

# **Night Prey Study Guide**

## **Night Prey by John Sandford**

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# Contents

<a href="#">Night Prey Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 1-5.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 6-10.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 11-15.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 16-20.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 21-25.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 26-30.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 31-34.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">35</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">37</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">39</a>



# Plot Summary

Night Prey, by John Sandford is an exciting tale, illustrating how the the investigating team of Lucas Davenport and Meagan Connell are pitted against the serial killer, Robert Koop. The novel twists and turns as Davenport and Connell struggle to identify the killer as Koop's control slips and he spins out of control.

Lucas Davenport has returned to the Minneapolis Police Department as a Deputy Chief, appointed by the Chief, Rose Marie Roux to assist the department in high profile cases and keep the media at bay. Lucas is happy to return after running a computer company for the past few years.

Lucas is tossed into the fray almost immediately as he is called to scene of a vicious murder. Harriet Wannemaker has been found violently murdered, tossed in a dumpster. Lucas arrives at the scene and is introduced to Meagan Connell, a state investigator who has been causing some problems with various police departments. Connell is convince that the murder is the work of a serial killer, and has been struggling to get someone to recognize the fact. Chief Roux asks Lucas to work with Connell, as Roux wants to run for office and the agency that Connell is involved with has a lot of political pull. Lucas agrees, and though the two butt heads occasionally, they work well together, following the few clues they have to track the killer they seek.

Robert Koop is a killer as well as a cat burglar. Koop is good at what he does, meticulous and careful whether he be burgling or killing. Things change the day he enters the apartment of the sleeping Sara Jensen and becomes infatuated with her. Frustrated by his inability to be with the woman he loves, Koop escalates the murders he commits, stepping outside his normal pattern. Lucas and Meagan step up their investigation, following the path of the killer, but usually two steps behind him.

Koop's infatuation leads to his downfall, though many are killed along the way. As Koop's obsession grows, he spends his evenings perched on the air conditioning unit across from Jensen's apartment, spying on the woman he believes he is connected to. His sexual frustration as well as his personal gratification at being so smart can sometimes lead to the deaths of others. The evening Koop sees Sara in the arms of another man leads to his complete loss of control. Angry at Sara and her boyfriend, Koop strikes out, letting his normal carefulness slide as he attacks Evan Hart in broad daylight in front of Sara's building.

Lucas and Connell meet Sara and are able to draw the connection between the break-in at her apartment and the killer Robert Koop. Connell struggles to stay well enough to catch the killer, as she is dying of cancer. In an act of desperation, Lucas and Connell have Sara Jensen act as bait, knowing that Koop is going to snap and come after her at some point.

Koop does, but not the way the police anticipate. Entering the building from the balcony, Koop takes Lucas and Meagan by surprise, attacking Lucas and almost incapacitating



him. Meagan intervenes, using her own body as a weapon, and the two struggle. The end result of the struggle is that Koop and Connell topple over the edge of the balcony and plummet to their death. Lucas can never be sure if Connell's death was an accident, or if she had given her life, knowing it was ending anyway, in order to assure that Koop would never kill again.

Lucas recovers from the physical injuries he obtains the night of Meagan Connell's death, but memories of her still haunt him. Despite this, or possibly because of Meagan's determination in catching a killer she had tracked, Lucas moves on in life, his own determination evident as he puts the case behind him and moves forward, onto the next puzzle.



# Chapters 1-5

## Chapters 1-5 Summary

Koop is a cat burglar and a killer, on the hunt for a victim. On the way to The Saint, a local bookstore with a scheduled reading, Koop's thoughts wander and he nearly hits a group of people crossing the street. One man calls out with a strange birdlike shout as Koop speeds away, realizing he should be more careful and not draw attention to himself. Koop keeps to a regular careful pattern, but the night before he had seen Sara Jensen and his needs are great. Koop enters The Saint, a local bookstore, and checks out the crowd. Koop's favorite victims are well dressed and expectant, hoping that they will meet Mr. Right. Koop chats innocently with one such woman, Harriet Wannemaker, and makes arrangements to meet for drinks down the street. While chatting and planning, Koop remembers Sara, whose apartment he had robbed the night before with a key provided by one of the men that had moved her in.

Koop had entered Sara's apartment while she slept and had immediately smelled her. Koop went about his business quietly, infatuated with the sleeping Jensen. After taking her valuables, Koop was unable to stop himself from going to Jensen's room one last time. At her bedside, Koop leaned down and gently licked Jensen's forehead before leaving.

Outside McClellan's bar, Koop waits for Harriet with a rag soaked with ether. The woman approaches, happy that Koop has not stood her up. Before Harriet realizes what has happened, she is unconscious and in the back of Koop's truck.

Sara Jensen wakes and prepares to go to work. A dream of Evan Hart, the man she is interested in at work, is still vivid in her mind. Sara notices her belongings are moved and realizes in horror that she has been robbed and that the dream of Evan kissing her was not a dream at all.

In chapter two Lucas Davenport is working a crime scene with Del, an undercover officer involving a murdered deputy and stolen guns. Sloan, a detective in Minneapolis, arrives and takes Lucas for a ride to a Wisconsin crime scene. A woman has been found in a dumpster and is believed to be Harriet Wannemaker. On the way, Sloan fills Lucas in; the concern is that Wannemaker might be the victim of a possible serial killer. If so, the killings are coming more frequently. Meagan Connell, a state investigator, has been building a case and Sloan thinks she might be right about the murders.

At the scene Lucas meets the pushy and brass Connell, who has no patience and borders on being rude. Connell looks in the dumpster at the body and moves away, vomiting. Lucas looks, identifies the woman as Wannemaker, and begins to scan for evidence. There is a cigarette in the hand of the corpse, possibly from the murderer. The initials S and J are carved over the woman's breasts. This is the only difference between her wounds and another victim found four months earlier.



Lucas wonders if the killer might be an old criminal they had dealt with in the past, Junky Doog, and tells Sloan to check it out. Sloan tells Lucas that Connell is rabid to catch the killer soon, as she is dying herself.

In chapter three, Lucas meets with Chief Rose Marie Roux. Roux had appointed Lucas as Deputy Chief after she had taken office. Though Lucas does not want to become involved with the Wannemaker case, Roux insists, claiming that her future political aspirations depend on it. Roux also requests that Lucas work with Connell, as the woman has connections that could be either helpful or hurtful to the chief's future as a candidate for the senate. Lucas agrees, albeit reluctantly, and a brief meeting is held where investigators are assigned.

In chapter four Lucas heads to his office and goes over the case files for the other killings. Meagan Connell arrives and the two discuss the similarities between the attacks and the victims. The pair review the timeline of the past murders, trying to figure out if the killer might have been in prison when no victims were found. The possibility of the killer being a police officer also comes up. Meagan heads out to change her clothes and Lucas meets with Bob Greave, a homicide detective.

Lucas and Meagan have little luck until they arrive at The Saint, a bookstore in St. Paul. The owner confirms that Harriet had been in Friday and left earlier than usual. Lucas gets a call that the chief wants to see them and drives in with Connell complaining about being called while they are getting closer. The chief tells Lucas and Meagan that the crime was committed in St. Paul, not Minneapolis, so they are off the case. Meagan is infuriated and Lucas is not happy and makes no fuss but has trouble celebrating another detective's closed case when he knows that a killer might be roaming the streets.

In chapter five, Koop works out then buys some cocaine before heading over to see Sara Jensen. After following Sara to the store and then home, Koop goes to the apartment complex across the street, trying to see in Sara's window. Koop needs a key to access the roof that would place him across from Sara. Staking out the front door, Koop is able to strike a man and take his key; however, he does not see until it is too late that a woman has witnessed the attack in the lobby. Chasing her, Koop strikes her in the head as well, killing her, then escapes before getting caught.

During his drive time following Sara, Koop recalls killing his mother, a disgraceful woman who did not like people that thought they were better than her, as well as hookers. Koop learned while in the army that the only way he could get sexual satisfaction was by hurting someone.

## Chapters 1-5 Analysis

In the first five chapters the reader is introduced to the main characters of the novel. The first character introduced is Koop, a cat burglar and serial killer. Koop is in the process of choosing and killing a victim, driven by his need after seeing Sara Jensen



sleeping in her apartment during a burglary. The reader learns that Koop has served time in the military, where he learned that the only way he can achieve sexual satisfaction is by beating the woman he is with. The reader also learns that Koop killed his own mother while in the service. Koop had no feelings of love for his mother, portrayed briefly as a drunk who would bring men home to earn a little extra money by performing oral sex. Koop's mother felt that other women judged her, women who were well dressed and educated, and these are they types of women that Koop targets when looking for a victim.

Koop's activities have not gone unnoticed, despite the fact that he has been careful to keep them separated by time and distance. Meagan Connell is a state investigator, dying of cancer. Meagan has researched similar murders in the area and discovered some similarities. The victims call to her and Meagan feels pressed to solve the murders before it is too late, as she is dying of cancer. Connell is brash and rude, making some dislike her, though she does not care what others think, only if they can help her solve the crimes and save future victims.

