

A Savage Place Study Guide

A Savage Place by Robert B. Parker

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Plot Summary

A Savage Place is eighth in the series of Spenser novels by Robert Parker and is set in the early 1980s. In this novel, Spenser handles a case that takes him from his native Boston to Los Angeles in order to protect a young, ambitious newscaster as she investigates corruption in the movie industry. Soon Spenser realizes this woman is in more trouble than he originally believed when her eyewitness, and only proof of her allegations, is found murdered. *A Savage Place* is a portrait of Los Angeles in the early eighties that both frightens and inspires Spenser's loyal fans and the newly initiated alike.

Spenser receives a call from a former client warning him that a newscaster from Los Angeles will be calling him soon about taking on a new case. When Spenser receives the expected call, the young woman, Candy Sloan, refuses to give him much information about her case, but insists that she needs him as a bodyguard, not an investigator. Intrigued, Spenser agrees to take the case. Upon arriving in Los Angeles, Candy tells Spenser little more about the case, instead insisting that he rest from his flight and she will advise him on the case the following day. In the morning, however, Candy fails to pick up Spenser as promised. Instead, Spenser is chauffeured by a friend of Candy's, who is clearly annoyed with Spenser.

When Spenser arrives at Candy's home, he discovers that she was beaten up by a couple of thugs the night before. Candy received a tip on a story she was doing, but the tip turned out to be a ruse to get her alone, away from the studio. Two men pushed Candy into a van and beat her, while warning her they would do more if she did not stay away from her investigation into a movie studio's corruption. Candy tells Spenser how Mickey, the friend who brought Spenser to Candy's house, saw a studio boss pay a bribe to a man who closely resembles the man who beat up Candy. It is this bribe and implied corruption that Candy has been investigating.

Spenser spends the next days at Candy's while she recovers from her injuries. When Candy is fully recovered, Spenser tags along as she resumes her investigation. First Candy visits the head of the studio where Mickey saw the bribe. The man becomes enraged and orders Candy and Spenser off the lot. Instead, Candy and Spenser go to the commissary where they have a conversation with an acquaintance. During this conversation, the studio boss comes in with security and has them escorted off the lot. Shortly afterward, Spenser and Candy are driving through town when Spenser notices they are being followed. Spenser has Candy pull over at a farmer's market where he doubles back and catches one of the men near Candy's car. Spenser overpowers the man and interrogates him, only to learn he is a hired thug and knows little about the situation.

Shortly after this confrontation, Spenser and Candy learn that Mickey has been murdered. Spenser believes that someone at the studio figured out it was Mickey who was Candy's informant and decided to silence him. Candy decides the next obvious step is to go to the head of the company that owns the studio, Peter Brewster. However,



her reception at Brewster's office is cold and Candy gets no help there. Candy decides she should then visit Sam Felton, the man who paid the bribe that Mickey witnessed. While there, Franco, the thug who beat up Candy and who Spenser suspects killed Mickey, shows up. Franco leaves with Felton after Spenser kills Franco's partner who was trying to keep Franco from killing Spenser and Candy. Spenser calls the police and is cleared of any charges, but is warned to back off the case when Felton is found murdered. The television station also tells Candy to back off, informing her that she is no longer on the story.

Spenser is told to leave town since he is no longer being paid by the studio, but he decides to stick around anyway. Spenser moves into Candy's house and watches as she begins to romance Peter Brewster in hopes of getting him to reveal some information about corruption at the studio. Candy believes that Brewster is going to meet with some known mob associates and asks Spenser to follow her on one of her dates. Spenser does, but is unable to follow closely enough to stop Brewster from killing Candy. Upset by her death and his inability to stop it, Spenser goes to Brewster's office and takes him and his head of security hostage in Brewster's office. Spenser then calls the television station for which Candy worked and has them send over a news crew to film Brewster's confession. When Spenser is satisfied that Brewster will be arrested and that his confession, confirming Candy's allegations, will air, Spenser is arrested for assault and kidnapping. However, the detective involved in the case allows Spenser to go home with the understanding that he will return to testify in Brewster's trial.



Chapters 1-2

Chapters 1-2 Summary

Spenser is in his office reading a biography about the poet Spenser that his girlfriend Susan gave to him when he receives a phone call from a former client. Spenser answers the phone imitating the great detective Allan Pinkerton, but the former client, writer Rachel Wallace, does not find it amusing. Wallace tells Spenser that she gave his name and number to a reporter in Los Angeles, who called requesting the information after having done a story on Wallace a few months before. The reporter, Candy Sloan, has received threats related to a corruption story she is investigating in the motion picture industry. Wallace tells Spenser that he should expect a phone call from Sloan. A few minutes after Spenser hangs up with Wallace, Candy Sloan calls. Candy offers to hire Spenser through the station she works for as a bodyguard to protect her in case any of the threats she has received are acted upon. Spenser agrees to take the case and takes a plane out the following afternoon.

Candy Sloan meets Spenser at the airport the following day and drives him to the hotel where the television station is lodging him. On the way to the hotel, Candy and Spenser talk briefly about the case, specifically whether Spenser's skills as an investigator will be needed. Candy assures Spenser she is confident she can handle the investigation herself and will only need Spenser to protect her against any threats to her well being. Candy does not want Spenser to think she cannot handle the investigation because she is a woman. Spenser agrees to act only as a bodyguard and to keep any opinions on the investigation to himself. Candy drops Spenser off at the hotel and promises to pick him up in the morning, when he will begin work on the case.

Chapters 1-2 Analysis

Spenser is introduced in the first chapter. Spenser is a private investigator out of Boston who has a strange sense of humor. Spenser is reading a biography of the poet Spenser that his girlfriend, Susan, gave him, claiming it is his own biography. Spenser quickly realizes the book is not about him, but continues to read it to prove his own intelligence. Later, when the phone rings, Spenser claims to be Allan Pinkerton, the great detective from the nineteenth century who began the first modern detective agency, Pinkerton's. Although the caller does not find this amusing, Spenser's joke shows the reader his quirky sense of humor and the depth of his knowledge about American history, at least as far as his own profession is concerned.

