

The Kill Study Guide

The Kill by Jonas Saul

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Plot Summary

The Kill is an entertaining and unique novel by Jonas Saul. In this novel, Darwin Kostas accidentally kills a mobster after the mobster survives a shootout at a peace meeting between rival mob leaders. Darwin then finds himself a target for execution by the mobster's family, including the man's very powerful and vengeful father. While on his honeymoon in Italy, Darwin is followed by several mobsters who make two attempts on his life before finally kidnapping him and his wife. Darwin finds himself in a position where he must face all his unusual phobias in order to save his wife and his father.

Vincenzo Fuccini arrives at a meeting of rival mob leaders in order to work out a peace treaty between the four powerful families. However, things go wrong from the very beginning when Vincenzo learns that the others are aware that he has brought bodyguards despite orders to the contrary. Then the meeting is overrun by another mob family and everyone is killed except for Vincenzo. Filled with confidence from his apparent invincibility, Vincenzo walks out of the warehouse where the meeting took place and begins to think of the future without these rival families. Vincenzo sees a car coming toward him and he waves for the driver to stop, then shoots at the car, but instead of stopping the car speeds up and runs Vincenzo over.

Darwin Kostas is in Italy on his honeymoon. Darwin has yet to tell his new wife of the threats he has received against his life in the aftermath of running down Vincenzo Fuccini, nor has he told her of the two attempts on his life during their time in Italy. Darwin plans to tell his wife, Rosina, on the plane to Greece. However, on the bus ride, a couple of Fuccini men attempt to stop the bus. This frightens Darwin and he decides the best thing to do is to get his wife out of the way and then throw himself at the mercy of the Fuccinis. Darwin tricks Rosina into getting on the plane without him and leaves. Darwin is greeted outside the airport by two Fuccini men and he allows them to take him captive.

As Darwin learns that negotiations are not going to work with the Fuccinis, his wife gets off the plane and makes her way back to the hotel where she and Darwin had been staying. On her way to get something to eat, Rosina runs into some Fuccini hit men who quickly load her into a car and take her to their boss. Rosina is tortured and threatened. However, when Mr. Fuccini gets word that Darwin somehow killed his men and escaped, Rosina is placed in a room and held as hostage.

Darwin makes his way to a busy bus station where he calls an FBI agent who helped him after the car accident. The agent advises Darwin to stay put and wait. However, Darwin identifies one of the Fuccini men at the station and uses a pencil to force the man to tell him what Fuccini's plans are for him. This is how Darwin learns that Fuccini has his wife. Darwin makes the man take him to Fuccini's office building in Rome where he is holding Rosina. The man then turns the tables on Darwin and tries to take him inside as his hostage, but Darwin gets the upper hand and kills the man by shoving him in front of a moving car. Darwin then breaks into the office building and rescues Rosina, but Mr. Fuccini escapes.



Darwin and Rosina are taken back to Canada in the company of their FBI friend, Greg Stinsen. When they arrive, Greg insists that Darwin and Rosina be placed in a motel under FBI guard because they have learned that the Fuccinis have kidnapped Greg's father. That night, they are also told that Rosina's parents have been kidnapped. Darwin insists on leaving the motel after Rosina goes to sleep, but he is picked up by two FBI agents. These agents tell Darwin they think one of their agents revealed to the Fuccinis where Rosina's parents were being watched and that it was Greg Stinsen. Darwin is then told that he and Rosina will be moved separately to another safe house.

On the way to the safe house, Darwin's car is run off the road. Darwin escapes and seeks help from Rosina's mother, whom he discovers was not kidnapped. It turns out the FBI thought Darwin was working with a rival mob family and they set him up to prove it. Instead, this situation leaves Rosina in the care of an agent who works for the Fuccinis. Darwin sets up a meeting with Fuccini to which the agent brings Rosina. With the help of a motorcycle gang, Darwin kills Fuccini and is placed in witness protection. However, the Fuccinis still manage to get to Rosina and Darwin where they have been relocated in Florida.



Prologue and Chapters 1-3

Prologue and Chapters 1-3 Summary

Prologue. Vincenzo Fuccini is on his way to a peace meeting with three other mob family leaders. Vincenzo has been instructed not to bring bodyguards, so he lets two bodyguards out of the car a short ways from where the meeting is to be held in an airplane hangar. When Vincenzo arrives at the meeting, he learns quickly that the others are aware of his bodyguards and have had them killed. Vincenzo is afraid these men will not take him seriously, so he steals a gun from one of their guards and shoots several of the men. Then chaos breaks out as a rival family not invited to the peace talks arrives and begins killing everyone. Vincenzo manages to survive the initial fight and he kills two surviving bodyguards, leaving himself as the sole survivor. Vincenzo leaves the airplane hangar, thinking of the triumph that such a situation means for his family. Vincenzo sees a car coming and tries to wave it down, then fires a shot at the windshield to get the driver's attention. This only frightens the driver who speeds up and runs Vincenzo over, killing him.

