

Pines Study Guide

Pines by Blake Crouch

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Contents

[Pines Study Guide..... 1](#)

[Contents..... 2](#)

[Plot Summary..... 3](#)

[Chapter 1-4..... 4](#)

[Chapter 5-8..... 8](#)

[Chapter 9-12..... 12](#)

[Chapter 13-16..... 15](#)

[Chapter 17-Epilogue..... 18](#)

[Characters..... 21](#)

[Symbols and Symbolism..... 24](#)

[Settings..... 26](#)

[Themes and Motifs..... 28](#)

[Styles..... 30](#)

[Quotes..... 31](#)



Plot Summary

Pines is a science fiction thriller by Blake Crouch which follows the efforts of Secret Service Agent Ethan Burke to escape from the town of Wayward Pines, Idaho. When the novel begins, Ethan has come to Wayward Pines in pursuit of two missing secret services agents. But when he wakes up outside of town near a river with temporary amnesia, the locals are not forthcoming with answers to his questions. Ethan begins to realize quickly that something is wrong with the town when the one road out actually circles back around to town, and when the people of town –including the sheriff –begin seeking to block his efforts to leave or do his job. Ethan meets a woman named Beverly, who reveals she went missing one year before –in 1985 –while Ethan believes the year to be 2012. Beverly is soon after ripped apart by a mob in town on the orders of the people who run the town, and Ethan flees into the wilderness, where several humanoid creatures attempt to kill him. He then breaks into a massive complex, where he discovers a secret base for the people who run the town. Ethan is then captured, and it is revealed to him by David Pilcher, the man responsible for everything, that Ethan and the others have all been in suspended animation for nearly 1,500 years. In that time, humankind has rapidly evolved into humanoid creatures, and civilization is gone – except for Wayward Pines, where Pilcher has preserved the species homo sapiens, and where Pilcher has expanded the human race from some 650 people to over 800 –and intends to keep going. It is the last town on earth. Ethan agrees to stay on as sheriff in the town, and he is reunited with his wife and son soon after.



Chapter 1-4

Summary

Chapter 1

Secret Service Agent Ethan Burke wakes near a beautiful forest and a stream. He can see Victorian houses in the distance across a field. He is suffering from amnesia, though he can remember six things: The name of the current president, his mother's face, that he can play the piano and fly a helicopter, that he is thirty-seven years old, and that he needs to get to a hospital. He moves into town, each with a beautiful lawn and beautiful gardens. His head is pounding, making him believe he has experienced a concussion of some kind. He reads the names on the mailboxes, and sees one that stands out to him: Mackenzie. The "mack" means something to him, but he doesn't know what. In the center of town, he can see locally-owned diners and coffee shops, but no chain places. He goes to the Wayward Pines Hotel, which has a coffee shop. Ethan questions the woman at the counter, Miranda, as to where he is, and if she recognizes him, which she does not. She advises going to the hospital, seven blocks up, but Ethan refuses an ambulance, deciding to walk. He passes a payphone, remembers his home number, dials, but there is no dial tone. He is enraged, and then passes out.

When he wakes up again, some time has passed. He looks through the Wayward Pines phone book until he comes to the names Mack and Jane Skozie. He heads to their house. An older man answers the door. It is Mack. Ethan ends up blacking out, remembering a shiny grille with the letters MACK stamped across the front. Ethan remembers being with a man named Stallings, and their Lincoln Town Car being slammed by a Mack truck.

Chapter 2

Ethan wakes up as a pretty nurse named Pam tends to him. Pam explains to Ethan that his memory is coming back, and he left the hospital the previous day. Pam confirms that Stallings is dead. Ethan asks that his wife, SAC, and other emergency numbers be contacted, but Pam says the sheriff is already on top of it all. Pam says she'll also check in to see what happened to Ethan's iPhone. Ethan thinks about his wife and son in Seattle, and figures they will fly into Boise or Missoula to drive out to Wayward Pines. Ethan is frustrated because Dr. Miter, and the others, all seem to be ignoring him. Ethan explains to Pam he is a Secret Service agent, and needs his phone, wallet, and briefcase. She says she is on it. After dinner, Ethan decides to leave the hospital once more. He puts on his suit, the jacket of which still has his pocketknife from his mechanic days inside. He begins sneaking through the hospital, looking for the exit. Outside, he finds a phonebook in a payphone booth and looks up the Sheriff's Office address.

Traveling through Wayward Pines, Ethan thinks everything looks too perfect. He arrives a short time later at the Sheriff's office, but it is closed for the night. He then goes to the



Wayward Pines Hotel to rent a room for the night, but explains to the girl on duty, Lisa, that his possessions are being kept by the sheriff at the moment. He explains his situation as a Secret Service agent. He promises to pay as soon as he has his things in the morning, and Lisa consents to giving him a room, 226. There, Ethan calls the field office in Seattle to leave a message. He then goes to a pub for a beer, having to explain his situation once more to his waitress, Beverly. She agrees to let Ethan have dinner on credit. The beer Ethan has tastes flat and plain to him, strangely, so he orders water.

Ethan at last explains to Beverly that he was sent to search for two other missing Secret Service agents, coming to Wayward Pines one month before. But Agents Bill Evans and Kate Hewson have not been heard from in ten days. Beverly scrawls down her address -604 1st Avenue –for Ethan in case he runs into trouble. As Ethan walks back to the hotel, he hears a cricket and thinks of his childhood in Tennessee, and of the poet Carl Sandburg, who wrote about crickets. Looking for the cricket, he discovers instead a small speaker in a bush, making the sound of a cricket. Ethan has a nightmare about a creature trying to strangle him that night, which causes him to wake up with a jolt. He wonders how he cannot remember his wife, Theresa's cell phone number, or the number of SAC Adam Hassler.

Chapter 3

Ethan wakes up after twelve in the afternoon. Lisa is banging on the door, urging him to hurry up and get out. His head is pounding. The pharmacist at the local drugstore will not allow Ethan to buy aspirin on a credit tab, so Ethan goes to Beverly's house. On the way, he says hello to some kids, who refuse to speak to him. Ethan goes to 604 1st, which is down a dirt road in the woods. The house is rundown and abandoned, and inside is the corpse of Agent Bill Evans, chained to an old bed, tortured before being killed. Ethan is in disbelief. He rushes to the sheriff's office, where the receptionist, Belinda, greets him. She contacts Sheriff Arnold Pope, who agrees to see Ethan momentarily. Pope soon reveals the car accident was a hit-and-run: the driver fled the scene of the accident. He also says he doesn't have Ethan's things, and that he spoke to Ethan's wife the day of the accident. Ethan explains to Pope he's seeking two missing agents, involving David Pilcher, a billionaire in the bio-pharmaceutical industry. Pope offers Ethan use of the conference room phone, at which time Ethan reveals knowledge of the corpse of Bill Evans. He relates the story of Beverly the night before.

