

# **Sea Change Study Guide**

**Sea Change by Robert B. Parker**

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# Plot Summary

Sea Change is a novel by award-winning mystery writer Robert B. Parker, who died in 2010. Published in 2005, the novel follows the investigation into the death of Florida heiress Florence Horvath by Paradise, Massachusetts Police Chief Jesse Stone. This is the fifth novel in the Jesse Stone mystery series.

When the badly decomposed body of a woman washes up in Paradise, Massachusetts during "Race Week," a month-long yachting event that attracts hundreds of yachts from all over the United States, Police Chief Jesse Stone starts an investigation. Jesse, who has been the Paradise Police Chief for seven years, has recently quit drinking and is in the process of trying to rebuild his marriage to his ex-wife Jenn. When Jesse learns that the victim is a Fort Lauderdale heiress named Florence Horvath who was popular in yachting circles, he begins to believe that there is more here than meets the eye. Enlisting the aid of Fort Lauderdale police detective Kelly Cruz, Jesse finds himself uncovering a world of non-stop wild partying, decadent sexual activity, drug and alcohol abuse, and criminal activity which leads him to believe that Florence Horvath was murdered.

Early in the case, Kelly Cruz finds a sex video in Florence's apartment in Fort Lauderdale which shows the heiress with two unidentified men. After getting a copy of the tape, Jesse has headshots of the men printed and shows them to the owners, guests, and crews of the yachts from South Florida in town for Race Week. A cabin on the Lady Jane, a yacht out of Miami, looks like the room where the Florence Horvath tape was shot but Harrison Darnell, who owns the yacht, and his guests say they don't recognize Horvath or the two men. The next day one of the guests tells Jesse that both men in the headshots had crewed on the Lady Jane, and that she and Darnell recognized them. Jesse later questions Corliss and Claudia Plum, Horvath's twin sisters, who claim to not recognize the men in the pictures and say that a friend of theirs told them about Florence's death.

The first real break in the case comes when a local underage girl claims to have been raped aboard the Lady Jane, which gives Jesse the legal grounds to search the yacht. During the search he finds that the entire boat has been wired to record video, and also finds videotapes which are very similar in content to the Florence Horvath tape. Meanwhile in South Florida, Kelly Cruz has been learning about Florence Horvath's wild lifestyle from her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Plum, and others who knew her. She also finds a connection between Horvath, Darnell, and the owner of another South Florida yacht in Paradise for Race Week, Thomas Ralston, who not only partied with Florence but also with her sisters the Plum twins.

Jesse locates one of the men in the Florence Horvath tape who tells him that Florence asked them to make the tape, and that the Plum twins had shot the video. After being confronted with their lies, the twins tell Jesse that Florence made the tape to send to Harrison Darnell to make him jealous. Realizing that the twins have lied throughout the case, Jesse starts checking out their story and learns from someone that knew both



them and Florence that all three girls were wild, and that they all seemed to be hung up on their father. After Jesse relates this to Kelly Cruz, Kelly questions Kimmy Young, the young woman the Plum twins said told them that Florence was dead. She finds out that when Kimmy was 15, Mr. Plum had molested both her and the twins one night when she slept over at the Plum's apartment. Jesse confronts the twins with this knowledge and they tell him that Florence actually made the tape to send to their father. They also admit that they are afraid that it was their father who killed Florence.

After they are able to confirm that Mr. Plum was in Massachusetts around the time Florence was killed, Jesse travels to Miami and he and Kelly confront the Plums in their apartment. Mrs. Plum says that she has known about the abuse for years but didn't do anything about it, and accuses her husband of killing Florence. Mr. Plum finally admits to the crime, saying that he killed Florence in a jealous rage to keep her from becoming worse than she already was. He is taken into custody and Jesse goes back to Paradise and the relationship that he is building with his ex-wife.



# Preface, Chapters 1-6

## Preface, Chapters 1-6 Summary

Sea Change is a 2005 mystery novel by Robert B. Parker. The author of over 65 books and best known for his novels featuring Boston private investigator Spenser, Parker was awarded the Edgar Grand Master Award in 2002.

In the Preface, as she and a companion are heading back into harbor after a day out on a yacht, a woman identified only as Florence is asked by her companion to check the boat's centerboard. As she stands, the boom swings around and hits her, knocking her overboard. Struggling to the surface, she sees the yacht coming back towards her, and thinks she will be rescued. Instead it picks up speed and hits her, forcing her under, then sails off leaving her to die.

In Chapter 1, Massachusetts Police Chief Jesse Stone and Officer "Suitcase" Simpson arrive at the Dory Bar, where they have been called because a very drunk customer - a huge professional football player - has broken the bartender's nose. Though the man is six inches taller and 125 pounds heavier than Jesse, the police chief quickly disables him with Simpson's nightstick. After handcuffing him they manage to get him out to the squad car, where he promptly throws up on the way to jail.

In Chapter 2, the next evening, Jesse and his ex-wife Jenn are having dinner at the Gray Gull restaurant overlooking the harbor, which is filled with yachts due to the start of "Race Week." Jenn is a weathergirl at a Boston television station, and asks Jesse about the football player he arrested. Jesse says that they let him go that morning without pressing charges, after he cleaned out the squad car. After dinner, Jenn says that she will be staying the night. Jesse tells her that it has been over 10 months since he has had a drink and she says that maybe he will eventually get to the point where he can drink again socially, and that maybe they will also get to the point where their relationship can be what it once was.

In Chapter 3, Jesse, Suitcase Simpson, and several other Paradise police officers are at the town dock where what appears to be the body of a woman is floating in the water; they can't be certain it is a woman because the body is badly decomposed. After the officers fish the body out, a woman from the Medical Examiner's office confirms that the body is, indeed, that of a woman, and that it has been in the water for some time - either at the bottom or near the water's edge because of evidence that crabs have been at it. She will be able to tell them more after she gets the body back to the ME's office.

In Chapter 4, Jesse and Officer Molly Crane are in the Paradise Police Station, and the preliminary Medical Examiner's report has just come in. The body is that of a woman about 35 years old, 5'7", 130 pounds, brown eyes, and a brunette. She'd had surgery to enhance her breasts and traces of alcohol and cocaine were found in her system; she was alive when she went into the water. Molly tells Jesse that there are five missing



persons in the Northeast fitting that general description, but that none of the dental records match. Jesse speculates that the body could have come off of one of the yachts, some of which began to arrive for "Race Week" a month before, although no one had been reported missing locally. Though it is a long shot, Molly says she will start checking with local plastic surgeons to see if she can track down anyone who has had breast surgery and is now missing. Jesse tells her that the ME is still working on the body, and they should have more to go on soon.

In Chapter 5, Jesse is in Dr. Dix's office; Dix is a psychiatrist that he sees occasionally. He tells Dix that he is having trouble dealing with the fact that his ex-wife Jenn has seen other men since their divorce. Even though they are working things out and trying to put their marriage back together, Jesse can't let go of the pain he feels when he thinks about her seeing other men. When Dix asks if he felt that way about the women he was with after the divorce, Jesse tells him that he never loved them the way he loves Jenn. Dix tells him that the problem really isn't with Jenn or the other men, but with Jesse himself.

In Chapter 6, after seeing Dix, Jesse finds Jenn waiting for him in his office. She tells him that her television station has chosen her to host a special on Race Week - a one hour feature which the company that owns her station plans to syndicate to all the major TV markets. This is a huge break for her and Jesse is thrilled. She says she would like to stay with him on those nights when the taping runs late, and Jesse says that will be great.

## **Preface, Chapters 1-6 Analysis**

After a short, one-page preface showing the death of a woman, the first chapters introduce the main character in the novel, Jesse Stone. Jesse is in his mid-forties and has been the chief of the Paradise, Massachusetts Police Department for seven years, after spending a number of years as an officer on the Los Angeles Police Department. Jesse and his ex-wife Jenn are trying to put their marriage back together 'one day at a time', although Jesse is having a hard time dealing with his own feelings of jealousy, as he explains to Dr. Dix the psychiatrist. Though he is uncertain that he wants to go back to living with her full-time, Jesse is happy when Jenn tells him that she will be staying with him more often, and hopes that this will help to move their relationship forward. Jesse has not had a drink in over 10 months and although nothing specific is mentioned as to the reason why, the reader has the impression that Jesse's drinking might have played a part in their breakup and eventual divorce.

It is "Race Week" in Paradise, which is actually a month-long yachting event that takes place every summer. It is the most important time of the year for the local economy, and the busiest time for Jesse and the rest of the Paradise Police Department. The town is filled with people from the yachts, as well as those who come to watch the racing events and enjoy the general party atmosphere, and disturbances due to too much partying - as well as complaints from the locals - abound. While Jesse tends to be quite easy-going as far as most minor infractions are concerned, when needed he is able to deal



with most any situation, as he shows when he disables the football player in the bar, even though the other man is much bigger than he is.

The body that washes up against the dock is that of a woman - a fact which is confirmed by the preliminary Medical Examiner's report - but other than her age and a few general characteristics, the preliminary report really gives Jesse very little to go on when it comes to identifying who she might have been, let alone how she died. While the possibility that she could have been the victim of a murder or that she could have fallen overboard off one of the yachts assembled in Paradise for Race Week without this fact being reported seems to be nothing more than speculation. The reader, of course, will assume that the body is that of the woman who died in the preface.



