

Mr. Murder Study Guide

Mr. Murder by Dean Koontz

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Plot Summary

Mr. Murder by Dean Koontz begins with a mystery writer and his family. Marty Stillwater is a published author, recently interviewed by People Magazine, who loves his family and appreciates his privacy. When he begins having fugue-like losses of time, he and his wife Paige are worried enough to send him to a physician, but the source of his blackouts and missing time have nothing to do with stress. On the other side of the country, a killer with Marty's DNA is working as a highly efficient assassin for a secret government agency. His targets are unknown to him, as is his past, his history, his family, or his life to date. Alfie is a blank slate. He's learned everything he knows from the programming he's received and the movies he has seen during his 'down time'.

The killer has a special link to Marty that goes deeper than any surface connection. He is able to tap into Marty and locate him easily, and without knowing why, is drawn to him in his home in California. He breaks protocol and ditches the Network's tracking devices, driving across the country to satisfy some unknown need he feels. The psychic pull takes him right to Marty's home, and when he sees Marty for the first time, he becomes convinced that Marty must be an alien clone of some kind who has stolen his life - his wife, and his children. He begins a violent campaign to regain his life and his family, willing to kill anything and anyone who gets in his way. Hunted by the Network and his handlers, Alfie engages Marty in a confrontation that has the Stillwater family fleeing their home and leaving everything they know behind. While evading his handlers, Alfie chases Marty to Mammoth Falls where he meets 'his' parents for the first time, but disappointed by their lack of support by his standards, he kills them believing they are clones as well. Now all that remains is to discover whether or not his wife and children have been cloned as well. With memories created only from movies he has seen, he writes himself as the hero, and using his favorite heroes as templates for his own behavior, he sets out to save the world from the aliens that are the Stillwater family.

In a violent confrontation, Alfie is finally killed by one of his handlers and then a spy within the Network reveals himself by killing his partner and saving the Stillwater family. Dean Koontz does a wonderful job of blending the science fiction of Frankenstein with the best of government conspiracies to create a blend that somehow meets in the middle.



Part One: Section One: Chapters 1 - 7

Part One: Section One: Chapters 1 - 7 Summary

Mr. Murder by Dean Koontz begins with a mystery writer and his family. Marty Stillwater is a published author, recently interviewed by People Magazine, who loves his family and appreciates his privacy. When he begins having fugue like losses of time, he and his wife Paige are worried enough to send him to a physician, but the source of his blackouts and missing time have nothing to do with stress. On the other side of the country, a killer with Marty's DNA is working as a highly efficient assassin for a secret government agency. His targets are unknown to him, as is his past, his history, his family, or his life to date. Alfie is a blank slate. He's learned everything he knows from the programming he's received, and the movies he has seen during his 'down time'.

Marty Stillwater is dictating a letter on his cassette deck to his editor regarding the final draft of his book when he becomes aware he is repeating the same two words over and over.... "I need, I need." Rewinding, he discovers this repetition has been going on for more than seven minutes. The family goes out for dinner and Marty is unusually reserved, even snapping at Paige on the way home, though he apologizes quickly. When the girls are ready for bed, Marty confesses the seven minute fugue state he earlier experienced. He watches his girls get ready for bed, finding the routine soothing, and once they are ready, he indulges in his favorite part of each day - story time. He writes all of the tales himself and puts them in a notebook he calls Stories for Charlotte and Emily, which he may or may not publish. Thanksgiving marks the beginning of a new story that will last through Christmas Day.

Meanwhile, a killer arrives in Kansas City, Missouri from Boston and collects his baggage containing his firearms from the baggage claim area. He uses an alias to rent a car and yet another identity to check into his room at the hotel. He goes to the restaurant for food and then drives around, already familiar with the area and layout, although he has never been there before. He goes to a strip club and fantasizes about killing one of the performers. A woman joins him and introduces herself as Heather. After a short conversation, she is convinced he is not a policeman and invites him to her room for a fee. Once there, his usual pattern repeats itself. At first turned on by her, he spends himself several times, but then is disgusted by both her and what he has done. He punches her hard in the face, stunning her into silence, and then while looking in her eyes, chokes her to death. He goes back to his motel, relaxed and ready to work.

Part One: Section One: Chapters 1 - 7 Analysis

Marty is deeply disturbed and frightened by a fugue state he experiences and by a fluke capture on tape. He has seven missing minutes. When Marty's wife Paige and their two daughters Charlotte and Emily return from the movies, Charlotte notices a difference in her father. He is still Daddy, but isn't at the same time. Usually easy going and steady as



a rock, he is unnerved by the experience, and tells his wife about it afterward. He begins to read the story he wrote for his daughters, a continuing saga that rhymes and will last until Christmas, and has a hard time not looking at their faces to gauge their reactions. It is the highlight of his day, and he lives for the enthusiasm they show for his stories. Until their praise is felt, the stories are without merit to him. He is a dedicated family man and a hopeless homebody at heart.

He is affected by fugue states that make it impossible for him to recall his real name, where he lives, or even what his previous contact was. He has no idea who pays him, or why his contracts have to die. He doesn't even have any recollection of the preparations he makes, which include elaborate exit strategies in case of emergencies, but he functions nonetheless. The missing parts of his life often depress him to tears, as does the sight of happy, normal families out together as he knows this is a life unavailable to him. Despite this, he places little value on life itself and feels such a state of intense need from people that he can't explain and they can't provide that he is capable of almost any atrocity. Sometimes he is on the brink of understanding it all, but at the last moment enlightenment fails him. He wonders about his sanity, but crazy people always believe they are sane so he rationalizes that he must be fine.

He is out on the prowl when he goes into the strip club, and isn't surprised when a call girl sits beside him. They talk with heads close to be heard over the performers, and once she is convinced arrest isn't imminent, she invites him to her room. It is a pattern that has repeated itself many times for him. He feels no guilt while having sex with her, even knowing how it will end. In fact, in some ways it heightens his experience. When he no longer feels the need for her body, his lust turns to disgust both in himself and her. She is no longer attractive to him and desire becomes rage as he punches her in the face. When he chokes the life from her, he stares into her eyes, enjoying the moment that life leaves her. Then he goes back to his motel, calm and content, ready to do the job he came to this city for.



Part One: Section One: Chapters 9 - 16

Part One: Section One: Chapters 9 - 16 Summary

Paige listens to the recording Marty made in his fugue and after two minutes shuts it off. Five minutes still remain, Marty explains. He has gone through his medical journal, and lists the causes he has found for this kind of state. She adds that it could also be psychological, but that is no comfort. The most likely culprit in his mind is a brain tumor. Shortly after midnight, Marty climbs the stairs and watches his girls sleep, thinking about fate. The next day Marty and Paige take the girls out for dinner and then to the zoo. Marty is his usual self and they all have a good time. He continues his Christmas story for them that night. Paige and the children leave for the day, in the morning and Marty awaits his doctor's appointment.

The killer drives to the neighborhood his contract lives in. He goes up the driveway, finds a key to the front door in his pocket, and punches in the code to silence the alarm. He climbs the stairs to their bedroom, and after ensuring the couple are his targets, he shoots them dead with a silenced weapon. He returns to his motel, but restless, he packs and heads toward Topeka for reasons that elude him. It is a deviation from normal, and driving down the highway he finds himself repeating the words, "I need" and then, "I need to be ... someone". He switches vehicles and finds a convenience store where he fills up, and buys enough junk food to satisfy his faster metabolism. Realizing he will need more money if he intends to drive all the way to the coast, he shoots the clerk and robs the register.

He reaches Oklahoma City by Sunday night, having exchanged plates to make tracking him more difficult and throws away everything but the gun and the clothes he is wearing. He is in a public washroom when a gray haired man about his size come in. He chats with the killer about the storm and how his wife doesn't like him to drive the motor home in this weather, preferring they sit it out. The killer almost takes him there and then, but the risk is too great. He waits in the stolen Honda, watches the old man come out and observes which of the four motor homes he goes in. The killer has to wait for some time for the lot to empty out, but when it does, he enters the unlocked motor home and kills both Jack and his wife, Frannie. He strips and gets into Jack's clean clothes and shoes. Before leaving, he cuts into the sole of his shoes and finds a selection of electronics in the heel. Sure now that he is being pursued, he moves on, ever westward towards California. He see the turnoff for Mission Viejo and takes the exit. He continues until he finds himself on Marty Stillwater's street and sits outside looking at the house that drew him from Kansas.

Marty is almost afraid to drive to Dr. Guthridge's office in Irvine, but it is impossible to call a taxi and still make the appointment in time When the killer sees him pull out of the driveway, he goes up the driveway. He sees the name of the family outside and feels a sense of kinship immediately. He picks the lock and wanders through the house until he finds his way into Marty's office. He sees Marty's novels translated into other languages,



and reads Marty's dedication to his parents, making another link in his mind, and finds two more, one to Paige and one to Charlotte and Emily. He looks at the photo from the desk again, knowing now who they are, and who he needs to be: Marty Stillwater. He feels he is finally at home.

Part One: Section One: Chapters 9 - 16 Analysis

Paige is unable to listen to the entire recorded seven minutes. For the first time, Marty seems vulnerable to her. Always so strong before and filled with enthusiasm that knows no bounds, this is a side that unnerves her. When Marty lists the ailments that could cause a fugue, she quietly rages against God for a minute. For once, he is not the rock-solid man she has always known, and she tries to convince him that this could all be the result of pent up stress. Marty isn't convinced, and doesn't believe in the twentieth century catch-all for everything that stress made him do it. She holds him, repeating that everything is going to be just fine, although she doesn't really believe it herself. Marty understands the Greeks definition for fate involves three personalities - Clotho, who spins the thread of life; Lachesis, who measures the length of the thread; and Atropos who snips the thread at her whim. He wonders if he is about to receive a visit from Atropos, and with a writer's imagination he can even picture her in his mind.

The next day, Marty, Paige and the girls go out to dinner and to the zoo afterward. Paige knows how hard it is for Marty to remain upbeat and positive while all throughout the day he never knows when another of those episodes might hit him. When no more episodes occur, Marty and Paige both breath a sigh of relief and try to treat it as an anomaly - a once in a lifetime occurrence. When Paige leaves with the girls the next morning, Marty is overcome with the dread that he will never see them again. It is all he can do to let them go without making a scene.

The killer fulfills his contract like he has many others. He arrives at the home of his primary target, finding the key to the front door in his pocket that he has not known until now was there, and once inside, entering the alarm code automatically with no memory of how he got it. He identifies and shoots his targets, and then moved by the fragility of life, he stands watching them for a moment. It is only now that he feels any connection with humankind, and he draws the moment out, enjoying it. He goes back downstairs, removing the night vision goggles and reluctantly returning to the world he doesn't belong in.

When he gets back to the motel, he realizes that he didn't dispose of the weapon as he normally would have. It is standard behavior and he doesn't know why he did things differently this time, but he feels a certain defiance as he gets into bed. He can't sleep, so before long he rises, packs and drives toward Topeka, although he has no idea why. He is supposed to stay until morning and then fly to Seattle, presumably for his next instructions, and he wonders how long it will take before they realize he's gone renegade.



Before too many miles pass, he enters the same fugue state Marty found himself in earlier, but instead of repeating just "I need", which he does at first, he adds "I need to be someone", to the litany. He doesn't mean someone particular - he just wants to exist and to have an identity. The killer feels as though his destiny is in front of him, but he wonders if 'they' are monitoring him. He gets rid of his suitcase and clothing, keeping only what he is wearing and his gun. When he happens across a man his size in a public restroom, he uses the opportunity to exchange his clothing as well as his shoes. Unfortunately, the traveling man and his wife become victims of this need. He shoots them and says goodbye to them gently, wishing he could spend more time with them, but after finding electronic devices in the sole of his shoes, he knows he must move on.

