

I Know What You Did Last Summer Study Guide

I Know What You Did Last Summer by Lois Duncan

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Plot Summary

The mysterious clues come in a year after the accident. Julie gets a nondescript letter in the mail with only seven words on it that says, "I know what you did last summer." Then Helen finds a picture of a boy on a bike ripped from a magazine advertisement of some sort, taped to her apartment door. A short while later, Ray gets a similarly nondescript envelope in the mail that contains only a newspaper article about the accident. Finally, Barry gets a phone call to meet someone at the football field amid the firework celebration and gets shot.

After each contact from the unknown person, Julie, Helen, Ray, and Barry talk to each other about who could be leaving these messages and what they all mean. Eventually, the details of what happened last summer come out. Barry was driving recklessly on a winding road with Helen next to him in the front seat. Ray and Julie were in the back seat making out. Coming around a corner too fast, Barry didn't see the boy, David Gregg, on the bike until it was too late and he was hit.

Instead of stopping the car and helping, Barry continued down the road to a phone where they stopped so Ray could call the police. They decide that there is nothing they can do for the boy so they do not go back to him. Since Barry is afraid the police will be very hard on him for driving recklessly and hurting someone, he forces them to make a pact never to tell what happened. Helen agrees quickly, but Julie and Ray take a little more convincing. Eventually, however they also agree not to tell.

After they learn that the boy they hit died from the injuries, Julie feels guilty and sends yellow roses to the funeral, and they try to go about their lives. Ray has to get away and moves to California and Julie drops out of all her extra activities and sticks to her studies. Helen seems to have the life of luxury and Barry is having a great time going to college, until the mysterious clues start coming in.

While they wonder who could have found out about them and what it would ultimately mean, Julie and Ray continually revisit the events and their feelings of guilt. Ray even goes so far as to tell Barry he wants to break the pact. Barry refuses to allow it. They go to the Gregg house to see if they can learn anything there. They learn that they wrecked a whole family and not just one little boy.

Helen meets a new fellow who has just moved into her apartment complex, but with her selfish ways, doesn't get to know much about him- her new friend.

Julie's feelings for Ray are revitalized and she feels bored with Bud her new boyfriend. She is looking forward to moving away and putting all this behind her.

Barry gets a phone call one evening. He goes out to meet someone and ends up in the hospital with a gunshot wound. He tells everyone it was Helen who called, that she just wanted to meet him, and that the gunshot was a fluke. He says that he was getting



robbed. Finally, he tells Ray that it wasn't Helen who called but some other girl and he only said it was Helen so as to upset his mother.

It is only after he realizes that he will be able to walk again that he has a change of heart and tries to warn Helen that the guy who shot him, did not want to rob him, but was the person who knew what they had done last summer. But it's too late. Helen isn't in the apartment to answer the phone. When she gets inside, she finds Collie in her apartment who tells he that he is the brother of the boy they killed and he is going to kill his date that night. He is also going to kill her.

Helen dashes into the bathroom and is saved from him by breaking a window and climbing out.

Bud shows up for his date with Julie but her mother has had one of her ominous premonitions and asks her not to go. Julie agrees but walks with him out of the car to say good-bye. While outside, Bud tries to get Julie in the car, but she refuses. She will be no match for him, and he strangles her until she passes out. Ray shows up having figured out who Bud is by the yellow paint on his hand and knocks him out with a flashlight. The police show up having received a call from Helen who told them what had happened and that she thought he would be going to Julie's house and Ray and Julie agree they are ready to tell the police what actually happened last summer.



Chapter 1.

Chapter 1. Summary

Julie is initially portrayed as a high school senior who's only concern at the moment is whether or not she will get into the college of her choice, her mother's alma mater, Smith University. She is a privileged young woman with a loving mother. Her father died eight years ago.

When the letter from the school comes, Julie is so excited to get the results of her application that she completely misses the other, smaller letter that was also delivered that morning. She and her mother are both thrilled about her acceptance at the school, although her mother voices some concern about her having "changed" over the last year. Julie used to be a bubbly, fun-loving, cheerleader who spent more time with her boyfriend, Ray, than she did on her studies, so while this acceptance letter proves that Julie has settled down with her studies, her mother also wishes she would have had more "balance" in her life.

When Julie goes to her room to get ready for school, she realizes she has changed too. She's become more serious and quiet and she does not want her mother to remember when she first noticed the change in her. Her mother suggests that the change occurred about the time Julie broke up with Ray, who has since moved away.

As a matter of fact, Julie doesn't want to remember the events of those times either. She just wants to move out east, go to school and forget about her life here. She feels relief at the prospect of moving away and no longer seeing Ray's mother, Helen, or Barry around town.

As Julie is leaving for school, her mother stops her telling her that she forgot her letter. Only now does Julie see the other mail. When she opens the small "party invitation" sized envelope and reads the note inside, a feeling of horror engulfs her. Written inside on smudged paper, the single sentence causes her to feel sick to her stomach.

"I know what you did last summer" is all the note says.

Chapter 1. Analysis

What has happened last summer that caused such a tremendous change in Julie? She is portrayed as a serious high school student who just a year ago spent more time with her boyfriend Ray than her studies. She was a bubbly cheerleader whereas now she is quiet and withdrawn.

The past events are hinted at when Julie is alone in her room remembering how she wished her mother would stop thinking about the exact day when Julie started changing. That something tragic or horrible occurred is reinforced by Julie's evident relief that she



will be moving away when she goes off to school and she will no longer have to see Ray's mother, Barry or Helen around town. The mention of a specific road and picnic ground leads one to believe that whatever happened, it happened here. By the end of the chapter, there are more questions raised than answered. What exactly happened last summer with Julie and her friends?



Chapter 2.

Chapter 2. Summary

Barry is going to visit Helen. He's not happy about going over there, because he has a date with another girl and Helen did not tell him why he had to visit. When he gets to Helen's apartment, he realizes that Julie is also there. The girls tell Barry about the letter. At first he thinks that one of them told someone what had happened.

They all agree that nobody has told anyone anything.

Then Barry suspects that Ray sent the letter especially since he is back in town. While Julie wasn't aware that Ray was back in town until Barry told her, she does know that Ray wouldn't send a letter like that. They discuss other possibilities.

Barry tells them that he and Ray fixed the dent in the car and painted it so they couldn't have been found out that way. Then Barry tries to calm them down by stating the letter was probably a joke by some kids who are playing tricks on people.

The girls settle on this response as being the most likely answer. Barry leaves to go back to the Frat House where he lives. As he is driving, he gets a strange feeling that he is being followed.

Chapter 2. Analysis

A good-looking guy, Barry can do no wrong. He won't drop his girlfriend, Helen, because she's got a full-time modeling job and looks good on his arm. He enjoys upsetting his mother by dating a girl who dropped out of high school to take on a modeling career. As one of the two men who were involved in whatever happened last summer, he seems to be the type of person who is able to take charge of a situation. This is proven when he gets to Helen's apartment and he is able to calm the girls down after he learns about Julie's letter.

The tension surrounding the events of last summer continues and more questions arise as details are mentioned. That Barry talks about hammering out a dent in the car, painting it and selling it gives more clues as to what might have happened. The pieces of the puzzle are being pulled together.

Another piece of the puzzle is that Ray has returned to town, his physical characteristics drastically changed so he is nearly unrecognizable. This fact also seems to connect with the mysterious events now that are somehow connected to what happened last summer.

