

Over the Edge Study Guide

Over the Edge by Jonathan Kellerman

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Plot Summary

Over the Edge by Jonathan Kellerman is a tale of intrigue and serial killings among the Los Angeles gay community. The hero, Dr. Alex Delaware, a clinical psychologist, receives a call from a previous patient from five years ago, Jamey Cadmus, a gay youth of eighteen, who has since become schizophrenic. Jamey babbles incoherently while asking Dr. Delaware for help. Alex learns that the boy is in the Canyon Oaks Mental Hospital, and drives there to visit Jamey. After difficulties getting into the clinic, he finds Jamey has gone missing.

The next day Milo, Alex's best friend, a detective investigating a series of murders called the Lavender Slasher Murders, calls and asks about Jamey. Milo asks only if the teen has called him, so Alex says yes. Later, Souza, the Cadmus's family lawyer, informs Alex that Jamey has been found at the scene of a murder similar to the Slasher killings, whose victims were all young boy prostitutes. The case pits Alex and his gay friend Milo against each other as Alex tries to prove Jamey innocent and Milo attempts to convict him. Souza hires Alex to prove that Jamey is incompetent and not aware of his actions when committing the murders. Alex reluctantly agrees to try to find evidence that will convince him that Jamey's capacity to reason is diminished, even though he feels many so-called "dim cap" defenses are faked.

During his investigation, Alex grows suspicious of Souza, and is relieved when Souza fires him; however, he continues to investigate independently. Learning from Milo that some biker thugs may be involved, Alex follows that lead. Investigating further, he questions a number of Jamey's fellow teens. He also researches schizophrenia and about drugs that mimic schizophrenia. The story follows Alex's investigations around the streets of Los Angeles, where he finds a trail of poison, wealth, greed, betrayal, and shattered friendships.

Eventually Alex learns that Jamey's step-aunt, Heather, resents Jamey and has been slowly poisoning him over the previous year with a drug that induces schizophrenia. He learns, too, that Heather has forged her husband's signature to get Jamey declared incompetent and thus gain control of the Cadmus family's assets. He also finds that Souza has conspired with Heather and has had his chauffeur commit the series of murders that implicate Jamey.

Souza has conspired with Heather because he envies his old friend, Jamey's deceased grandfather, Jack for having possessed many things Souza desired. For example, Jack had married his old girlfriend, Antoinette, and had been more successful in business as well. Jack had felt sorry for Souza, and even gave him land in an attempt to retain his friendship. Nonetheless, Souza pursues his hatred by punishing Jack's offspring through two generations by appearing to be a friend, but eventually almost destroying Jamey with the help of the equally bitter Heather. Jamey's poisoning and the deaths of the victims in the Lavender Slasher Murders are the end result of greed, envy and hatred on the part of previous generations.



Chapter 1, 2, 3

Chapter 1, 2, 3 Summary

Over the Edge by Jonathan Kellerman is the story of a psychologist, Dr. Alex Delaware and his quest to help Jamey Cadmus, a former patient accused of a series of brutal murders called the Lavender Slashings. Alex must contend with a smarmy lawyer, rich family members, biased police officers and a psychiatrist that is less than ethical. Through all of this, Alex refuses to give up on the teenager despite the violence of the crimes and the danger to himself and his personal friendships.

In chapter one, a call wakes Alex when he is in bed with Robin. No patient has called in the middle of the night in years, so a buzz from his service is unexpected. He heads to the library so that he does not disturb Robin and learns the call is from his former patient Jamey Cadmus. He treated Jamey about half a decade ago. When the service puts Jamey on the line with Dr. Delaware, Jamey speaks incoherently, but there is a brief moment of clarity where he recognizes "Dr. D." That moment ends and Dr. Delaware tries to get Jamey to tell him where he is at, but all he keeps talking about is glass canyons, white zombies, and needle games. Alex realizes he must be in a hospital and asks Jamey which hospital, to which he responds Canyon Oaks. Thrilled that Jamey is in a hospital and not a dark alley, Dr. Delaware knows that he needs to just listen and hope that the hallucinations end and he can speak to the real Jamey; however, the line goes suddenly dead before Alex hears any coherent thoughts.

In chapter two, Alex telephones Canyon Oaks but learns that calls cannot be received until 8 a.m. Alex attempts to convince the operator it is important, using his title and saying that he used to treat a patient that has called him from their location. Refusing to believe that Jamey has escaped, she goes to check on the patient and when she returns, hangs up on Alex.

Concerned, Alex heads back to the bedroom where he paces and musses to Robin about the possibility of a wonderful mind, such as Jamey's, being crazy at the age of seventeen. Knowing it is possible that Jamey has taken drugs or is schizophrenic, he decides to head out to Canyon Oaks to check on the teen himself. A car accident that has not yet been resolved by the police has traffic backed up on the road to the hospital, but he flashes his credentials, lies a bit, and is allowed to go around the wreck.

Arriving at the hospital, Alex tricks a guard into thinking he is Jamey's current doctor and is lead into a room where two nurses are discussing Jamey's escape. Nurse Vann works for the hospital and Miss. Surtees is Jamey's private care nurse who was hired by the family. They explain that Miss. Surtees loosened Jamey's restraints and he attacked her and escaped.

Dr. Mainwaring, Jamey's current doctor, is on his way back to the hospital. Dr. Delaware decides to wait for him to arrive at the hospital. Finally, a man in his fifties with a British



accent appears and demands to know the identity of Alex. Dr. Mainwaring tells him Jamey has been hallucinating for about a year and has early onset schizophrenia, but refuses to provide any more information, so Dr. Delaware decides to head home.

In chapter three, Alex goes home to Robin, who is getting ready to leave for her studio where she makes musical instruments. Alex heads into his library where he goes through the files and reflects on his previous encounters with Jamey.

Jamey was part of a study of young, highly gifted children by Dr. Flowers, who is trying to prove that there is not a link between insanity and geniuses. Dr. Delaware was to watch and counsel the kids during the program. Jamey was the least interactive with the other kids, but he sought Alex out for Friday discussions. Jamey's mother died in childbirth and his father committed suicide when he was three. Alex worried about how Jamey was dealing with his past, but Jamey never opened up about his father's suicide or his uncle's family. Finally, Alex broached the subject of Jamey's father and Jamey freaked out revealing he was gay and in love with Alex. Due to surprise, Alex did not react well to this declaration, permanently driving a wedge in their relationship.

Chapter 1, 2, 3 Analysis

In chapter one, the call shocks Alex from his rest and the reader realizes that he used to be on call but is not at the present time. Later in chapter three we learn his practice is now more selective, with fewer cases and better hours, due to his good financial. His companion, Robin, is described in positive, beautiful terms and it can be inferred that she is important to Alex and not just a passing companion.

When the service describes the patient, Jamey Cadmus, he does not ask Alex to rush to the hospital, so the reader assumes that despite being called Dr. Delaware, he is not a medical doctor. The reader learns that Alex has not treated Jamey for half a decade, but his instant recollection of Jamey means that he must have been extremely important and/or pivotal to Dr. Delaware's professional or personal life.

Jamey proceeds to whisper insane comments about glass canyons, rubber walls, snakes, needles, and white zombies. Most of the statements do not make sense but Dr. Delaware is able to infer from the white, rubber, and needles that Jamey must be in a hospital. Jamey is coherent enough to say Canyon Oaks, which is a private hospital that only a select few can afford. This means either Jamey or his family must have a great deal of money, which never bodes well for an heir, so there is some foreshadowing of part of the reason for his problems. From the sentence about Alex's past treatment of Jamey, and his knowledge of Canyon Oaks, the reader can also infer Dr. Alex Delaware is some type of shrink. We do not learn until later that he is a psychologist rather than a psychiatrist

In chapter two Dr. Delaware talks to the hospital and finds Jamey is missing. This causes him to reflect on Jamey's poor state of mind five years ago at the age of twelve. Unable to sleep, Alex heads to the hospital, which shows his level of dedication to the



people that he helps. Even though he only briefly knew Jamey, and is no longer his doctor, he goes out of his way to attempt to help the boy.

When Dr. Delaware gets stuck in a traffic jam, he uses his knowledge of the hospital to convince the policeman to let him through. He acts like there is a serious emergency needing his immediate attention as the official doctor of Jamey. Alex shows his quick thinking and ability to exaggerate the truth for the greater good as well as his deep concern for Jamey. Once at the hospital, he again stretches the truth to the security guard by implying that he is presently Jamey's doctor. The man does not seem to like Jamey much and the reader wonders what Jamey did to provoke such animosity in a random security guard.

Mrs. Vann greets Dr. Delaware none too warmly and scolds the guard for his lack in checking up on Alex's story. Dr. Delaware's impression of Mrs. Vann is intelligent but cold, which causes the reader to wonder what her role may be in Jamey's disappearance. He also meets Miss Surtees, who seems to be a dumb, emotional private helper hired by Jamey's family to keep watch over him in the hospital. Mrs. Vann tells Alex that Jamey has mentioned him when he was lucid, which means that Dr. Delaware made an equally strong impression on Jamey and that his subconscious trusts the doctor. Dr. Delaware decides to wait at Canyon Oaks to meet Jamey's doctor, Dr. Mainwaring, who is out with his kids. Dr. Mainwaring is a simple, no frills, British man who has no interest in revealing anything about Jamey to Alex.

Chapter three shows Jamey through Dr. Delaware's eyes. Jamey is a quiet, withdrawn boy who rarely interacts with the other kids in the program. He seeks Dr. Delaware out and talks to him about a variety of subjects, which displays his intense interest in just about any topic on which he can find information about. Jamey's talks with Dr. Delaware appear to show his desire to connect with an adult and discuss an issue with him, but Jamey never reveals the original reason he sought out Alex.

Alex knows the death of Jamey's mom, his father's suicide, and finally his subsequent placement with his uncle's family predisposes Jamey to depression and suicide; however, Jamey refuses to talk about his family. Jamey's violent reaction to Dr. Delaware's questions about his father makes us wonder if there is something more to his death. His reaction seems extreme, almost as if someone has been telling him something to react so strongly at the mere thought of talking about the suicide.

Jamey's interest in Dr. Delaware is also explained when he reveals that he is gay. One reason the two are no longer in contact is because of Alex's brief adverse reaction to the revelation of Jamey's love declaration. Jamey's intelligence and the fact that he is gay could also explain the reason that he withdrew from the group, since both factors tend to isolate young people by their choice or by society's choice. Both also lay a foundation for a young man going crazy from the pressure that comes out of being a genius, intelligent, rich, and just plain different from the "norm."



Chapter 4, 5, 6

Chapter 4, 5, 6 Summary

In chapter four, Dr. Delaware receives a call from his money manager, Lou and his best friend, a policeman named Milo. Milo has Jamey and asks Alex if he received a call from Jamey at some point during the night. Alex says yes and is angry when Milo ends the call without providing more information. He calms down because he knows Milo is under a great deal of pressure from his current case. Alex decides to call his friend Ned at the news desk. Alex asks him about the Lavender Slasher case and Ned instantly sniffs a story. Neither has any information they care to impart and the call ends. Over dinner with Robin, Alex discusses Milo's behavior and isn't sure about the cause, the Slasher case or the fact that Milo is gay. On arriving home, he finds a note under the door from a lawyer named Horace Souza wanting to talk about Jamey.

Alex decides to call Souza in chapter five, hoping that someone will tell him what is going on with Jamey. They agree to meet and the lawyer sends his chauffeur, Tully to pick him up and bring him to his office. The office screams understated wealth despite the outward smaller appearance of the building compared to the larger Art Deco buildings nearby. Inside the office, Alex is introduced to Horace Souza and immediately learns that the Slasher murders are being blamed on Jamey. The police plan to hold a press conference to announce they are holding a suspect in the crimes. Alex also learns that Jamey has been unstable for some time and Horace seems saddened by his mental state, having known the boy since he was a baby, which helps explain the lawyer's involvement in the case.

Dwight, Jamey's uncle, is in Souza's office and does not appear to recognize Alex despite a previous conversation when Jamey was in the UCLA program. The lawyer tells Alex that he tried contacting known acquaintances of Jamey when the hospital was unable to find the boy, and so far the doctor is the only one he has been able to contact outside of the family. Alex is told that when the search for Jamey failed, the police were finally contacted and they took Horace's short list of acquaintances to aid in the search. The detectives find the teen at the Digby Chancellor house, a known friend of Jamey's. The house was a murder scene, Chancellor was dead, a male prostitute was dead, and Jamey, covered in blood, was sitting between the bodies holding a knife and a lavender scarf.

Souza asks Alex if he thinks they have a case for diminished capacity, which upsets Alex because it is a difficult defense that is rarely believed or true. Dwight also protests that it will drag the family's name through the mud, bringing up his brother's suicide again. Eventually, after much discussion on the lawyer's part as to why he needs Alex, the doctor seems to lean toward his viewpoint and Horace hires him to look into the case and help prove Jamey's poor state of mind.



In chapter six, Alex calls Mal, a divorce attorney who has many good contacts and seems to know just about everyone. Mal knows a great deal about Horace and Alex is able to get information on Horace Souza's character and the fact that he owns most of the Boulevard on both sides of his office. He learns that Souza has worked his way up through the ranks and defends any kind of criminal. Since Horace is extremely rich, he only works because he loves his job.

Later, two men approach Alex's the house and flash their badges. The officers, Calvin Whitehead and Richard Cash ask Alex questions about Jamey, especially pertaining to the call. He tells them everything that he remembers from the call, but then they press for a diagnosis. They attempt to lead Alex into saying Jamey may have committed the murders by calling Jamey a deviant, and interpreting the things said on the call in such a way as to prove he did the crime. Dr. Delaware refuses to answer the questions and maintains that both Jamey's and Souza's conversations are confidential.

The two officers continue to try to pull information out of Alex by saying nasty things about Jamey, especially about his homosexual tendencies. Then Robin comes home. Both officers are surprised to meet Robin, having assumed that Alex is gay due to his sympathy with Jamey and his relationship with Milo. The two leave shortly after Robin arrives home.

