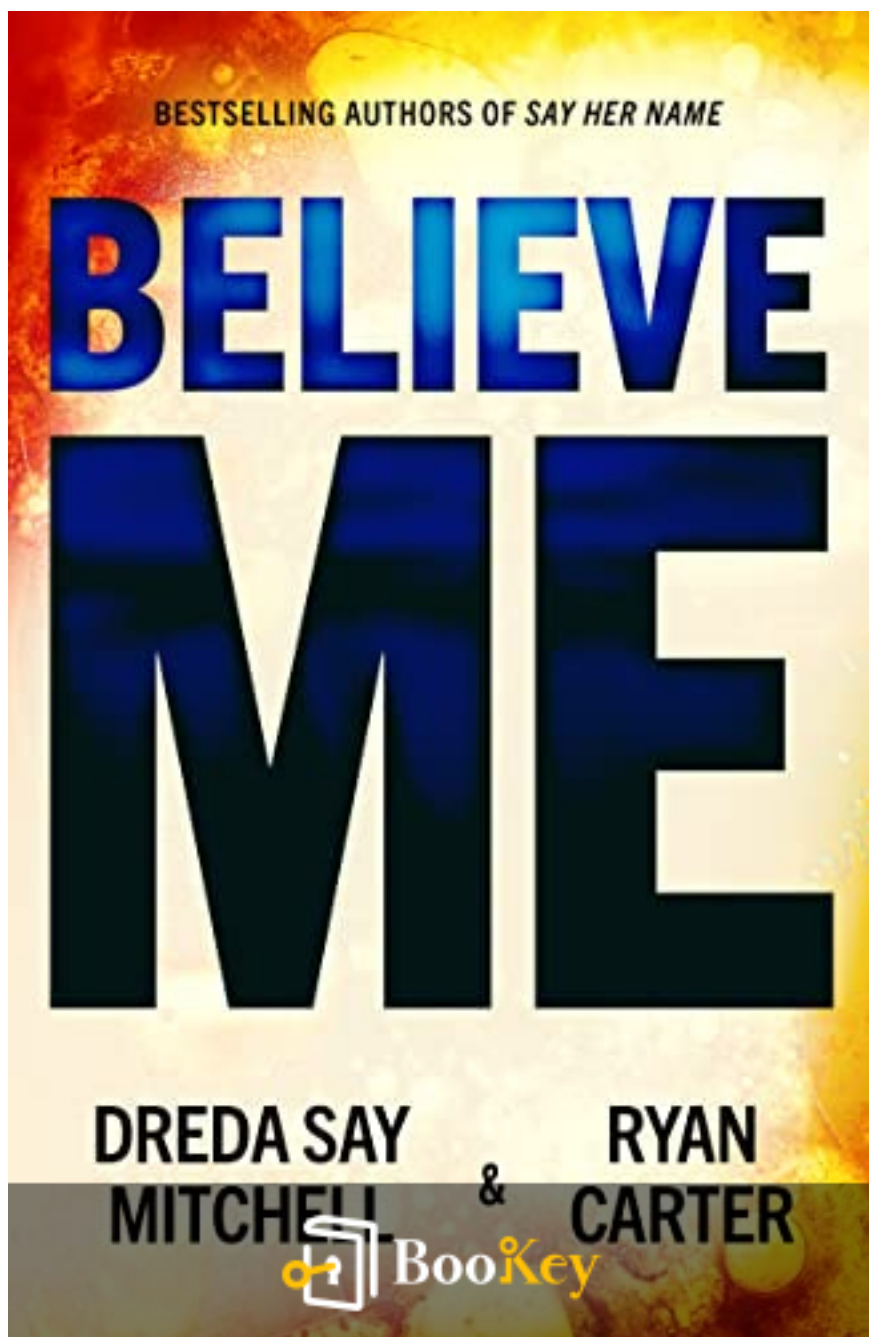


Believe Me PDF (Limited Copy)

Dreda Say Mitchell, Ryan Carter



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Believe Me Summary

****"When Trust Turns on a Knife's Edge"****

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About the book

In the riveting world of suspense and deceit, "Believe Me" by acclaimed authors Dreda Say Mitchell and Ryan Carter crafts a masterful tapestry woven with threads of psychological intrigue and dark secrets. At the heart of this engrossing narrative is Emma, a woman grappling with the haunting specters of her past while trapped in a perilous game of cat and mouse. As the shadows of her former life blur the lines of reality, Emma finds herself ensnared in a web of trust and betrayal, where every whisper seems to echo with the chilling question: who can she really believe? Unraveling each sinister mystery leads readers on a heart-pounding chase through layers of lies, where nothing is as it seems, and the truth may be even more terrifying than the deception itself. Dive into this electrifying thriller, where every page is a tightrope walk between paranoia and possibility, designed to keep you guessing until the final shocking revelation.

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About the author

Dreda Say Mitchell and Ryan Carter are a dynamic literary duo renowned for weaving heart-stopping thrillers that captivate readers from the first page to the last. Dreda, an award-winning author, has gained widespread acclaim for her gripping narratives often set against London's vibrantly diverse backdrop. Drawing upon her rich cultural heritage and influences from her East London upbringing, she has consistently delivered stories filled with depth, tension, and insight. Ryan Carter, complementing Dreda's storytelling prowess, brings his unique talent for crafting intricate plots and character development, enhancing their joint work with layers of suspense and unpredictability. Together, they are celebrated for their ability to create complex characters and intense scenarios that plunge readers into a world of mystery and intrigue, making every page-turn a journey into the unknown.

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Chapter 1 Summary:

Chapter 1 Summary

The protagonist receives a troubling call from the police informing her that her father, Saul Lewis, has been assaulted and is in critical condition in the hospital. Her initial reaction is marked by skepticism, suspecting it's another one of her father's dramatics, which he often employs to manipulate those around him, including her. Despite her disbelief, the police officer insists on the seriousness of the situation, urging her to visit him promptly.

As a lawyer deeply entrenched in the affairs of affluent clients, the protagonist is hesitant to leave her demanding job. Though she informs her boss of the emergency, she's met with a dismissive attitude about her request to leave early. Later, weighed down by a familial obligation and plagued by her own internalized guilt, she reluctantly decides to visit her father.

The drive to the hospital becomes overwhelming, and she's gripped by a heightened sense of anxiety and impending doom, driven by a deeply rooted fear of dying young like her mother. Her past trauma and unresolved grief reveal themselves as she struggles with irrational fears of accidents and premature death.



Chapter 2 Summary

Upon arriving at the hospital, the protagonist feels that she has been manipulated yet again by her father. She's greeted warmly by the nursing staff, who are charmed by Saul, a man adept at winning people over despite his faults. The nurse informs her that although her father was hurt, his injuries are not life-threatening, and he will heal with some care once discharged.

The protagonist encounters her father, who is lying in his hospital bed, seemingly worse off from the incident but retaining his combative and demanding demeanor. He suggests that she should move back into his house to care for him, a proposal that she firmly rejects due to her own obligations and strained relationship with him.

Detective Craven, who is handling the assault case, informs her that the attack was carried out by a single assailant, contrary to Saul's account of a gang. Despite security footage and witness statements supporting this new claim, Saul maintains his embellished version of events. Alone with the realization of her father's habitual deceit and manipulation, she faces the conflicting emotions of familial duty and personal resentment.



Chapter 2 Summary:

Chapter 2 Summary:

As the narrator, Gabby Lewis, enters her father Saul Lewis's hospital ward, she's immediately reminded of the familial burdens she's tried to escape. The nurse hints that Saul is charming the staff, even as he's recovering from injuries inflicted during a street attack. Gabby notes the irony of this, recalling Saul's previous vigor compared to his diminished current state. She's quickly embroiled in the complexities of her strained relationship with her father. Saul, ever the manipulator, suggests she move back in with him, ignoring her commitments and plans, and continues to wield emotional pressure by reminiscing fond childhood memories. However, Gabby resists his manipulative tactics.

During the visit, a detective named Craven approaches her. Craven is investigating the assault on Saul, revealing that contrary to Saul's story of a gang attack, security footage shows a single perpetrator. This revelation further deepens Gabby's mistrust of her father, who tends to exaggerate and distort reality. As Gabby leaves the hospital, she contemplates the expectations thrust upon her and the unyielding demands of her father's care.

Chapter 3 Summary:

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Arriving at her childhood home, Gabby is haunted by family memories and her mother's death. Despite its quaint Victorian charm, the house embodies turmoil and unresolved familial tensions. Gabby encounters Jenny, a long-time neighbor and family friend, who offers comfort in the form of homemade scones, a nostalgic gesture from Gabby's childhood.

Inside the house, Gabby finds chaos and reminders of neglect. While clearing up, she is confronted by memories of her mother's diligent housekeeping and the responsibilities once shared. Her sister Salina arrives, deflecting from her own neglect of family duty by showcasing her glamorous life as a social media influencer married to a wealthy businessman. They exchange barbs and bear the weight of their fractured upbringing, revealing Salina's resentment towards their father, whom she blames for their mother's death.

As Salina leaves, she advises Gabby to establish boundaries to avoid becoming overwhelmed by their father's demands. Despite their differing lifestyles and unresolved grievances, both sisters share an unspoken understanding of their complex family dynamics. Gabby is left to ponder her own unwillingness to reconcile with her past, trapped between familial duty and personal resentment.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Resisting Emotional Manipulation

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 2, Gabby's visit to her father, Saul, highlights a critical life lesson. Despite their strained relationship and his attempts to manipulate her emotionally, Gabby remains steadfast in her resistance, choosing to honor her own commitments rather than succumbing to his demands for her to return home. This scenario underscores the importance of setting boundaries and upholding one's autonomy in relationships, even with family. It serves as a powerful reminder that maintaining personal integrity sometimes requires us to prioritize our own emotional well-being over others' expectations or pressure. By setting these boundaries, we protect ourselves from manipulation and ensure we're leading our lives according to our values and aspirations, not someone else's narrative.



Chapter 3 Summary:

In Chapter 3, the protagonist, Gabby, finds herself outside her father's old house, a place heavy with memories, including the one of her mother's tragic final days. Her family was the only Black family in Tinfields, a Victorian-era village that had once thrived on tin mining before the industry collapsed. Gabby's father moved their family here from London, drawn by the seaside, reminiscent of his homeland, Trinidad.

Upon arriving, Gabby hesitates to enter, overwhelmed by nostalgia and the sight of her childhood neighbor, Jenny, a kind but now-stricken old friend of her mother. Gabby learns Jenny has remained a supportive presence, though she displays concern and surprise at Gabby's rare visit, particularly since Gabby missed the last Christmas.

Inside the house, Gabby discovers evidence of her father's neglectful state—overdue bills and a cluttered mess—as she instinctively tidies up. Memories of her mother linger as she handles remnants of her past life. While there, she reflects on her mother's influence and the unresolved grief that permeates the household.

Her sister Salina soon enters, characterized by her beauty and charm, but also by an unspoken resentment towards their father, whom she blames for their mother's death. Their interaction reveals underlying family tensions,



with Salina offering sisterly yet unwelcome advice laced with pain. Salina remarks on their father's attack by local youths, highlighting racial tensions and a divergent account provided by the police.

In Chapter 4, Gabby returns to her cramped rented room with a few mementos: her father's ginger beer and her mother's old make-up bag. Despite the room's deteriorating condition and impending sale, Gabby finds solace in its sea view and its lack of commitment. She's reminded of her sister's warning about becoming entangled in their family home again—a prospect she vehemently rejects.

Gabby immerses herself in a work assignment involving an intricate property dispute case related to a house named Ocean Haven. The property, once owned by the widow Mrs. Carol Shore, became subject to a trust before being plagued by mysterious deaths and disappearances, including those of Mrs. Lewis and Mr. Robert Delbrook. Delbrook has since been declared dead, and the property's ownership remains contentious among Shore's family, who claim Mrs. Shore was not of sound mind when she relinquished control.

Gabby's shock mounts when, upon reviewing the case, she discovers an unexpected connection to her family: her mother, Marcia Siparia Lewis, held a significant role in the trust's board. This revelation launches Gabby into a whirlwind of questions about her mother's past—a narrative intertwining



personal history with her present investigation, hinting at deeper mysteries to be unveiled.

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Chapter 4:

Chapter 4: Present Day

Returning from her father's house, the protagonist carries with her a bottle of homemade ginger beer and her late mother's makeup bag, filled with memories of her mother's former glamor. She reflects on the limited understanding of her parents' past lives, as she navigates her career responsibilities, specifically a complex property dispute regarding a place called Ocean Haven. This house has a mysterious past marked by ownership disputes, death, and disappearances. Researching the case, she discovers an unexpected connection to her family—it seems her mother, Marcia Siparia Lewis, was once involved in the trust that now owns Ocean Haven. The puzzle deepens, leaving her determined to understand her mother's role in this tangled history.

