

Second Glance Study Guide

Second Glance by Jodi Picoult

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Plot Summary

Second Glance is a novel by bestselling novelist, Jodi Picoult. In this novel, a development company's decision to build a strip mall on an old and abandoned property in Comtosook, Vermont not only creates a protest among the local Abenaki Indians, but brings to light a ghost who has been haunting the property for seventy years. Ross Wakeman arrives in town after quitting his job only to find himself pulled into searching for the ghost haunting the townspeople of Comtosook. When Ross meets a beautiful and confused woman, he finds himself quickly falling in love despite his decade-long devotion to his dead fiancée. However, when Ross realizes this woman is the ghost who has turned Comtosook on its head, he becomes determined to identify her killer and then join her in the afterlife. Second Glance is a ghost story that takes on the question of whether or not love dies when a soulmate is taken away.

Ross Wakeman has been working with ghost hunters for more than year, trying to find proof of ghosts. Ross lost the love of his life ten years before in a tragic car accident and has spent the last decade attempting to join her. Unfortunately, it seems Ross cannot die. Every time Ross tries, he miraculously survives. During his latest attempt at finding a ghost, Ross realizes his boss, a famous television ghost hunter, is a liar who is willing to do almost anything for ratings. This causes Ross to become disillusioned and so he quits his job. He goes to stay in Comtosook, Vermont with his sister, Shelby, and her son, Ethan.

Ethan has XP, an illness that makes him unable to tolerate UV light. Ethan and his mother sleep all day so they can play outside in the dark. Shelby has been raising Ethan alone since his diagnoses scared his father away. Ethan adores his uncle and is thrilled when the construction on the old Pike property causes a ghost to manifest itself, giving Ross a job. Ethan assists Ross as he sets up video cameras and attempts to catch proof of the ghost living on the Pike property. Ross expects to find an Indian haunting the area because the Abenaki Indians are protesting the construction of the new strip mall. They claim the Pike property houses an Indian burial sight. However, all Ross finds is a beautiful young woman who appears afraid of her husband.

Ross becomes obsessed with this young woman, Lia, when he again runs into her at the diner in town. Ross returns to the Pike property over and over in hopes of seeing Lia again where he first saw her. One night, Ross runs into Lia on the Pike property again but she is very frightened of something Ross does not understand. Ross chases Lia as she attempts to leave. Ross trips over a headstone during the chase. When Ross sees the name on the headstone, both he and Lia are in for a huge surprise. The name is Cecelia Beaumont Pike. It is Lia's grave. Lia is a ghost who disappears as Ross watches.

Ross enlists the help of a local detective to help him find out how Lia died. The detective, Eli Rochert, unearths the file on Lia's death, discovering that Lia was hung and the suspect at the time was an Abenaki Indian named Gray Wolf. As Eli becomes



embroiled in the investigation, he meets Shelby Wakeman and falls head over heels in love. This keeps Eli nearly as obsessed with the case as Ross.

The investigation eventually leads Eli and Ross to question not only Lia's murder, but the death of her infant born that same night. Lia's widow, Spencer Pike, claims that the baby was stillborn and that he buried it the day it was born in order to spare Lia's feelings. However, when Eli exhumes both Lia's and the baby's bodies, he discovers that Spencer buried a beef roast and not a stillborn infant. This leads Eli and Ross to Ruby Weber, a French-Canadian woman who was once a house girl in the Pike home. Ruby is now in her late eighties, living with her granddaughter and great-granddaughter.

Ross visits Ruby Weber and asks her about the night Lia died. Ruby confesses to seeing Lia's body hanging in the ice house the night she died. Ruby also tells Ross that the infant was still alive, crying in her coffin in the ice house. However, Ruby claims the baby died soon after she stole her and ran away. Ross knows this is not true, however, because Ruby's granddaughter, Meredith, looks exactly like Lia. Ross tells Meredith the truth about her mother and convinces her to return to Comtosook with him.

Meredith meets her great-great grandfather and her grandfather after a DNA test confirms their family connection. Soon after, Meredith decides to return to Maryland and leave Lia in the past even as Eli and Ross come to the conclusion that Lia committed suicide to punish her husband for the baby's death. However, when Ethan and Meredith's daughter, Lucy, become trapped in a rock quarry as the computer begins detonating explosives to excavate the rock, Meredith and Ross are forced to face danger in an attempt to rescue them. Ross manages to get the kids out safely. However, Meredith becomes trapped under a slab of rock. While trying to help her, Ross spots a stick of dynamite too close to her. Ross takes the dynamite and attempts to move it before it explodes. The explosion comes too quickly, causing Ross to be thrown against some rocks, killing him.

Ross dreams of the day his fiancée died. Ross relives the moment when he chose to leave his fiancée by the side of the road to help the other driver. As Ross lays the other driver out of harm's way, he realizes it is Meredith. Ross saved Meredith's life ten years ago, enabling her to give birth to Lucy and continue her research in genetics. Ross suddenly wakes up as he is being wheeled into the morgue. Ross tells Meredith about the accident. Together they realize they were meant to be, just like Shelby and Eli have discovered their own connection to one another.



Part 1: Chapter 1

Part 1: Chapter 1 Summary

The Abenaki Indians are a group of Indians from the East coast who were never classified as a native group of Indians because they would often cross the border into Canada, causing the American government to consider them Canadian Indians. For this reason, the Abenaki often lost their claims to their native lands on the East coast. The Abenaki play a role in this novel because of the relationship between Gray Wolf and Lia Beaumont.

Ross Wakeman is placing a video camera on the roof of the O'Donnell family's summer home in order to video tape possible poltergeist activity in their attic. Ross does not use care because he is convinced he cannot die. Mrs. O'Donnell shows Ross into the attic inside the home a short time later and tells him that she believes the ghost that she hears is the ghost of her sister who died when Mrs. O'Donnell was seven. In the attic, Ross finds a stack of pennies. Mrs. O'Donnell tells him that happens often. Alone, Ross calls out to the ghost, asking if it is Aimee, is dead fiancée. Much later, Ross tells his boss, Curtis Warburton, host of the television show, *Bogeyman Nights*, that Mrs. O'Donnell believes the ghost is her sister. Curtis uses this information to suggest a scam séance. This causes Ross to believe Curtis is a liar and to quit his job after eighteen months.

Shelby Wakeman watches her son, Ethan, riding his skateboard in the driveway. It is the middle of the night. Ethan has xeroderma pigmentosum or XP, a rare disease that causes Ethan's body to be unable to repair the damage done to the skin when it is exposed to UV light. Ethan was diagnosed when he was an infant but his mother worries that too much damage was done before his diagnoses and that this damage could lead to his premature death of skin cancer.

Az Thompson and the others are Abenaki Indians protesting the proposed construction of a strip mall on the Pike property on the grounds that the property is an ancient Abenaki burial ground.

Rod van Vleet, the representative of Redhook Group, the corporation building the strip mall on the Pike property, visits Spencer Pike in the hospital to have him sign the final contract. Spencer agrees to sign the paperwork, insisting the property was always his wife, Cissy's, and that he has no sentimental connection to it. Afterward, Rod stops to get gas. Rod uses his cell phone to call his boss with the good news, but his phone continually connects with the Angel Quarry instead of Redhook. Ross arrives at his sister's house.



Part 1: Chapter 1 Analysis

This first chapter introduces the main characters and the conflict that will propel the plot. The first character introduced is Ross Wakeman. Ross is a man consumed with grief. Ross lost his girlfriend in a car accident. Not only was Ross driving the car at the time, but he left Aimee for a short time to help the other driver, dragging that driver out of the car before the gas tank exploded. When Ross returned to Aimee, she was dead. Ross has been consumed with guilt over the fact that he allowed Aimee to die alone. Ever since, Ross has been trying to kill himself, but has had no success. In fact, Ross has oddly been saved every time he has come close to death. Ross has also spent the last eighteen months attempting to find ghosts, hoping that one day he will meet Aimee again. This grief will propel Ross, becoming an obsession that will rule every action Ross takes.

Shelby and her son, Ethan, are also introduced. Ethan has a rare disease that keeps him out of the sun and away from UV light. This caused Shelby's divorce from Ethan's father and left her living a life in darkness. Shelby clearly adores her son and has placed her own life on hold to help him. From the very beginning, this shows the depth of Shelby's personality and her strength. The fact that Ross is her brother shows the reader a contrast that will lead to conflict as the plot continues to develop.

The reader also meets Eli Rochert, a local cop, and Az Thompson, a local Indian. These characters are only touched on briefly and the reader learns little from them. However, their introduction at this point suggests they will be important as the plot continues to develop. The reader meets Spencer Pike and Rod van Vleet as well. These two characters introduce the project on the Pike property that will end in the building of a strip mall. This project seems mundane, but the reader is already aware that the Abenaki are protesting the project. When Spencer mentions ghosts, the reader begins to wonder if this project might be something more than mundane. In fact, this project is the conflict that will propel the plot.



Part 1: Chapter 2

Part 1: Chapter 2 Summary

Lucy Oliver is alone in her bedroom, trying to sleep. However, Lucy is afraid because she believes there is a woman in her room, threatening her. Lucy calls her mother at the laboratory where she works, but her mother becomes impatient and insists she go to sleep. Much later, when Meredith Oliver comes home, she finds Lucy asleep in the pillow lined bathtub.