In the conference room, Ethan cannot get a hold of his wife, and Adam Hassler is not in. Ethan leaves information for Hassler that he is in Wayward Pines, Idaho, and that Bill Evans is dead. Pope then takes a description of Kate Hewson, telling Ethan that he wants to help however he can. He also gives Pope the house's address. Ethan then goes to the Biergarten, the pub he was at the night before, to be told that there is no woman named Beverly working there. At about this time, severe pain again comes to Ethan's head. He then goes back to the Wayward Pines Hotel, but is met by an infuriated Lisa, who orders him out. He then stumbles around town until an elderly couple finds him.

Chapter 4



Theresa believes her husband is dead, and tells her son, Ben, as much. They hike up to Striped Peak where she buries the toy ring that Ethan had proposed with. She tells her friend, Darla, that she and Ethan had completely reconciled before he left, and that there is no proof of death, which makes her worry about insurance. Ethan has been gone for fifteen months. Hassler shows up to speak to Theresa. Hassler says that Ethan was one of his best agents, and he should have heard from Ethan by then. The last known contact from Ethan and Stallings was a phone call in a mountain town, Lowman, an hour from Wayward Pines. From there, at 3:07 p.m. Stallings pulled out in front of a Mack truck at an intersection in Wayward Pines. Adam also reveals that, strangely, there was no trace of Ethan in the car –not even residual or trace DNA. Hassler is determined to find out what happened to Ethan. Theresa remembers how one of the agents Ethan went to find –Kate –is the one he had an affair with.

Analysis

When the novel “Pines” by Blake Crouch begins, Ethan Burke, Secret Service agent, wakes up with few memories, though his amnesia is only temporary. He remembers soon after that he is a Secret Service agent sent out to discover what has become of two other missing Secret Service agents. But that changes when Ethan recalls a truck hitting his car, killing his partner, and then waking up on the riverbank –but nothing else. According to Pam and the others at the hospital, Ethan got up and wandered away following the accident. Ethan is suspicious, but accepts the story, for he has no reason not to disbelieve it. He is worried that his gun, wallet, badge, and iPhone are all missing, but Pam says she’ll be looking into recovering those things for him. Ethan, however, cannot abide sitting by and waiting, so he heads back out of the hospital against the orders of the medical staff.

At first, the novel seems cut-and-dried: Ethan is looking for two missing agents in a town that does not seem very friendly to outsiders, and the reader wonders what murderous secrets there are. Investigating an old house, Ethan discovers the body of one of the agents, Bill Evans, mutilated nearly beyond recognition. The sheriff, when Ethan explains the situation with Bill, does not seem overly concerned or very sympathetic. Indeed, he appears almost antagonistic –but the reader believes the reason why is because the sheriff was unaware of the investigation Ethan is conducting in town for the two missing agents. The sheriff also explains to Ethan that he has already spoken to Ethan’s wife on the day of the accident.

However, there is a monkey wrench thrown into the sheriff’s story when Adam Hassler, Ethan’s Special Agent in Charge, explains to Theresa that there has been no contact with Ethan –for fifteen months. Ethan has, according to his own calculations, been in Wayward Pines for a few days. If this isn’t strange enough, Hassler explains there has been no news of Ethan at all –contradicting the sheriff’s claims that he contacted Theresa on the day of the accident. The reader is now faced with two serious issues on the part of Ethan: there has been no contact, despite the sheriff’s assurances, and there are fifteen months of missing time between the conversation Theresa and Hassler have, and the conversation Ethan and Sheriff Pope have.



Discussion Question 1

What is Ethan's primary objective in Wayward Pines as he remembers it? For what reasons does he grow suspicious not only of the people in the town, but the sheriff in particular?

Discussion Question 2

What inconsistencies are there between what the sheriff tells Ethan, and Hassler tells Theresa? How could this be?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Ethan have retrograde amnesia? Why, according to the medical staff at the hospital, does Ethan wake up beside the riverbank?

Vocabulary

Exertion, involuntarily, epidermis, vulnerable, emanating, dubious, excruciating, extricate, palpable.



Chapter 5-8

Summary

Chapter 5

Ethan remembers checking in on Ben one last time before heading off to Wayward Pines. Ethan comes to in Wayward Pines Hospital to Dr. Jenkins tending to him. Ethan remembers passing out on Main Street the night before. Jenkins asks if Ethan has a family history of mental illness; Ethan says he does not. Jenkins asks about Ethan's combat experience in the Iraq War. Ethan flew Black Hawk helicopters, and explains he was shot down in Fallujah in 2004. He is the sole survivor, and he is captured by the enemy. Jenkins is a psychiatrist, and is worried about Ethan. Ethan is now getting dressed, determined to leave once more. Ethan tells Jenkins there is something wrong with the town and all the people in it. Pam tries to stop Ethan from leaving, but he goes anyways, telling her the town is wrong. Outside, the town is tranquil, beautiful, but suddenly feels boxed in by the mountains on each side of it.

Ethan goes to see Sheriff Pope, who is not in. He then uses the conference room phone to try to get in touch with Theresa, who still does not answer. He tries Hassler again, but gets his new secretary, Marcy, once more instead. Suddenly, Pope arrives, grabs the phone from Ethan, and slams it down, angry that Ethan is using his phone without permission. Pope says the crime scene is being handled, and tells Ethan not to leave town. Ethan heads back through town, reciting names and information about himself in his head, finding comfort in things he knows for sure. He comes across a girl named Nancy, in clothes reminiscent of the 1950s, in a cookout with other neighbors. She offers Ethan food, saying she and the neighbors get together as much as they can for gatherings. The oldest woman among them, Christine, has a nickel-sized birthmark on her face –just like Kate, which stuns Ethan. Christine and who appears to be either her husband or her boyfriend, Harold, leave the party –and Ethan follows them home, where he talks to Christine, calling her Kate. He realizes that she is indeed Kate, but older.

Kate speaks in a hushed whisper, telling Ethan they are always watching and listening. She says she's lived in Wayward Pines for years. She says she has to go, and that he could have a happy life in Wayward Pines. She confirms he isn't crazy. He finds a car a few blocks away, a 1980 Buick LaSabre, and breaks into it, hotwiring it to start it. He drives away just as the family in the house sees him go. He is thrilled to be driving. He heads out of town, into the forest –and then ends up back in town. He drives back out of town, and then walks into the forest. Ahead of him, he hears a scream. He returns to the car, where he is confronted by Pope, who is armed. Pope tells Ethan he must be out of his mind. He then knocks Ethan out.

