

Tell No One Study Guide

Tell No One by Harlan Coben

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Plot Summary

David Beck is a pediatrician who practices in a poor neighborhood eight years after the night he and his wife were attacked. The night had ended with David injured and believing that his wife Elizabeth had been killed. There comes a day when David receives an email that makes him believe that Elizabeth is alive. As he begins trying to find out if she really is alive, David discovers that nothing about that night is what he believed it to be. Police also begin to question that night and begin to wonder if David killed Elizabeth, though the murder had been credited to a serial killer. Discrepancies between Elizabeth and others of the killer's victims make police question David's innocence even more.

David is soon looking for answers, which takes him to an old friend. When the friend is murdered the following day, David is framed for the crime and police prepare to arrest him. He calls on the father of a patient, a young drug dealer named Tyrese, to escape.

David comes to discover that the truth the events were much different than he'd thought them to be. He finds that Elizabeth had discovered that a young man, Brandon Scopes, who was touted for his good work with young people, had actually been dealing drugs and engaged in other illegal activities. When Elizabeth confronts Brandon he retaliates. Brandon breaks into Elizabeth's house, but David is there and kills Brandon in self-defense. Elizabeth is blamed for the shooting and Brandon's father, Griffin Scopes, orders Elizabeth's murder. When the two men hired by Scopes attack Elizabeth and David, David is severely injured and left for dead. He is pulled from the water by a man who is hiding out from authorities.

David discovers that Griffin Scopes is also behind the murder of his father. He then learns that Elizabeth's father, Hoyt, killed the two men who attacked Elizabeth and David. Hoyt then convinces Elizabeth to leave the country, leading authorities to believe that she is the victim of a serial killer. He puts a Jane Doe in her place and the body is cremated before anyone can question it. Hoyt is actually on Griffin Scopes' payroll and he lives the next eight years glad that Elizabeth has survived. When the bodies of the two men who'd been hired to kill Elizabeth are discovered, Elizabeth realizes Griffin Scopes will question her death. She returns to the United States in the hope of reuniting with David. She's discovered and the situation comes to a head, with Hoyt eventually confronting and killing Scopes and then killing himself. David and Elizabeth begin their lives anew, clinging to each other and hoping for a brighter future together.

Introduction through Chapter Five

Introduction through Chapter Five Summary

David Beck and his wife, Elizabeth Parker Beck, make the drive to Lake Charmaine for the anniversary of their first kiss. The lake property belongs to David's grandfather and is very secluded. That first kiss had happened when the couple were just twelve years old. They go to the tree with their initials are carved along with a slash carved for each of the twelve years that had passed in the meantime. After the ritual, they return to the lake where they undress. David dives in the water and swims out some distance when he hears Elizabeth scream. Realizing that she's being attacked, he rushes back to the dock, but as he tries to see what's happening, he is attacked as well. After another hit or two, David falls into the water and passes out.

Chapter one begins eight years later. David has become a pediatrician in Washington Heights, a poor part of town, where he deals daily with teen pregnancy and other problems typical of poverty-stricken areas. During the course of the day, David is visited by Shauna, who is the live-in partner of David's sister Linda. David recalls that he and Shauna met while attending college at Amherst College. On this day in Washington Heights, the two friends share lunch and Shauna asks if David can babysit his nephew, Mark. The two talk some more before David returns to work. There he finds that he has an email with "E.P. + D.B." in the subject line, the same as was written on the tree in the woods near Lake Charmaine. In addition, there are twenty-one slashes, the same number that would be on the tree if David and Elizabeth had never missed making their mark on any of the anniversaries. David first believes that it's a "cruel, sick joke." David moves on to the body of the email and finds a hyperlink with the instruction to click on it at "kiss time." He knows the words "kiss time" refers to the moment of their anniversary and that time is documented because David looked at his watch immediately after that first kiss. He tries the link but gets an error message. David saves the email to a diskette, knows that "kiss time" will fall on the following day, and plans to check the hyperlink again then.

In chapter two, David arrives at the home he shares with his grandfather and finds a note indicating that he is to call Sheriff Lowell. Lowell was the officer who investigated Elizabeth's attack eight years earlier. The fact that Lowell is trying to contact him on the same day he receives the email can't be a coincidence, in David's mind. Lowell won't tell David what he wants to talk about and tells David that they'll talk the following day. Lowell says he wants to talk to Linda as well. When they meet, Lowell tells David and Linda that two bodies were found in the woods near Lake Charmaine. Lowell says that they'd also found another item with the bodies and asks David to confirm that his blood type is B positive, then refuses to say why he wants to know. David will later learn that police had also found the bat that was used to attack David. Lowell asks David to go back through the details of the night of the attack. David says the last thing he remembers is slipping into the water after the attack. He was found by emergency rescue personnel on the floor of the cabin near the lake but says again that he has no

memory of how he got there. Linda asks if Lowell thinks KillRoy - the man believed to have killed Elizabeth - also killed the two men.

In chapter three, David hurries to his office the morning after his meeting with Lowell and after having given blood for the DNA testing to match David's blood with the bat found near the bodies. He recalls that Elizabeth's "body" was found near Route 80 five days after the attack. She'd been dead two days and David says this means Elizabeth was alive for three days with her killer, Elroy Kellerton - aka KillRoy. David spends his day seeing patients, and when the last is gone he logs onto the Internet to check on the hyperlink again. "Kiss time" is 6:15, and he receives a call from Lowell with just eight minutes until then. Lowell asks if the name Sarah Goodhart means anything to David. David, not wanting to get into the subject with so little time until "kiss time," says he'll call Lowell back shortly.

David then turns his attention to the computer and continues to click on the hyperlink until it finally works. When it does, he finds himself on a street corner. He watches as a woman comes into view, looks directly at the camera and mouths the words, "I'm sorry." David believes it's Elizabeth, but she then walks out of sight.

In chapter four, a man named Vic Letty looks cautiously around, checking for anyone who might be watching him, before finally going to the mailbox at Mailboxes Etc. He's carefully hidden his name behind a phony corporation and a phony identification for the owner. He walks with a limp and wears a mustache in further attempts to eliminate the possibility that someone will be able to identify him. Vic works for a cable company and is running a scam, blackmailing men who purchased pornography movies. He'd initially chosen at random. If the victim paid, Vic simply went away. If the victim didn't pay, Vic went away anyway. Then he began to search for high-society victims, doctors and the like, who would have more to lose and would be more willing to pay with the financial wherewithal to pay more. He'd stumbled on Randall Scopes, the son of an important man in the financial world, Griffin Scopes. Randall is also the brother of Brandon Scopes, the man who was murdered about the same time as the attack on Elizabeth and David.

Vic picks up a package he believes to be from Randall Scopes, which contains forty thousand dollars, and plans to leave the country with this payoff. He manages not to open the package until he reaches home. As he gets to his doorway, he realizes that the hall light is again burned out. He then realizes that he's stepping on plastic of some sort. Before he can open the door, the light comes on and Vic is confronted by Eric Wu and Larry Gandle, hired by Griffin Scopes to ensure that Vic hasn't shared his knowledge with anyone else. Vic is tortured and eventually killed after Gandle and Wu are convinced no one else knows about the blackmail.

