

# **Roses Are Red Study Guide**

## **Roses Are Red by James Patterson**

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# Plot Summary

Roses Are Red is a detective novel by James Patterson. It traces the life of detective Alex Cross while he tries to solve a series of robberies. Unfortunately, the majority of the robberies also include murders. Alex is employed as a homicide detective with the Washington DC police force. He also has a doctorate degree in psychology. Alex is middle aged and single with three children. He is recovering from a break-up with his long time girlfriend, Christine Johnson. Christine is also the mother of his third child, Alex Junior. Professionally, Alex is under immense pressure to discover the perpetrator and solve the case. The brutality of the murders has the public scared. Large companies and banking institutions are the selected targets, and the industry fears not just for the safety of individuals, but also for the stability of America's economic sector.

Alex and his police partner, Sampson, set out to uncover the crook behind the first robbery, only to see the case evolve into a series of robberies. Due to the severity of the crimes, the FBI is quickly brought in to help. Among the FBI agents are Betsey Cavaliere, James Walsh, and Michael Doud. The first robbery occurs at a Citibank Branch in Silver Springs. At that robbery the bank employees are spared but the bank manager's family is killed. The second robbery occurs at First Union Bank in Falls Church, Virginia. At that robbery the bank employees were shot but the manager's family was released unharmed. A third robbery occurs at a Chase Manhattan Bank branch. At this robbery the sole survivor is the security guard, who was spared because he was needed to deliver a message to the authorities. The final robbery occurs at the Mayflower hotel and the target is MetroHartford. No one is hurt during the kidnapping and attack, but thirty million dollars worth of cash and diamonds are collected as ransom. Alex and his FBI counterpart, Betsey, work together to follow up on leads and untangle the perpetrator's trail. It is a difficult trail to follow because the Mastermind plans his attacks but pays others to conduct them and then poisons those who helped him accomplish his task. He eludes authorities and truly is a mastermind at planning. Alex and Betsey learn that many small-time thieves as well as crooked police officers are among the Mastermind's accomplices.

The detectives finally obtain a solid lead that takes them to Hazelwood Veterans Hospital where Frederic Szabo is a resident. Szabo has a paranoid personality disorder which causes him to entertain the idea of revenge. His targets are banks and insurance companies who he feels are harmful to the average person. Szabo makes intricate plans for plausible robberies, but does not have the resources to conduct them. He is manipulated by his physician, Dr. Francis, who has more options available to him. In an unexpected last minute twist, the ultimate Mastermind is revealed as Kyle Craig, who had been posing as Alex's friend and coworker throughout the story.



# Prologue: Ashes, Ashes Chapters 1-2

## Prologue: Ashes, Ashes Chapters 1-2 Summary

*Roses Are Red* is a detective novel by James Patterson. It traces the life of detective Alex Cross while he tries to solve a series of robberies. Unfortunately, the majority of the robberies also include murders. Alex is employed as a homicide detective with the Washington DC police force. He also has a doctorate degree in psychology. Alex is middle aged and single with three children. He is recovering from a break-up with his long time girlfriend, Christine Johnson. Christine is also the mother of his third child, Alex Junior. Professionally, Alex is under immense pressure to discover the perpetrator and solve the case. The brutality of the murders has the public scared. Large companies and banking institutions are the selected targets, and the industry fears not just for the safety of individuals, but also for the stability of America's economic sector.

The Mastermind is, as the name implies, the one who plans all of the attacks that occur throughout the book. Brianne is a small-time crook with an average appearance. Because of her average appearance, there is nothing that stands out or makes her memorable. At precisely eight o'clock the bank opens. She easily approaches the Citibank branch, wears a mask, and forces the teller into the bank from where she stood unlocking the doors. Brianne is prepared with the names of the employees and the bank's schematics. The teller, Ms. Jeanne Galetta, leads Brianne to her boss, Mr. Buccieri. Brianne informs them that she intends to be out of the bank within eight minutes. Her schedule has been planned closely by the Mastermind. Brianne feels powerful in her role. Carrying a gun and making demands that are followed is a new feeling for her. While in the branch manager's office, the telephone rings. On the other end of the call is the manager's husband, Steve. Steve tells her that he is in their home with their son and nanny. They are being held hostage at gunpoint. Steve tells her that unless the woman at the bank (Brianne) leaves in a timely manner they will be killed. With new motivation, the manager moves quickly to empty the safe. Again, Brianne enjoys the feeling of power she experiences as the ladies follow her orders and cower in front of her. Brianne takes the money and locks both of the ladies in the vault. Brianne leaves the bank with the money as directed by the Mastermind, but she is fifty-two seconds behind schedule. This has also been planned by the Mastermind. He intended her to be late. At the bank manager's house her husband, son, and nanny are killed by gunshot. The executioner is named Errol. Errol is Brianne's husband.

## Prologue: Ashes, Ashes Chapters 1-2 Analysis

Chapters 1 and 2 comprise the prologue. The prologue introduces the reader to Brianne and the Mastermind. Brianne and Errol are minor characters, but by opening the book with a crime, the author manages to quickly pull the reader into the book. Brianne is interesting—like all of the criminals in the book, she thrives on the feeling of power. The reader learns that the crime she is committing was planned by a person who calls

himself the Mastermind. The Mastermind is a thorough planner. He is an extremely confident individual. As such, he uses a scale to evaluate his crimes. He will often refer to his level of thoroughness, preparedness, or the execution of a crime as a 9.9999 out of 10. The Mastermind planned the initial robbery down to the second, yet he doesn't want the robbery to be conducted on time. Instead he wants the hostages to be killed even though his demands were met. The killings were not necessary to accomplish the robbery. The result is a terrified public and a scrambling police department.



# Part One: The Robbery Murders, Chapters 3-4

## Part One: The Robbery Murders, Chapters 3-4 Summary

Chapter three opens on a party scene. The main character, Detective Alex Cross, has gathered together with his longtime girlfriend Christine Johnson and their collective friends and family to celebrate the christening of their son, Alex Junior. The mood is jovial. Alex's daughter, Jannie, plays with the family cat while singing her rendition of "Roses are Red". Alex's grandmother, affectionately called Nana, has cooked a wonderful meal for the special occasion. The combination of great food, upbeat music, and a little karaoke makes the party a success. The mood is dampened by the arrival of Kyle Craig from the FBI. Kyle Craig is Alex's fellow officer. He arrives with balloons and a christening gift, but Alex knows that his arrival is a bad omen. The news has to be bad to require an unscheduled evening visit from the FBI. Although he is well liked by his co-workers, Kyle isn't very social, and Alex concludes that he'd only come to the party if he had to. A particularly terrible case needs Alex's attention. Christine asks Alex not to tend to business on the night of the party, but Kyle isn't taking no for an answer, and Alex feels obligated to help.

## Part One: The Robbery Murders, Chapters 3-4 Analysis

Part One is written in the first person. It introduces us to the main character, Alex Cross, and some important people in his life. Alex was married but his wife, Maria, passed away. They had two children together. Jannie is their daughter and Damon is their son. While preparing for the guests Alex happily observes Jannie playing with her cat and sweetly singing "Roses are Red. . ." This is a clear allusion to the novel's title. Alex's elderly but spry grandmother is helping him to raise the children. Alex's parents died when he was young and Nana raised Alex. His best friend and police partner, John Sampson, was a childhood friend and frequent guest as well.

Alex has subsequently become romantically involved with another woman since his wife's passing. Her name is Christine Johnson. Although they have a child together and they are celebrating his christening, the reader finds tension between them. An example of this can be seen in Christine's request for Alex to not participate in work that evening. For some reason she feels strongly that his job not interfere. Her advice is taken to heart by Alex. Alex is deeply in love with Christine and hears her advice as a warning. The cause of the tension between them will be further revealed in later chapters. The visiting FBI agent, Kyle Craig, whispers the words "multiple homicide" in his ear while

pretending to hug him and Alex feels torn between his commitment to his profession and his loyalty to Christine.





# Chapters 5-10

## Chapters 5-10 Summary

Kyle accompanies Alex inside. They check on Alex Junior who is now sleeping. After friendly banter about Alex Junior's physical resemblance to his dad, talk quickly turns to a more serious matter. They discuss a recent case which occurred in Silver Spring. The robbery went off seamlessly and varied by less than a minute from the demands of the perpetrator. Based upon those facts, it seemed that the murders of the hostages were not necessary. Because Washington is Alex's jurisdiction, Kyle needs Alex to search for the killers before they strike again. Kyle leaves, and when Alex searches for Christine he discovers that she left with Alex Junior while he was speaking with Kyle. Their relationship had been rocky lately, and this didn't help.

