

'I' Is for Innocent Study Guide

'I' Is for Innocent by Sue Grafton

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Plot Summary

I is for Innocent is the ninth novel in the Kinsey Millhone series by Sue Grafton. In this novel, Kinsey has just been fired from her long time association with California Fidelity Insurance and taken office space with Lonnie Kingman's law firm. Her first major case after this upheaval is for Kingman, a case that involves the wrongful death suit brought by Kenneth Voigt against the man accused of killing his ex-wife, Isabelle Barney. As Kinsey investigates this case, she not only stumbles across another crime that has remained unsolved for six years, but she begins to doubt the guilt of Isabelle's accused killer, David Barney. *I is for Innocent* is a fast-paced and intricately plotted novel that is in the style that has kept Grafton's readers always coming back for more.

Kinsey Millhone has just moved her offices from California Fidelity Insurance to the offices of Lonnie Kingman's law firm because of a disagreement with the new efficiency expert. Kinsey has been surviving by serving subpoenas, therefore she is pleased when Kingman calls her into his office and asks her to take on a case involving the wrongful death suit Kingman is bringing on behalf of his client Kenneth Voigt. The case involves the murder of Isabelle Barney, Voigt's ex-wife, who was shot through the peep hole in her front door the day after Christmas six years ago. Isabelle's third husband, David Barney, was charged with the murder, but acquitted at trial. The case is set to go to trial in a month, but the private investigator working on the case passed away. Kinsey is to take his files, complete the interviews, and serve the remaining subpoenas.

Kinsey begins the case by reviewing the paperwork taken from the previous investigator, Morley Shine. Kinsey finds the paperwork disorganized with multiple files missing. Kinsey decides to visit Morley's widow to gather any other paperwork he might have left in his office. Kinsey learns that Morley's wife has cancer and Morley spent a great deal of his time working from home in the past year. With the permission of Morley's sister-in-law, Kinsey searches the home office and then gets the keys to Morley's office behind a beauty salon in town. At the beauty salon, Kinsey speaks with the owner of the shop and allowed to search the office, but she finds little except more disorder and evidence of Morley's poor health habits.

Kinsey begins her investigation into Isabelle Barney's death by visiting the plaintiff's star witness, Curtis McIntyre. McIntyre swears that David Barney confessed to him that he killed Isabelle as he left the courthouse after his acquittal. From there, Kinsey speaks to Isabelle's sister, Simone, who still lives behind the house where Isabelle died. Simone talks about Isabelle's difficult relationship with her third husband as well as her business designing tiny houses. Simone seems to support the prosecution theory that David had many reasons to kill his wife, the least of which was the large amount of money he would inherit. After Simone, Kinsey interviews Rhe Parsons, Isabelle's best friend. Rhe tells Kinsey how Isabelle might have been narcissistic, but she was a good friend to Rhe's teenage daughter who was struggling with a drinking problem at the time.

Kinsey also interviews Isabelle's employer, a well known architect, and his wife, as well as the wife of Kenneth Voigt who was a witness to some of the drama that often took



place between Isabelle and her husband, David. Through all this, Kinsey became aware that Morley Shine did not interview all the people he claimed to have and that he never served subpoenas that he charged Lonnie for. At the same time, Kinsey receives a call from David Barney, giving her reason to doubt the testimony of Curtis McIntyre, an ex-con who claims David confessed to the crime after his acquittal. Kinsey interviews McIntyre again, only to have him change his story. Now Kinsey has strong reason to believe McIntyre is lying.

Kinsey returns to her office to review more of the paperwork before going to interview Laura Barney, David Barney's first wife. As Kinsey is leaving, she has trouble starting her new, used VW Bug. David Barney surprises her, insisting that he needs to speak with her. Barney claims that not only did he not confess to McIntyre, but he has witnesses who can place him several miles from the crime scene at about the time the coroner believes Isabelle died. Barney gives Kinsey the name of the witness, as well as the description of a truck he claims he saw Tippy Parsons, Rhe's daughter, driving that night.

Unable to ignore Barney's claims, Kinsey interviews his witness. The man, a worker for the city's water department, backs up Barney's story. Kinsey then calls Rhe and asks her about Tippy's whereabouts the night of Isabelle's death. Rhe becomes defensive, insisting that Kinsey back off of her daughter. This bothers Kinsey until she recalls that a man was hit by a vehicle that night. Kinsey speaks with a witness and learns that the man was hit by a white truck with a blue logo, making Kinsey wonder if Tippy, who she knows was struggling with alcohol addiction at the time, might have been driving drunk that night.

Kinsey returns to her office to retrieve her camera so that she might create a lineup of trucks for the witness. Before she has a chance to take pictures, however, Kinsey gets a call from Shine's sister-in-law requesting the return of his keys. At Shine's house, Kinsey searches his car for anymore files pertaining to the case and finds a receipt for a photo development shop. At the shop, Kinsey pays for the prints and discovers that Shine took pictures of white trucks just as Kinsey was planning to do. Kinsey shows the pictures to the witness who quickly identifies the truck belonging to Tippy's father. Kinsey visits Tippy and warns her to go to the police before Kinsey goes herself with this evidence.

Kinsey begins to wonder if Morley's death is coincidental or if someone wanted him out of the way. Kinsey talks to the widow and suggests an autopsy. As part of the autopsy, Kinsey gathers chemicals and leftover food from Morley house and office for the coroner to use to look for possible poisons. After the funeral, the coroner's offices autopsies Morley's body and informs Kinsey that it appears he was poisoned by a mushroom laced strudel.

Kinsey returns to the files Morley Shine created on the case and begins playing with the facts, trying to put them in some kind of comprehensible order. Kinsey finds a notation on a calendar suggesting Morley spoke with Kenneth Voigt's wife, but she denied ever speaking to him. Kinsey visits Mrs. Voigt again and learns she spoke to Morley on the phone after discovering her husband was giving money to McIntyre. Kinsey attempts to



interview both Voigt and McIntyre about that, but finds both of them unavailable. Instead, Kinsey breaks into McIntyre's hotel room and discovers he was also receiving payments from the wife of Isabelle's boss, the architect.

Kinsey visits the home of the architect, looking for the mushrooms she has since learned are responsible for Morley's death. The wife surprises her on the property. Kinsey tells her about the money she found in McIntyre's room and learns that McIntyre is her grandson, suggesting a connection between McIntyre and Voigt that could have led to McIntyre's false testimony. Kinsey returned home once more, still running the case through her head, bothered by a missing segment of time between Tippy hitting the man downtown and arriving at the intersection where she nearly hit David Barney. Kinsey speaks with Tippy and learns that she stopped at Isabelle's house after the accident to ask for advice. However, when Tippy arrived, no one answered the door and so she leaves.

