

# **What I Saw and How I Lied Study Guide**

**What I Saw and How I Lied by Judy Blundell**

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## Plot Summary

In the novel "What I Saw and How I Lied" by Judy Blundell, narrator Evie Spooner tells the story of her realization that her parents, whom she had always admired, were not as upstanding and glamorous as she had always thought they were. She also learns how truly unfair the world is, especially to those who are different. Evie's biggest step into adulthood comes when the man who is the focus of Evie's first serious crush is killed in a questionable boating accident which involves her parents. Evie puts her own reputation on the line to keep her parents out of jail but swears to herself afterward to become a better person.

Themes addressed in the novel include the description of the road that Evie travels as she comes to realize what has been happening in her family. As she looks back on the circumstances that have caused her parents to get into trouble, Evie realizes that she must sacrifice herself in order to save her parents. Even after she lies on the witness stand so that her parents aren't charged with murder and sent to jail, Evie still realizes her parents need to be punished. She does out justice by stealing the money that Joe had gotten from the items he stole from the Jews and giving it to Mrs. Grayson so that she can get it back to needy Jews. By giving away this money, Evie also ensures that the family is left living with Joe's mother, a punishment that she believes is fitting for them all.

Another minor theme in the novel is the post-war conditions in America. Evie often mentions that the country seems to be heaving a sigh of relief with its men having returned from overseas and the lean time of war finally finished. The story is set in this sudden luxury and relief after slim times. Despite this atmosphere, however, Evie learns that there are still personal battles to be fought. While Evie believes that the war was fought to make life better for the Jews, she learns that the Jews of America still fight the stigma of segregation.



# Chapters 1 - 3

## Chapters 1 - 3 Summary

In the novel "What I Saw and How I Lied" by Judy Blundell, narrator Evie Spooner tells the story of her realization that her parents, whom she had always admired, were not as upstanding and glamorous as she had always thought they were. She also learns how truly unfair the world is, especially to those who are different. Evie's biggest step into adulthood comes when the man who is the focus of Eive's first serious crush is killed in a questionable boating accident which involves her parents. Evie puts her own reputation on the line to keep her parents out of jail but swears to herself afterward to become a better person.

In Chapter 1, the narrator wakes up when she hears her mother strike a match to light a cigarette. The narrator pretends not to be awake. Her mother pretends not to know that she is awake. It is almost morning and the narrator knows that her mother has been up all night.

They don't eat at the hotel dining room anymore because people know them and have seen their pictures in the paper. The narrator instead takes breakfast in her bike basket to the beach. She remembers watching the surfcasters with Peter. She mentions that she, like Alice in Wonderland, had noticed things happening around her, things that should have clued her into reality. Now she has to stop and face reality and put all the clues together. In order to do so, she must start from the day they left for Florida.

In Chapter 2, it is 1947 and America is recovering after World War II. The narrator's stepfather is selling appliances and making a fortune. Evie is spending the day with her best friend Margie. They are smoking candy cigarettes and wishing they were grown up. They see the boy whom Evie has a crush on walking with a Jewish girl. Margie makes up a lie to tell the boy about an altar boy meeting so he will leave Ruthie Kalman, the Jewish girl. Margie believes the girl has given them a dirty look, so she deliberately steps on the back of Ruthie's shoe, flattening the back. Ruthie continues to walk, trying to fix the shoe as she goes, but is unable to do so. Margie believes they have proven a point to the girl.

In Chapter 3, Evie wants to block out the image of Margie's cruelty to Ruthie. Evie's mother, who is beautiful, sits on the stoop beside Evie. Evie tells her mother she wants to wear lipstick. Her mother encourages her not to want to grow up too fast. Evie's mother had gotten pregnant with her at seventeen. Her real father had left after only six months of marriage. The family lives with Joe's mother, Grandma Glad. Evie's mother and Joe's mother do not get along.



## Chapters 1 - 3 Analysis

Chapter 1 is a short chapter but is full of foreshadowing and hints of what is coming later in the book. At this point, no names are given and the story is unfamiliar, so the introductory chapter seems strange and distant, almost as if one is remembering a dream. The narrator indicates that she plans to start from the beginning of the story and look again at the clues that she had noticed the first time that she went through the story but had not interpreted correctly.

In Chapter 2, Margie is mean to a girl, not just because she is talking to the boy whom Evie has a crush on, but also because she is Jewish. Evie already knows that Margie will make a fuss about the two being together. When Evie draws Margie's attention to the couple, she immediately wishes that she hadn't done so. Evie is less than thrilled by the fact that Margie is pleased by the way that she has treated the Jewish girl. Religion is becoming a theme in this novel as Evie indicates that she and Margie believe more in old wives' tales, than they do in religion. Notice also the images of the Virgin Mary as she seems to say to the group of teens "What gives?" The statue could be motioning to Jeff as he seems to have forgotten his religious duty, Margie as she makes up a lie to get Jeff away from the Jewish girl, or the group in general as they pass judgment on one another in their own ways.

Loyalty becomes a theme in Chapter 3. Evie indicates that loyalty is an important and honored trait in the neighborhood. She knows that Margie was mean to Ruthie out of loyalty to Evie. Regardless, Evie wants to block this image of cruelty out of her mind.

Evie tries to talk to her mother about her desire to grow up and be treated more as an adult. Evie's mother, however, offhandedly tells her daughter not to grow up too fast, that being an adult isn't as glamorous as Evie believes it to be. Notice that when Evie points out that her mother was married when she was seventeen, just two years older than Evie is now, her mother tells her only that Evie does not want to take after her. She doesn't give any details as to what might have happened to her.



# Chapters 4 and 5

## Chapters 4 and 5 Summary

In Chapter 4, when Joe had gone off to war, he had insisted that Evie and her mother move in with his mother. Her mother got a job selling ties at Lord and Taylor. Grandma Glad hounds her when she comes in late.

In the present, Evie runs to the door to meet Joe as soon as his car pulls into the driveway. He doesn't see her in the hallway and curses. She is surprised because it is unlike him. When she turns on the light and he sees her, he turns into the Joe that she knows. He takes her mother into his arms. To Evie, they represent love and glamor. When Grandma Glad tells Joe he's had a call looking for him, he become grouchy again.

As Joe and Beverly try to enjoy a cocktail in the kitchen, the man calls again. Joe talks to him but tells the family the man had the wrong number. He suggests they take a trip to Florida. As soon as it is decided that Grandma Glad will not come, Beverly agrees. Evie notes at the end of the chapter that it doesn't feel like anyone is chasing them.

In Chapter 5, it takes the family four days to drive to Florida. When they finally get to the island, Beverly is angry because all the houses are boarded up. When they finally find a hotel that is open Beverly becomes happier. Beverly and Joe make friends with a swanky couple named Tom and Arlene Grayson, and begin spending time with them. Evie indicates that she is bored until one night everything changes.

## Chapters 4 and 5 Analysis

One of the major things to notice in this section is the way that Joe's attitude changes. Evie is surprised how out of sorts Joe is when he first comes home. He tries to cover his bad mood until his mother mentions to him that he has had a phone call. It is after this man calls back that Joe asks if they want to go to Florida. Evie foreshadows in the last sentence of the fourth chapter that it doesn't feel as if they are being chased. This seems to indicate that Evie realizes later that the family is running away from something to Florida. Also notice that Joe's reaction when Beverly asks him if they are running from the law seems to back up the idea that they may be on the run from something or someone.

Another example of foreshadowing occurs at the end of Chapter 5 when Evie indicates that she was bored until everything changed one night. These hints given by the foreshadowing keep the reader engaged in the novel and interested in moving to the next chapter. This foreshadowing also gives the novel a mysterious tone.



# Chapters 6 and 7

## Chapters 6 and 7 Summary

In Chapter 6, Evie can hear and sees girls arriving for a dance. She goes to her mother's closet and chooses a green dress with violet flowers. She is stuffing a bra with tissue when her mother and Mrs. Grayson walk in on her. They laugh, and at first Evie is hurt. Mrs. Grayson leads the work to fix Evie up. After they are finished, Evie looks in the mirror hoping to see a version of her mother but she does not. Mrs. Grayson tells her that she is beautiful.

In Chapter 7, unfortunately, it is the ugliest boy in the room who notices Evie at the dance. He asks to dance but she refuses, escaping to the pool area. Evie has just taken off one of her high-heeled sandals and thrown it into the pool when she notices a man on the other side of the pool, smoking a cigarette. He walks over to her and Evie realizes he is handsome. He offers to salvage her evening by dancing with her.

## Chapters 6 and 7 Analysis

In this section, it is Mrs. Grayson who encourages Evie's mother to help Evie dress up and attend the party with the high school students. Although Beverly had always tried to keep Evie from growing up too quickly, she gives over to Mrs. Grayson's influence and pushes her daughter into the opportunity that helps to set up the action of the rest of the novel.

Once she arrived at the party, Evie realizes that everyone there knows one another. She holds out hope that someone will ask her to dance, but the longer she stands alone, the more out of place and unwanted she feels. She is horrified when the ugliest boy in the room is the only one to approach her to dance. She notes this is worse than not being asked at all and escapes outside where she meets this strange handsome man who makes her feel beautiful, the way she wanted to feel at the dance, by paying attention to her and dancing with her. This sets Evie up for the crush that she develops on Peter.





# Chapters 8 and 9

## Chapters 8 and 9 Summary

The next morning, Evie is languishing in the memory of her dance in Chapter 8. Peter walks in and introduces himself. He offers to take her to Delray for lunch. She tells him she is only fifteen, believing that he will forget about her, but he asks again. He suggests she go without asking her parents, but her mother comes into the room. Evie introduces the two. He asks Beverly to join them for the trip as well. When Joe joins them, Peter recognizes him and seems to be happy to see him, but Joe doesn't return his friendliness. Peter makes a point of gushing over Beverly and telling her she looks just as Joe described her. He prompts Evie into telling that Joe has three appliance stores. Joe suggests that Beverly and Evie go upstairs while he talks with Pete alone.

In Chapter 9, Evie records what she knows of her and her mother's lives up to the point of the story. Beverly's parents had died when she was fourteen and she had been taken in by her uncle. It was while working in her uncle's store that she had meet Evie's father. Later, Evie's mother had begun dating Joe. He decides to propose when he enlists in the war. He is gone four years, coming home only on furloughs. He spends a year after the war is over, stationed in Salzburg, Austria. When he does return, he brings Evie a gold bracelet as a gift. In two months, he opened his first appliance store.

When he and Beverly get married, there is a photographer from Life magazine to whom he sells the idea that people called Beverly "the dish" while he was referred to as "the spoon," giving the writer the idea for his headline. Although her mother had asked if Evie could be in the picture as well, the editors don't choose a picture that includes Evie. In fact, she isn't even mentioned in the article.