Later that night the Mastermind goes to visit the robbers. They are living in squalid conditions in an abandoned project building. The man who held the Citibank manager's family hostage, Errol, comments that the murders could have been prevented. The Mastermind contends that the plan went perfectly. Under the guise of a celebratory dinner, he presents them pizza and wine laced with poison. Brianne and Errol Parker die painful deaths under the Mastermind's watchful eye.

The next morning Alex tries to call Christine, but she is still angry and won't answer his calls. Alex turns his attention to work and the murder case presented to him by Kyle. He and Sampson drive the streets looking for leads to help them solve the crime. They locate a possible source of information in Cedric Montgomery. Cedric was a small-time drug dealer afraid of being caught in possession of his product. To avoid being caught, he runs when spotted, but Alex and Sampson are strong and they outrun him. Cedric gives them information in exchange for not being charged with possession of drugs. Cedric warns Alex that he won't like what he hears, and he is right. The person implicated is the stepbrother of Alex's late wife, Maria. Alex and Sampson search for Errol Parker. They are unable to locate him, but they find that he hasn't been seen in his normal routine for about a week. At the end of the day Alex stops by the school where Christine is employed as principal. He offers to walk her home and tries to ease the tension by telling a joke.

## Chapters 5-10 Analysis

Despite Alex's desire to be with Christine, he listens to what Kyle has come to tell him. Kyle feels the need to give a detailed version of the events. Alex was already aware of the Silver Spring robbery and its associated killings, which may add to his feeling of obligation. Knowing how ruthless the criminal is, Alex wants to help to apprehend him. After speaking with Kyle, Alex emerges to look for Christine. When he can't find her or their son he knows she must have left the party because she was angry with him. Christine can't appreciate his perspective. Christine and Alex had been seeing each



other for two years. One year into their relationship Alex was investigating a dangerous criminal suspected of murder. The man, Geoffrey Shafer, targeted Christine because of her involvement with Alex. He kidnapped her and kept her hostage. Everyone believed she was dead and Alex blamed himself. She was found and brought home along with their baby. Since her return, things haven't been the same between them no matter how hard Alex tries. The ordeal had changed Christine and she isn't rebounding from it. Christine recognized her need for space as a requirement to heal. She was seeing a therapist to help her with the trauma and was renting a near by apartment where she and Alex Junior lived. Throughout the book the reader will repeatedly find Christine's need for space and Alex's desire for them to be together. Alex's guilt about Christine's kidnapping and the realization that his job comes between them will cause him to reevaluate his life and his chosen profession.



# Chapters 11-14

## Chapters 11-14 Summary

Christine accepts Alex's offer for an escort on her walk home, but on the way she requests space from him and their relationship. She had hoped that it wouldn't bother her when he returned to a high profile murder case, but she has discovered that it is bothering her a lot. Previously, Alex had been involved in a murder case and the criminal had turned his attention to Christine. He eventually kidnapped her. Although she has been home for almost a year, she constantly fears for her safety as well as the safety of Alex and their son. She is plagued by nightmares, and subsequently their relationship is strained. They have tried to work through these difficulties, but Christine realizes she can't make it work and ends their relationship. Since he couldn't change Christine's mind, Alex throws himself into his work. He learns that the Parker couple were responsible for a string of small bank robberies over the past year, but they had never harmed anyone. Something had happened to change their style.

While working late, Sampson and Alex locate Darryl Snow, who proves to be a good source of information. Darryl leads them to Brianne's hideout at the First Avenue apartment complex where they find the Parkers dead. They had been dead for at least a day and Brianne's clothing had been stripped as well. Autopsies confirm that they died of poisoning and that Brianne Parker had been sexually assaulted post-mortem. Alex alerts Kyle Craig and prepares himself for the difficult task of alerting the family of the deceased.

## Chapters 11-14 Analysis

While Alex and Christine have been having problems since her return, Christine's decision to end their relationship is painful for Alex. His feelings of guilt, inadequacy, and turmoil resurface. At difficult times Nana is always a source of comfort and wisdom. Alex jokingly defines Nana as the best psychologist in their house, but there is a significant amount of truth behind his statement. In addition to his many feelings relating to Christine, he must face his deceased wife's family. The Parkers, while estranged from him, are not ordinary crooks. They are also technically Jannie and Damon's aunt and uncle. This must present an uncomfortable situation for Alex, although the evidence linking them to the robbery and murders is clear.



# Chapters 15-20

## Chapters 15-20 Summary

The Mastermind has planned a second robbery. For this occasion, he recruits a new crew of robbers. The target is located in Falls Church, Virginia. This crew goes by the fictitious names of Mr. Red, Mr. White, Mr. Blue, and Ms. Green. Two of the team are present at the daily opening of the First Union Bank branch and the other two are located at the bank manager's home. His house is situated in an idyllic neighborhood of Fall's Church, Virginia. All four criminals carry semi-automatic weapons, which have the desired effect of terrorizing all involved. The bank manager's wife, Katie, and his three children are held captive. The bank manager, James Bartlett, is aware of the deaths associated with the Silver Spring robbery. He works quickly to ensure his family's safety. The bank manager and assistant manager both promise not to alert authorities in any way, but someone does. The robbers hear the robbery's announcement on their police scanner and shoot the manager, assistant manager, and bank tellers, then flee with their money.

Alex arrives at the crime scene shortly after the robbery. Also arriving at that time are Kyle Craig and some of his affiliates from the FBI. Included in the FBI team are senior agent Betsey Cavalierre and her associates Michael Doud and James Walsh. Considering that the first robbers, the Parkers, had been found dead, Kyle and Alex are both surprised at the occurrence of another bank robbery in the area. Agent Cavalierre had experience with robberies in the Midwestern US, so she and Alex begin working together to solve what is beginning to look like a serial spree.

After a long day of pouring over case files searching for relevant information, Alex goes home for dinner with his family. He has a weekly date with his children. Every week he, his son Damon, and his daughter Jannie have a boxing match in their basement. It is quality family time and no one has ever been injured. This time, though, Damon's glove connects with the side of Jannie's head. The seemingly easy blow sends Jannie into convulsions. Jannie's seizure is a very scary time for Alex. Damon goes to call for help while Alex holds his daughter, whispering words of encouragement, throughout her seizure. Later that night, doctors at the hospital confirmed the diagnosis: Jannie had a grand mal seizure. She undergoes testing and has one more seizure that night while staying at St. Anthony's Hospital.

## Chapters 15-20 Analysis

The Mastermind was a perfectionist. He was serious about his planning and expected no mistakes from his crews. In turn, his crew members expected the same from the innocent people they attacked. The Mastermind had shown through the Silver Spring Robbery that he would not hesitate to kill, and everyone associated with the robberies, whether victim or perpetrator, was aware of this fact. The Mastermind even directs the



phrasing of his crew. He tells them not only what to do, but also when to do it and what to say to create the atmosphere he requires. He directs the crew of colors to speak in high pitched voices. The shrill sound is intended to mimic instability on the part of the robber and increase the fear felt by those he is robbing. Even though everything goes according to plan and the bank associates promise to not alert authorities, the presence of the robbers is discovered. They are carrying police scanners and escape, but not before killing all of the bank associates. The reader is left to wonder who had knowledge of their presence and why that information was leaked to the police. The only thing to be gained are the deaths of innocent people. The Mastermind thrives on killing and creating fear, so one can surmise that he is the source of the leak. It is interesting to note that although the bank employees were executed, the manager's family was released. This is in direct opposition to what happened at the Silver Spring robbery.

Because the Mastermind planned the robbery differently, the police have difficulty determining his motives and creating his profile. Alex finds this frustrating. Kyle has extra information that no one else does. He announces that the robbery was reported while in progress and that his men are trying to locate the source of the tip. Alex does not seem surprised by Kyle's knowledge. On the contrary he considers the presence of extra information from Kyle to be usual. One wonders why Kyle would be the only person in possession of such information. Alex can't stop to consider Kyle's comments though, or his source of information, because his mind is already preoccupied with Jannie at the hospital.



## Part Two: Hate Mail, Chapters 21-29

### Part Two: Hate Mail, Chapters 21-29 Summary

Jannie is safe at the hospital so Alex returns to work for an abbreviated day. The crime scenes are so grotesque that Alex feels compelled to solve the case before the perpetrator strikes again. The Mastermind thrives on the confusion his plan creates. The crimes seem related, and yet each scene is different. The turmoil generated makes the Mastermind feel powerful and the detectives frustrated. The Mastermind searches his computer for his next team. They have to be very skilled. For this job, he reviews their criminal records like a hiring manager would review a resume. Meanwhile, Alex, assisted by Kyle and Betsey, works hard to locate him. Kyle inquires about Jannie, but the team quickly returns to business. A unsuccessful day at the office leads to a nighttime visit to Jannie at the hospital. While there, Christine stops by for a visit and Alex receives a telephone call from Kyle. Kyle informs him that the Mastermind has hit another bank. This time the First Virginia branch in Rosslyn had been targeted. Although Kyle had called Alex, he hadn't called any other police. When Alex arrives on the scene, he gets the impression that the FBI, and particularly Kyle, are in charge. The larger banks are working directly with the FBI to increase their own safety. Because someone had been killed at each of the previous robberies, the detectives fear that the same would occur this time. After determining everyone is safe at the bank, they enlist the help of local police and head to the bank manager's home. Alex discovers the bank manager's wife and baby bound and gagged, but alive, in the cellar of their home. While Alex is at work protecting this family, Jannie has another seizure at the hospital.