He follows the psychic pull that leads him ever westward, desiring nothing more than to be like all other men and ignoring anything that makes him different. He can't explain the need he feels to keep moving west, but the lure is so strong that he doesn't even want to stop for sleep. The turnoff for Mission Viejo calls to him, so he follows it, drawn as surely as a magnet to metal through the streets until he sees the Stillwater residence, and he knows it is at long last the place that has drawn him all the way from Kansas.

Marty is so afraid of another state of altered consciousness assailing him. He is filled with a fear that has gripped him since the night before that today something terrible will change his life. He can't even explain why he feels that way. It is just a nameless terror that has him physically shaking off and on since he woke up during the night, quaking with the fear of impending doom or disaster. The killer almost follows him, but decides that he will return eventually. Instead, once Marty is gone, the killer goes to the house. Stillwater, the plaque outside says. For him, it represents the still water that has drawn him all this way. Peace at last after a life of turbulence. He wanders around until he finds himself in Marty's office. He sees the artwork on the wall, representations of the novel covers that Marty has published, and the dark nature of Marty's work speaks to him. When he sees the name on the spines of the books in the bookshelf, understanding reaches him. Marty Stillwater is the author. A photo of Paige and the girls on the desk so touches him that he carries it around while he investigates the room. He sees Marty's books and reads a dedication in one to Marty's parents. His parents. Now, the killer has an identity. His parents are Jim and Alice Stillwater in Mammoth Lakes. Another dedication is to Paige, his perfect wife, and still another to his perfect daughters, Charlene and Emily. He feels as though at last his has found his life. This is his home, and his future begins now, he thinks to himself. Now he knows who he need to be: Marty Stillwater.



Part One: Section Two: Chapters 1 - 7

Part One: Section Two: Chapters 1 - 7 Summary

Marty waits for Dr. Guthridge in an exam room like any other. After Marty explains his symptoms, Guthridge gives him a brief physical exam and asks several questions, deciding to send Marty for further tests at the hospital. He assures Marty that the likely culprit is stress and that he should just try to relax. Then jokingly, he asks what name to use, Stillwater or Mr. Murder, and offers Marty his spare copy of People Magazine which was just released and has a recent interview of Marty inside, referring to him by that name. He sits in the parked car and reads the article. While basically factual, he comes across as deep, dark and twisted. He doesn't like it.

The killer makes himself at home, going through the girl's room and familiarizing himself with them. He immediately notices one is neat and the other slovenly, and determined to be a 'good father', he knows that one will be more work than the other. His whole life experience so far is based on movies he has seen, and they all have the same theme. Children like Charlotte require more discipline and structure to bring them into line. The personalities of 'his' daughters touch him and he looks forward to their interaction, imagining it. Seeing Charlotte's pets as something from the dark side, he kills them and leaves them on her bed.

Hungry, he goes down to the kitchen and consumes bread, raw bacon, cheese and chocolate cake, washing it all down with beer. Then, sated, he goes back upstairs to familiarize himself with his wife. He goes through her lingerie, and wanting to be clean for her, he showers, finds his toiletries and dresses in 'his' clothes, which of course fit him perfectly. He can hardly wait to make love to his Paige. He calls her at work, and Paige's receptionist tells her it is Marty on the phone. His voice is similar to Marty's but different at the same time. He tells her he likes how she looks, her photo appeals to her, and how he would like to make love to her, promising her it will be just like the movies. Then he hangs up and turns on the computer to write but is unable to put words to the page, so he puts his fist through the monitor. He thinks about calling Paige again. Paige sits for a moment in her office, knowing that Marty's meeting with the doctor might be finished but he couldn't possibly be home, so she calls his cell and he answers, obviously on his way home. He has no idea what she is talking about when she questions him about the call, and refers to it as a crank at first, and then both wonder if he has suffered another fugue and called her without his knowledge. Neither mentions this possibility, and instead talk about his appointment and the tests Dr. Guthridge wants to run.

Marty goes to the Mission Viejo Mall, and arrives twenty minutes before Paige and the girls are due. He is surprised to find the light on in his office, but even more so by the shattered monitor. He notices the blood droplets, and realizes he is not cut. He checks for his pistol, and it sits in the drawer where he left it. A voice says "I need my life", and Marty looks up to find himself looking at a man who could pass for his double. The effect



of the doppelganger is unnerving, and Marty thinks he is having an hallucination. He is afraid to speak, although the double is asking him questions like 'How did you steal my life?'. Marty sees the gun in the other man's hand and doesn't recognize it. His mind balks with the myriad of possibilities, but when the other starts telling him that Paige and the girls are his, Marty reacts. He grabs the gun from the drawer and shoots three times. The first miss but the second two shots hit the other in the chest, but he doesn't go down. Instead, he stumbles down the hall out of sight. Knowing that Paige and the girls are due any moment, Marty has to act, and he follows the blood trail around the house, looking for the injured intruder who looks just like him.

Part One: Section Two: Chapters 1 - 7 Analysis

Marty's imagination as a writer takes over as he waits for Guthridge, and he has no problem imagining the most horrible circumstances. Guthridge banter with Marty about being a celebrity, based on an article done on him in People Magazine that Marty had not seen yet. In it, he is referred to as Mr. Murder, and he is immediately embarrassed. It is the reason he didn't want to do the interview, and he doesn't see himself as a celebrity, although Guthridge disagrees, telling him that he must be if he is in People. He offers Marty his spare copy, and asks which name to book his test at the hospital under - Mr. Stillwater or Mr. Murder. Marty sits in his car and reads the article before going home, alternately embarrassed and disappointed by the way he is portrayed as a spooky and somewhat creepy guy who sees murder and mayhem where others only see sunshine. He can't get past the feeling that since his fugue state, his life had taken a turn for the worse, and it might be a long time before it goes back to normal.

The killer goes through Charlotte and Emily's room, quickly determining which daughter is which. He takes note of the state of Charlotte's side and decides that if either daughter is going to be difficult to raise correctly, it will be her. He already envisions the ways he will bring her into line with tough love, like he has seen in the many movies from which he draws all of his life's experience to date. He sees Charlotte's pets and deems them inappropriate and from the dark side. All the movies he has ever seen equate snakes, rodents and bugs with evil. He knows that Charlotte might hate him at first but that this kind of discipline is necessary for her proper upbringing. One by one, he kills her pets and leaves their remains on her bed for her to find when she gets home. The chameleon escapes him, but he decides that perhaps he'll make her hunt it with him and kill it herself as a further lesson in rehabilitation.

He eats and then showers after going through Paige's personal things and imagining what sex with her will be like. He knows it will be perfect because he loves his wife, and the cycle of guilt leading to death that always followed sex with prostitutes won't happen with her. He uses Marty's toiletries, thinking of them as his own, and finds his way into Marty's clothing, all of it fitting him perfectly. More and more, it feels good to be home. He calls Paige at work after finding her number, and he sounds enough like Marty that she believes it is him at first. When he begins to tell her how much he wants her and gets graphic about his need to make them into the perfect, television movie type couple, she is disturbed, but he hangs up before she can get her wits about her to respond.



Paige calls Marty's cell phone, and he answers but has no idea what she is talking about when she questions him as to the nature of the previous call. Both silently wonder if it is another of his fugue states. Meanwhile, the killer sits at Marty's desk, feeling comfortable, and turns on his computer - opening the word program, and like with his many other skills, he is able to navigate, although he has no memory of learning to do so. He finds it to be more difficult than he thought to begin a novel. Every attempt to start ends in frustration. Enraged by his own lack of ability, he puts his hand through the monitor, ignores the pain, and resolves to talk to Paige about his writer's block, feeling better now that he has a wife to share his troubles with.

Marty gets home twenty minutes before Paige and the girls. When he goes to his office, he finds the shattered monitor and questions his own sanity for a moment, but the blood droplets are not his. Confused, he opens the desk but his pistol is where he left it. The killer comes back to the office and his first sentence shocks Marty. He tells Marty that he wants his life back and that it all belongs to him. He doesn't understand how Marty stole it from him, and isn't sure how the reclamation will go. Marty notices the gun in his hand and can't bring himself to speak. The killer, who looks just like Marty, talks about killing him and wondering if he'll regain his lost talent to write if he does. Marty gets scared enough to act, and shoots the man - relieved that the bullets actually seem to hit an animate person and not a fugue state his own mind has created. The killer stumbles down the hall and Marty tries to pull himself together, knowing that Paige and the girls are due anytime now, and he has to ensure their safety. He follows the killer's blood trail towards the girls' bedroom. Fear is almost paralyzing him, and his senses are all on overdrive as he listens for sounds of movement, but hears only the rain. Shooting his doppelganger was more difficult than anything he'd ever written about, but he doesn't have time to think about the consequences now.



Part One: Section Two: Chapters 8 - 9

Part One: Section Two: Chapters 8 - 9 Summary

Marty reaches the door of Charlotte and Emily's bedroom, still following the bloody footprints, and at the last moment his brain registers a difference. The foot had turned. He spins around to find the Other behind him. Marty fires a shot reflexively, but it goes into the ceiling as his doppelganger hits him in the kidneys so hard that he drops the weapon. It falls over the balustrade and the Other grabs him by the throat, choking the life out of him and telling him repeatedly that Paige and the girls are his. Marty feels the life seeping out of him, his vision going, when the balustrade gives and they tumble more than twelve feet to the ground.

Luckily, momentum takes the Other over him and he lands on top instead of under. He manages to retrieve the gun and turns, but the Other hasn't moved, murmuring the word 'broken' to indicate his back. Marty asks who he is, but before he gets an answer, Paige and the girls come through the door. He goes as quickly as he can to them and tells them to go to the neighbors and call the police. It takes a moment for her to register the gun, the blood and Marty's expression before she takes the girls back out into the downpour to the house next door.

Marty goes back inside, but the Other is gone. He can't believe it. With something broken, he couldn't have gone far, so Marty searches the lower floor, finding the kitchen door open. He goes outside, senses heightened, but there is no sign of him, and Marty can hear approaching sirens. He goes to the front of the house just in time to see a car pull away, but his mind tells him that is impossible. When the police round the corner and squeal to a stop, all they see is Marty with a gun. They command him to drop it and get down on the sidewalk, which he does, instinctively knowing they want compliance, not explanations. Cuffed and asked for identification, Marty feels humiliated, and realizes that in all the times he has written about such a scene, that one word has never been a part of it. Paige comes out of the neighbors and tells the police he is her husband and they take off the cuffs, but even hugging Paige now he has the uncomfortable feeling that this nightmare has only just begun.

Part One: Section Two: Chapters 8 - 9 Analysis

Marty is terrified as he searches the house for his doppelganger, his mind still unable to process that the man looks so much like him. When the Other takes him by surprise and is forcing him over the balustrade, Marty looks into his eyes and takes note of the differences even then. Though the Other looks just like him, he has expressions Marty knows have never been on his face. The hatred and contempt, and the savage, maniacal pleasure he sees now twist the familiar features in ways Marty does not recognize at all. The Other is his size and weight, but seems to possess an inhuman strength, despite what should have been two mortal bullet wounds. The only thing that



saves Marty's life is the fact that the balustrade gives out and they tumble down to the next floor. Momentum thankfully takes the Other over him and down to the floor first, so Marty's fall is cushioned by his body when they land. All Marty can think of is retrieving the gun and when he does, he half expects the Other to be on him but he is still on the floor. He tells Marty his back is broken and asks if Marty is going to kill him, but as much as he feels as though he could at that moment, he knows he won't. He asks the Other who he is, but before he can get an answer, he hears Paige and the girls come in.