## Chapters 8 and 9 Analysis

There are many subtle hints in this section of the novel that may go unnoticed during the first read. The first is the interaction between Joe and Peter. Peter puts on a show of being a great buddy with Joe and it is obvious that Joe does not return the sentiment. It is learned in Chapter 8 that Peter had been in the Army with Joe. Peter refers to Joe as "Sarge" indicating that Joe may have been a commanding officer in the unit. Peter has already told Evie that he earned only rank as a private, meaning that Joe outranked him. There was also an old Army buddy trying to get in touch with Joe when he decided to take his family to Florida on vacation. This raises the question of whether or not Peter is the old Army buddy who had been calling Joe in New York, causing him to be so upset. Joe is also upset when he asks Beverly and Evie to go upstairs while he talks to Peter. When Evie remembers the episode, she realizes that she didn't notice her stepfather's rude treatment of Peter until she thought back over the incident, after the entire story had played out.



Notice also the way that Peter tries to get Evie to misbehave. She refers to herself several times as a "good girl." When Peter suggests that she go to Delray with him without asking her parents, she realizes that it is a proposition that she had never considered. Evie believes that Peter really likes her, but it could be that he is just playing her in order to get to her father. Also important issue in Chapter 8 is the way that Peter treats Beverly. Although Evie does not recognize it at first, Peter is flirting with her mother. She is flirting back. Peter's act of flirting with Beverly could also be an act against Joe in order to try to get Joe riled up.

Also notice in Chapter 9 the way that Evie notes that she had never wondered who had owned the gold bracelet that her stepfather had given her as gift. It is unusual to think that someone would give a bracelet that had belonged to someone else as a gift, but this comment makes the reader wonder about the background of the bracelet. Finally, it is important to notice that Joe is described as a salesman. He had sold the idea of the dish and the spoon to the magazine journalist just as he sold his appliances at the store. He has also "sold" himself to Evie and her mother. Evie wanted a father so badly and Joe is the sort of man she had always envisioned as her father.

Another growing theme in the novel is the way that Evie does not believe that she fits in with the image of her mother and father. To her they seem perfect and glamorous. Their wedding picture makes the cover of Life magazine. Evie is allowed to go to the wedding, but isn't included in the photo, she doesn't fit the journalist's idea of the glamorous wedding between the Army man and the beautiful woman. Peter is one of the first people who has made her feel as if she is important and glamorous on her own.



# Chapters 10 and 11

## Chapters 10 and 11 Summary

In Chapter 10, the Graysons, along with Evie's family, join Peter on the trip to Delray. Peter wins over Mr. Grayson by complementing him on his hotel in New York. When he learns that Mr. Grayson had been declared unfit for service because of his bad heart, Peter compliments him again by telling him that he believes that the men who had to stay behind and couldn't fight were the ones who had held the country together during the war.

Mr. Grayson mentions that the hotel in which they are staying is for sale. Mrs. Grayson jokingly asks if he plans to buy it. She indicates she believes the idea is crazy. Joe mentions that they should all go out fishing. Finally, Peter suggests a walk and Evie goes with him. He tells her that he doesn't believe that she knows how pretty she is. He tells her that he is giving the advice as an older brother type and that she has a lot to learn about boys. During their conversation, Peter also tells Evie that he needs to stay away from her and that he plans to do so. When it begins to rain, he grabs her hand and the two run back to the restaurant.

In Chapter 11 Evie tries to leave a message for Peter but learns that he has checked out of the hotel. Later that evening, Evie overhears Joe asking her mother "What could happen?" When she goes outside, she overhears the Graysons arguing. Mrs. Grayson is telling Tom she won't go with him. When Mrs. Grayson sees Evie, she pulls her husband further into the darkness. The next morning Evie sees Mrs. Grayson at the pool. Evie runs after Mrs. Grayson's post cards when the wind blows them away. As she does, she gets a glimpse of a letter Mrs. Grayson is writing advising someone to wait about sending money as "it" could blow up.

When Mrs. Grayson takes the letter, she tells Evie she will take her shopping as an early birthday gift. She seems to sense the reason for Evie's hesitation and tells her to never wait for any man. Evie asks Mrs. Grayson if Mr. Grayson really plans to buy the hotel. She doesn't get a definitive answer. When Evie asks if Mrs. Grayson lost anyone in the war she simply says "yes" and gives no details. Mrs. Grayson buys Evie a couple of dresses and a pair of slacks, along with a light blue evening dress. She also suggests that Evie wear her hair differently.

Evie believes that Mrs. Grayson knows about her crush on Peter and confides in her that she is worried she won't see him again. Mrs. Grayson tells her that he will be back at the hotel the following day because he works there. Evie is angry because she realizes that Mrs. Grayson believes she has a crush on Wally. Evie suddenly wonders if Mrs. Grayson had invited her shopping and bought her clothes as a bribe to not mention the letter she saw.



## Chapters 10 and 11 Analysis

In this section of the novel, several things happen. First, Peter emerges as a smooth talking salesperson. He flatters Mr. Grayson and makes him feel better about not having been able to go to war because of his bad heart. He also encourages Mr. Grayson's idea of buying the Palm Beach Hotel in which they are staying. Joe, however, is not as easy to win over. Every comment that Peter directs at Joe, Joe either does not respond to or is grouchy in his response. When Evie offers to go for a walk with Peter, Peter is almost disrespectful to Joe in his reference to him as "Sarge" and his promise to take care of Evie.

The only positive comment that Joe makes during the lunch is to suggest that they all go out on a boat one day. Peter is the only one who seems to not think the idea is a good one. Keep this suggestion in mind as this topic will surface again in the novel.

Also notice that when Peter is talking to Evie, he refers to himself as the "big brother type" but Evie translates his actions as putting the moves on her. He tells her that she is pretty, and flirts with her when she suggests that he needs to teach her about boys. He tells her that he needs to, and plans to, stay away from her.

The next day, Evie notices the adults stay up late talking but doesn't know what they are talking about. She only knows that she later hears her mother and Joe talking about something serious, then sees the Graysons arguing outside the hotel. The following morning, Evie sees Mrs. Grayson again at the pool area. The woman is writing letters and Evie gets a glance at one when the wind blows it off Mrs. Grayson's table. Evie doesn't understand what the letter is referring to, only that Mrs. Grayson is asking someone to hold off wiring them money because something could "blow up in their faces." It is after Evie sees this letter that Mrs. Grayson offers to take her shopping. Evie at first believes that Mrs. Grayson knows about her crush on Peter, but later learns that Mrs. Grayson thinks that Evie's crush is on Wally. Evie wonders if Mrs. Grayson's offer in taking her shopping was to bribe her. She also wonders what the woman's actions have to do with the letter that she saw.



# Chapters 12 and 13

## Chapters 12 and 13 Summary

In Chapter 12, Peter invites Evie to see a movie with him. When Evie approaches her parents, Joe appears to be scowling and tells Beverly that he doesn't like Peter's interest in Evie. Beverly offers to chaperone. At first, Evie sits between Peter and her mother but her mother sends her for food. When she returns her mother and Peter are sitting next to one another.

After the movie, Peter takes them for a soda at the drug store. Evie sees Wally at the drug store and her mother tries to get her to go join him. Evie tries to refuse but her mother continues to push. Evie tries to be civil to Wally but when she senses he is about to offer to take her to see a swamp, she cuts off the conversation by indicating she has to get back to her date.

After they get out of the car, Evie's mom tells them both that she plans to go for a walk to see if she can find and open store. Evie offers to go with her, but her mother tells her that she needs to start homework. Peter tells Evie she is a peach and watches as she walks up the stairs. Meanwhile, Beverly walks off with her scarf fluttering in the wind behind her.

In Chapter 13, Evie asks Joe what Peter was like during the war as they wait for her mother to return. He tells her only that he didn't know Peter well. When Beverly does finally come back, she has an ugly pineapple vase. She tells Evie and Joe she has been shopping. As she changes for dinner, Joe announces that he and Tom are thinking about going in together to buy the hotel. Joe gets frustrated when Beverly seems to be putting up roadblocks to his idea. Because Evie is listening so intently, Beverly distracts her by giving her one of her dresses to put on. Even as she goes into the other room, Evie listens closely to what her parents are saying. Beverly wants to know what Tom will get out of the deal since he is the one who will be funding the purchase. The line "It could all explode in our faces" from Mrs. Grayson's letter comes back to Evie.

When she goes back into her parents' room, Evie notices Joe is sulking, Beverly tries to cheer him up, but it doesn't seem to work. Joe asks about the movie, then warns both Beverly and Evie to stay away from Peter. Evie notes that this would be the first time that she would disobey her father.

## Chapters 12 and 13 Analysis

In this section of the book, an atmosphere of tension begins to develop between Joe and Beverly. Although Evie interprets Joe's expression as a scowl because of the sun, it later appears that he may have really been unhappy, or even angry, about the way that his conversation is going with Beverly. The only part of the conversation that Evie hears is him encouraging Beverly to look at the big picture. It could be that Joe is scowling



because he is trying to sell the hotel deal to Beverly and she is not listening. As she walks off, Beverly tells Joe she is tired of the "hot air" which could refer either to Joe and the deal he is trying to sell her or the actual heat.

Notice also that this is one of the first times that Joe speaks up about his dislike of Peter and the interest that Peter is showing in Evie. Beverly, however, scoffs at his concern and offers to chaperone. When Evie looks back at Joe, his hand is curled into a fist, a sign of anger. The reader must wonder if Joe is angry with Beverly for blowing him off as she has, if he is angry for her not backing him in his concern about Peter's intentions, or if he is angry for another reason. Later, Joe forbids both Beverly and Evie from being around Peter. He tells them that he has experience with the man and knows him to be a sharpster and a chiseler.

One thing that should be noticed in these two chapters is the way that Beverly is suddenly encouraging Evie to be around Peter. Although in the past, she has insisted that her daughter not dress up, appear pretty or attract boys up until this point, Beverly is suddenly not encouraging Joe in his desires to keep Evie away from Peter. By offering to chaperone at the movies, Beverly is actually encouraging Evie in her crush on Peter. Once they are alone with Peter, however, Beverly seems most interested in getting Evie out of the picture. At the movies, for instance, she sends Evie to get food. When Evie returns, her mother has taken the seat next to Peter. Later, at the drug store, Beverly pushes Evie to go and talk to Wally. It appears that Beverly's interest in Peter may be entirely selfish.



# Chapters 14 and 15

## Chapters 14 and 15 Summary

In Chapter 14, Mr. and Mrs. Grayson both complement Evie on her new dress. Although Joe glares at Peter, he sits next to Evie and calls himself her boy. During dinner, Mr. Grayson drops the idea that he and Joe are thinking about buying the hotel together. On the surface, everyone seems happy with the arrangement. After dinner the men go for coffee in the lobby but Mrs. Grayson and Beverly choose to go to their rooms instead. Evie walks around the hotel and sees Peter standing, waiting across the street. She runs to him and they walk to the beach.