Chapter 4, 5, 6 Analysis

Chapter four provides some insight into the relationships in Alex's life. He has a money manager who has enabled him to live life as he sees fit without worrying about working. When Lou tells Alex about some stock that is more risky, Alex decides to stay with the safer bonds. This perhaps gives us some insight into his way of life in general and why he was unwilling to accept Souza's way of handling Jamey's case even under pressure. If he were not conservative and methodical in his ways, Jamey would not have been exonerated. Alex's best friend is a policeman who also happens to be gay. Their relationship has felt a bit strained lately and he worries about the cause. After his short conversation with Milo about Jamey, he thinks that it might be about the case Milo is working called the Lavender Slasher case. But, Alex also knows that it is difficult for a heterosexual and a gay man to be as close friends as the two of them, without feelings becoming deeper on one party's part.

There is some foreshadowing that Jamey might be part of the Lavender Slasher case, which might cause a bigger rift in Alex's and Milo's relationship. Alex seems to get very involved in his friends' lives and his ex-patients. You know that he is not going to let the abrupt ending to his and Milo's conversation stop him from investigating Jamey's case; even if it does involve the Slasher case. Lastly, the message from the lawyer indicates that Jamey is in big trouble and something Alex has learned may be important.

The opening of chapter five hints at a break in the Slasher case, which between Jamey's call, Milo's abrupt end to their conversation, and the note from the lawyer add up to Jamey being a prime suspect in the murders.



Alex calls Souza, who sends his chauffeur, who appears unassuming and lazy, which of course is not true. This is the first hint that the chauffeur is sent to client's homes as the first line of defense. Even though Tully appears to lack intelligence, he is really a major source of information for Horace to spy on people and learn their feelings and weaknesses. Also, when Alex asks if being picked up by limousine is normal for people seeing Souza, the chauffeur responds by saying that he will do anything asked of him. This shows his loyalty and hints at other jobs he might perform for the lawyer.

Souza describes the scene of the crime to which Jamey is accused. It is implied in the first four chapters that the murders are planned since the bodies are dumped and there are few clues to the serial killings. Until now there are no suspects, which does not seem to fit with the distracted, bloody, obvious scene that Souza describes- the other killings are anything but obvious. The reader is immediately sympathetic to the boy and begins to suspect that Jamey was framed.

When Souza tries to hire Alex to prove diminished capacity, Dwight's protest shows that his families' past and name are more important than sacrificing his nephew's reputation. Alex's protest is due more to the fact that the diminished capacity plea lets too many criminals off the hook. Despite his feelings on the topic, Alex cares about what happens to Jamey and tells Souza he will examine all angles of the case with some kind of plea in mind, but will only give an opinion after a through investigation on his part. Souza indicates that Jamey has severe paranoid schizophrenia. This foreshadows the fact that Dr. Delaware knows schizophrenics do not usually commit serial murders and probably feels that the boy is at least innocent of the other murders. Also, the reader suspects that Alex wants to help Jamey to diminish the guilt he feels about his reaction when Jamey revealed he was gay and loved Alex.

In chapter six, the police arrive to question to Alex. Their excessive anger about the case shows that they have tried and convicted Jamey. The only reason they are questioning people is to put the final nails in the coffin. Also, they seem to feel that because Jamey is gay that makes him more likely to be guilty. This helps show the pressure that Milo must be under in relation to the case and why his friendship with Alex has been strained, since Alex is also involved in the case. Many people are predisposed to think gay people are deviants. When Robin arrives and they learn that the doctor is not gay, the police seem deflated. They leave shortly after her arrival, realizing they have taken the wrong tact with the doctor. Their attitude towards gay people, as well as declaring the boy a monster, helps Alex decide to work with Souza on Jamey's case.



Chapter 7, 8, 9

Chapter 7, 8, 9 Summary

Alex calls Souza in chapter seven and agrees to work for him with certain conditions. He insists on learning Jamey's entire family history and wants to see Jamey in person. Souza agrees to the terms and says that he knows the family history better than any other source that Alex could find. The lawyer also sets up a meeting with someone at the County Jail so that the psychologist can have access to Jamey.

Dr. Delaware heads over to the jail after his conversation with Souza. He meets Patrick Montez, a social worker, who gives him the lay of the land in the jail. The treatment of mental health patients is very similar to those of the other inmates due to the lack of funding. Unless the inmate is rich and has private funding, they do not get any medication. Alex is given a tour of the jail campus including the isolation rooms, which are in high demand because everyone has their own space. Jamey is in the high security unit for high-profile cases called High Power. Security is so tight that nobody outside of prison employees can enter the area. Alex must wait for Jamey to be brought to him for his visit.

In chapter eight, when Jamey is brought to see Alex, he finds the boy is an extremely skinny, downtrodden, sickly smelling teenager. Twenty minutes into the silent interview Jamey opens his eyes. He does not seem to recognize the doctor's presence nor focus at all on his surroundings. Alex is upset to find that Jamey is essentially a zombie, having held out hope that since there had been enough coherency for a call, there might be a bit of information to be gleaned from Jamey. When the boy falls asleep, the doctor continues to talk to him until his hour is up. Alex decides to find what drugs are being given to Jamey to cause his current unresponsive state.

Before Alex leaves, he questions Deputy Sonnenschein about Souza's visits and the general state of their relationship. He also learns that Jamey was hyper when he was first brought in but became despondent after a few days. Alex asks the Deputy to let him know if Jamey says anything when he screams. Sonnenschein explains it is against policy and if he does, any information must also be reported to the defense. As he leaves the jail, Dr. Delaware runs into Milo, who makes quick small talk and refuses additional conversation.

Chapter nine opens with Alex watching Souza eat a steak. He describes Jamey's condition and asks the lawyer about the progression of the mental illness. The lawyer says that Jamey used to have days of lucid behavior but continues to get steadily more unresponsive as time goes on. When Jamey was and is lucid, he talks about people poisoning him and is paranoid. Until recently, he'd never hurt anyone and nobody suspected that he was violent. Alex asks if Souza ever suspected Jamey of intentionally pretending to be sick. The lawyer says no and describes the rapid deterioration of the teen.



Alex questions him about the Cadmus family and the lawyer describes Jamey's family history. Souza and John/Jack Cadmus met in Germany after the war and became friends. Jack felt that there would be a housing boom after the war and began buying all the real estate in the San Fernando Valley that he could afford and building houses on it. His vision and charm made the family quite rich. John's wife, Antoinette, was a mentally ill woman who was agoraphobic, but in those days was simply considered weak and ill. Jack and Antoinette's two children were raised by nannies when her mental health forced Jack to decide to commit her to a mental institution. Before she could be sent to the institution, she overdosed on an opiate and died. The lawyer says she was probably schizophrenic, which is a hereditary disease.

Souza tells Alex that Dwight turned into the good boy and Peter, Jamey's father, became a drug addict who gave all appearances of being crazy. He impregnated Jamey's mom, Margaret, a homeless runaway. She died in childbirth, which caused Peter to go home to Jack with the baby because Jamey was not well and Peter needed Jack's help to raise the boy. The baby improved the father and son relationship between Jack and Peter and they became closer than they had ever been until Jack died in 1969. Even though Peter was charming, he was a poor worker and overwhelmed with the business as well as Jamey. Eventually he withdrew from life and his son and hung himself when Jamey was three.

Dwight is given custody of Jamey and he and his new wife Heather and their children became Jamey's family. Souza describes Dwight as attentive and Heather as a good woman. He blames Jamey's downfall on his suspected boyfriend, Dig Chancellor and his influence, but does say he was deteriorating even before he met Dig.

Chapter 7, 8, 9 Analysis

Alex agrees to work for Souza in chapter seven, despite the fact that he remains unsure if he is doing the right thing for himself and Jamey. When Alex asks about Jamey, Souza is quick to say he is the resident expert. The lawyer has all this family information and considers himself an authority, yet he says he never suspected that Jamey was killing people. This seems to be foreshadowing that the lawyer knows a great deal more about what is going on than he reveals. Alex also refuses to accept money from him until the job is done because he feels it makes him less indebted to the lawyer and he will still feel free to research and judge things his way. His negative feelings toward Souza show a conscious as well as a subconscious suspicion of the lawyer's true motives.

At the jail, he finds the treatment of prisoners difficult to take, especially when he finds out the mentally disturbed do not receive any treatment or medication unless privately funded. Alex asks his guide, Montez, how he deals with working in the prison and the response is unexpected. Montez likes the job because no two days are alike. Dr. Delaware cannot fully understand that attitude and seems to have too much compassion to be able to handle the everyday human suffering.



In chapter eight, Alex discovers that Jamey is unable to communicate. Jamey is now a drooling zombie. During his observations of Jamey's condition, Alex thinks his physical symptoms and behaviors are inconsistent with the current diagnosis and medications. He is suspicious of the symptoms, and this is foreshadowing that something might not be quite right with his medical treatment.

Alex's discussion with the deputy that brought Jamey down to the jail room indicates that he might have an ally in the jail. Deputy Sonnenschein refuses to break the rules about disclosure, but seems sympathetic to Jamey and Alex's cause of helping the teenager.

As Alex is leaving the jail, he runs into Milo and Cal Whitehead, one of the policeman who interrogated him at his house. Cal is extremely biased and berates both Dr. Delaware and Jamey, while Milo barely acknowledges Alex and ignores Alex's look requesting a conversation. Once again, it shows how Milo is torn between his job and his friendship with Alex.

Chapter nine opens in a discussion between Alex and Souza about Jamey's mental state. The first hint at the possibility that Jamey is being poisoned is mentioned, which foreshadows the rapid deterioration of his mental state. The reader begins to wonder who would want to poison the boy. Souza was seen feeding Jamey in the jail and his family is also paying for him to be medicated, so both become immediate suspects.

Souza says the murders are decisive and analytical, which the reader suspects would be difficult for a person in Jamey's mental condition to commit. The avid interest Souza seems to have in finding Jamey incompetent seems to throw blame away from lawyer. However, if Jamey is committed and medicated his entire life, the lawyer would not have much to fear if he himself is guilty or somehow connected to the murders or to the boy's problems.

The family life that Souza describes indicates that there might be some resentment on the part of both Dwight and Heather towards Jamey even though they both deny this and say they did their best with him. Souza says they are good parents; however, the reader knows that whenever there is a great deal of money involved,, friction may occur. Also, the fact that Jack favored Peter would cause bitterness on Dwight's part. Also, now that Dwight is responsible for the son of the brother he was slighted by must make matters even worse.

Souza also offers an alternative to the crime by blaming Jamey's friend Dig Chancellor, which Alex finds suspicious wondering where that theory was a week ago. It is obvious from what he tells Alex that he did not approve of Dig's way of life and does not really seem to care for homosexuals in general. He does slur homosexuals by saying they are not normal, so the reader can wonder how attached he really is to Jamey since he is a homosexual.



Chapter 10, 11

Chapter 10, 11 Summary

Alex heads over to UCLA in chapter ten to go back to the beginning of his relationship with Jamey. He heads over to the Biomedical Library to do more research on schizophrenia. Most books say the exact cause is unknown, but Souza points out that it in Jamey's case it is genetics and people frequently use genetics to explain issues. The one item that all the books agree on is that most schizophrenics are harmless. Typically they only hurt those closest to them in fits of rage, but they do not become serial killers.

After leaving the library, he calls Dr. Sarita Flower's office to see if he can get an appointment to talk about Jamey and the old study. Her assistant Karen agrees to lead Alex to Flower's location on campus. Before Karen leaves, she tells Alex that the doctor has been under a great deal of stress because of Jamey's influence on the funding for her research in relation to intelligence and mental illness.

Sarita is with another boy, but when he heads out Alex immediately begins questioning her about Jamey. He learns that Jamey began to evidence signs of mental illness about a year ago and started to drop out of classes. She felt sorry for Jamey and did not immediately kick him out of the program. Alex asks her if he could speak to the five others in Jamey's program and she reluctantly agrees. She knows that Souza would force her to allow Alex access to the kids and does not want to deal with any additional issues beyond her financing and PR.

In chapter eleven, Alex asks Souza if he can visit the crime scene of Jamey's arrest, to which Souza reluctantly agrees. They talk about Jamey's condition and Souza asks if there is a possibility of Jamey being on drugs. Alex doubts there is drug use, Dr. Flower's saw no signs of drugs, and Mainwaring also doubted drugs were involved and thinks Jamey is clearly schizophrenic. Souza speculates that maybe the Chancellor fed Jamey drugs and knows that it might help the case if it were true.

Dr. Delaware heads over to the jail to see Jamey, who for the first twenty minutes is unresponsive. Finally, he says one word, glass, and then slipped back into his lifeless state. Disappointed, Alex heads to meet Dwight at the Cadmus building. Dwight admits that his wife Heather is the one who is involved with Jamey's day-to-day life and probably has more useful information.

Dwight drinks and tells Alex that Jamey's intelligence prevented him from having traditional schooling and normal social interaction. At the age of five, Dwight married his wife Heather, who was able to deal well with Jamey. Dwight changes the subject and shows the strain on his life by getting angry at the scandal that would hit the family because of Jamey. He feels his whole family went above and beyond for someone who did/does not appreciate the sacrifice. At the end of the Jamey discussion, Dwight shows his anger at the fact that Jamey is gay and had a relationship with Dig Chancellor.



Chapter 10, 11 Analysis

In chapter ten, the reader learns how conscientious Alex is about his profession. He researches and studies as much as he can find about schizophrenia. If Jamey's symptoms are accurate, there is very little chance that he is capable of performing such methodical murders and schizophrenics are never serial killers. Alex seems to be questioning his ability to determine if Jamey is a monster or truly mentally ill.