He convinces them to go next door and call police, his voice still raw and raspy and covered in the Other's blood. He goes back through the kitchen and grabs a cold beer from the fridge to soothe his throat, but drops it on the floor in shock when he sees the Other is gone! He can't believe it. With a broken back, he can't have gotten far, he reasons, but he is wrong. The Other had convincingly lied to him and is gone, leaving the side door open behind him. Marty goes out into the rain carefully, but there is no sign of him. Even now, his mind balks at the possibility that the Other could have gotten this far in the shape he was in. He goes around front just in time to see a car pulling out fast, and passing the police as they pull in just as quickly. Seeing him with the gun, they mistake him for the perpetrator, and he is told to drop the gun, which he does, and get down face first on the sidewalk. He complies, knowing that nothing else will satisfy the police right now. The feeling of humiliation is overwhelming as he lies on the ground in hand cuffs while the police go through his wallet to ascertain who he is and to prove his claim that he lives there. Finally, Paige runs out of the house next door, telling the police Marty is her husband. She has never looked more beautiful, more confident and more charmingly attractive to him than she does at that moment, and yet when the cuffs are removed, and he is standing there in her arms, he can't shake the feeling that the worst is yet to come.



Part One: Section Three: Chapters 1 - 3

Part One: Section Three: Chapters 1 - 3 Summary

Karl Clocker and Drew Oslett drive their rented Chevrolet down the highway, following a signal from a satellite tracking unit that is plugged into the lighter socket. The signal they are tracking comes from an electronic device that is concealed in the heel of a shoe. It hasn't moved in some time, and Drew comments that it looks as though he has pulled off at a roadside stop to rest. As they get close, Karl pulls out his gun, but Drew assures him that the tranquilizer gun will be enough.

Marty asks their neighbor Vic Delorio to watch the girls while he and Paige talk to police, and cautioned him against releasing them to anyone but Paige - not even himself unless Paige was with him. Confused, Vic agrees and Marty and Paige return to their home where they are fingerprinted as a process of elimination. A plain clothed detective, Cyrus Lowbock, asks him a myriad of questions after taking his statement, enough that Marty feels uncomfortable and even Paige is beginning to wonder. He is focused on the number of guns Marty has loaded and strategically placed around the house, and how much Marty may have had to drink.

Drew sees the rest area exit, sure that is where they'll find Alfie. The only vehicle is a motor home, and Drew speculates that no matter how far off the rails Alfie has gone, he'll respond to them. Taking the tranquilizer gun, Oslett knocks on the door and speaks the code phrase, "Be at peace, Alfie." The response should immediately be, "I am at peace, Father", but silence greets them. He tries again, and still nothing. Then his flashlight plays across the white hand of the dead man.

Part One: Section Three: Chapters 1 - 3 Analysis

Drew is out of his element. He is very uncomfortable in open spaces, preferring the city by far. He pays close attention to his tracking unit, and feels better because he is connected.

Cyrus Lowbock is the investigator that arrives with the police, and Marty gives him his statement. Cyrus seems not only skeptical but accusatory, and Marty doesn't understand why. He seems focused on how many legal guns Marty has and why they are loaded and placed in various places around the house. When he ask about the gun in his glove box, Marty doesn't want to give an answer that makes him look paranoid, so he lies, telling the detective that the gun was left there after his last time at the range two to three weeks ago. The lie gets him in deeper because the gun is loaded. Then Marty is questioned about the gun the killer left behind. It is a professional's weapon and is fitted for a silencer, which is illegal. When Marty explains the gun belongs to the Other, Cyrus is obviously not convinced. His next plan of attack covers what Marty has had to drink and he finds discrepancies there as well.

Karl is unfazed as they approach the rest area, almost as if he is in a state of meditation. He seems totally relaxed. Oslett is glad the rest stop is empty, and at the same time unnerved by the extreme emptiness of everything around him. The bustle and hum of the city serves as enough of a distraction that Drew is able to avoid the pitfalls of self examination.



Part One: Section Three: Chapters 4 - 8

Part One: Section Three: Chapters 4 - 8 Summary

Marty is angry but is determined to be cooperative and offers to take a breathalyzer, but the Lieutenant is calm to the point of aggravating. Lowbock is called upstairs and Paige asks Marty when he loaded the guns. He explains the panic attack he had earlier, and can see that she believes him, which helps. Lowbock returns, asking Marty if he'd locked the house securely before leaving that morning, and when he replies that he had, Lowbock puts a case on the table. Frustrated now, they ask what it is, and Lowbock obviously doesn't believe they don't know. It is a sophisticated lock pick set, and Lowbock doesn't believe that a regular burglar would have a silenced, professional weapon and a set of lock picks that only a professional would have.

The detective takes a new turn in the conversation when he questions Marty about Charlotte's pets and how long she's had them. Calling it a 'flamboyant touch', he reveals that all of the pets were killed, and Marty finally understands that the detective is accusing him of having killed them in an elaborate attempt to add credibility to his story. When he adds that strangulation is the safest way to 'attempt' to kill yourself and make it look as though you've been attacked, Paige loses her temper and throws him and his men out.

Drew examines the two bodies quickly, determining they have been dead for between eighteen and thirty-six hours. The Road King has been in the rest area for long enough to have drawn attention, so they want to leave quickly. Scouting the inside quickly, they find the clothing Alfie should have worn on the flight back and the shoes with the heel carved out revealing the electronics. Drew can't understand how Alfie would have gotten the idea to even look for tracking electronics, but Clocker is not surprised, claiming that Alfie has the knowledge they gave him. Having gone renegade, he would simply have applied that knowledge to himself.

Alfie's powers of recuperation are amazing, but his metabolism requires he consume large amounts of food to maintain himself. The bullet wounds have almost stopped bleeding, but he is weak. He goes to a McDonald's drive through and orders enough food for an office, barely able to restrain himself long enough to park before going at the food with animal enthusiasm. Once he is sated, he thinks about Paige and the girls and the impostor holding them. He promises to rescue them, or die trying. He switches cars with a shopper in a parking lot, and looks up the name of the people he heard Marty telling Paige to take the girls to. Only one Delorio is listed.

Once they are gone, Marty and Paige pack as quickly as they can, and when Paige sees the amount of blood on the carpet upstairs, she is sharply aware of how much danger they are really in. Both carry guns around the house as they assemble the clothing and immediate necessities.



Part One: Section Three: Chapters 4 - 8 Analysis

Paige is so angry that she has to step away from the table to regroup. Marty tries to stay calm, knowing that losing his temper now would alienate the one person here to help them. Before long, it is obvious that Lowbock thinks Marty staged the whole thing as some elaborate publicity stunt designed to sell more books. Paige finally loses her temper when the detective accuses Marty of choking himself and then killing Charlotte's pets as a way of proving that it couldn't possibly be him. She tells the detective to get out, and take his men with him. When both Paige and Marty mock him on the way to the front door, he almost second guesses himself, but that would be to admit that he may have been wrong about all of this and he would never admit that.

Quick examination tells him the man and woman have been dead for between eighteen to thirty-six hours. Drew is disappointed that this has happened, but Clocker is unmoved. He refers to the couple as nothing more than Klingons anyway, and irrelevant. Drew hopes this doesn't mean that he is going to be faced with an ongoing diatribe about Star Trek and its characters and plot lines, preferring the silence.

Alfie has incredible powers of recovery. Even though he is shot twice in the chest, he is still able to get himself to a nearby McDonald's so that he can replace the energy he is quickly losing. He doesn't look at the girl in the window, and tries hard not to draw attention to the distress he is in. He manages to get enough food to feed a small army and parks off to one side before digging in like an animal that has been without food for days. Once he has his equilibrium again, he knows it is time to get rid of the Honda. He drives to a mall and with a tire iron subdues a man loading parcels into his trunk. Then he takes the man's raincoat, which covers the blood stains on his chest, and thinks about the fact that another man has Paige and his girls is enough to devastate him. He is determined to rescue them from him even if it costs him his life. Speaking their names out loud like a mantra, he tells them to hold on, he's coming.

Marty has never loved Paige as he does at this very moment. He can see that there is absolutely no doubt in her mind, and that she is looking to him for what to do next. He tells her to pack enough things for a few days, and begins to do the same thing. He grabs their checkbooks, and two boxes of books which he puts in the trunk. Then he goes to the girls room to pack their things.



Part One: Section Three: Chapter 9

Part One: Section Three: Chapter 9 Summary

Charlotte and Emily sit in front of the television at the Delorio's pretending to watch but whispering about what might have happened. When Vic checks on them with a gun in his hand, they are a little more concerned, but then a knock at the door takes him down the hall. He opens the door to find Marty standing there, wet and looking disheveled. Vic asks what is going on, but Marty is incoherent and unresponsive. Vic keeps trying to get information from him, but then the girls run down the hall and into his arms. He crouches, holding them, murmuring things that make less and less sense. Even Kathy has a doubtful look on her face as Marty tries to usher the girls out of the door. Then Vic remembers that Marty told him not to let the girls go even with him unless Paige was with him. When he asks about Paige, Marty says she's gone ahead, but Vic reminds Marty about what he said, and then Marty's demeanor changes. He adopts a Jimmy Stewart persona, telling Vic he's been half out of his mind, and claiming that an enraged stalker fan had broken into their house and they were in danger, so Vic lets Marty take the girls. At first the Buick Alfie stole won't start, and the girls are asking him a million questions at once. His head is screaming, and he yells at the girls to shut up. They are stunned. Their father has never done that before. Then Emily sees Marty running towards the car and realizes the man driving is an impostor. She shows Charlotte, and they duck when they see their father holding a gun and getting ready to fire. When the car crashes, they take off their seat belts and run.

Marty empties his gun into the fleeing Buick, but isn't able to stop the car. Paige sees the girls huddled to one side and pulls to the side of the road, jumping out to embrace them both. They all get in and Marty drives, but without a specific destination in mind. He still can't think clearly. Paige argues for going back and talking to the police, sure that this time they'll listen, but Marty knows better. He knows that at best, they'll lose the two guns they have left and will be defenseless the next time this man comes after them. He manages to convince her. Alfie finds a deserted visitor's lot at the back of a building and parks so that the damage to the Buick can't be seen. Then he crawls into the back seat to sleep. He thinks about how the girls had come to him at the Delorio's and then deserted him for the impostor.

Part One: Section Three: Chapter 9 Analysis

Charlotte and Emily exercise their vivid imaginations as they whisper to each other as to what might have happened at home. When Marty comes to the door, they are relieved, having confirmation that he is okay. They throw themselves into his arms, hugging and kissing him, telling him they love him. He seems overwhelmed to see them and Vic and Kathy wonder about the comments he is making. He keeps telling them he'll never let them go again, and they are so sweet - just like in their pictures. Vic keeps asking him what happened, and Marty keeps sidestepping his questions, telling him they have to



go. Then Vic remembers that he isn't supposed to let the kids go with Marty unless Paige is with them. He asks where she is, and Marty tells him that she has gone ahead. Alfie can see the disbelief in Vic's face, and since Vic has a gun and he doesn't, he can't really push the issue. Instead, he switches tactics, adopting the friendliest demeanor he can, that of Jimmy Stewart. Imitating him, Alfie quickly weaves a story that Vic partially believes, and then tells him that he'll call them in a few days. He manages to get the car started and is just pulling out when Marty comes out of his garage and sees Emily's face in the back window of the Buick.

He chases Alfie and the girls down the street, and Emily catches sight of him. She is so relieved to see him because she immediately realizes the driver is an impostor. It is not a hard leap for her to make. He yelled at them, which is something her Daddy has never done, and he had a mean face that she has never seen on her father either. She points him out to Charlotte, and they both duck while Marty fires his gun at the driver. When the car crashes, they pile out of the car, to Marty's relief. He empties his revolver at the driver, filled with a rage and a need for revenge that he has never felt before. It is all consuming, and now that he knows his girls are safe, he fires until there are no bullets left.

Paige comes around the corner and sees the girls cuddled together. She stops and gathers them up in her arms, filled with such immense relief that all she can do is repeat 'thank God' over and over like a mantra. Marty gets them all into the car when they hear the sirens approaching, knowing that if they stay, things will only get worse. Paige thinks they should stay, but Marty knows he still has no proof to offer, and the best scenario likely is that they will also lose their two remaining firearms. He explains this to Paige and she realizes he is probably right.