Lucas Davenport was a Minneapolis police officer before leaving the force approximately two years ago. Hired back from his lucrative software company by the current Chief, Rose Marie Roux, Davenport signed on to be a type of investigator, helping the department with his contacts and experience. Thrown into the investigation with Connell, Davenport is not thrilled, but intrigued by the connections that Connell has drawn to the previous murders. Davenport also appears to have missed the thrill of the chase.

Events move quickly in the first few chapters, as the reader learns that Koop is hungry for a victim after becoming infatuated with Sara Jensen. Koop had even licked the sleeping woman, unable to keep to himself while in her apartment. Though Sara had not wakened, in the morning, after discovering the burglary, she realizes that someone had kissed or licked her during what she assumed was a dream.

Koop's distraction during his hunt does cause one event that will become important later in the novel. While driving, he nearly hits some people while they are crossing the street, and one man shouts after him in a strange birdlike call. While this event seems insignificant, it will lead to a dramatic turn of events as the investigation closes in on the killer.



# Chapters 6-10

## Chapters 6-10 Summary

Lucas heads home and discovers that his lover, Weather Harkinnen, is not home yet. Weather is a surgeon who saved Lucas's life about a year ago. While Lucas changes his clothes, Connell calls and tells him not to throw out his notes on the case yet. Lucas wonders what she is up to, but Weather arrives and the two go for a run. Arriving home, Weather readies for bed but Lucas wants to track down Junky Doog.

At the Blue Bull, a local bar, Lucas meets Earl Stupella, the bartender and brother of one of Lucas's old sources. Earl points out Randy Leski, another of Davenport's sources. Randy is not happy to see Lucas, but tells him that Junky Doog has been working at a dump in Dakota County. Pleased to have a lead, Lucas heads home to get some sleep, only to have Weather wake him to see the news program "The Openers", the following morning.

In chapter seven, Lucas arrives at the police station where Chief Roux is furious. It is clear that Meagan Connell handed her reports about the killings over to the press in order to get more focus on the story. The media followed the murders from the first victim, Mercedes Bey, right to Harriet Wannemaker, and calls out the police for dropping the investigation. Livid, Roux orders Lucas to continue investigating, afraid the media will destroy her chances at a senate seat.

Lucas speaks briefly to Connell, telling her to stay away for the day, and fills her in on the forensic report on Wannemaker. There were ligature marks on the woman, suggesting Harriet had been held for a time before being killed. Connell decides to call the people that had been in the bookstore the night Harriet was taken while Lucas and Greave look for Junky Doog.

Greave discusses his case with Lucas. Charmagne Carter had been found dead in her apartment with no visible cause of death. Greave is sure that the building owners, John and George Joyce, had something to do with her death. Carter had refused to move from her leased apartment so the men could renovate and capitalize on government funding.

At the dump, Lucas and Greave find a confused and mentally unstable Junky, twirling his knife like a baton. Junky has obviously lost touch with reality as he has cut off his own fingers and toes. Lucas orchestrates an assault so that Junky will be incarcerated and get some care in an institutional setting. While waiting for the ambulance, Lucas questions Junky about why someone would cut a woman. Junky tells Lucas and Greave that sometimes you have to keep a woman in her place, other times if a woman makes you excited you have to cut someone else to relieve the pressure. Doog tells the officers that eventually you have to cut the woman who excites you.





In chapter eight, Lucas meets with Meagan, who has found a witness from the bookstore. Mae Heinz remembers seeing a man with a beard at the bookstore and agrees to meet with a police sketch artist.

Lucas goes with Greave to the Eisenhower Docks apartments to see Carter's apartment. Outside, Lucas sees Ray Cherry, the handyman. Cherry is not happy to see Lucas and wants to know why he is there. Lucas tells Cherry he wants to find out how he killed Carter. He knows by the way that the handyman looks that he is the killer.

In the apartment, they meet Emily Carter, the victim's daughter. Emily tells the men that her mother was healthy but underweight because of her thyroid. She also suffered from insomnia, taking a sleeping pill with a bottle of beer to sleep each night. Lucas tells Greave he will think about the case and the two leave, headed to headquarters.

Connell has a sketch of the suspect and wants to put it out to the media, but Lucas convinces her to wait, trying to avoid problems in the future with a defense attorney.

In chapter nine, Koop works out at the gym, then heads to the building across from Sara Jensen's. Nervous and excited, Koop is cautious, making sure he doesn't draw attention to himself. Carrying a briefcase with two powerful scopes, he heads to the roof and discovers that from atop the air conditioning unit he can see clearly into Sara's apartment. Koop is thrilled to see Sara in the nude, and watches her go about her business until she goes to sleep for the night. Excited, Koop longs for Sara, but knows he needs release.

Seeing a girl at the bus stop, Koop orchestrates a meeting, telling the girl that the neighborhood is dangerous. Cautious at first, the girl, Marcy Lane, introduces herself and accepts a ride with the killer.

In chapter ten, Lucas gets a call in the middle of the night regarding a body found, that of Marcy Lane. Lucas realizes that killer has struck again, that the timeline he had seemed to follow is no more. Lucas heads to the scene, meeting officer Carrigan. The two discuss the situation, and the relative closeness of the body to a group of people nearby. Lucas examines the body which has the same initials, S and J, carved on her breasts.

A patrolman arrives with a young man, Dex, who saw a white man in a truck drop the body. Dex tells Lucas the a man named Lawrence was closer to the scene. Lucas and Carrigan head to an after-hours underground bar to find the other witness. Lawrence tells Lucas and Carrigan that he had seen the man and that he was snorting cocaine. The description is close to that of Dex, so Lawrence is taken in to get a statement.

## Chapters 6-10 Analysis

The reader learns a bit about Lucas Davenport's background and personal life. Davenport lives with a surgeon, Weather Harkinnen. Though detail is not provided, Davenport reflects on the fact that Weather saved his life previously after he had been



shot by a child. Davenport is in love with Weather, but is a bit uncomfortable in the relationship. It seems he is not used to being needed, or needing someone in return. Despite this, the two seem to have a good, stable, understanding relationship.

Meagan Connell, unwilling to give up on the serial killer's trail that she is sure she is following, takes her reports to the media, forcing the hand of Chief Roux. Roux is angry at being manipulated, but knows that if she does not at least present the appearance the Minneapolis Police Department is investigating, she will never be elected to the senate. Lukas is aware of the chief's feelings, but was not happy with the case being passed along to begin with. Lukas appears to be the type that needs to investigate and solve mysteries to feel productive.

With the investigation continuing, Connell meets with witnesses from the bookstore and is able to have one meet with a sketch artist. Davenport does not want the sketch made public, for fear that if there is ever a trial, a defense attorney could use the sketch against them. Surprisingly, he is able to convince Connell of this.

Davenport follows his investigation to Junky Doog, a man who had been arrested years earlier for slicing beautiful women. Doog is obviously mentally unstable, yet when discussing his crimes with Davenport and Greaves, he is somewhat enlightening. Doog explains the need to cut, stating that a woman needs to be kept in her place at times. Other times a man might become excited by a woman. If unable to reach her, he must strike out at a substitute. Even then, at some point, the woman that excites him must be the ultimate target. Though it is clear that Doog is not the man they seek, his words will play an important role later in the novel.

Koop's infatuation with Sara continues, and he seems to be building a fantasy relationship with the woman. Unaware that she is being watched, Sara undresses in the comfort of her apartment, making Koop feel as if he is a part of her life. The excitement in him is too much to contain and he needs to strike, finding another victim quickly, Marcy Lane. Disposing of Marcy's body, Koop is seen by at least two men who give descriptions, though they describe his truck differently. The detectives finally have something to go on, and the investigation moves forward, one small step at a time.



# Chapters 11-15

## Chapters 11-15 Summary

Lucas meets Jan Reed, a reporter for TV3. Reed wants information and Lucas speaks with her, but the reporter does not learn anything new. Lucas is attracted to Reed, and fails to divulge his relationship with Weather. He does tell Reed that he has a daughter, from a former relationship with a reporter. The two part, with Lucas wondering why he failed to mention Weather when the opportunity presented itself.

Lucas goes to the hospital to watch Weather operate. Weather meets with her young patient, a girl with burns on her arms. The girl is afraid of more pain and Weather calms her. In surgery, Lucas is impressed by Weather, but feels badly for the patient who will obviously be in pain afterward. Weather explains that she is a surgeon, this is what she does. Getting involved on a personal level with the patients is not a good idea. Lucas wonders about the difference between a killer, who wields a knife in cold blood, and a surgeon, who cuts to help.