Immediately after talking to Tippy, Kinsey receives a call from Curtis McIntyre. McIntyre wants to meet Kinsey at the bird refuge. Kinsey calls for backup from an ex-lover who is a cop and then drives to her office to get her gun. However, someone is there waiting for her. The lights go out and someone fires. Kinsey crawls through the office and stumbles on Curtis McIntyre's body. As Kinsey backs away, looking for a hiding place, she realizes who the gunman is. Kinsey calls out to David Barney, telling him she knows that he killed his wife. Kinsey has realized that David Barney saw Tippy pull up to the house, so he jumped into the back of her pickup truck and jumped out at the intersection where the water workers saw him. David confirms this.

Kinsey speaks to David Barney as she looks for a place to hide, not only getting him to confess to all his crimes, but keeping him distracted. Finally Kinsey hides in the copy room and waits for Barney to come after her. When Barney enters to room, Kinsey fires twice, killing him.



Chapters 1-2

Chapters 1-2 Summary

Kinsey Millhone is a private detective who is featured in eight previous novels by Sue Grafton. Kinsey is an orphan raised by an aunt who lives alone in a small apartment in the backyard belonging to octogenarian Henry Pitts.

In Chapter 1, Kinsey arrives at her new office. Kinsey had to rent an office from Lonnie Kingman after her long term situation with California Fidelity Insurance ended in a disagreement with a new efficiency expert. On this Monday in December, Kinsey is called into Lonnie office where he tells her private investigator Morley Shine has died. Kinsey knows Morley because he was a partner to the man who trained her as an investigator. Morley's death leaves Lonnie in a difficult position because Morley was working on a wrongful death case that Lonnie is due to go to court on in a month. Kinsey agrees to take over the case. Kenneth Voigt, the client, explains to Kinsey that David Barney, the man Voigt believes killed his ex-wife, Isabelle Barney, was acquitted on the murder charge and stands to inherit all of Isabelle's money. Voigt would rather see that money go to his and Isabelle's daughter, Shelby.

In Chapter 2, Kinsey reviews the case files. The files are in terrible disarray, which surprises Kinsey because Morley's partner always taught her to be well organized. As Kinsey works through the mess, she begins to get a picture of the case. Isabelle Barney had been married to David Barney for a short time when a fight over a missing gun on Labor Day prompted Isabelle to ask David to move out. David began to harass Isabelle, calling her repeatedly, leaving notes and gifts on her car and doorstep. When Isabelle filed for a restraining order, David's attentions only increased. Isabelle became a nervous wreck, afraid to leave the house. Finally some friends talked her into visiting San Francisco for a few days. On the day after Christmas, Isabelle waited alone for her friends to pick her up. The friends were delayed by car trouble. When they arrived, Isabelle refused to answer the door. Simone, Isabelle's sister, let them in through a back door. That is when Isabelle's body was found in the foyer. Someone had apparently removed the fisheye from the peep hole in the front door and shot Isabelle as she looked out to see who had knocked on her door. David Barney was immediately arrested when he showed up at the crime scene claiming to have been out for a midnight run. The trial lasted three weeks and ended in an acquittal for Barney.

Kinsey spends half the night reviewing the files before going home where she continued her habit of cleaning house. The next morning, Kinsey returns to work where she has a conversation with Lonnie about payment. Kinsey normally gets thirty bucks an hour and expenses, but Lonnie offers her fifty, which is apparently what Morley got. Kinsey asks for fifty-five without mileage. Kinsey then returns to her office and begins setting up appointments with witnesses.



Chapters 1-2 Analysis

The case on which Kinsey Millhone will work in this novel is introduced in the first chapter. Kinsey is to pick up a case that another investigator was working and finish interviews, serve subpoenas, and basically help the lawyer prepare for trial. It seems like a simple case at first. The man being sued, David Barney, was charged and tried for killing his wife, Isabelle Barney, but was acquitted four years ago. Isabelle's second husband, Kenneth Voigt, believes that David is guilty and is suing him for wrongful death in the hopes of securing Isabelle's estate for their daughter, Shelby.

Kinsey begins going over the case files and discovers that the files are in disarray, which surprises her. Kinsey quickly acquaints herself with the details of the murder and begins work, discovering that she will get more money for this case than she has gotten in the past, another plus that helps bring Kinsey out of the funk she has been since being kicked out of her offices in California Fidelity Insurance. As Kinsey begins the case, the reader becomes aware that there is a great deal at stake for someone. Either David Barney is guilty and he stands to lose a lot of money, or he is innocent and someone risks their crime being revealed. This sets up some tension that will most likely grow as the novel continues to develop.



Chapters 3-4

Chapters 3-4 Summary

In Chapter 3, Kinsey goes to the police station to talk to the investigating officer in the Barney case, but discovers he is out with the flu. Instead, Kinsey speaks with Detective Cordero, a female cop who tells Kinsey that the talk around the station suggested David Barney was guilty. Cordero also talks about Morley's death, surprising even herself when she admits that she cried when she learned he had died, even though he took such poor care of himself that it was hardly a surprise.

From there, Kinsey goes to the Shine residence in Colgate to see if she can get access to his office files. Kinsey finds Morley's sister-in-law at the house caring for Morley's wife who has been suffering from cancer for a year or more. The sister-in-law, Louise, allows Kinsey to search Morley's home office and gives her a key ring so that she can gain access to his public office. Kinsey takes all the files she can find in both offices that appear to relate to the case and Morley's daily activities. Afterward, Kinsey goes to the library and researches the local newspaper on the days before and after Isabelle's death so that she might have some information that could help jog a witnesses' memory.

In Chapter 4, Kinsey interviews Curtis McIntyre at the county jail. McIntyre is a career criminal who shared a cell with David Barney when he was first arrested. McIntyre has claimed that Barney spoke to him as he left the courtroom the day of his acquittal and admitted to killing Isabelle. Kinsey writes out McIntyre's statement and has him sign it. From there, Kinsey goes to the home of Simone Orr, Isabelle's sister. Simone continues to live in a small cottage behind the house where Isabelle died and David Barney now lives. Simone explains that Isabelle left the house to Simone, preventing David Barney from evicting her. Simone then invites Isabelle to have lunch with her while they talk.

Chapters 3-4 Analysis

In these two chapters Kinsey begins her investigation. Her first stop is the police station where she learns that the cops believed David Barney was guilty. This suggests to Kinsey that they more than likely tried the right person in the crime. From there, Kinsey retrieves more files from Morley Shine's two offices, one in his home and one behind a beauty salon. With these files, Kinsey hopes to learn more about Morley's investigation and what he had learned, but the files are in such disarray that she learns little to begin with. However, this visit to the offices should be noted by the reader because Kinsey may have noticed something that seemed unimportant at this point, but will prove to be very important later in the novel.

