

# **The Husband Study Guide**

## **The Husband by Dean Koontz**

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# Plot Summary

The Husband by Dean Koontz is an exciting drama that tests one man's devotion to his wife. Mitch Rafferty is just a gardener, a simple guy who has never hurt anyone. However, someone wants to hurt Mitch. Mitch has just received a phone call telling him that his wife has been kidnapped and he has sixty hours to come up with two million dollars. This phone call starts Mitch and the reader off on an adventure that is full of surprising twists and the emotional rollercoaster that faithful Koontz readers have come to expect.

Mitch is working at his landscaping job when he receives a phone call. The caller claims to have kidnapped Mitch's wife, Holly. To prove it is not a joke the kidnappers shoot a man who is walking his dog across the street. Frightened, Mitch waits impatiently for the police to allow him to go. One of the detectives, Taggart, seems interested in Mitch. However, the police finally allow him to go. After dropping off his employee, Mitch rushes home, afraid of what he will find.

Confirming Mitch's worse fears, he finds blood all over the kitchen where Holly was clearly overtaken by her captors. Moments later the phone rings. Holly is on the other end, making Mitch promise that no matter what happens he will go on with his life. The kidnapper comes on a moment later and gives Mitch instructions, warning him that if he does not follow their rules they will kill Holly. The kidnappers have planted evidence around the house so that if Holly is killed, it will look as though Mitch committed the crime. Mitch has little choice but to follow the rules.

Mitch showers and is about to leave the house as instructed when Taggart knocks on the door. It turns out the dog walker is a man Mitch once shared an apartment with. Mitch assures Taggart that he has not seen this man in years and had no idea he was the victim. Taggart seems to think Mitch is hiding something, but he leaves anyway.

Mitch goes out to the garage to get his wife's car. When Mitch enters the garage, it occurs to him that the kidnappers, who have clearly been watching him, might have a surveillance post in the garage. Mitch starts the car and then sneaks up into the second story where there is storage space. There Mitch finds surveillance equipment. Before Mitch can do anything, he is overtaken by a strange man. The man begins to walk Mitch back downstairs but trips and falls, falling through the guardrail and onto the garage floor below. The man is dead.

Mitch, afraid of the repercussions for Holly should the kidnappers find their partner dead, puts the body in the trunk of his car. Mitch then drives to his parents' home. Mitch is hoping to see his mother, but is forced to spend several minutes speaking to his father. Mitch's parents were cruel to their children and Mitch finds it difficult to deal with his father now due to this cruelty. However, Mitch believes this might be the last time he will see his father, so he endures the visit.



Mitch leaves his father's home and drives to a church. Here Mitch receives another call from the kidnappers on his cell phone. Mitch is told to go to his brother's house. Mitch does as he is told. Once there the kidnappers call again and give Mitch's brother, Anson, instructions. Anson tells Mitch that the kidnappers want Anson to provide the two million dollar ransom. Anson has agreed. However, Anson wants Mitch to go talk to an ex-FBI friend of his to discuss their options. This friend turns out not to be FBI, however, but one of Anson's many illegal contacts.

Anson turns on his brother and leaves him with Campbell, his friend, to be killed. Mitch is taken to the desert, but manages to overcome his killers. Mitch returns to Anson's condo and takes him hostage, forcing him to tell Mitch where his money is so Mitch can pay the ransom. Mitch then arranges with the kidnapper to make an exchange. Mitch has trouble getting to the exchange, but finally arrives ready to fight. Mitch shoots the kidnapper when Holly distracts him and runs, but the kidnapper is wearing a bulletproof vest and able to continue fighting. Mitch shoots him again, finally killing the kidnapper and rescuing his wife.



# Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 1-6

## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 1-6 Summary

The Husband by Dean Koontz is an exciting drama that tests one man's devotion to his wife. Mitch Rafferty is just a gardener, a simple guy who has never hurt anyone. However, someone wants to hurt Mitch. Mitch has just received a phone call telling him that his wife has been kidnapped and he has sixty hours to come up with two million dollars. This phone call starts Mitch and the reader off on an adventure that is full of surprising twists and the emotional rollercoaster that faithful Koontz readers have come to expect.

Mitch Rafferty is planting flowers in the yard of a client with his employee, Iggy Barnes. Mitch is enjoying the warmth of the day and the normalcy of his life. All this is shattered when Mitch gets a call on his cell phone. The caller claims to have kidnapped Mitch's wife, Holly. The kidnappers give Mitch sixty hours to come up with two million dollars. Mitch tells the kidnapper he is only a gardener and cannot come up with this money. The kidnapper assures him he will find a way. To prove their point, the kidnappers kill a dog walker walking his dog across the street from what Mitch stands.

Mitch stares at the dead man trying to decide what he should do. Mitch is worried that calling the police will hamper his ability to get his wife back. However, Mitch decides he has no choice. Mitch calls 911 and waits while the police investigate. One detective, Detective Taggart, seems to have taken an interest in Mitch. Taggart interviews Mitch twice before allowing him to leave. When allowed to leave, Mitch quickly drives Iggy home before turning toward his own home. Mitch is scared to enter his house, afraid he will find blood. Mitch enters the house despite his fears and does find blood, a great deal of blood in the kitchen where his wife was clearly overpowered while attempting to make her breakfast. While Mitch is taking in the scene, the phone rings.

## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 1-6 Analysis

Mitch is an ordinary man. Mitch works for a living, running his own gardening company. Mitch is not rich, not the type of man that criminals might target. However, kidnappers have snatched his wife and are asking for two million dollars, an impossible sum for Mitch to come up with. Mitch does not understand what is going on and asks the kidnappers if they are sure they are targeting the right man. They are. To prove how serious they are, the kidnappers shoot and kill a dog walker as he is walking across the



street from where Mitch stands. This has the intended impact, causing Mitch a great deal of fear for his wife.

Mitch calls the police as he is afraid if he does not the police will focus on him as the killer. It seems, however, that the police are focusing on him anyway when one police detective continuously interviews Mitch. Mitch is impatient and scared that the detective will not let him go. However, the police finally release Mitch from the scene. Mitch drives Iggy, his employee, home and then turns toward his own home. Mitch is completely focused on Holly now, afraid what he will find when he returns home. Mitch worries about finding blood. Mitch does find blood, in the kitchen where the kidnappers clearly found Holly making breakfast. Mitch is devastated by the sight. Then the phone rings. The reader is grabbed by the suddenness of this phone call, convinced it is the kidnappers calling with more instructions. However, the reader will have to wait for the next chapter to find out if this is true.



# Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 7-10

## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 7-10 Summary

Mitch answers the phone and Holly's voice fills his ear. Holly begs Mitch to be calm and to promise her if something goes wrong he will go on with his life. Mitch reluctantly agrees. The kidnappers come on the line and inform Mitch that they have not harmed his wife. The blood, they explain, was taken with a needle from Holly's arm and the scene in the kitchen staged. The kidnappers have also put blood on a knife and some of Mitch's clothes and hidden them somewhere on the property. The kidnappers have done this so that if Mitch does not cooperate, it will appear that Mitch is responsible for Holly's death. Again, Mitch finds himself forced to follow orders.

The kidnappers tell Mitch to wash up and then drive around until six when they will call him again. Again reluctant, Mitch does as he is told because he does not know what else to do. As Mitch moves around the house, he thinks about Holly and worries the situation in his mind, trying to figure everything out. During the phone call, the kidnappers seemed to know Mitch's every move, including the fact that he was standing in the kitchen when the phone rang. It occurs to Mitch that the kidnappers have him under surveillance. The most likely place Mitch believes they could be doing this from is the garage at the back of his property. However, before Mitch can check out his hunch the doorbell rings.

Taggart is at the door. Mitch answers the door, feeling he has no choice since his truck is in the driveway. Mitch does not want Taggart walking around to the back door and catching sight of the blood in the kitchen. Mitch tells Taggart that Holly has a migraine and suggests they speak on the porch. Taggart sympathizes with Holly, being a migraine sufferer himself. Then Taggart gets down to business. At the scene of the shooting, Mitch denied knowing the victim. However, Taggart has learned that the victim is a man that Mitch shared an apartment with for two years after high school. Mitch looks at a picture the coroner took of the victim and admits that he recognizes him now. Mitch says that he has not seen Jason Osteen in more than eight years. Jason got involved in illegal activities toward the end of their friendship and Mitch chose to end the relationship for that reason. Taggart seems satisfied with this explanation and leaves.

## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 7-10 Analysis

It is the kidnappers on the phone. After speaking to Holly, Mitch is told that Holly will remain safe as long as Mitch follows the rules. If Mitch does not follow the rules, the



kidnappers have staged a crime scene and planted evidence to make it appear that Mitch murdered Holly. Then the kidnappers instruct Mitch to leave the house and drive around until their next phone call. Mitch is restless after this call, filled with Holly's memory and frightened for her life. It occurs to Mitch that the kidnappers have known exactly every move Mitch has made and this makes him wonder if perhaps he is not under surveillance. Mitch thinks maybe the kidnappers might be watching him from the garage, but before he can check this out, the doorbell rings.

At the door is Detective Taggart. It occurs to Mitch to ignore the doorbell, but he knows that if he does Taggart will come around to the back door. If Taggart does this, he will see the blood in the kitchen and then Mitch will be arrested and will no longer be able to maneuver to get Holly back. Mitch opens the door and tells Taggart Holly is inside with a migraine and suggests they talk on the front porch. Taggart agrees, expressing concern for Holly.

Taggart appears to be a nice man, interested in Mitch and Holly's lives. However, the reader suspects that Taggart might be suspicious of Mitch for the murder of the dog walker and this is why he is there. When Taggart announces that the dog walker is someone Mitch was once close to, a roommate, the reader is as surprised as Mitch. Jason Osteen was someone Mitch shared an apartment with after high school. However, Mitch says that he and Jason lost touch many years before when Jason became involved in illegal activities. The reader believes Mitch, but wonders if Taggart believes him. For now Taggart lets the subject rest, but the reader suspects this will not be the last time Taggart will appear in Mitch's path.





# Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 11-13

## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 11-13 Summary

Mitch goes back into the house. In the den, Mitch looks over his financial statements and finds that the most money he could possibly offer for a ransom is just over twenty thousand. Again, Mitch wonders if the kidnappers have made a mistake. However, Mitch is beginning to suspect the kidnappers plan to use him to do something only he can do. What that might be Mitch still has not figured out. Mitch shakes his thoughts and decides he better get out of the house as instructed. Mitch drives his truck into the garage and plans to exchange it for Holly's Honda. Mitch gets into the Honda and starts it, but then slips out of the car and makes his way silently up into the storage loft. Mitch believes the kidnappers have been watching him from up here and he wants to see what they are up to.

Mitch takes a lug wrench and sneaks among the stacks of boxes in the loft. At the front of the garage along a bank of windows, Mitch sees a collection of fancy electronics he has never seen before. As Mitch approaches the equipment, his voice fills the room. It is a recording of his discussion with Taggart on the front porch. A gun is pressed against the back of his neck and a voice suggests that Mitch must really want Holly dead. Mitch immediately gives up the lug wrench and promises to do whatever he is told. The gunman directs Mitch back the way he came. As they approach the stairs, the gunman suddenly pulls a group of boxes down on himself and falls forward, breaking through the guardrail and falling onto a wheelbarrow in the garage below. Mitch rushes to his side and finds the man is dead.

## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 11-13 Analysis

Mitch goes into the house and checks out his financial papers. There is not nearly enough money in all of Mitch and Holly's bank accounts to come up with the ransom. Again, Mitch thinks that the kidnappers have the wrong man, or that they want him to do something only he can do. However, Mitch cannot imagine what that might be. The reader is just as confused as Mitch, but suspects this idea might come up again later in the novel.

Mitch decides to do what he has been told. Mitch drives the truck into the garage in order to exchange it with Holly's Honda. First, though, Mitch wants to check out his suspicion that the kidnappers are watching him from the garage. Mitch takes a lug wrench and goes up into the storage loft on the second floor of the garage. Mitch walks



quietly, hoping if someone is up there they will believe he is sitting in the Honda. Mitch finds surveillance equipment, but before he can take a closer look, a gunman comes up behind him.

The gunman plays a tape for Mitch, proving that they have been listening to his every conversation. Then the gunman instructs Mitch to go back the way he came. As the two men walk toward the stairs, the gunman somehow pulls some boxes down on himself and falls through the guardrail onto the garage floor below. Mitch now has the upper hand, giving the reader a thrill of excitement. However, the reader must be cautious as the full impact of this situation begins to make itself known.



# Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapter 14-18

## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapter 14-18 Summary

Mitch rushes down to the garage and finds the gunman dead. The gunman landed on a wheelbarrow in such a way that he cut his throat and crushed his windpipe. The gunman also shot himself when he fell, sending a bullet directly through his heart. Mitch does not immediately know what to do, but he knows he cannot allow the other kidnappers to find their partner dead. The kidnappers might blame Mitch and this could cause them to harm Holly. Mitch quickly searches the body, removing his identification and his guns. Mitch then wraps the gunman in a tarp and puts him in the back of the Honda. Mitch cleans up the garage, placing boxes in front of the broken guardrail so it is not immediately visible, and then leaves.

A few blocks away Mitch pulls over and searches the gunman's wallet. Mitch learns that his name is John Knox, but finds very little other information on the man. Mitch briefly thinks about checking out Knox's home, but decides he does not have enough time. Instead, Mitch drives to his parents' home. Mitch is not sure he will ever have a chance to see them again and wants this opportunity to see his mother one last time. However, Mitch's mother is not home. Instead, Mitch is forced to visit with his father for a few minutes.

Both of Mitch's parents are doctors of behavior psychology and they approached child rearing as an opportunity to experiment with different parental techniques. One of these techniques was to lock their children in a room called the learning room for days at a time. This room was soundproofed and dark, producing a sensory deprivation environment that was intended to take away all distraction in order for lessons to be learned quicker.

Mitch and his father discuss his father's collection of fossilized dinosaur feces before discussing Mitch's four siblings. Of all their siblings, Mitch's father is most proud of his brother Anson. Mitch's father tells Mitch about Anson's latest business success, holding it up as a way to emphasize Mitch's professional failures. This is typical of their father, who is disappointed that Mitch chose to be a gardener rather than something more prestigious. Mitch only spends a few minutes in his father's company before escaping into the street once more.



## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapter 14-18 Analysis

Mitch decides to take Knox's body with him, afraid the kidnappers will come looking for him and decide that Mitch murdered him. Mitch cleans up the garage and leaves, stopping only long enough to check out the dead man's wallet. Mitch briefly thinks of checking out Knox's apartment, hoping there will be some clue to Holly's whereabouts, but decides he does not have the time. Besides, the kidnappers are most likely still watching him and they would be suspicious if he did this. Instead, Mitch decides to go to his parents' house.

Mitch and his four siblings had a difficult childhood. Mitch's parents used parenthood as an excuse to experiment with strange and cruel rearing methods. Mitch's father would put his children in a room meant to be used as a sensory deprivation chamber in order to help them learn certain lessons quicker. This was cruel and most likely left Mitch and his siblings with some emotional scars. However, Mitch still feels some affection for his mother and is hoping to see her since he does not know if he will survive this crisis. However, Mitch's mother is not home.

Mitch is forced to talk with his father for a few minutes. Mitch's father shows off his latest dinosaur feces before telling Mitch how his brother Anson has just gotten a prestigious business deal. Mitch's father often holds Anson's successes up in order to remind Mitch of what a failure his father believes him to be. Mitch is used to this comparison and is not often offended by it. Mitch and his siblings are relatively close, especially he and Anson since they are the only ones who have remained in California as adults. The reader might suspect, because of this relationship, that Anson might play a part in the novel at a later time.



# Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 19-21

## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 19-21 Summary

Mitch leaves his parents' house and parks at a nearby church. While waiting for the phone call from the kidnappers, Mitch checks out the guns he took from Knox. One is a large pistol. Mitch checks to see how many bullets it has and looks for a safety, but does not find one. Mitch hides this one under the passenger seat. The other is small gun with an ankle holster. This also does not appear to have a safety. Mitch puts it on his ankle.

The phone call comes right at six. Mitch is told to drive to his brother's house and wait for another call. Mitch does not want to involve his brother, but the kidnapper is insistent. Against his better judgment, Mitch does as he is told. Mitch finds his brother in the middle of making dinner. While they make small talk, Mitch writes on a piece of paper, telling his brother that the house might be bugged. Anson appears to be concerned. When the phone rings, Anson speaks to the kidnappers. When he hangs up, Anson immediately suggests that they leave the house in his vehicle. Mitch agrees.

In the car, Anson tells Mitch that the kidnappers want two million of Anson's personal money. Anson informs Mitch that he has the money, he has been saving up to buy a sail boat, and that he is more than happy to pay the ransom for Mitch. At first Mitch protests, upset at taking his brother's money, but then he is grateful to finally be able to see an end to this mess. Anson tells Mitch that he can get the money together in the morning when the banks open and that the kidnappers had said they would call again at noon the following day.

## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 19-21 Analysis

Mitch parks at a nearby church and investigates the guns he took from Knox. Mitch is expecting trouble and from what happened in his garage, the reader should be too. Mitch puts the ankle holster on and then hides the other under the passenger seat. The phone call from the kidnappers comes then, right on time. Mitch is told to go to his brother's house. Mitch does not want to involve his brother, showing the reader the depth of his love for his brother. However, the kidnappers insist that Mitch has little choice. The kidnapper's insistence makes the reader remember Mitch's thought that the kidnappers want something only he can provide. Perhaps what the kidnappers want is a way to get to Mitch's brother.



Mitch arrives at his brother's house and tries to warn him about what is happening without speaking aloud in case the kidnappers are listening. Anson appears concerned about what Mitch has to tell him. When the kidnappers call, Anson speaks to them and shows all the appropriate responses. Later Anson tells Mitch that the kidnappers want two million and they know that Anson has that kind of money. Mitch is shocked to learn this despite the fact that he has known that Anson is saving his money to buy a sailboat. Anson tells Mitch he has no problem handing over his money if it means getting Holly back. Mitch is deeply grateful. However, the question remains for the reader how the kidnappers learned that Anson had this kind of money if his own brother was not aware of it.



# Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 22-28

## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 22-28 Summary

Mitch and Anson drive around for a while, not really talking. Anson suggests they stop for something to eat. Mitch pulls over at a Chinese restaurant and goes inside to get take-out. Mitch's initial relief at learning his brother has the ransom money has faded and now he is slowly filling with anger at these kidnapers for taking his wife and placing her life in danger. This rollercoaster of emotions distracts Mitch so that he does not question why his brother is on his cell phone when he returns to the car with food.

After they have eaten, Anson suggests they go visit a friend of his. This friend is ex-FBI and he might have suggestions on how they should proceed. At first Mitch is reluctant because the kidnapers said not to involve the police, but figures because the man is not currently in the FBI it will be okay. Anson's friend, Julian Campbell, lives in a large mansion that screams money. Anson says Campbell has made a lot of money in private business. Once inside the house, Anson and Mitch are shown into the library. They discuss their childhood for a minute, talking about some of the cruel things their father did to them to teach them their lessons. Then suddenly Anson pulls a gun on Mitch.

At first, Mitch thinks it is some sort of joke. However, when Julian Campbell comes into the room with two men, Mitch begins to realize it is not. The men take the pistol from Mitch that he hid under his jacket at Anson's house. Anson tells Mitch then that the kidnapers are actually partners of his from an illegal deal he had done some time before. Anson lied to these men about the amount of money they had made from the deal and took a larger cut for himself. Now the kidnapers want what they believe is their fair share. Anson would rather see both Mitch and Holly dead before he will give in to these men. Anson tells Campbell to dispose of Mitch. Campbell hands Mitch over to his two men who escort Mitch out to a car pavilion where they make him climb into the trunk of a vintage Chrysler Windsor.

At the same time, Holly is in a dark room working at a nail in the floor. Holly hopes to pull the nail loose to use it as a weapon. Holly is not afraid that the kidnapers are going to kill her. The kidnapers wear ski masks whenever they around her. Holly believes this is so that she will not be able to identify her later. One of the kidnapers does worry her because he seems crazy, but she thinks as long as the others are around she is safe. Holly is worried about Mitch, however. Holly has figured out that the kidnapers are holding her in order to make Mitch manipulate Anson. Holly is worried how this will play out because she has always suspected there was something not quite right with Anson. Holly has never told Mitch this, but she is afraid Anson is not what he appears to be.



## Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapters 22-28 Analysis

Mitch was relieved to finally have a source for the ransom money, but now his thoughts are filled with Holly and the danger she is still in. Mitch allows his concern for his wife to cloud his vision. When Anson suggests they go visit an old friend of his who was once with the FBI, Mitch has no reason not to trust his brother. However, Anson proves to be untrustworthy. Anson pulls a gun on Mitch and tells him that Holly has been kidnapped because of an illegal business deal in which he cheated his partners. This whole thing is Anson's fault and Mitch did not see it.

Now Anson tells Mitch that he does not care about him and would rather see him and Holly dead than give in to these people. Mitch is shocked, but pities his brother to a certain extent. Anson hands Mitch off to Julian Campbell who then hands Mitch over to his two hit men. Mitch is marched out of the house, through back doors so that the staff will not see, and put into the trunk of a car. Mitch is without his pistol and seemingly helpless, about to give his life so his brother can keep his money. Anson's behavior illustrates the theme of greed, especially when it comes to his callous behavior toward his brother.

Holly is locked in a dark room, unsure where. Holly is not afraid of dying, but she is aware that one of the kidnappers is crazy and possibly unpredictable. Holly is working a nail out of the floor just in case she needs a weapon while hoping she will not need to use it. Holly thinks about Mitch as she works. Holly is more concerned with Mitch than she is with her own safety. Holly knows the kidnappers are using him to get at Anson and she knows Anson is not the loving brother he has always pretended to be. This worries Holly and makes her think Mitch is in danger. Holly's awareness of Mitch attests to the love these two share, touching on the theme of love.





## **Part Two, Would You Die for Love? Would You Kill?, Chapters 29-34**

### **Part Two, Would You Die for Love? Would You Kill?, Chapters 29-34 Summary**

Mitch rides for a long time in the trunk of the car. When it finally stops, he is ready for the hit men. Mitch still has the gun from the ankle holster. Mitch pulls the gun and lies in a position that will give him the greatest aim when the trunk is opened. When the gunmen open the trunk, Mitch is able to kill one right away. Mitch believes he has wounded the other. Mitch gets out of the trunk and hides behind the car, trying to see where the other hit man has gone. Mitch is out of ammo, so he goes to the back of the car and takes the dead hit man's gun. The other man begins firing at Mitch. Mitch hides behind the car again. When the shooting stops, Mitch silently makes his way down a slope on the other side of the car, out of the gunman's range.

It is difficult for Mitch to move around because his hands are handcuffed in front of his body. Mitch takes a position behind some vegetation and waits. Soon Mitch sees the outline of the hit man moving slowly toward his position. The hit man stops and waits. Mitch decides to move, thinking eventually the hit man will give up and go back to the car. Mitch decides to hide in the trunk, giving him a good position to fire from when the hit man does come back. However, the hit man does not come up at the back of the car when he does return. Instead, the hit man approaches the car from the front and slips into the back seat, apparently having the same idea and hoping to get Mitch when he climbs into the driver's seat.

It occurs to Mitch that the back of the backseat is the back wall of the trunk. Mitch thinks he might be able to fire the gun against the backseat and hit the gunman. Mitch is a little concern there might be a metal partition, but decides to take the chance. Mitch empties the gun into the back of the backseat. Slowly Mitch gets out of the car and approaches the back door. The gunman is still alive, but barely. The gunman dies before he can do anything to further harm Mitch.

### **Part Two, Would You Die for Love? Would You Kill?, Chapters 29-34 Analysis**

If Mitch dies, so will Holly. Mitch is determined this will not happen. Mitch still has the ankle holster with its small pistol. Mitch pulls this gun and prepares himself to fire as soon as the killers open the trunk. Mitch is able to kill one hit man immediately, but the other escapes. Mitch is forced to hide from this man until he can figure out what to do. Mitch arms himself again with the other killer's gun and then runs into a slope in the ground where he finds protection among the vegetation. It occurs to Mitch that this killer

will not stop until he finds him. Mitch decides to go back to the car and wait for the killer to come back and catch him by surprise.

Mitch waits in the trunk, but the hit man has the same idea. The hit man sneaks into the back seat, clearly intending to wait for Mitch to try to drive the car away. Mitch listens to him sitting there, trying to decide what his best course of action is. Mitch decides to fire his gun against the back wall of the trunk, hoping there is nothing but cushion between him and the killer. Mitch's plan works. The killer is shot several times. However, he is still alive when Mitch comes to check on him. The killer is hurt bad enough, though, that he dies before he can shoot Mitch.



