

Running Blind Study Guide

Running Blind by Lee Child

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Contents

Running Blind Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	4
Chapter 1.....	5
Chapter 2.....	6
Chapter 3.....	7
Chapter 4.....	9
Chapter 5.....	10
Chapter 6.....	11
Chapter 7.....	12
Chapter 8.....	13
Chapter 9.....	14
Chapter 10.....	15
Chapter 11.....	16
Chapter 12.....	17
Chapter 13.....	18
Chapter 14.....	19
Chapter 15.....	20
Chapter 16.....	21
Chapter 17.....	22
Chapter 18.....	23
Chapter 19.....	24
Chapter 20.....	25
Chapter 21.....	26
Chapter 22.....	27



[Chapter 23..... 28](#)

[Chapter 24..... 29](#)

[Chapter 25..... 30](#)

[Chapter 26..... 32](#)

[Chapter 27..... 33](#)

[Chapter 28..... 34](#)

[Chapter 29..... 35](#)

[Chapter 30..... 36](#)

[Chapter 31..... 37](#)

[Characters..... 38](#)

[Objects/Places..... 41](#)

[Themes..... 43](#)

[Style..... 45](#)

[Quotes..... 47](#)

[Topics for Discussion..... 49](#)

Plot Summary

The Visitor is a novel by the best-selling author Lee Child. The story follows Jack Reacher, a former member of the Army Military Police (MP), who finds himself embroiled in the middle of an FBI investigation. When former Army women start dying, the FBI brings in one of their top profilers, Julia Lamarr. Her profile describes Jack Reacher to a "T." Hence the FBI bribes Reacher, for the safety of his girlfriend, to act as a consultant in helping them find the murderer.

Twists and turns throughout the novel take the FBI agents and Reacher from one side of the country to the next. Reacher even calls in favors from his Army contacts to try to help himself get free from the grips of the FBI. While Reacher's original theory is just one to buy him some time, it turns out the killer and Reacher think quite alike.

The ultimate twist is at the end of the novel, when it turns out that hypnosis and one of its own is involved with the murders. Since the serial killer is dead and Reacher promises to keep it a secret that an FBI agent was a serial killer, Reacher is finally free to live the life he wants as a wanderer.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The novel opens talking about how knowledge is power. The author refers to various types of knowledge and how if someone possesses this knowledge, it can help them achieve anything from winning the lottery to committing the perfect murder.

Reacher is sitting in a new Italian restaurant, Mastrano's, in New York City. His girlfriend, Jodie, who is a lawyer, is working late so he is there to eat. Reacher is occupying one table and a couple dressed in business attire is occupying one other table. The only other "patrons" are two guys at the bar talking to the owner. Reacher senses that the two men are threatening the owner—asking him to pay them money on a weekly basis so that the crime boss of the neighborhood offers protection to the restaurant.

After the two men leave, Reacher confirms that the two men were threatening the owner. Reacher goes to the nearby office supply store to buy a label maker and superglue. He goes by Jodie's parking garage of her apartment to pick up his 4x4 and drives back to the alley near the restaurant. He waits for the two thugs to return and approaches them as the restaurant business manager before they go back into the restaurant.

They fight in the alley and Reacher takes away each of their cells phones, wallets, and guns. He superglues labels onto each of their foreheads that send a message to the boss that Mastrano's already has protection and that he shouldn't start a turf war. He sends the guys on their way, pockets their cash and destroys their guns. Reacher goes back into the restaurant to give the owner money for a plate the thugs broke earlier.

Chapter 1 Analysis

In Chapter 1, the audience learns that Reacher possesses knowledge that will come to good use throughout the novel. In the first chapter, Reacher's knowledge of criminals allows him to help the restaurant owner of Mastrano's not have to pay for protection. The inference is that Reacher is either a law enforcement officer or was one at one time. It seems as if the first chapter sets the tone for the novel, but is not really what the novel is about.

The author is simply trying to show the reader what type of character Reacher has. He is presenting Reacher as a tough guy, but also someone who possesses the knowledge that is necessary to help solve the situations that come later in the novel. Additionally, since Reacher has access to legal advice from his girlfriend, Jodie, this opens up another avenue of knowledge and power for Reacher.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Reacher makes the 58-mile drive from New York City to his home in Garrison. When he arrives in his driveway, lights from vehicles pop on and surround him. A lady walks up to his car window, knocks on it and shows him her badge. It's the same woman from the restaurant couple that occupied the other table. Reacher sees that one of the men rushing to surround his car is the man she was with at Mastrano's.

With a gun to his head, the woman moves Reacher to one of the federal vehicles. The man produces a search warrant for Reacher's house. As the woman holds the gun to Reacher's head, she still hasn't handcuffed him. She asks him if he wants to know what this is about. Reacher knows it is not about the thugs he just took care of, so it has to be something else.

As the rest of the agents search his home, Reacher assesses the woman. She catches him looking her up and down. She tells him to stop. The man from the restaurant returns with another FBI agent. They get into the front seat of the car and back out of the driveway with Reacher and the woman agent in the back. She's still holding the gun to his head. The man nods to the woman. Reacher asks if he gets a phone call. The male agent says they'll give him one in the next 24 hours.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The other patrons in the restaurant were there following and observing Reacher. Obviously, it has something to do with a past crime that he was involved with because they couldn't have gotten a warrant so fast for the incident in the alley with the thugs. The fact that Reacher is not more defensive and questioning what it is about suggests that he knows precisely why the FBI is arresting him.

The male FBI agent nodding to the woman agent when he returns to the car suggests that they found what they were looking for during the search of Reacher's house. Reacher asking for his phone call also implies that he will call Jodie. Since she is a lawyer, she can either help him or employ the help of an attorney that can help Reacher.

While the inference at the beginning of the novel is that Reacher is a current or former law enforcement agent, this chapter introduces another possibility. It suggests that Reacher is a thug himself. This is how he has the knowledge of what the restaurant thugs are up to and how to stop them.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

The agents pull into a parking garage somewhere in Midtown. Agents from the building meet up with the agents arriving in the vehicles. Reacher realizes that the agents that arrested him are visiting from another place, which is why the local agents meet them in the garage to take them to the interrogation room.

The room they lead Reacher into is bare and only has a lawn chair in it. Every once in a while, someone comes and peers in at Reacher, as if saying, so you're the guy and then leaves. Reacher sits in the room alone for an hour before a group of agents come to escort him to another room. Jack Reacher introduces himself and each of the agents introduce themselves. Some are FBI agents for the New York Field Office. The two agents from the restaurant and one other guy are from the Quantico office.

They start questioning him about knowing specific women. They ask him who he's working for—who sent him to the restaurant. Reacher denies working for anyone. They say he hasn't worked in three years, but lives in a half a million dollar house and drives a new \$45,000 SUV. He admits to coming out of the Army three years ago. They also reveal that he was in the military police when he served.

They ask him again about knowing the two women, Amy Callan and Caroline Cooke. He admits to knowing both of them in the Army, but says they didn't know each other. He also denies having any sexual relationship with either of the women.

Reacher says he met Amy Callan when she came to him accusing a soldier of sexual harassment. Reacher was the one to arrest the soldier. Reacher says Caroline Cooke was having consensual sex with a colonel when they were overseas. When he didn't promote her a year later, Cooke accused the colonel of sexual harassment. Reacher admits to arresting the colonel because sex between ranks is illegal. They ask him if he remembers any other sexual harassment cases. Reacher mentions the name of another case he worked. The agents reference their list.