In Chapter 15, Peter talks about his experience in the war. When he describes himself as a rich man's only son, Evie stops him to remind him that he told her that he has a brother. He changes the subject when Evie asks when he met Joe. He starts by asking where they live and conversation moves to Joe and Tom's plans to buy the hotel. Peter asks Evie how much Joe is putting into the deal. He wonders what the Graysons will get out of the deal and why they are in Florida in the off-season. Peter kisses Evie, then apologizes. He tells her that he wishes that she were back in Queens at her grandmother's house.

## Chapters 14 and 15 Analysis

Notice in this section that Peter, like Beverly, wonders what the Graysons will get out of the deal and why they are visiting Florida in the off-season. Notice also while Peter and Evie are talking, Peter refers to himself as an only child when he has told Evie at some point that he had a brother. Peter also shows an unusual interest in Joe and Tom's plans to buy the hotel. When Joe is talking about the ease of a partnership, Peter makes a point to mention to him that following through on a promise is also a part of the partnership. It is interesting how much interest that Peter shows in Joe and his business dealings.

Through these chapters, Evie is continuing to try to understand the ways of the grown ups. She notices them laughing at things as they talk, even things that they don't think are funny. She also notices the crease that appears on Mrs. Grayson's forehead whenever she gets concerned. Peter continues to be an obsession for Evie. She projects her feelings onto him, believing that he is really falling in love with her. In reality, he appears to be struggling with an attraction that he knows is not right.





# Chapters 16 and 17

## Chapters 16 and 17 Summary

In Chapter 16, Evie notices that the routines of her family and the Graysons changes. Joe and Tom spend much time together. Mrs. Grayson rides off on her bicycle for hours at a time, and Peter comes by the hotel often to take Beverly and Evie out for rides in his car. One day Beverly tries to keep Evie from swimming in the ocean just after she had eaten. Peter tells her that he has been swimming in the ocean for years and has never been bothered by swimming just after eating. He throws Evie in the ocean, then throws her mother in as well. Evie notices the way her mother laughs and plays with Peter like a teenager.

One day while they are out driving, Peter teaches Evie how to drive. When they stop at a gas station for Cokes, Peter notices that Evie doesn't like the idea that there is a water fountain for white people and one for colored people. He tries to explain to Evie that the entire world is segregated between those who have plenty and those who have nothing. As they discuss the issue of the colored people and breaking the rules, Peter tells Evie that she is good. Beverly overhears the two talking and tells Peter that nothing is good except Evie. They share with him a time when Aunt Vivian had tried to take Evie away from Beverly. Evie says things changed because she went to a church and prayed. After this, Vivian got pregnant and no longer wanted Evie.

Beverly begins taking golf lessons. Evie watches when she drives back to the hotel with her car covered with orange petals. It is at this point that Evie notices things start to turn in her family. Joe is drinking more, he has delayed their return to New York, and Evie is tired of her mother always going along on the drives with Peter. She believes that anything she does in Florida will have no impact on her reputation. Evie suddenly thinks that she realizes that Peter is waiting for Evie to show him that she is ready for more than just a kiss on the lips.

In Chapter 17, Joe takes Evie with him to pick Beverly up from the golf course early. He tells Evie that Tom has made an offer on the hotel that has been accepted. Once they are at the golf course, Evie looks around for her mother's pink blouse. She doesn't see it. She suddenly realizes that her car is not in the parking lot either. Joe has already realized this. They wait until all the golfers have left the parking lot.

Joe makes Evie wait with him until Beverly finally shows up at the hotel. When Joe asks Beverly where she was, she makes up a lie that she went shopping with Mrs. Grayson. Evie notices Mrs. Grayson hesitate. Joe doesn't see this because he is watching Beverly.

That night, Evie is awakened by the sound of her parents arguing. Joe is confronting Beverly, asking her why she was placed on selling ties. He also asks why she thinks her uncle was so nice to her and why her aunt hated her so much. Evie goes to their room





when he hears a crash. She sees her mother picking up the pieces of the pineapple vase. Early that morning, Joe stumbles into Evie's room. He tells Evie that he loves her mother, and that he is all balled up. Before he goes to sleep, he asks Evie where Beverly goes.

## Chapters 16 and 17 Analysis

It is perhaps in this section of the novel that Evie finally begins to realize that something is wrong. Her mother has been telling them that she has been taking golf lessons but when Joe and Evie go to the golf course to pick her up, she is not there. Although Joe doesn't notice it, Evie notices Mrs. Grayson hesitate when Beverly lies and tells Joe that she was with her. It appears that Joe is realizing what a challenge it is to be married to an exceptionally attractive woman. It also appears that Joe has some suspicions that his wife may have been cheating on him in the past, and that she might be cheating on him again. It appears that Joe truly loves Beverly and that he is torn up about what is happening with Beverly. He is heartbroken when he admits to Evie that he loves her mother, but wants to know where she goes.

One major clue that Evie drops in this section of the novel is the orange petals that are always covering her mother's car when she comes back from playing golf. These orange petals will appear later in the novel.

Also in this section of the novel, the writer uses the weather to accentuate the mood when Joe and Evie realize that Beverly has not really been taking golf lessons, but has been using these lessons as a cover from whatever she has really been doing. Rain begins to fall just as Joe and Evie pull up in the parking lot. As Evie realizes that she can't find her mother anywhere, it begins to thunder. This physical storm is symbolic of the storm that is waiting to hit the lives of Evie, Joe, and Beverly.



# Chapters 18 and 19

## Chapters 18 and 19 Summary

In Chapter 18, Mr. Grayson invites everyone to dinner to celebrate the purchase of the hotel. Evie decides that it is time to wear the moonlight dress. Peter admires the dress but Joe and Beverly are angry. They make her go upstairs and change. As Joe yells about Peter, Beverly tells Evie that it has to stop. She is crying. Evie is not.

That night at dinner, Joe suggests again that the group go fishing. He doesn't get much interest. As they get ready to leave, Peter tries to talk to Evie but Joe interrupts them angrily. Peter suggests to Joe that Joe does not believe that he is good enough for Evie. Peter tells Joe quietly that it is Joe who appears to be a dirty rat, not him. It is at this point that Evie realizes that Joe is afraid of Peter. Joe throws a punch at Peter but Peter does not retaliate.

When they get back to the hotel in chapter 19, Evie notices that Wally is acting strangely. Inside, Mr. Forney is waiting when they enter the hotel. Evie notices when he calls the Graysons, he doesn't say "please" as he usually does. Mr. Forney tells the Graysons they are not allowed to stay at that hotel anymore because he has learned they are Jewish.. Joe and Beverly try to comfort them, but they are pushed away.

Back at their room, Joe angrily explains to Beverly that the hotel deal is off because it has been learned that the Graysons are Jewish. He accuses Beverly of not being any help to him. It is at this point that Beverly realizes that Joe had known that Mr. Grayson was Jewish all along. The argument progresses and Beverly voices her suspicions that Joe was using his mother as Beverly's chaperone while he was away at war. Evie gets tired of hearing her parents argue and doesn't understand, so she runs away.

## Chapters 18 and 19 Analysis

The plot of the novel takes a sudden twist when the owner of Le Mirage learns that Mr. and Mrs. Grayson are Jews. At this point in time, West Palm Beach is still segregated, not only between blacks and whites, but also between Jews and Gentiles. Jews are not allowed to stay in the hotels in this area, much less own one. This explains why Tom had invited Joe in on the hotel deal. With Joe's name on the deed, it should not have ever come up that Tom, who had apparently changed his name to one that did not sound Jewish, was a Jew.

Things also come to a head with the relationship between Joe and Peter when Evie wears the moonlight dress. When Joe sees the way that Peter looks at Evie, he is angry. Later, Joe confronts Peter when he tries to talk to Evie. Evie is the only one who sees Joe try to hit Peter. She realizes in their interaction that Joe is afraid of Peter. She also hears Peter tell Joe that it appears to him that it is Joe who is the dirty rat. Although Joe has told both Evie and Beverly that he did not know Peter well, it is made obvious



by the interactions between Joe and Peter that there is some serious history between the two that both men are holding strong feelings and emotions toward each other.

Notice also in this section Evie's distaste for the hate that she sees in the actions of Wally and Mr. Forney toward the Graysons. While they had always been polite and willing to serve the couple in the past, they are suddenly cold and disrespectful when they learn that the Graysons are Jewish. What surprises her most is how eager both Wally and Mr. Forney seem to be in their unkind actions toward the Graysons. Evie is also disturbed by the hate and distrust that she has never seen in the relationship between her parents.



# Chapters 20 and 21

## Chapters 20 and 21 Summary

In Chapter 20, Evie runs in the direction in which she has seen Peter's car driving in the past. She finally finds his car parked in one of the driveways. Peter is sitting in a lounge chair next to an empty pool. Peter hears Evie walk up behind him and says sarcastically without looking behind him that he is surprised that the person has shown consideration by coming to check on him. Peter softens when he sees that it is Evie. She shares her hurt about what has happened to the Graysons. Peter does not seem surprised. Evie asks him to explain to her why the manager was so happy about telling the Graysons to leave.

Evie also begs Peter to tell her what happened between her father and Peter. When Peter tells Evie that she does not know him, she explains to him that she knows that he is not bad, no matter what bad things he might have done. It is at this point that Evie sees herself change in his eyes. He explains to Evie how war turned the men into cheats because they grew used to lifting things from other units when they needed them. Peter indicates that the men, however, had an unwritten understanding that they did not cheat on their buddies.

He goes on to tell Evie that he and Joe had found a warehouse filled with loot the Germans had stolen from the Jews. Joe had been the property officer at that time. He and Peter had become buddies and had decided no one would notice if they stole some of the things. The plan was for Joe to get the stuff, mostly gold, to the United States where he would cash it in. Joe is supposed to split the cash with Peter once he gets out of the Army. Instead, Joe has used all of the cash to buy his appliance stores. He explains how Joe had dodged his calls and also taken off for Florida when Peter started trying to track him down. In Florida, Peter said that Joe had promised him money when the deal goes through with Tom but Peter says that he gets nervous waiting. Evie reasons that if the Graysons had found out what had happened with Joe and Peter, they wouldn't have been so quick to go into business with a man who had stolen from Jews.

Evie thinks about the gold bracelet that Joe had given her. She realizes that it probably once belonged to some Jewish girl. She also thinks about Margie stepping on Ruthie's shoe. Now, Peter says that he has been thinking more and more that they were wrong to take the money, that it is cursed somehow. He now believes that someone has to pay for what he and Joe have done. Like a Catholic priest, Evie tells Peter that she absolves him. She leans over and kisses Peter on the mouth. He wonders that a girl like Evie can make him feel again. He tells Evie that she has what he calls "true north" a compass inside her that shows her the proper way to go. He kisses Evie again, a real kiss.