In chapter five, David is stunned at the sight of Elizabeth but makes himself focus on the surroundings, looking for a building or something significant about the pedestrians that will help him identify the place. Then the link goes dead. He knows that it's Elizabeth and remembers that her body had been identified, though not by David, who was still in the hospital. It was her father, Hoyt Parker, who had identified the body. Hoyt is a police

detective. David then thinks about Lowell's question about Sarah Goodhart. Elizabeth's middle name is Sarah. By playing a childhood game that links the middle name with the name of the street where she lives, creates an alternative name of Sarah Goodhart for Elizabeth. David returns Lowell's phone call but gets the sheriff's voice mail.

Meanwhile, Eric and Larry are cleaning up at Vic Letty's and plan to take the body to Benny's crematorium. Larry gets a phone call and tells Eric that the two bodies found near Lake Charmaine were Bob and Mel. He doesn't explain the significance.

Introduction through Chapter Five Analysis

The story begins with the attack on Elizabeth but doesn't indicate the outcome of that attack. The reader is led to believe over the coming chapters that Elizabeth was killed during that attack, and it seems that David also believed the story. The writer depends heavily on suspense to drive the action, and there are many instances of foreshadowing. In this first section of the book, David says that he's going to tell Elizabeth a secret that he'd been holding back. It's not until the end of the book that the reader will discover that this secret is that it was actually David who killed a man by the name of Brandon Scopes. This will be explained more fully over the course of the story.

Shauna and Linda have made their commitment public and are generally accepted as a couple. David notes that Linda was artificially inseminated and gave birth to Mark. Shauna then adopted him. This child will be the anchor that helps the two women hold their relationship together over some rough times. Shauna is a model and is very beautiful. Both Shauna and Linda deal with powerful, high-society people on a daily basis and Shauna is known for her wandering eye, which puts a strain on the relationship. David will note at the end of the story that he doesn't know whether they'll make it, but the two are holding it together for that moment.

David lives with his grandfather. He explains that his grandfather is unable to be at home alone and a private nurse stay s with him. When it became evident that their grandfather would need constant care, Linda considered taking him into her home and David moved in with their grandfather to eliminate that possibility. David's grandmother is no longer living. His father was killed in a wreck and his mother had lost her grip on reality after that. She'd lived with Linda for a short time and now resides in a nursing home. David notes that Linda visits her regularly but that he doesn't.

When Gandle receives the information that the two bodies found near Lake Charmaine were those of Bob and Mel, he reacts, but doesn't explain the reaction to the reader at this point. The reality is that Bob and Mel are the two men who had been hired by Larry for Griffin Scopes to kill Elizabeth because Griffin believes that Elizabeth had killed his son, Brandon. The author depends fully on suspense, foreshadowing and misdirection to engage the reader. This misdirection includes making the reader believe that Elizabeth died. One point that is never explained until the end of the story is that Brandon had come to Elizabeth's house planning to kill her in order to keep her quiet about Brandon's drug dealing. The truth is that David had killed Brandon. This creates

one of the only holes in the story. David will later say that Brandon had broken into the house and attacked him so that David fights back and kills Brandon. David panics and runs from the house and when he returns to face the situation, he finds the body is gone. Inexplicably, he never tells anyone and Griffin Scopes comes to believe that Elizabeth had killed his son. It's then that Griffin seeks revenge and orders the attack on Elizabeth and David in order to protect Brandon's reputation. All this will unfold over the course of the story, along with several other details to explain how David knows the Scopes, the death of David's father and Hoyt's involvement.

Chapters Six through Twelve

Chapters Six through Twelve Summary

In chapter six, David visits the Parker house. They still live in the house where they'd lived when David and Elizabeth were children. David thinks of Kim, Elizabeth's mother, as a beautiful woman. David recalls that the couch that is still in the house had been where David and Elizabeth had sat as children, sharing their childhood dreams and eventually their goal of becoming a lawyer and a doctor. On this day when David visits, Kim asks if David is seeing anyone, a deviation from the typical impersonal conversation the two share. She then says that it's okay for David to move on, and he says that he has dated some. Hoyt arrives home and David senses disapproval. Hoyt is a police detective and David wants to tell him about the email and the Internet link in which he'd seen Elizabeth, but David recalls the warning on the email to "tell no one" and decides to withhold the information. When Kim returns to the kitchen, David asks Hoyt about the condition of Elizabeth's body when he'd gone to identify her. Hoyt is initially evasive, asking why David wants to know, then says that he'd known as soon as he saw the body that it was Elizabeth.

In chapter seven, Griffin Scope is introduced. It's noted that he is many things, but the word "billionaire" always precedes his name. Griffin had been born rich but his father had forced him to work hard as well, including attending public school rather than a private school filled with rich children. On a particular night just after David receives the email, David's sister Linda is overseeing a party thrown by Griffin Scope to honor the memory of his son, Brandon. Brandon had been murdered and the party is in the name of the Brandon Scope Charitable Foundation. Linda oversees this foundation.

During the party, Griffin sees Larry Gandle arrive. He goes to talk to Gandle and discovers that the two bodies discovered at Lake Charmaine were the men Gandle had hired to kill Elizabeth. Gandle says that he'd paid the men prior to the job and that they'd agreed they would leave immediately after the murder and not return for some time. Gandle says he hadn't been really surprised that they never came back, but that now it's apparent that they'd been murdered as well, which leaves Elizabeth's fate in question. Griffin tells Gandle to find out everything he can about the situation.

In chapter eight, David visits Shauna at the apartment she shares with Linda on Riverside Drive. Mark is already in bed and Linda is attending the event for the Brandon Scope Foundation. Shauna tells David that she and Linda are having trouble and that Shauna's roving eye is to blame. David shares the information about the email with Shauna, citing their long friendship and the fact that he's had few secrets from her since their college days. David says that the last communication had indicated that he was to log on again two hours past "kiss time," which is 8:15. Shauna is skeptical but agrees that she'll wait to see what happens when David again logs on.



Meanwhile, Wu is working to find out everything possible through David's email and discovers the cryptic note indicating that he is to log in to a new sight at "two hours past kiss time." He doesn't understand what time that means, but says he can continue to monitor David's computer until David logs on, and he has hacked into David's account so that he can watch David's incoming and outgoing messages in real time. As Gandle hears Wu talk about the cryptic messages, he realizes that someone is going to great lengths to disguise the messages and to ensure secrecy. This makes Gandle very suspicious.

In chapter nine, David encounters Lowell with two federal agents, Nick Carlson and Tom Stone. They tell David that they've already made arrangements for his patients for the morning and take him to 26 Federal Plaza for questioning. They also ask David if he knows anyone named Sarah Goodhart. He explains the game which would result in Elizabeth's name. They then ask if David had ever hit Elizabeth and he denies this. The agents then produce photos of Elizabeth, badly beaten. David says he's never seen the photos before and that Elizabeth had told her that she'd been in a car accident. The agents don't seem to believe David's story and he comes to realize that they suspect him of Elizabeth's murder. He says that he's seen enough television to know that he needs a lawyer.

In chapter ten, David calls Shauna, who says she'll find an attorney to take his case. David is quiet for a while as they wait but breaks the silence to say that Elizabeth had been branded with the letter "K," typical of all the victims of KillRoy. He then asks the agent that considering that fact, they couldn't possibly believe that he had anything to do with Elizabeth's murder. Just then, a noted attorney named Hester Crimstein walks in. She berates the agents for continuing to question her client after he'd asked for an attorney. They argue that he'd begun the conversation, but Hester asks only if David is under arrest and, upon being told no, walks out of the building with him. In her limo, she has him relate all aspects of the conversation. She asks him whether he'd taken the photos of Elizabeth and he says he hasn't. She then asks if he'd ever beaten Elizabeth and he denies this too. She says that she has to know the truth about all aspects of the case if she's going to accurately represent him. She tells him that he isn't to talk to anyone or answer any questions. She says that she'll "make some calls" to find out what's going on but says that she doesn't like how the situation is shaping up.