Also introduced in these first two chapters is Candy Sloan. Candy is a female television reporter who is very beautiful and most likely got her job based on her looks as much as her ability to report the news. Candy is aware of the fact that her looks are as much a distraction from her talents as an asset and seems determined to prove herself a good reporter despite her looks. When Spenser asks what his role in her investigation is to



be, Candy makes it clear he is only there to protect her from bodily harm, insisting that she will do the bulk of the investigation herself. This touches on the theme of sexism and Candy's determination to prove herself a good reporter. The reader sees Candy's determination, and as much as they want to applaud her strength, suspects that this determination may lead Candy down a road from which Spenser can not rescue her.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

The following morning, Spenser wakes early and has breakfast in his room before going for a run. Spenser is familiar with Los Angeles and runs through some neighborhoods he has run through before, amused that Los Angelinos could name two different streets the same name. Back at the hotel, Spenser showers and shaves, dressing in a casual suit he would not wear in Boston but is sure will help him blend in in Los Angeles. As Spenser is finishing up, the phone rings. The man on the other end tells him that Candy Sloan has sent him. Candy was injured the night before and wants Spenser brought to her home. Spenser goes down to the lobby and finds a short, tough-looking man waiting for him. Spenser asks about Candy, but the angry man tells him to ask her himself.

Spenser and the short man, Mickey Rafferty, arrive at Candy's house after a short, silent drive. Candy's face is bruised, and she has a stitch in the corner of her mouth. Candy tells Spenser that she went back to the television studio after dropping him at the hotel when she got a call from someone claiming to have information on a series on which she had been working. Candy agreed to meet the man in the zoo parking lot. When she arrived, two men pushed her into a van and drove around while one of the men beat her face. The men warned her to stop investigating the movie studio corruption story and then left her on the Ventura Freeway. As Candy tells this story, Mickey keeps interrupting, first accusing Spenser of not doing his job and then telling Candy she should not have gone to meet these men alone. Spenser quickly gets the idea that Mickey believes himself to be Candy's boyfriend. As Mickey continues to question Spenser's ability to protect Candy, Mickey grows increasingly hostile. Finally Mickey punches Spenser. Spenser, who is larger and heavier than Mickey, is able to hold him off and make it clear that he would win in any fight between the two.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Spenser is picked up at the hotel by Mickey Rafferty, a friend of Candy's. Spenser has no idea what is going on, but soon learns when he arrives at Candy's house. Candy has been beaten by a couple of thugs and warned to stay out of the movie industry corruption investigation. Candy is upset, but more determined than ever to continue with the investigation, showing the reader the depth of her strength. However, her boyfriend Mickey is not as happy about the situation. Mickey wants Candy to fire Spenser because he clearly cannot protect her. Mickey then picks a fight with Spenser; however, Spenser is much bigger than Mickey and able to end the idea of a fight without anyone getting hurt. Spenser's reaction to this situation again shows his quirky sense of humor and it also begins to show the reader how tough he is. Spenser could have beaten up Mickey for questioning his ability to do his job, but Spenser chose not to hurt the smaller man. Spenser has a strong moral compass, as proven by the delicate way in which he handles Mickey. Mickey, on the other hand, is an angry man, who cares about Candy

and only wants to protect her. However, Candy does not want Mickey's protection and feels she can handle herself, touching again on the theme of sexism.



Chapters 4-5

Chapters 4-5 Summary

Spenser learns that Mickey is a stunt man and that he witnessed a bribe being paid while he was working on a movie a few weeks before. Mickey saw a producer, Sam Felton, paying off some guy who looks a lot like the guy who beat up Candy at Summit Studios. Mickey, however, is Candy's only witness and the only evidence she has at the moment. Spenser questions what Mickey saw, suggesting that Felton could have been paying off a bookie or something less criminal, but Mickey insists that it had the feel of a bribe being paid. Candy thinks Felton was paying off the mob, but cannot prove it. Candy talked to Felton about what Mickey saw, but he denied the whole thing. Spenser suggests that Mickey might be in danger, but Mickey swears he can take care of himself.

Spenser stays at Candy's for several days while she recovers from her wounds. Finally Candy decides it is time to get back to work. The first thing she wants to do is visit the head of Summit Studios, Roger Hammond. Before the meeting, however, Spenser and Candy go to Spenser's hotel so he can get fresh clothes and then go out for lunch. At the studio, they are forced to wait while Hammond takes a long distance phone call. Finally, Candy and Spenser are shown into Hammond's office. At first Hammond is pleasant and helpful, but soon becomes defensive and angry as Candy tells him her theory about labor racketeering in the movie industry. Candy tells Hammond about the bribe transaction Mickey saw, keeping Mickey's name out of it despite Hammond's insistence on knowing his name. Hammond accuses Candy of making up lies and kicks her and Spenser out of his office, promising to report her conduct to the head of the television studio.

Chapters 4-5 Analysis

Spenser finally learns the details of the case on which Candy is working. Mickey is the only witness and evidence Candy has so far. Spenser is not even sure they can prove the pay off was a bribe. However, Candy is determined to do so, insisting that her instincts are correct. This bribe Mickey witnessed is the basis of Candy's entire investigation. This investigation is very important to Candy because she believes it will prove her worth as a reporter and help promote her career.

Candy and Spenser go to visit the head of Summit Studios after Candy has healed. The studio head treats Candy like the beautiful woman she is, once again touching on the theme of sexism, acting as though there is nothing this woman can say that can hurt him. However, Hammond quickly becomes irritated with Candy's questions and angers when she continues to suggest that something illegal is going on at his studio. Hammond's reaction seems a little over the top to the reader and suggests that either

he is really telling the truth, that nothing illegal is taking place at his studio, or he is hiding something behind his outrage.



Chapters 6-7

Chapters 6-7 Summary

Candy and Spenser stop at the commissary for a drink on their way out of the studio. Spenser tells Candy he thinks Hammond is lying about not knowing anything about the bribery because it seems reasonable Felton would have told Hammond about Candy's accusations when she visited with him before. As they talk, Candy and Spenser are joined by one of the studio's publicists. Before Candy can ask the publicist any questions, Hammond comes into the commissary with a couple security guards and demands that Candy and Spenser leave. Spenser and Candy allow the security guards to walk them to their car, leaving peacefully.

As Candy and Spenser drive through town, Spenser notices a car following them. Spenser instructs Candy to take a few odd turns to make sure the car is really following. Finally, Spenser has Candy turn into a farmer's market and run into the bathroom to hide until he calls for her. Spenser walks Candy into the market to make sure she gets into the bathroom safely and then doubles back. Spenser finds a blond man waiting near Candy's car. Spenser overpowers the man and presses a gun to his nose, demanding to know who he is and what he wants. The man tells him he was hired by the fat man, the same man who took the bribe and beat up Candy. The man does not know anything else. Spenser can hear police sirens, so he drives the man's car around the corner. Spenser then tells Candy to go get her car and come pick him up on the corner.