Chapter 1. Darwin Kostas, and his new wife, Rosina, check out of their hotel in Rome and board a bus for the airport. Darwin is worried because he knows the Fuccini family is trying to kill him and that they have made two attempts on his life in the few days they have been in Rome. Darwin has yet to tell his wife about the death threats he has received from the Fuccinis or the attempts on their lives in fear of frightening her. However, on the bus he resolves to tell her on the plane to Greece. As the bus prepares to leave, two men Darwin guesses to be Fuccini henchmen, attempt to board. When this fails, the two men chase the bus down, pull in front to slow it and finally stop the bus. However, the police arrive and keep the men from boarding the bus and taking Darwin.

At the airport, Darwin feels safer around so many other people. He and Rosina make it through security and wait at their gate. Just as the plane begins to board, Darwin tells Rosina he needs to use the restroom and asks her to board without him. Rosina begins to worry when Darwin does not immediately join her. She opens a letter he gave her and realizes he has no intention of joining her, so she leaves the plane as it is pulling away from the gate. At the same time, Darwin walks out of the airport and is immediately kidnapped by the two Fuccini henchmen.

Chapter 2. Darwin quickly realizes there will be no negotiating with the Fuccinis. He decides he has made a mistake giving himself up and goads one of the men into showing him a knife. Because he was abused by his stepmother, Darwin has a dark phobia of sharp things. The phobia, rather than cause him to become frightened, sends him into a rage. Darwin attacks the two men, causing the van they are driving to crash.

Chapter 3. Rosina makes her way back to the hotel where she and Darwin had been staying. She then decides to get something to eat before going to the police. However, on the street Rosina runs into two henchmen from the Fuccini family. Hoping to



negotiate peace for Darwin, Rosina goes with them willingly. Instead, they torture Rosina with water and threaten to sexually assault her in an attempt to punish Darwin for the death of Vincenzo. This torture stops, however, when Mr. Fuccini, Vincenzo's father, learns that Darwin has escaped his kidnapers.

Prologue and Chapters 1-3 Analysis

The prologue tells the reader about Vincenzo Fuccini, a man who is inexperienced and egocentric, a man who believes he is invincible. This man goes to a peace meeting with other mob leaders only to break the rules and set up a situation in which his family is clearly going to come out on the short end unless something big happens. Fortunately for Vincenzo, the meeting is overrun by another family, the Gambinos, who are unhappy with not being invited. Vincenzo somehow survives the bloodbath that follows and thinks that his family will now sit at the top of the mob hierarchy. Unfortunately, he is run over by a man who appears to have been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The Fuccini family wants revenge for Vincenzo's death despite the fact that Vincenzo was something of a screw up anyway. This is the conflict that will move the plot along for the rest of the novel. Vincenzo's death was caused by a phobic writer named Darwin Kostas. Since Darwin has received multiple threats against his life, he has run off to Italy to marry his girlfriend of many years. This proves to be something of a miscalculation because Fuccini's men have followed Darwin and his wife. Darwin tries to head off the problem by confronting it directly after sending his new wife on to Greece without him, but this is again a mistake since Darwin comes to the conclusion that he will not survive such a confrontation. At the same time, Darwin's wife is kidnapped and it is made clear that Mr. Fuccini, Vincenzo's father, plans to kill Rosina in front of Darwin as revenge before killing Darwin as painfully as possible. This leaves Darwin, who is a normal, weak man, to battle against a large mob family.

Darwin suffers from a host of phobias, including a phobia of sharp items and a phobia of the dark. Rather than make Darwin overly afraid, these things make him angry. This stems from abuse Darwin suffered at the hands of his stepmother. These phobias prove to be an asset in Darwin's fight against the Fuccinis because they give him the anger he needs to fight back.



Chapters 4-8

Chapters 4-8 Summary

Chapter 4. Darwin buys new clothes and makes his way to Termini Station. Once at the station, he calls Greg Stinsen, an FBI agent who handled in the aftermath of the accident that killed Vincenzo Fuccini. Greg and Darwin hit it off and Greg had told Darwin to call him whenever he needed help. Greg tells Darwin that he should lay low and promises to be on the first plane out, but says that he will have little power to help Darwin once he arrives. However, Greg promises to get Darwin out of Italy safely.

Chapter 5. Rosina is upset at being held captive by the Fuccinis and is worried about Darwin. Therefore, when one of the henchmen comes to give her dinner and take her to the bathroom, she is feeling less than cooperative. However, this henchman gives her a rosary and tells her he is an undercover cop who will help her escape.

