

# **The Last Thing I Remember Study Guide**

**The Last Thing I Remember by Andrew Klavan**

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## Plot Summary

The Last Thing I Remember by Andrew Klavan is a tale of intrigue and mystery surrounding the main character, Charlie West. Charlie comes to consciousness strapped to a chair, aching and confused. He has no idea how he got there and though he struggles to remember, he can't make sense of any of it. He can hear men talking outside the door and his first impulse is to call out to them, but common sense reminds him that the voices must belong to whoever tied him to the chair to begin with. He listens, and hears his name mentioned, followed by their intention to kill him. He is close to panic, but remembers the words of Churchill - never give up.

The straps holding him are tight, but the leg of the chair has a metal flaw that is close to the restraint and he begins moving his leg up and down against it. The strap gives just in time, but escaping his captors is only the beginning of the nightmare that is Charlie's life now. Charlie manages to get away from the soldiers holding him, but that is where his luck ends since he is still unable to remember how he got there. He remembers snippets of the previous day, flashes of his karate demonstration at school, talking to Beth, and how she wrote her telephone number on his hand. After an amazing escape through underground caves, he meets a woman who agrees to give him a ride down the mountain. Cathy Simmons fears him at first, but Charlie manages to convince her that all he wants is to call his mother and go home. She offers him lunch and a telephone, but when Charlie calls home, the number is disconnected. Cathy suggests he call the police or, at the very least, allow her to call her husband who is an assistant district attorney. Charlie agrees, and after the call she seems more distant, but Charlie is tired. He accepts the offer of a shower and discovers that a full year has passed since the last day he can remember and when he gets out, to his surprise, he is arrested. Charlie's nightmare continues as he is told that he is an escaped felon, having been convicted of killing his best friend, Alex Hauser. They are taking him in to resume his sentence. A night in jail and a second escape send Charlie on a quest to stop the assassination of the secretary of Homeland Security, Richard Yarrow. Though Charlie manages to save Yarrow, he is unable to convince anyone that he was trying to save Yarrow, not kill him. He has no choice but to run for his life again, and hope he can unravel the mystery surrounding the last year of his life.



# **Part 1: Chapter 1: The Torture Room; Chapter 2: An Ordinary Day; Chapter 3: Kill Him; and Chapter 4: The Word Of The Day**

## **Part 1: Chapter 1: The Torture Room; Chapter 2: An Ordinary Day; Chapter 3: Kill Him; and Chapter 4: The Word Of The Day Summary**

The Last Thing I Remember by Andrew Klavan is a tale of intrigue and mystery surrounding the main character, Charlie West. Charlie comes to consciousness strapped to a chair, aching and confused. He has no idea how he got there and though he struggles to remember, he can't make sense of any of it. He can hear men talking outside the door and his first impulse is to call out to them, but common sense reminds him that the voices must belong to whoever tied him to the chair to begin with. He listens and hears his name mentioned, followed by their intention to kill him. He is close to panic, but remembers the words of Churchill - never give up.

A tray of horrible looking instruments is nearby, positioned on a blood stained cloth. Unable to move his arms or legs, he is suddenly aware of the pain he is in. His skin is clammy and he has no idea where he is or how he got there. Terrified, he tries to recall the last thing he remembers. He recalls doing history homework in his room and talking to Josh Lerner aka Galaxy Master on Instant Messenger. At ten o'clock, he remembers his mother telling him it was bedtime, and knowing it was non negotiable, he complies. The last thing he did was look at the telephone number written on his hand.

Then, he wakes up in the bare room, hurt, helpless and strapped to a chair. He hears voices and listens. One mentions "Homelander One" and says, "We'll never get another shot at Yarrow." The second voice suggests that "Orton" be sent instead of "West." The mention of his name brings panic to the surface again. Another voice identified by his cohorts as "Waylon" claims West is no longer of any use and tells them calmly to kill him. What had been panic before blossoms anew. Again he struggles to recall how he got there. He remembers the alarm going off, getting ready for school and coming to the realization that today is the day he was to give a karate demonstration at the school. He had forgotten it entirely, and he is suddenly nervous. The demonstration was to be for the entire eleventh grade - even Beth Summers.



## **Part 1: Chapter 1: The Torture Room; Chapter 2: An Ordinary Day; Chapter 3: Kill Him; and Chapter 4: The Word Of The Day Analysis**

Charlie West wakes up strapped to a chair. Slowly, he comes to and takes in his surroundings. He has no idea where he is, but he's scared. Part of that comes from the tools on the tray in the room with him, and the blood... presumably his blood. The pain just becomes part of his conscious mind all at once. He thinks back to the last thing he remembers. Homework, going to sleep, talking to Josh all come easily to mind. The last conscious thought he remembers having is of Beth Summers.

He can't remember how he got to be strapped to a chair, and when struggling doesn't get him anywhere, he listens to the voices outside his door. What he hears scares him even more. They are talking about him. They mention a plan, changes, the future uselessness of West (himself) and then the decision is made to kill him. Charlie panics, trying to remember how he got there and can remember waking up, getting ready for school and the karate demonstration he had to do. He can remember how nervous he had been just thinking that Beth was going to be there.



# Part 1: Chapter 5: My Right Leg and Chapter 6: One Shot

## Part 1: Chapter 5: My Right Leg and Chapter 6: One Shot Summary

Charlie fights to stay calm and think his way through the situation he is in. He remembers the Churchill Card Sensei Mike had given him, and the advice it espoused - never give up, never give in.... not even when the odds seem overwhelmingly against you. He knows he has little time, but he is a karate black belt. Surely that must give him some advantage. He finds what he is looking for by his right leg. A rough spot in the metal of the chair right above his ankle looks like it might be just enough to wear through the canvas strap if he has enough time. He begins moving his right leg up and down against it. Two men come in. One is white and one is brown skinned. The latter has a rat-like face and seems excited by the prospect of killing him. He struggles and insists he has no idea what is going on, but they laugh at him as they fill a hypodermic needle with the solution that will kill him. Finally, his leg comes free.

Neither man notices that Charlie has managed to free one leg, each paying more attention to the syringe. He remembers the sayings Sensei Mike taught him, and the lessons including to turn the other cheek whenever possible but in this instance, the advice simply didn't apply. When the brown skinned man approaches him, he brings his free leg up hard into his groin and he drops the syringe. It takes a second for the chunky white man to realize something is wrong. The rat faced man bends double, close enough for Charlie to grab him by the throat. He tells the second man to undo the strap on his wrist or he will rip the first man's throat out. Something in his demeanor convinces the man he is serious as he fumbles to undo the strap. As Charlie starts to undo the second strap, the chunky man sees his opportunity. He opens the door and starts yelling that West is getting away. Charlie frees himself and gets to the door, coming face to face with the chunky man. He hits him hard against the temple, bringing him down like a sack. The sound of running footsteps comes and Charlie runs for the black square at the end of the hallway that looks like a window.

## Part 1: Chapter 5: My Right Leg and Chapter 6: One Shot Analysis

Charlie is fighting panic. He remembers some of the lessons that Sensei Mike taught him. He reminds himself of the Churchill Card in his wallet which advocates that you never, never, never give up - even when the odds seem stacked against you. He reminds himself that he is a black belt in karate and as such has four weapons - two legs and two arms. When he looks over his restraints more carefully, he discovers a way to free one leg. From there, hope blossoms in him, and he works in earnest to gain



freedom. Two men arrive to kill him, but don't intend to shoot him. Instead, he is to be injected with a hypodermic needle, and they both seem rather excited to be carrying out this task. As they are mesmerized by the syringe, Charlie's leg finally comes free.

Charlie manages to use his newly freed leg to subdue the first man by kicking him soundly in the groin. The pain causes him to double over, right into Charlie's grasp. This gives him the leverage he needs to force the second man to free his wrist as well. He does, after realizing that Charlie will kill his partner otherwise, but when Charlie begins to free the second wrist, the large man sees his opportunity and begins yelling for help. Charlie frees himself completely and runs down the hallway even as footsteps come down the hallway to him.





# Part 1: Chapter 7: My Karate Demonstration

## Part 1: Chapter 7: My Karate Demonstration Summary

Charlie remembers his karate demonstration as he is pursued down the hall, recalling how nervous he had been about Beth Summers sitting in the front. He recalls how Principal Woodman introduced him, and how he stammered through the introduction, calling him Harley instead of Charlie at first. He remembers the polite applause that came with his introduction, and the fidgeting that occurred as he set up the three concrete blocks that were part of his routine. When he had been ready to begin, he had addressed the audience, telling them he planned to perform a 'kata' which is a series of movements that mimic fighting several opponents at once. The Tiger Kata uses powerful techniques, and after his explanation, he had assumed the front position and held it until his insides had quieted. The audience had settled and he started the salutation that begins the kata. Amazingly, he had forgotten all about the audience from that point forward, going through his routine with flawless ease and grace. He could feel their appreciation, and hear the occasional whoop from them as he worked his way towards his final move. He had stood in a crane position at the far end of the stage, poised to continue when he suddenly wondered what would happen if it didn't work. What would happen if he broke his hand instead of the bricks, making a fool of himself in front of Beth. He had forced the thought from his mind and unfolded, exploding over top of the bricks and breaking them with ease.

Out of the corner of his eye, Charlie could see the expression on Beth's face. For a brief second, she had been filled with horror and then surprised as she laughed and applauded with the rest of the class. She and her girlfriend had exchanged expressions of amazement while the audience continued to cheer and clap. It is by far one of the coolest days Charlie can remember in his life.

## Part 1: Chapter 7: My Karate Demonstration Analysis

Charlie remembers the day he performed for his grade eleven class. He remembers how nervous he had been, and how he had been filled with trepidation about appearing on stage and doing anything in front of Beth Summers. He had imagined himself doing something that would make him look foolish, and when Mr. Woodman had introduced him as Harley several times, correcting himself so often that even the audience had begun to address Charlie as Harley-Charlie. He had stumbled through his own explanations of his performance, clearing his throat into the microphone not once, but twice, and earning a giggle from the audience. All of that had changed, however, once he'd finally managed to get the bricks set up and assumed his opening stance.



