

The Hypnotist's Love Story Study Guide

The Hypnotist's Love Story by Liane Moriarty

(c)2016 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

The Hypnotist's Love Story Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.....	4
Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.....	7
Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15.....	11
Chapters 16,17, 18, 19 and 20.....	14
Chapters 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25.....	18
Chapters 26, 27 and 28.....	22
Characters.....	25
Symbols and Symbolism.....	28
Settings.....	30
Themes and Motifs.....	31
Styles.....	35
Quotes.....	37



Plot Summary

In *A Hypnotist's Love Story*, by Liane Moriarty, a woman named Ellen O'Farrell who lives in Sydney, Australia, works as a hypnotherapist in her beach house. The 35-year-old has a couple of good friends, but she has not found a husband. This is a source of anxiety for her because she really wants to be married and have children. Ellen is an only child who was raised by her physician mother. Consequently, she wants what a family can bring to a person's life. When Ellen meets a man named Patrick Scott, a widower with a young son named Jack, they hit it off. Before long, Ellen is pregnant. Patrick proposes to her.

There is a complication in their lives, however, as Patrick reveals that his ex-girlfriend, Saskia Brown, has been stalking him for a long time. Ellen is not aware that Saskia, using the name Deborah Vandenberg, has become one of Ellen's clients. Saskia continues to stalk the couple and even ends up at the island location where Patrick proposes to Ellen. Patrick and Jack move into Ellen's house, and Saskia continues to follow them around. One night, Ellen and Patrick wake to find Saskia standing at the foot of their bed. They order her out of the house, but chaos ensues when Jack sees Saskia and the two of them fall down the stairs. Jack's arm is broken, but Saskia's pelvis is broken, forcing her into an extended hospital stay. This provides some relief for Patrick and Ellen because they know Saskia is no longer a threat.

Saskia has time to examine her life and decides to change. She also makes new friends and begins to put her old ways behind her. Basically, Saskia had functioned as Jack's mother when she was with Patrick after the death of Patrick's wife, and Saskia desperately misses the boy. Her grief propelled her into her obsessive behavior, but she is recovering and moving on. Patrick and Ellen welcome a baby daughter to their family, and their lives are in place to move forward peacefully.



Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Summary

In Chapter 1, an unnamed woman is feeling anxious over her first appointment with a hypnotherapist. She feels comfortable with the hypnotherapist, Ellen O'Farrell, though, in the beachfront home she uses as her office. Ellen always offers chocolates and tissues to her clients as small comforts when they are in distress. Later, Ellen has dinner with a man named Patrick Scott, someone she has seen for a few weeks. Ellen thinks all is going well until he tells her that they need to talk. Normally, this phrase is the beginning of bad news, so Ellen braces herself. What Patrick reveals, however, is that his ex-girlfriend has stalked him everywhere he goes for the past three years and was even present at the restaurant tonight. Ellen is intrigued and relieved that Patrick is not breaking up with her. She invites him to her home, and they make love for the first time.

In Chapter 2, Ellen walks on the beach and thinks about Patrick as well as her past failed relationships. She also thinks about Patrick's stalker, Saskia, and how she would not be happy with how good Ellen's life seemed to be now. However, Ellen empathizes with Saskia to a degree. Breaking up with someone is so difficult because the person with whom you were once so intimate no longer wants you. It is so hard to come to terms with that. Ellen always thought she would have a long-term marriage like her grandparents. The reality is that she must use Internet to find men to date. Saskia has spotted Patrick and Ellen out and realizes that they have slept together by the way Patrick places his hand on Ellen's back.

In Chapter 3, Ellen and Patrick have been dating for three weeks when Patrick questions her about her career because he wants to understand that it is more than just something frivolous. Ellen does a few suggestibility tests on Patrick to see if he would be a good hypnosis candidate. It turns out that he is. Patrick questions the power of the mind to rule the body because his first wife, Colleen, certainly had not wanted to die of cancer at such a young age, but it happened anyway. Ellen tells him that she tries to help clients with pain management and stress relief but would never claim to be able to heal any disease. Patrick has made his career in surveying because he loves maps and enjoys knowing where things are in relation to other things. While Ellen and Patrick are conversing about life, Saskia is stalking them. When she loses them in traffic, she returns home and sorts through memorabilia from her relationship with Patrick.

In Chapter 4, Ellen tells her friend, Julia, about Saskia's stalking behavior. Julia is shocked, but Ellen finds it mildly fascinating. Julia also thinks that Patrick's son, Jack, and Patrick's feelings about his dead wife could complicate Ellen's life unnecessarily. Ellen is willing to take the risk.

In Chapter 5, Ellen has invited Patrick to dinner. She is surprised when he phones to tell her he is bringing Jack along because this will be the first time she will be meeting the boy. Ellen hopes to be Jack's stepmother one day. She worries that she will not know



what to do with him. Ellen meets with her client, Rosie, who wants hypnosis to stop smoking before her wedding to local business tycoon, Ian Roman. Under hypnosis, Rosie reveals that she is not in love with Ian, which is why she cannot stop smoking. Later that evening, Patrick and Jack arrive at Ellen's house. After parking her car across the street, Saskia is watching. She reminisces about the time when Patrick was in love with her and she was Jack's mother. The evening does not start well because Patrick does not like what Ellen has prepared for dinner. Ellen is curious about Jack's relationship with Saskia because she had been his mother for a couple years. Patrick does not want to talk about it.

Analysis

The author quickly sets up a sense of intrigue in the story as Patrick reveals to Ellen that his ex-girlfriend, Saskia, is a stalker. Ellen has not seen her yet. She is never sure when the woman will be hovering, but Ellen finds it mildly fascinating. Ellen wonders what it is about Patrick that makes him so alluring and hard to let go by his ex-girlfriend. She can also sympathize with Saskia because she had been in the role of Jack's mother for three years and then unceremoniously dumped by Patrick. The relationship between Patrick and Saskia may have been over, but Saskia still loved Jack as his mother and that bond is much harder to break.

The themes of obsession, love and letting go of relationships are important in Saskia's, situation and they will extend throughout the story as it unfolds. Love is an important theme for Ellen at this point because she feels as if she has finally found it after many years of unsuccessful relationships. This will also play out as the story continues.

Discussion Question 1

For what does Ellen brace herself when Patrick says they need to talk?

Discussion Question 2

In what ways does Ellen sympathize with Saskia?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Ellen want to make a good impression on Jack?

Vocabulary

hypnosis, pendulum, leaflet, translucent, helm, prisms, barramundi, quizzical, receding, bizarre, furrowed, torrent, alternative, abrupt, mobster, raucous, levitating, sutra, cajoling, debilitating, baffled, celibate, vengeance, porridge, winced, serotonin,



BOOKRAGS

ravenous, ironically, unassuming, fraudulent, crux, amnesty, atheist, sarcastic, baffled,
arouse, coincidence, humiliate, snooty, subliminal, therapeutic, tangent



Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

Summary

In Chapter 6, Ellen and Patrick have been dating for six weeks and he tells her that he loves her which pleases her because she's usually the first one in a relationship to say it. Saskia has to go to Melbourne for business and her need to see Patrick and Ellen grows worse the longer she is away. Saskia has an appointment with Ellen and she uses the name Deborah Vandenberg. Saskia has extreme leg pain and hopes that hypnosis will help when other therapies have not. She used to be very active but her life has changed so much because of the chronic pain. Ellen's next appointment is with a dour woman named Mary-Kate whose appointments Ellen dreads. Mary-Kate isn't sure about why she is coming to Ellen which makes it difficult for Ellen to help her. Saskia has come to really like Ellen and thinks they could have been friends if the situation were different.

While Patrick and Ellen drive to Ellen's mother's house to have dinner, Ellen tells him that her mother raised her on her own, opting to have a child but not a husband. She had a brief affair with a married man who is Ellen's father. She has never met her father. She was raised by her mother and her mother's two friends, Phillipa and Melanie, whom Patrick meets for the first time at dinner. Ellen's mother, Anne, will not give Ellen a favorable opinion of Patrick, but the other two women do. Saskia waits in her car outside of Ellen's house for Patrick and Ellen to return home. As she waits, she recalls the time when she raised Jack and wishes now that she had adopted him.

In Chapter 7, Saskia wanders around Ellen's yard when she is not at home and takes a path near the house which leads to the beach. As she swims in the cold water, she thinks about letting go of Patrick. She emerges naked from the water and feels an unfamiliar feeling again--happiness. She decides that she will stop by Patrick's parents' house to tell his mother, who always liked Saskia, that she has decided to move on.

