

# **Still Missing Study Guide**

## **Still Missing by Chevy Stevens**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

<a href="#">Still Missing Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Sessions 1-3.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Sessions 4-6.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Sessions 7-10.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Sessions 11-14.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Sessions 15-18.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Sessions 19-22.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Sessions 23-24.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Sessions 25-26.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>



# Plot Summary

Still Missing is the debut novel of new writer Chevy Stevens. In this novel, Annie O'Sullivan has recently returned home after being abducted by a psychiatrist who kept her hostage in a mountain cabin for a year. Annie works with a psychologist in multiple sessions in an attempt to return to something of a normal mental state as she learns more and more about the man who abducted her and the plot behind his actions. Still Missing is a psychological thriller that will haunt the reader weeks after the final words are read.

Annie O'Sullivan has been home for less than four months and is attempting to put her life back together after having been held captive by a psychopath for a year. In her attempts to overcome the mental damage done by her abduction and captivity, Annie is seeing a psychiatrist. In her sessions with the psychiatrist, Annie tells her story of captivity and reveals clues in the investigation.

In the first session with her psychiatrist, Annie talks about the open house she was hosting when a strange man arrived at the last minute and asked for a tour of the house. After entering the house, the man pressed a gun into Annie's back and forced her into his van. On a mountain road, the man, who called himself David, injected Annie with some kind of tranquilizer. By the time Annie woke, she was in a cabin with locks on all the drawers and cabinets.

David returned to the cabin from some unknown location and washed Annie in the bathtub before dressing her in a fancy, white dress. David then took Annie to bed. As she struggled, Annie realized David took pleasure from it, so she stopped. This caused David to be unable to succeed in raping Annie. For several days Annie repeated her passive reaction to David's attempts at rape, causing him to become so frustrated that one night he beat her so severely, she lost consciousness. When she woke, David was gone.

Annie spent five days alone, becoming more frightened of starving together in the locked cabin than she was on being brutalized by David, whom she had begun to think of as the Freak. When David finally returned, Annie forced herself to figure out what it was he wanted and to give it to him. In a short time, Annie found herself submitting to his needs and obeying his outrageous rules. Annie also found herself pregnant.

After a long winter on the mountain, the Freak began allowing Annie out of the cabin to help him with the garden and other chores. Annie learned to take pleasure from these small snatches of freedom. Annie never thought of running away, however, because she thought the Freak would catch her before she could get very far. It was during one of these rare trips outside that Annie went into labor with her child. The Freak panicked as Annie began to give birth, leaving her largely on her own throughout the process.

The baby, a girl, was born healthy. Annie cared for her the best she could, but lived in constant fear that the Freak would hurt the child. When the baby became sick, Annie



begged the Freak to take her to a doctor, but he refused. One night Annie woke to find the Freak holding her dead baby. The Freak took the baby away and refused to tell Annie where they had gone. A short time later, the Freak announced that he planned to impregnate Annie again. In fear and shock, Annie killed the Freak with an ax blow to the head.

Annie ran away and took herself to the police. Eventually Annie met Gary, a kind police sergeant who treated her with the care and respect Annie needed. Over time, Annie returned home and tried to return to a normal life, but learning to trust people again was difficult. Then, when someone broke into her house and then attempted to abduct her on the streets, Annie became convinced her abductor had a partner. With Gary's help, Annie eventually learned the truth: that her own mother paid her abductor to take her in a ploy to make money off the story.



# Sessions 1-3

## Sessions 1-3 Summary

Chevy Stevens is a new writer and this is her debut novel. The novel is written in twenty-six sessions with the main character, Annie's, psychiatrist.

Annie tells her psychiatrist, Nadine, that she is the second psychiatrist that she has been to see since escaping from her abductor less than four months previously. Annie is very angry and this comes through in her speech which is laced with profanity. Annie then tells Nadine about the morning she was abducted, how it was a Sunday and she slept late despite having an open house that day. As a Realtor, Annie had always specialized in private homes, but she was currently attempting to win a big contract for a large condominium project. As Annie prepared to leave that morning, she thought of the dinner she planned to have with her boyfriend, Luke, that night. When the phone rang, Annie argued with her mother over an espresso machine she had allowed her mother to borrow.

The open house was slow. Annie was cleaning up her signs and preparing to leave when a man drove up in a van and asked to see inside. Annie walked the man through the house, giving her best pitch, when he suddenly pulled a gun and pressed it against her back. The man forced Annie into his van and drove into the mountains before pulling over and forcing her into the back. The man injected Annie with some unknown medication.

At the beginning of their second session, Annie tells her psychiatrist about how when she was twelve her father and sister were killed in a car accident after leaving a store where her father had bought ice cream at Annie's request. Then Annie describes the cabin she woke up in on the first day of her captivity. The cabin was small, a single room, with locks on everything from the refrigerator to the fire burning stove. Annie was alone when she woke, but the stranger from the open house, who called himself David, came in not long after she explored the cabin for weapons. Annie tried to get answers out of David, asking why her and how, but he refused to answer and became angry with her persistence. David showed Annie some pictures and other things he had on her, having clearly stalked her for some time before abducting her.

Session 3. Christmas is approaching. Annie talks about the decorations in Nadine's office. Annie went all out for Christmas two years ago, but this year she can barely make herself leave the house to buy groceries, let alone replace the Christmas decorations her mother sold when she rented out Annie's house during the year she was missing.

Returning to the story of her abduction, Annie tells Nadine that the Freak, the term she has come to think of her abductor in, forced her into the bathroom where he gave her a bath, doing everything for her including shaving her legs with a straight razor. Afterward,



the Freak forced Annie to don an expensive white dress before attempting to rape her. When Annie became aware that her struggle excited him, she became passive, causing the Freak to grow frustrated.

## Sessions 1-3 Analysis

In these first chapters of the novel, the reader learns that the main character, Annie O'Sullivan, has recently returned home after having been abducted and held captive for a year. Annie is having trouble readjusting to independence and the real world. Annie lives in a state of perpetual fear, struggling to such a degree that she spends most nights sleeping in her closet because her bed seems too vulnerable. For this reason, Annie is undergoing therapy with a psychiatrist called Nadine.

The novel is written from Annie's point of view as she tells her story to her psychiatrist. For this reason, some aspects of the narration should be considered unreliable because Annie can only tell the story as she understands it, hiding things from her psychiatrist either on purpose to protect herself or unconsciously because of her fragile mental state.