To learn more about Jamey's progression, he heads to talk to Dr. Flowers, the women in charge of the program in which Jamey was previously enrolled. She describes how Jamey's previous moodiness changed about eighteen months ago. He began to drop out of classes, become paranoid, talk about poisoning and zombies, and have rapid mood swings. The common thread in his discussion seems to be poisoning, which leads the reader to believe that there might be a shred of truth in Jamey's ramblings.

In chapter eleven, Souza and Alex discuss the possibility that Jamey might be on drugs. Souza doesn't care how accurate the information might be as long as he can insinuate at the trial that several causes might have contributed to Jamey's state of mind.

At the jail, Jamey briefly comes out of his drugged state to say the word "glass." The reader wonders what significance this one word has that even in Jamey's zombie world he attempts to communicate it to Alex. Jamey does not say anything else, so Alex heads to meet with Dwight.

Dwight seems to be torn between his families' reputation and his resentment of Jamey. His anger towards his nephew makes one suspect he had something to do with the predicament in which Jamey finds himself. Dwight explains to Alex that Heather had more to do with raising Jamey and knows more about his personality. Jamey's treatment of his cousins makes the reader wonder why Heather is such a saint to Jamey. This lack of protective mother behavior foreshadows the real resentment Heather feels towards Jamey.

Finally, Dwight's anger at Jamey being gay shows his position about alternative lifestyles. He brings up Dig Chancellor and accuses him of being a bad influence on Jamey. Once again someone else seems to think Dig is the reason Jamey is troubled. The constant resentment Jamey's family has towards his lifestyle and friends could contribute to his state of mind. Never being accepted causes people to act out of character, which does support the theory that Dig influenced Jamey to horrible acts. However, Dwight's strange behavior about how the meeting of Dig and Jamey came about foreshadows a hidden secret that Dwight has in his relationship with Dig.



Chapter 12, 13

Chapter 12, 13 Summary

In chapter twelve, Alex goes home and contemplates his role in Jamey's trial. He realizes that he is not able to correctly determine Jamey's state of mind and knows he is somewhat trapped by his agreement with Souza. Alex decides not to accept payment for his services, but to continue investigating the situation.

A call from Souza sends Alex to the Chancellor estate. The nicer officer, Cash, who'd formerly interrogated Alex, is guarding the estate. He gives Alex a brief tour of the house on the way to the crime scene. Alex asks questions about the crime, but Cash refuses to give him details of the case.

Back at home, he reflects on the case until Alex hears voices at the front of the house. Outside Milo is arguing and then fighting with a stranger. The stranger recognizes Dr. Delaware and yells about police brutality. Milo cuffs the man and finds a knife as well as a gun, which Ernie claims is registered. Another policeman arrives and takes the man away.

Milo explains that the man is Ernie Radovic, a crazy man who was the Chancellor's bodyguard. Milo was watching Ernie when he saw him approach Alex's house. Ernie was planning on asking about Jamey despite the fact he was no longer a cop. Before Milo leaves, Alex asks him what is going on between them and at first he refuses to answer. Finally, he tells Alex to meet him in a location near the airport as he cannot be seen with Alex, as they are on opposite sides in the murder investigation and it would be a conflict of interest

Chapter thirteen opens at the Golden Eagle bar near the LAX airport. The detective apologizes for being late and tells Alex that Radovic is in jail for forty-eight hours. Alex learns that Milo's boss died and the new boss is not friendly to gay cops, giving him the worst partners and all the gay-related cases. The detective is unable to complain because the situation has been manipulated to set him up to look bad.

After too many drinks, Alex drives Milo along the coast to clear his head. He asks Milo about the case again and Milo tells him the only other lead the police ever had was that two bikers may somehow be connected to the murders as they were seen with three of the victims. This lead did not seem to check out though, so Jamey is still the best suspect.



Chapter 12, 13 Analysis

In chapter twelve, Alex realizes he is unable to continue his agreement with Souza. He does not feel that he can give the verdict that everyone wants and does not approve of others in his profession who give their opinions in cases of dim caps without a thorough examination of all the facts. He wants to continue investigating the case, so Alex assuages his guilt by telling himself he won't accept payment. The psychologist wants to help Jamey and he knows that Souza is opening doors that he will be unable to open.

At his house, Alex hears voices in his yard. He discovers that Chancellor's bodyguard Ernie Radovic intends to ask him questions about the case, but Milo is following him and prevents him from talking to Alex as he fears the man means harm to his friend. Milo warns Alex about the danger that Ernie presents because he claims he is mentally unstable. The reader wonders if Radovic had any part in the murder or knows more than he is admitting. Milo's concern for Alex shows that he still has deep feelings for his friend and the detective agrees to meet Alex in secret to discuss what is going on in their relationship.

In chapter thirteen, Alex learns that Milo is going through hell at his precinct. His old boss has died and the new boss is a homophobe who does everything possible to make his life miserable. The detective is given all the cases related to the gay community and is unable to protest because he does not want to be a headline. Alex realizes that Milo is under pressure at work and must find their conflict of interest on this case difficult.

On the drive home, Alex wangles a few details of the case from Milo, but nothing that would actually compromise his integrity since Souza knows everything that he reveals. The psychologist learns that despite the fact Milo and everyone else think Jamey is guilty, they had reports of two bikers leading three of the victims away. This is one of the first hints that someone else may have committed the murders, and now the reader must watch for which character rides a bike.



Chapter 14, 15

Chapter 14, 15 Summary

Alex arrives home in chapter fourteen to find Robin still awake. He fills her in about the case and Milo's predicament with his boss. She asks him to stop by the shop tomorrow to meet one of her clients, hoping it will cheer him up. Robin also tells him that Souza called and Alex can meet with Dr. Mainwaring tomorrow.

The next day at Dr. Mainwaring's office, he learns that the doctor is out and left a file for him to read before their meeting. After reading the file and talking with the doctor, he is unimpressed with the level of treatment that Jamey has been receiving. Alex hopes to talk to Mrs. Vann and learns she has left the employ of Canyon Oaks. Dr. Mainwaring becomes annoyed with what he feels is an interrogation on Alex's part and ends the meeting.

In chapter fifteen, Souza sets up a meeting with Heather Cadmus. In the interview, Dwight's wife tells him that originally Jamey viewed her as the evil stepmother and was jealous of her getting some of Dwight's attention. Eventually, since she was the primary parent at home, he opened up but never got personal with anyone. She guessed he was homosexual but knew that Dwight could not handle the news, so Heather got rid of any evidence of Jamey being gay. She admits that Jamey met Dig at a party they hosted and that his mental deterioration started around that same time. Heather also tells him that Jamey stole a lavender dress from her closet and wore it on a date with Dig about a year before the murders started. She claims she never saw the dress again even though she looked for it. Alex finds the news upsetting and leaves disheartened.

Chapter 14, 15 Analysis

Alex meets with Dr. Guy Mainwaring in chapter fourteen and discovers a difference in their philosophy on patients. Alex is a psychologist who is concerned with the emotional, physical, and medical causes of an issue, while Guy is a psychiatrist who concentrates on the medical cause and chemical cures to issues.

Mainwaring is not really interested in Jamey's family history and the emotional stress that might have caused his problems. He does not really like to deal with the emotional side, preferring to study the effect of the chemicals. As Alex asks more questions about the treatment of Jamey and the unusual effect of the drugs on his mental state and behavior, Dr. Mainwaring gets more irritated and agitated. The reader wonders if Guy is beginning to question the benefits and effects of the drugs and if there is more being given to the boy than what he prescribed. Dr. Delaware questions the inconsistencies in reactions and behavior. Guy does not mention that he is suspicious as well, and it is revealed in a later chapter that he did contemplate why the effects of his drugs are so



different than what they should be, but said nothing, which is negligence on his part as a doctor.

In chapter fifteen, Alex meets with Heather Cadmus at the Cadmus house. Reporters are clamoring to get in the wrought iron gate for an interview and Tully Antrim is guarding the house's entrance. When an especially aggressive reporter refuses to back off, Tully hits him quite hard in the gut. Once again, Tully is doing more than just chauffeuring people around for Souza. The reader wonders what his relationship is with Heather that he is standing guard. It may be because the lawyer ordered him there but why would he not just hire more guards rather than giving up his chauffeurs services? Antrim also knows the layout of the house quite well when he escorts Alex in to see Heather, which means he has probably been here many times. This knowledge of the house, as well as Tully guarding Heather, foreshadows the fact that she has more dealings with Souza than just using his services as a lawyer.

Alex's first impression of Heather is of a model thin but beautiful woman who seems nervous. The reader wonders if she is nervous because she is involved and worries that he'll perceive her guilt, or if is she just having a difficult time with the situation and is slightly shaky.

The image she presents of Jamey is a moody, withdrawn youth with no noticeable violent tendencies. She acts like she is setting Jamey up for a bum rap and then drops a bomb. Heather leans forward and quietly says she doesn't wish to hurt Jamey, but then proceeds to tell Alex about seeing the teen in her lavender dress. Heather's behavior seems inconsistent in that she pretends to be concerned and protective and says good things but then tells Alex something she knows is a killing blow to Jamey and the case. She does say that Souza feels the fact that Jamey took the dress to Dig's house may show that Chancellor was the brains behind the killings. Heather's revelation of the dress is disturbing to Alex because he has been feeling the boy is innocent.

All of this of course is to mislead Alex and later he questions much of her information. One important thing he does notice when leaving the house is Heather's has carvings from Latin America, which seems irrelevant at the time but foreshadows her knowledge of poisons later.



Chapter 16, 17

Chapter 16, 17 Summary

In chapter sixteen, Dr. Sarita Flowers sets up a meeting between Alex and the four other young people in project 160. They tell him that Jamey distanced himself from them and that they know very little about him. The only one Jamey has talked to is Gary, who is no longer in the program. Alex asks them if they observed any odd behavior and they say they saw him talking to himself and mumbling about strange things like glass canyons. They feel Jamey may be doing drugs because Gary is heavily into drugs; however, they never saw Jamey take anything.

At the end of the conversation, Jennifer questions the validity of Jamey's diagnosis because she has done some research on schizophrenics as well and agrees that typically schizophrenics do not perform serial murders. Alex feels the same as he has all along, and they end their conversation intrigued by the possibilities. Alex heads over to Sarita's office and asks her for information about Gary's whereabouts. While they are talking, she gets a call from Souza at the jail to say Jamey has tried to commit suicide.

Dr. Delaware rushes to the jail to see Jamey in chapter seventeen. Souza is still there and tells Alex that Jamey just kept banging his head on the wall until he bled, but he does not have any broken bones or internal injuries. Sonnenschein motions Alex aside and tells him that Jamey was talking about plumes and poisoned Earth during his episode. Since the deputy won't reveal any other information, Alex leaves and goes to lunch with Souza to discuss the case.

The lawyer asks Alex if he is willing to give a dim cap review and he says not until he has all the facts. Souza tells Alex he is no longer needed to testify in court because the lawyer knows he is hesitant to say that Jamey is dim cap, though he will say he is incompetent. Horace also thinks he has a good case due to his behavior at the jail. He has also found two doctors from Harvard and Stanford willing to act as expert witnesses to the dim cap diagnosis. Alex feels relief despite the fact that this is his first time being fired.

Chapter 16, 17 Analysis

A message is left for Alex in chapter sixteen from Sarita Flowers telling him that he could meet with the other kids in the program. The next day he goes to UCLA to meet with the four young people. Sarita's meticulous nature is shown when she leaves him a detailed memo describing the kid's current accomplishments.

Felicia, David, Jennifer, and Joshua discuss their impressions of Jamey with Dr. Delaware. None of them were close to him so they only observed his behavior; however, they do mention that he talked to Gary, one of the young men that dropped out



of the program. Gary is now into drugs, so there is some speculation about Jamey's drug use; but, they never saw Jamey take drugs so nobody can confirm drug usage.

Otherwise, they confirmed what he already suspected, that Jamey was not violent but was prone to rambling and he kept mentioning glass canyons. Once again glass is mentioned and the reader knows this is important to the mystery. Jennifer also asks Dr. Delaware some of the same questions that have been puzzling him. It confirms to the reader that several intelligent people have issues with the theory that Jamey was able to commit the serial murders. The reader must doubt either the diagnosis of schizophrenia or the crime being committed by the teen or perhaps both.

Alex goes to Sarita's office to get information about Gary. The mention of Gary upsets Sarita, which may be caused by the fact that she feels he is another failure to her program. The reader wonders what the connection is between the two boys. The call about Jamey's injury ends any further discussion between Flowers and Delaware.

In chapter seventeen, Alex and Souza both rush to the jail to check on the teen and learn that he is probably going to be live but are unable to determine if there will be any permanent damage to his brain. The deputy that previously told Alex he would not provide him with any information relents and tells him what Jamey says when he screams. Apparently, Jamey talks about glass canyons and poison again. The sympathy Sonnenschein feels for the hapless teen, the repetition of the same words, and the doubt by Delaware and Jennifer are all adding up to the teen being framed for the murder, but who really did the killings is still very much up in the air.

The suspicion that the lawyer is involved gets stronger over lunch, when Souza fires Alex for not going along with the dim cap plan. Souza suddenly feels that he has enough evidence to get Jamey institutionalized. The question is why Souza is so set on having the teen basically declared crazy and how will it benefit him. When he asks the lawyer if he thinks Jamey is innocent, Souza says it does not matter to him as he is just the lawyer.

Later the reader finds out what his involvement is, but at this time Alex is suspicious of Souza, as he should be.



Chapter 18, 19

Chapter 18, 19 Summary

Musing about Jamey's past, his strange reaction to medications, potential drug use and Souza's sudden change in heart in needing him, Alex is left with more questions than answers in chapter eighteen. Alex plans on investigating on his own, but first has to go Robin's studio to meet Billy Orleans, a rocker picking up a guitar Robin designed just for him. Billy has connections in San Francisco that Alex asks to be introduced too so he can learn more about the case.