Patrick has taken Ellen to his parents' house for dinner so they can meet her. They all get along very well. His parents are shocked when Saskia shows up at their house. She causes a scene, and Patrick threatens to call the police. Ellen takes the opportunity to look at all the photos of Colleen at the house. She cannot help but feel sad because she was beautiful and died so young. Later, Saskia regrets showing up at the Scotts' house. Nevertheless, she cannot help thinking about when she was free to go there and how Patrick's mother had especially liked her. At home that night, Patrick is still stirred up by Saskia's visit. Ellen hypnotizes him to put him to sleep. Ellen thinks of her hypnotherapy mentor, Flynn Halladay. He would think it unethical to hypnotize someone you love, but she feels that it is necessary for Patrick's well being.

In Chapter 8, Ellen and Patrick have dinner with her friend (Julia) and Patrick's friend, Stinky. Julia brings up the topic of Patrick's stalker. He responds that he gets upset because people do not take male stalking victims seriously. They all agree that it is hard



to get over a broken relationship but that stalking someone is extreme. Saskia goes to a beach and falls asleep in the same dress she was wearing the previous night. After she left the Scotts' home, she drove around Sydney all night remembering all the places she had ever been with Patrick. When she wakes, she goes to a surf shop and buys a wet suit and a boogie board, even though she does not know how to use it.

Ellen glances at the morning paper and sees an article about Rosie's society wedding to Ian. She is surprised that Rosie had gone through with it. Ellen receives a call from the sister of her her ex-boyfriend, Joe's. The sister tells her that Joe is getting married. The news upsets Ellen. Since she is in love with Patrick, she does not understand why the news bothers her so much. Saskia (as Deborah Vandenberg) arrives for her appointment with Ellen and finds a positive pregnancy test when going through the trash in Ellen's bathroom.

In Chapter 9, Ellen is really unnerved by the pregnancy test results. She has been with Patrick only three months. She is not sure how he will respond to her pregnancy. Ellen is distracted during her session with a new patient, Luisa, who has come for help with infertility problems. Saskia recalls how desperately she had wanted to be pregnant, but it never happened for her and Patrick. Ellen's godmother, Melanie, phones to tell Ellen how much she liked meeting Patrick at dinner the other night. She also wants to know if Ellen has noticed anything different about her mother lately, but Ellen cannot recall anything. Patrick calls to tell Ellen that Saskia had shown up at his office today babbling and crying about babies.

Patrick needs a break from everything and suggests that they take a little trip to the beach area called Noosa. Ellen's initial reaction is that she is too tired. Nevertheless, she thinks it might be a good opportunity to tell Patrick about her pregnancy. She will have to cancel a few client appointments but that should not be a problem. Saskia returns to work after her appointment with Ellen, still devastated that Ellen is pregnant.

In Chapter 10, Ellen is surprised by a drop-in visit from her mother who tells her that she thinks that Patrick seems like a cold person. Ellen also tells her mother that she is pregnant. Saskia calls in sick to work and goes to the beach with her new boogie board. Saskia wishes that her mother were still alive so she could talk to her about how she is feeling. When she gets to her car to leave that day, her cell phone is ringing. She sees that it is Ellen calling. Patrick and Ellen have a great time on their first flight together, plus they're relaxed because they know they will not be running into Saskia where they're going. Patrick happens to mention the chronic leg pain that Saskia always suffered and Ellen thinks about Deborah Vandenberg and realizes that Deborah is actually Saskia. Ellen panics because she had told Deborah about her weekend plans with Patrick and wonders if Saskia will follow them. She decides not to tell Patrick.

Saskia has indeed followed them and was even on their same flight. Saskia had met Patrick on Noosa when they both attended the same conference a few years ago. Now he and Ellen are staying at the same hotel she and Patrick did. Patrick is still stressed out and Ellen hypnotizes him again so that he can sleep. She tries to instill a sense of calm with the hypnosis so that Patrick will not overreact to the news of her pregnancy or



the random chance that they will run into Saskia. As Saskia makes her way to the hotel in Noosa, she thinks about how much she likes Ellen and how she seems to be helping her manage her leg pain when no one else was able to do that.

Analysis

The author uses the theme of love to demonstrate the intense emotions evoked by the achievement or loss of it. The reader now knows that Patrick and Ellen are in love. Ellen is especially pleased that Patrick says the words, "I love you" before she does because she is usually the one in the relationship who says it first. Saying it first has always backfired on her. Clearly, Saskia had loved Patrick and she is still having trouble getting over their break-up. Also, she loves Jack as his mother would love him, and she really mourns the loss of him in her life. Ellen grows to learn how much Patrick loved Colleen as evidenced by his mentions of her and the photos Ellen sees of her. Sometimes, Ellen is distressed by how much Patrick speaks about Colleen and she is not sure if he is trying to let her know that he is comparing the two or whether he may not even be aware of what he's doing.

The author also uses the motif of motherhood to exhibit the differing shapes that motherhood can take. Ellen's mother intended to be a single mother and had no intention of marrying Ellen's father. Although her mother liked the man, she didn't really want marriage but did want to have a child. Ellen's mother preferred the companionship of her friends and had a career as a physician which meant that she didn't need a man in her life for financial security. Conversely, Ellen wants the entire marriage and family scenario, possibly as a result of missing out on that in her life. What she finds with Patrick fulfills the scenario that she has carried with her into adulthood. Another version of motherhood is Saskia's relationship with Jack since his mother is dead. As Patrick's partner, Saskia took on the mothering role for Jack who was a tiny boy when Saskia entered his life. Saskia and Jack formed a bond which was an important one for both of them and it is this relationship that Saskia really mourns as she tries to go on without Jack in her life.

It is interesting to note that the author uses a man as a stalking victim in the story. Typically stories involving stalking or obsessive behavior show women as the victims. This twist on the stereotype could be the author's way of asking the reader to view men and women in unexpected ways. In the story, Patrick is the vulnerable one while Saskia is the aggressor.

The author uses the technique of metaphor with Saskia's leg pain. Stalking is an activity that involves physically following another person which is what Saskia does with her obsessive behavior with Patrick. The leg pain that Saskia experiences is a result of her guilt about her behavior and her conscience telling her that she should not continue with this behavior. Probably if Saskia were to stop this stalking behavior, her pain would mitigate or disappear entirely.



Discussion Question 1

Even though Saskia still stalks Patrick, she feels like she could have been friends with Ellen if things had been different. Why does she feel that way?

Discussion Question 2

Even though it is not right to threaten another person by stalking them, are there any reasons why Saskia thinks her behavior is justified?

Discussion Question 3

Why would it be considered unethical to hypnotize a person with whom you were involved romantically?

Vocabulary

complex, volatile, reconciliation, carnivore, humiliating, lurking, brooding, clenched, loomed, endorphins, debilitating, corrosive, charismatic, virginal, paternal, indispensable, visceral, chided, sarcastic, lank, sneer, regression, affectation, sieves, sanctimonious, bespectacled, anecdote, attributes, prudishness, irrelevant, hilarity, inscrutable, lexicon, pristine, homicidal, kookaburra, tepid, nondescript, osteoporosis, extricate



Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15

Summary

In Chapter 11, Ellen and Patrick are enjoying their time on Noosa, but Ellen has not yet told him about the pregnancy. One evening, Patrick and Ellen walk to a lush park area for a sunset picnic. After some glasses of champagne, Patrick gets down on one knee, pulls out a ring box, and proposes to her. Ellen tells him that there are two things she has to say before she answers: She is pregnant and Saskia is walking toward them.

In Chapter 12, Saskia approaches Patrick and Ellen and encourages Patrick to continue with his proposal to Ellen. Saskia also tells Ellen that her leg is better and she will see her on Friday for her next appointment. Ellen has no choice but to reveal that Saskia has been posing as Deborah when she has her hypnosis appointments, and Patrick is stunned in disbelief. Ellen accepts his marriage proposal. She loves the vintage ring with an aquamarine stone. Patrick is very happy to learn that Ellen is pregnant. Saskia is bitter after witnessing the proposal and laments the lack of love in her life.

Ellen is uncomfortable with all the fuss their family and friends make when hearing about the engagement. Patrick and Jack move into Ellen's house and begin their life as a new family. Ellen is both amazed and terrified by the rapid changes in her life. Ellen doubts that Saskia will show up for her next hypnosis appointment, but Patrick does not want to leave Ellen alone with her. He goes to work anyway. Ellen thinks about a book she loaned Saskia. She doubts that she will get it back. Saskia's car breaks down on the way to her appointment, and she regrets that she will not be able to see Ellen today. Ellen's client, Rosie, shows up unexpectedly, having just returned from her honeymoon. She still smokes. Rosie admits that she does not love her new husband and wants Ellen to hypnotize her so that she will fall in love with him.