Finally, one must ask whether Barry is becoming paranoid, or if he really is being followed as he returns to the frat house after talking to Helen and Julie. If he is merely



paranoid, then it is likely that he has a guilty conscience, and he must work that out for himself, but if he is really being followed, at the same time Julie receives the strange letter, the question becomes one of how far will this person go to seek revenge on this group of young people who committed some horrible act?



Chapter 3.

Chapter 3. Summary

When she gets home after visiting Helen, Julie notices a strange car in her driveway. She enters the house and her mother says that Ray is there visiting. He has let his hair grow and now has a beard. Julie's mother leaves them alone to get reacquainted, and they talk about why Ray had returned.

They talk about the events of last summer. Julie insists that if Ray, rather than Barry had been driving, things would have turned out differently. Ray is not so sure. He sees the events as an accident and even though he called an ambulance, he didn't insist that they return to the site and wait for the police to arrive. He admits to being bothered by the events and tells Julie that she has been too. Julie admits that she sent yellow roses to the family in her effort to "do something."

Ray has decided that they should no longer keep the events of last summer a secret. That is why he has returned: the feelings of guilt have been wrecking him, and he wants to break the pact and come clean with what they did, what happened.

Just before they can make any kind of agreement as to what they should do, the doorbell rings and Bud is picking up Julie for their date.

Chapter 3. Analysis

Can four teenagers keep an accidental death a secret? These four want to, but when Ray comes home, he admits that keeping the secret is impossible. He's an emotional wreck and he wants to dissolve the pact and come clean with what they did. Julie is just as affected by holding the secret, but she is sure that Barry will refuse to allow them to talk about it. Julie knows that if Barry won't talk or allow them to talk about it, Helen won't fight him on the issue. They seem to be at an impasse.



Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 Summary

Helen loves her life. Today, as she lounges by the pool soaking up the sun, she reflects back to how she came to be where she is. Helen realized at an early age that she had more looks than brains and spent a lot of effort refining her physical appearance. This effort has paid off. As a Golden Girl she can work at her job without breaking her back.

Helen's tanning session is interrupted by a nice-looking young man who says he has recently moved into the apartment complex. After he sits down the introductions are made and Helen makes sure to tell Collingsworth Wilson that she has a boyfriend who attends the university and visits often. Collie, as he is sometimes called, flirts with her a bit and tells her that he can't tell if she's getting sunburned.

Helen decides that she would be better off out of the sun; a sunburn would not look good on camera, and leaves the pool area to return to her apartment. As she reaches her door, she notices a note taped to it: a picture taken from a magazine advertisement, no words, just a picture of a boy on a bike.

As Chapter 5 opens, Ray receives a letter similar in style to the letter Julie had received and he knows this is no joke. His letter is a cut-out of the newspaper story of 10 year old David Gregg who was hit by a car while riding his bike home from a friend's house. David was not killed at the site of the accident, but died on his way to the hospital.

Ray knows that someone else really does know what they did last summer. He reflects on how his life changed that fateful evening when he and his friends ran into young David. How his father, a former football player approved of his friendship with Barry, a high school football player, and Julie, a cheerleader, and while his father never expressed dissatisfaction with Ray's inability to play football- he was a comparatively small young man- Ray knew his father would have wanted him to play. But if he couldn't play, at least he could have friends that did, and a girlfriend in the "game."

Ray's reverie brings him to that night last summer, how he and Barry flipped for the back seat and he won so when they came around the curve, Barry driving too fast, Ray and Julie didn't have a chance to respond. After they went to a phone booth to call for help for the boy, only Julie insisted they go back to help him. Barry and Helen insisted that turning themselves in would serve no purpose and since Barry was 18 and the only adult in the group, and he was the one responsible, he would be the hardest punished and would probably go to jail. When they voted on whether or not to go back, Julie was the only one to vote in favor of going back. When Ray sided with Barry over her, she broke off their relationship.



Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 Analysis

Whoever knows what happened last summer is picking on the girls, supposedly the weakest links in the group of friends, because after Helen is finished sunbathing and meets Collingsworth Wilson, a good-looking friendly fellow who has just moved into the apartment complex, she returns to her apartment to find a picture of a boy on a bike that has been cut from a magazine.

In Chapter 5, it is obvious that by not standing up for his true convictions, Ray has lost a lot, and he finally realizes it. In trying to save his friendship with Barry, he lost his relationship with his girlfriend, Julie. He was so tormented by his actions that he had to move away, and in doing so, lost his relationship with his other friends and family. He even lost himself in this conflict as evidenced by his attempt to "hide" with long hair and a beard. The irony in this situation is that in attempting to save his relationship with Barry, he also lost his relationship with him.

The other irony of the situation is that if Ray would take the blame for the accident, he would have saved Barry from being prosecuted as an adult. Since Ray refused to lie and say that he was driving, Helen and Barry accuse him of "throwing Barry to the wolves." This accusation has the affect of turning the attention away from the real offender, Barry, and creates a situation where now Ray, the innocent one, must justify his actions.

The vote to keep a pact and not tell what happened is an example of how peer pressure can be stronger than even personal ethics when Julie, who has been the most insistent about returning to help the boy, agrees to keep quiet.



Chapter 6 and Chapter 7

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 Summary

Barry is visiting his parents for dinner. His mother wants him to spend the upcoming summer with her visiting relatives, but Barry tells them he wants to go to Europe with his friends and live in hostels all summer. The difficulty lies in the fact that he expects his parents to pay for this summer trip because they have the money, yet it's not what they want him to do. Barry admits that if he wants their money he has to live by their standards.

Barry also reflects on his relationship with Helen. He wants Helen as a status symbol but doesn't want to commit to her. He understands that he started dating Helen because she was good-looking, but he continued dating her because he knew that her socio-economic status was a bother to his overbearing mother. Now, he finds himself feeling trapped because he is bound to her by the secret of the accident last summer and his desire to have the "Golden Girl" on his arm.

When Barry returns to the frat house, he is told that he's missed a phone call from Helen and he decides to wait until morning to call her back. The next phone call he gets is from some girl. He believes it's Helen and is determined to break up with her over the phone. His phone conversation is short and he leaves the frat house. He heads over to the football field where the fireworks are going off in celebration of the Memorial Day Holiday. He waits briefly and is blinded by a flashlight in his eyes. He cannot hear, but feels the shot as a bullet rips through his stomach.

Barry is still the center of attention as the rest of the group learn that he was shot in Chapter 7. Ray's father tells Ray about the shooting after he hears it on the radio. Ray is unable to find out any information from the hospital other than that Barry has been admitted. He calls Julie. Helen hears about the shooting just before she has to go on the air to give the weather report, and later Collie tells Helen that he was watching television in the recreation room of his apartment complex when he heard of the shooting. That he hurried down to the television station to help Helen, knowing this is her boyfriend reinforces his desire to be her friend. Helen is hysterical after hearing the news and her co-workers are happy to have him help with her.

On their way to the hospital, Helen shares with Collie some of the details of her relationship with Barry. When they get to the hospital, Barry's mother is appalled that Helen has shown up. Helen argues that she is more to Barry than just a friend, but Barry's mother wants her to leave. She tells Helen this is all her fault, if she hadn't called Barry on the phone to come and meet her this wouldn't have happened. Helen denies making the phone call stating that she had called earlier in the day and was waiting for him to call her back.



Collie agrees with Barry's mother that Helen should wait elsewhere, and he takes her to the general waiting room.