In chapter eleven, Jeremiah Renway is introduced. Jeremiah had been involved in a group who set off an explosion at Eastern State University's chemistry lab. The group had been convinced that university professors are creating napalm. The four had scattered, though three were captured, either immediately or in the years after. Jeremiah alone had escaped. He'd gone into hiding and ended up in the woods near Lake Charmaine. Jeremiah notes that there were children who believed him to be the "bogeyman." Jeremiah lives on the land, often in the woods and occasionally seeking out the relative shelter of the tumble down shacks on the property owned by David's grandfather. Now, as the discovery of the bodies of the two men prompt an influx of FBI agents and criminologists, Jeremiah watches from hiding places. Jeremiah reveals that he'd seen what happened on the night of the attack against David and Elizabeth. As a



criminal running from the law, he'd kept quiet, then but feels the effect of helping to cover up the lies.

In chapter twelve, David returns to his office where there are patients waiting to see him. One of those present is Tyrese Barton. Tyrese is the father of one of David's patients, T.J. David and Tyrese met when David was doing hospital rotation. Tyrese was being arrested and the commotion had caught David's attention. Tyrese's son, T.J., was in the emergency room. T.J. exhibited the signs of shaken baby syndrome and was blind by the time he was brought to the hospital. David had intervened, not really because he thought Tyrese innocent of the crime, but rather because he felt that there was more to the case than had been examined. Then David does some additional testing and finds that T.J. was a hemophiliac. Tyrese is released and David becomes T.J.'s doctor. On the day after the FBI questions, Tyrese brings T.J. in to see David and slips David some cash and a business card. David gives the money to a charity.

After the questions by the FBI, David continues to wonder about the photos of Elizabeth. He believes that their friend and professional photographer, Rebecca Schayes, may have taken them. He calls Rebecca and asks her who was driving the car when Elizabeth had been involved in the wreck that she said caused all the bruises seen in the photo. Rebecca puts him off, saying she's busy and will call him later. David goes to Rebecca's office, which is located above the stables where the horses that pull carriages around the park are housed. Rebecca tells David that she hadn't taken the pictures. She then says that Elizabeth had come to see her right after that incident and that Elizabeth had not told Rebecca what really happened. However, Elizabeth told Rebecca that if anyone asked, Rebecca was to say that they'd been in Rebecca's car at the time of the accident. Rebecca now says that she believed Elizabeth expected that David would ask.

Chapters Six through Twelve Analysis

David believes that Hoyt blames David for having allowed Elizabeth's attack and death. In fact, the animosity David senses may very well be there, but the emotion probably comes from the fact that David is the one who killed Brandon Scope, an action for which Elizabeth took the blame. It's Brandon's death that prompts the order for Elizabeth's death.

Brandon's death has apparently been very difficult for Griffin. Apparently, Brandon was the favorite son, and it's not clear whether Griffin knew about Brandon's illegal activities.

The relationship between David and Tyrese is interesting in that David doesn't believe Tyrese is living a good life. David notes that Tyrese is obviously involved in illegal activities. T.J. lives with his mother and David notes that Tyrese has a great deal of money but that T.J. and his mother are on public health insurance. David never really comes to believe that Tyrese's life is a good life, but is willing to call on Tyrese when he needs help and Tyrese is the only person who can help him.

Chapters Thirteen through Twenty-One

Chapters Thirteen through Twenty-One Summary

In chapter thirteen, Hester and Shauna talk over the situation with Hester, saying that the police believe David killed Elizabeth and Shauna saying he would never have killed her. Shauna seems about to tell Hester about the emails but says only that Hester should ask David for additional information. Meanwhile, agents Carlson and Stone are talking about the case and Carlson says that he feels they are missing something in their analysis. They visit with Hoyt and Kim Parker and show Hoyt the photos of Elizabeth with the bruises. Kim says David wouldn't have hurt Elizabeth. When Kim leaves the room, the officers tell Hoyt they believe David is Elizabeth's murderer.

In chapter fourteen, David goes to get his car and sees a man in a tan overcoat loitering near the garage. He wonders about the man, but when the man doesn't move as David drives away, David dismisses the thought. David calls Briggs Penitentiary where KillRoy is being held. The superintendent asks why he wants to see KillRoy but David counters, saying that by law he has the right to see the man accused of his wife's death if KillRoy agrees. David then goes through Elizabeth's possessions and finds her day planner. In the week prior to her death, there's an appointment labeled only "PF" with a phone number. David calls the number and finds that it belongs to attorney Peter Flannery. David asks for an appointment, pretending to be wrongfully injured, and is told to come the following day. Just as he hangs up, Shauna calls and tells him that he has to come over immediately.

In chapter fifteen, Hoyt Parker continues his conversation with Carlson and Stone. The agents recount the "official" version of the events of the night of the attack on Elizabeth and David. Carlson says that he has doubts about KillRoy's guilt, citing the fact that the killer had picked up his other victims from populated places and that Lake Charmaine is secluded and seldom visited. The agents say it makes more sense that David, knowing the area, took his wife there to murder her. They say that David, realizing that police would naturally suspect him, had hired killers and that their instructions were to then beat David to divert that suspicion. They say that they believe the two killers had then come back to extort more money from David and that he'd arranged to meet them at the lake, killing them to keep them quiet. The agents then tell Hoyt that they'd found the photos of Elizabeth with the bruises in a safety deposit box, and that the key to the box had been in the shoe of one of the men killed at the lake.

Larry Gandle also learns through their surveillance that David is suspected of Elizabeth's death, that David has requested a visit with KillRoy, that he's called Peter Flannery's office and that he's talked with Rebecca Schayes. Gandle admits that he'd always wondered how David had survived the attack and he now wonders if perhaps someone else had also survived. Gandle decides that the next step is to figure out what Rebecca knows.

In chapter sixteen, Shauna takes David to the offices of DigiCom and has a company employee demonstrate what's possible with digital technology in an effort to convince him that the image of Elizabeth on a city street could have been a hoax.

In chapter seventeen, Gandle and Wu prepare to torture Rebecca in her studio. Meanwhile, David and Shauna are waiting until the time David is to log in for another message from Elizabeth. When the time comes, he is unable to log on and faces the possibility that it might have been a hoax as Shauna believes. Shauna points out that police are trying to blame David for Elizabeth's death and that it might have been a ploy to prompt some reaction from David.

In chapter eighteen, Rebecca returns home and has the nagging idea - as she'd had all along - that the bruises and the story about Elizabeth's bogus car wreck were somehow connected to her murder. She believes that if she had spoken up then, she might have been able to save Elizabeth's life.

In chapter nineteen, Shauna goes home. Both Shauna and David have been drinking, but after awhile Chloe, David's dog, insists on a walk and David heads out with her. As they walk, David considers the instructions he'd been given regarding the log-in to the new link. He suddenly realizes that he'd misread the clues and hurries to a neighborhood Kinko's.