Ross and Shelby watch Ethan ride his skateboard in the middle of the night. Ross and Shelby discuss ghosts. Ross tries to convince Shelby that they exist based on some of the things he witnessed as Curtis Warburton's assistant, but even a strange picture taken over a lake cannot convince Shelby completely. Ross then admits that he has decided to retire from the ghost hunting business.

Eli Rochert is called to the Pike property in order to encourage the protestors to stop interrupting work on the new strip mall.

Az Thompson works as a security guard at Angel Quarry even though he is more than a hundred years old. As he watches the baseball game on his television, a light on one of the security monitors catches his attention. Az walks out to the area where he saw the light and finds Ross Wakeman walking around. Ross was told by Ethan that someone was murdered at the quarry, so he came to see if he could find anything. Az tells Ross he is on private property and escorts him to the gate.

Over the next couple of weeks, the residents of Comtosook began to notice unusual things, such as rose petals raining from the sky and blueberries bursting through a car's air conditioning vents. The ground around town has also become surprisingly cold, making the work at Pike's property slow and hard going. The Abenaki protestors begin to wonder if maybe it is not a ghost haunting the town. The Redhook Group has several scientists come out and check out the sight to offer explanations for the odd coldness of the ground. None of them can explain it.

Rod van Vleet goes to the library to look for information. Shelby works there as a librarian, but she tells him there is little she can do to help him. However, Shelby suggests he talk to Ross about the possibilities of finding the ghost causing these problems. Unfortunately, Ross is unhappy when he learns this, leading to a fight between him and Shelby that Ethan overhears. Ethan runs out of the house even though it is daylight. Ross chases after him, finding him at Angel Quarry, sunburned.

Part 1: Chapter 2 Analysis

Two new characters are introduced in these chapters. Lucy Oliver is an eight-year-old girl who has night terrors when she is awake. Lucy's mother, Meredith, is a geneticist



who specializes in creating babies for people who want a child free of disease. These two characters are not clearly connected to the other characters in the novel, therefore the reader wonders who they are and how they will fit in the plot. The reader does not doubt, however, that they will fit in eventually.

Strange things are beginning to happen in Comtosook, such as rose petals raining from the sky. Not only this, but Rod van Vleet begins noticing odd things not only personally but on the construction sight. This suggests to him that the property is haunted. Rod looks for help in the history records of the town but instead meets Shelby who points him in Ross's direction. Perhaps this will give Ross something to do that might take his mind off of the grief that has ruled his life for the past decade, or perhaps give him another reason to find proof of ghosts and the hope that Aimee will one day appear to him. In either case, this brings two sets of character closer together as the plot continues to develop.



Part 1: Chapter 3

Part 1: Chapter 3 Summary

Ethan and Ross take a video camera and junk food to the Old Pike house to spend the night so that they might try to catch some evidence of a ghost. Ethan is less than impressed with the lack of fancy equipment. Ross and Ethan settle in at the Pike house for the night in a back bedroom. They begin to play cards and eat junk food. When Ross and Ethan hear a noise, Ethan becomes frightened. Ross sees a light outside the window. Ross leaves Ethan alone in the house while he chases after the light with the hope of catching sight of something paranormal. Instead, what Ross finds is a young woman digging in the frozen ground. The woman introduces herself as Lia Beaumont. Ross assumes she lives in the neighborhood. Then Ethan calls out for Ross.

In Maryland, Lucy becomes frightened at day camp and locks herself into a shed. Meredith arrives and talks her out of the shed, learning that Lucy thought she saw a woman hanging from a tree. Meredith climbs the tree to prove to Lucy that there is nothing there. About this same time, an article appears in the New York Times about the strange events in Comtosook, suggesting all the strange events taking place all over town have something to do with the Abenaki burial ground on the Pike property. Later, Meredith goes on yet another bad date with a man who cannot stop talking about himself and who suggests that he would like to make a baby with Meredith as soon as possible.

In Comtosook, Ethan and Ross watch the video tape of their night at the Pike house. Ross is fascinated with the fact that the video camera cut out while he was out speaking to Lia Beaumont. Ethan has a vague memory of seeing a woman getting out of a bathtub, but he does not say anything because the memory is not clear. Shelby spends the afternoon researching the Pike property for Ross. Shelby finds the will of Spencer Pike's wife that left him the property, finding it interesting that the woman never mentions her own name, but calls herself Mrs. Spencer Pike. Shelby also notes that the property would have gone to a child had one resulted from the marriage.

Ross returns to the Pike property, hoping more to see Lia again rather than a ghost. Ross runs into Az Thompson and speaks to him for a few minutes, revealing some of Az's unhappiness of the American government's treatment of the Abenaki Indians. A nurse at the nursing home quits because of Spencer Pike's cruelty in regards to her family history. In Maryland, Meredith Oliver takes Lucy to see a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist wants to put Lucy on psychotic drugs, but Meredith hesitates.

Ross goes to the town diner only to find it overcrowded. While waiting for a table, Ross steps out back to have a cigarette. Lia suddenly appears. They talk about the paranormal for a few minutes. Ross asks Lia to come to the Pike property with him to help search for the ghosts. When Lia asks Ross why he searches for ghosts, he finds himself telling her all about Aimee and her death. Lia then tells Ross about her husband.



Lia implies that she is frightened of her husband, leaving Ross with the impression that Lia's husband is abusive. A short time later, Ross goes to the library to research the Pike property. Unfortunately, they cannot trace the property back further than Spencer Pike. However, Ross is able to locate several Beaumont's in the phone book, hoping one of the address will lead him to Lia.

In her lab, Meredith finds herself recalling the death of her mother, an unexpected death that brought Meredith home from school and a slowly dying relationship with a biomedical engineer professor. On the way back to school, Meredith was in a car accident. It was in the aftermath of the accident that Meredith learned she was pregnant. Back in Comtosook, Ross has no luck tracking down Lia. Now Ross is back on the Pike property searching for ghosts. A stone mysteriously falls out of a tree and hits Ross in the shin. The next day, Ethan goes to the dermatologist to have yet another set of precancerous growths removed from his face. At home, Ethan becomes frustrated with his situation so he slams his fist into the mirror. Shelby cleans up the mess and tries to soothe her son's emotions, but Ethan remains fixated on his own inevitable death.

Eli wakes from another intense dream about a young woman he has never met. The dream makes Eli think of his mother and how she once told him how dreams are the things a person is too busy to see while awake. In Maryland, Lucy wakes in the middle of the night, insistent that there is a strange woman in her room. Meredith is so upset by this that she calls the doctor and insists on starting Lucy on the psychotic drugs.

Lia appears on the Pike property once again. Ross shows her all his equipment, including the new EMF meter. Ross also shows her a spot where he saw holes dug in the ground a few days ago that mysteriously disappeared before his eyes. As they talk, Lia sees the marks on Ross's wrists from a long ago suicide attempt. As they talk the EMF meter begins to give off an alarm. Ross turns to check it and when he turns back, Lia is gone.

Part 1: Chapter 3 Analysis

In this chapter, Ross and Ethan spend a great deal of time trying to find proof of a ghost on the Pike property, but are only able to document a few strange events, including lights that have no apparent source. However, Ross meets Lia Beaumont on the property. Ross becomes slowly obsessed with Lia, finding in her the first sense of connection he has felt with anyone in a long time. This relationship brings Ross out of his grief, making him see there is life still left in the world even without Aimee. However, Lia's odd behaviors causes the reader to wonder what her real motives and desires might be.

Shelby and Ethan begins to struggle in their relationship as Ethan becomes more and more aware of the possibility of his early death. Shelby also struggles with this as she has made Ethan the center of her world and would be devastated should he die. This



parallels Ross's feelings for Aimee, leaving the reader wondering what might happen to Shelby should Ethan die.

Meredith Oliver has her daughter placed on psychotic drugs after she begins displaying odd behaviors that seem to involve a young woman Lucy can see but Meredith cannot. This makes the reader wonder if perhaps Lucy is not psychic or otherwise able to see the dead. Meredith is too scientifically minded to understand this, leaving the reader concerned that Meredith's actions are not the best for Lucy at this point.

Eli has dreams of a woman he has never met, suggesting his loneliness after his wife's abandonment. Az Thompson remains peripheral character, perhaps one destined to touch the main plot but at this point all he appears to be is a leader of the Abenaki protestors. Perhaps this role will expand as the plot continues to develop.



Part 1: Chapter 4

Part 1: Chapter 4 Summary

Ross shows Rod van Vleet the evidence he has garnered from the Pike property. It does not prove much, leaving van Vleet unhappy and determined to find someone else who can rid the property of the ghosts. As they are talking, a group of workers come into the office and complain of flies in their ears that say *chijis*, or baby in Abenaki language.

Ross spends two days at the emergency room hoping to find Lia there. Instead, Shelby finds Ross. Shelby accuses Ross of making her worry on purpose and of torturing her due to his past desire to commit suicide. Ross tells Shelby about Lia. Shelby finds some hope in the fact that Ross seems prepared to move on with his life finally. In Maryland, on the medication, Lucy sleeps a lot. However, the strange woman has not left, but Lucy is no longer afraid of her.