In chapter twelve, Lucas meets with the chief and some investigators. The press is upset again, thinking that Junky was arrested simply to placate them. Lucas and others review the investigation and Greaves is called in because TV3 called in a tip about a suspect. Lucas heads to the home of Ray Weston to investigate. Weston's daughter has accused her father of being the killer, having remembered during a therapy session seeing him come home covered in blood. Lucas knows that the man is innocent and tells the reporter so. Greaves tells Lucas that a group of deaf people called in a tip about a suspicious man near the bookstore with a partial license plate 'ASS'. Lucas is disappointed, as the motor vehicle department does not issue tags with suggestive words. The lead is a dead end. Lucas speaks with Connell about a man in prison who claims to have seen a man with a tattoo, the letters PPP. The two agree to fly to Waupun Prison and meet with the man the following day.

In chapter thirteen, Lucas and Meagan fly to Waupun to meet with D. Wayne Price. Price was convicted of killing a woman with a knife in the same manner as the killer they are searching for. Price insists that he is innocent, that he knew the woman because he had worked on her car, but was drinking with friends the night she was killed. Price had followed the woman into a bookstore, but left, realizing he was drunk and not going to get lucky that night. Price maintains that he went home and passed out, not waking until the police arrived.

Connell excuses herself to use the bathroom. When the guard escorts her out, Price tells Lucas that he was mistaken, the tattoo actually said '666', and the man he had seen was Joe Hillerod, a member of the a biker gang, The Bad Seeds. Price had met Joe's brother in prison and realized that Joe is the man he had seen in the bookstore.



In chapter fourteen, Connell and Lucas head back to Minneapolis. The two discuss the case and Lucas explains the tie-in to the case with the stolen guns that involved Del. The killings they are investigating more or less fit the timeline of Hillerod's past. Del and Lucas gather information about the Seeds and all parties agree to meet in the morning for a drive up north.

Greaves enters the office with a kid who works at Eisenhower Docks. Greg tells Lucas that the day before Charmagne Carter died, the air conditioner broke and he spent the day with Roy Cherry in the basement dismantling and reassembling it. Greaves wonders if someone had entered the apartment while Carter had her windows and doors open because of the heat. Lucas reminds him that there was nothing detected during the autopsy, but that he is sure Cherry had something to do with the woman's death.

In chapter fifteen, Koop spies from in the lobby on Sara Jensen at work. Koop times his trip to the parking garage with Sara's, riding in the same elevator with her. When Sara bumps into Koop, he imagines that it is a subtle sign from the woman he is infatuated with. Koop continues to follow Sara, trailing her to a parking lot at a pharmacy. Watching when Sara returns to her car, Koop sees that Sara has locked her keys in her car. Before he can come to her rescue Sara pulls a box from her bumper and unlocks her door. Koop wonders if Sara might have a house key hidden there as well.

The following day, Koop checks the box on Sara's bumper and discovers her new key. Thrilled, he drives to her building and spends the day in Sara's apartment, even showering, eating and then lying in her bed. Koop does not leave until he knows Sara will be returning from work. Sara returns home but feels as if something is off. Noticing her bed, Sara wonders if the blankets were that way when she left for work that morning. Uncomfortable, Sara leaves.

## Chapters 11-15 Analysis

Lucas meets Jan Reed, an attractive reporter for the local news station. Lucas is in love with Weather, but is attracted to Reed. Unsure of himself, Lucas fails to mention his relationship with Weather to the obviously flirtatious Reed. Lucas knows that he is happy with Weather, but it seems that the comfort he finds in the relationship is a bit overwhelming to him. This is also the case when Lucas observes Weather perform surgery. Lucas is impressed, but a bit put off by the single mindedness of Weather and what he perceives as a lack of compassion when dealing with her patient. Lucas considers that in his life nothing is certain when dealing with a case, while everything in Weather's life must be certain.

The investigation leads in many directions, including a tip from TV3. A woman claims that she remembers her father returning home, covered in blood, then raping her. Though the police know that the tip is going to lead to nothing, the chief is unwilling to leave it, afraid that it will be one more mark against her. Though the interview only



proves what the investigative team already knows, an important piece of information is learned.

Greaves tells Lucas and Connell that a group of deaf people had reported seeing a suspicious man the day that Wannemaker was taken. Unfortunately, the license plate they claim to have seen could not exist. The team is discouraged, but Lucas will file this information away and it will be key to the case later.

The interview with D. Wayne Price might lead to something, and Joe Hillerod, the man he claims to have seen at the bookstore, has a past that involves sexual assault. The fact that Hillerod is involved with the Seeds ties into the investigation that Del is involved in.

Koop's infatuation with Sara Jensen continues to grow, leading the reader to wonder when the man will kill again. Koop had grown bold enough to spy on Jensen from within her own office building, even riding in the elevator with her. Fortuitously, Koop discovers that Sara keeps spare keys hidden under her car bumper and is once again able to access her apartment. After Sara returns, it is clear that she is still cautious and seems to know that someone has been in her apartment. Though she feels a bit foolish, Sara is unable to stay, afraid that there might be someone with her.



# Chapters 16-20

## Chapters 16-20 Summary

Lucas and Meagan meet with George Beneteau at the Carren County Courthouse. Beneteau takes them to the junkyard where the Hillerod brothers part out stolen motorcycles. They find Bob Hillerod at the counter. Lucas goes in the back where he finds speed spilled near the bathroom door. A man pushes a shelf onto Lucas, cutting his head. The man runs out the door and Lucas chases him to a dead end. The two fight and Lucas breaks the man's nose. The man, Earl, tells the investigators that Joe is at his house and they proceed there with search warrants.

At the house, Lucas and Connell find several people and more drugs. Joe Hillerod is upstairs with a woman, the wife of the local diner owner. In the dining room there are guns everywhere, guns stolen from gun stores during burglaries. Lucas searches Joe's room and finds a knife. Connell is excited, but Lucas notices the cigarettes on the table. They are Marlboro, not Camels, like the brand found with Harriet Wannemaker.

In chapter seventeen, Lucas and Connell meet with George Beneteau and Joe Hillerod, along with his attorney. Lucas questions Joe about the killings, tying his knife and his record into their suspicions. Joe is adamant that he has nothing to do with the murders and tells Lucas he remembers the bookstore he was seen in, even though it was several years ago. Hillerod is angry, and gives Lucas his alibi, having picked a woman up at the store and then spending four nights with her. Hillerod looks at the composite sketch and tells Lucas that the man in the picture looks like the man he believed to be a cop at the store. Lucas and Connell leave, back to square one. The police officer in St. Paul is not a suspect, his own department would not cover for him in a case such as this.

In chapter eighteen, Sara is in her apartment with Evan Hart, a man from work that she is interested in. The two discuss Sara's uneasiness about her feelings since the burglary. Evan is sympathetic and the two sit on the couch and kiss, then continue talking and kissing until Evan readies to leave. Unknown to either Evan or Sara, Koop is on the air conditioning unit across the street watching the exchange. Furious with Evan for touching what he perceives to be his woman, Koop works himself into a rage. As Evan opens the door, Koop prepares to meet him in the street and kill him, but the door to the roof opens and a couple emerges, kissing and discussing their illicit affair. Koop is stuck on the roof, unable to get to Evan.

In chapter nineteen, Lucas is back at the department, frustrated with the way the investigation is progressing. Connell arrives, sick, her cancer is getting worse. Jan Reed arrives and questions Lucas about the raid at the junkyard. Lucas tells her that it was a good bust, but unrelated to the murders. Heading home, Lucas speaks with Weather and goes through the case file. Once again, the report from the deaf people that



witnessed a man that matched the general description of the suspect surfaces. Lucas wonders if there is anything to it.

In chapter twenty, Koop watches Sara again as she tries on several outfits in her bedroom. Koop wonders if Sara is going out, but she settles on a comfortable sweat suit. Happy that Sara seems settled in for the night, Koop continues to watch until Evan Hart arrives. Angry that the man is back, Koop is infuriated when the two get intimate and Hart spends the night. Koop also spends the night, perched on the air conditioning unit across the way. Watching Sara and Evan wake and get ready for work, Koop's anger grows at an alarming rate. Evan leaves and Koop races from the roof top, intent on catching Sara's lover.

Across the street, Koop charges when he sees Evan and is stunned when Evan strikes out. The two struggle and Koop is finally happy to feel the knife slide home, but stunned again when he is hit from behind. Two other men have come to Hart's aid and chase Koop away.

## Chapters 16-20 Analysis

Lucas and Connell meet with the chief from Carren County and take down the Hillerod brothers. Though they find drugs and stolen guns, there is no evidence tying Joe to the murders they are investigating. Joe has an alibi and stuns Lucas when he tells him that the man in the sketch is a cop he saw in the bookstore. Connell and Lucas know that the police officer they originally investigated is not tied to the crimes, but they wonder now if there is another involved, or if the man was also a convict. This will be important later in the novel when the killer's history becomes known to the investigators. The investigation seems to be stalled once again.