Suddenly, Evie hears her mother yelling at her and Peter. She tells Evie to get in the car. When Evie defends her love for Peter, her mother throws an ashtray. A piece of it cuts Evie's forehead. When Evie walks to the car and sees the orange petals, she



suddenly realizes what has been happening. On the way back to the hotel, Beverly tells Evie that she won't tell Joe about what has happened. She asks Evie to promise her that it won't happen again. Evie does not promise.

In Chapter 21, Evie tries to sleep on a raft in the pool. She only gets wet. She looks up to see Mrs. Grayson looking down at her. Even though it isn't morning yet, they are packing to leave. Evie mentions that her family didn't know about the restriction at the hotel. Mrs. Grayson tells her that they did know but that Tom had wanted to get away from what he was. When Evie asks why, she explains to her that Tom was of the belief that God should atone to the Jews for what was done to them in the war. She tells Evie about their relatives that were killed in concentration camps in the war. Mrs. Grayson tells Evie that she is glad that Evie saw what happened to them although Evie tells her that it made her sick. Mrs. Grayson gives Evie a letter to give to Joe telling him that Tom is pulling out of the deal.

## Chapters 20 and 21 Analysis

It is in this section of the novel that everything around Evie seems to fall apart. The destruction of Evie's life as she knew it is precipitated by the hotel staff learning that the Graysons are Jews. Evie witnesses the drastic difference in the way that the hotel staff treats Mr. and Mrs. Grayson once they have learned that they are Jews. Evie is stunned by the cruelty with which the Graysons are thrown out of the hotel. She notices that Mr. Forney seems happy to tell the Graysons that they can no longer stay at his hotel.

Already the evening has not gone well as Evie decided to wear the moonlight colored dress. This dress incited Peter's attraction to Evie and fueled Joe's anger toward Peter. Evie's distress about what has happened to the Graysons, along with her parents' hateful fighting stems her to search for Peter in hopes that he can explain to her what is happening. She does find him, he is staying at a house that is still boarded up and has no electricity. Even though Evie notices how strange this is, Peter makes excuses. What is most strange, and is a definite clue to what is happening, is the orange petals that Evie notices falling in the breeze. It is not until after her mother finds her with Peter that Evie realizes what has been going on all along. Although her mother had told her family that she had been taking golf lessons, she had been going to Peter's where her car has been getting covered with orange petals from Peter's driveway.

While she is at Peter's house, Evie learns what has gone on between Peter and her father. Her father has cheated Peter out of his part of the money they got from a bunch of loot they stole from a warehouse in Austria. Peter has been following Joe, hoping to get his part of the money, but has instead learned that Joe put all of the money into his appliance stores. Joe has told Peter that he will give him his part of the money when the deal goes through with the hotel, but Peter has gotten nervous waiting. He tells Evie that although he didn't realize it then, that he now realizes how wrong it was for them to take the things. He now feels that someone has to pay for what they did to the Jews. The things that they stole were all items that had been collected from the Jews before they were taken to concentration camps. Evie realizes the bracelet that her father gave



her was among these items. While Peter has stolen once, and now feels bad about this theft, Joe has stolen twice. He stole the loot from the Jews, then stole Peter's part of the haul. Now, Joe is looking to use a Jewish man, for whom he seems to not have any respect in general, to try to buy a hotel.

One of the things that Evie recognizes in these two chapters is the difference between a person who is intrinsically good and one who is bad. Peter indicates to Evie that he is a bad person. Although Evie does not think that what Peter did in Austria was right, she argues with Peter that he is not a bad person. She tells him that she has recognized the things that he has done have kept others from getting hurt or feeling badly. She has seen this in the way that he danced with her the night of the high school party even though she felt that she looked ridiculous in her party dress. She knows that he did this because he knew she felt badly. Evie has also seen this goodness in Peter because he did not hit Joe in return that evening because he knew Joe was drunk.

Also during this section of the novel Evie begins to realize that her own parents are not as good as she had always thought that they were. Joe has cheated Peter out of money. Her mother has been seeing Peter on the sly. Evie does not promise that she will not see Peter again, a sign that she has still not decided how to handle the new knowledge that she has.



# Chapters 22 and 23

## Chapters 22 and 23 Summary

In Chapter 22, Evie's mother finally tells Evie that she was pregnant with Evie before she and Evie's father were married. Uncle Bill had made Evie's father marry Beverly. She tells Evie that she did love Joe, just not as much as Evie did.

Also in this chapter, Evie decides not to give Joe the letter from Tom because she knows that he will want them to pack up and follow them. She doesn't want that to happen. But Evie has a change in heart when Peter tells Joe that he plans to follow the Graysons to New York since they have old times to talk about. Evie wonders if Peter is giving Joe a veiled threat. It is at this point that Evie realizes that she has to give Joe the letter so that they will follow Peter as well.

At the end of the chapter, Joe tells them they cannot leave without the planned fishing trip. Evie notices that Peter looks unsure about the proposition. The captain of the boat they will rent also does not want them to go out since the weather is forecasted to get bad, but Joe convinces him that they will be all right. Peter adds that he knows how to handle a boat. Although Evie asks them not to go, Peter assures her that they will be fine. As the boat takes off, he calls out to her that they will be back.

In Chapter 23, because she is angry, Evie decides to see what sexual experience she can gain from Wally, the bellhop. They walk down to the ocean. Evie leads Wally on and encourages him. When she pushes him away, he asks what is wrong and grabs her skirt. Her skirt rips and Wally tells her that he didn't mean it. As they walk back to the hotel, Evie starts to cry. Mr. Forney sees Evie's tears, her clothes and Wally's pants, then tells Wally that he needs to see him.

When her parents aren't back by cocktail time, Evie tells Mr. Forney, who calls Wally's father and the Coast Guard. Meanwhile, Evie learns that the hurricane will hit West Palm Beach directly. Evie tries not to think about her parents and Peter together on that one little boat.

## Chapters 22 and 23 Analysis

In this section, Evie holds onto the hope that she can fix things between her parents and also that she can make things work between Peter and herself. Joe, however, has other plans. Even with a storm coming and everyone advising against it, Joe decides that he, Peter and Beverly should go ahead with the fishing trip that he'd been wanting them to take from the first time he'd seen Peter. Now that Evie knows the whole story between Joe and Peter, she wonders if Peter is threatening Joe when he tells him that he plans to go to New York and "catch up" with the Graysons. She wonders if Peter plans to tell the Graysons about the things that he and Joe had stolen from the Jews in Austria and the way that Joe had ripped him off and not held up his part of their deal.



Also on the day of the fishing trip, Evie is left behind, making her feel as if she is being treated like a baby. In rebellion and also because of her desire to see what adult love is really like, Evie leads Wally on to a point that she can stand it no longer. He is angry when she pushes him away. When they arrive back at the hotel, it is obvious to Mr. Forney what has happened between the two. He interprets the situation in the only way that he can as he calls for Wally to join him in his office.





# Chapters 24 and 25

## Chapters 24 and 25 Summary

In Chapter 24, Evie is frantic with worry as she throws a few of her mother's and Joe's things in a suitcase. She rides with Mr. Forney as they evacuate. Mr. Forney tells Evie he has fired Wally because of what happened between the two of them the day before. He says it is because of the hotel's high standards. Evie indicates to him that she knows about the standards because she saw how the Graysons were kicked out of the hotel the previous day because of the high standards.

Evie is alone as the hurricane hits the courthouse. Someone brings Evie a blanket and some soup. The electricity goes out. To comfort herself, Evie concocts a story in her head in which Peter comes to find her after the storm and they become sweethearts. A police officer comes to talk to Evie. He tells her that her parents have still not been found but offers to take her to his house where his wife will feed her.

In Chapter 25, Officer Deary's wife feeds Evie then puts her to work. Evie listens to the people coming in and out and sharing their own hurricane stories until Evie finally remembers to pray for her parents and Peter. A few hours later Evie learns that her parents have been found and that they are alive. He tells her that Peter had been hit in the head with a wrench trying to fix the boat and that a rogue wave had washed him overboard.

## Chapters 24 and 25 Analysis

The storm passes for Evie both figuratively and literally as the hurricane blows itself out and she learns that her parents have been found. Evie appears numb, to not understand what has happened as she is told that Peter is most likely dead. She holds out hope that he was able to swim to shore even though no one will support that hope.



# Chapters 26 and 27

## Chapters 26 and 27 Summary

In Chapter 26, Evie's parents finally arrive at the hotel late that afternoon. Her mother seems to not know where she is, although she hugs Evie, one of the first things that she says is that she needs a bath. She is also angry with Evie for bringing only a cocktail dress for her to wear.

Later that evening, Beverly tries to explain to Evie that Peter was not who either of them had thought that he was. She tells Evie that Peter had been spending time with them only to get back at Joe because he believed Joe owed him money. Beverly believes the whole deal had been a misunderstanding and that Joe didn't really owe Peter anything, but that Peter was blackmailing him anyway. Evie begs her mother to tell her what really happened on the boat, but her mother will tell her only that it was just what they had told her had happened.

Although Joe wants to leave, Officer Deary suggests to him that he would think they would want to stay with Peter still missing. Joe makes arrangements to leave anyway. Just as they are packing up, Officer Deary approaches them to tell them that Peter's body had been found. The police need to ask Beverly and Joe some questions.

In Chapter 27, Evie wonders if what happened to Peter was an accident. When they come back from the police department, Evie's parents tell her that they need to get their stories straight for the police. They try to get her to tell the police that it had been Peter's idea to go out on the boat. When Evie asks if they want her to lie, Joe gets angry and tells her that the cops are trying to pin the cause of Peter's death on him. When she looks at her mother, she sees that her mother is scared of her.

## Chapters 26 and 27 Analysis

The police, as well as Evie, begin to become suspicious of Joe and Beverly was Peter's body is found. Joe and Beverly are questioned about the accident. After the questioning, the two tell Evie that they need to get their stories straight. Joe tries to convince Evie to lie for them. Evie realizes that her parents are scared of her. They know that she tells the story as she knows it, it will make them look even more guilty than they already do.



# Chapters 28 and 29

## Chapters 28 and 29 Summary

In Chapter 28, Evie walks downtown to buy a paper with the story of the questioning into Peter's death. The paper indicates that there were marks on Peter's body that were not consistent with what he would have sustained during the hurricane. It says that his father, a fisherman, was coming to make a positive identification of the body. Evie is stunned to learn that Peter's father was a fisherman.

In the next morning's edition, it is reported that Peter was not loaded, nor had he been to college. He had stolen the blue car from a friend who had reported it stolen. He had broken into a closed mansion without permission. The caretaker had found after the hurricane was over that a window had been forced open and that there were two glasses on a sill, one with dark red lipstick. Since everyone else is wondering what Beverly had been doing with Peter, Evie guesses that she should wonder as well. She learns that Joe is also a suspect. She wonders if he could truly be responsible for Peter's murder. She wonders if her mother had any part in Peter's death.