In Chapter 13, Ellen has lunch with her mother who tells her that she has reconnected with Ellen's father and that they have been seeing each other romantically. He had been shocked to learn that he had a daughter and wants to meet her. Ellen agrees to meet her father but cautions her mother that it is just to be polite because there are no residual feelings for the man who fathered her. Saskia learns that her duplex neighbor is moving and that a family with two small children will be moving in. Saskia has virtually ignored her neighbor for three years, but now that he's leaving, she thinks she could have been friends with him. She cannot bear the thought of a happy, little family next door when her own life is so solitary and quiet.

Ellen arrives home from lunch with her mother and sits on the front step for awhile thinking of her grandparents who completely loved and indulged her, so opposite of her mother. When she enters the house, she finds the book that she had loaned Saskia lying on a table. Ellen knows that Saskia had been in her house when she was gone which is frightening but she decides not to tell Patrick to spare him from getting even further stressed out. Still thinking about Saskia, Ellen is startled when a new client,



Alfred Boyle, arrives for an appointment. Alfred is an accountant and needs help with his public speaking skills.

In Chapter 14, Ellen attends a meeting of the Australian Association of Hypnotherapists where she encounters her mentor, Flynn Halladay. Flynn has always been attracted to Ellen and is unnerved to learn that she is getting married. Patrick asks Ellen to accompany him and Jack on a regularly scheduled visit to see Colleen's parents. Ellen cannot go because she had already made plans to meet her father on that Sunday. They have a fight because Patrick had committed Ellen to going with him before asking her if she had any previous plans for the day. Ellen is also annoyed because Patrick has not unpacked fully and there are stacks of collapsing boxes cluttering the house. After Patrick leaves to get more boxes, Ellen throws one of her grandmother's wedding plates at the wall.

Saskia sits in her car across from Patrick's house, watching him load more moving boxes into his truck. When Patrick sees her, he approaches and warns her never to go anywhere near Ellen again. He tells her that her behavior has to stop and she agrees that things cannot continue as they are now. He must return to her. While Patrick is gone picking up more boxes at his house, Ellen is captivated by some photos of a nude Colleen she finds in another box. She cannot help but feel awe for the love Patrick had for his wife, and she wonders if he will ever love her that much.

In Chapter 15, Ellen conducts an age regression session with Alfred to discover the source of his fear of public speaking which is rejection of a gift he offered a girl playmate when they were four-years-old. Alfred seems so sad that Ellen thinks about introducing him to her client, Mary-Kate, in the hopes that they might hit it off. Ellen introduces the two when Mary-Kate arrives for her appointment and wonders if fate will work magic for them.

Analysis

The author explores the themes of obsession and letting go of relationships as Saskia's compulsive stalking behavior with Patrick deepens. Saskia has learned that Ellen is pregnant with Patrick's child, which was her own dream when she was with Patrick. This news seems to escalate Saskia's intensity in spite of the fact that she had recently entertained the thought of stopping the stalking. The obsessive behavior is supplemented by the intrigue of whether or not Saskia will show up on Noosa to ruin Ellen and Patrick's trip. Ellen has unwittingly told Saskia about her weekend plans with Patrick because she knows Saskia as her client, Deborah Vandenberg. Ellen is on the lookout for Saskia as they travel and arrive at the hotel in Noosa. The author uses intrigue to intensify the possibility of Saskia's appearance which keeps the reader engaged to know what Saskia will do next. Saskia does appear on Noosa, much to Patrick's horror. He knows that he will have to do something more serious now to stop her interference in their lives.



The author uses the literary device of foreshadowing when writing that Ellen thinks about a hypnosis book she had loaned Saskia. The book then appears in Chapter 13 in a moment that evokes a startling scene in a horror movie. Ellen returns home to find the book lying on a table, and there is a flower placed on top of it. Clearly, Saskia has been in Ellen's house without her knowledge. Ellen knows that Saskia has crossed the line from nuisance to threat. Rosie's relationship with her new husband will also soon be a source of great angst for Ellen. The author is setting up scenarios that punctuate the calm of Ellen's life.

Ellen and Patrick also have their first big fight in Chapter 14. Patrick had committed Ellen to accompanying him and Jack on their monthly visit to see Colleen's parents. However, Patrick had not asked Ellen about her plans for that day. She tells him that she is to meet her father for the first time. Patrick does not understand the gravity of the day for Ellen. She has never met her father and this will be a momentous occasion, not simply another lunch. On the other hand, Ellen does not understand Patrick's need to visit Colleen's parents on such a regular basis. Of course, they are Jack's grandparents, but the volume of visits seems excessive to her. The adjustments to their personal relationship are just one more way that Ellen's life has been upset. It seems reasonable for her to think that it may be more trouble than it is worth.

Discussion Question 1

How does the author use the technique of intrigue in Chapter 11 when Patrick and Ellen take a trip to Noosa?

Discussion Question 2

Is it understandable that Ellen would be shocked that her mother is seeing her father romantically after all these years?

Discussion Question 3

What adjustments are Patrick and Ellen finding particularly difficult as they begin to blend their lives?

Vocabulary

trance, intrigued, tremble, audacity, psychopathic, interlude, isolation, demeanor, conspiracy, sentimental, colleagues, hideous, flamboyant, persona, gushy, contraception, nonchalant, logistics, folly, swoon, blissful, advocate, rigorous, anguish, discreet, significant, disclose, enticing, mosaics, camellia, vaguely, thugs, rubbish, hysteria, delve, vigilant, crumpets, negotiating, giddy, aback, infuriate, detonate, trivial, auras



Chapters 16,17, 18, 19 and 20

Summary

Ellen's lunch with her father is cancelled so she is able to go with Patrick and Jack to visit Colleen's parents. On the way, they stop at Colleen's grave which makes Ellen very uncomfortable. Ellen is eleven weeks pregnant now and she fights nausea and feelings of anxiety at the cemetery. However, Ellen soon realizes how much these visits mean to Patrick and Jack. She pushes her discomfort aside. Saskia is aware that Patrick has taken Ellen to meet Colleen's parents and she thinks about the days when she accompanied him. She also reflects on how she became a mother to Jack after Colleen's death and considers for the first time that she could actually be a stalker. Saskia thought that Patrick was her perfect love story but he was not; he is actually the hypnotist's love story.

On the way to Colleen's parents' home, Patrick reveals that he has plans to go to the office to catch up on paperwork later today. This means that Ellen will be responsible for taking care of Jack, but she had plans to be with Julia. Ellen is also irritated because Patrick's moving boxes have been stacked in her house for weeks and he is not making any real attempt to unpack and de-clutter the space. Ellen is beginning to resent the intrusion into her life with no regard to her own needs.

Saskia's new neighbors are a perky family of four including two young children and she bristles at their youth and energy. Saskia turns down an invitation to their barbecue, stating that she has a party to attend. Although Saskia had fabricated the party excuse, she dressed up and went out anyway. She finds herself at Ellen's house where she discovers a spare key and lets herself inside.

In Chapter 17, Colleen's parents are cordial to Ellen even when she bursts into sobs when looking at a picture of Colleen with Jack. On the way home, Patrick makes a cutting remark about Ellen's crying. In retaliation, Ellen mentions Patrick's moving boxes, and he accuses her of nagging him. They spent the rest of the drive home in silence. When Ellen opens the door at home, she finds a warm, foil-wrapped package nearby. Saskia had entered Ellen's house while she, Patrick, and Jack were away and made some fresh biscuits for them. While she was baking, a middle-aged man arrived asking for Ellen.

In Chapter 18, at dinner the next night with Julia and Madeline, they talk about Saskia's baking in Ellen's kitchen. They scold Ellen for eating the biscuits because Saskia could have poisoned them. Ellen cannot help but feel that Saskia will not stop until something bad happens. Madeline and Julia think that Ellen should hate Saskia. Actually, Ellen would like to talk to her.

Saskia thinks about the angry man who had come to Ellen's house as she was baking. She has a feeling that she has seen him somewhere and actually feels bad for Ellen,



whom Saskia thinks is not equipped to deal with anything unpleasant. Still at dinner, Ellen tells Madeline and Julia about meeting Colleen's parents and how she had made a spectacle of herself by bursting into tears. Ellen also tells them that she did not have any real feelings when she met her father, David, for the first time. Ellen is still a little miffed at Patrick for their recent fights and longs for the days of peace when she had her house to herself. For years, she has told clients that relationships are hard work but she had no idea how hard it really is.