Chapter 5: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Marcia

In a flashback to her mother's life, we see Marcia Lewis wrestling with intense, undiagnosed abdominal pain while attempting to maintain normalcy for her family. Amidst preparing dinner for her husband Saul and their children, Gabrielle, Salina, and Karl, conflict arises between the sisters about



a missing lipstick, highlighting tension in the family dynamics. Marcia, already grappling with her secret illness, finds herself confined by her husband's domineering presence, which instills fear and obedience in the household through a rigorous discipline method involving an old pocket watch. Despite support from neighbor Jenny, who encourages Marcia to seek better medical attention, the evening reveals a household trapped by unspoken rules and hidden pain, setting an oppressive backdrop that hints at Marcia's later involvement with Ocean Haven's mysterious trust.

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Chapter 5 Summary:

Chapter 5 and 6 Summary:

In Chapter 5, we are taken back to a dinner scene twenty-five years ago in the Lewis household, where Marcia Lewis is secretly grappling with a mysterious, debilitating illness she has been dealing with for months. Despite having seen her doctor multiple times, no diagnosis has been made. As a mother who deeply cares for her children, Gabby and Salina, she tries to hide her pain during a tense family dinner. Her daughters argue over makeup, showcasing their distinct personalities: Gabby is introspective and observant, while Salina is outgoing and expressive. The atmosphere shifts when Saul, their authoritarian and intimidating father, enters. He enforces strict discipline, using a brass pocket watch as a timing mechanism, pushing his daughters to hastily consume their meals, creating a scene of distress for Marcia, who feels powerless due to the traditional values instilled in her by her grandmother. Meanwhile, Fred, the neighbor, helps nurture Karl, Marcia and Saul's withdrawn son, by spending time with him, which Marcia greatly appreciates. She confides in her neighbor, Jenny, who encourages her to demand more decisive medical attention. Saul's presence remains oppressive as he imposes his will severely on the children, exacerbating the emotional pain Marcia endures.



In Chapter 6, set in the present day, Gabby, Marcia's eldest daughter, visits her sister Salina with pressing news. She has discovered evidence suggesting that their mother, Marcia, owned or was involved in a property called Ocean Haven, linked to mysterious deaths. Gabby is puzzled by Marcia's possible connection to a house in Tinfields, a town known for its wealthy 'gold coast' residents. Salina, hosting a dinner party with her affluent guests, appears unconcerned by Gabby's news and is more preoccupied with maintaining her social status. This chapter reveals the widening rift between the sisters, highlighting their differing perspectives: Gabby, the practical lawyer, is focused on unraveling their mother's mysterious past, while Salina, now a successful businesswoman in the makeup industry, is unwilling to delve into their mother's potential secrets. As Gabby leaves, she is told by her sister that her use of Marcia's old lipstick makes her look uncannily like their mother, adding a ghostly touch to the mystery surrounding Marcia's life and death. These chapters both set the stage for unraveling family secrets, showing how past traumas and hidden histories continue to impact the present.



Chapter 6 Summary:

Chapter 6 Summary:

Gabrielle arrives at her sister Salina's luxurious coastal home with urgent news—she's discovered their late mother, Marcia Siparia Lewis, owned another house, Ocean Haven, and is deeply troubled by this revelation. The news unsettles her, especially knowing people connected to the property died under mysterious circumstances. Salina disapproves of Gabby's appearance, as she is hosting a high-class dinner party with her husband, Luke, who is charming but untrustworthy in Gabby's eyes.

Inside, Gabby feels out of place amid the posh guests. Desperate to discuss their mother's secret property without causing a scene, Gabby uses a strategic ploy, hinting at personal financial troubles, to get a private moment with Salina. During their tense conversation, Gabby reveals more details about their mother's involvement with Ocean Haven, but Salina is skeptical, noting their mother never even had a bank account. Gabby insists on the seriousness of the matter, linking their mother to legal disputes over the property, but Salina dismissively suggests Gabby drop the case to let their mother rest in peace. As Gabby leaves, Salina notices her wearing their mother's lipstick, which makes her a striking reflection of the late Marcia.



Chapter 7 Summary:

In the dead of night, Gabby sifts through information about Ocean Haven online. The house, once grand, now appears neglected and eerily cold even in summer photos. The estate agent's website optimistically promotes it, downplaying unresolved legal issues—contrary to Gabby's documents. Her insomnia is deepened by memories of her mother's mysterious death, prompting a nighttime investigation into Ocean Haven's past.

Gabby finds little on key figures like Carol Shore and Robert Delbrook, past inhabitants of Ocean Haven, who seem to have vanished without a trace. However, she learns about a former solicitor, prosecuted for fraud, who managed the trust connected to the property. This discovery adds a layer of suspicion over the trust her mother chaired. Gabby acknowledges her mother's seemingly undocumented existence, contrasting with significant personal impact as her mother's aspirations were for Gabby to excel beyond the hardships of past generations.

Seeking comfort, Gabby dons her mother's lipstick, a visual homage to Marcia. The reflection conjures an apparition of her mother, who remains uncommunicative, amplifying Gabby's yearning to understand Marcia's secret life tied to Ocean Haven.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Strength through Discovery

Critical Interpretation: In this chapter, you're presented with the notion that unveiling truths, no matter how unsettling, can be a catalyst for personal strength and transformation. As Gabrielle navigates through family secrets and unearths revelations about her mother's hidden property, you observe how revealing and confronting the unknown empowers her to take charge of her own narrative. This journey of discovery, although fraught with uncertainty and familial tension, can be your inspiration to courageously face the undisclosed aspects of your life. Whether it's delving into untouched personal history or confronting long-suppressed truths, embracing the full spectrum of your truths can fortify your identity and influence your path forward. Emulate this resilience by allowing life's hidden chapters to shape your story, and witness the power of self-awareness and growth when the veil of mystery is lifted.

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Chapter 7 Summary:

Chapter 7 Summary

In the early hours of the morning, a sense of unease pervades as the protagonist studies Ocean Haven, a once-grand house reminiscent of faded Hollywood glamour but now a neglected relic. This curiosity stems from the estate agent's website, despite a steep asking price that belies the house's dereliction. Legal ambiguities pique concern, as unresolved documents link her deceased mother to this enigmatic estate. As insomnia grips her, intensified by memories of her mother's tragic death, she becomes obsessed with uncovering connections to Ocean Haven, despite warnings from her friend Salina to stay away.

In an effort to unravel the truth, she searches for information on Mrs. Carol Shore, Robert Delbrook, and any signs of her mother's past connections, but the digital footprint proves elusive. The scarcity of information from decades ago leaves her frustrated. A past incident at Cliff Heights and a deceitful solicitor associated with the house's trust suggest something sinister. The protagonist's search extends to her mother's past, finding she led a life unrecorded by history, emphasizing the common stories of unsung women. In solitude, she applies her mother's lipstick, a poignant ritual that conjures a haunting apparition of her mother, prompting a whisper to the silent



reflection, "Who are you, Mum?" and "What were you doing at Ocean Haven?"

Chapter 8 Summary

The protagonist awakens in excruciating pain, a reflection of past trauma experienced by her mother, whose agony she once helplessly witnessed. The physical agony drags her back to memories of her mother, cared for by Salina in their father's absence. She emerges from her pain, haunted by the memory and with a chilling warning from her mother's ghostly presence: Ocean Haven is cursed and dangerous.

Despite facing fatigue and emotional turmoil, the protagonist resolves to uncover the truth about Ocean Haven, pursuing a lead from Mr. Hall, the estate agent, although previous interactions revealed the house is beyond her means. Undeterred, she feigns interest on behalf of a fictional developer client to secure a viewing of Ocean Haven, dodging Mr. Hall's polite resistance due to an existing offer from a couple. Overcoming these barriers, her resolve is driven by a connection through her brother-in-law, who knows the property's manager.

The chapter concludes with her determination setting her on a path to a nighttime viewing of Ocean Haven, a tangible step towards uncovering her



mother's past and confronting whatever dark legacy the house holds.

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Chapter 8:

Chapter 8 & 9 Summary:

Chapter 8:

The protagonist wakes in excruciating pain, confused and terrified by the foreign sensation overwhelming her body. The torment is so intense that it brings back haunting memories of her mother's own battles with pain, as witnessed during her childhood. In these memories, her sister Salina is seen comforting their mother with cool cloths and soothing music, highlighting Salina's bravery and compassion.

As the protagonist regains control and the pain subsides, she reflects on the facade she's maintained for years, hiding her true emotions from the world. Seeking solace, she visits the communal kitchen, where she imagines her mother preparing cocoa-tea. Her mother cryptically warns her about the danger of Ocean Haven, the house she is fixated on purchasing. The protagonist's resolve strengthens to pursue Ocean Haven, despite its dark reputation and being out of her budget. A call from Detective Craven interrupts her, updating her on an investigation regarding an attack on her father, a mystery that intertwines with her own story. Determined, the protagonist convinces Mr. Hall, the estate agent, to arrange a viewing of



Ocean Haven for her, using a white lie about acting on behalf of a developer client to gain access.

Chapter 9: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Marcia

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Chapter 9 Summary:

Chapter 9: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Marcia

Marcia sits in dread anticipation at the hospital, convinced she is dying as she faces the consultant whose demeanor suggests grave news. Her heart aches as she considers how to tell her children—Gabby, Salina, and Karl—that she is leaving them, haunted by the thought of their futures without her. However, contrary to her fears, the consultant tells her all tests came back negative. Her pain, he explains, is a phenomenon known to affect women at her age, linked to "phantom pain" as her body undergoes changes with tumultuous ovaries. Marcia feels embarrassed and shamed by the discussion of her private body parts in front of strangers. Her vivid memory of a late-night talk show discussing female anatomy reminds her of societal taboos surrounding women's health.

The doctor dismissively attributes her pain to delusions brought about by non-functioning ovaries, prescribing antidepressants and advising fresh air and relaxation—advice she finds patronizing and trivializing. Marcia, overwhelmed with disappointment, prepares to leave, feeling unheard and unsupported. Her pain is real, intensified by tensions with her controlling husband, Saul, especially after a recent confrontational incident. The situation feels futile, given their financial constraints and Saul's likely



refusal to fund private healthcare.

In a daze of suppressed tears, Marcia collides with a sickly-looking boy in the car park. He silently walks away, dropping a leaflet advertising Ocean Haven, a place claiming to heal minds to heal bodies, under the guidance of Dr. Vincent. This mysterious leaflet offers Marcia a glimmer of hope as she contemplates alternatives outside conventional medical avenues.

Chapter 10: Ocean Haven

Approaching Ocean Haven, the narrator describes the place as decrepit and haunting, nestled on an isolated and bleak coastline. Mr. Hall, the estate agent, tries to dissuade interest in the property, citing its exposed location and decay. Yet there's something compelling about Ocean Haven, despite its degenerated state—a once grand, now moth-eaten structure with abundant historical charm. The grounds are overgrown, revealing the passage of time and neglect, with lilies, mourning symbols, laid at the entrance with an enigmatic note addressed to "Mum."

Inside, the scene is equally dismal; the decay is pervasive with flaking walls and distressed furniture. The narrator feels a strong sense of disappointment, having hoped to uncover a connection to her late mother, who had ties to Ocean Haven a generation ago while she battled illness. The exploration of



each room reveals neglect, twisting architectural features, and a somber atmosphere dominated by soot-darkened fireplaces and deteriorating decor. In the main room, the darkened scarlet wallpaper and twisted elements evoke a morbid sense of history, as if the house itself quietly mourns its past.

The thought of a possible attic offers hope for undiscovered links, yet the access remains elusive. As night closes in, the outside conveys an eerie ambience complimented by silent ravens and storm clouds. Despite the superficial look, the narrator leaves feeling disconnected and unsettled, convinced that Ocean Haven still holds secrets tied to her mother's enigmatic past that need uncovering.

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Chapter 10 Summary:

Chapter 10 Summary:

In this chapter, Ms. Lewis and Mr. Hall stand before the dilapidated Ocean Haven, a once grand but now decaying house perched on a coastal incline, enveloped in an aura of gloom and neglect. Mr. Hall, the estate agent, attempts to dissuade Ms. Lewis from her interest in the property, pointing out its severe weather exposure and isolation. Despite its sorry state, the house was evidently imposing, built solidly from local stone and sitting amidst overgrown grounds.