The next day, the family is surprised to discover that Grandma Glad has come to Florida. She is angry because she has read about what had happened in the paper. She has called a lawyer for information as to what they should do. The lawyer has suggested that they don't answer any more reporters' questions. He has also said that they need to hire a lawyer. She calls what has happened a murder. Evie realizes that her grandmother has come to take over. She tells Joe that she had warned him about marrying Beverly. Beverly snaps at him, asking if she plans to get Joe off the hook and hand her over as the killer.

That night Evie wakes up hearing Joe and her grandmother whispering to one another. Evie does not believe the lies that her grandmother is telling Joe about her mother. That she had been messing around on him, even when he was still overseas during the war. She learns Grandma Glad has brought eight thousand dollars with her, money that Joe had intended to use to build a dream house, to try to bribe the lawyer and maybe even the judge. As Evie thinks back on the conversation, she realizes that her grandmother never asked Joe if he had killed Peter.

In Chapter 29, Grandma Glad hires Mr. Markel, a local man, to be their lawyer. He tells them that the good news is that the coroner has determined that Peter's cause of death was drowning. In that afternoon's edition of the paper, the story includes details of the testimony by the owner of a gift shop who says that Beverly and Peter had come in and bought a pineapple vase together. Evie realizes it was the same day that she and her mother had gone to the movies with Peter. That while she thought it was her first date with Peter, it was actually her mother's. It is at this point that Evie realizes that her mother had been having a fling with Peter. That he loved her, not Evie. It is this pain the Evie believes she cannot stand.



The policeman who had driven Beverly and Joe back to the hotel had also testified, saying that the couple appeared to be concerned more about what they had been through than Peter's death. He says that he'd smelled liquor on the two of them. When the officer repeats what her mother had said when she saw Evie, Evie believes that he makes it sound like her mother didn't care about her. The paper goes on to report that Beverly had been holding her mother-in-law's hand, a clue that leads Evie to believe the whole article is false because her mother would not have held Grandma Glad's hand. Evie wonders how long she can go on believing her parents are innocent, when everybody else does not.

That afternoon Evie is scheduled to talk to Mr. Markel. Before she goes in, Joe tells her that she doesn't have to tell everything that she knows. He instructs her on how to lie. Then he looks her in the eye and tells her that he didn't kill Peter. He tells her that if they stick together, they can all be a family again.

## Chapters 28 and 29 Analysis

Since Evie is not allowed to attend the inquest sessions, she makes her judgements of what happens based on the newspaper reports that she reads. She does not want to believe that her mother and father could be killers, yet she also realizes that the evidence is staking against them. She uses one sentence, the fact that the article indicates that her mother is holding Grandma Glad's hand, which Evie believes would never have happened, to discredit the entire article. Evie does not realize that her mother was probably prompted by her lawyer to act affectionately toward her mother-in-law so that it would strengthen their appearance as a loving family.

Notice also that so far, Evie is the only one in the family who has asked Joe if he was responsible for Peter's death. Evie indicates that when Joe tells her that he didn't kill Peter, he looks her straight in the eye, just as he had instructed her to do when talking to the judge. Could it be that Joe is taking his own advice that he has given to Evie when he told her how to lie? It also comes out in this section of the novel that Peter was not the person whom he had made the Spooners believe that he was. He was not rich, nor did he have friends who lived in Palm Beach. He has stolen a car and broken into a house to make himself seem to fit the story that he has told.



# Chapters 30 and 31

## Chapters 30 and 31 Summary

In Chapter 30, Evie is taken to see the lawyer. He tells her that he wants her to attend the following day's inquest as it will make the family look better. Evie tells the lawyer exactly what her father had told her. Mr. Markel instructs her on how to act and dress at the inquest and how to answer the questions. Evie is lying when she tells Mr. Markel that her mother was not in love with Peter.

During the next day's inquest, Evie gets the feeling that the crowd in the courtroom does not like Joe. When her mother takes the stand, Evie can tell that the crowd is waiting for her to tell her role in the death. Evie wants to know the truth as well, but doesn't want to learn it in a crowded courtroom. It is when Beverly refers to going "below" on the boat as going "downstairs" that the opinion of the court seems to change toward her. She seems too ditzy to have helped kill anyone.

In Chapter 31, Wally testifies after lunch. Wally testifies that one night as he was walking home, he saw Beverly and Peter necking beside a tree. Evie remembers this as the night that her mother had told everyone she was going upstairs because she had a headache. He also testifies that Joe had been asking about what happens to the boats during hurricanes. Wally also testifies how Joe had asked about renting his father's boat and says that he had found a hurricane hole. Evie now believes that those in the courtroom believe that Joe is a murderer and Beverly is a tramp.

## Chapters 30 and 31 Analysis

In this section of the novel, Evie is allowed to attend this portion of the inquest. Because she is in the courtroom, she is able to decide for herself what the atmosphere of the court is. Although Evie indicates that at first it seems the people in the courtroom believe that Beverly is too dumb to have killed anyone, after Wally testifies, she believes that they have changed their minds and now believe that Beverly is a tramp.



# Chapters 32 and 33

## Chapters 32 and 33 Summary

In Chapter 32, the family finally has a chance to fight out in private what has surfaced during the inquest. Beverly tries to pass off her activities with Peter by saying that he had made a pass at her. Grandma Glad continues to try to pick a fight with Beverly until Joe throws her out of the room. Once she is gone, Joe tells them that once they get home, they are never to say Peter's name again. He leaves, slamming the door behind him. Beverly tells Evie they will charge her with accessory with murder and will hang Joe. She asks Evie what she has done. She tries to get Evie to recite their phrase with her but Evie will not do it.

It is on this night that Evie's narrative catches up with the beginning of the book. She is back at the scene where the sound of her mother's match striking against the box has woken her up. Afterward, Evie sits on the beach thinking about what she should do and what she believes about Joe and her mother.

In Chapter 33, Evie puts on one of her mother's new dresses and makes herself up. She goes to the lawyer's office. Evie turns into someone else as she testifies that she was the one that Wally saw with Peter. Evie believes that the only truth she told the judge on that day was that she was in love with Peter. There is one man sitting in the courtroom that makes Evie nervous. She then tells about Peter encouraging them to take out the boat because he could handle it. Evie then testifies that Wally had tried to have sex with her after she had led him on and had gotten fired. She supposes that he had testified against her mother in an attempt to get even. Wally's father cries out that Evie is lying and that she is a whore. The lawyers finally finish questioning Evie. She thinks that they believe her story. It is not until she sees the contempt in the eyes of Peter's father that Evie is able to cry after all that she has said and done.

## Chapters 32 and 33 Analysis

It is in this section of the novel that Evie comes to a decision as to what she must do. She lies on the stand. Evie may not realize this is an offense punishable by jail time. She does, bring the situation to an end so that no one has to do jail time. The only person who seems to bother Evie during this time is Peter's father. He seems to see through the lies that she concocts about his son and can look at Evie only with contempt. He will now not be able to get any closure for his son's death, nor will anyone be held responsible for his untimely death.

The only person besides Peter's father who is hurt by Evie's testimony is Wally. Wally, who had only wanted to be friends with Evie from the beginning and who had made a pass at Evie only after she lead him on, is accused of being a liar. Evie claims on the

stand that Wally testified as he did because he was angry with her because he tried to rape her and got fired because of it.



# Chapters 34 and 35

## Chapters 34 and 35 Summary

In Chapter 34, the headlines in the paper read that Beverly and Joe have been exonerated. They head for home the same day. Evie and her mother look at one another as they walk back into the house that was never really their home. Evie's mother shrugs and Evie wonders if this is what being an adult is all about. Evie watches as her grandmother puts the valise full on money in her closet. Margie is there before Evie even gets unpacked. She suddenly realizes that she doesn't want to be Margie's friend anymore. She tells Margie she doesn't want to talk about it. By the time Evie looks up from hanging a skirt, Margie is gone.

In Chapter 35, Evie strikes up a friendship with Ruthie. Next, she goes to see Mrs. Grayson. As they talk, Mrs. Grayson tells Evie that as she read the papers, she began to realize what had been happening, that Evie had loved Peter. She tells Evie that she is sorry for her loss, the first person who has said this to Evie. Evie is able to cry for the first time. She tells Mrs. Grayson what had happened between Joe and Peter. She explains that she wants to give the left over money, the eight thousand dollars to Mrs. Grayson. She wants Mrs. Grayson to get the money to people who need it. Evie is determined that if Mrs. Grayson does not take the money her family will be doomed. Evie tells Mrs. Grayson that there is nothing that Joe can do to her for getting rid of the money because he owes her too much. Evie compares it to the way that penicillin was first discovered. That through a mess, deliverance can be found.

As Evie walks back home, she realizes that Grandma Glad has realized the money is missing. She knows at that point her grandmother and Joe have realized she was the one who took the money. She realizes that having to continue to live in Grandma Glad's house will be a sort of deserved punishment for her and her mother. As she thinks of Peter, she realizes that she owes him justice for the people he didn't even know. Evie has decided that she will continue to live with Joe and Beverly "for the duration" but that she will never admire them or want to be them again. She vows to tell herself from that day forward she will tell the truth.

## Chapters 34 and 35 Analysis

These chapters are significant because of the punishments that Evie decides to inflict on herself and her family. She gives the money that Joe had intended to build them a house with to Mrs. Grayson so that she can give it to Jews that need the cash. She knows that by giving away this money, her family will not be able to have a house of their own, but she feels this is an adequate punishment. Maybe she has realized that her mother really does have a habit of running around and attracting men, and has decided that it would be best for Grandma Glad to be around to keep an eye on things.





Evie also believes that by giving the money to Mrs. Grayson that she has, in a way, help to exonerate Peter for the guilt that he had begun to feel in stealing the loot from the Jews to begin with. Although there was no way for Evie to try to track down and give the cash back to its rightful owners, she does the second best thing by entrusting it with someone who will get it to Jews who need it.

At the conclusion of the novel, Evie also makes a pact with herself. She decides that she will no longer laugh at things that she doesn't believe are not funny. She has seen the adults doing this during their time in Palm Beach and realizes how shallow they were. She also promises herself that she will always consider Beverly and Joe to be her parents, but will never admire them the way that she did in the past. She no longer wants to be the kind of glamorous that they were. Evie also promises to herself that she will never tell another lie. Although she knows that this will be hard, she believes that she is tough enough to persevere.

Also in this section of the novel it is significant that Evie decides that she no longer wants to be Margie's friend. This symbolizes how deeply Evie feels the desire to change her life and no longer be led down paths that may get her into trouble. She has decided to take control of her life. She does this by putting off Margie as a friend, and instead striking up a friendship with Ruthie, the Jewish girl whom Margie had been mean to in the beginning of the book.