The next day Alex tries to find Gary and instead meets a neighbor, Ms. Randee Bogdan, who tells Alex that Gary has moved. She describes him and his friends as nihilists who consider life meaningless but they do sometimes go to an art gallery where they display their "art". After viewing Gary's apartment, Alex leaves and a homeless man named Mudpie stops him at his car. Mudpie tells him two scary, ugly biker people were looking for Gary, the Jap kid. Money, of course, exchanged hands.

In chapter nineteen, Alex is looking through microfiche at the library to learn more about Jamey's family. Alex discovers that Souza used to date Antoinette before his best friend Jack swept her off her feet. After finishing researching the family, Alex drives to the gallery that Randee told him Gary sometimes went to called Voids Will Be Voids. He discovers an art piece by Gary depicting a combination of a slasher murder as well as Peter's suicide. In the scene is a book with diary written on the cover. Alex haggles with the attendant to buy the piece and bribes him to call Gary to come to the gallery that night by six. After leaving the gallery he calls Milo to tell him about the bikers breaking into Gary's loft since Milo had told him about bikers before.

Later that night, Alex goes to the gallery and learns a man in a suit bought Gary's picture called The Wretched Act for more money. The deal to meet with Gary in the alley is still happening. Gary tells him that he feels Jamey was taking acid because his behavior was like someone on drugs, even though he never saw him take any. Gary also tells Alex that he thinks Jamey is capable of murder before he exits the alley.

Chapter 18, 19 Analysis

Alex is attempting to sort through all the information he has learned over the course of his investigation in chapter eighteen. The descriptions from Jamey's family and fellow students contradict the nature of the murders of which the teen is accused. Jamey's reaction to medication does not match with his diagnosis, and overall Alex finds he has more questions than answers. He decides to keep investigating on his own, knowing that now he does not have pressure from Souza, which means he does not have to worry about his diagnosis. Alex is showing how important the teen is to him and he is continuing to try and prove his innocence.



His meeting with Billy Orleans is important and one of the ways Robin first actually helps him in a case. Maybe she is not only the love interest and will become important in this book and other Alex Delaware novels. Alex knows Billy's contacts could provide him with more information about the murders and the people involved in the case. Alex uses every avenue and contacts in his own life to find information about Jamey's case.

Later Alex drives to Gary's last known address and discovers he has moved from a friendly neighbor. He learns Gary is a nihilist, so there is very little chance that he is involved in Jamey's murder since he wouldn't care enough to be involved. Alex knows he may still have information about Jamey's state of mind and potential drug use, so he continues to try to find Gary.

As Alex is leaving, he runs into a homeless man named Mudpie, who lets him know two ugly biker people are also looking for Gary. This implies that the biker lead that Milo told Alex about earlier has some validity. The reader now knows for certain that at least two other people are involved in Jamey's case. This also foreshadows the fact that Gary knows something or has something relevant to the case, which one finds out later is the diary.

In chapter nineteen, Alex discovers that Antoinette and Souza used to date before Jack wooed her. Delaware knows that not matter how good the friendship, there had to be some level of anger simmering below the surface. He finds it confusing that Souza ends up being Jack's best man and wonders if his worship of Jack outweighed his bitterness. The reader suspects that Souza would love to see Jack's family suffer.

When Alex goes to the Voids Will Be Voids gallery, he learns that Gary is showing a piece of art depicting Jamey's father's suicide combined with elements of the Lavender Slashings. In the room is a diary that is specifically highlighted, so the reader wonders at the significance of the book. Alex bribes the attendant to have Gary meet him at the gallery later. Unfortunately, a well-dressed man outbids Alex on the piece while he is away. Now the reader knows a well-dressed man and bikers are involved in the conspiracy. Luckily, Gary meets Alex in the alley and he learns that Gary feels Jamey is on drugs, even though he has not seen him ingest any, but says that Jamey acted like he was high on PCP. The poisoning theory gets stronger as more people describe Jamey's behavior as drug-induced but do not see him take drugs.



Chapter 20, 21

Chapter 20, 21 Summary

In chapter twenty, Alex and Robin discuss Gary and Jamey and their disappointing lives. They both wonder if there is any link between genius and insanity since two of the six kids in the program are off track.

The next morning Alex searches for Surtees and Vann at local hospitals and agencies. Eventually he finds Vann signed up with a registry and pretends to be Mainwaring to get her address. Alex learns she has left the apartment so he leaves to see his next contact.

Alex visits Mr. Oberheim, the man Billy set him up to talk to about the local residents of San Francisco. Mr. Oberheim tells Alex that Peter probably did not commit suicide. Peter would hang himself to the point of death for sexual pleasure and the last hanging likely went wrong. Also, Jamey's mom was a sweet but wild girl who liked to dance naked.

In chapter twenty-one, Alex drives back to the gallery to get a better description of the man who bought Gary's artwork. The description sounds just like Ernie Radovic, Chancellor's bodyguard, so he calls Milo to report the connection. Alex learns that Radovic is dead and two bikers were reported at the scene of the crime.

Chapter 20, 21 Analysis

In chapter twenty, Alex wonders about the link between insanity and genius because of Gary and Jamey's descent into madness. Alex seems to be hoping for a link at this point because he feels responsible for Jamey's issues. Alex discusses Gary with Robin and she points out that art such as he describes involves careful planning and is very Japanese, so once again her feedback is helpful.

The next day Alex searches for and finds Vann's apartment. She has already fled, which he knows is unexpected since she registered with an agency after leaving Canyon Oaks. The conspiracy seems to be large and touching anyone that was part of Jamey's life. Her absence foreshadows her possible involvement in Jamey's frame-up.

When Alex talks to Mr. Roland Oberheim, he learns that Jamey's father did not commit suicide but instead was involved in a sexual game that went too far. Even though Roland is obviously stoned, Alex feels he has learned much that is still valid. The secret relating to the suicide is revealed and the reader wonders why the information that Peter did not abandon Jamey was not imparted to the teen. This foreshadows that some secret about the incident still needs to be hidden by Dwight.

In chapter twenty-one, Alex learns that Ernie Radovic bought Gary's artwork. He knows that Ernie is trying to find the real killer since Ernie does not believe that Jamey is



responsible. The artwork must have some significance or reveal a clue about the real murderer. When Alex calls Milo to tell him about the connection, he learns that Radovic is dead and was killed by two bikers. There does seem to be a conspiracy that is important to protect, since it is necessary to kill Radovic. The murderer(s) must feel like Radovic was getting too close to exposing them as the killer(s) instead of Jamey.



Chapter 22, 23

Chapter 22, 23 Summary

In chapter twenty-two, Alex drives to Bitter Canyon to meet Milo to talk about the case and Radovic's murder. Once there, Milo tells him that the two bikers were involved in some kind of deal gone wrong. An old, drunk man named Skaggs owns the diner where the bikers and Radovic were fighting. The fat biker starts the fight and the skinny biker kills Radovic with a large knife.

Alex tells Milo about Gary's art piece and they discuss who they think is involved in the murders. Milo thinks both Jamey and Gary participated in the murders, but Alex does not believe that they were involved. Milo writes Gary's and his girlfriend's Slit's last known address in his notebook so he knows where to find them to question them later.

A park ranger drives up to help and tells them that Cadmus Construction owns the canyon. They all go to the northeast rim to look at the lake and the ranger says it is called the glass canyon because it looks like a sheet of glass.

In chapter twenty-three, Milo and Alex go back to the cafe and talk more to Skaggs. They ask him if he has seen Jamey, Digby, or Gary, but he has not seen them. He is easily sidetracked but says he did meet Jack Cadmus. He remembers Jack had a book that he refused to show to anyone. Alex feels that this diary is important to solving the homicide. At home he calls Lou and asks him about the Bitter Canyon bonds. Lou is frustrated when Alex can't tell him if the bonds are a bad investment. He asks Alex to call day or night if he learns something that may affect him or his investors.

Chapter 22, 23 Analysis

In chapter twenty-two, Milo asks Alex to meet him in Bitter Canyon, which is the scene of Radovic's murder. Skaggs, a drunk diner owner, has told Milo about the bikers that killed Radovic and says that the skinny one stabbed Radovic several times with a long knife. Since the serial murders were done with a knife, the reader suspects that the bikers may have committed those murders as well. Milo seems to be starting to relent and think that Alex may be right that someone else or a group of people is involved in the Slasher Murders.

When Alex and Milo meet at Bitter Canyon, they learn Cadmus Construction plans to make a great deal of money by turning the lake into a hydroelectric plant. Since Dwight Cadmus as well as a number of other people have a vested interest in the project, one can see that a great deal of money may be a strong motivation for many things, including murder. Radovic's murder, and the identity of the investors involved in the hydroelectric scheme, foreshadow the fact that the canyon and the Slasher Murders are somehow related. The park ranger takes them to the canyon's lake, which is described as a sheet of glass. The reader realizes that Jamey knows something about the canyon



that someone wants to keep secret since glass is a consistent part of his ramblings. The lake may also start to explain why someone wants Jamey to appear to be insane, so his ramblings will go unnoticed.

In chapter twenty-three, Milo and Alex go to the diner to talk with the owner again. They are hoping for a better description of the bikers, but Skaggs gets off track when they ask about Gary and starts talking about World War II and the Japs. Skaggs also tells them he knew Black Jack Cadmus and that he saw Jack carry a diary that looked like a book of poetry. Alex tells Milo that a diary was depicted in Gary's artwork and the reader knows the diary may be one key as to why the murders are happening. Milo still feels Jamey is involved in the homicides, but he is willing to investigate other theories and suspects. The reader wonders if he would bend if Alex were not his friend. If so, Milo is a very fair-minded detective in being willing to further investigate whether Jamey is innocent when they have such a cut and dry case already.

Back at home, Alex calls Lou to ask him about the bond sales related to the Canyon Power Plant. Lou wonders what this has to do with the case, but Alex can't explain. The reader learns that the investment business is based on faith and suspects that Jamey knows something that will badly hurt the investment various people have made in the bonds.



Chapter 24, 25

Chapter 24, 25 Summary

Alex drives to UCLA in chapter twenty-four to meet with Jennifer. She has been thinking about the murders and has a theory about Jamey's condition. Jennifer thinks that Jamey is being controlled by hallucinogens. They head to the library to research the possible drugs that would not have been tested for or shown in a doctor's panel. Dr. Delaware and Jennifer walk to the Biomedical Library to do research on drugs that may cause a problem like Jamey's. They both find information on belladonna and Alex finds that Heather Cadmus used to work in the Central America with her father.

In chapter twenty-five, Alex calls Milo to let him know what he and Jennifer have discovered about Jamey's aunt. Lou calls to ask Alex to tell him if he learned anything more about Bitter Canyon, but Alex refuses to give him any information yet. It turns out that Lou has unloaded his and his investor's bonds in the Canyon project. Alex also asks Lou where someone would hide a small object on a boat, and the answer aids in the search for the diary. Meanwhile, Jamey is still in bad condition despite the fact that Milo and Alex have a separate doctor treating him. They are worried the family is still slipping him drugs despite their best efforts.

Chapter 24, 25 Analysis

Jennifer has reasoned that there is no way Jamey would have been caught if he were faking his condition. His intelligence factored with his deteriorating condition does not add up to a murderer who would get caught, as he is too bright to just wait to be discovered in Digby's home. She also theorizes that his behavior does not match any specific mental illness. Her theories break the case because it makes Alex realize he needs to research drugs that are not looked at in a normal panel but could still be slipped to someone to cause these reactions.

They learn that Heather Cadmus lied about her field work and was in Central America. Also, in Central America, belladonna is used and causes similar symptoms in people, especially combined with Jamey's other medications and after prolonged use. The reader knows that Heather must feel some resentment or anger towards Jamey and was faking the kind aunt routine. It is obvious that she is probably involved somehow in causing the severity of Jamey's mental problems

In chapter twenty-five, Milo is shocked that the family may be causing part of Jamey's issues. Despite the fact that he is supposed to be a hardened detective, Milo seems to be a genuine nice guy who is constantly amazed at people's depravity. Alex asks about Jamey's condition and learns Milo has ordered a doctor to check on Jamey in secret and take frequent blood tests. The problem is that that belladonna is so easily absorbed it would be difficult to know when and how the family is sneaking it to Jamey. If they find



it is atropine poisoning, they can give him something that will help almost immediately. This is good news for Jamey but bad news for the killer, so the teen will have to be watched very carefully because if he dies they will still consider him the murderer. Only Souza and his aunt and uncle have visited, so one has to wonder if one of them is involved, especially after the information Alex found out about Heather.

Lou calls and asks Alex about the Bitter Canyon bonds and Alex says he still knows nothing. Lou has already unloaded his bonds and those of his clients after finding there are small amounts of bonds being sold from the Beverly Hills area. Lou seems to always be watching for an angle. While on the phone, Alex asks him where someone would hide a small item on a boat that they do not want found even by the pros. Once again, one of Alex's connections and a little developed character in the book provide Alex information that advances the case. If not for Jennifer and Lou, Alex and Milo would probably not have as much information as they do about the case. Lou's information helps Milo and Alex find the diary on Radovic's boat. The reader now knows that the diary depicted in the artwork is important to the case as no one would bother to hide it otherwise.



Chapter 26, 27

Chapter 26, 27 Summary

In chapter twenty-six, Alex and Milo examine the book they find on Radovic's boat. The book is a diary written by Black Jack Cadmus, Jamey's grandfather. Most of the content describes Jack's business life and the current deals he has in the works. The one of interest to this case is the Bitter Canyon deal, which Jack describes in great detail.

The diary tells that a man named Hornburgh, from the army, approaches Jack and is eager to have him buy the Canyon; however, Jack is suspicious of their zealotry to get him to buy the land. He speculates that there must be some problem with the canyon and on one of his trips he spots a man, Kaltenblud, which he recognizes as a poison gas expert on the round-up list for Nuremberg.

The government had set Kaltenblud up with a lab, and a lot of poison is left behind buried in metal canisters, which Hornburgh claims are safe, but Jack knows metal deteriorates and the land may become polluted at a later date. He threatens to go public with the issue and the government gives him a great deal and paperwork stating that the property is clean and safe.