Eli is called to the Pike property because the house appears to be reconstructing itself. Eli goes inside the partially reconstructed house and believes that he can see a woman's finger write help on a foggy bathroom mirror. As Eli runs from the house, the house lights up even though it has not had electricity in twenty years. That same night, Ross visits Spencer Pike at the nursing home to ask about the property. Spencer tells Ross that his wife died on that property and that she was killed by an Abenaki. The following day, Shelby visits the municipal building and searches through the death records from the thirties. There, Shelby finds a death certificate for Cecelia Pike and her stillborn daughter who remained unnamed at her death. The time of death for both is the exact same time, leaving the impression that Cecelia Pike died in childbirth despite what her husband Spencer told Ross.

Ruby Weber, Meredith Oliver's grandmother, recalls the day her daughter died after Ruby told her about a phone call she received from Spencer Pike. Due to this, Ruby has decided to never tell Meredith about the phone call or the reason behind it.

Ross visits Eli and asks him to help investigate the death of Cecelia Pike. Eli pulls the investigative records and discovers that Cecelia was hung in the ice house on her property. Eli also learns that Cecelia's husband claimed an Abenaki named Gray Wolf killed her in revenge for being fired from a job on the property. Gray Wolf subsequently disappeared from the area. Eli sends some DNA from the evidence remaining in the case to a friend at the crime lab and gets a call a few days later. The DNA seems to rule out Gray Wolf as the killer because his DNA does not match that on the rope. Eli rushes over to Shelby's house to discuss this with Ross only to find himself staring into the face of the woman he has been dreaming about when Shelby opens the door. At the same time, Ross finds himself face to face with Lia once more. Lia is jittery and she quickly runs away. Ross chases after her and kisses her. Lia breaks free and runs again. This time however, Ross trips over something as he gives chase. When Ross stands, he finds himself staring at a grave marker. Cecelia Beaumont Pike, nestled alongside the



grave of her stillborn daughter, Lily Pike. As Ross realizes that Lia and Cecelia Pike are one in the same, she slowly begins to disappear before his eyes.

Part 1: Chapter 4 Analysis

Ross has become obsessed with Lia while at the same time trying to come up with something about the Pike property that will explain the events taking place during construction. Ross cannot find any ghosts on the property and he begins to doubt his ability to ever see a real ghost. This causes Ross to doubt the possibility that he will ever see Aimee again. Perhaps this explains to the reader why Ross works so hard on the Pike property, including the investigation into Mrs. Spencer Pike's death, as well as his quickly growing obsession with Lia. When Ross reaches the conclusion that Lia and Cecelia Pike are one in the same, he realizes he has fallen in love with a ghost. This causes Ross to fall into a deeper depression and the sad realization that both the women he loves are dead. The reader finds this disheartening and wonders where it will take Ross as the plot continues to develop.

Meredith continues to work hard at trying to help her daughter overcome her fears, including her insistence that she can see people who are not there. As a reaction to this, Meredith has her daughter placed on psychotic drugs, causing Lucy to become close to catatonic. This is a calm and reasonable reaction to a child's odd behavior perhaps, but it does not help Lucy. At the same time, Ruby Weber reveals a connection to Spencer Pike that is not completely explained, but leaves the reader wondering how all these characters connect.

Finally, Eli becomes involved with the Pike investigation first because of his own experience in a house that appears to be rebuilding itself and again when Ross asks him to look into the death of Cecelia Pike. It turns out Cecelia was murdered and hung in her own ice house on the same day her baby girl was born. This tragedy explains perhaps what Lia was digging for on the day she first met Ross. It does not explain why she does this or why Lia continues to haunt her old family home.



Part 2: Chapter 5

Part 2: Chapter 5 Summary

Cecelia Pike attends the Fourth of July carnival with her husband just a day after she attempted to kill herself by slitting her wrists. Spencer Pike carefully covers the wounds with bandages and forces Cecelia to wear a long sleeve shirt despite the heat. At the carnival, Cecelia and Spencer meet up with Cecelia's father, Harry Beaumont. Both Spencer and Harry are professors at the University of Vermont where they teach undergraduates. They also work on the eugenics project to sterilize unwanted members of families whose offspring include feebleminded persons as well as the sexually immoral. As Cecelia listens to her father and husband talk, she finds herself looking around the grounds. Cecelia becomes aware of someone watching her. It is a dark man she has never seen before. Spencer pulls her away.

Cecelia sneaks away from Spencer and visits a fortune teller. The fortune teller says that Cecelia has blood on her hands and Cecelia believes that this means she will die in childbirth as her mother had done. Cecelia rushes out of the tent only to be forced into a maze of mirrors by a crowd. The heat overwhelms her and Cecelia faints. When she wakes, Cecelia is back home with Spencer. A short time later, Ruby, the house girl, brings Cecelia the new boots she ordered for her growing feet and so she gives Ruby her old boots.

A few days later, Cecelia is in the closet of her bedroom attempting to have a séance. Cecelia, in her obsession with her mother's death and her own possible death, has become fascinated with Harry Houdini and his own belief in ghosts. Ruby finds Cecelia here and reminds her that she is supposed to meet Spencer for lunch at the university. However, when Cecelia arrives, she learns that Spencer forgot about their meeting. After Spencer leaves Cecelia to meet with a colleague, Abigail Alcott comes looking for Spencer. Abigail is a social worker who has been working with Spencer on the eugenics project, keeping track of the target families. That day Abigail and Spencer were to go to the state mental hospital. Cecelia convinces Abigail that Spencer has arranged for her to go in his place.

At the mental hospital, the superintendent shows Abigail and Cecelia around before taking them to the water treatment room. In this room, Cecelia sees women being drowned and tortured with water in order to treat them for bad behavior. The superintendent then shows them a woman who was sterilized when two doctors decided it was in her best interest and a situation considered voluntary by the state law governing sterilization of those considered a burden on society. Cecelia becomes lightheaded when she learns the woman is in the hospital because she attempted suicide several times. Cecelia thinks that if she were not married to Spencer or the daughter of Harry Beaumont, that it would be her. Abigail believes Cecelia is overwhelmed by the things she sees in the hospital and offers her some words of



wisdom that her own boss told her when she began work as a social worker. Then Abigail arranges to meet Cecelia the next day to show her more.

The next day, Abigail and Cecelia go to an area where a group of Gypsies or Abenaki Indians live. Abigail tells Cecelia about the history of these people, including all the criminal and feebleminded activities of the multiple family members. Cecelia watches Abigail interview a woman whose son has been taken from her. Cecelia is annoyed by the notes Abigail is taking while being nice to the woman and so she walks around the encampment. Cecelia sees the man who was staring at her at the Fourth of July carnival fishing in the lake. Cecelia talks to him and asks him to teach her a few Abenaki words. When Cecelia arrives home, Spencer confronts her about her trip to the mental hospital the previous day. Angry, Spencer locks Cecelia in her bedroom. When he comes home late that night, Spencer apologizes and makes love to his wife, claiming he loves her too much to risk losing her.

Part 2: Chapter 5 Analysis

These chapters change not only in setting but also the point of view. These chapters are written in Cecelia Pike's first-person point of view a full seventy years before the time in which Ross Wakeman and his family live. Cecelia introduces her husband and her father but the focus remains on her and her fears of dying when her child, due in just three months, is born. Cecelia's own mother died in childbirth, which is a death that Cecelia has felt hanging over her all her eighteen years of life, filling her not only with guilt, but with a certainty that she will suffer the same fate. At the same time that Cecelia is afraid of dying in childbirth, she is also obsessed with the idea that she does not matter and that she has no substance. For this reason, Cecelia has attempted to kill herself several times, including one attempt the day before this section of the novel begins.

Cecelia's relationships with her husband and father are difficult, based in part because of the way in which educated men treated women at the time. It also becomes apparent to the reader that Spencer is a dominating man who is mildly abusive toward his wife. This could explain the fear of her father that Lia expressed to Ross in previous chapters. It could also suggest that Cecelia's death was caused at some point by Spencer.

Finally, Cecelia meets a man in this chapter who is mysterious and clearly fascinated with Cecelia. The reader wonders if this man might be a future lover of Cecelia's. The reader is also curious if this man is the mysterious Gray Wolf who Spencer will accuse of Cecelia's death in the future.



Part 2: Chapter 6

Part 2: Chapter 6 Summary

Cecelia has an episode of sleepwalking and is guided back to bed by Ruby. Later Cecelia is in New York with Spencer and her father, attending a conference on eugenics. Spencer is set to give a speech there and brings Cecelia to keep an eye on her. While Spencer is distracted by his speech, Cecelia and Ruby go for a walk, arriving at the home of Hedda Barth, a famous psychic. Cecelia pays her to conduct a séance to reach her mother, but the only person the psychic is able to contact is Ruby's dead sister, Simone.

Spencer forces Cecelia to visit a famous obstetrician in New York. The obstetrician tells Spencer and Cecelia that there is no reason why Cecelia should fear she will die in childbirth. A short time later, Spencer, Cecelia, and Ruby return home. Cecelia goes into the bathroom to take a bath. Cecelia lies in the warm water and cuts her wrists. Ruby finds Cecelia just as she is about to lose consciousness. Cecelia makes Ruby to promise she will take care of the baby. Spencer comes and calls the doctor. The doctor wants to put Cecelia into a mental hospital, but Spencer refuses.