In these first chapters, the reader learns that Annie was abducted at gun point while hosting an open house on a home she was attempting to sell as part of her job as a realtor. The reader also learns that before her abduction Annie was a strong, independent woman with a steady boyfriend and a rocky relationship with her mother. The reader also learns that Annie's father and sister died in a car accident when she was only a child, an event that Annie harbors some guilt in, and which the abductor, The Freak, seems to have some knowledge of because he has chosen to call himself David, the name of Annie's dead father. The reader also learns that Annie's abductor has been watching her for several months as evidenced by the pictures he shows Annie her first night locked in a mountain cabin. All this information will prove valuable later in the novel as Annie and the police try to figure out who her abductor was.



# Sessions 4-6

## Sessions 4-6 Summary

On the first full day in the mountain cabin, the Freak laid out the rules to Annie, telling her that she would only be allowed to use the restroom at scheduled times, that they would eat at scheduled times, and that he would personally bathe her each night as he had the night before. Annie then tells Nadine how she tried to use the restroom off schedule one of her first days in the cabin, but the Freak caught her. The Freak dragged her into the bathroom and forced her to drink toilet water as a punishment. After this story, Annie tells Nadine how she has tried to break free of the Freak's rules, but still finds it nearly impossible to use the restroom off schedule.

Annie describes how she would often count tiles on the wall or how many seconds it took water to drip down the side of the bathtub whenever the Freak gave her bath or did something made her uncomfortable. Annie also tells Nadine how the Freak beat her on her second night in the cabin when she refused to call him by his name. Each night as Annie lay passive under the Freak's attempts to rape her, he became more and more frustrated, often beating her. On the fifth night, the Freak talked about Annie's friend Christina and made threats against her. Annie became so frightened for her friend that she realized she would have to help the Freak rape her so that he would not attack Christina in his frustration. The next night, Annie flattered the Freak during her bath and then responded to his sexual advances. However, when Annie told the Freak she wanted to make love with him, he called her a vulgar name and beat her unconscious.

Annie woke in pain after her beating to find herself alone. At first Annie was afraid to move, let alone use the restroom, in fear of the Freak's return at the wrong time. However, as days passed, Annie became frightened that the Freak would never return, leaving her to die of starvation in the locked cabin. As Annie lie in bed, waiting to heal, waiting for the Freak, she thought of her family and friends back in Clayton Falls and kept track of passing time with marks on the wall. After five days, the Freak finally returned. Convinced he was going to kill her, Annie showed the Freak her fear because she knew that was what he wanted. Satisfied, the Freak agreed not to kill her yet. That night, the Freak made his attempt to rape her again and this time Annie struggled and showed her fear, pleasing the Freak well enough that he was able to rape her.

## Sessions 4-6 Analysis

In her first few days of captivity, Annie acted as any woman in her situation would do, attempting to preserve her life and her virtue. Unfortunately, the more Annie attempted to protect herself, the more dangerous the situation became. The Freak wanted everything from Annie, her independence, her freedom, and her dignity. In the end, the Freak beat Annie severely and threatened to kill her, forcing her to submit to him in the darkest of ways.



At this point in the novel, the reader can see how it was taking away Annie's independence more than anything else that has had a lasting effect on her. The Freak scheduled when Annie would eat, drink, and use the restroom. These things have stuck with her, making it impossible for Annie to feel safe enough to use the restroom when she needs to rather than when she is supposed to. It is psychological damage that the experience has left her with rather than the physical damage, though clearly both have left Annie with horrible scars.





# Sessions 7-10

## Sessions 7-10 Summary

Annie tells her psychiatrist how the only bright moments on the mountain were when she was allowed to read to the Freak. Annie admits that her literary discussions with the Freak were quite enjoyable and allowed Annie a few minutes in which she was not afraid. Despite this, Annie continued to be brutalized each night and soon realized that she was pregnant. It was also about this time that Annie learns that the Freak was adopted by a woman with a strange sense of boundaries. Annie also learned that the Freak knew a great deal about her childhood, especially about events that took place shortly after her father and sister's deaths.

Annie talks with Nadine about her friend Christina in this session, of how she had always been pushy and take charge over Annie, but how this attitude began to wear thin when Annie returned from her abduction. Annie says that Christina insisted on bringing over some clothes for Annie, but Annie balked. Christina brought the clothes anyway and left them on Annie's front porch. Annie tossed them into the basement and has refused to answer Christina's calls ever since. Annie does not know why she reacted to the clothes in this way, but cannot bring herself to speak with Christina about it.

Annie talks about her own reaction to her pregnancy, how the idea of having the Freak's baby sickened her at first. The Freak, too, seemed uncertain about the situation, acting tense in those early weeks. One day the Freak announced he was leaving. He left some food on the counter for Annie and removed the screen around the stove so she could keep warm. For five days Annie was left alone, unsure if the Freak would ever return. When he did, the Freak told Annie he had gone to Clayton Falls and learned that the searches for her had been called off, that her mother had sold her house, and that her boyfriend, Luke, had gotten new girlfriend.

Annie's pregnancy continued to advance. When the baby began to move in the fifth month, Annie lost her sense of repugnance toward the child and even began to fall in love with the idea of a baby. Annie told herself the baby was hers, not his, and this made it easier to love it. During this time, Annie tried to draw the Freak out, asking him questions about his life that might help the police when she was eventually rescued. In doing this, Annie often found herself talking of her own difficult relationship with her mother and her mother's game of one-up-manship with her sister, Annie's Aunt Val.

Annie tells Nadine how in March, while she was six months pregnant, the Freak allowed her outside for the first time in seven months to help him butcher a deer he had killed. The Freak told Annie how he wanted to become self-sufficient so they would never have to rely on society for anything ever again. As he butchered the deer, Annie got the Freak to tell her more about his relationship with his mother. The Freak described an inappropriate relationship with his adoptive mother that led to jealousy and possible murder on the Freak's part.



## Sessions 7-10 Analysis

At this point in the story, Annie has been held captive for seven months. As is typical in such situations, Annie finds herself taking small pleasures from some of the activities in which she is allowed to participate, namely the reader and literary discussions with the Freak. Annie finds these discussions stimulating and enjoyable, something that bothers her because of the situation. However, it is quite normal for Annie to find a way to adjust to her situation and even find some pleasure in it.