Part Two: Section Four: Chapters 1 - 2

Part Two: Section Four: Chapters 1 - 2 Summary

Drew and Karl check in with their home office in New York as soon as they leave the rest area and the bodies of the elderly couple behind, seeking further instructions. They tell them to wait, and when they call back, New York instructs them to get to the airport in Oklahoma City and board a flight for Orange County. Once there, they are to refer to pages sixty-six through sixty-eight of People Magazine. This is the first time Alfie has strayed off course in the fourteen months Drew has been handling him, but no one involved in the program believes he's gone renegade. Drew buys the magazine and the second page reveals a photograph of someone who looks exactly like Alfie. He calls New York again, and they send him to the Stillwater residence where a disturbance has been reported.

Marty and Paige check into adjoining rooms in a motel in Laguna Beach, and the girls treat the event as though they are on holiday, enjoying every new experience as though everything is normal. They even insist Marty continues his nightly story to them, and he's glad he remembered the book. After Marty read the verses over a second time, they tuck the girls in and retreat to the adjoining room after making sure everything is as secure as it can be. Neither of them undress, wanting to be ready to leave immediately if necessary, and they lie on the bed holding hands and talking quietly.

Part Two: Section Four: Chapters 1 - 2 Analysis

Drew and Karl leave the rest area, and using a special satellite phone not available to most people, Drew calls New York and asks what they want done. New York seems more concerned with the idea the two of them may have left behind incriminating evidence than anything else, and Drew is somewhat put out by their lack of confidence. It suggests incompetence and he also isn't particularly pleased with the prospect of spending unending time in the middle of nowhere with his only company being Karl. He is glad he thought ahead and brought his Gameboy, which he takes out and plays with headphones until New York calls back. When the phone rings, they are told to fly to California and are given cryptic instructions to look at a section of People Magazine. New York disconnects without explaining. Drew relates the information to Karl, who behaves as if it all makes perfect sense. Drew is more comfortable in Oklahoma City where there is a larger population base, but it's still a far cry from the sensory overload he is used to in Manhattan.

While theoretically possible, no one involved believes that Alfie has gone renegade, but because he has all the necessary skills to avoid detection, given to him by them, he now has a very good head start. When Drew calls back, they are sent to Marty's house to investigate the disturbance reported. New York implies the whole situation could have

been avoided if Drew had taken more care in his handling, and Drew is put out by the insinuation. He feels like his reputation is being undermined.

The Stillwater family rents adjoining rooms in a Laguna Beach motel, where the girls insist their story time be continued. After reading, Marty and Paige tuck the girls into bed and talk quietly, marveling at the magic of story time, and how such a simple act served to restore them from the horrors of earlier in the evening.



Part Two: Section Four: Chapters 3 - 4

Part Two: Section Four: Chapters 3 - 4 Summary

Drew wakes Karl on the plane to tell him they are about to land. The advance man who meets them, Jim Lomax, looks to be in his late twenties, just slightly younger than Drew. He comes across as a new age man obsessed with his health, but Drew likes him because next to him, Karl looks small. Lomax gives him a copy of the Stillwater disturbance police report, telling him he has to take it with him when he goes. Jim takes them to the Ritz-Carlton where a suite has been booked for them and says that someone will come for them in the morning, hopefully with more information on the Stillwater's location.

Alfie wakes up in the back seat, already well into the healing process. His eye has purged the windshield glass from it, and bits of glass and viscous fluid have dried on his cheek. He finds moist towelettes in the glove box and cleans himself up. He thinks about Paige and the girls, and wonders if he can find them by connecting himself again to the impostor holding them hostage. He imagines himself and the impostor as large magnets and immediately feels the pull of psychic energy begin. At first the experience is pleasant, but it soon becomes uncomfortably strong, so he severs the connection before the other realizes the hunt is still on.

Opening the trunk, he moves the dead mans' body out of the way and going through his parcels, finding a new sweater that will suit his needs. He breaks into the apartment building easily and goes down to the laundromat where he cleans himself up and changes. Abandoning the car, he look for a new one and finds a Camry that he hot wires. He feels much better, deciding that he will take out the eye of the false father in retribution and he will make the girls watch as part of their education and proof that he must be obeyed.

Part Two: Section Four: Chapters 3 - 4 Analysis

Drew can't believe he's been paired with Karl. To him, it feels like some kind of cosmic joke, and since his father is an important man in the business, Drew can't believe that this pairing hasn't been done on purpose. Protecting the integrity of the family name had been drilled into him since childhood. He considers using Alfie to take Karl out if the Network is slow in fixing their obvious mistake. The advance man appears to be even younger than Drew, and Drew would normally have been filled with disdain immediately, but Jim Lomax is a big man who obviously considers his body as a temple, and next to him, Karl looks small. Drew has always been a bit intimidated by Karl, so he enjoys the role reversal, even though Karl seems completely unaffected by their contact.

Jim takes them to their suite at the Ritz-Carlton even though they have already slept and would have preferred to begin working immediately. Jim extols the virtues of the



hotel's breakfast and Karl comments that he hopes he can get the same breakfast of alligator embryos and chicken-fried eel head with a double order of calves' brains. Jim doesn't realize Karl is joking, making Drew appreciate Karl a little more for his intelligence if nothing else.

Alfie wakes already better than half healed, and with a little experimentation, he discovers that he can direct and draw himself to the false father who has his family. The thought invigorates him and gives him new energy. Marty feels the psychic touch and the weight of it is overpowering, waking him from sleep. He takes the shotgun and sits between his daughters, watching over them as they sleep. Alfie breaks into the apartment he is parked outside of, cleans and makes himself presentable, and switches cars before leaving the Buick with its dead owner in the trunk.



Part Two: Section Five: Chapters 1 - 3

Part Two: Section Five: Chapters 1 - 3 Summary

Marty wakes the girls and instructs them to shower and get ready to go. When he hears the television in the next room, he knows Paige is awake. He goes in to find her watching a national news article about the incident at their house, implying that Marty had likely set it all up as a publicity stunt and adding that since the blood in the hallway tested as human, the police would like to talk to him further.

The Ritz-Carlton is everything it is advertised to be. It is lavishly appointed with antiques that are museum quality. The Network's representative, Peter Waxhill, shows up at eight sharp the next morning. He takes the liberty of having breakfast delivered so they can eat and debate the latest findings. Waxhill tells Oslett that in the month of December five years previously, Marty had been in the hospital with his youngest daughter and had given both a marrow sample and blood. Oslett feels sick. He knows now that their people screwed up. Clocker seems oblivious to it all. Waxhill speculates that perhaps Alfie has the secret ability of psychic perception that allows him to tune into Marty because of their connection. Oslett loses his appetite when he considers the implications. Though Alfie was engineered to be impotent, they also wonder if perhaps his spectacular regenerative powers have also healed him in that area. It is a frightening possibility.

Marty, Paige and the girls go to their bank branch in Mission Viejo. They all go in together, and Paige sits with the girls while Marty goes to the counter and asks to withdraw seventy thousand dollars of his savings. It takes time, and the teller has to get the authority for such a large transaction. Having Paige and the girls inside with him helps dispel the suspicion that perhaps he is trying to assemble a ransom. He is standing at the teller window when Alfie sends a psychic tap out to him again. This one is so strong that he can barely stand. It doesn't last long, but Marty knows when it ends that it came from The Other. He also knows that he is coming - now.

Part Two: Section Five: Chapters 1 - 3 Analysis

Marty sits up until morning, when he wakes the girls and tells them to get ready to go. When he sees their house on the news, he is even more paranoid than before, and has a gut feeling that there is something much deeper and much more dangerous going on. He can't shake the feeling of dread he has, and the feeling that life for them will never be the same. Sadly, Paige has to agree.

Oslett checks with Clocker in the morning, and shortly afterward Peter Waxhill arrives to discuss developments. The Network discovered that Marty Stillwater had been in Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles with his daughter five years previously and had donated both marrow and blood. The timing coincides with the creation of Alfie, and Oslett



immediately knows that someone on the science end of things really screwed up. Though Alfie had been engineered with no sexual interest whatsoever, they now speculate that along with his incredible recuperative abilities, he likely has repaired himself sexually and overcome the programming he was given. They also fear that he may have psychic powers that allow him to tune into Marty at will.

The following morning, the Stillwater family all together go into their branch of the bank. While Paige and the girls wait, and Marty asks to withdraw the bulk of his savings. Seventy thousand dollars is too large a withdrawal for the teller to conduct alone, so she gets authorization. While she is doing so, Alfie sends out a psychic signal to find Marty again. The strength of it almost takes him off his feet and had the teller come back at that moment, it is unlikely that they would have released his money without more questions. Thankfully, it doesn't last long, but when it is finished Marty knows he is coming. He knows where they are.

Part Two: Section Five: Chapters 4 - 8

Part Two: Section Five: Chapters 4 - 8 Summary

Waxhill tells Oslett that they are checking police records for the cities that Alfie was in during the times he wasn't actually working to see if there are any unsolved murders or rapes. DNA evidence recovered from a murdered woman in one city is being flown to them to see if it matches. In an effort to find Alfie, they send a man to Marty's but glean nothing that will help. Waxhill tells Oslett that they are being sent to Marty's parents' place in Mammoth Lakes to try to get a lead on Alfie. They are to bring him in if possible, terminate him if necessary, but either way, the Stillwater family is to be eliminated. The Network wants the Stillwater family eliminated in a way that mimics a Maryland murder a few years previous when a man had killed his family and then himself, so Waxhill gives them precise instructions as to how to set things up.

At the bank, the manager approaches Marty to ask if the bank had displeased him in some way, and after assuring her that was not the case, she went to help the teller count the withdrawal. Alfie magnetizes himself to Marty one more time to ensure he is still headed in the right direction, and adjusts accordingly. Marty feels as though he's been hit in the chest with a hammer, and when the teller and manager return with his withdrawal, he doesn't even want to wait for them to count it in front of him, as is bank policy. Alfie tries to modify the strength of his connection to Marty so that Marty won't be so aware of him coming, but the sensation still hits Marty so hard that he stumbles, and he knows Alfie is coming. Paige drives, and pulling out of the lot, following Marty's instructions, she is seen by Alfie as he is pulling in. He follows. When he realizes they are headed for Mammoth Falls, he drops back and even travels ahead - all in an effort to get Marty to relax his guard. Marty has a gun and he does not.

A helicopter takes Drew and Karl to Mammoth Falls where they are met by Networks' Alec Spicer. Spicer confirms that DNA links Alfie to a hooker's death in Kansas City. There are fifteen more homicides that may also be Alfie's work. Oslett is numbed by the news, but nothing scares him as much as the possibility that a woman exists that Alfie coupled with but did not kill. As Alfie's sperm count is very high, there is increased likelihood of pregnancy, and with even one child brought to term, the entire human race would be in trouble.

Part Two: Section Five: Chapters 4 - 8 Analysis

Oslett is determined not to let Waxhill know how much the knowledge that Alfie could have evolved into a sexual being bothers him. Though Alfie had been monitored carefully for the first six months and showed no aberrant behavior, Waxhill speculates that perhaps he was aware of their surveillance in the same way he was aware of Marty. Drew's biggest fear is that this will all somehow wash down to the Oslett family name and make them an object of scorn or a target of public ridicule and outrage. At first



Oslett had thought of Waxhill as a kindred spirit - someone he could actually form a friendship with, but now he got the impression that Waxhill enjoyed giving the bad news and was a smug and self satisfied little prig. Still, Oslett dislikes and admires Waxhill at the same time. The Network wants Oslett and Clocker to make it appear as though Marty snapped and killed his family and then himself, mimicking an earlier murder/suicide in Maryland. Marty had been quoted in People Magazine as having thought about writing a book about it, but the subject depressed him too much.