The agents tell Reacher they've been tailing him and tapping his phone for the last eight days, but say his only contact is with Jodie. They ask again about his connection to Petrosian, which is the boss the two thugs work for. Then, the agents reveal that Callan and Cooke are dead. It's the same MO, no clues left behind and it's obvious it was done by someone with military and investigative training.

Chapter 3 Analysis

The FBI is inferring that Jack Reacher is using his former skills as a military police officer to work for a criminal boss in the city. They've obviously done a thorough background check on him because they know who he is. They know who his girlfriend



is, what she does for a living and where she works. Additionally, they know he doesn't have any income, has spent all of his savings and is now living off of Jodie.

The line of questioning about the two women he knew in the Army suggests that something has happened to these women. Since he is the common denominator, they suspect his involvement in their deaths or injuries.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Lamarr, the woman FBI agent from the restaurant, and Poulton, the male FBI agent from the restaurant, are profilers. The profile for a serial killer connected to this murder fits Reacher's lifestyle. When they give him the timeframe for each murder, Reacher realizes that he doesn't have any solid alibi. He asks for his lawyer and they return him to the first room.

Eventually, Jodie comes into the room. She says she isn't equipped to deal with criminal law, since she deals with financial law. They talk back and forth and Reacher tells Jodie that they are eliminating him by following him. Reacher says the killing is working on a three week timeframe, which means the third murder occurred during the week they were following him.

The agents end the lawyer conference. They set up a tape recorder and read Reacher his rights. They are arresting him for beating up the two thugs and putting them in the hospital. When Jodie requests a bail hearing, they say they are releasing Reacher on his own recognizance. They release him and one of the agents drives him back to his house.

Chapter 4 Analysis

The FBI agents are inferring that Reacher has problems with women like Callan and Cooke because they are using their gender as a means for ruining the careers and lives of perfectly good men. The FBI agents are accusing Reacher of killing the two women. With no forced entry, the agents are suggesting the women let Reacher in because they knew him.

Since the killer fits a profile that is similar to Reacher, the FBI wants Reacher's help in solving the crime. Since they were following him during the week that another murder should have occurred, they already know he isn't the murderer. They want to use him as a consultant, however, to help them find the real killer.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Reacher inherited the house from Jodie's father, who was also Reacher's former commanding officer. When Reacher came back to New York, found out Leon was dead and that Jodie had married and divorced, they finally admitted their feelings for each other.

Reacher is thinking about how he never really owned any possessions when he was in the military. The house is his first real possession and it makes him feel rooted in ways that he has never felt before. As Reacher is making coffee, Lamarr and Blake, two of the FBI agents show up at his door and want to talk with him. They tell Reacher that a third woman in Utah, connected to the Army, has been murdered.

Reacher doesn't recognize her name and says he was never stationed in Utah. The agents admit that they know it wasn't Reacher who committed the first two murders, but say they stand behind the profile, so it is someone like him. They ask him to be their advisor—a go between—in solving the cases. Blake also tells Reacher while Lamarr is in the kitchen that her sister is one of the people on the list of possible victims they've narrowed down to 91 people.

Reacher talks with Jodie about it. He tells her that he has to give the FBI a decision later that night. They talk about all of the possibilities—how she could go to Quantico with him, how Petrosian might come after Jodie if he leaves without her, and all of the negative positions the FBI is putting him in if he says no or if he says yes.

He makes a phone call to someone who owes him a favor. Then Reacher calls Lamarr five minutes before the deadline to tell her he'll do it. She says they're driving instead of flying and says to meet her in two hours.

Chapter 5 Analysis

For Reacher, the house that he inherited symbolizes a living and breathing entity that is tying him down to one place. It is also making him responsible, where he has never been responsible for anything other than his work before this. The FBI has really put Reacher in a position where he cannot say no to them. In a way, they are threatening to release his information and Jodie's information, which will put them both in danger because it will give Petrosian the information on the man that put his two thugs in the hospital.

Reacher grudgingly agrees to work with the FBI. While he and Lamarr have a very hostile relationship, it foreshadows that they will end up working well together because they will challenge each other. There is a slight inference that they might even end up in a romantic relationship by the time the novel comes to an end.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Reacher goes to say goodbye to Jodie at her office. He goes home and grabs his folding toothbrush and prepares the house to leave.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Against his better judgment, Reacher chooses to help the FBI. The only reason he agrees to work with the FBI is to protect Jodie. It's ironic that he goes home to secure the house when he doesn't really care about it as a possession, but rather sees it as something that is holding or anchoring him down.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

When he meets Lamarr, she asks where his bag is and he says he doesn't have one. She asks the best way to drive from New York to Virginia, but Reacher says to fly. They set out for Virginia.

Reacher says he's sorry about Lamarr's sister. She says it's her stepsister and she is only concerned about her on a professional level. Reacher insists Lamarr's profile is wrong, but Lamarr tells him about other cases where her profiling helped the local police to catch the killer.

Lamarr also gives Reacher the details on the three former Army women that were murdered. She says there is no forced entry and that they are all found in their homes, naked in the bathtub. She says the killer leaves zero evidence, which is next to impossible to do. He also fills the tub to cover their bodies with gallons of Army green paint.

Lamarr says it takes 20 to 30 gallons of paint to fill a tub. She also says they don't know how the women died. When she canvassed the neighborhoods, nobody saw anyone going in and out with cans of paint.

Chapter 7 Analysis

It seems as if the killer has a lot of forensic experience because he has figured out how to commit murder at least three times without leaving one shred of evidence behind. This could mean that he is a cop or former law enforcement officer. It could also mean that he has some kind of medical training.

The fact that the killer has access to 20 to 30 gallons of paint for each woman suggests that his job gains him access without anyone questioning it. He could be a worker in a paint store, or be in the Army. Additionally, transporting this many gallons of paint to the homes of the women suggests that he drives a large vehicle. Finally, it would take for him to unload 20 to 30 gallons of paint, especially without being seen by anyone in the neighborhood.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

When they stop for lunch, they talk about the significance of the three-week killing cycle. Lamarr says they think it's some external because it doesn't match the lunar cycle or other things they looked at as possibilities. They think he might have a military schedule that rotates every three weeks, and Reacher suggests it might be someone in Special Forces. When they get back in the car, Reacher asks about Lamarr's stepsister. Lamarr says she's a rich girl that joined the Army looking for adventure. Instead, they assigned her to drive a truck and she saw a colonel five times about making a transfer. When he suggested it might help if she got naked, she turned the colonel in and got him kicked out of the Army.

Lamarr confirms that she has warned her stepsister about not letting anyone into the house, no matter who it is. The rest of the time she spends at the hospital because her father and Lamarr's stepfather is dying of cancer.

They finally arrive at Quantico. After going through the security gate, and Reacher obtaining his visitor pass, Poulton meets the car as they pull up to the office building. Poulton shows Reacher to his room, which looks like a standard hotel room, but doesn't have a door handle on the inside of the door and the window doesn't open.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Reacher and Lamarr are trying to think like the serial killer is thinking. The problem with this is that they are rational thinkers, when a serial killer tends to be an irrational thinker. It is as if Reacher has come full circle in his life. He is accustomed to living in military quarters. Now, he is living in a similar room at Quantico. While the military provided a structured environment for Reacher to operate, once again he finds himself taking orders from someone; this time from the FBI.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Ten minutes later, Lisa Harper unlocks the door and introduces herself. She's the agent assigned to escort Reacher wherever he goes. She takes him down to the Behavioral Science office in the old bunker of the building. Blake, Lamarr's boss and one of the agents that was in New York, gives Reacher crime scene photos of mutilated women that crossed Petrosian. Poulton and Lamarr join them.

