

# **The Lola Quartet Study Guide**

**The Lola Quartet by Emily St. John Mandel**

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## Plot Summary

"The Lola Quartet" is about Gavin Sasaski, a reporter for the New York Star. While working on a story in his home state of Florida, he meets with his sister and learns that he may have fathered a child with his high school girlfriend. When he returns to New York, he is distracted by the possibility of having a child. When he puts his story together, he realizes he forgot to write down the name of one of his sources. After trying to confirm her identity and failing, he makes up a name. This small fabrication leads to others as his newspaper begins to lay off more and more workers. Once his lies are exposed, Gavin loses his job, which eventually leads to losing his apartment as well. He returns to Florida to stay with his sister and becomes preoccupied with tracking down Anna Montgomery, his old high school girlfriend. He struggles to find where she's gone. He tracks down each of the members of the Lola Quartet, the jazz band Gavin and his friends formed in high school, to locate Anna. Daniel, now a police officer, evades his questions at every turn; Jack, a recovering drug addict on a bender, doesn't know where she is; and Sasha, her half-sister, is reluctant to reveal her whereabouts as well. What Gavin doesn't know is that shortly after Anna gave birth she stole over a hundred thousand dollars from a drug dealer in Utah and has been hiding ever since.

Gavin persists in his investigation. He learns that Anna met and ran off with Jack's college roommate, a jazz guitarist named Liam Deval. When Gavin learns that Deval is staying at a hotel in Sebastian, Florida, he goes to confront him. Deval had a long romance with Anna that eventually fizzled out. When Anna reaches out after a suspicious picture of her daughter Chloe is taken by a real estate agent at Deval's mother's house, Deval returns to Florida to help protect Anna and Chloe. When Gavin shows up at the hotel, Deval panics. After failing to reach anyone who can confirm that Gavin isn't affiliated with Paul, Deval expects the worst: that Paul, the drug dealer has finally caught up with them. Deval shoots Gavin in the arm and when Gavin wakes up in the hospital Daniel is forced into explaining more about what happened to Anna. Daniel stops short of revealing where Anna is, but confirms that Anna is in trouble and in hiding. Once Gavin tracks down Sasha, he becomes unwittingly involved in the plan to free Anna from her debt to Paul. After a misunderstanding, Paul ends up dead, leaving Gavin and Sasha to question how they became involved. When Gavin finally confronts Anna about what she's done, he realizes how misguided her choices are. He tells Sasha to make a run for it and decides that his only option is to tell the police what happened. When he arrives at the police precinct, he struggles with whether or not he's made the right decision.



# Part 1, Chapters 1-10

## Summary

Chapter 1 introduces Anna at 17 currently in hiding with her infant daughter, Chloe, somewhere in Virginia. Under the stroller is a stash of over \$100,000 in cash. The focus shifts to South Carolina and introduces Jack playing piano while high on pain killers. His roommate left for Virginia to rescue a girl.

Chapter 2 moves 10 years into the future and introduces Gavin. He has just broken up with his girlfriend Karen and the shower is leaking. Gavin works as a reporter for the New York Star, but it isn't the dream job he thought it would be. He wears a fedora and carries an old camera. He romanticized being an investigative reporter, but realizes now that the job has changed with the times. He feels too much of journalism is entertainment news. He talks to his friend and co-worker Silas, and Silas explains that Gavin's problem is that he wants to be a reporter in the 1920s. Gavin concurs. His editor sends him on his first out-of-town assignment in South Florida. He doesn't want to go, but knows he has to. He's originally from the region and the heat caused him heatstroke. He checks the weather in his hometown, Sebastian, and finds they're in the midst of a heatwave. He remembers visiting five years ago when he met his sister Eilo for dinner. He spent time interviewing conservationists about snakes in the canals in residential areas. Hurricane Andrew was thought to have destroyed the greenhouses where snakes were kept, releasing them into the wild.

He returns to Sebastian and meets Eilo for dinner. He explains that he and Karen broke up after she miscarried. Gavin asks Eilo about her job in real estate. Because she deals primarily in foreclosures, business is booming in the downtrodden economy. Eilo tells Gavin that one of the foreclosure properties belonged to Gloria Jones who was looking after a young girl. Strange as it seemed, the girl looked exactly like Eilo had when she was young. Gavin suggests that the girl must simply be half-white, half-Japanese. Eilo shows Gavin a photograph of the girl and Gavin sees what his sister is talking about. The girl's name is Chloe Montgomery. The last name strikes Gavin and he asks if he can keep the photo. Eilo complies. Later Gavin thinks about what he would say to the girl to explain that he's her father.

Chapter 3 flashes back to 10 years prior with Anna waiting in the park with Chloe. A man approaches and Anna tenses up until she realizes it is Liam Deval. She's relieved to see him and he explains that they have to leave because he thinks someone knows where Anna is.

Chapter 4 returns to the present and Gavin in his hotel room the next morning, looking at the photo of Chloe. He wonders where Anna has been the past 10 years. He goes to interview Ella Thomson about her seeing a python in her backyard. He returns to New York and finds the leaky shower in his apartment is getting worse. He goes to meet with his editor and finds that many people, including his friend Silas, are missing from work.



His editor explains that many people were laid off while he was gone. She tells him that his work is consistently good, but that the paper is going to look at more people to cut in the coming weeks. She tells him to do the best work he can. He writes his story about Ella Thompson. He looks through his notes and discovers that he wrote the neighbors name down as Chloe Montgomery. He can't remember the name and reaches out to Ella Thompson, but she's left for vacation. So that he can use the neighbor's quote, he makes up the name Chloe Silas and attributes the quote to her.

A couple weeks later he asks Eilo if he should try to look for Chloe. Eilo tells him she hasn't heard anything about where Anna might be. His editor Julie assigns him a story about Jonathan Alkaitis, an investment adviser implicated in a Ponzi scheme. He doesn't have any luck getting usable quotes from the people giving depositions. He recognizes Arnold Lander a former COO, who tells him no comment. A much younger woman tells him that it's a nightmare. When he writes the story, he uses the quote, attributing it to one of the victims: Amy Torren.

He embellishes the quote. The newspaper makes a second round of lay-offs and Gavin is spared. Julie confronts Gavin about Amy Torren not being on the list of Alkaitis's victims. He tells her the accounts were in her husband Jacob Fischer's name. His next story involves funding cuts for playgrounds in the Bronx. He makes up more quotes, attributing them to the names Gavin and Karen had picked out for their baby: Rose Thomas. Julie tells him to go home when she leaves early due to a headache. He stays a couple hours longer and remembers that the last time he saw Anna she threw a paper airplane at him.

Chapter 5 finds Gavin remembering one of the last conversations he had with Anna before he graduated high school. He told her that he wanted to live somewhere colder; she loved Florida. Sasha, Anna's half-sister, came out on the porch and told Gavin he should go. She told Anna to leave, but not to go through the house. Later that night, Gavin heard sirens and Anna wasn't in school for the next few days. Rumors went around school about Sasha losing money in poker games. The next time Gavin saw Anna was at the final jazz band concert. The band was called The Lola Quartet. Gavin played trumpet, Sasha played drums. Daniel played bass. Of the quartet, only Jack, the saxophonist, had professional ambitions as a musician.

During the encore of the song "Bei Mir Bist Du Schon," Anna threw a paper airplane at Gavin while he was on stage. Later, while talking to Taylor, the vocalist, Taylor told Gavin she heard a rumor that Anna was pregnant. Gavin shrugged off the suggestion. The note on the paper airplane read: "I'm sorry." Two weeks later, Gavin realized that Anna had left him and in the fall he left for New York City. In the present, Gavin leaves work and returns to his apartment where the shower is leaking more profusely. Eilo calls and reminds him of the time they ran into Sasha and she was buying baby clothes. Gavin doesn't remember.

Chapter 6 reveals what Gavin does remember: Anna's large headphones and how she liked electronica music, not jazz; her dark hair and blue eyes; and a bass clef tattoo on her left shoulder. She got the tattoo prior to transferring to the school where they met.



She told Gavin that a cop had seen the family living in squalor and called Family Services.

Chapter 7 finds Gavin covering a story about a 9 year-old girl dying in a fire. He makes up another quote, this time about the girl playing hopscotch. The day after the story ran, Gavin meets with Julie, the editor-in-chief, personnel, and legal. Julie tells him that Jacob Fischer doesn't have a wife and that the girl who died in the fire never played hopscotch because she was wheelchair bound. Gavin gets up, collects his bag and fedora, and leaves without a word.

Chapter 8 takes place on the same day of Gavin's firing, but focuses on Daniel in Salt Lake City, sitting in a meth dealer's living room. He remembers living in the house after high school. He went for a jog after work and felt out of place as a black man in a predominantly white community. He waits for Paul. He feels insecure without his service weapon, but knew not to bring it. He continues to wait and thinks of his children.

In Chapter 9 Gavin finds himself alone. He doesn't reach out to his friends in the city as most of them were associated with the newspaper. He goes to Barbes to listen to a jazz guitar duo called Deval and Morelli. He notes tension between the guitarists. Later, Julie reaches out to him; he confesses all the fabrications in his stories. Julie never responds to his email. Out of money and heavily in debt, he stops paying rent.

In Chapter 10, Daniel waits two hours before meeting with Paul. Paul explains that he doesn't work for himself anymore because of the drug cartels. Daniel tells Paul that his grandmother died and that since he was about to come into an inheritance, he wants to repay Anna Montgomery's debt. He explains that the estate won't be settled for a few weeks, but that he wanted to come quickly because of the photograph of Chloe. Paul is confused and Daniel soon realizes that Paul has no idea about the photograph. Paul tells him that he once hired a private investigator to track down Anna, but gave up on finding her. Daniel tells him that he's a detective in Vice and Intelligence. Paul tells Daniel that he wants Chloe to be present for the money exchange as an insurance policy. He makes it clear that Daniel will either pay with money or pay with family.