# Chapters 7-13

## Chapters 7-13 Summary

In Chapter 7, a local businessman named Guilfoyle comes to police headquarters and tells Jesse that a month earlier a young woman rented a small sailboat from him for the day and never returned it. The boat has finally turned up at a large dock on the other side of the harbor, where it has sat unnoticed until just a few days ago; it has trash and empty wine bottles on it, but nothing else. Guilfoyle says that he has a credit card slip and the woman's driver's license, and Jesse says he will need to hold onto the license to get in touch with the woman.

In Chapter 8, the driver's license belongs to Florence E. Horvath, 34 years old, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Jesse asks Molly Crane to call the Fort Lauderdale police and ask them to get what they can on the woman, particularly dental records if possible, and then call the credit card company and get a history of purchases. He then calls the Florida DMV and asks to have Florence Horvath's driver's license picture blown up and sent to him. He then asks Officer Peter Perkins to scan the driver's license into the computer and send it to Forensics to see if there is anything that could rule Florence out as the floater. Molly then tells him that the Fort Lauderdale PD will send a car over to Horvath's address, and the bank will send a printout of her recent charges.

In Chapter 9, Jesse and Jenn are sharing a pizza on Jesse's balcony, and discussing their relationship. Jenn says that she loves him and that she knows he loves her. Even when things were at their worst, they both felt connected to one another. Jesse tells her that he has been talking to Dr. Dix about their relationship and about how he feels. Jenn tells him that their relationship is much more than simply a physical one, and that she loves him deeply.

In Chapter 10, Captain Healy, commanding officer of the Massachusetts State Police Homicide Unit, stops by Jesse's office to see how the investigation into the floater is progressing. Jesse shows him the enlarged picture of Florence Horvath, who has been identified as the victim from her dental records. Jesse says that there is no record of her booking an airline ticket or renting a car in recent weeks, and no record of her checking into any area hotel. Jesse thinks that she came in on one of the yachts and, though there is still nothing to prove it, he believes that she was probably murdered, and Healy agrees. Healy offers his unit's help in the investigation and Jesse accepts his offer, after making certain Healy understands that it will remain Jesse's case.

In Chapter 11, Jesse is on the phone to a Fort Lauderdale police detective, Kelly Cruz, who has been assigned to look into the Florence Horvath case. She tells Jesse that Florence was wealthy and that her family - the Plum family - owns a chain of health food stores; Horvath was her married name. Lawton Horvath is the most recent of several ex-husbands, and hasn't seen her since their divorce. She had moved to Fort Lauderdale recently and joined a yacht club, where she became very popular with some





of the male members. Cruz hasn't had time to track down any names, but she has been to Florence's condo where she found a sex tape with Florence on it, which she will FedEx to Jesse. She also says that she has a call in to Florence's family, but hasn't heard back, and that she plans to check out the other ex-husbands. Jesse tells her that three of the yachts in Paradise for Race Week are out of Fort Lauderdale and gives her the names of the owners. She tells him she will check them out as well.

In Chapter 12, Jesse stops by where Jenn is filming the special on Race Week just to say hello, but she doesn't have time to talk with him, as they want to get one more shot before they lose the light. As Jesse stands in her dressing room alone, he can smell her perfume and he finds himself wondering how many other men have smelled it, and starts to feel jealous. He realizes that whatever this feeling is, it isn't love, and wants a drink.

In Chapter 13, the tape that Kelly Cruz found in Florence Horvath's condo arrives via FedEx, and with the exception of Jesse, Molly Crane and two officers manning the patrol cars, the other eight members of the Paradise Police Department are gathered in the squad room to watch it. Though she feels she should see the tape too, Jesse tells Molly - the only woman on the force - that she can watch it later, by herself, in his office. The tape shows Florence's face and the faces of two men very clearly; it is obvious from the start of the tape that Florence wanted to be recognized, as she continually turned towards the camera. While there is nothing to specifically indicate where the video was shot, it appears to be a very small space which Jesse thinks might be a cabin on a yacht. When the video ends, Jesse tells Peter Perkins to get head shots of the men from the tape and blow them up, and then calls Molly into his office. He puts the tape in his VCR and starts it, then leaves so that Molly can watch the tape alone.

## Chapters 7-13 Analysis

After identifying the body as being that of Florence Horvath, Jesse begins to focus on trying to find out who she was, what happened to her, and why. Although initially there is nothing specific to indicate that the woman was murdered, Jesse simply cannot believe that her body washing up during Race Week can be a coincidence. Learning that she had been very popular with a number of the members of a yacht club back in Florida helps to confirm his suspicions that her death is somehow connected to someone from the yachting community who is currently in town. Detective Kelly Cruz, who will play a vital role as the novel progresses, is introduced as a highly competent and methodical police detective, and it is obvious from their first phone conversation that she and Jesse will work well together, even via long distance.

The tape Kelly finds in Florence Horvath's condo, while not immediately providing any clues as to how or why she died, is the first real insight Jesse has into Florence's personality. At a number of points during the tape, Florence specifically turns and "mugs" for the camera, indicating that far from being shy or embarrassed about being on a tape of this kind, she definitely wanted to be recognized. Watching the tape immediately makes Jesse uncomfortable and shortly starts to do the same for the other



male officers viewing it. Jesse not only making certain that Molly is treated as an equal when it comes to viewing the tape, but also arranging for her to do it privately in his office away from the male officers, shows Jesse to be sensitive to the specific needs of his officers and, as Molly puts it, "a nicer guy than most people know."

Jesse continues to struggle with his feelings for Jenn and his relationship with her. Though he loves her more than anyone else he has ever known, and is thus far enjoying her being with him often while she is shooting the Race Week documentary, he is unable to step away from the pain and jealousy he feels when he thinks about her having seen other men. Though he does not show it to Jenn or anyone else, the reader understands that these feelings are tearing him up inside.



# Chapters 14-20

## Chapters 14-20 Summary

In Chapter 14, Jesse meets Jenn for lunch, and takes her to Daisy's. As they walk through town to the restaurant, Jesse asks her if she has figured out what draws so many people to Race Week, and she says that it is the Mardi Gras-like party atmosphere. Jesse says that for his department it is exactly like Mardi Gras: full of fights, public drunkenness, and vandalism. When they reach the restaurant the owner, whose name really is Daisy, seats Jesse and Jenn immediately, even though there is a line waiting to get in that stretches around the block, and some people have been waiting for over an hour. By way of explanation Daisy tells Jenn that if she can't get the town's chief of police fed in a hurry, she wouldn't be doing her job.

In Chapter 15, the harbormaster takes Jesse and Suitcase Simpson to several of the yachts in the harbor - including the three out of Fort Lauderdale - before they come to the Lady Jane, a yacht out of Miami. In addition to the crew, there are several men and women on board. When Jesse tells Harrison Darnell, the yacht's owner, that he is investigating the death of a young woman and needs to show everyone on the boat some pictures, Darnell is uncooperative but takes the officers over to his guests after Jesse tells him that he would be happy to question them all at the station. Jesse has Simpson show the pictures of Florence Horvath and the two men in the video to the guests while he watches their reactions. One of the guests, an attractive blonde, says that she doesn't recognize anyone and then starts to flirt with Jesse. Jesse watches as the other guests look at the pictures, but doesn't see any signs of recognition on their faces. He then tosses several business cards on the table, and asks the guests to call him if they think of anything that might help. The blonde takes one of the cards and says that she might call Jesse whether she thinks of anything or not.

In Chapter 16, the next afternoon, Jesse is in his office watching the Florence Horvath tape when Jenn comes in. Jesse tells her that he thinks he remembers seeing an ornamental brass monkey with a long, curling tail that he noticed on the Lady Jane the day before on the tape, and is watching the tape trying to find it. He asks Jenn to be a second pair of eyes, and while they are watching he notices that the blue and white striped couch Florence is on in the tape looks like the one the guests on the Lady Jane had been seated on. Jenn then tells him to freeze the tape when she notices something that looks like a long, curling brass tail in the edge of the picture. Jesse says he thinks it is the same ornamental monkey, but can't be certain. He will need to do some checking to see when the boat arrived in Paradise, and who was on it, before he can even think of taking any action.

In Chapter 17, Jesse calls Kelly Cruz, who tells him that their lab has been able to date the Florence Horvath tape to March 17th of that year - almost four months ago. Jesse tells her that he thinks the tape was shot on the Lady Jane and asks her to check Darnell out. Kelly then says that she spoke with Florence Horvath's parents - Mr. and



Mrs. Plum, who live in Miami - and that they hadn't seen or heard from her in a couple of years. They told her that Florence had inherited a lot of money from her grandfather when she'd turned 25, and started drinking, taking drugs, and living a wild lifestyle. She would come home when things got bad, but would eventually fight with them and then disappear again. The last time they told her not to come back, because they were afraid that she was a bad influence on her sisters - 20 year old twins named Corliss and Claudia - who the Plums said were spending the summer in Europe. Kelly showed the Plums the headshots of the two men in the tape, but didn't have the heart to tell them about the tape itself. Kelly says that she will do some digging into Darnell, and get back to him when she has something.