They go over the details of the latest murder victim. Reacher focuses on the photograph of the hallway of the latest crime scene. He notices and mentions to the group that there is no sign of a struggle—the picture and shelves on the wall are untouched. They have 18 days until the killer is due to strike again, if he sticks to his current interval. Reacher tells the group that they should call a colonel he knows at Ft. Dix in New Jersey. He tells them to mention his name and mention it often, otherwise, he won't be interested in working with the FBI.

After the meeting, Harper takes Reacher to the cafeteria for dinner. He asks her if they are trying to set him up with her and if his room is being videotaped. She admits yes to both. After dinner, she takes him back to his room. He tries to call Jodie at home, work and on her cell. he tries a couple more times before and after showering and he still cannot reach her.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Blake gives Reacher the photographs of Petrosian's work as proof that Petrosian will harm Jodie if Reacher doesn't cooperate with the FBI, and the FBI turns over Jodie's information to Petrosian and his crew. It seems as if the FBI has assigned a beautiful woman agent to follow Reacher to set him up. They want to see if he tries to hit on Harper. Since they are taping everything in the building, including in Reacher's room, if they can videotape him cheating on Jodie, then the FBI has additional ammunition to hold over Reacher's head and keep him working for them.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

The next morning, Reacher wakes up early. He tries to reach Jodie again, but she still doesn't answer any of her phones. Harper comes to escort him to the Learjet because the colonel has agreed to spend all day with Reacher. When they land at McGuire Air Force Base, a car is waiting for them to drive them to Ft. Dix and to meet with the colonel.

Colonel John Trent greets Reacher and Harper when they arrive. He tells Harper that she has to wait in the outer office lobby because the information he and Reacher have to go through is matter of national security. She hesitates and mentions that she is supposed to watch Reacher at all times. The colonel assures her that there is only one door in and out of the office.

Inside the office, Reacher asks Trent for a gun, which Trent hands over without any ammunition. Trent escorts Reacher out of a back door and through an alley, where a car is waiting to drive him to a helicopter.

Chapter 10 Analysis

It seems as if the FBI might be threatening to divulge Jodie's information to Petrosian, but instead are keeping her in protective custody. This would explain why she isn't answering any of her phones, no matter what time of the day or night Reacher is trying to reach her.

When Reacher and the colonel enter the office, it is clear that Trent is the phone call Reacher made before agreeing to work with the FBI. John Trent owes Reacher for not reporting something about an investigation where Trent is involved.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

The helicopter lands in New York City, where a car drives him to Chinatown. The driver tells him that he'll be back to pick him up in three hours.

Reacher spends almost the entire three hours looking for couples. In the last few minutes, he spots two men and he knows they are who he has been looking for all this time. Reacher watches as the two Chinese guys, one with a satchel and one with a spiral notebook and pen, go from business to business to collect protection money. When Reacher only has a few minutes left before he has to meet the driver, he grabs the two men and pushes them into an alley. He pulls his gun and tells them that Petrosian owns this street now. Reacher takes the satchel full of money from the men and leaves.

When he reaches the rendezvous point, he sees the Navy car pulling away. He runs after it and jumps in the passenger seat. He gives the loadmasters the money for their next party when he boards the helicopter and makes it back to Ft. Dix, where Harper doesn't even know he was gone. Reacher uses Trent's private phone to try to reach Jodie, but doesn't succeed. When he emerges from the office with his notes, he and Harper fly back to Quantico, where Poulton, Lamarr and Blake are waiting for them.

Reacher says he's narrowed it down to 30 men, but says he needs to talk to Lamarr's stepsister to narrow the list down further.

Chapter 11 Analysis

In Chinatown, Reacher is looking for two criminals that he can use to carry out some sort of plan he is cooking up in his head. Reacher is looking for two Chinese men because the Chinese are Petrosian's enemies—competition. He learned this earlier from Harper.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

The next morning, Reacher and Harper are on a commercial airline to Spokane, where Lamarr's stepsister lives. On the plane, Reacher pushes the point that the killer is a very, very, very smart guy to beat all of the forensic tests three times. He tells Harper there is something the FBI is not factoring in about the killer, but he won't tell Harper what it is.

They land in Seattle, where a local agent escorts them to a private Cessna to fly them to Spokane. When they land in Spokane, a car drives them out to a ranch, where Lamarr's stepsister lives. They knock on the door and eventually hear creaking floorboards from inside the house. After producing her FBI badge to the spyhole, Harper tells Alison Lamarr that they are the agents that made an appointment with her yesterday.

She lets them in and serves them coffee. Reacher walks around the house and the property to do a security check. He notices that the house is newly renovated.

Alison tells them her story, but says the colonel who tried to get her to have sex with him is old, so she doesn't think it could be him. She says she even flew out to Quantico and let her stepsister hypnotize her to make sure she didn't forget anyone that could be involved in the murders that was connected to Alison in the Army. Reacher warns Alison not to open the door to anyone again before they leave. Lamarr meets them when they arrive and Reacher fills her in on her stepsister.

Chapter 12 Analysis

The fact that Lamarr's house is newly renovated, including the installation of a bathtub, might provide a clue. It could be someone who is involved in the renovation or construction business that is involved in committing the murders. This would explain how he knows the women have a bathtub and that he has a vehicle large enough to store and transport 20 to 30 gallons of the Army green paint.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

The next morning is Sunday. Blake tells Reacher he needs to spend the day reading the case files, so he can give them an update on his thoughts at the breakfast meeting on Monday. Harper sits with Reacher while he goes through the files.

After reviewing the files, Reacher tells Harper he thinks the guy is driving to his destinations. Because drive-time and surveillance time would add up to weeks worth of time, Reacher says he doesn't think it is someone on a three-week work rotation schedule. Harper and Reacher go to the shooting range and Reacher helps to show Harper how to shoot better. When they get back to the office, Reacher goes through the list and narrows the women down to the ones that live alone in secluded houses. He tells Harper that eleven women are the target, with three of them dead, it leaves eight.

Chapter 13 Analysis

As Reacher reads the files, he is thinking of how the killer is getting the women to cooperate without a struggle. He thinks the killer is making the women carry in the paint cans, so that it doesn't signal anything out of the ordinary to their neighbors. Since the killer is making the victim open the door, lever off the paint can lids, take off her own clothes and everything else, this explains why the killer isn't leaving any DNA evidence behind.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

The next morning, Poulton comes to get Reacher, telling him that Harper is off the case. Reacher finds out Lamarr's stepfather died. She doesn't plan on taking any time off the case. In the cafeteria over breakfast, there is a story in the New York Times about a racket turf war and Petrosian is among the dead. Reacher throws his badge down to the FBI agents and walks out. Harper ends up following Reacher in the car and giving him a ride to the highway so he can hitchhike home. She tells him that Jodie is okay and home now from some work travel.

Reacher hitchhikes back to New York City, which takes him seven hours. When he lets himself into Jodie's apartment, she tells him there is an FBI agent in her kitchen. The agent calls in Alan Deerfield, who shows up and starts questioning Reacher about Petrosian's death and how Reacher stopped calling Jodie two days before the death because Reacher somehow knew Jodie was safe.