Ellen recalls the lunch meeting with her mother and father and how it felt almost like a date with someone you met on the Internet. She wanted to be polite and presentable but she felt no real emotions and the conversation at lunch was stilted at best. Her father is an orthopedic surgeon who has returned to Sydney after living in England for many years. Ellen is surprised by her mother's uncharacteristic girlish behavior around him. Ellen stares hard at her father trying to find any similarities in their looks.

In Chapter 19, Jack has not been sleeping well and tells Ellen that he has been having dreams about Armageddon. Patrick and Ellen are excited because they are going to the doctor's this morning for Ellen's first ultrasound. Ever since she and Patrick have been together, Ellen has been putting him into a mild hypnotic state so that he can sleep better at night. Recently, she has introduced the thought of his moving the boxes and this morning he tells her he is going to take off a couple hours of work to move some boxes. Ellen is torn between feeling successful and feeling guilty for manipulating him.

Ellen's first appointment this morning is with Luisa Bell, a woman who has come to Ellen for help with fertility problems. Luisa arrives sniffing and in a bad mood because Ellen is pregnant and Luisa is not. Luisa wants her money back because Ellen has not been able to help her. Ellen is unnerved but writes Luisa a check and she leaves abruptly. Patrick and Ellen see Luisa talking to an angry man arriving at Ellen's house. The man is Ian Roman, Rosie's new husband, who reveals that he had overheard his wife telling someone that she does not love him. She is being hypnotized into loving him. Ian is angry and threatens to expose Ellen as a fraud and put her out of business.

In Chapter 20, Saskia thinks that she may have crossed a line by baking in Ellen's kitchen and answering the door as if she lived there. She toys with the idea of going to therapy but dismisses the idea. She attends a successful business meeting and realizes that she has a phone message from an old friend named Tammy Cook with whom she stayed after Patrick kicked her out. She has not talked to Tammy for awhile because Tammy thought she was moping over Patrick too long. Saskia thinks that if someone dies, people are allowed to mourn; but, if a relationship ends, you are just supposed to get over it. Tammy is back in Sydney and wants to meet Saskia for a drink.

Saskia thinks her life might be getting back to normal. Then, she finds herself driving to Ellen's house. She sees Patrick and Ellen hurrying to get into the car, and Saskia follows them to Jack's school. Patrick retrieves Jack from the building, and Saskia cannot imagine why he might be leaving school at that time of day. She then follows them to a medical building and takes a seat in the ultrasound office waiting room.



Jack had to be picked up at school because he had fallen asleep. Patrick, Ellen, and Jack go out for pizza to celebrate seeing the new baby on the ultrasound picture. When they get home, there is a message for Ellen from a journalist named Lisa Hamilton who is doing a story on hypnotherapy. She has been talking to some of Ellen's clients and wants to interview Ellen so she can give her side of the story.

Analysis

In Chapter 16, the author supplies the reasoning for the book's title, *The Hypnotist's Love Story*. Saskia thinks about Patrick and her relationship with him and how she thought he was her perfect love story. Unfortunately, Saskia comes to the conclusion that Patrick was not her perfect love story. He is the hypnotist's love story. Patrick never really belonged to Saskia, even though they had created a life together. She now can see that what Patrick and Ellen share is a true love story, and she is saddened by that.

Saskia has no boundaries when it comes to Patrick, and her obsessive behavior even allows her to let herself into Ellen's house to make biscuits. Supporting this theme of obsession, Saskia's behavior is approaching criminal behavior which must be stopped. Conversely, Ellen is almost naive to the possibilities of Saskia's behavior. Eating the warm biscuits left by Saskia was not prudent as pointed out by Ellen's friends. Given Saskia's obsessive behavior, it would have been completely within the realm of possibility that Saskia could have put poison in the biscuits to kill or seriously harm those who ate them.

The differences in the two women's personalities become very stark in this example of the biscuits. Saskia clearly has no boundaries and is driven to do what she wants to do. She even pushes the boundaries of criminal acts. Her personality and emotions are on overdrive all the time. Her intensity never relents. In contrast, Ellen is a calm, earth mother type who tries to see the good in people and help them with their issues through the gentle art of hypnosis. True to Ellen's character, she is not really afraid of Saskia. Instead, she is intrigued by her and would like to talk to her about her issues.

Discussion Question 1

Why is it so important to Patrick that Ellen go with him to visit Colleen's grave and Colleen's parents?

Discussion Question 2

In what ways are Patrick and Ellen having difficulty in adjusting to being a new couple?

Discussion Question 3

What was Ellen's experience in meeting her father for the first time?



Vocabulary

dwell, cahoots, deceive, absurd, tally, apprehensive, tranquil, alternative, risotto, excruciating, encapsulated, utterly, deranged, ethics, sultanas, redundant, gangrene, feng shui, poignant, flustered, debilitating, cornice, exquisite, undertone, irrational, frantic, fascinating, confrontation, stance, flinch, harried, acute, ironic, disconcerted, intoned, demeanor, skittish, nebulous, babble, brandishing, sanctimoniously, urbane, facade



Chapters 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25

Summary

In Chapter 21, Ellen has agreed to meet the journalist doing the story on hypnotherapy, but she does not have a good feeling about the outcome. Unfortunately, Ian Roman owns the newspaper. There is little she can do about halting the article. Patrick also worries over a client who refuses to pay a large bill. Now that client is suing Patrick apparently because it took too long to complete the client's work. Neither one is able to fall asleep, so Ellen does a relaxation trance on Patrick during which he reveals that he does not love Ellen in the same way he loved Colleen.

Saskia had left the ultrasound office in tears, and the pain in her leg intensifies so much that she sits on the curb and cries. She heads home for the day and takes some painkillers and drinks some wine to help lessen the pain. Ellen has difficulty sleeping because of Patrick's admission about loving Colleen more than he loves her. She is also stressed about the reporter's article and her father's appearance in her life. After a bad dream, Ellen wakes to find Saskia standing at the foot of hers and Patrick's bed. When Patrick awakens, he roars at Saskia to leave their house. Jack hears the ruckus and rushes in screaming that it is Armageddon. He finds Saskia there. When Jack hugs Saskia, they tumble together down a flight of stairs.

In Chapter 22, Ellen and Patrick race to the bottom of the steps to determine what injuries Jack may have sustained. Patrick is not interested in whether Saskia has been hurt, but Jack is adamant that Patrick attend to her. Later, Saskia cannot recall what made her go to Ellen's house that night; she only remembers standing in Patrick and Ellen's bedroom. Saskia wakes in the hospital to find Ellen in her room. Ellen tells her that the sky looks like there has been a big dust storm. Ellen also says that Saskia has fractured her pelvis and ankle and may need surgery. Jack has suffered only a broken arm.

Ellen tells Saskia that Saskia has hit rock bottom and that she needs to rebuild her life and stop stalking Patrick. Saskia will be stuck in bed for six to eight weeks so she will not be able to follow them around anymore. Ellen also tells Saskia that she must get counseling. Ellen also thinks that Saskia should move far away from Sydney once she gets back on her feet. Patrick is also taking legal steps to keep Saskia away from them by filing a restraining order. Ellen acknowledges that Saskia loved both Patrick and Jack, but it is time for Saskia to forget about them and move on.

In Chapter 23, Ellen drives home from the hospital and thinks about how Patrick does not love her like he loved Colleen but she tries to not feel hurt by the fact. Ellen isn't sure how Patrick will react when he learns that Ellen had been to see Saskia in the hospital but she felt she needed to do it for the sake of their family. Saskia's doctor tells her that she'll need to rely on friends for help after her release from the hospital but Saskia doesn't really have any friends. Ellen arrives home to find Patrick in a rage about



the morning's events. He gets even angrier when Ellen tells him that she has visited Saskia in the hospital. Ellen also tells Patrick about what he said about loving Colleen more than he loves Ellen while under hypnosis.

Saskia floats in and out of a morphine haze but manages to call Nina at the office to tell her what has happened. Patrick apologizes for saying what he did about Colleen under hypnosis. He wants to talk to Ellen about it but is anxious to get the restraining order filed against Saskia. Ellen suddenly realizes that in all the morning's events, she forgot about the appointment to meet the journalist. She leaves a voice mail for the woman apologizing for not showing up. Ellen's client, Mary-Kate, arrives for her appointment, and Ellen tries to get her to leave due to the imminent negative news article. Fortunately for Ellen, Mary-Kate is a barrister who specializes in defamation law and offers to help Ellen with her legal dilemma.