Chapters 6-7 Analysis

Candy and Spenser discuss their meeting with Hammond. Spenser believes Hammond knows more than he is telling them because his behavior is so outrageous. As if to prove it, Hammond arrives in the commissary and has Candy and Spenser thrown off the lot. Now the reader also believes Hammond has something to hide. Moments later, while driving through town, Spenser notices that he and Candy are being followed. Spenser has Candy park the car and hide while he doubles back and confronts one of the men who has been following them. The man has little to tell Spenser. However, the fact that they are being followed seems to prove that Candy is on the right track. Perhaps Hammond called the thugs to stop Candy and Spenser from investigating the studio. The reader is unsure at this point who is behind the threats, but the coincidence of these men showing up so close to Candy talking to Hammond seems too much to ignore.



Chapters 8-11

Chapters 8-11 Summary

Spenser and Candy meet up again. Spenser tells Candy what happened and then promises to show her how to use a gun, believing it might be helpful later. Then Spenser and Candy go to the offices of an agent Candy used to know. Candy convinces the agent that this investigation could make her career for her. Reluctantly the agent tells Candy and Spenser that Hammond got the studio into financial trouble five years ago, and a West Coast Mob family bailed him out before his bosses at the parent company, Oceania Limited, could find out. Candy wonders aloud why the mob would do this and Spenser tells her that they did it because now they now control Hammond.

That night Spenser escorts Candy to dinner. They talk about the case and Candy suggests that her next move should be to talk to the President of Oceania. After dinner, Spenser takes Candy back to his hotel where she has taken the room next to his. Candy asks Spenser to join her for a drink. Spenser and Candy share several drinks on the balcony of her room where they talk briefly about Spenser's past and his girlfriend, Susan. After a while, Spenser and Candy end up in bed with the understanding that it is only a one time thing. The next morning over breakfast Candy wants to know if Spenser will tell Susan about their night together. Spenser admits he will.

Later that morning, Candy and Spenser go to the offices of Oceania where they ask to see the president. The president forces them to wait a long time and then allows them into his office only after his lawyer, the head of public relations, and a security officer have arrived. Candy tells the president, Peter Brewster, about her eyewitness who saw a bribe payoff. Brewster accuses Candy of making unfounded allegations and threatens to call her boss to complain. As Brewster becomes rude to Candy, Spenser cannot help making some rude comments of his own. Candy becomes frustrated, both with Brewster's threats and Spenser's comments. Finally Candy suggests they leave at the same time that Brewster calls for security to escort them out.

Chapters 8-11 Analysis

Candy and Spenser visit an agent who tells them how Hammond mishandled finances at Summit Pictures so badly that he had to be bailed out by the mob. Spenser suggests that this means that Hammond is being controlled by the mob, perhaps explaining the bribe Mickey saw Felton pay. This could also explain the thugs who have been following Candy and who beat her up. The agent also tells Candy who owns the studio, a company named Oceania. Candy decides to go there and talk to the president. However, Candy gets a cold reception, and much to Spenser and the reader's dismay, takes everything the man dishes out without trying to defend herself. Once again the theme of sexism is touched on here. Candy wants to prove she can do whatever it takes



to make it as a female reporter, but she fails to show her strength of character, and, in this case, allows a man to bully her into leaving.

Candy and Spenser spend the night in bed during this set of chapters. Spenser has a girlfriend and is very clear to Candy that he loves his girlfriend and has no intention of a long term affair with Candy. Candy agrees, but is amused that Spenser would admit that he intends to tell his girlfriend of their one night stand despite the pain it might cause her. Candy finds this liberating and it again fits in with the theme of feminism or sexism. Also fitting in with that theme is Candy's decision to have sex with a man who is not her husband knowing that it is a one night thing and will not be repeated. This, too, might be considered the act of a "liberated woman," again touching on Candy's desire to be seen as more than the weaker sex. Candy's behavior also gives more insight into her personality in her willingness to go to bed with a man she does not know well nor one with whom she does not intend to have a relationship. As the plot continues to develop, the reader will be reminded of this episode.



Chapters 12-15

Chapters 12-15 Summary

Candy is very upset by the meeting with Brewster and tells Spenser she is afraid Brewster has the power to have her fired should he complain about her interview. Candy is angry at all men for the power they have over her and refuses to allow Spenser to console her. Spenser tries to put sexism into perspective for Candy, but she insists that because Spenser is a man he could never appreciate what she is going through. Candy is determined to be the victim and to make Spenser feel like a bully just for being a man.

Later that evening, Spenser and Candy learn that Mickey Rafferty was killed. A cop named Samuelson comes to tell them to ask questions about Mickey. Candy refuses to tell him anything about the corruption investigation, claiming she has no clue why someone would want to kill Mickey. After the cop leaves, Candy tells Spenser she does not want to tell the police because if they get involved she will never be able to break the story. Spenser is unhappy with her decision, believing they should be honest with the police and allow them to help. When Candy continues to argue, Spenser agrees to stand by her.

The next morning, Candy and Spenser go to Candy's house to check the mail and find a message from Mickey on the answering machine. The message says that Mickey talked to Felton. Spenser realizes that it was talking to Felton that got Mickey killed, so he suggests that he and Candy go talk to Felton. Maybe then they can get Felton's thug to make an appearance and maybe find out for whom he works. Before they do anything else, however, Spenser teaches Candy how to use a gun.

Chapters 12-15 Analysis

Again touching on the theme of sexism, Candy is angry at Brewster because she believes he has the power to get her fired for being too pushy and making unfounded allegations. Candy is also angry with Spenser because she believes he does not understand what it means to be a woman in a man's world. Spenser does his best to calm Candy, but has little luck. Later, Candy and Spenser learn that Mickey has been killed, an event that Spenser predicted several chapters back. Candy is upset, but she keeps her wits enough to refuse to tell the police about Mickey seeing bribe being paid at Summit Pictures. Candy is trying to save her story, at the expense of keeping information from the police. Spenser warns her that this is not wise, but Candy ignores his advice. Spenser later teaches Candy how to shoot a gun, something that might come in handy if the same men who killed Mickey come after her. At the same time, Candy and Spenser begin to think that Felton is the one who keeps calling the thugs out after them because it turns out that Mickey spoke to Felton right before he died.



Chapters 16-18

Chapters 16-18 Summary

Candy and Spenser go downtown to make a statement about Mickey's death, continuing to leave out the details about the corruption investigation. Late that afternoon, Candy and Spenser go to Sam Felton's house. When they are refused admission because Felton is not home, Candy and Spenser decide to wait until he arrives. Candy and Spenser have a picnic in her car and try to lighten the mood as they wait. When Felton stops at his own gate later that evening, Candy approaches him. Felton finds himself in a position in which he is forced to invite Candy and Spenser into the house.