The audience had quieted as he found his own center, and then everything changed. He forgot all about the faces watching him, and began the routine that he had done so many times before. It flowed, and when Charlie thought about it later, he came to the conclusion that it was likely the best routine he had ever done. When he was ready for his grand finale, he stopped on the far side of the stage, and held himself in the crane position. He considered his next move, and for one brief moment he was afraid that he would blow the ending. He wondered what would happen if the bricks didn't break, but his hand did instead. Still in the crane position, he had given himself a mental shake and tried to push away the thoughts that he would not be successful. Finally, he let the breath out of his body, and launched the sequence. He can't remember the moment that his hand hit the bricks, but shards of concrete flew as he broke all three with nothing but his hand. Slowly, his consciousness returned to the auditorium, and became aware of the excited and appreciative audience. They were on their feet, clapping, cheering and screaming. Beth was clapping too with a look of amazement on her face. It was the best day of his life.



## **Part 1: Chapter 8: The Black Square and Chapter 9: Lunch**

### **Part 1: Chapter 8: The Black Square and Chapter 9: Lunch Summary**

Charlie runs for the black square, hoping it is a window or at the very least, a way out. Two middle eastern looking men carrying machine guns are close behind as Charlie throws himself headlong through the black square. The guards begin firing their AK's as Charlie connects with the ground. The sun is so bright that he feels a surge of joy and hope but he can't stop to appreciate the fact that he is out. He crouches and looks around, taking note of the engine he hears running. Charlie manages to grab the window of the truck and pull himself inside. After a brief scuffle with the driver, Charlie takes his gun from him and orders him to get out. He hits the gas and races for the partially open gate, taking fire that barely misses him. Charlie gets through the gate but never makes it to the protection of the forest. A rock that lay hidden in the dirt road is hit by the left front tire, and Charlie loses his steering. The truck rolls and when it stops he sits there stunned for a few moments.

Charlie remembers how on that last morning of normalcy, life had seemed pretty perfect. Josh had told him that Beth had a thing for Alex Hauser, who was technically Charlie's best friend, but Alex had blown his chance with her by behaving like a jerk. Alex and Charlie had known each other since childhood and spent much of their spare time together. Then Alex's parents had split up and Alex had to move, changing schools as well. It wasn't long before Alex hardly spoke to Charlie at all anymore, even though Charlie had ridden his bike the forty minutes it took to get to his house. Charlie still missed his company. That day, he had gone for lunch as usual, Josh calling him the man of the hour after his karate demonstration. He had sat with Josh Lerner and Rick Miler who had both been shocked when Beth walked up to tell Charlie how much she enjoyed his demonstration. He had stood there, tongue tied while she talked to him, and almost let her walk away, but at the last minute, he called her back. He remembers walking towards her and confessing how much he liked her. He even remembers telling her that he gets all tongue tied when she is around, but the more he talked, the easier it seemed and before he knew it, he'd asked her out, and she'd accepted! She even wrote her number on the back of his hand before walking away. He doesn't remember seeing her again. The next thing he remembers is his worst nightmare.

### **Part 1: Chapter 8: The Black Square and Chapter 9: Lunch Analysis**

Charlie knows the window is his only hope. All he can think about is making it that far. He can hear the guards behind him and time seems to slow down as he races down the



hallway. The guards are all carrying machine guns and he knows if they catch him, he is dead. When he gets close to the window, he dives head first through it and out into the sunshine. His mind is working fast now, assessing his surroundings, evaluating potential threats and taking note of the engine he hears running. Without a second thought, he runs for the truck and grabs the passenger window, pulling himself inside. The driver is stunned for a second, but quickly recovers, fighting Charlie while trying to maintain control of the truck. He pulls a pistol out and Charlie manages to take it from him in the scuffle. He points it at the driver, and orders him out. Then he just floors it through the partially open gate. The road is rough and he is going too fast to negotiate it safely. He rolls the truck several times after hitting a rock and breaking something in the steering. At that point, stunned and sore, he almost gives up hope.

He thinks back to the last day he remembers. His only worries had been whether or not his grades would be good enough to get him into a decent college and Beth Summers. He couldn't stop thinking about her. It didn't help to know that according to Josh, she had been seeing his best friend, Alex Hauser. The only up side was that Alex had blown it with her, and now lived at least forty minutes away by bike, no longer even attending their school. Things between him and Alex had changed after Alex moved. Charlie had tried to keep their friendship alive. He'd even biked there, but the reception he got wasn't exactly welcoming. As such, when Beth came up to him in the lunch room after the karate demonstration, and told him how much she enjoyed his performance, he wasn't feeling any real loyalty to Alex. Unfortunately, every time Charlie got anywhere near Beth, he felt like his tongue was super glued to the roof of his mouth. He almost let her walk away again, but at the last second he called her back, surprising even himself. He told her how much he liked her, as embarrassing as it felt to do so, and confessed how every time he got near her, he lost at least forty IQ points for reasons he couldn't explain. She laughed, and in that moment he fell even harder for her. Life was perfect in that moment as she wrote her number on the back of his hand. Then he woke up to the present nightmare.



# **Part 1: Chapter 10: Leave Me Alone, Winston Churchill and Chapter 11: The Woods**

## **Part 1: Chapter 10: Leave Me Alone, Winston Churchill and Chapter 11: The Woods Summary**

The guards are running towards Charlie in the wrecked truck but all he can think about is Beth. He sees her smile and then she opens her mouth to speak and a British voice tells him, "Never give in." He groans and tries to shake the message from Churchill out of his head and get back to Beth. For a moment, Charlie argues with the voice that tells him not to quit. Finally, he just forces his eyes open and gets out of the truck. Taking the gun he grabbed from the driver earlier, he grabs the keys from the ignition in the hopes that he'll slow the guards down, noting the flashlight on the keyring, and puts them in his pocket. Despite being beaten, tortured and rolling the truck, he manages to get moving. Thankfully, every step seems to get a little easier. Charlie begins to run, sticking to the dirt road at first to put as much distance between them as he can, and then finally plunging into the forest itself. Charlie is running for his life.

Charlie runs for what feels like a long time. He doesn't know how long it has been since he had a drink, but he can feel the effects of dehydration. The undergrowth is thick, and there is no more running. It closes in behind him, and he realizes that if he can't see the guards, they can't see him either. When he trips and falls, he is unable to get back up at first. He lies there gasping for breath, listening for the guards approaching. The noises of the forest slowly return and he lets his mind drift until the croaking honk of a bullfrog reaches his ears. In the background he can just hear the sound of water, and though his body argues, he manages to get moving in the direction of the sound. He finds a small stream, and can feel the strength returning with every mouthful. As he continues to drink, he thinks and plans. Somehow, he'd been stolen out of his life and there had to be a way back. He realizes that the water must head somewhere - a lake, a bigger river or a town perhaps, so he begins to follow it. He goes around the bend and to his disappointment sees that the water just disappears in a clearing. It goes down into a sinkhole. He stands there for a moment, and then hears the engine. It comes closer, and then stops and Charlie can hear their voices. He realizes they are tracking him and listens as they discuss including Hunter. The next sound reveals that Hunter is a bloodhound.



## **Part 1: Chapter 10: Leave Me Alone, Winston Churchill and Chapter 11: The Woods Analysis**

Charlie is stunned, and lies in the overturned truck, his thoughts once again going to Beth but somehow Winston Churchill manages to insert himself into the picture. Charlie tries to return to Beth, but Winston won't let him. He keeps pressuring him not to give in. Finally, Charlie listens. He gets moving and begins thinking again. The last thing he does before leaving the truck is grab the keyring from the ignition, hoping it will slow them down, and takes the gun that he wrestled from the man who was driving the truck. Survival is all he is thinking about now as he forces himself and his battered frame to run. He heads off down the dirt road, his body protesting a little less as he gets moving.

He runs until he feels like he can't run any further, and then plunges into the bush. The undergrowth prevents him from running, but it also provides good cover once he has gone into the brush a little ways. He trips and falls, dehydrated, tired and hurting all over, and simply can go no further. He lies there, getting his breath and listening for the guards. He listens as the sounds of the forest assert themselves, and finally the sound of the water comes through. It takes all of his energy to get up, but he does. His desire for water is overwhelming everything else. He follows the sound to a small stream and lies there drinking it until he can drink no more. He decides to follow the stream, reasoning that it should lead to some form of civilization, but when he rounds the first bend, the water disappears into a sink hole. Then he hears the truck pull up and the guards get out, talking to each other. They have obviously found the point at which he came into the forest, and employing Hunter, they feel confident they'll find him. It only takes one bray from Hunter to reveal he is a bloodhound.



# Part 1: Chapter 12: Into The Dark and Chapter 13: Sensei Mike

## Part 1: Chapter 12: Into The Dark and Chapter 13: Sensei Mike Summary

Charlie can hear the men shouting. There seems to be no where to hide, and no escaping Hunter. He looks back at the sinkhole, worried about what he might run into, but the dog is closing in and he can't just stand there. Charlie has to lie flat in order to slide in feet first and the hole is narrow. He works his way in, feeling the cold as he pushes himself in deeper and deeper. Water and mud seep around his neck and face as he pushes himself the whole way in, hearing the dog and the guards closing in. His feet can find no purchase and he slides the rest of the way in. Finally, his feet find a small ledge, but he is unable to stay on it, falling the short distance to the ground. The sinkhole is now just a patch of blue sky about the size of a basketball and Charlie is standing on a rock ledge. At first, it appears to be a dead end, but the water continues to the base of the wall and then under it. Charlie has no choice but to continue or be caught. He lowers himself down, edging into a hole that is like a coffin. The dog shows the guards where Charlie has gone, and one guard reluctantly follows him into the sinkhole. Charlie shoves himself further under the rock and with one hand can feel open air on the other side. He pushes himself forward until he manages to push all the way through. Relieved, he rolls over and then off the rock he is on, falling down to the bottom of the cave, and gasping for air in the darkness. He hears the guard shouting that there is no one there, and the dog is wrong. Then he calls for a rope and Charlie hears them leave.

Charlie tries to unravel what happened next on the last day he remembers. He recalls going from class to class, still on a high from his encounter with Beth. He remembers driving his Mom's Ford Explorer to his karate lesson with Sensei Mike. He even remembers the details that kept Sensei Mike from returning to Afghanistan and the life he had in the army for so many years. He remembers sparring with Lou, and Lou getting the better of him when he lost his concentration. He had been called in afterward and Sensei Mike had teased him a bit about being distracted by the phone number on his hand, but had then asked him if something else was on his mind, and for the first time Charlie put his dream into words. He had asked Sensei Mike if he thought it was possible for Charlie to become an Air Force pilot. Sensei Mike had told him how hard it would be, and how selective the elite group was, but Charlie had already known all of that. One stumbling block Charlie could see was that a candidate had to be nominated by a Congressman, but Sensei Mike had told him he knew several, along with Air Force brass. He had promised that if Charlie kept up his grades, he would get his shot. He even remembers leaving the dojo and his surprise encounter with Alex Hauser and a couple of his current friends. There had been three of them all together, drinking beer from paper bags and looking anything but friendly as they came his way.