## Analysis

Chapter 1 introduces three major themes of the novel: Relationships, Music, and Misinformation. The opening shows Anna's relationship with her daughter. Jack playing the piano sets up the theme of Music, and the deliberately vague statement about Jack's roommate picking of a girl misleads the reader and foreshadows that Anna is that girl. This introduces the theme of Music.

With Chapter 2, Gavin's character becomes the primary focus. He appears to be someone who is doing well in his life, even if he has just ended a long-term relationship with his girlfriend Karen. The reader begins to sense that something is off with the leak in the shower. It's not so much that the leak is foreboding, but rather that Gavin seems incapable of taking the proper steps to stop it. He doesn't fix it himself or call the



landlord to fix it. He considers these things, but doesn't follow through. This foreshadows how out of control his character will soon become. The theme of Identity can be evidenced in how Gavin wears his fedora and carries around a camera from the 1970s. He isn't quite a man of his time. When he talks with Silas, he understands how out of place he is. This may be preparing him for the choices he is going to make. If he is out of place, then perhaps the consequences of the present won't affect him long term. Perhaps this foreshadows that while Gavin is about to venture down a dark path, he can survive it. This chapter gives some background on Gavin's relationship with Karen and the subsequent miscarriage that led to their break-up. Gavin exhibits regret over the miscarriage and the end of the relationship and seems to continue to want Karen in his life. His relationship with his sister Eilo is also introduced in this chapter. They appear close, but not exceptionally so. It is a relationship built on knowing they will be there for each other. This is particularly evident in Eilo's character. She reveals the photograph of Chloe and tells him that she believes that he may have a daughter. She isn't sure what to tell him to do about, and Gavin is clearly caught off guard, but Eilo feels the right thing to do is to tell him. Beyond that it's up to Gavin to pursue it.

Chapter 3 is a brief chapter that furthers the themes of Misinformation and Relationships. As Anna waits, she becomes concerned that the person coming toward her is Paul, the man looking for her. Instead, the reader learns that the man approaching her is actually Deval and this establishes their relationship. Chapter four introduces Gavin's struggle with learning about Chloe. He doesn't know for certain that the child is his, but there is some compelling circumstantial evidence. It prompts him to think about Anna in ways that he might not have otherwise. Certainly an ex-girlfriend might come to mind from time-to-time, but now Gavin is faced not only with wondering where she might be, but also why she chose not to tell him about the baby. Gavin is coping with this new information and the sudden changes at the newspaper. Friends and colleagues have suddenly lost their job and he's confronted with being unable to confirm a source. He makes an error in judgement by fabricating the name of his source. The article is otherwise accurate, so the reader may readily understand why he makes the choice he does. Long term, it may not even be problematic, but it spurs a pattern of behavior that Gavin hasn't previously exhibited. It's easy to understand the pressure of the job in light of losing it, but the reader also knows that Gavin is struggling, not so much that he may have a child, but why Anna would keep it from him. In some respects his acts of deception mirror Anna's. It's possible that he wants to know what that type of deception feels like. It is evident that Gavin is thinking of Anna constantly as well. What is disconcerting to the reader is that Gavin is aware of his dishonesty and the repercussions that go with it, but continues to do it.

In Chapter 5, Gavin thinks about the last conversation he had with Anna. The conversation he remembers is more about him and his desire to leave Florida than it is about them or their relationship. While it's expected that Gavin's perspective would focus on what he remembers about himself, it's fairly telling that there was a disconnect in their relationship. He has an apt reason for not wanting to stay in Florida – the heat literally makes him physically ill – but is rejecting something that Anna outwardly loves. The theme of Relationships continues when Sasha comes out and tells Anna to leave. She tries to protect her sister from their tumultuous home life as much as possible.





When the night of the concert comes around, Anna makes an attempt to communicate with Gavin by throwing the paper airplane. She likely doesn't want to have an in depth conversation with Gavin, and not only because she would have to reveal the pregnancy (the infidelity) and that she's leaving him. Throwing the paper airplane is a childish act and this symbolizes her lack of maturity. The fact that it takes Gavin two weeks to fully comprehend that Anna has left him reveals, not only his own immaturity, but also his own self-absorption.

In Chapter 6 Gavin makes an effort to remember details about Anna. In doing so, he's searching for clues to help lead him to finding her. Yet the things he does remember are personal to her, revealing things about who she was, not necessarily who she may have evolved into in the present.

The theme of Misinformation is explored in Chapter 7. Gavin isn't aware of how egregious his lie is in the story about the little girl dying in the fire. In thinking of her playing hopscotch, he's painting a past for Chloe in his memory, imagining things she might do. The girl who perished, however, was wheelchair bound. While Gavin is thinking only of himself, he doesn't recognize the needs of others. It takes his careless act to cause enough humiliation to wake him up to what's going on around him. This foreshadows his behavior in future chapters. Gavin loses his job, unsurprisingly. For both the reader and Gavin, this is a relief. That's not to suggest that hard times won't follow this event, but something needs to force him to the next stage of whatever personal growth this inspires.

On the same day Gavin is fired, Daniel is in Utah. Chapter 8 shifts the focus to Daniel, continuing with a parallel view of Gavin and Daniel. He is not on police business, but is actively missing his fire arm. While he waits, he thinks of his children. This emphasizes the theme of Relationships. Daniel is driven by helping his family.

Chapter 9 finds Gavin isolated. The theme of Relationships is evidenced by how Gavin's relationships have fallen apart. While the previous chapter showed Daniel thinking of his family, Gavin is without even so much as a friend. This juxtaposition reveals much about these men, foreshadowing how they will react throughout the duration of the novel. The themes of Music and Relationships are touched upon when Gavin sees Deval and Morelli play. Gavin indicates that there is visible tension between the men. Gavin is likely hyper-aware of tension given his current state. He would likely project the emotion on anyone around him. Witnessing this tension, however, foreshadows a future encounter between the Gavin and Deval. Gavin is also given an opportunity to apologize for the choices he made at the newspaper. It's Julie, however, that reaches out to him via email. That provocation leads Gavin to apologize. Gavin likely wouldn't have been mature enough, or perhaps humble enough, to initiate contact with her. Gavin doesn't make the decision to explain anything to her. Julie's email prompts him to do so.

In Chapter 10, the themes of Identity, Misinformation, Regret, and Relationships are all explored. Paul's identity is wrapped up in the drug world. While the business has changed for him over time, it remains a major part of his identity. Daniel is left coping





with the reality of his grandmother's estate not being what he expected. When he learns about the lack of money, he is struck with the regret of promising the money to Paul. Further, he begins to understand how the estate was misrepresented to him prior to his grandmother's death. The theme of Relationships is evidenced in the interaction between Daniel and Paul. While these two have a history together and were once friends, Paul's primary interest is in regaining the money he lost 10 years earlier. He also makes it clear that if he doesn't get his money, Daniel will have pay, even if it means paying with the blood of his family.

## Discussion Question 1

How does Gavin's decision to fabricate elements of his story affect the readers' perception of him?

## Discussion Question 2

What are Eilo's motivations for showing Gavin the photograph of Chloe?

## Discussion Question 3

What does Daniel's decision to repay the money Anna stole reveal about their relationship?

## Vocabulary

transient, silhouette, varnish, imperiled, titans, pantheon, leaden, impose, herpetologists, terrain, insubstantial, dissipation, scrutiny, sublime, digression, abyss, desolate, feral, languid, volatile, inarticulate, conciliatory, urbane, anemic, atrocious, impeccable, magnet, squalor, fretted, milled, leisure, synesthesia, gradations, tangents, arpeggios, banal, irreparable, shell-shocked, cartels, colossal, console, vice



# Part 1, Chapters 11-15, Part 2, Chapter 16

## Summary

In Chapter 11 Gavin lists things he no longer needs, including electricity. He knows his financial situation will find him without an apartment soon, but he's making due with candles for now. He has received multiple letters from his landlord, but hasn't opened them. He knows he's on borrowed time at the apartment and never leaves without his favorite fedora. He calls Eilo from Starbucks and tells her that he's lost his job. She doesn't understand since everything seemed fine when she saw him four months earlier. He tells her he was fine then, but since learning about Chloe, his life has been in a tailspin. The newspaper is running an article about Gavin's deception. Eilo buys him a plane ticket and tells him to come back to Florida and stay with her. When he arrives back at his apartment, he finds the eviction notice. Eilo arranges for Gavin to fly to Florida that day. When he arrives in Florida, he's struck by the heat. He learns that Eilo has moved to a soundproof house under the freeway and that she's separated from her husband.

Chapter 12 is a brief chapter that finds Daniel leaving Paul's house and leaving Salt Lake City. He considers all the expenses he has, including alimony and child support. He also thinks of being able to erase the debt of a friend, but is concerned about what might happen if he can't come up with the interest; he worries about his family.

Chapter 13 finds Gavin at Eilo's house and how peculiar it is waking in a soundproof house. He goes to work with Eilo and observes her job. She gives him a digital camera and sends him out of his first job on the foreclosure on Emory Street. He speaks with the woman at the house and offers her \$2,000 to vacate within 30 days. He checks in with Eilo afterwards and she tells him to be mindful of the heat. He thinks about Anna and how easily she got away from him. Now he wants to find her.

Chapter 14 is another brief chapter. Daniel attends his grandmother's funeral and learns that there isn't any inheritance. His grandmother spent what money she did have on a bad real estate investment.

Chapter 15 begins with Gavin thinking about how to find Anna. While he thinks of leads he can hear Eilo in the spare room hitting her punching bag. Gavin tells Eilo that he's thinking about visiting their parents; Eilo hasn't seen them in a couple years. When he sees his mother, he learns that she doesn't know about Eilo's impending divorce. His mother drinks a lot and his father is on a business trip. They talk about a Christmas when Gavin and Karen visited. He leaves and goes to the police station to report Chloe as a missing child. He runs into Daniel. They go into the interrogation room to talk and Gavin explains that he's never met the child, but is worried about her. Daniel comments



on the fact that Gavin was fired from his job for creating stories and dismisses Gavin's claim.