Marty is sure that he is pale and sick looking as the manager approaches, sure that she is going to find a reason to halt the withdrawal somehow, but instead her only concern seems to be whether or not the bank has upset him in some way, making him almost clear out his accounts. He assures her this is not the case, and as she walks away Marty is hit with another wave. Had this happened in front of the manager, he fears what the response would have been, and he can hardly wait to get out of there.

Alfie understands his failure to overcome Marty in their first encounter stems from Marty having known he was coming, and imagines the magnetic connection as having a dimmer switch attached that he can dial down, perhaps even so far that Marty wouldn't even be aware of his using it. He tries it, and though not as strong as before, it is enough to knock Marty off his feet on the way to the car. He gives the keys to Paige, telling her she'd better drive. As they are pulling out Alfie is pulling in, and he recognizes his 'wife' as she leaves. Alfie dials down the connection to seven out of a possible three hundred and fifty, enough to find him but not so much as to make him fearful. He is terribly aware of all that he has lost.

When Oslett and Clocker get to Mammoth Falls, they learn that Alfie has been confirmed as the one responsible for one murder, and fifteen or more possibilities still exist. The fear is not so much that he is killing his sexual partners, the fear belongs more to the remote chance that he hasn't killed one of his encounters. With an abnormally high sperm count, combined with his special genetic makeup, an offspring would be a threat to the entire human species - not just to the Network or the handlers involved.

Part Two: Section Five: Chapters 9 - 12

Part Two: Section Five: Chapters 9 - 12 Summary

Marty, Paige and the girls head to Mammoth Falls, but not to his parents' place as Alfie and the Network suspect. Instead, they are headed for the small cabin his family owns in the mountains nearby. Marty calls his parents repeatedly, wanting to warn them and suggest they take their motor home and leave for a while, but there is no answer. Spicer takes Oslett and Clocker to their motel, and checking in with their surveillance team, conveys to Drew that Marty's parents are still not home and Marty has not been seen. He gives them items they will need to stage the murders to look identical to the one in Maryland, including braided wire, a suicide note and a 9mm pistol. Alfie arrives at the home of Jim and Alice Stillwater but recognizes nothing except an overly aggressive recreational vehicle parked outside. He is immediately convinced that this is a surveillance vehicle. He leaves to shop for supplies. Spicer gets a call at the motel telling him that Jim and Alice have arrived home.

Alfie arms himself with an ice pick and a can of lock deicer, and stealing a florists' van after killing the delivery boy, he drives the van back to the Stillwater home. He approaches the surveillance van, yanking the back door open and spraying lock deicer into the face of the agent who is closest. When he goes down, Alfie finishes him with the ice pick, and then repeats the performance on the other agent. Feeling safe, he knocks on the door and the woman he knows is his mother answers. Surprised, she greets him, and when he sobs with relief, she calls his father in as well, but when he tries to explain the situation to him, their attitude changes, and his world crumbles.

Paige drives straight through Mammoth Falls to the cabin at Mary Lake. They go inside and Paige turns on the baseboard heaters to warm the rooms quickly while Marty tries again to reach his parents on the phone. After over ten rings, he is about to hang up when someone answers the phone. Marty tries to talk to either his mother or father, but it is Alfie who has answered, asking Marty how he managed to turn his parents against him. The conversation is so bizarre that the only thing Marty understands before he hangs up is that his parents are dead.

Part Two: Section Five: Chapters 9 - 12 Analysis

Marty is afraid to go anywhere near his parents for fear that he brings this to them. He is paranoid with good reason. The Network has decided to eliminate him and oddly that is the threat he is not aware of. Drew and Karl are already in Mammoth Falls and Network agent Spicer is providing them with enough props to make a murder / suicide look exactly like the one that occurred in Maryland. The same wire is provided, a gun of the same caliber - the box and receipt left in the Stillwater residence and a clerk bribed to remember selling it to him, a suicide note - written on paper from Marty's own stock and in handwriting so close to Marty's that an expert couldn't tell the difference. All in all the



attention to detail would be frightening to most, but Drew is excited. He is looking forward to staging this and admires the complexity of the entire plan. He is beginning to feel as though they might actually be able to salvage something out of all of this.

Alfie finds his way to the house of Marty's parents, and though it is a welcoming and warm kind of home, he simply can't remember having spent a single day there. It may well have been the home of two perfect strangers. He manages to overcome the agents watching the house and goes up the walk, overcome with emotion at the beauty and tranquility of the whole scene. He can't remember having grown up there, but he is sure he did and that the impostor has stolen his memories. His mother and father are warm and concerned when they greet him, but when he tries to explain that an impostor has stolen his life and his memories, they ask him if drugs are the problem and his perfect vision of life crumbles. He feels betrayed and can't understand why they can't simply believe and support him and fight the impostor with him. He needs their support so bad that he shakes with the very need for it and is devastated when they look at him with suspicion and question his sanity.

Paige drives them straight through to the cabin, going through the motions of settling them in, but Marty's raised voice brings her out to him again. Marty has called his parents only to have Alfie answer. Alfie insists that Marty will not be able to lie to them any more, and asks if he will have to kill Paige and the girls as well. He wants to know if Marty has so corrupted their minds against him that it will be necessary. Marty hangs up and tries to control himself. He still hasn't been able to tell Charlotte about her pets, and certainly doesn't want them to know about their grandparents yet. He softly tells Paige they haven't much time.



Part Three: Section Six: Chapters 1 - 5

Part Three: Section Six: Chapters 1 - 5 Summary

Alfie feeds his higher metabolism and gets ready to confront Marty, going through Marty's parents home and assembling the items he needs to face Marty. He makes several incendiary devices, wondering if four gasoline bombs will be enough to face what he has come to think of as the alien who has his family. He prepares for war, knowing that the next meeting with Marty will test him to his limits. He builds fire bombs and makes sure his weapons are loaded and then drives the four wheel drive Jeep Marty's parents owned towards their cabin. He realizes that if Marty has turned his parents against him, he may also have turned Paige and the girls against him as well.

At the cabin, Marty feels defenseless. He instructs the girls to watch at the window and call out if anyone comes down the driveway or even slows down out front. Then he and Paige go through the cabin securing windows and closing drapes. They leave lights on in several rooms so Alfie can't be sure where in the house they are. Paige questions her ability to face Alfie, but Marty assures her she is capable. They make hot chocolate to warm themselves and to feel some semblance of normal. Sitting there, looking outside, Paige realizes that one of them should ambush Alfie from outside, and she tells Marty her plan, showing him the rock formation she intends to hide behind.

Spicer calls the surveillance van, and when he gets no answer he knows there is something wrong. Right away, Spicer, Clocker and Oslett drive over to the Stillwater home and see the florist van out front, and Spicer knows it is not legitimate right away. They open the back of the surveillance van and find the two dead agents. There are fresh tire tracks in the snow, leading out of the Stillwater driveway, and Spicer knows Alfie has already gone. They find the delivery boy dead in the back of the florists' van, and checking the equipment in the surveillance van, they listen to the last conversation held between Alfie and Marty. Now they know how bad things really are. They confirm the deaths of Marty's parents and see the preparations he has made before they leave, still hoping to catch Alfie before he kills anyone else and ruins their cover plan. Spicer gives Oslett and Clocker a map to the Stillwater cabin and drives the surveillance van away from the area so that he can call in a disposal team discretely.

Part Three: Section Six: Chapters 1 - 5 Analysis

Alfie thinks about how his heroes would behave in his situation. He knows they wouldn't waste time dwelling on death, and instead would persevere and push forward, so that is what he intends to do. In his mind, he is a hero. Alfie only has the memories given to him by all the movies he's watched over time, so instead of grieving the loss of the parents he killed, he forces himself to behave like the heroes he has learned about in film. He asks himself what Kurt Russell or Harrison Ford would do, and convinces himself that he must continue forward, confronting and overcoming his adversaries. His



background information from movies makes him believe that perhaps Marty is an alien clone of some kind and that he has killed Paige and the girls, cloning them as well. In fact, he tells himself that it is likely that his parents were also cloned and therefore he should feel no grief for killing them as they weren't even human. If that is the case, he knows he will be forced to kill the entire family, and the thought of losing them after having finally found them makes him at first filled with sorrow, and then angry at Marty for having stolen them.

Marty and Paige carry loaded weapons around the cabin, making sure windows are closed and drapes are drawn. Marty fights the urge to give in to the sorrow he feels over the loss of his parents. He can't bring himself to tell the girls either, having not even confessed the loss of Charlotte's pets to her. He fights tears as he sees his mother in everything he touches and knows he will have to kill Alfie to stop him. He almost calls the police, but he realizes that the police will believe he killed his parents and he will have to defend himself from jail, leaving Paige and the girls at the mercy of the Other. That stops him. Paige finds her courage, although at first denies she has what it takes to stand up to this threat, but then decides to be the one to ambush the Other from behind when he arrives by secreting herself outside.

Spicer knows the minute he can't reach his men that Alfie has gotten to them, somehow recognizing the surveillance van for what it was, even though Oslett and Clocker still question it. Spicer is so sure the agents are already dead that he is not concerned about blowing their cover as they pull up to the van. They open the back to find Spicer is right, and after he recognizes that the florists' van is an anomaly, they find the dead delivery driver in the back as well. After discovery Marty's parents dead inside the house and seeing traces of the bombs Alfie has made, they also know he is going to war. The most unnerving discovery is the recorded conversation in the surveillance van between Marty and Alfie on the phone. The voices are indistinguishable, and it sounds as though Marty is having a nervous breakdown talking to himself on the phone.



Part Three: Section Six: Chapter 6

Part Three: Section Six: Chapter 6 Summary

Paige gets ready to go outside so that she can ambush Alfie when he arrives, and Marty makes one more attempt to change her mind by offering to leave the cabin himself and lure Alfie somewhere away from them. Paige won't hear of it. She knows that Alfie would only come looking for them anyway. She takes the Mossberg and hides behind a granite outcropping. She stretches out on her stomach and waits, cold seeping in through her jeans. Just as she starts worrying about how long she might be out there, a Jeep station wagon that looks like the one Marty's parents have pulls in. The station wagon goes by Paige so fast that she has no time to react. She watches the Jeep as it hits the steps and climbs the front porch.

Alfie finds his way to the cabin. He sees the BMW, pulls into the driveway and steps on the accelerator, mentally turning up the psychic pull to full force. In doing so he temporarily disables Marty inside. Paige runs towards the front of the house and sees Marty and the kids coming around from the back. They get into the car while she stands with the Mossberg facing the house. When Alfie hears the car doors slam, he comes out the front and Paige opens fire, drawing return fire from him. Paige jumps into the car and Alfie begins throwing the flaming bombs at the BMW. One of the bombs sets fire to a tire, and before Marty can put any distance between them, the BMW spins out of control and leaves the road. They get out quickly and go through the fence to an abandoned church. One of Alfie's bullets hits Marty as they go through the front door, and he goes down. Paige helps him up, and he takes Charlotte and Emily through to the nave while Paige stays behind to try to catch Alfie unaware. As Alfie steps across the threshold, she fires twice, and the first blast hits him solidly. He didn't make a sound, but is pitched back out the door and disappears into the dark. Despite his injury by the buckshot, Alfie finds an window he can gain access to, and boosting himself up he hears a child scream. Paige hears, and coming in, she fires without hesitation. He drops into the church and hides in the rows of pews. They find a staircase leading to the bell tower. Marty considers going back, but Alfie is following them. Though Paige fires twice more, Alfie keeps coming, taking the shotgun from her. Marty comes to her aid and Alfie tries to bite him, holding him by the throat when he hears, "Be at peace, Alfie", which stops him in his tracks. Marty sees Oslett and Clocker while Alfie in his confusion answers, repeating "Father?". A shot rings out and then another as Alfie sinks to the floor, sobbing pathetically while trying to hold his face together. Finally still, Oslett turns his attention to the Stillwaters. He comments to Clocker that the church is so strange that it suits their purposes. Clocker tells Oslett that he's intelligent but sick and shoots him in the face, and Marty loses consciousness.