## Part 1: Chapter 12: Into The Dark and Chapter 13: Sensei Mike Analysis

Charlie has watched enough Discovery Channel to know that a dog can't be fooled just by splashing through some water. He looks around, feeling trapped, and knowing the only route available to him is through the sink hole. With barely enough room to wiggle his body through backwards, he lays in the stream and pushes himself into the hole. He can hear the guards coming and knows if they see him go down, he is dead. With renewed energy, he pushes himself deeper, until he is pushing his face through the water and mud to get all the way in. He can feel his feet hanging in the air, and he pushes until his waist goes over the edge. His feet search for a ledge or a bottom and finally find an outcropping, but he is unable to keep his feet on it. He slides down and falls the remaining few feet to the ground below with a thud. Looking around, his worst fears are realized when he sees there is no alternate exit. Then his eyes follow the water under a slab of stone. There is just enough room for Charlie to wiggle his way underneath. He fights claustrophobia, knowing that a confined space might kill him just as easily as bullets, but he has to try. One hand reaches air, and relieved, he drags himself forward to the next chamber. He can hear the guards above with the dog, one guard complaining loudly as he is faced with following Charlie into the sinkhole. By the time the guard gets down that far, Charlie is out of sight, and the guard believes he was never there. He calls out for a rope, still cursing, and they leave soon afterward.

Charlie stays for a long time, again reliving the last day he remembers. He thinks about the last afternoon in school he can remember, and then his karate lesson afterward with Sensei Mike. He recalls the conversation he had with Sensei Mike afterward, where he had revealed his deepest desire - to become an Air Force pilot. He remembers how good he felt coming out of the dojo afterward, having gotten Sensei Mike's opinion that his dream could be a reality one day. He even remembers running into Alex and his two friends, and how unfriendly they looked.





# Part 1: Chapter 14: Alex and Chapter 15: Argument

## Part 1: Chapter 14: Alex and Chapter 15: Argument Summary

Alex approaches Charlie and initiates conversation, but his demeanor isn't exactly friendly. He tells his friends that Charlie is a black belt, and one of them begins belittling Charlie almost right away. Alex tells Charlie he knows that Charlie is interested in Beth and has intentions of asking her out. Charlie keeps himself in check. One of Alex's friends, (Charlie calls him Crew Cut guy) takes a swing at Charlie who easily side steps it and slaps the attack away. Crew Cut guy is more than willing to try again, but Alex stops him by telling him that Charlie will put him in the hospital. Charlie gives Alex a one-fingered salute and suggests that he call sometime... that they could talk - privately. Charlie gets into the Explorer and before he pulls away, Alex gets in the other side.

They drive in silence for a while before Charlie breaks it by sarcastically telling Alex that he likes his new friends. Alex defends his choice and pulls out a package of cigarettes, but Charlie asks him not to smoke in his mother's car. Finally, Charlie tells Alex that if he doesn't want him to ask Beth out, he probably will anyway, but he'd feel bad about it if that is any help. Alex relaxes and admits that there is no reason he shouldn't ask her out. He admits that he was just mouthing off earlier and didn't mean the derogatory things he said about her. In fact, he admits she is the coolest girl that he ever met. That takes the last of Charlie's anger away. They talk about Alex's parents splitting up, and Alex admits how hard it is. He doesn't believe that Charlie can understand what he is going through, but Charlie is patient and Alex finally tells him that they come from different worlds emotionally and there is no way he can grasp what he is going through because nothing really bad has ever happened to him. At first, that bothers Charlie, but he has to admit that compared to Alex, his life is pretty ideal. He knows that Charlie relies on his belief in God, country and family, but asks how Charlie would feel if he found out it was all a lie. Where would God be then? Charlie quietly tells him God is always there, but Alex isn't buying it. They park at the end of Oak Street at a small park. Alex tries to clarify his thoughts so Charlie will understand. Charlie can't help but feel that Alex is really messed up. He tries to help him, posing the thought that perhaps his judgement isn't reliable because of the pain he is in, but Alex makes it clear that he feels very alone. Becoming angry again, he gets out of the car and warns Charlie to stay away from him. He reminds him that he knows how to fight too, and next time won't go easy on him. Then he jogs off through the park, ignoring Charlie who tries to call him back.



## Part 1: Chapter 14: Alex and Chapter 15: Argument Analysis

Alex behaves and even looks different now than he did when he and Charlie were best friends. His face is hardened and angry, and his smile is more of a sneer as he approaches Charlie with his new friends. When he confronts Charlie about his intentions where Beth is concerned, Charlie begins to wonder if Alex might have been waiting there to ambush him. He struggles to maintain a calm demeanor, not wanting to initiate a fight, but one of Alex's friends isn't willing to let it go so easily. He tries to deliver the first contact but Charlie is quick and trained to avoid such attempts. Alex warns his friend of the potential for injury if he keeps going after Charlie, so the friend backs off. Charlie doesn't like leaving things the way they are. As he gets into the Explorer, he suggests that they talk privately some day. He had no idea that Alex would take him up on it immediately, but he does, climbing into the passenger seat before Charlie pulls out.

Neither one speaks for a while, so to break the silence, Charlie makes a sarcastic comment about his new friends and Alex defends them. Then he finally begins to express some of the anger and frustration he feels. He is angry that his Dad left them, and forced the changes of home and school on them. He is frustrated when he hears his mother crying in her room and is unable to do anything to help. Most of all, he feels as though everything he learned before was a crock and that there is no God. He says that there are some very intelligent people out there who believe that in order to fix the way things are in the country, they have to be able to start again. Charlie doesn't understand which people and what problems need to be fixed. In fact, he doesn't understand much of what Alex is trying to tell him. He does however notice how much pain his friend is in, and wants to be able to help him, but Alex isn't ready for help. His frustration is simmering at the surface, and he finally gets out of the Explorer, giving Charlie a not so veiled warning as he leaves. Charlie tries to call him back to no avail.



# Part 1: Chapter 16: The Cave and Chapter 17: Angeline

## Part 1: Chapter 16: The Cave and Chapter 17: Angeline Summary

For a while, Charlie sleeps and wakes disoriented and in the dark. Then he remembers the cave. He sits up slowly and assesses himself. Though sore, it appears as though nothing is broken. The darkness is complete, and as he reviews recent events in his mind, he recalls taking the keyring with the small flashlight attached to it. He looks up to the area he fell from and sees that there is no way back the way he came without a rope. The only other choice is a passage through the rock, and though his mind balks, he knows there is no other way. He turns off the flashlight after getting his bearings to preserve the battery. He makes his way to the entrance and shuffles carefully into it. He has a moment of panic after he drops his flashlight, but he finds it, and it still works. He can see that the corridor narrows but there is no going back, so he continues until the space becomes so narrow that he fears becoming stuck. Finally, he becomes angry that this might be the end of things for him. He decides that he can't allow that to happen. He works his way ever deeper, and finally the corridor opens up again and he can see a faint patch of gray ahead. The chamber he is in is high enough for him to walk across, and he inches his way towards the light. Feeling his way around a boulder, he sees daylight and sunshine.

Exhausted, hungry and cold, Charlie isn't sure how long he laid there before he heard the voice calling. At first he thinks it might be just his imagination, but when he turns his head, a little girl is standing there staring at him. She appears to be no more than about five years old and Charlie tries hard not to frighten her. He introduces himself, asking her if her mother is with her, but she says nothing. A woman appears and freezes when she sees him. She calls Angeline to her with urgency now, and begins to back away. Charlie is desperate that they stay, and begs her not to leave. Sure he plans to hurt her or the child, the woman begs him to let her go. Charlie tries to reassure her, explaining that all he needs is a little help. She offers him money, but he asks for a phone instead to call his mother. Then she sees the gun in his waistband and is frightened all over again. He takes it out and hands it to her in a gesture meant to make her see that he had no intentions of harming her. She takes it from him, telling him there is no cell service where they are, but offers to drive him to the bottom of the hill to where service begins again.



## Part 1: Chapter 16: The Cave and Chapter 17: Angeline Analysis

Charlie sleeps for a while, and when he wakes it takes a few moments to remember where he is and what happened. Then it comes back to him - the guards, the chase, the cave, and the fall. His initial terror is replaced by despair. He has no idea what to do now. He fears taking a step and falling into a pit and either dying or worse still, being injured and unable to get out. The darkness is all encompassing, but then he remembers the key chain and its small flashlight. He almost sobs with relief and renewed hope as the light illuminates his surroundings. He sees only one possible exit, and everything in him rebels at the idea of going further into the cave, but he has no choice. He turns off the light, knowing he will have to preserve the batteries. He shuffles forward for what seems like a long time. Alex's voice haunts him, telling him there is no hope and he forces it from his mind. At one point, he drops the flashlight, and for a moment he panics, but his hands touch on it again and turns it on to see the corridor narrowing in front of him. He fights claustrophobia, and a feeling of suffocation, before anger replaces his fear and he continues to cram himself forward into the narrow slot. When he finally breaks free of the corridor, he finds himself in yet another cavern. This one reveals an opening in the distance and beyond a large boulder, he discovers a natural staircase in the rock. He climbs to the light.

The next time Charlie wakes, he hears a voice calling out the name Angeline. At first he thinks he is dreaming it, but when he turns his head, he sees a little girl standing there looking at him solemnly. He reaches out to her, but worries about scaring her so he takes his hand back again. He introduces himself to her, but she says nothing. Her mother comes around the corner and at first doesn't see Charlie, but when she does, her eyes are filled with fear. Charlie tries to reassure her, but the woman is convinced that he means her or her child harm. She begs him to leave them alone and backs away. Charlie tries to be calm, and pleads with her to stay. He swears he means her no harm and begs her to help him. She offers him money, but all Charlie really wants to do is call his mother. He asks for her phone, but she tells him there is no service where they are. Finally, after giving her his gun, she offers to drive him down to where service can be attained.