As Ms. Lewis inspects the property, her interest is piqued by a bunch of fresh flowers near the gatepost, with a mysterious card attached reading, "To Mum. Always in my thoughts." Inside, the house mirrors its exterior disrepair with peeling walls, worn-out furniture, and creaky floors. Mr. Hall humorously nicknames the former morning room the "mourning room," its once vivid wallpaper stained and peeling, adding to the house's ghostly atmosphere.

While the house holds no visible connections to Ms. Lewis's mother, it does stir memories of her past and her mother's slow demise. Despite Mr. Hall's hesitance, Ms. Lewis notes the potential treasures an attic might hold—a



place where family secrets could linger. However, Mr. Hall insists on maintaining their brisk pace, further emphasizing the building's neglect.

Outside, the evening's shadows deepen, giving the place an even more ominous air. A group of silent ravens and a dysfunctional lamp add to the sense of desolation. Despite the inspection, Ms. Lewis leaves the property feeling unfulfilled and unsure of what she hoped to find.

Chapter 11 Summary:

Ms. Lewis visits her father in the hospital, showing him a security camera photo of a hooded suspect related to his recent attack. Her father dismisses the photo, and despite probing, doesn't offer any useful information about the assault. Frustrated, Ms. Lewis suspects he knows more than he's letting on, as a particular man's clothing bears resemblance to the attacker.

Later, Ms. Lewis seeks out her sister, Salina, whom she finds on the beach, busy with a photoshoot for her new product line, "Latte Loox." Despite Salina's busy schedule, Ms. Lewis confronts her about their mother and the mysterious house, Ocean Haven. Salina dismisses Ms. Lewis's inquiries about their mother's past, showing disdain for her sister's relentless search for answers.



During their conversation, the sisters' strained relationship becomes apparent. Salina hints at being the favored child, which leaves Ms. Lewis feeling distressed and questioning her identity. Despite Salina's advice to leave town and not let their father manipulate her back into the family home, Ms. Lewis is determined to uncover the truth about Ocean Haven and its link to their mother. However, the narrative remains fraught with unresolved tension as Ms. Lewis struggles to balance her past with her present challenges.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Pursuing mysteries of the past despite discouragement

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 10, you encounter a crucial moment as Ms. Lewis faces the dilapidated Ocean Haven, which resonates with her on a deeper level. While she is met with Mr. Hall's discouragement and many visible signs of decay, the chapter emphasizes her unwavering curiosity about the mysteries tied to her past, represented by the forlorn house. This narrative can resonate with your own life, inspiring you to pursue the undiscovered stories of your ancestry, heritage, or personal history despite facing obstacles or naysayers. Like Ms. Lewis, you may find that delving into the past, regardless of the challenges or disapproval from others, can lead to profound revelations and strengthen your sense of identity and purpose. Embrace the unknown and persevere, for the hidden treasures of family secrets or past experiences could illuminate aspects of your current life, guiding you toward a richer understanding of yourself and your place in the world.



Chapter 11 Summary:

Chapter 11 Summary

The chapter opens with Gabby visiting her father in the hospital, attempting to get his attention on a crucial matter. Detective Craven had sent a blurred security camera image of a suspect fleeing after attacking her father, but her father dismisses it, mocking the police investigation. Despite her probing, he denies recognizing the attacker, leading Gabby to suspect he's hiding the truth. There is a subtle implication that Gabby knows someone who fits the description of the attacker based on unique clothing, but she keeps this suspicion private.

Meanwhile, Gabby is eager to talk to her unresponsive sister, Salina. She eventually spots Salina on the esplanade, being photographed by a hipster for her new beauty product line, "Latte Loox." Salina's success in the beauty industry contrasts sharply with Gabby's lingering concerns about their troubled family past, particularly involving their mother and a mysterious house named Ocean Haven.

As they sit in a café, Gabby confronts Salina about their mother and the house. Salina dismisses her concerns, accusing Gabby of being overly inquisitive due to her education. Their conversation reveals tension rooted in



their family history, especially concerning their mother's affection and the mysterious Ocean Haven. The chapter ends with Salina advising Gabby to leave town before their father manipulates her into returning home permanently.

Chapter 12 Summary

Gabby delves deeper into the mystery surrounding Ocean Haven. She's unsettled by the death of Carol Shore, a young woman whose death certificate she scrutinizes at her desk. Carol died from trauma after falling from Cliff Heights near Ocean Haven, with suggestions it might have been suicide. Gabby contacts the law firm involved in the creation of the property's trust, uncovering a history of questionable dealings linked to the elusive Robert Delbrook, who initiated the trust.

The law firm recounts the controversy surrounding Delbrook, noting his dubious reputation and ultimate disappearance, officially declared dead. Disturbingly, Carol's son also died in the fall, adding another layer of tragedy to the property's history.

Gabby's investigation is interrupted by the abrupt appearance of Luke, her sister's husband, whose unusual behavior and attire raise alarms. She realizes he matches the description of her father's attacker. Luke forcibly drives Gabby out of town, leaving her fearing for her safety but also feeling



validated in her long-standing suspicions about him. As the chapter ends, Gabby contemplates her precarious position while navigating this complex web of family secrets and danger.

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Chapter 12:

Chapter 12 & 13 Summary:

The story unfolds as Gabby reviews the death certificate of Carol Shore, who died at the young age of 30 from a fall-related trauma near a property called Ocean Haven. Gabby ponders the mystery surrounding Carol's death, questioning whether it was an accident or deliberate, and if it is connected to the mysterious deaths linked to Ocean Haven.

As she tries to piece together the puzzle, Gabby's investigation is interrupted by her boss, Greg, who insists she finishes a property dispute file related to Ocean Haven. Intrigued, Gabby persists, contacting the law firm that managed the trust for Ocean Haven. She learns from the firm of the illicit dealings of a former partner who handled the trust, potentially connecting to a shady figure, Robert Delbrook, now believed dead, adding more layers to the mystery.

The plot thickens with the revelation that Carol's death, along with her son's, via a fall from cliffs near Ocean Haven, might not be accidental; suicide and even foul play are speculated. Gabby finds herself distracted by an update from Detective Craven, who is still on the case, and is conflicted about whether to involve the police with her suspicion that her brother-in-law Luke attacked her father.



Amidst these mysteries, Gabby's routine is violently disrupted when Luke, wearing the same style of trousers as her father's attacker, suddenly abducts her. Despite the frightening encounter, Luke's intentions become perplexing; he wants to "clear the air," suggesting his confrontation is not necessarily violent but confusing and intimidating. After calming down, Luke offers a surprising turn: he grants Gabby access to Ocean Haven, potentially to help her in her search for answers.

Once inside Ocean Haven, Gabby ventures into the mysterious attic, uncovering relics of a bygone time suggesting a commune-like past. Odd items, from routine chalkboards to peculiar gowns, hint at a deeper, maybe cult-like history within the house.

Chapter 13 zeroes in on Luke's aggressive confrontation with Gabby regarding her suspicions about him attacking her father. He vehemently denies the accusation, making Gabby question her certainty. Luke offers an olive branch of sorts by driving Gabby to Ocean Haven to explore the property further for clues related to her mother.

The chapter climaxes with Gabby exploring the cliffs near Ocean Haven, contemplating the unsteady and possibly dangerous terrain where Carol Shore met her end. As darkness falls, a sense of foreboding envelops her exploration. Gabby's suspicion of being watched heightens into near panic



until Luke reappears, pulling her back from a potentially fatal fall, embodying his duality of being both a perceived threat and unlikely savior, leaving Gabby questioning his true nature amidst her investigation.

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Chapter 13 Summary:

Chapter 13

This chapter delves into an intense confrontation between Gabby and Luke, which begins with Luke abruptly steering the car into a layby overlooking the sea. He is visibly angry about being accused of assaulting Gabby's father, a suspicion Gabby developed after questioning Salina, who informed Luke. Gabby is taken aback by his anger, which convinces her of his innocence, as truly guilty individuals would not display such genuine ire. Amidst apologies, Gabby realizes she owes Luke an apology herself for suspecting him without conclusive proof, though she points out he owes her one too for essentially kidnapping her. Luke reluctantly agrees he was wrong but hints at his intentions to help her, without initially elaborating.

As they drive to Ocean Haven, a house tied to mysterious circumstances surrounding Gabby's mother, Gabby is surprised by Luke's knowledge of her interest in the place, fueled by his wife's complaints. Once there, he surprisingly offers her the keys to explore, obtained through a friend managing the property who allowed him to borrow them. Eager, Gabby accepts the opportunity even if still processing being taken there against her will.



Ocean Haven is linked with lingering mysteries, such as frequent floral tributes laid out for a motherly figure and an old attic with secrets waiting to be uncovered. Within the historically rich house, she discovers a hidden staircase presumed to lead to old servants' quarters. Venturing into the attic alone after Luke shows her the way, she uncovers remnants of a bygone era, a possible commune, suggested by blackboards listing names that resemble flowers and fruits, and bundles of orange gowns. However, she doesn't find anything directly related to her search about her mother's past or Robert Delbrook.

Upon leaving the attic, Gabby asks Luke if he could arrange for more access to the house; Luke is optimistic he can oblige. As darkness sets in, Gabby's attention is drawn to a public footpath leading to 'Cliff Heights,' the site of a tragic fall involving Carol Shore and her son. Exploring the path, she encounters not just rigorous terrain but also fears someone lurking. As she nears the cliff's edge, she's startled by Luke's sudden appearance, his intentions misunderstood initially until his grip prevents her from losing her balance.

Chapter 14 (Twenty-Five Years Ago: Marcia)

This chapter transitions to a flashback where Marcia visits Ocean Haven. Marcia, struggling with unexplained pain that traditional medicine couldn't



heal, is inspired to visit Ocean Haven after finding a leaflet promising a holistic approach. The Victorian gothic house impresses her, contrasting with her fraught and noisy home life. Seeking respite and healing, she is welcomed by Dr. Vincent, a charismatic figure who offers solace and belief in her unseen pain, a validation she hasn't felt in ages.

Dr. Vincent's approach is unconventional, eschewing desks to promote openness and communication. The house, lined with his qualifications and brimming with tranquility, lures Marcia in, promising healing. During their conversation, she feels seen and empowered as more than just her roles of mother and wife, recognized instead for her individuality and strength.

Despite the prohibitive costs of treatment, Dr. Vincent insists they find an amiable solution, indicating monetary concerns should not impede her healing journey.

Upon leaving, Marcia is unnerved by the presence of women in orange gowns high in the trees, a surreal addition linked to Ocean Haven's mysterious ethos of healing and anonymity. Dr. Vincent explains the nomenclature as a way to honor nature and cultivate trust rather than rely on traditional medicine. As Marcia departs, an emerging sense of inclusion in this unconventional community tugs at her curiosity, though questions about the commune's nature and its secrets still loom large.



Chapter 14 Summary:

Chapter 14 Summary:

Twenty-five years ago, Marcia visits Ocean Haven, a grand Victorian gothic house promising an unconventional healing approach led by Dr. Vincent Fortune. Drawn by a leaflet she found in a hospital car park, Marcia hopes Dr. Vincent can help her with the pain that conventional doctors dismiss. As she approaches Ocean Haven, she is both mesmerized and curious about its serene surroundings, which starkly contrast the shack at the property's edge.

Inside, Dr. Vincent, without barriers like desks, presents a welcoming environment filled with plants, sunlight, and certificates. He listens intently as Marcia, comforted by the lack of judgment, pours out her heart about her chronic pain. Dr. Vincent assures her of belief and a commitment to healing, emphasizing the mind-body connection. Although discouraged by the treatment costs, Marcia finds solace when Vincent insists that money won't hinder her healing.

Wondering why Ocean Haven seems devoid of people, Marcia learns that it mainly caters to women like herself. As Marcia departs, she encounters seven women perched in trees, dressed uniformly in orange gowns. Known by names inspired by nature rather than their given names for anonymity and



connection to nature, they reinforce Ocean Haven's holistic approach. This experience, paired with Dr. Vincent's assurances, leaves Marcia with renewed hope and an inkling of self-worth beyond her roles as wife and mother.

Chapter 15 Summary:

In present-day, Gabrielle feels unsettled at work, concealing her tiredness with her late mother's lipstick. Her supervisor, Greg, confronts her about unauthorized searches related to Ocean Haven, putting her job at risk. Despite Greg's reprimand, Gabrielle persists with her investigation, driven by the mysterious connection between her mother's name and Ocean Haven.