When Julie gets the phone call from Ray about Barry's shooting she is shocked and horrified. She talks to her mother about what happened and wants to be soothed by the thought that the shooting was part of a some sort of demonstration as her mother suggests. She does not want to think that Barry was shot by someone who knows what they did last summer.

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 Analysis

In Chapter 6 Barry's personality is more closely examined and it is evident that he is an egocentric and self-absorbed brat. He manipulates people, his parents, his friends, and his girlfriend, to accomplish only what he wants and then gets rid of them. He admits that he must do what his mother wants him to do because she holds the purse strings. But, he will do everything he can to irritate her to get his own way. He also admits to exploiting Helen, her beauty and her insecurities for his own esteem. He wants to have a "Golden Girl" to show off and he likes the feeling he has of going against his mother's wishes by dating her.

Maybe, finally, Barry has enough courage to do what he has wanted to do- and that is break up with Helen, and he goes to talk to her on the phone. Even though a relationship break-up is painful, this can be seen, from Barry's perspective as the first time he has ever tried to do the right thing. It shows that he wants to stop lying to everyone, including himself.

There is also a feeling of mounting tension as Chapter 6 closes. Up to this point the girls have received "warning" notes, but now one of the group has been physically attacked, probably killed. Whoever knows what they did last summer is stepping up his acts of revenge, and it is probably fitting that Barry as the driver and primary person responsible for David's death, is the victim. The reader is left, however, with the feeling that Barry probably won't be the only victim.

Chapter 7 illustrates the reactions the other have to the shooting. The group's reaction emphasizes the fear that they must be feeling as they try to understand what really happened to Barry. There is a sense of urgency in Ray's phone call to Julie and Helen is seen as completely inconsolable when Collie comes to pick her up to take her to the hospital. There is an overall sense of panic that creates a more dangerous feeling to the events.

Barry's mother is rude to Helen when she comes to the hospital to check on Barry. These rude comments reinforce the earlier observation that Barry's family did not like Helen, rather they looked down on her. This creates another source of tension on which to base the development of the main "horror" of this story leaving one to wonder what will happen next.



Chapter 8 and Chapter 9

Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 Summary

Helen awakens late the next morning. It was three am when she learned that Barry was out of surgery, with a good prognosis but no details, and Collie took her home from the hospital. She reviewed the events of the previous evening in her mind, still feeling upset that Barry's parents had not listened to her when she told them that she had not called Barry on the phone.

She wonders who could have called Barry, however and remembers a conversation she had had with her sister Elsa on the night of the accident. When she came home Elsa noticed her eyes were red from crying and proposed that the reason Helen had been crying was because Barry had broken up with her. When Helen said no, they were fine, Elsa said it would happen sooner or later.

Helen's reverie is interrupted by a visiting Collie who wants to know how she is and how Barry is. He asks several questions as to the state of Barry's health. Helen gets upset because she can't go visit him or call the Coxes to get information.

Collie questions the motive of the shooter. He says he knows they've ruled out enemies and a drug deal, and supposes it couldn't have been an accidental shooting like what sometimes happens when cleaning a gun. Collie suggests that there is something in Barry's past that might have caused someone to call and lure him out to the football field. He suggests this might have been planned.

Helen refuses to believe this to be the case and Collie leaves. After he is gone, Helen goes to her dresser and opens the top drawer. She pulls out the magazine picture of a boy on a bike.

Julie is not surprised in Chapter 9, to see Ray parked in the school parking lot waiting to pick her up after school. They eventually decide to go to the picnic spot near where the accident happened. Ray insists they talk about the events of that night, in spite of Julie's reluctance and fear. He believes, especially in light of what happened to Barry, that the accident isn't over, they need to talk about it and deal with it in a way they haven't for the last year.

Ray has put the recent incidents together and admits to Julie that he believes that the same person who sent the notes was the one who shot Barry. Their discussion leads to speculation as to how the phone call fits into the events leading up to Barry's getting shot.

One possibility leads to another and they determine to talk to Barry as soon as he is allowed visitor and to Helen as soon as she is finished at the station. They read, again, the article that Ray received in the mail and Julie decides that they should go to the



boy's house and talk with his parents. In spite of Ray's objections, Julie is determined to go with or without him.

Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 Analysis

Each chapter is like a new piece in a puzzle. And putting it together takes a little time. There is frequent return to the finished picture and Helen is full of justification for their behavior the night of the accident. She believes that in driving fast to get to a phone to call for help, they are "lucky" they weren't all killed on a curve. She also believes that running over the boy on the bike was an accident that could not have been avoided, and that Barry was not at fault, rather the boy was. He shouldn't have been out riding his bike after dark, anyway.

There's Collie coming around to take her to the hospital after the story of Barry's shooting breaks and then he comes over to her apartment to see how she is the next day. At this point one wonders if his questions about Barry's health are merely his way of showing his friendship and concern over Helen's obvious worry, or does he have an ulterior motive? His constant questioning and suggestion that this shooting was planned and Barry was lured out of the house has an unsettling affect on Helen. She locks the door after he leaves and nervously takes the picture of the boy on the bike out of her drawer. She believes that whoever shot Barry, knows what Barry and the rest of them did last summer.

As Chapter 9 opens it becomes evident that the events to date have reached a point where something has to be done. Each of the four "friends" has had some contact with a person or persons of the past and has been emotionally, or in Barry's case, physically, damaged by that contact. Now, is the time for action and the two friends, Ray and Julie, who were almost victims of the event themselves as they were merely passengers in the car and at least tried to convince Barry to return to the scene of the accident, are going to try to get to the bottom of things.

Their reluctance to reenter the world of a year ago is evident in their argument of how to proceed. Julie, at first doesn't even want to go to the picnic spot where they had been "partying" before the accident, but she goes. Then Ray doesn't want to go to the home of David, the boy they killed to talk to his parents. Julie's insistence shows that once she decides to do something, she's going to get it done. There is the question, however, of what purpose will this really serve in setting things to rights for David's family and why, since Ray wants to set things right, is he reluctant to do this?



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Julie and Ray drive past the house of David's family, then park down the road and begin walking back. Julie feels sick but is determined to continue. When they get to the house and ring the doorbell, it seems nobody is home, but a young woman, perhaps a few years older than Julie, meets them. She introduces herself as Megan, a hairdresser from town, and offers Julie some iced tea. Ray goes to the telephone.

While drinking tea, Julie helps Megan take down laundry and they talk. Megan tells her that her mother is in a "hospital" because of emotional problems. She then relates how her little brother, Davey, was spending the night at a friend's house and wanted to come home, but their mother refused to go and get him. She tells Julie that the rangers at the park knew there were four teenagers at the park that night, but they couldn't tell who any of them were.

Julie is devastated by the story and hopes Ray will hurry up with his phone call. Megan apologizes for upsetting her with her family's story.

When Ray finally appears in the doorway, Julie is ready to leave. They say goodbye to Megan who offers to "do" Julie's hair if she would stop into her shop sometime. As they are walking back to the car, Julie and Ray discuss the situation and Julie comes to the conclusion that they killed David, they ruined a whole family.

Julie wishes they hadn't gone to see about David's family. She feels even more guilty knowing that they are "real" people not just names in a newspaper article. Julie's next conclusion is that the Gregg family doesn't have anything to do with the notes and Barry's shooting. She tells Ray that Megan couldn't have done anything and her parents are out of town. Ray, however, believes there's something more going on around there. The house is being painted- typically something a man would do, and Megan had men's shirts hanging on the clothesline.

