

# **The Midnight Club Study Guide**

## **The Midnight Club by James Patterson**

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# Plot Summary

The *Midnight Club* is a novel of mystery, murder, and romance mixed together in the unique style that readers have come to expect of James Patterson. John "Stef" Stefanovitch has been restricted to a wheelchair since being shot by his nemesis, the Grave Dancer. Stef does not let this situation stop him, though, returning to work as soon as he can convince his bosses that he can do the work better than before. Soon afterward Stef is called to the location of a shooting where he discovers that the Grave Dancer has been murdered. All is not what it seems, however, and Stef quickly finds himself embroiled in an investigation that is far more dangerous than he could ever have imagined. *The Midnight Club* is Patterson at his best.

Stef leads a group of cops to a house on Long Beach where he believes he will find Alexandre St.-Germain, aka the Grave Dancer, in possession of drugs. However, the Grave Dancer has received advanced warning of Stef's attack and is waiting for him. While the Grave Dancer's men ambush Stef's men, the Grave Dancer follows Stef as he makes a run for his car. The Grave Dancer shoots Stef in the back and leaves him for dead. The Grave Dancer then goes to Stef's house and kills his wife, Anna.

It takes Stef a long time to recover, but when he does he quickly returns to the police force. Stef is determined to get the Grave Dancer. However, someone gets the Grave Dancer before him. Stef is called in to investigate the murder of Alexandre St.-Germain at a local bordello. Stef learns of some tapes hidden in the bordello that are recorded evidence of the activities that have taken place in the house. Stef takes all the tapes, hoping to find one that will show the murder or suggest who the killers might have been.

At the same time, Sarah McGinniss, a writer, has been given full access to anything that might include information on a group of organized crime bosses called the *Midnight Club*, the subject of her next book. When Alexandre St.-Germain is killed, Sarah immediately asks for access to the investigation since he was a pivotal part of her book. At first Stef resents the intrusion since he normally likes to work alone, but he soon finds Sarah's involvement to be helpful due to the wealth of information she has gathered on the *Midnight Club*. Stef and Sarah begin to review the tapes together, as well as combing through her information, soon spending a great deal of time together.

One of the tapes shows a convicted killer discussing the *Midnight Club*. Stef jumps on this information and calls the prison to visit the man. The man will only see Sarah, who has visited him many times in the past. The man, Nicky Wilson, will not talk about the *Midnight Club*. The visit ends before it has begun. However, Nicky arranges to visit with Sarah again a few days later. Sarah learns on this visit that the *Midnight Club* is arranging a meeting of its members in Atlantic City. Stef takes this information and arranges a large police operation that includes members of the FBI as well as other law enforcement agencies. During their surveillance of the *Midnight Club*, someone gets into their hotel suite and murders most of the members.



During this time, a police officer by the name of Isiah Parker has been working with a rogue group of cops murdering crime figures who cannot be stopped through the courts. Isiah participates with this group because he believes he is getting justice for his brother, Marcus, a promising boxer who was found dead of a drug overdose in a motel. Isiah believes the mob, and specifically Alexandre St.-Germain, killed Marcus in retaliation for his failure to throw boxing matches. Isiah is in Atlantic City when the Midnight Club murders take place, expecting to be given orders to assassinate some unknown figure. Instead, Isiah finds himself the target of one of his own partners.

Isiah goes to Stef. Along with Sarah, Stef and Isiah organize a group of trusted law enforcement officers to begin a campaign of harassment against Alexandre St.-Germain. This campaign appears to be working until Sarah's son is snatched off the street. A few days later, three gunman break into Sarah's house and try to kill her and Stef while they sleep. Stef manages to kill two of the gunmen in the apartment and follows the other out into the street. Stef gives chase and kills the other man seconds before he is hit by a car. Stef's injuries are severe, but the operations to fix these injuries also help to repair Stef's prior injury. Several months later, Stef is able to walk.



# Prologue, Night of the Detective, Chapters 1-6

## Prologue, Night of the Detective, Chapters 1-6 Summary

John "Stef" Stefanovitch has been restricted to a wheelchair since being shot by his nemesis, the Grave Dancer. Stef does not let this situation stop him, though, returning to work as soon as he can convince his bosses that he can do the work better than before. Soon afterward, Stef is called to the location of a shooting where he discovers that the Grave Dancer has been murdered. All is not what it seems, however, and Stef quickly finds himself embroiled in an investigation that is far more dangerous than he could ever have imagined. The Midnight Club is Patterson at his best.

Detective John Stefanovitch is in Long Beach preparing to serve a warrant on Alexandre St.-Germain, aka the Grave Dancer. Stef has been investigating the Grave Dancer for almost two years for narcotic violations. The Grave Dancer has been Stef's obsession during this time and he is happy to finally see it coming to an end. In fact, just hours before the operation was set to begin, Stef celebrated with his wife, Anna. Now Stef focuses on the task at hand. However, moments before the operation is to begin, Stef has a bad feeling that something is not right. Stef moves toward the target home where he suspects they will find a major drug factory in St.-Germain's organization.

St.-Germain has a reputation for being ruthless when people break what is known as the street law. St.-Germain has been known to kill cops and criminals alike without a second thought. Stef is not worried, though, because he has the law on his side. However, before the police can approach the target house, they are ambushed by St.-Germain's men. Stef makes a run for his car, hoping to reach the radio and call for backup. Just when Stef believes he is in the clear, someone comes up behind him and shoots him in the back. Stef is then shot again, at point blank range by a shotgun. That same night, St.-Germain himself drives over to Stef's house and fires a shotgun at Anna, also at point blank range.

## Prologue, Night of the Detective, Chapters 1-6 Analysis

Detective John Stefanovitch, or Stef, is introduced in this chapter. Stef is a successful narcotics detective who is about to make the biggest arrest of his career. Stef has been investigating a powerful drug lord for almost two years and has finally gotten to the point where he can make an arrest. Stef is confident in his work and feels success waiting just around the corner. However, it seems that Stef has become overconfident. Stef underestimates the man he has been chasing, disregarding all he knows about this



man's devotion to what is known as street law. Stef finds himself in the middle of an ambush that leaves him mortally wounded.

Also introduced in this chapter is Alexandre St.-Germain, or the Grave Dancer. The Grave Dancer is a powerful drug lord who is also a businessman with so many legitimate businesses in the United States that it is difficult to prove his illegal dealings. The Grave Dancer is a dangerous man who lives by the code of the street, striking down any man who gets in his way. The Grave Dancer craves power and he does whatever he has to do to get it. In these chapters, the Grave Dancer proves just how ruthless he can be. Not only does the Grave Dancer receive warning about the operation against one of his drug factories, but he plans a punishment for a cop who has gotten too close to the truth. The Grave Dancer shoots Stef in the back and leaves him for dead before going to his home and shooting Stef's innocent wife. These actions not only prove the Grave Dancer's power and disregard for human life, but they also effectively destroy all that Stef held sacred in his own life.



# Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 7-12

## Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 7-12 Summary

Isiah Parker is working undercover at an Orange Julius stand in order to catch a couple of neighborhood drug dealers in action. Finally Isiah catches sight of the two drug dealers making a sale on a bridge overlooking the stand. Isiah jumps the counter and chases after two boys. Isiah takes out one of the boys with a blow to the head, but has to race to catch up with the other. Isiah, an athlete in high school, has little trouble catching the second boy, taking him down among the uninterested citizens loitering in the street.

That night, Isiah goes with two other men and parks outside a club in Manhattan called Allure. The men watch as the exclusive clients of the club come and go. One of these clients is Alexandre St.-Germain. St.-Germain is escorted up to a private room upon his arrival and is left alone with two beautiful women. The women are beautifully dressed and use their feminine charms to help St.-Germain relax. Just as St.-Germain is beginning to fall under the spell these women are weaving, a commotion begins out in the hallway. It is the three men from the car parked outside, Parker among them. When St.-Germain rises to check out this noise, the door opens and a gunman appears. St.-Germain asks repeatedly if the man was sent by the Midnight Club in the seconds before the gunman opens fire.

Stef arrives at the scene of the murder. Stef is confined to a wheelchair since the shooting two years before, but has convinced the department that he is still capable of fulfilling his job duties. Bear Kupchek, Stef's partner, is already at the scene when he arrives. Bear carries Stef up the stairs in front of the club and escorts him through the crime scene, including the bedroom where St.-Germain's body still lies. Stef is overwhelmed with emotion when he sees the dead body of the man who put him in the wheelchair and murdered his wife. Stef spits on the body in a fit of rage.

## Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 7-12 Analysis

Another character is introduced at the beginning of this group of chapters, that of Isiah Parker. Parker first appears to be a lower class working man, making fruit drinks for a living. However, when Parker sees a drug deal going down, he quickly jumps the counter, leaving his job in order to stop the drug dealers. Parker pulls a gun and stops both dealers while neighborhood people stand around and watch, not bothering to do anything to help. The reader learns then that Parker is a cop and appears to be a good cop at that. However, this opinion shifts in the next chapter when Parker joins two other men and participates in a shootout at a local Manhattan club.