Milo and Alex realize that Jamey found the diary and his ramblings are about the land. They speculate that he told Chancellor, who then threatened Dwight Cadmus and forced Dwight to buy back his share in the property. They speculate that Dwight and his wife decide it would be easier to remove Jamey and Chancellor so that nobody else discovers the Canyon's potential problems. The doctor tending Jamey in jail confirms that someone is giving Jamey belladonna.

Milo and Alex drive to Dr. Mainwaring's house to interrogate him in chapter twenty-seven. Guy is upset at the intrusion and tries to make them leave; however, Milo continues to question him. The primary line of questioning is the affect of drugs on a person and how well they mimic schizophrenia. Finally, Milo accuses Guy of poisoning Jamey, which he denies, saying he was fooled.

Vann appears in the room and insists Guy is telling the truth. She explains he knew nothing and that she was mysteriously dropped 5,000 dollars to disappear from the ward the night of Jamey's disappearance. Angela and Guy plan to get married and are desperate for money since his ex-wife got all his money in the divorce. Vann also admits to being attacked by two bikers.

Finally, Mainwaring says that he was being paid by Souza to let Surtees take care of Jamey, so they must have been poisoning him. Milo makes a deal to keep things quiet if both Angela and Guy cooperate with the investigation.



Chapter 26, 27 Analysis

In chapter twenty-six, Alex is reading Black Jack's diary and learns that he cared most about his business and little about his family. Jack only briefly mentions his family, and this lack of real love may partially explain why his wife and boys are such an emotional mess. The only person mentioned in a little detail, on a personal level, was Souza. Jack worries that Souza hates him because of his involvement with Antoinette, his success in business, and the fact that Lucy also dumped Souza. Jack decides to make the lawyer Peter's godfather and give him some additional property on Wilshire to appease Souza. His arrogance is evident, since Jack assumes everyone cares about property and money as much as he does; but, Souza never really forgives Jack, so this bitterness helps lead to the events that cause the murders. Jamey finding the diary and talking about it leads to his being dosed with belladonna, so the journal is essential to explain current developments.

Milo and Alex go to Mainwaring's house in chapter twenty-seven to interrogate him about Jamey's poisoned state. He denies poisoning Jamey, but this is hard to believe because he considers himself an authority on drugs and how they affect a person. Vann enters the room to defend Guy and the reader learns they have been together for a year.

Vann took a bribe to be gone from her post at the hospital at the time that Jamey went missing from the Oaks. She states that she is broke and after getting the second payoff, decides to abandon her apartment because she fears for her life. When she is in her car, two bikers show up and try to get in her car, but fortunately her landlady starts screaming and scares them off. Knowing that Mainwaring took a bribe to let Surtees work at the hospital tells the reader that the conspiracy seems to have touched everyone's life and this foreshadows the depth of Surtees involvement in the entire case.

If Milo and Alex can find the bikers, the reader knows the culprits will be revealed. Milo bribes Mainwaring and Vann with sealed records, which gives them a new start in life if they aid in helping trap the killers. Milo does what is needed to get justice done and one has to admire that in him.



Chapter 28, 29

Chapter 28, 29 Summary

In chapter twenty-eight, Milo, Alex and various policemen setup a stakeout using Mainwaring as bait. Mainwaring calls Heather Cadmus and tells her that he has information that is crucial to Jamey's case and wants to sell it to her. Heather sends the two bikers, Skinny and Fat, while the police watch and video tape from another hotel room.

As Alex watches, he realizes that Skinny is Tully Antrim, Souza's driver. The police burst in to arrest the men when they get violent; but, only after the bikers have said they plan to kill Guy on Heather's orders. As they unmask the Fat biker, they discover it is Martha Surtees, Jamey's nurse.

At dinner, Milo tells Alex about Antrim and Surtees illustrious past in chapter twenty-nine. Antrim claims to be a descendant of Billy the Kid and is suspected of multiple rapes and a murder. Surtees is part of an outlaw biker gang called the Ghouls. She was accused of second degree murder and put in jail until Souza freed her. While in jail, she studied to be a nurse.

Souza is paying for Surtees and Antrim to live on a piece of his property, and the two have become more than partners. Antrim agrees to work with Milo to reduce Surtees sentence and admits that he committed the murders. Milo says that since Surtees did poison Jamey, she cannot totally avoid jail.

Later, Milo and Alex meet with the lawyer, Balch, who notarized Dwight's signature without actually seeing him sign the incompetence clause to transfer Jamey's funds back to Dwight. Balch insists he did not know the signature was a forgery. Milo blackmails the lawyer to get the documents about the will and case by saying he does not plan to investigate or bring Balch up on charges if he cooperates. The lawyer agrees and reluctantly hands over the documents.

Chapter 28, 29 Analysis

In chapter twenty-eight, Mainwaring agrees to work with the police to prevent his reputation from being smeared and losing all custody of his children. Mainwaring seems to care about his family and Vann, which shows that he isn't quite the cold, impersonal person he has been portrayed.

Also, when the bikers are unmasked as Antrim and Surtees, it is confirmed that the Cadmus family and Souza are both involved in the conspiracy. As far as the reader knows, Surtees is in the employ of the Cadmus family and Antrim is in the employ of Souza.



In chapter twenty-nine, Milo tells Alex that Surtees is actually being paid by Souza. Apparently Souza has his hand in a number of pots. The reader learns that Antrim has a weakness for Surtees and would do anything to prevent or reduce her jail sentences. He agrees to work with Milo and Alex to unmask Souza and Heather Cadmus. Antrim also gives Milo pictures to prove that he committed the murders, not Jamey. He tells Milo that only he did the murders and that Surtees was not involved. Antrim shows his fiercely protective nature to the one thing he loves.

Souza and Heather apparently also lie to another lawyer to get him to notarize a fake signature of Dwight's. This allows Heather and Dwight to have control over Jamey's money if he is found insane. Suddenly the whole goal of the murders and Jamey's poisoning makes sense. Heather now has control of the money and keeps Jamey from revealing that the land is worthless as well.



Chapter 30, 31

Chapter 30, 31 Summary

In chapter thirty, Milo asks Alex and Antrim to work together to get a confession from Souza and the Cadmus family. Alex is nervous because he is afraid that Antrim will betray him and the police. Alex hopes the motivation to protect his girlfriend is enough to keep him in line.

They arrive at the law building and Souza is impatient with Alex because he and the Cadmuses have a function that evening. He asks Alex what medical developments have been discovered that made a meeting so urgent. Alex explains that he found out that Jamey is innocent and being poisoned. Souza agrees to call Platt and learn about Jamey's condition, but Dwight finds the whole theory difficult to swallow. Just as Souza goes to call Platt, the police arrive.

Souza questions the purpose of Milo's and the other officers' entrance in chapter thirty-one. Milo enters the room with a briefcase and stands next to Souza, while Cash walks around the room touching all of the lawyer's possessions. The remaining officers stay just outside the door.

Dwight tells Alex that he is going to file a harassment suit against him, but Souza calms him and asks Milo to release them to their function. He also tells Milo that he represents the Cadmus family and any issues he may have with them must be taken up with him. Milo says that Souza cannot represent them and has a young officer bring in a video monitor.

The video monitor is set up and turned on to reveal a taped confession by Tully Antrim. Antrim describes each of the victims, where he met them, and how they were killed. Tully tells the police he was ordered to cut them up to appear like a psycho was at work. He says after he killed and dumped the bodies, he went back to the cabin that is owned by Souza to clean himself up. Tully also comments on how the murders meant nothing to him as he was just following orders.

Tully says he was also sent with Skull to kidnap Jamey from Canyon Oaks. Skull gives the boy an injection and then they go to the Chancellor's house. When Skull hears Jamey on the phone with Dr. Delaware, she panics and hits him with the needle while he is on the phone. They knocked out Chancellor, gave Jamey more drugs, and mutilated and hung Chancellor per Souza's orders.

Souza protests that the interview is not credible and Dwight demands an explanation. Milo tells Dwight that Peter's will was drawn up by someone other than Souza because Peter suspected something was off about Souza. Milo then tells Dwight about the clause activated in the will and Dwight protests the validity. Dwight also says that it was



okay that Jamey got the inheritance. He wanted to watch over Jamey after Peter died because they were family.

Dwight explains that the one thing that hurt was when Chancellor demanded money back for his investment in the Canyon. He suspected that Jamey told him, but then the Chancellor showed Dwight copies of Jack's diary. Dwight went to Souza for advice and they paid off Chancellor for a year. Dwight protests he had nothing to do with Chancellor's murder and Jamey's mental state, and then Milo plays a taped recording between Tully and Souza about taking care of Vann and Mainwaring.

Dwight seems genuinely shocked at Souza's actions. Then, Milo accuses Heather of slowly poisoning Jamey over the last year because she hated the boy. Dwight is again shocked at the involvement of the people he loves. Milo also tells Dwight that Radovic was killed right after he called Souza about Radovic's blackmail.

The police open the briefcase to reveal the full extent of Heather's involvement as inside the case is everything needed to make poison. Dwight calls Heather names and she pulls a gun on him. She explains that Dwight felt he killed Peter by not cutting him down in time when Peter did his hanging game, and wanted to make it right by raising Jamey. She was angry because she had to put up with Jamey and Dwight did nothing. Whitehead steps in front of Heather and is shot in the mouth. Then the police shoot her before she can kill Dwight as well. Souza is taken to county jail.

Chapter 30, 31 Analysis

In chapter thirty, Antrim is continuing to work with the police to protect his girlfriend. Alex describes him as a cobra ready to strike, which seems appropriate, and the reader hopes Antrim does not find an opening to betray Alex.

Antrim and Alex drive to the law building to meet the Cadmus family and Souza to discuss Jamey's issues. At the building Souza is impatient, and seems very sure that his involvement has not been discovered. When Alex says that Jamey is innocent and being poisoned, the only one who shows a visible reaction in the room is Dwight. Dwight's reaction of disbelief and annoyance seem to imply he is stupid but not involved. Heather and Souza's lack of reaction is so cold that the reader knows they are guilty and are not even sorry for the killings or the poisoning of Jamey.

Chapter thirty-one shows the first dent in Souza's armor, when he sways slightly at the arrival of the police. The moment only lasts for a second as he gathers his composure, believing he can still bluff his way out of the situation.

Heather shows what a cold person she is by not even having a reaction. Dwight is offended and wonders what the police have to do with the situation since he still believes Jamey is the killer. Dwight shows his obliviousness to the emotions and situations around him by still worrying about his pride and not the fact that the police are here to arrest someone in the room.



They show Tully's confession to the entire group. He implicates Souza in all the murders stating that none of them were personal but all on the orders of Souza. Tully seems to be finding justification for his soul by saying he didn't do the murders by choice. Souza shows his confidence by remaining stone-faced and stating that Tully's confession is not believable or creditable due to his character. The interesting part is that Souza seems to have something personal against Chancellor and even the entire gay population due to his desire to see Chancellor strung up in a particular way, which is similar to how Jamey's father died. Seems he is getting his revenge against the family in reminding the family of one of their secrets, Peter's mysterious "suicide."

When Souza says Tully is lying, Milo explains that it is too detailed to not be true and Tully has proof in a taped phone conversation between him and Souza. Souza gets a drink and Milo continues to tell Dwight the depth of the conspiracy. Alex and Milo watch Dwight's emotions closely to see if he knew what was happening around him. Chancellor was blackmailing Dwight and he suspected Jamey was somehow involved as well, but he was simply paying the money. Souza is the only one who knew of the payments and takes care of the issue without Dwight's knowledge. Dwight just seems to think that it is convenient that anyone threatening his family has something happen to them. The reader can't help wonder if on a subconscious level Dwight is relieved and might have suspected but didn't want his world turned upside down with actual knowledge because he isn't a mean man, just a weak one.

Milo reveals to Dwight that the clause in Peter's will about ill health has been put into effect. Once again things are done "for" Dwight. Heather finally breaks down and admits to her involvement. Dwight is furious and his betrayal is evidenced when he calls her a whore. She tells him he is spineless and didn't even bother to save his own brother. One learns that Dwight did find his brother in the middle of an "act" and did not cut him down in time. He blames himself and wanted to raise Jamey to assuage his guilt. Heather is angry and bitter she got stuck with the evil kid, so she plotted with Souza who has his own agenda. After Heather is shot, Dwight just stares, and then faints, so one sees he is not a brave man. Once again, even in the face of all the evidence, Souza seems sure he will be released in time and once again be a respected member of society.



Chapter 32, 33

Chapter 32, 33 Summary

In chapter thirty-two, Milo calls Alex and tells him they found and talked to Gary. Gary put the diary in a drawer and later made it a part of his art. He seemed to have no knowledge of the importance in relation to Bitter Canyon. Alex flies out to go visit Jamey.

In chapter thirty-three, Alex drives to Carmel and arrives at the hospital overlooking the ocean where Jamey is living. A young woman named Susan escorts Jamey to meet with Alex. Alex talks to Jamey about how he is feeling. Jamey tells Alex he is feeling better but still aches some. A big cause of his improvement is Susan, who helps him get through the day. Jamey feels guilty about all the horrible things that have happened.

Jamey talks about how everyone hated him. Delaware explains that it is not his fault and how they treated him was because of their own selfish greed. He is also having strange dreams and thoughts as his brain tries to adjust to the strain of thinking normally without poison or drugs.

Alex explains that he should just take everything one day at a time. Jamey is never going to be normal and there will be challenges, but Alex says he will learn to cope. He tells Jamey to call if he ever needs his help. Jamey shakes his hand, Alex hugs him and Jamey says thank you.

Chapter 32, 33 Analysis

In chapter thirty-two, Gary is found and says he almost threw away the diary. Alex speculates that Jamey gave the diary to Gary because he knew his new Nihilist attitude means he wouldn't care what the diary revealed.