After Deerfield leaves, Jodie talks to Reacher about how they seem to want different things in life. She wants roots, like those she never had as an Army brat. Reacher doesn't. Before they finish their conversation, Harper shows up.

Chapter 14 Analysis

The way that Reacher is physically showing Harper how to shoot on the range suggests a physical attraction between the two. Something about their interaction also leads Blake to take Harper off the case and replace her with Poulton. It is Harper that goes after Reacher when he leaves, however, to try to convince Reacher that he should go back to try to make the FBI listen to him because he is likely right.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Harper tells Reacher that Alison Lamarr has been murdered and that Blake wants Reacher back on the case—that Blake believes his theory now about the eleven women on the list. They fly out to Seattle.

When they get to Alison Lamarr's house, Blake makes them walk him through what they did on their visit. Blake wants to know if there is anything different from when they came to see Alison. In the garage, Reacher notices that the washing machine box is open now but was sealed when they visited. Additionally, Reacher also remembers that Alison already had a brand new washing machine installed in the kitchen. Blake says now they know how he's transporting the paint—delivering it ahead of time in a washing machine box.

Blake has agents check the other crime scenes. They call to confirm that all three previous dead women had washing machine boxes in their homes. They confirm the boxes were resealed and when they open them, they find paint used paint cans inside. Blake and Reacher find tire tracks outside of Alison's home.

Somewhere else, a colonel has the same list of women's names that Reacher has. The colonel has the list locked in a drawer with a bible.

Blake receives word that the remaining seven women on the list have all received washing machine deliveries to their homes.

Chapter 15 Analysis

The inference is that the colonel hiding the list in his drawer is the killer. Additionally, it points to the fact that the colonel is Colonel Jack Trent, which is the colonel that helped Reacher. Since Trent owed Reacher a favor for eliminating a paragraph in a report Reacher had to write about Trent when Reacher was an MP in the Army, it suggests that Trent has sexual tendencies that could have gotten him into trouble if Reacher hadn't saved his butt.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Blake sends Harper and Reacher to Seattle to talk with Rita Scimena because she is the closest to the current scene. On the six hour drive, Reacher tells Harper he thinks the killer flies and then rents a car.

Harper and Reacher talk about Reacher and his time in the army. They also talk about Jodie wanting stability and Reacher wanting to be a wanderer. When they arrive at Scimeca's village in Oregon, it is three in the morning. They pull up behind a bureau sedan in her driveway.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Additionally, Reacher has been telling the FBI all along that they need to reconsider the motive. Reacher implies to Harper that he knows the real motive. He refuses to tell them at this point, however, until he has all of the agents involved in one place.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

They briefly fill Scimeca in on the murder details. She leads them to the washing machine box in the basement.

The box contains the same paint cans. Scimeca says it was delivered roughly two months ago. She assumed it was her roommates that moved out two weeks ago. Harper and Reacher fly back to Quantico, where Blake says that the research they've done suggests that Reacher's theory still holds.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Reacher's assessment of the list stands true. Even though Scimeca had a roommate, the killer would not have been able to tell this by the list he was reviewing, which is the same list Reacher assessed as well. It seems as if the killer is starting to make mistakes that he didn't make with the previous three women. For one, he left the box for the paint cans unsealed, so he didn't have Alison reseal the box like he did the other women. This mistake is providing additional clues to the FBI.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Alison's tub and body arrive at Quantico. Everyone, but Lamarr, stands in on the autopsy. From the X-rays they take of the body in the tub, they can that there is some kind of a metal tool underneath her that wasn't at the other crime scenes.

Dr. Stavely, the FBI pathologist, starts to cut the body out of the hardened paint in the tub. He finds a screwdriver under the body. The doctor confirms that the scratch marks on her face are superficial and were probably self-inflicted and made with the screwdriver. He still doesn't have any idea on how she died, but speculates it could be suffocation or by stopping the heart since there are no other indications of the cause of death. The doctor also theorizes she got into the tub after filling it with paint. He says he read the autopsies from the other three victims and doesn't have much hope that an internal exam will reveal Alison's cause of death either. The doctor has to open up Alison's body, so he tells them to leave.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Now, the medical examiner has found some kind of a metal tool under the body that wasn't found in other crime scenes. This could be an additional mistake and an additional clue that leads them closer to uncovering who the killer is.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

When they return to the TV room, they find Lamarr is still there even though Blake sent her home. Reacher argues a new motive for the killings. Reacher says he thinks he is killing them to eliminate witnesses to something. Reacher says all of the women were in jobs in the Army that relate to weapons. The filed-off serial numbers on the guns Reacher took from the racketeers at the restaurant were government issued. This got him to thinking that something similar could be going on with the Army issued weapons.

Reacher says he is staging the murder scenes to make it look like it's a serial killer instead. Poulton argues that Reacher's new motive theory is wrong because Caroline Cooke's job didn't have anything to do with weapons. In the meantime, Stavely comes into the room where the agents and Reacher are talking. He says he knows how the killer is killing the women, but that it's impossible.

Chapter 19 Analysis

The killer is managing so far to stump even the leading pathologist in the country—Stavely. The author is giving the reader glimpses into the mind of the killer. These insights reveal that the killer is in fact thinking almost simultaneously to the thoughts Reacher is having. This helps to prove that Lamarr's profile of the serial killer is correct. It is the motive for the killings that might be off, which is ultimately throwing off the entire investigation.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

He tells them that the cause of death is a denial of oxygen. He believes the killer might be using a form of gentle strangulation by pushing something, such as a sponge, down their throats. Then, the doctor contradicts himself by saying it is possible because the women would have fought the killer and they didn't. Someone suggests the women were sedated. The problem is no drugs show in any of the toxicology reports.

In the meantime, the colonel checks in at the D.C. airport. He buys a coach open-end ticket to Portland, Oregon.

Reacher continues to argue that Cooke still fits the pattern. Since she was an officer candidate, she would have been sent all over the place to get an overview, which means she could have been involved with weapons during one of the duty stations. Reacher negotiates payment from the FBI for her consulting services. He also asks for the Petrosian issued to be dropped.

Blake tells Reacher he is going to set him up to talk with Cozo in New York. Blake also says that Harper will be accompanying him there. Blake reports that they have information from UPS and Hertz on potential delivery and very short car rental information, but they probably won't have it until the following afternoon.

Chapter 20 Analysis

As the agents and Reacher continue to argue the motive of the killer and how it's relevant to solving the case, the killer is continuing on his path. The thought process of the killer is pretty much identical to the theories that Reacher has. This indicates that Lamarr's profile is pretty much on target—except the motive.

Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Harper and Reacher fly from D.C. to New York. On the plane, they talk about the case. He says the scratches on Alison's face were put there to keep up the charade of it being a serial killer with rage. He says the plain-vanilla motive is money. When they land in New York, they have dinner at the little Italian restaurant. Then, the driver takes Harper to her hotel and Reacher walks to Jodie's apartment, but she's not home yet.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Reacher and Harper are forging a closer relationship. They are talking about work, but there is a personal side underlying their discussions. Harper is having an inner struggle because she is attracted to Reacher. At the same time, she knows that he is involved with and committed to Jodie.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

The murderer thinks about the fact that the new murder scenes will have guards now. He thinks about how to overcome this. He assumes the local cops will guard during the day and the FBI at night. He decides it'll be easier to commit the crime during the day.

Jodie comes home, they have sex and then they stay in bed talking. She tells them they are going to offer her partner. Reacher tells her he wants to sell his vehicle and the house. he says he wants to travel. She says she's worried, but he assures her that nothing will change. They fall asleep.