For some reason that Ray cannot verbalize, he just doesn't feel comfortable about the way things look at the Gregg home.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Chapter 10 opens with a description of David's family's home. This is the most description of any place (so far) in the book. This fact is noteworthy because it gives this place real meaning- this is the only place worth describing in the book. This is the home of a little boy who was killed. It puts David and his family in "place" and gives them importance. This importance is felt by Julie when she tells Ray that she wishes they hadn't come to the house. Before, the Greggs were merely names in the newspaper. Now, after seeing his home and talking to his sister, David Gregg is a real person, and



she feels even more guilty; she didn't just help kill a little boy, she helped wreck a whole family.

Ray is unsettled by the visit also and does not believe that Megan is there alone. The partially painted exterior of the house and the men's shirts drying on the line attest to that fact, but Ray can't figure out exactly how everything fits.

Neither of them seems to remember Megan's comment about her older brother whom she says has "left the nest." This comment leaves the attentive reader wondering where he might have gone to live.



Chapter 11.

Chapter 11. Summary

Julie and Ray go to Helen's apartment to find out what she knows about Barry's phone call. They meet Helen's sister Elsa who has been there to console her sister. Helen is glad to get rid of Elsa and talk to Ray and Julie. Helen tells them that she did not make the phone call and they discuss ways to get into the hospital to talk to Barry. Helen tells them that Barry's parents are letting no one in to see him.

Ray suggests that they dissolve the pact and tell the police what happened so as to prevent further attacks on themselves. Helen says no, she won't agree to that. She argues that the shot could have come from some drug addict and had nothing to do with the accident. Then, if they tell, Barry will be punished and put in jail besides being shot and that's not fair to him. She believes he has suffered enough.

They all agree that they need to talk to Barry, but there is no phone in his room and his visitation is limited. Ray volunteers to call Barry's parents. When he gets Barry's father on the phone he learns that Barry is recuperating. He will survive but may be paralyzed, although Barry does not know this, and they are not going to tell him for awhile as it may be merely temporary.

Ray is told that he is not able to visit Barry and that Barry says the phone call was from Helen Rivers.

Chapter 11. Analysis

Julie and Ray are in a panic to get to the bottom of the shooting and fear that the shooter may not stop with Barry. Helen continues to believe that the shooting and the accident have nothing to do with each other and refuses to dissolve the pact and tell the police what happened. With her attitude holding things up, Ray can only continue as he has been, with guesses and assumptions.

Perhaps Ray, Barry, Julie, and Helen could get to the bottom of this and make some plans if they could all just sit down together and talk face-to-face, but Barry's father tell him that he cannot have any visitors.



Chapter 12.

Chapter 12. Summary

Ray and Julie have left Helen's house and are going home. Julie is nearly hysterical and can't understand why Mr. Cox, Barry or Helen would lie about the phone call. She thinks about Megan alone at the Gregg house and the picnic area. Ray finally figures out that they could all be telling the truth, their own truth of the situation, which leads them to the conclusion that somebody could have been imitating Helen on the phone.

Julie concludes that the woman on the phone could have been Helen's sister Elsa. She recalls meeting for the first time when Helen invited her over to see her prom dress. Elsa was rude and derogatory towards Helen and Julie believes that she would be jealous enough of her to have wanted to hurt Helen by hurting Helen's boyfriend.

Ray agrees, Elsa is a possible prospect, but when dropping Julie off at her house, he warns her to be careful. She warns him to be careful, too. When Julie enters the house she goes to the kitchen and has a little talk with her mother who is baking bread. Julie notices as she works, that her mother is no longer a young woman, she has gray streaks in her hair and purple lines on her hands. Julie realizes that she loves her mother and tells her so, stopping just before blurting out the whole story of what happened a year ago and what is happening now.

After Bud calls and invites her to a movie the following evening, Julie realizes that the urge to tell her mother everything has passed and they continue through the evening with a "normal" conversation.

Chapter 12. Analysis

Julie describes the situation to be like a Merry-go-round, with everything going in circles and no answer to anything. The clues as to the identity of Barry's attacker come for the reader at the same rate that they come for the characters. It's a slow and tension-laden process.



Chapter 13.

Chapter 13. Summary

Barry is in the hospital. He realizes that he can't feel his legs, but he also doesn't feel much pain because the doctors have kept him pretty doped up. He remembers telling his father that it was "Helen" on the phone, and looking at the roses she sent him, he wishes Helen could somehow know that he was through with her, that he had turned her picture over even before the shooting. Even after finding out that Helen had come to visit him with, as his mother said, "a boyfriend," Barry has a difficult time accepting the idea that there is not relationship and Helen is free to date anyone she wants.

His anger is mounting as his mind tells him that Helen has been two-timing him and that instead of breaking up with her, he had been too concerned about hurting her feelings. He could have had gotten "even" with her, but instead he was flat on his back. Barry hates every body while he lies in the bed, including his mother who is driving him crazy with her calming and constant chatter. He finds the thought of recuperating at home disturbing and reminds his mother that as soon as he is healed up he will be going on his European trip. She doesn't argue with him.

Ray shows up to visit stating that he just walked past the on-duty nurses with no problems. Small talk aside, Barry asks Ray what his father told him about his legs. Ray hesitates before he answers, "nothing," so Barry doesn't believe him.

Their conversation continues and leads into Ray's confession that when he was in California he did a lot of thinking about right and wrong and responsibility and doing what's important. Barry is correct in guessing that Ray wants to tell the authorities about their part in the boy's death and he refuses to let the pact dissolve. Ray points out to Barry that breaking the pact now might be the safest thing to do considering the fact that Barry has been shot once already.

Barry says that he'll be safe with his mother standing guard at his bedroom door and Ray brings up the rest of them, Helen in particular. Barry tells Ray he doesn't care about Helen and finally admits that it wasn't Helen on the phone the night he was shot. He says it was another girl. He convinces Ray that he had money in his pocket when he left the frat house that night and after he was shot, the money was gone, and if Ray turns him in for the Gregg kid accident now, it will be like kicking a man when he's down. He begs Ray to leave using the excuse that he doesn't feel too good.

After Ray leaves, Barry thinks about the phone call. He wishes it had been some other girl, or even Helen, but it wasn't. It was a strange voice he had never heard before saying he was a "friend" and needed to talk to him about "something."

This person enticed Barry into meeting him by telling him that he had a picture of a car and a boy on a bike, and he would be willing to sell the picture and the negative it came



from. Barry didn't know if there was such a film that can take pictures in the dark, but he had agreed to meet this stranger under the stands at the athletic field.

Barry finally breaks down at the thought of what happened and the ultimate repercussions of being shot and paralyzed.

Chapter 13. Analysis

The gunshot wound brings Barry's true personality to the forefront. He hates everyone and blames everyone. He is impatient with his mother, condescending towards his father and accuses Helen for being a two-timer and a liar. The irony of this accusation is that He has been doing all the things he accuses Helen of doing.

His desperation is keen and he lies to everyone . He lied to his parents when he told them that Helen was the caller the night he was shot. He lies to Ray when he tells him that it was another girl who called him the night he was shot. He lies to himself when he continues this game of lies.

Barry does not shed a tear for the child he killed or his friends who lives have changed dramatically because of his failure to be honest a year ago, but he cries for himself and the fact that he is paralyzed. Again, and still he refuses to admit that he is the one in the wrong.



Chapter 14.