# Part 1: Chapter 18: Dateline and Chapter 19: Police

## Part 1: Chapter 18: Dateline and Chapter 19: Police Summary

Charlie follows the woman out of the woods. They make it to the parking lot, and Charlie sees that the woman drives an Explorer just like his mother. Relaxing a little, she asks him what happened and he tries to explain but it sounds crazy even to him. What really surprises Charlie is when he discovers that he is just north of Centerville which is all the way on the other side of the state. There is still no service on her cell phone, and he leans back in the seat, falling asleep. Cathy wakes him and he looks around to discover she has taken him to her home. She shows him where the phone is, and offers him something to eat. Charlie calls his parents to discover the line has been disconnected. Cathy suggests he call the police, but Charlie fears they won't believe him. She then reveals that her husband is an assistant district attorney and offers to call him for Charlie. Grateful, he eats the food in front of him, while Cathy calls her husband. She looks different when she comes in, but offers him the use of a shower and clean clothes, and though her change in behavior confuses him, he's too tired to think it through. He starts the shower and as he's getting undressed, he turns toward the mirror. He looks older somehow and stands there, staring at himself until the mirror fogs up. He leaves the bathroom to look at a newspaper, checking the date. It's October! A whole month has passed, he thinks at first. Then he sees the year and realizes it's been one full year since the last day he can remember.

He stands in the shower, cleaning off the blood and soothing the bruises. He gets out to find clean clothes as promised. He remembers the guards talking about Homelander, but doesn't know what it means. When he is done, Cathy and Angeline are nowhere to be seen. Outside he can see a Sheriff's car and when he calls out a voice yells, "Freeze, West!" Before he can explain, he is in cuffs. A man threatens him, obviously thinking that he had intended Cathy and Angeline harm, but everyone assures him no harm had come to them. He relaxes only slightly, and Charlie realizes that the man they are all calling Harmon is Cathy's husband. Charlie asks the Sheriff what is going on, and Sheriff James tells him that he is going back to prison where he belongs, having been convicted of the murder of Alex Hauser.

## Part 1: Chapter 18: Dateline and Chapter 19: Police Analysis

Charlie can barely keep up to the woman as he follows her out of the woods. Angeline asks her mother if Charlie is a bad man, but she reassures her, telling her Charlie only needs help. Charlie apologizes for scaring her, and introduces himself. She tells him her



name is Cathy and he thanks her again for helping him. He can tell by her face that she is softening a little. She has the 'Mom' face that he knows well, and is glad to see it. Charlie feels like he could use a little mothering at present. She asks him what happened, but when he tries to explain, it sounds crazy even to him. She gives him another 'Mom' look which has him feeling like he needs to defend himself, but then admits it sounds lame. She asks where his parents are, and where he's from, and she doesn't recognize the name of the town of Spring Hill. When Charlie discovers where he is now, he is shocked to find he is on the other side of the state. He is so tired, and so hungry that he falls asleep while Cathy drives him to her house. She offers to feed him while he calls his parents, but the number has been disconnected. Charlie doesn't understand. When Cathy offers to call her husband, who happens to be an assistant district attorney, Charlie agrees, relieved. He eats the food she made him and pays little attention to the conversation she is having. When she gets off the phone, her demeanor is different. Suddenly she seems fearful again, and feeling protective where Angeline is concerned. Unable to wrap his mind around what is happening, he accepts her offer of a shower and clean clothes, but he is in for another surprise. When he looks in the mirror, he discovers that he looks older. A newspaper confirms that somehow Charlie has managed to lose just over a year and has no memory of it at all.

Confused, he showers and dresses in the clothes that she put out for him. He can't understand why he doesn't remember his eighteenth birthday, or anything else. Once he is dressed, he finds himself alone in the house. He calls out to Mrs. Simmons, but instead of her responding, he is surrounded by police who cuff him and appear to be taking no chances with him. Confused, and trying to explain that he is one of the good guys, he is confronted by Mr. Simmons next who tells him that if he harmed his wife or daughter in any way, there wouldn't be a safe place in the world for him to hide in. He tries to tell him they are fine, but he isn't reassured until the Sheriff and Cathy herself confirm it. Angeline is crying. Charlie asks the Sheriff what is going on, and when Sheriff James confirms his identity, he tells Charlie that he intends to take him back to jail where murderers belong. Charlie is stunned. He asks the Sheriff what he means, and the Sheriff tells him he was convicted of killing Alex Hauser and will be returned to serve out his sentence.



## **Part 2: Chapter 20: Rose and Chapter 21: A Voice In The Crowd**

### **Part 2: Chapter 20: Rose and Chapter 21: A Voice In The Crowd Summary**

The next morning Charlie is led out of jail in his orange prison jumpsuit. He had slept little and his dreams had been filled with snippets of the guards and their conversation outside his door. He is taken to a room where the deputy cuffs him to the table. A man comes in with a binder that has Charlie's name on it and he seems surprised that Charlie doesn't remember him. He introduces himself as Detective Rose, and tells Charlie he is the man who arrested Charlie for Alex's murder. Charlie insists he didn't kill Alex, but Detective Rose is less than sympathetic. Detective Rose tells him that they have evidence, witnesses, blood and a conviction that all say he did. He tries to explain that he's lost an entire year, but no one is listening. Detective Rose is convinced Charlie is lying. He tells Charlie how he believes the crime occurred and then admits he doesn't like him - not because he is a criminal, but because he fooled him into believing him once, and assures him it won't happen again. He tells Charlie it will be a pleasure to take him back to prison and help to ensure that he doesn't get released until he is an old man.

Charlie is taken back to his cell where he waits, knowing they are taking him to prison for the rest of his youthful life. He begins to wonder if Detective Rose is right. Has his whole life been a lie? A deputy returns with his clothes and once he has dressed, he is handed back to Detective Rose. Outside, throngs of reporters and cameramen try to get his attention and photograph. Questions are fired at him, one after another. Charlie scans the crowd and sees a face that is familiar, but he doesn't know where from. He is helped into a police car and someone presses close to him and he feels a pinch at his wrists where the cuffs are. A voice whispers to him, telling him that he is better than he knows, and that he should find Waterman. Charlie tries to see who it is, but he is shoved the rest of the way into the police car and the door is shut. As the car pulls away from the curb, he realizes that his cuffs are no longer locked.

### **Part 2: Chapter 20: Rose and Chapter 21: A Voice In The Crowd Analysis**

Charlie is in a world of confusion. Even his pain is secondary to the depth of his misery. He suffers one shock after another and each is so great that he can barely pull his mind around them before the next one is pushed in his path. He is taken to a room where a detective introduces himself and tells Charlie that he is the one who arrested him. In fact, he explains the depth of Charlie's guilt, telling him about the witnesses who fingered him as the one who committed the crime. He tells him that they have the



murder weapon containing his prints and DNA and blood on his clothes together convinced the jury who subsequently found him guilty. The whole thing is so insane that Charlie actually laughs. He tells Detective Rose that he has no memory of him or anything else from the past year, but Rose thinks that Charlie is simply lying to him yet again. He tells Charlie that his memory loss is convenient, but Charlie doesn't think so. Alex was his best friend and he can't understand what could have happened. Rose reminds him of the fight he and Alex had, but Charlie remembers that argument, and insists that Alex left him, walking off through the park alone. Rose is unconvinced. In fact, he tells Charlie that he fooled him once, and his pride won't let that happen again. Charlie is desperate for someone to believe him.

He is taken back to his cell where despair makes a home in his mind. He believes there is nothing he can do, and resigns himself to the life that is ahead. He is living in a nightmare and can't wake up. Even the Churchill Card has little effect now. Slowly, a whisper works its way into his brain, growing with a life of its own. What if the detective is right? What if his whole life has been a lie? Could it be? Could he have done what they accuse him of? He wants to pray, but can't find the connection he has always felt to God before. Most of all, Charlie is afraid that perhaps he really deserves to be in jail for the rest of his life. He forces the words of prayer into his mind, but no help comes. A deputy returns and gives Charlie the clothes that Mrs. Summer loaned him. He puts them on, and is led to Detective Rose, who tells him that he will get immense pleasure from putting him back into jail where he belongs. He is led through a crowd of shouting reporters and cameramen, all yelling questions at him. Confused, Charlie looks around, hardly able to understand the degree of attention that is being paid to him. Two events only add to that confusion. He sees a familiar face in the crowd, and before he can bring his mind to recall him, a man presses against him briefly. He feels a pinch behind him, and a voice tells him he is a better man than he knows. Find Waterman, he whispers, and then is gone.





## **Part Two: Chapter 22: Radio News and Chapter 23: Seconds**

### **Part Two: Chapter 22: Radio News and Chapter 23: Seconds Summary**

Detective Rose drives him to Centerville where the jail is. He works his hands free of the cuffs, hope renewing itself in his mind. He remembers the conversation the guards had outside of the torture room. He realizes that he is supposed to escape. He has to look for the right opportunity and doubts cloud his ability to think. He asks Detective Rose if they are going directly to the prison, but Rose tells him that he will go to Winchester first and Charlie knows he will have to break free before then, or he will lose the single advantage he now has - surprise. Charlie asks to call his parents, but Rose just glowers at him. He tells Charlie that his parents have left Spring Hill. Then he turns the radio up to better ignore Charlie completely. Charlie listens to the news report that announces Richard Yarrow, the secretary of homeland security arrives this Saturday. The reporter continues with the news, but Charlie doesn't hear it. All he hears is the report in his mind and the guard saying they will never get another shot at Yarrow. He realizes they plan to kill Yarrow. In one more day, they planned to assassinate Yarrow. How will he ever get anyone to believe him.

Charlie tries to tell Rose, but Rose is adamant that he doesn't want to hear anything Charlie has to say. Despite that, Charlie knows he has to try. Rose and the driver discuss Charlie's ability to fabricate as they take the exit off the highway to Winchester. His heart is racing and the cruiser slows. Unlike their departure, here no one waits for them, or shouts questions at him. Though the odds are heavily against him, Charlie can also feel his moment coming. They pull into the alley where another detective waits to take Charlie inside. Time slows. Everything feels vivid as the driver gets out to help Rose, leaving the keys in the ignition. As the driver reaches forward to help, Charlie explodes into action. Everything happens very quickly, as Charlie pushes the driver into Rose and gets into the driver's seat. He sees Rose pointing a gun at him, but Rose doesn't fire, and his chance to stop Charlie passes.