Ruby and Cecelia are home alone and notice the ice house door is open. Cecelia walks out there and finds Gray Wolf waiting for her. Cecelia has Ruby fix Gray Wolf some food, leaving her a few minutes to talk to him alone. A few days later, Cecelia goes to dinner with Spencer, her father, and another couple from the university. They discuss the baby's impending birth. When a Gypsy waiter attempts to help Cecelia clean up the mess from a spilled glass of wine, Cecelia thanks him in the language Gray Wolf taught her. However, this causes some confusion, causing Cecelia to be forced to pretend disdain of the waiter.

Cecelia and Gray Wolf continue to meet and get to know one another better. One day Cecelia meets Gray Wolf on the street and they are spotted by Spencer. When Spencer approaches them, Cecelia pretends she is buying something from the poor Gypsy. When Cecelia finds that Gray Wolf has given her a picture of her own mother, she becomes confused. A few days later, Gray Wolf comes to the house and tells Cecelia that he knew her mother when they were both young and he worked on the very family property that is now Cecelia's home. Spencer again catches them together. Cecelia covers by claiming she hired Gray Wolf to fix a hole in the roof that Spencer has not had time to repair. When Harry Beaumont learns of this, he disapproves. Cecelia asks if her mother was ever friends with a Gypsy but Harry claims Cecelia's mother hated the Abenaki Indians.

During this time, Cecelia has dreams of a long-haired man she has never met before who appears to live in the future. Spencer fires Gray Wolf and does the repairs on the roof himself. Cecelia goes in search of Gray Wolf, finally finding him near the Abenaki Indian settlement outside of town. When they talk, Gray Wolf admits to Cecelia that he



went to prison for nearly twenty years because he killed a supervisor at the rock quarry for beating his grandfather. In prison, Gray Wolf was told he could be released early if he submitted to a vasectomy. Gray Wolf agreed so that he might be able to meet the child he already has, Cecelia.

Part 2: Chapter 6 Analysis

Cecelia and Spencer's relationship unfolds in more depth in these chapters. Spencer's actions, both in attempting to soothe Cecelia's fears of death by taking her to a well respected doctor and by locking her in her room, show the reader that Spencer loves Cecelia deeply and he believes that he is trying to protect her. However, Spencer is a controlling and narcissistic man who does not know how to show affection properly. This causes Spencer to do almost more harm than good when he tries to help Cecelia, leaving her to find her own ways to deal with her irrational fears. Cecelia turns to the supernatural, studying the actions of Harry Houdini and visiting psychics. However, this fails to soothe Cecelia's fears. Cecelia begins to sleepwalk and have dreams that the reader will recognize as her future encounters with Ross Wakeman. This suggests to the reader that Cecelia might have some connection to the supernatural that she is not consciously aware of just yet.

Cecelia's relationship with Gray Wolf continues to grow in these chapters. At the same time, the prejudice that exists between the upper class white people of Vermont and the Abenaki Indians, whom they refer to as Gypsies, continues to be revealed. Cecelia wants Gray Wolf in her life because she finds him to be a good, strong person despite the lack of morals her husband and father try to tell her Gray Wolf has. A romance seems imminent in this chapter, suggesting Cecelia will finally find some answers or support to the fear and guilt she experiences. However, when Gray Wolf reveals that he is her father, this relationship is altered leaving the reader wondering how the lies of her childhood will impact Cecelia's already fragile mental health.



Part 2: Chapter 7

Part 2: Chapter 7 Summary

Gray Wolf and Lily Robinson met while Gray Wolf was working for Lily's father on their property. Lily and Gray Wolf began dating in secret, aware of the prejudice against such a relationship. When Lily learned she was pregnant, Gray Wolf promised to marry her. However, when Lily told her father of the pregnancy, he beat up Gray Wolf and refused to allow his daughter to ever see him again. Lily's father then forced her to marry one of her many suitors and lie to him about the child. During this time, Gray Wolf was arrested and imprisoned for the murder of his supervisor at the stone quarry. Lily would die after forty hours of childbirth less than eight months later.

Cecelia begins to wonder about her own genealogy and she goes into Spencer's office to look at the genealogy charts he has created of undesirable families in the area. Instead of finding Gray Wolf, Cecelia finds a chart of Ruby's family. The next day, Spencer tells Cecelia he would like to have a dinner party to celebrate the impending birth of his son. Over the next few weeks as Ruby helps plan the party, Cecelia makes up excuses so that she can leave the house and visit Gray Wolf. During one of these visits, Cecelia steals Gray Wolf's pipe so that she might have something of his to remember him by when he leaves to winter in Canada. Then one night, Cecelia overhears her father and husband discussing Gray Wolf and the realization of the depth of their prejudice causes her to faint.

The doctor comes to check on Cecelia. While the doctor announces that Cecelia is in good health, he also reveals that Cecelia has not visited him once in the past few weeks even though she has told Spencer she has gone to the doctor on at least six occasions. This leads Spencer to lock Cecelia in her room to keep her from visiting Gray Wolf. For the next few days, Ruby is the only one to come visit Cecelia in her rooms besides Spencer. One day, however, Gray Wolf sneaks into her bedroom. Gray Wolf begs Cecelia to run away with him. However, Cecelia continues to believe Spencer loves her. When Spencer finds them together, he accuses Cecelia of having an affair with Gray Wolf. In fact, Spencer questions the paternity of the baby even though he knows that Gray Wolf was in prison until the Fourth of July when Cecelia was already over six months pregnant. Spencer beats up Gray Wolf and kicks him out of the house.

Cecelia's water breaks and she goes into labor. Convinced Gray Wolf is the baby's father, Spencer leaves Cecelia to be cared for by Ruby instead of calling for the doctor. The baby is born alive and well. However, when Spencer comes to meet his new daughter, he discovers that she has multiple Abenaki features. This further convinces Spencer of the baby's paternity even as Cecelia tries to tell him that Gray Wolf is her father. Spencer takes the baby away and encourages Cecelia to rest. When Cecelia wakes, Spencer tells her the baby has died. Cecelia does not believe him. Cecelia sneaks through the house with the intention of finding her baby, but she cannot find her anywhere. Spencer finds her and locks her in the bedroom. Cecelia breaks the bedroom



window and sneaks out using the ladder Spencer left against the side of the house. Cecelia finds the baby in a crate in the ice house. Cecelia holds the baby for a few minutes, warming it against her breast before making a decision as to what she will do next.

Part 2: Chapter 7 Analysis

The relationship between Cecelia and her father, Gray Wolf grows. Cecelia becomes aware that the prejudice against the Gypsies and Gray Wolf in particular, is wrong, but she is not strong enough to do anything about it. Cecelia is afraid to break away from what she has always known and to run away with her father. This causes Cecelia to be left at the mercy of Spencer, a man who is controlling and unable to allow Cecelia to have thoughts and actions of her own. Cecelia goes into labor and gives birth to a living baby girl, already proving that Spencer Pike is a liar as the reader knows that Spencer will later claim the baby was stillborn.

It is ironic that Spencer, an intelligent, educated man, can believe that Gray Wolf somehow fathered Cecelia's baby girl while he was in prison volunteering for his own sterilization program. However, in the heat of the moment, Spencer does believe this and he decides that this child cannot be seen by anyone outside of the house. Spencer is, after all, a proponent of eugenics and his own child is a product of one of the undesirables that Spencer and his colleagues are trying to stop from producing. To have a wife who is also a product of this family Spencer finds undesirable is also an insult to all he has done and will continue to do. If Spencer were to believe Gray Wolf is Cecelia's father, he will have to admit that he cannot continue to be married to her. Spencer's deep love for Cecelia forces him to deny this fact, leaving him more susceptible to the idea that Gray Wolf is the baby's father despite the logistics of this idea. Now the reader has motive for Spencer to kill Cecelia, leaving the reader unclear what Cecelia's last choice was and how Spencer became involved.

Part 3: Chapter 8

Part 3: Chapter 8 Summary

Az Thompson, unable to sleep, hears strange noises coming from the Pike property. It turns out to be Ross Wakeman who was caught in a rain storm. Az warms him up, but is unable to get him to talk about what happened. Across town, Eli Rochert sits on Shelby's couch, trying to figure out how he has been dreaming about his woman before he met her. At the nursing home, Spencer Pike believes he can hear a baby crying. The nurses are forced to sedate him.

In Maryland, Meredith has decided to give up men. When she arrives home, Meredith finds her daughter sleepwalking. Back in Comtosook, Ross comes home to find Eli and Shelby waiting for him. Ross is depressed over Lia and is resistant to either's concern. Eli takes Ross to the police station and tells him what he has learned about the DNA on the rope and the pipe found near Cecelia Pike's hanging body. Back at the house, Ross admits to Shelby everything that happened with him and Lia that night. Shelby has some doubts about his story that only make Ross more depressed. However, Shelby encourages Ross to find Lia again anyway.