Chapter 6. Darwin knows he needs a weapon, but there are few that he can get easily that do not have sharp points. As he thinks about this, he remembers the abuse by his stepmother and how he eventually killed her with a pitchfork, something he has yet to tell Rosina. Darwin finally settles on a pencil as a weapon. He is surprised to find one of Fuccini's henchmen in the station and he decides to confront him. While holding the pencil on this man, Darwin takes his gun and learns that Fuccini is in Rome and has kidnapped Rosina. Darwin verifies this by going to the hotel and learning that Rosina did check back into the hotel that afternoon. Darwin then forces the henchman to take him to where Fuccini is holding Rosina, an office building in the city. When they arrive, the henchman turns the tables on Darwin and tries to take him in as his captive. Instead, Darwin picks a fight, eventually killing the man by pushing him into traffic.

Chapter 7. Rosina is taken from the room where she is being held and forced to watch the torture of the man who confessed to being a cop. This man is stabbed multiple times and his hamstrings severed. The man dies of his wounds despite Fuccini's desire to send him back to his people alive. Then word comes that Darwin has killed another henchman and is in the building.

Chapter 8. Darwin sneaks into the building by killing a henchman who had come out to look for him. Darwin makes his way to a service elevator and takes it to the floor below the top floor, the one where he knows Rosina is being held. He then takes the stairs and is confronted on the stairwell by three of Fuccini's men. Darwin kills two with lucky shots from a stolen gun and then fights the third, finally killing him as well. He slips out of the stairwell and finds himself confronted by Fuccini in a room where Rosina has been strung up with chains. Darwin has a conversation with Fuccini during which he learns that Fuccini wants to kill someone Darwin loves before killing Darwin himself. Darwin surrenders his weapons in order to get Rosina released. Then the cops swarm the building and Fuccini leaves. Darwin fights Fuccini's torturer, killing him. Then Darwin and Rosina are arrested by the local cops.



A short time later, Darwin and his wife are released by a cop who knows Greg Stinsen. The next morning, Darwin wakes in the hospital and learns that his father has been kidnapped by the Fuccinis.

Chapters 4-8 Analysis

Darwin is told to hide out and keep safe until the FBI agent he befriended can arrive and help him out. However, Darwin finds himself face to face with one of Fuccinis men and he hopes he can use this opportunity to learn something to help himself. Instead, Darwin learns that his wife has been kidnapped by Fuccini and is in imminent danger. This causes Darwin to go after her by himself despite the FBI agent's advice.

Darwin is not a mobster, he knows little about guns and fighting. However, Darwin manages to use the anger produced by his phobias to help him kill six men and rescue his wife. Unfortunately, Darwin is not able to kill Fuccini or do anything to stop the attempts being made against his life. Instead, Darwin and his wife, who are essentially the victims in this situation, are arrested. This leaves Darwin and Rosina in something of a precarious situation as they find themselves faced with battling both the mob and the Italian justice system. However, things quickly change. Darwin and his wife are saved from the justice system, but they soon find that the battle against the Fuccinis has intensified when they learn that Darwin's father has been kidnapped.



Chapters 9-15

Chapters 9-15 Summary

Chapter 9. Darwin, Rosina, and Greg Stinsen fly back to Toronto where Darwin and Rosina are put under FBI protection in a local motel. Later that night, they receive a call telling them that Rosina's parents have been kidnapped as well.

Chapter 10. Frustrated with inaction, Darwin insists on leaving the motel once Rosina is asleep. However, once out of the motel Darwin is picked up by two FBI agents. These agents tell Darwin that because of the circumstances of the kidnapping, they believe one of the FBI agents gave up information to the Fuccinis. They want to test this theory by having Darwin transported to a new safe house with Greg Stinsen, the possible double agent. They want Darwin to make note of any calls Greg makes during the transfer.

Chapter 11. During the transfer, Greg and Darwin are in an accident caused by a car that has run them off the road. Convinced that Greg is a double agent, Darwin makes a run for it in the aftermath of the accident. At the same time, while being transferred to a safe house, Rosina learns of Darwin's accident.

Chapter 12. Darwin walks for hours, finally finding himself in a small shopping center. He calls his father, but gets an FBI agent. However, when he calls the home of Rosina's parents, he gets her mother. Convinced now that the FBI has lied to him about everything, Darwin asks Rosina's mother to help him. She agrees to meet with him. Then Darwin tries to call Rosina at the motel, but is told she has been moved.

Chapter 13. When Rosina wakes in the safe house, the FBI agent tells her that other agents are coming to talk to her. When they arrive, they tell Rosina that they had thought that Darwin was working with the Gambino family based on the fact that he was in an adult store the same night the mob leaders went to the same store to get the location of the peace meeting. This is why the FBI lied to Darwin and Rosina about her parents' kidnapping and Greg Stinsen's trustworthiness. Rosina, however, is adamant that Darwin is not an agent of the Gambinos.