In Chapter 18, the blonde woman who flirted with Jesse onboard the Lady Jane comes to Jesse's office to talk to him. After a little more flirting that goes nowhere, she tells Jesse that her name is Blondie Martin and that both she and Harrison Darnell had lied to him when he was aboard the Lady Jane. The two men in the headshots had been on the crew of the Lady Jane the previous year, and Blondie had seen them several times. When Jesse asks why she didn't tell him that while he was on the boat, Blondie tells him that Darnell was her ride back to Florida, and she couldn't risk him getting mad at her.

In Chapter 19, Jesse is at his desk doing paperwork when Molly Crane tells him that Florence Horvath's sisters - Corliss and Claudia Plum - want to see him. The Plum sisters - both blonde, scantily dressed, and wearing too much make-up - ask him who killed their sister. Jesse says that that they don't know if anyone killed her, and then asks why they aren't in Europe. The twins say they told their parents they were going to Europe, but have actually been on Long Island partying. When Jesse asks where, they manage to remember that a man named Carlos Coca owned the house, but not the address or phone number. Jesse asks how the twins heard about their sister's death, and they tell him that a friend named Kimmy Young told them. They then tell Jesse that they are staying at a hotel in Boston and that they want to hire a private investigator to look into Florence's death. Jesse tells them to contact Rita Fiore, a Boston attorney, and mention his name. They ask Jesse if anyone hurt Florence before she died, and when Jesse asks why they thought that might be case, they tell him that she ran with a "weird" crowd. Jesse then shows them the two headshots, but they say they don't recognize either man. He then shows them pictures of three women and asks which one is Florence. After they pick her out, the twins are offended that Jesse doesn't trust them.

In Chapter 20, after they leave, Molly asks Jesse what he thought of the twins, to which he replies that he is certain that they know more than they are saying, and conceal that fact very badly. Specifically, he is sure they recognized the two men in the video with Florence. He tells Molly that they asked for the name of a private detective and that he sent them to Rita Fiore so that in a couple of days he could call the attorney and find out if they showed up. He doubts that they will, but figures it could be worth finding out for sure how much they care about what happened to their sister.



## Chapters 14-20 Analysis

Although he is still very aware that there is no concrete evidence that Florence Horvath's death was the result of a crime, Jesse is finding that there are people involved in the case who are not telling the truth, which immediately makes him suspicious. The lies told by Blondie Martin and Harrison Darnell aboard the Lady Jane are particularly intriguing to him, especially in light of the fact that there is some evidence that the Florence Horvath video may have been shot onboard that boat. Although Blondie's explanation that she lied so as not to anger Darnell and end up without a ride back to Florida is certainly plausible, Jesse thinks that she knows more than she is telling. Additionally, if Darnell recognized the two men, and the video had indeed been shot on the Lady Jane, then it is also highly likely that at least Darnell had lied about not recognizing Florence, and it is not inconceivable that Blondie did as well.

The sudden and unexpected arrival of Corliss and Claudia Plum is yet another thing about the case that doesn't make sense to Jesse, but which helps to reinforce his belief that something is going on that he doesn't understand, but needs to. The girls appear to Jesse to be spoiled, not very bright "party animals" which, according to Kelly Cruz's account of her talk with Mr. and Mrs. Plum, isn't all that far removed from what Florence was. The fact that they obviously recognized the pictures of the two men in the video and then made a point of asking if their sister had been hurt by anyone before she died indicates to Jesse that they - like Blondie Martin and Harrison Darnell - know more than they are willing to tell.



# Chapters 21-27

## Chapters 21-27 Summary

In Chapter 21, Jesse and Jenn are relaxing on Jesse's balcony; Jenn is drinking wine, and Jesse a club soda. Jenn asks if Jesse misses drinking, and he tells her that he misses it every day. When she asks if it is a physical craving, he says that he doesn't crave alcohol, but that he does crave her.

In Chapter 22, Molly comes into Jesse's office and says that the Plum sisters haven't been at school for over a year; they didn't graduate, they just left. Jesse then calls Kelly Cruz and tells her about his talk with the Plum sisters. Kelly then tells him that she checked Harrison Darnell out; he is wealthy, has a playboy reputation and clean record, and there is nothing to link him with Florence Horvath. She also tells him that of the three Fort Lauderdale yachts in Paradise, only one is owned by a single male, Thomas Ralston. Jesse asks her to put pressure on Florence Horvath's parents and find out exactly what they knew about their daughter and her activities. He also asks her to find out if there might be some connection between Ralston and Darnell.

In Chapter 23, Jesse tells Molly that while he doesn't have enough to get a search warrant, he is going to get aboard the Lady Jane and search it without one, even though it will mean that nothing he finds can be used in court. He says that he is hoping to find something that will link Darnell with Florence Horvath. He tells her that he will search the boat the next day while everyone is at the Stiles Island Clambake, one of the biggest events of Race Week.

In Chapter 24, the next day Jesse has the harbormaster take him out close to the Lady Jane, where he watches the boat through binoculars as guests and crew leave it via a small launch. When he thinks the boat is empty, he has the harbormaster pull up next to it, and he boards. After calling to see if anyone is aboard, he starts searching the various cabins. In the master cabin, he finds a stack of numbered video tapes, as well as a number of unopened, blank tapes. He takes one of the recorded tapes and replaces it with one of the blank tapes after marking it with the appropriate number. After quickly searching the rest of the boat, he returns to the master cabin and studies the huge entertainment center. He finds a remote, pushes a button marked "all on", and sees a picture of a shower on the TV. Pushing another button, he gets a picture of a bed, and realizes that the entire boat is wired for video recording. A moment later, he is back on the harbormaster's boat, with the video.

In Chapter 25, back at his office, Jesse watches the tape on his VCR; it is long and repetitive and shows Harrison Darnell and a redheaded woman making love, as well as the woman showering, putting on make-up, changing clothes, etc. At one point in the tape the redhead's hairstyle changes, indicating that the tape had been recorded over a period of days or weeks.



In Chapter 26, after that day, Molly shows a local man named Sam Holton, his wife, and his 17-year-old daughter Cathleen into Jesse's office. Cathleen is claiming that she was raped, and that it happened aboard the Lady Jane; she met one of the crew at the Dory bar, and he offered to show her the boat. Cathleen doesn't know the name of the man who raped her, but thinks that it was the boat's owner, and is certain that she could pick him out of a line-up. When Jesse asks her to tell him exactly what happened, Cathleen says that she can't talk about it in front of her parents, and he asks Molly to take her statement. Molly returns after a few minutes and says that she has a full statement, and Jesse tells the Holtons he will arrange a line-up.

In Chapter 27, after the Holtons leave, Molly tells Jesse that in her opinion there was no rape. She plays the tape of Cathleen giving her statement, during which the girl mentions that the man who "raped" her had also videotaped her doing a striptease. After the statement ends, Jesse says that what probably happened is that Cathleen got drunk, went out to the boat and got drunker, and had sex with someone. Later, when she remembered that she had been videotaped, she made up the story about being raped to stay out of trouble. Jesse then tells Molly that even though they both think she is lying, they now have the grounds to conduct a legal search of the Lady Jane.

## Chapters 21-27 Analysis

Although Jesse understands that searching the Lady Jane without a warrant is illegal, and could actually do more harm than good were he to be caught, he decides that the potential benefits outweigh the hazards. He is becoming frustrated with the fact that while questions and inconsistencies continue to pile up, there don't seem to be any answers. He feels that some of what he needs to know has to do with the Plum sisters and Florence Horvath herself, and he thinks that the best way to get at these answers is for Kelly Cruz to pressure the parents. However, he is also reasonably certain that Florence's death is somehow tied to the Lady Jane and Harrison Darnell, and is willing to bend the rules in the hopes of getting closer to the truth.

These chapters also serve to show how much Jesse trusts and depends on Molly Crane, as well as how talented and loyal an officer she really is. She is the only member of the Paradise Police Department that he trusts with the fact that he will be illegally searching the Lady Jane and he has no hesitation about leaving the questioning of Cathleen Holton to her. Although both of them are certain that Cathleen is lying and that no rape occurred. As the age of consent in Massachusetts is 16, a crime was not even committed. Neither Jesse nor Molly suggest telling anyone their suspicions. Now that Jesse knows that the boat is wired and that Darnell likes to make videotapes, he is more certain than ever before that he will find something linking Darnell with Florence Horvath in the other tapes that he left aboard the boat.



# Chapters 28-34

## Chapters 28-34 Summary

In Chapter 28, Kelly Cruz questions the Plums in their Miami penthouse. Mrs. Plum tells Kelly that Thomas Ralston - owner of one of the yachts currently in Paradise - was one of the wild crowd Florence had been a part of; she calls him a gigolo, but says that his having money and owning a yacht was enough for Florence. Kelly tells the Plums about the videotape of Florence, and after a moment Mrs. Plum says that it doesn't surprise her; it was the kind of thing she would do to shock people. Mrs. Plum then says that she loved Florence, but gave up on her because she couldn't allow her to corrupt her two younger daughters. Kelly asks if the Plums were aware that the twins had left college and Mrs. Plum admits that she knew, but didn't know where they were. When Kelly asks why she lied about them the first time they had spoken, Mrs. Plum says she was ashamed that she didn't know where her own daughters were.