When Ethan comes to, Pope wants to know about how Ethan, with no gun, badge or ID, knows about a body in a house after a story of a missing bartender. Ethan tells Pope his



career is over for assaulting a federal officer. Pope scoffs at this. Ethan tells Pope he saw Kate, but older, and there is no road out of town –and Pope tells Ethan he is crazy, and there is a road out of town. Pope even doubts that Ethan is a federal agent on an investigation. Pope, however, thinks that Ethan was being pursued by Bill Evans, only to turn around and kill Bill Evans. Pope claims that Hassler has never even heard of Ethan. Pope attempts to intimidate Ethan, at which time Ethan head-butts Pope, knocking him down, and then diving on top of him. Pope fights back, demanding to know who Ethan is. Ethan remembers being held captive by insurgents in Iraq. Pope knocks Ethan out.

Chapter 6

At 4:50 a.m., a short, bald man comes to speak to Theresa about Ethan. It is David Pilcher. He produces a Polaroid photo of Ethan as proof of who he is. Pilcher explains that Ethan is alive. He offers her the chance to reunited with Ethan if she takes a small vial of liquid –a sedative. Pilcher tells her that if she and Ben come with him, they will have Ethan once more, but they will never again have their old life back in terms of where they currently are. As Theresa decides against the idea at last, Pilcher knocks her out with spray from an aerosol can, and then calls in Arnold and Pam.

Chapter 7

When Ethan comes to, he is chained to a hospital bed on Pope's orders. Jenkins is in the room once more. Jenkins tells him his brain is bleeding, and needs surgery. Ethan says he does not consent to surgery, but Jenkins has Pam put Ethan under. Pam can't hit a vein, so the knocking out will take longer. Ethan is brought into the operating room. Everyone leaves the room, and Ethan realizes he is in serious trouble, strapped down to a gurney. Suddenly, there is movement –and it is Beverly, who is wheeling Ethan into an elevator. There, she pulls out keys and lets Ethan out of his chains, telling him they are trying to break his mind. They flee through the hospital, having to hide from Pam, who says that she will allow Ethan to wake up during surgery if he doesn't give himself up. Ethan tries to knock out Pam, but can't, for he is beginning to lose consciousness. Fortunately, Beverly comes to the rescue, knocking out Pam with a steel chair. They flee to the old cemetery, where they take refuge in an old crypt. Beverly tells Ethan they are trying to make him think he is crazy, and she is helping him because she wants the same thing as Ethan –to get out. She explains she was a sales rep for IBM and came to look at the school, when she got into a car crash and woke up next to a stream. She explains this was one year before –on October 3, 1985. Ethan then passes out.

Chapter 8

Beverly misses her old life, and envies that Ethan is passed out. She then pulls out a some medical supplies, to operate on Ethan's left leg.



Analysis

Ethan's suspicions that something is wrong with Wayward Pines are confirmed fully by a number of things. First, his attempt to leave town is met with failure, twice: First, the road he takes out of town circles around back to town. Second, his attempt to move through the woods to escape is met not only by inhuman howls, but by Sheriff Pope, who knows, somehow, just where to find Ethan. His treatment of Ethan –knocking him out with a shotgun barrel –enrages Ethan, and underscores the knowledge that Pope is either a horrible sheriff, or has ulterior motives –or both. It is only later revealed through Beverly that Pope is able to track Ethan's movements by way of a tracking microchip planted into Ethan's leg.

Ethan ultimately decides that there is something seriously wrong with the town and the people living in it. But what it is, he cannot yet say. However, the third hospital visit he has, Ethan is told he is being prepped for surgery –and when Pam begins talking about how overjoyed she will be to see Ethan suffer, Ethan knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that everything is wrong and his life is in danger. Yet it is Beverly who rescues Ethan, and the two escape through town by heading into a cemetery, and hiding in a mausoleum.

There are other disconcerting events that occur seemingly around this time: Pilcher comes to see Theresa and Ben –the same Pilcher connected with the investigation that caused Bill and Kate to disappear –and Pilcher knocks out Theresa and Ben using an aerosol spray can. Additionally, as Ethan begins to pass out, Beverly makes a startling claim: She has been trapped in Wayward Pines for over one year, and the date she went missing was 1985 –nearly thirty years before Ethan went missing.

Discussion Question 1

What confirms beyond a shadow of a doubt in Ethan's mind that things are truly not right in Wayward Pines?

Discussion Question 2

What startling information does Beverly present to Ethan about her own disappearance? How does Ethan respond to this?

Discussion Question 3

What information does Kate give Ethan? What is it about Kate's appearance that Ethan finds difficult to understand or believe? Why?

Vocabulary

Delirious, eviscerate, conciliatory, epiphany, palpable, trajectory, mythologized, dissociative, sociopathic.



Chapter 9-12

Summary

Chapter 9

When Ethan wakes up, his left leg is burning in pain. Beverly explains she had to cut something out of it –a microchip, which allows them to track people. The mausoleum they are currently in deflects the signal, but the signal can be tracked to within a hundred yards of where it is dropped. Ethan tells her that when he got into a car crash, it was September 24, 2012, and the President is Barack Obama. For Beverly, the President is Ronald Reagan. Beverly explains that the people of town are told to live in the moment. Politics, culture, all of it is discouraged, except for what already exists in town –and the money used is from the 1950s and 1960s. There are no calendars, no newspapers, and Beverly has only been able to keep track of time because she has kept a journal. Beverly explains that after coming to, the Pope told her she was a bartender at the Biergarten, and every time she took a long walk and was in danger of leaving town, Pope, like a warden rather than a sheriff, showed up to escort her back. A note passed to her in the bar one night tells her about the chip in her leg, which she ultimately cuts out.

She explains that she leaves the chip in her bed every night so she can go out and explore. She has attempted to climb the cliffs around town, but has always had to give up. Skeletons of fallen escape attempts line the bottom of the cliffs. She explains she headed out of town on the road once, only to find it looped back into town, but traveling half a mile through the forest, she came upon a massive fence. The man who told her about the chip was Bill Evans. They both decide to try to escape, but they are found out. The people of town literally tear Bill apart. Ethan begins to wonder if the fence is meant to keep people in –or something else out. Suddenly, around them, the sound of five hundred phones ringing can be heard –a death order for Ethan being issued to the town, same as it was for Bill. Ethan rushes to leave. Beverly tells him she will meet up him upstream when he finds the river. Ethan agrees. The people of town are spreading out, looking for Ethan. Closing in on him is one man with a machete.