Annie continues to hope for rescue even as months pass and it seems that no rescue will ever come. At the same time, Annie adjusts to her pregnancy and begins to find some happiness it because the baby is part of her. Annie is still unhappy with her situation and continues to live in fear for her life, but fear is a condition in which it is exhausting to live in for an extended amount of time, therefore Annie has adjusted and no longer agonizes every second of the day. Annie also has begun to draw the Freak out in hopes of learning something about him that will help her understand her situation and perhaps help the police when she eventually is rescued. In doing this, Annie discovers that the Freak has murdered before and this increases her conviction that eventually he will kill her. The reader begins to wonder increasingly so how she managed to escape this psychopath.



# Sessions 11-14

## Sessions 11-14 Summary

Annie tells her psychiatrist how her mother sold all her belongings during her absence in order to pay the reward for any information on her abduction. Annie also talks about how her mother has been pushing her to agree to a movie deal so that she can get enough money that she will never have to work again.

Annie returns to her story of the mountain cabin, telling her psychiatrist how the Freak began allowing her outside to tend a vegetable garden by the river. Annie enjoyed the time outdoors and watching the seedlings grow. One afternoon while watering the garden, Annie went into labor. Annie had to take charge of the situation because the Freak panicked, unable to help her. Annie had been forced to read about homebirths, therefore she knew what to do. The Freak only helped to catch the baby, but Annie did everything else, including cutting the baby's cord with the Freak's knife.

From the very first moment she laid eyes on her daughter, Annie fell in love with the baby. The Freak, on the other hand, refused to even touch the baby at first. The Freak did, however, care tenderly for Annie after the birth. One night the Freak picked up the baby and appeared pleased when the baby appeared to answer his command to quiet down. Annie lived in fear each time the Freak touched the baby that he might hurt her. Annie also feared at night when the baby cried that he might become annoyed with her cries and hurt her. When the Freak killed a duck that Annie had tamed, her fear for her baby only became more intense.

Annie begins the session by telling her psychiatrist how she saw Luke, her former boyfriend, at the store with another woman. Annie became so upset she rushed out of the store before he could see her.

Annie returns to the story of the mountain cabin. The Freak told her about a helicopter pilot in a logging camp where he once worked befriended him when she broke up with her boyfriend, but how the woman ended up back with the boyfriend, sneaking around behind the Freak's back. The Freak implied he killed the woman, making it clear he would kill her too if she crossed him in any way. A short time later, the Freak left the cabin and came back sick. Annie cared for him, begging him to go to a doctor, but he refused. The baby became sick just as the Freak began to get better. Annie begged the Freak to take the baby to a doctor, but again he refused. As the Annie became sicker, she began to wake often in the night. Annie tried to stay awake to calm her before she could wake the Freak, but exhaustion finally caught up with her. On the fifth night, Annie woke to find the Freak holding the baby at the end of the bed. It only took a few seconds for Annie to realize the baby was dead. The Freak took the baby away, returning two days later. The Freak refused to tell Annie where he had taken their baby.



Session 14. Annie has fallen into a dark depression. Annie tells Nadine that she has tried to write a letter to her baby, but failed. During this time, Annie has discovered that running helps her feel better. Annie has also begun taking calls from Luke, speaking to him about their dogs and his restaurant. Annie also tells her psychiatrist of two disastrous visits with Luke, once when she was in the hospital and once when she was staying with her mother. Both times Luke tried to touch her and both time Annie panicked, pushing him away.

## Sessions 11-14 Analysis

The reader learns more about Annie's relationship with her mother in these chapters. It is important to note the fact that Annie's mother rented out her house and sold all her belongings during her absence. While it makes sense that Annie's mother might have needed money for a reward in the case, it also seems sort of heartless, or at least pessimistic, for her mother to have sold her belongings. Although Annie was gone a full year, it seems her mother would be the last person to decide Annie was never coming back and give up.

The reader also learns about Annie's relationship with Luke in these chapters. Luke was important enough to Annie that she became distraught when the Freak told her he was dating someone else. However, Annie cannot even allow him to touch her now and has seen him with another woman. The reader wonders if Luke has moved on, leaving Annie in his past. However, Luke has begun to call Annie, suggesting that he still has an interest in being a part of her life. The reader must wonder however what role Luke wants to play and what role Annie is ready for him to play.

Finally, the reader learns about the birth and death of Annie's child in this chapter. Annie did not want the pregnancy and detested the growth of the Freak's child in her womb at first. However, Annie fell in love with her child later in her pregnancy and lived in fear for the baby after its birth. It seems that Annie's fears were well founded when she wakes in the middle of the night to discover the Freak holding her dead child. Annie will never know if the baby died from her illness or was murdered by the Freak, but the guilt of the child's death remains with her even after her escape and return to society. Annie's grief for the baby adds to her difficulties healing from her experiences and leaves her conflicted over her feelings for her abductor.



# Sessions 15-18

## Sessions 15-18 Summary

Annie tells her psychiatrist the reason that she sought therapy again after her first failed attempt was because she saw an infant in the store late one night and briefly thought about kidnapping her. That and her reaction when the child's mother asked if she had kids of her own made her realize she was not handling things on her own very well.

Annie tells her psychiatrist about a fight she had with her mother when she asked her about some pictures taken from her house of her father and sister. During this conversation, Annie asked her mother how she recovered from her grief, expressing a desire to learn how to deal with the grief over the loss of her own child. Annie's mother belittled Annie's grief over the death of her infant daughter and then hung on her.

Annie continues her story of the mountain cabin, talking about her grief over her child that was largely ignored by the Freak as he forced Annie back into their routine. One afternoon, the Freak asked Annie to help him stack firewood that he was chopping in preparation for another winter. As he worked, the Freak told Annie that although it had not been a full six weeks yet, he felt it was okay for them to start trying for another baby. The Freak said the last baby had been weak and it was good they discovered it early. The next one, the Freak assured her, would be better. Shocked and angry, Annie lifted the axe when the Freak put it aside to pry a piece of wood in half with his hands. Annie swung the axe and buried it in the Freak's head. Annie rushed into the house and took a shower, shocked by her own actions. When she was able to get a handle on her emotions, Annie went back outside and moved the Freak's body into the storage building behind the cabin.