In Chapter 24, Saskia's work colleague, Lance, and his wife, Kate, visit Saskia in the hospital. Saskia cannot recall ever having met Kate, but she appreciates the woman's kindness. Kate answers Saskia's ringing cell phone and talks to Saskia's friend, Tammy, who is coming to the hospital. Patrick's parents and brother and Ellen's mother arrive at Ellen's house to see Jack. Patrick is in a better state of mind since he filed the restraining order against Saskia. Mary-Kate calls Ellen to tell her that the newspaper is not going to print the article until they get Ellen's version of the story. Ellen's mother tells her that she has broken off the new relationship with Ellen's father because she he is bored with him, though he is a nice person.

Tammy joins Lance and Kate at Saskia's bedside, and Saskia is glad to see her. Ellen helps Jack understand why his father has negative feelings about Saskia. Jack shares that he always thought it was his fault that Saskia left because he had lost her lucky marble. Patrick reassures him that that is not the case. Jack tells Patrick that he does not need to be so mean to Saskia. Patrick and Ellen take a walk on the beach, and he tells her about his relationship with Saskia. Saskia had taken over much of the parenting of Jack. Patrick reached a point where he wanted to be totally responsible for Jack and he wanted to break up with Saskia. However, Saskia's mother was really sick and he could not bring himself to do it. He waited until after her mother died before telling Saskia that their relationship was over. After she started stalking him, he did not file a restraining order because he knew he had treated her badly in the break-up. Their conversation is halted when Patrick's mother comes running toward them on the beach to tell Ellen that she has an important phone call.

In Chapter 25, Lance, Kate, and Tammy all agree to help Saskia through her six weeks of bed rest and recovery. Lance offers to bring DVDs, and Kate wants to teach Saskia to knit. Tammy is going to live in Saskia's townhouse. Luisa has called Ellen to tell her that she is pregnant, and she apologizes for asking Ellen for the refund when she did not get pregnant sooner. Patrick has a chance to tell Ellen that he will never love another woman like he loved Colleen because he was young and in love for the first time; consequently, he will never love another woman like he loves Ellen because of the man he is now.



Analysis

The symbol of the Apocalypse comes into play in this section with the seeming crash of Patrick and Ellen's lives. Ellen has been threatened with professional ruin by the publication of a defamation article in Ian Roman's newspaper. Patrick is being sued by a client who claims that Patrick didn't meet the deadline when that is not true. The climax of the story also occurs when Saskia enters Ellen's house in the middle of the night and she and Jack tumble down the stairs and are injured. Ellen visits Saskia in the hospital, and Ellen tells her that the sky looks like there has been a big dust storm. This is a direct allusion to the apocalypse which is supposed to be a major catastrophic event to occur prior to the end of the earth.

The main characters probably feel as if they are in an apocalyptic state because it seems that their worlds are crashing. Fortunately, the pinnacle has been reached. Instead of devastation, life returns to a sense of normalcy. Old patterns can be discarded and new lives can be built after the crises. This is especially true in Saskia's case. She is forced to bed rest for weeks and literally cannot stalk Patrick and Ellen anymore. It is almost as if something drastic had to happen to get her attention to stop her obsessive behavior. Now she will have time to think about her behavior and how she can conduct her life in a more positive manner in the future.

The theme of not being able to let go of relationships exhibits in Ellen's fear that Patrick still loves Colleen more than he loves her. When Colleen hypnotizes Patrick in order to help him sleep, she knows that this is not really ethical behavior. However, she does it anyway. When Patrick reveals that his relationship with Ellen is simply not the same as the one he had with Colleen, Ellen is devastated. She thinks that perhaps their relationship may not work because he cannot let go of his love for Colleen. Saskia is the primary example of not being able to let go of a relationship in the story. She not only wants to get Patrick back, she mourns the loss of Jack in her life. In some ways, Saskia's behavior can be understood. Nevertheless, that does not make it acceptable. She must find a way to move on with her life.

Discussion Question 1

Why is the symbol of Apocalypse so important in this section?

Discussion Question 2

Is it true that Patrick loved Colleen more than he loves Ellen?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Patrick think that he treated Saskia poorly?



Vocabulary

unconscious, sulky, imply, distraction, trance, rubbish, ravaged, taffeta, shriek, Armageddon, obscured, haunches, baffled, surreal, chaos, pristine, unflinching, unrelenting, sappy, despair, bloke, ravenous, virtuous, baffled, instinctual, defamation, gamine, apprehended, authoritative, vendetta, barrister, besotted, mortified, mesmerized, philanthropic, hindsight, legume, integrity, plethora, surged, infrastructure, empathy, brunt, keen



Chapters 26, 27 and 28

Summary

In Chapter 26, it is two weeks after the accident and Saskia has been moved to a different hospital room. She recalls the day that two police officers showed up to serve her with an Apprehended Violence Order stating that she could not go within one hundred meters of him, his office or his home. Kate had been with Saskia at the time and she is not fazed by what she hears about Saskia's behavior.

Ellen waits for her father to show up and take her to dinner. She is surprised when the doorbell rings and it is Rosie. Rosie is trying to hide because photographers have been chasing her after an article in this morning's paper claiming that Ian has been dating a supermodel. The marriage is over and Rosie has made sure that Ian will never talk to the press about Ellen's practice because she told him she would go public with information about his sexual fetish if he did so.

Saskia finds it unusual that Kate is indifferent to Saskia's stalking behavior. Kate does tell Saskia that she should just stop the stalking and take up knitting instead. Saskia is happy that she has a new friend in Kate. Ellen and her father attend an outdoor event called The Festival of the Olive. Ellen enjoys the vendors of organic and handcrafted items. A vendor remarks on how Ellen and her father have identical chins and they are both a little self-conscious. Her father reassures her about Patrick's love for her in spite of Ellen's feeling inadequate in comparison to Colleen.

Tammy visits Saskia in the hospital and tells Saskia that her new neighbor's brother had been interested in Saskia when he saw her there one day and Tammy wants to set them up once Saskia is released from the hospital. Tammy has also brought Saskia's mail, which includes cards from Jack and Patrick's mother and that pleases her. Enclosed in the envelope from Jack is a marble to replace her lucky marble that he had lost and thought was the reason that she left.

In Chapter 27, Patrick and Ellen are madly in love with their new baby daughter, Grace. She is now a year old, and Ellen cannot imagine life without her. Ellen also thinks back to her feelings of inadequacy related to Colleen and she is embarrassed. Ellen is glad to see how relaxed Patrick is now since they have not seen or heard from Saskia in over a year. Ellen and Patrick still have not gotten married, but they do toss around different ideas all the time. Patrick takes Jack and Grace to the beach as Ellen prepares for a new client.

In Chapter 28, Saskia has attended court-ordered psychiatry sessions for the past year and feels like she is doing better in her life. After her release from the hospital Saskia never tried to see Patrick or Jack again. Tammy is still living with Saskia at the townhouse and Saskia even dated her neighbor's brother for awhile but it didn't last. Lance and Kate are expecting a baby and they want Saskia to be the godmother.



Saskia did see Ellen and the baby unintentionally one evening while waiting for Tammy at Circular Quay. She saw Ellen's face light up and Saskia smiled in return, however Ellen had been smiling and waving at someone behind Saskia. Saskia just kept walking and blended into the crowd.

Analysis

Saskia must deal with a lot of loss in her life, substantiating the theme of grief. Not only did she lose Patrick, someone whom she thought would be the love of her life, but she also lost his son, Jack. She acted as Jack's mother after Colleen died and raised him as if he were her own. To Saskia, the break-up with Patrick also included the loss of a child she grew to love very much. If Patrick and Jack had died, people would have understood Saskia's grief but since they are still alive, people expected Saskia to carry on as if nothing had happened. Clearly, Saskia chose extreme measures to cope with her grief, but she should have been allowed to mourn for the people and the way of life she loved.

Ellen, however, is living a reverse experience. She felt the loss of not having a father in her life when she was younger and mourned in her own way. Now, her father has returned to try to get to know her and her life will flourish on that front. Throughout the book, the author has pointed out the stark differences in Saskia and Ellen and this is just one more example.

The author's choice of a marble as a symbol is an interesting one because many people would say that Saskia had "lost all her marbles," a phrase meaning that she had gone crazy. However, the marble also symbolizes Jack's fear and guilt over losing Saskia's lucky marble and thinking that this is what made her leave them.

The author closes the story with a sense of much-needed calm. Saskia has been in therapy for a year and is feeling better about herself. She has friends in her life again and is not singly focused on revenge or retaliation. Patrick may still have a hint of apprehension that Saskia may turn up again, however Ellen is filled with calm and the reader gets a sense that she will eventually be able to influence Patrick to relax into his life again.