Chapter 10

Theresa remembers the order that comes to kill Bill Evans, and she hides in her attic, watching Ethan run down the street, terrified for him, and is relieved that at least her phone hasn't rung, expecting her to kill her own husband. She has had five years living in Wayward Pines –and only four fetes have occurred in that time. Ethan's will be the fifth. Ben, now twelve, is sleeping –but he enjoys participating in fetes.

Chapter 11



Ethan rushes toward Main Street, the murderous mob behind him growing and growing. The man with the machete Ethan recognizes as the pharmacist. He ducks down an alley, then rushes back out, head-butting the pharmacist, knocking him to the ground, bloody. Ethan grabs the machete, and kicks the man in the face. He then rushes into a brick building. He is chased by a man in a yellow poncho with a giant knife. Ethan gashes the man's neck, causing him to collapse to the floor in an apartment. From the bedroom, Ethan obtains clothes and shoes to wear. He grabs carrots and bread from the kitchen. He looks out through a window below, where a large group of people have gathered with Pope. He takes a drink of some liquid from a vial, and then more men come along with Beverly, who is bloodied and beaten. A man steps forward, takes a drink from a vial, and then hits Beverly with a wooden baseball bat. A woman in a black bikini then approaches, takes the baseball bat, and hits Beverly with it as well. Then everyone descends on Beverly. Ethan is enraged, powerless to help Beverly.

Ethan goes back outside into the alley, and kills another man, and then runs. He rushes out of town along the woods, past a mansion, where some thirty children come running after him to kill him. They corner him. They are between seven and fifteen years old. They are dressed in Halloween costumes. Ethan turns on them, scaring off all of them but one. The boy screams for the approaching adults, and Ethan rushes into the nearby river, attempting to cross, but being carried downstream in the process. Ethan rushes out of the water, and is faced by a cliff. Pope calls out to him through a megaphone, telling Ethan that if he returns, he won't be harmed, and all will be forgiven. Ethan presses on.

Chapter 12

Ethan walks on. He comes to another river, but knows that attempting to cross in his current weakened state would be fatal. He climbs up a cliff into cave-like recess to rest and sleep.

Analysis

When Ethan comes to, Beverly has cut the microchip out of his leg. She explains everything she knows about Wayward Pines, and what became of Bill Evans –that he was killed in an escape attempt by a mob from the town. What is chilling is that the mob from the town consists of every person in the town, who are given orders to kill by the overseers, who contact them by way of telephone. Beverly goes on to explain that discussions about anything divisive –such as culture or politics –is discouraged, and residents are encouraged to live in the moment and not worry about other things like politics. The money people use is long outdated, and there are few cars around. Beverly explains that people in town are told where to live, where to work, and who to marry. She herself was told she was a bartender at the Biergarten, though she has no memory of this at all. Things go from bad to worse when phones across town all go off, one after another, to tell the townspeople to kill Ethan and Beverly.



Ethan and Beverly flee the cemetery, intending to meet up again by the river. Ethan ends up running through town, where he is seen by his wife –who has apparently been in the town for five years. Ben is twelve now. The reader is again confronted with another difficulty of time: Ethan has been in town for a couple of days, while Theresa and Ben have been in town for five years. Time is just not adding up.

As Ethan flees, he discovers that Beverly is torn apart by the mob. Ethan is enraged, but helpless to do anything about it. Instead, he manages to kill two members of the mob as he rushes out of town and into the woods for safety. He is relentlessly pursued to the river, where he crosses, and despite the request of the sheriff for Ethan to return in exchange for mercy, Ethan continues on. He ultimately takes shelter in a cave, determined to sleep and await daylight.

Discussion Question 1

What further inconsistencies are there in time as it relates to Theresa, Ben, and Ethan? How could this be possible?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Beverly want to help Ethan? What really happened to Bill Evans?

Discussion Question 3

Why do you believe Sheriff Pope entreats Ethan to return to town in exchange for mercy? What possible motives could there be?

Vocabulary

Filibustering, periphery, effervescent, ebullient, diffused, reverberation, methodically, bedlam, intermittent, gibbous, reverie.



Chapter 13-16

Summary

Chapter 13

Ethan dreams of the Iraq War, and wakes up, freezing cold. Down below him, the people of the town are moving along the river. However, when he next looks, all he can see is one individual –who looks as if he is smelling the air, and then disappears, traveling on all fours, arms twice their normal length, with a large nose. Ethan does not go back to sleep. He thinks instead of Theresa. In daylight, Ethan can see how bruised and battered his body is. He eats the bread and carrots he has on him, and then finds a walking stick to continue his journey. He travels along the river into a canyon to a point where the river narrows to a stream. He sleeps through the night, and continues on the next morning. He continues upstream, to the spring which feeds the river, and then continues on over steep terrain to find an electric fence. Signs warn of the fence being electrified, and certain death beyond it. He climbs up the nearby canyon, and passes the fence. He heads through the canyon, determined not to return to Wayward Pines. He begins to head toward a square, metallic object, when a milky-white, pale creature begins coming toward him. It is the same sort of creature as from the night before. It is some kind of humanoid. It leaps onto Ethan, who bashes the thing to death with a rock. He then begins to climb toward the metallic object. Down below him, five more screaming humanoid creatures approach. They begin climbing the canyon wall, following Ethan's scent, sighting him. He begins climbing toward the metal square, while the creatures continue on after him, leaping and bounding effortlessly. He hurls a massive rock at a creature behind him, hitting it square in the face, and causing it to fall, taking out two more creatures with it. He arrives at the metal square –a vent of some kind –and two more creatures close in on him. He bashes open the vent with a massive chunk of granite, then throws the granite onto one of the creatures, causing it to fall. He then turns toward the final creature, who ultimately falls from exhaustion after one last attempt to kill Ethan.

Chapter 14

Pilcher comes to speak to Theresa. He tells her to get Ben, and that he isn't going to hurt her or Ben. He says to meet him out front in two minutes.

Chapter 15

Ethan squeezes into the air duct. He stops to sleep and then continues crawling into the duct. He questions himself and his existence. He then comes into a main air intake area, and then crawls into another duct.