### **Part Two: Chapter 22: Radio News and Chapter 23: Seconds Analysis**

Charlie puts two and two together and realizes he is supposed to escape. He knows he has only a limited window of opportunity, and he fights to clear his mind. His handcuffs open and close with ease behind his back, his mind filled with questions. Who knows the truth? Who is Waterman? Who is helping to free him? WHY? Charlie can't remember anyone named Waterman, and obsessively goes over the events again and again, trying to force his mind to remember the missing pieces. The conversation the



guards held outside his torture room come back to him. "Homelander One," "We'll never get another shot at Yarrow," "Two more days," "We'll send Orton..." Charlie strains to remember the rest, but it keeps slipping away. He begins to feel overwhelmed by it all, but knows he has to stay calm, think, make a plan to escape and take control of his life again. He tries to find out what the plan for him is but Detective Rose isn't overly anxious to talk to him. In fact, he turns on the radio to drown Charlie out. Then Charlie hears the news report that makes clarity of confusion. Homeland Security Secretary Richard Yarrow is to be assassinated, he suddenly understands, and he is the only one who knows the truth. He tries to tell Rose, but Rose is convinced that everything Charlie says is a lie. Charlie has no idea how to get through to them.

Charlie tries to talk to Rose, but Rose and the driver laugh at him. Charlie realizes he will have to do something himself. They arrive in Winchester, and Charlie can see the jail ahead. No crowds are in front of the building as Rose has the driver pull into the alley. Charlie sees his opportunity, and when Rose and the driver are helping him out of the cruiser, he jumps up, revealing that he has no cuffs on. The seconds feel like minutes as he registers the fact that the keys are in the ignition, and he pushes the two men together getting into the driver's seat. He speeds away before Rose can even properly react, let alone stop him.



## **Part Two: Chapter 24: Shelter and Chapter 25: A Cry In The Night**

### **Part Two: Chapter 24: Shelter and Chapter 25: A Cry In The Night Summary**

In a cafeteria, Charlie hears more on the news about Richard Yarrow and his travel plans. A map on the screen shows their travel route, and road closures. No one but Charlie and the men who planned to commit the crime are aware of what is going to happen. He has managed to ditch the cruiser and sits in a homeless shelter. He had hidden for hours in an abandoned building, and when the commotion died down, and it was dark, he had left. Then he remembers how his church had worked with a homeless shelter, where people from his congregation had supplied food for those in need. Charlie looks for a church, and at the third one he finds, there is a line up outside the door. He joins it, and shuffles inside, receiving a plate full of food. He carries it to a table near a television in the corner, and sits there watching the story about Yarrow, followed by his face and the story of his escape. The next thing he sees is his parents. His mother is crying and unable to speak but his father asks only that the police not hurt Charlie. Shocked and emotional, Charlie watches as Beth's face is next. Underneath her is the caption that she is the "killer's girlfriend." Her eyes are filled with tears as she speaks, asking Charlie to turn himself in. She promises that they will fight with him and make the world realize his innocence. She tells him she believes in him, and still loves him. Charlie notices an old man near by, and realizes that he has been recognized. He grabs a roll from his plate for later, and leaves.

Charlie walks for a long time. He finds himself in a warehouse district and hearing someone cry out, he sees a woman who is wearing a long black overcoat. She looks frightened, and within seconds a man comes into view. He curses her and he can hear her cry out again. Unable to stand by and do nothing, Charlie runs towards them. The man has her pinned against the wall, holding her with one arm while the other hand wields a knife. Charlie stops short, telling him to let her go. The man argues, but after Charlie disarms him with a surprise kick to the wrist, he is not so frightening anymore. In fact, Charlie can see his fear and disgusted, Charlie tells him to go away. He scurries off, and Charlie is alone in the alley again.

### **Part Two: Chapter 24: Shelter and Chapter 25: A Cry In The Night Analysis**

Charlie hides for hours, waiting for things to die down, expecting any moment that a dog will have picked up his scent and tracked him down, but it doesn't happen. He spends his time trying to figure out what is going on. Yesterday he had been chased by bad guys and today the good guys are after him. He still can't remember the past year, and



nothing makes sense to him anymore. The sirens die down, and finally he ventures out again. Thinking back reminds him of how the congregation of his church used to help the homeless by providing a meal and he strikes gold on the third church he finds. He sits in the cafeteria close to a television set where he watches the news about Richard Yarrow coming to town, and the security precautions being taken. Then he sees his own face as the newscaster talks about his escape. He sits, mesmerized while his parents are interviewed, and is heartbroken by their obvious grief, but the real shock comes afterward when Beth is interviewed. He can hardly believe it when she proclaims her faith in his innocence, and her love for him. When the interview ends, he realizes that a man near by is staring at him. He knows he has been recognized and has to leave, so he grabs a roll for later and leaves.

He walks until he reaches the warehouse district, and hears a woman cry out. When he sees a man go after her, he knows she is in trouble, and his conscience won't let him just walk away. When she cries out a second time, he runs towards them, but the man hears Charlie coming at the last moment and wheels around with a knife in his hand. Charlie easily deals with him, disarming him and then sending the now fear filled man on his way. When Charlie turns around, the woman is nowhere in sight.



## Part Two: Chapter 26: Crazy Jane and Chapter 27: Cans

### Part Two: Chapter 26: Crazy Jane and Chapter 27: Cans Summary

Charlie picks up the knife and hurls it into the night. Just as he starts walking again, an arm comes out of the dark and grabs him. The woman, who had been hiding in a doorway, steps out. She is small and dirty, and tells him she knows him. She talks about mind control, impulses, and her ability to hide from them. She says she knows they are coming, repeating it again and again. She leads him to her hideaway, telling him they don't know where it is yet, and promising to protect him. Her hideaway is on the fifth floor of a brick building where she assures him they are safe. Three cats greet them and she feeds them while Charlie looks around at the piles of papers and garbage that fill the apartment. She asks Charlie if he is hungry, but he has already eaten and turns her down. She invites him to sit down, and again tells him she knows him. She finds the relevant newspaper, and hands it to him. The headline screams "Fugitive Killer Caught," but when Charlie questions why she isn't afraid of him, she explains that a bad man would not have saved her. She tells him that she knows they got to him, and with their mind control they can make him believe anything. Charlie smiles, and recognizes the truth through her crazy ramblings. She seems to understand, despite her ramblings, that Charlie is unable to trust anyone. She says they want to kill Charlie, and when he mentions Yarrow, she finds the article corresponding to his name. A photo with the story shows a man who Charlie recognizes as Orton and the route Yarrow is taking goes over the Indian Canyon Bridge. Charlie knows it is the bridge on which they plan to ambush Yarrow. Jane tells Charlie he has to stop them.

Jane gives him an old blanket and newspapers to use as a pillow, and Charlie lies there for a long time, thinking about how to get to the Indian Canyon Bridge. When light is just beginning to dawn, Jane wakes him, telling him they can get to the cans before anyone can reach them. Charlie still doesn't understand, but he follows her. She takes him to a vacant lot and hands him a garbage bag. Then he understands. They move together across the area, both collecting cans until the bags are full. Finally, she looks up at the sky and tells him they are done. No one recognizes Charlie as they go to the supermarket and feed the cans into the blue boxes. Between them, they have over twenty-two dollars in cans. Then, instead of going back to her place, she continues on to the bus station. Jane takes his hand and presses the twenty two dollars into it, telling him to stop Orton, and once again showing an understanding for the situation that amazes him. She tells him to think about her, and turns, walking away and murmuring "Charlie is my friend."



## Part Two: Chapter 26: Crazy Jane and Chapter 27: Cans Analysis

Charlie thinks that the woman he saved likely ran off and he walks a few steps before an arm reaches out of the dark. She is talking fast, and keeps a hold on his arm, her eyes scanning the area. She draws him into her hideaway, assuring him that they haven't found it yet. She tells him the door is special and the electricity can't get through. She murmurs to her cats, telling them that she will protect them. She continues to talk, and offers Charlie food which he declines. She calls him by name, and for a minute, he's unsure as to what to do. Finally, when he comments, she digs out one of many newspapers scattered around the floor and finds the one that features his arrest on the front page. She talks about the fact that they got him, and that they can make him believe anything - that they put it in the papers so that everyone believes it. She knows how it works, she tells him. That actually makes him smile despite the circumstances. It is obvious to him that she is crazy, but despite that, she often makes sense too. She isn't afraid of Charlie, telling him that if he were a killer, he wouldn't have helped him and in a backwards way, she is absolutely right. Then her conversation goes back to nonsense. Then Charlie wonders if part of it is true, maybe the rest is too. So many crazy things have happened lately that Charlie is having trouble telling reality from fiction. He finds himself telling her about Yarrow, and in a moment of sanity, she tells him that he has to stop them.

Charlie is exhausted, but still doesn't sleep for a long time. He knows he has to stop the assassination, but has no idea how to make them take him seriously. Everyone thinks he is a liar and a murderer. He thinks about it for a long time and isn't even sure how he will get there. A hand shakes his shoulder, waking him. He aches all over, but follows Jane through her morning routine, helping her collect cans until they have two garbage bags full. Then she takes him to the Supermarket where they trade them in for just over twenty-two dollars. She takes him to the bus depot, presses the entire amount into his hand and tells him to stop Orton. Charlie tries to give her some of the money back, but she refuses. She asks him to think about her, and adds that she knows he is her friend. Charlie agrees, and is grateful.



## **Part Two: Chapter 28: Beth and Chapter 29: Death Over Indian Canyon**

### **Part Two: Chapter 28: Beth and Chapter 29: Death Over Indian Canyon Summary**

Charlie pays eighteen dollars to get as close as he can to the bridge - Cale's Station. Though Centerville is closer, Charlie knows that he could never get close enough to the motorcade from there. From Cale's Station, it is just a quick trip over the hill to the bridge. He's hoping that somehow he can stop the motorcade. He also knows that as soon as he is seen, he will be taken back to jail. Despite that, he has to do whatever he can to save Richard Yarrow. He climbs off the bus and heads straight for the pay phone, dialing the number that he remembers her writing on his hand over a year ago. He has no choice but to call collect, and he listens as she accepts the charges. She asks if he is okay, and he assures her he is, and tells her he just needed to hear her voice. He tries to tell her that he is about to do something dangerous, and that he doesn't know what happened. She assures him that she and his parents still believe in him. He tells her that no matter what she hears next, she should know that he was trying to do the right thing. Then he confesses that he remembers nothing of the past year. That upsets her even more. She tells him she loves him, and he promises to come back to her. With hands shaking, he hangs up the phone.