Annie tells her psychiatrist that she was beginning to make progress, able to use the restroom without worrying about the time and actually sleeping in her bed rather than the closet. However, while Annie was out running one morning, someone broke into her house. Although the burglar did not take anything, Annie's sense of safety disappeared once more. This experience adds pressure to Annie, who recently agreed to do some bookkeeping for Luke. On top of everything else, Annie's mother came by to apologize for their recent fight. Annie did not want her around, but in a desire to make peace allowed her in. Annie's mother had brought pictures of Annie's father and sister, leading to a discussion of how Annie's mother stole her father from Aunt Val. This makes Annie think of the many times in which her mother and aunt attempted to one-up each other, using everything from their husbands to their children. Later, Annie's mother tried to convince her to take a movie deal in order to set her up financially for the rest of her life, but Annie cannot imagine making money from her ordeal.

While still running the oddity of the break-in over and over in her mind, Annie made a list the psychiatrist asked her to make of all the people in her life who might want to hurt her. Annie found the exercise futile, but it did help her to realize no one truly wanted to



hurt her therefore she should feel safe in her own home. Annie then tells the psychiatrist how Luke came by to put some bookkeeping software on her computer. During his visit, Annie and Luke talked about the day she disappeared, how Luke was angry that Annie did not show up for dinner and therefore did not search for her at the house where the open house was held until she had been missing for hours. Luke also admitted it was her mother who got the police involved.

Annie tells the psychiatrist that after she killed the Freak and moved his body, she rested on the bed. When she woke, she searched all over for her child's body, searching the grounds and the river, finally looking in the shed. All Annie found was the pictures the Freak had shown her of herself and the suit she was wearing the day she was abducted. Annie searched all day long and then deeper into the woods, finally discovering the van the Freak had used to abduct her with. Annie then drove until she reached a small town where she had breakfast before going to a police station.

## Sessions 15-18 Analysis

After discussing the death of her baby, Annie backs off of the story of her abduction, talking about her own life and the events that took place after her rescue. The reader learns more about her mother's sense of competition with her own sister, Annie's Aunt Val. The reader also learns how Luke carried around a sense of guilt for not sounding the alarm sooner than he did. Finally, the reader learns more about the media circus surrounding Annie's return home and how her mother has pushed her for months to make a movie deal so that she might be set up for life, a thought that might not sound all that bad to someone who cannot work and struggles to even feel safe in her own house. However, Annie struggles with the idea of people watching and commenting on her life as though it is simple entertainment.

In this set of sessions with the psychiatrist, Annie also tells how she killed her abductor and spent a day searching for her child in the woods around the cabin where she was held captive for a year. The reader might initially wonder why Annie does not run away immediately, but understand the shock and fear that remains with her even after the death of her abductor. Not only this, but as a mother Annie instinctively wants to find and protect her child, even in death. Important about this part of the novel is the picture Annie takes from the shed as she searches for her baby. This picture has stuck out to Annie for a long time as an oddity, as something the Freak should not have had access to. Even in her shock Annie instinctively grabs at this clue without realizing what it is she is doing.



# Sessions 19-22

## Sessions 19-22 Summary

Annie relates to her psychiatrist how she called Christina and suggested she wanted to sell her house. Christina came over with paint and forced Annie to paint her house rather than sell it in order to help her feel more comfortable there. During their time together, Christina tried to tell Annie something, but Annie asked her to keep things light in order to help her deal with their relationship in the aftermath of her ordeal.

Annie returns to the story of her abduction, describing what happened when she walked into the police station. The cops were small town bumbler who accused her of lying during interrogation. For this reason, Annie demanded they bring her cops who were better at their jobs.

Annie tells the psychiatrist that the police caught the burglar who had been robbing houses in her neighborhood. Annie, however, does not feel as though this teenager could possibly be the one who broke into her house because he changed his routine when he broke into her house during the day. The idea continues to plague Annie, making her wonder if the Freak had a partner.

Annie returns to her story of her first interviews with police. The small town cops called in cops from Clayton Falls, a man and a woman. The man, Gary Kincaid, was gentle but firm with her as he began asking questions. Gary quickly established Annie's identity with questions about her life before the abduction. Annie asked where she was and Gary quickly provided maps to show her where she was and to ask where she had been held. When Annie became agitated, they decided to call it a night, taking her to a hotel where they stayed the night in adjoining rooms. The following morning, while they questioned her again, Annie became emotional as she told them about her baby and collapsed in the female cop's arms.

Annie woke in the hospital to find her mother sitting at the end of her bed. For the next few days, Gary remained at Annie's side and questioned her about everything, over and over again. Gary told her that she might be charged with the Freak's death, but the conditions of the cabin supported her story so he thought it was unlikely. After two weeks, Annie became frustrated and finally Gary talked to the doctors, convincing them to let Annie go home. Annie's mother came to pick her up, walking her directly through the crowd of media who had mysteriously been tipped off to Annie's release.

Annie arrives at the psychiatrist on an unscheduled visit. While heading out for a run a few days before, Annie was attacked by a man in a white van. Annie managed to get free, thanks to her dog, but the attack landed her in the hospital. Upon her release, Annie stayed at her mother's house like she had when she first returned from her abduction. Gary called and told her about an alarm the police had set up directly in her house. Gary then told Annie he was still working her case, visiting towns within an hour



of Clayton Falls with the hope of finding one where the Freak stayed while stalking her. Gary also asked Annie to look through mug shots again even though she had gotten frustrated with them before, so Annie ends her session with the doctor to go do that.

## Sessions 19-22 Analysis

Annie has begun to reach out to the people who were in her life before her abduction. Not only is Annie speaking to Luke and Christina again, but she is attempting to put her relationship with her mother in a better light despite their frequent disagreements. This is a good sign, suggesting to the reader that Annie is getting better with the therapy she has been receiving.

At the same time Annie seems to be getting stronger and feeling better about her situation, she is placed in a situation that brings back some of the memories from before. Annie is nearly abducted on the street again, supporting her idea that the Freak might have had a partner. Annie is frightened, but she fought back this time and it has left her in a stronger frame of mind. Annie reaches out to Gary, a cop who has been on her case since the beginning who is still working on his own time to find answers for Annie. This suggests a personal connection to the case that might build a relationship between Annie and Gary that will last beyond the investigation.





# Sessions 23-24

## Sessions 23-24 Summary

Annie has a special session with her psychiatrist because she found a mug shot of the Freak. No one will tell her who the man is or why his picture was in the mug books. While waiting for Gary to call about the mug shot, Annie had dinner with her mother. Over dinner, Annie's mother told her how Christina was her competition on the condo job and that Luke was having financial trouble with his restaurant in the weeks before her disappearance. When Annie tells this to Gary later, it all sounds like motive for a kidnapping. Then Annie remembered where the photo that did not fit with the rest of the Freak's photos of her had come from. It was a photo that she had in her house.