Kinsey interviews Curtis McIntyre, a career criminal who will be the star witness for Lonnie at trial. McIntyre swears that David Barney admitted his guilt to him after he was acquitted. If this is true, it could mean an easy win for Kenneth Voigt. Therefore, it

seems logical that this testimony will be scrutinized closely as the plot continues to develop.



Chapters 5-6

Chapters 5-6 Summary

In Chapter 5, Simone fixes Kinsey lunch and tells her about the cottage where she lives. The cottage was designed by Isabelle, the first in her new career as a designer. Isabelle and David both worked for an architect and began a business of their own designing small homes like this cottage. Simone points out that Isabelle's death allowed David Barney to take control of the entire company, rather than having to split it with Isabelle in a divorce. Simone also tells Kinsey that Isabelle had a prenuptial agreement with David Barney that would have left him with very little should Isabelle have divorced him. Simone describes the harassment David Barney caused Isabelle in the final months of her life, including leasing a house just a few minutes walk from Isabelle's house. When Kinsey leaves, she finds David Barney's leased house and walks back to Isabelle's home, timing the journey. All this seems to add up to motive and opportunity to Kinsey.

In Chapter 6, Kinsey goes to the home of Peter and Yolanda Weidmann. Peter is the architect that Isabelle and David Barney worked for before starting a business of their own. Peter is asleep in the garden when Kinsey arrives, but Yolanda walks her out to wake him up. They move into Peter's study where Kinsey observes multiple pictures of Peter with famous people during the heydays of his career. Kinsey asks about Isabelle and David, discovering that Yolanda is more upset about what she perceives as Isabelle's disrespect of Peter, leaving the company and not giving him any credit for the designs she created while under his employ. Yolanda also insists that Isabelle was an alcoholic. Finally Kinsey asks about the Labor Day party in which David Barney's gun supposedly disappeared. Yolanda insists that David must have taken the gun.

Chapters 5-6 Analysis

Kinsey interviews Isabelle's sister and learns about David and Isabelle's prenuptial agreement that would have left David nearly penniless in a divorce. Kinsey also learns that David lived less than eight minutes from Isabelle's house at the time of the murder. All this gives David both motive and opportunity, facts brought out in court during David's trial. Kinsey then interviews Isabelle's former employer and learns she was an alcoholic who gave no credit to Peter Weidmann for the designs that launched her business, leading to hard feelings on the part of Peter's wife. This gives motive for murder to Yolanda Weidmann as well. Also important in these chapters is the issue of the gun David Barney insisted was stolen during a Labor Day party. Everyone agrees that it was this accusation that finally pushed Isabelle into kicking David out of the house. It also seems to be the general consensus that David took the gun himself, connecting him to the possible murder weapon.



Chapters 7-8

Chapters 7-8 Summary

In Chapter 7, Kinsey speaks with Rhe Parsons and makes an appointment to meet her that night at a community college where Rhe teaches art. Before the meeting, Kinsey goes home for dinner and speaks with her landlord, Henry. Henry tells her that his brother, William, is coming to visit for a few weeks. William had a heart attack a few months ago and is driving Henry's other siblings crazy, so he believes they are sending William to him to punish him for past hurts. Kinsey stops at a local bar, Rosie's, for dinner before meeting Rhe at her art class. In the hallway, Rhe tells Kinsey that she had known Isabelle for fourteen years when Isabelle died. Rhe and Isabelle met at school and remained close. In fact, Isabelle was like an aunt to Rhe's teenage daughter, Tippy, who had an alcohol addiction at the time of Isabelle's death. In fact, Rhe believes it was Isabelle's murder that inspired Tippy to clean up her act.

In Chapter 8, Kinsey drives Rhe home after the class. Rhe recalls Simone calling her to Isabelle's house the night of the murder. Rhe was there when David Barney showed up, claiming he had been out jogging and saw the police cars at Isabelle's. Simone lost control and attacked David, accusing him of killing Isabelle. Rhe also recalls that Simone accused David Barney of stealing his own gun the night of the Labor Day party to point the finger at one of the guests, who included Rhe and Isabelle's ex-husband, Kenneth.

On the following day, Kinsey sets up appointments with both Kenneth's third wife, Francesca Voigt, and David Barney's first wife, Laura. Kinsey then goes through Morley's files and calls a random group of witnesses who Morley should have contacted and discovers he did not. Kinsey tracks down Lonnie at the courthouse and tells him that Morley billed for work he did not do and that they might not be ready to proceed by the assigned court date. Lonnie tells Kinsey he is going out of town, but asks her to do the best she can. Kinsey returns to the office where Lonnie's secretary tells her that a strange man is demanding on talking to her. Kinsey takes the call and realizes the caller is David Barney. Barney insists that Morley was killed because he talked to David Barney and that Morley had been checking out the fact that Curtis McIntyre lied about talking to David Barney the day of his acquittal. David Barney insists that McIntyre was in jail the day he was acquitted.

Chapters 7-8 Analysis

Kinsey speaks to Isabelle Barney's best friend and the conversation somehow focuses on Rhe Parsons' daughter, Tippy. Tippy, it turns out, had been an alcoholic since she was ten, creating a difficult situation when she became a teenager and began to drive. In fact, Rhe says that Tippy had her license suspended at one point. This seems like incidental information to the reader at first, but will prove to be important as the plot



continues to develop. In fact, this combined with the fact that Tippy was very close to her Aunt Isabelle will prove to be crucial clues as to the identity of Isabelle's killer.

Kinsey also discovers that Morley Shine was billing for work he had not done. Kinsey finds folders with no paperwork in them and witnesses who were marked as interviewed had never heard of Morley Shine. This leaves Kinsey not only in a bind because of the amount of work left to be completed before the court date, but also concerned about the lack of integrity a man she admired apparently showed in his final days of life. On top of this, Kinsey learns that Morley spoke with David Barney, the defendant and therefore a witness of limits to the plaintiff's investigator. Barney claims that McIntyre's story is a lie and that evidence of this could have led to Morley's death. This is the first time it is suggested Morley died of anything other than a heart attack as a result of his poor eating habits. The reader must wonder if this is true and what it might mean for Kinsey's safety.



Chapters 9-10

Chapters 9-10 Summary

In Chapter 9, Kinsey calls the police station and asks a sergeant to check the date of David Barney's acquittal and confirm if Curtis McIntyre was in county lockup that day. Kinsey then goes to a local television station to find out if they have footage of David Barney's acquittal. Kinsey has to bribe a station worker to show her the footage, but the footage appears to confirm David Barney's story. Kinsey goes home for lunch where she meets Henry's brother, a man obsessed with his own health and driving poor Henry crazy. During lunch, Kinsey gets a call confirming that McIntyre was in jail the day of David Barney's acquittal.

