

# **Trace Study Guide**

**Trace by Patricia Cornwell**

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## Plot Summary

In *Trace*, Dr. Kay Scarpetta returns to her former home of Richmond, Virginia to consult on a high-profile murder. Young Gilly Paulsson has been found dead in her bed under suspicious circumstances, but Virginia's office of the chief medical examiner (OCME) has been unable to determine a cause of death. Dr. Joel Marcus holds the position of chief medical examiner (CME) which once belonged to Scarpetta and he decides to call his predecessor in to consult on this puzzling case. It is not Scarpetta's expertise, however, that Marcus seeks. Marcus hopes to use Scarpetta to deflect any criticism his office might face over the Gilly Paulsson case. When Scarpetta arrives in Richmond with her friend and fellow investigator, Frank Marino, she finds she has stepped into a political minefield.

Gilly Paulsson's father, Dr. Frank Paulsson, is an informant for Homeland Security and uses his political clout to put pressure on the OCME to solve Gilly's case. Unfortunately, Dr. Paulsson is also a sexual deviant who not only molests his female patients, but quite possibly has molested his daughter as well. His ex-wife, Suzanna Paulsson, participated in violent sex games with her husband and his friends in the home where Gilly lived. This negative home environment opens the door to the possibility that Gilly's murderer may have been Dr. Paulsson or one of the many guests who had been invited to his home to participate in his twisted sexual practices.

Suzanna Paulsson is afraid of having her bizarre sex life exposed in the investigation and in order to gain some leverage in the case, she lures investigator Frank Marino into her home, drugs him and violates him sexually, causing him severe injury. When Marino wakes the next morning, Suzanna accuses him of rape and Marino is so confused by the intoxicants she put into his system that he does not remember what happened. Luckily for Marino, Scarpetta is not only a terrific doctor, she is also a terrific investigator and an even better friend. She is able to determine, based on Marino's injuries, that Suzanna has set him up. Scarpetta threatens Suzanna with exposure if she dares file a fake rape charge against Marino and Suzanna is forced to drop the matter.

Meanwhile the real killer, a man named Edgar Allan Pogue, is stalking Scarpetta's niece, Lucy. Just prior to the beginning of the novel, Pogue attacked Lucy's girlfriend Henri but was interrupted before he could finish the job. Henri was found alive in Lucy's master bedroom in the same position Gilly Paulsson's body was found and bearing the same distinctive pattern of injuries. Unfortunately, Lucy and her aunt Scarpetta don't share the details of their cases with one another, so Scarpetta has no way of knowing that the killer she seeks shares the same M.O. as the assailant who attacked Henri.

Pogue had worked for Scarpetta in Richmond when she had been the CME for the state of Virginia. He met her niece, Lucy, at that time and had developed a psychotic fixation on her. After Scarpetta and Lucy left town, Pogue was able to track down the reclusive Lucy through an interview that Henri inadvisably gave to *The Hollywood Reporter*. Pogue had been squatting in the former OCME building which was abandoned some eight years before the events of the novel. When the novel begins, the old building is at



last being torn down and Pogue has been forced to move his collection of dead bodies from the basement into the home of one of his murder victims. Pogue now lives in this home, located immediately behind the Paulsson home and it was through his bedroom window that Pogue first spotted Gilly.

Eventually, Scarpetta and Marino identify the killer as Edgar Allan Pogue and all the pieces fall into place. Scarpetta is able to track her killer through the microscopic trace evidence found at the scene of the Paulsson case. The evidence is identical to traces lifted from the body of a construction worker in an unrelated accidental death case and Dr. Marcus accuses Scarpetta of contaminating the evidence. Before Marcus can hang her out to dry, however, Scarpetta is able to prove that the evidence is a valid link between the two cases and it points directly to the involvement of Edgar Allan Pogue. All ends well for the major characters of *Trace*. By the end of the novel, Marino's reputation is secure, Lucy is safe from her stalker, the detestable Dr. Paulsson has been driven from his medical practice and Scarpetta has redeemed herself in Richmond.



# Chapters 1 - 10

## Chapters 1 - 10 Summary

*Chapter 1:* Dr. Kay Scarpetta slows her rental SUV to watch the demolition of her old office building in Richmond, Virginia. Caught by surprise, she had been unaware that the building where she worked for many happy years is being torn down. Former police captain Frank Marino listens from the passenger seat as she complains. Scarpetta has flown in from her home in Florida at the request of her successor, Dr. Joel Marcus, the current chief medical examiner of Virginia. Dr. Marcus has asked her to consult on a difficult case: a fourteen-year-old girl, found dead in her own bed, with no apparent cause for her death. This is Scarpetta's first trip back since she was fired for political reasons by the former governor. It is a homecoming for Marino as well, who had once been a homicide detective working closely with Scarpetta's office. Marino has his own resentments about the treatment he received from his former employers. Today he is surly and dressed all in black; incongruously, he wears an LAPD cap on his shaved head. The cap was a gag gift from Scarpetta's niece, Lucy.

Marino reminisces about the gloomier aspects of the condemned building, including its crematorium and the ghoulish basement Anatomical Division, where naked, pink bodies were kept in vats, lifted out as needed by chains hooked to the ears of the corpses. Scarpetta drives around the old building a second time, saying her goodbyes. Her observant eyes lock on a construction worker standing dangerously close to an oversized tractor tire as he works on the machine's engine. She drives away and as they head toward the newer medical examiner's building, she advises Marino to leave his LAPD cap in the car.

*Chapter 2:* Edgar Allan Pogue brags to his mother about his new Hollywood home. She mocks him, telling him he's a loser who won't amount to anything. His new home is not in star-studded Hollywood, California; it is a run down one-bedroom apartment in Hollywood, Florida. Pogue laments how much higher the rents are in Florida than they are in Richmond, Virginia. He has arrived recently, his white Buick loaded with his personal belongings. He paid cash for the apartment on Garfield Street and had not been required to show proof of identification. Pogue wore his wig when he met with the landlord.

Pogue thinks of the salmon-colored mansion nearby. He had gotten inside, as planned, but everything had gone wrong somehow. He had run off the "little fish" but the "Big Fish" was still there. His mother wonders how he'll ever catch the Big Fish if he couldn't even catch the small one. Mother gives him her famous "hairy eyeball" stare as Pogue polishes his red, white and blue baseball bat. He turns to his mother and the reader learns that he has been talking to a cookie tin filled with his dead mother's ashes. On the wall, Pogue draws a hairy eyeball. He considers smashing it with the bat, but knows he mustn't. He decides to check on Mrs. Arnette. Pogue digs into a moving box and pulls out a cigar box filed with ashes and an envelope of Polaroid photos. He chooses



his favorite photo of Mrs. Arnette and pulls it out for his mother to see. Pogue stares at the photograph, admiring how neatly he sewed the old woman's mouth shut.

*Chapter 3:* Dr. Kay Scarpetta shakes Dr. Joel Marcus' hand in the lobby of the Biotech II building which houses the office of the chief medical examiner (OCME) of the state of Virginia. She introduces Marino, explaining that he once worked for the Richmond Police Department and is an experienced investigator. Dr. Marcus offends her by calling her Kay and gives her a hard time about bringing Marino. Scarpetta is afraid she's made a mistake by coming here but does not intend to let Dr. Marcus bully her. Marino spots an old friend in the lobby and irritates Dr. Marcus by socializing loudly. Marcus leads them into the inner sanctum which was once Scarpetta's turf.

Marcus pauses before admitting her into the back rooms containing the upper-level administrative offices, the morgue and Scarpetta's former office. Marcus refuses to admit Marino and suggests they get some coffee and wait outside while he attends his staff meeting. Scarpetta is incensed; it is common professional courtesy to invite visiting consultants like herself to attend the office staff meetings. Scarpetta insists on a private conversation with Marcus. They duck into the library and she lays down some ground rules. She tells Marcus that any office requesting her assistance must be open to her. She insists on attending the staff meeting with Marino and asks Marcus not to call her by her first name in front of the staff. She demands to know if there is a political agenda in the Gilly Paulsson case for which she was called in to consult. Marcus admits that Gilly's father is using his clout with the commissioner to pressure the OCME to get fast results on cause of death. She asks how long they have had the body and when he tells her two weeks, she is stunned.

*Chapter 4:* In the conference room, Scarpetta takes the chair furthest from the head of the table just to be contrary. Marino sits against the wall, next to Scarpetta. He had been flirting with the receptionist while Scarpetta had her private chat with Marcus and now he whispers in Scarpetta's ear that the staff hates Marcus' guts. Marino has also learned that the FBI is involved in the Gilly Paulsson case. Scarpetta looks around the room, noticing that the anatomical model known as "Guts Man" appears to be unused. This fact implies that Dr. Marcus does not care enough about the families of the dead to spend time with them explaining how their loved ones died. She feels the humanity of her profession is missing under Dr. Marcus' stewardship. The only familiar face at the staff table is Assistant Chief Jack Fielding. She avoids making direct eye contact with Dr. Fielding, but notices that he has developed a skin disorder since she last saw him. Momentarily, she feels pleased by this, attributing it to the stress of working under the poor leadership of Marcus. She remembers that Fielding did not speak in her defense when the former governor forced her out of her job. She recalls his loyalty and the care he always put into his work and her attitude towards Fielding softens.

Dr. Marcus begins the meeting. He asks Marino about his job title, but Marino will only reveal that he works with Scarpetta. Before he begins to review the OCME's current caseload, Marcus suggests again that Scarpetta and Marino leave to go get coffee. They stay, so Marcus turns the floor over to Dr. Ramie, who begins to read the list of current cases. The OCME has Sissy Shirley, a ninety-two-year-old black woman, found



dead in bed. The next corpse is Benjamin Franklin, an eighty-nine-year-old black man who has died of nerve failure. Dr. Marcus interrupts Dr. Ramie to mock her slip of the tongue. There is no such thing as nerve failure; Ramie blushes and explains she meant to say renal failure. Kay finds Marcus' attitude insulting to his staff as well as to the dead people, but Marino joins Marcus in mocking Dr. Ramie. Bravely, Ramie continues reading, despite the heckling. Finky Finder is the next corpse; a twenty-two-year-old black female, probable heroin O.D.

The next case she mentions causes Scarpetta to sit up in alarm. Theodore Whitby, dead less than an hour, run over by his construction tractor at Nine North Fourteenth Street, the old medical examiner's building. Marino nudges Scarpetta as she thinks of the man she saw that morning standing dangerously close to his tractor tire. Marcus assigns Assistant Chief Fielding to personally handle the Theodore Whitby autopsy because there's no margin for error when a state employee dies on state property. Ramie concludes her recitation and Dr. Marcus presents some test cases which Scarpetta feels are designed to put her in her place. His plan to embarrass her backfires as she answers all the test questions confidently, even overruling Marcus' opinions.

*Chapter 5:* Benton Wesley paces his Aspen town home as he talks to Marino via cell phone. Marino tells Benton that his fears about Dr. Marcus' motives were accurate: Marcus is indeed trying to make Scarpetta look bad. Benton reassures Marino that Scarpetta is probably aware by now that Marcus is trying to use her. Benton has checked in with his sources about the Gilly Paulsson case and believes the girl's death is being manipulated for political reasons. Marino asks about Benton's new case. The unexpected case has spoiled Benton's plan to vacation in Aspen with Scarpetta, but Benton will not divulge details of the case to Marino. Benton explains to Marino that for privacy reasons he can't talk at the moment, but he asks Marino to warn Scarpetta to use extreme caution around Marcus. Benton ends the call and jots down some notes on a legal pad.

Henrietta Walden enters the living room and insists Benton tell her who was on the phone. Benton reminds her not to overstep boundaries and tells her the conversation was private. Henri tells Benton she knows all about Benton's relationship with Scarpetta. Benton, not for the first time, laments the fact that Lucy has dumped her girlfriend Henri in his lap. Henri was assaulted recently and is in need of a post-incident stress counselor to find out exactly what happened. Henri claims not to remember the details. Benton is doing his best, but in the past four days he's learned only that Henri is a narcissistic sociopath who actually enjoys the drama of being a near-murder victim. For Lucy's sake, he continues to try to get information from Henri. Henri toys with him, answering everything obliquely. If he didn't have proof someone had tried to kill her, Benton would be inclined to think she was making it all up for attention.

*Chapter 6:* In the morgue, Scarpetta gives Fielding advice on the Whitby autopsy. She can't forget seeing Whitby just moments before his death by tractor. Also in the morgue is a group of young Army interns, sent to the OCME to get practical experience handling dead bodies. Fielding bosses them around rudely and makes fun of their ignorance. Scarpetta is aghast to see how he treats them. In her day, no one including Fielding



would have treated the interns or anyone else with such public disrespect. She tries to remind Fielding of this by her own example when she refuses to join him in negative gossip about Dr. Marcus. She remembers when Fielding was young and eager; she taught him everything he knows. Since her absence he's become cynical and his health has faded. Dr. Marcus overworks Fielding. Marcus is the type of chief ME who would never dirty his hands doing an autopsy.

Poor Fielding has been left alone with the politically charged Paulsson case. Scarpetta suddenly feels guilty that she never called Fielding after leaving Virginia and when he invites her and Marino to dinner that night, she gladly accepts. Scarpetta assures her former assistant that they will work on Gilly Paulsson together and figure it out.

*Chapter 7:* Henri Walden, fresh from the shower, reports to her counseling session in the living room wearing only her robe. She moves in such a way as to deliberately flash her nude flesh for Benton's benefit. He reminds her again of the importance of boundaries. Henri asks Benton why his girlfriend Scarpetta isn't here in Aspen with him. Henri goads him by implying that Lucy has told her all about Benton's sexual relationship with Scarpetta, or lack thereof. Benton is momentarily furious with Lucy for discussing his personal life with Henri, but then realizes Henri is probably just trying to manipulate him. She lets her robe fall open again and he insists she cover herself. "Her relentless attempts to sexually arouse Benton are not simply about transference but are a direct manifestation of her acute and chronic narcissistic needs and her desire to control and dominate, degrade and destroy anyone who dares to care about her. Henri's every action and reaction are about self-hate and rage." (pg. 61)

Painstakingly, painfully, Benton attempts to lead the uncooperative Henri through the details of her attack. She refers to her attacker as the beast and blames Lucy for letting him into the house. Henri had forgotten to lock the door and set the alarm because, she says, she had the flu. Benton has formed a mental image of the crime scene from the pictures Lucy took of Henri's wounds. Henri was found lying facedown on the bed with her arms stretched over her head and her legs bent at odd angles. Her injuries consisted of a bloody nose, bruises on the tops of her hands and some reddish areas of contusion on her upper back which have since bloomed purple. Henri claims not to remember if she was raped. As a former actress turned police officer, Henri should be familiar with the physical evidence recovery kits (PERKs) used by hospitals, but she plays dumb when Benton tells her the PERK found no evidence of seminal fluid. Henri tells Benton she overheard a doctor comment that there's "Nothing like being raped if you're mad at someone. Payback's hell." (pg. 66) She continues to blame Lucy for the assault. When she learns Lucy took pictures of her injuries, her anger with Lucy increases.

Benton turns the subject to Lucy's Ferraris. Lucy does not allow Henri to drive the highly conspicuous black Ferrari, but Benton learns Henri has taken it out anyway and parked it at the gym, where someone scratched a drawing into its black paint. Henri stalls when Benton asks if she removed her own clothes prior to being attacked or if her assailant removed them during the attack. She claims not to remember. Benton cannot know if she's telling the truth. On the one hand, she's a sociopath who would lie just to keep





herself at the center of a psychological drama, but on the other hand, she's a human being who has undergone a terrible ordeal and actually may not remember. Benton wonders again why Lucy would get involved with her, but reminds himself how charming sociopaths can be when so inclined.

*Chapter 8:* Marino calls his boss, Lucy, to report that her aunt Scarpetta has entered a political minefield in Virginia. Marino recalls meeting Lucy when she was ten years old and how she had hero-worshipped him. Today he is still uncomfortable having her as his boss and is even intimidated by the way she flaunts her money and power.

*Chapter 9:* Back in Hollywood, Florida, Rudy Musil sits in the passenger seat of Lucy's Modena as she ends her call to Marino. He asks what is going on in Richmond and Lucy explains her aunt is being used as a political fall guy for the Gilly Paulsson case. She complains that her aunt ignored her warning to stay away from the case and now Scarpetta's in it neck deep. As they talk, Lucy keeps an eye on an undercover police car that has been following them. Suddenly she realizes her radar detector is silent and that the car must not be a police car. She orders Rudy to run the plate and swerves across three lanes of traffic into a parking lot. The unmarked sedan trails them into the parking lot. Rudy is disgusted by Lucy's rash and dangerous reaction. He exits the car and talks to the driver of the other car, who apparently just wanted to get a good look at the Modena. Back in Lucy's car, Rudy chides her for driving such flashy cars. It is dangerous for a private investigator to be so conspicuous. He reminds her she could drive one of the company Hummers and be much less conspicuous. He blames her unsafe behavior on her relationship with Henri. Rudy questions her judgment for hiring Henri and for letting her drive the black Ferrari. Rudy blames the Ferrari for attracting the attention of the psychopath who attacked Henri.