As he walks down the street, he can still hear her voice in his head, telling him she loves him. He follows the road until it curves and then he heads up over the mountain to the bridge. At first, the going is slow, but as he climbs the terrain improves and he makes better time. By noon, Charlie has reached the top, and has twenty minutes to intercept the motorcade. When he can see the bridge, he is disappointed to realize that there are police cruisers and unmarked cars already waiting. He racks his brain trying to come up with a plan and then sees a Secret Service agent lift a hand to his ear. He says something into a microphone and then all of the police approach the lone agent on the bridge. As soon as they get close, the agent pulls a gun and Charlie realizes he is Orton and understands. All he can do is watch as Orton shoots them and calmly opens the trunk. Charlie can see a mechanism of some kind inside and has no trouble guessing what it is. Orton planned to blow up the bridge.

### **Part Two: Chapter 28: Beth and Chapter 29: Death Over Indian Canyon Analysis**

Charlie is so tired that he doesn't want to get up. He can hear his mother calling him and for a minute, Charlie fears that if he doesn't get up, she will stop waiting for him. That fear wakes him and he hears the loudspeaker announcing the bus has reached Cale's Station. Charlie had seen on a map that he couldn't go all the way to Centerville and still



hope to make it to the bridge with the security in position, so he opts to get off one stop sooner and climb the small hill between Cale's Station and the bridge where the assassination is to take place. He doesn't have a plan, beyond hoping to make it to the bridge before Yarrow. Before he leaves Cale's Station, he goes to the pay phone and dials Beth's number from the memory of the day that she wrote it on his hand a year earlier. She sobs on the phone when she knows it is him, and tells him she loves him. She believes in him and so do his parents, she tells him. He makes the mistake of telling her that he doesn't remember any of the last year, and that distresses her even more. He promises her he'll come back to her.

Charlie heads down the road, remembering her voice as she told him she loved him. He thinks about the amount of pain he has caused her, and his parents. The worst of it is not remembering what happened. He goes as far as he can by road, and then heads into the forest, sadness hanging over him like a cloak. At the top of the hill is a clearing and Charlie judges that he has little time left. He hurries down the hill, letting gravity help. Close to the bottom, he can see that police are already in place, and he tries to understand how he can get across the road and then the bridge without being seen and getting himself arrested. Before he can figure out what to do, the killing begins. Charlie realizes that the man on the bridge is Orton, and he watches as Orton rapidly eliminates the police and then checks on the trunk of his car. Charlie can tell it is a bomb without getting closer. All Charlie knows is that he has to stop him.





# Part Two: Chapter 30: The Battle For The Bridge and Chapter 31: To Find The Truth

## Part Two: Chapter 30: The Battle For The Bridge and Chapter 31: To Find The Truth Summary

Charlie makes a decision and runs for the bridge. Orton has his back to him, leaning over the trunk to work on the mechanism inside. He is only a few steps from Orton when he hears him coming and turns around. His face registers shock and surprise first, but he quickly recovers. He pulls out a gun and fires, but Charlie is faster, and the bullet goes past him as he hits Orton. Charlie gets the gun, but only temporarily as Orton kicks it out of his hand. They fight each other but Orton charges and his momentum takes him over the railing of the bridge. Charlie grabs him and he pleads for his life. He tries to remind Charlie that they are friends and begs him to pull him up. Charlie wants answers and Orton is talkative. He tells Charlie that they are both part of the Homelanders. Charlie asks who the Homelanders are, and Orton explains that they are Americans who have been recruited by Islamists. It takes all of his strength to pull Orton up who immediately tries to resume his activation of the bomb. Charlie refuses to let him, and they struggle again. The bomb is rigged with a remote control, and Orton runs with it. Charlie chases Orton, and manages to get to him just as the motorcade is reaching the edge of the bridge. Charlie wrestles with him, trying to get the remote out of his hands even as Orton watches his time, hoping to get everyone far enough on the bridge to be effective. Charlie puts his hand on the button and detonates the bomb early, saving the motorcade. Orton argues with him, angry with the outcome and telling Charlie that Prince was right about him. Midway through his rantings, he stops and collapses to the pavement, dead. The rumble of the blast echoes and fades. Charlie looks up to see that they are now all shooting at him.

Charlie realizes almost immediately that they believe he is a terrorist too. They thought he'd tried to kill Yarrow, mistakenly setting off the bomb too soon. They were yelling in his direction now, likely telling him to give himself up. Then he remembers the voice that told him he was better than even he knew, and that he should find Waterman. Something in him knows that he isn't a killer. He couldn't turn himself in. He might not know what happened in the last twelve months, but he knows that he is no killer. The truth matters, and Charlie knows he has to find out what the truth is at any cost. He says a quick prayer and heads deeper into the woods.



## Part Two: Chapter 30: The Battle For The Bridge and Chapter 31: To Find The Truth Analysis

Charlie can't stop - not even for the horrific sight of the dead trooper in a spreading pool of blood. Time slows as he runs, and it seems to take forever to close the gap between himself and Orton. His features register his surprise as he looks up and sees Charlie only a few steps away, but he recovers himself quickly. They grapple, seeming evenly matched in strength and ability. Each tries to get the upper hand. Charlie, at one point, believes that Orton intends to pick him up and toss him over the rail, but he dodges and Orton hits the rail instead, his momentum carrying him over the railing. Charlie catches him by an arm, his weight pulling him hard against the rail. Orton's face is a reflection of terror as he begs Charlie to help him. When he calls Charlie by name, Charlie begins asking questions, promising to pull him up as soon as he has the answers. Charlie is stunned when Orton tells him he is one of them and he has always been on Charlie's side. When Orton explains, Charlie doesn't believe him, knowing that he loves his country and would never do anything to hurt it. He pulls Orton up with the last of his strength, and Orton still hopes to finish his mission. Charlie, filled with sudden rage, assures him he will not allow that to happen. He tells Orton his intention is to turn him in to the authorities for killing the troopers, but Orton staggers away. He makes it to the back of the car while Charlie goes for the gun Orton lost in the scuffle. Orton is faster, and kicks it away from him, and is about to go after it himself when he notices the motorcade. There is no chance left for Charlie to warn them. He races after Orton, allowing fear and desperation to give him the speed he needs. Orton is waiting for the right moment, but before the motorcade can reach the right spot, Charlie lunges and presses the button on the remote in Orton's hand. The bridge explodes but without Yarrow. Orton is about to argue with him when his face takes on a surprised look and a bloody hole appears in the center of his chest. The report follows and he falls to the pavement dead. The firing continues and Charlie realizes they are shooting at him.

Charlie quickly understands that they see him as a terrorist too. He quickly gets to the tree line as they continue to fire, shouting at him. In confusion and fear, he crouches trying to decide what to do. Then he remembers the voice telling him that he is better than he thinks and to find Waterman. Suddenly he just knows that he is neither a terrorist, nor a killer, regardless of what the papers or news said. Beth knew the truth too. Charlie wasn't alone, and the truth would somehow set him free. He knew he had to find it.



# Characters

## Charlie West

Charlie is a seventeen year old senior who attends Grade Eleven at Spring Hill North High School. He has a black belt in karate which is the highest rank that can be held by someone his age. Charlie takes karate seriously, and has a great deal of respect for the man who is his instructor, Sensei Mike. In fact, when Charlie first discusses his dreams for the future, it is with Mike and not with his parents or friends. Charlie has aspirations to be an Air Force pilot, and Sensei Mike is encouraging, although he warns Charlie that it will take dedication and hard work to get there.

Charlie is basically a level headed student who cares about his family and friends. He has a serious crush on Beth Summers who is the class vice president in his school. After Charlie gives a karate demonstration to the grade 11 class, Beth approaches him and the conversation he has with her results in her writing her telephone number on his hand. Charlie is on cloud nine for the rest of the day, and that night, it is the last thing he looks at before going to sleep.

When Charlie wakes, his life is upside down. To begin with, he is strapped to a chair, and it quickly becomes apparent that he has been beaten. He has no recollection of how he got there, or who is holding him captive. He soon learns of their plans to kill him however, and quickly focuses on escape rather than remembering the events that led up to his dilemma. Soon, Charlie is running through the woods, escaping in underground caverns, and believing that things will soon go back to normal, but he couldn't be more wrong. Before he can understand what is happening, he discovers that he has lost thirteen months of memory, and during that time was arrested and convicted of killing his best friend Alex Hauser. His parents have moved, and he struggles to make sense of it all. Local news reports include pleas from Beth who says she loves him and believes in him, and coverage of Homeland Security's Richard Yarrow and his planned visit to meet with the President. He recalls his captors discussing Yarrow, and the opportunity they have to eliminate him, but Charlie can't get anyone to believe him. He must escape again, and with help from a homeless woman named Jane, he catches a bus to Cale's Station to do what he can to prevent the assassination. The challenges and confusion continues as the bomber claims he and Charlie are friends and that Charlie is one of their Islamist recruits who intend to destroy America from the inside.

Charlie is forced to run again, seeking the truth that he hopes will lead to his freedom, his family, and back to Beth.

## Beth Summers

Beth is the class vice president at Spring Hill North High School, and Charlie's girlfriend. She has honey brown hair that is curly and hangs to her shoulders. She has blue eyes



and features that are straight and smooth. She is graceful and has a demeanor that is nice - inside and out. Beth approaches Charlie after he finishes a karate demonstration in front of the grade 11 class, and tells him how much she enjoyed it. Somehow, Charlie manages to find his tongue and tell her that he likes her, and she makes it clear that her feelings are the same. She writes her telephone number on his hand.

Beth and Charlie's relationship develops depth and emotion in the year that follows. They speak of their future together, he shares his dreams with her, and they profess their love for each other without reservation. Unfortunately, Charlie remembers none of it. Beth pleads with him via a news broadcast to turn himself in. She tells him she believes in him, and loves him. When Charlie calls her from Cale's Station, she is devastated that he can't remember their relationship, but he swears that he will find a way back to her.

## Jane

Wearing a torn gray overcoat, Jane has a large and round face that has a childlike innocence about it, despite the dirt and sores. She has brown hair that hasn't seen a brush or comb in so long that it is matted with dreadlocks. The dirt and grime makes it difficult for Charlie to gauge her age, but he pegs her at somewhere in her thirties. Her eyes are green and almond shaped, and dart about nervously. She lives in an old brick apartment building on the fifth floor of the abandoned building. Three cats, one black, one orange and one gray. The apartment is filled with old newspapers, and plastic bags stuffed with what appears to be junk. The newspapers are everywhere. Jane is bordering on crazy, but makes sense in more ways than not.