In Chapter 29, Jesse, Molly Crane, and Suitcase Simpson board the Lady Jane with a search warrant. They are met by Harrison Darnell and Jesse tells him that a young woman has alleged that a rape took place on his boat, that he will not be allowed to leave Paradise Harbor, and that he will need to come to the station to be in a lineup. He tells Simpson to stay on deck with Darnell while he and Molly search the boat. Darnell says that he will not allow his boat to be searched and tries to stop Jesse, but Jesse quickly subdues and handcuffs him. While searching the boat Jesse and Molly find an assortment of illegal drugs, which they confiscate. They also take the videotapes that Jesse found on his first search - including the blank tape he'd substituted for the tape he'd taken. When they finish the search, Jesse has Simpson release Darnell and hands him a list of everything they are confiscating; Darnell is upset about them taking the tapes. Jesse says they will call him when they need him for a lineup, and the three officers leave.

In Chapter 30, Kelly Cruz is at the bar of the Boat Club in Fort Lauderdale, questioning the bartender about Thomas Ralston. The bartender tells her that Ralston is one of his favorite customers; he is a big tipper, and usually comes in with beautiful women. As far as he knows Ralston didn't have any one special woman and is usually with a different woman every night. He tells her that he once worked as a bartender at a party on Ralston's boat which quickly turned into an orgy, most of which was videotaped. Though he doesn't know any of Ralston's friends, one of the waitresses working at the bar does. Cruz then speaks with the waitress, who reluctantly gives her the address and phone number of her friend Mandy, who occasionally dates Ralston.

In Chapter 31, Jesse and Molly watch the tapes they have confiscated from the Lady Jane. The tapes are all much like the tape Jesse had taken during his first search of the boat, and the one with Cathleen Holton on it shows that she was a willing participant. Molly then recognizes a local girl on one of the tapes named Katie DeWolfe who is in school with her oldest daughter, which makes her 15 years old and underage. This





gives Jesse something he can use against Darnell. After several hours they reach the end of the tapes, without seeing Florence Horvath.

In Chapter 32, Kelly Cruz questions Mandy Morello, the woman the waitress told her dated Thomas Ralston. Mandy tells Kelly that life on Ralston's yacht was a continuous party, and that everyone who took part was a willing participant. She says that Ralston had his entire boat wired so that he could record everything that happened. Kelly shows her headshots of Florence Horvath and the two men from the video and although she doesn't recognize them, she remembers hearing about a woman named Florence from Ralston. She recalls meeting the Plum twins and tells Kelly that they partied with Ralston too.

In Chapter 33, Kelly Cruz calls Jesse and reports what she has found out so far, and then tells him that she will continue investigating both Ralston and Darnell. After hanging up with Kelly, Jesse asks Molly to have Katie DeWolfe and her parents come to the station. Molly tells him that the parents are divorced, and the father is gone. He tells Molly that he needs her to be part of the interview with them and to have them come in when she is on duty.

In Chapter 34, Katie DeWolfe and her mother arrive at the police station. Katie first denies having been with Darnell, but admits to it after Jesse plays the tape. Jesse asks her mother to leave the room, and Katie tells him that she met Thomas Ralston first, who then introduced her to Darnell. Katie and several of her friends were introduced to Ralston by Cathleen Holton; there had been drugs and alcohol, and Katie hadn't minded when the party got wild. She asks what Jesse is going to do with her and he says that he will take the names of the other girls who went out to Ralston's boat with her for starters.

## Chapters 28-34 Analysis

In these chapters Kelly Cruz is introduced as more than simply a disembodied voice on the telephone. She is shown to be tough and capable, but also compassionate and understanding. When interviewing the Plums, she notices that while Mrs. Plum seems to be aware of most of what has been going on with her children, Mr. Plum seems to exist in something of a haze; whether this is due to drugs, senility, or something else she doesn't know but he definitely does not appear to be "all there" to her. After learning a bit about Thomas Ralston from the bartender at his yacht club, she is able to find out from Mandy Morello that at least the Plum twins knew Ralston, and that she knew there was a Florence who had dated him whom Mandy said, "was a little old for him." Though it is not hard evidence, Mandy's statement along with Mrs. Plum's establishes a connection between Florence and the owner of one of the yachts currently in Paradise. Though this is not her department's case, she has become interested in it, and agrees to pursue it further when she has the time.

Jesse is able to establish a firm connection between Thomas Ralston and Harrison Darnell beyond the fact that they are both in Paradise for Race Week, and are fond of

videotaping their parties. The videotapes found during Jesse's search of the Lady Jane, and the subsequent interview with the underage Katie DeWolfe, firmly establishes that not only do Ralston and Darnell know each other, but they have the same tastes in partying and girls. The videotape of Katie DeWolfe and her statement at the police station are the first evidence of actual crimes being committed and while those crimes aren't murder, they do give Jesse leverage to use against both Darnell and Ralston.



# Chapters 35-41

## Chapters 35-41 Summary

In Chapter 35, Jesse and Jenn are in Jesse's apartment at the end of the day. Jesse tells her about the Florence Horvath case and how it has turned into a "cesspool". When Jenn asks if he can now get both Darnell and Ralston for statutory rape, Jesse tells her that he probably can, but it isn't enough. He is convinced that either Darnell or Ralston - or possibly both - killed Florence Horvath, and he wants them for murder.

In Chapter 36, Thomas Ralston comes into the police station at Jesse's request. Jesse tells him that he is investigating the death of Florence Horvath and shows him the headshots from the video, which Ralston says he doesn't recognize. Jesse asks if he knows Katie DeWolfe, Cathleen Holton, the Plum twins, or Mandy Morello; he denies knowing any of them. He admits to having met Harrison Darnell, but says he doesn't know him well.

In Chapter 37, Kelly Cruz interviews the marina manager at the Boat Club in Fort Lauderdale. She asks him if Thomas Ralston or Harrison Darnell have assigned moorings for their yachts at the club, and the manager tells her that they do; they had insisted that their moorings be far out and located right next to each other when they had joined the Boat Club a year before. The manager thinks they wanted side-by-side moorings so they could party together.

In Chapter 38, Jesse asks Captain Healy of the Massachusetts State Police to stop by his office, and fills him in on the Florence Horvath investigation. He tells Healy that while he can charge both Darnell and Ralston with statutory rape, he is afraid that if he does so they will "lawyer up" and he won't get another word out of either of them. He asks Healy to help ensure they don't leave the jurisdiction, and Healy says he can station a patrol boat at the harbor entrance and arrest them on the rape charge if they try to leave. Jesse says that he believes Ralston and Darnell are at the center of some kind of a sex ring, and that something to do with that ring is the reason why Florence Horvath was killed. Healy says he will help and tells Jesse that if he keeps pushing Ralston and Darnell one of them will probably end up giving the other up. Jesse agrees.

In Chapter 39, Jesse meets Jenn in her dressing room during a break in her filming, and she tells him that she wants him to look at a video of background footage one of the camera crews had shot. A few minutes into the video, Jesse recognizes one of the two men who were in the Florence Horvath tape. The footage had been shot on Thomas Ralston's yacht, the Sea Cloud, the day before. Jenn gives him the tape, having made a copy after recognizing the man.

In Chapter 40, the man's name is Eric Jurgen and after he is brought to the station, he tells Jesse that he knew Florence Horvath well; she was Harrison Darnell's "head girlfriend" when Jurgen worked on the Lady Jane. He says that the other man in the



tape is his brother, who is crewing on a yacht in the Caribbean. Jurgen says Florence asked he and his brother to make the tape with her. The tape had been made in Fort Lauderdale several months before and Florence's sisters, Corliss and Claudia Plum, shot the footage. Jesse asks Jurgen not to discuss their conversation with anyone and Jurgen agrees.

In Chapter 41, Jesse meets with attorney Rita Fiore at a Boston hotel bar. Jesse and Rita dated briefly prior to he and Jenn getting back together, and Rita is happy that they are doing so well, although she is still attracted to Jesse. She tells him that the Plum twins contacted her about hiring a private detective and after they mentioned Jesse's name, she had sent them to a detective she used occasionally. The twins refused to give the detective anything to go on, and he didn't take the case. Jesse tells her that while the Plum sisters aren't very bright, they also aren't as innocent as they might appear, and then tells her about the Florence Horvath case. Rita is disgusted by what she hears and orders another martini. Jesse wants one too, but orders a Coke instead.

## Chapters 35-41 Analysis

There is now no doubt in Jesse's mind that either Ralston or Darnell - and possibly even both of them - are involved in the death of Florence Horvath. While he is keenly aware that he needs help to keep them from leaving his jurisdiction if they decide they want to go, he does not want to arrest them for statutory rape if he can help it. Having confirmed the fact that they know each other well, that they both knew Florence Horvath, and that they are both involved in some strange sex ring, Jesse understands that the lies both of them have told him are more than just attempts to avoid embarrassment; they are attempts to cover up crimes. He wants them free to continue to do what they are doing in the hopes that they will slip up and hang themselves - or each other. Though Jesse understands that there are risks to pursuing this course of action, Captain Healy agrees that it is Jesse's best chance of getting one or both of them for murder, and offers to help.

Jesse's relationship with Jenn is becoming increasingly comfortable and domestic, and although the jealousy he struggles with is still there, both his workload with the investigation and the increasing comfort he feels with Jenn is pushing it into the background. Specifically, he is enjoying discussing the case with her at the end of those days she stays with him, and having someone there when he comes home. He still misses drinking, and the uglier the investigation becomes the more often he finds himself wanting a drink but he manages to resist the urge, which may also be contributing to the comfort he feels when he is with Jenn.