In chapter thirty-three, Alex is at the hospital where Jamey is now living. It is a beautiful location on the beach. Jamey and Alex talk and the strain of the situation is still evident. He doesn't fully remember all that has happened, but everything is slowly coming back in dreams. Alex knows that Jamey is never going to fully recover, but hopes that someday he can cope in the real world and have a semblance of a good life. Jamey is extremely attached to the nurse Susan, and her caring seems to be healing him quicker. Jamey needs to feel attachment and as if he is important to someone. Alex's help is also an anchor for Jamey.



Characters

Dr. Alex Delaware

Dr. Alex Delaware is the main character in *Over the Edge*. He is a psychologist who now has a private practice. He met Jamey Cadmus when he worked with Dr. Sarita Flowers on a study of young geniuses and their mental health problems at UCLA.

He has done very well with his investments through Lou Cestare, his money manager, and does not need to work, but still takes cases when they interest him. Alex lives in a nice house in a good section of LA and even has a Koi pond, which he says brings calm to his life. Alex is a very honest, caring person who is genuinely concerned with his patient's welfare. His nature is shown by his refusing to be influenced by Souza when asked to provide a quick verdict on Jamey's condition without even investigating the issue. Alex is a persistent person who keeps researching even when all evidence seems to indicate severe schizophrenia as the cause of Jamey's problems.

Alex also forms lasting friendships in his life such as his friend, Milo. He likes Milo for himself and does not care that he is gay even when others criticize this friendship.

When he receives the incoherent pleading phone call for his help from Jamey, he worries and finally goes to the hospital to check on the teen. When he finds out from Milo that Jamey is in serious trouble, he promptly tries to help and find out who the real killer is as he feels from the beginning that Jamey did not do the murders. Alex's instincts are very good and his friends support him even when they disagree.

Jamey Cadmus

Jamey Cadmus is a brilliant teenager that Alex Delaware knew when the boy was twelve years old in Project 160 under Dr. Sarita Flowers. Jamey is also part of an extremely wealthy family who run a real estate corporation. He is the heir to the company and his uncle is the current figurehead until Jamey comes of age. His money and the fact that he is a young genius makes him feel very isolated from others and he has very few friends. Most of the others in the Project 160 group do not know him well as he sets himself apart from others and does not always attend classes.

The one person he seems to feel an attachment to is Dr. Alex Delaware, so when Alex leaves the project this makes the boy feel even more alone. When Alex seems a little upset when the gay youth declares he loves the doctor, it is clear that this does not help Jamey's problems and probably causes even more feelings of isolation due to his sexual preferences.

Gary, another genius in the project group, seems to be a person Jamey feels some friendship for, as he does trust Gary with Black Jack's diary. Digby Chancellor and Jamey have a relationship, which is how Digby finds out about the gas problems with



Bitter Canyon. Since this relationship is common knowledge, it gives Souza the opening he needs to kill Digby as well as make the teen appear to be the murderer.

Horace Souza

Horace Souza is the lawyer for the entire Cadmus family and has been for many years. Horace was a friend to Black Jack when he was alive, even though Jack was mistrustful of the friendship because of Antoinette. She dated Souza first, and then stopped dating him and married Jack. Then to compound the problem, Souza was also dumped by Lucy Simpson, her sister. Jack also made lots of money and Souza envies everything Jack has, so obviously the lawyer does not really have good feelings toward the Cadmus family even though he puts on a good front.

Dr. Sarita Flowers thinks Souza is overbearing, Alex says he is "manipulative and calculating" (p.169) and Robin thinks he is charming and old-world polite. The reader finds out that all are true about Souza but the charming part is, of course, a façade he presents to people so that they do not suspect the true evil. He is actually a person without any conscience or morals who will do anything needed to get exactly what he wants. Money, power and revenge are all Souza cares about.

Sergeant Michael Sturgis (Milo)

Milo is Alex's best friend and a gay detective who lives with a doctor, Rick. Milo is missing Rick as he is in Acapulco without Milo. He admits he has been a pain lately due to stress at work because of the new boss assigning him all the gay cases to investigate, and says Rick was right to leave for awhile.

Milo is described as a big, heavy man with black short hair, and bad acne scars. He is careless in his style/lack of style of dressing. He apparently has a kind heart and is a good friend to Alex. Milo does tend to drink too much when he gets upset and Alex finds he is still doing this when he meets him at the Golden Eagle bar and Milo gets drunk.

Apparently he is a very good detective and is open to suggestions from Alex even though he may not agree with him. Milo is good about following the leads that Alex gives him on the murders and this spirit of cooperation goes a long way toward helping solve the case. He does not like being on opposite sides from Alex in the case about Jamey and is happy when Alex stops working for Souza.

Dr. Sarita Flowers

Dr. Sarita Flowers is the doctor in charge of a study at UCLA to disprove the link between geniuses and mental illness. She used to be an Olympic figure skater until she is gets MS. Her former sports career and her current career show her drive and desire to succeed in the face of any challenge even when in a wheelchair.



Sarita hires Dr. Delaware to monitor the kids in the program and report on their mental health. At first she appears to only be concerned with the program and the results and very little about the children, but her soft side emerges in relation to Jamey. Dr. Flowers keeps Jamey in the program past the point when she should because she feels sorry for him and hopes he would turn around. When she first talks with Dr. Delaware, she is open and friendly, answering all his questions. Later, when things hit too close to home and her program and ethics are being questioned, she is short and attempts to avoid Alex.

The entire time Flowers is under tremendous stress to find funding for her project now that such a public scandal has occurred and the public is linking genius and insanity. Essentially Jamey's arrest creates a PR nightmare that she tackles with optimism.

Dr. Guy Mainwaring

Dr. Mainwaring is the doctor at Canyon Oaks who has been in charge of Jamey Cadmus's treatment. He is a British man in his fifties who shows little emotion when discussing Jamey's case. Mainwaring's notes indicate that he does not seem to care about Jamey except as a study in how the drugs are affecting his patient. The only thing he seems frustrated about is his inability to get Jamey stabilized on the drugs rather than how Jamey is actually doing mentally. When Alex is interviewing the doctor to learn more about the case, he gets angry at being questioned. All of the doctor's emotions seem to be focused on his feelings of inadequacy about his job and his family and very little time is spent being concerned with his patients.

Later, one learns that Mainwaring figures out that someone may be drugging Jamey but does not inform anyone. He is worried that it will reflect badly on his abilities as a doctor that he does not notice the discrepancies sooner and that somehow it will give his ex-wife leverage to keep him from seeing his children. In this regard, the doctor shows how self-centered he is only concerning himself with his immediate family circle and himself.

Dwight Cadmus

Dwight is Jamey's uncle and was always second best in Black Jack's eyes to Jamey's father, Peter. Dwight drinks quite a bit and seems submissive to his wife and loves his two girls. He does not pay much attention to Jamey and does not want to know that Jamey is gay. Alex talks to Dwight about Jamey's problems when he is the psychologist for the UCLA 160 program, but the uncle does nothing to help Jamey at that time. Dwight felt guilt about not saving his brother Peter when he was hanging, and wanted to do a good job raising Jamey to make up for the guilt. He does not realize the duplicitous nature of his wife or lawyer and lives life in a spineless haze.



Heather Cadmus

Heather Cadmus is initially described as a good woman by her husband, Dwight. She supposedly tries to help Jamey whom she secretly detests. She hates Dwight as well and feels he is weak. Heather works with Souza to get her "entitlement" for putting up with Dwight's family. She knows about poisons as she did field work with her father in Central America. Heather poisons Jamey over a course of a year to make him appear insane and capable of murder.

Digby Chancellor (Dig)

Digby is a rich, older, gay man and has business dealings with the Cadmus family. He is a large, tall man, a prominent banker, and comes from a wealthy banking family. His family was upset when he became a gay activist, so he started his own bank. He meets Jamey when he goes to a party at the Cadmus's home and influences the teen to learn about business. It is speculated that he was Jamey's lover and he is murdered by Tully at Souza's orders in order to frame Jamey.

Robin

Robin is Dr. Alex Delaware's girlfriend and is described as a slight, beautiful, olive-skinned, petite Japanese woman. She makes musical instruments for a living and has some contact with famous musicians. Robin is the sounding board for Alex and seems to be understanding and helpful to him but also does her own thing as well.

Mrs. Andrea Vann

Mrs. Andrea Vann is a nurse at the Canyon Oaks hospital. She answers the call when Alex Delaware is trying to find out more about Jamey and his condition. She is described as looking like a young Sophia Loren. Vann knew of Dr. Delaware and even attended a lecture by him where his suggestions helped her son with bad dreams.

Money is left at her house with a note to leave the desk at the hospital unattended. Desperate for an influx of cash, she obeys, unsure who it is that wants this done and what consequences will occur from the act. Jamey is taken away from Canyon Oaks during that time and Mrs. Vann leaves Oaks before her transgression is discovered.

Later the reader learns that Vann is involved with Dr. Mainwaring.

Edwards

He is an older security guard at Canyon Oaks who annoys Mrs. Vann by leading Alex into Jamey's room.



Miss Marthe Surtees Sorrel/Sabrina Skull /Wilhelmina Surtees

Miss Marthe Surtees is described as a fat blond with pale skin tinged with pink. She is a private nurse hired by the family to take care of Jamey. Vann describes her as a babysitter since she has no formal nursing training. She is the one who loosens the restraints and is then assaulted by Jamey when he leaves Canyon Oaks.

Later, one learns she is the fat biker that is mentioned at multiple crime scenes. Skull is in the employ of Souza and is the one who is physically poisoning Jamey at Canyon Oaks.

Skull is helped out of jail by Souza and is living with Antrim on Souza's property. While in jail she receives her nurses training. Antrim and Skull have a very unhealthy but loving relationship with each other; however, her past is littered with game war, murder, and drugs and she was once a member of the Ghoul biker gang.

Tully Antrim AKA WilliamTull Bonney

Tully Antrim is first introduced as Souza's driver; however, he makes a statement that he would do anything for Souza. He claims to be a descendant of Billy the Kid and loves Surtees. Tully is the one who performed all the murders on Souza's orders and confesses to save Surtees from serious jail time.

Patrick Montez

He is a social worker at the county jail that gives Alex a tour of the jail and provides him with a brief overview of the treatment of prisoners, including mentally ill patients. When Alex asks him how he bears to work at such a discouraging job, he says he loves it and every day has something different happen so it is not boring.

Deputy Sonnenschein

Deputy Sonnenschein brings Jamey down from High Power to see Alex. He is studying to be a psychologist. Sonnenschein seems to be sympathetic to Jamey and tells Alex some things Jamey was saying when he hurt himself but refuses to comment about if Jamey is faking his mental illness.

Asa Skaggs

A drunk, old man who owns a diner named after his wife. He is a witness to Radovic's murder by the two bikers. He tells Alex and Milo about Jack and his black book.



Slit

Slit is Gary's girlfriend and the person whose identity as a missing person allows Milo to find Gary later.

Mal Worthy

Mal is a divorce attorney who gives Alex information about Souza. He tells Alex that Souza works because he enjoys his job and not because he needs money.

Ned

Ned is a reporter for the Times and a contact Alex tries to use to get information about the Slasher case. He is unable to help Alex because he doesn't know anything he wants to reveal about the case.

Peter Cadmus

Peter is Jamey's father who supposedly committed suicide, used drugs, and seemed crazy. He could not handle the pressure of the business or a child. According to Rolly Oberheim, Peter probably did not commit suicide but instead was using the rope around his neck to play a sexual head game for pleasure.

Calvin Whitehead

Calvin is a homicide investigator who questions Alex at his home about Jamey. He does not seem like a nice person and is very anti-gay. He also seems to be a bit of a smart aleck, and this trait gets him shot in the mouth by Heather Cadmus.

Mr. Bradford Balch Esquire

Mr. Balch is paid to notarize a clause in Peter's will that allows Dwight and Heather Cadmus access to all of Jamey's money in the event he is found mentally incompetent. Dwight is not present at the time; therefore, Mr. Balch did not officially see Dwight sign the paperwork and should not have notarized the document. Milo agrees to try to keep Balch's reputation intact if he cooperates with the police.

Lou Cestare

Lou is Alex's money manager. He has a yacht, so he knows quite a bit about boats and provides a key to the case because he helps Alex and Milo find Jack's diary on



Radovic's boat. He also provides information about the bond situation involved in the Bitter Canyon Power Plant deal.

Ms. Randee Bogdan

Ms. Randee Bogdan is the former next door neighbor of Gary's who works as a caterer for rich clients. She lets Alex in to Gary's previous residence and tells him about Gary's theory of Nihilism and about his girlfriend.

Mudpie

Mudpie is a homeless man who tells Alex about the two other ugly men searching for Gary.

Felicia Blocker

Felicia is the youngest member of the Project 160 kids. She is fifteen at the time of Jamey's arrest and knows very little about Jamey. Felicia is the first person in the group of kids to speak up about Jamey and says that she wonders if there was something she could have done to help him. Her questions show a compassionate nature.

Jennifer Leavitt

Jennifer Leavitt is another member of Project 160. She appears to be the most social because she looks like a Barbie and an airhead but her appearance hides a sharp mind. Jennifer hides her superior intelligence since she knows being different is an alienating factor in society. She has learned to hide her differences instead of withdrawing from society like Jamey and Gary.

Jennifer is also the one in the group that seems to think the facts in Jamey's case are fishy and questions the validity of his arrest. She echo's Alex's own thoughts on schizophrenia and helps make a major break in the case.

David Krohnglass

David Krohnglass is a nineteen-year-old in 160 subjects program with a B.S. in physics and M.S. in physical chemistry from Cal. Tech. He plans to be a doctor. He tells Alex a bit about Jamey and Chancellor and that Jamey stated to read business and economic books.



Joshua Marciano

Joshua Marciano is an eighteen-year-old in 160 subjects program and a senior at UCLA. He tells Alex that Gary is the only one Jamey ever really talked to.