The next morning, Jodie leaves for work and Reacher goes with Harper to meet Cozo. Reacher gets the address of the two brothers he put in the hospital. He and Reacher meet with them to find out where Petrosian got the guns they had. They find out that Pterosian buys the military issue weapons from a guy named Bob that sells them out of the trunk of his car at some bar in New Jersey.

Chapter 22 Analysis

Jodie and Reacher are in a lifestyle struggle. While they love each, they are each after different kinds of lifestyles. It is unclear at this point if their love alone will see them through their differences. Since Reacher is confiding more and more in Harper about his relationship with Jodie and his feelings about being a drifter and a wanderer, it foreshadows Reacher and Harper having a romantic relationship.

In the meantime, the colonel is plotting his next attack. The colonel's thoughts mirror the thoughts that Reacher has been telling the FBI. Since the colonel is finding it hard to break into Scimeca's house to commit the murder without the local police or FBI agent on duty noticing, it suggests the killer will create a final slip up that will get him caught and stop his killing spree.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

Harper and Reacher get a confiscated car from the FBI to use to make the drive.

In the meantime, the colonel is staking out Scimeca's house. He watches as the black-and-white cop car takes over for the FBI agent parked in Scimeca's driveway.

Reacher and Harper stop for lunch to kill time until the gun seller is set to be at the bar. Reacher tells Harper that he told Jodie about wanting to sell the house and car.

Back at Scimeca's, the colonel watches as the cop goes into Scimeca's house to use the bathroom. The colonel sees that he won't be able to use the cop's bathroom break to attack so he'll have to use the cop's lunch break.

The lunch break won't work either. The colonel watches as another police car pulls up and hands a brown paper bag and drink to the officer outside of Scimeca's house.

Reacher drives the car to the bar in New Jersey. When they get to the bar, they don't see the Cadillac the brothers say Bob drives. They go in to have a drink and find out from the bartender that Bob is in jail. He says the military police came in the bar a couple months ago and hauled Bob out.

Chapter 23 Analysis

Reacher and Harper are taking one step at a time to get to the person who selling Army issued weapons on the street. While they don't think Bob is the big fish, they believe he can lead them to the big fish. Presumably, the big fish is the colonel that is committing the murders. Further presumption suggests that it is Colonel John Trent, since all roads seem to be leading to Ft. Dix, where the colonel is stationed.

The killer intends on making a phone call from the stolen cell phone. He plans to call in a bomb threat or some kind of an emergency to lure the cop guarding Scimeca's house away from it. While the cop is otherwise distracted, the colonel plans to kill Scimeca.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Reacher theorizes that Bob is in the Trenton brig, so they plan to go there to talk to him. Reacher calls ahead for the captain of the brig. When they arrive, Captain John Leighton, meets them. He says he checked on Reacher before he got there so he knows who he is. Harper explains the criminal investigation.

The colonel thinks about all of the ways that he can get the police officer to leave Scimeca's house so that he can kill her. He finally decides that he has to make a phone call.

Chapter 24 Analysis

All of the gun sellers having the same proportion of the sales money missing suggests that they all had to pay someone the 50 percent. The name that McGuire provides might be some who is involved with the gun ring, but it might not be the killer. It could delay the investigation if when they get to Kruger, he turns out to be just another link in the chain. The sexual tension between

Reacher and Harper is intensifying.



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

He drives to the airport where he chooses a woman about to get on plane. When she isn't paying attention, the colonel steals her cell phone so that he can make the call he needs to make without it tracing back to him.

The captain explains that the new computer system allowed the Army to do analysis on their weapons. This is how they figured out where people were selling weapons, which is how they found Bob McGuire and arrested him. He also explains that their theory of a big fish might be correct because all of the sellers of the guns have exactly half of their profit missing. The captain arranges for Reacher and Harper to meet with McGuire, off the record, and without the video tapes rolling.

Reacher spends time convincing McGuire to tell him who the leader of the racket is. Reacher threatens McGuire, but at the same time assures him that the Army will protect him from the leader. McGuire finally admits that it is his CO, Colonel LaSalle Kruger.

The captain uses the colonel's name to search for personnel information on him in the computer system. Harper and Reacher ask him to see if he can trace the paint to Kruger as well. Additionally, they ask the captain to search for the dates of the murders and the thefts to see if they coincide with Kruger's time off and his duty stations. Reacher and Harper check into the nearest hotel down the road while Leighton conducts the searches. They joke about being in a room together with a bed and controlling their urges.

The killer plans to strike during the cop's last hour on duty. This is when his attention will be its lowest. The killer parks at a park on the other side of Scimeca's property and hikes to see the property from the other side. He determines the only entrances are the front door and the garage door. After leaving, he goes to his hotel room to wait for the following day when he commits the murder.

Harper asks if it's Jodie that's stopping Reacher from being with her. He says it is. Harper says she wants a celebration kiss, so they kiss. When they pull apart, Reacher admits that he doesn't think Kruger is their guy and that he made the entire theory up to get out of Quantico for awhile. A barrage of knocking on the hotel room door jars them apart.

It's Leighton. He's telling them that Kruger is the Army's guy but not the killer. He says the dates don't match up and that Kruger is in a wheelchair now after losing both of his legs under friendly fire in the Gulf. Leighton says when he searched for the list of women to compare the dates that he found out someone in the Army called one of the women. He thinks it was Alison Lamar and she is the one that gave him the names of



the women that were sexually assaulted or harassed from a support group they were members of.

At the same time, Harper receives a call calling them back to Quantico. They found out that Cooke's records were scoured and she was never anywhere near any supply units and wouldn't be related to the gun theory.

Chapter 25 Analysis

The clues Reacher and Harper are uncovering are just a coincidence. Reacher presented the theory he did just to buy himself some stall time to get out of Quantico. While some of the information has proved to be true, Reacher is not really predicting the outcomes accurately. Now, he is like the boy that cried wolf, so even if he is telling the truth, none of the FBI agents want to believe him at this point.

Now that Reacher is actually trying, however, he might soon be on to something since he and the killer do think a lot alike and have a lot in common.



Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

Leighton goes on to say that he found out the thief of 300 gallons of paint was Lorraine Stanley, which is one of the victims. When they return to Quantico, Blake tells them that the UPS guy remembers making the delivery to Lorraine Stanley. He also remembers her ripping off the shipping documents. He says that he's going to hire another consultant because Reacher isn't working out.

In the middle of the night, back in his room at Quantico, Reacher calls Jodie. He tells her he'll be home the following day. Then, he calls Harper. She comes to his room. He tells her that he thinks all eleven women were involved. The killer is compelling each of them to cooperate in some way, which is why all of the women they interviewed were so vague in their responses to the FBI inquiries. Then, they kiss again, but Harper pulls away.

The following day, Blake tells Reacher to work the case files. Reacher asks if he can borrow the plane to fly to Portland. Reacher asks Harper to go to Portland with him. She asks him what for, but he says she has to see it for herself.

Chapter 26 Analysis

Leighton is able to explain some of the details of the murders, such as where the paint came from originally. The killer is covering his tracks by using the former Army women as his cover for gathering the supplies he needs and the tracks he needs to cover to commit the murders. Reacher believes that the FBI is finally going to release him, which is why he calls Jodie to let her know that he'll be returning to New York City.