Rebecca returns to the studio, where she's tortured until Gandle and Wu are convinced that Rebecca really doesn't know anything about the situation involving Elizabeth's attack. Rebecca reveals only what was already known, that David had questioned the photos of Elizabeth bearing bruises and that Rebecca hadn't taken the photos. Gandle and Wu finally kill Rebecca and leave her body in the studio. At Kinko's, David gets in line to wait for a computer. The clerk insists that he leave Chloe outside and David ties her to a parking meter before returning to the store where he waits in line and logs in successfully. He receives a message that says only "Washington Park. Meet me at the southeast corner. Five O'Clock tomorrow. You'll be followed. No matter what, I love you." The message isn't signed, but David is certain it's from Elizabeth.

In chapter twenty, David spends a great deal of the night surfing the Internet and says that by daybreak he has a plan. Rebecca's husband doesn't immediately panic when she doesn't come home, but he and Rebecca's assistant go to the studio where they find her body.

In chapter twenty-one, David goes to the Sussex County Coroner's Office and talks with medical examiner Timothy Harper. He asks for Elizabeth's autopsy files, and Harper says he doesn't have them on the premises. David asks if Hoyt Parker had immediately identified Elizabeth's body or if he'd had to think about it. Harper first says he doesn't understand the point of the question but then answers, saying that he doesn't remember anything unusual, so he would assume that Hoyt had not hesitated. Under additional questions from David, Harper says that the federal authorities were already here when Elizabeth's body arrived, and supposes that it's because the police who discovered the

body had reported the brand, putting the murder as one of KillRoy's. David says that he'll return the following day for the autopsy file.

Chapters Thirteen through Twenty-One Analysis

Shauna is warned by Hester that the police will be watching David and that many things could be misconstrued to fit their current investigation. Shauna in turn warns David of this fact, and it seems to play a role in the fact that David decides to go to a neighborhood Kinko's to use the computer rather than returning home. As it turns out, Rebecca is being murdered at exactly this same time and the stop at Kinko's will give David an alibi when he's framed for Rebecca's murder.

The plot becomes so convoluted that it's sometimes difficult to track the twists and turns. As the agents are then talking to Hoyt about the situation, they reveal a series of events that are purely supposition and will prove to be untrue. However, they do reveal one aspect of the situation that is true - that one of the men buried near the lake had a key in his shoe. It will later be revealed that Elizabeth had found that Brandon was engaged in illegal activities. He'd beaten Elizabeth in an attempt to shut her up about it. Elizabeth had arranged the photographs to document the beating and then had put the photos in a safety deposit box under the name, "Sarah Goodhart." The box hadn't been discovered until the bodies were found.

There are some aspects of the story that are explained in very small clues. For example, there is a relationship between the families of Griffin Scope, Hoyt Parker and Stephen Beck. Stephen and Hoyt had each been involved in Griffin's organization in some manner. Hoyt is apparently "on the take," accepting bribes and other forms of graft. Stephen had been on Griffin's payroll, and it was Stephen's job to teach Brandon Scope some aspects of the family business. Stephen's father is likely killed by Griffin, and it seems likely that Stephen had come to the same conclusions about Brandon as Elizabeth. Griffin Scope's scholarships had funded Linda's education as well as David's. Finally, Linda also works for Griffin.

At one point it's noted that David had a life insurance policy on Elizabeth and that this could have been why he killed her. The policy, explained by David, was taken out because Elizabeth had a relative just starting out in the insurance field and Elizabeth had wanted to help him by buying a large policy.

Chapters Twenty-Two through Twenty-Eight

Chapters Twenty-Two through Twenty-Eight Summary

Rebecca's assistant tells police that Rebecca had had a conversation with David the previous evening, prompting police to conduct a search of David's house. They do so quickly, realizing that Hester would block the warrant if they give her time to find out about the search. In a trash can, they find a gun that has been recently fired. Outside, they find latex gloves. Stone is ecstatic, figuring that they are nearing the proof they need for their case. Carlson believes they are missing something important.

In chapter twenty-three, David is seeing T.J. David and T.J.'s father Tyrese met when David was doing hospital rotation. Tyrese was being arrested and the commotion had caught David's attention. Tyrese's son, T.J., was in the emergency room. T.J. exhibited the signs of shaken baby syndrome and was blind by the time he was brought to the hospital. David had intervened, not really because he thought Tyrese innocent of the crime but because he felt that there was more to the case than had been examined. Then David does some additional testing and finds that T.J. was a hemophiliac. Tyrese is released and David becomes T.J.'s doctor. On the day after the FBI questioning, Tyrese brings T.J. in to see David and slips David some cash and a business card. David gives the money to a charity. On this particular visit, T.J. bumped into a doorway and the bleeding was so intense that Tyrese brings T.J. to the emergency room. David tells Tyrese that T.J. is going to be admitted to the hospital for observation, but that he'll be free to go home soon.

Back at Linda and Shauna's home, Hester says that the newest aspect of the case is going to be a charge against David for the murder of Rebecca. Shauna says that she was with David but can't provide an alibi for late enough to cover him for the crime. Hester then receives a phone call and says that David is to be arrested for Rebecca's murder within the hour.

In chapter twenty-four, Hester calls David with the news of his impending arrest. She assures him that he'll be out on bail by midnight, but David knows that means he'll miss the meeting with Elizabeth that afternoon. He tells Hester only that he can't be arrested and prepares to run out of the office but sees officers already waiting for him at the front door. He instead rushes to the back door and runs into the alley. David gets himself caught up in a dead-end alley. He can't reach the fire escapes and finally throws himself into the least-odorous dumpster he can find. He can barely keep from gagging, but manages to remain quiet until he believes the police have passed by and are gone. He climbs out and finds an officer at the opening of the alley. David tackles the man and breaks his jaw. He now knows that he's guilty not only of fleeing but of assaulting a police officer as he continues to run.



In chapter twenty-five, Hester and Shauna arrive at the clinic while Linda begins the process of liquidating assets to be used for bail. When Hester and Shauna arrive, they find that David has run and the police are involved in a serious manhunt. Hester is angry, saying that David's decision to run makes him look guilty, eliminates any possibility of a fair trial, and ruins her credibility with police and the district attorney. She tells Shauna that she quits, prompting Shauna to accuse her of not caring at all for her clients but being interested only in her own public image. David continues to run and a group of young black men, realizing that he's running from police, cheer him on. David notes that it gives him a boost and the young men then use a ploy common to the area and the time, reaching into the pockets and shouting the name of an unarmed black man who'd been gunned down by police when he reached for his wallet. The ploy slows police a little, giving David some additional distance. David finds a cellar and breaks in to find a man wandering around in the dark, obviously mentally ill. David then breaks into the building on the other side and finds himself in a hallway. He's quickly confronted by a woman with a gun and he asks to use her phone. She agrees for the price of twenty dollars. He pays and wonders who he could safely contact, finally realizing that he knows only one person who could possibly help him now. He calls Tyrese.

In chapter twenty-six, police encounter residents running around yelling about a white man with a gun, which briefly takes the heat off David's location. Tyrese arrives and picks him up, taking him to a crack house. David wonders if he needs to apologize to Tyrese for calling on him but Tyrese cuts it short, saying that David's done the right thing. He says that when T.J. was sick, he'd sought out the best doctor and that when David was in trouble with the police, he had sought out the man who could successfully evade the police. Tyrese gives David a cell phone with an untraceable number, tells him to change clothes because he smells bad from the dumpster, and promises to talk afterwards.

In chapter twenty-seven, Wu and Gandle talk about their priorities, including the need to have "them" alive if possible in order to find out how much they know about the overall situation. Wu, in an inexplicable moment of sharing information, says that his mother was hanged for being a spy. Gandle doesn't know how to react to the information and says only that he's sorry.