Before they can begin their conversation, Felton leaves the room to wash his hands. When he returns, Candy asks Felton about Mickey. Felton answers the questions in a nice enough tone, but he is clearly nervous. Spenser suspects something is wrong and places his gun between the couch cushions, within easy reach. Within minutes, Franco, the thug, arrives. Franco wants Candy and Spenser to go with him, but Spenser refuses. Spenser pulls his gun and tells Candy they now have the proof they need to prove that Franco killed Mickey. All they need is to take Felton in to the police. However, before they can do that, a gun fight erupts. Spenser kills the young blond man with Franco, but Franco grabs Felton and leaves. Spenser is forced to call the police while Candy is once again without a story.

Spenser and Candy now are forced to tell Samuelson everything about Mickey and the story Candy is developing. Samuelson is not happy with Spenser and Candy but does not charge them with anything. The next day, Candy and Spenser make an identification of Franco at the police station. It turns out Franco, or Francisco Montenegro, was once a collector for a loan shark. While they are discussing the case with Samuelson, a call comes in that Felton has been found dead at a local Holiday Inn. It appears that Felton was shot on an upper level of the parking garage behind the motel and allowed to fall backward into a Dumpster. Spenser hypothesizes that Franco works for someone, perhaps Hammond, and that he killed Felton to keep Felton quiet. Spenser begins to think that maybe Franco is trying to run a scam all his own.

Chapters 16-18 Analysis

Candy and Spenser believe Felton is the one who has called Franco to follow them, attack Candy, and kill Mickey, so they decide to go talk to Felton. Their theory proves to be correct. Felton calls Franco almost as soon as Spenser and Candy arrive. When Franco arrives, Spenser is prepared for him. A gun fight ensues and soon Franco and Felton are leaving while Spenser is left with the death of Franco's partner on his hands. Spenser refuses to allow Candy to ignore the legalities this time and calls the police himself. The same detective investigating Mickey's case arrives. Spenser tells him



everything, including Mickey's part in the story Candy is investigating. Later, Felton is found murdered. Spenser tags along to the crime scene where he and Samuelson theorize that Franco is beginning his own scam and that this is why he has killed Felton, in order to keep him quiet.

The case seems to be heating up. Spenser and Candy have found a connection between Franco and Felton. However, with Felton and Mickey dead Candy still has no witness and no evidence. Not only this, but now the police are involved. Candy is afraid she will lose her story now because the police will scare everyone into silence. Spenser is intrigued with the case now, curious why such a mob shakedown is being run so sloppily. Spenser thinks that someone small is trying to act big, suspecting Franco to be behind the bribes, the murders, and the attacks on Candy. However, the reader still does not see proof of this and Candy still has no story.



Chapters 19-22

Chapters 19-22 Summary

Candy and Spenser are having lunch with the news director from Candy's station. The man tells Candy that the story is over, that she is to stop working on it. The man also tells Spenser he will pay him for the rest of the week if he wants to enjoy a vacation. Spenser refuses the extra pay. After lunch, Candy and Spenser have a drink at a local bar. Candy is convinced there is still a story. Candy believes that Franco killed Felton to cover up something bigger than a blackmail scam. Spenser suggests that maybe Franco killed Felton to keep him from telling the mob something. Candy then asks Spenser to stay in Los Angeles, offering to put him up in her house. Spenser agrees. The next morning Candy is severely hung over and too sick to do much of anything. Spenser calls Samuelson and learns that Samuelson is beginning to doubt Franco killed Felton as well.

Candy gets a call from Peter Brewster. Brewster apologizes for his behavior the last time they met and asks her out to dinner. Candy agrees, hoping to get the evidence she needs to continue with her story. Spenser follows Candy and Brewster in Candy's car only to watch them have dinner and then make love on Brewster's couch. Spenser waits in the car until four in the morning and then follows Candy back to her house. Candy tries to explain to Spenser why she had sex with Brewster, only to become angry at him when she feels as though he is judging her for her actions. The following day, Spenser accompanies Candy as she works and again follows her on another date with Brewster. When Candy and Brewster again go to Brewster's house, Spenser decides to go back to Candy's. Candy did not come home until the next morning. The next day is pretty much the same, Spenser following Candy as she works and then as she goes out with Brewster. This time Candy does not come home at all and calls Spenser to tell him she will be at the studio all day and he should not worry about going there. Spenser spends the day touring LA before Candy comes home and invites him to dinner.

Chapters 19-22 Analysis

Now that Felton is dead, Candy is told to stop working on the story. Spenser is also fired, though they offer to pay him for the rest of the week. True to his character, Spenser refuses the extra money. Later, Candy and Spenser talk the case over and decide that it does not make sense for Franco to kill Felton if all he is trying to protect is a blackmailing scheme. Spenser begins to suspect someone else might have killed Felton. Spenser also learns that the detective, Samuelson, also suspects this. Candy asks Spenser to stick around while she continues to look into the story on her own. Spenser agrees since it seems Candy is playing with dynamite by continuing to look into the story, and he also wants to learn the truth about the whole case.



Candy begins to date Peter Brewster, the president of Oceania. Spenser follows Candy on her dates to make sure she is safe, but is saddened when he sees her having sex with Brewster. Candy tries to explain that she is simply using the power of her body to get close to Brewster, hoping he will reveal some evidence during their more intimate moments. This again touches on the theme of sexism as Candy claims that men have been doing this sort of thing for millions of years, so there should be nothing wrong with Candy doing it. However, the reader gets the impression from Candy's heated argument that she feels a little ashamed of herself just the same. Candy and Brewster date every night for several days, leaving Spenser bored and wondering if anything will ever come of this investigation.



Chapters 23-26

Chapters 23-26 Summary

Over dinner Candy tells Spenser that Brewster has mob connections and that Franco is blackmailing him, threatening to tell the police. Brewster is to meet with Franco the following night. Candy is to have dinner with Brewster the following night as well so she suggests that if she can find out where the meeting is to be, she and Spenser can follow. Spenser says that Brewster will probably take someone with him, maybe his security man, and kill Franco. Candy is overconfident that Brewster would never think of killing her. Candy believes she is an asset to Brewster because she has convinced him she loves him. Spenser is concerned for her safety just the same. Spenser tries to convince Candy to go to the police, but she refuses. Spenser relents and agrees to follow her on her date. Spenser rents a car for the occasion so Brewster will not know he is being followed.