Part Three: Section Six: Chapter 6 Analysis

Paige pretends to have a strength her body doesn't agree with. Her bowels feel loose and her heart is pounding as she goes outside to wait for Alfie. As she nears the formation she pointed out to Marty from inside, she has a sudden irrational fear that he is already there and waiting for her, and almost freezes in fear, but forces herself to continue. When Alfie arrives, he is filled with rage and bitterness for the alien who has stolen his family. All of that rage bubbles to the surface and he stomps on the accelerator as he comes up the driveway, focusing all of his anger on the task at hand.

Guided by the magnetic pull from Marty, Alfie is able to easily track Marty to the cabin. He is so filled with his hatred for the man he believes has stolen his life that he is even more irrational than usual. He goes up the driveway and without stopping, plows straight up the front steps onto the porch and through the front door. Marty is stunned momentarily by the ferocity and intensity of the feelings directed at him, but he comes to his sense and tells the girls to run. In his haste, he leaves the Beretta on the coffee table, but there is no time to go back. Alfie gets out of the car and empties the first pistol into the closed door of the pass through between the living room and kitchen, but hears no screams in response. He is consumed by the need to kill them, in his mind he is saving the planet in the process. He chases them to the church, pushing himself forward, all the while reassuring himself by remembering bits of movies where his heroes prevail by continuing against all and any odds. Even after he loses his gun, he figures his supreme strength will help him prevail. In an effort to heal itself, his body fat and muscle tissue dwindle as it consumes itself, changing his appearance to that of a monster. Alfie is convinced that they are copies and that he must kill them. Taking several shots from Paige's Mossberg, more than one at close range, he is losing his grasp on reality.

Guided by maternal instinct to save her children and love for Marty, Paige is beyond fear, pushing herself to limits she wouldn't have thought possible before. When Alfie follows them into the bell tower and gains the advantage over her, Marty finds a last gasp of strength himself and helps free her from Alfie. The only thing that saves Marty is the arrival of Clocker and Oslett. Oslett gives the code phrase that Alfie is programmed to be tamed to and Alfie is stopped in his tracks. He is almost beyond recognition, but something deep in his subconscious is still responding to his programming. Oslett and Clocker calmly and clinically discuss the mutation they see, while the Stillwater's watch - the whole scene surreal on so many levels. When Oslett finally kills Alfie, Marty dares to hope that they are saved, but Oslett isn't coming to their rescue. It is soon obvious that they've only traded one monster for another as Oslett discusses the viability of the church being used in their cover story. Oslett still thinks he can make it all appear as though Marty lost his mind and killed his family and then himself. Clocker doesn't offer much verbal help, and finally decides this is the place to make his stand. He kills Oslett after telling him that he is one sick human being.



Part Three: Section Six: Chapters 7 - 9

Part Three: Section Six: Chapters 7 - 9 Summary

Marty comes to in Clocker's vehicle and listens while Clocker slowly explains. The girls are quiet and reserved, and Marty drifts in and out while Clocker drives them away from Mammoth Falls. He wakes again in a motel. Clocker helps to clean his wound, dressing it and injecting him with penicillin, an antibiotic. Paige assures him they can trust Karl, and Marty is unable to do anything but hope she is right. The next time he wakes, they are driving again, this time Paige is behind the wheel. Marty has been in and out for almost three days. They are in Nevada and heading to Wyoming, she tells him. Karl knows a place where they can stay, she explains. That night, Karl explains more to them, clearing up how the Network wound up with Marty's DNA and the details of the creation of Alfie and the modifications, including his ability to heal and rapid maturation.

When they reach Wyoming, Paige follows Karl's directions and finds the cabin without trouble. Two days later, Karl shows up again with new identities, including histories that can be relied on. He also gives Marty a case that contains Network files, computer disks, and recorded conversations and the names of two people Marty should contact. One is high up in the FBI and the other is a newspaper reporter. He tells Marty he has had an opportunity to read a couple of his books since the previous Tuesday, and he wants Marty to write about this experience and to send an explanation along with proof to these two people, telling him to mail it blind. He also gives them the deed to the cabin and the property it is on, explaining that he had created two safe houses under untraceable names and he only needs one. Karl is blushing when the Stillwaters, now named Gault, try to thank him and are overwhelmed with his generosity. Karl is convinced that even if they disband this version of the Network, they'll reform, smarter and less trusting than this time. The thought unsettles Marty. Karl leaves and the Gaults begin rebuilding their lives.

Marty writes about the Network, and that December and for some time afterward, the media frenzy feeds on it. Since they own their little place outright, and have the savings they'd cleared out of the bank, they are under no pressure to work. For extra cash, they occasionally would sell books from the two crates of first editions Marty had originally packed when they fled from their home. It is Christmas Eve before Emily - now Suzie-Lori, asked about the next part in the story Marty - now John had been reading them. Story time resumes and a semblance of normalcy returns. Five years later, 'Santa's Evil Twin' is published by John Gault with illustrations from Ann Gault. It is a hit. One day, a novel titled the Clone Rebellion arrives in the mail and they are only sad that they will be unable to congratulate the author or offer their admiration.



Part Three: Section Six: Chapters 7 - 9 Analysis

Clocker has been preparing for this time since his acceptance by the Network. He has used untraceable identities to buy two different properties, secluded and at opposite ends of the country from each other, put aside money, and stolen as much documentation as he could. He even has recordings that are as recent as his conversations with Oslett in the motel in Mammoth Falls. The Network has never been something he supported. Rather, once discovering their existence, he always felt that one day perhaps he would be in a position to make a difference and perhaps aid in at least slowing them down, if not exposing them completely. Now, the opportunity has presented itself. He has come to the aid of a family who deserves to be delivered from the nightmare that is the Network, and he slowly explains this all to Paige and Marty while Marty slips in and out of consciousness. He is resourceful on many levels, helping to clean and dress Marty's wound, and comes up with the drugs necessary to combat infection. He takes the Stillwater family away from Mammoth Falls after leaving the bodies of Oslett and Alfie near Marty's parents house to ensure the deaths would be linked and investigated.

Paige quickly realizes she can trust Karl, and comes to admire and like him. She and Marty are both overcome when Karl continues his generosity by giving them new identities that will stand up to scrutiny, copies of all of his documentation about the Network, and then the deed to the cabin they are staying in with the deed registered to their new names. Karl is almost embarrassed by their gratitude, and is just happy to know that something he has done in his life has made a difference. As Marty regains strength, he asks more questions, learning how widespread and unstoppable the Network really is. The scope of their power is frightening, and though Karl believes that they can make a real dent in their ability to operate in their current form, he is still certain that they will be back even if totally exposed. Their self serving agenda knows no limits, and while Karl assures him that they won't be easily seen, the Network will still control and shape major decisions and attempt to make the world run to their vision of reality. Marty and Paige still have the money they withdrew from their savings and two books of first edition Stillwater novels which increase in value dramatically when the Stillwater family vanishes without a trace. They live comfortably under their new names, and together they publish the book of stories Marty has written for his girls, which is an immediate hit. Information about the Network comes to light, and the media frenzy surrounding it is ignored by the Gault (formerly Stillwater) tribe. One day, they get a copy of a novel in the mail called the Clone Rebellion, and are only sorry that they will never be able to tell the author how much they admire his work.



Characters

Marty Stillwater

Marty is a thirty-three-year-old author who works from home. He writes mystery/thriller style books and is generally easy going, with a good sense of humor. He and his wife Paige have two daughters and he enjoys joking around with them. He likes to drive fast, although he's never had an accident or been given a ticket. At the age of thirty-three, he has his first fugue state. It lasts seven minutes and he is later frightened by the fact that he can remember none of it. In fact, he would have been totally unaware of it had it not occurred when he was in the process of dictating a letter to his editor on a cassette recorder, recording the strange lapse that had him repeating two words with increasing desperation for the full seven minutes.

He becomes increasingly concerned with the security of his home, checking all doors, and window locks and latches sometimes even more than once, before turning in. Despite this, he has the reputation of being solid and emotionally stable. He is reliable and loves his wife more now than he did when he married her twelve years previously, after meeting her in college. Marty can be described as a hopeless homebody. He loves his family life more than anything else, and nothing has more allure to him than the moments he cherishes with them.

Marty is six feet tall and weighs 180 pounds. His easygoing manner and enthusiasm for life that knows no limits has long been a steadfast comfort to his wife. He taught her that hugs are a necessary part of a healthy life - as much so as food or sleep. Marty suffers a gunshot wound that is dressed and tended by Karl Clocker, and assumes the name of John Gault when they begin their new lives in the house given to them by Karl. He publishes the stories he assembled and read for his girls to rave reviews, and later adds the story of Santa's Evil Twin, which is also a hit. Both are illustrated by his wife in her new career direction. The love of his family means more to him than his previous career or the name he left behind. When Marty becomes John, he grows a beard and is not completely surprised to see that a good portion of it grows in gray.

Paige Stillwater

Paige and Marty have been married since they were very young. Having met her husband in college, they are still happily married, and in fact are more in love now than ever. She is thirty-three years old, has blue eyes and hair the color of gold. Her skin is smooth and supple, and she is warm and has a depth of character. In twelve years of marriage, Paige and Marty have never kept major secrets from each other. She has a wonderful sense of humor.

Paige is a child psychologist and has donated many hours to grief counseling through welfare. Her childhood was not a happy one, and deeply affected her as she grew up.



When she met Marty, she was convinced that families were simply a source of pain and something to be avoided at all costs. Marty taught her that love and the family circle can provide strength and support that makes every day a brighter one for the company of those around you. When she discovered that she could be a part of a family, and share that much of herself, she married Marty and they had two daughters together. They have been a source of constant joy ever since.

When Alfie invaded their serenity and threatened to negatively impact their family life, Paige found strengths that she had no idea she possessed, able to fight back with a ferocity she had not previously known, part of that based in her unwavering trust in Marty. Paige takes the name Ann Gault when Alfie is dead, and they are beginning their new lives. She appreciates her family unit even more than before, although she would not have believed that possible, and finds a new talent and career direction when she illustrates the new stories that Marty writes for children. The first is the book of stories written for his girls, and later the Christmas story of Santa's Evil Twin, created and read to the girls as their lives so drastically changed. As Ann, Paige cuts her hair short and dyes it from blond to brown.

Alfie aka Mr Murder (The Other)

Alfie is a killer who takes on a different name or group of names for every city in which he works. He has memory lapses which make it difficult for him to function as he cannot remember who he really is, who pays him to commit the crimes he commits, or why his contracts have to die. He has so many holes in his memory that he has no idea where he was born, what religion he belongs to or whether or not he has living family. The lapses in memory at times are almost more than he can bear, making him despondent and even bringing him to tears from time to time. He prepares for each assignment with due diligence, knowing the layout of each city he goes to and having exit strategies in case of trouble, but has no memory of these preparations either.

He is six feet tall and weighs 180 pounds. He has a healthy appetite, easily consuming enough food for a larger man. He dresses casually in clothes that are neither memorable nor remarkable. He enjoys movies, and often has meaningless sex with women he picks up at random, after which he usually kills her so that she will never be able to identify him. He is careful, concise and could be described as a perfectionist, and he enjoys his job. Alfie has two degrees - one from Harvard and one from Princeton. He is well schooled in the art of murder and works out of a home office in New York, although he doesn't remember that. He responds to his primary handler, Drew Oslett, but doesn't remember him most of the time either.

Charlotte Stillwater

Charlotte is six weeks shy of ten years old, and is very observant for her age. She has a pet turtle named Fred and a beetle named Bob that she sometimes takes out in her pocket. She is learning to play piano. Charlotte has colorful tastes. Her posters in her



room are filled with motion, her bedspread is multicolored and her side of the room is a state of perpetual disorder. Charlotte has several pets other than Fred and Bob who share her side of the room. Wayne, the gerbil, Sheldon, the snake, Whiskers, the mouse and Loretta, the chameleon all occupy terrariums of various sizes on her bookshelf. She likes these pets better than a dog or cat, which she can not protect as easily.