Chapter 14. Darwin meets with Rosina's mother and realizes immediately the FBI is watching. He convinces Rosina's mother to give him the keys to her car and quickly races away, driving to the adult store where the whole thing began. Darwin had gone to the store to buy a tree mint lotion Rosina likes that he can only find in such a place. That day Vincenzo had been in the store and dropped a piece of paper that mentioned the time and location of a phobia meeting. Darwin had seen the note when he handed it back to Vincenzo and decided to go check it out, causing the accident that led to his current predicament.



Chapter 15. Alfred, the FBI agent watching Rosina, tells her about the meeting between Darwin and her mother. At the same time, Darwin overpowers the clerk at the adult store whom he believes works for the Fuccinis and tells him to call Mr. Fuccini. The man confirms that he works for Fuccini and tells Darwin he has already called the Fuccinis. Darwin pushes redial and talks to Mr. Fuccini, arranging a meeting at the same hangar where Vincenzo died. Darwin then leaves ahead of Fuccini's men.

Chapters 9-15 Analysis

Darwin and Rosina return to their hometown of Toronto, but are forced into protective custody by the FBI. This causes a great deal of frustration on Darwin's part, especially with the knowledge that both his father and Rosina's parents have been kidnapped. The situation grows even tenser when Darwin is told that his friend, Greg Stinsen, is a double agent who helped in the kidnapping of Rosina's parents. Unfortunately, this proves to be a lie and Darwin finds himself unable to trust anyone.

Rosina learns things about Darwin she never knew, like the fact that he has been a patron of an adult bookstore. This seems to be an attempt to turn Rosina against Darwin, but in fact it proves to be true. Darwin is an innocent victim of wrong place, wrong time. He simply frequents an adult store because they sell a particular lotion Rosina likes. This store happens to be run by the mob and is where the four leaders of the four families learned of the location of the peace meeting that ended so fatefully for Darwin weeks before. Darwin happened to learn of this location too, but he thought that it was a phobia group meeting. This is why Darwin was at the location where he accidentally ran over Vincenzo. Although both the Fuccinis and the FBI think Darwin might have been hired by the Gambinos to kill Vincenzo, the truth is that he was trying to make himself better in regards to his phobias for Rosina. However, in a twist of fate, these phobias are the only thing keeping him alive at this point.

Darwin arranges a meeting with Fuccini even as the FBI are trying to get him to come back in and trust them despite all their lies. At the same time, Rosina learns some truths about Darwin, but she refuses to believe anything bad about him thus showing her deep loyalty love.



Chapters 16-19

Chapters 16-19 Summary

Chapter 16. Darwin arrives at the hangar where the ill-fated peace meeting took place. Darwin has arranged for a motorcycle gang he previously angered by writing a novel about them to join him there as backup. Darwin has promised the motorcycle gang that he will write another novel showing them in a better light if they will help him survive his meeting with Fuccini. At the same time, it turns out that Alfred, the FBI agent in charge of Rosina, is a double agent for the Fuccinis.

Chapter 17. Alfred drives Rosina to where Darwin is to meet Fuccini and uses her to force Darwin into the car so that he can meet Fuccini somewhere else. Darwin is startled by this change in plan, but before he can decide what to do next, the motorcycle gang members shoot out the car's tires and kill Alfred. Darwin then calls Fuccini and orders that he meet him at the hangar as originally planned.

Chapter 18. Darwin and his group return to the hangar. Darwin sends some of the motorcycle gang members to take Rosina out of harm's way. The rest hide in the area. Fuccini arrives and almost immediately there are gun shots. A group of Fuccini's men bring several of the motorcycle gang to the meeting area. Five are dead, three are injured. Another man is killed as Fuccini talks to Darwin about his blood debt. However, Darwin's father manages to cause a distraction as the leader of the motorcycle gang arrives and takes control of the situation. Fuccini is killed quite gruesomely just as the FBI arrive.

Chapter 19. Darwin and Rosina are living in the witness protection program. Darwin has begun writing again, though under a pseudonym. However, the Fuccini family mob has found them and two men attack them at home. Darwin again uses his phobia, the sight of sharp knives, to drive his anger and use it to kill the invaders.

Chapters 16-19 Analysis

Darwin has decided he cannot trust anyone, so he has decided to end this thing on his own. He arranges a meeting with Fuccini where he plans to kill him. The plan does not go exactly as it should have, adding tension to the plot, but eventually Darwin is successful in bringing about the death of his enemy, though at a heavy cost to his friend/enemy, motorcycle club leader Richard H.

In the end, Darwin clearly has decided to trust the FBI again as he allows them to place himself and Rosina in witness protection. Darwin and Rosina leave their families behind, including Darwin's father despite the fact that he was kidnapped by the Fuccinis previously to get to Darwin. However, this program proves not to be that safe for Darwin and Rosina as the Fuccinis find them and Darwin is forced once again to take matters into his own hands. The ending of the novel suggests that this is only the first in several

novels to follow as Darwin and Rosina face the fact that the Fuccinis will never give up looking to make good on their blood debt.