# Characters

## Joe Spooner

Joe Spooner is Evie's step-father and Beverly's second husband. He dates Beverly and becomes engaged to her shortly before the war. When the two are married, they are featured in Life magazine. During the war, Joe meets up with Peter Coleridge in Austria, where the two discover the large stash of items taken from the Jews before the Jews were taken to concentration camps. The two concoct a plan to steal some of these things. It is Joe's job to take the loot to America and trade it in for cash. Once Peter gets out of the service, Joe is supposed to give Peter his half of the cash. Instead, Joe spends all of the money on appliance stores. When Peter comes looking for Joe for his money, Joe takes his family on the trip to Florida in an attempt to avoid Peter. Joe is angry when he discovers that Peter has followed him to Florida and is not flirting with his wife and daughter.

Also while in Florida, Joe makes friends with a Jewish businessman who wants to go into the hotel business with him. The two put in an offer on the hotel in which they are staying. The offer is accepted until it is learned that Mr. Grayson is Jewish, a fact he had hidden from those with whom he was trying to make the deal. Joe had made a second promise to Peter that once the deal went through with the hotel that he would give Peter his money. When this hotel deal falls through, Joe decides that it is time for he and Beverly to take Peter out boating before the three leave Florida. Peter is killed during the trip. Because it becomes apparent during the inquest that Peter and Beverly had been having an affair during their time in Florida, Joe has adequate reason for killing him. Evie alone is aware of the bad deal between Peter and Joe, and the way that Peter had been threatening to tell the Graysons about the way that Joe had gone back on his promise to him in their business deal.

Before the final day of the inquest where Joe and Beverly are exonerated from the crimes, Joe has basically encouraged his step-daughter to lie on the stand for him. He has also told his family that once they get back to Queens, they will never talk about Peter again. Although Peter's death is highly suspicious, it is never told for certain if Joe really did something to cause Peter's death or if he, at the least, did nothing to save Peter's life when he was thrown from the boat.

## Evelyn

Evelyn Spooner is the daughter of Beverly Spooner and the step-daughter of Joe Spooner. She is the narrator of the novel. In the beginning of the novel, Evie admires her mother and wants to grow up to be beautiful, as her mother is. She sees the characteristic of beauty as being most important in life. Evie is growing tired of her mother's intent to keep her looking plain. This comes out one night when she decides to dress herself up and crash a high school party at the Palm Beach hotel at which they



are staying. Arlene and Beverly, however, catch Evie trying to dress herself up and do the work for her. Although Evie believes she will attract a guy that night, the only one who pays attention to her is Wally, the boy who works at the hotel as a bellhop.

Evie leaves the party in frustration. It is at this point that Evie meets Peter. He makes her feel better by asking to dance with her. Evie develops a serious crush on Peter. Her crush is fueled because Peter continues to ask her to go places with him so that he can spend time with her mother, with whom he is having a secret affair. Even though Peter tells Evie what he and Joe had done in Austria, Evie tells Peter that she still believes that he is a good person because he does things to help people feel better about themselves.

Evie does not want her parents and Peter to go on the fishing trip together. She is distraught when she learns that Peter has been killed, but Arlene is the only one who sympathizes with Evie's loss. When Evie realizes how much trouble her parents are in, she lies in order to keep them from being sent to jail. These lies ruin her reputation to those in Palm Beach because she claims that it was she who was having an affair with Peter, not her mother. It is only the look of contempt on the face of Peter's father that makes Evie cry because of the lies that she had told. Once her family is back in Queens, Evie takes the money that her father had stolen from the Jews and had intended to use to build their dream house, to Arlene so that she can get it to Jews who need it. Evie believes the punishment to which she has left her family, that they will have to live with Grandma Glad indefinitely, is appropriate. Evie also promises herself that she will never lie again.

## Beverly

Beverly is Evie's mother and Joe's wife. In the beginning of the book, she encourages Evie not to grow up too fast as she is afraid that her daughter will become like her. Beverly is an extremely attractive woman whom men seem to find irresistible. Beverly became pregnant with Evie when she was only seventeen years old. Her uncle forced the father of her baby to marry her, but the man left soon after they were married.

Since that time, Beverly began dating Joe. Joe did not get the courage to propose to Beverly until he knew for sure that he was going to be sent overseas into the service. Beverly agrees to marry Joe, and also agrees to move into his mother's house until he comes back from war. While Joe is away, Beverly gets a job selling ties. This job becomes a sort of point of tension between Beverly and Joe because Beverly was able to sell more ties than anyone else who had worked at the store. In an attempt to keep her from straying, Joe's mother keeps tabs on Beverly, hounding her with questions if she gets home late from work.

In Florida, Beverly takes up with the attractive Peter Coleridge. She is able to spend time with him because Joe is busy cooking up the hotel deal with Mr. Grayson. Beverly also encourages Evie to spend time with Peter, even though he is much older than Evie, so that she can "chaperone" the dates and be able to spend time with Peter as well.



Beverly also gets alone time with Peter because she is lying to her family and telling them that she is taking golfing lessons. Instead of going to play golf, she is actually going to meet Peter at the house where he is staying.

Although Beverly is with Joe and Peter on the boat on the day when Peter is killed, Beverly claims to have no idea how the death happened. She claims that she was scared and went "downstairs" in the boat. At this point, the people in the courtroom seem to believe that she is too ditzy to have killed anyone until Wally exposes Beverly's relationship with Peter. It is only when Evie lies about her own actions in Florida that her mother is let off the hook on charges of being an accessory to murder.

## Peter Coleridge

Peter Coleridge is a young man who meets Joe during their time in World War II. The two find a stash of loot in Austria taken from the Jews and decide to help themselves to some of it. They make a deal that Joe will take the loot back to America with him where he will cash it in. When Peter is released from military service, he will look Joe up to get his half of the money. It is Peter who has been calling Joe at home when Joe decides to take the family to Florida.

Despite Joe's attempt to shake him, Peter catches up with Joe in Palm Beach. Peter develops a relationship with Joe's wife along with his daughter as he spends time with the family as he is trying to get his money back. Peter tells the family that he is the son of a rich man but find that this was not correct during the inquest into his death. He had stolen the blue convertible that he has been driving and has also broken into a closed up mansion where he has been squatting during his time in Palm Beach. Peter's father was a fisherman, which explains Peter's familiarity with sailing and ships.

Peter drowns when he falls overboard off the boat that he, Joe and Beverly have taken out on a fishing trip. Joe and Beverly both tell the court that Peter had gone into the engine well in an attempt to fix the engine. While he was trying to fix the engine, they tell the court that a wrench fell and hit Peter in the head. He had come up from the engine well but had been unsteady on his feet and was washed overboard by a rogue wave. It is never determined if Peter's death was an accident or a murder.

## Mr. Markel

Mr. Markel is the lawyer who is hired to represent Beverly and Joe Spooner during the inquest into Peter Coleridge's death. Evie isn't impressed with Mr. Markel on their first meeting, but later becomes more impressed by his composure during the proceedings. Mr. Markel is the one tells Beverly and Joe that the coroner's report has stated that Peter did die by drowning, not a blow to the head. Mr. Markel tutors Beverly and Joe on how to dress and act for the inquest. He also schools Evie on how she should act during her appearance during the inquest. It is to Mr. Markel whom Evie goes the morning of her questioning in the inquest. When she tells him what she plans to tell the court, he asks if she has a handkerchief and suggests that she use it.



## Tom Grayson

Tom Grayson is Arlene Grayson's husband. Although he is a Jew, Tom has brought his wife to the hotel in Palm Beach where Jews are not allowed. Arlene says this is because her husband wants to get away from everything that he is. Arlene tells Evie that Tom is of the belief that God should atone to the Jews for the things that He has allowed to happen to them. Tom has had family members killed in the holocaust. He also was not allowed to fight in the war because he had a bad heart. Tom works with Joe to buy the Le Mirage because he knows that he cannot put his name on the deed of the hotel. When the hotel manager finds out that Tom is a Jew, he kicks the couple out of the hotel. The deal to buy the hotel is also called off.

## Arlene Grayson

Arlene Grayson is Tom Grayson's wife. She is the wife of the swanky couple whom Joe and Beverly befriend in Palm Beach. When Beverly and Arlene catch Evie trying to dress up in one of Beverly's dresses for the high school party at the hotel, Arlene encourages Beverly to help her dress Evie up. When Evie sees the letter that Arlene had been writing, Arlene offers to take Evie shopping for clothes. Evie wonders if Arlene is attempting to pay her off to keep her quiet about the letter. Evie also sees Arlene crying as she and Tom argue. Arlene tells her husband that she will not go with him. Later, it is to Arlene that Evie takes the money that Joe got from the things that he stole from Austria. Arlene is entrusted with getting the money to Jews who are in need of it.

## Mr. Forney

Mr. Forney is the manager of Le Mirage Hotel in Palm Beach Florida. Mr. Forney is most important in his role as the one who informs the Graysons that they are no longer welcome at the hotel because he has discovered that the couple is Jewish. Although the Graysons had been treated as any other guests for the bulk of their stay, Forney seems almost eager to tell the Graysons they must leave the hotel. Later in the novel, Forney also fires Wally because he believes that Wally has tried to rape Evie. When Forney tells Evie that Wally has been fired because of the high moral standards of the hotel, Evie calls him on his hypocrisy by pointing out that he also had been mean to the Graysons and forced them to leave the hotel because of the "high moral standards."

## Sheriff Bud Deary

Sheriff Bud Deary is the police officer who takes charge of Evie after the hurricane passes through West Palm Beach. He takes her to his house where his wife feeds Evie and comforts her. A few hours later, it is Deary who tells Evie that her parents had been found safe but that it was feared that Peter had not survived. When Evie's parents prepare to leave town as quickly as they can after their ordeal in the hurricane, it is Officer Deary who informs them they must stay around for questioning after Peter's



body is found. Officer Deary is also called to testify during the inquest about the Spooners' reaction to the news that Peter's body had been found.

## Walter

Walter "Wally" Forrest is the teen who works as a bellhop at Le Mirage. Throughout their stay Wally tries to catch Evie's attention but Evie is too caught up with Peter until the day that Peter, Joe and Beverly go fishing and leave her behind. On this day, Evie leads Wally on and Wally reacts by attempting to have sex with her until Evie makes him stop. Wally walks Evie back to the hotel after the incident. When Mr. Forney sees the two, he fires Wally. During the inquest, Wally testifies that he saw Beverly and Peter kissing and holding one another outside of the hotel one night. Evie discredits Wally's testimony when she lies and tells the court that it was she who was with Peter that night.

## Grandma Glad

Grandma Glad is Joe's mother and Evie's step-grandmother. When Joe goes off to war, he insists that his wife and step-daughter live with his mother. Evie later learns that this may have been so that Grandma Glad could keep an eye on Beverly and her extra-curricular activities. Grandma Glad does not seem to like or trust Beverly. When Grandma Glad comes to Florida for the inquest, Beverly is afraid that she is planning on saving Joe and sending Beverly to jail.