Koop's infatuation with Sara is growing, as he spends most of his time watching Jensen from the air conditioning unit across the street. The attacks in front of the building have been written off as gang violence and Koop's theft of the key has gone unnoticed. Koop's life begins to unravel when he sees Evan Hart with Sara. His fury is almost uncontrollable, but the couple that enters the roof stops him from being able to meet Hart outside Sara's building. Things change the following night when Hart spends the night and Koop is left on the roof, anger and rage growing though the night. The following morning Koop is unable to contain himself, rushing through a crowd of onlookers to get to Evan as he exits Sara's building. Despite his inability to control himself, Koop is still surprised that Evan fights back and two other men jump into the fray. Finally able to stab Hart, Koop escapes, but not before being seen by others in the area.

Lucas is once again drawn to the report of the deaf people that had come forward with the report of a man in the area of the bookstore where Harriet Wannemaker was taken. The report gnaws at Lucas, staying in his mind. Once again, this fact will play an important part in the investigation and the climax of the novel.





# Chapters 21-25

## Chapters 21-25 Summary

Lucas returns downtown to find the area in chaos. A reporter tells him about the attack that had taken place that morning. Jan Reed is there, waiting for the press conference about the attack to begin. Lucas is once again struck by his attraction to her. Lucas speaks briefly to Connell regarding the investigation. Both feel that there will be another killing before they can stop their perpetrator.

Jan Reed stops by Lucas's office and the two go for coffee. Jan tells Lucas about the press conference and the attack on Evan Hart. Reed mentions that Hart's girlfriend, Sara Jensen is furious, wanting the man caught. Between the two people attacked the previous week and now Hart, Jensen is almost in a rage. Lucas listens and considers what Junky Doog said about a man having to cut something because of a woman. Realization dawns as Lucas rushes to find Connell and tell her about the knife wound to Hart, then reminds Connell about the initials carved into the victims. S and J, might tie into Sara Jensen.

In chapter twenty-two, Lucas and Connell meet with a distraught Jensen at Hennepin General Hospital. Jensen insists that the attack is related to the burglary at her place. Lucas and Meagan have no knowledge of the burglary, so Jensen updates them about it as well as the feeling she has that someone has been back in her apartment. Lucas tells Jensen that the man they are searching for might be infatuated with her, and about the initials carved in the woman. The three of them go over the different possibilities about how the man could have gotten a key to her apartment.

Jensen is worried, but agrees to stay in her apartment so that there is a chance of catching the killer. As Lucas and Meagan prepare to leave, the surgeon arrives and tells Sara that Evan was hurt badly but will probably pull through.

In chapter twenty-three, Koop flees the area, alternately remembering Sara the first night he saw her and screaming at the image of the woman he loves with Evan Hart. Koop disposes of his bloody clothing and buries the knife and keys to Sara's apartment in a park. Listening to the radio, Koop discovers that the description given by witnesses of his truck and himself are not accurate. Determined to be careful because of what he has learned in Stillwater, Koop builds an alibi, buying things at a store and saving the receipt. He shaves his beard in the back of his truck, drastically altering his appearance. Koop also buys some fishing equipment and heads to a nearby lake. Once there, he scours the garbage for more receipts and lets the air out of the tire on a boat trailer. When the owners return, Koop helps them fix the tire, making sure they see his face and chatting so they remember him.

Feeling better, Koop drives back to the city, needing to see Sara. On the way he digs up the knife and keys, knowing that he will have to kill Sara for her betrayal. Even then,





Koop still loves her, and climbs on top of the air conditioner hoping for a glimpse. Across the way, Koop sees a man in the window, wearing a shoulder holster. Koop knows the man is a policeman and that they are waiting for him.

In chapter twenty-four, Lucas and Meagan talk in Sara's apartment, wondering why they have not seen or heard from the killer in four days. The two mull over how the killer had gotten Sara's key, and conversation turns to food and Connell's medical condition. Lucas looks out the window and notices the air conditioning unit on the other building. When their relief comes, Lucas and Connell head over to the other building to check things out. The janitor opens the door and boosts Lucas up to see the top of the unit. The A/C unit is littered with Camel cigarette butts. Lucas looks across the street and is able to see another officer's shoes in Sara's window. Connell and Lucas know that the killer has seen them in Sara's apartment and that this is why he has not been back yet.

In chapter twenty-five, Koop robs the house of John Posey with information provided to him by the same moving man that had given him the impression of Sara Jensen's key. In the house, Koop kills Posey's dog and opens the safe, cleaning it out of cash and jewelry, then exiting the house before the alarm sounds. Feeling the rush of success, Koop heads downtown and begins drinking and doing cocaine. Needing release, Koop considers driving to Sara's apartment, knowing the police might be there. A woman is walking down the dark street and Koop leaps from the truck. The woman screams. In his anger, Koop screams back and before he knows it people are witnessing the crime. Still half out of his mind, Koop stabs the woman. Turning to flee, he sees a flash and realizes someone has taken a picture of him. Out of control, Koop runs, leaving the woman dead on the ground.

## Chapters 21-25 Analysis

Events begin to move rapidly when Lucas arrives downtown to the chaos after the attack of Evan Hart. At first he does not tie the crime to the murders of the women, but his conversation with Jan Reed makes him think about Junky Doog and his reasoning behind cutting women long ago. The wound on Evan Hart is similar to that of the victims in Connell's case files. When Lucas hears Sara Jensen's name, he makes the connection between her and the initials carved into the victim's breasts. Rushing off, he leaves Reed wondering after him as he tracks down Connell to explain his conjecture.

Meeting with Sara, Lucas and Meagan learn about the burglary in her apartment, cementing the idea that Junky Doog had planted in Lucas's mind. It seems to Lucas that the burglar has become infatuated with Sara and is releasing his pent-up frustrations on the victims. Lucas notices that Sara is in no way like the victims; she is focused and competent rather than having the vague sense of longing that Harriet Wannemaker and the others exhibited. Jensen is relieved that Evan has a good chance at recovery has agreed to help the police, as she is their only tie to their suspect.

Koop is unraveling rapidly, fearful that he was seen during his attack of Hart. The reader learns that Koop has a history at someplace named Stillwater, though the explanation is



not given at first. Koop learned of the mistakes that cons make while at Stillwater and is determined not to make them. After building an alibi carefully, gathering receipts that place him well out of the area, shaving his beard to change his appearance, and making sure to be memorable to the man with the flat at the boat dock, Koop is able to relax a bit. Determined to see Sara, but realizing he will have to kill her for her transgression with Hart, Koop climbs to his position across the road only to discover a police officer in Sara's apartment.

Koop commits another burglary with information obtained by the moving man who had given him Sara's key, killing the dog of the home owner and emptying the safe. Fueled by alcohol and drugs, Koop needs release and chooses another victim, growing more careless every second. Attacking a woman in the street, Koop grows even more angry when the woman screams and draws attention to herself. Neighbors call the police and call out to Koop, driving his rage further. Koop kills the woman but realizes in horror that someone has taken his picture.

Lucas and Connell finally discover Koop's perch across the way from Sara's apartment. The Camel cigarette butts provide a link back to the murder of Harriet Wannemaker. The fact that Lucas can see into Sara's building leads the investigators to the conclusion that Koop knows who they are, and that they are waiting for him.



# Chapters 26-30

## Chapters 26-30 Summary

Lucas and the team meet with the chief and go over what they know, which isn't much. The pictures and the video taken at the scene, while a promising lead, turn out to show little. The witnesses cannot agree on a description other than him being strong and muscular. Giving up, Lucas heads home for a nap, then he and Weather make love. Afterward the two banter playfully about Weather's nudity. Lucas makes a comment about her ass and the connection between the deaf witnesses. Lucas is surprised when Weather comments that quite a few deaf people cannot read English and decides to check into it. After checking with the St. Paul police department, Lucas discovers that their regular translator was not used and he tracks down the witness to verify the information.

Lucas meets with Paul Johnston, a deaf man who lives in the area. A young girl helps him translate after he explains his questions. Lucas discovers that to Paul the letters on the license plate would be the same read either correctly or backwards. The license plate seen by the deaf people read "SSA".

In chapter twenty-seven, Lucas informs Meagan and the team about his discovery and they check trucks in the area with the same three letters in the license. Several hours later, Greaves runs across a truck owned by a former prison guard, Robert Koop. The amount of money that Koop would need to live at his address and buy his truck does not come close to what he had earned as a prison guard. Further investigation of the license plate ties Koop the site of a fencing operation. Lucas calls the deputy warden at the Stillwater prison, Koop's former employer, and discovers that Koop resigned after being accused of selling speed within the prison. One of the inmates he was friendly with was a former cat burglar. After reviewing all the information, the team heads out to do surveillance. Several hours later, Koop leaves his house and leads them to a local diner. Lucas checks Koop's truck while he is inside and sees Camel cigarettes on the dashboard. Connell and Lucas realize they have found their man.