Characters

Darwiin Kostas

Darwin Kostas is a Canadian writer who publishes six books a year on Amazon. As part of this, Darwin has made an enemy of a motorcycle gang who dislikes how he wrote about them in one of his novels. Darwin also angers a mob family when he accidentally kills Vincenzo Fuccini, the heir apparent of the Fuccini family, in a car accident. This accident has left Darwin a target of the Fuccini family who want his death and that of someone he loves in payback for what he has done.

Darwin runs away to Italy to avoid the Fuccinis only to have them follow him. Darwin's wife is kidnapped in Italy and he must save her before they can torture and murder her as they have done to an undercover cop and one of their own men. Darwin is successful, a surprising turn of events, but the Fuccinis do not give up. They kidnap his father instead, forcing Darwin to again go after them and rescue his loved one. In the end, Darwin is successful, thanks in part to the motorcycle gang he previously angered with one of his novels. However, the death of the Fuccini patriarch does little to end the ordeal for Darwin and his wife.

Rosina Kostas

Rosina is Darwin's wife. The couple has been dating for many years, but because he is Greek and her family is Italian, their parents do not approve. For this reason, Darwin finds it easy to convince Rosina to elope with him. They decide to marry in Italy, out of respect for her family, and finish their honeymoon in Greece, out of respect for his father. However, this honeymoon ends prematurely when the Fuccini family tracks them down and makes several attempts to kill them, finally kidnapping Rosina to draw Darwin out.

Rosina is a strong, loyal wife who refuses to believe anything bad about Darwin. This loyalty is not earned, but given freely. Rosina is unaware of the threats against Darwin by the Fuccini family until her kidnapping. Nor does she know that her husband is prone to violence when his phobias are at the worse. In fact, Rosina has no clue that Darwin murdered his abusive stepmother when she pushed him too far. These things appear to come to light, however, when Darwin become a murderous vigilante as first she and later his father are kidnapped.

Vincenzo Fuccini

Vincenzo Fuccini is the typical mobster. He is egotistical and appears to have delusions of grandeur. At the beginning of the novel, the reader is introduced to Vincenzo in the final hours of his life as he goes in his father's place to a peace meeting between the four leaders of the largest mob families in Toronto. Vincenzo thinks the rules of this



meeting do not apply to him, but when he is called out for breaking these rules, he reacts with violence, stealing a gun and killing several people. This attack by Vincenzo is followed by an attack on the meeting by another mob family, the Gambinos. Vincenzo is left the last man standing. However, Vincenzo is run over by Darwin when he frightens Darwin by firing a gun at his car. It is for this death that Darwin is hunted by the Fuccinis throughout the rest of the novel.

Mr. Fuccini

Mr. Fuccini is Vincenzo's father and the leader of the Fuccini mob family. Mr. Fuccini wants revenge for what Darwin did to Vincenzo, unable to believe it was an accident. Mr. Fuccini kidnaps Rosina with the idea that he will torture and kill Rosina in front of Darwin before killing Darwin as slowly and painfully as possible. Mr. Fuccini is a dark, evil man who will do anything he wants and is incredibly cruel. However, in the end Darwin gets the better of Mr. Fuccini and Mr. Fuccini is killed by Richard H.

Agent Greg Stinsen

Agent Greg Stinsen is an FBI agent with rights to act for the American government in Canada. Greg and Darwin met at the scene of Vincenzo's death and become something like friends. Therefore, when Darwin finds himself in trouble in Italy, he calls on Greg to help him. Greg does come to Darwin's rescue, but in a supporting role after the fact. Later, Darwin is told that Greg is a double agent working for the Fuccinis. Darwin stops trusting Greg and leaves him after a car accident caused by the Fuccinis.

Richard H

Richard H is the leader of a motorcycle gang that Darwin previously annoyed by writing about them in an unflattering light in one of his novels. Richard H, however, agrees to help Darwin when Darwin promises to write another novel that shows the gang in a more flattering light. Richard H and his gang provide security when Darwin arranges to meet with Mr. Fuccini in an effort to come to some understanding about Vincenzo's death. Instead, Mr. Fuccini's men kill most of Richard H's gang, leaving Richard H to kill Mr. Fuccini.

Agent Alfred

Agent Alfred is one of the FBI agents assigned to provide protection to Rosina. Alfred moves Rosina from the motel to another safe house and tries to befriend her while watching over her. Alfred is present when the other FBI agents tell Rosina about their plot to try to prove Darwin works for the Gambinos and their conclusion that they had been wrong. In the end, it turns out that the double agent is Alfred. Alfred takes Rosina to the meeting place where Darwin has arranged to meet Mr. Fuccini and tries to force



Darwin to meet Mr. Fuccini elsewhere. However, Alfred is killed by Richard H and his gang, allowing the meeting to take place on Darwin's terms.