Gavin leaves and tracks down Jack's childhood address, gets the phone number and calls Jack's mother to find him. He goes to the house on Mortimer Street and finds Grace, a young girl of thirteen who is both pretty and dirty. A woman named Laila also lives there. Grace lets him in and he asks about Jack. She leads him to the backyard. Jack doesn't recognize Gavin. Gavin explains who he is and Jack invites him to sit down. Jack has been reading a book on Django Reinhardt. They talk and Gavin puts it together that Jack has a drug problem. Eventually, Gavin asks about Chloe; Jack says she's a sweet kid. Gavin sneaks a photo of Grace. Back at Eilo's, Gavin asks if Eilo has any idea where Anna and Chloe went; she doesn't. The next morning he returns to the police station and meets with Daniel. He offers the photo of Grace to Daniel, wanting to trade information about a runaway in exchange for answering questions about Anna. Daniel mentions that Anna went to Georgia after high school and is reluctant to say anything else.

Chapter 16 is the first chapter in Part 2 and takes place in the past. The reader learns that Jack auditioned for but didn't get into Julliard, ending up at Holloway College in South Carolina. At the time his roommate was Liam Deval who introduced himself to others by name and by explaining that he was going to be famous. Jack began taking more and more pills throughout college and questioning his musical abilities. He returned to Sebastian at semester break. He met with Daniel and Sasha when he moved back. Daniel has quit playing bass. Gavin came up in conversation and Daniel thinks it's convenient that Gavin took off after Anna disappeared. Rumors about Anna's whereabouts were discussed.

After break, Jack went back to Holloway. In his dorm he found Deval with a baby. Deval told him that Anna was using the showers and he was watching the baby. Deval invited them to stay the night. When Anna returned to the room, she explained that she went to Utah and had the baby but didn't want to talk about it. In the morning, Jack discovered that Anna, Chloe, and Deval were gone. Four days later, Deval returned and told him that he drove Anna and Chloe to Virginia. Deval later told Jack that he was in love with Anna, but is concerned that she's under aged and has a child.

In February, Jack ran into a man with a goldfish tattoo who asked about Anna and knew Jack by name. He also knew the name of Jack's sister Bridget. He threatened Bridget to get Jack to tell him where Anna was. Jack told him she was in Carrolsburg, Virginia. Jack told Deval about the man. Deval explained that Anna stole money from a meth dealer and that he was going to go find her, leaving school during the middle of the semester. He later got a note from Deval postmarked from Detroit explaining he wouldn't be coming back. Jack dropped out of school. His parents sent him to rehab. A year later, he went to the Lemon Club, although still under aged, because Deval and Morelli were playing. He talked to Deval and Deval told him that he thought he got to Virginia just in time.



## Analysis

In Chapter 11 the theme of Relationships is quite evident. In listing the things he doesn't need, Gavin understands his relationships to things. It's possible that he's been consumed with things prior to this time in his life. That Eilo has given Gavin the opportunity to reflect on what's important in life, e.g. his relationships, either with relationships in the past, present, or future. Prior to this moment in life, he has been consumed with his life as a reporter. While it is something that he longs to do, his relationship with the job isn't what he expected. This dissatisfaction foreshadows how he will handle similar disappointments going forward. When he is evicted, it's the final push he needs to leave New York City. Gavin isn't comfortable in Florida. The heat is too much for him, yet he needs to go back. He needs to know about Anna and Chloe. That he waits to leave until after the eviction notice demonstrates that Gavin isn't emotionally ready to face this aspect of his life. He doesn't go until he absolutely has to. Eilo helps him by purchasing the plane ticket. While it's unclear if Eilo harbors any guilt about telling Gavin about Chloe, she is there for her brother. Their relationship is strong even if they are apart for long stretches of time. Eilo is there for Gavin, but it's unclear if Gavin would reciprocate. In considering this, it's logical to assess that Eilo is the more mature of the siblings. This likely reveals that Gavin still has some growing up to do. Eilo is also going through a separation from her husband. This may further be contributing to Eilo's desire to help her brother. Both of them are going through significant life experiences, causing them both to reflect on their lives and relationships with others.

Like Gavin in the previous chapter, Chapter 12 sees Daniel considering his expenses. While Gavin listed the things in his life, Daniel lists people as he thinks about alimony and child support. It's in addition to supporting the people in his family that he's considering how he will be able to also provide for Anna. He wants to settle her debt with Paul even though he was not complicit in stealing the money. In keeping with the theme of Regret, he may feel guilty for introducing Anna to Paul, which would ultimately lead her to do what she did. More likely is that he considers Anna part of his family and because of that harbors a sincere desire to help. This reinforces the theme of Family. He must think that her life will improve if she no longer has to hide.

The theme of Music is explored in Chapter 13. So many of the character's lives are touched by music. At its most basic level, music can be regarded simply as sound. When Gavin arrives in Florida and goes to Eilo's house, he finds that the house is soundproof. It's practical, given that the house is located under the freeway. The lack of sound, however, is distracting to Gavin. He misses the sounds of traffic and birds. These sounds give him a sense of an outside world. In this moment, Gavin is completely locked within himself. This marks the beginning of his journey of getting away. The business that Eilo is in is important to note as well. The job is essentially giving people money to vacate a home that's about to be foreclosed on. This business is symbolic of Gavin's situation. True, he can relate to the people in that he was recently evicted from his house, but it also represents people being forced into doing something



they either don't want to do or aren't prepared to do. This reflects Gavin's current state, yet he begins to focus more and more on what he does want, which is to find Anna.

The themes of Relationships and Misinformation are explored in the brief Chapter 14. The chapter allows for Daniel to understand how what he expected from his grandmother's estate is something else altogether. Similarly, it is possible that his grandmother was misinformed about the investments she made toward the end of her life. Daniel may share that in common with his grandmother. Both are willing to take serious risks. Like his grandmother, Daniel is realizing when it's too late the actual cost of the risk being taken.

Chapter 15 finds Gavin piecing together his investigation. He tracks down the other members of the Lola Quartet. While the group never appears all together, Gavin's pursuit of each of them brings them together indirectly. When Gavin tracks down Jack, he isn't quite sure what to expect, likely the reaction he can expect from reconnecting with all of his former friends. Of the group, however, Jack's situation is likely the most dire. While Daniel and Sasha will face different threats throughout the novel, Jack's addiction already has complete hold over him. The theme of Identity is witnessed in the introduction of Grace, the girl living with Jack and Laila. While Laila's character is never fully formed or really plays a direct role in the novel, Grace is different. The reader isn't fully exposed to all of Grace's backstory, leaving her without a true identity. Yet she is significant enough to warrant concern. Gavin's confusion over who Grace is foreshadows the role Grace will play in the plan to help Anna later in the novel. Gavin also takes a photograph of Grace. This is reminiscent of Eilo taking the photo of Chloe. The consequence of both photos works to enforce the theme of regret.

Chapter 16 begins Part 2 of the novel. This marks a shift in focus away from Gavin. Prior to this, his character has found his trajectory. The chapter gives the reader insight into how Jack got to where he is. His situation gives a sense of helplessness. In witnessing how he was in the early days of college, the reader is exposed to how deeply rooted Jack's addiction is; it is part of his identity. He wants to seem fine with his situation about not becoming a musician, but the drugs mask the disappointment he must surely possess. The theme of Relationships is explored in Deval meeting Anna. The reader learns that Deval was in love with Anna, but likely has regrets about the relationship. He's clearly uncomfortable with Anna's age, but is drawn to her and pursues the relationship. The theme of Music is evidenced, not only by Jack's shift away from music, but also by how driven Deval is by his art and Jack's identity as a musician, something that many of the characters face in the novel.

## Discussion Question 1

What does Eilo's offer to help Gavin reveal about her character?

## Discussion Question 2

What do Daniel's comments about Gavin's past reveal about Daniel?



## Discussion Question 3

Why does Paul threaten Jack's sister?

## Vocabulary

redundant, detritus, congregation, pylons, austerity, alimony, perdition, commiserate, agitation, frugal, undulating, mausoleum, sangria, pristine, absurdity, fabulist, figment, reconcile, adornment, squalor, noir, stultifying, retrospect, grandeur, bravado, ostentatiously, translucent, pensive, prodigy, slippage, celluloid, convalescence, serene, morose, queasy, benignly, hysterical, supplanted, emissaries, addled, faltered



## Part 2, Chapters 17-19

### Summary

Chapter 17 begins with Anna feeling bored about life on the run. She's afraid and misses Daniel's call while she has her headphones on. She ends up at Jack's college where she meets Deval before she goes to Virginia. Deval meets her in Virginia and tells her that he wants to go to Detroit to meet a gypsy guitarist, but will take her anywhere she wants to go. She agrees to go with him and they find a place to stay and he gets a job as a waiter. He meets Stanislaus, the guitarist, and remembers how Jack had a saying: "He has the music." Meeting with Stanislaus motivates Deval as a musician. He plays quietly at night and both Anna and Chloe love the music. In the spring, Deval suggests moving to New York City to meet Arthur Morelli, another musician. They end up in Brighton Beach in Brooklyn. Anna knows Gavin is in New York. Deval gets another job as a waiter, but hates it. Anna suggests using the money. While Deval is initially reluctant, he relents. Arthur comes to the apartment and notices how young Anna is. While Arthur and Deval discuss music, Anna contemplates what it would be like to confess everything to him. Months later, Anna goes to watch Deval play at a jazz bar and she doesn't feel like she belongs there. Deval gets a gig in Florida, but Anna won't go back because she doesn't think it's safe.