In chapter twenty-eight, the team tracks Koop as he meanders aimlessly through the area. When Koop stops for lunch, the tech squad is able to put a tracer on his truck so that he can be tracked electronically as well. The day goes by. As night falls, Koop appears to be headed toward Sara Jensen's apartment. At the last moment Koop drives by, goes to a bar for a few drinks, then heads home for the night.

The following day Koop acts the same way, driving aimlessly with the investigators following carefully. That afternoon Koop goes into a diner, but comes out rather quickly, startling the team. Lucas sees another person he knows, Just Plain Schultz. Schultz leaves the restaurant and the police pull him over. Lucas addresses the man, a known fence, as Schultzie, telling him he wants whatever Koop sold him. Schultz reminds



Lucas that his name is "just plain Schultz" and tells Lucas he can't believe that Koop belongs to the police. Lucas replies that he does not.

Thomas Troy, the District Attorney, suggests that Lucas arrest Koop for burglary, with information obtained from Schultz. The police will be able to get search warrants for the truck and home of Koop and see what they find. Lucas and Connell are concerned that if they do not get enough information to tie Koop to the killings he will serve little time in jail. Lucas considers waiting to see if Koop tries to kill again while under surveillance, but the risk is too great. Chief Roux instructs Lucas to bring Koop in now.

In chapter twenty-nine, Koop is arrested at a liquor store. Koop knows from dealing with the prisoners at Stillwater not to speak to the police other than to ask for a lawyer, but his mind swirls, wondering why they are arresting him. Koop is unsure if somehow he has been tied to the killings or if he is being arrested for something as simple as a traffic violation. Rather than make things worse, he goes quietly. The police ask for Koop's keys to tow his truck and he again asks why he is being arrested. The police cryptically state that he must know why. Realizing the police are trying to get him to talk, Koop shuts down, refusing to answer or ask anymore questions.

In chapter thirty, Lucas goes over Koop's truck and finds evidence of burglary tools, then instructs the police on the scene to make sure the truck is inspected carefully for any evidence to the killings. At Koop's house Connell has found nothing other than a space in the basement where a plastic tarp had been laid out on the floor. The windows in the basement are covered and painted black so that from the outside no one can see in. Lucas talks to a few neighbors who tell him that Koop never kept to a schedule, rarely leaving his home during the day, suggesting he did not work. The women also tell Lucas that Koop has always worn a beard. The information is interesting, but there is nothing visible that ties Koop to the killings.

In Koop's bedroom Connell finds a bottle of Opium perfume, the fragrance Jensen wears. Though a bottle was stolen from Jensen's apartment, this is not the same one. To Lucas, the perfume proves Koop's infatuation with Sara. Meagan tells Lucas that she is getting sicker, and won't be able to hang on much longer.

## Chapters 26-30 Analysis

The case seems to be at a standstill again, with the investigators frustrated over their lack of progress. Connell is especially frustrated, afraid that Koop is losing control and will continue to kill as she gets sicker, dying before she can stop him. Lucas heads home to think and spend some time with Weather, trying to decompress. Weather relates to Lucas that she is amazed that he can just shut off the investigation, something she would not be able to do if she were in his place. Moments later, Lucas proves that he never really stops thinking about the case when the subject of the license plate comes up while Weather is undressed. The license plate that has been in the back of Lucas's mind and the statement given by the deaf witnesses suddenly has a whole



other meaning when Weather explains that some deaf people never learn to read properly, seeing no need for it.

Lucas follows up on the piece of information and discovers that Weather was right; Paul Johnston had gotten the letters correct, but had reversed them. The lead that had been bothering Lucas from the outset finally triggers something for the team.

The long process of checking license plates brings Lucas and Meagan to the person of Robert Koop, a former prison guard at Stillwater Prison. The fact that Koop was a guard might make others think he was a police officer, as Joe Hillerod had described seeing in the bookstore. Another thread of the investigation ties in. The fact that Koop has been seen at a known fence is another link to Sara Jensen, as Koop might have been the man that had broken into her apartment.

The District Attorney is unable to give the team the go-ahead to arrest Koop on what they have tying him to the killings, but when they are able to tie him to a burglary the chief feels that it is the right time to bring him in. With warrants for Koop's truck and home, Lucas and Connell are able to try and find some type of evidence but seem unable to. Connell is getting desperate as her cancer is once again progressing. Her desperation might play a role in the events that follow.

Robert Koop is arrested, confused and frightened. Unsure of why he is being arrested his mind swirls, wondering whether he should try and flee or wait and see what is going on. His past experience with the prisoners at Stillwater tell him to stay quiet and simply ask for an attorney. Koop's mind is raging, fear and anger sharing equal space. Being arrested is bad enough, but not knowing why is terrifying.



# Chapters 31-34

## Chapters 31-34 Summary

Koop is released from jail, free from the confines of a cell and his phobia of being locked up. On the edge, Koop feels as if he is losing control. While spending the night in jail, Koop had worked out almost continuously to keep the feelings of being locked up at bay. Meeting with his attorney, Koop wonders what the police might know, as his lawyer seems to think that selling stolen merchandise does not explain why the authorities are making such a big deal. Unsure of what to do, Koop knows that he will never survive in jail, that if he were convicted of a crime he would flee. Forcing himself to relax since the trial is a month away, Koop goes home, punching walls and furniture, trying to get his swirling mind under control. Taking the bottle of Opium, Koop is able to relax, smelling Sara's perfume and imagining her.

In chapter thirty-two, Lucas, Connell and their team conduct surveillance on Koop, keeping an eye on him from the time he leaves the jail. The surveillance continues the next day as Koop makes his way to Sara Jensen's office. Koop follows Sara into the elevator as he had before, this time with Lucas and Connell. Koop continues to follow Jensen as she grocery shops and heads for home. Koop changes direction, leading the police around the area for a bit, but as night falls, he heads back toward Jensen's apartment. Lucas enters before him, wanting to be in place when Koop arrives. Lucas knows that Koop will make his move tonight.

In chapter thirty-three, Koop heads back to Sara's neighborhood while the police wait. Koop is consumed by thoughts of Sara and decides to check on her from across the street. The police witness his entrance and realize that he had attacked the man and woman in order to obtain the key to the building.

Sara positions herself on her bed reading, waiting for word from Lucas that Koop is watching from across the street. When Jensen gets word that Koop is watching, Sara gets up from the bed and heads to the bathroom to run a bath. With her robe gaping open, Jensen is aware of the show she is putting on for Koop. Pacing around the room and then laying on the bed again, Sara is performing and Koop's heart catches in his throat every time Sara passes the window. Eventually Sara heads to the bathroom and closes the door. Koop tries to have a cigarette but cannot light one, as they are soaked with sweat. Instead he leaps from the air conditioning unit and heads off the roof. Lucas gets the call on his radio and informs Jensen. Sara leaves the bathroom and heads down the hall to another apartment that the police are using in the trap.

Lucas and Meagan Connell wait in Sara's apartment. Lucas warns Connell not to try anything funny, as the arrest has to go off cleanly for them to be able to charge Koop. Lucas will wait for Koop to unlock the door and try to enter the apartment, then slam the door, forcing Koop back where others will grab him in the hall. Connell agrees, but Lucas wonders about the strange look in her eye.



Koop enters the stairway and pauses as he hears a soft noise. Not in a hurry, Koop heads to the roof cautiously and looks over the edge to Sara's balcony. Rather than head back to the stairs, he decides to jump down. The police inside wonder where he could be. Connell barely hears the sound of Koop landing on the balcony. Koop sees Connell and in a rage charges her, screaming. Lucas turns and calls his back-up on the radio, telling the other officers that Koop is in the apartment. Lucas runs to Connell's aide, swinging his pistol at Koop, who manages to duck the blow. Koop lunges for Lucas and the two battle, with Koop squeezing Lucas to the point of almost blacking out. Lucas is in bad shape when Connell leaps onto Koop's back, digging her fingers into his eyes and biting him.

Back-up arrives as Lucas, with Connell still on his back, flails about, trying to get Connell off of him. The two wind up on the balcony and Lucas has time to scream Meagan's name before the two flip over the railing and plummet to the ground. Lucas tries to stop the fall but is unable to catch the pair.

In chapter thirty-four, Lucas is recovering from his injuries at home. Thoughts of Connell are constantly in his mind. Lucas convinced himself that Connell was ready to die but at the same time he feels that their time together was unfinished. Weather takes care of Lucas, worrying about his solitude. The two watch the news together as Chief Roux declares the Minneapolis Police Department triumphant in their hunt for a serial killer. Weather comments that her blood runs cold to think of what might have happened in Jensen's apartment and suddenly Lucas looks almost happy. Telling Weather he is going out, he calls Greaves and has the detective get the young man that works at the Eisenhower Docks.

Lucas meets Greaves and the kid at the building and they head to the roof. Lucas inspects the air conditioning unit, calling the sticker for the service company on the side. The service company tells Lucas that the unit is under warranty as it was installed the year before. Lucas tells Greaves that Ray Cherry had rerouted the ducts of the system so that all of the cold air in the building was directed into Ms. Carter's apartment. Considering her weight and the fact that Charmagne had taken a sleeping pill with alcohol, she had died from hypothermia. Greaves' case is solved.

