

The Other Side of Dark Study Guide

The Other Side of Dark by Joan Lowery Nixon

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Plot Summary

"The Other Side of Dark" by Jean Lowery Nixon is the story of a seventeen-year-old girl who wakes from a four-year-long coma and must face the changes that have occurred in her life, including the fact that her mother was murdered by the same man who shot and put Stacy in a coma. When Stacy McAdams wakes from her coma after four years to learn that she is the only one who can identify her mother's murderer, she has to recall his face. She struggles to regain her memory of that day before the killer finds her. "The Other Side of Dark" is an intriguing, suspenseful novel that deals with issues of growing up at once and who can be trusted. The story is set in a narrative filled with murder and mystery.

Waking from a long dream, Stacy believes she is in the wrong body until she learns she has been in a coma for four years. When she is told that Mom was killed on the same day she was shot, Stacy remembers the guy who shot her, but she cannot see his face. Unfortunately, she mentions this to a reporter whose article claims Stacy can identify Mom's murderer, causing Stacy to worry that the killer will find her before she can remember who he is. Once Stacy goes home, Jan, her best friend, introduces her to Jeff, a new guy who seems interested in Stacy. While babysitting for the neighbors, Stacy sees a shadowy figure trying to peer in her windows, but the police dismiss this as her overactive imagination. A whispering voice calls and threatens Stacy, telling her she should just forget and that he has a friend. At Tony's party in Stacy's honor, Jarrod Tucker spikes Stacy's drink and leads her outside to see his new car, but Jeff is there to protect Stacy when she recognizes Jarrod as Mom's murderer. Stacy thinks it is odd that Jeff drives her home without asking where she lives.

After Jarrod is arrested and Stacy identifies him in a lineup at the police station, he sees her in the hallway and again threatens her with his friend. Stacy tries to figure out who Jarrod's friend is as she continues to spend time with Jeff, but when Tony tells her that he has seen Jeff with Jarrod, she does not want to believe that Jeff would hurt her, despite the fact that Jeff seems to be hiding something. During Jarrod's hearing, Jarrod has a seizure and is taken to the emergency room. At home, Stacy learns that the car that her neighbor has seen patrolling their street actually belongs to Jeff.

Ignoring multiple phone calls, Stacy considers the possibility that Jeff is Jarrod's friend. She hears a rattling noise in the garage as the news reports that Jarrod escaped. Stacy hides in the rickety tree house in the backyard, but Jarrod knows where she must be and threatens her with his friend, his gun. Deciding not to let Jarrod get his way, Stacy pushes the tree house on top of him, grabs his gun and points it at him. Though she hates Jarrod enough to kill him, Stacy cannot do it when she thinks of Mom and so she calls for help to the neighbor who has already called the police. Jeff arrives and takes the gun from Stacy, explaining that he is an undercover police officer. After Jarrod is arrested, Jeff explains he was working undercover for the narcotics squad at the high school and Stacy became part of his assignment because they felt she was in danger; however, Jeff asked to be taken off the assignment because he has feelings for Stacy.

He wants to be Stacy's true love and is willing to wait. Stacy finally accepts that she is seventeen years old and that she definitely is in the right body.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

"The Other Side of Dark" by Jean Lowery Nixon is the story of a seventeen-year-old girl who wakes from a four-year-long coma and must face the changes that have occurred in her life, including the fact that her mother was murdered by the same man who shot and put Stacy in a coma. When Stacy McAdams wakes from her coma after four years to learn that she is the only one who can identify her mother's murderer if she can only recall his face, she struggles to regain her memory of that day before the killer finds her. "The Other Side of Dark" is an intriguing, suspenseful novel that deals with issues of growing up at once and who can be trusted, set in a narrative filled with murder and mystery.

The dream is too long, and when Stacy calls out for her mother, her voice shakes the dream violently. She is not in her room when she wakes, and when she asks for her mother, the shocked nurse flies into action, rushing from the room but promising to return. Stacy cries for her mother as people fill the room, but after kicking everyone except one nurse out, Dr. Peterson promises he has contacted her family and explains she was brought to Houston's Braesforest Medical Center for a gunshot wound when she was thirteen, but she spent four years in a coma and is now seventeen. Waking slowly this time, Stacy is glad to see Dad, but she has never seen him cry before. Dad tells her that no one understands it how this happened to her; the bullet caused a coma, but a physical therapist was able to help her walk and sit, though she was mentally unresponsive. When Donna enters, Stacy holds her arms out, and her sister rushes to hug her. Stacy comments that Donna is getting fat, but Donna tells her she is pregnant and Stacy will be an aunt in two months. Donna married Dennis last year. Dr. Peterson interrupts to ask Donna and Dennis to leave. Stacy asks Dad about Mom and is able to tell that he is hurting, and Dad tells her Mom was shot and killed on the same day that Stacy was shot. In disbelief, Stacy asks for the whole story. Dad tells her that she was going to the backyard to sunbathe, but no one knows what happened next because Donna went to the grocery store and came home to find Stacy and Mom unconscious. Stacy hears the words but cannot feel them. She hears a yelp from inside the house and runs to the back porch as someone runs outside and stares at her. He is scared, but she cannot see his face. Stacy asks if the murderer was caught, but Dad answers negatively since there were no witnesses. Stacy objects she is a witness because she saw him.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Stacy wakes from a long dream in a hospital room, causing a nurse to react quickly. Asking the empty room for her mother, Stacy pulls the blanket up and screams, shocked at her suddenly developed breasts. "I am Stacy McAdams. I'm only thirteen years old, and I'm in the wrong body" (page 2). When Dr. Peterson explains that Stacy has been in



a coma for four years and is now seventeen years old, Stacy argues that he is wrong before crying herself to sleep. She knows Dr. Peterson told the truth when she sees Dad and notices his changes, and she asks how this happened to her. Dad explains that Stacy went into a coma after being shot and has been mentally unresponsive for four years. Last week, Stacy developed an infection after falling and cutting her hip, and since she was treated with minor surgery, the doctor believes her reaction to the anesthetic brought her out of the coma. When Stacy's older sister Donna visits, Stacy is shocked to learn Donna is married and pregnant. Stacy objects because she was supposed to be Donna's maid of honor, but Donna did not have a large wedding. This foreshadows the discovery of the many changes that have occurred in the McAdams' lives while Stacy was in the coma. Donna is anxious for her sister to meet Dennis who enters and says Donna has introduced them before. Maybe he was part of the dream which contained many voices, but Stacy does not want to remember. Stacy is happy they are having a baby, but she feels lonely and shut out because she has to get used to all of this at once. It bothers her that she was not there when Donna fell in love, got married and first found out she was pregnant. When Stacy says she will babysit if Mom lets her, no one answers, and getting a funny chill, she asks where Mom is. This foreshadows the revelation that Mom was murdered, and the foreshadowing is quickly fulfilled when Dad tells Stacy about Mom's murder. Stacy has a moment of being in shock at the news as she recalls running to the house as someone ran out of it with a gun. When Dad tells her the murderer was not caught because there were no witnesses, Stacy objects that she is a witness, foreshadowing her obsession with identifying and prosecuting her mother's murderer. Drifting off to sleep, Stacy wonders what Mom will tell her about this dream, indicating that she has not fully accepted the truth of her current situation.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Replaying how she ran to check on Mom in the morning, Stacy demands the murderer show her his face because she remembers that he is someone she knows. As Stacy eats breakfast, a girl appears in the doorway, and she does not recognize her best friend, Jan Briley, at first. Jan brings makeup for Stacy, but Stacy does not know how to apply it since she still feels like she is thirteen years old. Jan tells Stacy how sad she was when they thought Stacy might die and how happy she was when Dad told her Stacy had woke up. As Jan does her makeup, Stacy thinks of how they used to have slumber parties on Friday nights and wishes Jan would go away. Finishing, Jan announces that Stacy looks beautiful, and Dr. Peterson agrees when he enters. Stacy cannot help giggling when Jan squeezes her hand to mean Dr. Peterson is gorgeous before leaving, but the giggle turns into a sob. Dr. Peterson warns Stacy what crying will do to mascara. Dr. Peterson asks to talk about what Stacy remembers. Stacy saw the guy, but she cannot see his face though she knows his name is in her head somewhere. She does not want to discuss the many adjustments she faces or Mom's death yet, so Dr. Peterson promises he will be here when she is ready. Stacy asks when she can go home and is told soon, after they make sure she is over the infection. After Dr. Peterson leaves, Stacy's mind does not wander through the new things she has learned. It shuts in on itself to ask who she saw on the backstairs because "it's his turn to die" (page 22).

Chapter 2 Analysis

When Stacy wakes in the morning, she knows this is not a dream. Recalling the day she was shot, Stacy realizes that she knew the murderer, but she cannot remember his name. As he points his gun at her, she wants to cry out for Mom but cannot make a sound. Facing Dad's words, Stacy cries as she realizes she will never see Mom again. A nurse, Alice, helps Stacy shower as she does every day, and though the shower makes her feel better on the outside, she doubts anything can help on the inside. Her face in the mirror is different than she remembers, and she wonders how her eyes can show so much pain when she feels so empty inside. Alice is glad that Stacy recovered and tells her Donna is going to bring her some clothes later. When Stacy's best friend, Jan, visits, Stacy feels awkward with her seventeen-year-old best friend, as if she is talking to one of Donna's friends, and she does not know what to talk about. When she asks about school, Jan tells her about Suzie Lindly getting married because she is pregnant and about dating Bick who used to be gawky but is now hot. Jan also joined the camera club with B. J., her best friend, but she interjects that Stacy has always been her best friend of course. Stacy is not even jealous because this Jan is not the one she has always known. Jan does Stacy's makeup since Stacy does not know how since she is still mentally thirteen years old and was not allowed to wear makeup when she was last awake. Looking in the mirror after Jan leaves, Stacy feels even more alienated from her body, and Dr. Peterson offers to wait while she washes her face; however, Stacy



changes her mind because she likes the way the girl in the mirror looks and maybe she can get used to it. When Dr. Peterson asks to talk about what Stacy remembers, she tells him she knows the murderer but cannot see his face or remember his name. She refuses to talk about Mom or the adjustments she is now facing, so Dr. Peterson simply tells her that he will be there when she is ready to talk about it. Once he leaves, Stacy returns to thinking about the murderer, indicating her growing obsession.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Brandi Mayer, a reporter from the "Houston Evening News" enters and asks for an interview. Stacy does not mind, but Donna checks with the supervisor's office who says it is alright. Dad is not in his office, so Brandi proceeds, asking what it is like to return to the real world after four years and comparing Stacy to Sleeping Beauty. When she asks what Stacy remembers, Stacy mentions seeing the guy raise his gun, but she cannot see his face. She knows his name, though, and maybe that is why he shot her. Excited that Stacy saw her mother's murderer, Brandi encourages her to think harder, but Donna objects it is not as important as Stacy is right now. Insisting this is not good for Stacy, Donna makes Brandi leaves and retrieves Alice who agrees Brandi should not have been allowed to see Stacy. When Stacy asks about going home, Alice tells her that Mrs. Montez, the physical therapist, will visit her soon and she will be allowed to go home in no time. As Donna gets ready to go to class, Stacy reminds her of when Mom was pregnant when Stacy was ten. She was so excited, but it hurt so bad when Mom lost the baby. It is confusing because it feels like Donna should be Mom and makes Stacy "feel strange and faraway" (page 30). Calming Stacy, Donna tells her not to rush, to just take one day at a time, and as they hold each other, Stacy realizes how much Donna misses Mom, especially now when she cannot turn to Mom with questions about her pregnancy. Stacy needs to see his face for herself and Donna, and as the clutter blows from her mind, she finds her sister. Donna promises to be there if Stacy needs her, and Stacy reciprocates the sentiment. After Donna leaves, Alice brings Mrs. Montez to see Stacy, and Mrs. Montez notes the regular exercise has paid off. It does not matter that Stacy does not remember her; it only matters that her body is still in good condition. In the morning, Mrs. Montez will put Stacy through her paces if Dr. Peterson allows it, and then Stacy can keep up the good work after she goes home. Mrs. Montez will tend to obtaining loaned equipment for Stacy to use at home. An orderly, Monty, brings Stacy's lunch before she falls asleep, and she wakes to find Donna sitting in the chair next to her bed. Donna wishes she had not let the reporter interview Stacy, showing her the article which depicts photos of Stacy at thirteen and seventeen. The Sleeping Beauty story is not too bad, but it makes it sound more exciting than it really is, especially the part about how Stacy is the only one who can identify Mom's murderer because Brandi makes it sound like Stacy might remember his face at any minute. Donna is upset about the article but will not explain why, and she quickly leaves to make dinner for Dennis. Alone, Stacy looks in the bathroom mirror, trying to get used to her new face, and she suddenly realizes why Donna is so worried. If the killer reads that Stacy can identify him, what will he do? Stacy tells her reflection that she needs help; she has to be able to see his face.