### Part Two: Hate Mail, Chapters 21-29 Analysis

In chapter twenty-two, the Mastermind references his numerical scale again. The reader gets the impression that he prides himself on terrific planning. He feels powerful and measures other people's losses as his own successes. He considers himself an artist and is convinced in his abilities. While it was only alluded to before, in this portion the Mastermind is confirmed as the source of the tip that caused all of the bank associates to be killed at the First Union Robbery in Falls Church. The Mastermind is enjoying his game and becoming increasingly confident. Unfortunately, Alex is feeling more confused than ever. For the second time he mentions that he's not thinking like the killer, and that's why he hasn't been able to solve the case(s). Alex knows there must be an important component he is missing or has overlooked.

Alex continues to try to balance his frustrating days at work with his heart-wrenching visits to the hospital. Jannie is receiving competent care at the hospital and Alex visits with her daily. On one of his visits, Christine stops by to see Jannie. While Christine's presence is welcomed, it is unfortunate timing because while she is there Alex receives another police call that sends him back to work. Witnessing the telephone call and Alex's response to it only underscores Christine's need to leave Alex. Although he

doesn't know it, Alex is being targeted by the Mastermind. The Mastermind considers himself superior to all of his opponents, and he considers Alex to be one such opponent. The Mastermind considers his recent actions and gives himself another score of 9.9999 out of 10.



# Chapters 30-39

## Chapters 30-39 Summary

After Jannie suffers a second seizure in two days, the hospital staff are understandably worried about her. An MRI is ordered late in the evening, making the day stretch longer for everyone. Alex's worst nightmare, a life-threatening tumor, is detected. To raise Alex's stress level even further, a man savagely murders a woman in London. The criminal is assumed to be Geoffrey Shafer, the man who had previously attacked Christine and been presumed dead. Alex is worried about Christine and visits her office. Unfortunately, Christine has already heard the news and is distraught. Alex struggles to hold together the pieces of his life. Even though he and Christine are no longer romantically involved, he cares about her deeply and worries about her safety. Jannie's tumor requires brain surgery, which he finds daunting.

Professionally, Agent Cavaliere is very respectful towards him, but the case is moving frustratingly slow and has no strong leads. Alex has concluded that there is a master planner who hires the small time thieves who carry out his work. The killer seems to be looking for more than money, but Alex can't quite figure out what his motivations are. Unbeknownst to Alex, a veteran who goes by the nickname of "Mastermind" is busy writing a piece of hate mail to Citibank. Once finished he reviews it, decides he is satisfied, and adds it to his collection of similar letters. Back at the hospital things are moving quickly. Due to the size of the tumor, Jannie's operation has been scheduled quickly. She and Alex give each other superficial assurances to mask the fear they feel. Jannie's surgery is a success.

Two days later Alex returns to work eager to solve the case. Following a hunch, Alex and Betsey leave the office in search of Tony Brophy. Tony Brophy is known as a local bank robber. He is also known to be dangerous. Brophy had moved away for a while but had recently returned, making him a prime suspect. Tony cooperates with them in exchange for a cash payment. He tells them that he had been interviewed by the Mastermind as a possible team player. The Mastermind knew everything about him, and the job would have earned Brophy a six-figure payment. The Mastermind was wise. To avoid recognition, he interviewed potential helpers in rooms he had brightly lit. The effect was blinding. Brophy was only able to describe his silhouette. Brophy had one more interesting piece of information: he wasn't hired because he wasn't willing to kill. Killing was an important criteria for employment with the Mastermind.

## Chapters 30-39 Analysis

When Alex receives word about Shafer's attack from his counterparts in London, his immediate concern is for Christine. He doesn't think she is in physical danger, but he worries about her emotional state. Alex tries to reassure her but is unsuccessful in his attempt. Christine is inconsolable. Alex is upset about Christine's condition, but





recognizes there is not much more he can do. During Jannie's brain surgery Alex had a lot of time to contemplate. He thought about his children, their significance in his life, Christine, and his work. At the end of a long day, Alex felt relief when Jannie's surgery was pronounced a success. Alex vows to live a more fulfilling life with his family. It is around this time that Betsey befriends Alex. The reader will note that Alex's attention is slowly shifting and he is constantly appraising her.



# Chapters 40-47

## Chapters 40-47 Summary

With no other leads, Alex and Betsey begin reviewing files of unhappy dismissed employees of the bank as well as people who have sent hate mail to the banks in question. One man, Joseph Petrillo, stands out to Alex as a possible suspect. Joseph Petrillo wrote hate mail to Citibank weekly. He had been employed as a security officer and was recently fired. Alex and Betsey arrive at his house and identify themselves on Petrillo's landing. They never speak to him though. Their announcement is followed by gunfire. Once local police backup arrive, Alex and Betsey enter the house. They discover that Petrillo had committed suicide. He died with a depleted bank account and surrounded by his nearly starving cats. That night Christine calls Alex in a panic. She is convinced that Shafer has come to get her and is in her house again. Alex explains Christine's kidnapping to the police who answered her call. The police can find no evidence of his presence and assume Christine is suffering from nightmares.

Another robbery is scheduled to occur. The criminals are in position to perfectly carry out their plan when the bank manager's wife leaves their house early, thus upsetting the robbers' schedule. The targeted bank is Chase Manhattan. This time nearly all of the bank staff, as well as the bank manager's wife, are killed. The sole survivor is spared in order to deliver a message to Alex and Betsey. The survivor is named Arthur Strickland. He was the bank's security guard and he feels guilty about not keeping the bank secure and the people safe. The message originates from the Mastermind. He says there "were to be no more mistakes". Following the successful completion of the robbery, the Mastermind visits the robbers and lethally poisons them. Before disposing of the bodies, he sexually violates the body of Ms. Green.

## Chapters 40-47 Analysis

The friendship between Betsey and Alex is growing. While driving together in search of Petrillo, Betsey admits that she grew up on wrong side of the tracks. Alex notes that she has come far from her childhood years. The search for Petrillo turned out to be a dead end. Alex finally climbed into bed only to be awoken by a telephone call from Christine. While Alex accepts that they can no longer be a couple, he cares about Christine deeply and still feels responsible for her well being. Christine continues to be afraid of her past. On this particular night Christine's nightmare is so vivid that she is convinced Shafer has broken into her apartment. The police search but can't find any evidence to support her allegations. The police officers leave and Alex remains to try, yet again, to calm Christine.

At work the detectives continue to be frustrated by their lack of progress. The sole survivor of the of the Chase Manhattan Bank Robbery feels responsible for not saving his associates. Betsey takes responsibility, though, by admitting that they just can't

seem to acquire headway on the case. Her admission provides insight into just how desperate the officers have become and how hopeless they feel. At the same time, the Mastermind continues to be elusive. He is powerful but also talks to himself, has sex with his dead female victims, and admits he is crazy. He seems increasingly unstable.



## Part Three: Hanging with the Big Dogs, Chapters 48-54

### Part Three: Hanging with the Big Dogs, Chapters 48-54 Summary

Three days pass in relative peace. Jannie is healing, there are no more robberies, and Alex spends time with his youngest son, Alex Junior. When it is time to return Alex Junior to his mom, Christine announces her intention to move away. She knows that her preoccupation with Shafer and her past are preventing her from being a stable mother to Alex Junior, so she has decided to leave him with Alex and Nana for the near future. Alex is distraught by her decision. Even though he was coming to terms with the ending of their relationship, he never thought that she would move away, or that they wouldn't spend time together as a family. Fortunately, Alex sees his psychiatrist in church the next day. Adele knows Alex well and pressures him to talk. Although it would have been good for him to let out all of his pent-up emotions, Alex doesn't budge on his position of silence. He lights a prayer candle and prays just loudly enough for Adele to hear.