Jane gives Charlie a place to stay for the night, and in the morning she wakes him at first light. She takes him with her on her can collections, showing him where to find them. Then they turn them in for cash and Jane leads him to the bus station. She gives him all of the money they made collecting cans, including her share, and tells him to remember her. She alone believes him and understands that he is the only one who can save Homeland Security's Richard Yarrow. She also believes that Charlie is her friend.

## Alex Hauser

Alex changes after he and his mother are forced to move out of Charlie's neighborhood. Before the move, he had a happy, round and open face, but now he looks more narrow faced and hungry. His mouth is permanently sullen and set in a frown and there is an anger in his eyes that wasn't there before.

Alex and two of his new friends ambush Charlie after one of his karate lessons, and confront him about his involvement with Alex's former girlfriend, Beth. At first, he has nothing nice to say about her, and his demeanor is angry and combative, but Charlie maintains his composure and doesn't rise to the bait he is given. Instead, he calmly tells Alex that should he ever want to talk, he should call. Alex jumps into the passenger seat right then and there, taking the offer. Charlie drives aimlessly for a while, and Alex tries



to explain how he feels. His parents have recently divorced, forcing him and his mother to move out of the area. His mother cries all the time, and he feels displaced. He tells Charlie that the only way Charlie could understand him is if he could imagine feeling as though everything he knew in life was a lie. What if there was no God, no good, no reason to try? What if it was all a lie? How would Charlie cope? Angrily, he finally gets out of the car, warning Charlie that the next time they met, he wouldn't go so easy on him.

The next time Charlie hears Alex's name, he is told that he has been convicted of his murder.

## **Sensei Mike**

Charlie West's karate teacher and mentor, Mike is the coolest person Charlie knows. He is about thirty-five years old and stands about six feet tall. He is slim, but has broad shoulders and black hair that always seems to be in place. He has a long face, lean and chiseled with a big, soup-straining mustache that hangs down both sides of his mouth. He always has a slight smile that can just be seen beneath it and is confirmed in his brown eyes.

Sensei Mike had spent a great deal of time in the Army. He had fought in the War against Terror, battling Islamic extremists in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He had single-handedly saved his task force by fighting his way to a .50 caliber machine gun and holding off the enemy until help arrived. Suffering injuries for his efforts, the President had given him a medal, but he doesn't see himself as a hero.

## **Cathy Simmons**

Cathy is the woman who reminds Charlie of his mother to a degree. She is tall and slender, and has a pretty face with red hair that falls to her shoulders. She is in her thirties, and drives a Ford Explorer that is brown in color much like the one Charlie's mother drives. She is the lady who rescues Charlie when she comes across him in the park, but then turns him over to the police while he is taking a shower. She has a daughter named Angeline who is about five years of age.

## **Angeline Simmons**

Angeline is the daughter of Cathy Simmons and is the first one to find Charlie after he makes it out of the sinkhole/cave. She has a solemn face and is wearing a pink woolen cap over her brown hair. She has a matching pink windbreaker, and purple leggings that have patches of dirt on them. In her hand is a small ball.



## **Richard Yarrow**

Secretary of Homeland Security, Richard Yarrow is committed to destroying the evil of Islamic extremism and rooting out the specter of terrorism that threatens their nation. He is determined to protect the freedom that the country enjoys to worship God in any way they want to. He is also to be assassinated.

## **Howard Orton**

Howard is one of the Homelanders, and claims that Charlie is one of them. He claims that he has always been on Charlie's side, and insists that he told the others that they were wrong about him. The Homelanders are Americans, recruited by the Islamists to destroy the country from the inside.

He is a strong opponent and almost falls from the bridge during his altercation with Charlie, but manages to convince him to pull him up and over the rail. Howard is determined to complete his mission which is to blow up the bridge when Richard Yarrow, Secretary of Homeland Security, is on it. He almost succeeds, but Charlie thwarts his plan, blowing the bridge too early.

## **Harmon (Jack) Simmons**

Assistant district attorney in Centerville, Harmon is livid when he realizes that his wife and daughter were exposed to convicted killer, Charlie West. When Charlie is arrested, he promises that if Charlie hurt his family in any way, there would be no place for him to hide.

## **Sheriff James**

An older man of about sixty years of age or so, Sheriff James has gray hair that is sparse and worn swept back over his head. His face is large and filled with wrinkles that make him appear as though he smiles a lot, even though he is not smiling when he arrests Charlie for the murder of Alex Hauser.

## **Detective Rose**

Detective Rose initially arrests Charlie for the murder of Alex Hauser.

## **Mr. Woodman**

Mr. Woodman is the principal at Spring Hill North High School. He is a tall man with thinning reddish colored hair and pale skin. He always seems to have a dopey kind of smile on his face.



## **Jack Alexander**

Jack Alexander is the reporter who reports the story of Charlie's escape from Detective Rose.

## **Amy West**

Charlie's sister and older by a year, Amy is easily excited. Her biggest concerns revolve around what she will wear and whether or not the clothing is presentable.



# Objects/Places

## Spring Hill North High School

Charlie West went to Spring Hill North High School along with Beth Summers.

## Churchill Card

Given to Charlie by Sensei Mike, the Churchill Card is something he has told Charlie to keep in his wallet. He is supposed to look at it before he has to take an important test or participate in a competition. It is a 3x5 index card on which Sensei Mike has written words once said by Churchill during the second world war when he was the Prime Minister of Britain. It simply reminds the reader to never give up. Never give in except to convictions of good sense and honor and never to yield to what is the apparent overwhelming strength of the enemy.

## Centerville

Centerville is the town that is closest to where Charlie finds himself after he escapes the guards that were holding him captive.

## Winchester

Charlie is taken to the town of Winchester by Rose to await transfer to prison to serve out the rest of his sentence.

## Green Hills

Green Hills is the location of President Spender's vacation retreat where he is to meet with Richard Yarrow to discuss a new program to combat Islamofascist terrorism.

## Indian Canyon Bridge

Indian Canyon Bridge is the site where Orton plans to kill Yarrow and Charlie foils their plans.

## Cale's Station

Cale's Station is the small town where Charlie disembarks from the bus in his efforts to derail the plans to assassinate Yarrow.





# Themes

## Karate and Discipline

Charlie takes his karate lessons seriously. He is a black belt, and has attained the highest rank a person of his age is able to get. He owes his success in part to his Sensei Mike, who is his instructor and mentor. Karate has taught Charlie many valuable lessons that he uses on a day to day basis in his life, and that come to his aid when he is facing his darkest moments.

In day to day life, Charlie has learned control and respect through karate. He has learned that to avoid conflict is always better than to confront it, and if a conflict can't be avoided, less is more. Sensei Mike teaches his students that they should turn the other cheek and to always try to make peace even when someone tries to start a fight with you or offends you. Charlie puts this into practice when he is approached by Alex and his friends after a lesson. Charlie manages to ignore the efforts of Alex's friends to engage him in physical conflict. Sensei Mike advocates that a person should do anything they can to avoid a fight, and Charlie believes that one hundred percent. Charlie would never use martial arts against another person if he didn't have to, even if it means that his opponents call him a coward.

At the same time, this doesn't mean that Charlie should allow himself to be ruled by bullies or killed. He also doesn't believe in standing by while someone else is being picked on, or when a man is hurting a woman. As such, he is confident when he uses his talents to escape the men who are holding him hostage, and when he comes across a man who is trying to hurt the woman he comes to know as Jane. He knows that sometimes even the most peaceful man on earth must fight if confronted by something or someone truly evil.

## Facing Fear

In *The Last Thing I Remember*, Charlie West wakes to find himself inside his worst nightmare. He must face his worst fears over and over again, and in many different ways. To begin with, Charlie is unable to recall how he managed to get into a position where he wakes tied to a chair. He sees a tray of instruments that appear to have been used on him, blood and pain supporting his thoughts in this area. Charlie's fear continues when he hears guards outside the door talking about his lack of continuing usefulness, and their subsequent decision to kill him. Charlie's fears must be faced as he escapes, using the forest to disappear in, but his escape is fraught with challenges. Some are easier to face than others. Fear of death almost seems to dim beside the fear of being trapped underground until he dies a slow and dark death.

When Charlie finally manages to escape the guards, he begins to relax, despite still being unable to remember everything. He is about to climb into a shower when looking



in the mirror, he sees that he has changed. Mesmerized at first, he finally checks a newspaper only to discover that he has lost over an entire year. Disoriented, his fear is compounded when he is arrested for the murder of his best friend, Alex Hauser. Terrified, and despondent, he almost gives up, but knows that he is the only one who can save Richard Yarrow. He must overcome his fear once again, escape from custody, and then somehow thwart the assassination attempt. He manages to do so, but his fear is renewed when the Secret Service believe he is a terrorist. Charlie must hold onto the knowledge that he is basically a good person, and find a way to clear his name and the charges against him.

## Decisions and Consequences

In *The Last Thing I Remember* by Andrew Klavan, Charlie West is faced with a number of decisions, each carrying consequences that are life altering at best and life ending at worst. Charlie faces his first decision early. He wakes strapped to a chair, and must decide whether to call out or not. Reasoning that those who tied him to the chair are likely the only ones who will hear him, he makes his first decision - to be quiet. The consequence of this decision is time. Rather than attracting the unwanted attentions of those who are holding him captive, he is able to eavesdrop on their conversation and discover that they intend to kill him. That forces him to make the next decision. Charlie must decide whether to wait for an opportunity, or create one to escape. He decides to create one, and the consequence of freeing himself is that he is able to fight his way out. The next decision Charlie faces is where to go and how to get there. He decides to commandeer a truck, but in his haste to escape, he crashes it and is forced to continue on foot. He does decide to take the keys with him, however, and the consequences of that decision are that he is able to use the attached flashlight to find his way out of the underground cavern.

The next two days are filled with potential turning points for Charlie. He is rearrested for Alex Hauser's murder but an anonymous man helps him to escape. The consequence of this help is that Charlie is free to thwart the assassination attempt on Richard Yarrow's life. Before he can do that, he comes across a homeless woman who is being attacked. Charlie makes the decision to intervene, and the consequences of his actions are that Jane trusts him despite knowing he is wanted for murder. She gives him a safe place to stay for the night and helps him to collect enough cans for bus fare to the region in which the assassination attempt will take place. When Charlie gets there, he finds Orton already in place on the bridge and before he can intervene, Orton kills the police tasked with keeping Yarrow safe. Charlie grapples with Orton, and saves him from the certain death of falling from the bridge. The consequence of this action is that Orton still attempts to blow up the bridge, forcing Charlie to detonate the bomb early in order to save Yarrow. As a secondary consequence to that decision, the Secret Service believe he is a terrorist and are prepared to kill him, as they have Orton.