Unable to sleep, Annie drove to a hotel where Gary was staying in anticipation of questioning employees who might have seen the Freak during a stay there. Annie confessed her fear and confusion to Gary. It soon became clear to Annie that Gary thought someone close to her might have hired the Freak to kidnap or even kill her. Annie could not, still cannot, get her mind around that idea. However, Annie can imagine her mother's step-brother, Dwight, doing such a thing, an idea that gains weight when Gary admits he was in prison at the same time as the Freak.

The next day, Annie spoke with Gary again and learned that the Freak, a man named Simon Rousseau, did know Dwight while in prison and that he stayed at the hotel in Eagle Glen where Gary was staying the night before. Gary also told Annie that a small woman with big sunglasses visited Simon there. Gary told Annie that he believes her mother was the visitor.

Annie tells her psychiatrist that she had suggested to Gary that Aunt Val might have been the small woman seen visiting Simon Rousseau in Eagle Glen. Annie had learned that her cousin, Tamara, had lost her Realtor's license for a short time and that Aunt Val might have paid Simon Rousseau to abduct Annie to get back at or to one-up her mother. While Gary promised to keep an open mind, Annie realized the evidence was adding up against her mother. For that reason, Annie went to see her stepfather, Wayne.

Upon direct questioning, Wayne admitted that he knew Annie's mother had hired Simon Rousseau to abduct her. Wayne found out after the fact, when Annie's mother became distressed because Simon Rousseau did not keep in contact as he had agreed and he did not release Annie after a week as he also agreed. Wayne also told Annie that her mother got the money for Simon Rousseau from a loan shark who was demanding repayment. Annie recorded the whole conversation and then accompanied Wayne to the police department where he made a full confession.



## Sessions 23-24 Analysis

The case begins to break wide open after Annie sees a picture of the Freak, who it turns out is a criminal named Simon Rousseau. Gary is on the trail of the Freak and has found someone who saw him while he was staying in a hotel in Eagle Glen, and a visitor to Simon Rousseau who closely resembled Annie's mother. Gary is convinced that Annie's mother paid Simon Rousseau to kidnap Annie, but does not know why. Annie learns the why when she speaks to her stepfather against Gary's wishes.

Annie's mother is a selfish woman who always has to be better than her sister. As a result, Annie's mother had her own daughter kidnapped, not only to make herself more of a victim than her sister and to take the sting off of Annie losing the condo deal to her best friend, Christina, but also so that she might make a great deal of money from a movie deal. Annie's mother did not know that Simon Rousseau was a psychopath who would hold Annie captive for a year, but this clearly does not take away from the sting for Annie that someone she is supposed to be able to trust above all others has betrayed her in such a basic way. Not only this, but Annie learns it was her stepfather who broke into her house and tried to abduct her on the street to keep her story alive in the media.

Even as Annie begins to recover from the emotional shock of what happened to her, she is struck with another blow from her own mother. Annie turns to her psychiatrist and to Gary, her trusted cop and friend, dealing with the blow in a very healthy way that could help her survive this current round of trauma.



# Sessions 25-26

## Sessions 25-26 Summary

Annie tells her psychiatrist how she watched while Gary interviewed her mother about the kidnapping. During the interview, Annie's mother confessed to paying Simon Rousseau to kidnap her daughter and to hiding that fact from the police out of fear of what the loan shark might do to her or her husband if they failed to pay back the money Annie's mother borrowed to pay Simon Rousseau.

Annie talks to her psychiatrist about a visit she made to her mother in jail. Annie's mother told her that she had been accused of having an affair with her stepfather when she was young and that led to her living with her stepbrother, Dwight. They had an affair, but needed money. Annie's mother planned the bank robbery that led to Dwight's first stint in prison. Annie's mother married her father because she could not wait for Dwight. After her first husband's death, Annie's mother reunited with Dwight, but he again was arrested for robbery. Annie's mother then married Wayne, but he could never make enough money to satisfy her needs. For that reason, Annie's mother had Annie kidnapped so they could make money off of the story, but Simon Rousseau changed the deal and never returned Annie, causing the media to refuse to offer a deal on a movie until the case was resolved. That left Annie's mother with a hefty bill to the loan shark, explaining why she sold all of Annie's things and rented out her house. Annie's mother would have sold the house if she could have.

Annie became so disgusted during this talk with her mother that she walked out. Later, Annie spoke to Christina, only to learn that Christina backed out of the condo deal as soon as she learned Annie was one of the other Realtors in the running. Christina also confessed to an affair with Luke during the time in which Annie was missing. Sometime later, Annie told Christina that she planned to sell her house and go to art school, but Christina accused her of running away. After a visit to the art school, Annie became so angry at Christina for this accusation that she confronted her, only to fall apart in her arms.

## Sessions 25-26 Analysis

In the final two sessions between Annie and her psychiatrist, Annie describes her mother's arrest and a visit she made to her mother in jail. Annie is clearly a strong woman in the fact that she faced her mother and came to the realization that her mother's selfishness was the only thing that mattered to her without falling apart. However, in Annie style, she decided she should go off to art school rather than attempt to put her life back together in Clayton Falls. Annie talks of how her friend Christina called her on this and she finally faced everything, faced her abduction, her mother's betrayal, and the death of her baby girl in Christina's arms. Annie has finally reached out to someone who loves her, suggesting that while she is not completely healed, that her

healing has begun and she will survive the worst. The novel ends on a note of triumph and hope as Annie allows herself to feel the grief that has been bottled up inside her since the moment of her abduction and the revelation of her baby daughter's name.



# Characters

## Annie O'Sullivan

Annie O'Sullivan is the main character of the novel. Annie is a thirty-something Realtor who was abducted at gunpoint from an open house by a psychopath. The novel begins four months after Annie returns home after her yearlong captivity. Annie is constantly plagued with anxiety and fear in the aftermath of her experiences and is seeing a psychiatrist to help her deal with what happened to her.

As the novel progresses, Annie tells the psychiatrist about her experiences not only in captivity, but her life beforehand and her relationships with the people who were most important to her before her abduction. These people include her mother and stepfather, as well as a boyfriend and best friend. As the novel progresses, the reader can see how Annie's mental stability becomes somewhat steadier and her ability to deal with what has happened to her becomes stronger. However, as Annie makes progress in her therapy creates positive changes in her life, Annie comes to learn that there was more to abduction than she originally realized and this threatens to change her life once more.