Reacher and Harper continue to have sexual attraction and tension between them. So far, kissing is as far as they have gone. Reacher does see Harper as an ally and confidante, which is why he asks her to go with him to Portland to continue investigating, and hopefully to solve, the case.



Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

Since Blake won't give him the FBI plane, Reacher and Harper drive to the D.C. airport. Without any money or credit cards between them though, Reacher makes a call to John Trent to ask a favor—for him to fly them from Andrews Air Force base to Portland.

In the meantime, Rita Scimeca is starting her day out in Portland. The killer is getting into place to watch the shift change of the night FBI agent to the day local police officer. When Rita finds muddy footprints on the floor, she bans the police officer from using her bathroom anymore.

Chapter 27 Analysis

Reacher is now determined to help solve the murder investigation and stop the killer. It's ironic that now that the FBI doesn't want him anymore, Reacher is striving even harder to solve the crimes. While he is still working on a hunch, Reacher still won't share his thoughts with Harper. Harper is going along with Reacher, just on his word that he knows what is going on, even though he won't tell her what his theory is.



Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

When they board the plane three hours later, they start talking about the motive. Racher tells Harper that only one of the eleven women is the true target. The rest of the women are just camouflage.

The killer, perched on the hilltop behind a rock, uses the stolen phone call to call Rita. She recognizes his voice.

Rita then goes out to the police car to apologize to the officer and allow him in to use the bathroom. Later, Rita tells the cop she is going to the store, so he moves her car so she can pull her car out of the garage. The killer watches her go.

After the grocery store, she goes into the hardware store next door. She pulls a paint chart from the shelf and starts looking at it. Rita tells the hardware store guy that she wants latex paint in an olive green color. She buys a gallon, pays cash and leaves the store with it. The cop sees a colonel dressed in a uniform with a religious collar approach Rita's house. The cop tells the colonel to get inside the car to show him his ID and top wait for Rita. When Rita drives up, she sees a passenger in the cop's car. He tells her there is a padre from the Army there to see her. Rita tells the cop to get rid of him.

The colonel steps toward Rita. He says he is following up on her recovery from the assault. Says it is a private mission, one not backed by the Army. Says he's visited five others—some for good and some wasted trips. She tells him this is another wasted trip and sends him away.

The killer is crouched in the trunk of Rita's car. When she pulls it in the garage, she pops the trunk, just like he told her to do. He crawled in it after she went in the store and left the car door unlocked like he told her to do. He gets out and puts his gloves on.

Chapter 28 Analysis

When the killer called Rita earlier, it was to get her to leave the house. It suggests that he was once the therapist for the women. While he was their therapist, he hypnotized them. This way, whenever they hear his voice, they obey what he tells them to do. This would explain why the women seem to do what he says without fighting him. He wants Rita to go to the store so that he can then gain access to her car, to get into her garage and ultimately into her house without the cop knowing.

Rita is going to buy the paint that her killer wants to use for his ritual.



Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

After the cop comes inside to use the bathroom, Rita takes him out a huge mug of hot coffee. When she returns, the visitor is waiting for her at the top of the basement stairs.

Rita greets him as if she is expecting him. He asks if she bought the can of paint. He tells her to smile and to go down and get a screwdriver to open the paint can. Rita complies with everything he asks of her. He tells her to get the paint can, stirring stick and screwdriver and show him where the bathroom is. When they get upstairs, the visitor produces a black garbage bag from his coat pocket. He tells Rita to put her clothes inside.

The plane lands in Portland and Harper and Reacher take a taxi toward Rita's house. The cab pulls up to Rita's house just the visitor has convinced Rita to swallow her own tongue while she is sitting in the bathtub of paint and water naked.

Chapter 29 Analysis

Reacher and Harper are closing in on the killer. What is in question is whether or not they will get into Scimeca's house while the killer is still there and before Rita dies. There is some foreshadowing that the killer is still in the process of causing Rita to kill herself while Reacher and Harper are approaching the house. If this is the case then it is possible that they will be able to save Rita's life.



Chapter 30

Chapter 30 Summary

The cop IDs Reacher and Harper and then asks them to take the mug back into the house for him.

When she doesn't answer, Reacher breaks the door down. When they rush into the bathroom, they find Scimeca in the tub and Julia Lamarr standing over her. Reacher grabs Lamar and hits her in the head.

Reacher makes his way to Scimeca and pulls her tongue out of her throat. As he is about to give her CPR, she coughs and starts breathing. Harper runs the shower and gets into the tub with Rita to wash the paint off her. Reacher wraps her in a towel and robe and carries Rita to her bed. He tells Harper that Lamarr hypnotized them all. He realized it last night when he couldn't figure out how such smart agents could be so stupid, that Julia was driving the motive and that she is the FBI's expert hypnotist.

Reacher tells Harper it was all for the inheritance. Julia says her stepfather was going to split it 50/50 between her and Alison. Reacher says he remembers Alison making a comment about sisters taking care of each other, which made him think that Alison was inheriting it all but planned on taking care of Julia financially. Reacher thinks Julia killed the other women as camouflage for murdering Alison.

They kiss a couple of times. Then, Reacher sends Harper into the bathroom to wake up Julia and arrest her. Harper comes back out to announce Julia is dead from a broken neck, from when Reacher hit her. The cop barges in and then calls are made and the investigation ensues.

Chapter 30 Analysis

Alison Lamarr mentioned earlier in the novel that Julia hypnotized her at Quantico to see if she remembered anything. It seems as if Julia was hypnotizing more than just her stepsister. For some reason, Julia Lamarr hypnotized all of the women so she could control them and get them to do what she wanted them to do for her.



Chapter 31

Chapter 31 Summary

They take Reacher to a cell in the local FBI building until Nelson Blake shows up. Then, Alan Deerfield arrives.

Deerfield insists that Julia Lamarr was there trying to save Rita Scimeca when Reacher killed her. He proceeds to tell Reacher how he thinks the story unfolded—all making Julia look like a humanitarian and hero, and Reacher look like her killer. They say they'll drop it if he keeps his mouth shut about what really happened. He refuses, saying that his own lawyer has their report saying he didn't kill Lorraine Stanley so they'll still have explaining to do.

Reacher relents, saying that he'll keep his mouth shut for Rita Scimeca's sake. He runs into Harper on his way out. She gives him her FBI flight voucher so he can get back to New York. When he lands, he goes straight to Jodie's office. He finds Jodie inside one of the conference rooms at a party celebrating her partnership offer with the firm. Reacher finds out that Jodie has to spend the next two years working in London. They agree that he'll visit but not move with her. They leave the office to go home.

Chapter 31 Analysis

In the end, Reacher gets his wish. Jodie is moving to London for the next two years. They will not be tied to each other in any way. It seems as if they have both come to the conclusion that they love each other but cannot live with each other.



Characters

Jack Reacher

Jack Reacher stands over six feet tall and weighs over 200 pounds. He is a former Army Military Police (MP) officer. When he was in the Army, he was involved in several sexual harassment and rape cases between Army women and men personnel. Because of his time in the military, Reacher is used to moving around from place to place and never really owning anything of value.

After his former commanding officer dies, he inherits the CO's home in Garrison, New York. His former CO is also his now girlfriend, Jodie's father. For the first time, Reacher also owns a vehicle. In spite of these two new anchors, Reacher really yearns to travel, wander and not own any assets or possessions.