The club where Parker and his friends participate in this shooting rampage is Allure, a brothel that caters to rich clients. Alexandre St.-Germain, the Grave Dancer who shot a cop and his wife in cold blood, is one of the clients of this brothel and clearly the intended victim. Stef is not heartbroken at the death of this criminal mind, which leaves the reader with a moral dilemma. The reader is not sure if what Parker did was not a crime, but really an act of justice carried out without the support of the court system. This is a question that will come up again later in the novel when Parker himself begins to question the morality of his own actions.

Stef, who the reader learns has been confined to a wheelchair since the shooting two years ago, arrives at the scene of the crime to begin the investigation. Stef is clearly in charge, throwing around orders even as his partner, Bear, is carrying him up the stairs and inside the building. Stef goes into the bedroom where the Grave Dancer's body still lies and finds himself overwhelmed with emotion. At this moment Stef is not a cop, but the husband of an innocent woman shot down in the prime of her life. Stef spits on the body. This act shows the reader more than anything else how deeply Stef's emotions run and how raw they still are even after two years.



# Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 13-16

## Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 13-16 Summary

Sarah McGinniss is up early so that she can work on her new book, *The Club*, while her four-year-old sleeps. Sarah has trouble concentrating. Sarah is uneasy with the success she found after the publication of her first non-fiction book, *A Mother's Kindness*, feeling pressured to write an equally successful second book. The book also brought other changes to her life, in the form of a divorce and the move cross country to New York City. Now Sarah reads in the paper that Alexandre St.-Germain, a primary figure in her new book, has been gunned down at an exclusive Manhattan club. All this makes it impossible for her to concentrate today.

Stef, who has a modified vehicle, drives himself to the morgue to receive the report on St.-Germain. The findings are routine. The killing was thorough, suggesting the killer was after vengeance of some sort. From there Stef goes back to Allure where one of the girls who was with St.-Germain the night before claims to have new information. When Stef arrives, the girl tells him about a secret room from which the managers of the club can video tape the action in one of three rooms without the occupants being aware they are being recorded. In the secret room Stef finds hundreds of tapes. Stef confiscates them all, hoping one will either show the murders or help identify the killers.

## Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 13-16 Analysis

Sarah McGinniss is introduced here. Sarah is a writer who had great success with a non-fiction book chronicling the poisoning death of a wealthy widow. Sarah came on the story by coincidence and wrote the book because it seemed too large a story for a newspaper article. Sarah never imagined it would sell so well and now feels pressured to repeat that first success. Sarah is writing another book called *The Club*, a book about organized crime, a theme of the novel, and a group of crime bosses known as the Midnight Club. Alexandre St.-Germain played a pivotal role in this book and his death causes Sarah a great deal of distraction as she attempts to concentrate on her work. Also important here is the fact that Sarah is divorced and has custody of her four-year-old son, Sam. This shows the reader that Sarah is vulnerable even as she undertakes the writing of a book that places her in a dangerous world, foreshadowing events later in the novel that place Sarah or her son in harms way.

Stef proceeds with the investigation into the Grave Dancer's death on his own, getting around town without the help of an assistant or anyone else, proving his strong independent streak. Stef learns that the killer who ended the Grave Dancer's life apparently was after vengeance of some sort based on the number and position of the bullets found in his body. Stef then returns to Allure, where he once again interviews



one of the women who was with the Grave Dancer the night before. The woman tells Stef that there is a secret room from which activities in any of three rooms can be filmed with the knowledge of the people in these rooms. Stef takes the tapes with the hopes of seeing the crime on film or learning the identity of the killers from the tapes. These tapes could prove valuable, not only because of the crime but also because of the faces that might appear on them.



# Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 17-22

## Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 17-22 Summary

Stef drives out to Coney Island, where he is met by his father and brother who have driven up from Pennsylvania just to watch Stef run in a wheelchair race. Stef gets out the special chair his brother and father built for him and makes his way to the track. Stef has been racing for a few months now and is excited about this race. Racing makes Stef feel almost like the man he was before the shooting, giving him some illusion of control and power. Stef lines up for the race, taunting the other racers, especially one successful man who has been something of a mentor to him these past few months. The race begins and Stef holds back, hoping to keep from wearing himself out too soon. Stef keeps up with the pack and slowly moves to the front, coming up second to his mentor. Soon Stef begins to catch up with the other man. As they approach the finish line, these two men are neck to neck. The other man calls for Stef's hand and they cross the finish line hand in hand, tying the race.

Parker and Jimmy Burke wait on a street corner for their next victim. Soon he comes around the corner with his lawyer, celebrating a travesty of justice. John Traficante has recently beaten a murder rap and is out celebrating with his lawyer. Parker and Burke approach him on his way out of the restaurant and shoot him on the sidewalk, accusing him of being a cop killer as he falls to the ground. The next morning Stef reads about the murder as he makes his way to work at One Police Plaza. Stef goes upstairs to begin viewing the video tapes from Allure by himself when he learns that a female writer has gotten permission to view the tapes with him. Stef is not happy about this because he likes to work alone and had wanted to view the tapes without distraction. However, the orders come from his superiors and Stef has little say in the situation.

When Sarah arrives in the viewing room, Stef tries to politely send her away. When this does not work, Stef becomes downright rude. Still Sarah will not be scared off. Stef claims that if Sarah insists on watching the tapes she will be interfering with the investigation, but because she has permission from Stef's immediate superiors there is really nothing he can do about it. Stef finally settles down to watch the tapes, uncomfortable watching the sexually oriented tapes in front of a strange but attractive woman.

## Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 17-22 Analysis

Stef goes to Coney Island to participate in a wheelchair race. The race is not important to the plot or to anyone in particular, but it gives the reader insight to Stef's personality. Stef feels more like the man he once was when he participates in this race. Stef has felt as though the essence of who he once was has disappeared since being injured and



losing his wife. While racing, Stef feels powerful and in control once again, two things that are clearly important to his feeling of being a man. This race also touches on the theme of living life as it shows that Stef's life has changed and his desire to live every day to its fullest has died with his wife. However, when Stef races, he feels a little of that life come back.

Isiah Parker and his fellow police officer, Jimmy Burke, murder a mob hitman on the streets of New York while accusing this man of being a cop killer. Then Parker and Burke walk away as though what they have done is justified. Parker and Burke are bold and in control, clearly under the assumption that what they are doing is the right thing. The reader is confused by this attitude, especially since the writer presented Parker as an upstanding cop in an earlier chapter. Here, Parker and Burke seem no better than St.-Germain, who lived by the code of the streets.

Stef continues in the investigation of St.-Germain's death, driving himself around to the morgue and to Allure to reinterview one of the girls who was with St.-Germain at the time of his death. Stef learns of the existence of some tapes that show events taking place in the three main bedrooms of the club. Stef confiscates all these tapes hoping to find some clues to the identity of the killers. When Stef prepares to watch the tapes, Sarah McGinniss insists on joining him. When these two first meet, the reader sees tension between them. Stef likes to work alone, but Sarah is forcing him to join the world once again. Sarah's actions not only show some character traits in her, namely strength and determination, but also draw out Stef, once again touching on the theme of living life.



# Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 23-32

## Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 23-32 Summary

Sarah takes her son to the airport in order to release him in to his father's custody for his court ordered visitation. Sarah is devastated to watch the boy go because he is what she has built her world around the last few years and she will miss him. Sarah also realizes just how lonely she is when she begins to cry in the arms of a stranger. Afterward, Sarah goes to One Police Plaza to watch more tapes with Stef, but instead talks him into having lunch with her. Over lunch, Sarah finds herself practically interrogating Stef, asking personal questions about his wife until he is so uncomfortable Sarah finds herself apologizing for her forwardness.

Isiah Parker walks into a popular club, nervous about the task he is about to perform. Parker is there to kill Oliver Barnwell, a drug pusher heavily guarded by his mob associates. Parker finds himself thinking about his brother as he moves through the club. Parker's brother, Marcus, once frequented places like this. A minor celebrity because of his boxing talents, Marcus was well known and now Parker hopes no one will remember him from the nights he came here with Marcus. Parker watches Barnwell break from his bodyguards and follow a beautiful woman into the women's bathroom. Parker follows, moving up tight behind Barnwell and stabbing him. Parker then makes a clean exit, allowing the knife to fall to the floor as he alerts dancers to a sick man in the bathroom.

Stef is called to the scene of Barnwell's death. Then the next day, Saturday, he works all day at One Police Plaza putting together all his information on each of the mob related cases that have occurred in the past week. International police representatives will be arriving in New York on Monday due to the fact that similar killings have taken place in London, Palermo, and Amsterdam over the same time period. Sunday Stef drives out to Sarah's beach house in order to take a look at her files on the Midnight Club. The drive is long but refreshing, and the house is beautifully situated on the beach. Stef finds himself more relaxed than he has been in a long time as he and Sarah study her notes together. They work late into the afternoon before taking a break for food. They work some more after lunch, working until the sun has gone down and they can no longer see. Sarah invites Stef to stay to dinner. As they work together in the kitchen, a romantic moment seems inevitable, but Stef shies away, afraid he cannot be the kind of man Sarah will need him to be. Then Stef is saved when Bear calls to say he has a lead and needs to meet Stef in the city.



## Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 23-32 Analysis

Sarah takes her son to the airport in order to hand him over to his father. The reader is allowed to see Sarah's deepest vulnerability in this scene, becoming aware of the one thing that could hurt her, the loss of her son. The parallel between this and the loss of Stef's wife are clear to the reader and makes the reader concerned that the loss of her son might become an issue for Sarah later in the novel. At the same time, Sarah's relationship with Stef seems to be rapidly changing. Sarah takes Stef to lunch and he finds himself telling her things about the loss of his wife that he has not told anyone, including his partner Bear. Stef's ability to trust Sarah so quickly suggests the reader that their might be a deeper relationship building between these two characters. However, when a romantic moment appears to be about to take place when Stef visits Sarah's beach house, Stef ends it quickly in the fear that he cannot be the man that Sarah needs in her life. Stef sees himself as less than a man now that he is in a wheelchair and incapable of protecting a woman the way a man, or a husband, ought to be able to do. It seems that a romantic affair is ending before it has begun, but the reader still sees hope in Stef's emotional reaction to the situation.

Parker goes to a club in order to murder a drug pusher. The reader is beginning to see a pattern in the murders Parker and his associates have been committing, but it still does not make the reader feel as though these murders are completely justified. At the same time, the reader begins to discover some of what motivates Parker. Parker had a brother who was a minor celebrity in his neighborhood because he was a talented boxer. This brother would frequent places like this club and was noticed by a great many people. However, Parker's brother is no longer alive. The reader does not know at this point what happened to Parker's brother, but suspects he might have been murdered by someone associated with the men Parker has been killing due to Parker's dubbing these crimes as revenge.



# Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 33-34

## Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 33-34 Summary

Bear Kupchek has been contacted by an informant who tells him he has information that could crack the St.-Germain case wide open. Bear is to meet this person in Central Park. Bear has lived in New York all his life and knows that Central Park was once a place to fear at night, but no longer feels that fear since the park has been cleaned up. However, Bear is still cautious as he makes his way to the meeting place. Bear makes his way into a tunnel and hears someone call his name. When Bear responds, the speaker begins firing a weapon at him. Bear feels the pain immediately, but instead of falling or running away, he charges toward his assailant. Bear recognizes the man as he rushes past. His assassin is a fellow cop.

Bear knows he must warn Stef. Instead of going to a hospital, Bear goes to Stef's apartment. It is here that Stef finds him when he returns from Sarah's beach house. Bear is bleeding out in front of his apartment door. Stef takes his larger partner into his arms and begs him not to die while at the same time screaming for help. Bear is so weak and confused from the blood loss he does not tell Stef the identity of his killer.

## Part One, The Grave Dancer, Chapters 33-34 Analysis

Bear Kupchek is meeting an informant in Central Park. The writer explains that Bear has no reason to fear meeting someone in this park alone after dark, not since the city has begun a restoration program that has weeded out most of the crime. This sets a tone of safety that is broken when the informant shows up and begins shooting without speaking to Bear. It is clearly an ambush, intent on stopping, or at least slowing, the investigation in St.-Germain's death. Bear keeps a clear head and runs toward his assassin, getting a good look at the man's face before jumping in a taxi to warn Stef. The assassin is a cop.

The reader suspects that the cop who has shot Bear is one of Parker's partners. This changes the overall sense of morality that Parker has been operating under from the beginning of his rampage. No longer is this about organized crime, a theme of the novel, and its impact on innocent citizens. Now this is about something more sinister, perhaps something masterminded by the mob themselves. Bear rushes to Stef's apartment to warn him rather than going to a hospital to get help. Stef finds Bear so weak that it is clear his wounds are serious. Bear never manages to tell Stef the identity of his killer, so Stef, as well as the reader, is left in the dark a while longer.





## Part Two, The Sixth Estate, Chapters 35-39

### Part Two, The Sixth Estate, Chapters 35-39 Summary

Isiah Parker remembers his brother's funeral and the pain he felt when he delivered the eulogy. Parker had wanted someone to pay then, and feels now that someone is finally beginning to pay. However, Parker is beginning to have doubts about the methods. Parker calls the man who recruited him to this murder squad and asks the man to assure him that what they are doing is right. Parker arranges for the meeting to take place on his turf, a train station in Harlem. The man, police deputy commissioner Charles Mackey, assures Parker that they are on the side of the angels. This is a phrase Parker will repeat to himself often as his doubts grow.

As Stef drives to New Jersey for Bear's funeral, he thinks about his own family back in Pennsylvania. Stef's grandfather once gave him the advice to work a job he truly loves and if he does not love the job he should no longer do it. Stef has taken this advice to heart and believes that he still truly loves his job despite days like this. At the funeral, Stef meets up with Sarah. Sarah helps Stef make his way to the front of the church for the service. Afterward, Sarah accompanies Stef to Bear's home where he spends a long afternoon reminiscing with Bear's widow. Afterward, Sarah invites Stef to her house for a drink. He accepts, despite his reservations about their budding relationship. Sarah and Stef talk for a long time, learning a great deal about each other. However, before anything romantic can take place, Stef leaves.

### Part Two, The Sixth Estate, Chapters 35-39 Analysis

Isiah Parker is consumed with grief over the death of his brother just six months before. At the funeral he had sworn to get justice for his brother and thought that by joining the rogue band of cops he was doing just that. However, the assault on Barnwell left Parker with a bad feeling. Parker is not sure what he is doing is right. Parker calls the man who recruited him and arranges to meet him in Harlem. Parker asks the man if they are doing the right thing. This man, police deputy commissioner Charles Mackey, assures Parker they are on the side of the angels. Parker is not so sure, but he does not try to drop out of the rogue squad. Parker's second thoughts, however, do begin to show the reader that he does realize that what he is doing might not be as morally right as he originally thought, showing not only character growth but also a change in his motivations.

Stef goes to the funeral of his partner, Bear Kupchek. Stef is clearly saddened by the death of his partner, but at the same time seems to reaffirm his commitment to his work when he thinks about the advice his grandfather gave him when he was a child. Stef was told to only do a job as long as it made him happy, and he has clearly decided that



this job does make him happy. This is important for the reader because it goes to Stef's character motivation and his desire to continue doing what he believes is right despite the death of his friend and partner. Sarah shows up at the funeral and Stef finds himself relying on her for companionship and consolation. Stef goes home with Sarah and talks to her about his family, but does not allow anything romantic to happen. However, the reader sees his growing affection for Sarah and suspects a romantic relationship is not far off.



## Part Two, The Sixth Estate, Chapters 40-49

### Part Two, The Sixth Estate, Chapters 40-49 Summary

It was Parker's day off six months ago when he heard the call on his brother. A body had been found in the Edmonds Hotel in the Bowery, naked in the bathtub of one of the rooms, clearly an overdose. Parker saw his brother's body, bruised and broken, and knew immediately that he had been murdered. However, everyone else believed he died of a drug overdose. Now Parker is waiting to meet with his two partners to discuss the next hit, the most important one of all. Parker meets up with these men but still finds himself questioning the morality of what he is doing.

Stef meets with a movie editor to cut the video tapes into a few hours of pertinent information instead of the hours and hours of sexually explicit details. While they are going over a tape that features a convicted killer named Nicky Wilson, Stef hears him mention the Midnight Club. Immediately Stef arranges a meeting with Nicky, but Nicky only wants to talk to Sarah, someone he has previously spoken to regarding to her book, *The Club*. Sarah arrives at the prison and finds Nicky angry and sullen, claiming his conviction was the state's way of blaming a black man for the drug problems in the city. When Sarah brings up the Midnight Club, Nicky becomes agitated and quickly ends the interview. However, Nicky calls Sarah back a day later and tells her that there will be a meeting of the Midnight Club in a few days in Atlantic City. The Midnight Club is a group of the heads of many organized crime groups from all over the world. Alexandre St.-Germain is the mastermind behind the Club.

Stef arrives in Atlantic City to join in a multi-jurisdictional police operation designed to arrest the various members of the Midnight Club. Stef is welcomed by FBI agent David Wilkes, a man he has worked with in the past. The operation has set up in a hotel opposite of the one in which the Midnight Club is to meet, with directional microphones and various surveillance equipment pointed at the Midnight Club's suite. At the same time, Parker and his partners arrive in Atlantic City to await orders for their next hit.

### Part Two, The Sixth Estate, Chapters 40-49 Analysis

Parker reveals to the reader how his brother was found dead of a drug overdose in a rundown hotel in the middle of one of the worst neighborhoods in the city. To the outside world, it appears that Marcus Parker died from a drug addiction that was allowed to get out of control. To Parker, however, he knows his brother was not a drug addict and that he was murdered. However, Parker cannot prove this and therefore cannot get justice for his brother through the courts. The fact that Parker cannot get justice explains to the reader why he would go along with a band of cops who murder bad guys rather than



arrest them. Parker cannot reconcile this in his own mind, however, and is beginning to feel doubts about his own actions.