Lucas checks in with the chief before heading home. Roux is pleased, happy that her political future is safe for now. Jan Reed stops Lucas, happy that he is safe and asking him for coffee. Lucas is flattered but tells Reed that he has to head home.

## Chapters 31-34 Analysis

Koop's release from jail comes just in time as far as he is concerned as the feelings of claustrophobia were overwhelming. Relying on his strength, Koop worked out to the point of exhaustion while in jail, sleeping when he is completely worn out. The work out that Koop puts himself through demonstrates his physical condition to the reader, and sets the stage for the fight that takes place between Koop and Lucas. Though Lucas is





in good physical condition, he is not match for Koop, whose only regular activity besides burglary is working out.

The detectives on the case convince Chief Roux with the help of Sara Jensen that the only way to catch Koop is to set a trap and catch him in it. The surveillance team works well together, following Koop from the time he is released from jail until he arrives at Sara Jensen's door. The team is well coordinated and things seem to be going without a hitch. Koop watches Sara from the roof across the way and Sara steps outside her role a bit and puts on a show for the killer, hoping to make sure that Koop will be unable to stay away. Sara's plan seems to work as Koop leaps from the air conditioning unit where he has spent so many nights and heads to Sara's building.

The team watches and waits, believing they are ready for Koop. Well laid plans are put into action as Jensen is secreted in an apartment down the hall. Lucas waits by the door for Koop to enter, planning on forcing the man out into the hall where other team members will take him. Allowing Koop to unlock the door will give the case more teeth in court.

Lucas and Connell wait in the apartment as things go according to plan, but Lucas is concerned with the strange look on Connell's face and warns her not to do anything that might jeopardize the case. Connell vows not to, claiming that she is only shocked that she is still alive to see the man she has been searching for captured. As the events that follow lead to the death of Koop and Connell, the reader is left to wonder if Connell knowingly levered herself and Koop over the balcony to their death. If this is the case, Connell is able to assure herself, even in death, that the killer she has sought despite all of the opposition is going to be off the streets and others will finally be safe.

Lucas is depressed after the case is over, both because of his injuries and recuperation and also because he cannot get his mind off of Meagan Connell. Weather worries for Lucas, but is also angry that the man she loves was in a position of such peril. Lucas and Weather are able to work things out, understanding that their jobs are their lives and their relationship is a bonus that neither expected but is happy to have. While the two discuss the case and Weather makes a comment about her blood running cold, Lucas has another epiphany, and suddenly knows the cause of Charmagne Carter's death.

Wrapping things up neatly seems to be something that Lucas feel is needed. Even during the investigation of Koop and the killings, Greaves' case has always been at the back of Lucas's mind. Ironically, it is the air conditioning unit that was used to kill Carter. After Koop spent so many nights on a similar unit watching Sara Jensen, Lucas makes the connection to the unit at Eisenhower Docks.

Ray Cherry, working at his employer's instruction, found a way to get Charmagne out of the apartment. Moving the duct work in the unit so that all of the cold air in the building would blow into Carter's apartment, Cherry was able to cause the death of Carter by hypothermia. Solving the locked door murder mystery, Lucas is able to smile again, and move forward in his day-to-day life.





# Characters

## Lucas Davenport

The main character in the novel *Night Prey*, Lucas Davenport is a tall, broad man, with dark hair just starting to show gray and shocking blue eyes. Lucas has a faint scar near one eye that extends to his mouth, and a newer scar on his throat where he had been shot the year before. Lucas had left the Minneapolis Police Department two years ago and started his own computer company after a fight with a pimp. The new police chief persuaded Lucas to return and appointed him deputy chief. Hired to work intelligence, Lucas would use his street connections to help the department catch the most dangerous criminals and work with a team on any problem that might attract unwanted or unwarranted media attention. The possibility of a serial killer operating in and around the Minneapolis area is just such a case.

Lucas lives with Weather Harkinnen, the surgeon who saved his life when he was shot the year before. The two share a good relationship, though Lucas is at times uncomfortable, not with Weather, but with how much he needs her. The comfortable routine the couple's life has settled into also makes Lucas wonder if being in a committed relationship is what he has wanted or needed all along. Despite his internal questions and the obvious attraction to a television reporter, Lucas is an honest and loyal man, and he never crosses the line of infidelity.

Lucas works with Meagan Connell, a tough, brass state investigator, on the case Meagan has developed about a possible serial killer operating in the area. Connell does not get along with many, and doesn't care to try, but she and Lucas work well together, partly because of a grudging respect, and partly because Lucas never hesitates to tell Meagan when she has crossed the line.

Lucas becomes entrenched in the murder investigations, unwilling to give up before the killer is caught. In this, Lucas displays his commitment to a cause, working things constantly, always thinking and turning things over in his head, even when he appears to be focused on something completely different. It is because of this trait in Lucas that the case is finally broken open, and the killer is identified and taken off the street.

## Meagan Connell

A state investigator, Meagan Connell is in her late twenties or early thirties. Built on the big side, with pale skin and close cropped blond hair, Meagan presents an outward appearance of strength, one she backs up with attitude. Connell does not care if she is offensive or brash, she is simply focused on the investigation that she has developed, one that ties several violent murders to one man. Connell is extremely focused on finding the perpetrator and taking him off the streets within a few weeks. Dying of cancer, Connell wants to make sure that the killer does not kill again.



Connell is focused, and not used to working as a member of a team. Connell seems to lack basic social skills, though it is most likely that she has simply given up any effort at niceties in order to accomplish her goal. Connell has been piecing together the trail of what she believes to be a serial killer for months. After investigating the scene of one slaying, Connell claims that the spirit of one of the victims talked to her, urging her to catch the killer, claiming that he is still at large and killing more women. Connell knows that she is not actually being visited by ghosts, but has a sense of urgency nonetheless.

Connell meets her match in Lucas Davenport, a seasoned investigator who is paired with her to investigate the series of deaths in the area. Lucas knows that Connell is dying of cancer, and makes some concessions to her behavior because of it, but does not fail to tell her when she has crossed the line. The two work well together. Lucas comes to respect Meagan Connell's abilities and Connell realizes that Lucas is not simply working the case but has become as entrenched in it as she is.

Meagan Connell gives her life in the line of duty, plummeting to her death off of Sara Jensen's balcony with the killer. Though it appears that her death was simply the result of a struggle, there is always a question that Meagan sacrificed her life, knowing that it is ending because of cancer. By ending her life and taking Koop with her, Meagan can be sure that the killer will not get out of jail on a technicality and that he will never kill again.

## Robert Koop

The killer, known as Koop in the novel, is a cat burglar whose only other occupation in life is working out at the gym, doing drugs and killing. Koop had killed his own mother when he was in the army, Koop's mother had been a drunk who would bring home random men and perform oral sex for extra money. Koop's mother constantly complained about other women looking down on her, women who dressed well and had a different standing in life. It is this type of woman that Koop targets, women who live relatively well, yet seem to be searching for something, yearning for love. Koop targets the women in bookstores, watching and waiting, preying on the women that seem to be looking for love. Koop takes the women when he is sure no one is watching, sometimes killing them quickly, sometimes keeping them for a few days.

Koop gets sexual satisfaction from killing, using a knife to brutally slice his victims. Careful to spread the killings out over time and distance, Koop is in control and unconcerned, having learned while a guard in Stillwater Prison the ins and outs of police investigation. Things begin to change, however, when Koop burgles the apartment of Sara Jensen. Koop's attraction to Sara causes urges in Koop that he cannot control. Unable to have Sara, Koop takes his frustration and longing out on victims, unable to control himself and knowing that he is stepping outside his normally carefully planned life.

Koop's infatuation with Sara spirals out of control, creating a frenzy in him that is destructive. Doing cocaine, working out in the gym, and stalking Sara take up Koop's



days, and his nights are spent stalking women to relieve his sexual tension. As the novel progresses, Koop's control falters more, causing him to kill in order to gain closer access to Sara. From his perch across the way, Koop watches the woman he yearns for. From his vantage point, Koop sees Sara's night with Evan Hart and his obsession becomes deadly. After attacking Evan, Koop's control is gone, knowing only that he has to have Sara before he kills her. Staying one step ahead of the investigators, Koop struggles to maintain control, making mistake after mistake until the night he enters Sara's apartment for the last time. His rage at being caught in a trap results in a struggle with first Lucas and then Connell, ending in Koop plummeting to his death off the balcony with Connell holding him.

## **Weather Harkinnen**

A surgeon, Weather is the love interest of the main character, Lucas Davenport. Weather saved Lucas's life a year earlier when he had been shot by a child. The two had bonded and moved in together, sharing a comfortable life of understanding and caring. Weather worries about Lucas and his job with the police department, but admires his work and the things he accomplishes.