Chapter 16



Ethan lowers himself from a duct into a corridor full of doors to minimally decorated rooms with beds and a few personal effects. He passes a library, a rec room, a gym where some people are working out, a laundry room, a rec room, and so on. He comes across a security room full of screens that showed different scenes from Wayward Pines. He comes to another room with a glass wall, on which the other side is a creature like the ones from the canyon. He comes into a massive, warehouse-sized room with massive cylindrical containers full of things like rice, flour, sugar, salt, Vitamin C, and so on. He comes across a parking lot with cars that span the length of time from the 1980s to the present day. Men there are armed with machine guns. He comes to a tunnel in the cliffs which surround the parking lot, with a sign indicating Wayward Pines is 3.5 miles away. He comes into a room with various display screens, listing suspension dates, integration attempts, and termination dates where appropriate. He comes across one such screen for Beverly. Ethan then realizes he is being chased – and he is confronted by Dr. Jenkins and others.

Jenkins explains that people are frozen in volcanic sand, and aerobic and anaerobic bacteria is killed, putting the person in suspended animation. It is a process that has taken decades to perfect, and Jenkins explains to Ethan that he isn't crazy. Ethan is then Tasered, given drugs, and passes out.

Analysis

Ethan's escape into the wilderness ultimately comes to prove two very important things. First, the electrified fences posted around the town are designed to keep abbies –the humanoid creatures in the wilderness –out. This is clearly demonstrated when Ethan scales a canyon wall near a fence and heads out into the great unknown. There, he is faced with a total of six abbies, all of whom try to kill him, and all of whom Ethan manages to outsmart and kill. Whatever these creatures are, they absolutely terrify Ethan –but Ethan is relieved by the knowledge that they can be defeated.

The second discovery Ethan makes out in the wilderness is that of an air duct, leading to a massive complex and underground base, in which dozens of people are working. There is a parking lot surrounded by canyon walls with cars that date back as far as the 1980s, and futuristic, sleek, modern looking cars as well. The base is full of labs, science equipment, foodstuffs, living quarters, a gym, a library, and so on. There is also a room of screens and containers full of black sand, which is explained by Jenkins to be volcanic. Jenkins, confronting Ethan, reveals that they have perfected a system of suspended animation, where people are essentially frozen and then reanimated later on. This process has taken decades to perfect, and Jenkins promises Ethan that he will show him everything in due time, because Ethan isn't crazy. The reader is one step closer to discovering the truth of Wayward Pines.



Discussion Question 1

Why does Ethan decide to head toward the metallic square beyond the fence? In truth, what is the metallic square? What is it a part of?

Discussion Question 2

What does Jenkins promise to tell Ethan? Can Jenkins be trusted? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Do you believe Ethan is crazy? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

Simultaneously, exhilaration, ominous, premonition, traversed, fetid, livid, flexion, paltry.



Chapter 17-Epilogue

Summary

Chapter 17

Ethan dreams of being tortured during the Iraq War. He is ultimately rescued by a SEAL team, and Ethan has his revenge by shooting his main tormentor and rapist, Aashif, in the face.

Chapter 18

Ethan wakes up in a helicopter, traveling with Jenkins, Pope, and Pam. Jenkins compliments Ethan on looking better, and on surviving. He says he is going to show Ethan what everything is all about. They land in a clearing. Pope gives Jenkins a Magnum .357 to carry. They are in the ruins of the city of Boise. Ethan has been in suspended animation for 1,814 years. Jenkins explains that in 1971, a geneticist named David Pilcher realized human DNA was becoming corrupted, which would lead to rapid, macro-evolutionary changes. He wanted to survive such changes, poured billions into research, and essentially took over Wayward Pines –a place easily defended. Jenkins is Pilcher. He has abducted or enticed 650 people over fifty years. The town is entirely self-sufficient. The people alive in Wayward Pines and the command center are all that are left of the human species, homo sapiens.

Pilcher, his crew, and everyone in Wayward Pines went into suspended animation in 2032. Ethan calls Pilcher a psychopath. Pilcher calls himself the savior of the species, and explains that the people in town have no clue about the reality of the world. The first group brought out of animation was told about the world, and most of them committed suicide, left town and were killed, or refused to reproduce. The town has grown to 811 people. While the people of town may not be free, they are alive. Dignity and individual freedom are dangerous. There is an underground group in Pines that Pilcher says he must crush. The creatures outside the city are called abbies. Pilcher reveals the back of the helicopter, where Ben and Theresa are unconscious and strapped to stretchers. He explains that Ethan has an important skillset when it comes to survival. He has attempted escape twice before, and he is on his third integration attempt. Ethan has a choice: he and his family can be left on the outside, or Ethan can help Pilcher run Wayward Pines on the inside. Ethan decides on the latter, using Pilcher's gun to cover Pope and Pam as they rush to the helicopter. But they leave Pope behind to die, because Pilcher says Pope wants to rule. Ethan will become the new sheriff.

Ethan's whole world is gone, except for the two people behind him in the helicopter. Ethan knows Wayward Pines is the only hope for humanity in the world, now. He wonders if it will ever feel like home to him.

Epilogue



Ethan passes an uneventful first day as sheriff, disillusioned and heartbroken. Heading home, he is greeted happily by town residents. He heads home for the first time, and is greeted by an overjoyed and crying Theresa and Ben.

Analysis

The truth about Wayward Pines is finally revealed to Ethan, but it is a truth far greater than just the town. In the 1970s, Pilcher –AKA Jenkins –discovered corruption in human DNA, and correctly surmised that massive, rapid macro evolutionary changes were coming to human beings. The descendants of human beings are the abbies that prowl the woods and the wilderness like animals. Civilization, except for Wayward Pines, is gone. Pilcher poured billions into his Wayward Pines project, put everyone in suspended animation, and allowed fifteen hundred years to pass. At the end of this time, Pilcher and his team began to reawaken people in waves, putting them into Wayward Pines. Pilcher explains that his first group of people were suicidal, tried to escape and were killed by abbies, or refused to reproduce given knowledge of the world outside. In successive groups, Pilcher and his team have not told people what awaits them in the world beyond the borders of Wayward Pines. As such, every aspect of their lives must be controlled in order to ensure the survival of the human race. Dissent and division are dangerous –as is individual human freedom.

Pilcher is impressed by Ethan, and offers Ethan the chance to leave and try to make it on his own in the world with his family, or to return to Wayward Pines as sheriff to replace Pope. Ethan reluctantly chooses to return to Wayward Pines, because he is aware that there are precious few options –and those other options are no guarantee of safety. Ethan willingly concedes his freedom for safety, and decides to return to Wayward Pines as sheriff. But as such, he is reunited with his wife and son, and at least some part of his former life is now possible.

Discussion Question 1

What is the truth about the world beyond Wayward Pines? How does Ethan react to this news? How would you react? Why?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Ethan voluntarily choose to surrender his individual freedom to return to Wayward Pines? Would you do the same? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Do you believe that Pilcher's Wayward Pines experiment is morally just? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

Dubious, species, retrograde, metronome.