Gabrielle meets Craven, a police officer, to discuss her father's assault. Craven reveals the suspect, initially thought to be a stockjobber, isn't white as first assumed and is instead linked to past murder investigations. While Gabrielle secretly recognizes the man, she conceals this from Craven, promising herself to unravel the mystery independently.

Realizing there might be a connection between her father's assault and Ocean Haven, Gabrielle takes a bold step. She impersonates a detective inspector over the phone to obtain the suspect's address from the police, despite knowing the risks involved. This determination is fueled by a need to



uncover the possible links between her mother's past, her father's recent attack, and Ocean Haven's dark secrets.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Belief in one's self and accessing resources that believe in you can drive healing.

Critical Interpretation: There are moments in life when you feel unheard, underseen, or even dismissed, especially in times of struggle. Marcia's journey in Chapter 14 offers a reassuring reminder that just around the corner might exist a place or a person who acknowledges your pain and believes in your potential for healing and growth. By stepping into Ocean Haven, she finds more than a sanctuary; she finds validation, a glimmer of understanding, and most importantly, an assurance that belief isn't out of reach. This scenario teaches us that seeking environments where faith in our journey is nurtured can be a stepping stone towards healing and achieving more than what roles in life have boxed us into. Embracing spaces that resonate with our intrinsic value opens paths to self-discovery and renewal, powering us to transcend pain and conventional expectations.



Chapter 15 Summary:

Chapter 15 & 16 Summary

Gabrielle walks into work feeling exhausted and off-balance due to a sleepless night caused by her upsetting discovery about Ocean Haven—a property entangling her deceased mother's name. At work, she faces her boss, Greg, who expresses frustration over her distraction from assigned tasks. Amidst Greg's criticism, Gabrielle resolves to continue her personal inquiry discreetly. Holding a photograph of Ocean Haven, she wonders about her mother's connection to the place.

A call from Detective Craven interrupts her thoughts, revealing a breakthrough in her father's assault case. Gabrielle meets Craven, eager for answers, yet finds herself sparring with the detective over minor points, a dynamic akin to close friends clashing yet caring. Craven informs her that the suspect is a wealthy man in London, hinting at possible investment-related ties to Gabrielle's father, but the mention of Ocean Haven piques Gabrielle's curiosity further. The suspect, however, is not who Gabrielle initially imagined him to be, creating a swirl of confusion and unresolved tension.

After Craven departs, Gabrielle takes an unauthorized step to secure the



suspect's address, disguising her identity to extract information over the phone. Though she doesn't get a name, obtaining the address sets her on a path demanding immediate action.

Arriving at a lavish address in London, Gabrielle is shocked to see her estranged brother, Karl, emerging from the house, looking distinctly different—transformed from a troubled youth into a refined, wealthy individual. Gabrielle's confrontation with Karl is loaded with tension, a familial estrangement underscoring their interaction. Their exchange, laced with past grievances and unresolved pain, reveals Karl's hardened demeanor and defensive stance against Gabrielle's inquiries about their father and Ocean Haven.

Inside Karl's upscale residence, Gabrielle battles her emotions while attempting to reconnect and understand her brother's enigmatic lifestyle. Her questions about their past and their family's tangled history are met with anger and defiance from Karl, who confronts her with his own unresolved resentments.

Overpowered by his furious rejection, Gabrielle leaves, her pursuit of answers only intensifying as she contemplates the hidden ties binding her family's past with the unfolding mysteries of Ocean Haven and her father's assault. Standing at a crossroads, she acknowledges the unraveling of family secrets as both a torment and an urgent necessity, pushing her deeper into



tangled truths she can no longer ignore.

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Chapter 16:

Chapter 16 Summary:

The protagonist, Gabby, arrives at a lavish London address she obtained under false pretenses, only to find her estranged brother Karl living there. Shocked by his transformation from a troubled youth to a seemingly successful young man, Gabby struggles with memories of their past. Karl was once deemed a "bad egg" in their community, often in trouble with the law, leading Gabby to distance herself while pursuing her law studies. Karl greets her with a tense awkwardness, and they are soon joined by his glamorous girlfriend, Jasmin.

Inside Karl's luxurious apartment, tension escalates as they converse on the rooftop terrace. Gabby, fueled by her recent conversations with Detective Craven, questions Karl about an attack on their father. Karl deflects, expressing sarcasm about their father's parenting, yet insists he never attacked him. Gabby realizes Craven had earlier accused Karl of murder as a child—an event that had loomed over their family for years, though it was never proven.

Gabby hints at their mother's involvement with a trust for a house on the coast shortly before her death, igniting Karl's fury. Karl's anger explodes,



leaving Gabby feeling alienated and rejected. Despite Jasmin's attempts to calm him, Karl demands that Gabby leaves, insisting she is unwelcome and should never return.

Chapter 17 Summary: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Marcia

The narrative shifts back 25 years to Marcia, Gabby and Karl's mother, who hears a scream while preparing her children for school. Marcia is initially in a rare moment of peace, possibly relieved of pain by Dr. Vincent Fortune's supposed healing touch. However, the scream disrupts everything. She rushes to her neighbors, Jenny and Fred's house, to discover Fred has been brutally murdered.

Jenny is distraught, revealing that Fred's valuable coin collection was stolen, leading her to believe it was a burglary gone wrong. Marcia, worried, recalls Fred's fondness for young Karl, who was privy to the secret of the coin collection. As she reassures Jenny, Marcia's thoughts turn to Saul, her abusive husband, whose disdain for Karl adds to her distress.

Marcia confronts Karl, who denies involvement, though her fears for him and her distrust of Saul linger. Memories of Saul's oppressive behavior surface, illustrating the marital strife she endured. Despite Saul's menacing demeanor, Marcia defends Karl fiercely. The chapter closes ominously as



police arrive to question Karl about the crime, suggesting turmoil and suspicion will soon engulf the family.

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Chapter 17 Summary:

Chapter 17 - Twenty-Five Years Ago: Marcia

In a quiet neighborhood, Marcia's serene morning is shattered by a piercing scream just as she's prepping lunchboxes for her children. The tranquil street was jolted by the sound, marking a drastic breach in its usual calm. Marcia recalled her recent encounter with Dr. Vincent Fortune at Ocean Haven, where his touch seemingly dispelled her chronic pain, reminiscent of her grandmother's vivid church experiences where divine interventions caused convulsions in the congregation.

Marcia rushes to her neighbor Jenny's house to find her friend bloodstained and in shock, unable to articulate what happened. Guiding Jenny inside, Marcia learns from her fragmented words that her husband Fred, a beloved craftsman with an endearing relationship with Marcia's son Karl, lies motionless in his workspace. Marcia, cautiously opening the door, is horrified to find Fred's lifeless, bloodied body.

As police fill the street, Jenny laments the loss of Fred, theorizing a burglary gone wrong as his coin collection is missing. This secretive collection, known only to a few including Karl, deepens Marcia's concern. As Marcia reassures Jenny and the children, memories of her tumultuous marriage to



Saul surface, highlighting the psychological control he exerted over her, often timed to domestic chores.

Marcia confronts Saul's disdain for Karl, defending her son while recalling how Fred served as a father figure to him. In her son's room, Karl, holding a penknife gifted by Fred, confirms the tragic news, denying any theft involvement. Marcia's relief is palpable as she comforts her weeping son, but her relief is short-lived.

Two days later, the police return, signaling a deepening investigation that now involves questioning young Karl about the crime next door.

Chapter 18

Years later, the narrator returns to her mother's house, a place heavily connected to her brother Karl, who reacted vehemently when she mentioned it earlier. Despite her sacrifices in raising Karl after their mother's death, there's underlying resentment from both her siblings, leading her to seek answers within the house.

She enters through a window she left ajar, and while the house looms with an ominous presence, she is determined to uncover what Karl might be



hiding. Checking her phone, she gives herself a tight window to search, heading to the attic where she previously found an orange dress—all perhaps relics of their mother's connection to the house.

As memories of the house mingle with the present, the oppressive atmosphere is both physically chilling and emotionally intimidating. Amidst the decaying structure, a vision of her mother surfaces, offering cryptic comfort. Her mother reminisces about Trinidad and moments of solace found within the house, alluding to unknown helpers who once restored her peace.

The vision fades, leaving the narrator emotionally drained. But her exploration uncovers carved letters in wood—a name that cements the house's connection to Karl and potentially ties back to the tumultuous events unfolding years prior: the death of Fred and the unresolved, secret threads linked to her family.



Chapter 18 Summary:

Chapter 18 Summary

The protagonist returns to her late mother's house, driven by a need to uncover secrets linking it to her brother, Karl. Her journey from London is filled with emotional turmoil, particularly due to feeling betrayed by Karl, whom she raised like a son after their mother's death. Despite her anger and resentment, she also acknowledges her efforts to support her siblings from afar. Her determination to discover what Karl has been hiding leads her to sneak into the vast, cold, and eerie house. In the attic, she encounters a vision of her mother, who, dressed in a peaceful orange gown, reminisces about their past life in Trinidad. Her mother hints at finding solace in the house but vanishes before revealing more. Frustrated and exhausted, the protagonist stumbles upon Karl's name crudely carved into the wood, indicating his connection to the house.

Chapter 19 Summary

The protagonist sits on a rock near the beach by her mother's house, feeling isolated and troubled, when her sister, Salina, arrives. Their relationship bears the scars of childhood rivalry, but Salina's embrace offers comfort. The protagonist admits to Salina that she found their brother Karl in London and believes he attacked their father. Salina, surprisingly unfazed, explains that



Karl had been mentored by her acquaintance, Luke, who once aided young offenders. This revelation reshapes the protagonist's view of Luke. The sisters agree to investigate the house's connection to their family and the mysterious carving of Karl's name they discovered.

Their father, hospitalized after the attack, remains a source of tension and manipulation, a reminder of their challenging past. Despite their father's denial, the protagonist confronts him about Karl's attack and the house. A fierce argument ensues, and the protagonist watches as their father collapses in a coughing fit, illustrating his frailty. With tempers high, Detective Craven confronts the protagonist about pretending to be a police officer during her investigation into her father's assault. Despite the tension, the protagonist feels a strange bond with Craven. As Craven warns her of potential charges, she grapples with her suspicions tying Karl, the mysterious house, and her family together, left alone in the hospital's stark corridor.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Confronting Past Traumas

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 18, the protagonist's journey to uncover family secrets by visiting her late mother's house highlights the significance of confronting past traumas to heal and gain clarity. This reflects the importance of facing one's own inner struggles and pain, rather than avoiding them, to achieve personal growth and transformation. Applying this to your life, consider revisiting unresolved issues from your past with courage and an open mind. Acknowledge the emotions tied to these experiences and allow yourself to introspect, as this could unravel truths that lead to understanding and peace, much like how the protagonist finds solace in her mother's ephemeral presence.

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Chapter 19 Summary:

Chapter 19 Summary:

Gabby is at a beach near her late mother's house in Tinfields, where she meets her sister, Salina. Despite their childhood rivalry, Salina is surprisingly supportive, hugging Gabby when she feels vulnerable. Gabby reveals that she discovered their brother Karl was the one who attacked their father. This revelation leads to Salina confessing that she knew where Karl was because her boyfriend Luke, who secretly helps young offenders like Karl, had helped him. They discuss the mysterious house their mother was involved with, raising suspicions about a family secret linked to the house, Ocean Haven.

Later, at the hospital, Gabby and Salina visit their ailing father. He blames and belittles Salina, repeating his cruel behaviors from their childhood. Gabby stands up for her sister, showcasing their complicated family dynamics. During their conversation, Gabby learns her father felt proud of her achievements, yet their relationship remains strained. She confronts him about Karl's attack, suspecting a connection to their mother's house, but their father denies knowing anything, his anger only intensifying Gabby's suspicions.



The tension escalates when Detective Craven arrives, accusing Gabby of impersonating a police officer. She admits her actions were to uncover the truth about her father's assault but is puzzled when Craven reveals he had already questioned Karl. The detective's decision to potentially press charges leaves Gabby worried about the consequences of her actions, while the mysterious nature of Ocean Haven looms over her investigation.

Chapter 20 Summary (Flashback 25 Years Ago):

The chapter shifts to 25 years earlier, focusing on Marcia, Gabby's mother, as she visits Ocean Haven—a place promising women a life free from pain. Marcia is drawn to the community, led by Dr. Vincent, who provides her relief and acceptance despite society labeling her as delusional. She brings her son Karl along, seeking solace after the traumatic events following their neighbor Fred's murder, a crime for which Karl was innocently questioned.