Although things seem quiet, the Mastermind is busy planning his next attack. He is scheduled to meet with his newest group of recruits. The group is led by a tough looking, confident man named Brian Macdougall. Macdougall is accompanied by B. J. Stringer and Robert Shaw. The group also includes two more men named O'Malley and Crews, but they are not present for the meeting. Their absence insults and angers the Mastermind, but he doesn't have much choice. He needs this crew. They are the best—lacking in criminal records but fully competent to conduct what he requested. The Mastermind gives them no personal information and protects himself with bright lights as usual. In truth, Macdougall doesn't care for the Mastermind's secrecy, and he would have walked away except that the Mastermind tempts them with fifty thousand dollars for the meeting and fifteen million dollars for the job. The other two team members are outside waiting for the Mastermind to appear. When the Mastermind surfaces outside the hotel they follow him on foot. The Mastermind begins running and a chase ensues. O'Malley and Crews lose sight of him a few times, but manage to catch up to him just before he enters the grounds of Hazelwood Mental Institution. As always, he alludes those chasing him.

Alex, Betsey and Kyle meet with the FBI director on Monday morning at the Hoover Building, affectionately known as Puzzle Palace. The Mastermind's activities are puzzling them all, and the FBI is under pressure to find a resolution from big banks and authorities alike. They worry that the terror he is causing could induce an economic disaster for the country. The meeting is followed by endless research. After a long day that drifts into the evening, Betsey invites Alex out for a drink. He declines, but is touched by her offer of friendship.



## Part Three: Hanging with the Big Dogs, Chapters 48-54 Analysis

While spending time with Alex Junior, Alex is filled with emotion. He shows Alex Junior each of Christine's beautiful roses. Alex can't help but compare her beautifully nurtured garden with their tangled and dying relationship. The comparison is poignant and illustrates how he still struggles with his love for her. It is in this beautiful garden that Christine announces her decision to move. Days later Alex runs into Adele Finally, his psychiatrist, at church. She is his official counselor, while Nana is his unofficial counselor and biggest supporter at home. Adele senses something is wrong and urges him to talk to her. By refusing to talk to her about Christine, Alex contains his feelings and keeps up a strong exterior. He does let just a little bit slip when he offers his prayer for Christine out loud. He could have prayed silently but choose not to, indicating that he is not yet willing to talk about it, but wants people to know about his loss in a limited way. This may prove to be a healing process for Alex. Alex sarcastically announces himself to be at peace, which couldn't be further from the truth. A few days later, Betsey asks Alex out for a drink after work. He is pleasantly surprised by her show of interest and contemplates dating again.



# Chapters 55-68

## Chapters 55-68 Summary

The Mastermind had worked a long time to secure his plan. The Mayflower Hotel on Connecticut Avenue is known to be a high end meeting place. It is the home of many corporate events and every inaugural ball since Calvin Coolidge. At this time it is being used by the MetroHartford Insurance Company. The families of its employees are scheduled to enjoy a day of sightseeing aboard a bus chartered through the Washington on Wheels touring company. While the MetroHartford employees attend the conference, their eighteen family members board the bus and start driving through residential neighborhoods towards their first destination. On one residential street, a van is blocking the path of the tour bus. A team of masked and armed men board the bus. The leader assures them that no one will be hurt provided they follow his instructions. He begins directing the driver accordingly. The hijackers are smart. One of the first things they do is to change the number displayed on the bus's roof. This number would have helped police to detect them, and its absence makes it easier for them to hide. Concurrently, a fax is sent to the MetroHartford directors alerting them to the situation and requesting thirty million dollars in ransom. Although the hijackers request that the authorities not be notified, the FBI is alerted and quickly works to set up stations in the area.

The insurance company's internal security company agrees to pay the ransom. They would have liked to make the exchange themselves, but for safety reasons, Betsey takes control of the drop. The Mastermind is aware that his demand for no interventions had been violated, but he doesn't care. Having the authorities present increases the challenge in a way he finds enjoyable. The hijackers call the hotel just thirty-five minutes before the deadline. They demand that five million dollars in uncut diamonds be placed into a duffel bag. The remaining twenty-five thousand dollars of the ransom should be paid in cash; specifically, twenty and fifty dollar bills in a ratio that doesn't require excess baggage beyond eight duffel bags. The insurance company meets the demands as required.

All that remains is for Alex and Betsey to successfully complete the exchange. They anxiously await further instructions from the hijackers. With only twenty-five minutes remaining before the deadline, the suspects contact the hotel again. Betsey and Alex are instructed to pick up walkie talkies which are waiting for them at the front desk, and board a van heading north. They are then contacted via walkie talkie and directed to board the train headed north to Boston. Alex and Betsey transport the duffel bags and are accompanied by their colleagues Walsh and Doud. The perpetrator dares them to utilize any and all of the FBI's northeast resources, but it is not a fruitful exercise—there is too much open space to survey in between each train stop. The hijackers test the officers repeatedly. They keep the officers' nerves and muscles on edge by repeatedly preparing them for the drop, then canceling at the last second. The officers are mentally and physically exhausted by the preparation and actual hauling of the duffel bags, which



are quite heavy. When the officers think they can't tolerate any more, the drop is completed. It is successful for the Mastermind, but he now has the money and the hostages. The agents get off of the train at the next available station. They are picked up by the FBI, who has a possible lead on the tour bus.

A woman named Isabelle Morris owned the only local busing company. Because of her monopoly on the market, she recognized an out-of-town tour bus earlier that day. She confirms the title on the bus and accompanies Alex, Betsey, and Kyle to help them locate it. She directs them to an abandoned farm large enough to accommodate the bus. They find all of the family members, as well as the bus driver alive, unharmed, and virtually unguarded.

## Chapters 55-68 Analysis

Chapter fifty-five introduces the reader to a corporate assistant named Mary Jordan. The author takes care to demonstrate Jordan's good nature. The families are having a great time and responding well to Mary. This creates a stark contrast when the hijackers board the bus. The Mastermind again instructs his robbers in the use of effective word choices. He remains the ultimate planner. The Mastermind is convinced in his cleverness and believes that he will only be caught if he becomes bored and careless. He is determined not to allow that to happen. The detectives are troubled by his knowledge base. For example, the average person would call the radio equipment "walkie talkies", but the Mastermind called them "handie talkies", a term used by the police force. They wonder if there could be any significance in the term he chose. Alex and Betsey continue to feel as though the Mastermind is always one step ahead of them.



## Part Four- Hit and Run, Chapters 69-75

### Part Four- Hit and Run, Chapters 69-75 Summary

It seems that the crisis was over. The Mastermind had alluded to the previous crimes as being object lessons in preparation for the MetroHartford event, so there is no reason to think he would continue his spree. Although he hadn't been captured, no one is in danger. The media sensationalizes the robberies and speculates about the Mastermind himself. Alex and his colleagues work exceptionally long days investigating every lead and scouring the crime scenes for evidence. A suspect in the case, Mitchell Brand, matches the profile. He is an ex-army officer with a high IQ, according to his military record. He was suspected of multiple robberies, but had never been charged, and had gone underground around the same time that the Mastermind surfaced. He was also known to be violent, a key component for any suspect in the case. The police receive a lead about the location of Mitchell Brand from a snitch. According to the lead, Brand is staying at the East Capitol Dwellings housing project. He is staying there with his girlfriend, who rented an apartment for herself and her three children. The officers approach the apartment hoping to apprehend Brand, but also hoping to not injure any innocent people. Brand is scared when the officers barge in, but he quickly agrees to talk to them. He has a strong alibi for the times of the crimes and insists he'd been set up. If that is true, the officers had spent a lot of wasted time and energy searching for him.

Alex has a lot to feel bad about; losing Christine, not apprehending the Mastermind, and wrongfully barging into Brand's home. He also has something to buoy him up—Jannie is being released from the hospital. Jannie's scary experience and her current health puts things into perspective for Alex. His happiness is short lived. Upon returning to work the next day, he is confronted with a solemn forecast for the future. FBI specialists and psychologists indicate that they thought the Mastermind would strike again. His viciousness and desire for challenge would not be satiated if he ceased criminal activity. According to the FBI, the need to capture him had increased again. Alex disagrees with their assessment. Alex's impression is that the Mastermind's desire to outrun the police would be enough challenge for him, at least for a while. Betsey agrees with Alex on this point. She invites him out for a drink after work, but Alex declines, stating that Jannie had just come home. Nana cooks a turkey dinner that night and Alex enjoys boxing with Damon while Jannie watches from a safe distance.

### Part Four- Hit and Run, Chapters 69-75 Analysis

Alex is thrilled that Jannie is finally proclaimed healthy enough to come home. She sings "Roses are Red" again and completes the phrase with "glad I'm home". Alex thinks that it is wonderful and safe at home. He ponders about how he works to protect his home, but then realizes that he is rationalizing his choice to remain a police officer, despite how it hurt Christine and takes him away from his children. Betsey shows



interest in him again that night, but with Jannie's comments fresh on his mind, Alex opts to go home instead. At breakfast the following day, Nana shows Alex a newspaper report on the best places to raise a child. Washington DC rates last, and she points out that he may be losing his fight against crime. All of these events conspire to make Alex wonder about the appropriateness of his profession.