# Chapters 42-48

## Chapters 42-48 Summary

In Chapter 42, Jesse meets the Plum twins outside their Boston hotel and says that he knows they shot the video of their sister, and also that they filmed it on Darnell's boat. The twins tell him that Florence asked them to do it, and that she wanted it shot there to make Darnell jealous after he dumped her for Blondie Martin; when tape was finished, Florence said she sent a copy to Darnell. They tell Jesse that Darnell had flown Florence up to Boston in a private plane a few weeks after getting the tape, in the beginning of June. The twins remember that the pilot's name was Larry, but no last name. They then tell Jesse that they didn't tell him this before because they were afraid he would say something to their parents, who still controlled their trust money.

In Chapter 43, Kelly Cruz meets Larry Barnes at the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, and he tells her that he did fly Florence Horvath up to Boston in June, and that it was Harrison Darnell who had arranged for the flight; Darnell frequently arranged for Larry to fly different women places for him. She then asks if he knows Thomas Ralston, and he says Ralston often flew to port cities with Darnell; the crews would sail their yachts to the port, and they would fly to meet them. The only person he'd flown to Boston that year, however, had been Florence Horvath.

In Chapter 44, Jesse and Molly go over what they know about the case so far. Florence Horvath was flown to Boston the first week of June, and her body was found on July 12th; it had been in the water for at least two weeks, and possibly longer. They know that Darnell and Ralston are a lot closer than either admits, and that they both knew Florence Horvath and the Plum twins. Molly points out that while they can get both Ralston and Darnell for statutory rape, there is still nothing that links them to Florence's death, and nothing that proves she was murdered. Jesse says that he knows Darnell and Ralston killed her; everything about the case points to them, and he has been a cop too long to ignore all the lies. He tells Molly that he is going to get them both.

In Chapter 45, Captain Healy stops by Jesse's apartment on Sunday to talk about the case. Working from notes, Jesse goes over the entire case again slowly and methodically, looking for loose ends and things he has missed. Jesse remembers that the Plum twins said they were staying in Long Island with a man named Carlos Coca, and that they heard about their sister's death from a girl named Kimmy Young - both of whom Healy says might be worth checking out. Jenn arrives home from filming, and Healy says that it is nice to see her back in Jesse's apartment. Jenn says she feels the same.

In Chapter 46, Kelly Cruz meets the Plums at their tennis club. While Mr. Plum plays, Kelly talks with Mrs. Plum, who is drinking gin and tonics. Kelly asks if she knows Kimmy Young, and Mrs. Plum says that Kimmy went to private school with the twins and that they had all been friends. Kelly asks if Mrs. Plum knows Carlos Coca, but she does



not. Out of the blue, Mrs. Plum then tells Kelly that this is the most important thing she will do that day and says that because of her husband's money, after a while all there is to do is "drink and look nice." Mrs. Plum orders another drink as Kelly leaves.

In Chapter 47, Jesse calls Carlos Coca on Long Island who says that the Plum twins stayed with him that year around Memorial Day, but that he threw them out after three days. He tells Jesse that the twins were crazy; drunk by noon, walking around topless, and flirting with important guests in front of their wives. Coca says that in previous years the twins came to his place with Florence, who said she was "showing them the ropes", but that she hadn't been there this year. He says that Florence told him once that her whole family was crazy, and that money had ruined them all. He also says that all three of the sisters seemed hung up on their father, but couldn't recall any details. After hanging up with Coca, Jesse makes a call to Kelly Cruz.

In Chapter 48, Kelly Cruz questions Kimmy Young at the young woman's apartment. Kimmy is shocked to hear that Florence Horvath is dead, and tells Kelly that not only didn't she tell the Plum twins about the death, she hasn't seen or talked to the twins in over five years. Cruz asks if she and the twins had been good friends, and Kimmy tells her yes, until they were 15. Kelly asks her what happened to change things, and when Kimmy doesn't answer asks if something happened involving Mr. Plum. Kimmy gets up and runs to the bathroom, locking herself in. After a few minutes of knocking on the door with no response, Kelly kicks the door in, and finds Kimmy curled up against the bathtub. Kimmy doesn't appear to be aware of anything, though otherwise she appears uninjured. Kelly tries to move her but is unsuccessful, and then calls for help.

## Chapters 42-48 Analysis

Even though the evidence of connections between Ralston, Darnell, Florence Horvath and the Plum twins continue to mount up around him, Jesse is rapidly finding himself running into dead ends as far as the murder investigation is concerned. As Molly points out while they are going over the facts of the case, there is still no hard evidence that a murder has been committed. Florence Horvath's death could have been an accident, or even a suicide. Jesse, however, is convinced that Florence Horvath was murdered and, after the Plum twins tell him that Florence made the tape to make Darnell jealous, he is even more convinced of it than ever. He relates what Darnell must have felt when he got the tape to himself and his own inner struggles with unreasonable jealousy when it comes to Jenn having been with other men, and understands that type of intense feeling is one which could cause some people to kill.

Jesse and Kelly Cruz are also beginning to understand that all of the principles in the case - including the Plum twins and Florence herself - were active and willing participants in the decadent lifestyle that Ralston and Darnell live. Jesse is given a new - and disturbing - look into who Florence Horvath really was not only when he learns why she wanted to make the videotape from Corliss and Claudia Plum, but also when Carlos Coca tells him that in previous summers Florence had brought her underage sisters with her to his parties on Long Island to "show them the ropes." Coca mentioning



that Florence had once told him that money had ruined her entire family sounded eerily like what Mrs. Plum told Kelly Cruz near the end of their interview at the Plum's tennis club, and helps to confirm Jesse's growing feeling that almost everyone involved with the case is morally bankrupt.

Although it is something of a throw away comment on his part at the end of their phone conversation, when Carlos Coca mentions that Florence and the Plum twins all seemed to be hung up on their father, Jesse thinks it may be important and immediately after hanging up with Coca calls Kelly Cruz. When she later asks Kimmy Young if something happened when she was 15 that involved Mr. Plum, the young woman completely withdraws from reality in a way that Kelly has seen before with victims of abuse, indicating that Jesse's instincts about Coca's comment may have been right.



# Chapters 49-55

## Chapters 49-55 Summary

In Chapter 49, Kelly Cruz calls Jesse and tells him about what happened in Kimmy Young's apartment, and says that after the paramedics got Kimmy to the hospital and gave her a sedative, she was able to talk about the past. When she was 15 she had been staying overnight with the Plum twins, and Mr. Plum had molested her after first molesting his daughters. Kimmy had never told anyone about it, and never saw the Plums again. Cruz tells Jesse that even before hearing Kimmy's story she'd suspected that there was something wrong with Mr. Plum; he seemed disconnected, and out of touch with reality. When Jesse asks if she thinks Mrs. Plum knows about the abuse Kelly says yes, but that she never knew what to do about it, and so she drank.

In Chapter 50, Jesse is with Dr. Dix, who tells him that part of his problem is that he insists on taking full responsibility for his marriage to Jenn failing, when in reality it is both their faults. By taking full responsibility Jesse is trying to keep control of the relationship, and the jealousy is part of that control. Dix tells him that he thinks Jesse is at a place in his life where he can trust her more and doesn't need to have control, and that their relationship can go forward.

In Chapter 51, Jesse has the State Troopers pick up the Plum twins and bring them to his office. Once there, he tells Corliss to wait outside with a female trooper while he and Molly Crane talk to Claudia alone. Both sisters protest that they always stay together, but Jesse insists and the female trooper escorts Corliss from his office. When she is gone, Jesse asks Claudia if her father molested her, Corliss, and Florence; when she doesn't answer, he begins to ask her about specifics in detail, and she begins to cry. After a moment Molly tells him to stop and says that if he doesn't, she will file a report with the town selectmen. Jesse leaves the office, goes to where Corliss Plum is sitting and says that the truth is now out about her father molesting her.

In Chapter 52, after the Plum twins leave, Jesse and Molly discuss what they have learned. The twins and Florence had all been abused by their father starting at a young age and while they were being questioned, both twins kept saying, "Don't tell Daddy", as though they were ashamed at having told on him. Though Jesse can't be sure, he speculates that the wild lifestyle and loveless relationships all three sisters were involved in was a result of none of them being able to come to terms with what their father had done to them, even though the twins obviously still loved their "daddy". Molly needs a drink after the twins leave and Jesse gives her one, but abstains himself, though it is hard for him to do.

In Chapter 53, Jesse meets with Rita Fiore again. At his request Rita talked with the private detective she referred the Plum twins to, and learned that they wanted to hire him to find out where someone had been over the past few months. The twins wouldn't tell the detective the name of the person whose whereabouts they were interested in





finding out about - and actually seemed surprised when he said he needed to know it. All the twins would say was that that they wanted him to look in Miami and Boston. The detective declined the case, thinking it was a joke. After thanking Rita, Jesse calls Kelly Cruz.

In Chapter 54, back at the Plum's apartment, Kelly Cruz asks Mr. and Mrs. Plum if either of them have done any traveling since the end of May. After Mr. Plum says they haven't, Mrs. Plum says she remembers her husband driving to Tallahassee to one of his company's store openings right after Memorial Day, but he says she is mistaken. Kelly thanks the Plums for their time and, as she is letting herself out, sees the maid and asks if she remembers Mr. Plum driving to Tallahassee a couple of months before. The maid says she remembers that very well.