Weather inadvertently helps Lucas crack the case of the serial killer when she remarks that deaf people do not necessarily read English, causing Lucas to realize that the information about the suspect's license plate might be incorrect. The easy relationship Weather and Lucas share creates an atmosphere of trust and understanding that enables them to be themselves.

## **Sloan**

A detective who has worked with Lucas Davenport in the past.

## **Del**

A detective who has worked with Lucas in the past. Del is involved in the investigation of the stolen guns, and works with Lucas when it appears that his case might be tied to the murders.

## **Chief Rose Marie Roux**

The chief of the Minneapolis Police Department, Chief Roux hired Lucas as a type of investigative consultant with the title of Assistant Chief. Roux has aspirations to the senate and is using her job to get elected. The murders that are taking place jeopardize her chances. Teaming Lucas with Connell, Roux hopes that Lucas will be able to keep Meagan under control, as well as discover if Connell's belief that a serial killer is operating in and around Minneapolis is true.



## **Bob Greaves**

A detective, Greaves is assigned to work with Davenport and Connell. Greaves is also working the case of Charmagne Carter, a teacher found dead in her apartment. Formerly Officer Friendly, Greaves was promoted because his wife is the mayor's niece. Greaves knows that he is not a good detective, but is trying to learn from Davenport.

With the help of Lucas, Greaves is able to discover the truth behind the death of Charmagne Carter, a teacher who dies mysteriously when she refuses to move out of her rent controlled apartment.

## **Junky Doog**

An unstable man, Doog has served time for cutting beautiful woman. Davenport investigates Doog, thinking it might be possible that there is some connection to his current case. Doog is obviously unstable, but does provide some insight into the mind of a killer.

## **Randy Leski**

A former informant for Lucas, Leski provides the detective with the location of Junky Doog.

## **Earl Stupella**

The bartender at the Blue Bull, Earl is interested in becoming one of Davenport's network of sources.

## **Dex**

A young man who witnessed Koop dump the body of Marcy Lane.

## **Lawrence**

A drug dealer who witnessed Koop dump the body of Marcy Lane.

## **Carrigan**

A police officer at the scene when Lucas is called to the site where Marcy Lane's body was found.



## **Charmagne Carter**

A teacher, Carter was found dead in her apartment. Greaves is investigating her murder because her landlords would benefit greatly if the woman no longer lived in their building. Lucas discovers that Carter had been frozen to death when the landlords paid Ray Cherry to reroute the air conditioning system into her unit.

## **Ray Cherry**

The handyman at Eisenhower Docks, Cherry rerouted the air conditioning system to Charmagne Carter's apartment, freezing her to death while she slept.

## **Mae Heinz**

A witness at the bookstore who saw Koop the night that Harriet Wannemaker was taken.

## **Mercedes Dey**

The first known victim of Koop.

## **Emily Carter**

The daughter of Charmagne Carter.

## **Jan Reed**

A television reporter for TV3, Reed befriends Lucas so that she can learn what is going on in the investigation. Lucas is attracted to Reed, but in love with Weather.

## **Marcy Lane**

A victim of Koop, killed when his frustration over not being with Sara Jensen explodes.

## **Harriet Wannemaker**

A victim of Koop, and the first murder that Lucas is involved in with Connell's investigation.



## **D. Wayne Price**

A convict who claims that Joe Hillerod is the murderer, having seen him in a bookstore the night a woman was killed. Price is in jail for the murder, but insists he is innocent.

## **Joe Hillerod**

A member of the Bad Seeds, a motorcycle gang. Hillerod is briefly tied to the murder investigation because he had been in the same bookstore as one of Koop's victims.

## **Greg**

A young man who works with Ray Cherry at Eisenhower Docks. Greg provides the information that Cherry had been working on the air conditioning the night before Carter was found dead.

## **George Beneteau**

A local police officer, Beneteau assists Lucas and Connell in the arrest of Joe Hillerod.

## **Paul Johnston**

A deaf man, Johnston witnesses Koop near the scene of Harriet Wannemaker's abduction. Johnston's inability to read English leads to a misunderstanding about the license plate numbers on Koop's truck, but Lucas is able to get to the bottom of it. Johnston's statement is the first solid lead toward the police catching Koop.

## **Evan Hart**

A coworker of Sara Jensen, Evan and Sara are at the beginning of a relationship when Koop attacks Hart after witnessing the two make love.



## **Objects/Places**

### **Minneapolis**

The city in Minnesota where the novel takes place.

### **Eisenhower Docks**

The apartment complex where Charmagne Carter lived.

### **Dakota County**

The area where Junky Doog was living at a landfill.

### **The Blue Bull**

The bar where Lucas tracks down Randy Leski.

### **The Saint**

The bookstore where Koop picked up Harriet Wannemaker.

### **Waupun Prison**

The prison where Lucas and Meagan interview D. Wayne Price.

### **Raider-Garrote**

The brokerage firm where Sara Jensen is employed.

### **Stillwater Prison**

The prison where Robert Koop was employed as a guard.

### **TV3**

The television station where Jan Reed is employed as a reporter.

## **Modigliani's Wine & Spirit**

The store where the police arrest Koop for passing stolen goods.





# Themes

## Obsession

Obsession is a key theme in *Night Prey*. The main obsession is obviously that of Robert Koop. Koop, as he is known in the novel, discovers Sara Jensen, an executive at a financial firm, when he burgles her apartment. Though Koop is an accomplished cat burglar, he is for some reason infatuated with Jensen; it is an infatuation that will result in his ultimate downfall.

Koop appears to suffer from a sense of obsessive love, insatiably longing for Sara Jensen, with an unreasonable preoccupation about her. Koop's obsession triggers an urge for release, causing him to kill women in order to make up for the distance he feels from Sara.

Koop's obsession is ultimately his downfall. Though Robert Koop has been killing women for years, gaining sexual gratification from overpowering and conquering women that he feels judged by, there has never been such a personal stake in things. Koop has found someone he believes to be worthy, and intends to cherish the feeling. Taking his sexual frustrations out on other women, Koop is able to keep Sara Jensen on a pedestal, worshiping the woman he believes is his. Circumstances change Koop's view and he realizes that Sara is not the woman his delusions made him believe.

Koop's organized life spirals out of control as he tries to maintain some grip on what Sara represents to him. When Sara "chooses" another man over Koop, the killer can be held back no longer. He is intent on possessing his obsession at least once before she dies, who is now sadly unworthy of Koop's love. Finally losing all control, Koop confronts the woman he "loves" as well as the police he has been able to dodge for years, resulting in his own death.

## Justice

In *Night Prey*, Meagan Connell is obsessed with the idea of catching a serial killer and bringing him to justice. Justice, or the concept of rightness, can be based either on the letter of the law or on personal beliefs. In the eyes of Connell, Koop, the killer, has not only violated the written law but also her own perceptions of rightness. It is obvious that murder is illegal, both morally and legally, and Meagan struggles at first with convincing others that there is a serial killer, then with trying to stop the killer before she dies herself. It is also clear to the reader that Meagan Connell has a very personal stake in the outcome of the investigation. Connell mentions to Lucas Davenport and to others that she is haunted by one of the victims in her sleep; the woman comes to her and tells her that she is not the only victim and that the killer will continue to hunt and kill.

Meagan Connell is especially intent on seeing that justice is served in this case because she is terminally ill and has very little time herself. Connell is focused completely on



catching the killer, even when it is she who suffers as her cancer progresses. Those around her can see the deterioration yet are unable to convince her to slow down and let someone else handle things. To Connell, the justice she seeks will make everything worthwhile.

As the novel comes to an end, there is a possibility that the investigators will be unable to charge Koop with the murders of the woman he has killed in the past. The thought consumes Connell, as Koop serving a short period of time for an unrelated crime is unacceptable to her. As events come to a head and the chance to catch the killer presents itself, there is an altercation in the apartment of Sara Jensen. After leaping to the defense of Davenport, Meagan finds herself at the railing of the balcony, hanging onto the killer. The two topple over the rail and plummet to the ground, ending the killings, as well as the lives of Koop and Meagan Connell. The reader is left to wonder if Connell, knowing that she was going to die of cancer, decided to hand out justice on her own, rather than leave Koop to the fickle court system and the possibility that he might someday be free to kill again.

## Sacrifice

The ultimate sacrifice in *Night Prey* is that of Meagan Connell when she plummets to her death with the killer, Robert Koop. During a struggle and while attempting to help her partner, Lucas Davenport, Connell and Koop become entangled and topple over the railing of Sara Jensen's balcony. Lucas tries to save Connell, even managing to touch the leg of Koop before the two fall beyond his reach, but is unable to change the course of events. The investigation into the serial killings abruptly over, Lucas is left to wonder if Meagan Connell had intentionally sacrificed her own life in order to be sure that Robert Koop would never kill again.