Discussion Question 1

Why is not shocked by the revelation of Saskia's stalking behavior?

Discussion Question 2

Will Ellen and her father maintain a relationship?



Discussion Question 3

Is it natural that Ellen would feel inadequate when compared to Colleen?

Vocabulary

superficial, disabled, condescending, oxytocin, placenta, serene, wispy, hover, transcendent, monotonous, remission, melancholy, contraptions



Characters

Ellen O'Farrell

Ellen O'Farrell is the main character in the story. She is a hypnotist who practices in her home on the beach near Sydney, Australia. Ellen is in her mid-thirties and has never married. She has had a few important relationships, and she still has unresolved feelings toward those. Ellen has always been proud of herself for her professionalism and control over her emotions. However, when she meets Patrick, she falls hard for him and cannot believe her good luck. Because of her past relationships, Ellen wonders if Patrick will abandon her, too. She proceeds tentatively at first. Ellen's fears are compounded as her relationship with Patrick grows and she learns more about his deceased wife, Colleen. Ellen knows that Patrick was fiercely in love with Colleen and she does not know if she'll ever measure up.

Ellen conducts her professional life without hesitation. At first, she is unnerved at the intrusion of Patrick and Jack into her life. Their moving into her home seems to bother her more than Saskia's stalking behavior. In fact, Ellen is actually intrigued by Saskia and would like to talk to her about her obsessive behavior. Ultimately, Ellen's clear-headed thinking steers her through the major transitions in her life. She guides Patrick, Jack, and Saskia to healthier places in their lives, too.

Patrick Scott

Patrick Scott is a surveyor who lives in Sydney, Australia. He was married to a beautiful girl named Colleen, who died when their son Jack was just a baby. Patrick enjoys maps and planning things, but his life was turned upside down when Colleen died. He entered into a relationship with a woman named Saskia who assumed the role of Jack's mother. After a few years, Patrick knew that he and Saskia were not meant to be together long term. He wanted to end the relationship. Being a sensitive person, Patrick did not break up with Saskia when her mother was ill. However, his timing was not great either when he ended things after Saskia's mother died. It could be inferred that Patrick is callous and cold, especially since he should know how devastating the death of a loved one would affect a person. Patrick knew that he wanted a better relationship with his son, and Saskia was complicating that. Perhaps, Patrick should have been more empathetic. He did not understand that Saskia, herself, would mourn the loss of Jack in her life. Patrick never gave her time to adjust to the idea of life without Jack or Patrick. Like most men, Patrick viewed the situation from a solution standpoint instead of considering the emotional impact of everyone involved.

Saskia Brown/Deborah Vandenberg

Saskia Brown is a single woman who lives in Sydney, Australia. She is employed professionally but loses her sense of boundaries when she must recover from a broken



relationship with Patrick. Saskia had taken on the role of mother to Patrick's son, Jack, after the death of Patrick's wife, Colleen. Saskia began stalking Patrick after he broke up with her and obsesses about him all the time. Saskia even poses as a woman named Deborah Vandenberg and becomes a client of Patrick's new love, Ellen, who is a hypnotherapist. Saskia does have leg pain and the hypnosis sessions seem to help. However, her real purpose is to learn more about Ellen and her life with Patrick.

Saskia's obsessive behavior borders on being criminal, and she takes bold risks venturing into the private lives of Patrick and Ellen. Saskia is not stopped until she is physically injured and must remain in bed. Finally, she is able to examine her life and make plans to go on without Patrick and Jack. It is important to note that Saskia is not crazy. She suffered major losses at one time in her life, and the grief brought on her stalking behavior.

Julia Robertson

Julia Robertson is Ellen's best friend. Both are professional women, who are about the same age. Julia is very comfortable with the single life she has created, but Ellen invites her to open up. Eventually, Julia dates Patrick's friend, a man who would never have been considered to be her type before. Julia is skeptical of more things than Ellen is and tries to be the voice of reason for her. Julia is Ellen's touch point for discussing life issues. She is always very open and honest with her friend.

Jack Scott

Jack is Patrick's five-year-old son. He was a baby when his mother died, and he was raised by Patrick and his girlfriend, Saskia. Jack feels bad that Saskia left, but he could never talk about it because Patrick did not want to discuss it. Jack carries guilt for Saskia's leaving because he lost her lucky marble. He thought that was the reason she left. Jack's feelings for Saskia are validated, and he adapts well to having Ellen as his stepmother.

Madeline

Madeline is a friend of Ellen's. She is the married friend in the little group of friends and is completely comfortable talking about children and family. Madeline is pregnant with her second child, yet she still keeps a beautiful home and loves to cook organic meals.

Dr. Anne O'Farrell

Dr. Anne O'Farrell is Ellen's mother. Dr. Farrell opted to have Ellen as a single mother, even though she was in love with the father, David. David was married, but she wanted her child to be fathered by him. She prides herself on being an independent woman who



has raised a fantastic daughter. She is pleased when David re-enters her life. Once they have the chance to spend some time together, she finds that David seems boring to her.

Flynn Halladay

Flynn Halladay is Ellen's hypnotherapist mentor. He has always been a little bit in love with Ellen. He is upset when she tells him that she is going to marry Patrick.

Ian Roman

Ian Roman is a business tycoon who owns a newspaper. He lives a grand lifestyle and marries an average girl named Rosie who thinks she does not belong in his world. Ian overhears Rosie telling a friend that she does not love her husband and she is seeing Ellen to be hypnotized to help her love him. Out of revenge, Ian takes action to put Ellen out of business.

Lance

Lance is Saskia's colleague at work. They have a casual relationship until Saskia is hospitalized and Lance and his wife become friendly with Saskia and get involved with her care.

Tammy Cook

Tammy Cook is a friend of Saskia's. Tammy took care of Saskia after Saskia and Patrick broke up. Tammy left Sydney for awhile, but she returns just at the time that Saskia has her accident. Tammy moves into Saskia's townhouse and cares for her during her recuperation.

Luisa

Luisa is a client of Ellen's who came to her for help with her fertility issues. Luisa is angry when Ellen gets pregnant first. Luisa demands a refund from Ellen for her services which Luisa considers to be ineffective. Luisa relents, however, when she gets pregnant. She apologizes to Ellen for her angry behavior.

Rosie

Rosie is Ellen's client. She wants hypnosis in order to stop smoking before her wedding to local business tycoon, Ian Roman.



Symbols and Symbolism

Chocolates

Ellen always has a bowl of chocolates in her office for her clients. She offers the luscious sweets as a small gesture of comfort when a client seems to be in distress.

Vintage Engagement Ring

Patrick buys Ellen a vintage engagement ring, instead of a new one, because he thinks that she will appreciate something that has a story. The stone in the ring is an aquamarine. It reminds Patrick of the ocean, which is also important to Ellen. This is a very thoughtful gesture on Patrick's part, and Ellen is very pleased with his thoughtfulness.

Boogie Board

Saskia sees a man at the beach carrying a boogie board. She decides that it might make her happy to have a sport like that to keep her occupied. She buys a wet suit and boogie board, even though she does not know how to use it. The boogie board symbolizes her attempt to try new things and, perhaps, make changes in her life.

Hypnosis Book

Ellen had loaned a book about hypnosis to Deborah Vandenberg without realizing that Deborah is actually Saskia. When Ellen returns home one day, the book is lying on a hall table with a flower on top. Ellen feels fear for the first time regarding Saskia because she now knows that Deborah is Saskia and that she had been in her home when she was not there.

Ellen's Grandmother's Plate

Ellen treasures a set of her grandmother's dishes that she uses. Ellen gets frustrated with Patrick because he is very slow in unpacking all the boxes he has moved into her house. When they have an argument and he heads out to get more boxes, she throws one of her grandmother's plates at the wall, and it shatters. It is symbolic that a plate, a fundamental element of any home, breaks when Ellen is distressed over the state of her home since Patrick and Jack have moved in with her.



Ocean

Swimming in the ocean is a cathartic experience for Saskia. She finds that she feels happy for the first time in a long time after she has had a swim. Water washes away unwanted elements and sediment. Metaphorically, it also washes Saskia's emotional debris, and she feels cleansed spiritually from the experience.

Armageddon

Jack begins having dreams about Armageddon and even joins an Armageddon club at school. Since Armageddon would mean the destruction of life on earth, it is symbolic because the lives of Ellen, Patrick, Jack, and Saskia are about to change dramatically. When Saskia breaks into their home and tumbles down the steps with Jack, it is a symbolic destruction of the way things have been going. When Ellen visits Saskia in the hospital, she notes that the sky is dusty and gloomy, just as one would imagine during Armageddon.