Chapter 14. Summary

Ray is relieved as he leaves the hospital. He fully believes Barry's story that the phone call was merely a robbery. As he is leaving he is stopped by Bud, Julie's boyfriend who asks why Ray is at the hospital and how Barry is doing. Bud asks more questions and he admits that he doesn't much like hospitals. Then he invites Ray to go to the drugstore to get something to eat with him. Ray agrees more out of curiosity about Julie's boyfriend than out of hunger.

Their conversation revolves around Julie. Bud thinks because Julie sent Barry a plant that she is dating him, but Ray assures him that she is not. He explains that they all used to "go around" together but that after last summer they don't anymore.

When Ray admits that he came back to try and make things work with Julie, Bud accuses him of running away and tells him he can't expect everything to be back to normal.

Finally, Ray realizes that he is giving more information to Bud, than he is getting from Bud and changes the conversation. Bud, however, refuses to talk about his time in the hospital explaining that war is hell, and it's the toughest on the kids who are innocent victims. This topic is disturbing to Ray and he tells Bud he has to make some phone calls. Bud tells Ray not to bother calling Julie because he is going out with her tonight. Then he predicts that Julie will not be going out East for school in September.

Ray argues that nothing will keep Julie from going, but Bud says that he will be the reason Julie will not go. Furthermore, he says that Julie doesn't know it yet. Upset now, Ray leaves the table and stops in the phone booth by the door to call Julie. When he only gets a busy signal he gets unreasonably angry that she isn't sitting home by the phone waiting for him to call.

Ray finally realizes that Bud, with his quiet and serious manner could be attractive to a girl like Julie and he becomes determined to break them up. He is so lost in his thoughts about Bud and Julie that he doesn't notice the car that followed him all the way home.

Chapter 14. Analysis

Bud asks questions about Barry and how he is doing in this section. Why is he so interested in how Barry is? Why does he invite Ray to have "lunch" with him? On the surface, Bud is a nice guy whom Julie likes, but doesn't love. Ray is willing to have lunch with Bud so he can find out more about him, why Julie likes him, but he is unknowingly manipulated in giving out way more information about himself and his friends than he learns about Bud.

Even when he asks Bud a direct question about his stay in the hospital he can't get any information from him which gives Bud a mysterious aura.



Chapter 15.

Chapter 15. Summary

When Ray can't get ahold of Julie to talk to her about Barry, he calls Helen and tells her that Barry is depressed and doesn't want to see anyone, but he was lucid and said that the shooting was for robbery. Helen is happy to hear that she won't have to worry about getting shot, too. She decides that she will visit Barry first thing tomorrow morning.

She vows to never forgive Ray for suggesting that they break the pact and tell the police what they did. She believes he would have ruined Barry's life for no reason and thinks he showed little honor for the agreement.

Returning to the poolside, Helen finds Collie talking to another girl. He is attentive to Helen, however, and offers to race her the length of the pool. After he dives in, Helen is approached by the girl who accuses her of stealing all the boys, especially Collie who hasn't looked at anyone else except Helen since he moved in.

As she swims she contemplates her history of not having any "girl" friends, except Julie who could have, but didn't betray her to the other girls with her knowledge that her prom dress had come from the Good Will Store. She doesn't mind now having any girlfriends now because she believes that they are just jealous of her. She remembered moving into her own apartment and how this had been her finest moment. Feeling proud, Helen swims over to Collie who is waiting for her.

Helen is surprised to learn that Collie has a date that night and is embarrassed when he suggests that she expects him to sit around and "moon" over her. He finally admits that the girl he is seeing is someone he knew long before he met Helen. Collie goes on to tell her that she doesn't know anything about him because she's never asked and she should realize that other people are interesting, too. He touches her chin and tells her that he is interesting; she might find him very interesting and she might find that he has a very important place in her life.

Chapter 15. Analysis

Why is Collie so interested only in Helen when he moves in to the apartment even after he knows that Barry is Helen's boyfriend? Considering the situation, the idea that someone knows what happened last summer and the attack on Barry, Helen doesn't seem to be overly concerned about the comments that Collie makes, but it gives the reader pause to ask, just how much does Collie know?

This character of whom so little is known adds tension. Is he the one who left the notes and shot Barry? Because of the POV changes in each chapter, the reader knows more than the characters, so while Helen (and the others) believe that Barry was shot for a



robbery, the reader knows this isn't true. But the question of who, precisely did shoot Barry continues.

This question arises at the same time that the other characters become less concerned because they all believe it was a robbery. This juxtaposition of events opens up an even greater degree of tension- when are they going to find out, or will they ever find out who is on to them?

Helen is in shock that her "friend" whom she's known for less than a week, would be so cruel. She shouldn't be surprised because she doesn't know him at all. She hasn't taken the time to know him, to know what he's interested in doing and what he's capable of doing. He also points out to her how self-centered she really is. This self-centeredness is further developed in the event of Helen befriending someone so quickly.

This also illustrates how shallow she is. She likes how someone looks and talks but doesn't take the time to get to know them.

Helen doesn't understand Collie's comment that if she were to ask questions and pay attention to his answers, she might learn some things. She might come to realize that he may soon have a very important role in her life. This example of foreshadowing leaves one wondering if he intends to become her boyfriend or if he's the one who has been stalking the group.



Chapter 16.

Chapter 16. Summary

Even though it is a beautiful spring evening and all is going well, Julie's mother feels on edge. She has had these feelings off and on through the years and they have usually signaled some sort of mishap. But not always, so tonight Mrs. James just doesn't know what to think, but she is pretty sure, based on Julie's behavior a few nights ago, nearly pleading that she loved her, that something is going to happen tonight. While Julie is getting ready for her date with Bud, Mrs. James waits.

At the River's house supper is finishing up and Elsa and her parents talk about Helen's good fortune. Elsa begrudges Helen's good looks and success and believes she doesn't help the family enough. She says she is glad that Helen's boyfriend was hurt and stomps away.

Walking into the hospital during visiting hours, Barry's mother expresses her concern over Barry's ability to walk again. Mr. Cox argues that she has been overprotective and ran him out of the house only "allowing" him to live in the frat house because she didn't want him to take an apartment. Mr. Cox further states that if Barry has to come home to recuperate for awhile, it won't be forever and they need to let him grow up.

Their worst concerns are over when the doctor tells them that Barry moved his left foot, and they want to rush right in to see him. The doctor refuses to let them stating that Barry is making a phone call to someone. He doesn't know to whom, but it may have something to do with the fact that the first thing Barry said as he watched his foot move under the covers was that he had done a terrible thing and had lied to someone. Mr. and Mrs. Cox can't believe that Barry lied to anyone about anything.

The phone in Helen's apartment rings 12 times before stopping. The man sitting on the sofa just lets it ring as he waits for Helen to come home.

Chapter 16. Analysis

This climactic point in the book begins with the people least affected by the events of the past: the families. On the surface, they seem to be continuing their lives but in reality, the events of last summer and this current summer have put everyone on edge.

It is also through second hand, or even third hand telling that it is learned that Barry has improved, both physically and psychologically. Telling of his change of heart in this manner lends an impersonal feeling to the event that makes one less inclined to be happy for him. The feelings that he deserves to be paralyzed for killing a little boy and then running away, remain.



That Barry is trying to call Helen shows he wants to set things right, but the man in Helen's apartment might mean he's too late. The smear of yellow paint on this man's hand seems insignificant, but since it is mentioned, must have some place in the coming turn of events.



Chapter 17.

Chapter 17. Summary

Helen stayed at the pool longer than she planned after having been left so rudely by Collie. She is now in a hurry to get to the television station, and when she enters her apartment she reaches to answer the ringing phone just as it stops ringing. A man's voice asking if she always leaves her door unlocked startles her, and she whirls around to see Collie sitting in a chair.