Spenser follows Candy and Brewster in Brewster's Mercedes, separating briefly when Brewster pulls into an oil field near LAX. Spenser goes to Brewster's car, but finds it already empty. Spenser heads out into the field, unable to see where Brewster and Candy have gone. After a few seconds, Spenser hears gunshots. Spenser rushes to the area where the shots were fired, but arrives too late. Candy and Franco are dead. Spenser goes back to where Brewster's car was, but it is gone. Spenser goes into town, reports the murders, and then goes to Brewster's house. Brewster is not home, but Spenser's knocking brings out security guards. Spenser leaves Brewster's and goes to the building where Oceania's offices are. Spenser parks on the street to wait for Brewster to show up. Spenser is nearly run off by the police, so he stands on the street to watch the building. In the morning, Spenser calls and asks for Brewster, learning he is expected at nine-thirty. Spenser goes into the office at nine-forty.

Chapters 23-26 Analysis

Spenser learns from Candy that Franco is blackmailing Brewster, threatening to tell the police about his mob connections. Brewster is to have a meeting with Franco the next night. Candy wants to find out where and follow in order to get the information she needs for her story. Spenser is worried that Brewster will try to kill Candy if he learns what she is up to, but allows Candy to go through with her plan anyway. When Candy proves to be overconfident and is killed, Spenser is overwhelmed with guilt. Once again, Candy proves that she is trying so hard to be like a man that she over-thinks things, is overconfident in her abilities, and has placed herself in a place of danger. Spenser also proves his deep moral compass when he is overcome with guilt for allowing Candy to do what she would have done with or without his help.

Spenser goes directly to Brewster's house and the reader suspects Spenser does not intend to simply express his disappointment. However, what Spenser is planning is still



a mystery. When Brewster is not home, Spenser goes to his office where he waits all night for Brewster to show up. Finally Spenser goes into the office building to find Brewster. However, the reader still has no idea what Spenser is planning. Hopefully the following chapters will clear up the mystery.



Chapters 27-30

Chapters 27-30 Summary

Spenser slams into Brewster's office and finds him there with his security man, Simms. Spenser fights off Simms and an executive in the waiting room, overpowering Brewster and Simms, only to face several security guards. Eventually Spenser fought them all off, locking himself, Brewster, and Simms in Brewster's office. Spenser tells Brewster that he knows that he had Simms kill both Franco and Candy. Brewster tries to deny it, suggesting Simms went crazy and acted on his own, but Simms denies this. Spenser tells Brewster he is going to confess to the murders on television. Spenser then speaks to the cops who have arrived outside, asking them to call Samuelson. Spenser then calls the television station and has them send a news crew. Spenser wants Brewster to confess to killing Candy on tape. Spenser writes out the confession, has the news director tape it, and then gives himself up to Samuelson.

At the police station, Spenser learns that Franco's loan shark boss bailed out Hammond six years ago when he made some bad investments and got Summit Pictures in financial trouble. When Brewster found out about it, he took a piece of the action. Everyone was making good money and it seemed harmless. Felton was skimming money, but no one knew except Franco. Franco began taking a piece of the money, too, so when it seemed Felton was about to turn, Franco had to kill Felton to keep him quiet. When Felton was dead, Franco had to run because it was only a matter of time before his bosses learned what he was doing. Franco blackmailed Brewster who had Simms, an enforcer for the mob, kill him and Candy.

Samuelson tells Spenser that the DA wants to prosecute him for assault and kidnapping against Brewster and Simms. Samuelson is supposed to take Spenser to be booked. However, Samuelson takes Spenser to the airport instead, making him promise to come back when it is time to testify. Spenser sleeps all the way home, dreaming about Susan.

Chapters 27-30 Analysis

Spenser breaks into Brewster's office and takes Brewster and Simms hostage. Spenser wants justice for Candy. Spenser has a news crew come to the office and tape a message from Brewster admitting that he killed her and that Candy had uncovered his connection to the mob. To Spenser, Brewster's statement revealed Candy's good work as a reporter, giving her what she had always wanted, legitimacy as a reporter. Ironically, Candy had wanted to prove herself a good reporter despite her feminine sex, but it took a man to do it for her.

Spenser is arrested, after which Samuelson tells him how Brewster became involved with the mob and why he killed Franco and Candy. Spenser finally has all the answers he has been looking for and the story has come full circle. However, Spenser has been

arrested for assaulting Brewster and Simms as well as kidnapping. Samuelson, who has become a friend to Spenser, refuses to book him, however, and sends him home.



Characters

Spenser

Spenser is a private investigator who works out of Boston. Spenser gets a call from a television reporter who got his number from a previous client. The reporter, Candy Sloan, wants to hire Spenser to act as a bodyguard while she investigates corruption in the movie industry. Spenser immediately flies out to Los Angeles where Candy puts him up in a local hotel. The next day Spenser learns that Candy was attacked by a couple of thugs, beat up, and warned to stay away from the corruption story. However, Candy is more determined than ever to work the story.

Spenser follows Candy around as she interviews people involved in the story, anxious to help but aware that Candy wants to do the actual investigating herself. Spenser makes many suggestions and acts as a sounding board to Candy's ideas, but does not interfere with the investigation and the choices Candy makes. When the station orders Candy to stop work on the story, Spenser agrees to stay when Candy decides to continue working the story on her own. Spenser follows Candy as she begins to date Peter Brewster, the president of Oceania Properties and her lead suspect in the corruption story. One night Candy is killed despite Spenser following her into the oil fields with Brewster. As a result, Spenser kidnaps and assaults Brewster and his security chief, Simms, forcing Brewster to confess to his mob connections and the murder of Candy Sloan on television.

Candy Sloan

Candy Sloan is a television reporter in Los Angeles. Candy wants to prove she is a good reporter despite being a woman in a man's world. Candy learns that her friend, stunt man Mickey Rafferty, has seen what he believes to be a payoff to the mob. Candy begins to investigate, hoping to prove corruption in the movie industry. However, Candy begins getting threats. The station she works for agrees to allow Candy to hire a bodyguard. Candy hires Spenser because she remembers a writer she interviewed telling her what a good job Spenser did for her.

Before Spenser can begin protecting Candy, she is kidnapped and beaten by a couple thugs. This does nothing to scare off Candy. Candy is more determined than ever to continue with the story. However, when Candy interviews Peter Brewster, president of Summit Picture's parent company, Oceania Properties, she becomes frightened that he might be able to put enough pressure on her bosses to end her career. Candy then accuses Spenser of not understanding what it is like to be a woman in a man's world. Candy is determined to prove that she can do just as good a job as a man but is afraid the boy's club that runs the television industry will keep her from proving her abilities.



When Candy is told to stop investigating the case, she is determined to continue. Candy begins dating Peter Brewster and sleeping with him in the hope that he will become relaxed enough around her to admit to his corruption. However, Peter Brewster knows what Candy is doing, and he uses her until he can get rid of her. Brewster takes Candy out into an oil field and shoots her, leaving her dead body beside another victim, Franco.