Chapter 3 Analysis

Donna brings clothes for Stacy, guessing on sizes since she stills thinks of her younger sister as being thirteen. Stacy still thinks of herself as a thirteen-year-old also. She feels self-conscious as she changes; even though Donna is her sister, she is grown and pregnant, making her so different that Stacy does not really know her. Donna objects to Brandi Mayer interviewing Stacy, but since the supervisor's office says it is alright, Brandi proceeds with the interview. She is excited when Stacy mentions that she recognized the murderer, foreshadowing Brandi's decision to mention this in the article as well as the danger that this puts Stacy in. It is important to Stacy to remember the man who killed Mom because she is filled with hatred for him and wants to see him gets what he deserves. Thinking of her sister's welfare, Donna makes Brandi leave and summons a nurse to check Stacy's vital signs to make sure she was not overly agitated by the interview. Stacy recalls Mom's miscarriage when she was ten, noting that she feels like Donna should be Mom and the situation is very confusing. Donna comforts her sister, and as Stacy realizes how much Donna misses Mom and decides she must identify the murderer for Donna, she finds her sister again. First, this reiterates Stacy's obsession with identifying Mom's murderer, and secondly, this shows that Stacy is beginning to adjust to portions of her new life. Mrs. Montez is proud of her work with Stacy's physical therapy and promises that Stacy will be able to go home soon. When Donna shows Stacy the article that Brandi wrote, Stacy is upset that Brandi did not get the facts right. Donna will not explain why she is so upset by the story, but after she leaves, Stacy realizes why her sister is upset; the killer could read the article and come after Stacy. This foreshadows the killer harassing Stacy and her increasing need to identify him.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Chills run up Stacy's spine as she wonders what she can do. Dr. Peterson enters, claims the Sleeping Beauty stuff was cornball, and apologizes for allowing the reporter to see Stacy. When Stacy admits she is scared the murderer might read the article, he tells her not to worry about that, and he offers to stay with her when two detectives from the Houston Police Department arrive to talk to Stacy, followed by Dad who objects he does not believe his daughter is up to this. Dr. Peterson assures Dad that Stacy can handle it, so the detectives question her about the person she saw running from her house. Explaining she cannot see his face, Stacy begs them to help her; she needs to know who he is because she hates him for killing Mom. She knows he was older, maybe a high school student, and asks why he killed Mom. The police suspect the killer was looking for drug money, thought the house was empty and panicked when it was not. Stacy does not understand why it had to be Mom who was always so kind and gentle, and when Dad says there is no way of knowing, she objects that they will know when they arrest him. They fear they are tiring her, but Stacy objects because she will do anything to help. Detective Markowitz gives her his card, and Dr. Peterson and Dad follow the detectives into the hall to discuss the slim possibility of catching the murderer. Dad asks about getting protection for Stacy, but Dr. Peterson insists she should lead as normal a life as possible in order to get the pieces together. Stacy is tired, angry and scared because she does not know what will happen next between her and the faceless murderer or who will find the other first.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Dr. Peterson assures Stacy that the murderer will not come after her, something that occurs repeatedly throughout the novel as adults try to shelter Stacy from the danger of her situation. When the police come to talk to Stacy about identifying the murderer, she is eager to help them because she hates the man who killed her mother and wants him to be punished. Stacy does not understand why her gentle mother was murdered when she learns that the killer stole only twelve dollars from Mom's wallet, but she insists they will know why he killed Mom after they arrest him. Detective Markowitz explains they need an eyewitness and physical evidence to make a solid case for the district attorney, foreshadowing the importance of Stacy acting as a witness and their attempts to provide physical evidence. The detectives will pull the case file to see if they found fingerprints and the bullet that killed Mom, but after they arrest the murderer, he will go through the legal process. Dad looks startled when Stacy asks if the killer will receive the death penalty, but the detectives tell her it depends on the jury. Stacy's interest in the murderer receiving the death penalty demonstrates the depth of her hatred. After the detectives leave Stacy's room, Dad talks to them about getting protection for Stacy, but Dr. Peterson insists that it is important for her to lead a normal life as much as possible. Stacy is frightened as she wonders what will happen next between her and Mom's

murderer, and her interest foreshadows her focus on finding the murderer as well as the murderer's interest in Stacy. This fear is a theme that appears repeatedly throughout the novel as Stacy tries to solve the case of her mother's murder.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Dad worries about her being alone, and Stacy is about to say Mom will be there until she reminds herself that Mom will not. Instead, she says she needs to go to school, but Dad points out she was just finishing seventh grade and is not prepared for eleventh grade, suggesting homeschooling, but Stacy suggests maybe she can make up eighth grade over the summer and start high school in the fall. She promises to work real hard, but when she mentions Mom, she apologizes because she keeps forgetting. Dad forgets too, and he does not know if it will ever stop hurting. He tells Stacy that hate is not the answer. When Monty bursts into the room with Stacy's dinner tray, Dad tells him to knock from now on before leaving for work. A nurse rushes into Stacy's room and tells her to turn on Channel 2 because she is going to be on the news. She did not see the TV crew because a policeman is stationed in the hallways to keep reporters and photographers away. The newscaster talks about Stacy as Sleeping Beauty and a potential eyewitness to her mother's murder, and when Stacy is again surprised by the recent photograph of herself, the nurse assures her she is an attractive girl and will have lots of dates. Stacy cannot imagine talking to boys, and though Jan would know how to date, she cannot imagine asking her for advice. Monty returns to collect the dinner tray and starts questioning Stacy about what happened. She yells for him to leave and hits the call button when he ignores her. A nurse kicks Monty out of Stacy's room and chides him for harassing a patient. She assures Stacy that he is harmless but curious, promising to make sure he does not bother her again. The next morning, Stacy is too busy to think as Alice changes the dressing on her hip and brings her jeans and a t-shirt that belonged to her daughter. Mrs. Montez pops her head in the room to announce Stacy will have physical therapy in fifteen minutes. As she enters the hallway, Monty grabs her arm, insisting he only wants to help her avoid the mob of reporters at the main desk. Dragging her along his shortcut, he admits a reporter offered him twenty dollars to bring Stacy to the back door to answer a few questions. The back door rattles, but it is locked, so the guy presses his face to the glass, and his distorted face looks like a monstrous blob. Stacy worries if he can see her as the doorknob rattles again.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Dad tries to hide his concerns when he returns to the room, and Dr. Peterson tells Stacy she can go home the day after tomorrow. Dad's concern about Stacy being left home alone again shows the way adults try to shelter Stacy throughout this novel. One aspect of Stacy's difficult situation is emphasized as she and Dad discuss what she will do about school, but Stacy mentions Mom helping her because she keeps forgetting that Mom is dead. Stacy wishes they could start over, but Dad tells her they have to climb over problems because there is still a lot of good to discover; this idea of moving on because life still holds the promise of good things repeats several times throughout the novel. Dad's advice that Stacy not succumb to hatred shows that he knows partially



what is going on in her head and foreshadows Stacy's increasing hatred as well as her eventual release of that hatred. Monty bursting into Stacy's room foreshadows his odd behavior later, especially as Dad notes that he does not like the orderly's attitude. After Dad leaves, a nurse alerts Stacy to the fact that she is going to be on the news, and Stacy is shocked by the report which shows a current picture of her. When the nurse tells her she is attractive and will have lots of dates, Stacy ponders the idea of dating, deciding to ask Donna since she feels uncomfortable talking to Jan about boys now that Jan is a stranger. Monty returns to Stacy's room to harass her with questions, but a nurse assures Stacy he is harmless after chiding him for disturbing a patient. Stacy guesses she overreacted, but she is scared of so much now. She does not want to be on TV or to have police guarding her room; she wishes she were still thirteen. The next morning, Stacy is too busy preparing to go home to be scared. Getting dressed, Stacy kind of likes her new face which looks like the face she is used to seeing on Donna, again demonstrating her growing acceptance of her new life. In the hallway, Monty grabs Stacy, claiming he wants to help her avoid the reporters at the main desk which she needs to pass in order to get to the physical therapy room, but as he drags her toward the back door, he admits that a reporter offered him twenty dollars to arrange for an interview with Stacy. The face pressed to the glass at the backdoor looks monstrous and terrifies Stacy as the man outside tries the locked doorknob. Monty's actions fulfill the foreshadowing concerning Dad and Stacy's uncomfortable feelings around the man, and the man outside's strangely persistent behavior foreshadows Stacy's fright and disbelief that the man is really a reporter.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Screaming, Stacy kicks Monty, and as people crowd the corridor, a policeman chases the man at the door who unfortunately escapes. The reporters try to question Stacy, but Mrs. Montez leads her away, claiming they are already behind schedule. Mrs. Montez has arranged for Stacy to borrow an exercise bike and insists she walk one to two miles daily. Stacy plans to stay in good shape because she has a lot to do, starting with identifying the guy with the gun and making sure he is convicted of murder. Soon after Stacy returns to her room, Dad arrives, and Detective Markowitz phones to ask Stacy to come by the police station to look at mug shots. Outside as Stacy leaves with Dad, reporters accost Stacy, but Dad tells them she has nothing to say, and they drive home without talking much. As Stacy looks outside at the tree house, Dad warns her it is not safe. Dad drives Stacy to the police station to look at mug shots, and in Detective Markowitz's office, Stacy looks through five books without finding the face she cannot remember. Detective Markowitz suggest she needs more time, and when Stacy insists she will remember, he tells her he is counting on it, but maybe it is better to remember the face naturally instead of trying to force it so her testimony will hold up in court. He promises to get in touch with her next week. Stacy is happy to be home again, and she assures Dad that she will be alright alone so he can get back to work. In the backyard, she faces the house, remembering the pale eyes behind the gun. She needs to walk, but she is reluctant to leave the house, so she sits and reads until Jan calls to insist she come to a party on Friday night in her honor at Tony's house. Jan also tells Stacy she needs to come over right away, though she will not explain why. When Stacy walks to Jan's, Jan is glad they have plenty of time because Jeff Clinton, a new hunk from Michigan, is coming over because he wants to meet Stacy. Jan answers the door while Stacy applies lipstick, and she cannot help shyly smiling back when she enters the den to find a handsome guy smiling at her. Jeff asks what she is going to do about school, offering to tutor her in math, and Stacy blushes as he looks at her like she is the most interesting person he has ever seen. Jan is pleased because Jeff obviously likes Stacy. Stacy goes home after promising to come to Jan's for dinner soon, and Donna and Dennis visit Stacy at home. Donna will go to the police station with Stacy next time because Dad cannot afford to take off work anymore. Stacy learns that Dad has been working two jobs to pay her medical bills, and Stacy hates the guy who murdered Mom even more. She wishes she could see his face but does not know how to explain she feel like she will run out of time if she does not identify the murderer soon.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Stacy's screams alert hospital workers and the police to her situation, and after they restrain Monty, the police officer chases the man outside. Mrs. Montez protects Stacy from the reporters' questions. Stacy worries the man outside would not have run if he was a reporter, but Mrs. Montez tells her not to worry. As she puts Stacy through her



exercise routine, she acts cold, but Stacy can see in her eyes that she really cares. The policeman reports that he believes the man at the back door was an amateur reporter, but Stacy does not believe him, showing her suspicion that the murderer is making an attempt at her. Dad worries that looking at the mug shots will be an emotional strain, but Stacy has to do this because she hates the murderer. As the nurses and Dr. Peterson tell Stacy goodbye, she blushes when Dr. Peterson hugs her, and she wants to tell Jan but quickly remembers that the Jan she wants to tell no longer exists. Stacy finally gets to go home. The house looks the same, except Mom is no longer there. Dad tells Stacy that her cat, Pansy, disappeared last year, and suggesting she might want a kitten from the Coopers' litter, he explains the Coopers are the new neighbors who have three little girls. He suggests they plan a weekend to Padre Island with Donna and Dennis soon, and though it is the last place Stacy wants to go since it holds so many memories, she agrees because Dad looks so uncomfortable and hopeful. When Jan invites Stacy to a party Friday night, Stacy tries to argue that she is not ready, but Jan insists she is, promising to come by early to help Stacy with her hair and makeup. Jan insists Stacy come over right away because a new guy, Jeff Clinton, is interested in her. Jan chides Stacy for being overly suspicious about Jeff's interest, assuring her Jeff just moved to Texas last year when she realizes that Stacy is worried about the guy whose face she cannot remember. Stacy does not know what to say to Jeff, but Jan assures her she will be fine as she does Stacy's makeup. Stacy is self-conscious as she talks to Jeff, and his apparent interest makes her blush. When Jan returns with drinks, she raises her eyebrows at Stacy's red face, but Stacy calms down as Jeff talks, though he seems older and somehow familiar, foreshadowing the discovery of who Jeff really is. Jeff seems bored when Jan starts talking about the party, also foreshadowing his true identity, and he reiterates his offer to tutor Stacy in math before leaving. Stacy hates the murderer even more after she learns that Dad has been forced to work two jobs to pay for her medical bills. Her feeling that she will run out of time if she does not identify the killer foreshadows the killer harassing Stacy and Stacy's renewed fervor to find him first.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