In Chapter 10, Kinsey tracks McIntyre, who was released from jail that morning, to a local motel. Kinsey follows McIntyre to a bar where she tells him what she has learned about the day of David Barney's acquittal. McIntyre changes his story, claiming that he had gone to David Barney's home to ask for money and that David Barney became drunk and admitted to the crime, even telling McIntyre some of the details. Despite the fact that McIntyre describes Isabelle's home accurately, Kinsey does not believe him. Kinsey gives him her card and tells him to call her when he wants to tell the truth.

Kinsey returns to her office to check her messages and hang around the desk of Lonnie's secretary, hoping to hear from Lonnie. Finally Kinsey has to go in order to meet with Laura Barney. Kinsey's car refuses to start at first, but she finds the distributor cap has been loosened. Kinsey fixes it and is about to leave when a man blocks her car in. The man, David Barney, tells Kinsey that he believes Morley was killed because he was helping him. David Barney then tells Kinsey that there are two witnesses who can place him miles from Isabelle's house the night of the murder.

Chapters 9-10 Analysis

Kinsey is able to establish that Curtis McIntyre could not have talked to David Barney on the way out of the courtroom the day of Barney's acquittal. When confronted, McIntyre changes his story and claims he went to Barney's home, the same one where Isabelle was killed, and David Barney told him how he killed Isabelle. Kinsey does not believe him, however, because his credibility is shot. However, the reader should notice that Curtis McIntyre described Isabelle's house accurately.

David Barney corners Kinsey again and claims to have an alibi for the night of the murder. This includes witnesses. If this is true, it could prove David Barney innocent and destroy Lonnie's wrongful death suit against him, the opposite of what Kinsey should want to happen. However, Kinsey is an impartial investigator, so it should not surprise readers when she listens to David Barney's story in light of Curtis McIntyre's lies.



Chapters 11-12

Chapters 11-12 Summary

In chapter 11, David Barney tells Kinsey that he was jogging on San Vicente when Tippy Parsons nearly ran him down. A crew for the water department was working on a burst pipe nearby and saw David Barney after the incident. One of these men, Angeloni, testified at the trial. Kinsey agrees to tell Lonnie about this information and then leaves to speak with Laura Barney. Laura Barney is a crisp, efficient nurse at a local medical clinic who clearly dislikes working for a living. Laura tells Kinsey that David and Isabelle began an affair after Laura herself threw them together, forcing David to be nice to someone who was clearly the boss's pet. When Laura learned of the affair she confronted David, forcing his hand. Laura now regrets it, believing the affair would not have lasted.

Back at her office, Kinsey calls Rhe Parsons and asks about Tippy's whereabouts the night of Isabelle's death. Rhe becomes defensive, refusing to answer Kinsey's questions. Kinsey then goes to the home of Bill Angeloni, the water department worker who testified to David Barney's alibi. Angeloni confirms that David Barney appeared to have been jogging when he was nearly hit by a white truck. Angeloni says he offered to call an ambulance for David Barney but he refused, resting a few minutes before continuing his jog.

In chapter 12, Kinsey stops by her apartment to change, then walks to Santa Theresa Shellfish where Tippy works. Kinsey asks Tippy about the night of Isabelle's murder. Tippy insists she was in bed asleep. From there, Kinsey goes to the home of Kenneth and Francesca Voigt. Francesca tells Kinsey that she has decided to divorce Kenneth after the civil case is over. Francesca admits to having been obsessed with Kenneth despite his obvious obsession with Isabelle. However, Francesca has decided Kenneth will never get over Isabelle, therefore there is no hope for their marriage. Francesca then suggests that she does not believe David Barney killed Isabelle. In fact, Francesca believes the method of death speaks of a female and that Simone is a possible suspect. Simone wanted children but a car accident that was Isabelle's fault left her unable to have children.

Chapters 11-12 Analysis

David Barney swears that Tippy Parsons nearly ran him over miles from Isabelle's house the night of the murder and that he was seen by a water department worker. This is confirmed by the water department worker, but every time Kinsey attempts to ask Tippy or her mother about her whereabouts that night, they either lie or refuse to answer. This suggests to the reader that Tippy and Rhe are hiding something. The reader wonders if Tippy or Rhe had something to do with Isabelle's death or if there is another secret they are attempting to hide.



Kinsey speaks to Laura Barney and learns that she is still grieving the end of her marriage and that she suspects that David and Isabelle's marriage never would have worked. Francesca Voigt admits to being obsessed with her husband and jealous of Isabelle, but this is all information Kinsey is already aware of thanks to other witnesses. Francesca, however, is the first to point the finger at someone other than David Barney. Francesca believes that Simone has motive to kill her sister due to an accident that Isabelle caused, leaving Simone with a limp and unable to have children. It also seems that several others have motive, including Yolanda Weidmann, Kenneth Voigt, and Peter Weidmann.



Chapters 13-14

Chapters 13-14 Summary

In Chapter 13, Kinsey goes to Rosie's where she runs into Henry. Henry is miserable because his brother's obsession with his own health is driving him crazy. When Rosie learns about the problem, she tells Henry to bring William to the bar the following day so that she can take care of the problem.

In the middle of the night, Kinsey wakes and remembers an article in the local newspaper dated the day after Isabelle's murder that reported a hit and run accident. Kinsey reviews the article, learning a man had walked away from a convalescent home and was killed by a white truck. Kinsey notes the name of the only convalescent home in the area and then goes back to bed. On the following day, Kinsey speaks with the manager of the convalescent home and with the son of the victim, learning that the accident was witnessed by a woman at a motel near the site of the accident. Kinsey speaks to this woman and learns that she saw the truck, but not the driver and she feels confident she could identify the truck if she saw it again.

In Chapter 14, Kinsey finds a message from Louise, Morley's sister-in-law, asking for the return of his keys. Kinsey makes copies of the files she took from Morley's offices so that she can return them as well. When Kinsey arrives at the Shine home, no one is home and so she leaves the files on the service porch. As she prepares to leave, Kinsey remembers Morley's keys. On her way back to the service porch, Kinsey decides to search Morley's car for any other files or evidence on the case. Kinsey finds nothing but a receipt from a film development business. Kinsey picks up the film and discovers that Morley was working the same lead as her. The pictures are of white pickup trucks, including the one belonging to Tippy's father. Kinsey takes these back to the witness who quickly identifies the truck belonging to Tippy's father. Kinsey then goes to see Tippy, warning her that if she does not go to the police that Kinsey will. Tippy admits driving the truck that night and seeing David at the turn onto San Vicente.

Chapters 13-14 Analysis

Kinsey remembers a hit and run accident the night Isabelle died and puts together that situation and the strange behavior of Rhe and Tippy. As Kinsey explores this idea, it quickly becomes obvious that Tippy killed the man as he crossed the street. This explains why Tippy never came forward and offered an alibi for David Barney. Also important about these chapters is the fact that Morley was clearly exploring the same leads, suggesting he was doing something other than lying about interviews he never completed. Kinsey feels that this might exonerate Morley's reputation somewhat. It also makes Kinsey wonder what else Morley was on to at the time of his death.