## **Part Two, Would You Die for Love? Would You Kill?, Chapters 35-39**

### **Part Two, Would You Die for Love? Would You Kill?, Chapters 35-39 Summary**

Mitch searches the hit men for the keys to the handcuffs and the car. Mitch takes off the handcuffs and then drags the two men into the vegetation. Then Mitch jumps into the car and heads back into town. Mitch is not sure what to do next. Mitch is disturbed by what he has done, but feels that he had no choice. Mitch goes home. Inside Mitch changes out of his clothes that have some blood on them from the hit man. In the bedroom, Mitch picks out new clothes. In Mitch's exhaustion, he does not at first notice that his belongings have been disturbed. However, Mitch does notice the bloody clothes lying on his bed. Next to the clothes are two fossilized balls of dinosaur feces.

Mitch rushes to his parents' home, boldly parking in the driveway. Inside Mitch finds the downstairs undisturbed. However, there are signs of a struggle in his parents' bedroom. Mitch also finds a Taser gun abandoned in the hallway. Mitch makes his way to the learning room. Inside Mitch finds his parents savagely murdered, stabbed to death with a pair of gardening shears and a hand trowel taken from Mitch's own garage. Mitch knows that Anson has done this. Mitch no longer feels pity for his brother.

Holly is still working the nail. Holly has had a nightmare in which she is forced to give up her baby to Mitch and her parents, all of whom are dead. Holly is frightened by what this means, especially since she only learned this morning that she is pregnant. Holly did not even have a chance to tell Mitch. While Holly is thinking about this dream, the crazy kidnapper comes in. The kidnapper has brought her a candy and starts talking to her about New Mexico. The kidnappers' conversation seems to have no pattern to it, but Holly slowly begins to realize that he is talking about some sort of metaphysical experiences he believes he has had. The kidnapper expresses a belief that Holly might have some sort of psychic power herself. Then the kidnapper tells her how there were originally five kidnappers and now there are only three. This kidnapper believes his partners might kill him in order to take more of the money for themselves.

### **Part Two, Would You Die for Love? Would You Kill?, Chapters 35-39 Analysis**

Mitch hides the bodies of the two killers and then drives their car back into town. Unsure what to do next, Mitch goes home. There Mitch finds evidence that Anson has killed their parents and set him up to take the blame. Mitch is supposed to be dead, so it no one would be hurt if Mitch were labeled a killer. Mitch sees this evidence and rushes to his parents home. Sure enough, they are both dead. Anson has stabbed them to death



in a vicious attack in the learning room. While Mitch held little affection for his parents, he is still sad to see them murdered so viciously.

Holly is still working on the nail in the floor of the room where she is being held captive. Holly is thinking about a dream she has had that implies to her that she is going to lose both Mitch and the baby she has just learned she is carrying. While thinking about all this, one of the kidnappers comes into the room, seemingly in a mood to talk. The man seems fixated on New Mexico and some experiences he has had there. The man also seems to believe there is something special about Holly. The kidnapper believes Holly has some sort of psychic ability.

The kidnapper then tells Holly that two of the kidnappers have either died or disappeared. This man believes that his other two partners are killing all the partners in order to take more of the money for themselves. This man is afraid his kidnappers will kill him too. The reader has the impression that this man is paranoid and dangerous, causing the reader to fear even more for Holly.



## **Part Two, Would You Die for Love? Would You Kill?, Chapters 40-45**

### **Part Two, Would You Die for Love? Would You Kill?, Chapters 40-45 Summary**

Mitch parks the Windsor a few blocks from Anson's house and then sneaks into the garden that separates Anson's condo from the one behind it. Anson has always told Mitch the second condo belongs to another person, but now Mitch believes it belongs to Anson. Sure enough, Mitch sees Anson leave the back condo and make his way to the front. Mitch confronts him and shoots him with the Taser gun. Anson goes down, but is still combative, so Mitch hits him again. Mitch then drags his brother into her kitchen. Mitch wrangles Anson into a chair and ties him to the washing machine in his laundry room.

Holly is visited again by the kidnapper. The kidnapper tells her that he has killed his two partners. Then the kidnapper tells Holly a story about a young girl who died of cancer. The kidnapper opened the girl's grave and stole a St. Christopher's medal from it. The kidnapper gives that medal to Holly now.

With Anson safely restrained, Mitch goes to investigate. Mitch checks the back condo and finds that it houses Anson's office. Mitch briefly thinks of checking out the computers, but knows Anson will have them well protected. Next Mitch checks out the garages. Mitch finds Holly's Honda, Anson's SUV, and the Woody Anson has restored. Mitch moves the vehicles around to make the Honda more accessible and transfers Knox's body into Anson's woody. Then Mitch returns to the house and informs Anson that he is going to tell Mitch where he keeps his money so that Mitch can pay Holly's ransom. Anson denies having that kind of money in the house. Mitch does not believe him. Mitch leaves Anson in the laundry room, in the dark, aware that Anson is afraid of the dark. Then Mitch goes into Anson's bedroom and sleeps.

Holly stops working the nail because she is afraid the hormones released when she uses it will harm her baby. Instead, Holly fingers the St. Christopher medal and thinks good thoughts about the baby growing inside her. The kidnapper returns and begins talking about New Mexico and the people he has met there again. The story is random and frightening, as the killer talks about taking lives as if they are unimportant. When his story is finished, the kidnapper tells Holly she has a decision to make in a few hours. The kidnapper has so frightened Holly that she forgets about her fears over the nail and begins working it out of the floor once more.



## Part Two, Would You Die for Love? Would You Kill?, Chapters 40-45 Analysis

Mitch goes to Anson's house and overpowers him with the use of the same Taser Anson used on their parents. Mitch has to hit Anson twice, but manages to take the bigger man down. Mitch then drags Anson into the house where he puts him in a chair and ties him to the washing machine. Mitch is angry with Anson and the reader is curious what will happen to him if he does not do what Mitch wants him to do. At this point, the reader is not even sure what Mitch wants from Anson. Later, however, the reader learns that Mitch wants the ransom money. All Mitch can focus on is saving his wife, once again illustrating the theme of love. At the same time, Holly has just discovered how crazy her kidnapper is. The man she spoke with before has just confessed to killing his two partners. Then the man gives Holly a medal he took from a child's grave. Now the reader's concern for Holly's safety has jumped to a new height.

Mitch explores Anson's condos and his garages. Mitch finds his Honda and moves it to the more accessible garage. Then Mitch moves Knox's body into Anson's Woody. The reader is unclear why he does this, except that it takes the chance of discovery down a notch for Mitch and might implicate Anson if found later. Then Mitch goes inside to speak to Anson again. Mitch wants the money to ransom Holly and believes Anson has it in the house since most of his income is illegally gained. Anson refuses, so Mitch locks him up in laundry room with the light turned off because he knows Anson is afraid of the dark. Then Mitch goes to sleep for a few hours.

Holly has been optimistic up to this point. However, now the kidnapper is frightening her with his odd behavior and his strange stories. The man appears to be fixated on Holly for some reason and keeps talking about how she needs to develop her gifts. Holly at first gave up on the nail, believing if she is forced to use it against the kidnapper, it will somehow harm the baby. However, now Holly is so afraid of the kidnapper she decides to take the risk.



## **Part Three, Until Death Do Us Part: Chapters 46-49**

### **Part Three, Until Death Do Us Part: Chapters 46-49 Summary**

When Mitch wakes and goes downstairs to check on Anson. Anson still refuses to tell Mitch where he keeps his money, so Mitch refuses to allow him to go to the bathroom. Mitch searches Anson's condo. Mitch finds a loose nail in the attic and works at it, convinced it is significant, but finds nothing underneath. Mitch searches every room but gives up when time begins to run out. Mitch returns to the laundry room and again demands to know where the money is. Mitch tells Anson if he does not tell him he will kill him. Anson tells Mitch about a safe in his kitchen. Mitch finds the safe and withdraws six hundred thousand dollars in bearer bonds and eight hundred thousand in cash.

Mitch returns to the laundry room and asks Anson where he can find the rest. Anson swears there is no more money. Mitch pushes him, keeping an eye on the clock at the same time. The kidnappers are due to call any minute. Anson tells him there is more money on his boat, but that it still will not be enough. Anson tells Mitch to negotiate with the kidnappers. Anson knows these people and believes they will take what Mitch has. When the kidnappers call, Mitch recognizes right away that he is not speaking to the same person. Mitch tells the kidnapper how much money he has. The kidnapper agrees to accept the money. The kidnapper tells Mitch to meet him at the Turnbridge House at three o'clock for the exchange.

### **Part Three, Until Death Do Us Part: Chapters 46-49 Analysis**

Mitch checks on Anson and finds him just as angry and defiant as the night before. Anson's greed is so complete that even in the face of massive humiliation, he still will not help his brother. Mitch leaves him in the dark with a full bladder and begins to search the house. Hours later Mitch returns to the laundry room and finds his brother further humiliated, but still defiant. Anson does, however, confess to a safe hidden in the kitchen. Mitch opens the safe and finds enough cash and bearer bonds to cover two-thirds of the ransom.