# Chapters 76-89

## Chapters 76-89 Summary

With no strong leads, Alex and the FBI team decide to interview people at the MetroHartford headquarters in Hartford, Connecticut. The day is uneventful until Alex's last interview of the day. A woman named Hildie Rader claims to have met one of the kidnapers. According to her story, he had approached her at a local bar. He seemed to know a lot about her, including her affiliation with MetroHartford, even though they had never met. Her story is corroborated by another woman, Betsy Becton, whom he had also approached. According to the two women, the kidnapper had been in Hartford conducting research for at least a week prior to the robbery. Using descriptions provided by the women, a composite sketch is created for aid in identifying the perpetrator. Alex and Betsey finish their long work day with drinks and dinner at the Hartford Hotel where they were staying. They also enjoy a memorable first kiss, but Alex isn't ready for anything more than that. Just outside the city a twenty-five-year-old named Justine is not enjoying herself nearly as much. The Mastermind has broken into her apartment and raped her. He intended to impregnate her and warned her that if she alerted authorities or attempted to abort the resulting pregnancy he would return to torture and kill her. She did report the crime and the Mastermind fulfilled his promise—he poisoned her to death.

Alex wonders when the gruesome deaths would stop. Fortunately, they received a strong lead. A fifteen-year-old girl claims her father, a New York police officer, was involved in the MetroHartford robbery. Her father drank too much alcohol and became violent, which provided her with motive to turn him in. She had also found his hiding spot for cash earned illegally. His work records show that he was not at work during the time of the MetroHartford robbery. This all makes sense to Alex. The perpetrator's police background gives him expansive knowledge on crimes, how to conduct them undetected, and also access to personal information about Alex and Betsey. The girl's father, Brian Macdougall, is placed under surveillance along with five other police officers. Before dawn on the following morning, the homes of all five suspected officers are approached. The idea is to arrest them all at once so no one would alert the others, but Macdougall was ready. He fires shots and flees. Macdougall can't outrun Alex, though. Alex catches him and boxes him for a few minutes before arresting him. At first, all five of the officers deny any involvement, but then Macdougall wants to make a deal. He offers to give Alex and Betsey the Mastermind's location, but in exchange, he wants minimal jail time and witness protection.

## Chapters 76-89 Analysis

When Alex calls home to check in on the children, he finds them all doing well. Jannie is enthusiastic and recovering from her surgery. Jannie cautions Alex not to get hurt before hanging up the telephone, and it sounds like an eerie echo of Christine's earlier



thoughts. Knowing that the children are happy and well cared for, Alex is able to spend a nice evening out with Betsey. Over dinner, Betsey opens up about her childhood. She is a self-described overachiever hoping to climb up the ranks at the bureau. They have a great evening and learn a lot about each other, but Alex still isn't ready for intimacy with anyone other than Christine. Betsey and Alex are making progress though, and Betsey feels confident in their shared chemistry.

The Mastermind's confidence continues to increase with each successful attack. He feels he has achieved perfection and wonders how to surpass everything he has already accomplished. This desire for continual challenge is what prompts him to rape and kill Justine. She was not associated with any of the robberies. Instead, her death was an example of how perverted and overly confident the Mastermind was becoming. At her rape he wore a President Clinton mask identical to those worn during some of the robberies he planned. When the detectives learn about the Mastermind's sick plan as he described it to Justine, they interpret that he is looking for an heir. Either he doesn't have children of his own in a literal sense or he is attempting to ensure his immortality as a criminal.

Alex is feeling very dejected. His attitude shows when he internalizes harmless chatter from Nana and accuses her of being tired of living with a homicide detective, too (just like Christine). He only half-heartedly believes that somebody out there will think he's worth the trouble. When he receives permission to arrest Macdougall, he feels good chasing him down, and his many emotions come out as they box. The emotional release was healthy for Alex.



# Part Five: All Fall Down, Chapters 90-98

## Part Five: All Fall Down, Chapters 90-98 Summary

Alex has a positive change in the case, but he still has to face things at home. After a heart-to-heart talk with Nana, Alex decides it is time to tell the children about his break-up with Christine. They are sad that she won't be near them anymore, but also overjoyed that Alex Junior would come to live with them. The happiness doesn't last long, though. While Alex is spending quality time with his family, the Mastermind is back on the hunt. He values the money, but not as much as killing. The Mastermind lets himself into James Walsh's home. Though he tries to be quiet, Walsh is alerted by the creaking floorboards. Walsh aims his gun at the intruder, cautioning him to stop, and finally pulls the trigger in self defense. Much to Walsh's surprise, nothing happens. The ammunition had been emptied from his gun. The Mastermind was behind this, of course, and closes in on Agent Walsh. Just before killing Walsh, the Mastermind announces his intention to kill all of the agents one at a time. To make it appear a suicide, the Mastermind forges a note and left it behind. Alex doubts that the cause of death was suicide. His suspicions are validated later that evening when he talks to Betsey. She believes Walsh wasn't the type to commit suicide.

At work the next day the department announces that it had reached an agreement with Macdougall. Alex interviews him, hoping to gain valuable information about the Mastermind. Macdougall admits meeting with the Mastermind three times in Washington. At each meeting he was given fifty thousand dollars in cash for traveling expenses. When asked how the Mastermind knew about his criminal skills, Macdougall says he doesn't know, but that he was contacted through his lawyer. He also indicates that whomever the Mastermind is, he shouldn't be underestimated. Macdougall doesn't care for all of the Mastermind's secrecy. If it weren't for the exceptionally large payment of fifteen million dollars, he would have walked away from the deal. Macdougall recalls how he stationed two of his men outside the hotel after their last meeting. He informs the police that they followed him to the grounds of Hazelwood Veterans Hospital, and that once he entered he didn't come out again.

In light of this new information the agents quickly begin reviewing the personnel files and medical charts of the residents and employees of Hazelwood. Feeling confident about their new lead, Alex and Betsey go out for dinner at the end of the day. They learn a lot about each other through intimate conversations and share a memorable kiss. Alex is still recovering from losing Christine and is not quite ready to take things further with Betsey, although he is very attracted to her.

On Monday morning, Alex and Sampson arrived at Hazelwood ready to work. They plan to go undercover to mingle with the patients on floors five and six. Alex is there as a mental health counselor and Sampson poses as a porter. They are not received well by the hospital administration who doubt that a criminal is among them. The staff are also insulted by the insinuation that if a criminal was in fact hiding there, their professionals



hadn't realized it. Kathleen McGuigan, the Head Nurse on floors four and five, is particularly unwelcoming. Alex asks about the availability of the drugs Anectine and Marplan, which the Mastermind had used in lethal doses to poison his victims. He is informed that they are used at the hospital.

## **Part Five: All Fall Down, Chapters 90-98 Analysis**

Macdougall's arrest brings interesting information. It also brings new questions to be answered. When Alex goes to interview Macdougall, he is disgusted that the justice department cut a deal with him. A police officer who follows and upholds the law has little patience for a fellow officer who doesn't share in his beliefs. Even Macdougall's attorney agrees that the situation is not pleasant. From his years of experience, Macdougall knows how to manipulate the system. He says what he wants and even tells the investigating officers how to conduct their interview. After all, just days ago he was on the other side of the table. For his wisdom he is nicknamed "the philosopher" by Alex. Macdougall has always been good at looking out for himself. This was why he tried so hard to learn the identity of the Mastermind when they were working together. Now he is able to leverage that information to protect himself. Macdougall is correct again when he declares the significance of the Mastermind's knowledge. The Mastermind knew about his activities when no one else did. He also knew how to contact Macdougall and has extensive knowledge of police procedures. He is the first to mention that the Mastermind could be connected with the police department.



# Chapters 99-109

## Chapters 99-109 Summary

On the fifth floor of Hazelwood, a patient is agitated. His privileges to leave the hospital had been temporarily revoked and he didn't care for his counselor's line of questioning earlier in the day. He writes an angry yet organized letter. Taking control of himself he puts on his poker face and leaves his room. He had felt safe at the hospital among the patients until he saw Detective Cross enter the ward. Alex wasn't interested in him, though. Instead, he engaged Cletus Anderson, who fit the physical profile and was known to be dangerous. It was fortunate for Alex that Cletus was medicated because he was big, strong, and easily provoked. Speaking with Cletus neither ruled him in or out as a suspect.

To convincingly pose as an employee, Alex has specific duties to complete during his daily shifts at the hospital. While completing his tasks, Alex monitors the patients. At the end of the day, Alex has narrowed his list of suspects. In addition to Cletus Anderson, Alex is interested in James Gallagher, Frederic Szabo, Stephen Bowen, David Hale, and Michael Fescoe. Some of the men are included merely because they fit the physical profile, while others have criminal tendencies or a background that involves banking. Before he is finished with his shift at the hospital, Betsey telephones him with alarming news. Agent Michael Doud had not arrived at work that morning although his wife said he left at his usual time. Betsey fears that the Mastermind has harmed him in some way. Since there are no leads on Doud's disappearance, Alex continues his research at the hospital.