Knitting

Kate wants to help Saskia recuperate and then turn her life around in a healthier way. Kate suggests that Saskia should learn to knit. Knitting is the process of creating something fresh, new and soft, just the thing that Kate hopes to provide for Saskia's life.

Identical Chins

When Ellen and her father attend a festival, a vendor notes that they must be father and daughter because they have identical chins. This is the factor that Ellen has been searching for, something that links her to her father. A chin is a prominent feature of a person's face, so it is significant that they share this connection.

Marble

Saskia used to have a lucky marble that she, Patrick, and Jack would use when they needed a little extra luck on their side. Jack lost the marble, and he thinks that is the reason why Saskia left their home. He carries guilt about this. He sends Saskia another marble when she is hospitalized to bring luck back into her life and mend their broken bond.

Settings

Sydney, Australia

The primary setting for the story is the metropolitan area of Sydney, Australia.

Ellen's House

Ellen inherited her house from her maternal grandparents. It is a charming home on the ocean, and she uses it to meet clients in her hypnotherapy practice.

Noosa

Noosa is a beautiful beach area located in the Sunshine Coast Region of Queensland, Australia. Patrick takes Ellen there to propose to her, and they are followed by Saskia who knows the place from when she met Jack there at the onset of her relationship with Jack's father, Patrick.

The Beach

Ellen's house sits beside the beach. She, Jack, and Patrick enjoy taking walks there. Saskia also re-discovers her love for the beach and begins to feel happy again after swimming in the ocean.

The Hospital

Saskia suffers a broken pelvis and broken ankle in the fall down the steps at Ellen's house. She is hospitalized for six weeks as the beginning of her recuperation.



Themes and Motifs

Obsession

An important theme in the story is obsession which occurs through Saskia's unhealthy stalking behavior toward Patrick, Ellen, and Jack. Saskia is so obsessed with them that she finds it difficult to live a normal life. Almost every waking moment is consumed with thoughts of Patrick and his new life and how she wants to get him back in some way. Saskia's obsessive behavior has alienated her from friends she used to have so it has become unhealthy for her as well as for Patrick, Ellen, and Jack.

It is possible that Saskia may not have resorted to stalking had her relationship with Patrick ended at a different time. He broke up with her after her mother's sickness and ultimate death. So, Saskia has a huge emotional void in her life. By stalking Patrick, she maintains some semblance of her former life. Stalking is her means of coping with the devastating losses she has suffered.

Saskia is not the only character who has some obsessive tendencies. Ellen feels very vulnerable when it comes to Patrick's relationship with his deceased wife, Colleen. She is always on alert to anything Patrick says about Colleen in hopes that she will come out on top in Patrick's affections. This is intensified when Ellen hypnotizes Patrick and hears him say that his relationship with Ellen is not the same as the one he had with Colleen. She begins to resign herself to believe that his love for her will never measure up to his love for Colleen. Fortunately, she is able to come to terms with her obsession before it negatively impacts her relationship with Patrick.

Loss

The theme of loss exhibits most obviously through death in the story. Patrick's wife, Colleen, died when Jack was just a baby. She was much too young to die, and Patrick naturally had a hard time coming to terms with her loss. Even though Jack did not really know his mother well, he suffers the loss of her in his life. Pictures of Colleen are everywhere in their home and in his grandparents' homes. She is still present to a degree, but Jack will never know his mother aside from that.

Saskia is a character who lives through much loss in her life, too. Her mother's death is an obvious loss for her, and she mourns that loss in her life. Then, after her mother's death, Saskia loses Jack when she and Patrick break up. She misses Patrick, of course, and mourns the loss of the dream life she thought she was going to have. The greater of the two losses for Saskia is no longer having Jack in her life. She was a mother figure for the first three years of his life. That would have involved intense interactions on how to eat, play, and learn.

Saskia has a strong bond with Jack. When she and Patrick are no longer together, she feels like she has lost her own child. To add to her grief, she was blindsided by the



break-up with Patrick. Quite naturally, these losses seem like deaths. Her stalking behavior is probably influenced a great deal because she had no proper resolution of the relationship and the life she was building with Patrick and Jack.

Letting Go of Relationships

Letting go of relationships is part of life for everyone, and the main characters are no different. Saskia seems to be the one who is challenged the most by letting go in the story. She thought she was building a perfect life with Patrick and Jack and when that relationship ended, she had a huge hole in her life. Perhaps, the stalking behavior was Saskia's way of trying to fill that space, even though it was not a healthy choice.

People do need to come to terms with the end of a relationship before they can move forward, and Saskia seems blocked in that area. Her seeking out psychological help at the end of the story is a good step for her and probably would have eliminated a lot of anxious moments for her and other people had she done that earlier in the letting go process.

Ellen's story includes a string of failed relationships, and she has varying degrees of success in letting go of them. She recalls fond moments she had with other men. She does this especially when she is irritated with Patrick. However, her bond with Patrick eventually strengthens to the point where she no longer needs the thoughts of previous relationships. Ellen behaves in what most people believe to be a normal manner when letting go of her relationships.

Patrick also evolves in the story as he lets go of his relationship with his deceased wife, Colleen, in order to love again. By letting go, he is able to build a new life with Ellen.

Anne learns to let go of an important relationship. She had loved David, the man she chose to be Ellen's father. She had an affair with him even though he was married. David went on to marry another woman. When he returns to Sydney, they have tried to rekindle a relationship. Unfortunately, Anne finds David to be boring, and she ends the relationship. Her actions end the hopes that she has had for so many years for a different life.

Grief

The grief that Patrick still feels for the loss of his wife, Colleen, continues to color his world. She is still very vivid in his memory. During a hypnosis session, he reveals that he does not love Ellen the way he loved Colleen. It would be natural to grieve for a young mother who died tragically, but Patrick runs the risk of letting his grief impact any future possibility of happiness. Patrick knows that Saskia cannot compare to Colleen, and he breaks up with her even though little Jack has come to view Saskia as his mother.



Patrick talks about Colleen a lot when with Ellen, almost to the point where she wants to yell at him to stop it. He is probably not aware of what he is doing because he is not an insensitive man. However, his constant comparison to his dead wife is chipping away at Ellen's self esteem. During a hypnosis session. Grief is not a straight line to healing, and Patrick has made huge strides in his recovery. As the length of his relationship with Ellen grows longer, he will be able to remember Colleen but put her memory in perspective.

Colleen's death obviously affected the other people close to her as exhibited by her parents and Patrick's family. They keep photographs of her all over their homes in an attempt to keep her memory alive. Little Jack suffers the loss of his mother and grieves for the loss of Saskia in his life as well. Saskia is the only mother whom he really remembers and his grief is complicated by his feelings of guilt. He thinks that Saskia's leaving was his fault because he lost her lucky marble.

Saskia is also a character wounded by grief. She was very close to her mother. When her mother died, Saskia was thrown off balance emotionally. The break-up with Patrick occurred shortly after that. Saskia was brought to her knees with grief. She had no idea of how she would recover. Unfortunately, Saskia did not seek counseling to work through such massive losses. Instead, she resorted to the destructive behavior of stalking. A person cannot bottle up such grief, but there are more acceptable ways to work through it. Hopefully, Saskia will heal emotionally as she continues therapy.

Love

Love is a classic theme found in literature, and it runs through this story on various levels for the characters. Since the book is titled *The Hypnotist's Love Story*, the love between Ellen and Patrick is the main example. Ellen had experienced what she had thought to be love before with other men, but the relationship with Patrick is so different and so fulfilling. Patrick, too, had been in love with his wife, Colleen, but his love with Ellen is different and just right for the man he is now.

Saskia thought Patrick was her true love, but Patrick did not feel the same way about her. Saskia also fell in love with being Jack's mother. That bond will never go away for either her or Jack, regardless of their physical separation.

Ellen's mother, Anne, had loved Ellen's father, David, in spite of the fact that he was a married man. Ellen is a result of their affair. Anne had always loved David even though he had a life in England with another woman. When David returns to Sydney, Anne hopes to rekindle their love. Unfortunately, the memory of him is more enticing than the actuality, and they decide not to continue with rekindling any old feelings.

In addition to Saskia's feelings of love for Jack, the story has several other situations of parent and child love. Anne chose to be a single parent to raise Ellen, and she loved her daughter fiercely. Even though the two women are very different, Anne loves Ellen so much that it hurts her sometimes. Patrick adores Jack. Jack is his entire world until

Patrick meets Ellen and they have their own daughter, Grace, who is also adored by her dotting parents.