## Captain Stephen

Captain Stephen "Sandy" Forrest is Wally, the bellhop's, father and the owner of the Captive Lady, the cabin cruiser that Joe wants to take out for a fishing trip. Although he does not believe that it is a good idea, Sandy allows them to take the boat when Peter says that he has boating experience and that they will be back before the storm hits. It is Sandy who calls Evie a whore during her testimony about her relationship with Wally.

## Ellis Coleridge

Ellis Coleridge is Peter's father. Although Peter had made it seem that his family is rich, it turns out that Ellis is only a fisherman from Patchogue, Long Island. During her testimony in the trial, Evie is disturbed by Ellis' eyes upon her. As she leaves the courtroom, she looks him full in the face and sees the similarity to Peter. It is the contempt that she sees in his face that finally makes her cry.

## Margie Crotty

Margie Crotty is Evie's best friend from Queens before her time in Florida. After Evie's experience with the cruelty to the Jews, Evie remembers the way that Margie treated



Ruthie Kalman because she is a Jew. When Evie returns to her grandmother's house and is talking to Margie for the first time since she has returned, Evie realizes that she no longer wants to be friends with the girl.

## Ruthie Kalman

Ruthie Kalman is a Jewish girl with whom Evie attends school in Queens. Margie, Evie's best friend is cruel to Ruthie because she is a Jew. After Evie returns to Queens after her experience in Florida, she decides that she no longer wants to be friends with Margie, but instead strikes up a friendship with Ruthie.

## Iris Wright

Iris Wright is the owner of the Iris's Eye, the gift shop where Beverly and Peter bought the pineapple vase. Iris testifies during the inquest that she saw the two shopping together and had assumed by the way that they interacted with one another that they were a couple.

## Twyla Deary

Twyla Deary is the wife of Officer Deary. Officer Deary takes Evie to his home so that Twyla can take care of Evie until her parents are found. Twyla irritates Evie by often repeating things twice, but she does help Evie's nerves by putting her to work helping to make sandwiches for the neighborhood people who need food.

## Miss Geiger

Miss Geiger is Mr. Markel's secretary. Although Mr. Markel tells Evie that his secretary does not make decisions on a client's innocence or guilt, Evie believes that the lady has already decided that her stepfather is guilty.

## John Reilly

John Reilly is the lawyer whom Grandma Glad first talks to when she learns that Joe is in trouble. Reilly tells Grandma Glad that the family should stop talking to reporters and that she should hire a good attorney.

## Eddie

Eddie is the bellhop at The Metropole who takes Evie to the roof to of that hotel to talk to Mrs. Grayson.



## **Mrs. Garfinkle**

Mrs. Garfinkle is Mr. Grayson's mother. When she calls the hotel to leave a message about a wire transfer for her son, the hotel personnel realize that the family is Jewish.

## **Judge Alton Friend**

Judge Alton Friend is the judge chosen to preside over the inquest into Peter's death. After Evie's testimony, the judge rules that there is not enough evidence for a trial.

## **Raymond Toomer**

Raymond Toomer serves as the state attorney during the inquest into the death of Peter Coleridge.

## **Kelly Marin**

Kelly Marin is the surf caster who found Peter's body on the Thursday following the hurricane.





# Objects/Places

## Match

It is a match sizzling that wakes Evie up during the opening chapter of the novel. This image repeats again Chapter 32 when Evie returns to the present in her memories.

## My Sin Perfume

My Sin is the scent that Evie's mother wears. One of the things that Evie packs when she is forced to evacuate from the hotel is a bottle of this perfume.

## Palm Beach Florida

Palm Beach Florida is where Joe takes Evie and Beverly for a vacation, even though it is the off-season and the island is basically deserted.

## Cigarettes

Margie and Evie believe that smoking cigarettes is synonymous with being grown up. They practice their smoking skills using candy cigarettes.

## Queens

Queens is the part of New York in which Joe, Beverly and Evie live with Joe's mother.

## Lord and Taylor

Lord and Taylor is the store at which Beverly works while Joe is away fighting in the war.

## Ties

Beverly is in charge of selling ties at Lord and Taylor. She is said to be the store's best tie saleswoman.

## Le Mirage

Le Mirage is the name of the hotel at which Evie and her parents stay in Florida. Tom and Joe wanted to buy the hotel but the deal is called off when it is learned that Tom is a Jew.



## **A Spring Green Silk Dress with Violet Flowers**

When Evie decides that she wants to go the high school dance, she chooses a spring green silk dress with violet flowers from her mother's closet.

## **Pussycat**

Pussycat is the nickname by which Peter refers to Evie.

## **Delray**

Delray is the town to which Peter offers to take Evie.

## **Tap Room**

The Tap Room is the restaurant to which Peter plans to take Evie. It turns out the whole family, plus the Graysons go to the restaurant.

## **Salzburg, Austria**

Salzburg, Austria is the place where Joe spends the last year of his military service. It is here that he and Peter find the warehouse full of things that had belonged to the Jews killed in the Holocaust.

## **A Gold Bracelet**

Joe gives Evie a gold bracelet as a gift when he returns from war. Evie later realizes the bracelet is part of the loot stolen from the warehouse in Salzburg.

## **Metropole**

The Metropole is the hotel owned by Tom and Arlene Grayson in New York.

## **A Piece of Hotel Stationary**

Evie writes her note to Peter on a piece of hotel stationary.

## **A Blue Convertible**

Evie recognizes Peter's car as a blue convertible. It is later learned that he stole this car from a friend.



## **Dark Passage**

Dark Passage is the movie to which Evie goes with Peter and Beverly.

## **A Pineapple Vase**

Storeowner Iris Wright testifies at the trial that she saw Peter and Beverly buying this pineapple vase at her store. During an argument between Beverly and Joe, the vase gets broken.

## **The Moonlight-Colored Dress**

Mrs. Grayson buys Evie this moonlight-colored dress as a gift. When Evie wears it the first time, her parents make her take it off, saying it is too grown up for her.

## **Golf Lessons**

Beverly tells her family that she is taking golf lessons as a cover for the time that she has been spending with Peter.

## **Orange Petals**

Beverly pays Wally to wash the orange petals from her car each day when she returns from her golf lesson. When Evie goes to the house where Peter is staying, she notices an orange tree, the tree from which the petals on Beverly's car were coming.

## **An Ashtray**

An ashtray is what Beverly throws at Evie while they are together at the house where Peter is staying. A piece of the ashtray cuts Evie on the forehead.

## **A Letter**

Mrs. Grayson gives Evie a letter to give to Joe. The letter is from Tom telling Joe that the Graysons are out of the hotel deal.

## **Cabin Cruiser**

The boat that Joe, Beverly and Peter hire from Captain Sandy is a cabin cruiser.



## **Mangroves near Munyon Island**

The Mangroves near Munyon Island is where Beverly and Joe tie the boat up and finally manage to get safely to shore.

## **Hurricane Hole**

A hurricane hole is a place where a boat can be tied safely during a hurricane so it can ride out a storm with no damage.

## **Wrench**

Joe testifies that a wrench fell and hit Peter in the head when he was working on the boat. This impact caused him to be dizzy and fall overboard.

## **Captive Lady**

The Captive Lady is the name of the boat on which Joe, Beverly and Peter get caught in the hurricane.

## **Grandma Glad's Valise**

Grandma Glad is carrying this valise when she comes to Palm Beach. Evie realizes that it contains the money that Joe got from selling the Jews' possessions that he and Peter found in the warehouse in Austria. She takes the valise and money to Mrs. Grayson, even though she knows that it will mean she and her family will have to continue to live with her grandmother.

## **Accessory to Murder**

Accessory to murder is the charge that Evie's mother believes that she will be given after the inquest.

## **Forty-Eighth Street**

Forty-eighth Street is where the Grayson's hotel is located.

## **Petal**

Petal is Mrs. Grayson's pet name for Evie.



# Themes

## Coming of Age

In many ways, Evie's story is one of coming of age. In a very short period of time, she learns that things are not always as they appear. She realizes how cruel people can be to those who are different, and she realizes her own ability to change the outcome of her own life.

Evie has grown up admiring her beautiful mother and smooth talking step-father. She has learned that the world likes pretty people. One incident in her life that has taught her this lesson is the magazine article in which her mother and step-father are featured on their wedding day. Evie believes that she is not included because she is not attractive like her parents. Before her experiences in Florida, Evie had aspired to be just like her parents. After she learns that there are things in life, like honesty and integrity, that are more important than physical beauty, Evie no longer aspires to be like her glamorous parents.

Also during her experience in Florida, Evie realizes how cruel people can be to one another. For instance, Peter notices Evie's disbelief that there are still separate water fountains for black and whites in Florida. She does not like this segregation based only on the color of a person's skin. Also in Florida, Evie is shocked by the hotel manager's apparent joy at kicking the Graysons out of the hotel simply because they were Jewish. Evie naively believes that since some of World War II dealt with ending the holocaust, America should be free of its stigma against Jews. She is hurt and disappointed by the people around her when she sees how cruelly this couple is treated just because of the religious beliefs.

Finally, Evie realizes her own ability to change the circumstances around her. For whatever reason, she decides that she must lie to keep her parents from being condemned to jail. In the opinions of those attending that day's court session, Evie has ruined her own reputation, Wally's reputation and has made Peter appear to be one willing to have an affair with a much younger woman. Because she lies, Evie's parents are exonerated of any suspicions the police may have had against them. She has finally learned the secret of adulthood that she wanted to know all the while. Now that she knows what it means to be an adult, Evie makes a promise to herself that she will never be like her parents. She also vows to never lie again.

## Religion

Religion is an important theme in this novel as much of the storyline is connected with Tom's intention to buy the Palm Beach hotel even though he is a Jew. In this time period, Jews are still looked down upon by American society. This is shown by the



segregation in Palm Beach. There is an unwritten rule that Jews and blacks are not welcome in this area. Tom tries to break this rule but is unsuccessful.

Notice also at the beginning of the book when Margie is taunting the Jewish girl in their class, that Evie mentions that religion does not mean much to them at this time. She says that it is old wives' tales and superstitions that the girls adhere to more than their religious beliefs. Evie does, however, also point out at least one miracle in her life brought about by prayer. She and her mother tell Peter that at one point Evie's aunt had wanted to take Evie away from Beverly. Evie says that she had gone to church and prayed, and that she was granted a miracle. Her aunt became pregnant with her own baby and no longer wanted Evie. Also notice through all of Evie's terror in the hurricane and the fear that her parents might be dead, it is not until she is at Twyla Deary's house that she indicates that she finally remembers to pray. This indicates that she believes this is what she should have done at the beginning of the boating incident.