In an effort to be thorough, Alex has requested appointments with some of the staff members, including Dr. Cioffi and Dr. Marcuse. Dr. Cioffi is aloof and Alex doesn't enjoy their conversation, although he doesn't say anything truly incriminating. He does question why, if he was ever there, a criminal would remain at the hospital if he had already acquired all of the ransom money. Dr. Marcuse is much kinder to Alex. He is a relatively new employee at Hazelwood. He had been hired to fill a vacancy left by his predecessor, Dr. Francis, who moved to Florida just eight months ago.

Alex feels that the search isn't going anywhere. He isn't any closer to apprehending a suspect, and now Agent Doud has disappeared. Alex needs time away, so when Betsey offers a weekend excursion, he gladly accepts. Agent Cavalierre books a night at the Four Seasons Hotel. They enjoy a night of relaxation, sex, and fun. Alex is having a great time but work still haunts him. He worries that they are focusing too much on MetroHartford. Alex wants to cross-reference the personnel files of the other banks that were robbed with the patients at Hazelwood. His diligence pays off. After returning to the office and digging through the files, he locates a picture of Frederic Szabo. Szabo was the missing link between the banks and Hazelwood. He had been a security officer for First Union Bank but he didn't disclose that information when he checked into Hazelwood Veterans Hospital.



## Chapters 99-109 Analysis

Macdougall's lead was a huge opportunity for Alex and Betsey. Although it seemed that they had him cornered, once they were inside Hazelwood Veterans Hospital, the Mastermind eluded them. Finding him within the hospital wasn't as easy as they expected it to be, yet he was still active because another agent, Michael Doud, was now missing. The officers began to feel that if he wasn't apprehended soon they would each be at risk. While the officers were second guessing themselves and the accuracy of their information, the Mastermind was enjoying himself. He found pleasure in their confusion and fear. He found the challenge of being so close to the detectives and acting placid to be exhilarating. The Mastermind's internal dialogue includes warnings for Alex. He definitely sees Alex as his adversary and this means Alex is in danger. It is an unfair pairing—the Mastermind knows who his opponent is. Alex continues to try to identify the perpetrator. He narrows his list down to Frederic Szabo. Szabo suffers from a personality disorder and his history makes him the likely suspect. Like many people suffering from paranoia, he hides in careers and places that allow his personality quirks to be accepted or even useful. This explains his angry letter writing, his desire to remain at the hospital, and his motivation to plan the robberies.



# Chapters 110-115

## Chapters 110-115 Summary

On Monday, Alex and Sampson return to Hazelwood to watch Szabo. His privileges to leave the institution still had not been returned, and he mopes around the hospital floor. When Szabo does nothing to attract attention, Alex suggests lifting his restrictions so that he may reveal himself. While Alex and Sampson work at the hospital, Betsey is conducting her own research. She interviews First Union Bank employees who worked with Szabo when he was employed there. She learns that he was known as a perfectionist. He was focused on efficiency and his coworkers had jokingly named him the Mastermind.

The next day Szabo brushes past Alex before leaving the building. When Alex realizes that Szabo is leaving Hazelwood he pursues him. Alex notices that Szabo's nervous tics decrease and eventually ceases as he gains distance from the hospital. Alex wonders if his need for mental help is just an act to cover for criminal activity. Alex is shocked to see that Szabo's destination is a brownstone that he rents on Rhode Island Avenue. Szabo remains in the apartment for two hours before resurfacing. When he leaves, Alex decides to investigate the apartment. He picks the lock and lets himself in with ease. The apartment is cluttered. The first things he notices are a knife collection lining the walls and a newly written letter. While the letter is not related to the robberies, it does indicate that Szabo is both lucid and angry.

Upon closer inspection, Alex discovers many angry letters addressed to large companies. He also finds the blueprints for the banks that had been robbed and the Mayflower Hotel. Alex spins around from the papers just in time to see a man lunging at him with a hunting knife. He is wearing a President Clinton mask and screaming Alex's name. The man is angry that Alex has broken into his home. He threatens him and Alex takes the threat seriously. Alex grabs a paperweight off of the desk and flings it at his assailant. This gives Alex just enough time to remove his gun from its holster and aim it at the charging man. Alex manages to pin him down and to stop his struggling. Once confined, Szabo complains that they have captured the wrong man. Szabo is arrested and his apartment is thoroughly searched. The technicians are looking for the money that they assume he stole. Despite having insisted his innocence in his apartment, once he is at the detention center, he refuses to answer questions. He doesn't even speak. Instead, Szabo seems to alternate from manic to despondent. He isn't giving them any information and there are questions that still need to be answered. Where is the money? How did he manage to travel to Washington and back, or if it wasn't him, who then is his accomplice?





## Chapters 110-115 Analysis

When Szabo brushed past him Alex wondered whether or not it was on purpose. Could it truly be just a coincidence that the man he was secretly investigating would accidentally stumble into him? Alex had a hunch that Szabo might be testing him or trying to get his attention. If that was true, then Szabo knew who Alex was and he was more clever than anyone gave him credit for. In the event that Szabo's contact was intentional, Alex tried not to fall for the bait and proceed normally. Alex was caught off guard when Szabo left the hospital. As Szabo was leaving the hospital grounds he kept looking behind him. Again Alex had to wonder if this was just a result of Szabo's personality disorder or if Szabo was aware that he was being followed. Later, when Szabo found Alex in his apartment, Szabo attacked him and called Alex by name. Alex clearly was not a stranger to him. When Alex finally arrested him, Szabo seemed to fit the description of the perpetrator. It must have been worrisome to be told that he had the wrong man. Alex wondered if he should trust a man who resides in a mental institution and has piles of evidence against him, or close the case which would have been an easy solution.



# Chapters 116-122

## Chapters 116-122 Summary

The agents begin by compiling a list of people who had been in direct contact with Szabo. Alex goes home that night ruminating over the list and what it signifies. In bed that night he has a sudden realization. There have been two Masterminds. When he interviewed Tony Brophy he was told that the Mastermind had large ears and a hooked nose. That description did not match the one that Macdougall provided. However, Szabo looked like what Macdougall predicted, and someone else did resemble Brophy's description. Dr. Francis had been Szabo's counselor before moving to Florida. In addition, Szabo's file stated that he had left the hospital with Dr. Francis on three separate occasions. Alex convinces Betsey of his conclusions, and then they speak with Kyle together. With Kyle's reluctant permission, Alex and Betsey board a plane for Florida.

Once on the ground they are met with local law enforcement and begin surveillance on Dr. Francis's new and very expensive condominium. He is entertaining a prostitute. Following her departure, Dr. Francis receives a cell phone call. The call comes from Nurse McGuigan, who is keeping Dr. Francis apprised of events at the hospital. She is nervous about the detective's continued presence at Hazelwood. After Dr. Francis retired for the night, Betsey and Alex decide to do the same. They leave the surveillance crew at the site and head a few exits north to the Hyatt Regency Hotel. On the drive there Alex and Betsey briefly discuss their relationship. Alex divulges that he still isn't ready for commitment, but they agree that they enjoy each other's company and proceed to the hotel.

The next morning they debate how best to arrest Dr. Francis. Nurse McGuigan's phone call from the previous night had implicated her as one of Dr. Francis' pawns, and they decide to start their plan with her. Agents up north are directed to arrest her in the early morning. At first Nurse McGuigan denies any involvement with Dr. Francis and his plan. A search of her property recovers one of the diamonds from the MetroHartford robbery. Once confronted with this evidence she admits her involvement, thus completing the case against Dr. Francis.

Alex and Betsey approach the door of Dr. Francis's home. He answers and feigns surprise at their arrival. When they press him about his involvement with Szabo, he initially becomes angry and then seems resigned to his predicament. He practically admits to his crimes just before jumping off of his balcony, five floors above the ground. Alex and Betsey assume he had jumped to his death to avoid prosecution, but when they look over the rail they see that he had dove five stories into his swimming pool and was climbing out. He starts to run. Without hesitation Alex and Betsey take the plunge as well. Dr. Francis rounds the corner and realizes he is sandwiched between the well-armed surveillance crew and Betsey and Alex who are closing in on him. They arrive just in time to witness him drink a vial full of the poison he had used to kill his victims.



He suffers horribly just as the others had. During his struggle, Alex asks him for information about Agent Doud, but Dr. Francis is unresponsive. In his last living moments he informs Alex that he had caught the wrong man.