Lucy insists she has the right to drive what she wants, live where she wants and be generous to whomever she pleases. Rudy says her carelessness could get them both killed. Lucy admits to being rattled by the attack on Henri and apologizes for mishandling the situation with the unmarked sedan.

In her mind, she goes over the evidence left behind by the attacker. She worries that he was careless in leaving behind fingerprints and three black hairs on the bed sheets. The attacker's lack of concern over this evidence tells her he probably has no arrest record and will be hard to trace. She tries to make up with Rudy by inviting him in for coffee when they pull up to her new L.A. mansion. She and Rudy have been fighting non-stop since Lucy opened up the satellite office in L.A. and since she recruited Henri from the LAPD. Lucy is terrified Rudy will quit after all these years because of Henri and because of Lucy's flashy new Hollywood lifestyle, but she is determined not to let the beast who broke into her house dictate the terms of her life to her, so she continues to stand up for Henri.

*Chapter 10:* Lucy parks the Modena next to her black Ferrari and avoids looking at the hairy eyeball scratched into the paint. Rudy asks if it's possible Henri scratched the drawing onto the car herself, but Lucy insists Henri would never have done that to Lucy's prize Ferrari. He follows her into the mansion and suggests she replace her



security cameras with cameras that record, but Lucy says she would just as soon sell the house now because of the attack. She offers Rudy some homemade chili. As they head for the kitchen, Lucy sees a piece of paper stuck to the outside of the same glass door the beast used to enter her house on the night of Henri's attack. On the paper is a drawing of a hairy eyeball.

## Chapters 1 - 10 Analysis

In the first ten chapters, the author introduces the reader to each of the main characters in *Trace*. Readers already familiar with Patricia Cornwell's series of Scarpetta novels will recognize Kay Scarpetta, Frank Marino, Lucy Farinelli, Rudy Musil and Benton Wesley. Only Lucy and Scarpetta have consistently appeared in each novel, but all of the main characters in *Trace* have appeared in prior novels on a rotating basis. Thus the author is set the intricate task of re-introducing these characters without sounding repetitive to her loyal readers. She must provide enough detail about them to satisfy first-time Scarpetta readers and to bring loyal readers up to date.

In addition to catching readers up on the lives of the main characters, Patricia Cornwell must lay the groundwork for the tale she is about to tell. Dr. Kay Scarpetta is the prodigal daughter returning to the city of Richmond from which she was cast out several years ago as the result of a political witch hunt. The complexity of the backstory is communicated through Scarpetta and Marino's reaction to the condemnation of the office building with which they are both so familiar and which housed many happy memories for Scarpetta. In this politically charged homecoming, Scarpetta and Marino must reclaim the respect they once had from their colleagues and community. Unfortunately for Scarpetta, it is clear at the start that she has been called back to be the political fall guy for the State of Virginia.

In a parallel plotline, Scarpetta's niece Lucy has become the target of a murderous psychopath. Her stubbornly independent nature, so similar to Scarpetta's, prevents her from discussing the problem with Scarpetta. Ironically, the reader will ultimately learn that the psychopath who has targeted Lucy is the very same man Scarpetta has been called back to Richmond to find. The killer, Edgar Allan Pogue, is introduced early in the story, in Chapter 2. Lucy's case and Scarpetta's case unfold independently and they will not learn they are seeking the same man until much later in the book.

In the meantime, the character of Benton Wesley serves to tie the two parallel plotlines together. Lucy has requested his professional assistance in her case, which he feels obligated to give because the attack occurred in Lucy's home and she is personally at risk. By taking on the case he has sacrificed some much-needed personal time with his significant other, Scarpetta. Due to the emotional distance between Lucy and Scarpetta, Benton is not at liberty to inform Scarpetta why he's taken on a new case at such an inopportune time. Thus the personal conflict between Lucy and her aunt interferes not only with the timely resolution of the two murder cases, but also with Scarpetta's relationship with Benton.



# Chapters 11 - 20

## Chapters 11 - 20 Summary

*Chapter 11:* In the morgue, one of the young Army interns asks Scarpetta what he should do with the deceased's dentures. Instead of letting Dr. Fielding answer, Scarpetta decides to handle the situation herself, realizing that the interns are there to learn and that Fielding has become too cynical to try to teach them anything. She instructs him to replace the dentures in the woman's mouth, but they are too large to fit. Scarpetta tells him they don't belong to the dead woman. She goes into the cooler and finds an elderly man's body; he wears dentures that are too small for his mouth. Fielding dresses the interns down and instructs them to sanitize both sets of dentures before returning them to their proper owners.

Scarpetta leaves the morgue and heads to Marcus' office, which was once hers. He invites her in to be briefed on Gilly Paulsson's medical records, but Scarpetta interrupts him to express her concerns about the way he's running the place. She advises him to spend more time in the morgue overseeing things. Marcus says he was afraid Scarpetta might have a disgruntled attitude and tells her he warned the commissioner against calling her in on this case. She tells him about the denture mix-up and warns him that the interns require more supervision because mistakes like that can cost the district attorney's office to lose their court cases and the press would have a field day. Marcus tells her Fielding is supposed to be supervising, but she informs him that Fielding is overworked. Marcus changes the subject back to Gilly Paulson. Scarpetta insists she wants a witness present when she re-autopsies the body.

*Chapter 12:* Lucy hasn't slept in the third-floor master suite since Henri was attacked. Rudy is out gassing up the Modena and watching to see if anyone follows him; he and Lucy both assume the lunatic is still watching the house now that they've found the second eye drawing. While he is gone, Lucy enters the third-floor bedroom and surveys the crime scene. It has not been altered since the attack. Lucy berates herself for having called 911. Rudy is still furious over this gaffe. As private detectives, they should have handled the situation themselves, but Lucy panicked when she found Henri lying face down on the bed. Henri had been unresponsive, as if in a coma, but Benton has since told Lucy that Henri was faking. Benton believes Henri took advantage of the situation to punish Lucy by pretending to be dead or nearly dead.

Lucy surveys the view from the bedroom windows and realizes her nosy neighbor could have seen the whole thing. She hasn't met the neighbor woman but knows she likes to spy on and even photograph Lucy's yard man from her windows. Lucy considers the attacker's potential path to the house. She doubts he approached from the harbor side. She believes he walked right up the path between her house and the neighbor's to Lucy's back door. She decides she will introduce herself to her neighbor after Rudy returns. For now, she lets her instincts guide her as she retraces the would-be killer's steps. Lucy can sense his presence in some rooms but not others. In the library she



removes the eye drawing from a plastic evidence baggie and examines it under a high-intensity short-wave ultraviolet light. If the scope doesn't pick up any prints, Lucy will have to resort to a more detailed chemical examination which could destroy the valuable evidence. She sees on the security cameras that Rudy has returned and she tucks the drawing back in the bag.

Lucy suggests to Rudy that they call the police as a formality, since they're already involved. She dials 911 and casually explains to the operator that there has been a second break in related to her case. She gives her name as Tina Franks and requests that the operator dispatch Crime Scene Investigator (CSI) John Dalessio to the scene since he is already familiar with the case. She hangs up and tries to ease Rudy's anger at the police involvement by making a game out of toying with the cops. Rudy jokes what a hard time the operator will have tracking down the non-existent Dalessio. Now when the cops show up Rudy can pretend to be a CSI named Dalessio in order to keep the eye drawing evidence out of the cop's hands. It worked after Henri was attacked. Rudy had walked in the front door and announced himself as a CSI. He had told the detectives he would take it from there and they didn't have to hang around while he processed the crime scene. Once the cops were gone, Rudy and Lucy had processed the forensic evidence themselves. Now, Lucy leaves Rudy to handle the cops while she goes next door to talk to her neighbor.

*Chapter 13:* Scarpetta and Fielding, suited up in biohazard gear, prepare to re-autopsy Gilly Paulsson. The autopsy table is sloped so the coroners can drain the body fluids, but Scarpetta will not have to do this since Fielding already drained the body two weeks ago when he performed the first autopsy. Scarpetta leaves the sink tap running in case Marcus has the place bugged. Fielding tells her Marcus wouldn't be smart enough to think of something like that, but Scarpetta cautions him that it's "easy to underestimate people you don't like." (pg. 114) She reviews the first autopsy record. Fielding found all of Gilly's vital organs to be within normal limits and found no cause of death. However, he had found some bruises on the tops of her hands, which Scarpetta knows will show up even more vividly now that the body has been drained of blood. The only blood left in Gilly's body will be in the bruised tissues, which will show up clearly against her white, blood-drained skin.

Fielding informs her that the girl's tongue had been removed by the perpetrator. Scarpetta examines the tongue after feeling in the girl's mouth for signs of other injury. Fielding tells her she won't find anything he didn't already find and reminds her that she trained him herself. Scarpetta thinks privately that she trained him better than this. The moment they turn the body over, they spot the bruise on her back. Fielding missed it before, but it now shows up against Gilly's pale skin. Scarpetta immediately postulates that Gilly was asphyxiated by someone who had her facedown, pressing her hands down over her head, with a knee on her upper back. The perpetrator would have simply leaned all of his or her weight on the child so that she couldn't breathe. Scarpetta requests a lab test on the pillow case. If it contains pulmonary edema fluid, she can prove the child was suffocated in this manner.



*Chapter 14:* Lucy presses her neighbor's doorbell for five minutes and gets no answer, even though all signs indicate the woman is home. Lucy holds a fake police ID badge up to the camera and loudly announces herself as police. The woman finally comes to the door, complaining about having her privacy disturbed. Lucy introduces herself as Tina and explains that the man who broke into her house has come back and that she's concerned for her neighbor's safety. Suspiciously, the neighbor asks how Lucy could be a cop and afford a house like that. Lucy admits that she is actually an actress and is just getting into her new role as a police officer. Now that the neighbor believes Lucy is a celebrity, she invites her in and offers her a drink. Lucy explains to her neighbor, Kate, that she is being stalked and asks if Kate saw anything the day the cop cars showed up at Lucy's house. Kate admits she noticed Henri out by the pool on the morning in question; Kate had been looking out the window of her home gym while working out on her elliptical machine.

*Chapter 15:* Scarpetta meets Marino outside the OCME offices at mid-morning. He is furious to learn that fourteen-year-old Gilly was murdered by asphyxiation. Together, they head to Mrs. Paulsson's house to interview her about her daughter. Scarpetta warns Marino that Mrs. Paulsson sounded strange on the phone and that the woman still believes her daughter died of the flu. Marino fills her in on what he's learned from Detective Browning, who is in charge of the case. Browning responded to the call from Gilly's mother, but Marino doesn't know who was responsible for calling in the FBI. Gilly's father, reports Marino, is a doctor who lives in South Carolina. Gilly lived with her mother. When Browning interviewed Mrs. Paulsson, she had trouble recalling events. Browning's instinct is that Mrs. Paulsson is hiding something.

When they arrive, Dr. Scarpetta treats Mrs. Paulsson with kindness and sympathy. Over coffee, Mrs. Paulsson tells them she doesn't understand why the police want to talk to her because her Gilly died of the flu. Scarpetta reminds the woman that Dr. Fielding has already explained to her that Gilly did not die of the flu. Gilly did have pneumonia but was well on her way back to good health when she died. Mrs. Paulsson tells them she was out buying cough syrup when Gilly died, but she avoids all direct questions about the day of her daughter's death. Scarpetta feels she cannot rule Mrs. Paulsson out as a murder suspect. Mrs. Paulsson suddenly remembers that her dog, Sweetie, had been barking the morning Gilly died. Mrs. Paulsson tells them Sweetie has been missing since that day and she cries about how upset her daughter would be if she knew. Scarpetta presses for information on the missing basset hound puppy until Marino interrupts her, insisting he and Scarpetta speak privately in the other room.

*Chapter 16:* Lucy looks around her neighbor's third-floor gym. She is unnerved to find that Kate has an excellent view into Lucy's kitchen, dining room, living room, patio and her swimming pool. Kate also has a good view of the path leading up between the houses to Lucy's back door. Lucy feels sure the beast came up that path and let himself in by the back door, which Henri left unlocked after sitting out by the pool that morning. While Kate mixes drinks downstairs in the kitchen, Lucy continues to check out the upstairs, planting several listening devices. The view from Kate's master bedroom looks right into Lucy's bedroom. Lucy assures herself that she usually keeps her curtains drawn and tries to recall if they were open the day Henri was nearly attacked. Just as



she finishes planting a bug in the phone jack, Kate comes upstairs with two champagne flutes. Lucy pretends to sip while they talk, but she doesn't drink. She is pretty sure Kate's flute contains vodka and that Kate's already had a few drinks. Kate moves close to Lucy and begins to rub up against her provocatively.

*Chapter 17:* Edgar Allan Pogue recalls one of the rare occasions when Scarpetta visited the Anatomical Division to talk to his supervisor, Dave. She had complained because they were leaving the gurney in the rusty iron service elevator. She spoke to Dave while he lifted a naked pink body with chains and pulleys out of the floor vat filled with formalin. Pogue thought it was unfair of her to complain, because no one really used the elevator, but Scarpetta insisted that it contaminated the elevator with ashes from the crematorium. Pogue had realized then that Scarpetta thought his job was offensive. He tells himself she would never have become a doctor without the use of the cadavers that men like Pogue prepare for scientific use. She did not even look at him that day while she told his supervisor that there would be space in the new building to keep the bodies in coolers so they could be treated with more dignity. Dave had hit the stop button, leaving the old lady's pink body hanging from her ears in mid-air, legs curled up underneath her from the cramped position of being in the vat. Scarpetta had said that the body would be fine for the police academy class, although she had hoped to do the demo with an unembalmed body. Dave had explained that Pogue had embalmed the body first thing before Dave could stop him. And that, Pogue now explains to the cookie tin that holds his mother, is what happened to Mrs. Arnette.

*Chapter 18:* Marino and Scarpetta examine Gilly's bedroom. Marino notices that the window latches are worn out and no longer click shut. Scarpetta theorizes that the killer might have been familiar with the house and knew about the broken window lock. In Gilly's drawers they find several items of her father's, plus a dried rose that Marino estimates is a couple of weeks old. He heads out to the backyard while Scarpetta asks Mrs. Paulsson more questions in the kitchen. She tells Scarpetta that Gilly had worshipped her father and that the FBI agent, Karen Weber, had asked a lot of questions about him. Marino returns and leads them all back to the bedroom. He shows Mrs. Paulsson the rose, but she claims not to know where it came from. She continues to avoid direct questions and talks more about Gilly dying of the flu and about the dog, Sweetie.

*Chapter 19:* Mrs. Paulsson finally takes them through the events of the morning her daughter died. She returned from the pharmacy and called out for Gilly, asking if Sweetie was in bed with her. She put some chicken in the kitchen sink to defrost, then took a spoon upstairs to give Gilly the cough medicine. When she got upstairs, she saw her daughter lying partially nude on the bed with her arms stretched straight out above her head and her legs bent. Mrs. Paulsson saw that Sweetie was not there. Her mind got stuck on that thought until she turned her daughter over. That's when she started screaming.

*Chapter 20:* Lucy returns home and finds Rudy gone, but a copy of the Broward County Sheriff's Office report is on her kitchen table along with the drawing of the eye. Rudy has managed to save the drawing from the cops, so Lucy will be able to subject it to



further testing. Lucy shudders as she remembers the smell of the champagne and the way Kate had rubbed up against her. Lucy recalls her own days of drinking, when she too would rub up against strangers she would never have touched sober. She is glad Rudy is not here to be reminded of the painful memories of her drinking days. Lucy retires to her office to monitor Kate's conversations.

She slips on some headphones but Kate's not talking, so Lucy works on the drawing instead. She picks up some latent prints, intending to run them through the FBI's computer system. Kate's drunken voice suddenly sounds in her headphones. She learns that Kate has been watching enough to know that Henri was assaulted, which "Tina" hadn't mentioned to her neighbor. Kate also knows that Henri is no longer in the house and she conjectures that Rudy is Lucy's boyfriend. Lucy realizes she forgot to ask Kate if she'd seen anyone with long dark curly hair, like the hairs she found on the bed. Lucy prints out a fake invitation for Kate to the premiere of Tina's movie in June and includes a note in the envelope. Pretending it's a movie trivia question, Lucy asks Kate if she has recognized the person with the long dark curly hair. Lucy leaves the envelope with the invitation inside Kate's mailbox.

## Chapters 11 - 20 Analysis

Chapters 11 - 20 are a study in frustration. Both Scarpetta and Lucy are working hard to track their respective killers, but are stymied at every turn. Back on her old turf, Scarpetta is not sure whom she can trust. Everyone from Dr. Marcus to Mrs. Paulsson appears to have a hidden agenda, which complicates Scarpetta's efforts to reveal the truth about Gilly Paulsson's death and also makes her personally uncomfortable. As the plot begins to unfold, Scarpetta's character is defensive and paranoid. In the eyes of the world, Scarpetta is a very tough cookie, but she betrays her human frailty by the defensive attitude that prompts her to attack Marcus for the way he runs her former office. She is concerned he is spying on her and demands that a witness be present when she re-autopsies Gilly so that Marcus cannot claim any impropriety on her part. Her paranoia about Marcus will eventually be justified, but this early in the story her fears seem to be exacerbating an already uncomfortable situation.