Mr. Suit

Mr. Suit works at the Voids Will Be Voids art gallery where Gary displays his artwork. Suit is bribed by Ernie Radovic and lets him buy Gary's picture instead of Alex since he offers more money.

Miss Antoinette Hawes Simpson

Miss Antoinette Simpson was the wife of John Jacob Cadmus, or Black Jack, as he was more commonly known. They were married in 1947 and it appeared to be a fairy tale; however, she soon started showing signs of mental illness. Antoinette had two children named Dwight and Peter and is the grandmother of Jamey.

When Antoinette started showing signs of illness, her friends and family just thought she was a frail woman due to the times. She has agoraphobia, meaning she fears leaving home. Eventually, her husband realized she was mentally ill and planned on committing her to an institution in Switzerland. Before being committed she overdosed on opiates.

Originally Antoinette's character was important to the mystery because she shows a pattern of mental illness, which may help explain Jamey's problems as well. Later, the reader learns that she originally dated Souza until Jack swept her off her feet. Souza was touted to be in love with her and was bitter when he was dumped.

Colonel John Jacob Cadmus

John Jacob Cadmus or Black Jack was a vibrant, shrewd man who knew that he would make a killing in real estate after the war. He cared about his business first and family second. Jack kept a diary that revealed important information about a current business deal.

Gary Yamaguchi

Gary Yamaguchi is an intelligent Japanese boy that used to be part of Project 160. In the project he was a good worker with lots of energy as well as being compulsive and meticulous. Now, he is disillusioned with life, doing drugs, and a nihilist artist with no real home. Jamey trusts Gary enough to give him the diary.

Gary's art is still meticulous and orderly, showing that his basic nature has not been completely wasted away by drugs. Gary's canvas, *The Wretched Act*, is one of the



major clues in the case due to its resemblance to Jamey's father's suicide and also because it contains the diary. Gary says that Jamey is on drugs; however, he never saw him doing drugs, which implies someone is slipping Jamey something other than prescribed medications.

Mr. Rolly Oberheim

Rolly is a friend of Billy's and he knew Peter and Margo when they were younger. He imparts a crucial piece of information to Alex. He says it is likely that Peter did not commit suicide but instead died during a sex game, as Peter liked to hang himself and take risks that were dangerous just for greater sexual pleasure.

Simon Platt

Simon Platt is the doctor that Milo and Alex hire to watch Jamey in jail for signs of poisoning. Eventually Platt confirms that Jamey is being poisoned with belladonna.

Margaret Norton/Mago Sunshine

Mago was Peter's wife, Jamey's mother and was supposedly happy about being pregnant with Jamey. She was said to be a sweet girl but liked to dance naked in a wild manner.

Ernie Radovic

Ernie is Chancellor's bodyguard who acts crazy and used to be policeman. He is trying to find out more about Digby's murder, probably to blackmail the killer rather than for any great concern for Digby. After buying Gary's artwork out from under Alex, Radovic hides the diary on his boat. He is arrested by Milo when he goes to Alex's home. Finally, Radovic is murdered in Bitter Canyon by the two bikers.

Bill Sarna

Bill is a ranger described as being in his forties with yellow hair and a suntanned neck. He is a sergeant with the Parks Department and appears in Bitter Canyon to help Milo and Alex search for the bikers. He is too late to aid in the search but does give them more information about the canyon and takes them to see the lake. Sarna says the canyon is called the glass canyon, which is very enlightening to Milo and Alex as Jamey keeps saying something about glass.



Richard Cash

Cash is a small Beverly Hills detective who is with Whitehead when the two interview Alex at his home. He tries to calm Whitehead when he gets out of hand in the interview. He seems quite interested in Alex's decorating and Alex later realizes it is because Cash thinks he is gay. Alex does notice that Cash and Whitehead do not like each other.



Objects/Places

Heather's Lavender Dress

Heather accuses Jamey of stealing her lavender dress. She glanced out her window one night and saw Jamey wearing it when he was on a date with Digby Chancellor. A swatch of the lavender dress is in Jamey's hand when he is found at the murder scene. It is assumed that the other pieces of the dress were found at the other murder scenes.

Knife

Jamey was found holding a bloody, long-bladed knife at the scene of the murder. The knife was used to kill a male prostitute and Digby Chancellor.

Golden Eagle

The Golden Eagle is a bar near the LAX airport. It is designed in the shape of a trapezoid and looks like a cheesy tourist attraction. Inside the bar everything is designed as if it is the inside of a plane. The bar is where Milo and Alex go to talk about the break in their relationship. Alex learns that Milo is under a great deal of pressure at work because he is gay and because he is in charge of the high-profile Lavender Slasher case.

Chancellor's Estate

The Chancellor's estate is in Beverly Hills. It is an expensive piece of property on a hill with a view of the Beverly Hills Hotel. Protecting the estate is a six foot wall of concrete topped with three feet of iron bars with the only visible entrance marked by huge iron gates. Inside the thirty-five room house is a sea of white with not a hint of color anywhere. The atrium of the house is the location of the murder and where the police found Jamey, a dead male prostitute, and Chancellor.

Garden/Koi Pond

The garden and koi pond is outside of Alex's house. Below the terrace is a Japanese garden with a koi pond. The sweet smell of jasmine surrounds him as Alex sits next to the pond listening to the waterfall and sitting in the moss. Alex goes to this colorful haven to relax and think about anything that is going on in his life.



Alex's Library

Alex's library is where he goes to work. The desk in the library is stacked with papers from his job. Alex also has bookcases with cabinets below the shelves where he keeps his files, and a comfortable, old leather couch on which he can relax. All his old files about Jamey are in the library and Alex uses the library anytime he wants to study or not disturb Robin.

Canyon Oaks Psychiatric Hospital

The Canyon Oaks Psychiatric Hospital's entrance is comprised of inviting gates and trees that provide a warm welcome but very little security. The building is a contrast to the welcoming front and is made of glass and steel giving a cold, isolated impression.

Souza's Building and Office

Souza's building is located in the mid-Wilshire financial district where most of the other buildings are bigger art deco edifices in pink and white. His building is a throwback to the residential district and is a small four-story red building that looks like a mansion with a parking lot. His office is decorated like an expensive law office with legal books, oversized leather furniture, and testaments to Souza's schooling and legal prowess.

UCLA

UCLA is the campus where Alex worked with the Project 160 kids. The campus is also the location of Sarita's office and the Biomedical Library.

Sarita's Patient Area

Sarita's patient area is dark when Alex enters the room. A microphone hangs from the ceiling and three walls are covered in tiles and the fourth is a one way mirror. On the other side of the mirror is a bright, windowless, white room.

Sarita's Office

Sarita's office has little clutter so that it is easy to maneuver her wheelchair. There are a few chairs, a low desk, and a few low modules on which things can be placed.

UCLA Biomedical Library

The UCLA Biomedical Library is quiet in the morning, but Alex knows that during the day it is full of medical students, residents, graduate students, or anyone who wants to know



the answer to any known medical question or study. Alex goes to the library to learn more about schizophrenia to help Jamey and correctly diagnose his mental condition.

Jail/High Power

The county jail is in a poorer area of LA in the industrial/slum area on Bauchet Street near Union Station. The lawn before the jail is yellow and not well tended and the jail itself is a large, gray concrete building. Inside, the jail is sectioned into several areas including the isolation rooms, general population rooms, visitation rooms, and High Power rooms. Jamey is being held in a High Power room, which is where extremely dangerous or high profile inmates are kept. The security is extremely tight and only those working in the jail can enter High Power areas.

Carving

Located on Heather Cadmus's mantle is a carving of a half-frog, half-human head covered in a feather helmet. Heather is an anthropologist who studied the Hispanic culture. When Alex notices the statute he asks Heather if she did field work and she lies, saying she is only a wife and mother. Later, he discovers she has worked with her father in the region where the statue comes from and knows a great deal about the poisons of the region as well. Alex's discovery helps him solve the mystery of Jamey's drug-induced behavior.

Guest House at Dwight's

The guest house on the Cadmus property is where Jamey lived a few months before he is admitted to the hospital.

Diary

Jack and then Peter had a diary that described the problems with Bitter Canyon. Jamey finds the diary in the library and gives it to Gary to keep safe. He knows that Gary has no interest in using the information for personal gain.

Belladonna

Belladonna is used in Central America, specifically Columbia, for a number of purposes, including chemical warfare, rituals, and medicine. Jamey is poisoned with belladonna by Heather Cadmus to make him appear to be crazy.



Heather's Case of Poison Ingredients

Heather has a case in her underwear drawer that contains twenty vials of ingredients for poison, a mortar and pestle, syringes, a dish, and a lighter. This is everything a person needs to mix and make home poisons.

Bitter Canyon

A huge piece of land that is an inactive volcano filled with water. The canyon is supposed to be turned into a hydroelectric plant fed by a series of streams and a huge lake. The lake is called El Canon Vidrio, or glass canyon, or Bitter Canyon because it looks like a huge sheet of glass. When Milo and Alex see the lake they know why Jamey keeps talking about glass. Jamey knows why the land can never be developed and that will hurt Cadmus Corporation and their investors. Souza and Heather will do anything to stop him from imparting that information.

Peter's Will

Peter's will gives everything to Jamey in a trust to be monitored by his guardian until the age of thirty-five, including Cadmus Corporation. The will was written by a lawyer named Seymour Chereskin. Souza put a great deal of pressure on Peter to allow him to write the will but Peter refused. Two months before Jamey's arrest, Heather forges Dwight's signature and has Souza add a mental health clause to the will enabling everything to pass to Dwight in the event that Jamey becomes mentally unstable. Heather and Souza are planning on murdering Dwight in the future so that she will inherit everything.

Cadmus's Building and Office

The Cadmus building is very modern and fits right in on Wilshire among the other high, mirrored buildings. Inside the overly air-conditioned building is more modern accents including granite counters and floors. The office has floor to ceiling windows, brown walls, rosewood furniture, and even a wet bar where Dwight mixes his drinks.



Themes

Influence of Money and Revenge on Family

The influence of money and revenge on the family dynamic is a common theme for murder mysteries. The motivation for murder is usually revenge, money, or power and in *Over the Edge* all three play a part in the story.

Decades before the murders occurred, Black Jack and Souza are friends. Souza is dating Antoinette, but she is then swept off her feet by the richer and charismatic Black Jack and marries him. Souza still acts like the best friend but is jealous of his friend's business and romantic success. Serving as Jack's right-hand man and lawyer, he plots the family's downfall.

When Jack dies and subsequently his son Peter dies as well, the nice, "good" but weak son, Dwight takes over the family business and raises Peter's son, Jamey. Peter had fifty-one percent of the business and Dwight forty-nine, so Jamey will have the controlling interest in the Cadmus empire when he comes of age and Dwight will only be a figurehead. Dwight is probably not happy with this; however, he is too weak to do much about it. Plus, he considers Jamey family and feels guilt over Peter's death.

Dwight's wife Heather resents having to take care of Jamey when he is young and also resents that she and her husband do not have the real power or money. She feels entitled and plots with Souza to destroy Jamey so that first Dwight and eventually she will inherit the money.

Souza sees this as the perfect opportunity to extract his revenge by destroying Jamey, who is the son of Jack's favorite son, Peter. By helping Heather gain control of all the Cadmus's assets, which were more important to Jack than anything, Souza is taking away, what was most important to Jack, from the blood family and giving it to the usurper's wife.

The money, revenge, and power that each of the protagonists wield destroys many lives. Souza's friendship with the Cadmus family, his practice, and his freedom are forfeit. Heather's greed and desire for revenge against her husband and Jamey hurts a young teenager, gets multiple innocent people killed, destroys her marriage and eventually causes her death. As the old cliché says, money is the root of all evil. The need for revenge is a close second.

Treatment of Gay People Versus Straight People

The treatment of gay versus straight people is another important theme in the book. The *Lavender Slasher* murders involve gay prostitutes and the crime scene at which Jamey is found also involves his lover being murdered. The accused teen, Jamey, is also gay. The police who find Jamey automatically assume he is guilty and the fact that he is a



homosexual causes them to call Jamey deviant and other choice names. The police officers seem to feel special venom towards those that are gay and commit a crime.

The lead detective in the case is Milo, the only known homosexual policeman on the force. His police chief intentionally places him on only gay cases because he claims Milo should have a better understanding of their deviant mind. Milo is given the worst cases and talked down to by his superiors and fellow officers. The irony is that Milo feels if he ran up against a true "flaming" gay, he would feel uncomfortable as well. Milo also says that it seems that gay people who commit crimes go above and beyond the violence of straight people. Milo is angry at his boss's treatment of him; however, he also treats a homosexual person different, which shows that there is some self-hate in Milo.

When Alex is interrogated about Jamey and the Slasher murders, the two officers interrogating him assume he is gay because his best friend is Milo. They ask questions intended to inflame Alex's emotions by making negative comments about gay people, thus hoping to have him slip and somehow implicate Jamey. During the interrogation, when Robin, Alex's girlfriend arrives, the officers are shocked. They leave soon afterward, realizing their line of questioning is not as effective as they thought because it is based on the falsehood that Alex is gay. The treatment of suspects and the line of questioning are different based on the sexual orientation of the subject.

Dwight also seems to view Digby Chancellor and his gay lifestyle as the thing that dragged Jamey into this horrible world and feels it is the cause of the boy's mental problems. He subconsciously denies that Jamey would have been gay if not for Chancellor's influence. Dwight does not want to accept that someone in his gene pool might be different. The family's treatment of Jamey as if he were this dark, insidious creature because he was dating Chancellor was a bit hypocritical. It was fine for the family to do business with Chancellor but not all right for a family member to embrace Digby's way of life.

Overall in this novel, Alex feels that straight people are treated with more tolerance when they commit a crime, investigate a crime, or get into an unfavorable relationship.