Chapters 15-16

Chapters 15-16 Summary

In Chapter 15, Kinsey visits Morley's wife, Dorothy, and sister-in-law, Louise. Kinsey asks about Morley's final days and learns he was fine until Saturday afternoon when he became ill, vomiting for hours before he began to feel better on Sunday. Then, on Sunday, Morley collapsed at dinner and died. Kinsey shares her suspicion that Morley might have been killed because of what he might have learned about the Barney investigation. Kinsey asks permission to have Morley's body autopsied. Dorothy agrees. Kinsey then goes to the coroner and tells him her suspicions. The coroner asks Kinsey to find any chemicals or food that might have transmitted the poison to Morley.

In Chapter 16, Kinsey returns to the Shine home where she collects all kinds of chemicals and Morley's office where she collects medicine from his bathroom and a pastry from his trashcan. Kinsey goes home afterward and cleans her home for several hours. Then Kinsey goes to Rosie's for dinner where she watches Rosie flirt with William and convince him to drink sherry as a method of controlling his high blood pressure.

Chapters 15-16 Analysis

In these chapters, Kinsey shares her concern that Morley might have been murdered with his wife and sister-in-law. Dorothy is a practical woman and she accepts this idea easily despite her emotional attachment to the victim. An autopsy is planned and Kinsey gathers articles that might have been used to introduce the poison to Morley. This includes a pastry that Kinsey noticed her first trip to Morley's office that was only half eaten. At the same time, Henry's difficult brother begins a flirtation with Rosie that could cause complications for Henry Pitts.



Chapters 17-18

Chapters 17-18 Summary

In Chapter 17, Kinsey listens to an angry message from Kenneth Voigt on her answering machine and decides to confront him in person. Kenneth is upset that Kinsey accused Tippy of murder. However, when Kinsey talks to him, their conversation is calm and includes a discussion of the things Kenneth hopes to buy when he wins the wrongful death suit. Afterward, Kinsey goes to Morley Shine's funeral service. Henry and William arrive to support Kinsey through the nondenominational service. Afterward, Kinsey sees Simone leaving. When Kinsey tries to talk to her, Simone accuses Kinsey of putting her nose where it does not belong in regards to Tippy. Simone demands that Kinsey focus on David Barney. When Kinsey tells Simone that someone accused her of killing Isabelle, she reacts by pointing the finger at Yolanda Weidmann.

In Chapter 18, Kinsey goes to the gallery where Rhe Parsons is having a show for her art work. Rhe is angry when she sees Kinsey, threatening to sue her. However, Tippy is open and willing to talk. Kinsey encourages Tippy to get a lawyer before she turns herself into the police. Back at home, Henry complains that Rosie is flirting with his brother. Henry is concerned about where this relationship might lead. When he leaves, Kinsey focuses on the case once more, writing out the facts on index cards to make it easier to figure them out. As she works, Kinsey gets a call from Lonnie's secretary telling her that the coroner has been looking for her.

Chapters 17-18 Analysis

In these chapters, Kinsey deals with the fallout of making the connection between Tippy and the hit and run accident. Kinsey discovers that Tippy is handling the situation better than the adults around her, making Kinsey feel guilty for placing her in such a position. At the same time, Henry becomes panicked about the relationship between his brother and Rosie and what it might mean for his future. This injects a little humor into a plot that has grown increasingly tense. At the end of Chapter 18, a call comes from the coroner. The reader is anxious to learn what he has found and how it will impact the case.



Chapters 19-20 and Epilogue

Chapters 19-20 and Epilogue Summary

In Chapter 19, Kinsey learns that Morley Shine was killed by a pastry laced with poisonous mushrooms. The mushrooms caused Morley to die of kidney failure brought on by the poison. This means that Morley was given the pastry either Friday evening or Saturday morning, suggesting he had learned something before that time period that made someone worried enough to kill him. Kinsey goes back over Morley's calendar for the final days of his life. Laura Barney said she was supposed to meet Morley Saturday morning and Francesca Voigt said she had never met with Morley, but there was a notation on his calendar the Thursday before his death with her initials. Kinsey goes to the clinic where Laura Barney works and catches her as she is walking home. Kinsey questions her about the meeting that Saturday morning. Laura Barney claims Morley never showed up. However, while she waited outside his office, Laura claims a messenger truck arrived with a bakery box for Morley.

From Laura Barney's, Kinsey goes to visit Francesca Voigt. Francesca admits that she spoke with Morley before he died. In fact, Francesca called Morley herself after discovering a ledge in which her husband kept track of money he had give to Curtis McIntyre. Francesca tells Kinsey that she gave the ledger to Morley and Kenneth became very angry, insisting she get it back. When Kinsey suggests that this is evidence that Kenneth was paying McIntyre for his testimony, Francesca says that Kenneth denied it, saying he gave McIntyre the money just because he needed it.

In Chapter 20, Kinsey tries to see Kenneth Voigt at his office, but he has already left. Kinsey goes to McIntyre's motel, but he has also gone. Kinsey asks the manager and learns that someone came to pick up McIntyre just moments before she arrived. As Kinsey prepares to leave, she decides to break into McIntyre's room. Inside Kinsey finds an envelope in which Mrs. Weidmann sent McIntyre four hundred dollars. Recalling having seen mushrooms growing in the Weidmann garden, Kinsey returns there to get a sample. The yard has recently been mowed, so Kinsey has a hard time finding her sample. Mrs. Weidmann returns home and confronts Kinsey. When Kinsey asks about the money sent to McIntyre, Mrs. Weidmann admits that McIntyre is her grandson.

At home, Kinsey is bothered by the large amount of time between Tippy's hit and run accident and when she spotted David Barney at the turn to San Vicente. Kinsey calls Tippy at her mother's art show and learns that Tippy stopped by Isabelle's on the way home. Tippy had wanted Isabelle's advice, but no one came to the door. Tippy left and returned home. As Kinsey hangs up the phone, it rings again. The caller is Curtis McIntyre, clearly upset, asking to meet Kinsey at the bird refuge. Suspecting a trap, Kinsey calls an ex-lover who happens to be a cop and asks him to meet her at the bird refuge. On the way Kinsey stops at her office to pick up her gun. The lights are on in Lonnie's office. Kinsey calls out to him, asking him to wait so she can update him on the case. However, the lights go out while Kinsey is getting her gun. Kinsey goes out into



the reception area on her hands and knees. Kinsey stumbles across Curtis McIntyre's dead body under the secretary's desk. Kinsey backs up, headed for the hall and some place to hide, when she realizes who the shooter must be.