Isabella Capote

Isabella Capote is Rosina's mother. Isabella helps Darwin out after he escapes the FBI after being used in a plot to try to catch a double agent. Isabella does not approve of Darwin's relationship with Rosina, but she does help him with the understanding that by helping him she is helping Rosina.

Adrian Kostas

Adrian Kostas is Darwin's father. Adrian is taken hostage by the Fuccinis and stabbed. However, Adrian manages to escape when Darwin sets up a meeting with Fuccini that is meant to end the entire feud between them. Instead, it ends in Mr. Fuccini's death, but the blood feud continues.

Harvester of Sorrows

The Harvester of Sorrows is one of Mr. Fuccini's henchmen. The Harvester of Sorrows is a master of torture who tortures an undercover cop and Rosina in the course of the novel. The man has a strong reputation among the organized criminal world, but Darwin manages to kill him at their first meeting.



Objects/Places

Pencil

Darwin uses an unsharpened pencil as a weapon in Termini Station because he has a phobia that causes him to become enraged when he sees or touches sharp objects.

Paul's Gun

Darwin gets a crash course on using a gun when he takes Paul's gun from him and Paul makes fun of him for not knowing how to turn off the safety. Darwin puts this knowledge to good use when he kills three of Fuccini's men in the stairwell of the Fuccini office building.

Knives

Darwin has a phobia of sharp items and he Darwin sees them, he becomes enraged. To help Darwin fight Fuccini's men, he asks them to show him a knife. Later, when being attacked in his new Florida home, Rosina knocks over a knife block to purposely enrage Darwin so that he will attack their attackers.

Isabella's BMW

Darwin borrows Isabella Capote's BMW after escaping the FBI to find Fuccini and put an end to their feud. Isabella is Rosina's mother.

Starbuck's

Darwin meets Isabella, Rosina's mother, at a Starbuck's even though he dislikes the coffee franchise.

Adult Bookstore

The location of the peace meeting is given to the participants at an adult bookstore owned by the mob. Darwin, who goes to this store to buy a mint tree lotion for Rosina, had accidentally caught sight of the location when Vincenzo dropped his paper with the location written on it in front of Darwin. Thinking the location is that of a phobia group therapy meeting, Darwin drives out there to participate and ends up killing Vincenzo Fuccini.



Airplane Hangar

A peace meeting between four mob families in Toronto takes place at an abandoned airplane hangar outside the city. No one learns of the location of this meeting until the day of the meeting, but somehow a fifth family manages to learn the location and arrives to massacre everyone present. This is also where Darwin accidentally runs down Vincenzo Fuccini and where he later meets with Vincenzo's father to end their blood feud.

Fuccini's Rome Office Building

Fuccini has an office building in Rome where he takes Rosina after her men kidnap her. This is where Darwin comes to rescue Rosina and where he kills the Harvester of Sorrows.

Termini Bus Station

Termini Station is a bus station in Rome where Darwin goes after he escapes a car accident involving two men who tried to kidnap him. It is here that Darwin learns from Paul, one of Fuccini's men, that his wife has been kidnapped.

Rome

Darwin and Rosina elope to Rome in honor of her parents' Italian heritage. It is also in Rome where Rosina is kidnapped by the Fuccinis and Darwin must rescue her.

Toronto

Darwin and Rosina make their home in Toronto. This is also where the peace meeting takes place between the heads of four local mob families. This meeting ends in a blood bath when a fifth family arrives.

Florida

Darwin and Rosina relocate to Florida at the end of the novel when they are placed in the Witness Protection Program. However, Fuccini's men find them there, as well.



Themes

Phobias

Darwin is a middle aged man, normally mild-mannered man who is an author making his living writing and publishing books on Amazon.com. As a child, Darwin was abused by his stepmother. Darwin's stepmother would lock him in dark places, often the basement, and would poke him with needles, forks, and other sharp objects. This has caused Darwin to develop an unreasonable fear of sharp things and the dark, both phobias. However, rather than manifesting themselves with incapacitating fear, these phobias cause Darwin to become unreasonably angry.

Darwin dislikes his phobias and he has done everything reasonable to rid himself of them including therapy and medication, but nothing seems to help. As Darwin draws closer to his girlfriend, Rosina, he becomes desperate to find a way to escape his phobias. For this reason, when Darwin sees the location of a phobia group therapy meeting on a slip of paper a man has dropped in an adult bookstore, he decides to drive to the location to see if this type of therapy might be more helpful to him. Instead, it proves to be the location of a peace accord meeting among four mob families that has been overrun by a fifth family. Darwin comes to the location in the aftermath of a massacre. Frightened by both the dark and Vincenzo firing a gun at his car, Darwin speeds up and runs Vincenzo over, killing him.