## Chapters 116-122 Analysis

Alex and Betsey were enjoying each other's company. When she cautioned him to be careful in chapter 116 her concern was sincere. They still hadn't answered all of the questions pertaining to the case. Walsh was dead, Doud was still missing, and they both felt ill at ease even after capturing Szabo. That sense of unresolved business kept Alex awake, which was a mixed blessing. He had the sudden realization that the case was twice as complicated as they had originally thought. Alex's hunch proves correct and he goes to Florida, accompanied by Betsey, to arrest another subject, Dr. Francis. While in Florida, Alex and Betsey spend another night together. Alex continues to be entirely honest about his feelings. Betsey knows things with Alex aren't permanent, but she cares for him a lot. Foreshadowing can be seen in their conversation on page 374. They are still together at the time, yet she predicts that she will miss him. After their night together they resume their professionalism and head over to Dr. Francis's home to arrest him. Dr. Francis dies a gruesome death. There is no closure gained from his death, however, because he leaves questions unanswered. He admits his involvement but insists that they have the wrong man. Additionally, Mike Doud is still missing and they have no new information about his status.



# Epilogue: The Right Man, Chapters 123-126

## Epilogue: The Right Man, Chapters 123-126 Summary

Three weeks after Dr. Francis's death, Alex's life starts to return to normal. Alex continues to think about leaving the police force. He can't bring himself to do it, but he is suffering from professional burnout. Although Alex no longer works insane hours, Betsey still does. She and the FBI continue to try to locate the fifteen million dollars Francis stole during the MetroHartford robbery. Alex realizes he is lonely, and this underscores the loss he still keenly feels from his breakup with Christine. Nana directs Alex and Sampson to a special church service. It is supposed to heal the differences and wrongdoings between the sexes. In some ways Alex finds it laughable, but he does leave feeling better than when he entered. Alex confides in Sampson that Christine had left for Seattle at the end of the school year. They miss her, but enjoyed having Alex Junior live with them.

Later in the week Alex begins to feel more at peace. He is playing piano late at night when the telephone rang. It is Kyle calling, and Alex is reminded that a late night visit from Kyle was how the Mastermind case began. Kyle informs him that Betsey is dead, and urges him to come to her home. While pulling on his clothes, the telephone rang again. The voice on the line congratulates him for a job well done. Alex had figured it out and eventually caught all of the Mastermind's intermediates. The Mastermind taunts him that he still hadn't been caught and he had all of the money as well. He also refers to Betsey, possibly taking responsibility for her death. Alex asks Sampson to come guard his home while he goes to Betsey's. Her home had indeed been broken into and the scene is gruesome. The FBI's technicians are already there attempting to collect evidence. Kyle is directing the agents, but Alex doesn't speak to him. Instead, he approaches Betsey's bedroom, and what he sees makes him sick. Betsey lay naked and had been savagely knifed to death.

The killer watches the proceedings at Betsey's home. The adrenaline rush excites him. He is careful to put on his poker face before approaching Alex. The ultimate Mastermind is Kyle Craig, posing as Alex's friend.

## Epilogue: The Right Man, Chapters 123-126 Analysis

In the epilogue the reader finds that Alex is lonely. Things between him and Betsey have cooled down and he continues to long for the relationship he shared with Christine. When she left for Washington she whispered "maybe someday" in his ear, raising his hopes that someday maybe they will be together again. In her absence, Alex is spending time with his children and trying to work on a more relaxed schedule. Alex is contemplating leaving the police force again when he learns of Betsey's savage death.



The Mastermind continues to entertain thoughts of power and hatred. He considers "counting coup" with his only remaining opponent, Alex. The author left room for a sequel where Alex avenges Betsey's death, catches the Mastermind, and reunites with Christine. Another possibility would be him leaving the police force entirely.



# Characters

## Alex Cross

Alex Cross is the main character in *Roses Are Red* by James Patterson. He is a homicide detective struggling to balance a troubled personal life with the many obligations of his demanding career. The reader learns that Agent Cross has three children, two from his marriage to Maria who has sadly passed away, and a third with Christine, with whom his relationship is currently faltering. He briefly dates a woman equally attached to her job, FBI agent Betsey Cavalliere. Additionally, Alex has a doctorate degree in psychology, but chooses to remain on the police force because he enjoys the action it brings. This is a contradiction because he also realizes that it negatively impacts his personal life.

Throughout this novel, Detective Cross is engaged in solving a series of robberies. During the majority of the robberies one or more people are killed, so time is of the essence. The perpetrator calls himself the Mastermind and targets large banks and insurance companies. Detective Cross must determine the Mastermind's objective in order to stop his pattern. Corrupt officers are revealed, FBI agents die, and all the time Detective Cross is searching. His investigation takes him all over the Eastern shore of America, including a veteran's hospital with floors for those in need of mental/emotional help and patients considered dangerous to themselves or others.

## Betsey Cavalliere

Betsey Cavalliere is the FBI agent in charge of solving the series of robberies/murders which detective Cross is also researching. They work as a team, each with a slightly different background, skill set, and professional jurisdiction. Betsey is single, and although she would eventually desire a family, she has invested herself in her job. She describes herself as an overachiever who has sabotaged her serious relationships in the past. Her attraction to Agent Cross is undeniable, however, and they play the part of flirtatious co-workers for much of the novel. Eventually they do consummate their relationship, but Betsey understands that Alex is still recovering from the end of his relationship with Christine. Betsey and Alex enjoy their time together but make no commitment to each other. While at work they are entirely professional and Betsey learns to appreciate the strength of Alex's hunches. Late in the story, Betsey becomes one of the Mastermind's many victims and is brutally slain.

## Mastermind

The Mastermind is the villain. He uses many people throughout his robbing spree. Worse than the stealing, he kills each of his conspirators in order to cover his tracks. He is clever and sets up many layers of fabrication so that the police believe on more than one occasion they have captured the "right guy", only to realize their mistake when the



robberies continue. He not only kills his conspirators but innocent victims, police officers, and FBI agents as well. The epilogue reveals Kyle as the ultimate mastermind. He was successful in all of his plans because of his years of experience on the police force and his positive reputation there.

## **Nana**

Nana is Alex's grandmother. At the time of the story Nana is well into her eighties. She raised Alex from the time he was young. Now that he is grown with a family of his own, Nana resides with Alex. She helps to care for the children when Alex's job requires extended amounts of time away from home. She is Alex's advocate, a great listener, and his unofficial therapist.

## **Christine**

Christine is Alex's longtime girlfriend following the death of Alex's wife. Christine and Alex have a son, Alex Junior, together. Christine was kidnapped during her pregnancy and hurt. When she returns to Washington DC she never fully recovers emotionally. She is plagued with nightmares and seems unstable. She ends her relationship with Alex partly because of her instability but also because his line of work increases her fears instead of calming them. The loss of Christine in his life is a source of pain for Alex.

## **Jannie**

Jannie is Alex's daughter from his marriage. While in the midst of the robbery/murder investigation, Jannie becomes ill. During their usual boxing match, Jannie has a seizure. The initial seizure is followed by more seizures, and testing confirms the presence of a brain tumor in Jannie. Alex toggles back and forth between the hospital and his work during Jannie's illness. Jannie undergoes surgery, the tumor is removed, and she is sent home with an excellent prognosis.

## **Damon**

Damon is Alex's son from his marriage. Damon is the one who spars with Jannie on the night that she has her initial seizure. While it was not his fault, Damon feels badly and is a great supporter of Jannie during her illness and recovery.

## **Alex Junior**

Alex Junior is Alex's son with Christine. The book opens at Alex Junior's Christening party. Because of the status of Alex and Christine's relationship, for the majority of the book, Alex Junior lives with Christine and spends some weekends with Alex. At the end



of the book, however, he has come to live with Alex and his other children. Jannie and Damon love Alex Junior and affectionately call him Little Alex.

## Robbers

The Mastermind hires many robbers to carry out his plan and kills the majority of them. The list of robbers includes the following: Brianne and Errol Parker, Mr. Red, Mr. White, Mr. Blue and Ms. Green, and the crooked police officers Brian Macdougall, B. J. Stringer, Robert Shaw, Vincent O'Malley, and Jimmy Crews.

## Suspects

Alex spends significant time searching for and subsequently arresting Tony Brophy, only to find he has invested time and energy in the wrong suspect. Tony Brophy had been a suspect because he was a known robber with dangerous tendencies. They also investigate Joseph Petrillo, considered a suspect because he wrote hate mail to Citibank weekly. He had been employed as a security officer and was recently fired. When Alex finally has a solid lead that the Mastermind is a resident at the Hazelwood Veterans hospital, he works there undercover and develops a list of suspects. On the list are Cletus Anderson, James Gallagher, Frederic Szabo, Stephen Bowen, David Hale, and Michael Fescio. Some of the men are included merely because they fit the physical profile, while others had criminal tendencies or a background that involved banking. Frederic Szabo was an integral component of the scheme and leads the detectives to his conspirator, Dr. Francis.