The fact is that all decisions we make in our daily lives have consequences. Some are more important than others. The lesson to be learned from Charlie and his experiences

is that no decision should be made lightly or without the willingness to accept the consequences attached.



# Style

## Point of View

The Last Thing I Remember by Andrew Klavan is a novel written entirely in the first person from the perspective of the main character, Charlie West. The perspective is reliable and is proven in chapter after chapter as Charlie struggles first to recall how he came to find himself secured to a chair and then over and over again after he escapes. Charlie's feelings are explored as he almost gives up the will to continue fighting, and again as he discovers he has lost a year of his life. All of this is compounded by the accusation that he not only killed his best friend Alex, but then was convicted and subsequently escaped custody. Charlie continues his emotional workout after meeting Jane.

Jane is a homeless woman who is being attacked by a man with a knife. Charlie intervenes and as a result he is befriended by Jane who takes him home, and gives him a place to stay for the night. She knows who he is, and proves it by showing him a newspaper article, but she has no fear of him. She reminds him that if he were the man they said he was, he would never have helped her. This assessment serves him well as he boards the bus that will take him as close as possible to the route being taken by Homeland Securities' Richard Yarrow. Though confused when Orton claims he is one of them, Charlie remembers the words of Jane, and the faith Beth has in him, and finds the courage to continue - determined to prove his innocence.

## Setting

The Last Thing I Remember is a novel that features a seventeen year old young man named Charlie West who attends high school in Spring Hill. When he first comes to, he is confined to a chair in a room that he doesn't recognize. He has no idea that he is no longer in Spring Hill. Escaping his captors becomes critical when he overhears them discussing how he is no longer useful to them and that he should be killed. Charlie escapes through thick forest and then by following a stream down into a series of underground caverns. Despite the altered surroundings, Charlie doesn't realize he is in a completely different region of the state until he talks to Cathy Simmons. Cathy informs him that he is nowhere near Spring Hill and is now in Centerville.

When Charlie is arrested at the Simmon's residence, Detective Rose tells him that they will be taking him back to serve out his remaining sentence. Charlie manages to escape, determined to prevent an assassination attempt on the life of Richard Yarrow which is scheduled to occur on the Indian Canyon Bridge. He is helped by a homeless woman who gives him a place to stay for the night, and helps him to secure the cash necessary for him to board a bus to Cale's Station. Charlie gets as close as he can, taking the bus to Cale's Station. Highway 153 runs parallel to the interstate that the bus takes, and gets him within striking distance of the bridge.



## Language and Meaning

The novel is written in conversational English, and is easy to follow. The story surrounds a teenage boy in an average town in America, who somehow loses just over a year of his memories and wakes up to find himself strapped to a chair and in the company of some very bad men. While there are some discussions of terrorism, and government responses, these in no way complicate or confuse the language or meaning as the story evolves. Charlie faces a series of obstacles as he struggles to find himself and regain his emotional and physical footing. He is given temporary help by Cathy Simmons, having managed to convince her that he is not dangerous, despite his dirty and disheveled appearance.

The story is filled with alternating chapters including flashbacks of Charlie's life before his memory loss. These include segments that reveal his interest and involvement in karate, and his demonstration in front of the grade 11 class at Spring Hill where he attends high school. In a surprise twist, Charlie learns that he is part of an Islamic conspiracy to destabilize America from the inside using ordinary American citizens. Proving he is not that kind of individual involves stopping an assassination attempt on Richard Yarrow's life, and then escaping through the wilderness in an effort to discover the truth about the time he is missing.

## Structure

The Last Thing I Remember by Andrew Klavan is written in two parts and divided into a total of thirty-one chapters. The first part is two hundred and seven pages long and contains nineteen chapters. Each chapter varies in length from three pages to eighteen pages in length. The chapters are further identified by a title which defines the subject matter that is discussed therein. Part One covers the beginning of Charlie's nightmare and includes "The Torture Room" which deals with Charlie's waking to find himself strapped to a chair; "An Ordinary Day" which is his first attempt to recall how he got to where he is; "Kill Him" which is the order given outside his door and so on. Each title, of course, reveals the salient point of that given chapter. Part One takes the reader from Charlie waking in the torture room to Charlie being arrested for the murder of Alex Hauser. In Part One, Charlie becomes aware that he has lost over a year of memories associated with his life. It also reveals that he and Beth are more than friends and an interview with Beth reveals her love for him.

Part Two of this story consists of eleven chapters and spans one hundred and twenty-five pages in length. Chapter lengths range from four to fifteen pages and cover Charlie's dilemma beginning with his interview with Detective Rose who reveals that he is the one who initially arrested him for the murder of Alex Hauser. Detective Rose reveals that he had at first been fooled by Charlie's act and protestations of innocence, but he assures Charlie that he won't make the same mistake again. Charlie manages to escape during his transportation back to prison, and devotes himself to thwarting the assassination attempt on Secretary of Homeland Security Richard Yarrow's life. Though

successful in this endeavor, Charlie finds that he is now a terrorist suspect as well, and resolves to fight to clear his name.



## Quotes

"Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never - in nothing, great or small, large or petty - never give in except to conviction of honor and good sense." Ch. 5, Pg. 26

Winston Churchill saying put on a card for Charlie by Sensei Mike.

"Avoid rather than check; check rather than block; block rather than strike; strike rather than hurt; hurt rather than maim; maim rather than kill, for all life is precious." Ch. 5, Pg. 36

Saying taught to Charlie by Sensei Mike, originally part of a television show called Kung Fu.

"I'm going to do a kata. It's kind of a make-believe fight where you imagine different people attacking you and you do defense techniques on them." Ch. 7, Pg. 50  
Charlie remembering the day he did his karate demonstration in front of Beth, and the explanation he gave his audience before he began.

"I feel like my tongue is superglued to the top of my mouth." Ch. 9, Pg. 87  
Charlie to Beth as he finally admits to her how he feels about her, and asks her out for the first time.

"Dylan and I will keep watch on the path in case he tries to double back and make a break." Ch. 11, Pg. 112  
Guards as they discuss sending Hunter after Charlie.

"Idiot dog must have heard a squirrel or something." Ch. 12, Pg. 122  
Guard after examining the sinkhole Charlie escapes through.

"That stuff I said about her [Beth] back at the mall: that was just me mouthing off." Ch. 15, Pg. 151  
Alex apologizes to Charlie for the way he talked about Beth earlier, and gives his blessing for Charlie to date her.

"I don't know what I would've done if you hadn't come along." Ch. 18, Pg. 184  
Charlie to Cathy Simmons after she agrees to take him down the hill to where a cell signal can be gotten.

"If I find out you laid one hand on my wife or my kid, you little punk, not even the cops'll be able to protect you." Ch. 19, Pg. 204  
Harmon Simmons to Charlie after the police arrest him after he showers at Cathy Simmons' house.

"You were going out with his girl and he didn't like it, and him and a couple of his boys threatened to bounce you around for it." Ch. 20, Pg. 218



Detective Rose to Charlie as he questions Charlie's assertions that he couldn't have killed his best friend.

"The dynamic new secretary, who has completely reorganized the Homeland Security Department, says he and the president plan to discuss what he called a 'bold and uncompromising new program' to fight Islamofascist terrorism at home." Ch. 22, Pg. 238

News broadcast regarding Richard Yarrow's upcoming visit with the President.

"You want to die tonight, punk?" Ch. 25, Pg. 272

Man attacking woman in alley to Charlie after Charlie interrupts his attack on her.

"Jane knows... they sent the knife-man to keep her quiet... about the impulses... they're electric, you understand... mind control... but they can't get Jane..." Ch. 26, Pg. 277  
Jane to Charlie as she explains what she believes.

"I remember everything up to that day you gave me your phone number, but after that - this whole last year - it's just gone." Ch. 28, Pg. 311  
Charlie to Beth when he calls her before going to the bridge.

"We're going to destroy this country from the inside..." Ch. 30, Pg. 326  
Orton to Charlie as he explains who the Homelanders are.





## Topics for Discussion

What is the first thing Charlie realizes when he wakes? Why is this such a problem? What is his first reaction? What helps him? How does it help? What does Charlie hear that spurs him to action?

How does Charlie manage to get to the woods? At what point does he first believe that he has given them the slip? What sound tells him he is wrong? What is the only option Charlie has? What foresight did Charlie have earlier that will serve him well in the next while? How does it help him?

How does Charlie finally manage to elude his captors? What risks must he take? How does he overcome his fear? What helps? When do the guards finally give up?

Where does Charlie meet Cathy Simmons? What is her first reaction to him? Why? What does she do for him? What connection does Charlie feel to Cathy and when does it change on her end again? What precipitates that change? Why doesn't Charlie pay more attention to this new demeanor?

What does Charlie discover as he readies for a shower? Why is it such a shock? How does Charlie confirm what he sees? What two things does he learn at that time?

What happens to Charlie after he gets out of the shower? Who confronts him and why? What is he told about himself? Why is he so shocked? What makes him think they are wrong?

Who interviews Charlie? What is his vested interest in Charlie's case? Why has this become a personal issue for him? How does that affect Charlie's ability to communicate with him? What does Charlie need to tell him? What is his response?

What issue is Charlie trying to prevent? Why is it so important that Charlie be the one to do so? How does Charlie manage to get free? Where does he hide? Where does he hear Beth's plea? What surprises him about it?

How do Charlie and Jane meet? How is Jane instrumental in helping Charlie? What does she do for him? What impact does she have on his self opinion and why? What observation does she make?

What makes Jane different from others? What does Jane believe? Who is she afraid of and why? What does she claim they are able to do? How does she avoid them? What does she do to survive?

Where does Charlie have to go and why? Why is the time frame so important? How does he manage to get there undetected? What is he faced with handling on his own? How does he plan to do so?



Who does Charlie call before he leaves town? Where does he make the call from? What is he told? What is the last thing he says? What drives him onward?

What does Charlie first see when he gets to where he must be? How does this complicate things and why? What happens almost right away? How does this identify at least one of the people below?

What does Charlie learn about himself during the struggle? Why are these things revealed to him at this time? How does Charlie manage to thwart Orton? What happens to Orton? What does Charlie realize almost immediately afterward? What motivates him then, and to do what?