Darwin's phobia has gotten him into trouble. The press has released his name in connection with Vincenzo's death causing the Fuccini family to come after him. To save himself and his new wife, Rosina, Darwin uses his phobias to enrage him and fight back against Fuccini's henchmen. In this way, a crippling phobia of which Darwin has been trying to rid himself has become an asset in his fight against the mob.

Revenge

Fuccini is the leader of a powerful mob family in Toronto. Fuccini is old and planning on retiring, so he sends his son in his place when three other mob families call for a peace meeting. However, the meeting is overrun by another family and everyone but Fuccini's son is killed. Unfortunately, Fuccini's son is run down by Darwin, an innocent man who was simply frightened by Vincenzo and the dark and killed Vincenzo by accident. Fuccini, however, does not see it as a simple accident and he wants revenge.

Fuccini follows Darwin and Rosina to Rome where they have gone to elope and enjoy their honeymoon. Fuccini's men make two attempts to draw Darwin out with the hopes of locating their hotel so that they might take them captive. Finally Rosina and Darwin place themselves in a position in which Fuccini's men are able to get to them. Rosina is kidnapped. Fuccini tells Rosina that he plans to have his men torture and rape her in



front of Darwin, to force Darwin to witness the loss of the one he loves before he himself is killed in the slowest, most painful way possible.

Fuccini believes that Darwin killed his son intentionally for the Gambino family. For this reason, Fuccini refuses to give up in his attempts to kill Darwin even when Darwin proves himself to be a formidable foe. In the end, Fuccini is killed by Darwin's friend, Richard H. However, this does not end the blood feud. Now Fuccini's men want revenge not only for the death of Vincenzo, but for Fuccini's death as well. For this reason, Darwin and Rosina must remain ever vigilant.

Relationships

There are multiple relationships in this book that play an important role either in the plot or in the motivations of the main characters. The first important relationship is that between Darwin and his stepmother. If not for the abuse to which Darwin's stepmother subjected him, Darwin would never have been at the airplane hangar where he ran down Vincenzo Fuccini, nor would he have the phobias that help him develop a dark anger and kill Fuccini's men.

The second important relationship in this novel is that between Fuccini and his son, Vincenzo. It is clear that Vincenzo was something of a goof up, someone who often messed up when his actions were the most important. However, he was still the son of Fuccini, an important leader of an organized crime family and was, therefore, treated with respect. Vincenzo was an important piece of the Fuccini family's future. His death left a huge hole in the family and the organization. This made it important to both the father, Fuccini, and his men, that they seek revenge for Vincenzo's death no matter what its cause.

The third, and most important, relationship in the novel is the relationship between Darwin and Rosina. Rosina is an important part of Darwin's life, creating the motivation he needs to want to get over his phobias. It is for this reason that Darwin finds himself in the wrong place at the wrong time and becomes Vincenzo's killer. Later, when Rosina is Darwin's wife and she is kidnapped by Fuccini, Darwin will stop at nothing to get her back. Finally, when they return to Toronto and the FBI men betray Darwin, he feels as though he must stop Fuccini on his own in order to create a safe life for himself and Rosina. Therefore Rosina is Darwin's main motivation for all he does in this book, making his relationship with her an important aspect of the novel.



Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the third person omniscient point of view. The author uses both Darwin and Rosina as narrators in this novel. Darwin is a writer who is being pursued by a mob family because of his role in the death of the heir apparent. Rosina is his wife. She is an unassuming, normal girl who thinks she has just married a calm, unassuming man. However, Rosina is kidnapped by the mob and quickly discovers that Darwin is much more than she ever imagined.

The point of view of this novel works with the plot because it shows the story from both Darwin and Rosina's point of view, allowing the reader to be aware of what one is experiencing while the other is off doing his or her own thing. The author is careful to separate change of point of view by white space or a change in chapter; therefore, there is little possibility of confusion as far as the identity of the narrator is concerned. For these reasons, the point of view works well with the plot.

Setting

The novel begins in Toronto where a peace meeting is taking place at a remote airplane hangar on the outskirts of the city. The novel then moves to modern day Rome where Darwin and his wife have gone to elope and enjoy the first part of their honeymoon. Finally, the novel returns to Toronto, to Darwin's hometown. In Toronto this second time there is another showdown at the airplane hangar, but this time Darwin and his friends are the victors.

The settings of this novel are merely backdrop to the events taking place in the plot. Rome is a rich and beautiful place full of historic sites, but the author barely mentions these historic locales and keeps the descriptions of his setting to discussions of traffic on the highway and the busy metropolitan streets. Toronto is a large city filled with many modern conveniences, but again the author uses it simply as backdrop, barely spending any time at all to describe the locale and its rich history.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple English. The author sets his novel in Rome for a brief period, but does not use any Italian in the telling of his story. The author also sets his novel in Canada, but most of the characters are American and the author does not make an attempt to use unique grammar or slang to give the suggestion of a Canadian dialect. Profanity appears only in dialogue when supporting characters are speaking. Language often associated with organized crime characters is also scarce though the novel is a mob story. Because of the lack of slang or dialects, the novel is easy to read and the language works reasonably well with the plot.