## The Freak

The Freak is how Annie came to think of the man who abducted her because she refuses to call him by the name he gave her, David, because it is the same as her father's name. During the year in which Annie is held captive by the Freak, she is repeatedly raped, forced to obey a schedule for everything from meal times to when she will be allowed to use the bathroom. Annie is also forced to give birth to the Freak's child and submit to his rules about the care of the baby, including his threats of bodily harm toward the child if it does not behave in the way in which the Freak thinks it should.

In the end, Annie ends up killing the Freak and running away from the cabin where he kept her captive for so long. Annie returns to society only to face the possibility of facing charges in the murder of the Freak. As time passes and the investigation into her abduction continues, Annie is able to identify a mug shot of the Freak. This helps police in identifying the Freak as Simon Rousseau, a convicted felon who is connected to the death and disappearance of at least two people.

## Lorraine

Lorraine is Annie's mother. Lorraine is a woman who has always felt as though she is in some sort of competition with her sister, Val. When the women were teenagers, Val accused Lorraine of having an affair with their mother's husband, causing Lorraine to be kicked out of the house. Lorraine then had an affair with her stepbrother, Dwayne. This affair led to Dwayne's arrest for a bank robbery that Lorraine helped plan. Lorraine then



married David, Annie's father. Together they had two children. When Lorraine's eldest daughter was sixteen, she and David were killed in a car accident when a drunk driver hit their car. Lorraine blames Annie for their deaths because they had stopped to pick up ice cream at Annie's request.

After David's death, Lorraine wanted to be with her stepbrother, but he was arrested again after a failed robbery. Instead, Lorraine married Wayne, but Wayne failed to live up to her expectations. One night, while watching a made-for-television movie, Lorraine gets the idea that she could make a great deal of money if Annie were kidnapped. For this reason, Lorraine hires Simon Rousseau, a prison friend of Dwayne's, to kidnap Annie. Simon is only supposed to keep Annie for a week, but instead he keeps her a year. When Annie returns, Lorraine pushes her to make a deal for a movie, but Annie continually refuses, so Lorraine convinces her husband to attempt to abduct her again in order to keep the media interested.

## Wayne

Wayne is a gentle man who is always looking for the next big deal, but he fails constantly to make any money in all these deals. Wayne learns after Annie goes missing that his wife was behind it, but instead of going to the police with this information, Wayne tries to protect Annie from the loan shark from whom she got the money to pay Simon Rousseau for the abduction. In the end, Wayne confesses to Annie and then turns himself in to the police to help them in their case against Lorraine.

## Luke

Luke is Annie's boyfriend before she is abducted. Luke is a gentle man who owns a restaurant. Annie feels guilty because she often misses dates with Luke in the months before her abduction. After her abduction, Annie has trouble being touched by anyone, but especially Luke. Annie pushes Luke away at first, but in time allows him to speak to her and slowly begins to rebuild their relationship. However, after Annie learns that Luke delayed in alerting the police after her abduction and then hears the shock and regret in his voice upon the news that Lorraine was behind the abduction, Annie begins to see Luke as a weak man.

## Christina

Christina is Annie's friend. Christina and Annie have known each other since childhood. Before the abduction, Christina is a strong influence in Annie's life, the reason why Annie became a realtor. However, after the abduction Annie is bothered by Christina's forceful ways and eventually pushes her away. In time, Annie begins to reach out to Christina again. Christina responds and does everything Annie asks of her. In the end, Christina is the only person whom Annie can fully trust. Annie finally turns to Christina when the trauma of her abduction and the knowledge that her mother was behind it catches up with Annie.



## Staff Sergeant Gary Kincaid

Gary is the cop who has been in charge of Annie's case since the day of her abduction. When Annie leaves the mountain cabin where she has been held captive, Gary is the first cop from Clayton Falls to interview Annie. Annie finds Gary and his methods oddly comforting as compared to the way in which other cops attempted to interview her. As time passes, it is Gary that Annie turns to whenever she needs to talk about the investigation or whenever she needs the reassurance that only the police can offer her.

Later in the novel, Annie turns to Gary when she needs answers to the investigation and the odd events that have taken place in her life. As they grow closer, Annie experiences a sexual encounter with Gary that suggests that they will have a romantic relationship in the aftermath of this plot. At the same time, Gary is the only cop continuing to pursue Annie's case and is the major reason why it is finally resolved as it is.

## Dwight

Dwight is Lorraine's stepbrother. Annie knows little about Dwight throughout her life because her mother refuses to talk about him or visit him in prison even though Annie's Aunt Val visits him often. It is not until after Annie's abduction that she learns about her mother's affair with Dwight before and after her birth as well as Dwight's part in her abduction.

## Aunt Val

Val is Lorraine's sister. Annie once lived with Aunt Val after her father's death because her mother could not handle her at the time. Over the years, Annie has become aware of the competition between her mother and Aunt Val, including the fact that her mother uses her as a pawn in the competition with Aunt Val. However, Annie did not understand the nature of the competition or how deep it went until she learns that her mother had her kidnapped in order to have something to hold over Aunt Val.

## Baby Hope

Baby Hope is the baby Annie gave birth to during her year of captivity. Hope is the secret name that Annie gave to the baby, but the Freak insisted they call the baby Juliet after his mentally deranged adoptive mother. When the baby dies, Annie tries desperately to learn where the Freak took her, searching for the baby's final resting place after she kills the Freak and is free to leave the mountain. The baby remains an important factor in Annie's emotional struggle after she is abducted.



## Objects/Places

### Hair Tie

Annie finds a pink hair tie in her mother's bathroom that is similar to one she saw in the shed at the cabin that was around a bunch of money in the Freak's things. The police are later able to prove the two hair ties came from the same package, proving Annie's mother gave money to the Freak.

### Gold Necklace

The Freak gives Annie a gold necklace with a heart on it as a gift during her captivity. The Freak tells Annie he bought the necklace for another woman and Annie finds herself wondering if the Freak killed the other girl.

### Baby Blanket

After returning from taking care of the corpse of Annie's baby, the freak gives her the baby's blanket. This causes Annie to hope briefly the baby is still alive and to fly into a rage when she realizes it is just a blanket. Annie takes this blanket with her when she leaves the cabin after the Freak's death.