Another instance of sacrifice is the issue of Meagan Connell's health. Connell has been battling cancer for some time and is nearing the end of her life. Despite this, Connell's total focus is on finding the man responsible for a string of vicious murders. As the murders all take place in different jurisdictions, Meagan first has to convince the authorities that there is a serial killer operating at all. When the investigation is ended before it has really begun, Meagan finds the means to get the ball rolling again, this time by using the media. Though this method does not endear her to the police, Meagan does not care.

Unconcerned about what others think of her, Connell's total focus is on catching a killer and doing whatever needs to be done so there are no more killings. Meagan's health visibly deteriorates in the novel as she spearheads an impossible investigation and ignores her needs.



# Style

## Point of View

The novel *Night Prey* is written in the third person. This is extremely helpful to the reader as events take place quickly and the writer follows the actions of several characters, changing from one to the other frequently. As the reader is able to understand the thoughts, feelings and motivations of the characters, there is very little confusion while reading the novel.

The novel follows the investigation into several killings in and around the Minneapolis area, and though the reader knows who the killer is from the beginning of the novel, the investigators do not. This allows the reader to experience the events first hand, both from the perspective of both the killer and from those trying to stop him. The reader is also privy to the motivation of the killer, both at the outset of the novel and as the story progresses.

The novel is written with equal parts exposition and dialogue, allowing the reader to experience how the characters interact, as well as their thoughts and feelings as events unfold. There is not a great deal of scenic description, as it would take away from the fast pace of the novel.

## Setting

The novel is set in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Lucas Davenport is a deputy chief, appointed by the Chief of Police, Rose Marie Roux. The events of the novel take place in the surrounding areas, though part of the investigation takes the investigators to Wisconsin when they investigate a murder there. Several areas of the city are visited, though the locations are not as important as what takes place there.

A main location in the novel is the apartment of Sara Jensen, the object of the killer's obsession. Robert Koop, a cat burglar and killer, breaks into Sara's apartment while she sleeps, intent on robbing her. While there, Koop becomes infatuated with Sara to the point of obsession. The climactic confrontation between killer and investigators also takes place in Jensen's apartment. As the trigger for the escalation of murders and the end of the killings takes place in the apartment, it is obviously a key location.

Another important setting in the novel is *The Saint*, the bookstore where Koop meets the first victim the reader is aware of. Though *The Saint* is named, it is the type of store, rather than the exact store that is more important. As the killer hunts for a certain type of victim, bookstores in general are his hunting ground. This fact makes it possible for the investigators to eventually track the killer and bring his murderous spree to an end.



## Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is modern, as it takes place within current times. The structure of the novel is very free flowing, allowing the reader to feel as if they are watching the events unfold. As the novel revolves around an active police investigation, an investigation that hopes to prevent the murders of more women, there are some specific references to police procedures and terms; however, the reader is able to easily determine the meaning of these passages through the context with which they are written.

The language of the characters does not vary much as most of the characters are of the same age and education. There are some instances where some characters cannot express themselves as well as other, but this is because of their background and choice of lifestyle, rather than due to their education or lack thereof.

The manner in which the novel is written allows the reader to follow along easily, experiencing events as they occur. Free-flowing and fast paced, this is important, giving one the sense of urgency that the investigators feel while trying to catch a killer, and the urgency of the killer as he struggles to control his obsession with Sara Jensen.

## Structure

The novel *Night Prey* is broken down into thirty-four numbered chapters, each between six to ten pages. Each chapter contains an important element of either the investigation into the killer or an insight into the mind of the killer himself. The chapters flow freely from one to the next, allowing the reader to follow the storyline easily, being drawn into the events that take place.

The plot is fairly simple and straight-forward. The novel tracks the growing obsession of Robert Koop with Sara Jensen, and the murders he commits in order to relieve himself of the growing pressure he feels because of this obsession. Koop's obsession and murderous activities are mirrored by the obsessive need of Meagan Connell to find the killer before she herself dies of cancer. The investigation of the murders by Connell and Lucas Davenport, a Minneapolis Deputy Chief of Police, speeds forward at the same pace as the growing obsession of Koop for Jensen.

The novel is written with a very fast pace, allowing the reader to become "caught up" in the sense of urgency that all of the characters feel as events unfold. This makes the urgency of the novel and the investigation more compelling.

*Night Prey* is an enjoyable novel, one in a series written by John Sanford. The recurring character of Lucas Davenport is likable, one that a reader would be happy to read more about. Though events of past novels are referred to, there is no sense that one must read the novels in order of publication, they stand alone very well.



## Quotes

"Lucas looked back toward the ramp. 'She's got a major edge on her,' he said. 'She's in a hurry to get this guy,' Sloan said. 'She needs to get him in the next month or so.' 'Yeah? What's the rush?' 'She's dying,' Sloan said.'" Chap. 2, p. 37

"Junky though about that, pawing his face with his good hand, then his head bobbed, as though he'd worked it out. "Cause a woman turns you on, that's why. Maybe you see a woman and she turns you on. Gets you by the pecker. You go around with your pecker up for a few days, and you gotta do something. You know, you gotta cut some women.'" Chap. 7, p. 108

"A look crossed Cherry's face, a quick shadow, and Lucas recognized it, had seen it six or seven hundred or a thousand times: Cherry had done it. Cherry wiped the expression away, tried a look of confusion, took a soiled rag out of his pocket, and blew his nose. 'Bullshit, he said finally.'" Chap. 8, p. 116

"Weather had seen Lucas working at close range, as he broke a murder case in her small northern Wisconsin town. Lucas had seen Weather working as a coroner—doctors were scarce up north, and they took turns at the county coroner's job—but the only time he'd been around when she was working on a live patient, he'd been unconscious: he'd been the patient." Chap. 11. p. 147

"Greg says that the day before the old lady died, the air conditioning went out and it got really hot in the apartments. He and Cherry spent the whole day down the basement, taking things apart. He says it was so hot, almost everybody left their windows and even their doors open." Chap. 14, p. 180

"Koop's eyes were closed, holding on. He could still feel her. She'd pressed, he thought. She'd apparently noticed him, noticed his body under the chameleon's shirt, and had been attracted. She'd pressed. He could still feel her ass. Koop got off at seven, stunned, realized he was sweating, had a ferocious hard-on. She'd done it on purpose. She knew...Or did she?" Chap. 15, p. 185

"They drove on for another minute, in silence, and then Connell began to weep. Eyes open, head up, big hands square on the wheel, she began sobbing, breath tearing from her chest, tears streaming down her face. Lucas started to say something, looking for words, but she just shook her head and drove on." Chap. 17, p. 210

"An hour later, he was puzzling over Anderson's note on the deaf people. Everything sounded right: a guy with a beard, going to the bookstore, in a truck. How in the hell did they screw up the license so bad? He glanced at his watch: one o'clock, too late to call anybody at St. Paul. He leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes. Maybe something would bubble to the surface of his mind..." Chap. 19, p. 221



"Koop screamed, 'Motherfucker,' and went in, the blade flicking out of his fist, his long arm arcing in a powerful upward rip. But quicker than Koop could believe, Blondy stepped right, swung his arm and raincoat, caught Koop in the wrist, and Koop's hand went past Blondy's left side. They collided and they both staggered: the guy was heavier than he looked, and in better shape. Koop's mind began working again, touched by a sudden spark of fear. Here he was, on the street, circling a guy he didn't know..." Chap. 20, p. 227

"'We don't know anything about that,' Connell said quickly. 'We work homicide. We're looking for a man who has been killing women for years. The last two he's marked with the initials, SJ—your initials. We're not sure it's you, but it might be. The attack on Mr. Hart resembles the technique he has used to kill the women. The weapon appears to be similar. He fits the descriptions we've had...'" Chap. 22, p. 235

"Lucas went with her, caught her arm. 'I don't want any dumb-shit stuff. You've got a weird look about you. If you pull the trigger on the guy, you're just as likely to hit Del or Sloan. They'll be coming in a hurry.'" Chap. 33, p. 323

"Lucas, two steps away, dove then, actually touched Koop's foot, lost it, smashed into the railing, felt himself caught by Sloan. He leaned over the rail and saw them go. Connell's eyes were open. She loosened her grip on Koop's head during the fall, and at the end, they were in a splayed-out star shape, like sky divers. All the way to the sidewalk. And forever." Chap. 33, p. 327



## Topics for Discussion

Koop is a serial killer who has maintained a fairly predictable pattern. Why does his pattern change?

What is Meagan Connell's motivation for quickly catching the killer?

What is Lucas Davenport's relationship with Weather Harkinnen? Do you think the couple will stay together? Why or why not?

What is the relationship between Lucas and Meagan Connell? Are they a good team? Why or why not?

What is Chief Rose Marie Roux's major motivation for catching the killer?

What type of women does the killer choose as a target? Why? How is Sara Jensen different?

At the end of the novel, Meagan Connell and the killer fall from the balcony of Sara Jensen's apartment. Do you feel this was intentional on Meagan's part? Why or why not?