Chapter 18 returns to Gavin. A woman calls him a leech because he is making money off of her foreclosure. After a heated exchange, he tells her she did it to herself. He continues piecing together what he remembers about Anna. He talks to Karen and explains he lost his mind a bit, lost his job, and moved to Florida. She reminds him that he wanted to go to Chicago. She complains about getting a part-time job as a night shift proofreader. The Florida heat is getting to Gavin. He goes to see Taylor, who sang with the quartet at the last concert. They catch up and he asks about Anna. She says he should talk to Daniel about her because she saw them disappear together the night of the concert. He goes to the police station to confront Daniel. Daniel wants him to let it go and Gavin tells him that he's sure the kid is his. He begins following Daniel and learns his routine; he doesn't know what he's looking for but thinks he'll know when he sees it. He goes to talk to Jack. They realize they both know Deval. Jack reveals Deval is in Florida to visit Anna, he's staying at the Decker, and has a gig at the Lemon Club.

He goes to the club and remembers talking to Anna about how he didn't think he was good enough to be a professional musician, but he was okay with that. Gavin asks the bartender about Deval and when the show is about to start, Deval ends up canceling. He sees a man with a goldfish tattoo leave before the replacement act takes the stage. The next morning, Gavin goes to the Decker. He bribes the receptionist to get Deval's room number and sees Deval is staying under the name D. Reinhart. He knocks on the hotel door and the heat is getting to Gavin. He tells the person in the room that he's looking for Anna. The voice in the room tells him to wait. Gavin is overcome by the heat and asks to come in. He tells him he has to wait because he can't reach anyone. Gavin asks if he's trying to reach Daniel. Gavin is losing consciousness from the heat and





needs to get inside. The door opens and he pushes his way through while Deval tells him to stop. Gavin hears a sound, tells Deval he has heat stroke, and falls unconscious.

Chapter 19 takes place 10 years earlier on the night of the Lola Quartet's final concert, but is told from Anna's perspective. She throws the paper airplane at Gavin on stage. Daniel asks her afterwards if Gavin saw her. She doesn't think so. They get in the car to leave and Daniel assures her it will all blow over soon. They are going to Utah to stay with his aunt until the baby is born. He tells her how nice it will be in Utah. When they arrive at Aunt Delia's, she informs Daniel that her daughter Tanya will be back over the holidays and that they can stay in the living room. Daniels sends Anna back to the car and Daniel tells his aunt that they're going to stay at a friend's house. He explains to Anna that he worked with Paul the previous summer when he visited Utah. Anna notes the goldfish tattoo on Paul's neck when he gives them a tour of the house. The one rule in the house is to not go in the basement. Anna wants to leave because it's not what she expects, but since she only have \$80, she's in no position to leave. She gets voicemails from Gavin but ignores them. She's concerned about the paternity of the baby and hopes that the baby is black. She takes a waitressing job at a doughnut shop.

A few weeks later, Anna hears a commotion and Daniel tries to prevent her from seeing Paul and another man fighting outside. Later, while Daniel is at work, Anna talks with Paul. She asks about the goldfish tattoo and he explains that his best friend drowned when they were young. The tattoo is to remind him not to fear water. He gives her a ride to work and asks about the baby. When the baby is born, Daniel leaves the room when he sees the baby clearly isn't his.

## Analysis

As Chapter 17 begins, the reader gets a better sense of Anna. For Anna, she views herself on the run. For Deval, he is chasing his musical muse. The juxtaposition between the characters demonstrates how people run from or run toward obstacles. While it's understandable as to why Anna is running away, it indicates that perhaps she has more in common with Gavin than would have previously been thought. Like Gavin, she isn't happy where she is, senses a desire to be elsewhere, but isn't entirely sure of what she wants. It is possible that she regrets not just stealing the money but also running away from Gavin like she did. That doesn't mean that she longs for him or misses their relationship. Rather the time with Gavin was a moment that wasn't filled with regret or fear. Anna's life wasn't easy, but the reader gets the sense that she's lost something of herself. This references the theme of Identity. She considers telling Arthur Morelli who she is but knows that in order to protect herself and her daughter, she can't risk it. Anna feels out of place. It's not just that Anna doesn't feel she belongs at the bar with Deval during one of his gigs, but rather that she has a genuine feeling of being misplaced. She regrets that she's unable to get back to where she likely feels she belongs.

In Chapter 18, Gavin tells a woman that she is to blame for her given situation. A myriad of events must have transpired prior to the woman having to face foreclosure, but



Gavin's comment seems unnecessarily cruel. Yes, the woman initiated the conflict; Gavin was there to do his job, but she reacted emotionally and called him a leech. His reaction comes from an equally emotional place and likely is directed at himself. Gavin can see himself in her failure. Without Eilo's help, Gavin would be homeless and without employment. Further, Gavin didn't get to his situation overnight. He is dealing with consequences for actions from his past. He concentrates on his past, both as an investigative reporter and as a man who was once friends with the people he's now reaching out to. He meets with Taylor, the vocalist from the final Lola Quartet concert. Reaching out to Taylor is symbolic of Gavin trying to find his voice.

This also helps to further the theme of Music in the novel. Anna tells him that he should reach out to Daniel. She tells him what she remembers. It's fitting that Anna is able to recall more about that night than Gavin; it reveals how detached he was from Anna even then. He doesn't directly reach out to Daniel, however. Instead he opts to follow and observe him. He also returns to talk to Jack again and Gavin is made aware of Deval's involvement – though not the full capacity – in Anna's life while she was on the run. It is almost as though Gavin has been surrounded by the truth of his past without being able to recognize it. He knew of Deval as a musician and watched him play, he was in New York when Deval and Anna lived there, and was friends with Jack, Deval's college roommate.

It is possible that Deval is symbolic of the truth that Gavin seeks, but ignores because he can't handle it. This may foreshadow how the two men eventually meet. Jack reveals to Gavin that Deval is in town. Gavin knows he needs to track him down and bribes a desk clerk at the hotel to get information about his room. Gavin has a history with heatstroke and is struggling with the heat when he goes to Deval's room. There is confusion about who Gavin is and Deval does panic. The heat overwhelms Gavin to the point that he loses consciousness while grappling with how to get into the motel room. While his original purpose was to speak with Deval, Gavin is in a life-or-death situation. He wants the air conditioning. He desperately needs to get out of the heat. The chaos of the scene is reminiscent of how jazz can sometimes be discordant and discombobulating, reinforcing the theme of Music.

Chapter 19 goes back to the night of the final Lola Quartet concert. The difference this time is that Anna's perspective is revealed. While the reader gains information about what happened to Anna and Daniel, it remains an incomplete account of events. It demonstrates how different perspectives can be based on need and experience. The reader doesn't have a reason to distrust either telling of the night in question, and ultimately doesn't need a completely accurate representation of it. The dual perspectives give the reader the opportunity to see Gavin and Anna as two separate people with different needs and desires. Knowing that Anna is leaving town with Daniel indicates her need to escape. She didn't talk about leaving Florida when Gavin and Anna spoke about life after high school; Gavin did. Perhaps they wanted similar things, but just weren't capable of communicating with each other. This indicates the struggle both characters have in finding out who they really are, reinforcing the theme of identity. Also focusing on the theme of identity is Anna's preoccupation with the paternity of her child. It's clear that Anna is desperate for the child to be Daniel's. While she wants the



child to be Daniel's, she doesn't indicate why she doesn't want Gavin to be the father. Anna may not be able to articulate why she doesn't want Gavin to be the father or why she wants Daniel to be. That failure to communicate those wishes to herself builds on the theme of Relationships and her understanding of how her life is forever connected to these two men. Daniel, of course, leaves after the baby is born. In some way, Daniel had to know there was a distinct possibility of the baby not being his, but he believed Anna because he wanted to. It's apparent that Daniel genuinely cared for her. While he did leave her, his future actions demonstrate that he never stopped caring for her.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why does Anna contemplate telling Arthur Morelli who she is?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Why does Gavin tell the woman who called him a leech that she "did it to herself"?

## **Discussion Question 3**

How do the two versions of the last Lola Quartet performance inform the reader about what really transpired that night?

## **Vocabulary**

epiphany, recriminations, stasis, elation, conduit, malevolent, sardonically, inscrutable, demoralized, languor, derangement, tirade, stucco, menace, derelicts, inconspicuous



## Part 2, Chapter 20, Part 3, Chapters 21-24

### Summary

Chapter 20 takes place in the present. Gavin awakes in the hospital and learns that he was shot in the arm. Daniel explains that Deval panicked, thinking Gavin was someone else. Daniel is at the hospital in an official capacity, investigating the shooting. In order to protect Anna, he tells Gavin that he's going to write it up that Gavin went to the wrong room and interrupted a drug deal. Daniel finally tells Gavin and he ran off with Anna because she told him the baby was his and that they broke up after the baby was born. Anna was fearful that if she stayed with Gavin he would call the authorities about the problems she had at home and was scared they would take the baby from her. Gavin tells him he'll forget who shot him if Anna and Chloe are safe. After he's released from the hospital, he talks to Eilo and she tells him she'll handle his medical bills. He tells her he was at the hotel looking for Anna and Chloe.

That night he calls a taxi to go to the Starlight Diner where Sasha works. She recognizes him and brings them both a coffee and they chat. He asks about Anna. Sasha misinterprets something he says and is surprised to learn that he's involved with what's about to happen; she thinks it's a terrible plan. Gavin plays along. She asks if a time has been set and he doesn't know. She only knows its supposed to happen in the middle of the night. He asks her to tell him about Chloe and she tells him she's a good kid. He gives her his address and cell in case Anna wants to find him.

Chapter 21 begins part three and takes place a couple months before Gavin returned to Florida. Sasha speaks with William Chandler, her unofficial sponsor at Gamblers Anonymous. In the past she used her student loan money from gambling and stole from previous jobs. Anna has been living with Sasha for years, having moved in with her after breaking up with Deval. She paid Sasha's gambling debt with the remainder of the money she stole. In their youth, Sasha protected Anna as best she could during their mother's episodes. Sasha started working the graveyard shift because it's quieter than the busier shifts. Typically, she works with Bianca and Jocelyn, in their 50s and 40s, respectively. Daniel arrives at the diner to talk to Sasha. She knows that Anna and Daniel ran off together, but not much more about him. He tells her that after the breakup he got married twice and had four children. He asks if Chloe is Gavin's child and that he thinks Anna should ask for child support from Gavin. Sasha explains that Anna was embarrassed about running off without telling him. The two begin a friendship and meet for chats at the diner.