In the morning, Donna takes Stacy to Foley's Memorial Store to shop for jeans and t-shirts, also buying several dresses which she insists is the style for Stacy's age. Donna also buys bras, panties and a slip for her younger sister. When it is time for Donna to leave, Stacy fights the fear of being left alone, hurrying her sister off to class, but she shrieks when she opens the front door to find a woman standing on the porch. Donna introduces Stacy to Mrs. Cooper who asks Stacy to babysit tonight from 7-10 P.M. Donna objects, but Stacy agrees since Dad will be working anyway. After Donna leaves, Stacy looks through the cookbooks and manages to make a casserole. As they eat, Dad frowns when Stacy tells him she is going to babysit for the Coopers, but he agrees before going to work. Making sure she has Detective Markowitz's card in her pocket, Stacy locks the door and goes next door to the Coopers' house. Mrs. Cooper shows her the emergency contacts and leaves. The girls stare at Stacy who learns their names are Keri, Meri and Teri. Stacy plays dolls with the girls, but Teri is upset that no one will listen to her about what she saw when she went upstairs to use the bathroom. She saw someone in Stacy's backyard, trying to look in the window. Stacy hushes the girls, and they all run upstairs and look out the window where they see a moving shape trying to peer in Stacy's bedroom window on the side of the house before disappearing around the back of the house. Keri is terrified as she asks what if he gets into Stacy's house.

Chapter 7 Analysis

In the morning, Donna arrives, looking delighted as she complains that the baby kicked all night. She takes Stacy shopping for new clothes. Stacy tells Donna she is being bossy; she is trying to act like Mom, but Mom was not bossy. Donna is only trying to help, so Stacy apologizes. At home, Stacy takes her packages to her room while Donna calls Dennis, and as she watches the Cooper children play in their backyard, she notes the oldest is about twelve, near her age, and longs to join them, thinking perhaps they can be friends, until she remembers she is seventeen, not thirteen. Stacy is in a world she does not want and is not ready for, making her hate the guy with the gun. Stacy fights the fear of being left alone when it is time for Donna to leave, but she is frightened when she opens the door to find a woman on the front porch. She is introduced to her new neighbor, Mrs. Cooper, who asks Stacy to babysit. As Stacy cooks dinner, she sees herself on the news and wishes Jeff would call. When Dad comes home, he falls asleep while reading the paper and waiting for dinner to be ready, and Stacy grabs the paper to look through the classifieds, waking Dad. She suggests getting a job, but Dad refuses. He wants to talk to her about Mom because he is worried that Stacy has not mourned her. He believes she is holding her feelings in, and it is not good to be afraid to face what happened. Stacy is saved by the oven timer announcing dinner is ready, and Dad reminds her that he is ready to listen whenever she is ready to talk. Dad agrees to let Stacy babysit for the Coopers, and when it is time, she goes next door and meets Keri,



Meri and Teri. Teri asks if she is the real Sleeping Beauty, and Stacy says that is just a make-believe story. The house looks very different than when the Hadleys lived there. As the girls play dolls, Teri tells Stacy that she saw someone sneaking around Stacy's house while she was using the bathroom. Stacy and the girls rush upstairs and see a shadowy figure peering in the windows of Stacy's house, and this indicates Stacy's suspicions and fears of the killer trying to find her are true. It also reinforces her need to find him first.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Stacy calls Detective Markowitz, and police are sent to check things out until the detective can arrive. As the police finish checking Stacy's yard, the Coopers return home, and Mrs. Cooper is frantic with concern about her children. Dad also arrives and calms everyone down as the police officer explains what happened. When he suggests that Stacy is just nervous, the Cooper girls object that they saw the figure too. After the Coopers go inside, Detective Markowitz arrives, and after talking to the officers, he agrees it was just Stacy's imagination. Stacy does not sleep well that night, seeing the guy with the gun each time she closes her eyes, though she still cannot see his face. She knows she is trying too hard, but she has to see it. In the morning, Stacy tells Dad that she is going to make an appointment to talk to the high school guidance counselor and about the party tonight. Dad questions her about the party, and she is annoyed that it has become a challenge, though she originally did not even want to go. She tells Dad he needs to let her grow up and not be overprotective. Dad agrees that Stacy can go to the party with Jan and tells her to have a great time. That afternoon, a delivery truck brings the loaned exercise bike to Stacy, and Mrs. Cooper calls to make sure everything is alright. She knows she is being too careful, but she is nervous after last night and the same car that seems to be cruising their street. She cannot describe the car, so Stacy drops it since it is probably not a threat. After exercising and showering, Stacy hears the phone ring, and when she answers it, a whispery voice asks what she remembers. Too shocked to be frightened, Stacy asks who it is, but the voice tells her it would be safer if she forgot. Stacy is angry instead of afraid as she demands to know if the voice killed her mother, and when he replies he will have to do something about it before she remembers his face, Stacy claims she will find him first. Laughing, he says he has a friend and she does not have a chance before the line goes dead.

Chapter 8 Analysis

The girls are frightened as Stacy calls Detective Markowitz, but since he is not in the office, a woman tells Stacy she will send a patrol car and try to reach Detective Markowitz in the meantime. The girls stick together since they are all terrified, and Stacy thinks it will be best if the Coopers do not get home until the police check things out. When the police car pulls up, one officer stays in Stacy's front yard while the other comes to the Coopers' house and tells the girls to stay put while they check things out. Detective Markowitz returns Stacy's call and instructs her to tell the officers to stay there until he arrives. The officer returns to the Coopers' house as the Coopers' car appears in the driveway. Mrs. Cooper is frantic wondering what happened to her children, but luckily, Dad also arrives and calms everyone down so the officer can explain. The officers did not find anyone in Stacy's yard and suggests she is nervous, but the Cooper girls object that they saw him too. Mrs. Cooper ushers the girls inside, forgetting to pay Stacy, but Stacy does not mind because she was not a good babysitter and is not going



to babysit again until the murderer is in jail because she does not want to involve anyone else if she is in danger. When Detective Markowitz arrives, he talks to the police, agreeing it was just Stacy's imagination and promising to watch out for her since she is their star witness. Stacy does not trust his smile because she does not believe things are as simple as he pretends they are. She knows that she saw someone prowling outside her house tonight. The incident disturbs Stacy's sleep that night. The next morning, Stacy tells Dad of her plans to talk to the high school guidance counselor, foreshadowing that trip. She also tells him about the party Jan insists she attend, and though she does not want to go, it becomes a challenge when Dad objects; Stacy's insistence on growing up shows that she is beginning to accept the fact that she is seventeen years old and simultaneously struggling to act the appropriate age. When Mrs. Cooper sees a delivery truck bringing the loaned exercise bike to Stacy's house, she calls, concerned because of the odd events happening lately, but Stacy dismisses her suspicions of a car she has seen driving by repeatedly, assuming Mrs. Cooper is just being paranoid. Apologizing for the excitement, Mrs. Cooper mentions that Teri has an overactive imagination and offers to pay Stacy if she stops by today or tomorrow. After Stacy exercises and showers, a whispery voice telephones her house, discreetly threatening her by suggesting it would be safer to forget what happened four years ago. This fulfills the earlier foreshadowing that the killer would come after Stacy, confirming her fears, and it also foreshadows the killer actually approaching Stacy brazenly. After he hangs up, Stacy shivers because she did not know that hate could be this strong; "he has torn up my life. He's destroyed four years that belonged to me. And most horrible of all, he's taken my mother away from us. I shiver as I realize I actually hate him enough to kill him" (page 101).



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Stacy decides the call was a prank because no way would the real murderer call her. Jan and B. J. arrive to help Stacy get dressed. Jan gifts her with a red V-neck t-shirt while B. J. shrinks her jeans; Stacy cannot go as she is because she has something to live up to since she is Sleeping Beauty coming back to the world and needs to make an impact on it. When the girls finally reveal their finished project, Stacy laughs in delighted shock at her image in the mirror because she is happy with how she looks. The phone rings again, and the same voice asks where Stacy is because the party has already started and he is waiting for her. Stacy hangs up, refusing to talk to the jerk, and when she tells Jan and B. J. someone is trying to scare her, the girls conjecture about who it could be, deciding they will ignore him when they find out who it is because it is not nice to scare Stacy.

As Stacy, Jan and B. J. arrive at Tony's house, Stacy is bombarded with questions from the guests, but Jeff saves her by telling everyone she cannot talk about a case before the trial. Jeff tenses when Jarrod Tucker approaches Stacy and asks if she remembers him. Stacy remembers him because he lived near Jan, but she never liked him. After Jarrod walks away, Jeff leads Stacy to the library for a break from her peers' questions, assuring her people are just excited because her story is new and different but things will settle down soon. Stacy wants to go home because she does not belong here, but Jeff can put himself in her shoes and imagine how hard it is to grow up all of a sudden. Stacy notes he is different, feeling stupid because she sounds like a kid and keeps saying the wrong things. When Stacy and Jeff are separated, Jarrod tries to offer Stacy an alcoholic drink, but he brings her a soda when she refuses the liquor. He convinces her to walk outside with him because he wants to show her his new car. Outside, Stacy does not feel well, and Jarrod admits he put alcohol in her drink but insists he did not think it would affect her so strongly. Since Stacy insists she should go home, Jarrod offers to drive her, but as he leads her down the front steps, the door opens and Jeff flings Jarrod aside, telling him to leave Stacy alone. Falling on the ground, Stacy can clearly see the guy who ran from her house, and feeling the fear in his yellow eyes as he points the gun at her, she screams at Jarrod "it was you! You killed my mother" (page 118)!

Chapter 9 Analysis

Stacy turns on the lights, and the light and movement makes things normal. Thinking about the voice on the phone, she decides it was just some crazy person who thinks the call is funny because there is no way the real murderer would call her. Jan arrives with B. J. who is amazingly beautiful, and they plot about Stacy's hair and makeup. As Jan and B. J. do her hair and makeup, Stacy is nervous about what she will finally see. B. J. seems unexcited as she comments about Stacy and Jeff, but Stacy insists he only



offered to tutor her in math. After the girls get Stacy dressed, they finish her hair, and when she worries they are going to be late since it is already 8 P. M., Jan and B. J. tell her they will look like nerds if they get there on time. As they pull her into the bathroom to see the final product, Stacy is annoyed that B. J. calls her Sleeping Beauty and Jan says she is Eliza Dolittle from "My Fair Lady" because she just wants to be herself. Stacy is thrilled with her transformation, again showing her gradual acceptance of her seventeen-year-old appearance. When the same person phones again, asking when Stacy will be at the party, Stacy hangs up on him; this foreshadows Stacy identifying Mom's murderer at Tony's party.