Lucy's situation is equally uncomfortable. Her affection for Henri has resulted in certain changes in her life that pose a risk to her otherwise successful private investigation practice. Rudy Musil is the stony voice of reason who reminds Lucy that the flashy girlfriend, mansion and cars she has acquired conflict with her professional needs as a P.I. In addition, they also conflict with her personal needs, as the author symbolically shows through the character of the neighbor, Kate. Kate symbolizes the soulless nature of Lucy's new neighborhood. There is no sense of community or human caring; Kate only cares about fame, status and money. Henri's behavior in earlier chapters underscores the lack of emotional fulfillment present in Lucy's new lifestyle. Benton has diagnosed Henri as a psychopath, incapable of true human affection. No matter how much Lucy loves Henri, Henri is not capable of loving her back. Lucy has therefore jeopardized the career she's worked so hard to build for a loveless relationship and some flashy status symbols. Lucy is beginning to realize her mistake, but her stubborn



willfulness prevents her from admitting it to Rudy and especially to Scarpetta. It remains to be seen whether Lucy will struggle to maintain her relationship with Henri and thus 'go down with the ship,' or if she will admit her mistakes and extricate herself from her bad choices.

[Just a note: the use of the word "girlfriend" implies a gay relationship. If that is the case, using the word is fine. If that is not the case, use "friend" instead.]





# Chapters 21 - 30

## Chapters 21 - 30 Summary

*Chapter 21:* Mrs. Paulsson stares at her daughter's toothbrush in the bathroom and starts crying. She collects herself somewhat and returns to Gilly's bedroom, where Scarpetta and Marino wait. Marino pulls up a chair for her. Mrs. Paulsson decides she likes Marino. He asks her if she recalls whether Gilly's window was open or shut the morning she died. Open, she thinks and fear grips her heart when she sees that Marino has dusted the windowsill for fingerprints. They look out the window into the backyard and Marino asks who lives in the house behind hers, just beyond the backyard fence. Mrs. Paulsson tells him there used to be an old woman, but she imagines she's dead by now. Scarpetta asks more questions and Mrs. Paulsson becomes hysterical. She cries out that "they" took her daughter. Marino wants to know who "they" are. Mrs. Paulsson tells him to ask her ex-husband, Frank, about the people he used to invite over to the house.

*Chapter 22:* Forensic scientist Junius Eise makes himself a tungsten tool in the Trace Evidence Lab. Ordinarily, Eise enjoys making his own tools the old-fashioned way, but today he admits to himself that he's merely procrastinating. Eise doesn't know what to make of the evidence recovered from the Whitby body in the tractor death. He has found some highly unusual grayish brown dust swabbed from the wound in Whitby's face. The only other time Eise has seen such strange dust was two weeks ago, when he examined the swab taken from Gilly Paulsson's tongue. Eise does not imagine the two deaths could be related, but he is further confused by the presence of red, white and blue paint chips scattered throughout the dust in both cases.

To further complicate matters, the trace evidence was lifted from the bodies with Q-tips. Eise gripes to his co-worker, Kit Thompson, about having to pick out all the tiny cotton fibers from the Q-tips. Eise has sent several cranky memos to Dr. Marcus asking him to insist that all lab samples are lifted using low-tack tape instead of Q-tips, but it has done no good. He tells Kit things were much better in Scarpetta's day and Kit informs him that Scarpetta is in town as a consultant. Pleased to hear it, Eise offers Kit another "Eise Pick" tool, which she accepts. Kit is analyzing the hairs found at the scene of the Gilly Paulsson murder. She comments to Eise that the hairs are strange; not only are they died black, but they are cut at both ends, which is unusual. Kit, feeling ill, gives up for the day, but only after mentioning that Marino is also in town with Scarpetta. Eise, an old friend of Marino's, is thrilled and decides to call him up right away. He wants to have a few beers with Marino and find out if he or Scarpetta have any theories about the red, white and blue paint chips found in the strange crime scene dust.

*Chapter 23:* Lucy reviews the results from her attempt to match the fingerprints on the eye drawing with prints in the FBI's computer database. The database has turned up nothing, but Lucy is able to visually match the latent prints from the drawing to the prints she and Rudy lifted from her master bedroom. This confirms her suspicion that the



attacker is the same person who left the eye drawing taped to the back door. Lucy has obtained no new information from her neighbor, Kate, either and has reached a dead end. Lucy does, however, have some information regarding her aunt Scarpetta's situation and after some deliberation, decides to call her. Lucy and her aunt have drifted apart lately and though they both spend much of their time in South Florida, they rarely see one another.

Scarpetta answers her phone and the conversation immediately becomes contentious. Lucy refuses to divulge any information about her current case. She doesn't want to answer questions about Henri, nor does she wish to alarm her aunt by telling her that Henri was attacked in Lucy's own home. Lucy steers the conversation to Scarpetta's case. Her aunt tells her that Fielding, whom Lucy used to work out with at the gym when she was younger, no longer works out at all and his health has declined. Last night, Scarpetta went to Fielding's house for dinner, but when she arrived, the doorbell just rang and rang. Fielding never came to the door, although his car was in the drive. Scarpetta is upset and when Lucy suggests she call Benton for comfort, her aunt informs her that she's not allowed to call Benton because of his new case. Lucy feels guilty that Henri's case has come between her aunt and Benton, but does not tell Scarpetta what Benton is working on.

To compensate for her guilt, Lucy gives Scarpetta some information she dug up on Dr. Marcus. Lucy's background check shows that Dr. Marcus' career has not been a distinguished one. He failed his boards the first time around and didn't manage to pass them until his early forties. When Lucy starts to tell Scarpetta about Marcus' lack of criminal background, except for some traffic violations, Scarpetta asks her to stop. She doesn't feel comfortable spying on Dr. Marcus and tells Lucy her behavior is inappropriate. Lucy is hurt, but tries to hide it. Her aunt complains she hasn't seen Lucy in months and believes Lucy is avoiding her.

*Chapter 24:* In his living room, Dr. Marcus starts to hyperventilate when he hears the garbage truck approaching. The trash truck comes every Monday and Thursday at around eight-thirty a.m. and on those mornings Dr. Marcus is invariably late to his staff meetings. His phobia about garbage collectors and their noisy trucks has gotten worse since he moved to Virginia four months ago. After the truck leaves the neighborhood, Marcus takes a Klonopin, prescribed by his psychiatrist for panic attacks. Marcus has always suffered from anxiety, but it has never been disabling before. He blames Scarpetta for the increase in his panic attacks. Ever since he took over her job, he has been compared to her and warned by everyone that he will never be able to fill her shoes.

To make his job anxiety worse, Marcus had to decline having coffee with the governor shortly after the governor hired him because the meeting had been scheduled for eight-thirty on a Monday, the same time the garbage truck arrives. Marcus is afraid he hurt his career by declining the invitation. He was grateful to get the job in Virginia because he wasn't liked or wanted by his colleagues in St. Louis. However, since moving here he has been unfavorably compared to Scarpetta at every opportunity and has come to hate her long before he meets her.



When Gilly Paulsson's father used his clout to get the governor and the FBI interested in his daughter's murder case, Marcus saw an opportunity to dump the political fiasco off on Scarpetta. Gilly's father, Frank Paulsson, has connections with the Department of Homeland Security and when Marcus asked the local health commissioner how he should handle the high profile case, the commissioner suggested he bring in a big gun consultant. Marcus immediately suggested Scarpetta, certain that whoever was responsible for the autopsy would take the brunt of the political fallout. Marcus fully intends to blame her for anything that goes wrong in the Paulsson case.

Feeling more confident now that the trash truck is gone and the Klonopin has kicked in, Marcus dials Scarpetta's cell phone. He informs her that they have a meeting this morning at nine-thirty to discuss some unusual trace evidence Junius Eise has found. He is condescending to her on the call, relishing the fact that at the moment he is her boss. After he hangs up, he watches a cleaning lady unload supplies from a blue Impala that he's never seen in the neighborhood before. It reminds him of his mother's white Impala. When he looks again, the car is gone. Fearing it was a hallucination, he knocks on the door where he saw the housekeeper enter with her supplies. He introduces himself and explains that he is a car collector. His neighbor tells him her housekeeper would never part with her Impala. She recognizes Marcus as the new chief medical examiner and invites him in for coffee. But when she asks about the charming Dr. Scarpetta whom Marcus replaced, he coldly refuses her invitation.

*Chapter 25:* Scarpetta walks through the parking lot on her way to the last minute morning meeting, irritated to see Marcus' parking space empty. At the security desk, she asks if Marino has arrived, but he hasn't been seen. She had called Marino the night before when she stood outside of Fielding's house ringing the bell. She had been very worried, not sure if Fielding was ignoring her or if something had happened to him. Marino hadn't sounded concerned but told Scarpetta to call him if she needed him. This morning the security guard informs her that Marino went out for a few beers the night before with Junius Eise. Scarpetta is irritated that both Marino and Marcus know more about the trace evidence Eise has found than she does.

In the waiting room, she is shocked to see Mrs. Paulsson, who says she is there to meet with Dr. Marcus. Scarpetta assumes they are both there for the same meeting and shows Mrs. Paulsson into the conference room. Mrs. Paulsson is upset that her daughter's body is still in the morgue. She blames her ex-husband, who is fighting with her about where the girl should be buried. Mrs. Paulsson says it's his fault their daughter is dead.

In the conference room they find Special Agent Karen Weber of the FBI. When Weber asks what Gilly's mother is doing there, Mrs. Paulsson tells her she came at Dr. Marcus' request to pick up Gilly's belongings. Weber informs Mrs. Paulsson that she is in the wrong room and Scarpetta apologizes for the misunderstanding. Weber takes the opportunity to question Mrs. Paulsson further about her ex-husband and Mrs. Paulsson tells them that Frank is a doctor who gives flight physicals. He has been known, according to his ex-wife, to sexually harass the female pilots who come in for physicals.



Just then, Dr. Marcus enters, late as usual. Scarpetta apologizes again for bringing Mrs. Paulsson into the conference room. She walks the woman out and on the way they pass Marino. Marino is upset to see Mrs. Paulsson and demands to know what she's doing there. "Marino is in a hurry and acting perfectly bizarre and he smells like booze and looks like hell." (pg. 216)

*Chapter 26:* Marino grabs a cup of coffee and again demands to know what Mrs. Paulsson was doing there. He is dressed in the same clothes he wore the day before and his attitude is hostile. Scarpetta asks him to either settle down or skip the meeting. She doesn't need to take any more heat based on his behavior. Marino accuses Scarpetta of secretly planning to move back to Richmond to take her old job back. Scarpetta is surprised he would listen to such a baseless rumor and assures him she would have told him if that were the case. She sets aside her concern for Marino until the meeting is over.

In the conference room, Fielding is waiting along with Marcus and Agent Weber; Fielding won't meet her eyes. Marcus asks Scarpetta to verify that she re-autopsied Gilly Paulsson and that she examined Mr. Whitby, the dead tractor driver. Scarpetta confirms both. Then Marcus asks Fielding to confirm for the record that he also examined both Paulsson and Whitby. Fielding agrees that he did, but then declares, "I told you that yesterday when this came up. This morning I'll tell you the same damn thing. It's bullshit. I'm not going to be hung on some cross in front of the FBI or anyone else." (pg. 219) Marcus responds that there is a major problem with the evidence. The trace evidence recovered from Gilly's body is identical to that recovered from Whitby's body. Since the two cases are unrelated, Marcus implies that either Fielding or Scarpetta contaminated the evidence.

Scarpetta calls him out for withholding the trace evidence from her investigation and then springing it on her at the meeting. She denies having contaminated the evidence. She reviews her methods with him and points out that the trace evidence swabbed from Gilly Paulsson's tongue was taken before Scarpetta arrived in Richmond. Agent Weber asks if Eise examined both samples. Marcus confirms that Eise is working on the trace evidence in both cases, but that he's not working on the hair samples. Scarpetta asks what hair evidence he's talking about and Marcus finally mentions that three hairs were removed from the bed linens at the Paulsson crime scene. Scarpetta tells him she had asked that the bed linens be tested for ciliated respiratory epithelium and when Marcus announces test results came back positive, Marino tells them this proves Gilly Paulsson was definitely murdered. Marcus tells him to shut up and Scarpetta responds by demanding to know why the FBI is involved. Marino announces that he's learned the reason. Things get heated and out of nowhere, Jack Fielding quits his job and leaves the room.

In the ensuing silence, Scarpetta asks Marino what he was going to say. Marino has learned from his buddies at the Richmond P.D. that Frank Paulsson is a snitch for Homeland Security. In his capacity as a doctor, he informs on any patients who show terrorist inclinations. Special Agent Weber tells Marino he's said too much, but Scarpetta asks him to continue. Marino continues that the FBI has been investigating Paulsson for



some time because they have uncovered rumors about his molestation of female pilots as well as other improprieties. Marino says that the FBI is involved in the Gilly Paulsson murder only because they hope to discredit Frank Paulsson and thereby discredit Homeland Security. Marino contends that the FBI would love nothing better than to catch Homeland Security involved with a child murderer because Homeland Security has stolen away much of the FBI's budget share. Scarpetta stands up and snaps her briefcase shut. She icily reminds Marcus and Weber that the case is not about politics, it is about a fourteen-year-old girl's murder.

*Chapter 27:* Now that the meeting is over, Scarpetta returns her attention to Marino. She confronts him and demands to know what happened the night before between him and Mrs. Paulsson. She tells him she saw the way Mrs. Paulsson looked at him when they were at her house and points out how strangely he acted upon seeing Mrs. Paulsson this morning. Marino admits to seeing "Suz" the night before, but insists she just wanted to talk. They park in front of the old medical examiner's building, where Ted Whitby was killed and exit the car.

*Chapter 28:* Marino thinks about Suz. He liked the way she had looked at him, liked the way she looked with her blonde hair cut into a sexy shoulder-length bob. He doesn't want Scarpetta to know what happened. They walk together through the mud and rubble toward the partially torn down medical examiner's building. He introduces himself and Scarpetta to the construction foreman, Bud Light. The foreman tells them Ted Whitby left behind a wife pregnant with their first baby. The wife is blaming a co-worker named Sam Stiles for the accident. Bud Light is sympathetic to the wife but angry with her for blaming an innocent man. He didn't witness the accident, but he got there in time to watch Ted die before his eyes. Scarpetta asks exactly where Ted died, explaining she needs to take soil samples.

While the foreman leads them to the spot, Marino's mind is back on the events of last night. He went to the FOP lounge with Junius Eise and Browning. Eise hung out with him long after Browning went home and Marino thinks if he hadn't been drinking hard whisky he would've known better than to take Suzanna Paulsson's call. Suz had more whisky at her home and poured him glass after glass while she talked about her ex-husband's treatment of female patients and about the other couples Frank Paulsson had invited into their home. When Marino pressed for information about these other couples, Suz would only say he should ask Frank. This part of the evening he remembers clearly, but he doesn't remember the most important part - what happened after.

Now Marino watches Scarpetta take soil samples from the ground. He wishes desperately that he could go back in time. As Scarpetta chats with the foreman, Marino winces at the brief flashes of memory that invade his mind. "Lips and tongue. Fragments of hands and shut eyes. And his mouth going on her. What he knows for a fact is that he woke up naked in her bed at seven minutes past five this morning." (pg. 236) Upon awakening, Suz locked herself in her bathroom, crying and ordering him to get out of her house. Walking back to the car with Scarpetta, Marino vomits into the



mud. Tears fill his eyes as he turns to Scarpetta. "'What if I raped her, Doc?' he says, so sick he might die. 'What if I did?'" (pg. 237)

*Chapter 29:* In Marino's hotel room, he is stretched out fully dressed on the bed, still in last night's clothes. Scarpetta tells him he needs to eat and places a sensible room service order. Scarpetta tries to imagine Marino as a rapist. She knows he has been stupid with women before, having gotten himself sexually involved with witnesses and victims in the past. His indiscretions have cost him, but he has never been accused of anything as serious as rape. She tells him for the record that she does not believe he raped Suzanna Paulsson and she promises to work through this with him and deal with the truth, whatever it is.

*Chapter 30:* Marino feels like a small child wanting to hide under the covers. He wishes he could go to sleep and wake up to discover that nothing happened. He thinks how many times he wished to have Scarpetta in his hotel room and now here she is, but under the worst of circumstances. For years he has fantasized about her but does not want to reveal his feelings for her. Now as she asks for the details of his night with Suz, Marino does not wish to tell her. He thinks if she sees him in this negative light, it will ruin whatever microscopic chance he might have of being with her one day. But Scarpetta, a skilled interrogator, starts off by asking him for innocuous details he feels comfortable discussing.

She asks what he'd eaten the previous day. He admits to skipping breakfast and lunch and having dinner around seven at the FOP lounge with Eise and Browning, after consuming a couple of beers. Marino, who has been on a low-carb diet, had only protein and salad for dinner. He can tell from her eyes that she wants to lecture him for not eating all day, for drinking on an empty stomach and for not eating any carbohydrates to soak up the alcohol; but Scarpetta knows he is miserable, panicky and hungover and does not complicate his situation with a lecture. She asks exactly how many beers he consumed. He admits to six, but tells her he can handle his alcohol and that six beers for him is like half a beer for her. She finds that statement dubious.