Stef is trying to compile all the important parts of the video tapes on one, shorter tape, when he hears mention of the Midnight Club. Stef is shocked by this and decides to contact the person who made the reference. This man is a convicted killer in prison whom Sarah has already interviewed several times for her book. Sarah goes to the prison to interview the man, but he becomes agitated, clearly frightened, when she mentions the Midnight Club. The reader learns then that the Midnight Club is a group of organized crime heads from all over the world. This is a very powerful group and they could cause trouble for anyone who crosses them. Death is a common punishment among the organized crime groups and clearly this is what Nicky Wilson fears. However, Wilson changes his mind and tells Sarah that the Midnight Club is about to have a meeting in Atlantic City.

Stef uses this information and organizes a multi-jurisdictional police operation in Atlantic City. Stef arrives and is greeted by an FBI pal. The police are set up in a suite across the street from the hotel where the Midnight Club is known to have arranged a suite as well. The police have surveillance equipment to listen in and watch the Midnight Club. Stef settles in to watch. At the same time, Parker arrives with his two partners to await orders on their next assignment, one that is supposed to be bigger than the previous ones. The reader suspects that Parker is there to kill a member of the Midnight Club and is curious what the risks are after learning of the power of this club.



## Part Two, The Sixth Estate, Chapters 50-58

### Part Two, The Sixth Estate, Chapters 50-58 Summary

Parker investigates the hotel where the Midnight Club is located in order to find any vulnerabilities, assuming it is a member of this club he and his partners are to hit. Parker is unsure this hit is one he will be able to pull off and becomes nervous when he sees Detective Stefanovitch. Stef had been taking a break, but is now back at the surveillance. Stef is bothered by something he cannot put his finger on, but he is filled with the same foreboding that he felt the night he was shot. Sarah arrives to observe the operation for her book. Sarah sits with Stef most of the evening before sneaking off for some sleep. Sarah wakes in the middle of the night and finds that Stef has not stopped to get any sleep himself. Sarah is trying to talk Stef into going to bed when something begins to happen in the suite where the Midnight Club is meeting.

A couple of room service attendants enter the room and begin closing the blinds. Moments later Stef can hear gunfire over the surveillance equipment. Stef yells out to his companions and most of the law enforcement officers rush out of the suite and toward the Midnight Club's hotel. Stef follows, but his disability causes him to fall behind. When Stef finally arrives, he finds a massacre he will not forget. At the same time, Parker gets a phone call from one of his partners telling him about the shooting and warning him to get out of town. Parker leaves his hotel and rushes to meet his partners, but is shot at by one partner and finds the other one dead. Parker runs away, making it back to the city on his own.

After the massacre in Atlantic City, Stef takes Sarah to his parents' farm in Pennsylvania to search through her research for any clue to who might be behind the attack. At the house, Sarah hears a great many of stories about Stef as a child and young man, pulling her tighter into the intimate circle that is Stef's private life. Stef becomes emotional about this situation, feeling as though he is on a path he cannot control, so he returns to the city without telling Sarah.

### Part Two, The Sixth Estate, Chapters 50-58 Analysis

Parker checks out the hotel where the Midnight Club is meeting to find vulnerabilities in their security, but finds himself wondering if it will even be possible to hit someone in their suite. Parker is nervous about this assignment and becomes more so when he sees Stef on the boardwalk. Stef is nervous too, filled with the same foreboding he felt the night he was shot. Something is wrong. The reader is tipped off by Stef's feelings and is not surprised when things do begin to go wrong. However, the reader is confused as to who committed the murder of the entire Midnight Club, since Parker never got his



orders and was not involved. The reader is becoming as confused as Stef, despite having slightly more information.

When the Midnight Club is hit, Stef rushes to investigate while Parker is warned to get out of town. Parker moves to meet his partners, worried they might be in danger, only to find one partner has killed the other and is out to kill him. Now Parker is in danger, suggesting to the reader that the plot to kill the Midnight Club goes much deeper than just this rogue group of cops. The reader is left with many questions, especially the question of who might have been powerful enough and motivated enough to have the members of the Midnight Club killed. The only character to come to mind is St.-Germain, the creator of the Midnight Club, but St.-Germain was killed earlier in the novel.

Stef takes Sarah to his family's place in Pennsylvania as much for safety as a chance to again go over her notes. While there, Sarah gets to know his family and begins to learn more about Stef, drawing her closer into his personal space. Stef sees how comfortable Sarah is with his family and begins to see her as a part of his life. This makes Stef very nervous because he is not ready to be in love again and risk the same pain he associates with the death of his wife. Stef runs away, returning to New York without telling Sarah, as much running from his own feelings as from her.



# Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 59-66

## Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 59-66 Summary

A man gets off a private jet at Kennedy airport and is met by Jimmy Burke, Parker's surviving partner. The man is St.-Germain, remarkably in good health despite his death the week before. Burke tells St.-Germain about the events of the past week, all which St.-Germain sees as favorable except for the survival of Parker. Parker was supposed to be killed. St.-Germain then goes to his private yacht where he meets with two Columbian drug lords, sons of one of the men killed in Atlantic City. St.-Germain listens to them talk about the future and realizes they are not the kind of men he wants in the Midnight Club any longer. St.-Germain shoots them.

Stef is still upset about the Atlantic City massacre and his feelings for Sarah, so he throws himself into his work. Stef attends a meeting about the massacre and then goes to his office where he finds Parker waiting for him. Stef knows Parker by reputation, aware he is a decorated officer, but does not know him personally. Parker introduces himself before he begins to tell Stef his story. Parker begins by describing his overwhelming grief at the loss of his brother and his obsession with making his killers pay. Parker tells how people in the police department were aware of his feelings and he was approached by the chief of detectives. The chief of detectives told Parker how he was forming a secret death squad through orders from One Police Plaza in order to fight the uncontrolled crime on the streets. Parker joined because he thought it would be a sure way to get justice for his brother.

Parker then tells Stef how he began to have doubts about what the death squad was doing and how he began keeping logs and recordings of squad business should anything happen. Parker reveals that he even has the deputy commissioner on tape. Then Parker tells Stef that Jimmy Burke has connections to St.-Germain and that Parker is sure it was Burke who killed Bear. Shortly after talking to Parker, Stef meets Sarah at the Waldorf-Astoria, where a mysterious press conference is about to take place. At the press conference, St.-Germain announces that he is still alive and that the man who died in his place was a body double who took his place when rumors spread that St.-Germain would be the target of an assassin. Stef is disgusted and appalled, insisting he and Sarah leave before the press conference is concluded.



## Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 59-66 Analysis

St.-Germain is miraculously still alive. Apparently someone told St.-Germain he was about to be murdered, most likely Burke, and got him out of town, replacing him with a body double. Now St.-Germain is back, ready to return to his old ways. St.-Germain starts with a bang by killing a couple of Columbian drug lords who are not respectable enough to a part of his new Midnight Club. Burke apparently is, however. Burke is one of Parker's partners in the killing squad. Burke is also the one who took shots at Parker in the streets of Atlantic City shortly after the massacre of the members of the Midnight Club, and the one who killed the other partner. In fact, it appears that Burke also killed Bear. All of these things add up to make Burke look like he has been working for St.-Germain all along. When the reader ties this in with the other murders taking place around the world and the seventeen members of the Midnight Club murdered, it looks as though someone is trying to wipe out leaders of organized crime all over the world in order to begin a new order. It seems St.-Germain is most likely behind it all.

Stef learns about Parker and his connection to the killing squad, as well as Burke's role. When Stef also learns that St.-Germain is still alive, it seems that Stef has all the pieces he needs to figure out what has been going on. Stef is in the middle of some sort of organized crime war. This not only illuminates the entire plot for both the reader and Stef, but it also touches on the theme of organized crime. This plot seems to be the epitome of what organized crime is all about. Everyone is always struggling for power, doing whatever they need to do to get what they want. Now it seems St.-Germain is posed on the edge of achieving his goal and Stef must step up and stop him before it is too late. The only question is how Stef will accomplish this impossible task.





## Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 67-75

### Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 67-75 Summary

St.-Germain throws a party on his yacht, enjoying his newfound respectability. However, when the party is over, St.-Germain cannot resist falling back on some of his old habits and arranges for a woman to be raped and murdered in his state room. Across town, Sarah has just written a chapter for her new book and is now joining Stef for a meeting. The meeting consists of law enforcement officials they know they can trust to begin a campaign against St.-Germain and the Midnight Club, to bring them down once and for all. After the meeting, Stef apologizes to Sarah for leaving her in Pennsylvania and describes a failed romance soon after he recovered from his gunshot wounds that have caused him to be cautious about relationships now. Sarah listens before she confesses that she is falling in love with him and that his chair is not an issue for her.