The girls giggle on the way to the Maconda house, and upon their arrival, Tony greets them, staring at Stacy so appreciatively that she blushes. Jan announces Stacy as they enter the house, and Stacy is bombarded with so many questions that she feels like she is in a nightmare and screams that she does not want to talk about it. Jeff interrupts, clarifying that she cannot talk about it because no one can talk about a case before the trial. Jeff acts as Stacy's savior for the first time of several times in this story. People still stare, making Stacy uncomfortable because she hates being a curiosity. As Jeff asks if she knows the people here, he tenses as a short, stocky guy steps forward and, introducing himself as Jarrod Tucker, asks if Stacy remembers him. Jarrod is a few years older and lived down the street from Jan, but Stacy mostly ignored him because Jan did not like him since he is spoiled and bragged about how he always got his own way. Stacy's dislike of Jarrod, combined with her description, foreshadows the discovery that he killed Mom. When Stacy comments that he is older, Jarrod points out that there are older kids at the party too, and he is a fixture at most of Tony's parties. As Jarrod walks away to help Tony with the radio, Jeff escorts Stacy to the library to escape the inquisition. Stacy is embarrassed that she sounds young when she notes that Jeff is different. When Jeff suggests they should get back to the party, Stacy stalls by asking about him. She feels like they have met somewhere, and Jeff jokes that maybe he is the man of her dreams. Jeff's habit of avoiding Stacy's questions about his life indicates that Jeff is not exactly honest and foreshadows Stacy's suspicions that Jeff is somehow associated with Mom's murderer. Jeff and Stacy are separated in the den on their way to check on the pizza, so Jarrod offers Stacy a drink which she refuses because she can smell the alcohol. Instead, he brings her a soda which smells alright, and he leads her to the garden room to talk, saying she is a beauty and putting his arm around her. Stacy stiffens and does not know what to do. When she wonders where Jeff is, Jarrod points out that she did not come to the party with Jeff and asks her to go out front to see his new car, insisting that he always gets his way. First, he insists Stacy finish her drink since he got it especially for her. Jarrod leads Stacy out the front door by the hand, but she sits down on the front steps because she feels funny. She suggests she should find Jan because she might be getting sick, but Jarrod tells her to relax and close her eyes; the vodka will not hurt her, and he did not think it would hit her so hard. Jarrod's odd behavior and the fact that he spiked Stacy's drink without her knowledge indicates his character and foreshadows the discovery that he murdered Mom. As Jarrod leads Stacy towards his car, Jeff appears again as her hero, flinging Jarrod away, but as Stacy falls to the ground, she clearly sees Mom's murderer, and the previous foreshadowing is fulfilled when Stacy identifies Jarrod as the man who shot her and killed her mother.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Enraged, Stacy staggers toward Jarrod, but Jeff knocks into her as he leaps off the porch, causing them both to fall as Jarrod runs to his car and drives away. People rush from the house, asking questions, and unable to stand it, Stacy collapses in the grass. While Jan gets coffee for Stacy, Jeff helps her sit upright and tells everyone to go inside because he is taking Stacy home. As Jeff leads Stacy to his car, she notes that he seems familiar but also that it seems he is not exactly what he is supposed to be. Claiming many people are not what they seem, Jeff asks Stacy about how well she knew Jarrod, but when she asks him the same question, he evasively claims he has seen Jarrod around. Mrs. Cooper hears the car and pops her head outside to check on Stacy, standing on her porch as Jeff kisses Stacy's forehead and hands her the house keys and his phone number. Though he refuses her invitation to come inside, he checks the house before leaving. Realizing Jeff drove her home without asking her address, Stacy recalls the whispery voice saying he had a friend and wonders if Jeff is Jarrod's friend. Detective Markowitz hears about Stacy identifying the killer and calls her before she can reach the phone. After ensuring that the identification is not a mix-up, he looks at Jarrod's record. Jarrod has a few possession charges, but they will have to prove he is a murderer; Detective Markowitz believes Stacy, but there are still a number of things to do. He will contact her tomorrow, and he assures her Jarrod will not bother her tonight. The house seems quiet, so Stacy showers, but she is scared when she turns the water off because she cannot hear the rest of the house with the door shut. The phone rings once, and as Stacy inches through the hall cautiously, Dad calls her name, apologizing for startling her. When Stacy asks about the phone call, Dad claims it was probably a wrong number because no one spoke when he answered. Stacy tells Dad about identifying the murderer at the party, and he looks guilty when she tells him Mrs. Cooper watched Jeff drop her off. Dad did not ask her to keep an eye on Stacy, but Mrs. Cooper is concerned. When the phone rings again, there is no response, and though Dad claims it is a wrong number, Stacy can tell he does not believe it. She sees Jarrod's face as she goes to bed, but she will not let him ruin her life because she is going to ruin his.

Chapter 10 Analysis

As Stacy approaches Jarrod, Jeff gets in her way, foreshadowing the concept that he is Jarrod's friend. After Jarrod drives off, Stacy collapses in the grass. The partygoers are shocked Jarrod is the killer, but one girl mentions seeing a gun in his glove compartment during a date. Jeff takes control of the situation, telling the party guests to go back inside because he will make sure Stacy gets home safely. Jeff already called the police, and he assures Stacy that Jarrod will not come to her house. After Jeff explains he arrived so fast because he was looking for Stacy, Stacy is embarrassed when she asks why, and she becomes increasingly more embarrassed as the coffee



clears her mind. As Jeff leads Stacy to the car by her hand, she notes again that he seems familiar; "it's like you're not exactly what you seem to be" (page 122). Jeff asks about Stacy's association with Jarrod but refuses to answer her reciprocated question. Stacy is agitated that Jeff avoids answering her questions, but when he offers to talk about the party, she insists that she does not even want to think about the party. As they drive in silence, Stacy feels that Jeff has a secret he does not want her to discover. He walks her to the front door, and Stacy hopes he will kiss her, though the thought is scary. Jeff again acts as Stacy's hero by checking her house before leaving her. Watching Jeff walk to his car, Stacy thinks he is nice but wonders why he is so mysterious and hesitant to talk about himself. When Stacy realizes Jeff drove to her house without asking for her address, her suspicion that he is Jarrod's friend fulfills the earlier foreshadowing. Detective Markowitz calls Stacy to question her about identifying the killer and to tell her how they will proceed from here. As Stacy gets out of the shower, she realizes she could not hear the rest of the house with the water running and the door shut, reiterating the theme of fear that recurs throughout this narrative. Luckily, Dad is home, so she tells him about identifying the murderer at the party. The phone was ringing when Stacy got out of the shower, but when she asks about it, Dad claims it was a wrong number. The phone rings again, and again, no one responds when Dad answers. Stacy can tell Dad does not believe it is a wrong number, another example of the adults in the novel trying to shelter Stacy from the reality of her danger. As she tries to sleep, Stacy decides she will ruin Jarrod's life instead of letting him ruin her, showing her determination and foreshadowing her resolve throughout the remainder of the story to see Jarrod incarcerated.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

As Stacy eats breakfast on Saturday morning, a woman arrives at her door, asking to talk to her. Learning the visitor is Eloise Tucker, Jarrod's mother, Stacy insists on talking outside. Eloise suggests that Stacy is mistaken about Jarrod being Mom's killer, even insisting that her sister will testify that Jarrod was visiting in San Antonio that day. Wanting to cry in rage, Stacy insists she will testify against Jarrod. Mrs. Tucker leaves when Jeff arrives, but Jeff responds vaguely when Stacy asks if he knows Jarrod's mother. Stacy tells Jeff that Mrs. Tucker was trying to dissuade her from testifying, and he admits that people can lie in court but suggests she call Detective Markowitz with her questions. Jeff follows Stacy into the house when the phone rings, and the call is from Detective Markowitz who tells Stacy that they have arrested Jarrod but still need physical evidence to prove that he was at the McAdams' house that day. They will begin with Stacy identifying Jarrod from a lineup. Jeff offers to drive Stacy to the police station, but Donna insists that she will take Stacy. In the viewing room, Jarrod is brought out on the other side of the glass along with seven men who look similar. Asking Detective Markowitz to tell the men to face the window, Stacy identifies Jarrod and claims those eyes stared into hers before he shot her, and she will never forget those eyes. Detective Markowitz seems pleased, and he tells Stacy that they will next have a hearing where Jarrod will plead "not guilty" before they proceed to the actual trial. He promises that they will make a strong plea that Jarrod be held without bail, but he warns Stacy that Jarrod might be released. Outside, a news crew is waiting, and with Detective Markowitz's encouragement, Stacy steps forward to give an interview; however, she suddenly finds herself face-to-face with Jarrod who threatens her with his friend before the officers drag him away. Stacy runs to Donna, but neither Donna nor Detective Markowitz heard Jarrod's threat. Detective Markowitz promises that Stacy will be safe, and when Donna suggests Stacy should not testify, Stacy insists that Jarrod will not scare her out of testifying. Stacy thinks about what Jarrod said. He succeeded in frightening her because she knows what she is up against with Jarrod, but she does not even know who his friend is.

Chapter 11 Analysis

On Saturday, Stacy wakes long after Dad leaves for work, half expecting to hear the lawnmower and smell pancakes like on Saturdays when Mom was alive. She decides she will clean the house after breakfast because that is one Saturday morning ritual she can still observe. When the doorbell rings, Stacy forces herself to ignore her fear and answer the door. A woman asks to come in and talk to Stacy, but when Stacy learns it is Eloise Tucker, Jarrod's mother, she insists on talking outside. Eloise insists that Stacy's claim that Jarrod killed Mom is impossible because he was visiting her sister in San Antonio that day, and her sister will testify accordingly. Her minister will also provide a character reference for Jarrod, and Mrs. Tucker suggests Stacy is confused about the



killer's identity. Furious, Stacy refuses to yield to Mrs. Tucker's demands. Mrs. Tucker leaves as Jeff pulls up, and though Jeff's eyes show a spark of recognition, he vaguely tells that he has seen her around. When Stacy invites Jeff inside, he suggests sitting on the porch, and Stacy likes and is scared by her strange feelings like wanting to sit close enough to Jeff that their bodies are nearly touching. She tells him that Mrs. Tucker was trying to dissuade her from testifying, and Jeff agrees that people can lie in court and Jarrod could go free but tells her to talk to Detective Markowitz. He understands that Stacy takes it for granted that he would know because his younger brother assumes he knows everything because he is older. When the phone rings, Jeff insists Stacy answer it, following her into the house. Detective Markowitz tells Stacy they just picked up Jarrod, but he did not tell them anything. He reminds her that they still need physical evidence to prove Jarrod was at her house that day, but there is a slim chance of tying Jarrod to the scene. They will start with Stacy coming to the station to identify Jarrod from a lineup which will help them hold Jarrod longer, but he could get out if they cannot convince the judge to hold him without bail. Jeff offers to drive Stacy to the police station, but when Stacy calls Donna, Donna insists Stacy should have her family with her. Jeff stays until Donna arrives, and Donna seems satisfied that he is a nice guy, though she declines his offer to drive them to the station. Detective Markowitz meets Stacy and Donna in the parking lot and escorts them to the viewing room where several men, including Jarrod's attorney, are already waiting. As eight men are led into the room on the other side of the glass, Stacy is glad Donna is holding onto her because all she can see is Jarrod's face. The other seven men look similar to Jarrod, but Stacy asks Detective Markowitz to make them face the window and tells him to look into Jarrod's pale yellow eyes. Wondering if Jarrod was trying to get rid of her last night and if he will try again if he is released, Stacy claims those eyes stared into hers before he shot her, and she will never forget those eyes. Detective Markowitz sounds pleased as he asks if Stacy is positive, and when Jarrod's attorney claims it is a formality since she saw him at the party last night, Stacy insists she will pick his photo out from four years ago. After Detective Markowitz thanks Stacy for coming, she asks about the gun, but the gun found in Jarrod's glove compartment is not the murder weapon. Next, someone from the district attorney's office will want to talk to Stacy, and Tucker will be arraigned where he will hear a summary of his charges and plead not guilty. His attorney will ask for a trial, and the judge will set the bail or decide against granting him bail, but it is possible that he will be set free, though the prosecutor will present a strong plea that he not be allowed bail. Donna says Jarrod would be insane to try to hurt Stacy, but they all think "who says that he's not" (page 142). A news crew is waiting outside, and Detective Markowitz says it would be alright for Stacy to talk to them, promising to step in if they ask anything they should not. As Stacy steps toward the reporter, she finds herself face-to-face with Jarrod whose eyes narrow as he snarls a comment about his friend. He grins as he is dragged away, and Stacy reaches for Donna or Detective Markowitz, but no one reacts to what Jarrod said because Stacy is the only one who heard him. Stacy wonders if Jarrod's friend will try if Jarrod cannot get to her. Detective Markowitz notices that Stacy is shaking and retrieves Donna. Running to Donna, Stacy tells her sister and Detective Markowitz what Jarrod said, but Detective Markowitz assures her that guys like Jarrod are all talk. Donna suggests that Stacy should not testify, but she insists he is not going to scare her out of testifying, and Detective Markowitz promises they will