During one of their conversations, Anna calls and tells Sasha about a real estate agent taking a photo of Chloe. They can't call the policy even if they fear Paul is coming after them because Anna is the criminal. During her time in Florida, Anna has been working as a dedicated file clerk, but misses work after learning about the photo. She tells



Sasha she called Deval and he's coming to Florida. Sasha wakes up the next afternoon and finds a note from Anna explaining that she and Chloe went to stay at a hotel with Deval. Later Sasha meets with William and tells him that she's been gambling, but just with scratch-off cards. He advises her to go to a meeting and she does, but later buys more lottery tickets.

Chapter 22 returns to Gavin, who is getting back to work for Eilo. He goes out at night to meet Sasha, who tells him that Daniel has the money from his inheritance and that the exchange with Paul is happening tomorrow. The next night Gavin shows up to find Grace dressed to look like Chloe. Grace reveals she's doing this so that she won't have to face drug charges. Gavin asks who offered her the deal and she tells him Daniel and Anna. Gavin talks to Sasha about the ethics of treating Grace as disposable. He leaves the diner and ends up walking through a new residential development only to get lost. He remembers a story about a lost boy in the Bronx. He calls Julie and asks her about the story: the boy was found wondering alone and was the son of someone who was shot during an exchange where the kid was being used as an insurance policy.

In the brief Chapter 23, Gavin goes to see Jack who is playing his saxophone. They talk about music and Gavin asks if Jack knows what's going on tonight. Jack takes a Vicodin, but it's not enough to curb his drug cravings. He tells Gavin Grace left with Anna.

In Chapter 24 Gavin returns to his apartment, takes two Vicodin, and flushes the remainder. He thinks of how everything could have gone differently. He falls asleep and wakes to find Deval at his door asking to come inside. He apologizes about the gunshot. They talk and Deval's hands are shaking. Gavin tells him he used to watch him play at Barbes and Deval reveals he had a falling out with Arthur Morelli. Deval also tells him about his time with Anna and that he came to Florida because Anna told him someone took a picture of Chloe at his mother Gloria's house. Gavin asks him to put him in touch with Anna and Deval gives him the information.

## Analysis

Chapter 20 returns to the present and the reader learns that Gavin has been shot in the arm and is hospitalized. The hospitalization is more likely for the heatstroke than the gunshot wound, however. It resolves the confusion at the end of Chapter 18. He wakes up to find Daniel in the room. Daniel makes it clear that he's only there in an official capacity. The theme of Misinformation is supported by Daniel's insistence that Gavin went to the wrong room and got caught up in a drug deal gone bad. Gavin is willing to go along with the lie, but he wants information in exchange. This gives Daniel an opportunity to reveal more about his history with Anna. Daniel has been protecting her with his reluctance to talk with Gavin, but it's also possible that Daniel is embarrassed about what happened when they were younger. He likely feels used by Anna, but because he loved her, and perhaps still does, he does what he can to protect her. This reinforces the theme of Regret.



Later in the chapter, Gavin reunites with the final member of the Lola Quartet: Sasha. Of the quartet members, Sasha seems the most aware of Gavin, or at least isn't threatened or confused by his presence. Sasha is the most at peace with her given situation. It's fitting that she is the last of the group for Gavin to reconnect with. In doing so, it foreshadows the hope that Gavin will be able to make it through the ordeal. That's not to suggest that it will be an easy transition, however. The theme of misinformation is evident in the exchange between Gavin and Sasha about the plan in action. Sasha concludes that Gavin must be in town because of what's about to happen with regard to Paul and the others. Gavin misleads Sasha into thinking that he does know if an effort to gain more information.

Chapter 21 begins the third section of the novel, but backtracks on the timeline, moving backward a couple of months. This gives the reader needed exposure to understand Sasha's position. While Sasha may have appeared to be the most together of the quartet members, she is not without her demons. Her gambling problem has caused her a great many difficulties in her past. She tries to do what's right and stay focused. Being a gambler is a major part of her identity. The reader also learns that Daniel and Sasha have been meeting regularly and have formed a friendship that neither really expected, reinforcing the theme of Relationships. Whether they are fully aware of it or not, the strongest bond between them is in how they take care of Anna. They have spent their adult lives doing so. Sasha tried to protect her when they lived with their turbulent mother, and then later helps when Anna and Chloe moved in with her when they returned to Florida. Clearly, Daniel's dedication to Anna didn't stop after the breakup, especially given that he not only offered to repay Anna's debt to Paul but has abused his police power to keep her safe. The reader witnesses Sasha and Anna interact toward the end of Chapter 21. Anna has called Deval and told him about the photograph Eilo took of Chloe. Anna doesn't know who took the photo and assumes the worst. Unwittingly, Eilo has started a chain of events that puts all of their lives in danger, thereby highlighting the theme of Misinformation.

Gavin begins to put together what the plan is in Chapter 22. Like Eilo, Gavin has responsibility for putting a child in danger. While Eilo endangered Chloe, Gavin is responsible for bring Grace into Daniel and Anna's plan. He used the photo he took of Grace to try and negotiate with Daniel earlier in the novel. This allowed for Daniel to use Grace in place of Chloe.

Chapter 23 gives the reader a final look at Jack's life as well. While he has been able to communicate with Gavin, he's not been fully aware. Drugs are consuming him. The reader doesn't see Jack overdose, but it's a bleak final view of him and leads one to suspect that it's likely only a matter of time.

In Chapter 24, Deval shows up unexpectedly at Gavin's apartment and the two men talk. Gavin notices how badly Deval's hands are shaking while they're talking. Deval is genuine in his apology and the reader gets the sense that he regrets that it happened. His unrest, however, indicates that perhaps more is at play. It foreshadows the truth about what Daniel and Anna's plan truly involved. This is also when it is revealed that the inciting incident for everything that is happening is because of the picture Eilo took.



The assumption was that Paul hadn't quit looking for Anna and that they were left with little recourse. Gavin has the opportunity to tell Deval who actually took the photo, but doesn't. This absence of information reveals more about the theme of Misinformation.

The theme of Relationships is also explored in the chapter. Not only does Deval reveal that he and Arthur Morelli have had a falling out, but Deval also discusses how relationships naturally resolve themselves. It may not be ideal how they end, and some indeed last forever, but typically an end will come. The interaction with Gavin and Deval will end with this encounter. It is through this meeting that Gavin is finally given the information to find Anna.

## **Discussion Question 1**

How is Daniel protecting Anna by convincing Gavin to lie about who shot him?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What does Sasha's preference for the graveyard shifts reveal about her character?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Why does Deval go to see Gavin?

## **Vocabulary**

epicenter, foray, transfixed, provisional, tuition, iconography, decipher, inconspicuous, inert, vertigo, pallor, Naugahyde, periphery, melodramatic, allure, bleary, infrequent, virtuous, serene, cacophony, pathological, provisional, tedious, indecipherable, vehement, iridescent, affectation, recitation, recede, plausible, ominous, ethereal, preclude, dirge, desiccated,





## Part 3, Chapters 25-29

### Summary

Chapter 25 takes place a day earlier. Sasha goes swimming and then to work where she finds Anna and Grace. When the plan is over, Sasha drops Grace off at the house on Mortimer Street. Something about the house seems familiar. She thinks about what has transpired and how Anna's debt is now paid. She thinks about leaving Florida, even though she never has.

Chapter 26 begins with Gavin waking up with a headache. He calls and tells Eilo he isn't coming into work. Later in the day he discovers an article on the local newspaper website about a body being found behind the Starlight diner. He remembers Deval's hands shaking.

Chapter 27 finds Sasha stopping again for lottery tickets and arriving at the diner to find police tape. Bianca tells her that a drug dealer from Utah was killed out back. Later Sasha goes outside and calls Anna about the body and wants to ask her if she was involved. Instead she hangs up. Daniel shows up later to talk to Sasha. She asks about the investigation, but Daniel tells her it isn't his case and that there aren't many leads from what he's heard. He tells her Deval left town. Sasha considers going to the police, but Daniel tells her the police wouldn't believe her since she's an unreliable source with a gambling problem. When she gets home she tries to sleep, and later ends up calling William. Her words are vague, but he asks if she's witnessed a crime. She tells him she can't go to the police and that she needs to raise enough money to leave town. She asks him to meet her at a casino to reign her in when she's made enough money; he tells her it's too much to ask of him. She goes to the casino anyway and feels at home there. She sees William sitting at a bar. She apologizes to him and plays her hand, thinking about moving to Alaska. After she makes about \$6,000 he tells her to stop. They go to the ocean because Sasha doesn't know when she'll see it again. Later she goes to the diner and Bianca asks her if anything is wrong. She says no, but Bianca gets a sense that Sasha is trying to say goodbye.

Chapter 28 traces the money that Anna stole. She took it from Paul's basement and because the bag wasn't heavy, she thought it was only a few thousand dollars, but turned out to be \$121. Paul confronted Daniel about where Anna would have gone and who she might be with. He gave Paul the names of the people in the Lola Quartet.

Chapter 29 takes place in the present, 10 years after the money was stolen. Gavin goes to the motel where Anna is staying and sees Chloe jumping rope outside. He asks where her dad is and she tells him he's dead. He tells her he was her mom's boyfriend when they were young. Anna pulls up in her car and he tells her Deval gave her the address. He thinks how old she looks now. They talk and she tells him she's studying to be a paralegal. He explains what happened at the newspaper and how he just fell apart. They talk about regrets and why she did what she had to in order to get out from under



her past. He starts to explain that Eilo took the photograph of Chloe, but stops. Anna tells him that she, Daniel, and Deval came up with the plan. Gavin tells her it was the wrong thing to do. He leaves and returns to his apartment. He gets what little he has and packs up the car. He stops at the Starlight Diner and speaks to Sasha. She asks if he knew what the plan was and he tells her no. She tells him that she wants to leave. He asks her to leave tonight and not tell anyone where she's going.