Reacher takes it upon himself to help a new restaurant owner who the neighborhood racket is trying to shakedown for protection money. Reacher's actions with the thugs give the FBI that is running surveillance on him a reason to pull him in for questioning. The FBI has connected Reacher with some of the women victims of the serial killer. The FBI blackmails Reacher to act as a consultant in helping them to find the serial killer. Reacher grudgingly complies.

Jodie

Jodie is Jack Reacher's girlfriend. She is a financial lawyer at a top law firm in New York City. She owns her own apartment and is divorced. Because Jodie grew up as an Army brat, she wants stability and consistency in her life. Reacher describes Jodie as tall, slender and beautiful.

Jodie is up for partner at her law firm. She is expecting the offer when the novel ends. Jodie also has grave concerns that she and Reacher want two different types of lives. While he continuously assures her that his travels, selling the house and selling the car will not affect their relationship, she is afraid that he sees her as an anchor too, and that it will be the demise of their relationship.

Jodie also acts as Reacher's lawyer during his questioning with the FBI. When they are alone, Jodie advises Reacher that he should hire a criminal attorney. Reacher, however, trusts only Jodie, so Jodie continues to act as his legal counsel.

Julia Lamarr

Julia Lamarr is an FBI agent from Quantico, Virginia. She is one of the agency's top profilers. She is also known for her hypnosis skills. Her profile of the serial killer leads



the agency to Jack Reacher. She has convinced the FBI that he is the killer or that the killer is someone just like him.

Additionally, Julia's stepsister, Alison Lamarr, is one of the women on the list of victims. Julia's stepfather is wealthy, but he is in the hospital dying of cancer. She tells Reacher that she is going to inheriting a large sum of money, a 50-50 split with her stepsister when her stepfather dies. Julia also claims she has a fear of flying.

In the last chapter of the novel, Julai Lamarr turns out to be the visitor, the serial killer. According to Reacher, Julia Lamarr was killing the other women as a cover to kill Alison Lamarr so that she would inherit all of her stepfather's money.

Poulton

Poulton is Julia Lamarr's partner in the FBI. Poulton is with Lamarr in the restaurant at the beginning of the novel following Reacher undercover. He is also the only one of the FBI agents that puts up a fight when Reacher proposes a different motive for the killings than the one Julia Lamarr proposed.

Nelson Blake

Nelson Blake is Lamarr, Poulton and Harper's boss at the FBI in Quantico. Nelson Blake is also the one that uses Jodie's safety as blackmail to get Reacher to act as a consultant on the case. At the end of the novel, Blake is the agent that tells Reacher to keep his mouth shut about an FBI agent being the serial killer or he'll make Reacher's life a living hell.

Alan Deerfield

Alan Deerfield is one of the New York City FBI agents. He is working with the agents in Quantico, but on the racketeering of Petrosian and his thugs in New York City. Deerfield wants to charge Reacher for beating up Petrosian's thugs and putting them in the hospital. Deerfield helps Blake to use Reacher's act as leverage to get Reacher to agree to help in the serial murder investigation.

Lisa Harper

Lisa Harper is a six-foot blonde FBI agent that is assigned to follow and protect Reacher while he is at Quantico. She also escorts him to various places where the investigation takes Reacher. She tends not to wear a bra underneath her blouse. Additionally, she seems to have three suits that she rotates throughout the novel.

Harper and Reacher seem to be attracted to one another. She admits to Reacher that Blake wanted her to try to seduce Reacher so that they would have additional ways to



blackmail him into helping the FBI. Harper and Reacher do share some kisses toward the end of the novel. Harper is the one with Reacher when he finds Julia Lamarr attempting to kill Rita Scimeca.

Rita Scimeca

Rita Scimeca is one of the women on the victim list. When she was in the Army, Rita was raped. She pressed charges and then left the military. She now lives in a home by herself in a small village in Portland, Oregon. Rita Scimeca enjoys playing the piano and has a grand piano in the living room of her home. Rita is the woman that Julia Lamarr is trying to kill when Reacher and Harper bust in to stop it.

Petrosian

Petrosian is the leader of the racket that is shaking down the Italian restaurant that Reacher is eating at the beginning of the novel. Reacher sets it up with the Chinese racket in the city so that they end up killing Petrosian. By eliminating Petrosian, Reacher is eliminating the threat the FBI has to leak Jodie's information to Petrosian for Reacher beating up Petrosian's men.

Alison Lamarr

Alison Lamarr is another one of the women on the murder list. Alison is also Julia Lamarr's stepsister. Alison's father is dying of cancer, so she ends up spending every afternoon by his bed in the hospital. Alison is also due to inherit her father's fortune. Reacher and Harper fly out to Spokane, Washington, where Alison lives, to question Alison. Ultimately, the serial killer does end up killing Alison.



Objects/Places

New York City

New York City is one of the primary settings in the novel. It is where the novel begins and where Jodie lives. Reacher returns to the city throughout the novel, including at the end when the case is over.

Quantico

Quantico, Virginia is where the headquarters of the FBI is. It is where the FBI agent, Julia Lamarr, drives Reacher to from New York City to help the FBI with the serial killer investigation. Reacher is put in a room to stay while in Quantico. It is also where all of the meetings between the FBI and Reacher take place to discuss the case and review the case files.

Portland, Oregon

Rita Scimeca lives in a small village in Portland, Oregon. When the visitor is inside of Rita's house, Harper and Reacher are on their way to Portland, Oregon. This is where Julia Lamarr's killing spree is stopped and where Reacher and Harper are able to save Rita's life.

Paint

Part of the serial murders is gallons of Army green paint. The killer is shipping the paint cans to the murder locations ahead of time. The killer is using the paint to fill the bathtubs of the murder victims and makes the victims slip into the tub full of paint. The corrosive nature of the paint is eating away some or all of the evidence.

Screwdriver

When Alison Lamarr's bathtub and body are X-rayed, they find a screwdriver is underneath her body. The pathologist also concludes it is the same screwdriver that Alison Lamarr's used to make the self-inflicted scratches on her face. Additionally, they conclude that it is the same screwdriver the killer made Alison use to pry open the paint lid cans.



House

Reacher inherits a house in Garrison from Jodie's father when he dies. Reacher feels as if the house is an anchor that is weighing him down. He tells Jodie that he wants to sell the house because he doesn't want to have the tie and the responsibility of being a homeowner.

Guns

At the beginning of the novel, the guns Reacher takes off the two thugs at the restaurant have the serial numbers filed off of them. Later, this leads Reacher to believe that stolen guns from the Army are what the serial killer is trying to cover up. Using the guns as a motive leads Reacher to propose a new motive to the FBI. This angle inadvertently leads Reacher and Harper to identify Julia Lamarr as the real serial killer.

Bathtub

The bathtub is where the serial killer is leaving the bodies of the women. The bathtub is also filled with the Army green paint. When Alison Lamarr dies, the FBI arranges for her bathtub with her body in it to be cut out of Alison's home and transported to Quantico.

List

The list is from the Army. It contains the names of 91 women that had sexual harassment and other sexual incidents when they were serving in the Army. Reacher uses this list to narrow the true potential victims down to 11 names. Of these 11 women on the list, four of them are murdered.

Foldable Toothbrush

A foldable toothbrush is the only true possession Reacher has ever owned. When he packs for his trip to Quantico, the only item he packs is the foldable toothbrush. When he goes out to other locations, the foldable toothbrush is the only item Reacher takes with him.