Mitch asks Anson where he can get the rest of the money, but again Anson refuses to help. Anson is still hoping to get out of this situation with enough money to disappear. Mitch has other plans. Mitch pushes Anson, but finally accepts that he has all he is going to get. Mitch speaks with the kidnapper, noticing he is not the same man he spoke to before, and arranges an exchange for the money he has managed to gather. Mitch is

hopeful once more that he will be able to rescue Holly, despite everything that has gone wrong.





## **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 50-55**

### **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 50-55 Summary**

Anson tells Mitch the name of the kidnapper, having recognized Mitch's description. Anson says his name is Jimmy Null and that if he is on the phone, the others are dead. Before Mitch has time to digest this, the phone rings again. Mitch thinks it might be Null so he answers, but it turns out to be Campbell looking for his car. Mitch pretends to not know who Campbell is, but Campbell recognizes his voice and promises to come find him.

Mitch prepares the money for the exchange. Anson begins telling Mitch what he does for a living and where the money came from. Anson writes computer programs that allow men like Campbell to sell child porn over the Internet. Mitch is sickened by this, but still determined to rescue his wife. Mitch begins to leave when the doorbell rings. Knowing it is too early to be Campbell, Mitch sneaks to the door to see who it is. It is Detective Taggart. Mitch sneaks out the back door to the garage and begins to pull out in Holly's Honda. Detective Taggart blocks his way.

Taggart gets into the car and the two begin to talk. Taggart tells Mitch that Anson has been in contact with Jason Osteen, the dead dog walker, and that he knows Holly is missing and insists on knowing where she is. Faced with no alternatives, Mitch tells Taggart all he knows, leaving out the death of John Knox. Taggart insists on calling in reinforcements and assisting on the ransom drop. Mitch reluctantly agrees. After calling in to his dispatcher, Taggart insists on going inside to speak with Anson. Mitch begins to have second thoughts as they cross the garden. Mitch is afraid Anson will lie to Taggart and Taggart will believe him. When they enter Anson's kitchen, Mitch turns on Taggart and uses the Taser gun on him. Taggart goes down hard, firing his gun as he falls.

### **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 50-55 Analysis**

Mitch learns the name of the kidnapper and the possibility that the others are dead. This idea is frightening, but Mitch has little time to think it over. Campbell calls looking for his car, promising to come get it. Now Mitch is in a hurry to get out of the house. Mitch puts the money in a trash bag while Anson tells him that the money comes from the transportation of child porn over the Internet. While sickened by this, Mitch has no choice but to use the money to save Holly.



Someone rings the front doorbell as Mitch is preparing to leave. Mitch quickly sneaks out the back, but Detective Taggart intercepts him. Taggart tells Mitch that he knows Anson has been in contact with Jason Osteen, which is what has brought him here, and that Holly is missing. Mitch realizes he has no choice, so he tells Taggart everything, except for the part that involves John Knox. Taggart believes Mitch and wants to help. Mitch agrees to let him bring the police in despite his own fears that this will cause something bad to happen. Mitch then takes Taggart to the house where Anson is still tied up so Taggart can interrogate him. However, fearful of what Anson will say, Mitch uses the Taser on Taggart.



## **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 56-59**

### **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 56-59 Summary**

The police backup that Taggart called arrives minutes later. Mitch jumps into the Honda and drives away before they can find Taggart. Mitch is frightened now, knowing that he has committed a terrible crime by assaulting an officer. Mitch is sure Taggart will put a bulletin out on the Honda as soon as he is able to speak. However, Mitch only has a small amount of time, so he focuses on Holly. At the same time, Holly finally manages to get the nail out of the wood floor. Holly hides it in her bra seconds before the kidnapper returns. Once more, the kidnapper starts talking about his experiences in New Mexico. Holly listens and gives the appropriate responses when it seems necessary. The kidnapper seems impressed with Holly's knowledge and continues to talk about the enlightenment she is meant to experience.

The kidnapper tells Holly it is time to go. Soon Holly will have to make a big decision. The kidnapper blindfolds Holly, apologizing as he does, and puts her in the back of a van. The kidnapper warns her that she must be quiet or he will have to hurt her. Holly promises to behave. At the same time, Mitch stops at a gun shop to get ammunition for the hit man's gun. Mitch has several bullets left, but wants to be prepared. However, Mitch has never bought bullets before and is afraid of making the shop clerk suspicious. Mitch studies the gun before hiding it in the car and going into the shop. Mitch describes the gun, but it turns out he should have brought it with him. Mitch turns to look at the car and discovers that a security car has blocked him in.

Mitch slips out of the store, gets the gun from the car, and sets out on foot while the security guard is looking for him inside the store. Mitch tries to find a parked car with the keys in it since he does not know how to hot-wire a car, but has no luck. Mitch wanders into a neighborhood nearby and can hear and see police cars swarming into the area. Mitch walks quickly, still hoping to find a car with the keys in it.

### **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 56-59 Analysis**

Holly is playing along with the kidnapper and this seems to be keeping him happy. Holly is concerned, however, that she will have to use the nail she finally pried loose of the floorboards. The more the man talks about enlightenment and Holly's special gifts, the reader begins to worry as well. At the same time, Mitch is on the run from the police. Mitch knows they will be looking for him now since he has assaulted a police officer. However, Mitch is still determined to save Holly.



Mitch stops at a gun shop to buy more ammo just in case the ransom exchange goes badly. While there, a security guard spots the Honda and blocks it in. Mitch is able to get the gun and run, but he is forced to leave the car behind. Mitch needs a car in order to arrive at the ransom exchange in time. Mitch makes his way into a residential area and begins looking for a car to steal. Mitch is desperate and this seems to be the only chance he has.



## **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 60-63**

### **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 60-63 Summary**

The kidnapper takes Holly into the Turnbridge House and chains her to a gas pipe in the unfinished kitchen. Holly tells the kidnapper some things about a woman he has been telling her about, again playing along with his stories and making him feel closer to her. However, it does not make the kidnapper feel closer to Mitch. The kidnapper leaves Holly alone to prepare for the exchange.

Mitch continues walking through the residential area. Finally, Mitch comes across a driveway where a car has been left idling. Mitch climbs into the car and drives off. However, an old man in the back seat becomes hysterical when he realizes Mitch is not his caregiver. Mitch returns the car, finding an agitated woman screaming in the middle of the street. Mitch apologizes, but the woman does not accept. Instead, she begins to follow him through the streets while talking on the phone to the police. Mitch slips through a few yards and a vacant lot, finding himself in a deep culvert. The cell phone Mitch took from Anson rings. The kidnapper has moved up the time of the exchange to two o'clock. Mitch has minutes to make it.

Holly is alone in the huge Turnbridge Mansion, a spacious home that was in the middle of construction when its owner committed suicide after losing everything in the Internet crash. Holly thinks about Mitch and their future together and begins to formulate a plan. The kidnapper comes back and Holly once again fakes a psychic connection to the people the kidnapper has been telling her about. When he is gone, Holly uses her nail to scratch at the dry wall.

### **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 60-63 Analysis**

Holly is taken to the Turnbridge House and chained to the gas pipe in the unfinished kitchen. Holly fakes psychic connections to the people the kidnapper keeps telling her about, hoping to stay in his good graces until Mitch can arrive to save her. Holly is frightened by the kidnapper's claims to be preparing for Mitch's arrival. Holly formulates a plan and begins using the nail to scrape at the dry wall beside her. The reader does not know what Holly's plan might be, but hopes it is a good one.

Mitch is trying to find a car to steal. Mitch finds one, but has bad luck when he finds an old man in the back seat. Mitch takes the car back, showing his kind heart, but places himself in deeper danger. Mitch manages to escape the situation and sure capture.

However, the kidnapper calls and wants to move up the time of the meeting. Now Mitch has only minutes to make the exchange but no way of getting there.



## **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 64-68**

### **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 64-68 Summary**

Mitch climbs back up onto the road and comes to a gas station where a careless driver has left her car idling. Mitch checks the backseat before he drives off with this car. Mitch arrives at the Turnbridge House a few minutes late, but the kidnapper allows him inside. Mitch is instructed by phone to go into the kitchen where Holly is waiting. Once there the kidnapper comes into the kitchen and instructs Mitch to open the trash bag and show him the money. Mitch does. The kidnapper begins to talk about Holly's chances for transcendence. At that moment, Holly holds up her hands and shows the kidnapper that she is experiencing stigmata. The kidnapper is distracted by this, giving Holly a chance to shove the nail in his eye and Mitch a chance to pull his gun.