### Axe

Annie kills the Freak with his own axe in the moments after he announces his intention to begin raping her again in order to achieve a new pregnancy.

### Picture

Among the pictures the Freak shows Annie her first night in the cabin is one that is older and is vaguely familiar to Annie. Annie later realizes the picture is one that she had in her house that her mother stole and gave to Simon Rousseau to entice him to abduct her.

### Custom Fitted Cabin

Annie is kept hostage in a cabin that has been custom fitted in order to keep Annie from opening any of the cabinets or drawers and from creating a weapon from the cabinets, dishes, or wood stove.





## **Shed**

There is a shed behind the cabin where Annie discovers a storage tub that contains pictures of her as well as the suit that she was wearing on the day she was abducted.

## **Tan Van**

Annie is abducted by a man driving a brand new tan van that she later learns was stolen.

## **White Van**

Annie is nearly abducted again by a man in a white van. Annie later learns that the white van was rented by her mother and that her near abductor was her stepfather, Wayne.

## **Clayton Falls**

Clayton Falls is the name of the city in which Annie lives.

## **Green Mountain**

Green Mountain is the name of the mountain where Annie is held captive in a small cabin.

## **Vancouver Island**

Vancouver Island is the island on which Annie lives. When Annie is abducted, the Freak takes her to a mountain located on the coast of Vancouver Island.



# Themes

## Greed and Selfishness

The abduction of Annie O'Sullivan looks like a random act on the part of a psychopath in the beginning of this novel. The reader sees the abduction through Annie's eyes and therefore the reader wonders with Annie what made the Freak chose her. The Freak shows Annie pictures he has taken of her, flyers he has collected on her properties in her job as a realtor, and describes his knowledge of her as a child as well as an adult. These things suggest the Freak stalked Annie for a time before he kidnapped her; something that is not unusual. However, the reader begins to wonder how the Freak came into such specific knowledge of Annie's childhood.

As the novel progresses, Annie becomes convinced that the Freak had a partner in the crime of her abduction. This seems confirmed when Annie is nearly abducted a second time. As the investigation continues, the reader learns along with Annie that her own mother hired her abductor to take her. This explains the Freak's knowledge of Annie's childhood and the tragedy of her father and sister's death. However, it fails to explain motive on her mother's part.

Annie visits her mother in jail to ask why she would do such a thing to her one surviving child. As they talk, not only does Annie learn that her mother wanted to make herself and Annie famous, she wanted to make money from the media in the aftermath of such an abduction. As they continue to talk, Annie also learns that her mother has always blamed Annie for the deaths of David and Daisy, Annie's father and sister.

In the end, it is clear that Lorraine, Annie's mother, is a deeply disturbed woman who is so selfish that she cannot see how having her daughter abducted for her own benefit is wrong. All Lorraine cares about is coming out on top in some perceived competition with her sister and making the money she needs to keep herself in the clothes and lifestyle that she has grown accustomed to. It is a sad realization for Annie to realize her own mother's greed and selfishness is what led to her being held prisoner by a psychopath for a year of her life.

## Control

During the year in which Annie is held captive by the Freak, the one thing she loses most is control. Annie can no longer decide when she leaves the house, when she will take a bath, when she will eat a meal, when she will use the restroom. Every aspect of Annie's life, down to the type of underwear she will put on that day, is chosen by the Freak.

When Annie kills the Freak, she does not leave the cabin right away. The reader might wonder why. However, if the reader realizes how much control over her own actions Annie has given up during her captivity, perhaps it will begin to make sense why it takes



time for Annie to feel safe enough to leave the property. Beyond that, the reader must also realize that Annie's first thoughts in freedom are of her baby, another helpless victim of the Freak's psychosis.

After Annie returns to civilization, the first thing that happens is she is placed in the hospital and not allowed to leave without the permission of the police. This causes Annie to again feel out of control. When Annie finally returns home and is able to move back into her own home, she struggles with the freedom of living her own life, being her own person. Annie still cannot use the bathroom on demand, let alone have a meal when she feels hungry or eat the types of food she once liked to eat. These are all things that Annie had no control over during her captivity and which she needs a psychiatrist to help her take control of again.

The most damaging thing Annie has lost control of during her year of captivity is her own body. Annie is not allowed to own her own desires, her own needs, during that year. Therefore when she needs to reach out to a man for comfort and care, she finds herself unable to allow the man in question to take control over her. Annie needs to be in control. With Gary's help, Annie regains some of this control and it helps Annie handle the darker moments that unfold in the days ahead of her, allowing her to lose control of her emotions with Christina and reveal her grief, her fears, and the name of her baby girl.

## Trust

Trust is another thing Annie lost when she is abducted. Annie trusted that the man who called himself David would not hurt her when she showed him the house, but he pressed a gun into her back and forced her into his van. Later, Annie trusted that this man would not hurt the child they made together, but she woke in the night to find him holding their dead baby. Annie lost all trust as she was tortured and held captive by the Freak.

When Annie returns to civilization, she finds it difficult to trust anyone. The first cops Annie speaks to accuse her of lying. The doctors refuse to allow Annie to leave the hospital despite a strong recommendation from a psychiatrist. Annie does not trust the first psychiatrist she goes to because he asks her to draw her emotions. Annie does not trust her boyfriend because he tries to touch her the first time he sees her in the hospital and Annie cannot be touched by anyone.

It takes time for trust to build up for Annie in the aftermath of her ordeal. Just as Annie is beginning to learn to trust those around her again, just as she begins reaching out to her friend, her boyfriend, she learns that her mother was behind her abduction. This has the potential of setting back Annie's progress in therapy months, but Annie survives it due to the strong trust she has in her friend Christina and in Gary, the cop on her case.



# Style

## Point of View

The point of view of this novel is the first person. The format of this novel is unusual. Each chapter is written as though it is a one sided recording of a therapy session between the main character, Annie O'Sullivan, and her psychiatrist, Nadine. For this reason, much of the narration is written in a sort of dialogue between Annie and Nadine, though the reader is only allowed to hear Annie's side of things. There is other dialogue in the novel as well, conversations that Annie relates to Nadine, but again it is all done in the frame of Annie's voice.

The point of view of this novel is not unusual in itself. The point of view offers an intensely intimate relationship between reader and narrator, as though the reader is Annie's therapist rather than a contemporary reader. The point of view also gives the reader a restricted view of the plot, keeping secrets until Annie is ready to reveal them and keeping the reader from discovering things until Annie herself discovers them. In this way, the narration contains elements of an unreliable narrator, keeping the reader at arm's length while drawing the reader in in other aspects of the narration.