Gavin goes to a police precinct outside of Sebastian. Still in the car, he looks at the picture of Chloe and thinks about what he needs to do. A police officer knocks on his car door, startling him. He ends up asking for directions to head toward Chicago. In the car he thinks of a letter he will write, but not send to Chloe and keeps on driving.

## Analysis

Once again the timeline loops back a bit with Sasha. In Chapter 25, the reader learns what Sasha did the day leading up the plan. Anna and Chloe are staying at the hotel with Deval because they think it's safer. Sasha misses them and wants them back with her. For her part, Sasha was responsible for getting Grace back to the house on Mortimer Street. She senses something familiar about the house, indicating the theme of Relationships, but she can't connect why it's familiar. She doesn't know that Jack is there.

Chapter 26 returns to Gavin the next day. He learns that a body was discovered behind the Starlight Diner and he understands the scope of the plan. While he is unaware that Daniel never had the money and that the intent was to kill Paul, he recognizes his role in the plan. When he remembers Deval's hands shaking, he realizes that Deval visited him in an effort to establish an alibi and that he killed Paul, indicating the theme of misinformation.

In Chapter 27, Sasha goes to the diner and learns of the murder. Of course Sasha knows what happened, but now she's left grappling with the reality of it. The theme of Misinformation is evidenced in Sasha's call to Anna. She wants to ask her sister if the plan was to kill Paul all along. She doesn't ask the question because she can't handle what the truth may be. If Anna says yes, Sasha must grapple with the fact that her sister is a murderer. If she doesn't know for certain, she can justify that perhaps what happened was something that got out of hand and couldn't be avoided. She tries talking with Daniel, and while the two of them have developed a genuine friendship, it begins to break down. Daniel misleads her by dismissing her inquiry by stating that it isn't his investigation and then dismisses what happened with rumors about the victim. Sasha considers going to the police, but Daniel dismisses her character. In doing so, he destroys what may have been left of their friendship. Daniel is dedicated to Anna and will resort to whatever means to protect her. It prompts Sasha to fall back on her addiction. She gambles in order to save herself. She can use her winnings to escape. Much like Gavin in the early parts of the novel, Sasha finally reaches her breaking point where she must act.



Chapter 28 is a brief chapter that gives the reader information about the money. It is likely that Anna's regret isn't that she stole the money, but rather that it was such a large amount. It is also revealed that Daniel is responsible for getting the other members of the Lola Quartet involved with Paul. He did so to protect Anna and subsequently put the others in danger. He may regret having made that decision, but likely feels that since he has eliminated the threat that he has done right by them and justified his actions.

In the final Chapter 29, Gavin and Anna finally meet. They are kept apart for the duration of the novel, not strictly as a plot device, but also because it's not until the matter with Paul is resolved and Gavin has an understanding of what happened that Gavin is able to confront Anna. While Gavin has spent much of the novel trying to remember Anna, he is struck by how old she looks for her age. He can see the evidence of a hard life on her face. They talk about things they regret doing or saying, indicating the theme of Regret. Gavin has the opportunity to tell Anna that Eilo took the picture of Chloe, but in doing so, he will alter her entire perception of what happened with Paul. Anna has justified Paul's death and defends the decision to Gavin. Should Gavin explain that Paul was no longer a threat and that effectively Anna and Daniel lured him to his death when she was the one who originally stole from him, Gavin changes the entire narrative of her experience. This misinformation is meant to help her, even if he struggles with the morality of what she's done. Once Gavin leaves, he goes to see Sasha one last time. He tells her to leave. He gives her the impetus to take the biggest gamble of her life and leave Florida and all of this behind her. He gives Sasha a chance at freedom because he is compelled to turn Anna and Daniel into the police. Once he's at the precinct, he changes his mind. He is a man consumed with regret no matter what he does. He opts to leave without reporting them and asks the police officer for directions to head toward Chicago. The reader knows from one of Gavin's earlier conversations with Karen that he felt that he would go to Chicago if he ever left New York. In this moment, he frees himself of what is holding him back in Florida and can go and reclaim his identity in a place he will feel he belongs.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why does Gavin tell Sasha to leave town?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Is Anna a sympathetic character?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What does Gavin's decision to not go to the police reveal about him?

## Vocabulary

transcendent, complicit, improbably, plaintive, delirious, impassive, parquet, squalid, opulent, transgression, derision, laden, provenance, nostalgic, demarcation



# Characters

## Gavin

Gavin is a newspaper reporter who considers himself born in the wrong era. He's fond of his fedora, trench coat, and camera. He played the trumpet when he was in The Lola Quartet, but went to journalism school, taking a job at the New York Star. After a series of layoffs at the newspaper, Gavin feels pressure to up his game. He becomes distracted after Eilo shows him the picture of Chloe, which leads to his first fabrication in one of his stories. He continues to make up quotes and source names, ultimately leading to the loss of his job.

Eventually he loses his apartment and moves back to Florida. He moves in with his sister Eilo and begins to work for her. He also starts looking into what happened to Anna after she disappeared. He tracks down the other members of The Lola Quartet to piece the mystery together.

He finds that people are reluctant to tell him anything about Anna. Frustrated, he persists, but keeps getting blocked. When he finally tracks down Deval, he experiences heatstroke, a problem he has suffered with his entire life in Florida, and is accidentally shot.

The shooting leads him on the path to locate Anna and learn for certain that Chloe is his daughter. When he finally confronts Anna, he's faced with a moral question as to whether or not he can turn her in for the crimes he now knows she committed.

Gavin is motivated by his need to get to the bottom of the story. He dreams of being an investigative journalist. Tracking down Anna and Chloe gives him an opportunity to fulfill this dream. For Gavin, it's more about finding Anna than it is about becoming a father to Chloe. He's curious about her and wonders about being a father, but it's not what he's truly aiming for. After meeting with Anna, he realizes how wrong all of what's she's done is and decides to go to the police. When he gets to the police, he thinks differently. He allows Anna to get away with what she's done so that his daughter can keep her mother. He also knows that the life he wants isn't in Florida.

When Gavin interacts with the other characters, he does so as an investigator. His dialogue is often driven by questions as he pieces the puzzle together. He is largely met with resistance from the other characters. It's not that they don't want to tell Gavin where Anna is, but rather that they don't to risk anyone finding out where Anna is.

## Anna

Anna is Gavin's high school girlfriend. She grew up in an unstable home with her violent mother, father, and half-sister Sasha. Younger than Gavin, she got pregnant in high



school. Instead of telling Gavin about the child, she runs off with Daniel, telling him he's the father.

They run off to Utah to have the baby. When the baby isn't black, Daniel realizes he isn't the father and they break up shortly after the birth. Anna steals over one hundred thousand dollars from Paul, a drug dealer, and flees. She meets Liam Deval and they begin a relationship, moving first to Detroit and then to New York.

Anna continues to live her life in hiding, but after breaking up with Deval, ends up returning back to Florida to live with Sasha. She pays off Sasha's gambling debt with the remainder of the money she stole from Paul, but continues to be fearful that Paul will come looking for her.

She takes a job as a file clerk and hopes to become a paralegal. Along with Daniel and Deval, she concocts the plan to get rid of Paul once and for all.

Anna's primary motivation is survival. She is aware that she's done bad things in her past, and continues to make questionable choices, such as going along with Daniel's plan to get rid of Paul, so that she can stay safe. She uses the people around her and takes advantage of their loyalty and kindness. The reader doesn't get much sense of what she wants outright, outside of just staying hidden. She likely wants freedom from her past, which is impossible.

How she interacts with the other characters reveals what she needs. She felt safer with Daniel than Gavin, so she ran away with him. When she runs off with Deval, the reader gets a sense that she cares for him. She is reliant on Sasha, not just for a place to live, but long relied on her sister to protect her from the harsh environment they grew up in.

## Daniel

Daniel is another member of The Lola Quartet. He is involved with Anna when they are in high school, before she breaks up with Gavin. Believing he is the father of her child, Daniel agrees to run away with Anna. They go to Utah, originally to stay with his Aunt Delia. When he realizes there isn't room for them, he takes them to Paul's house. Paul agrees to let them stay. After the baby is revealed to be white, Daniel ends his relationship with Anna.

He marries twice and has four children, two with each wife. He owes a lot of money in alimony and child support. He works as a police detective in Sebastian. When he thinks he's about to come into an inheritance from his grandmother's estate, Daniel decides to pay off Anna's debt to Paul with the money. When he learns that there won't be an inheritance, Daniel, Anna, and Deval devise a plan to get rid of Paul.

Daniel also helps Deval by convincing Gavin to lie about who shot him.

Daniel loved Anna and that motivates him to protect her. He risks his family, financial security, and job to help her. He does so in spite of her lying to him about the baby



being his. He likely feels guilty about introducing Anna to Paul. While Daniel had nothing to do with the money being stolen, if he hadn't introduced her to Paul, she never would have stolen the money. His guilt motivates him to offer to pay off the debt. When he discovers that he isn't going to inherit the money he thought he would, he devises a plan to rid them both of Paul.

He is both cold and reluctant around Gavin. The reader gets the sense that he's trying to protect them both. He needs Anna to be safe, but also knows the risk to Gavin if he learns the truth. Further, because of Gavin's position as a journalist, he is likely fearful that he will become a story, which would ruin his career.

## Liam Deval

Deval, who is referred to as both Liam and Deval interchangeably, was Jack's college roommate. He meets Anna after Chloe is born and Anna is on the run after stealing the money. He falls in love with Anna and helps her get away.

He moves Anna and Chloe to Detroit so that he can meet and learn from a jazz guitarist. A talented musician, Deval takes a job as a waiter to get by and plays music at night. He then moves them to New York where he meets Arthur Morelli, another jazz guitarist. He takes another job as a waiter, but is miserable. Anna offers to support him with the stolen money. Deval and Anna eventually break up. He stays in New York while she returns to Florida.