Mitch shoots the kidnapper several times in the chest. Mitch hugs Holly and checks her for injuries. Then they grab the money and begin to leave. However, before they have gone far they can hear a motorcycle engine. The killer must have had a bulletproof vest. Mitch shoves Holly behind him and fires at the killer, shooting him in the head. It is finally over.

More than three years later, Mitch and Holly are having a birthday party for their son. Mitch and Holly have been blessed with two children. Holly is now a real estate agent and Mitch has expanded his business. Taggart is now counted as one of their friends. Mitch maintains a relationship with his sisters. However, Anson is now in prison, along with Julian Campbell.

### **Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part: Chapters 64-68 Analysis**

Mitch arrives at the Turnbridge House a few minutes late. The kidnapper calls him on his cell phone and instructs him to enter the house. Mitch finds the kidnapper and Holly waiting for him in the kitchen. Mitch follows the kidnapper's instructions, showing him the money. Holly has a surprise, however. Holly reveals to the kidnapper that she is experiencing stigmata. While he is distracted by this, Holly shoves the nail in the kidnapper's eye. Mitch then shoots the kidnapper. However, the kidnapper is wearing a bulletproof vest and comes at them again. Mitch again shoots the kidnapper, shooting him in the head this time.

Holly and Mitch are safe and back together. Three years later, they have a birthday party for their son. Holly and Mitch have the life they have always wanted, including



Detective Taggart as a friend. Mitch even has a good relationship with his sisters. Anson and Campbell have gone to jail for their crimes, so this novel has a happily ever after ending.





# Characters

## Mitch Rafferty

Mitch Rafferty is a gardener. Mitch is living a simple life. Mitch is married to the woman of his dreams, hoping someday soon to have a few children. Mitch owns his own gardening business, working with only one employee. Mitch would like to expand his business someday, but is content now with the way things are. Despite having a difficult childhood with parents who treated their children as test subjects rather than children, Mitch is a well-adjusted, normal man. That is, until the day someone kidnaps his wife.

The kidnappers want Mitch to come up with two million dollars in sixty hours despite the fact that Mitch does not have access to that kind of money. To encourage Mitch to do as he is told, the kidnappers shoot and kill a dog walker across the street from where Mitch is working. Scared, Mitch does everything he is told. Despite this, the kidnappers continuously prove to Mitch that they are watching him by recording his conversations and playing them back to him. Not only this, but the kidnappers also have planted evidence in Mitch's home making it appear as though Mitch has killed his wife.

When Mitch is directed to involve his brother in the kidnapping, Mitch is reluctant because he loves his brother and does not want to hurt him. However, the kidnappers are insistent. Mitch tries to protect his brother, giving him as much information as he can without tipping off the kidnappers. Mitch does not know that his brother is the reason Holly has been kidnapped. Mitch is suddenly thrust into a situation he does not know how to handle. Mitch handles it beautifully, however, and saves Holly, as she was sure he would do.

## Holly Rafferty

Holly Rafferty is Mitch's wife. Holly is in the middle of making her breakfast when some men break into her home and kidnap her. The kidnappers are careful to keep their faces covered so Holly is secure in the idea that they do not mean her harm. Holly fears for her husband, however, because she knows he will do whatever it takes to save her. Holly is afraid whatever it takes will be something that will place her husband in mortal danger.

Holly is pregnant, a fact she has only learned the morning of the kidnapping. Holly is afraid to defend herself or do anything that will cause her body to be flooded with hormones that might harm the baby's development. However, when one of the kidnappers confesses that he has killed his partners out of fear that they are attempting to swindle him, Holly changes her mind. Holly manages to free a nail from the floorboards of the room where she is being held and hides it in her clothing until an opportunity to use it arises.



The remaining kidnapper thinks that Holly might have psychic talents that she needs him to help her develop. The kidnapper wants to take Holly to Arizona with him, but first he wants to collect the ransom from Mitch. The kidnapper takes Holly to Turnbridge House, an abandoned mansion, where he not only wants to make the exchange, but where he hopes to talk Holly into traveling with him. Holly goes along with the kidnapper in order to keep herself safe. When Mitch arrives, Holly uses the nail to make it appear that she has been touched by stigmata. The stigmata distracts the kidnapper long enough for Mitch to overpower him and rescue Holly.

## **Anson Rafferty**

Anson is Mitch's older brother. Anson is the oldest of the Rafferty children so he was always the one that his brother and sisters turned to in times of trouble. The Rafferty parents are sociologists and university professors, so they raised their children using experimental techniques. One of these techniques was to lock the children in the learning room, a room that placed the child in a sensory deprivation situation. Anson suffered during his times in this room and as an adult is afraid of the dark.

Anson pretends to be a loving brother and son to his family members. Anson knows that his father uses his success to encourage his siblings to work harder in their own chosen fields. Anson pretends to be remorseful about this as well. However, Anson is emotionally detached from his siblings. Anson's true successes are nothing like what he tells his father. Anson uses his knowledge of computers to create programs to move illegal materials over the Internet, including pornography. Anson has made a great deal of money in his illegal endeavors.

Anson was involved in an illegal operation that required the use of a team. At the end of the job, Anson lied to his team members about the amount of money they made so that he could keep a larger cut of the funds. When the team members find out about this, they kidnap Holly in the hopes that Anson loves his brother enough to give back the extra money to save her life. However, Anson does not care about his brother that much. In fact, Anson arranges for Mitch to be killed to end the situation. Anson underestimates Mitch, however. Mitch takes Anson captive and makes him pay the ransom anyway. When the kidnapping is over, Anson is arrested for his crimes and sent to prison.

## **Detective Taggart**

Detective Taggart is a detective with the Los Angeles police department. Detective Taggart is one of two officers who respond to the scene when the dog walker is killed. Taggart takes a special interest in Mitch, interviewing him twice on the scene of the murder. Mitch is impatient, anxious to go home and verify that his wife is missing. Taggart takes Mitch's impatience and a Freudian slip in Mitch's 911 call as an indication that Mitch knows more than he is telling. However, Taggart has no evidence and is forced to allow Mitch to go home. Once Mitch is home, Taggart shows up again. Taggart



has discovered that the dog walker is a man that Mitch knew in high school and lived with upon leaving home.

Taggart is curious about the dog walker's connection to Mitch and why Mitch did not mention this at the scene. Mitch manages to convince Taggart that he did not realize who the victim was before and Taggart leaves. However, Mitch runs into Taggart again at his brother's house. Desperate to keep out of jail, Mitch tells Taggart the truth of what has happened to Holly. Taggart wants to help, but Mitch cannot allow him to do that. Mitch hits Taggart with a stun gun and escapes to make the ransom drop himself. Taggart does not hold a grudge, however. Mitch and Taggart become friends when the case ends.

## **Iggy Barnes**

Iggy Barnes is Mitch's one and only employee. Iggy is a man that Mitch has known since high school. Iggy is a surfer who loves to hang out in surfer bars when he is not on the beach. Mitch finds Iggy's conversations humorous and difficult to follow at times. Iggy is with Mitch when the dog walker is killed. Iggy does not know that the dog walker is Mitch and his friend, nor does he know about Holly's abduction. Iggy does, however, tell Taggart about Mitch's connection to the victim, causing Taggart to return to Mitch's home in order to ask him about the dog walker's identity.

## **Jason Osteen**

Jason Osteen is the dog walker. After high school, Mitch and Jason rented an apartment together. Mitch and Jason lived together for two years. However, Jason became involved in illegal activities and Mitch did not want those activities to come back on him. Mitch moved out of the apartment and broke off contact with Jason. Mitch later learns that Jason is one of the men that Anson hired to work an illegal case with him and part of the group Anson cheated when he did not give them their fair cut of the payment. Jason agrees to walk the dog, believing that his fellow kidnappers are going to shoot the dog. However, the kidnappers shoot Jason in order to raise the amount of money each man will get.

## **John Knox**

John Knox is one of the kidnappers. When Mitch investigates the second story of his garage to see if this is where the kidnappers have been watching him from, John Knox is waiting for him. John Knox has been monitoring the house from the garage. John Knox pulls a gun on Mitch and begins to walk him out of the garage. However, John Knox stumbles and falls through the guardrail, killing himself. Mitch is afraid that if the kidnappers find Knox dead they will think Mitch did it and kill Holly. Mitch wraps Knox in a tarp and puts him in the back of his car. Mitch drives around town with the body in the trunk until his brother arranges for Mitch to be killed. When Mitch returns to his brother's condo, he finds his car in his brother's garage. Mitch moves the body into Anson's car.