Mickey Rafferty

Mickey Rafferty is a stunt man who witnessed what he believed to be a bribe being paid by a movie producer to a mob guy. Mickey goes to Candy Sloan with this information because he believes Candy to be his girlfriend and he wants to help advance her career. When Candy is beaten up, however, Mickey begins to question her involvement and becomes determined to help protect her. Mickey resents Spenser and believes Spenser cannot protect Candy as well as Mickey can. Spenser is forced to prove his strength to Mickey by getting into a scuffle with him. Spenser proves himself to be the tougher man, however, and puts Mickey in his place. Spenser is concerned Mickey might be in danger due to what he witnessed. Spenser is right. Mickey is killed at his hotel.

Sam Felton

Sam Felton is a movie producer who works for Summit Pictures. Mickey Rafferty sees Felton paying a bribe to a man who appears to be a mobster, beginning the investigation that leads Candy to believe there is corruption in the movie industry. Every time Candy tries to talk to Felton, he denies the allegation. Finally Candy and Spenser visit Felton at his home. Felton immediately calls Franco, a thug who works for the mob. Franco tries to kidnap Spenser and Candy, but Spenser pulls a gun. A fight results. Franco escapes with Felton and later kills Felton. Spenser is confused by Franco killing Felton until he realizes that Franco has done this to protect himself. It turns out that Franco and Felton were taking a cut of the payoffs between Summit Pictures and the mob, and Felton was paying Franco to keep his mouth shut.

Roger Hammond

Roger Hammond is the head of Summit Pictures. Roger Hammond made some bad investments with the studio's money five or six years before the novel begins and was forced to go to the mob to bail him out before anyone could find out. As a result, the mob got involved in the movie industry and everyone, including Hammond, got rich. However, Felton began stealing money and Franco found out. Franco began blackmailing Felton, which is the payoff that Mickey saw. This payoff begins Candy's investigation, causing the mob to become concerned that Candy might prove the connection and bring them all down. As a result, Franco was sent to scare Candy off, but it did not work.



Peter Brewster

Peter Brewster is the president of Oceania Properties. Brewster is rude to Candy when she first visits his office, threatening to speak to the head of the television studio and get her fired. Candy becomes frightened by this idea, believing that a powerful man like Brewster could ruin her career. However, when Brewster calls a short time later, apologizes, and invites her to dinner, Candy agrees to go out with him in the hopes of making him relaxed enough to tell her about his connection with the mob. Candy begins sleeping with Brewster with this hope despite her desire to prove herself as smart as a man. Brewster, it turns out, is using Candy. Brewster takes Candy out into an isolated oil field and kills her along with Franco, who is an enforcer for the mob.

Rollie Simms

Rollie Simms is the chief of security at Oceania Properties. Simms is the one who actually shot Candy and Franco, per Brewster's orders. When Spenser kidnaps Simms and Brewster the next day, Brewster tries to blame everything on Simms, so Simms tells the truth. Later when Simms and Brewster are arrested, Simms turns on Brewster and tells the complete truth, causing both men to be charged with numerous crimes. Not only that, but with these confessions, Spenser finally learns the truth about Candy's investigation and its conclusion.

Detective Samuelson

Detective Samuelson is the homicide detective who investigates both Mickey Rafferty's and Felton's murder. At first, Candy makes the decision to lie to Samuelson about Mickey's role in the movie industry corruption story. However, after Spenser kills Franco's assistant in Felton's house, Spenser insists they be truthful with Samuelson. Samuelson is not happy about the lies but agrees to allow Spenser to go along when they discover Felton's body. Samuelson and Spenser discuss Felton's murder and bounce theories off each other. Later, Spenser keeps in touch with Samuelson, happy for the help despite Candy's reluctance to trust the police. Spenser and Samuelson become tentative friends, and Samuelson ends up cutting Spenser loose when he is accused of kidnapping and assaulting Brewster and Simms.

Francisco Montenegro

Francisco Montenegro, or Franco, is a mob enforcer. Franco is blackmailing Felton and Mickey sees a payoff between Franco and Felton, which begins Candy's investigation into the movie industry. Franco learns that Candy is investigating the movie industry and kidnaps her, beating her, hoping to scare her off the story. However, Candy only becomes more determined to investigate the story. Later, Franco follows Candy and Spenser through town after they interview Hammond. Spenser is able to scare Franco and his hired partner off that time. Later when Spenser and Candy show up at Felton's



house, Franco arrives and a gun fight erupts. Spenser kills Franco's partner but is unable to stop Franco from taking off with Felton. Later, Felton is found murdered. Franco killed Felton to keep him from telling the mob that he has been stealing money from Hammond's payoffs. Franco is running from the mob after Felton's death, so he blackmails Brewster. Rather than be blackmailed, Brewster kills Franco and Candy in a remote oil field.

Ray Zifkind

Ray Zifkind is the mob leader who bails Hammond out of trouble when he makes bad investments that leave the studio in trouble. Zifkind helps Hammond and begins to take payoffs from the studio. When Brewster finds out about this, rather than stop it, he is cut in on the action. It is this relationship that Brewster is trying to hide by killing both Candy and Franco. Zifkind is a powerful man in the mob, and despite the fact that Brewster and Hammond are going to be charged with crimes, Zifkind will most likely go free due to a lack of evidence.



Objects/Places

MG

Candy drives an MG, a small sports car. Spenser uses this car to follow Candy on her dates with Peter Brewster.

Bribe

Mickey Rafferty sees Felton pay a bribe to Franco, which is the act that begins Candy's investigation into corruption in the movie industry.

Gun

Spenser keeps a gun close by in order to protect himself and Candy during Candy's investigation into racketeering in the movie industry.

Oil Fields

Candy and Franco are killed in an oil field near Los Angeles Airport by Brewster and his chief of security, Simms.

Felton's House

Candy and Spenser go to Felton's house to speak to him and to hopefully find a connection between him and Franco. While Spenser and Candy are at Felton's house, Franco shows up and attempts to kidnap Candy and Spenser.

Brewster's House

Candy goes to Brewster's house after each of their dates. Spenser observes Candy and Brewster through the window and is saddened to see Candy using her feminine wiles to get what she wants from Brewster.

Farmer's Market

Spenser sees that he and Candy are being followed, so he has Candy turn into the Farmer's Market in order to get the drop on the thugs following them. Spenser attacks one of the thugs, but does not learn much from him because he is only a hired hand.



Holiday Inn

Felton is found murdered in a Dumpster near the parking garage at a local Holiday Inn.

Summit Pictures

Summit Pictures is the movie studio where Mickey Rafferty believes he witnesses a mob payoff.