He tells her he's been waiting quite awhile and that he wanted to tell her about his date. Helen argues that it's not necessary since they don't have any attachments. While he agrees, he pulls his chair around to block the door, then directs her to sit on the sofa. He's going to tell her anyway.

Helen is shocked with disbelief when Collie tells her that he is going to kill his date tonight. When she accuses him of "making a joke," he tells her he's not joking at all. He continues telling her that he is the half-brother of Davey Gregg, the 10-year-old boy who was killed on his bike last summer. He wasn't even able to come home for the funeral because he was in the hospital in Nam when it happened.

Collingsworth continues telling her about the information he got from his mother about the event surrounding the death of his brother. He explains how he knew there was more than one person in the car from the phone call to the police and that he found Julie by asking about the anonymous roses at the flower shop. He found Helen and Barry through Julie.

When he admits to having shot Barry, Helen is horrified and asks why he just didn't go to the police. Collie admits that he wouldn't have been able to prove anything. Helen says they would have confessed, but Collie doesn't believe that would have been enough.

Helen notices his eyes getting darker, sinister, as he admits that he "cracked up" while he was in Nam and explains to her that the horrors continued for him when he got home. Helen is in shock listening to his story and the phone rings again.

Helen uses this brief distraction to run into the bathroom and lock the door behind her. With only moments to think, Helen realizes that it had been Barry, not Ray who had lied to her about the shooting. But she can't quite figure out why; she comes to the realization the Barry was not thinking at all of her safety or that of Ray or Julie.

All is quiet outside the door in the apartment until finally Helen realizes that Collie is taking the hinges off the door. Helen has only one thing left that she can do. She smashes the window and crawls through.



Chapter 17. Analysis

The tormentor is revealed. Collingsworth Wilson acts a little strange to Helen at the pool, but she thinks he's just going on a date. When she gets to her apartment and he's hiding in the shadows, the tension turns to horror. Collie's eyes are described as darkening, which adds to the feeling of anger and instability he emits as he tells her about everything he has done and why.

It is a harsh realization for Helen that her "friend" is capable of murder. Even at this point, her shallow self-centered personality will not allow her to believe what is really happening, so she vacillates between reality and disbelief. She has enough presence of mind, however, to lock herself in the bathroom away from him.



Chapter 18.

Chapter 18. Summary

Mrs. James asks Julie to stay home from her date tonight because she is having one of her "feelings." Julie tells her that she can't call Bud to cancel because he's moved to a new apartment and doesn't have a phone hooked up yet. Her mother insists and finally, since Julie doesn't have strong feelings for Bud, especially since Ray came back to town, she concedes and says she will not go out with him tonight.

When Bud comes to pick her up, Julie tells him her mother isn't feeling well and she would like to stay home, maybe just watch television, but Bud doesn't want to take no for an answer and he accuses her of wanting to get back with Ray. Julie disagrees and again, invites him to watch television with her or go to a movie without her. Bud says he will leave and asks her to walk with him out to the car.

Julie can't shake her own unsettled feelings and finally tells herself to stop, that this is just Bud Wilson, Collingsworth Wilson whom she'd dated at least a dozen times. She agrees to walk out to the car with him but shudders when he holds her hand. She is nervous about what he wants to talk to her about but refuses to get into his car. Finally, she tells him that she does still have feelings for Ray and that they should stop seeing each other.

Bud asks why she's never called him Collie and explains that his little brother, Davey, gave him the name of Bud. Julie thinks he is acting strange and wants to go back into the house to be with her mother who doesn't feel good.

Bud tells her that his mother doesn't feel good either and he has a "score" to settle with her and the other three. He believes she is the most important because she sent flowers as a joke.

Bud's hands begin to tighten around her throat as he berates her about the yellow roses representing sunshine that she sent to Davey's funeral. She could send flowers but she couldn't go and sit with a hurt little boy, alone in the dark.

As she realizes what Bud is doing, Julie thinks about her future and the life she has yet to live. The next thing she knows is that someone is telling her to wake up. She recognizes the voice and realizes she is not dreaming.

Ray is there and explains that Barry had called him and told him the truth about the shooting, released them all from the pact of secrecy and told him to get ahold of both Helen and Julie. When Ray couldn't get her on the phone, he came over to the house, found her being strangled and hit Bud over the head with a flashlight.

He continued that he remembered seeing yellow paint on Bud's hand when they had had lunch together. That yellow paint reminded him of the painting on the house when



they visited Megan. He put two and two together and realized that Bud was Megan's brother.

Mrs. James is bewildered by this turn of events and even more so when the police show up after getting a phone call from Helen. Ray admits that Helen was correct. There has been trouble and it started last summer. Julie and Ray are going to tell the police all that has happened; even though they cannot undo the deed they can face it, and the reader is left with the feeling that Julie and Ray have become a couple once again.

Chapter 18. Analysis

When Julie's mother asks her to stay home tonight because of her "feelings," Julie considers it briefly, but it's not until Mrs. James asks if Bud didn't recently move into the Four Seasons complex that the horror of the situation is realized and questions are raised: who exactly is Bud? and that thought brings up even more questions: Did Julie ever meet Collie? Did Helen ever meet Bud? Didn't Collie just tell Helen he was going to kill his date to make a point that ANY killing is wrong, but Julie has a date with Bud tonight? There is hope that the conclusion that Bud IS Collie, is wrong.

When Julie tries to shake her unsettled feelings by saying to herself, this is just "good ol' Collingsworth Wilson" the feeling of a need to be aware and watch out become obvious. The tension of what will happen next intensifies as Bud chokes Julie until she is unconscious, and it is only after she awakens that the reader learns that Helen is still alive and called the police, and Ray was able to figure out who Bud really is.

The conclusion that has Ray and Julie realizing once again their love for each other, and everyone willing to go to the police to tell what happened last summer gives this story as happy an ending as possible considering one boy is dead and another young man is ruined because of his desperation to find some sort of consolation for his brother's death.

Finally, even though Ray and Julie are the two people who at least wanted to go back and help young David, the tragedy of the events prevents overt feelings of happiness for them as they find love again.



Characters

Julie James

Julie is a cute red-headed high school senior who was just accepted at her college of choice, Smith. She lives with her mother and has changed tremendously over the last year. She cannot get the events of last summer off her mind. She gets the "letter," which sets the events of this spring in motion. She had wanted to go back to the scene of the accident and sent yellow roses to the funeral in an attempt to appease her guilty conscience.

Ray Bronson

Ray Bronson is the boyfriend Julie broke up with because they were spending too much time together. Ray could have been the driver who struck and killed the boy on the bike and he wanted to return to the scene and see if there was anything they could do to help, but he agrees to the pact not to tell and runs away to California in a futile attempt to appease his feelings of guilt. Ray receives the third cryptic message: a letter in the mail that includes only a well-worn copy of the newspaper article of the accident.

Barry Cox

Barry was the driver of the car that hit and killed David Gregg. He is especially concerned about getting caught because he was 18, an adult at the time of the accident. It was Barry's decision not to stop or go back to help, and he insisted they all create a pact not to tell what happened. He dates Helen among others and is physically attacked - shot by someone who tells him on the phone that he has pictures of what happened last summer.