Marino recalls privately how upset he became when Eise and Browning started talking about Scarpetta. Eise made a crude remark about Scarpetta's breasts and the two men told Marino that Scarpetta was planning to move back to Richmond after getting her old job back. Marino became furious that Scarpetta would move without telling him and that's when he switched to whisky. Now, to Scarpetta, he says only that he switched to whisky. The room service arrives. Marino feels too sick to eat, but Scarpetta insists and he realizes his intense hunger when he digs into the oatmeal.

She learns that Suz called him around eight-thirty or nine, by which time he'd already had three bourbons. She does the math: six ounces of alcohol in six beers, plus four to five ounces for the three bourbons. A conservative estimate is that Marino consumed ten ounces of alcohol in a three hour period. After burning off an ounce per hour, he would still have been well past the point of legal intoxication. Nonetheless, he arrived at Suzanna's house safely around ten-thirty p.m.



He balks at further questions, but Scarpetta assures him it will be all right. Marino tells her when he arrived, Suzanna was wearing only an army-style camouflage t-shirt and tall steel-toed black leather military boots. She put her hands in his front pants pockets, the same pants pockets he is still wearing, Scarpetta notices. Suzanna said something to the effect that she wanted Marino since the moment she laid eyes on him. Then Suzanna had retrieved a bottle of bourbon from the kitchen and started pouring. Marino asked about the camouflage and Suz explained that her ex-husband got into playing sex games with her dressed in uniform. Scarpetta tells Marino it is important he tell her about the game, but he again balks at revealing the gory details to the woman he secretly desires. She asks him what time they started the game and he tells her eleven-thirty. He admits Suz told him to chase her.

Scarpetta is interested in why it took an hour from the time she greeted him at the door with a frank sexual embrace until they started the game. Marino says they kissed and talked about the case and then talked about the game. In his mind he recalls protecting himself from Suzanna's touch. She grabbed at him painfully and bit him hard. She kept telling him not to be a sissy, but he dreaded her getting her teeth on more sensitive areas. He tells none of this to Scarpetta. Scarpetta ascertains that Suzanna poured him three drinks before starting the game. He doesn't tell Scarpetta how scared he was, in the dark hallway, counting off five minutes as Suzanna instructed. He had been both excited and scared in a way he'd never felt before. He believes he passed out briefly in the hallway. When he woke up in the dark, his gun was gone and Marino's battle instincts kicked into action. He drunkenly, instinctively, began searching the house for the man who took his gun. He was disoriented, didn't know where he was and was taken completely off guard when something or someone hit him in the darkness. He was aware only of pain and some terrible wet noises. He tells none of this to Scarpetta.

To Scarpetta, Marino only admits that he woke up in Suzanna's bed the next morning, naked. Scarpetta is interested to hear that his clothes and gun were neatly folded on the bed. Marino saw a bloody towel next to the bed. Scared, he tried to get up but couldn't. Scarpetta wonders if Suz drugged him, but unfortunately it's too late to test for drugs in his system. Marino doesn't know whose blood was on the towel. He called out for Suzanna from the bed and she screamed at him from the bathroom to get out of her house, accusing him of raping her. Marino called a cab and went straight to the OCME. Scarpetta questions this story, because she thinks the meeting was called this morning at the last minute. She is enraged with Marcus when Marino tells her both he and Eise knew about the meeting last night.

Scarpetta demands to see Marino's injuries. Although he didn't tell her about the biting or the pain, she has figured out that Suzanna hurt him. He doesn't want to show her his body under these circumstances, but Scarpetta points out that his only other option for medical treatment will involve the police. Even a false accusation of rape is enough to ruin Marino's career. Scarpetta theorizes that Suz set him up for a rape accusation in order to get some leverage in her daughter's case, or attention, or something. Scarpetta intends to find out what Suzanna wants. In the meantime, she looks at the wounds on Marino's chest. Her reaction is extreme sympathy. She tells him the injuries are so bad that he's crazy to think that *he* hurt Suzanna and not the other way around. She insists



on seeing his genitals and reminds him she's a doctor. Marino tells her if she laughs he will hate her forever. Upon seeing the injuries to his genitals, however, Scarpetta does not laugh. "'You poor boy,' she says. 'That crazy bitch,' she says." (pg. 261)

## Chapters 21 - 30 Analysis

By the end of Chapter 30 the author has reached the half-way point of the book and the main characters are thoroughly embroiled in dangerously sticky situations. Patricia Cornwell spent the first ten chapters introducing the characters and setting up the situations. She spent the next ten chapters creating an atmosphere of tension, frustration and paranoia. In Chapters 21 - 30, the traps Cornwell so carefully crafted have all been sprung and things are looking pretty grim for Scarpetta, Marino and Lucy. What really stands out about Patricia Cornwell's writing is the complexity of her characters and of the intricate plot threads she weaves together in *Trace*. For example, many authors would have been content to put Marino's character in jeopardy with a fake rape accusation. Cornwell, however, adds layers to the plot by introducing additional complications like Marino's secret, long-standing crush on Scarpetta. The secret crush lends an extra emotional dynamic to the scene in which Marino must bare his body and soul to Dr. Scarpetta. Still, Cornwell doesn't stop there. She adds another level of emotional confusion with the complicated backstory of Suzanna Paulsson's character. Suzanna is revealed as both victim and victimizer. She plays the same twisted mind games on Marino that her ex-husband used to play on her. Whatever sympathy Scarpetta or Marino had for the victimized woman vanishes as she reveals herself to be complicit in the abuse of her daughter and dangerously manipulative and violent in her treatment of Marino.

The trap sprung on Scarpetta is equally frightening and her career is every bit as much in jeopardy as Marino's. Dr. Marcus has jumped to the conclusion that the puzzling trace evidence linking the Whitby and Paulsson cases must be the result of evidence contamination. He leaps at the opportunity to hang the mix-up on Scarpetta and Fielding. Patricia Cornwell adds depth to this plot twist as well by showing the contradiction between Fielding's reaction and Scarpetta's. While she maintains her composure and righteously reminds Marcus that the case is about Gilly's death, not political machinations, Fielding becomes so unnerved that he cannot even face his friend Scarpetta and hides in his house when she shows up for their appointed dinner date. As everyone around her collapses into vulnerability, Scarpetta must remain strong for her own sake and also find the additional strength to support her friends Marino and Fielding and to persevere in her quest for the truth despite the serious obstacles thrown in her path by Marcus.





# Chapters 31 - 40

## Chapters 31 - 40 Summary

*Chapter 31:* Scarpetta lets her engine run for a moment as she stares through the rain at Suzanna Paulsson's house, thinking about Marino. "What he told her was more than he thinks. What she saw was worse than he knows. He may not believe he told her every detail, but he told her plenty." (pg. 262) She is also angrier than Marino realizes and Mrs. Paulsson is about to get a taste of Scarpetta's anger. She stands in the rain and knocks firmly on the door. The lights are on and Mrs. Paulsson's mini-van is in the drive. She dials the house number on her cell phone and knocks again. She calls two more times, finally speaks to the answering machine and identifies herself. Mrs. Paulsson comes to the door, pretending to be surprised that it's Scarpetta who has been knocking. She invites Scarpetta in, but the moment she's over the threshold, Mrs. Paulsson sees the look on her face and asks Scarpetta to leave. Scarpetta makes a show of looking around the house. When Mrs. Paulsson threatens to call the police, Scarpetta tells her to go ahead, saying she has a story to tell, too.

Scarpetta walks uninvited in Mrs. Paulsson's bedroom. Mrs. Paulsson tells her the police won't believe anything Marino says. Scarpetta asks how often Mrs. Paulsson and Frank played their sexual soldier game when Gilly was around to see it. She asks if the people Mrs. Paulsson says Frank invited over to the house had been invited for group sex. Mrs. Paulsson acts indignant and denies knowing anything about a sex game. Scarpetta pulls back the bedsheets and finds blood. Mrs. Paulsson says Scarpetta should have some compassion for a fellow woman. Scarpetta replies that not a single decent woman on the planet would have compassion for Suzanna's having first mauled Marino then accused him of assault. Scarpetta takes the bedsheets, pillows and quilt off the bed and rolls them together. She tells Mrs. Paulsson that there was no trace of semen in Marino's pants or underwear, so he didn't rape her. Mrs. Paulsson backtracks and says maybe she got carried away with anger because Marino had been unable to perform sexually. Scarpetta says Mrs. Paulsson arranged for him not to be able to perform by plying him with prodigious amounts of bourbon. She tells her Marino has received medical treatment and that his injuries have been photographed and documented.

She tells Mrs. Paulsson to quit lying and Suzanna changes her story a bit. She says she thinks Marino had a good time and she doesn't plan on mentioning their night together to anybody. Scarpetta informs her that she is obviously in good shape and has no injuries; Marino, on the other hand, can scarcely move without great pain. Scarpetta asks her if she knows what happens to people who file false rape accusations. Scarpetta tells her she has enough evidence to prove Suzanna is lying. Mrs. Paulsson tells her not to worry, she won't be filing a rape accusation. She calls Marino a big baby who was no fun at all. Scarpetta asks her why she did this to Marino. When Mrs. Paulsson replies that it's personal, Scarpetta tells her it stopped being personal when she committed a crime. Scarpetta asks how long she and Frank have played these



games and about the rose found in Gilly's room. Mrs. Paulsson claims not to know anything about the rose. Scarpetta asks if she suspects Frank molested or killed Gilly. Mrs. Paulsson says she doesn't believe Frank killed Gilly, but she does think he is somehow involved. Scarpetta asks her to call if she thinks of anyone involved in the sex games who might have hurt Gilly. Scarpetta takes the evidence from the bedroom with her as she leaves.

*Chapter 32:* In the Other Way Lounge, Edgar Allan Pogue finishes a specialty drink called a Bleeding Sunset. The colors in the overpriced cocktail remind him of the orange drinks his mother bought for him as a child. The drinks used to come inside plastic oranges with green straws that looked like orange stems. The colorful packaging had appealed to him as a child and he frequently begged his mother to buy him an orange drink, but inevitably, the taste of the drink did not live up to its packaging and each time Pogue drank one he was disappointed. He feels a similar disappointment now, in the Other Way Lounge, because the cocktail waitresses act friendly but only when a patron flashes cash at them. Pogue doesn't have enough money to command their respect and can barely get their attention to order another Bleeding Sunset. By the time the hostess finally comes over to his table, Pogue is sulky and tells her it's too late.

He exits the lounge and stares across the street at the corner Shell station. The gas station reminds him of desolate childhood vacations; his mother bought him the orange drinks whenever they stopped for gas en route to Vero Beach to visit Pogue's maternal grandmother. He walks into the Shell station and asks the lady at the counter if they still sell plastic orange drinks. The woman recalls the drinks but tells him they haven't been sold in years. Instead, Pogue purchases two empty Big Gulp cups with lids then heads back to his car.

*Chapter 33:* In his hotel room, Marino encourages Scarpetta to discuss the trace evidence mystery with Benton. Scarpetta is loathe to discuss Benton with Marino and it bothers her that Marino is so curious about the two of them. Tonight Marino wears loose white cotton pajamas, which Scarpetta has purchased for him to wear while recuperating. His wounds are covered in dark orange Betadine and he claims his injuries don't hurt much, although Scarpetta doesn't believe him. They are both preoccupied with the trace evidence. Scarpetta doesn't understand how the same dust could be found on Gilly Paulsson's tongue and in Ted Whitby's facial wound. The two cases are unrelated. Scarpetta is confident the evidence was not contaminated, yet neither she nor Marino can come up with a viable theory to explain the evidence.

Marino's eyes betray his lingering fear as he asks Scarpetta if she's sure Suzanna Paulsson won't go to the police with her rape accusations. Scarpetta understands his fear; Suzanna is skilled at acting vulnerable and weak and even though she is the one who assaulted Marino, a jury is unlikely to see it that way. Scarpetta assures Marino that Suzanna Paulsson is too afraid of the evidence Scarpetta carted out of her house to go through with a rape charge. Also, Suzanna would not want to have to go to court and explain the games she plays with men. Scarpetta and Marino both think Suzanna and her ex-husband probably played their games even when Gilly was present. They believe the sex games may have opened the door for a sexual predator to murder Gilly.



Scarpetta suggests they ask Lucy, who is a pilot, to talk to Frank Paulsson. Marino relishes the idea of tough Lucy taking on Frank Paulsson, but he balks when Scarpetta suggests he ask his local police contacts for information on Whitby. He is avoiding the police since the incident with Suzanna, but Scarpetta insists that he must face his fears and get back in the game.

*Chapter 34:* Back in her own hotel room, Scarpetta sips a glass of wine and thinks about Benton. She calls his cell phone; when he answers, he sounds distant. He asks about her case, but Scarpetta is still upset with him for canceling their vacation plans and prohibiting her from calling him, so she doesn't want to get into the details with him. She asks about his day instead, but Benton tells her there is somebody there with him and he cannot talk. In the background, she hears a woman's voice. The cell phone is abruptly disconnected.

*Chapter 35:* Pogue's white car is parked in a shopping plaza. He returns to the vehicle with supplies and sets to work using a pair of rubber gloves, a box of sugar, soda pop, aluminum foil and duct tape. When he is finished, he puts on a black curly wig made from human hair and starts the car. He drives towards the salmon pink mansion in Hollywood, Florida.

*Chapter 36:* Rudy Musil pulls his Hummer into the driveway of Lucy's salmon pink mansion. He sees the flag up on her mailbox, which is strange because Lucy doesn't send or receive any mail from home and is not home today anyway. He opens the mailbox door and, upon seeing the contents, instinctively jumps back ten feet.

*Chapter 37:* Scarpetta drives because Marino's injuries are severe enough to hamper his movements. He claims to be feeling better, but Dr. Scarpetta knows the wounds are bad and that he must be in tremendous pain. Her cell phone rings and Scarpetta is alarmed to see Rudy's number flash on her display. He rarely calls and usually only when he has bad news. Rudy tells her he cannot reach Lucy. Lucy is supposed to be en route to Charleston, South Carolina to interrogate Frank Paulsson at Marino's request. Rudy is unnerved because someone put a bomb in Lucy's mailbox. The bomb is homemade, in a Big Gulp cup which has been colored orange and green with felt markers. Rudy assures Scarpetta that he has safely disposed of the bomb. However, when he tells her he has no plans to involve the police, Scarpetta points out that there could be other bombs placed by the perpetrator. "Please find some way to make sure there aren't other victims or potential victims out there. That's what concerns me if you handle things on your own.' It is her way of saying that if he doesn't intend to call the police, he should at least be responsible enough to do what he can to protect the public." (pp. 296-297)

*Chapter 38:* Rudy is at his training camp office, working the computer for leads on the bomb. He calls an associate, Phil and asks Phil to trace the Cat in the Hat Big Gulp cup which was used to make the bomb. The Cat in the Hat movie came out a year ago, so it may be possible to trace the few stores where the promotional cups are still being sold. Rudy returns to the computer and surfs the internet for stories on Lucy. As a private investigator, she shuns all publicity, or at least she did before she met Henri and got



interested in the Hollywood lifestyle. He is chagrined to find a published interview with Henri in *The Hollywood Reporter* that not only mentions Lucy, but also that her private detective business, The Last Precinct, is headquartered in Hollywood, Florida with a new branch opening in L.A. It also mentions that former FBI agent, Lucy Farinelli, is the niece of the famous Dr. Kay Scarpetta. Angered, Rudy picks up the phone to find out if Lucy knows about this interview, which is a serious breach of company protocol. Lucy insists she did not know, but downplays Rudy's concern that Henri had intentionally sought out Lucy to further her own agenda and that their first meeting had not been coincidental. Rudy suggests she speak to Benton about Henri, but Lucy says she already spoke to Benton and in fact, Benton will be monitoring her conversation with Frank Paulsson.

*Chapter 39:* Scarpetta and Marino are greeted in the lobby of the OCME by the shame-faced security guard, Bruce. Bruce reluctantly tells them that he's been ordered to inform them Dr. Marcus will not see them anymore. Bruce stops himself from speaking ill of Dr. Marcus only because Bruce values his job. Scarpetta reassures Bruce that he is not to blame and informs him they are there to see Junius Eise, not Marcus. Happily, Bruce calls up Eise, who sends the elevator down for his visitors. In the elevator, Marino comments that this must mean Marcus has fired Scarpetta as consultant to the Gilly Paulsson case.

Junius Eise meets them in the corridor outside the elevator and leads them toward his lab. Scarpetta recalls that when she was chief she was forced to keep a certain professional distance between herself and her employees, but now she is free to be friendlier. She asks Junius how he's been and expresses her confidence in his ability to figure out the trace evidence. She also assures him she doesn't believe he mixed up the evidence; Eise is visibly grateful for her support. Scarpetta has brought him the soil samples she took from Ted Whitby's death scene. They spread the evidence out on Eise's work space and the two of them begin to examine it together while Marino heads off to take care of some business. After a few minutes, Eise locates some dust particles similar to the ones found on Whitby's body and Gilly's. Eise also shows Scarpetta the red, white and blue paint particles found mixed in with the bone dust.