Characters

Ethan Burke

Ethan Burke is the thirty-seven year old main character and principal protagonist of the novel *Pines* by Blake Crouch. An Iraq War veteran, Ethan is now a Secret Service agent who has come to Wayward Pines, Idaho, to investigate the disappearance of two other agents. Ethan has a wife named Theresa, and a son named Ben. Ethan wakes up alongside a river outside of the town, with temporary amnesia which the local medical staff at the hospital explains was suffered in the car accident he was involved in a short time before. Ethan begins his investigation, though the sheriff and the people of town seem to oppose him every step of the way.

Ethan ultimately discovers that Wayward Pines is in fact the last town and piece of civilization on Earth. He has been asleep for nearly 1,500 years, kept in a state of suspended animation by Pilcher, and brought back to animation for integration in the town –which he has failed at twice already. Ethan learns the truth about the world: that it has crumbled and been overrun by humanoid descendants of modern man. Wayward Pines is Pilcher's attempt to preserve and save the human race. Ethan reluctantly agrees to return to town as sheriff, where he will be reunited with his wife and son.

Beverly

Beverly is an IBM representative who travels to Wayward Pines in 1985, and ultimately wakes up in a similar fashion to Ethan beside the river outside of town. Beverly becomes friends with Bill Evans, and the two decide to attempt escape from Wayward Pines, only for Bill to be brutally murdered by the town mob. Beverly manages to escape, and it is Beverly who frees Ethan from the hospital, and removes the microchip from Ethan's leg. During her second escape attempt, Beverly is ultimately ripped apart by the mob.

Theresa Burke

Theresa Burke is the wife of Ethan Burke, and mother of Ben. Theresa is incredibly loyal, supportive, and loving as a wife. She has even decided to remain with Ethan following an affair Ethan had with another secret service agent, Kate. Theresa is abducted with Ben by Pilcher, and integrated into Wayward Pines. She struggles for five years, hoping that one of Ethan's integration attempts will finally work. Ultimately, she is reunited with Ethan when Ethan decides to accept the position of the town's new sheriff.



David Pilcher

David Pilcher is the individual in charge of both Wayward Pines, and the scientific complex and project that oversees Wayward Pines. In the 1970s, he discovers corruption in human DNA, and goes on to spend billions for the Wayward Pines project. He is an overlord, seeing to each and every daily activity of the people in the town. Pilcher is impressed with Ethan's penchant for survival, and explains the truth of the world to Ethan, and that Wayward Pines means surrendering individual human freedom for the guarantee of safety and security. Ethan believes Pilcher is psychotic, but agrees to become the sheriff in order to be with his wife and son once more.

Arnold Pope

Arnold Pope is the sheriff of Wayward Pines, and a member of Pilcher's scientific crew. Pope is cruel, unkind, and bloodthirsty, and wants to be the ruler of the city. He opposes and interferes with Ethan's investigation, knowing the truth about Wayward Pines, and is ultimately left behind in the wilderness to be killed by abbies by Pilcher.

Ben Burke

Ben Burke is the son of Ethan and Theresa Burke. He is seven years old when his father goes missing and he is put into suspended animation. He is twelve years old when the events of the novel transpire, and is thrilled to have his father back home when Ethan agrees to become sheriff.

Pam

Pam is a member of Pilcher's scientific crew. She is a strong, no-nonsense woman capable of handling weapons. She poses as a nurse at the Wayward Pines Hospital, where she quickly loses patience with Ethan, and seeks to see him suffer in response for the struggle with him. Ultimately, Pam is one of the people who travels with Ethan and Pilcher to show Ethan the truth of the world. While Pilcher allows Pam the ability to come back to town, Pope is left behind.

Adam Hassler

Adam Hassler is a Secret Service Special Agent in Charge, and is Ethan's superior. He vows to Theresa that he will find out what happened to Ethan, though he is never heard from again following the abduction of Theresa and Ben by Pilcher.



Kate Hewson

Kate Hewson is a beautiful, petite Secret Service agent who goes missing in Wayward Pines with partner, Agent Bill Evans, while investigating Pilcher in 2012. Kate has an affair with Ethan, and is later integrated into Wayward Pines, successfully. She is an elderly woman when she meets Ethan again, having been in Wayward Pines for an extended period of time since reanimation.

Bill Evans

Bill Evans is a Secret Service agent and partner of Kate Hewson who travels to Wayward Pines to investigate Pilcher's activities. He and Kate are put into suspended animation, and when Bill Evans awakens, he meets Beverly, and the two try to escape. Bill is ultimately ripped apart by a mob in town, his body soon after discovered by Ethan.



Symbols and Symbolism

Ethan Blake's Personal Effects

Ethan Blake's personal effects –including a gun, a badge, a wallet with ID, and his briefcase –are all missing at the beginning of the novel. He spends a good portion of the novel attempting to track them down in order to prove who he is, and to pay for the things he needs while in town, such as a place to stay, and things to eat. Ethan is never able to find these things, because they apparently no longer exist fifteen hundred years later.

Tracking Chips

Tracking devices in the forms of microchips are surgically implanted into the left legs of each person in town. The devices are used in order to keep a track of people, and where they are located. The devices can be removed –such as by Beverly, who removes her microchip, and later removes Ethan's chip. The tracking device in Ethan's leg is how Sheriff Pope is able to track Ethan down when Ethan first attempts to escape Wayward Pines through the woods.

Rocks

Rocks are found strewn throughout the wilderness, and especially the canyons outside of Wayward Pines. Ethan Burke uses rocks as a weapon in two ways: the first, to defend himself against abbies; and second, to break into the air duct and shaft protruding from the canyon walls high above him.

Cars

Cars are in short supply in Wayward Pines, proper. The only car Ethan comes across –a 1980 Buick LaSabre –has but a quarter-tank of gas and must be hot wired to be used. Ethan uses the car to attempt to escape Wayward Pines, but is unable to do so. Ethan later discovers a stockpile of cars in the parking lot at the scientific complex run by Pilcher. The cars there range from models in the 1980s, to futuristic, sleek models beyond Ethan's time in 2012. It is apparent that the cars are carefully kept and guarded, but not frequently used.

Weapons

Weapons, in the form of revolvers, shotguns, and machine guns, are carried by the crew that works for Pilcher and oversees Wayward Pines. Ethan is consistently without a gun throughout the novel, until the end when Pilcher gives Ethan a Magnum .357 to



lay waste to some abbies. The guns utilized by the crew are for the purposes of protecting the town, and maintaining order among the population.