At Ocean Haven, the women are involved in what Marcia perceives as an unusual ritual focused on reviving the essence of women's wombs, led by Dr. Vincent. Though the scenario is intense and mystifying, Marcia is comforted by her new name, Honeysuckle, and finds hope and belonging among the women.

Meanwhile, Karl exhibits signs of distress and detachment, a result of the



societal and familial pressures he faces. His experience at Ocean Haven offers no clarity, particularly when Marcia encounters a silent, haunting boy near a mysterious shack, hinting at deeper secrets within Ocean Haven.

As Marcia leaves, she feels rejuvenated but remains torn about the peculiar experience and the possible implications for her son Karl. Ocean Haven's mysterious allure and unsettling atmosphere linger in her mind as she departs, marking the beginning of a haunting legacy tied to her family's future.

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Chapter 20:

Chapter 20: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Marcia

Marcia, seeking solace from her pain after Fred's death, arrives at Ocean Haven, a sanctuary led by Dr. Vincent where women adopt new identities to heal from past traumas. She's welcomed by Buttercup, one of the residents, who emphasizes the haven's goal of helping women grow without pain. Marcia, accompanied by her son Karl, reflects on how the police investigation into Fred's murder left them both traumatized, particularly Karl, who reverted to a withdrawn state that concerns her greatly.

At Ocean Haven, she feels comforted by Dr. Vincent, who assures her of her worth as a mother. Karl is settled with refreshments as Marcia prepares for her first treatment, donning the orange gown like the others. In the healing room, surrounded by women in similar attire, Marcia nervously participates in a ritual intended to 'awaken' her womb, a concept Dr. Vincent passionately preaches about as the core of a woman's identity and power.

The ritual, characterized by loud screaming and chanting, overwhelms her, but Marcia allows herself to be swept up in the experience, recalling the pain and joy of childbirth. Dr. Vincent bestows upon Marcia a new name, Honeysuckle, symbolizing sweetness and affection, bringing about applause



from the room. Marcia feels a sense of rejuvenation, although unsure of the complete disappearance of her pain.

Outside, confronted by Karl about the unusual sounds from the ceremony, Marcia urges secrecy about their visit. As they prepare to leave, she notices a pale, silent boy who had previously given her an Ocean Haven leaflet. The boy is led away by an older woman, and though intrigued by the strange aura surrounding him and the mysterious shack he stood near, Marcia dismisses it as imagination before heading home.

Chapter 21

Back in the present, the protagonist struggles with physical ailments and memories tied to her turbulent history with Ocean Haven. A phone call about Robert Delbrook—linked to Ocean Haven's administrative trust—interrupts her misery, alerting her to his possible sighting in Utah but offering no further insights. Delbrook is revealed to have orchestrated a sham ownership of Ocean Haven, using her late mother's unwitting cooperation to become its sole proprietor. This discovery, coupled with her deteriorating state, sends her into a daze, leading to her collapse outside her workplace.

Detective Craven arrives to assist her, displaying concern in an unexpected



encounter. When she adamantly refuses an ambulance, Craven insists on escorting her to her doctor. On the way, the protagonist confides in Craven about how returning to Tinfields and confronting her past is emotionally overwhelming. Their exchange reveals shared feelings of displacement and brokenness.

At the doctor's office, Dr. Morris's gentle manner helps ease her anxieties. Despite past experiences with medical professionals dismissing concerns as psychological, Dr. Morris reassures her commitment to a thorough diagnostic process. The encounter leaves her more relaxed, but soon finds out about an urgent police matter at Ocean Haven, hinting at further complications intertwined with her history.

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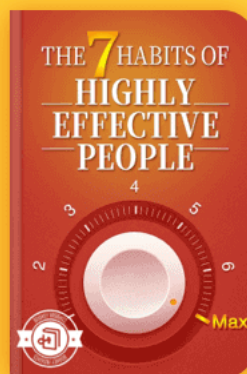
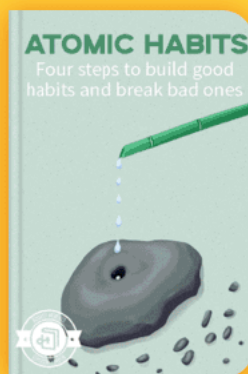
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Chapter 21 Summary:

Chapter 21 Summary

The protagonist returns to their desk feeling utterly exhausted and burdened by a persistent stomach ache reminiscent of walking on hot coals. Yearning for relief, such as a bottle of Dad's ginger beer, the protagonist receives a call from a solicitor representing the trust that once managed Ocean Haven. The caller mentions a sighting of Robert Delbrook in Utah, an unlikely development given past elusive rumors. Despite feeling unwell, the protagonist struggles to understand the paperwork concerning Ocean Haven, eventually uncovering a deeply buried sub-paragraph 7E, which wasn't immediately visible. This reveals that Robert Delbrook, a cunning manipulator, would inherit Ocean Haven once the trust dissolved after two years. Overwhelmed, the protagonist seeks air but collapses outside.

Upon waking, they find Detective Craven nearby, who informs them an ambulance is on its way. Embarrassed and surrounded by onlookers, the protagonist insists on visiting their doctor instead. Craven offers to drive them. During the drive, the protagonist admits that returning to the town of Tinfields, filled with difficult memories, exacerbates their condition. Craven shares his own troubled memories, creating a bond between them as Craven drives them to the doctor's office.



At Dr. Morris's office, the protagonist recounts their symptoms, fearing a dismissal similar to their late mother's experience. Dr. Morris assures them that he will take their pain seriously and orders a comprehensive set of tests. Leaving the office, the protagonist learns from the receptionist that Craven has been called away for a police matter at Ocean Haven.

Chapter 22 Summary

Arriving at Ocean Haven, the protagonist is taken aback by a bustling crime scene active with police officers and forensic teams. The focus of the investigation is a recently uncovered corpse discovered by builders on site. The protagonist suspects the body might belong to Robert Delbrook and attempts to blend into the scene by feigning a role as an official.

Tension heightens as Salina, the protagonist's sister, arrives with her husband, Luke, revealing that they recently purchased Ocean Haven. Ignorant of the builders' plans, Salina chastises Luke over the unauthorized construction work. Their argument escalates in front of Craven, who insists on their respect for the ongoing police investigation. Salina's fury culminates in her leaving, threatening divorce, leaving Luke to face the aftermath with the police.

Inside the house, the protagonist confronts Luke about his secrecy over



purchasing the property, realizing that his earlier excuses were a cover-up for his dealings. When the protagonist sneaks upstairs, Craven reveals the potential identity of the remains—Robert Delbrook, who operated under several aliases, including Vincent Fortune. The chapter closes with Craven hinting at more revelations to come, asking the protagonist to meet him to discuss further insights into the case.

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Chapter 22 Summary:

Chapter 22

Arriving at Ocean Haven, I am confronted with a chaotic crime scene bustling with police activity, indicating something serious has occurred. A sense of foreboding fills the air as I observe the forensic team focusing on a recently excavated area where a building once stood. Suspicion arises about who the buried victim might be, and I suspect it could be Robert Delbrook, a man who vanished long ago, though I hold back from informing the authorities. Suddenly, Craven, someone known to me, appears and questions my presence. Our exchange is interrupted by Salina, my sister, arriving in a huff and making a surprising declaration about owning Ocean Haven. Craven attempts to prevent her entry, revealing that a grave was found containing a bullet casing. The revelation stirs questions about Salina and her husband Luke's connection to this mystery. Amidst their marital spat, it becomes clear Luke was the real estate buyer, using information from his friend to acquire the property. As a result, he and Salina are drawn into the investigation due to the grim discovery on their land.

Inside the house, I discover Craven, who hints that the victim might be someone with multiple identities, one of which is known as Vincent Fortune. This revelation alludes to deeper secrets tied to Ocean Haven. Craven



proposes a meeting to discuss further, suggesting there is much more to uncover about the identity of the deceased and his connection to the property.

Chapter 23: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Marcia

Marcia, a woman seeking relief from chronic pain, participates in unorthodox treatments at Ocean Haven, led by the enigmatic Dr. Vincent. Despite some eccentric methods, she is committed to healing, secretly attending sessions under the guise of hospital visits, keeping her husband Saul and children unaware. Marcia befriends Buttercup, sensing underlying tensions in her new acquaintance. An unsettling silence falls when Carol and her son Jamie arrive, their haunted appearances hinting at greater troubles.

Raspberry, a fellow patient, introduces them, yet Carol and Jamie remain silent, adding to Marcia's confusion about their presence. An accidental reference to an earlier encounter causes Carol distress, leaving Marcia perplexed about her reaction. As Dr. Vincent arrives, he subtly reminds Marcia about patient confidentiality and the sensitivity of interactions among clients, leading to Carol's abrupt departure with him for a private session. Carol's struggle and Jamie's anxious behavior highlight underlying issues, unsettling Marcia further.



Marcia later observes Vincent escorting Carol to a mysterious shack, hearing groans reminiscent of earlier suspicion, intensifying her curiosity and concern. Upon leaving, she discovers a cryptic note in her bag reading "HELP US," escalating her unease about the true nature of the treatments and the safety of those involved at Ocean Haven.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Unraveling Hidden Truths

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 22 of 'Believe Me,' you are immersed into a world of mystery and tension as unexpected discoveries about a familiar location, Ocean Haven, push characters to confront secrets long hidden. This chapter teaches us the significance of patience and persistence in unraveling hidden truths, urging us to face our own realities honestly and without fear. Ocean Haven symbolizes the layers of our own lives, where truths are often buried under years of silence and ignorance. By drawing courage from this narrative, you can challenge yourself to explore underlying truths in your own life's circumstances—be it in relationships, personal growth, or unresolved issues. Embrace the journey of discovery and let it guide you towards clarity and authenticity, recognizing that each revelation has the potential to transform your understanding and inspire positive actions.

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Chapter 23 Summary:

Chapter 23: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Marcia

The story flashes back to Marcia, who is immersed in a unique healing community for women suffering from chronic pain, led by Dr. Vincent at Ocean Haven. The treatments, though unconventional, offer her hope of recovery, especially as she desires to restore her reproductive health. Despite her husband Saul's disapproval, Marcia secretly attends these sessions, hopeful for a cure.

At Ocean Haven, Marcia befriends Buttercup and meets other women undergoing treatment, some staying in the facility. During a tea gathering, a mysterious woman named Carol Shore and her son Jamie arrive, silencing the room with their unsettling presence. Marcia attempts to befriend them, only to trigger a distressed reaction from Carol.

As Dr. Vincent, a charismatic and enigmatic figure, steps in, it becomes clear that Carol's treatment is unique and isolated. Marcia becomes suspicious as she watches Carol be led into a locked shack by Vincent, remaining inside while he exits alone. Her concerns intensify when she later discovers a note in her belongings with the message "HELP US," hinting at something sinister at Ocean Haven.



Chapter 24: Present Day - Gabrielle

Gabrielle wakes from a nightmare about being buried alive, intertwined with memories of a body found at Ocean Haven. This leads her to question if her mother was involved in the potential murder linked to Ocean Haven's dark past.

Later, Gabrielle meets with Craven, a persistent detective with whom she shares a rocky yet symbiotic relationship. He reveals that Robert Delbrook, also known as Dr. Vincent Fortune, was a fraudster once operating as a doctor at Ocean Haven. Delbrook's scams exploited women seeking cures, leaving Gabrielle to wonder if her mother fell victim.

Craven and Gabrielle form a tentative alliance to unravel the mysteries surrounding Delbrook's skeletal remains found at Ocean Haven and the ties that bind them to the past. As they connect the dots, Craven urges Gabrielle to explore her brother-in-law Luke's recent purchase of Ocean Haven, suggesting potential hidden motives.

The investigation picks up pace, leading Gabrielle back to her family ties and the missing pieces of the puzzle. As they part ways, Gabrielle receives a text about her pending test results, leaving her anxiously pondering the



revelations yet to come.

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Chapter 24:

Chapter 24 Summary:

Gabrielle Lewis wakes up terrified, hallucinating that she is being buried alive by her mother at Ocean Haven, where the remains of Robert Delbrook, also known as Vincent Fortune, were discovered. Gabrielle is haunted by the implication that her mother might have been involved in Delbrook's murder.

Later that morning, she meets with Detective Craven at a cafe, a regular meeting spot for them. Craven, aware of Gabrielle's inquiries into Ocean Haven, suggests they work together to uncover the truth. He reveals that Delbrook, a disbarred doctor notorious for conning people with fake medical remedies, had ties to Ocean Haven. Gabrielle wonders if her mother was one of Delbrook's victims and worries about how her mother's name ended up on the property's trust documents.