Charlotte has gold hair like her mother. More emotional than her sister Emily, Charlotte loves all creatures, and given the chance would probably have a replica of Noah's Ark in her bedroom. Despite being on the run from Alfie, Charlotte was still concerned about the pets she keeps in her room and who would feed them while they were gone. While not as neat as her sister, she is artistic and vibrant, able to express herself both literally and figuratively. She has a passion for fiction like her father, able to put herself into the stories he tells without dissecting them or attempting to relate them to reality. Charlotte chooses the name Rebecca Vanessa Gault as her new identity, naming herself after Rebecca from *Manderley* - a story that depicted a woman of mystery and beauty. As Rebecca, Charlotte tints her hair from blond to auburn.

Emily Stillwater

Emily has just turned seven. She is an organized person even at this age, prizing neatness. Her side of the bedroom reflects her tastes and her sense of order is visible everywhere. She has only one pet, which is a stone she calls Peepers. It is the size of a small lemon and she found it while on summer vacation a year earlier. She painted two eyes on it, proclaiming its wisdom because it had been around for ages. She thinks it is the best pet because she doesn't have to feed or water it, and it's a good listener and never makes a mess.

She has dark eyes, dark brown hair that is almost black, and a complex nature, as though she is seven going on four hundred years old. Emily is serious and intelligent for her age. She enjoys her father's stories, but has a rational mind that can distinguish between what her father creates in his characters and what is actually possible in the real world. She loves animals, but prefers a pet rock to a live pet. Emily loves Charlotte, and though they banter back and forth like any sisters would, in a crisis situation, she is calm and logical. She had no trouble discerning between Alfie and Marty, able to tell that Alfie was the one driving the car and her father was the one chasing it. The decision was based almost solely on Alfie's behavior, and her certainty of her fathers' love and the knowledge that he would never behave in a manner that exhibited a lack of patience or tolerance for them. Emily's first choice for a new name is Bob, but she is vetoed, and is allowed her second choice of Suzie Lori Gault, insisting that people call her by both first and second name at all times. As Suzie Lori, Emily is transformed with a shorter and new hair style.



Dr. Gunthridge

Gunthridge has his offices in Irvine, California. He is a forty-five-year old internist who looks ten years younger than his age. He is a good listener and has a boyish charm that the entire Stillwater family relates to and likes. In the summer, he likes to wear Hawaiian shirts and often claims to be playing doctor if he happens to be wearing the more traditional white smock over top.

Dr. Gunthridge has a good sense of humor and jokes with Marty about his profile in People Magazine when Marty goes in to see him about his fugue states. The doctor's bedside manner is very good, and he puts Marty at ease, assuring him that what he is experiencing is most likely a result of stress.

Drew Oslett

Drew is a city man at heart. Having lived for years in New York, he had never once visited Central Park. He was entirely in his element in his Midtown apartment, sleeping with no drapes on the windows, caressed by the ambient light of the city. The occasion sirens, horns, or other noises made up the cocoon he felt safe in. Drew enjoys video games and electronic devices that help him to feel connected to the world. He believes in the importance of respect, and has commanded it since he was a young boy. He is Alfie's primary handler, and when Alfie goes off the reservation, he knows that he will bear at least some of the responsibility, whether there is any fairness involved in that or not.

Drew learned early in life that nothing with the exception of vast amounts of money was more important than the family's good name. His father is considered to be a mover and shaker within the organization. Drew has exquisite taste in clothing, most of which is tailor made and all matching and in subdued colors. Drew attended Princeton and then Harvard. Drew is almost as twisted inside as Alfie is - a true evil example of what human beings are capable of. He not only enjoys being the handler to a remorseless killer, but gets great pleasure out of getting his hands dirty now and then too. When Alfie goes off the reservation and is hunted down, a decision is made by the Network's head office to terminate the entire Stillwater family, making it appear as though Marty came unglued. Drew relishes the idea, and looks forward to getting into the action himself. He actually is so excited by the prospect as the time nears that he is unable to eat. The relish that he exhibits for the task at hand is largely what contributes to his ultimate demise.

Karl Clocker

Quiet and about as communicative as a rock, Karl drives the rented Chevrolet he and Drew are in. He is a hulk of a man and carries Colt .357 Magnum revolver as his choice of weaponry. He prefers to wear a tweed jacket with leather covered buttons and leather patches on the elbows. Sometimes, as is the case now, the jacket included leather lapels. He owns a varied collection of sweater vests with harlequin patterns that are as



bold as the brightly colored socks he wears, clashing with everything else he has on. Over them, his Hush Puppy shoes made of suede are an unlikely grouping but considering Karl's demeanor and overall size, no one was likely to risk commenting on his clothing choices.

Karl has a broad face and his features though blunted are pale and smooth. His brow and cheeks are unlined, and his blue eyes are the color of sapphires. He has a talent for violence, and seldom speaks, but when he does it is often cryptically. He is so self controlled that he needs little in the way of human companionship or interaction, and has an I.Q. that is well above average. He is an ardent Star Trek fan, able to quote characters, dialogue and episodes from memory.

Karl is not a true believer in the Network. He worked his way into the inner circle in order to perhaps undo it from within if the opportunity ever presented itself. He carefully created two safe houses, paid for in full under aliases that could not be traced, and had the presence of mind to put away enough money to look after himself when the time came for him to get out. He also documented much of the Network's activities, including recordings of conversations that described both the Network's mandate and their plans to eliminate the Stillwater family. All of this is delivered to Marty and Paige along with the deed to one of the two safe houses, and false identities. Karl then disappears himself, embarrassed that the Stillwater family would display such obvious gratitude and affection for him when it was time for them to part. A gentle and intelligent man, he did his best to undermine the Network and take it out of existence as much as was possible.

Vic Delorio

Vic and his wife live next door to the Stillwater residence. He is a physical education teacher, coaches high school swimming, is the leader of a Boy Scout troop and is a big part of the neighborhood watch program. He is an energetic man with an earnest demeanor who likes helping people.

Lieutenant Cyrus Lowbock

Cyrus is the plain clothes detective that shows up after Marty's first encounter with the Other. Able to pass for a male model, he is about fifty years old, in good physical condition with salt and pepper hair and a nice tan even though it is November. He has fine cheekbones, incredible gray eyes and an aquiline nose. He has a style that gives him the appearance that he is both distinguished and athletic. He has an upper class air about him and looks like a man who was born into wealth.

Jim Lomax

Though Jim is likely not his real name, it is the one he uses when he introduces himself as the advance man for the Network at the airport in California. He takes good care of



himself, like many new age Californians, viewing his body as a temple. Jim has taken that to the level of Cathedral. His neck is thick, his shoulders large and square and his chest well defined. He has a flat stomach and accentuates his body by wearing nothing but jeans and a tee-shirt. He moves with grace and behaves as though everything he does puts him on display for all to see.

Peter Waxhill

Peter is six feet tall, and his razor-cut hair is feathered with gray at the temples. He appears to be in his early forties and is slim but has a fit build. Peter is handsome and charming and handles himself like a diplomat. Organized and suave, Waxhill is the Network representative that is sent to confer with Oslett and Clocker. Waxhill attended Yale and then Oxford.

Alec Spicer

A Network representative, Alec is not like Jim Lomax or Peter Waxhill, although he is at least the same rank as Peter. Spicer is about five foot ten, weighs approximately a hundred and sixty pounds and is about fifty years of age. He wears his hair in a military style brush cut that is iron-gray in color. He has a military demeanor and style of dress that includes combat boots, khaki clothing, and behaves like an army officer who hasn't been able to leave the army in his mind.



Objects/Places

Mission Viejo

Hometown of Marty and Paige Stillwater in Southern California.

Mammoth Lakes

Location of the residence of Marty Stillwater's parents in California.

Irvine

Dr. Gunthridge's office site.

Delorio's

Vic and Kathy Delorio's across the street from the Stillwater residence.

SATU

Satellite Assisted Tracking Unit.

Laguna Beach

Site of the motel where the Stillwater family hides out after their encounter with Alfie.

Ritz-Carlton

Hotel in Dana Point where a suite is secured for Drew and Karl in California.

Prophetic Church of the Rapture

Abandoned church in Mammoth Lakes where the Stillwater family runs to hide from Alfie.

Mossberg

Rifle used by Paige to fight off Alfie.



The Network

Super secret organization dedicated to keeping the world safe from what they deem to be the stupidity of politicians.

Fallon

Stopover on the way to a safe house made by Clocker and the Stillwater family.

Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Town closest to where Karl Clocker set up one of two safe houses. This one he deeded to the Stillwater/Gault family.

The Clone Rebellion

Name of the novel written by Karl Clocker regarding the Network.

Santa's Evil Twin

Book written for Marty's daughters. He began reading it to them before meeting Alfie, and finished and then published it under their new alias Gault afterward.



Themes

Reality vs Perception

In *Mr. Murder*, Dean Koontz does a wonderful job of presenting the reader with the consequences of reality when confronted with an alternate perception of reality. The Stillwater family lives a fairly modest lifestyle, where Marty is a mystery writer of talent, published many times over, and Paige is a child psychologist. Their two girls are normal, outgoing children, who enjoy the love and positive reinforcements of stable and well rounded parents. All in all, their lives are ideal. Marty's parents are loving and supportive, and though Paige has come from a troubled background, Marty has had a calming and positive influence on her, making her believe in the family unit again. When Marty and Alfie first meet face to face, Marty begins to wonder if he is losing his mind, seeing double and questioning his grasp on reality.

Alfie is a clone created from the DNA belonging to Marty Stillwater without his knowledge. In fact, the identity of the donor is a surprise to all, as Marty was never the intended donor but became the recipient of the dubious honor by accident. Alfie was genetically engineered, educated and altered from first breath to adulthood in a matter of just a few short years. When given life, he is educated to become the ideal assassin. He has no memory of family, or the trappings that come from emotional ties, and as such is able to kill without remorse or conscience. What his handlers are unaware of is Alfie's intense desire to belong. Alfie wants more than anything else to know his family. When he discovers Marty Stillwater, he believes that Marty (his identical clone) has stolen his family. He comes to believe that somehow Marty was cloned by aliens to take over his life and erase his memories. He thinks that all he has to do is kill Marty and resume his rightful place, filled with emotion at the thought that he has a wife, children and parents who love him. His perception that these people actually are related to him fuel his desire to live a normal life, although he has never known one. His handlers have no idea that he has these feelings and believe he is incapable of them. Alfie is so convinced that his assessment is correct that the lines of reality blur and his perception overrides his logic and his programming.

Government Control versus Democratic Government

In *Mr. Murder*, an alliance of men that included powerful people in government, business, law enforcement and media share a perception that democracy is a system that is doomed for failure because it is inefficient. They are certain that most people are sensationalist, self-involved and self-serving, greedy and lazy and without moral compass. They assert that history proves that as a whole, people have always been irresponsible, and the only reason we have survived so far is by blind luck and by the dedicated and diligent efforts of people like themselves - visionaries. It is not a thought that is new or unique. Hitler, Mao Tse-tung, and Stalin shared their single-minded approach that the planet would be in peril if government made decisions based on the



motives of the selfish masses. In truth, their goal is really nothing more than brute power. They share a similar motivation with radical environmentalists who believe the ecology is in peril and the group who believe that the population has lost its purity and has become too brown or black.

In the world today, democracy is gaining speed. More and more countries have adopted it as the political norm, and over time, a projection can be made that eventually the entire world will be ruled by a democratic process. Leaders like Hitler and Stalin proved that it is impossible to strengthen one group of people by eliminating another. The problem doesn't belong to one color or one system of government. Instead, our system would work just fine if not for the existence of one deadly sin: greed. Greed stands to be the downfall of civilization. Without greed, we would easily see and avoid the worst disasters that face society and the world today. If government ever truly becomes democratic, where even the leaders rule strictly by democratic process and without the self serving, greed driven attitudes that are rampant in government today, the world has a true chance of survival and an opportunity to thrive.