In chapter twenty-eight, Tyrese tells David that he has to work two more years in order to save enough money to take T.J. away from the city and into a safer place. He says that his chances of surviving that long are not good and says that he'd created a will with David as executor. Tyrese says that T.J.'s mother would not be reliable in that capacity. David urges Tyrese to quit now, use the money he has saved, and promises to supplement that with his own money, but Tyrese shrugs off the offer. Carlson says there are still some aspects of the case that don't add up to David's guilt, but his partner says to forget Elizabeth's murder and concentrate on Rebecca's. Stone then tells Carlson that they are to leave Elizabeth's murder alone.

Chapters Twenty-Two through Twenty-Eight Analysis

Tyrese is obviously involved in many illegal activities and makes no secret of the fact. However, contrary to this street-wise attitude is his devotion to his son, T.J. When T.J. is hospitalized, Tyrese is upset, but it seems that he's mostly upset because T.J.'s illness is progressive and the prognosis is dim. On this particular day, Tyrese tells David that he wants to get T.J. "out of here," and David realizes that he's not talking about the hospital but about the lifestyle, but it seems that T.J. is also talking about the hopeless situation. Over the coming days, Tyrese will tell David that he is trying to save enough money to retire with T.J. away from the streets where T.J. can have a better life.

Shauna and David are devoted friends, an interesting relationship because of Shauna's relationship with David's sister Linda. David says that he tells Shauna everything and it's only she that he entrusts with the information about the emails and his belief that Elizabeth is alive. On the night Rebecca is murdered, Shauna had been with David but left too early to provide David an alibi for the murder itself. However, when Hester asks Shauna what time she left David's apartment, Shauna counters with a question of her own, asking what time she should say in order to cover David. Hester won't accept that and Shauna does tell the truth, which will turn out to be the correct action because David has an alibi from the people at Kinko's.

The shouting match between Shauna and Hester is very public and gives some clues as to the real personalities of these two characters. Shauna is loyal to David and hates the idea that he might be in danger. She cares only for his safety and is immediately angry at Hester for what she believes to be an uncaring and self-serving attitude. Hester is actually both those things to some degree. She has a television show and is constantly in the limelight. She is known for playing hardball, as evidenced by the police who try to hurry and serve the search warrant on David's house before Hester can find out and block the warrant. Hester does worry a great deal about her public image, but she has a point when she tells Shauna that if she loses her credibility it will hurt all her clients, including David. Hester does quit as David's attorney but will rescind that shortly and will return to help David negotiate the closure of the situation.

Stone tells Carlson that there are people in the FBI who want them to leave Elizabeth's murder alone, indicating that they are not to continue their investigation into it. Stone says that it's because the murder was initially blamed on KillRoy who'd also been blamed with other murders, and that casting doubt about Elizabeth's murder would cast doubt about his guilt in other cases as well. It seems likely that Griffin has dropped hints or given orders to someone in the position to order Stone and Carlson away from the case. Carlson continues to argue that if David had been so careful in Elizabeth's murder, then it makes no sense that he would be so sloppy as to leave the murder weapon used to kill Rebecca in a trash can at his house. These doubts will continue to color Carlson's actions until the case is solved.

Chapters Twenty-Nine through Thirty-Nine

Chapters Twenty-Nine through Thirty-Nine Summary

In chapter twenty-nine, Elizabeth watches the appointed meeting spot from her hotel room. She has two tickets out of the country - one for herself in the alias Lisa Sherman and the second for David. Tyrese drops David off near the park where he's watched by Eric Wu. Elizabeth watches David's arrival but also sees that he's being watched and knows that she's going to have to simply leave again without talking to David. She goes out and gets a taxi to the airport.

In chapter thirty, David feels certain that he's somehow missed Elizabeth. He calls Shauna and directs her to the phone of a neighbor, feeling the authorities won't be able to get a tap on that phone in time to hear the conversation. He tells Shauna that he was at Kinko's at the time of Rebecca's murder and instructs her to go find someone who can corroborate his alibi. He knows that people will remember Chloe even if they don't really remember him. David, knowing the window for meeting Elizabeth has passed, gets up to leave but is confronted by Eric Wu. In chapter thirty-one, David is thrown into a van and he suddenly realizes Elizabeth's warning that he'd be followed. Wu begins to beat David but is interrupted by the arrival of Tyrese and his friend, Brutus. Tyrese kills one of the men and they kick the others out of the van.

In chapter thirty-two, Carlson talks to medical examiner Timothy Harper about Harper's meeting with David. He takes the autopsy report and leaves. Meanwhile, Tyrese takes David to Peter Flannery's office where Tyrese bribes their way in for an immediate meeting. After David introduces himself, Flannery tells him that he'd seen Elizabeth in connection with Brandon Scope's death. Flannery says that a "street kid" named Helio Gonzalez had been arrested for Brandon's murder but that Elizabeth had given Helio an alibi, saying that they'd spent the night together at Helio's place. David leaves the office but tells Flannery that Elizabeth's story about having sex with Helio was a lie.

In chapter thirty-three, Carlson finds several discrepancies in Elizabeth's autopsy file, including the fact that there were defensive wounds which KillRoy's victims never had because they were tied up prior to their deaths. He notes that the brand occurred postmortem which was also not in accordance with KillRoy's other victims. He also notes that there are no photos in the file. Meanwhile, Tyrese tracks down Helio Gonzalez, who finally admits that he hadn't been with Elizabeth, but he also says that he doesn't know why Elizabeth had lied for him.

In chapter thirty-four, Elizabeth arrives at the airport and sees the television coverage about David, prompting her to decide that she can't leave until she is certain David is safe. Meanwhile, the airplane ticket in David's name is discovered and it's found that he'd been booked to sit near Lisa Sherman, though they discover that Sherman also

doesn't board for the flight. When Peter Flannery sees the reports, he calls the district attorney.

In chapter thirty-five, Tyrese asks David about Brandon Scopes. David says that his father, Stephen, had been in charge of teaching Brandon about the family business and that Elizabeth had shared offices with Brandon for work on a charitable foundation. He notes that Tyrese asks if there's more, but the moment passes without his answering. Carlson continues to work on the case and talks to Shauna, saying that he has questions that haven't been answered. He shows Shauna Elizabeth's autopsy report, notes that the photos are missing, and Shauna is immediately interested in the vital statistics in the file. He quickly learns that Hoyt had been the last person to check out Elizabeth's autopsy file.

In chapter thirty-six, Griffin Scope talks to Larry Gandle and says that he'd failed once to protect Brandon, but that he has no intention of letting it happen a second time.

Carlson goes to visit Hoyt and asks about the autopsy report. Hoyt says that he'd had the report but denies having done anything to the photos. Hoyt says that he'd also noted the discrepancies - including the defensive wounds - but felt those could all be explained. For example, he says that Elizabeth was strong-willed and might have forced her killer to take action earlier than he'd planned. Carlson listens, tells Hoyt that he doesn't believe any of what he's said, and leaves.

In chapter thirty-seven, Linda and Shauna talk about David and Linda confesses to having taken the photos of Elizabeth with all the bruises. Shauna says that Brandon Scope beat Elizabeth up. Linda doesn't deny it but says Elizabeth made her promise not to tell. Shauna says that Linda, working for a charity established by Brandon's family, had been happy to keep the secret in order to protect her job. Linda says that she'd told Hoyt. Just then Hester calls and says that Shauna was right and that she wants to continue representing David. Hester and Shauna go to District Attorney Lance Fein with their information about David being at Kinko's, then Hester says that she'll help Lance clear up the situation. She tells him to issue a press release saying that there'd been a misunderstanding and that David was only wanted for questioning as a witness, not as a suspect. She says that in return, she expects all charges against David dropped, including the fleeing and assault on a police officer. Fein agrees.