Craven confides in Gabrielle about his attempts to track down Delbrook and shares his belief, based on evidence like a green bow tie, that the discovered remains are his. He emphasizes the importance of finding justice for Delbrook's victims and urges Gabrielle to examine her connection to Ocean Haven more closely, suspecting there might be more to discover about her family history.



Their partnership strengthened, Craven uses pieces of paper to jot down key points in their investigation, placing Gabrielle's brother-in-law, Luke, as a potential suspect due to acquiring Ocean Haven recently. As they wrap up their discussion, Craven invites Gabrielle to dinner, stressing it's only to discuss the case.

As Gabrielle processes the day's events, her meeting ends with an unsettling text message indicating her medical test results are ready.

Chapter 25 Summary:

Gabrielle, still haunted by the specter of her mother, arrives at the doctor's office for her results. Her mother's imagined voice warns her against intrusive medical procedures, but Gabrielle shrugs off these fears and confronts Dr. Steven Morris.

Dr. Morris assures Gabrielle that while her tests returned negative results, her symptoms are real, and her condition is not dismissed. Gabrielle, overwhelmed, confesses her deep fear of dying young like her mother did, a fear which has led her to push away loved ones. Dr. Morris offers understanding, sharing that such anxiety can be normal, especially when one approaches the age at which a parent died.



Gabrielle reveals the frightening grip of her anxiety, how it once kept her housebound. She moved back to her hometown of Tinfields to reconnect with her mother's memory, though her symptoms have since worsened, mimicking her mother's illness. Dr. Morris plans to refer her to a specialist for further tests, reassuring her that they will figure out the root cause of her ailments.

As Gabrielle prepares to leave, Dr. Morris double-checks her details, leaving her with the unnerving sense that her last name might sway her fate in unexpected ways.

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Chapter 25 Summary:

Chapter 25 Summary:

As the protagonist stands at the entrance of the doctor's office, she imagines her deceased mother beside her, instilling fear by warning her against allowing any invasive procedures. This maternal presence symbolizes her internal conflict, reflecting anxiety and distrust in medical professionals. Despite her mother's cautions, she decides to trust logic and enters the office to meet Dr. Steven Morris. She confronts him directly, expressing her fear of any drastic treatment, but Dr. Morris, appearing perplexed by her assumption, reassures her that he intends no harm.

The protagonist is haunted by symptoms that mirror those suffered by her late mother before her death. She confesses this fear of dying young, plagued by the same condition, feeling a haunting dread. Dr. Morris listens empathetically and assures her that such anxieties are common, especially as people approach the age when their parents passed away, which brings some relief. She reveals a past decision to break up with her boyfriend at thirty-nine, to spare him the potential grief of her anticipated death at the age of forty, her mother's age of death.

The protagonist explains that she hasn't shared her condition with another



doctor before because it was rooted in anxiety rather than physical symptoms until recently. Dr. Morris acknowledges her fears as understandable, but he decides to refer her to a specialist for further tests, emphasizing that he believes she is genuinely ill and is determined to discover the cause and help her. This chapter uncovers a poignant glimpse into the protagonist's mind, revealing her struggle between fear, logic, and the hope for answers.

Chapter 26 Summary:

Twenty-Five Years Ago, Marcia

Marcia reflects on a cryptic note she received a week ago, a desperate plea for help from a woman named Carol. It troubles Marcia deeply, especially as she considers the implications for Carol and her son, who are in some sort of peril. Conflicted about involving the police due to doubts they might have about her credibility, and worried about the potential consequences for Dr. Vincent, who had only shown her kindness, Marcia decides to handle the situation herself.

Marcia travels to Ocean Haven, a retreat run by Dr. Vincent, where Carol and her son also reside. Trying to remain unnoticed, she arrives early with a



plan to confront Carol about the note. Her exploration of the house reveals that Carol and her son are living in quarters on the top floors, a revelation that piques Marcia's curiosity and concern.

Her attempt to ascend to these private quarters is intercepted by an angry Dr. Vincent, who questions her presence. Quick to improvise, Marcia mentions she was looking to give toys to Carol's son. Dr. Vincent's demeanor shifts to unexpected generosity as he discusses Marcia's debts, reassuring her of his support, which only further entrenches Marcia's feelings of gratitude and confusion over the note.

As Marcia leaves, she witnesses Vincent leading a frail Carol toward a shed, reigniting her suspicions. Acting on impulse, she sneaks to the back of the shack, discovering Carol blindfolded and bound in a position reminiscent of torture. Carol pleads for Marcia's help to escape, urging her to meet on Thursday for a rescue. This encounter reveals the extent of Carol's desperation and solidifies Marcia's commitment to help, despite the looming threat and ambiguity surrounding Vincent's true intentions.



Chapter 26 Summary:

Chapter 26 Summary: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Marcia

Marcia finds a chilling note saying "HELP US" in her bag and can only surmise it was slipped in by Carol, a young mother she met at Ocean Haven—a retreat run by the seemingly benevolent Dr. Vincent. She wrestles with whether to involve the police, fearing they wouldn't take her seriously and worried about causing issues for Vincent, who has been nothing but kind to her.

Marcia becomes suspicious of Nancy and her son's peculiar behavior at the retreat, questioning whether they may be elective mutes—a subject she'd seen in a documentary years ago. Driven by a mix of concern and fear, Marcia decides to confront Carol directly during her next visit to the retreat.

During her visit, Marcia learns more unsettling things: Carol and her son live upstairs, which Marcia hadn't known was possible as she believed it to be Vincent's property. Vincent confronts Marcia when he finds her exploring areas she shouldn't be in but treats her kindly, excusing her actions and asking her to sign a waiver for her services—seeming to confirm his generous nature.



However, as she prepares to leave, Marcia's concerns surmount when she witnesses Vincent guiding a frail Carol to the shed, locking it tightly. Sneaking back, Marcia peeks inside and sees Carol in a distressing, restrained position which reminds her of torture scenes she'd seen in documentaries. Confirming the plea for help, Carol asks Marcia to aid in their escape. Troubled by the implications but determined to help, Marcia agrees to devise a plan.

Chapter 27 Summary

As the story unfolds, Gabby is at her upset sister Salina's house following a blow-up involving the retreat, Ocean Haven, and its new owner, Salina's husband Luke. Gabby is on a mission to uncover if Luke holds any history with the mysterious and troubled haven as instructed by Craven, her investigator partner. Salina, engulfed in frustration at being made a fool of by Luke, reveals the roots of her anger not only lie in financial deceit but in the emotional baggage associated with Ocean Haven.

While they speak, Salina shares Luke's personal statement, shedding light on his determination and background. Salina mocks his sentimental attachment to Ocean Haven, believing it's another one of his financial ventures rather



than any family connection Gabby hopes to unearth, advising caution given the recent discovery of a body on the site.

Gabby's quest continues to Ocean Haven itself, now a crime scene with a tense history hanging over it, including the mysterious murder victim. She encounters Luke, who's repairing damage done by police searches. Their discussion unveils Luke's genuine passion for restoration and property, his ambition extending beyond the realm of speculation towards a deeply personal redemption story tied to his late mother's legacy of respect and kindness—a story that surprises Gabby as she hasn't seen this side of him.

Facing her dilemma of needing a place to stay and her desire to further investigate the secrets lurking in Ocean Haven, Gabby cleverly persuades Luke to allow her temporary residency in the disheveled property. As Luke leaves, expressing his committed love for Salina and a veiled warning not to drag old family issues back into their lives, Gabby prepares to navigate the mysteries and truths that lie within Ocean Haven.

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Chapter 27 Summary:

In Chapter 27, Gabby attempts to mend bridges with her estranged sister, Salina, who remains upset after a fallout involving their shared investigation at Ocean Haven. She finds Salina barricaded behind multiple locks, wary that Gabby might be accompanied by Luke, her husband. Despite this, Salina lets Gabby in but reveals her anger towards Luke, who bought the mysterious Ocean Haven property without her knowledge. Salina believes there is more to his motivations, possibly linked to his troubled past as an orphan. They discuss Luke's dubious past and the prospect of selling Ocean Haven for profit. Gabby, sympathetically concerned for Salina, reveals her own need for housing after her rental lease expires. Salina offers to take her in, but Gabby decides to find her own place. The sisters share a rare moment of affection, exchanging gifts, indicating a deepening bond.

From Salina's, Gabby heads back to Ocean Haven, where the aftermath of a police investigation into a found body is evident. The house is in disarray as the police have left no stone unturned. Luke is repairing a lock when Gabby arrives and assures her that, despite the current rift, he and Salina will reconcile. Luke shares insights on his love for properties, seemingly stemming from childhood experiences. He recounts buying the home of his mother's former employers—a symbolic win over past hardships. Gabby decides to move into Ocean Haven, partly for investigation purposes, and Luke offers her the keys, cautioning her about the eerie isolation and safety



concerns of the house. Despite its past, Gabby feels rooted in the mystery surrounding the property and its connection to her and Salina's late mother.

In Chapter 28, Gabby moves into Ocean Haven, the vastness of which overwhelms her but simultaneously calls to her with its secrets. The house feels heavy with the echoes of its past, particularly a tragic accident from decades ago involving the previous owners. She selects a room with strategic visibility and safety, though its ominous décor unnerves her. To her surprise, Luke has thoughtfully left her a fridge, reducing her prior misgivings about him. As Gabby prepares to settle in, she wanders to the beach, reminiscing about her childhood spent with her father by the sea—a rare bonding that makes it hard to abhor him, despite his flaws.

On the beach, a chance encounter with a woman named Aphrodite, who owns a spirited dachshund, reveals a startling twist: contrary to local legend, the boy from the 25-year-old tragedy at Ocean Haven did not die. This new information deepens the mystery, propelling Gabby further into the story of Ocean Haven.

Afterward, Gabby meets Craven at a local Vietnamese restaurant. Despite running late due to health concerns—a recurrent personal theme—Gabby is intrigued by Craven's relaxed demeanor, a stark contrast to his usual professional self. Their conversation provides comic relief and light-hearted banter, highlighting a growing rapport. Gabby shares her recent discoveries,



including Luke's true motivations. As they discuss further, a surprise interaction with a stranger leaves Gabby and Craven on edge. The man reveals Craven's real name as Jamie Shore, connecting him to the Ocean Haven tragedy—further complicating the investigation and suggesting that Craven himself is entwined in this convoluted mystery.

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Chapter 28:

Chapter 28 & 29 Summary

Gabby stands before the imposing Ocean Haven, burdened by both the rucksack on her back and the daunting task of finding the truth within its walls. The mansion's eerie atmosphere amplifies her unease as she steps inside, sensing whispering shadows of the past. She retreats to a room she deems the safest for her temporary stay, despite its gothic decor that sends chills down her spine. With a mixture of dread and determination, she unpacks and surveys her surroundings. Noticing a thoughtful gesture from her brother-in-law, Luke—a modest camping fridge—she's arrested by a pang of guilt over past judgments. Stepping out to clear her mind, Gabby is drawn to the familiar comfort of the sea, a childhood escape shared with a complex father who embodied both flaws and fleeting warmth.

While savoring the beach's rejuvenating breeze, Gabby encounters Aphrodite, a vibrant local with a sprightly dachshund named Eddie The Seventh. Their friendly exchange turns to the dark history of Ocean Haven—a tragedy long past, but still resonantly alive. Aphrodite shines a light on an enigmatic detail: contrary to belief, the boy involved in the fateful incident did not die.



Gabby's evening unfolds at a buzzing Vietnamese eatery where she meets Craven for a dinner engagement unintentionally delayed by her persistent illness. Despite the evening's casualness and Craven's attempt at chivalry, tension underlies their conversation fueled by shared histories and unspoken truths. Their dialogue tinged with humor and boundaries hints at deeper vulnerabilities, particularly Gabby's grim health prognosis.

As they update each other on investigative progress, Gabby reveals a local woman's claim that Jamie, Carol Shore's son, had survived the Cliff Heights tragedy. An unexpected interruption by a familiar acquaintance exposes Craven's concealed identity—Jamie Shore—prompting an awkward departure and raising more questions than answers.

The revelation leads Gabby and Craven to the beach, where intimate confidences unravel. Jamie discloses a tumultuous past marred by a tragic loss, deceit, and a consequential name change to Craven in homage to his mother. His mother's entanglement with the insidious Dr. Vincent Fortune had lured her into vulnerability and manipulation, culminating in the mutual tragedy that had forever altered both their lives.