## Julian Campbell

Julian Campbell is a friend of Anson's. Mitch is told that Campbell is an ex-FBI agent who has made a fortune in private business. However, Campbell is really a pornographer who uses Anson's computer program to move illegal child porn over the Internet. Mitch goes to Campbell's house with Anson before he learns the truth. Once there Anson pulls a gun on Mitch and hands him over to Campbell and his men. Mitch is then put in the trunk of a car and taken out to the desert to be murdered. Mitch escapes and later turns evidence on Campbell, sending him to jail.

## Jimmy Null

Jimmy Null is another of the kidnappers. Null is a believer in psychic abilities and metaphysical connections. Null believes that Holly has special powers and only needs his help to learn to use them fully. Due to this belief, Null becomes attached to Holly, assuring her safety unless she does something to prove him wrong. Holly plays along with Null's beliefs, especially after she learns he has killed all his partners in the belief that they are trying to rob him. Null decides to collect the ransom on his own so he can take Holly to Arizona and help develop her powers. When Null comes face to face with Mitch during the exchange, Holly pretends to be suffering stigmata. Null is distracted enough that Mitch gets the better of him and rescues Holly. Null is not dead yet, however, and comes after Mitch and Holly again. Mitch manages to shoot Null, ending the ordeal.

## Hit men

Two of Campbell's hit men are charged with taking Mitch to the desert and killing him. Mitch feels this is something they have done many times and are well experienced at subduing their victims. The hit men put Mitch in the trunk of a car and drive a long distance into the desert. Mitch has a gun hidden on his ankle. When the hit men open the trunk, Mitch pulls the gun and kills one, wounding the other. Mitch then runs off into a culvert, hoping to draw out the second man and killing him. However, the second man is more experienced and more aware of the landscape. Mitch instead goes back to the car and hides in the trunk. When the hit man comes back, he sneaks into the backseat of the car. Mitch fires through the trunk into the backseat, mortally wounding the hit man.



# Objects/Places

## Cell Phone Call

Mitch receives a cell phone call from a man who claims to have kidnapped his wife. The man gives Mitch sixty hours to come up with two million dollars, an impossible feat for a gardener.

## Mitch and Holly's Kitchen

When Mitch arrives home, he finds Holly's blood all over the kitchen. Mitch later learns that the kidnapers have planted evidence to make it appear as if Mitch has killed his wife.

## Mitch and Holly's Garage

Mitch discovers the kidnapers have been watching him from the second floor of his garage. This is also where John Knox is accidentally killed.

## Holly's Honda

Mitch puts John Knox in the trunk of Holly's Honda to keep the kidnapers from finding out about his death.

## Anson's Condo

Mitch is ordered to go to Anson's condo in order to force Anson to help Mitch come up with the ransom money. Later, Mitch returns to Anson's condo and holds his brother hostage.

## Julian Campbell's House

Anson takes Mitch to Julian Campbell's house supposedly to speak with Campbell about the kidnapping. However, Anson turns on Mitch and hands him over to Campbell and his men and orders them to kill Mitch.

## Anson's Woody

Mitch puts John Knox in the back of Anson's Woody, a 1947 Buick Super Woody Wagon Anson rebuilt himself.



## **Anson's Kitchen Safe**

Mitch discovers that Anson has a kitchen safe in which he keeps a large amount of cash and bonds. Mitch takes the money to give to Jimmy Null for Holly's ransom.

## **Pregnancy Test**

Mitch discovers a pregnancy test among Holly's things when he goes home to change. Mitch was unaware of Holly's pregnancy.

## **Turnbridge House**

The Turnbridge House is a large mansion that was under construction until the owner's Internet business went bust and his subsequent suicide. The house now stands abandoned. This is where Null takes Holly in order to make the exchange with Mitch.

## **The Learning Room**

The learning room is a room in Mitch's parents home that has been soundproofed in order to provide a sensory deprivation room where the children were often locked for days at a time to assist them to learn a difficult lesson.

## **California Desert**

Campbell's men take Mitch out into the desert in order to kill him. Mitch manages to catch the men by surprise and kill both of them instead.



# Themes

## Love

When a group of kidnapers takes Mitch's wife, Holly, they count on Mitch's love for Holly to force him to do as they say. The kidnapers want to use Mitch to get two million dollars they feel they are owed. Mitch has the unfortunate luck to be the only sibling of Anson Rafferty living in California. The kidnapers feel that Anson stole money from them by keeping a larger portion of the payment for a job they all did together. The kidnapers take Holly in order to force Anson to do what he can to help his brother get his wife back. However, the kidnapers do not count on Anson caring more about money than his brother.

Mitch, however, loves his wife so much that he is willing to do anything to get Holly back. Mitch obeys everything the kidnapers tell him to do while also trying to do some investigating on his own in order to find a way to get Holly without coming up with the money. Mitch has no way of getting the money, at least this is what he believes when the kidnapers first call. Mitch would willingly give them the money, if he had it, but he does not. When Mitch realizes that the kidnapers know his every move and are able to record his conversations, he gets the idea that they are watching him. Mitch goes on his own to investigate this idea and discovers that they have been watching him from his own garage. Mitch is caught investigating this, but the kidnapper who catches him falls and dies. Mitch hides the body, afraid what would happen if the kidnapers thought he killed their buddy.

Later, when Mitch speaks with Anson and learns the truth about why the kidnapers have stolen Holly, Mitch is filled with rage toward his brother and fear for Holly. Mitch fights his way out of the situation his brother has put him, killing two hit men who were told to kill Mitch. Mitch then kidnaps his brother, turning the tables on him and forcing him to tell Mitch where he hides his ready cash. From Anson Mitch is able to gather enough ransom money to get the kidnapper to agree to release Holly. Mitch then assaults a police officer to keep him from interfering and makes the drop on his own, saving Holly from a mad man who believes her to be some sort of psychic. Mitch fought on his own, doing things he never thought he would, to save his wife. That is why love is a major theme of this novel.

## Greed

Greed is the underlying reason why Holly is kidnapped. The kidnapers want money they believe they are owed. Anson, Mitch's brother, stole money from these men by misleading them about the amount of money they received in payment for a job. Anson lied to these men out of greed. Anson wanted to keep more of the money rather than share a fair cut with the others. The others found out and now they want the rest of what they would have gotten in a fair cut. The kidnapers believe that Anson loves his brother





enough that he will pay the money rather than see his brother become a widower and a convicted felon, as the kidnappers have made it appear as though Mitch killed Holly. They underestimated Anson.

Anson does not want to give up his money. Anson has spent a great deal of time amassing a large fortune so that he can live on a boat in luxury for the rest of his life. Anson does not want to give up his dream. When Mitch goes to him, Anson at first appears to want to help Mitch. However, Anson delivers Mitch to a man who has no qualms about paying men to kill Mitch. Anson would rather have his brother killed than give up his hard earned money.

After Mitch survives the attempt on his life, he returns to his brother's house and locks his brother in the laundry room. Mitch forces Anson to endure humiliation in order to get him to give up his ready cash for the ransom. Anson eventually tells Mitch where his money is, but even under these circumstances Anson attempts to hold out until the end. Anson's greed is so complete that he would rather see his brother and his sister-in-law dead rather than give up any portion of his money. Anson's greed got Mitch into this situation and Anson's greed nearly causes the death of both Mitch and Holly, making greed an important theme of the novel.

## Survival

Mitch is a normal guy. Mitch has a wife, a nice little house, and a small gardening business. Mitch passes his days planting flowers and spending time with the love of his life. All of this is turned upside down when Mitch gets a call on his cell phone telling him that his wife has been kidnapped. Mitch cannot understand why someone would want to kidnap his wife. Mitch has only a few thousand dollars in the bank, money he has been saving to enlarge his business. The kidnapper tells Mitch they want two million dollars. Mitch has no way of getting that kind of money.

Mitch immediately begins trying to find a way to do what the kidnappers want in order to get his wife back. Mitch is willing to do anything. Within twenty-four hours, Mitch will find himself killing a stranger, shooting two hit men who wanted to kill him, kidnapping his older brother, and assaulting a police officer. All of these things are actions Mitch would not take under normal circumstances. However, Mitch knows if he does not survive, neither will Holly.

Holly too finds herself doing things she might not do under other circumstances. Holly is locked in a room at the mercy of a crazy man. This man believes Holly to be some sort of psychic. The man wants to take Holly to Arizona and help her develop her powers. Holly plays along with this man, aware that if she makes a mistake he will more than likely kill her just as he has done to his partners. Holly plays along to survive.