Ross and Rod van Vleet argue over Ross's lack of success in riding the Pike property of the ghost. Ross walks out, so Rod van Vleet calls Curtis Warburton to come rid the property of the ghost. At the same time, Eli has the pictures of the Pike crime scene analyzed to prove a theory that the window in Cecelia's bedroom was broken from the inside. This leads Eli to suspect that Spencer Pike killed her because she was trying to leave him. Eli then visits the retired medical examiner who tells him that Cecelia clearly died from the hanging and that the bruises on her body show that she was in some sort of struggle within hours of her death. However, the retired medical examiner tells Eli that a hematoma found on Cecelia's liver was not caused by a struggle as the original coroner thought, but from toxemia, a condition of pregnancy. The retired medical examiner tells Eli that Cecelia Pike would have died within forty-eight hours if she had not been hung. Eli then goes to visit Spencer Pike. Spencer tells Eli the same story that he told seventy years before, that Gray Wolf killed Cecelia in revenge for Spencer firing him the day before.

Shelby has a will made that leaves everything to Ethan even though she knows she will most likely outlive him. Shelby runs into Eli again and they spend some time together. At the same time, Ross speaks honestly with Ethan about death. Later, Ross and Eli examine fingerprints that Eli took from a glass Spencer Pike handled and discover that the fingerprints on Gray Wolf's pipe belong to Cecelia, not Spencer. The following day, Shelby shows Eli the death certificates for Cecelia and Lily Pike. They are interrupted by Frankie, Eli's very beautiful DNA expert. Frankie tells Eli that not only is Spencer's DNA not on the medicine pouch or pipe found at the scene of the murder, but that Cecelia and Gray Wolf's DNA suggest they are father and daughter.



Part 3: Chapter 8 Analysis

Eli Rochert throws himself into the investigation of Cecelia Pike's murder despite Ross's sudden depression and loss of interest. Eli learns a great deal of information about the murder, including the fact that Cecelia and Gray Wolf are father and daughter and the fact that Cecelia would have died anyway, fulfilling her conviction that she would die in childbirth. Everything Eli has learned seems to prove that Spencer Pike has been lying for many years. The fact that Cecelia broke the bedroom window herself shows Eli that she was thinking about leaving her husband. This could be a motive. However, Eli also learns that Spencer's fingerprints are not on the medicine pouch or the pipe, suggesting that he did not plant them at the scene of the murder in order to frame Gray Wolf. This causes some confusion but the reader is sure that Eli will clear it up quickly.

Ross is obsessed with Lia but learning she is a ghost causes him a deep depression because he now thinks he is destined to never love a living girl again. Ross has lost interest in the death of Cecelia and everything else, except for one thing. Ross is determined to not have anything to do with forcing Lia to leave the Pike property and stop haunting it. Therefore Rod van Vleet's decision to call in Ross's old boss, Curtis, starts a conflict that leaves the reader hoping it will spark some life in poor Ross.



Part 3: Chapter 9

Part 3: Chapter 9 Summary

While Ross continues to struggle with depression, Meredith finds herself enjoying the first relaxing day with Lucy and Ruby in a long time. However, Meredith is shocked when Lucy says that she can see a little boy in striped pajamas sitting against the wall outside the holocaust museum. Eli gets a warrant to exhume the bodies of Cecelia and Lily Pike. Before serving it, however, he approaches Az Thompson and asks him to arrange an Abenaki ceremony to honor the dead. Az quickly agrees. Across town, Ross runs into Curtis at the local gas station and learns that he is there to get rid of Lia. Ross immediately begins planning a way to keep Curtis from scaring her away.

Eli visits a retired cop who was present when Cecelia Pike's murder was investigated. This man suffers from dementia, but he is able to recall that Spencer Pike claimed to have buried Lily's body the night before Cecelia's death and that none of the officials ever saw her body.

Ethan sneaks out of his mother's house and goes off to play at the skate park with other children his own age. At the library, the clerk from the municipal building brings Shelby a box full of records from the thirties. This box includes the genealogies of the families involved in the eugenics project. As Shelby looks through these, unaware that her son is missing, Eli finds Ethan at the quarry. Eli drives Ethan home, arriving just as Ross has become aware of Ethan's disappearance. Shelby comes home seconds after Eli arrives. Eli covers up his purpose in coming to the house by asking Shelby out on a date. Shelby takes everyone inside and shows them the genealogies, explaining about the eugenics project. Eli is personally touched by these genealogies when he realizes that not only does he know many of the names listed, but that his own family appears on one of the genealogies. It also appears to give Spencer Pike motive for murder.

The following morning, Frankie wakes Eli early to tell him that a stain on Cecelia Pike's nightgown is meconium, proving the baby was alive at birth. Eli returns to the nursing home to ask Spencer about this. Spencer continues to deny everything. That night, Ross tricks the Warburtons into thinking they scared the ghost haunting the Pike property away using parlor tricks. As they leave, Eli serves the exhumation order on Rod van Vleet. Later, Eli has a successful date with Shelby while Ross and Ethan go to the quarry. As Ross talks to Az Thompson about the Pike case, their conversation turns to Gray Wolf. It is then that Az admits to being Gray Wolf.

Part 3: Chapter 9 Analysis

In this chapter, it becomes clear that Lucy can see ghosts, making her not only unique but also free of mental illness. This leaves the reader curious if the hanging woman she



has seen on multiple occasions might not be Lia Beaumont Pike. If so, the reader wonders about her connection to Lia.

Ross continues to be obsessed with Lia despite her ghostly existence. This obsession causes him to trick Curtis Warburton, using some of his own tricks on him to make him leave town, protecting Lia. It also leads to the revelation that one hundred and two year old Az Thompson is actually Gray Wolf, Lia's father. This explains his connection to the plot and also offers the investigation a witness who might be able to answer questions that could lead to the truth of Lia's death.

Eli continues to investigate the murder of Cecelia Pike, learning that the baby was not stillborn, proving yet another lie that Spencer Pike has told. All roads seem to lead back to Spencer Pike, leaving the reader wondering if he was capable of killing his wife.



Part 3: Chapter 10

Part 3: Chapter 10 Summary

While being tested for DNA to prove his identity, Az Thompson tells Eli that he is responsible for Lia's death because he told her the truth about her paternity. From there, Az goes to the nursing home to see Spencer Pike. However, Spencer Pike is in so much pain that he would welcome pain, so Az allows him to continue living with that pain. The following day, Az and Ross stand over Cecelia's grave as her body is exhumed. When they move to exhume the baby's body, however, they discover that instead of burying a baby, Spencer Pike buried a beef roast. As they make this determination, roses fall from the sky and make the initials RW. Ross believes they are meant for him and that it is an affirmation of Lia's love for him.

Eli goes to speak to Spencer Pike a third time, armed with the information that the baby's body is missing. Spencer confesses to suffocating the baby when he saw her Gypsy features but he continues to deny killing Cecelia. In Maryland, Meredith's grandmother has had a heart attack. When Meredith visits Ruby, she is surprised when she starts calling her Miz Pike and promises to take care of the baby.

Eli goes to Shelby's to talk to Ross and finds a collection of amazing medical stories Shelby has collected. Among them are an article about a three-year-old who wandered outside into the snow and fell asleep, dying for several hours before a doctor brought him back to life. The article gives Eli an idea and he suggests that he and Shelby drive to Canada to talk to the boy's doctor. When they arrive, Eli insists on separate hotel rooms to protect their slowly budding relationship. The next day, Eli and Shelby visit the miracle baby's mother and find that the boy is perfectly normal despite his ordeal. Later, the doctor explains that baby breath differently than older people, making it near impossible for a baby to be suffocated. The doctor further explains that sometimes a baby can appear to be dead, but in reality they continue to breathe just a few breaths per minute. If the child is also in a cold environment, they can continue to breathe this way for several hours until someone comes and warms them.

Back in Comtosook, Ethan and Ross discuss death while they watch a movie in the driveway. In Maryland, Lucy struggles with the large number of ghosts she can see around her great-grandmother, including a young girl who claims to be her great-grandmother's sister. Back in Canada, Eli and Shelby struggle with insomnia. As they talk, Eli suddenly realizes what might have happened to the Pike baby. He and Shelby quickly drive back to Vermont and tell Ross that the baby was most likely taken by Ruby Weber, the Pike's house girl. This news causes Ross some sadness because he realizes the initials RW at the exhumation referred to Ruby, not him. Ross sneaks out of Shelby's house while she and Ethan are sleeping to find Ruby Weber.



Part 3: Chapter 10 Analysis

The exhumation of the graves lead to a shock that sends the investigation down a new path. The baby is alive. Suddenly the reader understands what Meredith, Lucy, and Ruby's connection to the plot is. They are Lia's old house girl and her grand-offspring. Now the reader knows that Ruby fulfilled her promise to Lia to protect the baby by stealing it and disappearing at some point after Cecelia's death. The only question that remains is if Spencer killed Cecelia and Ruby is a witness or if Ruby killed her in order to take the child. Eli's investigation into the reanimation of an apparently dead child in Canada reveals to the reader how Cecelia might have believed her child was dead on the night of her own death. In fact, the reader realizes that Cecelia herself warmed the baby and most likely brought it back to life without realizing it.

The relationship between Shelby and Eli continues to grow even as Ross's depression over his loss of not only Aimee but Lia continues to plague him. Ethan too has become obsessed with his own death, afraid of dying before he experiences his first kiss. This leads to some dangerous behavior on Ethan's part that leaves the reader in fear for not only his early death, but the impact that this death might have on Shelby and Ross.