Kinsey calls out to David Barney. When Barney asks how she figured out it was him, Kinsey tells him about her conversation with Tippy. Kinsey realized that Barney must have jumped into the bed of Tippy's truck and ridden with her to the turn off, jumping out as she slowed. Barney admits this is true. Barney then tells Kinsey that he killed Morley because he was getting too close to the truth. Now Barney plans to kill Kinsey and make it appear as though Curtis killed Isabelle and Kinsey and Curtis killed each other. Kinsey keeps Barney talking until she can find a hiding place in the copy room. When Barney comes into the copy room, Kinsey shoots and kills him.

In the epilogue, Kinsey tells the reader of her investigative report that Tippy turned herself into the police but would not be arrested or charged because the statute of limitations has passed. Kinsey received a reward of twenty-five thousand dollars for locating the driver in the hit and run despite the fact that no charges would be brought.

Chapters 19-20 and Epilogue Analysis

Kinsey puts together Morley's death with the help of the coroner and Laura Barney. However, Kinsey continues to have no clue who the killer is. Kinsey continues to track down witnesses and evidence, but the truth continues to elude her. Finally, Kinsey decides to call it an early day, but first she wants to settle one nagging question about Tippy Parsons and the time lapse between the accident and when she saw David Barney on the street. This little bit of information becomes the most critical when Kinsey finally realizes how David Barney managed to be at two places in such a small amount of time.

David Barney kills Curtis McIntyre and tries to kill Kinsey in an attempt at ending the wrongful death suit once and for all. However, David Barney does not bargain on Kinsey winning a gun battle. The case has come to a satisfying conclusion, though not quite the way everyone was hoping it would. In the end, the bad guy is punished and the good manage to go on with their lives, such as they are.



Characters

Kinsey Millhone

Kinsey Millhone is a private detective who has been featured in eight previous novels by the same author. Kinsey is an orphan whose parents died when she was only five, leaving her to grow up with an aunt. Kinsey lives in the renovated garage behind Henry Pitts' home. Kinsey and Henry are close friends that take care of one another, often sharing meals, gossip, and advice.

In this novel, Kinsey has just lost her office in the back of California Fidelity Insurance because of a few harsh words with the new quality control officer. As a result, Kinsey has moved into an office rented out by Lonnie Kingman in his law firm. Kinsey has been working on small cases. When Lonnie asks her to take over the investigation on a wrongful death case after the first investigator died, Kinsey is happy for the work. However, Kinsey soon finds herself reinvestigating leads and witnesses that should have been completed by the first investigator. Not only this, but Kinsey uncovers another crime that took place the same night. In the end, Kinsey is in a shootout with the real criminal.

David Barney

David Barney is an architect who was married to a rich woman named Isabelle. After a few short years of marriage, David and Isabelle separate after a long stream of ugly fights. David tries to win Isabelle back by calling her and leaving gifts for her, but Isabelle sees this as harassment. When Isabelle gets a restraining order against David, he realizes his marriage may be over. Not long afterward, Isabelle is found shot to death in her foyer.

David Barney arrives at the crime scene and claims he had been out jogging. David is arrested and tried on the murder, but he is acquitted. Six years later, Isabelle's second husband, and father of her daughter, Shelby, decides to sue David for wrongful death, hoping to recover Isabelle's assets for Shelby. Kinsey speaks to David during her investigation and learns that he has an alibi for the night of Isabelle's murder.

Kenneth Voigt

Kenneth Voigt is Isabelle Barney's second husband. Kenneth is deeply in love with Isabelle as he was throughout their marriage. It was not Kenneth's idea to get a divorce and he is heartbroken when Isabelle marries David Barney. Kenneth remains friends with Isabelle, witnesses the tumultuous relationship between Isabelle and David. When Isabelle is killed, Kenneth is one of the first to point fingers at David. Six years later, Kenneth brings a wrongful death case against David, claiming he wants his daughter Shelby to inherit all of Isabelle's money.



Francesca Voigt

Francesca Voigt is Kenneth Voigt's third wife. Francesca is a beautiful and intelligent woman who has her own business making head coverings for cancer patients. Francesca is blindly in love with Kenneth from the moment she meets him, convinced that she can make herself desirable enough for him to want her as much as he wants Isabelle. However, when Kenneth brings a wrongful death suit against David Barney six years after Isabelle's death and appears to be paying off a star witness, Francesca realizes that Kenneth will never love her the way he loves Isabelle. Kenneth is obsessed with Isabelle and so Francesca has decided to end the marriage.

Simone Orr

Simone Orr is Isabelle Barney's sister. Simone has always been the more mature of the twin sisters and so she has always been the one to take care of Isabelle. Simone has helped Isabelle through three marriages and multiple career changes. Simone cares for Isabelle so often that she has moved into a cottage on Isabelle's property. Before Isabelle's death, Isabelle had a drinking problem. One day Isabelle forgot to set the parking brake on her car, allowing it to roll down the driveway and crush Simone. Simone has a permanent limp and can no longer have children. On the night Isabelle died, Simone found her body with a couple of Isabelle's friends who had come to pick her up for a trip to San Francisco. Simone immediately blamed David Barney.

Laura Barney

Laura Barney was married to David Barney for three years. Laura came with David to Santa Theresa from Los Angeles when David took a job with an architecture firm in Santa Theresa. Laura also encouraged David to befriend Isabelle because she was the architect's pet. When Laura learned David and Isabelle were having an affair, she confronted him, forcing him into a divorce and marriage to Isabelle. Laura regrets that action, believing if she had not confronted David the affair would have ended and he would have returned to her.

Tippy Parsons

Tippy Parsons is the daughter of Rhe Parsons, Isabelle's best friend. Tippy began drinking at the age of ten when a babysitter introduced her to the drug. Tippy's drinking grew progressively worse through her teenage years until she finally sought help after Isabelle's murder. Kinsey learns that Tippy hit and killed an elderly man that same night. Kinsey encourages Tippy to turn herself in for the crime. Tippy does, despite her mother's fear and outrage, only to learn the statute of limitations has passed and she will not be charged in the crime.



Rhe Parsons

Rhe Parsons is an artist who was Isabelle's best friend. Kinsey speaks with Rhe and learns a different side of Isabelle she had not heard from other witnesses. Rhe paints Isabelle as a best friend to her daughter and the kind of friend who was always there for her when she was in need. Rhe threatens to sue Kinsey, however, when she learns that Kinsey has threatened to go to the police with evidence that Rhe's daughter committed a hit and run six years ago.

Isabelle Barney

Isabelle Barney is the murder victim in the case Kinsey is investigation. Isabelle was separated from her third husband and suffering from anxiety due to his harassment of her. Isabelle was planning to go out of town the night after Christmas when someone rang her doorbell. Expecting her friends, Isabelle looked out the peephole only to be shot by someone on the other side. David Barney was charged and tried for the murder, but was acquitted.