Chapters Twenty-Nine through Thirty-Nine Analysis

The significance of Elizabeth's autopsy report will become more evident later in the story when it's revealed that the report indicated the weight and height of the body to be several inches and several pounds off of Elizabeth's height and weight. This discrepancy means that the body that was cremated wasn't really Elizabeth after all, that Hoyt had identified the wrong young woman as being his daughter and that Elizabeth is, in all likelihood, still alive. These facts will begin to play out quickly from this point as the story moves at an even faster pace.

Griffin's statement that he'd failed once to protect his son, Brandon, is significant in that Griffin apparently feels any slur to Brandon's name would mean that Griffin had failed again in his duty as a father to protect Brandon. The reader must remember Griffin's power and role in society to understand this aspect of Griffin's personality. As an example, Vic Letty was murdered simply because it was feared that Vic might tell people that Griffin's other son, Randal, had ordered pornographic movies. It seems that Griffin is at least slightly sentimental and emotional regarding his family, but much more likely that he's trying to protect himself.

David talks about the childhood he'd shared with Elizabeth and the impact she's had on his life. According to David, both his parents and Elizabeth's parents had been in favor of the two spending some time apart. The fact that David and Elizabeth were nearly inseparable from childhood makes their parents nervous. David says that in truth they'd been instant soul mates and that they'd put their own tests on their relationships as well. They attended different colleges but found themselves to be miserable without each other. David says that having lived without Elizabeth has now made him more caring and that he believes he is a better person now. He says that he probably didn't deserve her when they were younger but that he believes he's grown into an adult who does deserve Elizabeth.

Chapters Forty through Forty-Six

Chapters Forty through Forty-Six Summary

In chapter thirty-eight, Tyrese says that he's remaining to help watch over David until the situation is cleared up. Carlson learns that the bullet that killed Brandon Scope matches the gun found in Sarah Goodhart's lock box belonged to David's father, Stephen. In chapter thirty-nine, Shauna tells David about the weight and height difference on the autopsy report. David talks with Carlson because of Shauna's belief that Carlson no longer believes in David's guilt, but doesn't admit to anything. In chapter forty, Shauna arrives at a photo shoot and finds a message directing her to the restroom. There she finds Elizabeth. Elizabeth initially says that she's leaving the country in the hope of keeping David safe, but Shauna argues that to leave David again will be devastating. Elizabeth says that Shauna should tell David to meet her at the Dolphin that night, saying that David will know what it means.

In chapter forty-one, Tyrese takes David to Hoyt's house. Hoyt says that he and his brother, also a police officer, had arrived at the lake in time to see the attack on Elizabeth. They'd killed the two men and Hoyt had convinced Elizabeth that disappearing and allowing Hoyt to fake her death was the only way to keep Griffin Scope's men from seeking out her family in order to get to her. Hoyt says that at Elizabeth's insistence he'd returned to the water to check on David but hadn't found him. He says that assuming David had drowned helped Elizabeth make up her mind. Elizabeth has spent the intervening years traveling, sometimes working with humanitarian organizations. Hoyt had taken a Jane Doe of Elizabeth's approximate weight, height and coloring, branded her to frame KillRoy, and dumped her where a small-town coroner would be in charge of the autopsy. No one had questioned the identification at the time. Hoyt says that he could never have told David about Elizabeth's survival because their homes and cars have been bugged since Elizabeth's death, indicating that Griffin's people had continued to keep an eye on things. Hoyt also says that he'd initially set Helio up for the murder of Brandon Scope but that Elizabeth, knowing Helio hadn't done it, made up the alibi.

In chapter forty-two, David learns that one of the men found buried near Lake Charmaine had been Melvin Bartola. David goes to the Ridgemont Library, where he looks up the old newspaper clippings of his father's accident and confirms his memory that Melvin Bartola had been the first on the scene at his father's accident. Tyrese gets a phone call indicating that Griffin's men have T.J. In chapter forty-three, Jeremiah meets David at the lake, tells him the story of how he came to be there, and says that it was he who pulled David from the water the night of the attack. Jeremiah then says that Elizabeth is waiting for him, and David goes to her. As they are holding each other, David's phone rings and it's Tyrese with the news.

In chapter forty-four, David and Elizabeth go to Hoyt, who has sent Kim away from the house, fearing for her safety. Hoyt is already in the car and makes a phone call after



David gets in. Tyrese calls David a short time later, saying that T.J. is safe. Hoyt then says that he's taking David to Giffin Scope's house. In chapter forty-five, Hoyt tells David that he's now become "the fall guy." Hoyt then appears to consider that David might be wearing a wire and demands to search him. When he apparently finds nothing, he tells David that he's fortunate he isn't wired. When they confront Griffin and his men, Hoyt is immediately attacked. David doesn't understand until Griffin plays a tape of their earlier conversation in which David had said that Elizabeth hadn't killed Brandon and Hoyt interrupted, saying, "I did." Now Griffin, apparently believing Hoyt to be the killer, is angry. As the police helicopters descend on the property, Hoyt reaches for the pistol strapped to his ankle, shoots Griffin and then himself.

In chapter forty-six, Hoyt's funeral is four days later. Griffin's organization is quickly breaking up with his hired killers ready to make deals in return for leniency. Elizabeth and David are clinging to each other but David says that will work itself out in time. David says he knows that Hoyt sacrificed himself for David and Elizabeth and their happiness. He also knows that it wasn't Hoyt who killed Brandon, nor was it Elizabeth, because David had been the one at home the night Brandon came to the house and it had been David who had killed Brandon.

Chapters Forty through Forty-Six Analysis

When David mentions Hoyt's name, both Tyrese and his friend Brutus smile. It seems that both men know the name and this is the first real indication that Hoyt might be anything less than an upstanding officer. In fact, David will soon learn that Hoyt would likely have been indicted himself if Elizabeth had continued her investigation into Brandon Scope. David accuses Hoyt of letting that play a role in deciding to fake Elizabeth's death, though Hoyt continues to argue that having Elizabeth alive was all he cared about.

The scene in the car headed to Griffin's estate is another situation that is misdirected. Hoyt tells David that he'd have been in trouble if he'd been wearing a wire. In fact, David is wearing a wire and the fact that the FBI is listening in means that the case will be nicely wrapped up. Hoyt is careful to say the right things to make this happen. Hoyt also knows that Griffin has his car bugged and so realizes that Griffin will already know that Hoyt claimed to have killed Brandon. This creates a flaw in David's character that seems out of place. David admits later that he was the one who killed Brandon. He says that he'd been at home the night Brandon broke into the house, apparently looking for Elizabeth. David had used his father's gun and shot Brandon, but then panicked and ran away. When he returned, he had discovered that the body was gone as well as the gun and apparently decided that there was no need to discuss the situation with anyone, including Elizabeth. Hoyt himself admits that there came a time when he was relieved to have let the Scopes believe that Elizabeth was responsible for Brandon's murder.

David concludes the story by saying that he can't tell whether Linda and Shauna work out their problems or whether Tyrese survives long enough to take his son and move

away. David says these are details that only time will tell. This is realistic of true life where all aspects of a story are not wrapped up at a specific time frame.