St.-Germain arrives at a conference room in the World Trade Center to give a speech to the new Midnight Club. They were no longer crime bosses, but business men, respectable in every way. St.-Germain is excited about this change, about being respected and powerful. Afterward, St.-Germain attends a party where two young ladies are made available for the pleasure of the gentlemen present. Respectability does not necessarily mean without pleasure. The next morning, Stef meets with his physical therapist before he joins Isiah Parker on a stake-out of St.-Germain's apartment. When St.-Germain comes out, Stef wheels up to him, grabs his jacket, and tells him that he intends to make his life difficult until he can take him down.

### Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 67-75 Analysis

St.-Germain throws a party for his new friends, then gives a speech at the World Trade Center. St.-Germain is walking in large circles now, filled with the respectability that he seems to crave. This word respectability appears frequently when St.-Germain is the narrator, showing the reader how desperately he wants to be respected despite his line of work, which just happens to be drug dealing. However, even as St.-Germain is moving in this new world, he is still indulging in the old habits, first arranging to have a girl raped and murdered, and then arranged for two young girls to suffer the same fate. These behaviors may come back to haunt St.-Germain as he surrounds himself with people who do not condone these types of behaviors.

Stef is determined to get St.-Germain. Stef has come up with a plan, as witnessed by the reader when Stef and Sarah hosted a meeting of law enforcement officers they

trust. What they plan to do, the reader is still unclear on. However, it seems harassment is a part of the plan, as Stef stakes out St.-Germain's apartment and then approaches him on the street, warning him that he intends to take him down no matter what it takes.



## Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 76-85

### Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 76-85 Summary

Sarah attends a meeting at the attorney general's office where they discuss ways to take down St.-Germain. They do not plan to go after St.-Germain for his illegal activities, but with RICO motions. At the same time, Isiah and Stef continue sharing shifts watching St.-Germain. That night, Sarah puts Sam to bed and waits for Stef to come over. Sarah and Stef share an omelet and talk about the program of harassment they are laying on St.-Germain. After a while, the conversation becomes personal. Sarah and Stef decide to take their relationship to the next level and end up making love.

The next day, Stef accompanies a group of US Customs and DEA agents to the harbor where they serve a court order allowing them to search and confiscate the cargo on board a ship known to be carrying cargo for St.-Germain. On board the ship they find a great deal of heroine. That night, Stef walks into a crowded restaurant where St.-Germain is giving a speech, and announces to the crowd that St.-Germain is being served a warrant to appear before a grand jury in connection with violations against the Continuing Criminal Enterprise Law. Afterward, Stef goes home, where he falls asleep while watching a movie. Stef is awoken by the phone. It is St.-Germain telling him that he killed Anna personally.

The next morning, St.-Germain does not come out of his apartment when Stef and Parker expect him to. Finally Parker goes to ask the chauffeur where St.-Germain is. Parker is told that St.-Germain has already gone to work and that the chauffeur was instructed to tell the cops that the game has only just begun. At the same moment, a call comes over the radio alerting Stef of exactly what St.-Germain is up to. As Sarah was walking Sam to school that morning, a man snatched him out of her arms. St.-Germain has decided that the street law needs to be put back into place, respectability or no.

### Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 76-85 Analysis

Stef, Sarah, and Parker begin their campaign of harassment against St.-Germain. They use the RICO act in order to seize a drug cargo St.-Germain was expecting, as well as compelling him to testify in front of a grand jury. This campaign of harassment costs St.-Germain money and some of the respect he is trying hard to build, which makes him angry enough to call Stef in the middle of the night. St.-Germain admits to killing Anna Stefanovitch himself. To the reader, this seems to show St.-Germain's anger and maybe some fear. Later, when St.-Germain decides he must implement the street law again,



the reader can clearly see he is motivated in this action by Stef's campaign of harassment.

Stef is developing a relationship with Sarah. Stef has admitted to her his fears about being a good man to her and now he feels safe enough to give their relationship a try. By doing this, Stef has begun to live his life again, touching on the theme of living life. Not only this, but Sarah softens the blow St.-Germain intends to give Stef when he admits to killing Anna. This helps to keep Stef focused on the job at hand. However, when St.-Germain kidnaps Sam, Sarah's little boy, there is no telling how this will affect Stef, leaving the reader anxiously turning the page to see what will happen next.



## Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 86-95

### Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 86-95 Summary

Sarah becomes frustrated while talking to the patrol men about Sam's abduction. Stef arrives and assures her they will find Sam, safe and sound. The next morning, before dawn, St.-Germain meets with the killers he hired to kidnap Sam. St.-Germain orders these men to kill Stef, despite the fact that the Midnight Club has made the decision not to follow the street law any longer. St.-Germain simply wants Stef off his back.

Sarah is devastated by the loss of her son and terrified about his well-being. Stef stays with her during the day. They go over witness accounts together, trying to keep busy. At the same time, Parker is taking precautions to be sure he is safe. Parker is staying with a girlfriend that no one knows about. During the night, Parker cannot sleep and decides to go for a walk. At a local diner, Parker identifies two men who are clearly hitmen. One of the hitmen sees Parker and pulls a gun. Parker manages to take both men out before anyone can get hurt.

On Park Avenue, Sarah and Stef settle into bed for the night. A short time later, the power goes out to the entire building. Stef becomes aware of noises in the apartment. Stef directs Sarah into the bathroom and then positions himself across the room and waits for the hitmen to come into the bedroom. When they do, Stef uses sound to take out two of the men. However, Stef cannot pinpoint the third. Sarah starts throwing things out of the bathroom to help, causing the third man to flee the apartment. Stef checks on Sarah before rushing out of the apartment to chase the third man, without telling Sarah he has been shot several times. Stef chases the third hitman through the street, weaving in and out of traffic before coming face to face with the hitman. Stef fires a moment before he is hit by a car.

### Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 86-95 Analysis

Sam is missing and St.-Germain orders the murders of Stef and Parker. Parker manages to escape his fate, catching sight of the two hitmen and killing them first. Stef is with Sarah, trying to keep her mind off of Sam when three hitmen break into her apartment. Stef manages to get the better of two of the men, killing them in Sarah's bedroom. However, the third proves more elusive and manages to escape the apartment and make a run for the street. Despite being injured, Stef follows. Stef manages to kill the third gunman seconds before being hit by a car. Stef worried earlier in the novel he could not be the kind of man Sarah needed, a man who could protect his

woman, but he has now proven to the reader and to himself that he can do just that. However, he is badly injured and the reader is left worrying about his recovery.



## **Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 96-103**

### **Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 96-103 Summary**

Several weeks go by. Sarah is stressed out by everything that has been going on. Stef is in the hospital but no one will tell her how bad his injuries are. Sam is still missing. Then suddenly Sarah gets a phone call telling her that Sam is fine. There is no other information and no follow up call even though Sarah anxiously waits for one. A few days later Sarah gets another call telling her if she will turn over all materials having to do with her book, *The Club*, they will release Sam. Sarah obeys the orders they give her, driving the materials out to an abandoned house in Milton. There is no one around and Sam does not seem to be there. Sarah leaves the materials and drives away. Two days later, Sarah is walking the streets outside her building and a car pulls up. Seconds later Sam is back in her arms.

In Beverly Hills, California there is an exclusive spa in the hills. This is where the Midnight Club is meeting to discuss what to do with St.-Germain, who has fallen back to the old ways and is ruining the club's respectability. The Club members believe they have finally risen above the law. However, they are wrong. The hills are filled with law enforcement personnel who move in as soon as all the members have arrived. All members of the Midnight Club are arrested.

St.-Germain is in the lobby of the World Trade Center when Parker distracts his body guards and shoves him onto the elevator. St.-Germain knows that Parker wants to kill him and he tries to talk him out of it. However, Parker is determined. Parker stops the elevator between floors and forces St.-Germain, at gunpoint, to take an overdose of drugs. Even as the police gather in the building, trying to free St.-Germain, Parker watches him die, thinking of his brother Marcus the entire time. When it is over, Parker restarts the elevator, gets off on the forty-sixth floor and walks down several flights of stairs before joining the police search as though that was the only reason he was in the building.

### **Part Three, The Midnight Club, Chapters 96-103 Analysis**

Sarah gets a phone call from the apparent kidnappers telling her that Sam is okay. Sarah is thrilled with this news, as any mother would be who had been without her child for several weeks. However, when they call back and tell her the only way to get her child back is to give up her book, Sarah is upset but willing to do whatever it takes. Sarah's only motivation is to get her child back and get back to living her life. Sarah



thinks that she is not going to get Sam back, but is thrilled when Sam suddenly appears on the street one afternoon, ending this saga for Sarah.

The Midnight Club members call a meeting to try to decide what to do with St.-Germain. The club is unhappy that St.-Germain has returned to the old ways of doing business after going so far to try to bring respectability to the business. However, before they can make a decision, the whole club is arrested. At the same time, Parker manages to trap St.-Germain on an elevator and kill him with the same drugs that killed Marcus. Parker has wanted justice for his brother since the beginning of the novel and has finally found a way to do it. Parker's motivations have been satisfied, leaving him free to go on with his life, touching on the theme of living life.