Pooling their investigative insights, Gabby and Craven uncover chilling parallels between the deaths of their mothers, probing whether more sinister forces played a hand. Revisiting events surrounding Robert Delbrook (Vincent Fortune) and those at Ocean Haven, they painstakingly piece



together a timeline. Drawing bereft conclusions cements the shared trauma between them, oblivious yet united in pursuit of the truth behind their mothers' tragic fates.

In her determination, Gabby focuses on the investigative board back at Ocean Haven, adding Jamie's name—a participant in the shared history, an essential cog in unraveling the mysteries that tie them irrevocably to the past.

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Chapter 29 Summary:

Chapter 29 Summary: Present Day

Sitting on the beach under a darkened sky, the conversation between the protagonist and Craven delves into a haunting past that intertwines their lives. Craven reveals his true identity as Jamie Shore, deeply connected to the mysterious case surrounding their parents' tragic deaths. He recalls a painful history involving his family's disapproval, his father's death in a car accident, and his mother, Carol Shore's, fragile mental state. Carol had met the manipulative Dr. Vincent Fortune at a private psychiatric clinic, where the doctor preyed on wealthy, vulnerable women. Fortune, seeking to establish a base for his so-called treatments, saw an opportunity in Carol's wealth and instability.

Craven recounts the emotional turmoil experienced as a child, traumatized into silence by his father's death and later witnessing his mother fall under Fortune's influence. He changed his last name to Craven to honor Carol, who resisted Fortune's pressure to sign over their family home. The doctor resorted to cruel mind games, isolating Carol and tormenting her.

As the protagonist digs deeper, they piece together the fateful night both their mothers died, suspecting foul play. They consider whether Marcia



Lewis, the protagonist's mother, was murdered, given her sudden illness and death on the same night as Carol's disappearance. Craven proposes they investigate Marcia's medical records as a potential avenue for truth, realizing the records might hold crucial evidence, despite the challenge of the passage of time.

Chapter 30 Summary: Flashback—Twenty-Five Years Ago

The narrative shifts to a flashback, capturing an intense night from Marcia's perspective. Awakened in the dead of night, Marcia takes her son, Karl, on a covert mission to Ocean Haven. Struck by the house's eerie presence, Marcia feels an urgent need to understand its dark secrets, enlisting Karl's help, despite her misgivings about involving him.

Guiding Karl to a shack on the property, Marcia uses his lock-picking skills to gain entry, searching for answers about what Dr. Vincent Fortune hides there. Inside, she discovers the real horror—her friend Carol trapped in a box, a prisoner of both Fortune and her severe agoraphobia, rendered immobile and terrified.

Carol confides in Marcia about her inability to leave the house without Fortune's coercive presence. She pleads for Marcia to help her escape with her son, Jamie. Carol reveals that the best chance for escape is the upcoming



Saturday, when Fortune plans to be away.

Marcia's rage and determination fuel her promise to help, solidifying her resolve to free Carol and Jamie from Fortune's clutches. Despite her shock and fear, Marcia manages to find a moment of light-heartedness with Carol, preparing for the planned escape while understanding Carol's dire condition and the oppression she faces.

In these two chapters, the narrative intricately threads the past with the present, unraveling mysteries, and deepening the emotional ties between characters as they pursue justice and uncover dark truths.

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Chapter 30 Summary:

In Chapter 30, the story unfolds with a flashback to when Karl, an eleven-year-old boy, is awoken in the night by his mother, Marcia. She urgently leads him away from home in secrecy to investigate Ocean Haven, an imposing house with a sinister reputation. Marcia, realizing the house's façade masks its decaying reality, is determined to uncover what's happening inside. Despite her trepidation about involving her young son, she needs Karl's skills—the same skills that got him in trouble at school for picking locks—to gain entry into a mysterious shack on the property. Once inside, Marcia is startled by an eerie presence, only to discover Carol, a woman trapped inside a chest. Carol reveals she's held captive by Dr. Vincent, the house's malevolent owner, and suffers from agoraphobia, a condition that renders her unable to leave without his physical guidance. The chapter ends with Marcia vowing to help Carol and her son Jamie escape, planning their getaway for when Dr. Vincent is away.

Chapter 31 shifts back to the present, revealing the narrator's unexpected dismissal from their job due to suspicions of impersonating a police officer for information about the Ocean Haven case, which involves the discovery of human remains. Demoralized, the narrator packs their belongings quickly, avoiding interactions with colleagues before heading to their new residence, where they surprisingly encounter their estranged brother, Karl. Their conversation uncovers shared memories of Ocean Haven and Karl's



mysterious past connection to it through their mother. Karl reveals their father's betrayal, falsely accusing him of murder, and laments their father's abusive tendencies, which left emotional scars on the siblings. As they reconcile this traumatic past, the siblings gain a deeper understanding of their dysfunctional family dynamic, driven by their father's cruelty and deception.

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Chapter 31 Summary:

Chapter 31 Summary:

The atmosphere at the protagonist's office changes dramatically when she arrives, as colleagues whisper and avert their gazes. Greg, her supervisor, asks to speak privately, hinting at some troubling news. Greg appreciates her work, especially on the challenging Ocean Haven case, but drops the bombshell: she's to leave the firm. Citing hearsay from a police contact about an employee impersonating an officer for confidential information, Greg suggests it's best for her to find opportunities elsewhere, despite no official charges. Although stunned, she senses the futility of arguing.

As she gathers some belongings, avoiding prolonged goodbyes, a message from the receptionist reveals someone awaiting her at her new place. Expecting Craven, she instead finds her brother, Karl, surprising her with their previously strained relationship. They reminisce about Ocean Haven, a place filled with childhood memories and mysteries surrounding their mother.

Karl reveals insights about their childhood and their mother's connections, including a mysterious woman named Buttercup and a dubious Dr. Vincent, hinting at secrets about their mother's quest for solace. Emotions surface as



Karl unravels painful truths about their father, Saul, who betrayed his trust, accusing Karl falsely of murder. Their conversation dives into past grievances, misunderstandings, and the emotional scars left by their father's actions, while they attempt to rebuild their sibling bond.

Chapter 32 Summary:

The protagonist visits her father's neighbor, Jenny, questioning her about money and letters supposedly sent to her siblings. Distracted by ghostly visions of childhood memories, she struggles with feelings of guilt. Upon confronting Jenny, she learns that her intentions were thwarted by Saul, who insisted he deliver money and messages, which never reached Karl and Salina.

The protagonist accuses her father of stealing from his children and manipulating the letters. Saul, unfazed, belittles her and maliciously taunts about their family dynamics, revealing their irreparable rift. Meanwhile, Jenny, Saul's current partner, is shocked by revelations of his abusive past and his toxic influence on his children, which was unbeknownst to her.

Furious and feeling betrayed, the protagonist leaves, haunted by culpability and the realization of her father's enduring cruelty. As she drives away, the weight of her family's dark past and her decisions linger heavily,



acknowledging a permanent burden of guilt for abandoning her siblings to a tyrannical father.

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Chapter 32:

Chapter 32 and 33 Summary

In Chapter 32, Gabby, the protagonist, finds herself haunted by memories of the past as she stands outside Jenny's door. She sees a vision of her younger self and friends, prompting a flood of nostalgia and confusion. Gabby then confronts Jenny, her father's neighbor and confidante, about money she sent for her siblings, Salina and Karl, when they were children. Jenny defends her actions, revealing she gave the money to Gabby's father, Saul, trusting him to pass it on. The tension mounts as Gabby discovers her father is in a relationship with Jenny, which possibly started after her mother's death. A heated argument ensues, revealing Saul's manipulative nature and his past cruelties, including fabricating letters from Gabby's siblings and mistreating them. Gabby, overwhelmed by the confrontation and feeling guilty for leaving her siblings with such a man, leaves in distress.

Chapter 33 sees Gabby's determination to uncover the truth about her mother intensify. At Ocean Haven, a house filled with eerie energy, she notices its unsettling atmosphere, with its shutters banging and lights flickering. Gabby's investigation leads her to an undiscovered area of the house—a hidden staircase descending into a cellar or potentially a tunnel. She finds herself in a long, cold room that holds a mysterious bath. Inside,



she discovers three boxes; two filled with Ocean Haven leaflets, but the third contains an unposted letter. The letter, written by someone nicknamed Buttercup, references another person named Eddie The Second, offering another clue about her mother. This discovery drives Gabby to seek further answers, indicating the potential for a deeper connection to her mother's mysterious past. The chapters deepen the mystery surrounding Gabby's family history and set the stage for further revelations.

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Chapter 33 Summary:

In Chapters 33 and 34, the protagonist is deeply committed to unraveling the mysteries surrounding her mother's past, particularly at a place called Ocean Haven. This investigation stems from a newly discovered horror linked to her own family's history and recent unsettling experiences she has at Ocean Haven itself, a place that comes alive ominously at night, heightening her sense of vulnerability and fear. Despite her apprehensions, the protagonist feels compelled to explore the enigmatic house and its grounds, particularly the area where remains of a man named Robert Delbrook, also known as Vincent Fortune, were found. She is tormented by the possibility that her mother might have been involved in his death, perhaps as an act of protection for others.

As she searches for clues, her mind is frequently drawn back to memories of her family, especially her mother's struggle with illness, indicated hauntingly by her hair loss—an eerie parallel as the protagonist begins to experience a similar symptom. In her search, she discovers a hidden door leading to a dank basement or tunnel, rumored to connect to a disused mine. Inside, she finds a bathtub containing boxes of promotional leaflets for Ocean Haven, and importantly, a letter with an unposted stamp containing the name "Buttercup"—a name that surfaces repeatedly in her investigation.

The unfolding mystery deepens the following day when the protagonist

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continues her search for answers on a nearby beach. Using a piece of steak as bait, she successfully draws out a dog named Eddie The Seventh, whose owner, a woman named Aphrodite Jones—formerly known as Buttercup—holds vital information about Ocean Haven. Aphrodite reveals a past intertwined with the house's sinister happenings and shares how Vincent Fortune exploited people's vulnerabilities, including her own. She speaks emotionally about her life, her medical struggles leading to a diagnosis of lupus, and how Ocean Haven, under Vincent's guise and control, became a site of manipulation and despair for many, including the protagonist's mother.

The protagonist learns that her mother, Marcia—called Honeysuckle at Ocean Haven—was likely helping another woman, Carol, and her son Jamie, when she died under suspicious circumstances. Aphrodite shares how the house, once owned by Carol, could have passed to her son, and acknowledges Marcia's strength and determination in helping others, despite the dangers posed by Vincent Fortune. The search for truth becomes more urgent as the protagonist reflects on her mother's involvement with Ocean Haven, its dubious treatments that led to tragic outcomes, and the burgeoning realization that her mother's death may not have been due to an illness, but murder.

Just as the protagonist begins to piece these threads together, she receives a text message from Craven, another key character in her quest for truth,



confirming the chilling news: her mother was indeed murdered. The confirmation of her mother's murder solidifies her resolve to uncover the full truth about her family's past and Ocean Haven's dark history.

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Chapter 34 Summary:

In Chapter 34, the protagonist wakes up in a cold room, overwhelmed by sickness and pain, and experiences a mix of anxiety and dread over pending medical test results. Her mother's memory looms large, especially when she finds herself losing hair and fears meeting the same fate as her mother. On the beach, she encounters a woman named Aphrodite Jones, who had connections to her mother Marcia at Ocean Haven. Aphrodite explains that they came from a world of silence and shame about women's bodies and suffered under Vincent Fortune, who ran Ocean Haven. Fortune exploited various women, preying on their physical and emotional pain. Aphrodite admits that she fled from Fortune's horrors and shares that Marcia attempted to help another woman, Carol, and her son. The protagonist learns her mother's name is on the ownership documents for Ocean Haven, raising questions about her involvement with Fortune. Aphrodite reveals she now runs an organization for women neglected by the medical profession, "Believe Me." The protagonist discovers that there are suspicions about the mysterious death of Vincent Fortune, also known as Robert Delbrook, possibly a victim of foul play. As she processes this information, the protagonist receives confirmation that her mother was murdered.

In Chapter 35, set twenty-five years earlier, Marcia is depicted as a caring and determined woman living at Ocean Haven, who plans to help Carol and her son escape. She is appalled by the conditions they live in and horrified



by the manipulative practices of Dr. Vincent Fortune, who reduces women's worth to their reproductive capability. Marcia encounters a troubling scene where her friend Buttercup is undergoing a painful and harmful treatment under Fortune's guidance, which involves electrocution in an ice-cold bath to supposedly lose weight. Disgusted and fearful for her friend, Marcia witnesses Buttercup's breakdown and threat against Fortune. She realizes the sinister nature of Fortune's operation as he manipulates desperate women. Though Fortune is calm in the face of Buttercup's collapse, Marcia becomes resolute in her plan to protect Carol and Jamie, contemplating going to the authorities. The chapter underscores Marcia's strength and the fight against the abuse women face, highlighting the dangerous environment of Ocean Haven and setting the stage for the future unraveling of its dark secrets.