## Setting

The novel is set on Vancouver Island in Canada. Most of the novel takes place in a city at the center of the island called Clayton Falls, but a great deal of the narration also takes place on Green Mountain on the west coast of the island where the main character was held captive for a year. The island is quite large, but it is like a place unto itself, a place that the residents think of as almost a world of their own that is separate from the rest of Vancouver and Canada.

The importance of the setting in this novel is not Clayton Falls, the quiet island community where Annie O'Sullivan grew up and where she was abducted. What is important to the plot of this novel is the cabin in which Annie was kept hostage and the house where she feels as though she is still a prisoner because of the fears that rule her every waking moment. The setting of this novel is designed to illustrate the sense of being held captive, of confinement. For that reason the author chose an island as her setting for the novel, a place that on its own could be a place of isolation, a place where a person might feel as though they have been stranded. It is this feeling that Annie finds herself struggling with even after she is freed from captivity on Green Mountain.

## Language and Meaning

The novel is written in simple English. The novel is set in Canada and therefore some of the phrasing and words might seem off to the reader. However, there are no foreign words or phrases that might complicate the narration of the novel. The novel is written in



a simple language that will be easy for readers of all ages to comprehend despite the complexity of a plot that some readers might find difficult to fully appreciate.

The language of the novel works with the plot because it reflects both the education level and emotional state of the main character. The novel begins with a great deal of angry words, of profanity that reflects the anger and frustration of the main character. As the novel progresses, this level of profanity begins to change, showing the reader how Annie is beginning to adjust to being free of her tormentor and losing the anger that has kept her from healing. For this reason, the language of the novel works well with the plot and the main character.

## Structure

The novel is divided into twenty-six sessions. Each session is a one sided discussion between the main character and a psychiatrist she refers to as Nadine in the first chapter. In each session, Annie discusses her current situation, such as things she has worked on since the last session, or an event that has taken place since her last meeting with Nadine. Each session also discusses some aspect of Annie's abduction, such as a complete story of some part of the abduction or how the abduction has impacted her current situation.

The novel has a single plot that is complimented by multiple subplots. The main plot follows Annie as she struggles to deal with the abduction that has changed her life. One subplot follows Annie's outrage at being impregnated by her abductor that changes into acceptance and then full maternal love for the child she has born. Another subplot follows Annie's often strained relationship with her mother and stepfather. Other subplots involve Annie's relationships with her best friend, her boyfriend, and the cop who is trying to give her answers in regards to her abduction. All these plots come to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



## Quotes

"You know, Doc, you're not the first shrink I've seen since I got back." (Session 1, p. 7).

"He wasn't there and I was still alive. Someone had to find me soon." (Session 2, p. 21).

"Feels like I'm never going to break free of all his screwy rules, Doc." (Session 4, p. 37).

"I did a lot of things on the mountain, a lot of things I didn't want to do and a lot of things I didn't want to think I was capable of doing. But that time? When I wonder how I became the zombie I am now, how I could have gotten so lost, it always traces back to that moment—the moment I put my soul on the shelf to make room for the devil." (Session 5, p. 45).

"I wanted to ask what happened to the girl who owned the necklace, but I was scared he might tell me." (Session 7, p. 62).

"But it doesn't just happen. It knocks you sideways and crushes you into the ground, because you were stupid enough to believe in sunshine and roses." (Session 9, p. 80).

"That's where you come in, Doc. You have to help me get rid of this obsession that I'm still not safe." (Session 12, p. 110).

"Might as well pack up my crap and move right into the penthouse suite at Chez Crazy." (Session 14, p. 131).

"As her breath tickled my back and her arm lay over me, I stared at her tiny hand touching my skin and realized it was the first time I'd let anyone physically close to me since I came back from the mountain." (Session 17, p. 160).

"Sometimes I wish Gary could go everywhere with me, like a bodyguard." (Session 22, p. 207).

"The papers got wind of things faster than my mother can pour a drink, and my phone's been ringing off the hook." (Session 25, p. 243).

"My baby? Her name was Hope." (Session 26, p. 255).



## Topics for Discussion

Who is Annie O'Sullivan? What is the source of her anger in the first session of the novel? Why has Annie come to see this psychiatrist, Nadine? What does she hope will result from these visits? What happened to Annie that has caused the press to be interested in her life? How does Annie deal with the intrusion of the press in her life? Why?

Who is Annie's mother? How has Lorraine reacted to Annie's abduction? Why does Lorraine continuously push Annie to talk to the press? What does Annie initially think of her mother's desire that she speak to the press? What is Annie's relationship like with her mother? Has that changed since Annie's abduction and if so, in what way?

Who are David and Daisy? What happened to them? Why does Annie feel guilty about this? Why does Annie's abductor bring up this event to her in the early days of her captivity? What impact does it have on Annie when the Freak talks about David and Daisy? What impact does it have on Annie later when she compares her loss of her infant daughter to her mother's loss in Daisy? Why does Annie's mother react in this way? Is it a fair way to respond?

Who is the Freak? What has he done to Annie? Why does Annie feel pity for the Freak on occasion? Is it odd that Annie likes having literary discussions with the Freak during her captivity? What name did the Freak give to Annie when they first met? Why does she refuse to call the Freak by this name? What does Annie eventually learn is the Freak's real name? Why did the Freak never tell Annie this name?

How does Annie respond to her pregnancy? When does this begin to change? How does Annie feel as she comes close to the time of delivery of her baby? Does Annie want her baby? Why? How does Annie feel when the Freak holds the baby? What does Annie think the Freak might do with the baby at some point? Why does she feel this way? What eventually happens to the baby? Do you believe the Freak had something to do with this? Why?

Who is Luke? Why does Annie panic whenever Luke wants to touch her? How does this make Luke feel? What happens as Annie begins to allow Luke back into her life again? How does Luke respond to this? When does Annie begin to think of Luke as a weak man? For what reason? What does this say about the future of their relationship?

Who is Gary? When does Annie first mention Gary? When does the reader begin to get the feeling that Gary is more than just a cop in Annie's life? What does Gary do for Annie at the beginning? Why does Annie trust Gary over the other people in her life? Why does Annie turn to Gary when she needs support? Why is Gary the first man Annie allows to touch her? What does this say about Annie's future and about Gary's?