# Epilogue, One Last Dance, Chapters 104-105

## Epilogue, One Last Dance, Chapters 104-105 Summary

Stef has been in the hospital for nine months. At first it was unclear if Stef would survive his injuries. Then a new surgeon took on the case and his confidence in Stef's recovery seemed to give new energy to the case. Several operations were performed, including one that Stef's previous doctors had told him was not a choice because it might leave Stef worse off than he was at the time. However, this operation performed now by the new surgeon has given Stef hope that he might walk again. Today, Stef attempts to take a few steps for the first time. Stef positions Sarah across the room because it is to her wants to walk. Stef takes several steps and falls into her arms, promising her that in six months they will be dancing.

On a cold winter night in Harlem several months later, Parker is leaving the police station on his way home. Parker is stopped in the alley by a stranger he cannot see. Parker moves cautiously toward this man and discovers it is Stef, standing with a cane. Stef tells Parker that he knows he is the one who killed St.-Germain and that he wants to shake his hand. Parker not only shakes his hand, but gives him a hug.

## Epilogue, One Last Dance, Chapters 104-105 Analysis

Stef's injuries were so severe that he had to be in the hospital for a long period of time. Sarah visits him often, telling the reader that she is still a big part of his life and hopes to continue to be so. This is good news for those readers who like the romantic aspect of the novel. Stef has suffered several operations, including one that was once an option to reverse his paralysis but was considered too much of a risk. The operation has been performed and now Stef is about to try to take his first steps. Stef walks into Sarah's arms, promising her he will dance with her within a few months. This is an exciting end to Stef's story, especially since the reader is aware that Stef's paralysis has been a difficult situation for him in the past.

Several months later, Stef walks in order to speak to Parker about the death of St.-Germain. Stef knows that Parker killed St.-Germain and wants to congratulate him. Whether this is morally right or wrong does not seem to matter. St.-Germain has been stopped and this is the most important thing in Stef's mind. Stef has finally achieved his ultimate goal, even if he was not the one to offer the final blow.



# Characters

## John

John Stefanovitch, or Stef, is a police detective. Stef has been investigating a man he knows as the Grave Dancer for a long time and is about to arrest him when he and his men are ambushed by the Grave Dancer's men. Stef attempts to escape the ambush but is shot in the back by the Grave Dancer himself. When Stef awakes, he learns that not only will he be wheelchair bound, but that his wife was shot in their home the same night. Stef has lost not only the use of his legs, but also the woman he loved more than anything else in the world.

Stef goes back to work despite his wheelchair, obsessed with the idea of taking down the Grave Dancer. When Stef gets the call that the Grave Dancer has been murdered in a local brothel, Stef jumps at the chance to take the case, anxious to see for himself the body of his nemesis. However, during the investigation of this murder, Stef learns of an organization called the Midnight Club, put together by the Grave Dancer and including the heads of organized crime from all around the world. Stef works with a writer, Sarah McGinniss, in unearthing the members of this exclusive club and stopping them before they can create the largest organized crime syndicate the world has ever seen.

Through the course of their investigation, Stef and Sarah fall in love. However, this relationship proves dangerous for Sarah when her son is kidnapped. Stef does all he can to protect Sarah, but feels his powers are limited by his wheelchair. This is proved to be false, however, when one night some men break into Sarah's apartment and attempt to assassinate Stef and Sarah as they sleep. Stef manages to kill two of the men in the bedroom and chases another through the streets, killing him before being hit by a car. The accident is severe, causing Stef to undergo an operation that not only repairs his new injuries, but also works to repair his previous injury. Within a year, Stef is walking again.

## Alexandre St.-Germain

Alexandre St.-Germain, or the Grave Dancer, is a business man who uses his legitimate business interests to hide his illegal activities. The Grave Dancer is heavily into the selling of drugs as well as other organized crime activities. The Grave Dancer is a brilliant man who comes up with an idea to unite all the heads of crime syndicates throughout the world and create one large group governed by one board. The Grave Dancer calls this group the Midnight Club. However, just as the group is beginning to become organized, a rogue group of cops begins killing off its leaders, including St.-Germain. What the cops do not know is that St.-Germain knew their plans somehow and had a body double take his place. It is this body double that is murdered by the rogue cops. A short time later, someone breaks into a hotel room where the Midnight Club is meeting and murders the entire group.



The reader soon learns that these events were plotted by St.-Germain so that he could place in power people who were more like himself who would help him run things in a way that would be more beneficial to himself. St.-Germain continues to build power despite the illegal aspect of his actions, creating a powerhouse that will make him one of the most powerful men in the world. Stef is close on his tail, however, coming close to taking him down. When St.-Germain realizes this, he strikes out at Stef again, this time kidnapping Sarah's son. However, the members of the Midnight Club disagree with St.-Germain's actions and return the child to Sarah. St.-Germain eventually meets a fitting end when Isiah Parker traps him in an elevator.

## Isiah Parker

Isiah Parker is a policeman who works in the same Harlem neighborhood where he has lived all his life. Isiah likes to be a cop and likes the idea of making his old neighborhood safer for his friends and neighbors. Isiah had a brother who was a promising boxer. This brother, Marcus, got involved with organized crime in order to further his boxing career. However, something went wrong and Marcus was found dead of a drug overdose in a dilapidated hotel in a poor section of the city. Isiah believes that St.-Germain killed his brother because he would not throw a fight. Isiah is filled with anger and grief and wants to get St.-Germain back for what he has done.

When Isiah is approached by a rogue group of policemen and asked to kill men like St.-Germain, he jumps at the chance, believing he will be bringing justice to the untouchables. One of the men on Isiah's list to murder is St.-Germain, but St.-Germain is tipped off and has a body double take his place. Isiah goes along with this plan until it appears that he and his fellow cops have been set up. Isiah is in Atlantic City to make a hit on members of the Midnight Club when the entire board of the Midnight Club is murdered by an unknown group. Now Isiah goes on the run, believing his life to be in danger. Isiah goes to Stef, whom he knows is a straight cop and who will help him. Stef, Sarah, and Isiah come up with a plan to stop the Midnight Club.

Later, when the Midnight Club has been dealt with, Isiah traps St.-Germain on an elevator. Isiah stops the elevator and forces St.-Germain to take a dose of the same drug that killed his brother. Isiah watches St.-Germain die, imagining the death of his brother, which he knows was much longer and much more painful. Isiah then slips off the elevator and is able to escape the scene of the crime by pretending he has just arrives in the building as a member of the police force that has arrived to rescue St.-Germain. Later, Stef tracks Isiah down and congratulates him on his successful murder of St.-Germain.

## Michael

Michael "Bear" Kupchek is Stef's partner. Bear is one of Stef's closest friends and the one person who treats Stef the way he did before Stef's devastating injuries. Stef depends on Bear to keep him from falling into a dark depression. Bear is also a



successful investigator. Bear helps Stef investigate the death of St.-Germain's body double. One night Bear gets information that an informant wants to meet with him. Bear calls Stef and tells him he will be meeting this informant and then he wants to meet Stef at his apartment. However, the informant turns out to be a cop who shoots Bear. Bear makes his way to Stef's apartment, wanting to tell him to be careful. Unfortunately, Bear is too seriously injured to communicate this information to Stef. It is not until much later that Stef learns the identity of Bear's killer.

## **Sarah McGinniss**

Sarah McGinniss is a writer who has recently become famous due to the non-fiction book, "A Mother's Kindness". Sarah was a reporter for a newspaper when she stumbled across information about the poisoning death of a wealthy widow. Sarah writes a book on this case and the book becomes a best seller. Soon after Sarah becomes divorced and moves to New York to begin writing a new book. This new book is about a group of organized crime bosses called "The Club". Thanks to her informants, Sarah has a great deal of information about the Midnight Club. When Sarah learns about the death of St.-Germain, a pivotal figure in her book, she gets permission from the police department to view video tapes found at the crime scene. When Sarah goes to see the tapes she meets wheelchair bound police detective, John Stefanovitch.

Sarah and Stef do not hit it off at first, but soon become friendly. Stef benefits from Sarah's research, spending long hours in her company in order to go over her papers. Soon Sarah finds herself in the middle of the investigation, helping Stef as much as she can. Unfortunately, St.-Germain becomes aware of Sarah's close relationship with Stef. St.-Germain has Sarah's child kidnapped in order to distract Sarah and Stef and keep them away from him. This does not work. Stef keeps pressuring St.-Germain to such a point that the Midnight Club turns on him. St.-Germain is forced to hand the child over to the Midnight Club, which in turn returns the child to Sarah after she turns over all the materials for her book.