Scarpetta examines the dust particles under the scope and realizes they are bone dust and she realizes the old OCME building must have a lot of bone dust in and around it since bodies were frequently cremated there. That explains why Ted Whitby's body showed traces of it, but it does not explain how the bone dust got onto Gilly Paulsson's body. Upon further thought, she cannot explain why they are on Ted Whitby's body either, because the bone dust should have been contained within the Anatomical Division of the old building. There should be no reason for the crematorium dust to have been tracked up into the parking lot. Scarpetta asks what else Eise found in the Gilly Paulsson evidence. The only thing of note is the complete absence of dog hair in any of the linens removed from the Paulsson house. When Eise and Scarpetta have completed their examination, he presents her for the first time with one of his handmade Eise Picks.



*Chapter 40:* Scarpetta puts the puzzling trace evidence out of her mind as she and Marino arrive at the house behind Mrs. Paulsson's. The real estate agent told them he would be there but let them know where the key was in case he was late. Scarpetta realizes the agent has no intention of wasting his time escorting them through the house. They enter with the key, despite her misgivings about the legality of the situation. Marino has learned that the house behind the Paulsson home is owned by a Bernice Towle who lives out of state and refuses to spend money on maintaining the home. Neither the police nor FBI had been interested in the house, but due to its proximity to the crime scene and the fact that the dividing fence can be seen from Gilly's bedroom, Scarpetta and Marino decided to look into it.

Inside, they put on gloves and find that the electricity is on. Scarpetta thinks she smells cigar smoke. Although Bernice Towle has never lived in the house, Scarpetta finds celebrity magazines dating back to a year ago. The magazines include *The Hollywood Reporter*, the name on the mailing label is Mrs. Edith Arnette and they are addressed to this house. She calls the real estate agent to find out who lived here last but gets only his voice mail. A further examination of the house reveals food items indicating that someone has been living here quite recently. The master bedroom has a view of Gilly's bedroom window and Scarpetta finds red hairs and semen stains on the sheets. She is pretty sure the perpetrator watched from his bed as the Paulsson's played their twisted sex games with Gilly. She finds some more magazines and their labels bear a familiar name: Edgar Allan Pogue. The magazine labels are addressed to the Anatomical Division at the former OCME building. Scarpetta remembers the shy young man who had retired on disability; she hadn't given him a thought since he left her employ some years ago. Marino calls up Browning and arranges for a search warrant to make their search official.

## Chapters 31 - 40 Analysis

This section constitutes a major turning point in the plot. At the end of Chapter 40, Scarpetta and Marino have discovered the identity of their killer. The reader has been aware of Edgar Allan Pogue from early on in the book. Cornwell introduces his character in Chapter 2 and makes it clear that he is a murderous psychopath. However the killer has thus far only been connected to Lucy's case. Lucy's home and Ferrari were both marked with crudely drawn pictures of a hairy eyeball, which the author revealed in Chapter 2 as Pogue's personal totem symbol. Thus the only surprise revelation in Chapter 40 is the connection between Pogue and Gilly Paulsson's death. This revelation is hardly a surprise to the reader, however, since the author has already broadly hinted that Pogue is the man whom both Lucy and Scarpetta seek. The similarities between the wounds to Gilly and the wounds to Henri are notable and unique and were revealed to the reader early in the book. Thus the only suspense for the reader is whether and how soon Scarpetta and Lucy will make the connection between their cases.

It is unusual for a crime mystery writer to reveal so much information so soon; it unfortunately results in a lack of dramatic suspense for the reader. Patricia Cornwell has



missed out on some terrific opportunities to confound her audience in an otherwise carefully crafted mystery story. This section of chapters reveals that Dr. Marcus has a strange and emotionally crippling fear of garbage collectors as well as an obsessive hatred for Dr. Scarpetta. The strange scene in which he inquires about the neighbor's car, which reminds Marcus of his mother's car, parallels Edgar Allan Pogue's childhood memories. Had the reader not already been aware that Pogue is the killer in both cases, this information about Dr. Marcus would have made him seem a likely suspect in Gilly Paulsson's murder. At the very least, his psychological oddities could have served as a red herring to keep the reader in suspense until later in the novel. Instead, his psychological problems serve only as an interesting distraction from the main events of the plot.



# Chapters 41 - 50

## Chapters 41 - 50 Summary

*Chapter 41:* Pogue drives by the salmon pink mansion and is disappointed not to see any police cars or crime scene tape. He thinks his bomb has been foiled but needs to see for himself. He parks a short distance away and walks casually towards the mail box. He passes Kate's house on his way to Lucy's and thinks of Kate's immoral behavior. He has watched her stand naked before her windows, putting on a show for the ships in the harbor. He hates women like Kate, whom he imagines would run screaming if any man tried to take her up on her apparent offer. The thought of her teasing increases the frustration he feels when he finds Lucy's mail box empty. He has been feeling frustrated since last September when he learned the old OCME building was being torn down. He had to hand carry boxes and boxes of dead people's ashes out of the old Anatomical Division, through the parking lot and into his car and then he had to find a new home for them. Pogue returns to his car and heads to the Other Way Lounge.

*Chapter 42:* In the Arnette house, Detective Browning questions Scarpetta about Pogue, but she has little recall of the quiet man who kept to himself. She describes him to the best of her ability as a short, thin man with red hair who worked for her nearly ten years ago. She remembers that Pogue retired on disability after being diagnosed with a lung condition caused by exposure to formaldehyde. She had handled the disability case and she tells Browning that the lung scarring caused by his condition was permanent and would cause Pogue respiratory problems such as asthma. Browning asks if he might take prescription drugs for the asthma and Scarpetta tells him Pogue would likely take prescription steroids, but then again, he might simply treat himself with over the counter products. She suggests if Pogue has been taking steroids for years he may have gained a lot of weight.

Scarpetta excuses herself to answer her cell phone. Rudy is on the line to inform her that the prints in the Gilly Paulsson case match the prints in the case he and Lucy have been working. The prints on the bomb and in the bedroom match the prints lifted from the Paulsson crime scene. Rudy explains that Lucy hadn't wanted Scarpetta to know about their current case, but now he's worried about her because he still can't reach Lucy on her cell phone. Rudy describes the position in which the victim was found and says Benton reported bruising on the hands and back just like Gilly's bruises. Scarpetta is furious that even Benton knows about Lucy's case, but no one bothered to clue her in. Scarpetta gives Rudy Edgar Allan Pogue's name and suggests he check out pharmacy databases for steroid prescriptions.

She hangs up and returns her attention to Browning and Marino. Scarpetta theorizes that Pogue watched through his bedroom window as Gilly was molested during her parent's sex games. "Seeing someone victimized can make someone want to victimize that person again. Watching sexual violence through a window could be very



provocative to someone who is marginal..." (pg. 334) Browning inquires about the sex games and Marino hurriedly changes the subject. Scarpetta informs Browning that Rudy has reason to believe Pogue is now in Florida. Marino leads her outside to show Scarpetta the boxes of dead people's remains stored in the shed. Scarpetta informs the police that the ashy boxes are called "cremains," and are probably very old. She theorizes that Pogue may have stockpiled cremains simply out of a fascination with death; she doubts he killed the many people stored in the shed as the bone dust appears old.

*Chapter 43:* As Scarpetta leaves the Arnette house, she thinks of what Browning told her, that Pogue has no vehicle registered in his name. Mainly, however, she thinks about what Rudy told her, that Lucy's case involves a personal situation. Scarpetta partially blames herself for Lucy's failures in her personal relationships. Guiltily, she dials Lucy's number, but gets no answer. Marino emerges from the Arnette house and joins her. He tells her that the real estate agent returned their call and informed Marino that Bernice Towle is Mrs. Arnette's surviving daughter. According to Mrs. Towle, the house has been empty since her mother's death several years ago. Mrs. Arnette left an odd clause in her will stipulating that the house be sold only for an unreasonably large sum. Mrs. Towle has therefore been stuck with the house and the high price tag explains the realtor's lack of interest in showing Scarpetta and Marino the house. As they pull away from the house, Scarpetta muses that someone must have seen Pogue while he was living in the house. Marino suggests they stop by the Paulsson home and question Suzanna about her neighbor.

Despite the late hour, Scarpetta and Marino knock on Mrs. Paulsson's door. Scarpetta enters and asks about the man who has been living in the house beyond her backyard fence. Marino walks in behind her and Suzanna screams at Scarpetta to make him leave. Scarpetta ignores her request and repeats the question. Suzanna denies having seen a man living in the house, claiming it has been empty since old Mrs. Arnette died. Marino informs her that the man's prints were found in Gilly's bedroom and Suzanna bursts into tears. Marino suggests that for once in her life she tell the truth, for Gilly's sake. Finally, Mrs. Paulsson admits to having seen a man out by the fence on one occasion. She says he had been petting Sweetie through the fence. When Scarpetta presses for more information, Suzanna asks Marino to tell Scarpetta to leave. Scarpetta informs Mrs. Paulsson that her lab found not a single trace of dog hair, which proves that there never was a dog in the house. As if she doesn't hear this, Suzanna continues to talk about Sweetie. She tells them that Gilly started opening her window because of Sweetie and that's why her window lock was broken.

*Chapter 44:* At ten a.m., Lucy paces the waiting room in Dr. Paulsson's office. She has left her FAA form uncompleted and the helicopter pilot who shares the waiting room with her warns her that Dr. Paulsson will be upset if she has not completed the form by the time she's called. Paulsson's office is in his home and the only other person present is the older woman who let Lucy in when she knocked at the door. She talks helicopters with the handsome, flirtatious pilot. Lucy, who is indeed a pilot, is pretending to be an employee of a rich man who owns an impressively expensive helicopter. When the older woman comes to lead the pilot in to see the doctor, Lucy takes advantage of her





momentary solitude to wipe her prints off every surface she's touched and to plant surveillance bugs throughout the downstairs of the house.

*Chapter 45:* Benton waits anxiously in the office of his Aspen townhouse for Lucy to activate the hidden video camera she wears on her clothing, disguised as a pen. Lucy had arranged the last minute appointment with Dr. Paulsson by pretending that her pilot's medical certification was due to expire in two days. The woman at Paulsson's office had made it clear that he was doing her a big favor by squeezing her into his schedule. As Benton waits on Lucy, he thinks bitterly about Henri. "Henri Walden is a sociopath, a narcissist, a stalker. She is a waste of his time." (pg. 352) He is angry at Lucy for letting Henri invade her life and use her and he is even angrier with himself for sacrificing his much-needed vacation time with Scarpetta in order to counsel Henri. He pushes Henri out of his mind and speaks into his transmitter, asking Lucy if she is ready. In response, his monitor flickers to life with an image of Paulsson's office door.

Dr. Paulsson greets Lucy sternly. Lucy makes herself sound nervous and unsure as she apologizes for messing up her FAA form. Dr. Paulsson asks Lucy about her personal life, insisting she share her personal problems with him. Lucy tells him her boyfriend dumped her and the stress of the break-up caused her to neglect renewing her medical certificate until the last moment. Dr. Paulsson capitalizes on this admission by reminding Lucy what a huge favor he's doing her and making it clear that she is in his debt and under his control. As he wraps the blood pressure cuff around her arm, he comments on her build and asks if she works out. Dr. Paulsson brushes a hand across Lucy's breast and Lucy responds to his question in a shaky voice. Miles away in Aspen, Benton reacts with alarm to Dr. Paulsson's transgression.

*Chapter 46:* Dr. Paulsson notes that Lucy's blood pressure is a bit high and asks if she is nervous. She admits that doctors make her nervous. She wills herself into a state of anxiety as he checks her lymph nodes and pulse. While he palpates her lymph nodes, he presses his erection against her knees. She suddenly excuses herself to the ladies room where she removes the receiver from her ear to avoid detection. She will no longer be able to hear Benton's voice. When she returns to the exam room, Paulsson frightens her with the intimation that he has found a problem with her lymph nodes. At least, thinks Lucy, he believes her to be frightened. Actually, she is enraged. Paulsson tells her to unzip her flight suit and remove her sports bra. Lucy protests that she's never before been asked to remove the bra, but he insists. She pulls down the flight suit at a careful angle so that the pen with the hidden camera can continue to transmit. Paulsson's demeanor is brusque and businesslike even as he runs his hands all over Lucy's upper body lasciviously.

Lucy has had enough. She pulls up her flight suit and orders Dr. Paulsson to sit down. She shows him the hidden camera. "As is typical of every bully she's ever met, he looks scared." (pg. 361) When he asks who she is, she tells him she's his destiny. Lucy demands to know if Paulsson did this sort of thing with his daughter Gilly. She interrogates him about the rose found in his daughter's room and about the soldier sex games he played with Suzanna. He is clueless about the rose and refuses to discuss intimate details between him and his ex-wife. Lucy asks him about their neighbor to the



rear, Edgar Allan Pogue. Paulsson tells her his neighbor was a Mrs. Arnette, who had been a patient of his. Mrs. Arnette had died alone at home of cancer. Paulsson says he feels sorry for the medical students who had to view her "withered, ugly old body." (pg. 366) Lucy changes tactics and asks about the dog, Sweetie. Paulsson tells her they never had a dog, but that Suz called him Sweetie and he in turn called Gilly Sweetie.

Paulsson's had enough of the questioning. He stands and tries to bully Lucy, demanding she turn over the pen camera. He believes she has come on behalf of other female patients he's molested in the past and that she just wants money. Lucy turns off the visuals on the camera, leaving the audio running as Paulsson approaches her threateningly. He rushes towards her, on the attack, but Lucy brings him down with a swift fist and a kick to the legs. She pins him to the ground and slams his head against it repeatedly. She calls him a pervert, among other things and as she heads out of his office, she tells him he's finished.

*Chapter 47:* Inside the training camp, five agents armed with Beretta Storm nine-millimeter rifles move in on a small stucco house. Inside the house, Rudy Musil waits calmly, armed with an AR-15 that far outguns the weaponry carried by the agents. Rudy levels his weapon on the windowsill and within five minutes, hits all five agents with rubber bullets. Rudy orders a halt to the exercise and explains to them that their fatal mistake was poor communication. Their losses should have been limited to one. They complain they hadn't been aware they would be shot with rubber bullets, but Rudy informs them that in real life situations they will never have any warning. He dismisses his agents and picks up his ringing cell phone. His contact informs him that Pogue has a prednisone prescription due to expire in a few days and gives Rudy the name of Pogue's doctor, Dr. Stanley Philpott.

*Chapter 48:* In a private air terminal at Aspen, Benton waits for Lucy to disembark from her plane. He argued against her coming insisting it was not the right time for her to see Henri, but she is here anyway. Lucy did not expect him to meet her at the airport and has arranged for a rental car. Benton suggests she pick up her car and meet him up at Maroon Bells, near the snowmobile rental place. Benton tells her he has snow shoes in his car and he suggests they walk and talk. He warns her about the thin air and leaves her to get her rental car.

*Chapter 49:* Darkness has begun to gather in the Rockies and the road Benton and Lucy traverse on foot is beginning to freeze over. He comments that they should have started back earlier. "The two of us are dangerous together. We never know when to quit." (pg. 378) Even the highly athletic Lucy is worn out from the high altitude as they snowshoe their way slowly back toward their cars. Their discussion of Henri has caused them to stay out on the mountain too long and now they must race an oncoming snow storm back to safety. With three miles to go, they continue to discuss Henri. Benton explains his clinical diagnosis of Henri to Lucy. Henri sees Lucy as an object and a victim. Henri is fascinated by Lucy, wishing to possess her, to become her. Benton explains that Pogue had also objectified Lucy, but for a different reason; Pogue wants to hurt Lucy. Lucy questions that she, not Henri, is Pogue's intended victim, but Benton sticks to his guns. Lucy asks if she should fire Henri and Benton tells her that Henri may



have made a decent cop, but her skills are not high level enough for Lucy's line of work. Lucy agrees, but again questions the idea of being Pogue's target. Since Pogue worked for her aunt, it makes more sense to Lucy that he's only after Lucy to get to Scarpetta. Again, Benton insists that Lucy is Pogue's target.

*Chapter 50:* In her hotel room the next morning, Lucy thinks how neatly Benton managed her. First he tired her out on the mountain, then he sent her back to her hotel room to bed, just like a child. She knows his heart is in the right place and she does not wish to damage the tentative progress he's made with Henri, but Lucy cannot stand the unanswered questions anymore. Today she will see Henri and decide for herself what type of person Henri is. She arms herself and dresses carefully. Suddenly, she realizes she's let her cell phone battery die. She realizes Rudy must be frantic. She calls him and apologizes for being out of touch. Rudy tells her that a waitress at the Other Way Lounge also received a bomb from Pogue and was alive but severely burned. He also tells her Pogue has red hair but wears a black curly wig and that he drives a white Buick still registered to the late Mrs. Arnette. He asks her to come back immediately, but suggests she not stay in her home. Lucy tells him she'll never stay there again.

## Chapters 41 - 50 Analysis

The author continues to develop the parallel story lines and in this set of chapters, she finally begins to connect them. A phone call from Rudy reveals that the fingerprints in Lucy's house match the prints in the Paulsson home and Scarpetta is able to tell him the name of the killer. The author makes this connection, however, seemingly out of the blue. The reader was never informed that Rudy was running a cross check of the fingerprints found in the Paulsson case, so the news that he's found a match seems somewhat contrived. It would have been more satisfying if Scarpetta herself, or perhaps Lucy, Benton, or Marino, somehow managed to put the pieces together. Between them all, they had enough information to make the connection, but due to the lack of communication between Scarpetta, Lucy and Benton, they never do. The author's choice to use Rudy, a relatively minor character, to seal the connection between the two cases is uninspired at best.