## Dr. Francis

Dr. Francis was employed at Hazelwood Veterans Hospital before moving to Florida to work in a different practice. While employed at Hazelwood, Dr. Francis was assigned Frederic Szabo as a patient and spoke with him often. It was from these conversations that Dr. Francis learned of the intricate nature of Szabo's plans. Because they were feasible, Dr. Francis saw that they were carried out. He is affiliated with Nurse McGuigan, who still works at Hazelwood and she informs him of the ongoings at the hospital. Dr. Francis is also one of the Mastermind's many pawns.

## Sampson

Sampson is special to Alex. He is a childhood friend. He is also Alex's partner on the police force. When Alex is struggling, he often turns to Sampson for a laugh. At six feet nine inches tall and 250 pounds, Sampson is large in stature.





# Objects/Places

## Washington DC

Washington DC is the hometown of Alex Cross, the main character.

## President Clinton mask

The President Clinton mask is (according to the book) very popular. Its wide distribution makes it a great disguise. It is used in the first robbery at Citibank, and again later in the story when Szabo attacks Alex and when the Mastermind rapes Justine.

## Citibank

Citibank is located in Silver Spring, Maryland. It is a freestanding bank. This branch is the first site of the Mastermind's robbery spree.

## First Union Bank

The First Union Bank in Falls Church is the second bank to be robbed by the Mastermind.

## Chase Manhattan Bank

The Chase Manhattan Bank is the third bank to be robbed.

## Mayflower Hotel

The Mayflower Hotel's conference rooms provide the setting for the MetroHartford robbery.

## Puzzle Palace

Puzzle Palace is the nickname for the FBI building to which Alex and Betsey are summoned. They are met there by the FBI director, who is unhappy with their lack of progress on the case.



## **Hazelwood Veterans Hospital**

Hazelwood Veterans Hospital is where Szabo resides. Alex and Sampson go undercover and pretend to be employed there to closely watch Szabo.

## **Szabo's apartment**

Szabo's apartment on Rhode Island Avenue is a secret. No one at Hazelwood is aware of its existence until Alex follows him there. It is also the location of evidence and Szabo's attack on Alex.

## **Washington on Wheels**

The name of the tour bus company whose bus, while transporting the families of MetroHartford employees, is hijacked.

## **Florida**

The state to which Dr. Francis relocates after leaving Hazelwood. It is also where Alex and Betsey find Dr. Francis and ultimately where he dies.

## **FBI**

The FBI are brought in to oversee the Washington police department's efforts to apprehend the Mastermind.



# Themes

## Love

Love is a major theme in this book. It propels the majority of the main characters actions. The reader learns that Alex Cross is in love with Christine Johnson. They share a past and have a young son together. Because of traumatic events in Christine's life, she chooses to end her relationship with Alex. He is deeply hurt and the loss affects him throughout the book. Alex blames himself and even considers changing his profession if that would convince Christine to stay with him. When Alex begins to accept Christine's decision, he dates a fellow officer. He is very attracted to her but denies his attraction out of love and loyalty to Christine. Later, when he and the officer begin to be romantically involved, he still can't forget about Christine. Alex seems to believe in monogamy and intimacy. He makes close bonds with the people in his life. Familial love can be found between him and his children, his Nana, and his best friend Sampson.

## Power

The feeling of power is an important component of this book. It is introduced early in the prologue. The book asserts that Brienne liked the feeling of power she obtained during the robbery. This could be said of all of the robbers. Each time a robbery occurs, the robbers have complete control of the situation. Their captives are afraid and powerless. The robbers are listened to and their requests are immediately granted. This feeling of superiority can also be termed power; power over oneself and over others. Power is the Mastermind's main motive. Even after he has obtained all of the money from the robberies, he continues to haunt Alex. The Mastermind enjoys the power he has over Alex. The Mastermind's desire for power can also be seen in the killing of Doud and the rape and subsequent killing of Justine. Their deaths have no possible gain for the Mastermind except the feeling of power on which he thrives.

## Fear

Fear is felt by many characters in *Roses are Red*. The Mastermind carries out his plans in such a way that inspires fear. He intends that the family of the manager at Citibank be killed. By doing so he ensures that all subsequent victims would take him seriously. He changes his actions at each robbery. By not being consistent, he keeps the detectives confused. More importantly, they are afraid of what would come next because they don't know how to stop it. Christine experiences fear as well, although it doesn't originate from the Mastermind. Christine's fear is inspired by a different criminal, Geoffrey Shafer. Christine's fear led to her emotional instability and nightmares. Extreme and consuming fear is known as paranoia. Paranoia is observed repeatedly in Szabo. Szabo's paranoia stems from his personality disorder. Szabo is afraid of large corporations, but he has no reason to be. His paranoia causes his anger.

# Style

## Point of View

Roses are Red is written in the first person. Literature written in the first person draws the reader into the story. The author further captivates the reader by beginning the book with an action scene. Roses are Red opens with a crime scene and introduces the novel's villain who calls himself the Mastermind. Much is learned about the characters' thoughts through dialogue. Alex shares his thoughts and feelings in conversations with others. The only time the reader learns of events without dialogue is by a review of the past; for example, Christine's kidnapping the previous year.

## Setting

Roses are Red is set in the present day United States. Alex resides in Washington DC. Through conversations between Alex and his family, the reader learns that Washington DC has crime and the neighborhoods can be rough. One also learns that despite this atmosphere, Alex has made a home there and loves it. The robberies he investigates occur near Washington DC. Some related events occur on the outskirts of the city or in its adjacent suburbs. The only time Alex strays far from Washington is when he and Betsey travel to Florida to find Dr. Francis. Dr. Francis owns a fancy condominium that appears to be costing more than his legal salary would allow.

## Language and Meaning

Because Roses are Red is a present day novel it uses English as one would normally hear it spoken. There is a small amount of vernacular use when Alex questions some of his informants. The use of a common language makes the novel feel real to the reader. When Jannie's medical condition is discussed there are some medical terms spoken but those terms are clearly defined. Throughout the book the author utilizes italics to show elevated importance. Therefore, the reader should take notice when italics are used.

## Structure

Roses are Red has 126 chapters. The chapters are distributed among a prologue, five formal parts, and an epilogue. The parts have individual titles and are roughly grouped according to the progress of the case. There are no flashbacks or premonitions. The writing is clear and moves forward at a good speed.



## Quotes

"Don't think there are no crocodiles because the water is calm." Chap. 3, p. 17

"That would be a serious mistake, and there can be no mistakes." Chap. 16, p. 55

"'I'm after Kyle's job,' she said and smiled thinly." Chap. 18, p. 61

"The artistry and symbolism of them infused him with confidence in the cleverness of his thinking- the rightness of it." Chap. 22, p. 72

"He understood very well that clever people often had large and uncontrollable egos. He certainly did." Chap. 22, p. 72

"The Mastermind wanted to count coup on Alex Cross." Chap. 28, p. 90

"We're the ones at fault, not you." Chap. 45, p. 144

"I'm the one who's crazy. If the police only knew. What a great clue." Chap. 47, p. 149

"Besides, we're in church. I'm hearing your confession." Chap. 50 p. 159

"Why won't you talk to me?" Chap. 54, p. 173

"I have children, you have children. Let's make sure all of our children get to see us tomorrow morning." Chap. 55, p. 176

"What have we done?" Chap. 60, p. 190

"How's that for whipped cream on shit?" Chap. 71, p. 222

"I'll find someone. Has to be somebody out there will think I'm worth a little trouble." Chap. 83, p. 261

"It could be anybody." Chap. 95, p. 301

"You just have to find him in there." Chap. 95, p. 302

"'What the hell is going on Alex? It's him, isn't it?'" Chap. 101, p. 322

"'You know what? I am going to walk up and touch you. Gotcha.'" Chap. 103, p. 327

"I finally had to admit - he was driving me crazy." Chap. 112, p. 352

"'I'm going to miss you so much' she whispered." Chap. 119, p. 374

## Topics for Discussion

Examine Alex's love for Christine.

How do the two Masterminds differ? How are they similar?

List areas where there were indications of Kyle's true nature.

Brian Macdougall was a crooked police officer, but he was thorough. He made some good points. What were they and how did they impact the investigation?

Trace Dr. Francis's path to thievery. How did he accomplish so much?

If Szabo was only able to travel in a limited sense, what character was the most likely to interview the other thieves?

Betsey Cavalliere liked Alex. While they were still together she mentioned that she would miss him. How was this an example of foreshadowing?

Why did the Mastermind poison his victims? What do you think that says about his personality?

The Mastermind harmed no one in the MetroHartford robbery. Why might this be the case when each of his other robberies resulted in fatalities?

Alex was confused about many things, both professionally and personally. Please describe his outlook.