protect Stacy. Sinking to a chair, Donna is tired of this. They were a happy, average family, so why did this happen to them? Detective Markowitz apologizes, seeming to satisfy Donna for the moment, and he promises to sneak them out the back when they are ready to leave. Stacy's fear of Jarrod's unknown friend foreshadows her attempts to learn who the friend is as well as her suspicions of Jeff.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Stacy plans to call Tony to ask about Jarrod's friends when she gets home, but she does not get a chance because Jeff arrives shortly after they do. Strangely, Stacy does not want to talk to him about it, but she invites him inside for tea. Donna invites Jeff to stay for dinner, so Stacy does not get a chance to call Tony until Sunday morning when she learns that his family is at the beach for the weekend. Detective Markowitz calls to tell her they received a temporary order to keep Jarrod in jail without bail, and the hearing is set for Tuesday afternoon. He phones again on Monday because the assistant district attorney, Regina Latham, wants to talk to Stacy. Detective Markowitz sends a car to bring Stacy to the courthouse downtown. He introduces her to Mrs. Latham whose direct, assaulting approach to questioning Stacy infuriates her. When Mrs. Latham asks if Stacy's coma could have affected her judgment or memory, Stacy is upset because Mrs. Latham has to believe her since she is "the one who's supposed to make sure Jarrod goes to prison for murder" (page 154). Detective Markowitz reminds Mrs. Latham that Stacy missed four years and is still a thirteen-year-old kid mentally, and he explains to Stacy that Mrs. Latham is trying to anticipate the defense's line of questioning so there will be no surprises at the trial. A phone call comes in for Detective Markowitz, and he learns that they got clear prints from the scene belonging to Jarrod which improves the chance of a conviction though it still depends on the judge, jury and prosecuting attorney. Mrs. Latham starts over, asking if Stacy's emotions will cloud the case, but Stacy assures her she will not let her anger get in the way. When Mrs. Latham asks if her guilt will confuse her since it is natural to shift some of the blame from Mom's death from Jarrod to herself, Detective Markowitz says that is enough for today. Mrs. Latham worries that Stacy will not be a good witness because of her emotional instability, but he assures her that Stacy will have time before she appears in court. As Detective Markowitz drives Stacy home, he warns her that the trial will be even harder because the defense will lie, and after apologizing for losing her temper, Stacy suggests Jarrod may have used his father's gun at the time of Mom's murder. Detective Markowitz already plans to get a search warrant. Since Stacy wants to attend the hearing on Tuesday, Detective Markowitz offers to send a car to pick her up. At home, Stacy asks Mom if her murder was Stacy's fault, but she cannot cry because her tears are locked behind the hatred that will not go away until Jarrod is dead.

Chapter 12 Analysis

On the way home, Stacy tells Donna her plan to call Tony and find out who Jarrod's friends are, but she does not get the chance because Jeff pulls up behind them as soon as they get home to ask how it went. Stacy's hesitance to ask Jeff about Jarrod's friends foreshadows and hints at her suspicions of Jeff. When the Cooper girls knock on the door and ask to play in the tree house, Donna tells them that it is too dangerous, so the girls ask Stacy to play dolls with them, and Jeff tells them Stacy will the next time she



babysits. He remembers having a babysitter who played cars with him when he was little, and he thought she was really neat. Donna invites Jeff to stay for dinner, so he calls home to say he will be at Stacy's house for a while. The phone call reminds Stacy that she needs to call Tony, but she cannot while Jeff is here, and for some reason, she does not want to ask Jeff about Jarrod's friends. On Sunday, Stacy calls Tony's house but learns his family is at the beach and will not be home until late. Detective Markowitz calls to tell Stacy that the hearing is set for Tuesday, foreshadowing Stacy's insistence upon attending the hearing. On Monday, he tells her that the assistant district attorney wants to ask her some questions, and Detective Markowitz will send a car so that Stacy does not have to bother Donna for a ride. Stacy is watching through the window when the brown sedan pulls up, and Mrs. Cooper calls from her porch to make sure everything is alright. At the courthouse downtown, Detective Markowitz meets Stacy at the car and leads her inside, apologizing that she has to go through all this because he knows it is tough on her and her family because they would rather forget all of this. Realizing Dad and Donna will have to relive everything, Stacy is furious at Jarrod. Inside, Detective Markowitz introduces Stacy to Mrs. Latham who asks what Stacy claims to have seen four years ago. She needs the information if the case goes to court. Stacy is indignant, but Detective Markowitz assures her that Mrs. Latham just wants to ensure nothing she says is misconstrued. Stacy is infuriated when Mrs. Latham suggests Stacy's coma could have affected her memory because Mrs. Latham is the one who is supposed to ensure Jarrod is convicted of murder. Appalled, Mrs. Latham insists that Stacy cannot act like that in court, and Detective Markowitz reminds her that Stacy is just a kid because of the four years she missed. He explains to Stacy that Mrs. Latham is just playing devil's advocate and trying to anticipate the defense attorney's questions. When Detective Markowitz receives a call alerting him that they found clear fingerprints from the scene placing Jarrod at the McAdams' house, he tells Stacy that their chances of a conviction still depends on the judge, jury and prosecuting attorney. Mrs. Latham starts over, but when she suggests it would be natural for Stacy to shift some of the blames from Mom's death from Jarrod to herself, Stacy explodes, causing Detective Markowitz to end the questioning for the day. Mrs. Latham suggests that Stacy's emotional instability will not make her a good witness, but Detective Markowitz insists Stacy will have plenty of time before the trial. Driving Stacy home, Detective Markowitz warns her that it will be harder at the trial because the defense will lie, and she will have to deal with Jarrod's attorney's questions because that is the way the justice system is set up. Stacy apologizes for losing her temper, but when she insists that she can tell Mrs. Latham does not like her, Detective Markowitz suggests it is jealousy. Changing the subject to Jarrod's gun, she suggests he may have used his father's gun at the time, and Detective Markowitz agrees which is why they are getting a search warrant. Stacy wants to be at the hearing on Tuesday, fulfilling earlier foreshadowing regarding this insistence, so Detective Markowitz offers to send a car. At home, Stacy looks at a picture of Mom and Dad, but she cannot cry as she asks Mom if it was her fault because her hatred hinders her sadness, showing that Dad's suspicions that Stacy has not really mourned Mom are true.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

On Tuesday morning, after agreeing to go to Jan's house for dinner, Stacy goes to the high school to talk to the head guidance counselor, Mr. Dobbis, about her future studies. She feels good by the time she leaves his office, knowing it will be a lot of work but also knowing she can handle it. In the hallway, she runs into Tony, but when she asks about Tony being friends with Jarrod, Tony admits that Jarrod comes to his parties to supply drugs. When she asks about Jarrod's friends, Tony claims he has seen Jarrod with Jeff Clinton occasionally, causing Stacy to shiver. Everything seems wrong; Tony must be lying because it cannot be Jeff. As soon as Stacy gets home, Detective Markowitz calls Stacy because Mrs. Latham wants to question her some more before the hearing. At the courthouse, Mrs. Latham slows down as she questions Stacy so Stacy does not feel quite as assaulted as before. Stacy insists upon attending the trial despite Detective Markowitz's and Mrs. Latham's attempts to dissuade her. In the courtroom, Mrs. Tucker and her husband glare at Stacy who tells Detective Markowitz what Tony said about Jarrod selling drugs. It will not matter in this case, but Detective Markowitz will pass the information along to the narcotics department. When Jarrod enters the courtroom finally, he glares at Stacy with the obvious message that he would like to kill her since there is little chance he could be convicted without her testimony. She would be more afraid if she did not hate Jarrod so much, but Detective Markowitz and Mrs. Latham cannot know about "the hatred that burns and hurts and makes me want Jarrod to be punished for what he did" (page 169). As Mrs. Latham talks to the judge about Jarrod being held without bail, Jarrod has a seizure in the middle of the courtroom, causing the judge to decide to reschedule the hearing after Jarrod's recovery. As Detective Markowitz leads Stacy outside, reporters wait to question her, and though Detective Markowitz fields the questions, he warns Stacy that the press will be interested in her and her family during the trial. Once Stacy gets home, Jeff arrives, startling Stacy when he follows her inside and locks the deadbolt. Stacy is scared of Jeff, but she still does not want to believe that he could be Jarrod's friend. Jeff notes that Stacy had a rough time at the courthouse, claiming he saw it on TV or heard it on the radio, but she can tell he is lying, though she does not understand why. When Jeff mentions that Tony told him about Stacy's questions at school, Stacy's hand trembles as he takes it and tells her not to believe everything Tony said; his eyes look sad as he warns her "don't believe in anybody but yourself" (page 173).

Chapter 13 Analysis

On Tuesday morning, Jan invites Stacy to dinner. Then, Stacy calls the high school and talks to the head guidance counselor, Mr. Dobbis, who invites her to the office to discuss her future studies. As Dad drives her to the high school, Stacy reminds him she is going to dinner at Jan's, so he decides he will not come home for dinner. Stacy spends an hour talking to Mr. Dobbis, and by the time she leaves, she feels good. It will be a lot of



work, but she knows she can do it and she will not even be the oldest high school graduate. As the hallway fills with bodies, Tony greets Stacy, but he tries to leave when she asks why he did not return her call. She asks about Jarrod being Tony's friend, and Tony admits that Jarrod supplies drugs for his parties. Stacy is distraught when Tony mentions seeing Jeff with Jarrod; this fulfills the foreshadowing concerning her suspicions of Jeff, but her belief that Tony must be lying foreshadows her indecision concerning her suspicions. The phone rings as soon as Stacy arrives at home, and she forces herself to answer the phone in case it is Dad or Donna. Detective Markowitz calls to tell Stacy that Mrs. Latham wants to question her some more before the hearing. He knows she is unbending, but she is a good prosecutor. Stacy promises to stay calm. Detective Markowitz warns her that the hearing will be boring and there is no reason for her to be there, but Stacy wants to go. As Stacy gets into the police car, Mrs. Cooper calls out that it is alright about that car, promising to tell Stacy later. At the courthouse, Detective Markowitz takes Stacy to Mrs. Latham's office, and Mrs. Latham slows down on her questions so that Stacy does not feel so bombarded. They go over the details several times, and Mrs. Latham warns Stacy that the media will be there when she announces she is going to the trial. She cannot explain that she needs to see Jarrod stand before the judge. In the courtroom, Stacy tells Detective Markowitz about Jarrod selling drugs, and he promises to pass it on to the narcotics department, though it will not matter in this case. After several prisoners are tried, the bailiffs bring Jarrod in, and he looks like a spoiled little boy about to throw a tantrum as he looks at his whimpering mother, but as he glares at Stacy, she knows that he would like to kill her if he got the chance because there is little chance of a conviction without her testimony. Detective Markowitz assures Stacy that she is safe, and she says she is not afraid, though she keeps seeing those yellow eyes and the gun. Jarrod's attorney asks that Jarrod be released without bail, but Mrs. Latham approaches the judge who seems to be agreeing with her until Jarrod suddenly convulses and falls to the floor. The judge announces that Jarrod will be taken to Ben Taub Emergency Room and another date will be set for the hearing after he recovers. As the paramedics work on Jarrod, Detective Markowitz leads Stacy outside where they are bombarded by reporters. After fielding the questions, Detective Markowitz warns Stacy that there will be a lot more of this because there will be a trial and then Jarrod's attorney will appeal if Jarrod loses in which case Stacy will have to testify again. The press will be interested in her and her family until this is all over. Stacy wishes Jarrod were dead because none of this would be happening if he were dead, foreshadowing her desire to kill Jarrod. Shortly after Detective Markowitz drops her off at home, Jeff arrives and asks to come in for a Coke, but Stacy is startled when he locks the deadbolt. She knows she could run to Mrs. Cooper's house or tell Jeff what Tony said about him being Jarrod's friend, but she does nothing because she has never had such confused feelings about anyone before; this fulfills the earlier foreshadowing concerning both Stacy's suspicions of Jeff as well as her disbelief that he would hurt her. She is scared of Jeff, yet she wants to touch him. His comments about Stacy having a rough time at court concern Stacy because he is obviously lying, but she still does not know why he would lie, indicating that she is still not completely convinced that Jeff has connections to Jarrod. Asking if she got things straightened out at school, Jeff hopes she still wants a math tutor, but Stacy does not know what to say when he mentions that Tony told him she had a lot of questions. Jeff tells Stacy not to believe in