Patricia Cornwell has focused on developing the cast of oddball characters who inhabit the pages of the novel. Instead of creating suspense and having Scarpetta deduce the connection between the cases, Cornwell's provides a marvelously insightful psychological analysis of her characters. Lucy's meeting with Dr. Frank Paulsson is a well-portrayed bit of psychology. Lucy displays a solid understanding of the sexual predator's mindset when she approaches Dr. Paulsson in a timid manner. The more nervous she becomes, the more appealing a victim she is for Paulsson. Men like Paulsson, according to both Lucy and Scarpetta, look for women who can be cowed by their authority. Paulsson greets his "patient," Lucy, with a stern demeanor. Had she reacted neutrally or confidently to his judgmental manner, he likely would have moved on and picked a different victim. Because Paulsson senses Lucy is frightened, he believes she will be easy prey. This echoes Scarpetta's words from Chapter 42, in which she explains that predators are most tempted by potential victims who have been



victimized in the past. The fear which the previous victimization has caused the victim makes it easier for the next predator to victimize her again. Thus Lucy's case and Scarpetta's case parallel each other in terms of predator-prey dynamics. Although the scene with Dr. Paulsson does not bear directly on either case, it does provide the necessary back story for understanding the motives of two of the other victimizers, Edgar Allan Pogue and Suzanna Paulsson.



# Chapters 51 - 58

## Chapters 51 - 58 Summary

*Chapter 51:* Edgar Allan Pogue sits in his white Buick and tallies up his resentments. He thinks about the red-haired waitress from the Other Way Lounge. He blames the cold he has caught on her and recalls how she kept him waiting the other night when he wanted to order another Bleeding Sunset. She got what she deserved. He thinks about his mother and his financial situation. Between his disability and the money his mother left him, he has enough to get by, but he still hears her voice in his head, nagging him about his finances. She also nags him about smoking a cigar while he's sick, but Pogue ignores her; he intends to smoke regardless. He resents his doctor for running out of flu vaccination. Pogue is sure he would not be sick now if he'd gotten his flu shot and he believes if he had more money or been famous his doctor would have given him the vaccination.

Actually, though, he blames Scarpetta for his flu. If she hadn't abandoned Pogue and left Richmond, they never would have condemned his former office building. If he hadn't been so busy carting all of his precious ashes out of the condemned building, he would not have been late getting in to see the doctor for his flu shot. As far as Pogue is concerned, no one had any right to tear his building down. Since the OCME moved to its new location, Pogue has continued to work in his old Anatomical Division. He still gets his disability pay every two weeks, so as far as he's concerned he is still employed there. Of course the person really to blame for his flu and his disability and all of his problems is Lucy, or the Big Fish, as he calls her.

Pogue recalls the time seventeen-year old Lucy visited the Anatomical Division with her aunt Scarpetta. The spoiled little brat rode a gurney down the hallway, almost hitting Pogue as he pushed an empty fifty gallon drum of formaldehyde. He had to stop abruptly, causing the drum to tip over. A few drops of formaldehyde got into Pogue's lungs, so he blames Lucy for his disability, even though Lucy doesn't know he's alive. Pogue vomited in the bathroom and when Scarpetta knocked on the door to see if he was okay, he told her he was fine. By the time he'd exited the bathroom, everyone was gone and he was left alone with burning lungs.

Pogue thinks about Mrs. Arnette. He met her when she completed the paperwork for donating her organs to science and afterward, he continued to visit her regularly at her home. She complained to him about her lousy family and her lousy doctor, Paulsson. In gratitude for his company, Mrs. Arnette told him he could stay in her house after she died and drive her car. He promised to carry out her wishes about how to dispose of her ashes and in gratitude, she wrote him a check for five hundred dollars. Pogue cashed the check and bought her a rose. He put the rose in a drawer and then smothered her in bed the same way he later killed Gilly Paulsson.



*Chapter 52:* Scarpetta arrives at Dr. Stanley Philpott's offices to speak with him about Edgar Allan Pogue. Philpott flatters Scarpetta by telling her he once heard her speak and had been so inspired he nearly signed up to be a medical examiner. He asks what crime Pogue has committed and when Scarpetta tells him he's wanted for the Gilly Paulsson murder, Philpott is stunned. The doctor tells Scarpetta that he's known Pogue since he was a child and that his mother had been a patient as well. Pogue's father, according to Philpott, was an alcoholic who committed suicide some twenty years ago. Philpott tells her Pogue had a bad case of pulmonary interstitial fibrosis from chronic exposure to embalming fluid. Pogue had lied to his doctor, telling him he worked in a funeral home. Philpott is surprised to learn Pogue worked for Scarpetta in the medical examiner's office. Pogue had told Philpott a gruesome story about how his lungs became damaged while he was embalming a corpse at a funeral home.

Philpott tells Scarpetta that Pogue is severely overweight and does not always take his medication regularly. Philpott asks how Pogue killed Gilly Paulsson. Scarpetta asks him if he's heard of Burke and Hare. In nineteenth century Scotland, these two men killed people and sold their bodies for medical dissection purposes. Their method of killing was the same as Pogue used and is hard to detect. "In forensic pathology, Burking refers to homicide by mechanical asphyxia. Burke's MO, legend has it, was to select someone feeble, usually an old person, a child, someone sick and sit on the chest and cover the nose and mouth." (pg. 403) Scarpetta reminds him that the Paulsson case is confidential and gives him Marino's number in case he hears from Pogue or thinks of any pertinent information. Philpott agrees to let Scarpetta review Pogue's medical file and leaves her alone in his office to read it.

Alone with the file, Scarpetta worries that Pogue will get away with his crimes. Fingerprints aren't enough and Burking is difficult to prove in court. She wonders what else he was up to in the years he worked the Anatomical Division. She feels guilty and responsible for the gruesome conditions in the basement of her old office building and thinks they might have contributed to Pogue's madness. She hadn't been able to fit a grinder into the budget, so the bones that didn't get fully burned in the cremation process were routinely pulverized with baseball bats. She wishes now she had bought a grinder with her own money. She knows she should have paid more attention to the Anatomical Division, but the vats filled with pink bodies were so disturbing she had avoided the place. They were a constant reminder of the dark side of her profession. "She understands Edgar Allan Pogue. She does not feel what he does, but she knows what he feels." (pg. 406) She recalls taking Lucy down there one time and that something happened, but she doesn't remember the details. She calls Marino and tells him to look for Pogue in Florida, where Lucy is.

*Chapter 53:* The construction workers watch Scarpetta approach the condemned OCME building. She asks for the foreman and the workers call a man named Joe. When he arrives, she learns that power to the building was shut off only after construction began in September. For all the years since Scarpetta moved her staff to the new Biotech II building, the power had been on. She explains to the foreman that she found some strange evidence on Mr. Whitby and insists on entering the building. Although the front has been demolished, the back part, where the Anatomical Division



was housed, is still intact. The foreman agrees to let her in but insists on accompanying her.

*Chapter 54:* The foreman, Joe, is uneasy about visiting the spooky basement level. He has not been in there before and Scarpetta tells him he needs to take a look because there are huge vats in the floor that could be a safety hazard if he's unaware of their location. Joe is upset to learn the vats are twenty feet by twenty feet - big enough to lose a tractor in - and nobody had told him. Scarpetta further advises him that the basement poses a biological hazard. Scarpetta's shoes crunch bits of bone dust under her feet as she enters the embalming room. On the wall, she finds a picture of a hairy eye, spray-painted in black. She finds and takes several bottles of spray paint, black, red and blue. She also finds a bag of unsmoked cigars containing a receipt dated the fourteenth of last September.

*Chapter 55:* Marino cases the cigar shop where Pogue bought the cigars Scarpetta found. He thinks of Scarpetta, who at this moment is winging her way to Aspen on a plane. He is overcome with jealousy and anger but buries it deep in his soul. Marino shows the clerk a picture of Pogue. The cigar clerk recognizes him but hesitates to answer Marino's questions. The clerk will only say that his shop does not sell illegal Cuban cigars. When Marino reassures him that he only wants Pogue and is not interested in the legality of cigar sales, the clerk admits that Pogue had been in often asking for Cubans. The clerk refers Marino to a bar called Stripes where he sent Edgar Allan Pogue to obtain illegal Cuban cigars. The clerk mentions that on Pogue's final visit to his store last October, he was carrying a red, white and blue baseball bat.

*Chapter 56:* Lucy and Henri snowshoe their way through the Aspen woods. Henri tells her she should not have come because Henri has had enough of Lucy and her firm and intends to move back to L.A. Lucy suggests they stop to rest. Henri's physical condition has deteriorated since the attack. Lucy thinks Henri seems to have lost something else as well, her sense of purpose. They sit on a log and Lucy presses Henri to reveal her true emotions about the attack. Henri appears not to have any emotions. Lucy tells Henri that Lucy had been the attacker's true target and calls her out for giving an interview to *The Hollywood Reporter*. Henri tells her she doesn't understand Hollywood stalkers and pretends to be a bigger star than she actually is. Henri tells Lucy she ruined her life and cruelly says she's more into men than women anyway. Lucy asks for the details of the assault and Henri admits that she does remember. She saw a fat woman with black curly hair skimming the pool and thought Lucy had hired another pool lady. But the pool lady turned out to be a man who came inside and sat on Henri, trying to smother her. Henri says she didn't tell Benton any of this because she was embarrassed the attacker hadn't wanted her sexually. Henri tells Lucy she's quitting, but Lucy tells her she can't because she's fired.

*Chapter 57:* Edgar Allan Pogue stalks the aisles of a Guns & Pawn Shop. At the counter, Pogue tells the clerk he's heard that the store sells Cuban cigars. Pogue wants to buy six Cohiba cigars and a thirty-eight Smith and Wesson revolver. Something about the clerk seems wrong to Pogue and he thinks about shooting him with the Smith and Wesson revolver, for which he already has ammunition stashed in his pocket. Before he



can act, however, the clerk pulls a gun and points it at Pogue. The clerk greets Edgar Allan by name and introduces himself as Marino.

*Chapter 58:* Benton walks down the path from his townhouse to greet Scarpetta. They kiss and he holds her tightly as they head towards the townhome. Benton compliments her for figuring out the cigar link to Pogue. Scarpetta credits Marino for finding him. Marino had asked around for Cuban cigars at tobacco shops all over Hollywood, Florida until he was finally tipped off to the Gun & Pawn Shop, where he lay in wait for Pogue. Scarpetta and Benton are self-conscious with one another as they enter the townhouse. She tells him she knows about Henri. Scarpetta has learned to be understanding of Benton's often inconvenient case load. On the threshold of the townhouse, their eyes lock and he invites her in with a smoldering look. After all this time, Scarpetta is finally in the mood to take him up on his invitation.

## Chapters 51 - 58 Analysis

For all intents and purposes, the crime was solved in the previous sections when Scarpetta learned the identity of Edgar Allan Pogue. This final section is the denouement in which most of the loose ends are wrapped up and Pogue is actually apprehended. Surprisingly, there is no great climactic scene as in a typical murder mystery. Nevertheless, the lack of a powerful climax suits the tone and pacing of the story since Patricia Cornwell has notably passed up several opportunities to heighten the suspense and mystery along the way. The book is more of a thoughtful mystery than a suspense novel. It is a detailed character sketch that presents plenty of fascinating evidence to puzzle over. The reader is never in doubt as to who the killer is, but the question that always interests Scarpetta in her capacity as a medical examiner is not the who, nor the why, but the how. She determines Modus Operandi and the details of the crime from the evidence presented by the dead. Intrigue is not an issue for her character; all she cares about is unraveling how the crime occurred. This appears to be the same approach author Patricia Cornwell has taken in unraveling the mystery in her novel *Trace*.

However, despite the lack of suspense in *Trace*, Patricia Cornwell's character arcs far outshine the average crime writer's. The first couple of chapters in this final section raise some intriguing questions regarding the importance of personal responsibility. Certainly nothing in the world could have justified Edgar Allan Pogue's actions, but Scarpetta's character is insightful enough to realize that she had a hand in creating his monstrous psyche. The barbaric use of baseball bats and the medieval conditions she allowed in the Anatomical Division cause her great shame in retrospect because she realizes this environment must have contributed to Pogue's psychological problems. Scarpetta witnesses the negative changes a stressful working environment have caused in Dr. Fielding, who by contrast thrived under her style of management and she rightly credits herself for providing such a positive environment. However she realizes she must also accept responsibility for creating a negative environment for Pogue. She does not by any means accept the blame for his crimes, nor should she. She does, however, realize



the impact one human being can have on another and she resolves never to make the same mistakes again.

By contrast, her niece, Lucy, who inadvertently contributed to Pogue's permanent, disabling lung condition, refuses to give any thought to her personal responsibility. Her childish behavior was certainly not the direct cause of Pogue's evil actions, but she might have spared an ounce of sympathy for the injury she caused him. Pogue describes Lucy as a selfish, spoiled brat and indeed her lack of empathy for her fellow human beings proves that on this one count, Pogue's thinking may have been accurate. Perhaps Lucy's own lack of empathy attracted her to the emotionless Henri. Thus nearly everything that occurs to Lucy and Scarpetta in the novel, both positive and negative, is a reflection of their inner characters. Scarpetta's ability to persevere and triumph under the most adverse of circumstances is a testament to her integrity as a human being. With the recurring character of Scarpetta, Patricia Cornwell has created a series of novels showcasing her subtle, yet masterful, grasp of the complexities of human nature.



# Characters

## Dr. Kay Scarpetta

Kay Scarpetta's character has been fleshed out over a period of years by author Patricia Cornwell. The majority of Cornwell's books feature Scarpetta and the success of her character has been largely responsible for the author's success. What is it about Scarpetta that attracts such a large and loyal following of readers? One likely factor seems to be Scarpetta's command of forensic medicine, a scientific art form that fascinates the general public. Television shows, books and movies have popularized the combination of modern technology with old fashioned detective work. Scarpetta's character serves as an instrument for Cornwell to showcase her detailed knowledge of forensics for the entertainment of her readers. Scarpetta is a modern day Sherlock Holmes who guides the reader through the intricate, technical details of fighting crime in the twenty-first century.

Cornwell adds complexity to her cases through Scarpetta's character. Placing a woman in the traditionally male fields of medicine and law enforcement allows Cornwell to imbue the Scarpetta novels with some built-in, underlying tension. Additionally, by making Scarpetta a woman, Cornwell manages to inject a maternal warmth into the offices of the chief medical examiner. Scarpetta is the type of Chief Medical Examiner who spends time with the family members of the deceased, taking care to explain their causes of death in understandable terms. Scarpetta's ability to explain forensic science to a layman also makes her an excellent voice to explain Cornwell's intricate plots.

Finally, Scarpetta's strong idealism draws the reader in. Scarpetta is an advocate for justice in each one of her cases. She is willing to fight her way through a morass of violent crime and backdoor politics to find justice for the victim. Her guts, determination and exemplary skills make her a powerful ally in the pursuit of true justice.

## Frank Marino

Frank Marino is one of the recurring characters in the Scarpetta series. He and Scarpetta have a long history together prior to the opening of the novel, *Trace*. A typical tough-guy policeman, it took Marino some time to accept a woman in the post of Chief Medical Examiner. Over the years he gradually and grudgingly came to respect her talents and her indomitable personality. Eventually Marino became one of her biggest supporters, which he remains to this day.

What Scarpetta doesn't know, but the reader learns about in detail, is that Marino is secretly in love with her. Marino has never revealed his feelings to Scarpetta and given that she is currently involved with Benton Wesley, whom Marino respects, he has no plans to reveal his feelings for her any time soon. Nonetheless, he harbors a small but unquenchable hope in his heart that one day they will get together. The secret of his



heart comes into play when Marino must look to Scarpetta for medical treatment after being sexually assaulted by Suzanna Paulsson. In addition to feeling shamed by the incident with Suzanna, Marino is loathe to reveal such awful sexual details to Scarpetta, thinking she will think less of him as a man. His trust in Scarpetta is well placed, however. She realizes that Marino is the victim of an unstable woman and it is Suzanna, not Marino, who receives Scarpetta's scorn. In large part because of Scarpetta's support for him, Marino is able to recover quickly from his emotional trauma.

Marino's character displays growth in the novel as he takes on more personal responsibility. For years the talented investigator indulged his vices of overeating and drinking too much to cope with the stress of his job. As the novel opens, however, the reader learns that Marino has recently made great strides in dealing with his weight issue. He also struggles with nicotine addiction, having recently quit smoking. Marino is not sure whether he will be able to maintain his improved habits and looks to Scarpetta to enforce his new lifestyle. Scarpetta refuses to take responsibility for Marino's vices, however and her refusal forces him to accept the responsibility for his own choices. By the end of the novel, he decides to limit his drinking and renounces cigarettes permanently, all of his own accord.

Marino is a likeable character, fallible, yet with a deep sense of integrity. In the novel his vulnerabilities are revealed to the reader, which make the tough guy investigator seem more human and easier to like. He is loyal and has demonstrated great personal growth. One can't help but hope that Marino's secret crush on Scarpetta will someday bear fruit.