Curtis McIntyre

Curtis McIntyre is a career criminal who shared a cell with David Barney directly after Barney's arrest. McIntyre came forward when Kenneth Voigt began his wrongful death case against Barney and said that Barney confessed the crime to him. McIntyre testified that Barney spoke to him as he was leaving the courtroom, but that was later established to be a lie. Later McIntyre tells Kinsey that he visited Barney at his home and Barney told him about the murder while drunk. Kinsey does not believe him, but Barney later supports McIntyre's version of the story.



Objects/Places

Pastry

A strudel pastry filled with poison that Morley Shine consumes is the cause of his death.

Mushrooms

When Kinsey learns that Morley died from eating poisonous mushrooms, she recalls seeing mushrooms in the garden of Paul and Yolanda Weidmann.

Picture Receipt

Kinsey finds a photo development receipt in Morley's car that leads her to some pictures of white pickup trucks he took. This discovery suggests that he was following the same investigative path as she was.

Morley Shine's Files

Kinsey takes over a case from Morley Shine after his death. Kinsey finds his files a disorganized mess.

Ledger

Francesca Voigt finds a ledger in her husband's study that shows he has been paying money to Curtis McIntyre, a witness for his wrongful death case against David Barney.

White Pickup

A white pickup is seen running down an elderly man on the same night Isabelle Barney is killed. That same night, David Barney says that he saw Tippy Parsons driving a white pickup and that she nearly hit him while he was jogging at the exact time of Isabelle's death.

Shine Residence

Kinsey visits the Shine residence several times, first to gather all of Morley's files on the Barney investigation and later to find possible modes of poison transmission in Morley's death.



Morley's Office

Morley has an office behind a beauty salon in Colgate. Kinsey finds a pastry in the trash here that turns out to contain the poison that killed him.

Lonnie Kingman's Office

Kinsey finds herself forced out of her offices at California Fidelity Insurance, so she has taken an office at Lonnie Kingman's law offices. It is from Lonnie that Kinsey gets the Barney murder investigation after Morley Shine dies.

Isabelle Barney's House

Isabelle Barney is killed in her own home when someone fires a shot through the peephole in the front door. The house is later taken over by Isabelle's estranged husband, David Barney.

Santa Theresa

Santa Theresa is the name of the city where Kinsey Millhone works and lives.

Colgate

Colgate is a town near Santa Theresa where Morley Shine lived and worked.



Themes

Greed

Greed is often a motive for murder. In this novel, David Barney has been accused of killing his wife, Isabelle Barney. Barney was a struggling architect when he met Isabelle. All of Isabelle's friends warned her that Barney was after her for her money, money she inherited both from her parents and her first husband. However, Isabelle married him anyway. Isabelle did insist on a prenuptial agreement prior to the wedding. Therefore, when the marriage began to fall apart, Isabelle was protected from losing a substantial amount of her fortune.

After the split between David and Isabelle, David began harassing Isabelle. To Isabelle it was harassment, to David it was an attempt to work out their problems. In the end, Isabelle got a restraining order, suggesting the marriage had reached its conclusion. Shortly afterward, Isabelle was shot while looking through the peephole of her front door. David was arrested, tried, and acquitted in the crime. However, he is set to inherit all of Isabelle's money, leaving Isabelle's child, sister, and ex-husband out in the cold.

Kenneth Voigt begins a lawsuit against David Barney to prove he killed Isabelle and to keep him from taking possession of all her money. Kenneth claims his motive is justice for Isabelle and money for their daughter, Shelby. However, as Kinsey investigates the case, she learns that Kenneth is interested in improving his own lifestyle by buying one of the luxury cars he sells. With this knowledge, it begins to look as though everyone around Isabelle is motivated by greed. The only difference is that one is willing to kill for it and one is not.

Secrets and Lies

Tippy Parsons began drinking at the age of ten when her babysitter introduced her to the drug. Tippy's drinking would grow steadily worse until at sixteen she has her driver's license suspended for several months. Tippy enters rehab and cleans up after her Aunt Isabelle is murdered. However, Tippy continues to hide the truth from everyone around her until Kinsey comes along and exposes what really motivated Tippy to get sober.

Kinsey learns from David Barney that Tippy was out on the night Isabelle was killed driving a white pickup truck. Kinsey begins to check out the story and soon realizes that Tippy was driving the same sort of vehicle that was seen driving away from a hit and run accident. When Kinsey shows a picture of a pickup truck belonging to Tippy's father, she realizes that Tippy was driving the truck that killed an elderly man.

Kinsey confronts Tippy and finally learns that truth. Tippy has been lying to everyone about that night for six years. However, thanks to AA, Tippy is able to face the truth and the consequences. However, Tippy's mother is not. Tippy's mother fights Kinsey and threatens a law suit, telling everyone involved with the Barney case that Kinsey is



unethical and putting her nose where it does not belong. She has lived with the lies for so long that she knows no other way to protect her child. Secrets and lies are a major theme of the novel.

Jealousy

Francesca thinks her husband, Kenneth Voigt, is still in love with Isabelle. Every time Isabelle would invite Kenneth over, Francesca would be at his side, trying to keep his attention off of Isabelle. However, it never worked. Francesca became obsessed with trying to make herself more desirable than Isabelle, but no matter how hard she tried, nothing seemed to work.

Isabelle worked for Peter Weidmann. Peter taught Isabelle all he knew about architecture and she took that knowledge to start her own highly successful business. This should have caused Peter to be upset, but it is Yolanda who reacts badly. Yolanda believes that Isabelle owed her husband for all he taught her.

Simone always wanted to have children. However, Simone never married, never had the opportunities at love that Isabelle had. When Isabelle forgot to lock the parking brake on her car and it rolled over Simone, Simone lost her only chance at children and happiness. This leads to a situation of jealousy and anger that could be motive for murder. However, Simone loves her sister.

Isabelle was a bright and beautiful woman who seemed to have all the luck in the world. Multiple people were jealous of her luck, of her beauty, and of her lifestyle. For this reason, jealousy is a theme of the novel.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of this novel is the first-person. In this novel, the narrator is Kinsey Millhone, a private detective working and living in Santa Theresa, California. Kinsey narrates the novel as though she is sharing with the reader a step by step report of her actions in a specific investigation. In fact, the novel ends with a final entry into an investigative report that is signed by Kinsey herself.

The first person point of view of this novel is reminiscent of the old style detective novels, such as those written by Dashiell Hammett. Kinsey Millhone takes the reader on a step by step journey through her case, mentioning such mundane things as the details of a witnesses appearance, while talking through her thoughts and emotions on the case. The first-person point of view is an intimate point of view that keeps the reader in a situation that narrow sighted, allowing the reader to only see and know what Kinsey Millhone sees and knows. It works in this novel, however, because the novel is structured in such a way that reader only needs to know what Kinsey knows to increase the tension and to increase the entertainment value.