Part 3: Chapter 11

Part 3: Chapter 11 Summary

While Shelby fears for Ross's life in Comtosook, Ross begins visiting Ruby every day. They talk about everything except for Lia Pike until finally one day, Ross plays cards with Ruby using the truth as the beat. Ruby loses and invites Ross to come to her home the following day upon her release from the hospital to hear the whole story. The following day, Ruby admits to hearing the baby crying and taking it from the icehouse, replacing her body with a beef roast prepared for a dinner party. Ruby also admits that she saw Cecelia already hanging from the beam of the icehouse porch. However, Ruby insists that the baby died shortly after. This causes Ross to realize that Ruby has never told Meredith about her biological grandmother.

Meredith and Lucy arrive home ask Ross and Ruby finish their conversation. Ruby practically forces Ross and Meredith to go out for a coffee. Meredith surprises herself by being interested in Ross romantically. That is, of course, until Ross tells her about her biological grandmother. Meredith becomes angry and refuses to believe any of it until Ruby admits to the whole story. Eventually, Ross convinces Meredith to come with him to Comtosook to meet Az Thompson and to learn the truth through a DNA test. Meredith agrees. Ross takes them first to the Pike property then to Shelby's house. Lucy is unhappy to be there and at first thinks that Ethan is a ghost. However, they quickly become friends even as Shelby and Meredith forge a bond over their children's common struggle with illness.

Eli takes Meredith and Az for blood tests to prove their connection to one another. Meredith refuses to believe it at first, even as she finds that Az is a kind, gentle man she would not mind making friends with. When the DNA proves her biological heritage, Meredith is shocked. Meredith sneaks out of the hospital and goes to see Spencer Pike. Meredith is with Spencer when he dies. At the same time, Eli has an epiphany and realizes that Cecelia Pike used a block of ice to hang herself. Eli proves it with a test in the crime lab. At the same time, Ross goes to the Pike property to search for Lia. Instead he finds Meredith. In fact, Lia does appear, but she has come to show Meredith why she killed herself, making it clear that she did it for her child.

Part 3: Chapter 11 Analysis

The reader finally learns what happened to Cecelia Pike in this chapter. Cecelia was distraught over the death of her child, convinced that she had nothing to live for. Cecelia also blames Spencer for her child's death. Therefore, Cecelia hangs herself not only to escape the pain and guilt that has always colored her life, but to punish Spencer for taking her child away from her. In this way, Spencer is somewhat guilty for Cecelia's death but only in the same peripheral way in which Cecelia was responsible for her own mother's death. This caused Spencer to live seventy years a broken man, drinking so



much that he finally dies of liver disease just days after learning that his daughter survived and had a daughter of her own.

Meredith, who looks a great deal like Lia, is shocked to learn that her grandmother is not her grandmother and that she lied to her for her entire life. On top of this shock, Meredith meets her great-grandfather and grandfather for the first time just a short time before their deaths. This is all an emotional trip that leave Meredith in a state of shock. Then to have her grandmother come and show her the final moments of her life leave Meredith unable to process anything she has seen. However, the reader wonders if this mutual sighting of a ghost will allow Meredith to open herself up to Ross and his odd beliefs.



Part 3: Chapter 12

Part 3: Chapter 12 Summary

Meredith and Ross struggle with what they have learned. Across town, Eli tells Shelby what he has learned about Cecelia Pike's suicide while Ethan and Lucy bond over their uniqueness, including Ethan's XP and Lucy's ability to see ghosts. A short time later, Ross begins to plan his suicide despite everything that has happened around him even as Meredith buries her grandfather alone. Only Az shows up to the funeral. Meredith tells Az she wants to donate the Pike property to the Abenaki. Az refers Meredith to a friend, claiming that he is going away for a while.

Shelby and Eli are going out on a date. Meredith agrees to stay home with the kids. That same night, Ross is at the quarry drinking with Az. Ross is feeling sorry for himself, allowing his depression to overwhelm him. Across town, Rod van Vleet is also depressed after having been fired by the Redhook Group after the mess surrounding the Pike property. Rod drinks too much and crashes his car. Eli hears the report on his police band radio and detours from his date with Shelby to work the crash. At Shelby's house, Ethan and Lucy sneak out to go to the quarry. They want to see a ghost and to watch the sun come up, hoping to outsmart their personal fears. Az Thompson is no longer at the quarry keeping watch because he has gone to Lake Champlain where he drowns himself with the genealogies of the local undesirable families taped to his body.

Meredith goes to check on the kids and finds them gone. Ross comes home and finds Meredith in a panic. Together they go to the quarry and find the kids on the far side of the active pit just as the computer begins setting off charges. Meredith rushes after the children, but falling rock breaks the leg she damaged ten years before in a car accident. Ross climbs over to the children, miraculously rescuing them and getting them out of the pit. Ross returns for Meredith and refuses to leave her until help arrives. When Ross sees a stick of dynamite sitting too close, Ross quickly grabs it and runs away from Meredith. Ross throws the dynamite, but the explosion causes him to fall backward and hit his head on a rock.

Shelby and Eli arrive at the quarry and learn that the children have already been taken to the hospital. However, when Shelby asks about Ross she learns that he was fatally injured. At the same time, Ross finds himself in a car with Aimee, the same night Aimee was killed. Ross lives through the crash again, but this time he refuses to leave Aimee's side. However, Aimee and Lia both encourage him to go check on the other driver. Like before, Ross realizes the other car is about to explode so he pulls the driver free and sets her on the side of the road. When Ross looks at the other driver, he finally realizes that it was Meredith he saved that fateful night. Ross suddenly awakens, finding himself on a gurney being wheeled into the morgue.

Meredith and Ross talk about the accident and begin to develop a romantic relationship. At the same time, Shelby takes care of Lucy while Meredith is hospitalized, allowing a



strong bond to continue to develop between Lucy and Ethan even as Shelby and Eli come to rely on one another.

Part 3: Chapter 12 Analysis

Az dies and Meredith buries Spencer. This puts to rest a past that has been haunting the town of Comtosook for seventy years. Now Meredith looks to the future, intent on returning to her life in Maryland. However, an accident at the quarry in which Ethan and Lucy attempt to face their fears causes Meredith to rethink her future. Ross becomes an important part of Meredith's life. Ross, ironically enough, saved Meredith during the accident that took Aimee's life. This suggests that perhaps Aimee had more to do with Ross's return to Comtosook than he would ever have believed. This also suggests that Lia came to him for a reason as well. Perhaps it was all predestined. No matter how it came about, Shelby, Ross, and Meredith have all found happiness out of the tragedy of one young woman's tragic death.



Characters

Cecelia 'Lia' Beaumont Pike

Cecelia Beaumont Pike is an eighteen-year-old girl living in the 1930s. Cecelia's mother died when she was born causing Cecelia to live her life filled with the guilt associated with this death. Now Cecelia is pregnant herself and convinced that like her own mother, she too will die. This conviction causes Cecelia a great deal of emotional pain in her life. For this reason, Cecelia tends toward suicidal tendencies. In fact, when Cecelia begins to tell her story, it begins on the day after she has attempted to slice her wrist in a suicide attempt. This behavior brings out the controlling, unpleasant side of her husband. Spencer believes the best way to treat Cecelia's behaviors is to ignore them, but to also keep Cecelia under close observation.

Cecelia is seven months pregnant with her first child when she meets Gray Wolf. Gray Wolf is an Abenaki Indian and part of a group of people referred to as gypsies by Cecilia's husband who believes in eugenics. Gray Wolf tells Cecelia about his relationship with her mother and the fact that he gave up his ability to have more children in order to meet his only living child, Cecelia herself. This causes Cecelia to be faced with the moral realization that her father and husband's entire body of work is wrong and that it is immoral. This also brings Cecelia to the realization that she is part of a genetic code that both her father and husband dislike. Cecelia struggles with this realization as she reaches the end of her pregnancy. When the child is born with the features of the Abenaki Indians, Cecelia's husband suspects an affair. The baby mysteriously dies, leaving Cecelia devastated.

Cecelia goes in search of her baby, eventually finding it in its makeshift coffin in the icehouse. Cecelia kills herself by hanging herself in the icehouse. As Cecelia succumbs to death, she hears her baby cry. Cecelia makes the promise to watch over her child. Seventy years later, when a construction crew comes to develop a strip mall on Cecelia's old home, she appears to a young ghost hunter. The young man falls in love with her before he discovers she is dead. However, Cecelia's haunting of the property eventually leads the people of Comtosook to learn the truth of her death and to find her granddaughter, bringing her home.

Spencer Pike

Spencer Pike is the young husband of Cecelia Pike. Spencer is an anthropology professor at the University of Vermont. Spencer is also a believer in eugenics or a science that suggests that preventing the procreation of undesirable peoples will protect the future generations of other citizens of the state. These undesirable peoples include the Abenaki Indians who tend to be poor and have children who often end up in mental institutes or jail.