Characters

Dr. David Beck

David is a pediatrician known to most of his friends simply as "Beck." After David decides that he wants to be a doctor, he considers specialties and decides that he'll become a surgeon because of the "wow" factor - that his friends will be impressed if he's a surgeon. As reality sets in, David chooses to be a pediatrician because he loves working with children. An important aspect of David's personality is seen in the fact that he doesn't choose to work in a large pediatric clinic, but instead works in a small clinic catering to the needs of the poor. He sees many poor, undereducated teenage girls with babies, young girls who have multiple children by multiple fathers who are equally young, poor and undereducated. David says that he could easily give in to despair over the situation but that he holds out hope that he's making a positive impact on the lives of the children. David never quite forgives himself for allowing Elizabeth's murder. David believes that Elizabeth's father blames him, and David himself says that he should have fought back rather than hesitating, which put Elizabeth at the mercy of her attackers.

Elizabeth Parker Beck

The wife of David Beck, Elizabeth is an attorney who discovers that a wealthy man named Brandon Scope is really a drug dealer. When Elizabeth confronts Brandon with the information, he retaliates. Brandon breaks into Elizabeth's house and is killed, which prompts his father to order Elizabeth's murder. Elizabeth and David are attacked while visiting a favorite spot at Lake Charmaine, and David believes Elizabeth was murdered at that spot. In truth, she is taken by her father and uncle with the assurance that faking her death and hiding out is the only option that will keep David and her family safe from Scopes's attempts at revenge. Elizabeth agrees and spends the next eight years working with organizations around the world. When the two men who had been hired by Scopes to kill Elizabeth are found dead, Elizabeth realizes that her death will be in question. She uses the opportunity to return, searching for a way to safely contact David. Elizabeth is careful, but warns David that he'll probably be followed. He is, and Elizabeth plans to return to hiding, but decides that she can't leave until she knows David is safe. Elizabeth is a strong person, but her ties to her family are obviously strong enough that being forced to live away from them is difficult for her.

Tyrese

The young black man who deals in drugs and prostitution, he is the father of T.J. and is grateful to David for treating T.J.'s hemophilia. Tyrese comes to David's aid when the police are chasing him and it appears that he might be put in jail on the day he's slated to meet Elizabeth for the first time since her falsified death eight years earlier.

Killroy

The nickname given to the man accused of killing some eighteen women, though he is not convicted of killing them all. His name is Elroy Kellerton, and he is on death row when David Beck begins receiving messages that make him believe Elizabeth is alive.

Hoyt Beck

Elizabeth's father, Hoyt is a police detective and seems receptive to the idea that David might have been the person who murdered Elizabeth, though he seems to have never considered the idea before. Hoyt is actually on the payroll of an important man named Griffin Scopes, who is ultimately responsible for the attempt on Elizabeth's death.

Rebecca Schayes

Elizabeth's roommate prior to Elizabeth's marriage to David, Rebecca is drawn back into David's life when he comes to wonder if she might have been the person who took the photographs of Elizabeth used by the FBI to build a case against David. Rebecca is murdered by Griffin's men, and the murder is staged so that David initially takes the blame.

Hester Crimstein

The attorney who is hired by David's friend Shauna, she is a ruthless attorney who constantly seeks the spotlight. When David flees, Hester threatens to drop his case but returns to follow through. She negotiates the deal for the case to be resolved, using her tendency for the limelight to make sure the police are willing to drop the case.

Linda

David's sister and one of his staunchest supporters, Linda is involved in a same-sex relationship. She and her life partner Shauna have one son, Mark. Linda works on the foundation named for Brandon Scopes, the man at the heart of Elizabeth's attempted murder.

Larry Gandle

The man hired by Griffin Scope to kill several people, he captures David Beck as he tries to find Elizabeth. When Tyrese mounts a rescue, Gandle escapes and has to answer to Scopes for losing David.

Eric Wu

A North Korean who is known for his brutal methods, Wu is with Gandle when the two men kill several people, including Vic Letty and Rebecca Schayes.

Objects/Places

Washington Heights

Where David works as a pediatrician.

Amhurst College

Where David attended.

Green River, New Jersey

Where David lives with his grandfather.

Riverside Drive

Where Linda and Shauna live.

Lake Charmaine

Where David and Elizabeth first kiss.

Goodhart Lane

Where Elizabeth's parents live.

Mailboxes Etc.

Where Vic Letty rents a mailbox for his scams.

26 Federal Plaze

Where David is taken by the federal agents for questioning.

Eastern State University

Where Jeremiah Renway is involved in an explosion meant to deter the use of university chemists involved in experiments involving napalm.

Brigg's Penitentiary

Where Killroy is being held.

Themes

Love

David and Elizabeth meet when they are only seven years old. Over the years, they become best friends, nearly inseparable, and depending greatly on each other. Their parents seem incredibly concerned that the two are becoming too close and that their relationship might not be the best thing for them. Over time, they defy the objections of their parents and continue to grow closer. David says that as they age, they come to realize that their love is almost too good to be true and decide for themselves to test it as well. Toward this end, David and Elizabeth attend different universities so that they are forced to be apart. This enforced separation makes both of them miserable. However, it does reinforce their love. David admits to having a one-night stand in college and says that he believes Elizabeth did the same, though both denied it. Linda and Shauna are another example of the power of love, though with a different emphasis. David notes that Linda and Shauna had been together for more than seven years and that Shauna's roving eye continues to be a problem. Shauna argues that Linda shouldn't worry, that she returns home each night despite her tendency to look at other women. Shauna seems to feel caged by the relationship with Linda but her love for their son, Mark, makes her determined to keep trying to make the relationship work.

Coming of Age

The characters age physically over the course of the story but also age mentally and emotionally as well. This is most prevalently seen in the life of David Beck. David says that he'd initially wanted to be a surgeon because a surgeon has the power to "wow" people. He also relates the story of going with Elizabeth when she'd worked for an organization seeking to get homeless children off the streets. David says that he'd winced at the condition of these young street children but that Elizabeth never had. Now, years later, David says that he admired that about Elizabeth and it could be this that prompts David's decision to work with the poor rather than seeking a lucrative career as a private physician. David says that he is a better person now than he had been years earlier, prior to Elizabeth's death. He admits that some people would point simply at the fact that he's aged physically, meaning he's also aged emotionally, as the reason for the improvements. David disagrees. He says that having Elizabeth by his side meant that he could lean on her goodness, in a sense. He says that now, without Elizabeth, he has to be a better person. He explains all this, but it seems reasonable that David has simply aged, physically and emotionally, so that he has become this better person he believes Elizabeth would be proud of.

Self-Preservation

Self-preservation means different things to different characters in this story. To Elizabeth, it means merely staying alive, and David feels guilty that he'd also sought to keep from being killed at the time of the attack. For Griffin Scope, self-preservation means that he is willing to kill anyone who comes in the way of his life or threatens his family in any way. This is extreme, especially considering the brutal murder of a man who'd blackmailed Griffin's son because Randal Scope had ordered a lot of pornographic movies from a cable company. Another instance of this self-preservation is seen in the actions of Hoyt Parker. There was a point around the time of the attack on Elizabeth that Hoyt realizes that his own life is in danger because of the death of Brandon Scope. Hoyt later tells David that when Griffin comes to believe that it had actually been Elizabeth who killed Brandon, Hoyt was willing to let that misconception stand so that he no longer under suspicion. Finally, Tyrese is an example of this theme. Tyrese lives the life of a street criminal though with an ulterior motive in mind. He tells David that he can escape this life if he can survive and continue to make money for two more years. This is a different kind of self-preservation, but Tyrese, who grew up on the streets and surrounded by the crime, feels that being at the head of the organization is the only way to survive. It's interesting that Tyrese apparently came to realize early on that having a drug addiction would be the death of him. He couldn't kick the habit alone and so hired Brutus with the promise of payment for every week Brutus kept Tyrese off drugs. While this is extreme, it is one way Tyrese sought to survive.