Helen Rivers

Helen is a beautiful, selfish young woman who is dating Barry and doesn't realize that he is just using her. She was Barry's biggest supporter of keeping the pact. She befriends Collie when he moves into the Four Seasons apartment complex where she lives and is the recipient of the second cryptic message: a picture of a boy on a bike taped to her apartment door.

Bud

Bud is an older boy who is more serious and has been in the military. He is Julie's new boyfriend. He's going to have a little competition for Julie's affections now that Ray has come back to town.



Collingsworth Wilson

Collingsworth is also known as Collie. He's the new guy in town. Collie has just rented an apartment in the complex where Helen lives. He seemingly flirts with Helen, but has more serious business than dating in mind.

David Gregg

David, or Davey as he is affectionately known as by his older brother, is the 10-year-old boy who is run over and killed by four teenagers one night while riding his bike home from a friend's house along a dark winding road.

Megan Gregg

Megan Gregg is David's sister whom Julie and Ray go to visit on pretense of needing to use the telephone. It is while visiting her that Ray gets some clues as to the identity of their stalker.

Mrs. James

Mrs. James is Julie's mother. She loves her daughter and recognizes the change in her. She is concerned that something happened to cause the change. She also has feelings of premonition that often come true and warns her daughter about Bud.



Objects/Places

The Letter

The first letter was evidence that someone knows what they did last summer. It was delivered to Julie and said only, "I know what you did last summer."

The Pool at Helen's apartment complex

The pool at Helen's apartment complex is the gathering place for the young and beautiful; it is symbolic of Helen's new wealth and where Helen meets Collingsworth Wilson.

The picture of a boy on a bike

The picture of a boy on a bike was found taped to Helen's door as an indication that "someone" knows what happened last summer and that Helen, as well as Julie, was involved.

Newspaper, story of the accident

A faded copy of the newspaper story of the accident was sent to Ray in an envelope addressed in the same way the letter to Julie was addressed. It is another threat that somebody knows what happened, and who was involved.

The Frat House

As a college student, Barry lives in the Frat House. It is from here that he gets the phone call luring him outside to the fireworks where he is shot in the stomach.

Fireworks

Barry is shot in the stomach during the on-campus fireworks display so that no one can tell that a gun was fired.

The Picnic Place

The picnic place at the park is where the friends had partied before the accident a year ago. The same place where Julie and Ray return to a year later to discuss their course of action and how to move forward.



Winding Road

Barry drove recklessly down this winding road and abruptly came upon a boy riding a bike. The ensuing accident ultimately led to the loss of young David's life and set in motion the current events.

The Car

Barry was driving recklessly when he ran over David on the winding road. Barry and Ray pounded out the dent, repainted the car and sold it so as not to be discovered.

The Hospital

Barry ends up in the hospital after being shot. His parents are very protective and won't allow him to have visitors other than family. The hospital is also a reflection of the hospital that Bud/Collie was in after being injured in Nam, and where he was when he learned that his brother had been killed.

Megaphone Necklace

Julie wore a necklace with a megaphone charm when she went to the flower shop and bought the yellow roses for David's funeral. It was obvious enough that the owner of the flower shop remembered it and was the hint that Collie/Bud needed to find his brother's killers.



Themes

Conflict: Man vs Himself and Man vs the unknown

Even before the accident, these young people are living with personal conflicts that are normal for their age. Who do they date, what should they do after graduation. After the accident a splitting of conflict resolution is evident. Ray and Julie are tormented by the events and their agreement to keep quiet, while Barry and Helen continue with their lives, seemingly unaffected.

Ray's conflict between accepting responsibility for this horrible act and living up to his "word" after he agreed to the pact of secrecy has caused him to leave town, change his appearance and basically throw his life away. Julie is preparing to do the same thing.

Immediately after the accident, both Ray and Julie acted on their feelings of personal conflict by doing something. Ray called the police and reported the accident and Julie sent yellow roses to the funeral. These two acts are what gave Collingsworth Wilson the information needed to track down the killers of his brother.

This leads to the next conflict. This one the whole group has to deal with and that is how to protect against the unknown. They meet and talk and try to figure out who could be sending the notes, who could know about what happened last summer. But are able to come up with nothing. Even when Barry is shot and it looks as if the others could also be in physical danger, he choose to fight against the unknown by pretending it doesn't exist. He lies to his parents saying that it was Helen who called him and he lies to Ray saying it was some other girl and a basic robbery.

Both Helen and Julie nearly die because of Barry's inability to deal with his unknown attacker by telling the truth. It is only when Barry approaches his problems head on and admits that things are out of control that he calls Ray. He tells the truth about the caller, which in effect stops all the lies, and Ray is able to get to Julie in time to prevent her death.

Secrets and Lies

Keeping the secret for almost a year has adversely affected the lives of these four young people, Julie and Ray in particular. Julie has become serious and quiet compared to her smiley, bubbly self of the past. She's broken up with her boyfriend, Ray, because of her inability to face the facts of what and tries to avoid her old friends. This might be good for her studies, proven by her acceptance letter from Smith University, but the rest of her life is suffering. Her relationship with her mother, her friends are suffering, too. She is also willing to give up all that is familiar and run away because she can't face up to the secret that she is hiding.



Ray, too, is adversely affected by the events of last summer and his inability to talk about it. Even though he "ran away" shortly after the incident he has found no peace. He has learned that changing his looks and "wishing" the incident away does not actually make it go away. He is still tormented by his feelings of guilt and has returned to try and make amends.

Barry has been lying all his life so keeping this a secret doesn't seem to bother him much. He is still able to go to college, have friends and date Helen, among others. He perpetuates the misery his friends are feeling after he lies to his parents saying that Helen was the one who called him the night he was shot. Then he compounds the danger when he lies to Ray saying that it was some other girl who called him that night. He lies to himself thinking that he and the group are going to be able to live normal lives after killing a young boy.

Helen is probably the least affected by the lies of all four of the group involved with the killing. She continues living in her apartment, working her glamorous job and dating Barry. She was an instigator in the original lie telling the others they couldn't talk: Barry would be punished for the act as an adult, and she perpetuates the lie by continuing her self-centered life.

Lying and keeping secrets have only brought about negative results. The fact that Barry is shot, Ray has run away, Julie plans to run away and Helen lives in a superficial world proves that honesty is the best policy.

Friendship or Peer Pressure

The line between friendship and peer pressure gets blurred in *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. The relationships between these four young people starts out looking like true friendships. Two couples approximately the same ages; they go out together; they laugh and have fun together; they have similar interests. It is obvious, however that their friendship cannot survive the death of a child and the secret-keeping of the incident. Their friendship as a group dissolves as does the dating relationship between Ray and Julie.

The differences in personality and personal character is evident the night of the accident when Ray and Julie want to stop and help. When that doesn't happen they want to go back and help. That's when the change happens. Instead of sticking by their own moral values, they are persuaded by Barry and Helen to keep this horrible secret. Keeping a secret of this nature is not a friend doing something for another friend; this is a person being forced into a situation by a peer.

The event that split up all the friendships within the group was not only natural, but also necessary for the events to occur as they did. Bud/Collingsworth Wilson had to depend on them not being friends or wanting to meet each other's friends in order for him to date Julie and at the same time "flirt" with Helen.



Duncan gives several glimpses into the personalities of Ray and Julie that gives plausible explanation as to why they do not fight against this peer pressure and tell anyway. Part of the reason is that they value their friendships and in their youth believe that they can just forget about it and go along with their lives.

As the story progresses, both in current time and in details of the past year, it becomes easier to see the progression of the relationships. There is no friendship left, even between Barry and Helen, although she doesn't realize this. The only thing holding them together is the pact secured by the past bonds of friendship.