## Lucy Farinelli

Lucy is Kay Scarpetta's niece. A former FBI agent, she runs her own private investigation practice called The Last Precinct. Those who are familiar with the Scarpetta series have watched Lucy grow from an obstinate, willful ten-year-old into the successful head of a private investigation firm. Those who have not read the previous Scarpetta novels only know as much about Lucy as the author chooses to reveal in *Trace*. *Trace* presents a less than flattering view of the adult Lucy. She is a maverick who flouts the law in her capacity as a P.I. She sees law enforcement as her competition and she has the cocky attitude that she and her firm can run circles around the police. By withholding evidence from the cops, Lucy's firm unnecessarily jeopardizes the life of one of Edgar Allan Pogue's victims and impedes Scarpetta's investigation.

Lucy and her fellow P.I., Rudy Musil, take the law into their own hands to investigate the attack on Henri, Lucy's girlfriend. Lucy doesn't trust Scarpetta with the case details, probably out of fear that Scarpetta will judge her lifestyle. Scarpetta does not seem the judgmental type. It is more likely Lucy who judges herself harshly. Lucy has recently acquired a Hollywood lifestyle, which by its conspicuous nature undermines her firm's policy of keeping a low profile. To Rudy's chagrin, Lucy has opened a satellite office in L.A., has started driving flashy cars, purchased a salmon pink mansion back home in Hollywood, Florida and has acquired Henri as the ultimate status symbol. Henri, a



former actress recently turned police officer, plays the role of "trophy wife" for Lucy. Lucy's actions are consistently careless of others and her new flashy lifestyle, which threatens the safety of every TLP employee, symbolizes Lucy's disregard for others. It is fitting, then, that the psychopathic killer in the novel targets Lucy because, as a teenager, she carelessly caused the accident that forced him into disability retirement. Lucy shows no remorse for any of her actions and displays no character growth.

To her credit, Lucy does have several good qualities. She takes after her aunt in mental toughness and her regimen of physical conditioning makes her a tough adversary for any man. She has willpower as well, demonstrated by the fact that she gave up drinking several years ago when alcohol became a problem in her life. She is fearless when she takes on the villainous Dr. Paulsson and the scene where she beats him up in self defense is satisfyingly brutal. By the end of the novel Lucy decides to discard her Hollywood lifestyle, although she never apologizes or admits she was wrong. Nonetheless, Lucy does love her aunt Scarpetta deeply and it seems likely that the future will bring aunt and niece closer together.

## Edgar Allan Pogue

Like his namesake, Edgar Allan Poe, Pogue is fascinated by death. Nearly a decade ago, Pogue worked in the OCME under Scarpetta in the medieval environs of the Anatomical Division. By the time the OCME moved to the new building in Biotech II, Pogue had already retired on disability and did not make the move with his former colleagues. However, he chose to remain in his subterranean kingdom with the ashes of the dead who had become his only friends. As much as Scarpetta regretted the deplorable conditions in the Anatomical Division, Pogue loved them. He enjoyed breaking up the cremains of the dead with baseball bats and he lovingly keeps his bat in perfect repair, polishing it frequently and applying touch up paint. When the city of Richmond decides to tear down the former OCME, which Pogue now considers "his" building, he becomes enraged. Feeling powerless to stop the destruction of his personal kingdom, Pogue, like many psychopaths, takes his anger and blame out on the world around him.

Pogue takes everything personally and feels the need to revenge himself for every perceived slight against him. When his doctor's office runs out of flu shots, Pogue is personally offended, believing that if he had more money or power the doctor would have given him a flu shot. He is also offended by the slow service at the Other Way Lounge. Because the waitresses only act interested in him when he flashes cash in their direction, Pogue feels the need to punish them for not recognizing and appreciating his greatness. Pogue's main nemesis, however, is Lucy. When Lucy was just a teenager, she behaved recklessly in the Anatomical Division, causing an accident that contributed to Pogue's disabling lung condition. Unable to accept the fact that accidents happen, Pogue spends the next decade planning Lucy's downfall. He calls her the "Big Fish." She is his primary target throughout the novel. When Pogue is ultimately apprehended by Marino, he is living in Hollywood, Florida, near Lucy's home.



## Dr. Joel Marcus

Dr. Joel Marcus is a bit of an enigma. He holds a position at the top of his field as the Chief Medical Examiner of the state of Virginia. The reader has respect for the office he holds because it was once held by the incredibly talented Dr. Scarpetta. Yet one has no reason to respect Marcus himself and like Scarpetta, the reader wonders how a man of such unimpressive talents landed his prestigious position. The only possible explanation is his instinctive gift for dirty politics. When the controversial Gilly Paulsson case lands in his lap, he is inspired to bring in Scarpetta to take the heat for his office's inability to determine a cause of death. Unfortunately for Dr. Marcus, Scarpetta is too well acquainted with the hardball politics of the OCME to be an easy target. The more she holds her own against him, the more determined he becomes to discredit her work.

Marcus' phobic personality is an intriguing diversion for the reader. He has a pathological fear of garbage trucks and garbage collectors. He is moved to panic by the sight of the long black rubber gloves worn by the sanitation engineers. Marcus hides his panic from the world by secreting himself inside his house two mornings a week until the trash truck leaves his neighborhood. He lives in constant fear that someone will discover his phobia and perversely blames Scarpetta for the fact that his phobia has gotten worse since moving to Richmond. Marcus, who is all too aware of his lack of professional skills, despises being compared to the talented Scarpetta. His desire to discredit his predecessor is the catalyst that brings Scarpetta to Virginia to consult on the Paulsson case. Scarpetta holds her own and proves her case despite his efforts to undermine her. Unfortunately, Marcus never receives his comeuppance during the novel. He is, however, left at the end to deal with the loss of his Assistant, Dr. Fielding. Since Fielding was the one who carried Marcus' weight in the OCME, it seems likely that with his absence, Marcus' lack of talent will become apparent to the powers that be.

## Dr. Jack Fielding

Dr. Fielding is the Assistant Chief Medical Officer of the State of Virginia. Fielding had been Scarpetta's assistant as well, when she was CME of Virginia. Scarpetta attributes the decline in Fielding's health to the stressful and unsatisfactory working conditions under her replacement, Dr. Marcus. Initially when Scarpetta sees Fielding again for the first time in several years, she is hostile toward him because he did not stand up for her five years earlier when she was fired from the post of CME. However, she comes to realize as the story progresses that Dr. Fielding simply lacked the strength to stand up to the political machinations of the local government.

Scarpetta's hostility quickly turns to sympathy when she realizes how overworked and overstressed Fielding feels in the OCME. He is simply not cut out to play hardball politics, which is unfortunately a large part of the job in the OCME. Scarpetta sees the decline in Fielding and feels guilty for never calling to check on him or offer moral support after she was fired. When Marcus exerts political pressure on Fielding and tries to blame him for contaminating evidence, Fielding becomes so stressed that he hides in



his home, refusing to open the door to Scarpetta. The Gilly Paulsson case is the final straw for the embattled Fielding and he quits his job, leaving Scarpetta and Marcus to clean up the mess.

## Gilly Paulson

Gilly is a fourteen-year-old girl whose death sets off a huge political controversy in Richmond, Virginia. Dr. Scarpetta is called in to investigate and becomes the only advocate the dead girl has, because everyone else, including her parents, the FBI, the OCME and the governor, all hope to use her death to pursue their own political agendas.

## Suzanna Paulsson

Gilly Paulsson's mother, Suzanna, lies to everyone in the story, including herself. Suzanna is in deep denial about the apparent sexual molestation of her daughter by her husband. Whether Suzanna herself was involved in the molestation is unclear, but it is not unlikely. She may have once been her ex-husband's victim, but ultimately she becomes his cohort in crime by becoming an active participant in his group sex games. Suzanna is both victim and victimizer and initially Scarpetta and Marino are confused whether to treat her with sympathy or suspicion.

Suzanna's denial about Gilly's death impedes the investigation. She invents facts to help her hide the truth from herself. Suzanna tells Marino and Scarpetta about Gilly's dog, Sweetie and although an analysis of the crime scene proves that there has never been a dog in the Paulsson home, Suzanna remains convinced that Sweetie exists. Sweetie the basset hound appears to be a mental projection that Suzanna uses to cover up the truth about her ex-husband and her daughter. When questioned about Sweetie, Frank Paulsson leers and explains that Sweetie is a nickname for himself and for his dead daughter, Gilly. Suzanna's references to Sweetie hiding under the covers in Gilly's bed take on a sinister light once the reader understands that she called her ex-husband Sweetie.

Given the unreliability of her testimony and the natural sympathy one feels for a mother who has lost her child, it takes Scarpetta and Marino some time to figure out whether Suzanna is a victim or victimizer. Eventually the reader learns Suzanna is culpable and not just a victim, when she victimizes Marino of her own accord. Afraid of becoming a target of the investigation, Suzanna tries to gain the upper hand on Marino. She invites him over, plies him with liquor probably spiked with drugs, then commits sexual battery on him when he's helpless. As part of her plan to enlist his help covering up her crimes, the next morning she turns the tables and pretends that he raped her. Scarpetta calls her bluff by telling her Marino's injuries have been documented and pretends to have proof that Suzanna is lying about the rape. Suzanna is too weak-willed to stand up to Scarpetta and quickly drops the rape story, but she continues to maintain the fiction about the dog, Sweetie.



With Suzanna, Patricia Cornwell has created an intriguing character. Suzanna is driven by her personal demons. With an emotionally unstable black widow type character like Suzanna, the reader can never guess what stunt she may pull next. She is like a train wreck that the reader can't look away from and she serves to distract the investigation by keeping Marino and Scarpetta's suspicions centered on her, instead of on the real killer, Edgar Allan Pogue.

## **Dr. Frank Paulsson**

In his capacity as a physician who certifies flight pilots, Dr. Paulsson has been recruited by the office of Homeland Security to inform on any potential terrorists he might encounter. Unfortunately for Homeland Security and for Dr. Paulsson's female patients, he is a villainous, lecherous man who thinks nothing of abusing his status as a trusted physician to molest his unsuspecting female patients. The FBI has gotten wind of some nasty rumors about Paulsson spread by his former patients and decides to use Gilly Paulsson's murder as a means for investigating Paulsson. The FBI's motives are painted as political by Marino, who believes they only care about discrediting Paulsson to damage Homeland Security's reputation. Marino sicks Lucy on Paulsson. Since Lucy is a pilot, she is able to pose as a patient. When Paulsson, mistaking Lucy for easy prey, molests her during her office visit, he is horrified to learn that she has secretly videotaped the whole encounter.

## **Henrietta (Henri) Walden**

Henri is Lucy's girlfriend. In the novel she serves as a mirror for Lucy and the reflection is not a positive one. Henri is a former actress turned police officer whom Lucy recruits from the LAPD to work for her private investigation firm, TLP. After Henri is attacked by Edgar Allan Pogue, Lucy sends her to Benton Wesley for some post-incident stress counseling. Benton diagnoses Henri as a narcissistic sociopath who is incapable of caring for Lucy as a person. Henri sees Lucy as an object that she wishes to possess. Henri wants to be Lucy, to have Lucy's life. Conversely, Lucy herself seems interested in Henri only for what Henri represents: the flashy Hollywood lifestyle. Lucy is more attached to what Henri represents than she is to Henri herself, which is demonstrated by the fact that Lucy does not notice Henri is incapable of emotional attachment. Just like Lucy's flashy Ferraris and salmon pink mansion, Henri is but another trophy, an accessory for Lucy's Hollywood lifestyle.

## **Benton Wesley**

Benton Wesley's character, although highly important to Scarpetta, is for the most part secondary to the plot. He serves as the means for the author to frustrate Scarpetta and create distance between her and Lucy. By agreeing to take on Henri's case as a favor to Lucy, Benton puts himself in the middle of their family squabble. Lucy does not care to discuss her sexuality or her personal mistakes with her aunt. Since Henri represents



both, Lucy begs Benton not to discuss the case with Scarpetta. By agreeing to this provision, Benton inadvertently sides with Lucy against his own girlfriend, temporarily jeopardizing his relationship with Scarpetta.

## **Junius Eise**

Junius Eise is an odd duck and a loner, well suited for his solitary occupation as a forensic lab technician. He has refused promotion after promotion over the years, preferring the company of his microscope and trace evidence to the company of most people, although he gets along well with his co-workers in the lab. Despite his tendency to be a loner, Eise is also an academician with a great deal of professional integrity. His solitude may be a result of social awkwardness rather than an anti-social personality. He sees himself on his best days as a Renaissance man who is appreciated for his artistry and dedication to his scholarly pursuits.

## **Rudy Musil**

Lucy's long time partner at TLP, Rudy runs the training camps to teach and test new recruits trying to make the cut at TLP. He is a valued friend to Lucy and she lives in constant fear that her poor behavior will drive him away. Lucy sees Rudy as indispensable to her work. The author implies a deeper connection between them, but whether it is platonic or romantic remains unresolved. Lucy is apparently a lesbian, but her emotional connection to Rudy is stronger than her connection to her girlfriend, Henri.





## Objects/Places

### The Baseball Bat

The red, white and blue aluminum bat is a relic from Pogue's days of working in the Anatomical Division of the OCME. Unable to afford a bone grinder, Chief Medical Examiner Scarpetta's staff had to use baseball bats to pulverize the pieces of bone that emerged from the crematorium intact. Scarpetta feels guilty over allowing such a barbaric practice in her own office. She feels the barbarism may have contributed to Pogue acquiring a taste for murder. Scarpetta wishes she had purchased a grinder with her own money instead of allowing the bats to be used. The paint chips found in the bone dust evidence come from these baseball bats and ultimately help lead to the capture of Edgar Allan Pogue.

### Biotech II

The newer building which now houses the state of Virginia's chief medical examiner's office (OCME). Scarpetta was still chief medical examiner when they moved into the new offices and helped design many of the features of the administrative and medical office spaces. Now Dr. Joel Marcus inhabits the office that once belonged to Scarpetta.

### FOP Lounge

The Fraternal Order of Police bar in Richmond where Marino hangs out with Eise and his old friends from the Richmond Police Department.

### Guts Man

The anatomical model of a human body found in the conference room of the OCME. Its plastic organs and body parts are removable and its intended use is as a visual aid for explaining to family members how a crime victim was killed. Scarpetta spent a great deal of time consulting with bereaved family members when she was the Chief Medical Examiner. She is chagrined to see that Guts Man has become dusty from lack of use under Dr. Marcus' tenure and assumes this means Marcus doesn't bother to spend much time with the victims' families.

### IAFIS

The FBI's Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System that Lucy hacks into in an attempt to match the latent fingerprints left at the scene by the killer. The database contains more than two billion prints on file, including partial prints, or "latents."



## **The James Center**

The upscale tobacco shop in Richmond where Pogue bought his cigars. It is the James Center receipt Scarpetta finds in the Anatomical Division that puts Marino on the right trail to finding Pogue.

## **LAPD Cap**

A gag gift from Lucy to her employee and long-time family friend, Frank Marino. Although Marino has never worked on the Los Angeles police force, the former cop finds the joke gift to be useful when he's interrogating witnesses unofficially; it allows him to give the impression that he is a police officer without having to make any false claims.

## **Nine North Fourteenth Street**

The address of the old chief medical examiner's office (OCME) where Scarpetta once worked. Edgar Allan Pogue ran the Anatomical Division in the basement of that building. After the OCME moved to the new Biotech II building, Pogue continued to work in the old building secretly, at night, cremating his murder victims. It is here Scarpetta finds the trace evidence she needs to link Pogue to the Gilly Paulsson murder.

## **The OCME**

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of the State of Virginia. When Scarpetta was Chief, the office was hers to run. She ran the OCME when it was located at Nine North Fourteenth Street and later, as funding increased, she moved the OCME to the new Biotech II building, which provided a better working environment for her staff.

## **The Other Way Lounge**

The girly bar where Edgar Allan Pogue goes to drink Bleeding Sunsets in the company of the paid female hostesses. Pogue has no real friends and resents the fact that he has to pay the women of the Other Way Lounge to act friendly toward him. He takes out his resentment against one of the waitresses by planting a homemade bomb for her to find.

## **The Wig**

Edgar Allan Pogue's black wig, made from dyed human hair, confuses the investigators in the case. The fact that it is real human hair makes the investigators believe it is the perpetrator's real hair and the black dye interferes with their ability to get a DNA match.



# Themes

## Rape Psychology

Patricia Cornwell provides an interesting twist to her presentation of rape psychology by making the rape victim a man. Frank Marino is not just an average Joe. He is a policeman, a man's man and an alpha male in every respect. By placing him in a situation in which he is taken advantage of and sexually abused, author Cornwell is able to show that the psychological effects of sexual assault are more than mere feminine hysteria. Frank Marino displays all of the symptoms of a typical rape victim and the fact that he is a strong man casts these symptoms in a particularly powerful light. Initially he wishes to deny his experience. He feels shame at allowing himself to be taken advantage of sexually and initially blames himself for the encounter. He allows his abuser, Suzanna Paulsson, to manipulate his mindset to the point where he feels that he is the one who abused her. Marino's experience of guilt, remorse and shame conveys quite poignantly the experience of a rape victim.