anyone but herself, indicating that Tony was not honest or was misled when he told Stacy that Jeff is friends with Jarrod; however, this could also be a misdirection so that he is cleared of Stacy's suspicions which continue to torment her.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Brandi and other reporters call Stacy, but she refuses to answer any questions, and Jeff agrees that she does not have to talk to them. He also tells her not to be afraid, and she does not know how to tell him that she is afraid of him. Mrs. Cooper brings a loaf of bread over, and when Stacy tells her she is about to go to Jan's for dinner, Jeff leaves because he has a lot of homework. Once he is gone, Mrs. Cooper tells Stacy she does not need to worry about the car she kept seeing because it belongs to Jeff. When a reporter calls to ask Stacy if she is scared of testifying and that Jarrod could be paroled in twenty years, she hangs up and ignores the phone, thinking this is a nightmare that will not go away if the jury does not give Jarrod the death penalty. She worries she will be forced to live in fear for the rest of her life and thinks she would kill Jarrod if she had a chance. When the phone finally stops ringing, Stacy turns the TV on for noise, ignoring Mrs. Cooper when she rings the doorbell and runs to the curb to talk to an unmarked police car. Realizing she is already late for dinner at Jan's house, Stacy is in the den, on her way from the living room to the bedroom, when she hears a rattling noise coming from the garage. As she listens for the noise to repeat, she actually hears the news announcer who states a bailiff was shot when Jarrod took his gun and fled the emergency room. The doorknob leading from the garage turns, and Stacy knows it must be Jarrod because he warned her that he always gets his way. She is unable to move for a moment, but knowing he will find her if she hides in the house, Stacy quietly slips out the back door. Unwilling to endanger the Coopers by running next door, she hides in the tree house, sure Jarrod will not look for her there. As she climbs the tree, the house rocks unsteadily, and a board drops to the ground. There is nothing to do except wait, yet "time has dissolved into terror" (page 179). Jarrod calls her name as he comes outside, seeming to be talking to himself a second later, and though Stacy tries not to move, he knows she must be in the tree house. He can shoot her from the ground, but he wants her to have an accident, and he reminds her that he always gets his way. Calm sweeps Stacy's mind as she decides she is not going to wait for Jarrod to get his way; she wants her own way, and she has a plan. Slipping through the window carefully until her feet rest on the lower window frame, Stacy sees Jarrod's yellow eyes and the guns and points out that they will know he killed her. He insists it will be an accident which he and his friend will take care of as he waves his gun and introduces his friend. Stacy kicks against the house with her full weight, causing it to fall into Jarrod, and she scrambles down the tree and grabs the gun at his feet, putting her finger to the trigger. No longer yelling, Jarrod looks terrified as he begs her not to shoot him. Seeing the backdoor fly open, Stacy realizes that she is pointing the gun at Jarrod and thinks it would be self-defense if she shot him, plus it would end the trials, questions, harassment, nightmares and years of fear. She aims the gun carefully.



Chapter 14 Analysis

Stacy refuses to talk to the reporters who call her, showing that she is still not ready to deal with the media chaos surrounding Jarrod's trial. When Jeff tells her not to be afraid, she does not know how to tell him that she is afraid of him. Stacy is relieved when Mrs. Cooper comes over and Jeff leaves, but when Mrs. Cooper tells her that the car repeatedly driving through the neighborhood belongs to Jeff, Stacy does not know what to think as this seems to verify that Jeff is Jarrod's friend. Stacy is scared to think about why Jeff would be driving around her street because she is scared of the answer. When a reporter calls and mentions that Jarrod could be paroled eventually, Stacy is furious at the idea of living in terror for the rest of her life, and her hatred makes her think that she wants to kill Jarrod, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing. Stacy pushes the startling idea away before examining it, and hatred makes it strong. Stacy turns the television on for noise, not really listening to it, and ignores the phone, foreshadowing the dangerous situation she puts herself in which is soon fulfilled when she hears someone in the garage and actually listens to the news as the announcer states that Jarrod has escaped from the hospital. Knowing the person in her garage must be Jarrod, Stacy runs outside, but refusing to endanger the Coopers by going next door, she hides in the tree house. Jarrod comes outside and threatens Stacy, acting like an insane person. Deciding not to let Jarrod get his own way this time, Stacy climbs out of the window with her feet on the side of the tree house. Jarrod reveals the identity of his friend when he waves his gun, indicating that Stacy had no reason to fear Jeff after all, though the mystery surrounding Jeff is still not explained. Stacy pushes the tree house on top of Jarrod, fulfilling foreshadowing that occurred earlier in the novel when Dad told her how unstable the tree house had become. Stacy turns the tables on Jarrod when she retrieves his gun, and as he begs her not to shoot him, she remembers him running out of the house and shooting her. Stacy thinks that killing Jarrod would be self-defense and would end all of the upcoming years of fears and problems, foreshadowing that she will shoot him.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Crying, Jarrod insists Stacy cannot shoot him. He did not mean to kill her mother, but he did not know anyone was in the house and got scared when she appeared. She was scared and just kept telling him "it's all right" (page 182). Hands no longer shaking, Stacy points the gun at Jarrod's head, but picturing Mom, she is blinded by tears. Keeping the gun pointed at Jarrod, Stacy calls out to Mrs. Cooper for help, and the neighbor tells her she already called the police. When Jeff jumps the hedge and tells Stacy to give him the gun, she refuses, telling him to stay away because the police are on their way, but Jeff tells her that he is a police officer with the narcotics squad and takes the gun from her. Stacy does not understand how Jeff can be a policeman when he is still in high school, but he avoids her question as usual, looking angry as he chides her that she could have been killed because she was home and did not answer the phone. Stacy argues that she could have shot Jarrod, but when Jeff asks "really", she admits she could not; she wanted to shoot Jarrod because she hates him so much, but Mom would never have shot him. The yard fills with people and voices, but Stacy only wants to hear what Jeff has to say. After Jarrod is taken into custody, Jeff pulls Stacy inside, and she realizes where she saw him before: at the police station downtown. Jeff explains that he has worked for the police for two years. He is twenty-three but was put on a special assignment with the narcotics squad and sent to the high school since he looks so young. Stacy became part of his assignment because Detective Markowitz was worried about her, and Jeff was in the perfect position to keep an eye on her. Stacy is hurt to think she is just an assignment, but resting his hands on her shoulders, Jeff insists he does not want to hurt her. She notes that hurt seems to be part of growing up, causing Jeff to argue that there are many good things about growing up also. Stacy asks if love is one of them because she thinks she was starting to fall in love with Jeff; however, Jeff does not want to be her first love, and Stacy tells him that she understands she is just an assignment. Jeff clarifies that he asked to be taken off the assignment so he could tell Stacy the truth because he cares about her, stating "I don't want to be your first love. I'd like to be the real thing, and I can wait" (page 185). As Jeff holds her tight, and Stacy wraps her arms around him, she thinks "I'm Stacy McAdams. I'm seventeen. And I'm definitely in the right body" (page 185)!

Chapter 15 Analysis

In stereotypical bully fashion, Jarrod pleads for his life once the tables are turned and his life is in danger. Stacy asks him about shooting Mom, and he admits that he did not plan to do so. Stacy's mother kept telling him it was alright before he shot her, and furious, Stacy aims the gun at Jarrod's head, but thinking of Mom's kindness and gentleness, she cannot do it, showing that the earlier foreshadowing was misleading. She notes "choices were so easy when I was a child. Good guy versus bad guy, and the good guy always won. But I'm no longer a child" (page 183). Instead, Stacy calls out to



Mrs. Cooper who already called the police, but when Jeff appears in her yard, Stacy refuses to yield the gun until he confesses that he is a police officer. Jeff chides Stacy for not answering the phone, ignoring her questions, and when she insists she could have shot Jarrod, he does not believe her. Stacy admits that she could not have done it because of Mom. It is hard to explain, but Stacy had no choice because Jarrod's life does not belong to her. After Jarrod is arrested, Jeff leads Stacy inside where he finally explains why he is so mysterious. He was working as an undercover police officer for the narcotics squad, and Detective Markowitz asked him to keep an eye on Stacy when he was concerned for her safety. Stacy is heartbroken that she was just an assignment to Jeff because she thinks she was falling in love with him, but Jeff tells her that he wanted off the assignment because he cares about Stacy. He wants to be her real love and is willing to wait for her. Stacy finally feels that she is in the right body and is the right age. The ending is cute but trite as Stacy comes to terms with her newfound identity.



Characters

Stacy McAdams

Stacy McAdams is the main character and the narrator of "The Other Side of Dark". She is a seventeen-year-girl who wakes from a four year coma after she was shot. Waking from a long dream, Stacy believes she is in the wrong body until she learns she has been in a coma for four years. When she is told that Mom was killed on the same day she was shot, Stacy remembers the guy who shot her, but she cannot see his face. Unfortunately, she mentions this to a reporter whose article claims Stacy can identify Mom's murderer, causing Stacy to worry that the killer will find her before she can remember who he is. Once Stacy goes home, Jan, her best friend, introduces her to Jeff, a new guy who seems interested in Stacy. While babysitting for the neighbors, Stacy sees a shadowy figure trying to peer in her windows, but the police dismiss this as her overactive imagination. A whispering voice calls and threatens Stacy, telling her she should just forget and that he has a friend. At Tony's party in Stacy's honor, Jarrod Tucker spikes Stacy's drink and leads her outside to see his new car, but Jeff is there to protect Stacy when she recognizes Jarrod as Mom's murderer. Stacy thinks it is odd that Jeff drives her home without asking where she lives.

After Jarrod is arrested and Stacy identifies him in a lineup at the police station, he sees her in the hallway and again threatens her with his friend. Stacy tries to figure out who Jarrod's friend is as she continues to spend time with Jeff, but when Tony tells her that he has seen Jeff with Jarrod, she does not want to believe that Jeff would hurt her, despite the fact that Jeff seems to be hiding something. During Jarrod's hearing, Jarrod has a seizure and is taken to the emergency room. At home, Stacy learns that the car her neighbor has seen stalking their street belongs to Jeff. Ignoring multiple phone calls, Stacy considers the possibility that Jeff is Jarrod's friend. She hears a rattling noise in the garage as the news reports that Jarrod escaped. Stacy hides in the rickety tree house in the backyard, but Jarrod knows where she must be and threatens her with his friend, his gun. Deciding not to let Jarrod get his way, Stacy pushes the tree house on top of him, grabs his gun and points it at him. Though she hates Jarrod enough to kill him, Stacy cannot do it when she thinks of Mom, so she calls for help to the neighbor who has already called the police. Jeff arrives and takes the gun from Stacy, explaining that he is an undercover police officer. After Jarrod is arrested, Jeff explains he was working undercover for the narcotics squad at the high school and Stacy became part of his assignment because they felt she was in danger; however, Jeff asked to be taken off the assignment because he has feelings for Stacy. He wants to be Stacy's true love and is willing to wait. Stacy finally accepts that she is seventeen years old and definitely in the right body.