In Chapter 55, Kelly calls Jesse and tells him about her meeting with the Plums. She says that after leaving the apartment she went to the parking garage in the basement of the building, and the attendant showed her where the Plum's car was parked. She saw that it had an EZPass transponder on it, which worked on many of the toll roads in the Northeast - including in Massachusetts. Cruz then called the Plum and Partridge health food store in Tallahassee and learned they opened just after Memorial Day, but that Mr. Plum hadn't attended the opening.

## Chapters 49-55 Analysis

Shifting their focus away from Harrison Darnell and Thomas Ralston based on what they have learned from Kimmy Young about Mr. Plum, Jesse and Kelly Cruz find themselves entering into a world of incest and abuse that is worse than anything either of them ever imagined was going on in the case. Although when he has the State Police pick up the Plum twins so that he can question them Jesse isn't certain that their father's abuse has anything to do with Florence Horvath's death, he tells Molly that he has to pursue the molestation accusations because, as a cop, he needs to know where it will lead. Although Kelly Cruz mentions nothing about the accusations to either Mr. or Mrs. Plum, she continues to be struck by Mr. Plum being "out of it", and finds the fact that Mrs. Plum contradicts her husband about his having traveled near Memorial Day to be very interesting. Though he denies it, she insists that he did, indeed, go and it is this insistence that causes Kelly to speak to the maid, and check the Plum's car.

Molly threatening to go to the selectmen was a trick to get Claudia to open up to her as the "good cop" while Jesse questioned Corliss, and it is obvious from their discussion after the Plum twins leave that this had actually been Molly's idea. The fact that Jesse immediately goes along with it and leaves her alone with the girl once again demonstrates the faith he has in Molly. The turn that the case has taken towards pedophilia and incest is particularly upsetting to Molly as she is the mother of four children, but she remains an integral part of the investigation, and Jesse's right hand in Paradise. Jesse cannot help but to continue following up on this new twist in the investigation, even though it may mean that he will have to admit being wrong about Darnell and/or Ralston being responsible for Florence Horvath's death.



# Chapter 56-62

## Chapter 56-62 Summary

In Chapter 56, Jesse meets with Blondie Martin and asks her if Harrison Darnell was angry or jealous when Florence Horvath sent him the tape of her. Blondie tells him that, on the contrary, Darnell loved the tape. She says that Darnell never ditched Florence for her, and that Florence had been on the boat with them in Paradise for a while during this trip; the tape had been mailed to Darnell when she left the Lady Jane to see her father, who had come to town unexpectedly. She remembers Darnell looking forward to watching the tape with Florence, and asking when she was due back, but she never returned.

In Chapter 57, Captain Healy tells Jesse that an EZPASS transponder registered to Willis Plum was recorded passing through toll booths in Maryland, New York and Massachusetts heading north between June 1st and 4th, and heading south between the 7th and 12th. Jesse admits that it is time for him to reformulate his theory of the case, and although he still has no proof that there even was a murder, he tells Healy that he now sees Willis Plum as his main suspect, and Healy agrees.

In Chapter 58, Jesse has the Plum twins come back to his office, and again has Molly sit in. Jesse immediately tells them that he knows they have lied to him at every opportunity, and that he is going to put them in prison if they don't cooperate. He then tells them that their father was in town in June; Corliss says they know and asks if their daddy killed Florence, and Claudia says that they are afraid that's what happened. They say that Florence really made the videotape for their father and that she made a lot of duplicates and planned to send him one a month, to drive him crazy. It was their mother who told them Florence was dead, and they only told him it was Kimmy Young because they panicked. They loved their daddy and didn't want to lead the police to him, but were also afraid that he might kill them if he thought they suspected him of killing Florence.

In Chapter 59, Kelly Cruz picks Jesse up at the Miami Airport and after the two finally shake hands, he asks her how he should handle the Plums. She tells him that the wife is ready to pop, but she has no idea how to get to Mr. Plum - he seems too far gone. Though it is before noon, Jesse can see that both of the Plums have been drinking for some time after the maid leads them to the penthouse's terrace.

In Chapter 60, Jesse starts by telling Mrs. Plum that her husband was in Massachusetts in early June, when Florence died. When Mr. Plum tells his wife it isn't true, Jesse tells her that they have the records from the EZPass transponder proving it. Mr. Plum tells her softly that he has done nothing wrong, and asks her not to make a scene. Jesse ignores him and asks her if she has any idea why he might have driven to Massachusetts. Mrs. Plum then accuses her husband of killing Florence after she sent him the tape because he was jealous and hated the thought of her being with other



men. She tells Jesse that her husband had been molesting all of their daughters since they were 13. When Kelly asks why she didn't do anything, Mrs. Plum says that it was easier to drink. Mr. Plum says that he loved Florence and the twins more than any of them could understand, but that Florence had betrayed him with other men, and he had to kill her to keep her from becoming worse than she was.

In Chapter 61, Jesse and Kelly Cruz are in the bar at Jesse's hotel. Jesse tells her that his department has already arrested Darnell and Ralston for statutory rape, and that he will be taking Willis Plum back with him tomorrow. Cruz then tells him that the Plum twins are back home with their mother for the time being. Jesse tells her that she did a great job on the case, that he knows she put in a lot of her own time, and thanks her. She tells him that it might have been worth it, since she has a date with a very nice private plane pilot tonight and a marina manager tomorrow.

In Chapter 62, Jesse and Jenn are having dinner in his apartment, and she asks if he understands what happened in the case. He tells her that the Plum twins gave him the clue that put it all together when they said that Kimmy Young told them about Florence's death; he suspects they did it on purpose, but isn't certain. Florence had finally decided to break away from her father, and the video was her way of telling him that. Plum said he drove to Paradise to reconcile with her, lost his temper while they were sailing, and hit her with the boat while she was in the water. Jesse then tells her that it has been a year since he has had a drink and that he thinks he would like to drink a glass or two of wine with her. If he can't handle it, he knows he can always stop again.

## Chapter 56-62 Analysis

Jesse finally realizes that he has been looking for Florence's killer in the wrong place by concentrating exclusively on Harrison Darnell and Thomas Ralston. While their lifestyle and complete lack of conscience and morality in their pursuit of pleasure has disgusted him and caused him to want them to be guilty, he reluctantly comes to the conclusion that he is wrong. The real killer is living in Florida, and the truth is worse than anything he ever imagined. When Willis Plum finally confesses to killing his daughter the pieces that didn't seem to make any sense fall into place. Corliss and Claudia Plum, whether they realized they were doing it or not, had moved the investigation towards their father by mentioning Kimmy Young's name to Jesse; if they had mentioned anyone else's name, or even made up a name, the trail wouldn't have led to Willis Plum and his abuse. It was Mr. Plum who sent Florence's video to Darnell in an attempt to embarrass him, and in the end it was obvious that he didn't really understand the lifestyle his daughter had been leading at all. Though he claimed he loved them, Mr. Plum had destroyed the lives of all the women in his family and, in the end, had destroyed himself as well.

Although it is hard for him to find anything good about this case, Jesse does grow as a result of it. He is uncomfortably aware of the parallels between the jealous rage that caused Willis Plum to murder his own daughter and the jealousy that had been threatening to derail the life he was rebuilding with Jenn. In the end, he sees that while

Plum could never give up the control he felt he needed to have over Florence, that was exactly what Jesse was going to have to do. He also would have to learn how to trust both himself and his ex-wife more, if he was going to make it with Jenn. Though they both know they have a long way to go, they love each other enough to try.



# Characters

## Jesse Stone

Jesse Stone is the chief of the Paradise, Massachusetts Police Department and the main character in the novel. Jesse is in his mid-forties and has been the police chief for seven years. Prior to taking the job in Paradise he was a police officer in Los Angeles. Jesse is a good cop - tough, smart, and capable - and is willing to follow the leads in the Florence Horvath murder case wherever they take him, no matter how horrible what he finds may be. He is also a compassionate and caring man, in tune with the needs of both his community and the officers in his department. Jesse is not afraid to bend and in some cases, break the rules in his pursuit of the truth. He also understands that he cannot do everything alone and relies on the help of others including Kelly Cruz, Captain Healy, and Molly Crane to solve Florence Horvath's murder.

For several months Jesse has been working and succeeding at putting his relationship with his ex-wife Jenn back together. He has not had a drink in over ten months and he and Jenn have starting living together in Jesse's apartment on a part-time basis. While Jesse is not certain how far he wants the relationship to go, he does know that he loves Jenn and wants to be with her. However, Jesse is haunted by control issues and thoughts of the other men Jenn was with during the time they lived apart after the divorce, and the jealousy he feels is at times almost overwhelming. Jesse works through these feelings throughout the novel and, after seeing uncomfortable parallels between himself and some of the suspects in the case, finally understands how destructive they really are. As the novel ends, Jesse believes he has grown enough to share a glass of wine with Jenn and continue putting the marriage back together.