When Anna calls him about someone having taken Chloe's picture, Deval returns to Florida to help. With Daniel and Anna, he devises a plan to take care of the threat from Paul. When Gavin comes to his hotel room, he shoots Gavin, thinking he's someone else.

Deval, like Daniel, loved Anna and wants to protect her. Because of their past relationship, when Anna calls him for help, Deval drops everything to try and help her. He is the one person who finally gives in to Gavin and tells him where to find Anna. This is likely done out of guilt because he shot Gavin, even if it was unintentional. Of any of the characters, Deval takes the biggest risk on Anna's behalf, as it is indicated that he pulled the trigger and killed Paul. He makes the decision to help with the plan because he knows Anna needs his help. It is possible that Deval remains in love with Anna.

## Sasha

Sasha is Anna's older half-sister; they share the same mother. Sasha is protective of Anna. She plays drums in The Lola Quartet. After high school, she develops a gambling problem and gets heavily in debt. She uses student loan money to gamble and steals from jobs. Eventually she goes to Gambler's Anonymous and gets straightened around. She doesn't really believe that gambling is a disease, however, because there isn't a cure for it.





She works at the Starlight Diner on the graveyard shift because it's quieter. After the plan to get rid of Paul comes to fruition, she starts gambling again. She makes enough money to leave Florida for good.

## Eilo

Eilo is Gavin's sister. She owns a real estate company that negotiates with people who are about to undergo foreclosure. While at a house that's about to be foreclosed, she spots Chloe and realizes that she looks exactly like she did when she was a little girl. She takes a picture of the girl before she leaves the house to show to Gavin. She keeps a punching bag in the spare room to take out her aggression. Recently separated from her husband, she takes in Gavin after he is evicted from his apartment. She gives Gavin a job at her business and covers his medical bills after he is shot.

## Jack

Jack is another member of The Lola Quartet. He auditioned for Julliard, but didn't get in. After going away to college, he realizes that he's not really good enough to become a professional musician, though he remains passionate about music. He is Deval's roommate in college, but eventually drops out after becoming addicted to drugs. He spends time in rehab, but by the time Gavin finds, he's relapsed, spending most of his time getting high.

## Karen

Karen is Gavin's ex-girlfriend. They were expecting a child together, but broke up not long after she experienced a late-term miscarriage.

## Chloe

Chloe is Anna's daughter with Gavin. She is twelve and said to be a bright child.

## Julie

Julie is Gavin's editor at the New York Star. She uncovers the lies he fabricated in his stories after receiving a complaint about one of Gavin's stories.

## Silas

Silas is a work colleague of Gavin's at the New York Star. Gavin considers him one of few friends in New York. Silas is laid off during the first round of cuts at the newspaper.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## Heat

Throughout the novel oppressive heat is emphasized around Gavin, with multiple references to heatstroke. It symbolizes how Gavin's inquiry into Anna and Chloe is as much a threat to their safety as the heat is to Gavin's.

## Pythons

The pythons are thought to be a result of pets being released and storm surges bringing the reptiles further inland. The python represents Gavin and how his arrival is a perceived threat to the people around him.

## Photograph

The photograph of Chloe symbolizes how her birth has affected each member of the quartet. For Gavin, it represents what he's lost by not knowing about his daughter; for Daniel, it represents the family he feels obligated to protect; for Sasha, the photograph represents the family she must leave behind; and for Jack, it represents what he's lost to his addictions.

## Django Reinhart

Django Reinhart is a famous jazz guitarist who overcame a hand injury to continue playing. He symbolizes how characters must adapt to their changing environments in order to survive. Gavin must adapt, not only to Florida heat, but also to his recent disgrace. Sasha must adapt to by fighting her gambling addiction. Daniel must adapt to how saving Anna and Chloe compromises his work as a police officer.

## Jazz

Jazz is style of music recognized for its improvisation. It symbolizes how the characters must think on their feet, reacting to the dangers around them. For Gavin, he improvises when he tracks Deval down at the hotel; likewise, Deval overreacts when Gavin shows up and ends up shooting him. Daniel must improvise a plan to save Anna and Chloe after he learns that he didn't inherit the money he thought he would. For Sasha, in order to save herself, she risks getting sucked back into her gambling addiction to earn enough money to get away.



## **Shower**

The leak in the shower begins gradually and becomes a significant leak over time. It symbolizes the lies Gavin uses to embellish his stories and reporting.

## **Goldfish Tattoo**

Paul got the tattoo in remembrance of a childhood friend. The tattoo symbolizes the impact the members of the Lola Quartet have on each other now that they're adults.

## **Sasha's gambling**

Sasha's gambling symbolizes the risks the characters take and how they impact their lives, such as Gavin lying in his reporting, Anna not telling Gavin about the baby, and Daniel promising his inheritance before having it.

## **Grace**

Grace symbolizes the danger that Chloe is in without understanding it. She takes Chloe's place during the exchange with Paul, but doesn't comprehend the risky situation that Daniel and Anna have put her in.

## **The Lola Quartet**

The Lola Quartet symbolizes how these four people's lives are forever linked, not just by their past, but also by the plan that rid them all of the danger from Paul.



# Settings

## Gavin's Apartment

Gavin's apartment is located in New York City. Previously he lived there with his girlfriend Karen, who has recently left him. The shower leaks, leaving him unsure of what to do. As he ignores the problem, the leak worsens, leaving the apartment damp and humid.

## Sebastian, Florida

Sebastian is the small Florida community where all the members of the Lola Quartet and Anna lived. It has a performing arts high school and is near the ocean.

## The Starlight Diner

The Starlight Diner is where Sasha works as a waitress in the present. It's a predictable diner with booths and a counter-top eating area. The diner is located off the interstate, and Paul is murdered behind the diner.

## Eilo's House

Eilo's house is located under the freeway. Because of its location the house is soundproof. Gavin lives with Eilo when he returns to Florida, but later gets an apartment before leaving town altogether.

## Paul's House

Paul's house in Utah is where Paul runs his drug-dealing business. Daniel and Anna stay with Paul until after the baby is born. Anna steals the money from the basement in the house.



# Themes and Motifs

## Identity

The theme of Identity can be traced throughout the novel. As the novel opens, Gavin is revealed to have to have his dream job as a reporter. The job he wants, however, is his job in a different time. He identifies with reporters from a bygone era. How he sees himself is a man who lives in the wrong era, making his identity conflicted. As he begins to fabricate elements of his story and lose his job, he loses his identity. If he's not a reporter, then who is he? Searching for Anna and Chloe gives him purpose and makes him feel like an investigative reporter again, thereby getting him better in touch with his identity.

Chloe's identity is in question before she's even born. Anna is hopeful that Daniel is the father. She connects with Daniel differently than with Gavin. When the baby is born, Daniel learns he isn't the father, and Chloe identity shifts. Not only is Anna running away with the secret of stealing the money, but she's also stealing away Gavin's child. When Gavin meets Chloe, he learns that she was told her father died in a car accident. Chloe's paternal identity remains unknown to her.

Many of the characters in the novel identify as musicians. Deval achieves some fame as a musician, though not likely on the scale that he anticipated when he was younger. His identity is wrapped up in being a guitarist and it is something that gives him pleasure. Jack, his former roommate, also identified as a musician, but after failing to get into Julliard, he comes to understand that he isn't good enough to be great. While he thinks he's fine with this outcome, his identity becomes wrapped up in his drug abuse. He loses himself in his addiction.

Daniel's identity is wrapped up in being a protector. Part of the reason Anna left Gavin for Daniel was because he offered to take her away from her abusive family. He could offer her a fresh start. Even though their relationship ends, he still identifies as her protector. Years later, Daniel offers to pay off Anna's debt to Paul. When he can't ultimately do it, he helps arrange for Anna to be free from Paul permanently.

## Music

The theme of music is apparent in the novel. The title evokes music with The Lola Quartet. The four members of the quartet are bound together, not simply because of their connection to Anna, but by forming the group. Gavin remembers the last song they played, *Bei Mir Bist du Schon*, and that they played it twice that night. Each group member is associated with an instrument: Gavin on trumpet, Sasha on drums, Daniel on bass, and Jack on guitar.

The final concert is an important turning point for the characters. It's the last time they are all together. They come close to all being together again with the plan to get rid of



Paul comes together. While they are all in the area, they stop short of being together. Each person, however, plays a part in bring the plan to fruition. Without all of them, it may not have come together.

Deval's relationship to music is a strong one. He gravitates to a style called gypsy jazz. It's appropriate because of how Deval moves around. He takes Anna to Detroit and then New York. Gavin sees him play in New York. While he doesn't know him, he's aware of him as a musician.

Another way in which music is present in the novel is in a less traditional manner. Sound is an important aspect. Gavin, struggling with the Florida heat, is often inside and noting the hum of the air conditioner. When he moves into Eilo's place, he is struck by the absence of sound. He misses hearing the birds or traffic in the morning. It's unnatural for him to be sequestered from sound.

## Misinformation

How information is exchanged, or not exchanged, plays an important part in the novel. Readers are first introduced to this when Gavin begins to make up quotes and sources for his stories. He deliberately deceives his readers and editor. The first time he does so, he perceives it to be out of necessity. He continues to do it, not merely because he's fearful of losing his job, but rather that he stops feeling the consequence of doing it. It's not until he gets caught that he understands the full scope of what he's done.

Anna uses misinformation throughout the novel. The first time is in the absence of information. She neglects to tell Gavin that she's pregnant. She's unsure of the paternity of the child, but has a strong inclination that it is Gavin's. She then deceives Daniel into thinking the baby is his. Once the baby is born, it's clear that Daniel isn't the father. She continues to deceive people.

After stealing Paul's money, Anna relies on others to help her try to better her situation. Further, she gets them to lie about her whereabouts, leading Paul to think that Anna is hiding in South Carolina. When she's living with Deval in New York, she contemplates telling Arthur Morelli who she really is, but chooses to continue to pretend she's not.