Styles

Point of View

Like many novels, *The Hypnotist's Love Story* is written in the third person omniscient point of view. This means that the author writes the story using third person pronouns such as "she" and "he." The author also has insight into what the characters are thinking which makes it an omniscient view, as opposed to a limited view where only the activities of the characters are reported. For example, the author writes, "He said, 'There's something I need to tell you.' He had placed his knife and fork on the edge of the plate, and now he was sitting up straight, with his shoulders back, as though he was finally ready to face the music. He seemed fearful and slightly ashamed." She not only tells the reader what the character says, but also what he does and projects into his feelings.

This story is unique that sections are also told in the first person narrative perspective which means that the author tells the story directly in the words of two main characters, Ellen and Saskia. As the narrators, both Ellen and Saskia use the pronoun of "I" throughout because the story is being told just as they see it or experience it. With the first person narrative point of view, the reader has access to the thoughts and feelings of the narrator only. What is going on in the heads of any other people in these sections of the story is only speculative as the reader does not have the privilege of seeing them.

As Ellen and Saskia go from present day to flashbacks in the story, they still maintain the first person narrative point of view. The story is theirs and the reader will learn only what the author wants him or her to learn. The first person narrative point of view tells a narrator's story and the reader must take into account who the narrator is to understand the perspective. For example, a child will see a story from a different perspective from that of an adult and the reader should make allowances for that.

Language and Meaning

Because *The Hypnotist's Love Story* is set in modern day, the language is current for the times. The author uses 21st century terminology and euphemisms in narration and dialogue to show authenticity. The author uses things like current movies and pop culture icons so that the modern day audience can relate to them.

Because the story is set in Australia, the author uses terms that are native to the country. For example, when

Saskia breaks into Ellen's house and makes biscuits, she is baking what people in America would call cookies. Anzac biscuits which are mentioned several times in the story are simply oatmeal cookies. There is also an instance when Saskia says she is quite chuffed about learning how to use her new boogie board. Chuffed is the Australian



term for being excited about something. These examples are ways that the author keeps the language authentic to the story.

The author also reveals some of the character's thoughts as they are listening to someone else speak or are engaged in something else. These thoughts are usually very abrupt, and conversational, as if the author is letting the reader in on the person's brain chatter. This lets the reader get to know the characters a bit better without having to go into a lot of explanation. Their internal language helps reveal who they are.

Structure

The structure of a novel usually takes one of four forms: character, milieu, event or idea. And while a story can contain all four forms, one usually predominates. The Hypnotist's Love Story takes the structure of both character and milieu forms. A character structure tends to show a character's personal growth as the story extends. A character structure shows transformation as being important as opposed to an event story which is more concerned with what a character does. It is easy to identify a character structure novel because there comes a point in the story when the main character reaches a point of frustration with life or a set of circumstances that are no longer acceptable for personal growth. The character then decides on changes, both small and dramatic, that will move the character's life in a different direction. The story concludes then when the character has resolved his or her issues and feels satisfied with the transformation or decides to stay in the current situation. Saskia's character shows the most growth in the story as she moves through her obsessive stalking behavior to being more balanced in how she deals with the world after she has had some psychological therapy.

The story also has an underlying milieu structure. Milieu is just another word for the world according to the author's view. It is all the elements that combine to tell the story and share the point that the author is trying to make. In this book, the author wants the reader to feel the angst created by Saskia's stalking and relief for all involved when it finally stops.



Quotes

He didn't say, 'Show me! Make me cluck like a chicken!
-- Ellen (chapter 1 paragraph 2)

Importance: Ellen is so pleased that Patrick takes her career seriously. Not everyone she knows, including her own mother, thinks that hypnosis is a serious form of treatment for people's problems.

She always puts on this pathetic act, as if we just happened to run into each other. You'd think she'd look like a crazy bag lady, with, you know, crazy hair, but she looks so normal, so together. It makes me doubt myself, as if I'm imagining the whole thing. She's a successful career woman. Well respected. Can you believe it? I always wonder what her colleagues would think if they knew what she did in her spare time.
-- Patrick (chapter 1 paragraph 5)

Importance: Patrick describes his stalker to Ellen and why it is difficult for anyone to believe that she has this bad habit. She doesn't seem like a typical stalker type which baffles Patrick but there's more wounded emotions behind what the stalker does than crazy behavior.

That was a mistake. Well, no, not a mistake! I was waiting for the perfect moment with moonlight and rainbows or whatever, and now I've blown it. Fool.
-- Patrick (chapter 6 paragraph 7)

Importance: Ellen has been thinking about telling Patrick that she loves him, but she is always the first one to say it in relationships. Then, it never works out. This time, she has withheld saying it, and Patrick says it first. Even though he said it quickly and not in the way he had intended, he said it all the same. Better yet, he really means it.

Like I remember her picking me up from school, and she used to say, 'Welcome back, Jack!' She always had this little plate ready with biscuits and fruit and stuff. Dad doesn't like to talk about her.
-- Jack (chapter 7 paragraph 7)

Importance: When Saskia appears unexpectedly at Patrick's parents' house, Jack is upset because he has not seen her for awhile. He recalls that she was good to him and they had a close relationship, but he is prohibited from seeing her. It seems as if Patrick had not accounted for how his break-up with Saskia would affect his son.

Aren't we all capable of it? I always think love is a kind of madness."
-- Stinky (chapter 8 paragraph 11)

Importance: Patrick, Ellen, Julia, and Stinky are discussing Patrick's stalker. Most of them think the behavior is twisted. However, Stinky tries to see the situation from the



stalker's position and believes that love makes people do crazy things. This is probably the most empathetic response from anyone to Saskia's behavior.

I thought Patrick was my perfect love story. Except he's not. He's the hypnotist's love story. I'm the ex-girlfriend in the hypnotist's love story. Not the heroine. I'm only a minor character. Or perhaps I'm the villain.

-- Saskia (chapter 16 paragraph 1)

Importance: Saskia tries to reconcile her place in Patrick's life and realizes that in spite of everything they had meant to each other, she is nothing to him anymore. Patrick now belongs to Ellen and Saskia is merely a minor character in the real love story of the hypnotist.

Yes," he said. "Although of course you were the one doing the crying!

-- Patrick (chapter 17 paragraph 11)

Importance: Ellen is embarrassed that she broke down thinking about Colleen at Colleen's parents' home. She tries to get some sympathy from Patrick who gives her a flip response, resulting in their first big fight. Patrick could have been more sensitive. He should have known that it would be an emotionally trying day for Ellen to meet his dead wife's parents and also visit her grave.

What I don't understand is why you haven't got the police involved," said Julia. "There should be a restraining order out against her, and then each time she breaks it, you call the cops, wham, she's in handcuffs. Problem solved.

-- Julia (chapter 18 paragraph 7)

Importance: Julia and the other people in Ellen's life do not understand why Saskia cannot be stopped from her stalking behavior. Aside from the fact that restraining orders are often worthless, Ellen is still intrigued by Saskia and what motivates her to do what she does.

And I think: It's not the same. It's just not the same.

-- Patrick (chapter 21 paragraph 7)

Importance: Against her better judgment, Ellen hypnotizes Patrick so that he can fall asleep easier. During the session he reveals that he does not love Ellen in the same way he loved Colleen. This revelation is startling for Ellen who thinks that Patrick does not love her enough.

Knit, don't stalk," murmured Kate. "Repeat after me: Knit, don't stalk.

-- Kate (chapter 26 paragraph 4)

Importance: Kate's advice to Saskia is simple: knit, don't stalk. Saskia and Kate hardly know each other, but Saskia is impressed when Kate is not startled to learn about Saskia's stalking behavior. Saskia has found a new friend who may be able to understand Saskia's motivations and doing what she does.



I said, 'I haven't been in a relationship for three years, but I guess I haven't really felt single for that time.

-- Saskia (chapter 26 paragraph 8)

Importance: Kate is trying to learn more about Saskia and asks about her personal life. Saskia honestly states that she has not actually been in a relationship for three years but she has not felt like she is single. In Saskia's mind, she is still in love with Patrick. She thinks that she can win him back. Patrick has not been completely out of her life because she has stalked him during that time period.

He chose you," said Ellen. "A man in his position could have any sort of trophy wife. He didn't choose a supermodel, he chose you.

-- Ellen (chapter 26 paragraph 10)

Importance: Ellen tries to counsel Rosie who thinks she was not a fit for Ian's luxury lifestyle. Ellen wants Rosie to consider the idea that there might be more to Ian because he could have had any glamorous woman in his life, but he wanted to marry Rosie.