## Kelly Cruz

Kelly Cruz is a detective with the Fort Lauderdale Police Department who works on the Florence Horvath murder case with Jesse; she checks into the places and people in South Florida that are important to the case. Cruz is in her mid-30s, has been a detective for five years, and is the single mother of two young sons. She is a smart, dedicated cop who follows up the leads Jesse provides her with from his investigation in Paradise while also generating a number of leads in the case herself. Her insights into Mr. and Mrs. Plum, as well as her pursuit of what at first seem to be insignificant facts, are crucial to solving Florence Horvath's murder. Since she has her own regular duties to perform as a Fort Lauderdale police detective she spends a lot of her own time working on the Horvath case because she, like Jesse, needs to know the truth.

Although she can be hardnosed and all-business when she needs to be, she also has a compassionate side, and is willing to go with her instincts. Early in the investigation Cruz chooses not to tell the Plums about the tape their daughter Florence made to



spare them further pain, and later works to shield Kimmy Young - a victim of Mr. Plum's abuse - as much as she can.

## **Molly Crane**

Molly Crane is the only female member of the Paradise Police Department and the officer that Jesse trusts and counts on the most. Molly is the mother of four children, and recognizes 15-year-old Katie DeWolfe - a friend of her oldest daughter - on one of the tapes taken during the search of the Lady Jane. Jesse insists on Molly being present when he questions the younger women and girls involved in the case, and trusts her instincts when dealing with the Plum twins at a very pivotal point. Though disgusted and horrified by the turns the Horvath murder case takes, Molly never quits and is Jesse's right hand in the Paradise part of the investigation.

## **Jenn Stone**

Jenn is Jesse's ex-wife and throughout the novel is working with Jesse to put their marriage back together. Jenn, who works as a weathergirl at a Boston TV station, is chosen to host an hour long TV documentary on "Race Week" in Paradise which keeps her in town - and consequently with Jesse - throughout the Horvath murder investigation. Smart, funny, and very observant, Jenn provides Jesse with two important leads during the case. She is an understanding and kind woman who loves Jesse despite his faults and helps him to work out his control issues.

## **Florence Horvath**

Though only seen alive in the one page preface, Florence Horvath is the murder victim at the center of the novel. An heiress in her own right, she lives a decadent, party lifestyle which she introduces the Plum twins—her younger sisters - to. After years of abuse by her father, Florence makes a videotape of herself with two other men and sends it to him as a way of telling him that she is breaking away. Angered and hurt by the tape, her father murders her in Paradise.

## **Corliss and Claudia Plum (the Plum twins)**

Corliss and Claudia Plum are the 20-year-old twin sisters of Florence Horvath. Spoiled, unintelligent, and hedonistic, the twins provide Jesse with the crucial clue in their sister's murder, although whether they actually intended to is unclear. Abused by their father from an early age, the twins were involved in making the tape of Florence that she sent to her father and, when finally confronted by Jesse with the truth, confess that they suspect their father might have killed her.



## **Willis Plum (Mr. Plum)**

Mr. Plum is the father of the Plum twins and Florence Horvath. Wealthy as the result of inheriting a thriving business from his father, Plum molested all of his daughters starting when they were about 13 and is revealed as the murderer of Florence Horvath at the end of the novel. Usually drunk and always seen with his wife, Kelly Cruz tells Jesse that Plum doesn't seem to be "all there," but whether this is due to drugs, mental illness, or something else she doesn't know.

## **Betsy Plum (Mrs. Plum)**

Mrs. Plum is the wife of Willis Plum, and the mother of his daughters. Mrs. Plum is also usually drunk but is responsive to Kelly Cruz's questions. She knows far more about her daughters' lifestyle than her husband does and has been aware of him abusing them for years, though she chose to ignore it. While being questioned by Jesse at the end of the novel she provides him with the final pieces of the puzzle, allowing him to arrest Mr. Plum for the murder of Florence Horvath.

## **Harrison Darnell**

Harrison Darnell is the owner of the Lady Jane, the yacht where the Florence Horvath tape was shot. Darnell lives a decadent and immoral lifestyle in which Florence Horvath was a willing participant for a time and which, among other things, involves videotaping his guests' activities both with and without their knowledge. Darnell is Jesse's prime suspect in the Horvath murder case for most of the novel and although the murder was actually committed by Mr. Plum, he is arrested for statutory rape after having sex with 15-year-old Katie DeWolfe.

## **Blondie Martin**

Blondie Martin is one of Darnell's guests on the Lady Jane. Blonde and beautiful, she is part of "party lifestyle" Darnell leads. She is attracted to Jesse and flirts with him when they first meet. Later she tells Jesse that both she and Darnell lied about recognizing the men from the Florence Horvath tape and gives Jesse some insight into life aboard the Lady Jane.

## **Captain Healy**

Captain Healy is the head of the Massachusetts State Police Homicide Unit, and is a friend of Jesse's. He offers his assistance with the Horvath case, which Jesse accepts.



## **Thomas Ralston**

A friend of Harrison Darnell's, Thomas Ralston is involved in the same lifestyle and was also involved with Florence Horvath for a while. He is also arrested for having sex with Katie DeWolfe.

## **Cathleen Holton/Katie DeWolfe**

Cathleen and Katie are two local girls who partied with both Harrison Darnell and Thomas Ralston. Cathleen claimed she was raped which gave Jesse the legal grounds to search the Lady Jane. Katie was 15, which allowed Jesse to arrest both Darnell and Ralston for statutory rape.

## **Kimmy Young**

Kimmy Young was a friend of the Plum twins, and was abused by Mr. Plum at 15. The twins lie about Kimmy having told them about Florence's death, which is a major break in the case.

## **Dr. Dix**

Dr. Dix is a psychiatrist that Jesse consults about his control and jealousy issues with Jenn.

## **Suitcase Simpson/Arthur Angstrom/Peter Perkins**

Officers with the Paradise Police Department. Simpson is called "Suitcase" after a professional ball player.





# Objects/Places

## Videotapes

Videotapes play a major part in the plot. The explicit videotape Florence Horvath made ultimately caused her father to kill her. Both Harrison Darnell and Thomas Ralston videotaped their guests' activities aboard their yachts.

## Yachts

Paradise Harbor is filled with yachts which are in town for "Race Week." The Florence Horvath tape was shot on board the Lady Jane, the yacht owned by Harrison Darnell.

## Telephone

Jesse and Kelly Cruz exchange information almost exclusively over the telephone.

## Alcohol

Many suspects are drinking when they are questioned by Jesse and Kelly. Jesse has had no alcohol in 10 months and misses it often.

## EZPass Transponder

The records from an EZPass transponder on the Plum's car put Mr. Plum in Paradise around the time Florence is murdered.

## Nightstick

Jesse disables a football player who is much larger than he is with Suitcase Simpson's nightstick.

## Private Jet

Harrison Darnell arranges for Florence Horvath to be flown to Paradise in a private jet.

## Paradise Police Station

Much of the action - particularly questioning witnesses and suspects - takes place in the Paradise Police Station.



## **Gray Gull/Daisy's**

The Gray Gull and Daisy's are restaurants in Paradise where Jesse takes Jenn.

## **Mr. and Mrs. Plum's Penthouse Apartment**

Kelly Cruz questions Mr. And Mrs. Plum several times in their Miami penthouse apartment.

## **Paradise, Massachusetts**

Jesse is the police chief in Paradise, Massachusetts. Paradise is where Florence Horvath's body washes up.

## **South Florida**

Many of the suspects, as well as Florence Horvath, are from South Florida. Kelly Cruz conducts her part of the investigation here, specifically in Fort Lauderdale and Miami.

## **Boston, Massachusetts**

Boston is where the Plum twins stay. It is also where Jesse goes to see attorney Rita Fiore.



# Themes

## Police Investigative Procedure and Instinct

The novel revolves around the death of Florence Horvath and the procedures and techniques that Jesse Stone and Kelly Cruz use to first prove that a murder has been committed and then find the murderer are central to the plot. While many of the leads they have wind up going nowhere, each lead is followed up on and every individual is tracked down and questioned. Though the process is time consuming and frustrating for both Jesse and Kelly, part of what makes them good police officers is their ability to stick with the investigation even when something they are looking into turns out to be a dead end. The increasing disgust both feel for the individuals associated with the case - including the victim - is kept in the background as neither cop shows any of the possible suspects how they feel, or exactly how much - or how little - they know.

Perhaps the most important tool Jesse and Kelly as well as Molly Crane possesses is their instinct when it comes to dealing with people. Jesse's firm belief that the Plum twins are lying to him about several aspects of the case, and Kelly realizing at the end that Mrs. Plum is ready to "pop" and that Jesse should concentrate his questioning on her rather than Mr. Plum, are key to finally solving the case. Most importantly, even though throughout most of the novel there is no firm evidence that Florence Horvath was murdered, Jesse's instinct tells him that this is, indeed, the case and he remains committed to proving it and bringing the killer to justice.

## Jealousy

Jealousy is a major theme in this novel and affects a number of the main characters in different ways. This powerful emotion is at the heart of Florence Horvath's murder as it was the jealousy that he felt after seeing his daughter in the videotape with two other men that ultimately led Mr. Plum to murder his own daughter. In fact, as the Plum twins tell Jesse near the end of the novel, one of the reasons that Florence made the tape and mailed it to her father was to make him jealous. They tell him that she had made many copies of the tape so that she could continue mailing it to him once a month to make him crazy.