When the plan comes together to get rid of Paul, Grace is used as a decoy for Chloe. Not only is Grace misrepresented to Paul, but the real risk to Grace is never made clear to her. Sasha is unwittingly spreads misinformation. She doesn't know the full scope of the plan, but continues to go along with it. When Gavin visits her in the diner, she leads the conversation with Gavin toward the plan. Gavin then lets her reveal elements of the plan to him without her realizing that he doesn't know what's about to transpire.

## Relationships

The theme of relationships is present throughout the novel. The relationships between characters vary greatly, and at times, changes over time. Gavin's relationship with Anna



drives the action of the novel. She leaves him when they're young, but it's not until Gavin learns that he may have a daughter that he seeks her out. They are kept apart for the duration of novel. It's not until the final chapter that Gavin is able to confront Anna about their relationship.

Similarly, Anna deceived Daniel in her relationship with him. She took advantage of Daniel's willingness to protect her to get away from her life in Florida. The relationship breaks down after Chloe is born, but the bond between them is long-lived. Daniel continues to fiercely protect Anna in the present. While Daniel did genuinely care for Anna, it's not entirely clear as to why he is so devoted to her. One reasonable explanation is that he felt guilty for introducing her to Paul, which led to her stealing the money.

Both Sasha and Jack demonstrate relationships with their personal demons. Sasha is able to manage her addiction to gambling, but Jack suffers a terrible addiction to drugs. While the reader sees Sasha flee Florida, the final time the reader sees Jack, he continues to load up on pills, unable to satiate his need. His relationship with drugs is likely to kill him.

The relationship with Anna and Deval might be the only true connection Anna developed. Deval is clearly in love with her, even if he struggles with their age difference when they first meet. While it is only a few years, they meet when she is still underage. Anna follows Deval as he pursues his music. In order to help him, she offers the money to support him. He takes the money reluctantly. The guilt he feels over this may have contributed to the downfall of their relationship or they may have simply grown apart. Regardless, Deval feels enough of an obligation to Anna for helping support him that he comes running in her time of need years later and likely killed for her.

## Regret

Regret is treated as a theme in *The Lola Quartet*. When Gavin leaves Florida, he does so knowing that he isn't suited for the Florida heat and that school and career await him in the north. He does regret leaving Anna without speaking with her following the night of the final Lola Quartet concert.

Anna experiences a lot of regrets throughout the novel. While many of her actions make her appear to be an un-redeemable character, her awareness of what she's done gives her some hope, however small. She regrets taking the money from Paul and going on the run. She feels bad about leaving Gavin without telling him about the baby, but until she's confronted by Gavin a decade later, she does nothing to rectify it. Further, while she may regret what becomes of Paul, she doesn't fully take ownership of the fact that a man was murdered.

Daniel promises money he doesn't have to Paul in order to eliminate Anna's debt to Paul. In trying to do what he believes is the right thing, he puts himself in an even worse



situation. Knowing that he's put others' lives on the line and can't come up with the money, he's left with a regrettable alternative: killing Paul.

Sasha and Jack's regrets are rooted in addiction. For Sasha, she is able to overcome her addiction, even if she experiences a brief, albeit necessary, relapse. There is hope for Sasha, where there isn't for Jack. Jack goes through rehab and makes an attempt to get his life back in order, but the drugs get the best of him. By juxtaposing these two addictions, the author is able to examine how people cope with regret.

# Styles

## Point of View

The Lola Quartet is told through a third person, omniscient narrator. The narrator is neutral and doesn't provide commentary or judgement on the character. In this regard, the narrator seems reliable in presenting the facts of the story objectively.

Different chapters focus on different characters. The first section of the novel has a strong emphasis on the character Gavin. While the section is Gavin-centric, the opening chapter is a brief introduction to Anna not long after she's had her baby, Chloe. The second part puts more of an emphasis on Daniel. The third part puts the emphasis on Sasha. Ultimately, however, the story is Gavin's. His actions drive the other characters to act; he is the instigator.

The narration also gives the reader a sense of regret. In looking back on the past, enough time has gone by for the characters to understand things they did when they were younger. They begin to see the consequences of those actions in the present. Whether it's Gavin's lies in his articles, Anna's theft, or Sasha's gambling problems, these characters have seen enough to understand their actions. What they do with that awareness differs, however.

In escaping the reality of her crime, Anna is willing to commit an even bigger crime. As she did when she originally ran off, Anna has managed to drag Daniel into her actions. She does the same with Deval. Because Anna's perspective is kept hidden for so long, the reader is left wondering what the lure of Anna after watching these men fall into her web.

## Language and Meaning

The vocabulary in The Lola Quartet is readily accessible and clearly written. There isn't much emphasis on specific jargon with regard to the characters' respective professions. However, there are frequent references to music, jazz, and specifically Django Reinhardt, but all is clearly understood in the context of the book.

The novel doesn't have a tremendous amount of dialogue. While there are exchanges of dialogue between the characters, the story is communicated through narration. Characters are alone frequently throughout the novel, making this an appropriate choice. When dialogue is used, it is natural and easily understood. Conversation between characters is natural.

There isn't much use of slang throughout the book. Gavin is written as a man who is alive during the wrong time period. It reads much like a mystery, revealing pieces of information along the way. Occasionally the author uses references to Raymond



Chandler, who is considered one of the first to write in the hardboiled detective fiction genre.

There are seedy elements to the novel, but the narrator doesn't pass judgement on them. They are presented in a factual manner. In doing so, it gives the reader an opportunity to make decisions about characters and their choices on their own.

## Structure

The book includes twenty-nine chapters, divided into three parts. Part one includes chapters 1-15, part two includes chapters 16-21, and part three includes chapters 22-29. Chapter length varies greatly from brief chapters comprised of two pages to lengthier chapters of 25 pages.

Each of the three parts delves deeper into the characters. Part one focuses on Gavin and his life in New York City and how he handles his job as a reporter. In part two, the emphasis shifts to Daniel; the reader learns more about his relationship with Anna and his life as a twice-divorced police officer. In part three, Sasha becomes the focus and the reader learns about her struggles with her gambling addiction.

By not having a fourth part focusing on Jack, the fourth member of the quartet, it emphasizes his situation. His addiction leaves him with limited control.

Anna is "missing" from most of the novel. Her character is present in flashbacks, but most of what is learned about her is second-hand through the other characters. In doing so, the author emphasizes how much of Anna's life has been led in hiding. Others are burdened with keeping her secrets.



## Quotes

I know this sounds crazy, but I think we have the same genes.”

-- Narrator (chapter 2 paragraph 51)

**Importance:** Gavin is rehearsing how he might approach Chloe. He doesn't know for certain that she's his daughter, and the quote indicates both the simplicity and absurdity of Gavin's situation.

He was always impatient and always wanted to be somewhere else and as he walked away from Anna's house that night his desire to escape south Florida was almost a physical ache.”

-- Narrator (chapter 5 paragraph 17)

**Importance:** The quote explains how Gavin felt as a young man, but he remains unchanged in the present. It foreshadows his decision to leave after finally confronting Anna and not getting to know his daughter.

He understood reading these stories, how easy it was to sink.

-- Narrator (chapter 9 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Gavin is capable of relating to the people he writes about, but doesn't fully comprehend the consequence of his.

If you're in narcotics, you know how it works these days. You pay with money, or you pay with your family.”

-- Paul (chapter 10 paragraph 40)

**Importance:** After Daniel meets with Paul about settling a long-time debt, Paul threatens to harm Chloe in case Daniel has second thoughts about paying the debt. The quote establishes that while Paul and Daniel have a long history with each other, business comes first and Paul makes sure the threat is palpable.

He'd let her slip away so easily. He assumed it was too late to make anything right, for Anna or her daughter, but it had occurred to him that the least he could do was find them.”

-- Narrator (chapter 13 paragraph 23)

**Importance:** Gavin considers how easily it was to walk away from her and this establishes a pattern for his behavior, foreshadowing his final decision. He also doesn't claim the daughter as his own, but rather that she is Anna's daughter.

He has realized, too late, that Daniel didn't like him, but he couldn't think of a reason.”

-- Narrator (chapter 15 paragraph 79)



**Importance:** The quote demonstrates how detached Gavin had always been from the group; he was caught up in himself and couldn't see what was happening around him.

No day passed without Jack wondering if the man with the goldfish tattoo had found them."

-- Narrator (chapter 16 paragraph 171)

**Importance:** The quote shows how far-reaching Anna's actions are. Not only has she put herself and others in danger, but has also left people with the burden of wondering if she survived.

The same fear she'd felt every time she'd ever brought a friend home, Please of please let everything be calm inside the house today."

-- Narrator (chapter 19 paragraph 35)

**Importance:** The quote indicates how much Anna's violent home life permeates her experiences. She is unable to separate herself from the anxiety and fear.

She wasn't in love with me. But you must have known what her family was like. I offered her a lifeline and she took it."

-- Daniel (chapter 20 paragraph 30)

**Importance:** The quote explains how Daniel copes with what happened. He cared for her, but the baby ended up not being his. He protects her out of love, but he recognizes the implications of Anna's actions.

It's like a marriage. Sometimes it lasts forever, sometimes you get sick of each other, sometimes the other party gets tired of playing the rhythm part."

-- Deval (chapter 24 paragraph 31)

**Importance:** The quote explains Deval's relationship with his music partner, but the quote also reveals how the members of the Lola Quartet interacted with each other following graduation

She found when she pulled into the diner parking lot that night that she had been expecting the police tape."

-- Narrator (chapter 27 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** The quote indicates that until she arrived at the diner, Sasha didn't fully believe what happened was true. That she realized she was expecting the police tape indicates her denial for what happened.

Have you ever made a decision in a moment of panic and then regretted it for the rest of your life."

-- Anna (chapter 29 paragraph 71)

**Importance:** The quote gives reveals Anna's conscience in making the decisions she

did: not just taking the money that put people in danger, but also in not telling Gavin about the baby.