# Style

## Point of View

The novel is written in the third person point of view. The majority of the novel is presented through Mitch's point of view. The reader goes along with Mitch as he tries desperately to save his wife. A few chapters are seen through Holly's point of view. These chapters are also written in the third person point of view. However, these chapters are not written in the past tense as the chapters seen through Mitch's eyes are. Holly's chapters are written in the present tense, giving the chapters more urgency.

The point of view of this novel works for several reasons. The chapters written in Mitch's point of view keep the reader close to the action as Mitch attempts to find a way to save his wife. If not seen through Mitch's eyes, these chapters would lose some of their impact on the reader. The reader is drawn into Mitch's saga, filled with fear along with Mitch and the urgency he feels in his fight to save his wife. In the chapters seen through Holly's eyes, the text is written in the present tense rather than the past tense of Mitch's chapters. This change in tense is important because it increases the tension of the novel. Mitch may be aware of the danger Holly is in, but Holly is more intensely aware that her life is in danger. The reader reads Holly's chapters and the danger seems more real, more immediate, than it may feel in Mitch's chapters.

## Setting

The novel is set in the Los Angeles area. Mitch begins in an exclusive neighborhood where he is working on the landscape of a client's home. While working, Mitch receives the phone call telling him his wife has been kidnapped and asking for the ransom. During this call, a man is killed. After the police have concluded their investigation, Mitch goes home to a less exclusive neighborhood that is more family friendly. This neighborhood is Mitch's own neighborhood. Here Mitch feels comfortable, safe, despite the evidence of his wife's kidnapping. Later Mitch once again enters several more exclusive neighborhoods, the one where he grew up, where his brother lives, and where Campbell lives. All these exclusive neighborhoods hold some sort of danger for Mitch, implying that with money comes unpleasantness.

The author uses setting in a subtle way to separate Mitch from the bad guys in this novel. Mitch lives in a middleclass neighborhood, one that might be scorned by someone with more money. Mitch is happy with his home and neighbors, content to live a middleclass life. However, when Mitch's wife is kidnapped he is thrown into more expensive neighborhoods. At each of these places, Mitch meets someone who either wants him dead or has no concern for his welfare. In this way the author has used setting almost as a character, alerting the reader in advance what might happen as Mitch enters each new setting.



## Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple, precise English. There is little slang in the novel except for what appears in the dialogue. The novel is written primarily from Mitch's point of view. Mitch spends a great deal of time thinking out his situation and attempted to find a solution to his problems. By writing the novel in this way, a great deal of the narration is inner monologue in Mitch's voice. Mitch is an educated man despite his lack of higher education and his vocabulary is not complicated but is appropriate to his intelligence.

The author uses language in this novel as a way to further develop his characters. Mitch's voice is filled with simple, but precise English. The voice of his brother Anson is similar but contains a subtle intelligence that lacks the emotion of Mitch's language. The kidnapers have yet another language that includes some slang in their dialogue. The language in this novel works because it is true to the characters and helps to develop the characters in such a way that they begin to take on larger dimensions than the ones allowed on paper.

## Structure

The novel is divided into three parts and sixty-eight chapters. Each part is given a name that plays on marriage vows and the emotions between a man and a woman, playing on the theme of love that is so prominent throughout the novel. The chapters vary in length with some being very short while others are comparatively long. The varying length in the chapters aids the author in building suspense throughout the novel while the different parts separate different actions within the novel, alerting the reader to changes in the plot.

The novel follows one main plot line, the kidnapping of Holly. The story begins with Mitch receiving the phone call asking for an impossible ransom. Mitch follows the instructions of the kidnapers as closely as he can, deviating only once when he searches his garage for the possibility of a surveillance team. Later the kidnapers send him to his brother Anson's condo where Mitch feels regret for pulling his brother into the scheme. However, Mitch learns that his brother is the reason Holly has been kidnapping and he cannot expect any help from him. Mitch turns the tables on Anson by restraining him in his home until Anson reveals where Mitch can find the cash needed for Holly's ransom. The novel is told in a simple, linear style with few subplots to distract from the main story.

## Quotes

"A man begins dying at the moment of his birth. Most people live in denial of Death's patient courtship until, later in life and deep in sickness, they become aware of him sitting bedside." Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapter 1, pg. 3

"Superstition promised that as long as the street remained still, as long as neither he nor the dog moved, the violence might be undone and time rewound, the bullet recalled to the barrel."

Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapter 2, pg. 13

"They didn't want the world, and didn't want to change it. They wanted their little corner of the world, and the chance to fill it with family and laughter."

Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapter 6, pg. 39

"To Mitch, standing on the back porch, this place, which had previously been an island of peace, now seemed as fraught with tension as the webwork of cables supporting a suspension bridge."

Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapter 8, pg. 51

"He drove out to the street and turned right, with a thrice-dead man in the trunk of the car and worse horrors loose in his mind." Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapter 15, pg. 99

"If the mother is not a monster, if she is instead emotionally disconnected and self-absorbed, and if she is not an active tormentor but a passive observer in the home, her child has a third option. He can choose to grant her mercy without pardon, and find compassion for her in recognition that her stunted emotional development denies her the fullest enjoyment of life."

Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapter 17, pg. 111

"If the salty sea could freeze and keep its color, it would have been the shade of Anson's eyes. They were as clear as ever, as direct as always, but they were further colored by a quality that Mitch had never seen before, that he could not identify, or would not."

Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapter 25, pg. 157

"Always an optimist, having believed since childhood that every life has meaning and that hers will not pass before she finds its purpose, Holly does not dwell on what might



go wrong, but envisions herself released, unharmed."  
Part One, What Would You Do for Love?, Chapter 28, pg. 173

"The war was over, you were a survivor, large swaths of Europe lay in ruin, but the homeland was untouched, and you wanted to feel alive. You didn't want a sound-proofed engine compartment. You didn't want noise-control technology. You wanted power, balanced weight, and speed." Part Two, Would You Die for Love? Would You Kill?, Chapter 29, pg.183

"The Chrysler Windsor was a beautiful machine. Seldom do dead men return to haunt the living in such style." Part Two, Would You Die for Love? Would You Kill?, Chapter 35, pg. 221

"The inexhaustible wind played chase-and-hide with itself among the ferns and bamboo. Leathery, wind-seared banyan leaves, blown in from another property, scabbled this way and that across the patio, scratching at the bricks."  
Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part, Chapter 52, pg. 309

"Mitch peeled up the mask to see the face, but it wasn't a face anymore, and they were done now. They were done." Part Three, Until Death Us Do Part, Chapter 67, pg. 397



## Topics for Discussion

Why do the kidnappers kill the dog walker? Does the dog walker's identity have anything to do with his death? How does the dog walker's identity make things more difficult for Mitch? How does killing the dog walker have a bigger impact than simply killing the dog would have? Would killing the dog only have convinced Mitch as well as killing the dog walker did?

Why do the kidnappers leave Holly's blood all over the kitchen? Why does Mitch not attempt to clean up the kitchen? What would have happened had Mitch attempted to clean the kitchen? Why does Mitch not attempt to find the evidence the kidnappers claim to have buried?

Why does Mitch search the garage? What did Mitch expect to find? What does he find? What does the discovery of the equipment prove? What does the equipment say about the kidnappers? Why does Mitch not try to overpower the kidnapper when he is caught?

Why does Mitch put John Knox in the back of his car? Why does Mitch believe the discovery of the body will cause the kidnappers to hurt Holly? Would they? Why does Mitch later put John Knox in his brother's car? Why does Mitch not tell Taggart about the body? How does this work in Mitch's favor?

Why do the kidnappers want Mitch to go to Anson's? Why does Anson suggest he and Mitch leave his condo as soon as he speaks to the kidnappers? Does Anson have ulterior motives other than the obvious? Why is Mitch not suspicious of his brother when he sees him talking on his cell phone? Is Mitch too trusting?

Why does Mitch take Anson hostage? Why is Anson afraid of the dark? Why does Mitch take advantage of this knowledge? What does Mitch want from Anson? Does he find it? How does Mitch feel about Anson before he learns the truth? What about after? Does this change the way Mitch feels about his other siblings? Why or why not?

What impact does Mitch's childhood have on his adult behaviors? What impact does his childhood have on Mitch's relationship with his parents? His siblings? What impact does his childhood have on Anson? Is his childhood to blame for Anson's greed and indifference toward Mitch? Why does Anson choose this time to kill their parents?