Perhaps there are exaggerated character flaws within Julie and Ray. How can such seemingly moral young people allow themselves to continue the secrets and lies when even their own lives are falling apart? It doesn't seem realistic that anyone would actually allow themselves to be so manipulated by peer pressure, by a friend, so as to keep this secret. This fact illustrates that friendships can be fraught with danger, too. The pressure from the closest peers can be the most damaging.



Style

Point of View

There is a third person and limited point of view is used with the perspective changing throughout the book.

This point of view is effective for this story for two reasons. First it allows the reader to see how the events of last summer are internalized and affect the lives of each of the characters involved in the incident. The characters' personalities are revealed in an intimate manner.

The second reason is that the reader doesn't know more about who is taking revenge on the group for the accident last summer than the characters do. This instills the desire in the reader to turn the pages quickly and go on reading. Since the reader only knows information about the other characters or events that the characters themselves know, there is a need to find out as quickly as possible who sent the note and what's going to happen next.

Setting

I Know What You Did Last Summer takes place all over the community, in their homes, the university campus, apartment, and frat house. The setting for the most part is secondary to the action in this book. That it is dark and there are fireworks and lots of noise on the night Barry is shot is necessary to move the plot forward, and to emphasize the fact that Barry does not know who his attacker is.

The other important setting would be Barry's hospital room. While the physical description his room is kept to a minimum, it is a setting that gives new insight to the events of the past: Barry is brought flowers which ties into the fact that Julie bought yellow roses for David's funeral and the roses are what lead Collingsworth to find her.

The setting also provides some insight on Collingsworth Wilson's personality. He also spent time in the hospital during Nam and as the story progresses, appears to be suffering with the aftereffects of the injuries and stress.

Basically, the only details on setting, are those that will help move the plot forward.

Language and Meaning

Duncan uses language that fits the age of the characters of the times. While the characters are high school seniors and young college students, the language is easily understood with a style that easily keeps young adult readers interested.

Structure

I know What You Did Last Summer is 197 pages in length and is divided into 18 chapters.

The story unfolds in bits and pieces with hints of characters lives. The limited third person point of view with changing perspective supports this structure. Once the information is pulled out, Duncan, again, piece by piece, connects the events of last summer to the action of today. This has the effect of building tension and keeping the reader in a "what will happen next" curiosity mode that continues right up to the last page.

Lois Duncan wrote I Know What You Did Last Summer was written in 1973 and is one of 48 novelsthat she has written. Besides young adult novels, her collection of work includes magazine articles, short stories, adult novels and non-fiction. She started writing at the age of 10 and sold her first work just three years later. She is the recipient of the Young Readers Awards in 16 states and three foreign countries and she received the Margaret A. Edwards Award in 1992, which honors a living author for a distinguished body of adolescent literature.



Quotes

"With slowly growing horror she stared at the letter, at the one black sentence that peered up at her from the smudged paper." Chapter 1, p. 8

"Crazy, Barry repeated to himself. Why should I suddenly start thinking people are following me just because Julie James pushes the panic button?" Chapter 2, p. 22

"We can't do that (break the pact). But we can talk to the others. We can dissolve the pact, if we're all in agreement." Chapter 3, p. 31

"It was a picture cut from a magazine advertisement. The written message was cut away, and what remained was a drawing of a little boy on a bicycle." Chapter 4, p. 40

"That bike came out of nowhere. We just went around a curve and there it was. No lights. No reflectors." Chapter 5, p. 49

"There had been times over the past months when the thought of Ray had filled Barry with a raging envy. Just the idea of being out from under with no pressure!" Chapter 6, p. 60

"If she hadn't phoned him- if she hadn't insisted on dragging him out to meet her- this wouldn't have happened." Chapter 7, p. 69

"... but something like this, where a guy gets lured out of the house by a phone call- well, it's planned. It has to have been.." Chapter 8, p. 82

"We've agreed that the people who have the most right to hate us are the boy's mother and father... I want to see them," Julie said determinedly. "If we're facing this, then let's really face it. Let's know." Chapter 9, pp. 92 & 93

"We didn't just kill a little boy. We wrecked a whole family!" Chapter 10, p. 103

"When we made the pact we never guessed that anything like this was going to happen. If the person who shot Barry did it as revenge for the Gregg boy's death, why should he stop with shooting one of the four of us? Next time it will be you or Julie or me." Chapter 11, p. 112



"For one crucial instant Julie wavered, torn by the temptation to step forward and throw herself into her mother's arms to weep out the whole dreadful story. What comfort there would be in letting it all out at last!" Chapter 12, p. 125

"It's more than just a moral thing; it's for our own safety. Somebody's got our number-how, we don't know-but somebody does, and whoever it is put a bullet through you the other night. You were lucky. You lived through it. But who's to say he's not going to try it again when you get out of here?" Chapter 13, p. 135

"So lost was he (Ray) in his thoughts that he did not notice another car that pulled into line behind him and followed him at a slight distance the whole way home." Chapter 14, p. 151

"Look at me sometimes. Ask me things. Listen to my answers. You just might find that I've got some things to say that you would be interested in. I may soon have a more important place in your life than you think." Chapter 15, p. 161

"He (Barry) said he'd lied to somebody, and he had to straighten it out before it was too late." Chapter 16, p. 174

"Killing people is never funny, whether you do it with a gun or a grenade or a bomb or with your bare hands. If you run somebody down with a car, a little kid on a bike going home to his mother, that's not funny, either." Chapter 17, p. 178

"We can never erase it, she thought. What we did last summer is done. We can't undo it, ever. But we can face it. That will be something." Chapter 18, p. 198



Topics for Discussion

Why has Ray come back? Why did Ray leave in the first place? Do you agree with Ray that there are certain secrets that simply cannot remain secrets and must be told?

Predict what will happen if they do tell what happened last summer?

Helen quit school to have a job as a Golden Girl with the television station. Was this a good choice? Why or why not?

Were the kids right or wrong to leave the scene of the accident? How could they have helped David? Why not just leave him when they couldn't help?

What should Ray have done when it came time to vote on whether or not they go back? What did his vote for not going back cost him?

Should it have mattered in an accident such as this that the driver was over 18 years of age?

Why did Julie break up with Ray? Do you think this was a valid reason for breaking up with him?

Which of the kids has the highest moral standards? Does s/he really? Why did s/he not live up to them?

Was Barry's mother right to blame Helen for Barry's shooting?

Helen says the accident was not Barry's fault, do you agree or disagree? Why?

Helen also proposes it was the boy's fault; he shouldn't have been out riding a bike in the night. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Why does Julie want to talk to the Gregg's? What purpose will this accomplish?

Why is Ray reluctant to talk with the Gregg's after he states he wants to put the accident behind him and get on with his life?

What purpose did the visit to the Gregg house serve? What questions were answered and what questions were raised by Julie and Ray's visit with Megan?

Ray talks again about breaking the pact and going to the police. Why doesn't he just do it?

A year later, Ray wishes he wouldn't have agreed to the pact: why does he consider this pact to be more important than telling the police what actually happened?



Which is more important, lying in order to keep a promise to friends who have broken the law and hurt somebody or telling the truth to both help a family and clear your conscience?

Why did Barry have a change of heart and want to admit to doing something terrible and lying?

What characteristics does Collie possess that make it so hard for Helen to believe he is capable of killing?

What characteristics does Collie possess that make it easy to believe he is capable of killing?