Themes

Good versus Evil

The primary plot throughout the entire novel is that of good versus evil. The serial killer represents the evil in the novel. The FBI agents, on the other hand, represent the good in the novel. There is a fine line, however, between the good and evil that the FBI does because even though they are supposed to be acting as law enforcement officers, the agents in the agency are blackmailing Reacher, and one of the agents turns out to be the serial killer they are investigating.

Jack Reacher even struggles with the good and evil of protecting Jodie from Petrosian and his thugs and helping the FBI to catch the serial killer. He also struggles with having to sacrifice his own wants and needs to be in a relationship with Jodie, while being a homeowner. Additionally, Reacher seems to struggle with fidelity in his relationship with Jodie. While he is in a committed relationship with Jodie, he kisses Lisa Harper a couple of times as the novel unfolds.

Mental States

Another primary theme in the novel is the mind or mental state of human beings. Primarily, the focus falls on the sanity, or insanity, of the serial killer. This is especially true when the identity of the serial killer is revealed as Julia Lamarr. Julia's mental state comes into question because they are not sure if her primary motive was the inheritance from her stepfather, or if Julia is mentally unstable, which caused her to kill her stepsister and three other women. There is also some question as to how sound in mind Jack Reacher is. Reacher has very unique views on owning a home, owning a vehicle and living in one place, rather than traveling around as he did when he was in the Army. Reacher's state of mind causes him to want to put his home and SUV up for sale so that he doesn't have anything anchoring him down.

The state of mind of each of the women on the murder list is also questionable. The FBI agents feel as if all of the women are being evasive when answering their questions about their sexual harassment or rape case from the Army, and why the murderer might be after them. It turns out that this evasiveness is because Julia Lamarr had hypnotized the women.

Relationships

Friendships and relationships are a third major theme that runs throughout the novel. Jack Reacher and Jodie have a romantic relationship. While it seems as if Reacher has been in love with Jodie since the first time he met her years before, they do not start a romantic relationship until after Jodie's divorce and after her father, and Reacher's



former commanding officer, dies. Reacher struggles with his level of commitment to Jodie at various points in the novel, after he meets Lisa Harper.

The relationship between Reacher and Harper teeters between work colleagues and lovers at a few points throughout the novel. While they never do more than kiss, the possibility of something more than two people working on a murder case seems to be omnipresent.



Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the third person point of view, from the perspective of author. The novel swings back and forth between the present and the past. The present represents the time after the murders. The past represents the time leading up to the murders.

The point of view of this novel is intimate, allowing a reader to connect closely with the main character, Jack Reacher. This allows the reader to get inside the head, thoughts and inner struggles of Jack Reacher as it pertains to the plot. The reader cares what happens to Jack Reacher. The point of view also allows the author to inject his own opinions into the narration and to expand on the events taking place around the other characters and the occurrences taking place.

Setting

The novel is set primarily in New York City and Quantico, Virginia. At certain times of the novel, the characters are in other areas of the country where the murder victims are located or the locations of the women that are on the murder list. The novel covers the few weeks of the serial murder investigation. The main characters are involved in the investigation of the murders.

The setting of this novel works well with the plot. At first, the reader is not aware that a serial killer is killing former Army women that were involved in sexual harassment issues while serving. However, as events unfold, the murders are a constant part of the plot, the lives of the characters and even the outcome of the novel.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is relatively simple and easy to read. The language is from the 21st century, which is when the novel is set. The language is descriptive enough that it helps to explain the situations and is detailed enough for the reader to truly understand.

Structure

The novel is divided into 31 chapters. The length of each chapter ranges from 10 pages to 20 pages long. The chapters tell the story primarily in exposition and some dialogue. The narrator injects his own voice and thoughts throughout the book, providing his opinions and feelings of the events unfolding in the novel.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot is the struggle of human beings in choosing between good and evil. One subplot is the mental states of the characters. Another subplot is human relationships.



Quotes

"We've got a message for Petrosian" (Chapter 1, p. 15).

"You don't want to know what this is about" (Chapter 2, p. 23).

"It was somebody exactly like you. Maybe it was you" (Chapter 3, p. 54).

"The profile is bullshit" (Chapter 4, p. 59).

"Would you agree to be hypnotized" (Chapter 5, p. 77).

"Maybe they were looking for someone who would kill a killer" (Chapter 6, p. 86).

"He leaves no evidence. Absolutely nothing" (Chapter 7, p. 100).

"What's the significance of the three-week cycle" (Chapter 8, p. 111).

"I thought you profilers were supposed to be real insightful" (Chapter 9, p. 129).

"Colonel must owe you big" (Chapter 10, p. 152).

"I've got thirty names. He could be one of them" (Chapter 11, p. 161).

"I even flew out to Quantico and let Julia hypnotize me, in case there was something buried there, but she said I came up with nothing" (Chapter 12, p. 183).

"It was eleven women. Not ninety-one" (Chapter 13, p. 207).

"We need your input, you know" (Chapter 14, p. 220).

"Now we know how he transports the paint. He delivers it ahead of time" (Chapter 15, p. 248).

"Why are we wrong about this guy's motive" (Chapter 16, p. 269).

"The guy kills you, dumps you in your bathtub and pours it over you" (Chapter 17, p. 275).

"Problem is, now I think the theory is absurd" (Chapter 18, p. 299).

"You're wrong about his motive" (Chapter 19, p. 301).

"Well, no, we don't. Because it's impossible" (Chapter 20, p. 316).

"A guy like this, he's thinking and refining all the time" (Chapter 21, p. 329).

"We'd drift apart" (Chapter 22, p. 341).



"Because Bob's in jail, far as I know" (Chapter 23, p. 368).

"LaSalle Kruger. Supply battalion CO. He's a colonel" (Chapter 24, p. 393).

"If you could lead Kruger back to the paint, that would do it for me" (Chapter 25, p. 397).

"We think it was actually Alison Lamarr, and she supplied the list. Seems they'd set up a support group among themselves, couple of years ago" (Chapter 26, p. 409).

"Big mistakes and wrong assumptions" (Chapter 27, p. 430).

"I'm here to see if you're OK" (Chapter 28, p. 450).

"Now swallow" (Chapter 29, p. 469).

"She actually confessed, right then and there, before she left" (Chapter 30, p. 480).

"So, your secret is safe with me" (Chapter 31, p. 497).



Topics for Discussion

Who is the true Jack Reacher? Why has he chosen to never really own any true possessions and live his life as a wanderer? Do you believe Reacher will sell the house and travel or do you think he will stay put in New York City with Jodie? Do you think the public ever finds out the truth about the case?

Discuss the relationship between Reacher and Jodie. Are they friends, lovers, in love, or something else? Does Jack really want to be with Jodie if he really yearns to travel and not form any roots? Why does Jack feel the need to protect Jodie? How does Jack feel about Jodie? How does Jodie feel about Jack? How do Jack's feelings change after the case is over? What does he do about it? What happens to Jack?

Who is Agent Harper? Why does she try to seduce Reacher? Why do you think Harper tells Reacher the truth about the FBI trying to set him up? What role does Harper play in proving Julia Lamarr is the real murderer?

Why does Julia Lamarr become a serial killer? Do you think she is crazy or that the inheritance is her true motive? Why do you think she doesn't kill Alison Lamarr first?

Discuss the deaths of the women. What impact do the deaths have on the characters of the novel? How does it motivate them and how does it derail their lives?

What do you think happens to the rest of the women on the list now? Do you think the FBI ever tells them about the hypnosis? Do you think someone un-hypnotizes them?

Do you think the FBI arrests anyone for the murders? What do you think they tell the public?