Cloning and Genetic Modifications versus Natural Evolution

The Network in Mr. Murder created a new breed of clones. They were thought of and described as flesh-driven machines, created without awareness of who or what created them and without history or family. They were supposed to be the ideal assassins. Since they were unaware of who created them, they could never turn on their handlers, and since they had no history of family or religion, they were not burdened by the moral dilemma arising from having to kill people on command. They had no basis with which to develop free will, and as such had nothing that would interfere with the assignments they were tasked to perform. The genetic modifications made to these clones included a metabolism that repaired itself with super human speed and ability, and a growth ability that enabled them to take a clone from creation to deployment in just a few years. Information that the clone would require was taught by way of subliminal input.

In reality, there are scientists who are working with the science of cloning, and with some success. Their goal is on the surface at least much more altruistic, and it is unlikely that we will see a future of hydroponic cloning pods fed by a mad scientist. The idea that certain traits or physical characteristics can be altered by way of cloning a better version of ourselves has a high likelihood of failure for several reasons. The most obvious reason would be that natural evolution happens over a slow, long period of time for a reason. We have had the fortune to be able to adapt to our environment, and grow with it. We change to adapt to our circumstances, and pushing that envelope can only weaken the ability we naturally have to survive. Our bodies are a remarkable and intricately balanced organic system that allow us to survive change and grow stronger with adversity.



Style

Point of View

Mr. Murder by Dean Koontz is written in the third person narrative perspective, alternating between the two main characters - Marty Stillwater and Alfie. The perspectives change from one character to the other as the story evolves from one chapter to another. The narrative is reliable and straightforward, making it easy to keep track of which character is being dealt with. Marty's world changes drastically when Alfie first becomes aware of him, and though it begins as nothing more than a feeling that Alfie can't ignore, the pull is so strong that he quickly teaches himself how to focus on the feeling and increase the strength of this contact to bring him on a collision course with Marty. Alfie, cloned and given remarkable powers of recuperation and strength, believes that Marty has stolen his life, and wants it back. Part of that conclusion comes from the fact that they look almost identical. The similarities are so strong that it is hard for even immediate family to tell them apart. Since Alfie was created from the DNA donated by Marty when his daughter was sick, their connection is strong and for Alfie, undeniable.

Alfie, having gotten most of his information about people, family and friends from television input, believes that Marty is a clone - an impostor who somehow stole his memories, his wife and his children. Determined to save the world from the dangerous clone that he believes Marty is, he pursues him and his family, all the while unaware that he is the clone.

Setting

Mr. Murder begins at the Stillwater residence in Mission Viejo, California, where Marty and Paige live with their two daughters. At the same time, Alfie is fulfilling another contract for the Network in Kansas City, Missouri. Alfie fulfills his mission there, but afterward is drawn by a nameless force to leave his usual routine. He packs his bag and instead of heading for the airport as he is programmed to do, he begins driving toward California. He isn't missed at first, but it soon becomes obvious to his handlers in New York that he has gone off the rails. In Topeka, he changes vehicles, and then continues westward and heads to Wichita. From there, he makes his way to Oklahoma City, filling his tank and leaving his suitcases behind in case he is being tracked. East of the Texas border, Alfie pulls into a rest area where he again makes changes to avoid detection. He finds a man who is his basic size, and after killing him, Alfie takes clothing and shoes from him, leaving the final transmitter in his shoes behind in their Road King. Without sleep, he continues through Flagstaff and finally on to Barstow, California.

When Alfie finds his way to Mission Viejo and crosses paths with Marty for the first time, he forces them to flee their home and head for the only place they feel safe. After spending a night in a motel, they drive to the Stillwater family cabin outside of Mammoth



Falls. Alfie follows them there and their final confrontation happens in the abandoned church called the Prophetic Church of the Rapture. Followed by agents of the Network, the Stillwater family is finally rescued after Alfie is killed. Karl Clocker follows Alfie's example and goes off the rails, turning on his Network partner Drew Oslett and rescuing Marty and his family. He takes them from Mammoth Falls to a safe house he has created in Jackson Hole, Wyoming where the Stillwater family becomes the Gault family and begins life again.

Language and Meaning

Since Dean Koontz is an author himself, it is easy for him to write a story that portrays his main character as a successful mystery writer. Despite the ease with which he could embellish on this subject, he doesn't. He dwells very little on the actual nuts and bolts of being a writer and the functions that surround it, with the exception of background to let the reader know that his character is published and popular, showing that he has been interviewed by People Magazine and how he abhors the publicity that sometimes comes with the territory. His private life with his family is more important. He creates stories for his two girls that he reads to them nightly, and in the end publishes a selection of them under his new pseudonym, which are a hit as well. In a well written twist, his 'Other', or Alfie, as he is known to the Network, believes that Marty has stolen his life. When he discovers that Marty is a writer, he breaks into Marty's home and, sitting at Marty's computer, Alfie attempts to write himself. Suffering a severe bout of writer's block, he is unable to even start to write and in frustration puts his fist through the monitor. The description of emotions created by the block in Alfie's ability to write are surely close to home in Koontz's own life and experience.

Koontz is a well rounded writer who uses his skill to draw his readers into his stories, and this book is no exception. Mr. Murder is a wonderful twist on the Frankenstein meets government conspiracies subject, and he draws the two together seamlessly. His 'creation' of Alfie uses some creative license when he stretches the ability of scientists today where cloning is concerned, using genetic mapping to select and amplify abilities of healing and growth. His description of the Network is detailed enough to make the reader feel as though this kind of agency must exist on some level, but far-fetched enough that widespread panic wouldn't accompany his book on the bestseller list. Mr. Murder is truly a well written story, typical of Koontz, with many twists of fate.

Structure

Mr. Murder by Dean Koontz is written in three parts. Part one has three sections. In the first, the reader is introduced to Marty and his family and to the killer. The chapters within this section alternate between Marty's reality and the killer's. The first sixteen chapters cover the killer's migration from Kansas to Marty's house. Section two has nine chapters. In this section, The Other is convinced that Marty's family is his family and that Marty has stolen them. In fact, he is sure that Marty has stolen his entire identity, and is eager to reclaim it. He kills Charlotte's pets, deeming them unsuitable for a young lady,



and tries to take his place as a writer at Marty's desk. He is unable to, and when Marty returns home, a confrontation between the two occurs, during which Marty shoots The Other twice in the chest. Surprisingly, The Other still manages to get away while Marty is corralling his family at the front door and sending them across the street for their own safety.

Section three has nine chapters as well. Police investigate the break-in at the Stillwater residence, but because of the recent publicity given to Marty by People Magazine and Marty's description of the intruder, the lead detective believes that Marty has cleverly staged the whole affair. Paige and Marty throw the detective out, load the car and are ready to go and get the children, but when Marty opens the garage, he sees The Other pulling away with his girls in the back seat. He chases the car, drawing enough attention to himself that Emily sees him. Relieved, she and Charlotte bail out at their first opportunity.

Section four has only four chapters. Marty and Paige take the girls to a motel and regroup while The Other sleeps in the parking lot of an apartment building while his metabolism heals his wounds. The Network now knows he has broken protocol, and send Alfie's handlers out looking for him. They find the electronic tracking device Alfie ditched and then are directed by the head office to go to California. The article in People Magazine has drawn their attention. Drew Oslett and Karl Clocker hunt Alfie, and the more they learn, the more disturbing his behavior is to them.

Section five has nine chapters again. Alfie discovers how easily he can track Marty, and he does so while the Stillwater family flees the area. They go to the family cabin belonging to Marty's parents outside Mammoth Falls. Alfie makes his way to Marty's parents' house, killing the agents watching for Marty outside, and confronts the couple he now believes are his parents. When they aren't completely supportive in the way he feels they should be, he kills them. Marty calls, and when Alfie answers the phone, he knows the worst has happened and that Alfie is coming for them. Armed, they wait, and what follows is a shootout that finally ends in an abandoned church nearby. By this time, the Network and its agents Clocker and Oslett have caught up with them. Oslett is a company man, and in an effort to clean up, he is willing to kill the four Stillwater family members who remain, but Clocker turns on him and kills him, saving Marty and his family. His explanations afterward do little to make Marty feel better, but he provides them with a home and false papers, and gives them the opportunity to start again.



Quotes

"This afternoon, in the office...for seven minutes... well, I only know what the hell I was doing during that time because I've got it on a tape recorder." Section 1, p. 23

"The twentieth century excuse, the favorite of goldbrickers filing fake disability claims, politicians trying to explain why they were drunk in a motel with naked teenage girls - " Section 1, p. 39

"I need to be Marty Stillwater." Section 1, p. 86

"I want what's mine, mine, damn it, my life, mine, I want my life, my destiny, my Paige, she's mine, my Charlotte, my Emily -" Section 2, p. 125

"He contrives to look exactly like you, spouts a lot of strange stuff about wanting his life back, comes armed with an assassin's gun threaded for a silencer, uses burglary tools like a Hollywoodized professional heist artist in a caper movie, takes two bullets in the chest but isn't fazed, loses enough blood to kill an ordinary man but walks away." Section 3, p. 194

"I thought it was strange, but you told me, you said not even to give them to you unless Paige was with you." Section 3, p. 229

"I feel as if I'm standing in a cosmic toilet, and God just flushed it." Section 4, p. 273

"Well, into every cryptofascist organization, a little rain must fall." Section 4, p. 299

"Even if I hired a publicist who'd sold his soul to the devil, he couldn't get me on this program, Paige." Section 5, p. 315

"The first operative Alpha-generation human clone is a renegade, mutating in ways we might not understand and capable of infecting the human gene pool with genetic material that could spawn a new and thoroughly hostile race of nearly invulnerable super beings." Section 5, p. 362

"I've been in such pain, I've been so afraid, for as long as I can remember, so afraid and alone and trying to understand." Section 4, p. 386

"More often than not, I think we decide to be what we are." Section 5, p. 406

"You've got a good sense of humor, you really do, you make me laugh, even when it's at my expense..... But you're a crazy, sick son of a bitch." Section 5, p. 460

"They believe, that recorded history proves the masses have always been irresponsible and civilization has progressed only by luck and by the diligent efforts of a few visionaries." Section 5, p. 464

"Because it isn't burdened by religion, philosophy, any system of beliefs, a family, or a past, there isn't much danger that a clone assassin will begin to doubt the morality of the atrocities it commits, develop a conscience, or show any trace of free will that might interfere with its performance of its assignments." Section 5, p. 466

Topics for Discussion

What state of mind do Marty and the killer share? How does it affect each of them the same and differently?

What is Marty's definition of Fate and how does he envision it? What are the origins of this definition?

What is the killer looking for and where does he think he can find it?

What do the Network's representatives discover that explains Alfie's connection with Marty?

How does Alfie keep track of where Marty is and why is this so important to Alfie?

What does Alfie do in Marty's house before Marty gets home?

How does the police detective investigating in the beginning respond? What are some of the reasons for his attitude? How do Paige and Marty react when they realize what the detective thinks?

What characteristics have been genetically engineered in Alfie? How do they change, catching the Network by surprise, and what is it about these changes that scares everyone involved?

How does Alfie continue to find Marty, and what does he do to try to hide the fact that he is 'tracking' him?

What is the phrase used by Oslett when greeting Alfie, and what should Alfie's response be if everything is normal? What is significant about the use of this phrase?

Why do the police think Marty is being less than truthful with them about the existence of Alfie? Name the reasons that support his story and how the police view each one.

How does Alfie cope with adversity? Where does he draw his strength and resources from?

Why is Alfie so confused about his past? What was the purpose of creating him this way?

Who saves the Stillwater family? Why? What steps had he already taken against this eventuality?