To further complicate matters for Marino, he must cover up the incident in order to avoid being permanently tainted by the scandal. This role reversal is a brilliant means of portraying the ordeal of rape because it shows how vulnerable the experience can make even the strongest of human beings and it reveals the flaws in society's common preconceptions about rape victims. Justice has not progressed very far from the days when female rape victims were scorned for bringing the rape on themselves and Marino's fears of having the incident brought to light are justifiable given society's prejudicial scrutiny of a rape victim's sexual history. Cornwell adds an uplifting ending to Marino's story as she shows him gradually regain his confidence and accept that Suzanna Paulsson is the one to blame for his victimization. Marino's shame becomes tinged with righteous, rightful anger as he begins to accept that Suzanna's actions were incontrovertibly wrong. His personal victory can be seen as a shared victory for every victim who manages to put their experience into perspective and leave their guilt and shame in the past.

## Political Machinations

Politics is at the heart of the events in *Trace*. In the book, the character's politics are not defined by party, platform, or the quest to win votes. There is no idealism or focus on public service. Rather author Patricia Cornwell depicts the Machiavellian side of politics, the machinations, the scheming, the manipulative power plays. In the Gilly Paulsson murder case, everyone has his or her own agenda and poor, dead Gilly is not on anyone's agenda except Scarpetta's. Gilly's father, in his capacity as a doctor who performs medical flight certifications, is also an informant for Homeland Security. Unfortunately his primary agenda relates to satisfying his twisted sexual urges by using the authority of his position as doctor and father to cow his victims into sexual submission. The FBI becomes involved in Gilly's murder with the hopes of exposing Dr.



Paulsson's improprieties and thereby discrediting Homeland Security for relying on such a sleazy informant. The FBI hopes that by discrediting Homeland Security they can win back a portion of their former budget which has been diverted for Homeland Security purposes.

Meanwhile Chief Medical Examiner Joel Marcus has his own agenda. He wishes to discredit Dr. Scarpetta, whom he has come to hate because her stellar reputation as the former CME makes Marcus look weak by comparison. When Marcus realizes that the Gilly Paulsson case is shaping up to be a political hot potato, he calls in Scarpetta to divert any political fallout in her direction. To this end, Marcus impedes her investigation and delays notifying her about crucial evidence and key lab test results in the hopes of making her look incompetent.

Scarpetta is the only one who seems to recall that the goal is to locate Gilly's murderer. She righteously reminds Marcus of this fact when he attempts to ambush her during a meeting with the FBI. Ironically, Scarpetta is not as righteous as she seems. Although she truly believes her only goal is to solve Gilly's murder, in truth Scarpetta has an agenda of her own. In returning to her old turf in Richmond, Scarpetta is intent on shoring up her sullied reputation and proving that the office of the chief medical examiner ran better under her stewardship than Marcus'.

## Personal Responsibility

The concept of personal responsibility is associated with every notable character in *Trace*. Against a political backdrop in which every character is trying to shift responsibility onto another party, Scarpetta is the only consistent voice for personal responsibility. Certainly none of the villains in the story accept personal responsibility. Suzanna Paulsson takes no responsibility for participating in the sex games that allowed her ex-husband to molest their daughter. She takes no responsibility for initiating the game with Marino and wounding him severely. Her ex-husband takes no responsibility for molesting his female patients. Nor does he take any responsibility for victimizing his daughter, thus making her more attractive to her killer.

Edgar Allan Pogue takes the least amount of personal responsibility of all the characters. Most chapters with Pogue center on him blaming everyone else for his problems. Everyone he blamed became a target and it's likely that Dr. Philpott would have been next on his list for denying Edgar a flu shot.

To a lesser degree, Henri Walden takes no responsibility for driving the flashy Ferrari or for giving an interview to *The Hollywood Reporter*, although her actions violated the P.I. firm's policy and attracted the attention of Edgar Allan Pogue.

The story's heroes all struggle with personal responsibility as well, but in the end Lucy, Marino and Scarpetta all come to accept some level of personal responsibility. Lucy makes the weakest showing. In firing Henri, Lucy accepts responsibility for inviting the narcissistic Henri into her life, but it's unclear whether she will apologize to her aunt,



Benton, or Rudy for bringing trouble into their lives. She certainly does not waste a moment of empathy for the disabling lung condition she caused Edgar Allan Pogue. She does, however, announce to Rudy that she's selling her salmon pink mansion, which represents her flashy, careless lifestyle.

Marino learns personal responsibility for his health. A man of integrity, he has never lacked for personal responsibility except when it comes to monitoring his drinking, smoking and eating habits. When Scarpetta refuses to give him doctor's orders about his vices, Marino decides on his own to quit smoking and to tailor his drinking.

When it comes to personal responsibility, Scarpetta goes above and beyond the call of duty. She even accepts responsibility for Lucy's failed relationships, for which she may have a part in; nonetheless Lucy is now old enough to assume that responsibility herself. Scarpetta's compassion and integrity are such, however, that she is willing to look at her role in creating an environment in the Anatomical Division that may have contributed to Pogue's obsession with death.

# Style

## Point of View

[Not having read the book but only the quotes below, I have to say this book has no first person in it. First person would be the narrative told in the "I"-as in "I went to Richmond." The author or narrator uses the third person throughout, but she uses the points of view of the many different characters. Therefore, I think this section need to be rewritten and reanalyzed, which I cannot do since I haven't read the book.]The point of view in *Trace* is a subtle blend of first and third person narrative, designed to create a feeling of detachment in each of the characters. On the surface, the entire book is written in the first person. The point of view shifts from chapter to chapter and sometimes even within chapters when more than one main character is present in a given scene. The author writes from the point of view of Dr. Kay Scarpetta, Frank Marino, Lucy Farinelli, Benton Wesley and the killer, Edgar Allan Pogue. She even gives her readers a brief glimpse into the minds of supporting characters such as Suzanna Paulsson and Junius Eise. Notably absent from this list is the sociopathic Henri Walden. Each of the major and supporting characters takes a turn with the first person narrative except Henri. Perhaps the author chose to leave Henri out of the equation in order to keep the reader guessing about her motives. It is a unique oversight, as even the killer, Pogue, reveals his thoughts and point of view to the reader.

Despite the preponderance of first person narrative, the author subtly injects an invisible third person. Generally when an author employs the first person, the character's thoughts are revealed directly with no filter. However, in *Trace*, the first person narrative is not so direct. Each character's thoughts are filtered through an invisible third person. For example, instead of revealing her character's thoughts using punctuation or italics to indicate to the reader that they are thoughts rather than dialogue, the author makes frequent use of the phrase "she thinks" or "he is thinking." This implies that the characters' thoughts are being revealed by some third party, although otherwise the narrative is in the first person. These subtle interjections serve to create a sense of distance or detachment wholly appropriate to the characters and subject matter. Doctors, investigators and coroners typically develop a sense of detachment from their work. It is psychologically necessary in order to work in the dark environments of death and violence. Cornwell's invisible third person narrator serves to create this detached mood, which in turn heightens the reality of the subject matter.

## Setting

As *Trace* tells two parallel stories, it is primarily set in two cities. The first city is Hollywood, Florida, where Lucy lives and where she has located the headquarters of her detective firm, The Last Precinct. This is not to be confused with Hollywood, California. California is not actually a setting because Lucy doesn't spend any time there during the novel, but former movie star Henri has brought some star-studded Hollywood



flash into Lucy's lifestyle in Florida. Lucy's Hollywood is in South Florida and although Scarpetta doesn't live in Hollywood, she lives not far from Lucy and TLP in South Florida. Marino, who works for Lucy at TLP, also hails from South Florida. As the story begins, however, Scarpetta and Marino have just left their homes in South Florida on a trip to Richmond, Virginia. Richmond is their old stomping ground, where Marino worked on the police force and Scarpetta worked as the chief medical examiner, a high-powered position to which she was appointed by the governor of Virginia. As the capitol of Virginia, Richmond provides an intriguing political backdrop to the events of *Trace*.

Within Richmond, there are two office buildings at the heart of the story. Nine North Fourteenth Street is the location of the original office of the chief medical examiner (OCME) where Scarpetta worked upon first being appointed CME of Virginia. This building is smaller and has less space than the new Biotech II building where Scarpetta moved her staff and the entire OCME. The move resulted from budgetary increases, which afforded Scarpetta luxuries such as space for a library and room for additional coolers to house the bodies in the Anatomical Division. In the old building on Fourteenth Street, the Anatomical Division, where Edgar Allan Pogue worked, was an underground medieval cellar worthy of Pogue's namesake, Edgar Allan Poe. Due to space restrictions, Pogue and the other employees of the Anatomical Division were forced to store bodies in underground vats from which they were removed as needed by a barbaric system of pulleys and chains. Here in this underground house of horrors Pogue chose to remain after Scarpetta and her staff left. He continued his "work" with dead bodies in the abandoned building until the building was finally scheduled to be torn down. Of all the settings in the book, this underground cellar is the most important and lends a creepy mood to the story.

## Language and Meaning

The detailed descriptions of forensic pathology in Patricia Cornwell's novels have been a key to her success. Cornwell challenges the intellect of her readers with technically accurate descriptions of criminal investigations. Her technical language is not only precise and detailed, it is also very accessible to the reader. She does not use technical jargon for its own sake, but as a means of identifying and solving the intricate puzzles she creates with her murder mysteries. She has taken the style of Sherlock Holmes' deduction to a higher level by integrating this deductive process with the microscopic trace evidence compiled by her fictional detectives. While Sherlock Holmes was able to study someone's clothing and deduce their occupation from the pattern of scuff marks on their shoes, Patricia Cornwell's character, Dr. Scarpetta, is able to recreate an entire murder scene based upon the lividity of the corpse and the presence of ciliated respiratory epithelium on the bed linens at the scene. Patricia Cornwell has been celebrated for her knowledge of the minutiae of forensic science and her accuracy is appreciated by forensic scholars, investigators and mystery lovers alike.

Not all of the language in *Trace* is scientifically specialized, however. If it were, it would make for a dense and tiresome read. Fortunately, Cornwell is equally adept at conveying the basic, everyday humanity of her characters. Scarpetta's character is by



turns professionally detached and irritatingly human. She is susceptible to petty jealousies, which come across in her less than charitable thinking and sarcastic tongue. Scarpetta is also warmly human and quick to repent her harsh words and thoughts when her better nature is in charge. Through Scarpetta, Cornwell is able to simultaneously convey technical details while explaining the big picture in layman's terms. As a caring professional, Scarpetta is practiced in the art of giving patient and gentle explanations to family members regarding the cause of death of their loved ones. Scarpetta's ability to speak both technically and in more casual terms is a boon to the victims' families as well as to Patricia Cornwell's readers.

## Structure

*Trace* has two parallel, linear story lines, tied together by a common villain. The major plotline is Dr. Kay Scarpetta's investigation of the death of fourteen-year-old Gilly Paulsson. The secondary plotline centers on Lucy Farinelli's quest to find the stalker who attacked her girlfriend, Henri. The villain in both cases is Edgar Allan Pogue. His story begins in Chapter 2 and continues throughout the book. Although all three stories are interconnected, the two parallel plotlines and the story of Edgar Allan Pogue never quite merge together. The author never places Lucy and Scarpetta in the same location, a plot element made possible by their estrangement. Edgar Allan Pogue's actions obviously affect and in fact drive, both of the parallel plotlines and yet he does not meet Lucy or Scarpetta in person at any time during the novel. He has a history with both women that is recounted in flashback, but Pogue does not interact directly with either one of them.

This is unusual, because ordinarily when a writer creates parallel, interlinked plotlines, there generally comes a point when the characters all meet and the plots intertwine. Instead, Patricia Cornwell separates her characters by location. Both plotlines unfold in separate states and the only communication between the plots or the characters occurs via cell phone. Each of the fifty-eight chapters is devoted to Scarpetta's case, Lucy's case, or Pogue's driving action, but there is not a single chapter that encompasses both Lucy and Scarpetta. Thus these two characters are not only separated by physical location, but by chapter demarcation as well. The unusual result of such plot separation is that the book fails to reach a single, all-encompassing climax. Each story finds its own particular endpoint, like parallel lines crossing the same grid but never meeting.





## Quotes

"She gives him a stare that could nail a sign to a tree and his father had a label for her infamous stare. The hairy eyeball, that was what he called it. Edgar Allan Pogue has never figured out why a stare as scary as his mother's is called a hairy eyeball. Eyeballs do not have hair. He has never seen or heard of one that does and he would know. There isn't much he doesn't know." Chapter 1, pg. 16

"Even on her best days, Henri has to be the center of chaos and the creator of chaos, the star of her own crazy drama and for this reason alone most police and forensic psychologists would conclude that she faked her own attempted murder and staged the crime scene, that the attack never happened. But it did." Chapter 5, pg. 49

"'I told you I don't need you to come,' Marino says grumpily and being grumpy has always been the magic charm that forces people to worry more about him and his moods than about themselves and their moods." Chapter 8, pg. 77

"So you came into my bathroom, Lucy says to the beast. You stood right here on the marble floor and looked at my tub. Maybe you never saw a tub like that. Maybe you wanted to imagine a woman naked in it, relaxing, minding her own business before you murdered her. If that's your fantasy, she says to him, then you're not very original." Chapter 12, pg. 105

"He wants as little to do with the Gilly Paulsson case as possible and Scarpetta now believes he decided long before he contacted her in Florida that he wasn't going to benefit from this fourteen-year-old girl's death, that nothing but trouble was headed his way if he didn't do something to deflect it and what better deflection than calling in his controversial predecessor, Scarpetta the lightning rod?" Chapter 15, pg. 130

"'Yes, ma'am,' Dave replied and he was working the overhead chains and pulleys, hoisting the naked pink body out of a floor vat of pink formalin, a big sturdy iron hook in each of her ears because that was they way they lifted people out of the vats when Edgar Allan Pogue worked there." Chapter 17, pg. 148

"He prides himself that his favorite tool-making trick has been used by master microscopists for hundreds of years. That fact, among others, makes him a purist, a Renaissance man, a lover of science, history, beauty and women. Gripping the short strand of stiff, fine wire with forceps, he watches the grayish metal quickly incandesce bright red and imagines that it is impassioned or enraged." Chapter 22, pg. 177

"They call themselves sanitation engineers now, not garbage collectors, but it doesn't matter what they call themselves or what is politically correct or what anybody calls the big dark men in their big dark clothes and big leather gloves. Dr. Marcus is terrified of garbage collectors and their trucks and his phobia has gotten worse since he moved here four months ago and he will not go out of the house on garbage collection days until the truck and its men have come and gone." Chapter 24, pg. 197



"He liked the way she looked at him. She made him feel big and important and strong and in her eyes he saw that she believed he knew what to do about problems, even though her problems are beyond fixing, no matter who she might look at. She would have to look at God Himself to get her problems fixed and that isn't going to happen because God probably isn't moved in the same way men like Marino are." Chapter 28, pg. 230

"What he told her was more than he thinks. What she saw was worse than he knows. He may not believe he told her every detail, but he told her plenty." Chapter 31, pg. 262

"The flat plates of the lamellae. They look like concentric circles and are the layers of bone like the rings of a tree,' she says, moving the particle a little. 'And the grooves and channels of the canaliculi. That's the holes we're seeing, the haversian canals or canaliculi, where tiny blood vessels run through. You put this under the PolScope and you should see an undulating, wavy fanlike extension. My guess is when you get around to the XRD it's going to come up as calcium phosphate. Bone dust, in other words.'" Chapter 39, pg. 308

"Not one dog hair. Not one hair from a basset hound,' Scarpetta says in the same quiet, firm voice from the higher ground of the fireplace where she stands, looking down at Mrs. Paulsson on the couch. 'Sweetie's gone, all right. Because she never existed. There is no puppy. There never was.'" Chapter 43, pg. 345

"He presses the stethoscope under one breast, then the other, touching her as she sits very still. She is breathing rapidly, her heart racing, registering her anger, not fear, but she knows he thinks she is afraid and she wonders what images Benton is picking up. Subtly, she adjusts the flight suit around her waist, touching the pen camera as Dr. Paulsson touches her and pretends he has no interest in what he is seeing and feeling." Chapter 46, pg. 360

"When she went still, he let go of her hands and gently took his white handkerchief out of her mouth and he sat on top of her when she was all quiet like that, making sure she stayed quiet and didn't breathe while he talked to her the same way he did the girl, the doctor's daughter, the pretty little girl whose father did things in that house. Things Pogue should never have seen." Chapter 51, pg. 397



## Topics for Discussion

Do you suppose Pogue would have become a psychotic killer if Lucy had not caused him permanent injury? Explain your position.

Scarpetta claims that she understands men like Pogue and why they are attracted to the dark side of her profession. Using examples from the text, explain what Scarpetta means by that statement.

Explain how Lucy and Scarpetta's failure to communicate prevented the case from being resolved more quickly.

Why would a man like Eise speak disrespectfully of Scarpetta in the bar with his pals and yet show obvious affection for her in the workplace?

Discuss the symbolism attached to Pogue's drawings of the hairy eyeball.

Why is a "Hollywood lifestyle" so detrimental to a woman in Lucy's position?

Benton mentions that he and Lucy have similar personality traits. In what ways are they alike?