Jeff Clinton

Jeff Clinton is a young man that Jan introduces to Stacy because he is interested in Stacy's story after she wakes from her four year coma. Stacy is attracted to Jeff but scared of him at the same time because he seems to be hiding something. Once Stacy goes home, Jan, her best friend, introduces her to Jeff, a new guy who seems interested in Stacy. At Tony's party in Stacy's honor, Jarrod Tucker spikes Stacy's drink and leads her outside to see his new car, but Jeff is there to protect Stacy when she recognizes Jarrod as Mom's murderer. Stacy thinks it is odd that Jeff drives her home without asking where she lives.

Stacy tries to figure out who Jarrod's friend is as she continues to spend time with Jeff, but when Tony tells her that he has seen Jeff with Jarrod, she does not want to believe that Jeff would hurt her, despite the fact that Jeff seems to be hiding something. Stacy is uneasy when Jeff seems to know more than he should after Jarrod's hearing. At home, Stacy learns that the car her neighbor has seen stalking their street belongs to Jeff. Ignoring multiple phone calls, Stacy considers the possibility that Jeff is Jarrod's friend. As Stacy holds Jarrod at gunpoint after he escapes from the emergency room, breaks into her house and tries to kill her, Jeff arrives and takes the gun from Stacy, explaining that he is an undercover police officer. After Jarrod is arrested, Jeff explains he was working undercover for the narcotics squad at the high school and Stacy became part of his assignment because they felt she was in danger; however, Jeff asked to be taken off the assignment because he has feelings for Stacy. He wants to be Stacy's true love and is willing to wait. Stacy finally accepts that she is seventeen years old and definitely in the right body.

Jarrold Tucker

Jarrold Tucker is a few years older than Stacy and her friends. At Tony's party, he spikes Stacy's drink with alcohol and takes her outside to see his new car. Stacy recognizes Jarrod as her mother's killer, but he runs off. Before the party, Jarrod was the whispery voice that called and threatened Stacy, and after he is arrested and Stacy identifies him in a lineup at the police station, he threatens her again with his friend, causing Stacy to suspect Jeff may be Jarrod's friend. Jarrod fakes a seizure during his hearing and is taken to the Ben Taub Emergency Room where he shoots a bailiff and steals his gun, escaping to break into Stacy's house. When Stacy hides in her dilapidated tree house, Jarrod threatens her with his friend, brandishing the gun, but Stacy pushes the tree house on top of Jarrod and holds him at gunpoint until the police arrive. Jarrod is a local drug dealer and a spoiled rotten brat who often brags about how he always gets his own way.

Donna Kroskey nee McAdams

Donna Kroskey nee McAdams is Stacy's older sister who is married and pregnant when Stacy wakes from her coma. She does her best to help Stacy through her adjustments.



Dad

Dad is happy that Stacy has woken from her coma, but he struggles with the urge to be overprotective. He works two jobs to pay Stacy's medical bills, and he still grieves for Mom.

Jan Briley

Jan Briley is Stacy's best friend. She seems like a different, unfamiliar person when Stacy wakes from her coma after four years. Jan is happy that Stacy wakes up, and she helps her best friend catch up on makeup, hair and fashion. She also introduces Stacy to Jeff Clinton.

Dr. Peterson

Dr. Peterson is the handsome doctor in charge of Stacy at Braesforest Medical Center.

Dennis Kroskey

Dennis Kroskey is Donna's husband.

Brandi Mayer

Brandi Mayer is the reporter for the Houston Evening News who interviews Stacy at the Braesforest Medical Center and writes an article, labeling Stacy as Sleeping Beauty and claiming that Stacy can identify her mother's murderer.

Monty

Monty is an orderly at Braesforest Medical Center who asks Stacy too many questions and tries to force her to the back door to talk to a reporter who offered him twenty dollars to question Stacy.

Jeanne McAdams

Jeanne McAdams, Stacy's mother, was gentle, kind and forgiving. She was killed four years ago by Jarrod Tucker when he broke into their house and was startled to find someone inside. Stacy misses Mom and seeks the killer for vengeance, but when she holds Jarrod at gunpoint, she cannot shoot him because Mom would never do so.



Detective Markowitz

Detective Markowitz is the detective who questions Stacy after Brandi Mayer's article claims Stacy can identify her mother's killer. He is patient and kind as he tries to help her remember who shot her. Detective Markowitz also explains how the proceedings will transpire after he arrest Jarrod. He asks Jeff to look after Stacy when he begins to fear for her safety.

Alice

Alice is a nurse at the Braesforest Medical Center who takes care of Stacy during her coma, and she is very happy when Stacy awakes.

Mrs. Cooper

Mrs. Cooper is Stacy's nosy neighbor who is constantly on her porch and checking in on Stacy. Stacy resents Mrs. Cooper's need to know everything that is going on, but her neighbor's nosiness saves Stacy on several occasions.

B. J.

B. J. is Jan's beautiful new best friend who helps with Stacy's hair and makeup before Tony's party, but she seems jealous when Tony compliments Stacy.

Tony Maconda

Tony Maconda is the guy who throws a party in Stacy's honor. Explaining that Jarrod attends his parties to provide drugs, Tony tells Stacy that Jeff is Jarrod's friend.

Eloise Tucker

Eloise Tucker is Jarrod's mother. She visits Stacy to try to dissuade her from testifying against Jarrod.

Regina Latham

Regina Latham is the assistant district attorney who will prosecute Jarrod at his hearing. She badgers Stacy with questions, trying to anticipate the defense's questions in order to be prepared, but her style of questioning offends Stacy and makes her uncooperative. Detective Markowitz suggests that Mrs. Latham is jealous after Stacy insists the attorney does not like her.

Mr. Dobbis

Mr. Dobbis is the head guidance counselor at the high school who helps Stacy plan how she will catch up on her schoolwork over the past four years.



Objects/Places

Houston, TX

Houston, TX is the main setting of this novel and Stacy's hometown.

Braesforest Medical Center

Stacy stays at Braesforest Medical Center during her coma and finally wakes there after four years.

Houston Evening News

After interviewing Stacy, Brandi Mayer publishes an article in the Houston Evening News which claims Stacy can identify Mom's murderer.

McAdams' House

The McAdams' house is Stacy's family's home where Mom was murdered and Stacy was shot. It remains unchanged during the four years Stacy spends in a coma.

Coopers' House

The Coopers' house belongs to Stacy's neighbors, and while babysitting for the Coopers, Stacy sees someone in her backyard.

Macondas' House

The Macondas' house is where Tony throws a party in Stacy's honor after she awakes, and this is where Stacy identifies Jarrod Tucker as Mom's killer.

Ben Taub Emergency Room

Jarrod is taken to Ben Taub Emergency Room after faking a seizure during his hearing. He shoots a bailiff, escapes and goes to Stacy's house in an attempt to kill her.

Police Station

When Stacy goes to the police station to identify Jarrod in a lineup, he threatens her with his friend.



Courthouse

Stacy goes to the courthouse to witness Jarrod's hearing during which he fakes a seizure.

Jeff's Car

Mrs. Cooper worries about a car she sees driving down their street several times, but when she tells Stacy the car is not a danger because it belongs to Jeff, this reinforces Stacy's fear that Jeff is Jarrod's friend.

Tree House

Dad warns Stacy that the tree house he built when she was a child is no longer safe, but when she hears Jarrod in her garage after he escapes from Ben Taub, Stacy hides in the tree house. As Jarrod threatens to kill her, Stacy knocks the tree house down on top of Jarrod, allowing her to claim his gun and hold him at bay until the police arrive.



Themes

Readjustments Stacy Faces After Waking From Coma

The most important theme in "The Other Side of Dark" is the changes that Stacy faces when she wakes from her four-year coma, including the need to grow up suddenly as she is now seventeen years old instead of thirteen as she feels. Stacy's life is turned upside-down when she wakes from a four-year-long coma caused by being shot. She is distraught to learn that Mom was killed on the same day she was shot, and she must also deal with the fact that her older sister, Donna, is now married and pregnant. Additionally, the whole dynamic of their family has changed since it is now just Stacy and Dad living at their house, and Dad works two jobs in order to pay Stacy's medical bills.

To Stacy, her family and friends all seem like stranger since they have aged in four years. She also feels like a stranger to herself, believing she is in the wrong body when she first notices her developed breasts. Stacy also must become accustomed to her new face which reminds her of the one she is used to seeing on Donna. Stacy feels uncomfortable with her best friend, Jan, because it seems like the seventeen-year-old Jan is one of Donna's friends, but Jan helps Stacy with her hair, makeup and the latest fashions. Stacy must arrange to make up the four years of school she missed and learn about life as a teenager, including driving, dating and friendships. Many characters treat Stacy as a seventeen-year-old without acknowledging the fact that she has missed four years of her teenage years, a fact that causes Stacy to hate Jarrod since he stole those years from her. Throughout the novel, Stacy continually forgets that she is no longer thirteen years old and must deal with the events that have continued without her during the past four years.

Fear

After waking from her coma and learning the circumstances that caused it, Stacy must deal with the fear that accompanies her realization that Mom's murderer may come after her after Brandi Mayer publishes an article claiming Stacy can identify the killer. Stacy is terrified when Monty tries to make her talk to a reporter at the back door, suspecting the man is not really a reporter, especially when he runs from the police. When she returns home, she battles the fear of being left alone, but she is frightened when she sees a shadowy figure in her backyard while babysitting for the neighbors. Soon after, Stacy receives threatening phone calls from a whispery voice, suggesting it would be safer if she forgot about Mom's murderer.

Stacy worries about Jarrod attacking her after she identifies him as the killer at Tony's party, but Jeff and Detective Markowitz assure her that she is safe. Jarrod threatens Stacy with his friend after she identifies him in a lineup at the police station, and this cause Stacy to worry about who his friend might be. She becomes scared of Jeff when



Tony tells her that he has seen Jeff with Jarrod, especially because she can tell Jeff is hiding something since he avoids talking about himself. Stacy is frightened at Jarrod's hearing when he glares at her, obviously showing his desire to kill her. When Stacy hears a noise in the garage and the news announces that Jarrod has escaped, she hides in the tree house in terror; however, overcoming her fear, Stacy decides not to let Jarrod have his way, pushing the tree house on top of him and holding him at gunpoint until the police arrive. She refuses to relinquish the gun to Jeff for fear he could still be Jarrod's friend until Jeff explains he is an undercover police officer.

Hatred

In addition to fear, hatred is an emotion that Stacy feels repeatedly throughout this novel. When she learns of Mom's death, she is consumed by hatred for the unknown killer, needing to know who he is since she can remember that she knows him, though she cannot picture his face. Despite Dad's protests that she is not ready, Stacy insists on looking at mug - shots because she is determined to see Mom's killer brought to justice, hating the murderer for taking Mom away. Dad warns Stacy not to be consumed by hatred, but she only hates the murderer more when she realizes Dad has been forced to work a second job to pay for her medical bills. She also hates the unknown man with the gun because she is now in a world she does not want and is not ready for.

Filled with rage and hate, Stacy tries to attack Jarrod when she recognizes him as Mom's killer at Tony's party, but Jeff gets in her way and Jarrod escapes. Stacy did not know hate could be so strong when she realizes that she hates Jarrod enough to kill him. At Jarrod's hearing, Stacy would be more afraid of his glares if she did not hate him so much, but her hatred burns and hurts, making her want to punish Jarrod for what he did. At home, Stacy startles at the realization that she hates Jarrod enough to kill him because he forces her to live in fear, but as she examines the idea, her hatred makes it strong. After pushing the tree house down on Jarrod, Stacy is filled with hatred as she points the gun at Jarrod, but thinking of Mom's gentleness and love, she cannot shoot Jarrod because his life does not belong to her, finally relinquishing her devastating and consuming hatred.