Electrified Fence

An electrified fence surrounds much of the land around Wayward Pines. The fence is intended to close gaps in the landscape, thus keeping the citizens of Wayward Pines hemmed in, and the masses of abbies out of Wayward Pines. Ethan encounters the electric fence traveling through the woods outside of town, and manages to bypass the electric fence by climbing over a canyon.

Machete

A machete is wielded by the pharmacist in town in his attempt to kill Ethan. But Ethan fights back, managing to get the machete away from the pharmacist. In the ensuing struggle, Ethan uses the machete to kill two men in town, before losing it on his mad rush to flee.



Settings

Wayward Pines

Wayward Pines is an idyllic, small town in the wilds of Idaho. Composed of a Main Street, suburban neighborhoods with Victorian-era houses, beautifully-kept lawns and gardens of flowers and vegetables, and a number of locally-owned and operated stores, businesses, and places to eat, Wayward Pines becomes the final town on Earth, the epicenter for the survival of the human race orchestrated by Pilcher. Wayward Pines is surrounded by rugged terrain and electrified fences, and the people in town are told what to do, who to marry, and how to live in order that they may survive, though nearly all residents know nothing about the truth of the outside world. Bill Evans and Kate Hewson first head to Wayward Pines to investigate David Pilcher, but end up abducted by him. Ten days later, Ethan Burke and Agent Stallings are dispatched to find Kate and Bill, but are also ultimately abducted and suspended by Pilcher. Ultimately, Ethan becomes the sheriff of Wayward Pines, sacrificing individual freedom for survival.

Wayward Pines Hospital

Wayward Pines Hospital is the local hospital and medical care center in Wayward Pines, Idaho. It is in a large, old brick building that resembles an insane asylum according to Ethan. The hospital is managed by a handful of staff and medical practitioners, all of whom end up being revealed to be members of the crew that work for Pilcher. Among them is Pam, a kindly nurse who ends up being revealed to be a sociopathic sadist, wanting to see Ethan suffer while in surgery.

Wayward Pines Hotel

Wayward Pines Hotel is the main place to stay for visitors in Wayward Pines. Ethan takes a room in the hotel after leaving the hospital. He stays there overnight, but without money or a way to pay, he is ultimately thrown out by Lisa, who runs the desk. Ethan attempts to stay another night, but Lisa refuses to let him stay, and throws him out for good.

Boise, Idaho

Boise Idaho, located 130 miles from Wayward Pines, is the destination that Pilcher brings Ethan to after Ethan discovers the scientific complex of Pilcher. Boise, once a sparking city center and a testament to civilization, is now crumbling, overgrown, and overrun by abbies. It is a ruined vestige of civilization from fifteen hundred years before. Boise is the proof to Ethan that the world, as previously known, is gone. Now, there are only several hundred people left in Wayward Pines, Idaho.



604 1st Avenue

604 1st Avenue is an old, abandoned house located outside of the suburbs of Wayward Pines. It is to this house that Beverly directs Ethan to discover the mutilated, rotting corpse of Bill Evans, torn apart by the mob. It is the first concrete evidence Ethan has that something is seriously wrong in Wayward Pines, and is handled with a careless attitude by Sheriff Pope, increasing Ethan's suspicions about the town itself.



Themes and Motifs

Mystery

Mystery is a major, dominant, and overarching theme of the novel *Pines* by Blake Crouch. Mystery includes that which is unknown or cannot readily be discerned. There are three major mysteries which figure predominantly into the novel, all of them revolving around Ethan Burke's existence in Wayward Pines.

The first major mystery in "Pines" involves Ethan's presence at all in the town. He is there to attempt to figure out what happened to agents Bill Evans and Kate Hewson, missing for ten days. This is Ethan's primary objective in town, but he seems stymied at every effort by Sheriff Pope and the people of the town. This mystery ultimately feeds directly into another –that of timing. While Ethan believes he has been in Wayward Pines for a couple of days, scenes involving his wife, Theresa, reveals that Ethan has been missing for fifteen months. Other scenes involving Theresa reveal her to have been present in Wayward Pines for five years –while Ethan has been in Wayward Pines for a few days. The inconsistency in time only adds to the mystery.

The third major mystery Ethan Burke confronts is that of the town of Wayward Pines itself. He can't understand why the road that should lead out of town leads back into town. He can't figure out why electrified fences surround the town. He also can't figure out why the sheriff is not only so unprofessional, but so seemingly set against his investigation. The truth about Pam and Dr. Jenkins, as well, are a mystery to Ethan as well, including who they really are, and why they present such obstacles to Ethan and his investigation. And just what the humanoid creatures are that exist in the canyon are also mysteries to Ethan as well –all mysteries which are ultimately revealed in time.

Dystopianism

Dystopianism is a major and underlying theme in the novel *Pines* that only clearly becomes distinguishable as the truth behind the town of Wayward Pines is revealed to Ethan by Pilcher. Dystopianism includes a society, organization, or place that is run by a fascistic or totalitarian government which denies individual human rights and freedoms in favor of the survival of the state or those in power. Dystopian societies may be implemented with good intentions, but ultimately cause more harm than good. Wayward Pines is one sort of dystopian society.

In Wayward Pines, reanimated human beings are reintegrated into the town after being asleep for nearly fifteen-hundred years. They are told what to do for a living, who to marry, to have children, not to discuss politics, culture, or anything divisive which does not exist in town already. They are told to enjoy the here-and-now, and not worry on the past or the future. They are told to respect and stay away from Pilcher unless he approaches them. They are forbidden to leave town or to go beyond the electrified



fences around the town, and they are kept in ignorance of what it is that exists outside the town.

Pilcher explains to Ethan that the individual human freedoms and human rights of people have been revoked in order to save and regrow the human population. Beyond the borders of Wayward Pines, human beings no longer exist. The world is populated by their humanoid descendants, abbies, monstrous creatures who are the results of rapid macro evolutionary change. Pilcher himself appears as a benevolent dictator, saving an ignorant and unknowing population from the terrors and truth of reality. Ethan, reluctantly, becomes a part of Pilcher's government, so to speak, as sheriff, in exchange for coming back to Wayward Pines and being reunited with his family.

Survival

Survival is a major theme in Blake Crouch's novel Pines. Survival involves the attempts and struggles of an individual or group of individuals to handle tremendous challenges that threaten their lives, ultimately living through such events and instances. Survival in the novel occurs in two ways: survival of the individual, and survival of the species.