Structure

The novel is divided into nineteen chapters and a prologue. The prologue tells the story of Vincenzo Fuccini's final hours of life while the rest of the novel tells the story of Vincenzo's killer, Darwin. Darwin becomes a target of Vincenzo's father, mob leader Fuccini. Told in narrative and dialogue, mostly showing the story rather than telling it, the novel has a linear timeline and uses very little flashback as it tells its story.

A single main plot follows Darwin as the Fuccini family attempts to kill him and someone he loves for the death of Vincenzo Fuccini that was caused by Darwin. There are no subplots to the novel. The main plot comes to a reasonable conclusion at the end of the novel.



Quotes

"Vincenzo Fuccini reached inside his Armani jacket and gripped the butt of his weapon, which hung suspended in his shoulder holster. No one would die tonight. Not if he had anything to do with it." Prologue, pg. 7

"The fact that Vincenzo would walk away from this carnage was enough to make him a hero. His name would go down in the mafia history books for years to come." Prologue, pg. 16

"No problem, I won't rush you, just hurry up." Chapter 1, pg. 19

"Fitting how twenty-five hundred years ago, prisoners fought to the death in Rome, and now he got to experience the same pleasures, first hand." Chapter 2, pg. 34

"Her man. Her new husband. She couldn't let him face this alone. Not after all they'd been through together." Chapter 3, pg. 39

"She could've been in Athens. She could've been far from these people. But she walked off the plane and right into their hands." Chapter 5, pg. 59

"He knew, rationally, there was nothing to fear just because it was dark. But that was the thing about a phobia—there was nothing rational about it." Chapter 8, pg. 82

"Months ago, if he knew that he'd be out in the dark this much, it would've caused him to go back into therapy. He would have asked to be committed for a few days to avoid the dark at all costs. But something about it was getting easier." Chapter 11, pg. 110

"He'd explained how the house was on a normal city street, surrounded by normal neighbors. She remembered asking him to define normal. He'd ignored her and went on to explain how there were hidden cameras everywhere." Chapter 13, pg. 120

"Deep breathing, controlled thoughts and a prayer were all he had." Chapter 16, pg. 138

"He didn't take what Fuccini said lightly. He knew they were coming, he just couldn't tell when or how. But he knew they were coming." Chapter 18, pg. 155

"Marriage was just the beginning." Chapter 19, pg. 159



Topics for Discussion

Who is Vincenzo Fuccini? Why is he at an abandoned airplane hangar as the novel opens? Why has he brought bodyguards despite the rules against it? How does Vincenzo react to the deaths of these bodyguards? Why does he react this way? What does this say about Vincenzo's personality? Why does Vincenzo leave the hangar alone? What happens when he does?

Who is Darwin Kostas? Why is he in Rome? What does Darwin's reason for coming to Rome say about his character? Who is chasing after Darwin? For what reason? How does Darwin feel about this? How does he handle it? Why does Darwin worry about telling his wife the truth of what is happening around them? How does Darwin tell his wife this truth? How does she respond?

Why does Darwin turn himself over to Fuccini's men? What is the hoped for result? Why does Darwin quickly turn against the men to whom he had turned himself over? How does Darwin escape these men? Where does Darwin go? Who does Darwin call? For what reason? Does Darwin follow advice given to him? Why or why not?

How does Darwin learn his wife was taken hostage by Fuccini? What does Darwin decide to do about this situation? Has Darwin ever been in such a situation? How does Darwin handle it? How does Darwin manage to find his wife? Why does Darwin not kill Fuccini immediately? Should he? Why does Darwin spend the entire novel trying to kill Fuccini if it does not give him the results he desires?

Who is Darwin's father? How does Darwin react to the news that his father has been kidnapped? What does Darwin do to try to free his father? How does Fuccini respond to these actions? How does Darwin find Fuccini? How does Darwin set up a meeting with Fuccini? What does Fuccini do to try to take control of this meeting? Is he successful? What happens at this meeting? For what reason?

What are phobias? What are some of Darwin's phobias? How does he react to the things of which he is afraid? Why? What has caused Darwin's phobias? What has Darwin done to try to overcome his phobias? How has his desire to overcome his phobias led Darwin to his current situation? How do his phobias help Darwin save his wife and father?

Who is Richard H? What role does he play in the novel? How does Darwin feel about this character? Why does Darwin turn to this character for help? Why does Richard H dislike Darwin? For what reason does this man decide to help Darwin? Is this a reasonable situation? How might the climax of the novel have been different without the appearance of Richard H?