Style

Point of View

The point of view in "The Other Side of Dark" is the first person. This point of view is limited and mostly reliable. This is proven by the fact that Stacy McAdams is the first-person narrator and she tells the story from her own point of view. Therefore, her knowledge is limited to her own thoughts and feelings, as well as what she is told of others'; however, she is not privy to the private thoughts and emotions of other characters. Additionally, her point of view is more limited than a normal seventeen-year-old girl's would be because of the four years she spent in a coma, which makes her think like a thirteen-year-old. She often misses what other characters' reactions to things could signify. This is important because it emphasizes Stacy's struggle to catch up on the last four years of her life in a short amount of time. Not only must she become accustomed to the events of the last four years, but she must also teach herself to be seventeen years old when it feels like she was only thirteen just yesterday.

The distribution of exposition and dialogue is fairly equal in this novel. This is useful as Stacy's thoughts tend to struggle more toward maturity while sometimes her words, her initial reactions, show the thirteen-year-old girl that she still is mentally. A lot of the dialogue also serves to show other characters' reactions and understanding about Stacy's struggle to gain maturity in a very short amount of time. This distribution is effective in showing the difficulty that Stacy faces during her attempt to grow up in a miniscule period of time. The novel's viewpoint is told solely through Stacy's eyes.

Setting

The setting of this novel is the real world, in Houston, Texas. The characters are average American teenagers, with the exception of Jarrod who is a spoiled brat and seems to think it is alright to kill Jeanne and try to kill Stacy if they prevent him from getting his way. Jeff is also somewhat unique as he poses as a teenager but is actually an undercover police officer. Also, Stacy is a seventeen-year-old girl who has the mentality of a thirteen-year-old since she just woke from a four-year coma.

Houston, TX is the main setting of this novel and Stacy's hometown. Stacy stays at Braesforest Medical Center during her coma and finally wakes there after four years. After interviewing Stacy, Brandi Mayer publishes an article in the Houston Evening News which claims Stacy can identify Mom's murderer. The McAdams' house is Stacy's family's home where Mom was murdered and Stacy was shot. It remains unchanged during the four years Stacy spends in a coma. The Coopers' house belongs to Stacy's neighbors, and while babysitting for the Coopers, Stacy sees someone in her backyard. The Macondas' house is where Tony throws a party in Stacy's honor after she awakes, and this is where Stacy identifies Jarrod Tucker as Mom's killer. Jarrod is taken to Ben Taub Emergency Room after faking a seizure during his hearing. He shoots a bailiff,



escapes and goes to Stacy's house in an attempt to kill her. When Stacy goes to the police station to identify Jarrod in a lineup, he threatens her with his friend. Stacy goes to the courthouse to witness Jarrod's hearing during which he fakes a seizure. Mrs. Cooper worries about a car she sees driving down their street several times, but when she tells Stacy the car is not a danger because it belongs to Jeff, this reinforces Stacy's fear that Jeff is Jarrod's friend. Dad warns Stacy that the tree house he built when she was a child is no longer safe, but when she hears Jarrod in her garage after he escapes from Ben Taub, Stacy hides in the tree house. As Jarrod threatens to kill her, Stacy knocks the tree house down on top of Jarrod, allowing her to claim his gun and hold him at bay until the police arrive.

Language and Meaning

The language used in this novel is generally casual and informal. The sentences are constructed fairly properly. This writing style is used as it is effective in alternating between Stacy as a young and older teenager, and this shows her variation between a thirteen-year-old and a seventeen-year-old as she struggles with her newfound identity after spending four years in a coma. The language also helps the reader associate with the narrator by using language that is common and familiar for the target audience, American teenagers. This helps them empathize with Stacy's situation since she seems like a peer.

The language used in this novel characterizes Stacy's thirteen-year-old mentality as well as her struggle to become the seventeen-year-old girl that her body has become during her four year coma. The distribution of exposition and dialogue is fairly equal in this novel. This is useful as Stacy's thoughts tend to struggle more toward maturity while sometimes her words, her initial reactions, show the thirteen-year-old girl that she still is mentally. A lot of the dialogue also serves to show other characters' reactions and understanding about Stacy's struggle to gain maturity in a very short amount of time. This distribution is effective in showing the difficulty that Stacy faces during her attempt to grow up in a miniscule period of time. The language is also useful as it shows the mental and physical differences in Stacy, but it can be confusing at times since she does not always understand concepts that are simple and basic knowledge for other seventeen-year-old teenagers. The language is easy to understand and also useful in emphasizing and explaining Stacy's bizarre circumstances.

Structure

"The Other Side of Dark" is comprised of fifteen chapters and one hundred and eighty-five pages with the chapters averaging about twelve pages in length. The chapters are numbered, rather than titled, and they are fairly short but detailed. The chapters are very useful in revealing the events, conversations and Stacy's mental struggles as she tries to accept the changes that have occurred in her life during her four year coma. Each chapter takes place over a short period of hours or a day at most as the entire novel occurs within less than two weeks.



"The Other Side of Dark" by Jean Lowery Nixon is the story of a seventeen-year-old girl who wakes from a four-year-long coma and must face the changes that have occurred in her life, including the fact that her mother was murdered by the same man who shot and put Stacy in a coma. When Stacy McAdams wakes from her coma after four years to learn that she is the only one who can identify her mother's murderer if she can only recall his face, she struggles to regain her memory of that day before the killer finds her. "The Other Side of Dark" is an intriguing, suspenseful novel that deals with issues of growing up at once and who can be trusted, set in a narrative filled with murder and mystery.

The novel's pace is fairly slow, but the book is easy to read as the language is simple and the concepts are concrete. The story is told using many flashbacks as Stacy remembers time with her family before she was shot. She also focuses on the recollection of the murderer's yellow eyes and his gun before he shot her, both before she can identify the killer and in order to encourage her outrage after she identifies Jarrod Tucker. The story is very entertaining and enjoyable, though the "happy ever after" ending is a bit trite.



Quotes

"I gasp as my hands feel breasts that are rounded and firm. My shaking fingers slide past my waist, exploring, as the horror grows. I lift my head to look down, down at toes that lump the blanket near the foot of the bed, and the horror explodes in a scream. I am Stacy McAdams. I'm only thirteen years old, and I'm in the wrong body" (Chapter 1, p. 2).

"Nobody completely understands it. Not really. You were shot, and the bullet did something to you that caused a kind of coma; but you didn't need life support. You were breathing on your own, and your vital signs were good. It's just that you were in a world of your own, and you couldn't or wouldn't leave it. The people here were able to help you sit in a chair and walk and even feed yourself if someone was with you. You have a physical therapist who has worked with you on exercises every day" (Chapter 1, p. 4-5).

"Show me your face. You're someone I know. I remember that much" (Chapter 2, p. 12).

"I've got to get used to that. I still feel like I'm thirteen. I feel like everything took place yesterday" (Chapter 2, p. 16).

"I'm trying to see his face, and I can't! The guy who shot Mom. He ran out our back door. The screen door slammed open. I was standing there. We looked at each other, and he raised the gun. He shot me. I know him. I know his name. I think that's why he shot me... It's in my head. It's like I can touch it. But it won't come close enough" (Chapter 3, p. 27).

"Brandi wrote that I could identify the murderer. What if the killer reads that? What will he do" (Chapter 3, p. 36).

"Help me! I have to know who he is. He killed my mother, and I hate him" (Chapter 4, p. 40).

"If we had wishes, I'd wish none of this had happened. I'd wish we could go back. Have a second chance" (Chapter 5, p. 47).

"At some time or another everyone gets hit by problems that seem impossible to handle. You can give up without a fight, or you can climb over those problems and move on, because there are lots of good things ahead for you to discover" (Chapter 5, p. 48).

"Hate isn't the answer, Stacy. It won't solve anything" (Chapter 6, p. 64).

"For an instant I ache to join them. The twelve-year-old- she looks almost thirteen- would be close to my age. She might like to be friends and- But I'm no longer thirteen. I turn and see myself in the full-length mirror that hangs on the door. I'm seventeen, in a world I don't want, that I'm not ready for" (Chapter 7, p. 81).



"About somebody who's in your yard. I looked out the window upstairs, and I saw somebody trying to look in your windows" (Chapter 7, p. 88).

"Is that all he cares about? That I might be able to testify against whoever killed my mother? Maybe that's all that would matter to me, too, if my job were trying to catch criminals. He's smiling, but I don't trust his smile because I don't believe everything is as simple as he makes it out to be. I know that I saw someone prowling around our house tonight, and nothing Markowitz or the other officers have said is going to make me change my mind" (Chapter 8, p. 95).

"What do you remember, Stacy?... It's been a long time. Why don't you just forget? It would be safer for you to forget" (Chapter 8, p. 100).

"I didn't know that hate could be this strong. He has torn up my life. He's destroyed four years that belonged to me. And most horrible of all, he's taken my mother away from us. I shiver as I realize I actually hate him enough to kill him" (Chapter 8, p. 101).

"Because you have something to live up to, Stacy. You're the Sleeping Beauty, coming back to the world, and you have to make an impact on it" (Chapter 9, p. 103).

"Jarrod! It was you! You killed my mother" (Chapter 9, p. 118).

"You're different... I can't explain it. It's like you're not exactly who you seem to be" (Chapter 10, p. 122).

"I'm not going to let you ruin my life because I'm going to ruin yours!" Stacy, Chapter 10, page 129

"It's about the terrible, unbelievable situation you've created. About your ridiculous statement that Jarrod was the person you saw in your house...As we all see it, when this terrible incident happened four years ago, it was a terrible shock to you. This morning my husband spoke with a noted psychiatrist who feels that it is entirely possible you may have- well, shall we say, some mental and emotional problems that are confusing you" (Chapter 11, p. 131-132).

"Jarrod Tucker is second from the right, and I want you to look at his eyes. Four years ago those awful yellow cat eyes stared into mine just before Jarrod shot me. I'll never forget his eyes! Never" (Chapter 11, p. 140).

"This whole thing has been horrible for Dad and for Donna. And now they'll have to relive it again. Blast you, Jarrod! It's not fair" (Chapter 12, p. 152).

"You have to believe me! You're the one who's supposed to make sure Jarrod goes to prison for murder" (Chapter 12, p. 154).

"I can't get rid of that hatred, and nothing can help me get rid of it. Not until Jarrod is dead" (Chapter 12, p. 159).



"Everything seems to be all wrong. Tony must have been lying about Jarrod's friend. It couldn't be Jeff" (Chapter 13, p. 163).

"I can't explain to either of them that I need to know what is happening each step of the way, that I need to see Jarrod standing before the judge" (Chapter 13, p. 165).

"One corner of his mouth twists, and he glares with such fierceness I gasp. I get his message. I couldn't miss it. But I know it as well as he does. Without my testimony there would be little way Jarrod could be convicted of murder. I know Jarrod would like to kill me if he could only get the chance." Chapter 13, page 168

"Stacy, don't believe everything Tony might have told you. Don't believe in anybody but yourself" (Chapter 13, p. 173).

"How long am I going to have to live with fear of this man who has already robbed so much of my life? And it's not just me! What is all this going to do to Dad? And to Donna and Dennis and their baby? If I had the chance, I would kill Jarrod Tucker" (Chapter 14, p. 176-177).

"In an escape while being examined in Ben Taub Hospital a short while ago. A bailiff was shot in the leg when his gun was taken by Tucker. An HPD spokesman told us that an all-points bulletin has been put out for Tucker, who is believed to have stolen a dark blue Pontiac and is thought to be heading out of state, possibly toward Louisiana" (Chapter 14, p. 178).

"You can't shoot me! I didn't mean to kill your mother. I didn't know she was in the house, but she came into the den from the kitchen, and saw me, and said something to me, and I was scared. I didn't mean it, Stacy" (Chapter 15, p. 182).

"I don't want to be your first love, Stacy... Listen to me. I asked to get taken off the narcotics assignment just so that I could tell you the truth, and I asked because I care about you... I said I don't want to be your first love. I'd like to be the real thing, and I can wait" (Chapter 15, p. 185).



Topics for Discussion

Why does Stacy think she is in the wrong body when she first wakes up?

Describe some of the things Stacy has to get used to.

What does Stacy remember about her mother's murderer? How does she feel about him?

Who is Jeff Clinton? How does Stacy feel about him throughout the novel?

Compare and contrast Stacy McAdams and Jarrod Tucker.

How does Stacy act like a thirteen-year-old girl? How does she act like a seventeen-year-old?

What happens during Stacy's final confrontation with Jarrod? Why is she unable to shoot him?