## Impact of the War

"What I Saw and How I Lied" takes place just after the end of World War II. Evie often mentions the changes in the country since the men have returned from battle. The women, like Evie's mother, have quit their jobs and returned to the kitchen so that the men can have the jobs back. Families have also stopped growing Victory Gardens since food was no longer in short supply. Suddenly, American residents are breathing sighs of relief not only because war is over but also because the country is suddenly in a position of great growth. Women are able to wear long, full skirts because there is no longer a shortage on cloth. Sugar is no longer rationed. Families are able to afford new cars and appliances. Since the time period is one of great growth, Joe is able to do well with his appliance stores.

Despite the war, however, circumstances seem to not have improved any for the Jews, even those living in America. One of the issues of the war was the holocaust where thousands of Jews were killed in concentration camps. The ending of the holocaust was one of the things brought about by World War II. Evie learns that even though the Jews are no longer being persecuted and killed overseas, those in America are still hurting. Tom, for instance, wants to lose his identity as a Jew. He wants to be treated as any other human. When it is learned that the Graysons are Jewish, they are thrown out of the Palm Beach hotel.



# Style

## Point of View

The story is told from the first person point of view of teenager Evie Spooner. Since this is a story about Evie's introduction to a world much harsher and crueler than she believed ever existed, it is proper that it should be told from her viewpoint. In this way the story is able to develop as Evie awakens to the reality of what is going on around her and the types of people that she has spent her life admiring.

This story is told with a good mix of exposition and dialogue. Although Evie is recalling what has happened to her and her family during just a matter of a few weeks during late summer, she still recalls these things in dialogue. Evie also records many of her memories in exposition as she describes what is going on around her and the things that she has noticed as the story has progressed.

## Setting

While the majority of this story takes place in Florida, it begins and ends in the Queens neighborhood of New York. Settings in New York include the house where Evie and her parents live with Grandma Glad. The sidewalk near the church where Margie embarrasses Ruthie Kalman by stepping on the back of her shoe is also an important setting, as Evie returns to this action by her friend again and again in her mind as she thinks about the way that the Graysons are treated in Florida. Another important setting in New York is the Metropole Hotel that is owned by the Graysons. Evie is escorted to the roof of this hotel where Mrs. Grayson is attempting to paint the New York skyline. It is here that Evie gives Mrs. Grayson the suitcase full of money that came from the items stolen from the Jews and asks her to give it to someone who she knows who needs it.

Action in Florida takes place mainly in the Palm Beach area of that state. It is in this city that Joe decides is the best place to take his family for their impromptu vacation. Although most of the city is deserted, as it is the hottest part of the summer and air conditioning is not yet an everyday fixture in most homes and businesses. They find one hotel, Le Mirage, which is open. Since there isn't much open during this part of the summer, much of the action of the novel takes place in this hotel. Common settings include the pool area, the dining room, the lobby and the Spooner's suite.

Other important settings in Palm Beach include the golf course where Beverly leads her family to believe that she is taking lessons. It is here that Joe and Evie realize that Beverly has really not been taking golf lessons when they go to pick her up early from her lesson. The mansion into which Peter has broken in and set up housekeeping is another important setting in the novel. It is here that Beverly catches Evie and Peter kissing and throws the ashtray at Evie. It is also at this house that the author gives clues that Peter has not really been honest with the Spooners as it appears that he does not



know the people who live in the house. He makes excuses for not having the electricity on. It is also here that Evie discovers the orange tree that has been dropping petals all over her mother's car throughout the summer.

While most of the action in Florida takes place on the island of Palm Beach, there are also a few parts of the novel that are set in the city of West Palm Beach. It is to West Palm Beach that Evie and the other guests of Le Mirage are evacuated when the hurricane comes. The most significant setting in West Palm Beach is the courthouse where Evis is taken to ride out the storm. It is also in this same courthouse that the inquest into Peter's death takes place.

## Language and Meaning

The novel "What I Saw and How I Lied" is told in a language that is generally easy to follow and easy to understand. Since the story is being told by a teenager, there is no real technical language or difficult concepts to grasp. Perhaps the only use of language that the reader might find unfamiliar is the use of court related lingo. Most terms that might be unfamiliar are explained at some point in the novel.

Since the novel is set in the time period just after World War II, there are terms and instances that a reader not well schooled in World War II might not understand. For instance, Evie speaks of the Victory Garden that she and her family grew up until the end of the war. The persecution of the Jews and the holocaust is another aspect of the novel that might be unfamiliar to the reader. In order to understand the context and atmosphere of the novel, it might be beneficial for the reader with little knowledge about World War II to do a little research to become more familiar with this time period.

## Structure

The story has a unique storyline, as much of it is told by Evie as she looks back over what has happened between the time that her family left New York for a trip to Florida and one of the final days of inquest into the death of Peter Coleridge. Evie begins her story with a brief snippet from a day in the more recent past with just enough information to tease the reader about what is coming up. She then goes back in her memory to record the events that lead up to the situation in which she and her parents have found themselves. After Evie tells the events that led up the inquest, she returns again to the same scene with which the book began, a clear signal that she has returned to the point at which she must make a decision. Evie moves on from this point, still in the past tense, though, to tell how she handled the situation.

One other aspect of the novel that is unique is the way that the author uses newspaper headlines and copy to tell portions of the story of the inquest into Peter's death. Evie is not allowed to go to the first portions of the inquest, so she learns what happens by reading the paper. Since Evie is not knowledgeable of court proceedings as she is only a teen and has never had experience in a courtroom before, it makes sense for these portions of the book to be told through a voice familiar with the courts.





## Quotes

"I'd noticed things on the way down, too. I'd seen it all—the way he took off his hat, the way he lit her cigarette, the way she walked away, her scarf trailing in her hand. Flower petals and a pineapple vase." Chapter 1, pp. 2-3

"Back then they were everything I knew about glamour. Everything I knew about love." Chapter 4, p. 20

"It didn't feel like anyone was chasing us. Not at all." Chapter 4, p. 27

"I know now how you can take one step and you can't stop yourself from taking another. I know now what it means to want. I know it can get you to a place where there's no way out. I know now that there's no such thing as just one. But I didn't know it then." Chapter 6, p. 42

"I took the fact that Joe called him Pete, not Peter, as a good sign. I didn't hear then how Joe smacked his lips against the P and made it sound like an insult." Chapter 8, p. 59

"Joe was so caught up in Mr. Grayson's world that he didn't have time to keep tabs on us." Chapter 16, p. 113

"I don't know when it happened, but things started to turn, just a little bit, like when you smell the bottle of milk, and you know it's going to be sour tomorrow, but you pour it on your cereal anyway." Chapter 16, p. 119

"It didn't take you long. What was it, maybe thirty seconds? I knew you'd come around to blaming this on me. You knew the deal was risky. You knew he was Jewish, didn't you? That's why he needed your name on the deed." Chapter 19, p. 139

"Well, we found it, Joe and me. After the war. It was a warehouse in Salzburg. Filled with loot. Treasure. And it belonged to nobody." Chapter 20, p. 146

"The plan was, Joe would get the gold stateside, and this guy he knew would help him get us cash for it and take his cut. Then, when I got sprung, we'd split the rest." Chapter 20, pp. 147-148

"I had a kid and no husband, and people's minds get dirty. The men look and the women talk and it doesn't matter how straight a line you walk. It makes you so...tired." Chapter 21, p. 162

"I had to get around Joe and Mom and show Peter that I was the one for him. He'd known it last night, even if it was just for a second." Chapter 22, p. 164



"I'd wanted to learn what love was like, but this wasn't what I'd felt with Peter. It was cheap and stupid and it stayed with you. It was animal and mineral, it was a bad taste and a terrible feeling." Chapter 23, p. 174

"They didn't come back at three, or four. They didn't come back by cocktail time. I told Forney, who called Wally's dad and then, when Wally's dad said they weren't back, the Coast Guard." Chapter 23, p. 175

"The coroner's report included 'suspicious markings' that could be 'inconsistent' with the 'natural batterings' that a body would be prone to sustain during such a hurricane. Chapter 28, p. 202

"By the afternoon edition, the mansion was called a 'secret love nest.' And Beverly had gone from 'attractive blonde' to a suspect." Chapter 28, p. 203

"All that time, I'd thought Mom was in the way. I'd been the one in the way. I'd been their cover." Chapter 28, p. 217

"'No,' I said. I looked right at him when I said it, just the way Joe had told me to when he'd taught me how to lie. Just the way he'd looked at me when he told me he hadn't killed Peter." Chapter 30, p. 227-228

"She had turned herself from a femme fatale into a dumb blonde. They knew she couldn't kill anyone. She was too pretty. She was too dim." Chapter 30, p. 234

"I'd answered every question, I'd thrown mud at a good boy's reputation, I'd lied, I'd been called a whore. But it was that one man's wave of contempt that finally made the tears come." Chapter 33, p. 265

"Being an adult—was this it? Doing the thing you most in your life didn't want to do, and doing it with a shrug?" Chapter 34, p. 267

"She had been my best friend for six years. There were all of the secrets we'd whispered, sweaters we'd borrowed, homework we'd done together at her kitchen table. I'd been practically adopted by her mother, brought into family dinners and stickball games, hoeing their Victory Garden, washing their big old '39 Ford with Margie on sunny Saturday afternoons. I didn't want to be her friend anymore." Chapter 34, pp. 268-269

"I don't know what kind of man Joe is. But I do know he did this one bad thing, at least. Peter said that somebody had to pay. Well, it can't be him. It just can't be. He might have been a thief and a liar and a cheat, but he was a good person." Chapter 35, pp. 277-278

"Mom and I weren't going anywhere. We would live in the house we hated, but that was okay, too, because maybe we were just getting a little bit of what we deserved." Chapter 35, p. 280



"I would never know what happened on the boat that day, but they would be my parents. For the duration." Chapter 35, p. 280

"I would love my mother, but I would never want to be her again. I would never be what someone else wanted me to be. I would never laugh at a joke I didn't think was funny. I would never tell another lie. I would be the truth teller, starting today. That would probably be tough. But I was tougher." Chapter 35, pp.280-281



## Topics for Discussion

What is Mrs. Grayson's role in the novel? Why does she take an interest in helping Evie turn into a young lady?

Do you believe that Peter had any legitimate feelings for Evie, or was he just pretending to try to get back at Joe?

What do you think happened on the boat with Joe, Peter and Beverly? Do you think Joe had planned Peter's death?

Consider Evie's speech to Peter that he is not a bad person, even though he might have done bad things. Describe your opinion on Evie's point of view. Do you think it is possible for a person to be good even though they do bad things?

Why does Ellis Coleridge have so much contempt toward Evie? How does her testimony affect him?

Describe the ways that Evie changes in order to save her parents from being found guilty of murder. Why do you think that Evie acts as she does?

How does World War II and the holocaust fit into this novel? Why do you think that Mr. Grayson wanted to get away from his identity as a Jewish man?

Consider Mr. Grayson's attitude that God should atone for what he had allowed to happen to the Jews? How does his reasoning make sense? For what other reasons, if any, is Mr. Grayson angry with God?