## **Sam McGinniss**

Sam McGinniss is Sarah's four-year-old child. Sam is an articulate young man who is full of life and joy of his mother's life. Sam is the child of divorce, torn between two parents. Sam spends two weeks with his father during the investigation into the Midnight Club, and is taken away from danger for a short time. However, it turns out this is not long enough. Shortly after Sam returns, he is on his way to school with his mother and is kidnapped by a strange man on the street. Sam is held for several days. Finally Sam's mother is contacted and told to hand over all her materials on her book about the Midnight Club. After Sarah does this, her son is dumped off on the street, successfully returned to her.



## Marcus Parker and Anna Stefanovitch

Marcus Parker is the younger brother of Isiah Parker. Marcus is a promising boxer who mistakenly gets involved with the mob. When Marcus refuses to play by the mob's rules, he is taken to a motel where he is force fed drugs over a long period of time. Finally Marcus is fed a drug overdose. Isiah Parker is devastated by the death of his brother and believes St.-Germain to be responsible for his death. Isiah Parker uses this death as motivation to join a group of rogue cops who go around killing men like St.-Germain. However, Parker eventually realizes that the men he thought were trying to achieve justice actually have other motivations. Parker goes to Stef and helps him bring down St.-Germain and the Midnight Club the right way.

Anna Stefanovitch is Stef's wife. Anna is the love of Stef's life. When St.-Germain realizes that Stef is getting too close, not only does he shoot Stef in the back, putting him in a wheelchair, but he also goes to his home and shoots Anna. Anna dies immediately. Stef is devastated by this death and cannot go on with his life. Anna's death becomes the focus of Stef's life as he tries to get revenge. However, when Stef meets Sarah, he begins to move past his anger and begin to live again.

## Charles Mackey

Charles Mackey is a deputy commissioner with the police department who organizes a group of rogue cops in order to mete out justice where the legal system fails. The deputy commissioner believes that certain criminal figures are untouchable, so he sends this group of men to kill these men. Isiah Parker becomes a part of this group because he believes that this group will be able to help him get justice against the man who killed his brother. However, when Isiah Parker finds himself set up and a target of these same men, he begins to believe that he is making a mistake. Isiah Parker goes to Stef and helps him catch these criminals the right way.

## Nicky Wilson

Nicky Wilson is a convicted criminal who is in prison for murder. Nicky claims that his conviction is based on the government needing a black man to take the fall for all the drug problems that plague the country. Nicky claims he is innocent. When Sarah visits him and asks about the Midnight Club, Nicky becomes agitated and refuses to speak to her. Later, Nicky calls Sarah back to the prison and tells her about a meeting of the Midnight Club that is about to take place in Atlantic City. It is this information that brings Stef to Atlantic City to witness the mass killings of the members of the Midnight Club.

## David Wilkes

David Wilkes is an FBI agent with whom Stef is partnered to watch the meeting of the Midnight Club in Atlantic City. The idea is to simply watch until some information can be



gathered and they are assured that all members of the club have arrived. Once this is established, Stef, Wilkes, and the rest of the police presence are to arrest the members of the Midnight Club. However, before this can happen, Stef witnesses through amplified microphones the sounds of the members of the Midnight Club being murdered. Soon after this event, Stef is approached by Isiah Parker. Stef takes this information and gathers together a small group of trusted police personnel to begin a campaign of harassment against St.-Germain. David Wilkes is a part of this group.



# Objects/Places

## Wheelchair

Stef has been confined to a wheelchair since he was shot in the back by the Grave Dancer, Alexandre St.-Germain.

## Speed racer

Stef has a special wheelchair, a speed racer, that allows him to participate in races with other people also confined to wheelchairs. Stef feels more like himself when he is racing.

## The Midnight Club

The Midnight Club is a group of organized crime officials who ban together to create an organization in order to slim line their crimes and make them more efficient as well as more profitable. Alexandre St.-Germain is the mastermind behind this organization.

## Diamond and Onyx Ring

When Alexandre St.-Germain's body double is murdered, one of the things Stef notices about the body is the diamond and onyx ring on his finger. Later the reader learns that this ring denotes him as a member of the Midnight Club.

## Video Tapes

At the sight of the murder of Alexandre St.-Germain's body double are found tapes taken of customers of a brothel, unbeknown to the participants. Stef and Sarah use these tapes to try to find some clue to the identity of the killer.

## Allure

Allure is an exclusive club in New York City that caters to the sexual needs of its rich customers. It is here that Alexandre St.-Germain's body double is murdered.

## Edmonds Hotel

Isiah Parker's brother died at a hotel named Edmonds Hotel, in a section of New York known as the Bowery. This is a poor section of the city where drug use is prevalent. The



killers tried to make it appear that Marcus, Isiah's brother, was a drug addict who overdosed.

## **Long Beach**

Stef is shot and rendered unable to walk by Alexandre St.-Germain during a police operation to arrest Alexandre St.-Germain in Long Beach. Shortly after this shooting, St.-Germain goes to Stef's home and kills his wife.

## **Harlem**

Harlem is the neighborhood in New York where Isiah lives and where he has concentrated most of his professional career.

## **Atlantic City**

Stef, Sarah, and a team of law enforcement officials travel to Atlantic City to witness a meeting of the Midnight Club. Before the law enforcement officials can do anything to stop or arrest the members of the Midnight Club, someone breaks into their rooms and kills them all.





# Themes

## Organized Crime

Organized crime is a problem in large cities throughout the world, including New York City, where this novel is set. Organized crime is crime that is run almost like a business and includes such things as gambling, selling drugs, and murder. Police departments all over the world have attempted to end these large crime organizations, but when the leader is taken down, another is ready to step up and take his place, making it difficult to stop these groups.

In this novel, one man brings together the heads of many organized crime groups, including leaders from many countries, including England and Japan. The idea is to create one large, international group that will run organized crime all around the world. This could create a syndicate so large that the governing body of this syndicate would run all the organized crime groups in the world. This would mean a great deal of power and money for those running the groups. Stef, the hero of the book, wants to take this group down, as much because of what they stand for as well as the fact that his own nemesis, the man who put him in a wheelchair and killed his wife, is the mastermind behind it all.

Before Stef is even aware of this organization, a group of rogue cops go after some of the leaders within this group. Stef becomes involved because of the death of a man he believes to be Alexandre St.-Germain. Stef will soon learn that St.-Germain is still alive, but during the investigation into his death, Stef stumbles onto this organized crime group, the Midnight Club, and begins investigating its members. Before long, Stef is drawn into a dangerous hunt that will result in the kidnapping of his girlfriend's son and a second attempt on his life. Stef will prevail, however, and prove that the bad guys do not always win.

## Murder

One of the ways in which organized crime bosses and the members of the Midnight Club ensure loyalty among their subordinates is the threat of death. These men think little of killing someone who gets in their way. If one of their employees does something that is not beneficial to the overall group, such as turning over evidence to the police or trying to leave the group, they are often murdered. The same goes for the police. If a cop gets too close to a member of one of these groups, the organized crime members think little about killing them.

Stef has investigated Alexandre St.-Germain, also known as the Grave Dancer, for several years. Finally he has gathered enough information to arrest the Grave Dancer. However, on the night Stef goes in to arrest St.-Germain, something goes wrong. Somehow the Grave Dancer has become aware of Stef's plans and is waiting for him.



The Grave Dancer sends his men to ambush Stef and his fellow cops. The Grave Dancer then follows Stef as he runs from the scene and shoots him in the back with a shotgun. Stef does not die, but awakes not only to learn he has lost the use of his legs and also to learn that his wife has been murdered in their own home.

Stef goes back to work and continues to try to take down the Grave Dancer. At the same time, a rogue group of cops have taken it upon themselves to stop the leaders of organized crime. This group of men go around and kill these leaders without benefit of a trial. One of the men these cops target is Alexandre St.-Germain. However, they end up killing a body double, not the man himself. This is a huge disappointment to a member of this group who believes that St.-Germain is the man who killed his younger brother, a promising boxer. At the end of the book, when it appears that St.-Germain will remain a free man, this cop, Isiah Parker, takes it upon himself to rid the world of St.-Germain. Isiah traps St.-Germain on an elevator and forces him to take the same sort of drugs that were responsible for the death of Isiah's brother, Marcus. It is these pivotal moments in the plot that make murder an important theme in this novel.

## Living Life

While murder and crime are huge themes in this novel, so is life. Stef finds himself without hope, without the love of his life, and without a reason to continue fighting for the things that were once important to him. The main focus of Stef's life quickly becomes revenge for the death of his wife and the injuries that have left him in a wheelchair. This is not a life, but an existence. However, as the novel continues, Stef slowly comes to realize that life can go on after tragedy. Stef meets Sarah McGinniss, a writer who interferes with his investigation and insinuates herself into his life. At first Stef dislikes this intrusion, but quickly becomes swept away with Sarah's charms. Stef falls in love, a fact that gives him a reason to start living again.