Psychiatry Versus Psychology

The theme of psychiatry versus psychology plays an important role in solving the mystery in *Over the Edge*. Dr. Mainwaring considers himself an expert on drugs in general and how a patient will react to certain drugs. In his notes about Jamey's treatment, most of the discussion is about how Jamey reacts physically to the prescribed drug treatment and the somewhat unusual behavior he exhibits after certain drugs. He even talks about the Cat scan; however, an EEG was never done, which does turn out to have some significance later. Nothing is said about what may have caused Jamey's problem, or about any of the emotional aspects of the situation. Mainwaring also dismisses Jamey's ramblings, and when he becomes mostly comatose, his notes trail off, showing Mainwaring as having little interest in Jamey now



that he isn't reacting to any drug in a positive manor. He does continue trying different drugs and dosages even though he does not really know what is causing atypical reactions.

Dr. Delaware takes a more personal approach. He learns about the family history, major events in the patient's life, how the diagnosis fits with the drugs, and the reaction to the patient to the drugs. After learning about Jamey's family's past, the history of mental illness does seem to support the diagnosis of insanity. Jamey is diagnosed as a schizophrenic; however, most schizophrenics are not comatose, react well to drugs by appearing almost normal, and do not commit serial murders. They may have quick, violent rages but they generally cannot do the careful planning involved in serial killings.

While talking to Jamey in jail, Alex sees signs of overuse of certain drugs that are not typically given to schizophrenic patients. When he confronts Dr. Mainwaring about Jamey's reaction, he says that Jamey is just reacting to the extreme version of his medications. Mainwaring does not wonder if it is odd for a schizophrenic to commit murder, he does not dwell on what is best for the patient but only on the effect of the drugs.

Eventually, Jamey's supposed thoughtfully planned murders, reaction to the drugs, and overall history do not support the accusations or his symptoms. Alex realizes that someone must be poisoning Jamey and framing him for the murders. He would not have discovered this without research into Jamey's family, the drugs, and typical behavior of schizophrenics. Mainwaring's lack of concern for his patients' overall emotional state and background allow him to accept everything that is happening to Jamey. Only after Alex points out Jamey's strange behavior and possible causes does Mainwaring review Jamey's case and realize he may be being poisoned.

It seems that in such an extreme case as Jamey's that both a psychiatrist and psychologist should have been consulted. An overall picture of a person's history and emotional state as well as their drug interactions seems to be crucial.



Style

Point of View

Jonathan Kellerman uses the first person point of view in his book *Over the Edge*. Dr. Alex Delaware is the narrator. There is a great deal of dialogue in the novel. Talking to and interacting with the other characters is how Alex gathers his information about Jamey and other events. He also speculates about others' feelings and motives but does not truly know what they are thinking. Therefore, the reader can infer what is going on using only Dr. Delaware's thoughts and gut reaction to a situation.

Since it is first person, the reader does not have any knowledge that he has not ascertained either from his own investigations or from what others tell him. For example, when Milo tells him of his investigation of the case and the one other clue, this is the first time the reader knows there is another theory as to who may have committed the crime.

For this reason one does not know when someone such as Souza is lying to Alex and can only rely on Dr. Delaware's instincts, which seem to be very good. Because of his knowledge of psychology in general, and his research on schizophrenics in particular, the reader realizes early that Jamey probably did not commit the serial murders. The reader is unsure if Jamey had a hand in the act because there is suspicion that someone else could have directed the teen. However, there are so many potential suspects that one really does not know who is involved for certain until close to the end. Since this is in first person, there is more detailed description and speculation than would have been necessary in the third person omniscient style. Even though the book is a little long on description, the novel is a very entertaining read.

Setting

The novel is set in Southern California. Most of the locations visited by the characters in the book are in and around Los Angeles. The book opens at the main character's Dr. Alex Delaware's house on a hill in Los Angeles near the San Diego freeway. After receiving a call from a previous patient, Alex travels to Canyon Oaks in the West Valley. On his drive, Alex passes through bedroom communities, such as Encino, Tarzana, and Woodland Hills.

Alex learns that Jamey is being held on suspicion of the Lavender Slasher murders, which took place on the streets of LA, usually in an alleyway. The crime scene at which Jamey is found leads Alex to Beverly Hills. In an exclusive portion of Beverly Hills is Chancellor's huge gated estate, which is the where Jamey is found and the scene of a brutal murder involving a male prostitute and Chancellor. The estate is a sharp contrast to the previous locations of the murders, which is an indication that something is not right about the situation.



Alex also visits Jamey's aunt at the Cadmus house in Hancock Park near the Los Angeles Country Club. Hancock Park is a wealthy area that is near a good deal of crime because the surrounding areas are not as wealthy. When Alex goes to meet Jamey's uncle, he heads to Wilshire, which is a financial district of primarily tall, modern buildings. Only Jamey's lawyer, Souza, still has a small brick four-story building on Wilshire, which is a contrast to the buildings that currently exist on the street.

Approximately an hour outside of LA is Bitter Canyon, which is the property that instigated the problems for Jamey. Bitter Canyon was once the location of a government lab and a dumping site of poison. A new hydro-electric plant is planned for the canyon, as the pollution situation is not known to the general public because the land is certified as clean. An inactive volcano of water and a lake of glass is the scene of the controversial investment.

After solving the mystery, Jamey is sent to a new hospital in Carmel on the beach, where he is learning to relax. The peaceful waves and beautiful location help with Jamey's healing process.

Language and Meaning

The language in *Over the Edge* tends to have many adjectives describing places. Maybe more descriptions than the reader would prefer, as it makes the book fairly long before one finds out who is responsible for the murders. There is plenty of dialogue, which aids in understanding the characters. *Over the Edge* is written in the first person, so one does not have that much insight on characters thoughts, as Alex cannot read their minds; therefore, the dialogue is essential.

Jonathan Kellerman is a psychologist, so it partly explains why there is so much technical terminology. The reader may find all this information about how the brain reacts to certain drugs a little hard to plow through. Many readers will have heard of belladonna, atropine, or other various drugs. Other words related to the medical field, such as dyskinesia, dysgraphia, psychotomimetics, and perhaps even limbic are probably not words familiar to most people.

The reader does have some clues to the meanings of unfamiliar words such as in the passage: "a subtle limbic abnormality that would not be revealed by a CAT scan." *Over the Edge*, p.172. The majority of readers can infer that limbic is an area of the brain; because Jamey has some type of a mental disorder and those scans are typically thought of to be used on the brain.

A lot of the word usage is incomprehensible to the layman, so the reader may tend to skip over these words; though, some of the more intellectually curious may actually stop to look them up in a dictionary. Understanding the terminology turns out to be important because the way Jamey is initially diagnosed, and the drugs that he is given, provide the reader with the first clues that his reaction is not that of a typically schizophrenic. If



the reader skips over understanding what is going on, they are unable to solve the mystery as quickly.

Structure

Over the Edge is thirty-three chapters long and has 433 pages. The chapters are of varying length but most are a minimum of seven pages. The chapters are numbered but not labeled, so the reader has no idea what is going to occur in that section. Most chapters cover one day in the life of the characters and proceed in a logical, linear fashion.

The novel does not jump around constantly from the past to the present and does not have flashbacks, so in that regard, it is easy to read. There is some information given about people that are dead, such as Jack and Antoinette Cadmus, who are Jameys' grandparents, as well as Peter Cadmus, his dead father.

Digby Chancellor's murder is described, but the other murders are not described in great detail. Most of the characters in the book are alive and talk to Alex at least once, which makes the dialogue very important in understanding the characters and their motives. Each chapter does have quite a bit of descriptive language and some parts have technical descriptions that are quite complicated.

The novel revolves around Dr. Alex Delaware, a teen, Jamey Cadmus, and various people in their lives. The book starts out with Jamey calling Dr. Alex Delaware for help from Canyon Oaks Psychiatric Hospital and goes downhill for the teen. He is accused of the Slasher Murders, a set of serial murders in L.A. The plot involves Dr. Delaware's attempts to understand what is happening with Jamey and his search for the true killer(s).

The reader does suspect quite early that Jamey is not a homicidal maniac, but there are so many suspects it is difficult to determine the true killer. There are too many people that act guilty or nervous about something when questioned by Alex, and the reasoning behind everything that happens seems to be complicated. The abundance of suspects does make for a good mystery novel, and one finds that money really is the root of all evil in this book.



Quotes

"Memories that had been buried for half a decade surged forth with the clarity of yesterday. Jamey was someone you didn't forget." Chap. 1, p. 1

"Jamey was a young man by now — seventeen or eighteen — and statistically ripe both for the onset of schizophrenia and for drug abuse." Chap. 2, p. 6

"There! Now you know! I'm a little faggot! I've been one for years and now I have the hots for you!" Chap. 3, p. 36

"The kid's in trouble,' I said. 'If it has anything to do with the Slasher, huge trouble.'" Chap 4, p. 45

"Souza had foisted a tough choice on me. The two policemen had helped me make my decision." Chap 6, p. 72

"I told him to keep the money until my evaluation was complete. It was a symbolic gesture, bordering on pettiness, but it made me feel less encumbered." Chap. 7, p. 73

"Before I left, I tried to catch his attention, but he'd fixed his gaze on the grimy floor and never raised his eyes." Chap. 8, p. 92

"I view Jamey as very much the product of his genes. The superior intellect is his endowment from Jack. The rest of it comes from the other side-antisocial tendencies, paranoia, a morbid preoccupation with fantasy and poetry. Saddled with such a chemistry, how could he have turned out normal?" Chap. 9, p. 99

"Schizophrenics don't commit serial murders." Chap. 10, p. 113

"I kept trying to reach him, but it was useless. He'd turned himself into a nearly inert bundle-pallid flesh wrapped in sweat-soaked cotton, lifeless but for the faint oscillation of his sunken chest." Chap. 11, p. 129

"Too much time had been spent dealing with his defensiveness, not enough on substance: a host of topics hadn't even been broached. I wondered what secrets he was laboring to conceal-it's the ones with the most to hide who build psychic fortresses-and lacking a ready answer, I decided to pursue other avenues before approaching him again." Chap. 12, p. 140

"I don't want you building up false hope about Cadmus's being innocent and chasing after Radovic, so I'll tell you: No he's not a serious suspect: Cadmus is still our main man." Chap. 13, p. 156

"The psychiatric history documented a pattern of progressive mental deterioration including delusions of persecution and probable auditory hallucinations combined with evidence of a premorbid schizoid or borderline personality." Chap. 14 p. 170



"But some of it was also political—through reasserting themselves as physicians, psychiatrists could distance themselves from psychologists and other non medical therapists—as well as economic, for insurance companies were reluctant to pay for something as ambiguous as talking therapy but had no problem reimbursing for blood tests, brain scans, injections, and other medical procedures." Chap. 15, p. 180

"But the questions she'd raised during the discussion went beyond theorization and dovetailed with my own." Chap. 16, p. 213

"'In other words,' I said, 'you've found other expert witnesses who don't share my ambivalence.'" Chap. 17, p. 224

"Souza had fished me out of a sea of experts, using the twin lures of flattery and professional responsibility: I was vital to the case because of my prior treatment of Jamey and my ostensible brilliance. Now, given the first opportunity, he'd thrown me back like some undersized hatchling, having filled his bucket with more substantive catch." Chap. 18, p. 227

"So Souza's relationship with the Cadmuses was more tangled than I imagined. I wondered what had transformed him from suitor to spectator." Chap. 19, p. 242

"Two out of six of those kids freaked out—doesn't that say something about the quality of her leadership?" Chap. 20, 257

"You titled it the Wretched Act, Gary. That's a phrase Jamey used to describe suicide" Chap. 21, p. 252

"'It's like a goddamn sheet of plate glass,' said Milo rubbing his eyes." Chap. 22, p. 292

"The whole dammed investment business is based on faith." Chap. 23, p. 301

"It was a stone carving, an idol used in hallucinogenic burial rite. I looked at it more closely: a squatting toad with the face of a slit-eyed human, a plumed helmet atop the rough-hewn head." Chap. 24, p. 323

"They're trying to keep an eye out without letting on and haven't seen anything fishy, but if the stuff's that absorbable, Platt admitted it could be slipping in anyway." Chap. 25, p. 332

"So I figure down deep he's got to hate my guts, and I'm wondering how to diffuse it." Chap. 26, p. 335

"I read that chart. Three times. There was nothing in it to indicate atropine poisoning." Chap. 27, p. 358

"'Far as Mrs. Cadmus is concerned, you're dead meat. She gave us carto blanco to do with you whatever the fuck we feel like.'" Chap. 28, p. 374



"'Look,' said Balch, 'how was I to know the signature was forged? Mr. Souza vouched for it. Mrs. Cadmus was right there.'" Chap. 29, p. 380

"'What'd you think when you found out Radovic had been gutted, Dwight? Another bit of good luck?'" Chap. 31, p. 416

"'If he did, he didn't catch on to the Bitter Canyon bit because he never tried to exploit it.'" Chap. 32, p. 424



Topics for Discussion

When did you first suspect that Heather was part of the frame-up of Jamey? What clues did you see that led you to this conclusion? If you did not realize Heather was involved until the end, why?

In the beginning of the book who did you suspect in connection with the murders and why? Halfway through, and why? Towards the end, and why?

Do you think that Kellerman left enough clues behind for the reader to determine who the killer(s) were with reasonable certainty or did you feel misled? What is your reasoning?

What purpose do you think the character of Robin serves? Do you think she was an important part of the book or would you rather have just focused on Dr. Delaware?

Do you think there is any link between genius and insanity? Why or why not? What about the characters in the book prove or disapprove this theory?

Do you think the portrayal of gay society and their treatment is accurate in the book? Why or why not?

What are the five main clues in the book that point the reader to the correct suspect(s) and why are they important? What are five misleading clues and why?

Is Jamey's character relatable to the reader? Why or why not?

What is the difference between a psychologist and a psychiatrist? Which do you think is better to treat a person such as Jamey? Why would you rather go see one type of doctor over the other?