Oceania Properties

Oceania Properties is the company that owns Summit Pictures and where Peter Brewster is the president.

Los Angeles

Spenser travels to Los Angeles to protect Candy Sloan while she investigates a story about corruption in the movie industry.

Boston

Spenser lives and works in Boston. Susan Silverman, Spenser's girlfriend, also lives in Boston.



Themes

Sexism

Candy wants to prove she can do just as good a job on hard-nosed investigations as a man. However, Candy falls into her own trap by using her femininity to solve the case and ends up dying for it. In the beginning, Candy stumbles on corruption in the movie industry when her friend, Mickey Rafferty, sees what he believes is a payoff to the mob. Candy grabs this information and begins investigating what appears to be a story that could help her write her ticket in the television news industry. Candy begins investigating, causing a couple thugs to threaten her. Candy hires Spenser to protect her, only she is beat up the night Spenser comes to town. This does nothing to scare Candy off the story, however. Candy only believes more intently that this story will make her career.

As Candy continues to investigate the story, she runs into several powerful men who threaten to have her fired from the television station. Candy becomes frightened that she will lose her job because she knows if a man powerful enough talks to her bosses, they will pull her from the story and either fire her or refuse to allow her to investigate any more hard-nosed stories. Candy also becomes angry at Spenser for not understanding her fears and the experiences Candy has had to face due to her gender. Candy believes everything is harder for a woman and that she has to prove herself twice as much than her male counterparts.

When Candy is told to stop working the movie industry corruption story, she decides to investigate the story on her own. Candy begins dating Peter Brewster, the president of Oceania, Summit Picture's parent company. Candy hopes to use her feminine wiles to get Brewster to confess something to her that Candy can use to prove the corruption. Candy goes to bed with Brewster on several occasions, hoping he will be relaxed enough to tell her the truth about the corruption. Spenser believes this goes against Candy's desire to not be treated differently due to her gender, but Candy sees it as using all her assets to get done what she wants. No matter who is right, Candy is killed when Brewster decides to get rid of all the loose ends in the corruption scam. Candy's desire to be treated with equality caused her to behave irresponsibly and led to her death.

Dark Side of Humanity

Spenser spends a great deal of his life fighting crime. Spenser was a cop once and is now a private investigator. Spenser has been involved in many cases that involved all kinds of crime. In this novel, Spenser travels to Los Angeles to help a television reporter investigate corruption in the movie industry. Spenser goes to LA and finds the city to be much like his hometown of Boston, with a fascinating collection of people and the



common congestion typical of large cities. However, Spenser also sees corruption in LA that is not common to his beloved Boston.

Spenser and Candy investigate the mob and their influence in the movie industry. Candy believes that the head of Summit Pictures is paying off the mob to repay them for bailing him out of financial problems a few years before. This investigation causes Candy to attract the attention of several thugs who kidnap and beat her to scare her off an investigation. Instead, Candy becomes more determined than ever to prove the story. The people that Candy becomes involved with in the investigation turn out to be corrupt people who are involved in various crimes, including bribery, theft, and murder. These people will do whatever they feel is necessary to protect themselves. Candy becomes a victim of one of these men, dying of a gunshot wound before Spenser can save her. It is these people and their depravity that makes the dark side of humanity a theme of the novel.

Morality

Spenser is a man with strong morals. Spenser believes that all people have a right to safety. Spenser believes that women should be treated equal to men. Spenser believes that commitment means being totally honest with one's partner. Although Spenser lives his life according to his own rules, he does not stray from his beliefs. Spenser is a private investigator who takes cases not based on how much the client can pay, but on an individual case by case basis. Spenser agrees to protect Candy Sloan, not because the station she works for can pay him a great deal of money, but because she asks for his help and he has the time and ability to help her. When Candy becomes upset about the way people treat her and concerned she will lose her job because of the so-called, boy's club, Spenser attempts to console her. Spenser believes that just because he cannot relate to how Candy has been treated, he can still sympathize and make sure he does not do the same to her.

Spenser is involved with a woman named Susan Silverman. Susan is an intelligent woman that Spenser loves deeply; however, this relationship does not stop Spenser from sharing a night in Candy's bed. Spenser tells Candy before they sleep together that it is a one night thing and he does not intend to have a relationship with her. Not only this, but Spenser says that he intends to tell Susan about the night. Spenser does not keep secrets from Susan, even secrets that might hurt her. Spenser is fully committed to Susan and he does not want anything to come between them, therefore believes he must be completely honest with her about every aspect of his life. Spenser's beliefs are based on his morals and that is why morals is a theme of the novel.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of the novel is first person. The novel's main character, Spenser, is the narrator throughout the novel. Spenser's first person point of view allows the reader to see his thoughts and emotions and the impressions other characters make on him. This narration allows the reader to understand Spenser's actions, but does not distract the reader with the thoughts and feelings of the various other characters. Although much of the plot involves Candy Sloan, the story is not muddled by Candy's emotions and problems except for the influence these things have on Spenser's thoughts and actions.

The point of view works in this novel because it makes it clear from the first sentence who the main character is. The reader is focused on Spenser rather than the other characters and therefore not easily distracted by the events taking place around Spenser. Should the author have chosen to use a third person point of view or use more than one narrator, the reader could easily have gotten caught up in the investigation rather than the impact of the investigation on the main character, Spenser. Therefore, the point of view works by keeping the focus of the novel where it belongs, on the main character.

First person point of view is typical of detective mysteries because the story is told from the point of view of the detective, so the reader only learns things at the time the investigator does. This maintains suspense and allows the reader in a sense to participate in the investigation.

Setting

The novel begins in Spenser's hometown of Boston, but the action quickly moves to Los Angeles. Los Angeles is a place with which Spenser is familiar, but is a somewhat high crime area, where crime takes place around the corner from the homes of the rich and famous. Spenser finds Los Angeles amusing when he notices how two distinct streets sport the same name and how chic shops are located just blocks from corners where the homeless live. Eventually Spenser comes to the conclusion that Los Angeles is a savage place when the woman he has come to care about is murdered in cold blood blocks from the airport.

The setting of this novel works because it plays with the theme of the novel, the dark side of humanity. Spenser comes from a big city and finds many similarities between Los Angeles and his home of Boston, but he also finds many things about Los Angeles to be less hospitable than his hometown. Many people complain about the traffic in Los Angeles, but Spenser finds the people to be the biggest problem of the city. Spenser comes up against many dark, corrupt people while he is in Los Angeles, convincing him that there truly is no place like home.