Spencer Pike loves his wife to distraction. When Cecelia repeatedly attempts to kill herself, Spencer is at a loss as to what to do for her. Spencer tries to keep Cecelia under constant observation. When the suicide attacks and other undesirable behavior continues, Spencer begins locking her in her bedroom. Eventually Spencer comes to the conclusion that Cecelia is having an affair with Gray Wolf, an Abenaki Indian living with the Gypsy settlement outside of town. When Cecelia's baby is born with Abenaki features, this underscores Spencer's beliefs. Spencer kills the baby to protect his own reputation. The following day Spencer finds Cecelia dead. For seventy years, Spencer lives with the guilt of Cecelia's death, aware that it was his actions that led to it.

Az 'Gray Wolf' Thompson

When the novel first opens, Az Thompson is introduced as an Abenaki Indian who is taking part in a protest against a new strip mall planned for the old Pike property. As the plot continues to develop, the reader learns that Az insinuated this protest by telling the Abenaki that the property contains an Abenaki burial site. In the flashback at the center of the novel, the reader realizes that Az is Gray Wolf, a middle-aged Abenaki who confessed to Cecelia Pike that he was her father. Gray Wolf's confession changes Cecelia's life, forcing her to recognize that her father and husband's work in eugenics is morally wrong.

Gray Wolf's life is one of prejudice and tragedy. Gray Wolf falls in love, but he is not allowed to be with his love because she is white and he is Abenaki. Later, Gray Wolf goes to jail because he killed a man who was beating his elderly grandfather. Finally, Gray Wolf returns home to meet his grown daughter only to be the cause of doubt and a morality crisis in her life that eventually leads to her death. Gray Wolf is destined to live a long life, living until the age of one hundred and two. However, this long life is filled with tragedy and loneliness that is finally brought to light in the final days of his life.

Ross Wakeman

Ross Wakeman is a middle-aged man who believes he is incapable of dying. Ross lost the love of his life after a car accident in which he left his injured fiancée alone while he rescued the driver of the other car. By the time Ross returned to his fiancée, she was dead, having died alone despite Ross's promise that he would never allow her to die alone. This leaves Ross with a lingering depression that leads to multiple suicide attempts that fail. It also leads Ross into a belief in the paranormal as he tries to find proof of ghosts in the hope that he will one day be reunited with Aimee on earth if he cannot die and see her in the afterlife.

Ross moves in with his sister and begins researching the ghost of the Pike property, eventually meeting and falling in love with Lia Beaumont. Ross does not know she is a ghost until after his love is well established, leaving him deeper into his depression and determined to protect Lia from other ghost researchers. Eventually, Ross finds himself meeting Lia's granddaughter and telling her the truth about her biological family. In time,



Ross comes to the conclusion that he was destined to meet Lia in order to meet her granddaughter and become her emotional partner.

Shelby Wakeman

Shelby Wakeman is Ross's sister. Shelby is a middle-aged divorced librarian. Shelby lives her life in darkness because her son has a rare medical condition in which he is allergic to UV light. Shelby has built her life around her young son. Shelby tries to ignore the fact that her son is destined to die before he becomes an adult because of his rare disorder.

Shelby is a lonely woman who has few friends. Shelby is close to her brother but she fears that he too will die a young death because of his obsession with suicide. However, Shelby cannot control Ross's actions any more than she can control the events revolving around Ethan's life. For this reason, Shelby isolates herself. However, Shelby eventually meets Eli Rochert, a kind police detective who makes her realize that she cannot live her life waiting for the worst to happen.

Ethan Wakeman

Ethan Wakeman is Shelby's son. Ethan suffers from XP, a disorder that forces him to live his life isolated and in the dark. Ethan feels like a freak and he longs to be normal like the other kids living in his neighborhood. Ethan often sneaks out of the house and exposes himself to the UV light that will one day kill him. Ethan also becomes obsessed with his death, frightened that he will die before he has even kissed a girl and experienced any of the other good things in life. This causes Ethan to place himself and Lucy, a friend, in harm's way and begin the catalyst that will bring the plot to its conclusion.

Eli Rochert

Eli Rochert is a police detective living in Comtosook. Eli is single because his wife left him for another man years before the opening of the novel. Eli is also half-Abenaki, a fact that he chooses to ignore. However, as he begins investigating the murder of Cecelia Pike and learns that she is also half-Abenaki, he begins to embrace the heritage that his mother taught him as a child. Eli is not only instrumental in learning the truth about Cecelia Pike's death but he also falls in love with and becomes an important partner to Shelby Wakeman.

Meredith Oliver

Meredith Oliver is a geneticist who works with couples who want to have children that are not afflicted with congenital defects and disorders that are passed down through DNA. Meredith is also the mother of a young daughter who can see ghosts. At first



Meredith struggles with her daughter's abilities and is afraid that she is psychotic but eventually comes to accept her gifts.

As the investigation in Cecelia Pike's death continues, the investigators learn that Cecelia's baby survived and grew up to have a child of her own. Meredith is this child. Meredith is shocked to learn the truth about her birth family but agrees to meet the remaining members of her biological past. This leads Meredith to meet Ross Wakeman and to discover their unique connection to one another.

Lucy Oliver

Lucy Oliver is Meredith Oliver's daughter. Lucy can see ghosts. Cecelia Pike's ghost comes to see Lucy often, causing her to have terrible night terrors that cause Meredith to believe she is mentally disturbed. Lucy remains deathly afraid of her ghosts until finally she meets Ethan Wakeman and he helps her get over her fears.

Ruby Weber

Ruby Weber is a French Canadian woman who was once the house girl for the Pikes. At fourteen, Ruby seemed to understand better what it was like to be a child as well as having the maturity to deal with things Cecelia was not strong enough to handle. When Cecelia attempts to commit suicide, she begs Ruby to protect her baby at all costs. When the baby proves to be alive after Spencer Pike's attempts to kill her, Ruby steals the baby and raises her as her own. In the end, Luze, the baby, dies of a heart attack upon learning the truth about her biological family. However, her daughter Meredith survives to learn the truth.



Objects/Places

Tiny Moccasins

Gray Wolf leaves tiny moccasins on the porch for Cecelia to find.

Picture of Lily Beaumont

Gray Wolf gives Cecelia a picture of her mother from a time when Gray Wolf was her lover.

Medicine Pouch

Gray Wolf gives Cecelia a medicine pouch filled with herbs that are intended to keep her safe. This medicine pouch is later found under the icehouse porch where Cecelia is hung.

Pipe

Cecelia takes a pipe from Gray Wolf in order to have something of his when he leaves her. This pipe is later found at the murder scene and used to establish a connection between Cecelia and Gray Wolf.

Family Genealogies

Spencer and Abigail have created dozens of genealogies of local families near Comtosook in order to show how many members of certain families are predisposed to being confined to either a mental hospital or prison. These families are targeted for voluntary sterilization in the eugenics program.

EMF Meter

Ross uses an EMF meter to record the electromagnetic activity on the Pike property.

Death Certificates

Shelby finds the death certificates for both Cecelia Pike and her stillborn baby stuck together by blood in the bowels of the municipal building. The death certificates state that Cecelia died in childbirth and that her child was born dead, recording their deaths at the same moment. However, this later proves to be wrong.



Pike Case Files

Eli Rochert finds the case file pertaining to Cecelia Pike's death. These case files show that Cecelia Pike was found hung to death in her icehouse. The files also suggest that Cecelia was killed by Gray wolf out of revenge for her husband firing him the day before.

Icehouse

The Pike property once included an icehouse that was weekly filled with ice blocks for use in the home. It is in the icehouse that Cecelia finds her dead baby and where she chooses to hang herself.

Pike Property

The Pike property is property in Comtosook where Spencer Pike once lived with his wife, Cecelia. This property later appears to be haunted when a real estate developer buys it to construct a strip mall, leading to complications that stall construction.

Angel Quarry

Angel Quarry is a stone quarry on the outside of Comtosook where Az Thompson has worked for more than thirty years. People in town believe someone was once murdered there and that he might still haunt the area. Later it is revealed that Az killed his supervisor for beating his grandfather when he was a young man living under the name Gray Wolf.

Comtosook, Vermont

Comtosook is a small town in Vermont where the Pike property is and where Shelby has chosen to raise her son, Ethan.

Maryland

Meredith, Lucy, and Ruby live in Maryland where Meredith works in a genetics lab.



Themes

Paranormal Activity

Ross Wakeman becomes obsessed with paranormal activities and reports of ghosts several years after the death of his fiancée, Aimee. Ross wants to be reunited with Aimee but his multiple attempts at suicide have failed. Now Ross believes that if he can find proof of ghosts, that he might have hope in meeting Aimee one day as a ghost. However, Ross's eighteen months with a paranormal investigator ends when he realizes the investigator is willing to lie to his clients in order to increase ratings for his television show.

Ross goes to stay with his sister and finds himself pulled into the investigation of paranormal activity associated with a new construction project on what has been dubbed the Pike property. Ross meets a young girl while doing this investigation and quickly falls in love with her when he finds her sympathetic to his struggle with suicide. This girl becomes an obsession with Ross, bringing him out of his depression and giving him hope for the future. This girl however proves to be the ghost of a young woman who was hung on the Pike property seventy years before. This situation makes paranormal activity an important theme to the novel.