Jealousy is also at the heart of the inner struggles Jesse is forced to deal with throughout the novel with regards to his relationship with Jenn. While outwardly things seem to be progressing nicely between them, Jesse continually finds himself thinking about Jenn being in situations with other men and being jealous of the experiences they may have had. Jesse realizes that these feelings are not love and that they have the potential to be very destructive, as Mr. Plum's actions show him very clearly. Though it is still an issue and perhaps always will be, in the end, Jesse is able to control his jealousy even though he cannot completely get rid of it.



## The Power of Money to Corrupt

Throughout the novel, the hedonistic lifestyle and the decadent and amoral behavior exhibited by many of the individuals involved in the Florence Horvath murder case - and particularly the Plum family, including the victim herself - is tied to the fact that they are all extremely wealthy. At one point in the novel Mrs. Plum tells Kelly Cruz that having money will "gut" anyone and that after a while all there is left to do is look nice and drink. At another point she tells Kelly and Jesse that she chose not to do anything about her husband abusing her daughters because he had the money, and the family was otherwise "well situated". Florence Horvath herself was once quoted as saying that money had ruined her entire family and made all of them crazy, and this fact is born out in scene after scene involving both Mr. and Mrs. Plum and the Plum twins.

As Jesse and Kelly go deeper into the case and learn more about the people involved, both become disgusted by the continual wild partying, the total lack of love or commitment, the excess and waste, and the almost total disregard for the law - all of which is viewed as being perfectly normal by many of the novel's wealthy characters. Though at one point Jesse says that it isn't money that corrupts but rather what people do with it, he - and the reader - wonders what these people would have been like without their wealth.



# Style

## Point of View

The novel is written in the third person and with the exception of the preface, it is written from Jesse Stone's or Kelly Cruz's point of view, depending on which of these two characters is at the center of the action or dialogue. The preface is written from the victim's point of view. One of these characters is in every scene in the novel and the author occasionally expresses their thoughts or feelings about situations, other characters, or the conversations they have outside of normal conversation or exposition. The information presented to Jesse and Cruz by other characters is not always reliable.

The majority of the information in the novel is conveyed to the reader through dialogue, specifically through conversations between Jesse or Kelly and someone else, although there are some sections that are purely descriptive (Jesse's first search of the Lady Jane, for example). The technique of using dialogue so extensively allows the reader to get a real feel for how Jesse and Kelly think and also allows these two characters to comment on what is going on in a natural and unobtrusive way.

## Setting

The novel is set primarily in the coastal town of Paradise, Massachusetts although the action in a number of the chapters centers on the investigation being conducted by Kelly Cruz and takes place in the Miami/Fort Lauderdale area of South Florida. The novel is set during "Race Week" in Paradise, which is actually a month long yachting event that takes place between late June and mid-July. Paradise is a small, intimate community and Race Week is the major social and economic event of the year and draws thousands of visitors during the course of the month.

The Paradise and South Florida settings work well with both the plot and the characters as the investigation can be conducted on two fronts and both the past and current actions of those suspected of involvement in Florence Horvath's death can be looked into. Particularly when the action is set in Paradise, the reader gets an excellent feeling for how closely knit and pleasant a community it really is, and how much a part of this community Jesse has become in his seven years as its chief of police.

## Language and Meaning

Since the majority of the story is shared via dialogue the language used in this novel is, for the most part, language that the reader would be likely to hear in the course of normal conversation. Because of this the dialogue tends to flow and sounds natural when read aloud. Each main character has their own unique way of speaking, and their "voices" are easily recognizable throughout the novel. While there is some profanity used in the course of the dialogue, it is not excessive and fits the characters that use it



well. Due to the fact that a good portion of the novel concerns a variety of sexual activities there is also a considerable amount of sexually explicit language used in both the dialogue and in the descriptive passages which might be offensive to some more sensitive readers.

The author's use of language is appropriate to both the characters and circumstances introduced in the novel and serves to keep the action moving forward at a rapid pace. The story is presented with a minimum of wasted words, and leaves a lot to the reader's imagination while never allowing them to become lost or disoriented. In particular, the author's use of short, declarative sentences and his technique of presenting information using 'question and answer' in the dialogue is very effective at conveying information clearly and succinctly and fits the story well.

## Structure

The novel is 295 pages long. It is divided into 62 chapters and starts with a short preface. Each chapter is between one and eight pages long. The chapters tell the story primarily via dialogue, although there are some chapters which are almost completely descriptive. In the vast majority of cases each chapter presents a single conversation or incident from beginning to end. While the exact amount of time that passes between chapters is not always made clear, the majority of the novel takes place in late June and early July, during "Race Week".

The novel has one main plot and a few subplots. The main plot concerns the investigation into the death of Florence Horvath being conducted by Jesse Stone and Kelly Cruz. One subplot concerns Jesse's attempt to rebuild his marriage to Jenn, his ex-wife, and his struggles with his own inner demons of control and jealousy. Another subplot concerns the amoral and decadent lifestyle lived by many of the novel's wealthy secondary characters and the destructive effect that it has on all of them. While the main plot is resolved at the end of the novel, the subplots are left undecided.



## Quotes

"It's not really about the other guy,' Jesse said. 'It's about yourself'" (Chapter 2, p. 9).

"We're law officers,' Kelly Cruz said. 'We're probably too suspicious'" (Chapter 11, p. 48).

"You know,' Jesse said. 'Craving is pretty much all about the craver and nothing about the cravee'" (Chapter 21, p. 103).

"Certainties are harder to come by,' Jesse said, 'in police work'" (Chapter 23, p. 111).

"Jesse never split a search. It was Jesse's view that two people searching the same room made it less likely that either would miss something" (Chapter 29, p. 140).

"It would be nice, Jesse thought, to be able to sit at the edge of evening and sip a whiskey and talk. Maybe someday. Maybe not" (Chapter 38, p. 184).

"These aren't people society has abandoned. They didn't grow up with no parents in some project somewhere. They're not victims of racism, or class contempt or poverty. They have no excuse for being trash" (Chapter 41, p. 199).

"So how are you going to solve this one?' 'Same old way,' Jesse said. 'Keep asking, keep pushing. Try to scare them. Maybe somebody will roll on somebody. Maybe somebody will do something stupid'" (Chapter 44, p. 213).

The money, you know. The money guts you. After a while all you have left to do is look nice and drink" (Chapter 46, p. 223).

"That may be,' Jesse said. 'But sympathizing with them is not my business. My business is catching the person who killed their sister'" (Chapter 52, p. 249).

"He's so gentle and sweet,' she said. "'Its like part of him is missing but he doesn't mind and there's no reason you should be upset about it'" (Chapter 55, p. 258).

"You know this business,' Healy said. 'You have to assume everyone's lying to you. But you have to act as if they weren't'" (Chapter 57, p. 269).



"'I killed her to keep her from becoming worse than she had become,' Mr. Plum said. 'I really had no choice'" (Chapter 60, p. 288).

"'It's about both of us,' Jesse said. 'Maybe I need to trust us both'" (Chapter 62, p. 295).





## Topics for Discussion

Discuss Jesse Stone and his investigation into the death of Florence Horvath. Why does he become convinced that she was murdered? Why does he break the law by searching the Lady Jane without a warrant? What convinces him that Harrison Darnell and Thomas Ralston killed her? Does his desire for this to be true affect the rest of his investigation? If so, how?

Discuss the relationship between Jesse and his ex-wife Jenn. Does he really want things to be as they were before the divorce? Is their relationship a healthy one? How does he deal with his control and jealousy issues? Is Jenn responsible for any of their problems? Do his discussions with Dr. Dix help, and if so, how? Was drinking responsible for the divorce? Will Jesse be able to handle drinking again?

Does the Florence Horvath investigation affect Jesse's attempts to put his relationship with Jenn back together? Does Jesse's personal life interfere with the investigation? What is Jesse's relationship with Molly Crane? How important is she to Jesse's ability to be effective in his job? How important is she to the investigation?

How important is Kelly Cruz to the investigation? Could Jesse have solved the case with a different detective in Florida? What is her major contribution to the investigation? Why does she pursue the case on her own time? How does the case and what she learns about the people involved affect her? Is she good at her job? Does Jesse respect Kelly, and vice versa?

Discuss Mr. and Mrs. Plum. What is their relationship with one another? What is their relationship with their daughters? How long has Mrs. Plum been aware of her husband abusing their daughters? Why does she never do anything about it? Does she love her daughters? Does Mr. Plum? Is who and what they are responsible for what their daughters have become?

Is money responsible for ruining all of the members of the Plum family, as Florence said? Are all of the members of the family really ruined? Is money responsible for the decadent lifestyle Florence Horvath chose to lead? Would - or could - she have chosen that lifestyle if she hadn't been wealthy? Is Florence responsible for Corliss and Claudia Plum following in her footsteps as far as the "party" life they choose to lead is concerned?

Are the Plum twins as dumb as everyone seems to think they are? Are they as amoral as they appear? Did they name Kimmy Young deliberately as a way to point Jesse's investigation towards their father? Do they know their father killed Florence? Why do they constantly lie to Jesse? Why do they move back in with their mother after their father is arrested?

Are Jesse and Kelly satisfied with the outcome of the investigation? Is Jesse satisfied with the charges he is able to file against Darnell and Ralston? Does Kelly understand

Mrs. Plum, and why she remained silent about her husband's abuses? Have either of them have been changed by the investigation? How?