Language and Meaning

The language of the novel tends to be simple. Although Spenser is an intelligent man who likes to read biographies about eighteenth century poets and F. Scott Fitzgerald novels, he is still a private detective who deals with the dregs of society and therefore tends to speak accordingly. Spenser's language, while not vulgar, tends to include some street slang as well as simple language in order to help those who are less educated understand him. Spenser also has a quirky sense of humor with which he occasionally makes up words in order to entertain those around him. Other characters also tend to use simpler words, such as Candy Sloan who speaks in simple sentence structure in order to make her words clearly understood by the audience of her news show and the people with whom she works.

The language of this novel works because it fits with Spenser's career and lifestyle. While Spenser is not a stupid man (quite the contrary), he lives in a world of mobsters and criminals; therefore, he often speaks in simple terms in order to be understood by those around him. The language is not overly simplified, but it is not terribly difficult to understand, either. The words work with the novel and the case that Spenser is investigating.

Structure

The novel is divided into thirty chapters. Each chapter is fairly short, most no longer than five or six pages. The story is told in a linear fashion, moving in a logical direction from the beginning of the novel where Spenser agrees to take Candy Sloan's case, to the end where Spenser learns the solution to the investigation and is allowed to return home. The novel is told in dialogue as well as exposition, with many sections of the novel taking place with a focus on Spenser's thoughts and actions rather than interplay between him and the various characters. Other sections of the novel include witty dialogue between Spenser and Candy Sloan, especially in sections when Spenser is attempting to cheer up Candy Sloan.

The novel contains one main plot. Candy Sloan, a television reporter, is investigating the possible corruption of the movie industry in which mobsters are being paid off by studio executives. Candy Sloan hires Spenser to protect her as she conducts her investigation, but when Candy dies, Spenser finds himself left clearing her name and finishing the investigation for her. The story is told in linear fashion, moving full circle from the beginning of the novel to the conclusion of the investigation. The structure of the novel works well because it is simple and direct.



Quotes

"I was sitting in my office above the bank with my tie loose and my feet up, reading a book called Play of Double Sense: Spenser's Faerie Queene. Susan Silverman had given it to me, claiming it was my biography. But it wasn't. It turned out to be about the sixteenth-century English poet who spelled his name like mine. The guy that wrote it had become the president of Yale, and I thought maybe if I read it, I could become Allan Pinkerton." Chapter 1, pg. 9

"Was there anywhere else, I thought, that had two streets running side by side with the same name? No, I thought. There wasn't." Chapter 3, pg. 25

"He pointed a finger at Candy Sloan and then pointed the same finger at the commissary door. Dramatic. You could tell he was creative." Chapter 6, pg. 63

"That's where the cops would be: What happened? There were these guys fighting, one had a gun. Where are they now? I don't know. One drove away. What did they look like? Short. Tall. Fat. Thin. Blond. Black. Old. Young. Who called? I don't know. Swell." Chapter 7, pg. 75

"There was nothing left for me to do. Telling Brewster he'd be hearing from me seemed graceless. I thought about kicking him, but by the time I got around the desk, the entire security force would be setting up gun emplacements in the reception room." Chapter 11, pg. 112

"Candy was out the office door. She wasn't waiting. I was supposed to guard her. I went after her. On the way out I picked the globe off the table in the booklined room and dropped it on the floor. That oughta fix 'em." Chapter 11, pg. 112

"Extend that logic, and we eventually have to decide that no one can understand anyone. Maybe the matter of understanding has been overrated. Maybe I don't have to understand your situation to sympathize with it, to help you alter it, to be on your side. I've never experienced starvation either, but I'm opposed to it. When I encounter it, I try to alleviate it. I sympathize with its victims. The question of whether I understand it doesn't arise." Chapter 12, pg. 118

"When I put my gun on the end table, I could still smell the faint odor of spent ammunition. I didn't like it. Bubba probably hadn't liked it either. If he'd smelled it. Which he probably hadn't." Chapter 17, pg. 162

"Few places are more charming than a quiet cocktail lounge in the middle of the day with the ice tinkling in the glasses and the starched look of a bartender's white shirt and the clarity of the beer in the glass with the bubbles drifting up." Chapter 19, pg. 180



"Off Sepulveda Boulevard, out toward the airport, visible from the street, there are some vestigial oil rigs—still pumping—reminders that all the money in L.A. didn't come from movies."

Chapter 25, pg. 222

"'The thing is,' I said, 'that she did what she did because she didn't want to be just another pretty face in the newsroom, you know. Just a broad that they used to dress up the broadcast. She wanted to prove something about herself and about being a woman, I guess, and what got her killed—when you come down to it—was, she thought she could use being female on Brewster. When it came down to it, she depended on—' I stopped again. I couldn't think of the right phrase.

'Feminine wiles,' Samuelson said.

'Yeah,' I said. 'Feminine wiles. And it got her killed.'"

Chapter 29, pg. 259

"Except for a half-conscious plane change in Dallas I slept straight through to Boston and dreamed of Susan Silverman all the way home." Chapter 30, pg. 264



Topics for Discussion

Who is Candy Sloan? Why is she investigating the movie industry? What does she hope to accomplish with this investigation? Is this investigation intended to clean up the movie industry, or does Candy hope this story will promote her own career? Does the motivation matter? What will the impact of this investigation have on the movie industry?

What is sexism? Why is Candy Sloan fixated on sexism? Is Candy being discriminated against because of her gender? What could the successful conclusion of the investigation into movie industry corruption do for Candy's career? Will this advancement in career end sexism in Candy's career?

Who is Spenser? What is Spenser's profession? Why does Spenser agree to take Candy's case? Why does Spenser continue with the case after he is told to go home? What are Spenser's feelings for Candy? Why does Spenser feel guilty when Candy is killed? Should Spenser have been able to save her? Why does he not?

Why does Spenser sleep with Candy? What does this say about Spenser's moral compass? Why does Spenser talk to Candy about his girlfriend, Susan? Why does Spenser insist on telling Susan about his night with Candy? How does Spenser believe Susan will react to this news? What does this say about Spenser's relationship with Susan?

What is racketeering? How does the movie industry become involved in racketeering? Why is Felton paying off Franco? Why does Franco kill Felton? What is Franco afraid Felton can do to him? Could Felton hurt Franco? Why does Brewster kill Franco? What does killing Franco do for Brewster?

Who is Brewster? Why does Candy start dating Brewster? Does Candy like Brewster? What does it say about Candy's personality when she begins sleeping with Brewster in order to find evidence against him? Is this ethical? Is this sexism? Is Candy acting like a man would in her place? Why or why not?

Why does Spenser take Brewster hostage? What does Spenser hope to prove by doing this? Why does Spenser make Brewster confess on camera? What does Spenser believe this will do for Candy? Should Spenser be charged for assault and kidnapping? Why is he not?