Style

Point of View

The story is divided between first person from Dr. David Beck's perspective and third person omniscient point of view, which is an interesting deviation from traditional stories that stick with either first person or third person. There are some entire chapters that are written in first person from David's point of view and some other chapters written entirely in third person with an omniscient perspective. The change is always immediately evident, but may be distracting to some readers. The use of both first and third-person narratives is useful in that the first-person sections of the book put the reader directly into the mind and thoughts of the main character, David. While the use of a third-person perspective would have been adequate, there's little doubt that the reader will identify more deeply with David because of this first-person perspective. The third person perspective is necessary in building suspense. For example, David doesn't learn about the death of Elizabeth's former roommate until the police have built a case against him and are about to arrest him. The reader already knows about the woman's death and the men behind the murder, making it clear why and how the police find the murder weapon at David's house.

Setting

The story is set in New York in modern times. The city is real and aspects of the setting are, in theory, also real. For example, the author describes in great detail the crack house where Tyrese takes David after David escapes arrest. David looks at the people lying around the floors, notes that some are engaged in sexual acts apparently in return for drugs, and that there is the occasional flare of a lighter as crack pipes are lit. The details are interesting to David, who notes that he works with the after-effects of drugs on a regular basis but had never been in the middle of a drug house. This particular house may not exist, but the description is typical of what one would expect of a crack house in the city during this time. Other descriptions include the lake property where David, Elizabeth and their families spend time when David and Elizabeth are children. The descriptions are detailed without becoming overbearing and do not typically slow down the action. With regard to time, the setting is real and acceptable. The use of technology indicates that computers are in practical use as are emails. Eric Wu's ability to hack into David's emails is believable and realistic to the time frame. The one exception is David's use of a beeper rather than a cell phone. Cell phones are used in the story, and David is given an anonymous cell phone by Tyrese, who always carries a cell phone and frequently talks "bidness" on it. The fact that David, as a doctor, doesn't carry one is not really believable to modern times and probably dates the book more than any other point.

Language and Meaning

The love of David's life is Elizabeth, who David believes was killed in an attack by a serial killer. David and Elizabeth had been childhood sweethearts and their love had only grown from there, leading up to their marriage. David's life without Elizabeth is somewhat devoid of hope, though he has come to accept her death. However, David's hope is so strong and so near the surface that he immediately latches onto the idea that Elizabeth might be alive. When his hopes are again crushed, he remained dejected only a short time before looking for another reason to hope. This tone of hope is balanced by the suspense. The author creates a constant sense of suspense through foreshadowing and clues to the true events of the night of Elizabeth's attack.

The story is written in a straight-forward language. There are few difficult words used and these are generally easy to discern when considered in the context of the story. The events occur quickly so that the story is fast-paced. The story is divided between narrative and dialogue and the two appear reasonable and believable. There are few instances where the story lags at all, with the exceptions of David's explanations about his life now. In those cases, the action is slowed in order to explain more about the personalities of the main characters, which is vital to understanding the events that occur as the story draws to a close.

Structure

The story is divided into forty-seven sections. The first section is not numbered and is set at Lake Charmaine on the night Elizabeth is killed. The remainder of the story, from chapter one through forty-six, is set eight years after Elizabeth's death. The chapters range in length from as few as three pages to as many as fourteen, with many of the chapters ranging from eight to ten pages. The chapters roughly cover one event or series of shorter events, though the chapters end in a place designed to create suspense rather than a place of any significant closure. The chapters are numbered without titles so there is no clue as to what's ahead. Either the first sentence of each chapter or the first few words of each chapter is written in bold letters. For example, chapter two begins with the bold words, "At home, I found another shock from the past." The chapter then goes on to explain where David lives and why before getting into the information regarding his "shock from the past." Chapter five begins with the bold words, "I stared unblinking at the computer screen." The only purpose in this case is to set the scene. The first words of other chapters are sometimes clues of coming events but more often simply set the scene for the coming events.

Quotes

"We sat in my grandparents' formal living room, which I usually do my utmost to avoid. The room was stale, creepy, and still had that old-people's-sofa smell." Chap. 2, p. 24

"I'd always wondered if she'd died that same way - with that naiveté intact - still clinging through pain to her faith in humanity and all that wonderful nonsense. I hope so, but I suspect KillRoy probably broke her." Chap. 6, p. 59

"They might comment on his personality of his family tree or his work ethic. But the first word - in the papers, on television, on people's lists - was always the B word. Billionaire. Billionaire Griffin Scope." Chap. 7, p. 65

"I also know that flirting with alcoholism is about as safe as flirting with a mobster's underage daughter. But so far, the flirting has led to coupling." Chap. 8, p. 75

"In person, she had the most bizarre aura of power, the kind of person who looks at everyone as though she were a hungry tiger and they were limping gazelles." Chap. 10, p. 92

"To the children who used to come here, Jeremiah Renway had been the Boogeyman." Chap. 11, p. 97

"Some things we pack away, stick in the back of the closet, never expect to see again - but we can't quite make ourselves discard the. Like dreams, I guess." Chap. 14, p. 115

"She's support me to the end. But only an idiot wouldn't be wondering at this juncture if my elevator was stopping at every floor." Chap. 17, p. 135

"I simply went down. I covered up and surrendered and let the stronger man take away my wife." Chap. 20, p. 152

"The Bad Man isn't lurking in playgrounds, kiddies. He lives in your house." Chap. 23, p. 170

"If you cross the street to avoid a gang of black teens, you're racial profiling; if you don't cross because you're afraid you'll look like a racist, you're racial profiling; if you see the

gang and think nothing whatsoever, you're from some planet I've never visited." Chap. 23, p. 171

"Assistant District Attorney Lance Fein stormed into Crimstein's conference room looking like a sleep-deprived weasel on too many amphetamines." Chap. 37, p. 288

Topics for Discussion

Describe the attack on Elizabeth and David. What story is told as the truth following the attack? What really happened? What is the secret David plans to tell Elizabeth?

Who is Eric Wu? Who is Larry Gandle? The two men kill two people over the course of the story. Who are their two victims? What is the method the men use to kill them? What information do they obtain from their victims? How do they dispose of the bodies?

How is David's family connected to the family and business of Griffin Scope? What does David learn about Griffin over the course of the story? How does David learn the truth of his father's death?

How did David and Elizabeth meet? What is their relationship over the years leading up to the attack? What is their parents' reaction to their relationship? How do David and Elizabeth test their love?

Who is Hester Crimstein? How does she become involved in David's case? What kind of person is she? How does she react when David flees from the impending arrest? How does she manage to solve the situation?

Who is Peter Flannery? How does David know that he needs to talk to Peter? What is the information he has about Elizabeth? What is David's reaction?

Who is Tyrese? How does David come to know him? What is Tyrese's long range plan? What does he tell David about his plan and about his will? Why does David call on him for help?

Who is Vic Letty? What is his fate? What is the scam he's running? Who is Linda? Shauna? Kim Parker? Brutus? What is the relationship between each of them and David?