There is a difference between being alive and living life. Stef learns this difference after the death of his wife. Stef is so grief stricken he cannot imagine living and feeling the way he did before. Stef does not want to be happy without his wife, he does not want to feel as though he has gone on with his life without her. Not only this, but Stef is now stuck in a wheelchair and this fact makes him feel like a different person, a person who is viewed as being unable to live a normal life. However, when Stef meets Sarah, he begins to understand that it is okay to continue in life without the one he loved. Stef knows his wife will understand his decision to go on with his life and that it is possible to love more than one person in a lifetime. Stef also finds that his wheelchair does not mean that he is not capable of being the man to Sarah that he was to his wife. Finally, after a fight in which Stef participates to protect Sarah, an operation gives Stef back his ability to walk, bringing him back to the life he once had. Now Stef feels that he can live his life to fullest once again, making living life a major theme of the novel.



# Style

## Point of View

The point of view of this novel is third person omniscient. The narrating character shifts repeatedly, including the point of view of the characters Stef, Sarah, and Alexandre St.-Germain. Each of these views is omniscient, allowing the reader not only to see the actions taking place around these characters, but to also see their emotions and thoughts. The reader rides along with these characters and is given insight into the plot of the novel through the eyes of each narrating character.

The point of view of this novel works because it gives the reader a well rounded view into the plot and the emotions of the characters living the story. The shifting of point of view from each of the characters allows the reader to see the story from several points of view, seeing the story in such a way that it is more rounded, involving the reader in the various aspects of the story, not just one viewpoint. This gives the reader a more satisfying experience with the novel and it allows the writer to explore not only the thoughts and actions of the hero in the story, but also those of the antagonist. The point of view of this novel is comprehensive and entertaining, creating a narration that works well for both the reader and the writer.

## Setting

The bulk of the plot takes place in New York City. The novel begins in Long Island, a suburb of New York, where Stef faces off with the Grave Dancer and finds himself on the losing end. The novel then moves into the present and to a club in New York City where it appears the Grave Dancer has been murdered by unknown assailants. New York City is Stef's stomping grounds and this is where he feels most comfortable. Stef takes on the case with the same energy he would put into the death of an innocent man on the streets. The investigation takes Stef into Atlantic City where members of the Midnight Club, the Grave Dancer's club of international organized crime officials, are murdered. Then Stef returns to New York where he eventually is able to take down the leaders of this exclusive club and end their worldwide terror.

New York is the setting of this novel because New York is a dark, crowded city where it is believable that these sort of crimes could take place. New York City is not only a place where organized crime flourishes, but it also fits the emotional state of the main character. Stef is a man who once had it all. Stef was a successful police officer and the husband to a woman he loved very much. However, all this was taken from him when Stef came too close to taking down an important member of organized crime in New York City. Stef lost the ability to walk after being shot in the back by the Grave Dancer. On the same night, Stef's wife was murdered by the same man. Now Stef has nothing to live for and nothing to lose, making him in tune with a city that is much the same. However, Stef eventually finds new meaning to his life at the same time he ends the



control the Grave Dancer has over his beloved city, injecting hope into this city just like hope has returned to his own life. The setting of this novel is a metaphor for Stef's own life and state of mind, making it an important part of the novel.

## Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple English laced with slang. The novel is written in words that will appeal to both the young and old, filled with not only simple English that can be understood by all, but peppered with slang words that fill the dialogue and will appeal to the younger generations. The novel also uses words that the reader might associate with organized crime, which might also be considered a sort of slang. All in all, however, the novel is written in simple terms that do not include foreign words or complex words that the reader might need a dictionary to understand.

The language of this novel works because it is universal. The language is simple and easy to understand, making the novel appealing to both the young and the old, the well educated as well as those with little education. The novel includes slang words, but these words are not uncommon or difficult to understand. The novel does not include foreign words or complicated words that the reader might not understand. In this way, the novel is written with words that make it clearly understood and reader friendly for just about anyone who might want to explore its slightly more complicated plot.

## Structure

The novel is divided into three parts, a prologue, and an epilogue. The novel includes one hundred and five chapters, most shorter than two pages. These short chapters keep the action moving, increasing the tension that the plot hopes to create. The novel is written in both exposition and dialogue, giving the novel a sense of movement and showing the story more than simply telling it. This technique not only gives the novel movement, but it also allows the reader to feel a part of the story, as though one is watching the action like a fly on the wall, rather than just reading an account of events that have taken place.

The novel includes one main plot and several subplots. The main plot is Stef's investigation into the Midnight Club. The sub plots include Isiah Parker's assignment to assassinate members of the Midnight Club in order to accomplish what the police cannot through legal means, and the death of Stef's wife and his own injuries at the hands of the Grave Dancer. Finally, an additional subplot of the novel is Stef's love affair with Sarah McGinniss and the kidnapping of her son, Sam. These plots all work together well and are all solved in a timely fashion, coming together at the end of the novel in such a way that the reader is satisfied with the completion of the novel. It is for this reason that the structure of the novel works well.



## Quotes

"The night that John Stefanovitch was shot couldn't have been colder, or the stars more dazzling in high winter skies." Prologue, Chap. 1, p. 3

"They made tender, then passionate, love in the still, blue-green water of the swimming pool. In the middle of the coldest March in years.

"At that moment, John Stefanovitch was sure he had everything he had ever wanted out of life. Getting St.-Germain would be the icing on the cake." Prologue, Chap. 2, p. 7

"Isiah Parker flashed by him as if he were standing still on a relay block. He pistol-butted the drug dealer on the side of his head as he went by. The dealer went down in the gutter in a heap of flashy clothes." Chap. 7, p. 23

"The shock of the brutal murder finally struck Stefanovitch with a physical jolt. Bile rose in his throat. Someone had gotten to the Grave Dancer before he had." Chap. 12, p. 41

"She felt so lonely, though. Sharing the moment with a stranger in Kennedy airport, Sarah thought she had never been so alone in her life. All that she had was Sam, and now she didn't even have him." Chap. 23, p. 80

"And in that confused instant, Kupchek recognized the gunman. The man was a cop. Someone he knew. A detective. He'd been set up and shot by another policeman." Chap. 33, p. 113

"The funerals of police officers were usually part pageant, part small-town parade, part Greek tragedy." Chap. 37, p. 128

"Sarah was seeing a side of men most women weren't allowed to observe. She was privy to their secret societies—the police, business, the government, the military, organized crime. For years, men had controlled White Houses, Pentagons, palaces, bordellos. The bottom line was always the same. They were in it for the power, for the visceral thrill; because of some lurid and primal fascination with violence. And now Sarah McGinniss was involved, too." Chap. 42, p. 141

"Madness was beginning to take over her world. Sarah couldn't stop thinking that way, because it happened to be the truth." Chap. 64, p. 211

"The Grave Dancer was alive. It was starting all over again." Chap. 66, p. 217

"The key to everything was patience. Harassment would work, but it took time. There was no other way to go after St.-Germain and the Club." Chap. 76, p. 252



"'You killed him, didn't you? The Grave Dancer. That was you at the World Trade Center?' Stef asked. Then he smiled. 'I came all the way up here to shake your . . . hand.'

"Isiah Parker did better than that. He embraced John Stefanovitch, claspng his back tightly with both hands.

"The two detectives stood there grinning in the shadows and winter cold of the Harlem street." Chap. 105, p. 349

## Topics for Discussion

Who is the Grave Dancer? Why is Stef attempting to arrest him at the beginning of the novel? What goes wrong? How is Stef injured? Why does the killer go after Stef's wife? What is the intended impact on Stef? Does this killing have the impact it intends? Why or why not?

Who is Sarah McGinniss? Why does she become involved in Stef's case? What does Sarah hope to achieve by becoming involved in this case? Does Sarah get what she wants? How does her involvement in the case affect her life? How does Sarah's life change with this case?

Why does Alexandre St.-Germain fake his death? How did he know there would be an attempt on his life? Is St.-Germain somehow behind the deaths of his fellow organized crime leaders? Why? What does St.-Germain hope to achieve with these deaths? Does he achieve his goal? Why or why not?

Why is Bear Kupchek killed? Who kills him? Why? What impact is this death supposed to have on the investigation? On Stef personally? Does it have this impact? Why or why not? Why do the killer target Bear and not Stef?

Why is Sarah's son kidnapped? What does the kidnapper hope this will achieve? Does this kidnapping change Sarah's mind about helping in the investigation? Why do the kidnappers demand Sarah turn over her book and all her research? What do they hope to hide by having her do this? Is this successful?

Why does the writer include the scene in which Stef races in a wheelchair race? What impact is this scene supposed to have on the reader? How does this scene tie in with the rest of the novel? Is this scene important to the overall plot of the novel? Why or why not? Does this scene provide motivation? A characterization?

Who is Isiah Parker? What is his role in the novel? Why does Isiah Parker get involved in the murder of crime bosses? How does this relate to the death of Isiah's brother? Was Isiah's brother murdered? Why does Isiah Parker kill Alexandre St.-Germain in the manner in which he does? What does this say about Isiah? What does it say about St.-Germain? Do you think it is appropriate that Isiah get away with this murder? That Stef congratulates him? Why or why not?