When it comes to survival of the individual, Ethan Burke is on his own. He must survive Wayward Pines, and the wilds beyond. He is faced with a sheriff who wants to kill him, a mob in town that wants to tear him apart –literally- and he must survive the cannibalistic abbies who live beyond the borders of the town and populate the wild. Ethan must rely solely on himself, his mental conditioning, his experiences in survival as a veteran of the Iraq War, and his physical conditioning to outrun the sheriff, the mob, and the abbies – all of which he does. He manages to survive with his life, but not with his freedom. In exchange for safety for himself, his wife, and his son, he becomes sheriff of Wayward Pines.

When it comes to survival of the species, Wayward Pines is the last remnant of civilization on earth. David Pilcher, noticing corruption in human DNA, and predicting rapid, major morphological changes, puts more than 650 people into suspended animation for nearly 1,500 years, where he revives them in Wayward Pines. He has saved the human race, and plans to regrow the size of the population. At the time Ethan becomes aware of this, there are now more than 800 people in Wayward Pines. Pilcher takes away human freedoms in order to guarantee safety, longevity, and ultimately, survival.



Styles

Point of View

Blake Crouch tells his novel *Pines* from the third-person limited omniscient perspective. This is done for at least three reasons. First, the third-person perspective allows Crouch to tell the novel with scenes focusing on Ethan's efforts and Theresa's experiences, meaning that the reader is able to understand things as both Ethan and Theresa see and understand them. This leads into the second reason –which is to add mystery to the overall plot by way of time discrepancies and plot issues (such as when Pope tells Ethan he has contacted Ethan's wife, and Theresa and Hassler knowing there has been no word from, or of Ethan, in fifteen months). Thirdly, the limited-omniscient perspective allows readers only to know as much as the characters as the characters learn them, also adding to the sense of urgency and mystery in the plot.

Language and Meaning

Blake Crouch tells his novel *Pines* in language that is simple and straightforward. This is done because the novel is a thriller, and the brief, simple language allows for a sense of urgency and mystery as the plot unfolds. It creates a sense of movement and a fast pace which also compound the idea of mystery and urgency. Crouch also uses sentence fragmentation to this effect, choosing to focus on a key words, thoughts, or feelings in a sentence, and eliminating any unnecessary words to that case. The language does not dwell on anything more than needed, in a way that Ethan cannot dwell on anything longer than necessary in order to survive.

Structure

Blake Crouch divides his novel *Pines* into eighteen numerically-linear but non-chronological chapters, supplemented by an epilogue. The chapters are arranged in order by number, allowing the reader to focus on the plot, rather than the chapter, and allowing the reader to easily traverse the novel. However, the chapters themselves are non-chronological, jumping back and forth between Ethan's efforts in *Wayward Pines*, Theresa's dealing with his disappearance fifteen hundred years before, and Theresa's five years in *Wayward Pines*. This deepens the mystery of the novel.



Quotes

His experience, there was darkness everywhere human beings gathered. The way of the world. Perfection was a surface thing. Cut a few layers deep, you begin to see some darker shades. Cut to the bone –pitch black.

-- Narrator (chapter 2 paragraph 188)

Importance: As Ethan begins his investigation in Wayward Pines, he makes a dark but realistic assessment of human nature, which is metaphorical for his experience so far in Wayward Pines: nothing is ever what it seems. The truth is far darker and disturbing than what meets the eyes. The same will be true of Wayward Pines.

The sting and the shame of all he's put her through are still raw. He can't say for certain, but he suspects that if she'd done the same to him, he'd already be gone. Marvels at her love for him. Her loyalty. So far beyond anything he deserves, it only intensifies the shame.

-- Narrator (chapter 5 paragraph 3)

Importance: Here, the narrator explains that Ethan, having reconciled with his wife following an affair, is constantly ashamed and humiliated by his past actions. He is resolved to redeem himself, and make his wife happy, for her sake, and for the sake of their family. The goodness of Theresa -her love and her loyalty -are gifts Ethan does not deserve, but desires to fight to prove himself worthy of.

In sleep, the dreams came to her. Of her Life Before.

-- Narrator (chapter 8 paragraph 3)

Importance: Having rescued Ethan, Beverly watches him sleep in the mausoleum before operating on him. She knows her own dreams are always dreams of the past, of her life before Wayward Pines. And it is the past of each person in town that is suppressed by the government that watches over them.

When she'd first arrived, the surrounding cliffs had filled her with awe and wonder. Now, she hated them for what they were, what they'd become –prison bars surrounding this lovely town where no one could leave, and those few who tried...

-- Narrator (chapter 8 paragraph 10)

Importance: Here, the narrator describes Beverly's initial awe of Wayward Pines, and then, like Ethan's metaphorical assessment, how much darker and more disturbing the reality is beneath the manicured lawns and carefully-kept houses. The town is a prison, not an idyllic or bucolic spot of earth. The people are being kept in against their will.

A metal taste –byproduct of fear –coated Ethan's mouth as it struck him that its proportions were all wrong, arms seemingly twice their normal length.

-- Narrator (chapter 13 paragraph 51)



Importance: Here, Ethan discovers for the first time that the electric fences erected in gaps in the landscape around town aren't just meant to keep people in -but to keep humanoid creatures called abbies out. His first experience with such a humanoid creature is described in the thirteenth chapter, following his escape from town, and from Sheriff Pope and his murderous mob.

If I wanted to hurt you, Theresa, I would take you and your son in the middle of the night, and no one would ever hear from you again. But you already know this. Now go get him. I'll meet you out front in two minutes.

-- David Pilcher (chapter 14 paragraph 31)

Importance: Realizing the situation with Ethan is not only out of control, but far beyond anything he expected of Ethan, Pilcher instructs Theresa and Ben to come along with him, and that he will not hurt them. Indeed, he will reunite them with Ethan, and whether they stay in or leave Wayward Pines will be totally up to them.

What Wayward Pines is, Ethan... it's the last town on earth. A living time capsule for our way of life. For the American Dream. The residents, the crew, me, you... we're all that's left of the species Homo Sapiens.

-- David Pilcher (chapter 18 paragraph 133)

Importance: Here, David Pilcher reveals the ultimate truth of Wayward Pines to a shocked and stunned Ethan. Wayward Pines is all that is left of human civilization, not just in America, but in the world. Human beings are an endangered species, in danger of becoming extinct had it not been for Pilcher and Wayward Pines.

I will never leave you again.

-- Ethan Burke (Epilogue paragraph 57)

Importance: Following his first day as sheriff, Ethan is reunited with his wife and son. Theresa is overjoyed to see him, especially given the horrors of Wayward Pines. Ethan, because of the past, and because of the terrors that await the world outside Wayward Pines, is determined to never again leave Theresa, and he tells her as much.