Setting

The novel is set in Santa Theresa, which is a town in California that is only two hours from Hollywood. Santa Theresa is a coastal town. Kinsey lives close to the ocean and a marina where fresh seafood is grown. In this novel, Kinsey remains in the Santa Theresa area. In fact, the murder Kinsey investigates happened in a wealthy neighborhood known as Horton Ravine. Many of the witnesses live in this area. Kinsey also spends some time in Colgate, a neighboring town where private investigator Morley Shine had his home and office.

The setting of this novel is different from most novels set in California because it is not set in one of the larger cities, but in a smaller town known as Santa Theresa. This setting allows for the typical California highlights such as beaches and wealthy characters, but takes away some of the history of a city like Los Angeles, and the large city crim and congestion. Horton Ravine is similar to Beverly Hills in that it is an area where wealthy people of the area live. However, it too is separate from the congestion and headaches of a place like Los Angeles. For this reason, the setting of this novel adds some glamour without the complications of a big city, making it a perfect setting for Kinsey Millhone and her investigative skills.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple English. The novel contains no foreign phrases and a few medical references. These references, however, are minor and should not



confuse or frustrate an uneducated reader. The novel includes some slang words that should be recognizable to most readers. There is little about the language of this novel that is unique or difficult to understand.

The language is simple and the grammar contains no hidden surprises. However the novel is written in a stilted fashion designed to give the impression that the reader is reading a written investigative report by Kinsey Millhone. This causes some of the descriptions in the novel to stand out and cause the reader to slow down, breaking up the flow of the novel. This is done in order to give the novel a sense of the old style of detective novels. For this reason, the language of this novel works well within its plot.

Structure

The novel is divided into twenty chapters and an epilogue. Each chapter is fairly long, containing between ten and twenty pages each. The novel is written in both exposition and dialogue, containing large amounts of internal dialogue as Kinsey works out the details of her investigation, but also dialogue from interviews Kinsey conducts with witnesses.

The novel has one main plot with several subplots working in tandem with it. The main plot follows Kinsey as she attempts to finish the work of another private detective on a wrongful death suit. Kinsey interviews witnesses and is supposed to serve subpoenas. However, in the course of her investigation, Kinsey discovers a great deal of the work has not been done and she must start from scratch in some instances. One of the subplots follows Kinsey as she finds clues to a hit and run accident that took place the same night as the murder Kinsey is working. Another subplot follows the romance between the brother of Kinsey's friend and landlord, Henry Pitts, and the owner of a neighborhood bar, Rosie. All these plots come to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



Quotes

"I feel compelled to report that at the moment of death, my entire life did not pass before my eyes in a flash" (Chapter 1, pg. 1.)

"She flipped on the porch light and put her eye to the spyhole before opening the door. Instead of seeing visitors, she was staring down the bore of the .38 that killed her" (Chapter 2, pg. 19.)

"How much would I remember if someone quizzed me about the night Isabelle was killed? One fragment had been restored, but the rest was a blank" (Chapter 3, pg. 39.)

"I have a special weakness for small, enclosed spaces, a barely disguised longing to return to the womb" (Chapter 4, pg. 48.)

"She tapped her fingers on her forehead as if to stimulate thought" (Chapter 6, pg. 65.)

"I've come up with many a personal insight with a toilet brush in hand, watching the Comet swirl around in the bowl" (Chapter 8, pg. 93.)

"The Thrifty Motel looked like the sort of 'auto court' where Bonnie and Clyde might have holed up" (Chapter 10, pg. 117.)

"She looked like a woman who'd been forced to go out into the workplace and wasn't at all happy with the necessity" (Chapter 11, pg. 134.)

"I returned to my car, aware of a little rush of hope I was having to subdue" (Chapter 13, pg. 173.)

"Maybe there simply wasn't any way to avoid public penance" (Chapter 18, pg. 233.)

"I jumped. That was eight. If the man had an eight-shot, I was doing okay. A nine-shot, I was screwed" (Chapter 20, pg. 281.)

"When Hartford McKell heard the driver had been found, he insisted on writing me a check for twenty-five thousand bucks despite the fact that Tippy was neither arrested nor convicted. I took the money. I did the work so why not get paid?" (Epilogue, pg. 286.)



Topics for Discussion

Who is Kinsey Millhone? Why is she moving into offices at the law firm of Lonnie Kingman? What case does Kingman ask Kinsey to review and for what reason? Why does Kinsey accept the case? What does Kinsey do for a living? What is her connection to the case she is investigating? Why is Kinsey surprised by how much Lonnie is offering to pay her?

Who is David Barney? What is he accused of doing? Why does Kinsey believe he is guilty? Why does Kinsey begin to doubt his guilt? Does Barney have a strong alibi? Why was Barney not found guilty in court? Who says that Barney admitted his guilt? Why would Barney do this? Why did Barney not have a stronger alibi for the night of the crime? Should he have? Could he have? What are Barney's motives for the crime?

Who is Isabelle Barney? Why is Kenneth Voigt suing for her wrongful death? What is their relationship? What are Voigt's motives? What is wrongful death? Why might it be easier to prove Barney guilty in civil court as compared to criminal court? Who are the witnesses that Kinsey is to interview on the case? How are they connected to Barney and to Voigt?

Who is Tippy Parsons? Why does Barney claim she is a witness to his alibi? Why did Tippy not come forward in Barney's criminal trial? What kind of addiction problem did Tippy have? How did this problem come about? Where did Tippy live at the time of Isabelle's death? Why did Tippy call Isabelle her aunt? Were they related? How did Tippy play a role in helping Isabelle's murderer escape the scene of the crime? Was she aware of this? What crime did Tippy commit that night? How is it relevant to Isabelle's murder?

Who is William Pitts? Why has he come to Santa Theresa? What does Henry, his brother, think about him? What is William obsessed by and for what reason? Why does William attend a funeral with Kinsey? Who is Rosie? How does Rosie meet William? How does Rosie feel about William? How does this become apparent to Henry? How does Henry feel about this situation?

Who is Calvin McIntyre? Why does Kinsey speak with him in and out of jail? Is McIntyre a liar? How does Kinsey know this? How does the reader? What story does McIntyre tell at the beginning of the novel? How does it change and for what reason? Was McIntyre telling the truth? How does Kinsey learn this?

Who is Yolanda Weidmann? Why does she dislike Isabelle Barney? Were they friends? What happened to the friendship? Why? How does Yolanda treat her husband? What does Kinsey think about this? Who suggests that Yolanda might have killed Isabelle? What would Yolanda's motive have been? How does Yolanda know Calvin McIntyre? How does this connect McIntyre to the wrongful death suit? Does this suggest McIntyre is telling the truth or lying?