Death

Death is often an obsession of characters in novels. In this novel, death becomes a focal point for four different characters for three very different reasons. For Ross and Cecelia Pike, death is a focus because they both lost someone they care deeply for and death seems to be the only way to make the pain of that loss go away. Cecelia lost her mother before she ever knew her. Cecelia's mother died in childbirth, leaving a hole in Cecelia's life that has never been filled. Ross lost his fiancée in a car accident, missing the moment of her death because he went to help another victim out of her car. Ross wants to be with Aimee but every attempt he has ever made fails.

Shelby is obsessed with death because she is the mother of a child with a genetic disorder that lessens the chances he will survive past adolescence. Shelby worries daily that her child will die, that she will be forced to outlive him, and that she will find herself alone. Shelby also worries about her brother Ross who seems determined to kill himself. This makes death a constant concern in Shelby's life.

Ethan, Shelby's son, is obsessed with his own death. Ethan knows that he will die of his disorder sooner or later. This causes Ethan to take unnecessary chances in order to experience something of life before it is taken away from him. Ethan is often leaving his home during the daytime in order to be a normal child. This causes Ethan terrible physical problems but it makes him feel more alive than hiding from life has done. It also sets up the catalyst that will lead to the books climatic end.



Suicide

Ross is obsessed with suicide. Ross believes the only way to be with Aimee again is to kill himself. Ross is struck by lightning, slices his wrists, confronts a mugger, and even stops his car on the train tracks. However, Ross manages to survive all these events with little more than a few scars.

Cecelia feels as though she does not matter. Cecelia has grown up with a father who is often distracted and a husband who is overly controlling and narcissistic. This causes Cecelia to often attempt to kill herself in order to simply feel as though she is real and that she matters. Even pregnancy and the conviction that she will die in childbirth like her mother does not stop Cecelia from attempting to slice her wrists. This connects Cecelia to Ross Wakeman, a man who will not even exist until seventy years after her own death.

Cecelia ends up hanging herself, committing suicide to punish her husband for killing their only child only to discover that the baby is still alive. Cecelia vows to come back for her child and ends up haunting the property where she died. Ross meets her here and falls in love with her. In the end, however, Ross feels that he has lost yet another loved one, leaving him intent on suicide again until he realizes he was fated to love Cecelia's granddaughter, Meredith. For this reason, suicide is a theme of the novel.



Style

Point of View

Parts one and three of this novel are in the third-person point of view. These chapters have multiple narrators, moving from character to character multiple times in the course of a single chapter. The third-person narration of these chapters is omniscient, allowing the reader to hear and see the narrators thoughts and emotions. In the second part of the novel, however, the point of view changes to the first-person point of view. In these chapters, the narrator is Cecelia Pike, a young mother-to-be who learns the truth of her paternity just weeks before her first child is to be born.

The point of view of this novel shifts quite often in this novel. The first and last parts of the novel are in the third person, allowing the reader to get to know many characters quickly. This also allows the reader to see multiple sections of the plot from the eyes of many different characters, allowing the reader to know more than the characters in the story. The middle section is in the first person point of view, restricting the reader's knowledge to just what that one character sees or does. This allows for suspense regarding this character's death to build up as the plot continues to develop. For these reasons, both types of point of view works well with the plot.

Setting

There are two main settings in this novel. One is Maryland where Meredith Oliver lives with her daughter and grandmother. Meredith is a geneticist who needs to live in a large city so that she can perform her job. The other setting of the novel is Comtosook, Vermont. Comtosook is a very small town where everyone knows everyone else and the houses are far enough apart that Ethan Wakeman can play outside in the middle of the night without disturbing anyone.

The two settings of the novel differ only in their size. The family unit remains tight, making the settings of Meredith and Shelby's homes seem very much the same. The importance of the setting in this novel is the property known as the Pike property in Comtosook. It is on this property where Cecelia grew up and lived with her husband in the years before her death. It is also here that Ross comes to investigate a haunting and where he meets Lia Beaumont. This property is important to the plot because it is where most of the plot takes place, creating the catalyst that will bring many seemingly unconnected characters together. For this reason, the setting of this novel works well with the plot.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is simple English. There are multiple examples of foreign languages in this novel as well. At one point, one character attempts to teach another



an Indian language, introducing many words and phrases into the plot that the reader might not recognize. However, all of these words are quickly explained within the text of the novel. At another point French is spoken and not immediately translated, but the meaning of the section is explained in the dialogue following this conversation.

The language of this novel is simple and easy for most readers to comprehend. The language includes foreign phrases, but these phrases are quickly explained. The language also includes slang and other words that some readers might not immediately understand. However, this language gives the characters and the plot a sense of authenticity that increases the believability of the plot. For this reason, the language of this novel works well with the plot.

Structure

The novel is divided into three parts and twelve chapters. Each chapter is long, including more than thirty pages. The first and third parts of the novel include chapters that are written in the third person point of view and use multiple narrators in order to give the readers a well rounded understanding of the plot. The second part of the novel is written in a first-person point of view that reveals the story of Cecelia Beaumont Pike, a central character throughout the novel.

The novel has one main plot and multiple subplots. The main plot follows the haunting of the Pike property in Comtosook, Vermont. This haunting is caused by a young woman who died on that property seventy years before. Investigation into this haunting leads to a subplot involving a young man who is depressed over the death of his fiancée and determined to find a way to be with her again, either through death or the visitation of her ghost. Another subplot involves the life story of the woman haunting the property and her surviving family members. There are other subplots as well, involving many of the characters who appear in the novel. All the subplots come to a satisfying conclusion at the same time the main plot reaches its own climax.



Quotes

"Ross Wakeman succeeded the first time he killed himself, but not the second or the third" (Part 1: Chapter 1, pg. 3.)

"Aimee had been cremated. Her ashes were somewhere on the other side of this lake, with her parents" (Part 1: Chapter 2, pg. 55.)

"What had scared her was the same thing that has scared Ross—what, even now, kept him shaking: the knowledge that for the second time in his life, he wanted someone he could not have" (Part 1: Chapter 3, pg. 167.)

"And the old one, he spelled the word we heard. C-H-I-J-I-S. It means baby, in his language" (Part 1: Chapter 4, pg. 171.)

"The day after I try to kill myself, Spencer says we are going to a celebration in Burlington" (Part 2: Chapter 5, pg. 221.)

"My last cut, on the wrists, is the deepest. The pattern for this gash is already there, a blue chalked line beneath the surface" (Part 2: Chapter 6, pg. 287.)

"Once upon a time, when my mother was my age, she fell in love" (Part 2: Chapter 7, pg. 321.)

"Live a century, and you know a lot of things: how to navigate by starlight, what to say to a grieving widow, where bear hide in the winter" (Part 3: Chapter 8, pg. 365.)

"The warrant to exhume remains from the Pike property was burning a hole in Eli's pocket, but he kept it there like a coal close to the heart, to remind him what he was doing and why" (Part 3: Chapter 9, pg. 451.)

"Ross turned, an explanation on his lips. And found himself staring into the face of Lia Beaumont Pike" (Part 3: Chapter 10, pg. 556.)

"Shelby was dreaming of blood, thick as molasses, flooding a city street, when the telephone woke her" (Part 3: Chapter 11, pg. 565.)

"After all, once you know that part of something exists, it stands to reason that the rest of it is somewhere out there, too" (Part 3, Chapter 12, pg. 699.)



Topics for Discussion

Who is Ross Wakeman? Why has he become a paranormal investigator? What does he hope to find? Why does he quit this job? What does Ross dislike about his boss? Why does Ross believe he cannot die? What proof does he have? What logical explanation might there be for this situation? What turns out to be the real reason?

Who is Shelby Wakeman? What is unusual about her lifestyle? Why does she live this way? What does Shelby think about her son's illness? Why does Shelby isolate herself? Why has Shelby not continued to have a social life? What does Shelby think about Ross' lifestyle? Why does Shelby think on multiple occasions in the novel that Ross is going to commit suicide? Does she have good reason to fear this?

Why does Eli Rochert dream about Shelby? What causes these dreams? Why does Eli ignore his Abenaki heritage? Why does he change his mind about this later in the novel? How does the investigation into Cecelia Pike's death change Eli's opinion of the Abenaki Indians? Is this why Eli becomes so determined to find the truth about Cecelia's death? Who is Eli's main suspect? Why?

Who is Cecelia Pike? How does Ross learn about her? Why does he become obsessed with her? How did Cecelia die? Who killed her? For what reason? What is ironic about her death and for what reason? How does Cecelia's death impact the people around her? Did she think of this before she died? Why or why not? What does this say about her personality?

Who is Gray Wolf? What is his connection to the haunting at Pike property? What is his connection to Cecelia Pike? Why do the Abenaki protest the construction on the Pike property? For what reason? Who initiates it? Why? Is there an Abenaki buried on the Pike property? Who? How did that person come to be buried there?

What is destiny? Why does Ross come to believe he was destined to meet and fall in love with Meredith Oliver? When did they first meet? When do they meet again? What brings them together? Why? Why does Ross initially resist Meredith? Why does Meredith initially dislike Ross? How do they overcome this situation?

Who does Lucy see in her bedroom at night? What gift does Lucy have? Where did she get this gift? What does this gift cause to happen to Lucy? How does the gift impact Lucy's personality and her behavior? What does Meredith think of this behavior? How does this gift help Lucy at the end of the novel?