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Chapter 35 Summary:

Chapter 35: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Marcia

Marcia finds herself in a race against time as she secretly meets with Carol in her attic room, planning their imminent escape from Ocean Haven. Her heart breaks over the dire living conditions that Carol and her son Jamie endure, while her outrage builds against Dr. Vincent, a man she once trusted but now sees as a façade of deceit. She resolves to report Dr. Vincent's dubious activities to authorities once Carol and Jamie are safe. As Marcia descends to the reception area, she hears distressing sounds from the basement. Driven by her nature to help, she bravely explores the dark, dank cellar, where she discovers her friend Buttercup enduring a grotesque treatment. Buttercup is forced into an ice-cold water bath as part of a so-called weight-loss treatment prescribed by Dr. Vincent, involving self-electrocution.

When Buttercup reaches the brink of despair and anger, she snaps, expressing defiance against Dr. Vincent. Despite Marcia's attempt to de-escalate, Buttercup, overwhelmed, points a shotgun at Dr. Vincent in a moment of rage but ultimately discards it and storms out, followed by the other women. Marcia realizes the extent of the manipulation at Ocean Haven, where Dr. Vincent preys on vulnerable women like Buttercup,



exploiting their pain. Marcia's encounter with Dr. Vincent leaves her more resolved to escape his grip and protect Carol and Jamie.

As Marcia collects herself to leave, she observes that her decision to challenge the status quo is echoed by Buttercup's departure in a cab. Meanwhile, Dr. Vincent appears unfazed as he secures the shotgun, his grip of control seemingly unyielding.

Chapter 36: Present Day Investigation

Haunted by the declaration that her mother was murdered, the narrator finds herself anxiously awaiting the arrival of Craven in a coffee shop. The implications of her mother's murder resonate deeply, clouding her thoughts with questions and suspicions, particularly about the ominous Ocean Haven. Craven arrives disheveled but driven, and they delve into the unsettling details uncovered in the narrator's mother's medical records. The records hint at poisoning, with suspicions from some medical staff that someone was deliberately causing her harm. But with key individuals deceased and others untraceable, their search hits a frustrating impasse.

Craven, meanwhile, updates her about Lady Aphrodite Jones, a supposed link to Ocean Haven. Despite her noble lineage and community respect, the gravity of Dr. Vincent's influence over women, even one as wealthy as



Aphrodite, is overwhelming. Their discussion shifts to a more complex conspiracy involving the ownership of Ocean Haven, revealing that the narrator's mother was used as a pawn in a larger scheme orchestrated by Delbrook to gain control of the property. The narrator and Craven grapple with their emotions and the intricate web of deceit spun to exploit the vulnerable.

As they process these revelations, they turn their focus to whether Delbrook was methodically poisoning the narrator's mother to claim Ocean Haven. Despite this troubling hypothesis, the narrator notes her mother was already ailing before falling under Dr. Vincent's spell, casting a shadow over the motives. They also piece together new fragments of evidence, adding more questions to their investigation board: linking Carol, Marcia, and Aphrodite to Ocean Haven and pondering who might have had the means and motive to poison Marcia. As they formulate hypotheses, their resolve strengthens—to uncover the truth and ensure justice for those whose lives were insidiously exploited.



Chapter 36:

Chapter 36

The revelation that her mother's death was a murder rather than a misadventure haunts the protagonist as she waits in a coffee shop for Craven. She is convinced that the eerie house, Ocean Haven, may have a lethal history. Craven arrives looking disheveled, and she wastes no time in questioning him about his bold claim. He takes out a file containing her mother's medical records, which miraculously remained intact because someone suspected poisoning.

Craven reveals that the hospital had two opinions: one dismissed her symptoms as typical of middle-aged women, while another, less formally recorded, suspected foul play. The woman digests this revelation with disbelief and anger, recalling how the family was kept in the dark when their mother passed away. They brood over the mysterious consultant who left the note about the poisoning suspicion but realize this lead is a dead-end since he died years ago.

The conversation shifts to Lady Aphrodite Jones, a wealthy and noble woman with connections to Ocean Haven, once rumored as a cult-like space rather than the healing sanctuary it pretended to be. They ponder her



connections with Delbrook, the suspect in their mother's and others' disappearances, and whether he could have poisoned their mother to secure the property's ownership through deceit. They must control their emotions to continue investigating and uncover the truth for their mothers, who deserve justice.

Chapter 37 (Twenty-Five Years Ago)

Marcia, as part of "Operation Freedom," is determined to save her friend Carol and her son Jamie from the manipulative clutches of Vincent Fortune. Disguising herself to avoid her husband's attention at the train station, where he works, she purchases tickets to London—Carol's planned sanctuary away from Vincent. Carol intends to stay with her husband's Aunt Laura and seek legal action against Vincent to reclaim her house.

An uneasy confrontation with her husband Saul ensues at the station's sidings, where she fabricates a story about a medical referral to London. She is catalyzed by fury into a bold act of defiance, throwing away Saul's pocket watch—a symbol of his control—onto the train tracks and walking away from him, symbolically reborn.

Back home, Marcia safeguards Carol and Jamie's escape suitcase and wrestles with the idea of involving the police, despite knowing Vincent is cunning enough to evade charges. She finds solace in the care of her



daughter Salina, who tenderly pampers her mother's face, offering a rare moment of peace in their tumultuous life. With resolve firmed up, Marcia counts down the days to help Carol and her son escape and start anew.

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Chapter 37 Summary:

Chapter 37: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Marcia

In this chapter, we delve into Marcia's plan, dubbed Operation Freedom, designed to rescue her friends Carol and Jamie from the manipulative grasp of Vincent Fortune. As she attempts to carry out her plan, Marcia dons a disguise to avoid encountering her husband, Saul, who works at Tinfields railway station. Despite Saul's manager's nosy inquiries at the quaint and somewhat shabby station, Marcia secures two one-way tickets to London, signaling the next step in their escape plan.

Carol has chosen to seek refuge at her husband's Aunt Laura's in South London, aiming to legally confront Vincent with the aid of solicitors and police, thereby protecting her home. However, as Marcia leaves the ticket office, she unexpectedly faces Saul. To distract him, she feigns a medical appointment in London, an unconvincing lie that only fuels Saul's suspicion. During a tense confrontation at the train sidings, Marcia snaps—a symbolic gesture of defiance when she throws Saul's pocket watch onto the tracks. Her actions mark a significant turning point as she embraces her newfound strength and independence, leaving Saul stunned.

At home, Marcia finds her children content and safe, reinforcing her resolve



to plan for Carol and Jamie's escape discreetly. Despite considering going to the police, she doubts they can help, knowing Vincent's knack for deceit. The chapter closes with a tender moment between Marcia and her daughter Salina, whose serene presence provides Marcia a brief respite from her turmoil. With only two days left until Saturday, Marcia steels herself for what lies ahead.

Chapter 38: Present Day

The narrative shifts to a gripping present-day revelation where Dr. Morris gravely informs the protagonist that she may be, or has been, poisoned. The protagonist is thrown into a state of panic, the fear of death reminiscent of her mother's demise from suspected poisoning. As Dr. Morris encourages caution, advising her to abstain from eating or drinking anything offered by others, a whirlwind of emotions overtakes her.

Struggling with disbelief and anger, the protagonist learns that Dr. Morris was indirectly involved during her mother's consultations 25 years prior—in the capacity of a medical student under a dismissive consultant. Despite recognizing the signs of poisoning then, Morris's concerns were overshadowed by the consultant's misdiagnosis, attributing the symptoms to mental health issues. The protagonist's frustration is ignited by the lost opportunity of what might have been if her mother was taken seriously.



Dr. Morris reveals that he recorded his suspicions of poisoning, a decision spurred by her mother's mistreatment, inspiring his dedication to equitable healthcare and ongoing advocacy. Suspecting arsenic as the possible poison, the link to the tin mines conjures alarming possibilities. The protagonist is left breathless by the gravity of the situation, prompting Dr. Morris to start gathering detailed accounts of her daily activities to better understand her current risk.

Both chapters intricately weave past and present, exploring the themes of resilience against adversity, the struggle for justice, and the complexities of human relationships amidst fear, betrayal, and liberation.

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Chapter 38 Summary:

Chapter 38 and 39 Summary:

In Chapter 38, the protagonist is rocked by Dr. Morris's claim that she might be poisoned. This revelation is chilling, especially since it echoes the fate of her mother, who had also been poisoned a quarter-century earlier.

Overwhelmed by fear and memories, she grapples with the possibility of dying the same way. Dr. Morris, cautiously urging her to avoid any food or drink from others until further tests confirm his suspicions, discloses his past. He was a medical student when her mother, Marcia Lewis, sought treatment and observed her suffering under dismissive medical care.

Haunted by guilt for not speaking out against his superior, he pledges that this failure defined his career, pushing him to improve women's healthcare. The chapter closes with Dr. Morris suspecting arsenic as the poison and drawing a connection to local mines—a chilling link suggesting the same method is being used on the protagonist.

Chapter 39 shifts to the protagonist's emotional turmoil as she sits by the sea, consumed by paranoia and mistrust. Her isolation is broken by an urgent call from Jasmin, her brother Karl's girlfriend, who informs her that Karl is critically ill, echoing the mother's mysterious symptoms. At the hospital, she and her sister Salina face their worst fears as they see Karl in a coma.



Confronted by Jasmin, who admits to being pregnant, the protagonist learns that she had urged Karl to reconcile with their estranged father. This revelation highlights the family's unresolved tensions, particularly their father's influence, and leaves the protagonist questioning her role in these tragedies. Amidst a flood of guilt, she feels that meddling with the past may have put Karl at risk, mirroring her mother's deadly fate. The chapter ends with the chilling suggestion that someone close to the family is targeting them.

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Chapter 39 Summary:

Chapter 39

Struggling with the unsettling realization that she is being poisoned, Gabby Lewis sits alone on a beach, haunted by memories of her mother's death and the overwhelming uncertainty of who might be targeting her. The possibility of history repeating itself with her brother Karl's illness torments her, especially since she hasn't eaten due to her fear of being poisoned. As paranoia grips her, she second-guesses whom to trust, including Craven, who she recalls is actually Jamie. Her thoughts are interrupted by a call from a distressed woman named Jasmin, urging her to rush to the hospital.

At Tinfields General's Intensive Care Unit, Gabby finds Karl gravely ill, contrasting sharply with the confident man she knew. In the waiting room, his girlfriend, Jasmin, appears distraught, reflecting on the recent developments that led to Karl's condition. Gabby tries to understand the illness troubling her brother, associating his symptoms with those she and their late mother experienced. Meanwhile, her sister Salina joins her, both grasping the gravity of Karl's situation while dealing with their own emotional turmoil.

After checking on Jasmin, who is not ill but reveals she is pregnant, Gabby



learns from Jasmin that Karl had collapsed after dinner, showcasing symptoms eerily similar to Gabby's own. Guilt washes over Gabby as she fears her investigation into their mother's past may have triggered these dangerous events endangering her brother. When Jasmin admits to encouraging Karl to reconcile with his father to break the cycle of familial anger, Gabby realizes the emotional complexity and potential dangers surrounding their family history.

Chapter 40 (Twenty-Five Years Ago: Marcia)

Marcia, lying tense on a calming room couch, wrestles with her growing anxiety. Her host, Dr. Vincent, an unsettling man by her observation, suggests she appears distracted. Tomorrow Marcia intends to help a woman named Carol escape Vincent's clutches, but the man's perceptive gaze pierces her, fueling her discomfort. To divert his suspicion, Marcia blames her anxiety on her teenage daughter, Salina, despite being distracted by her anxiety about Carol and Jamie.

As Vincent conducts another one of his pseudo-therapeutic sessions, Marcia hides her anger towards the manipulative man, masking her intentions to help Carol. Without warning, Vincent suggests they leave the house, instructing her to follow him outside. Her heart races as they approach a dreaded shack she associates with horror. However, Vincent guides her past it, leading to a clifftop overlooking the turbulent sea.



Standing at the edge, Vincent performs a psychological ritual, instructing Marcia to close her eyes and release pain using breathing techniques. Their proximity disturbs Marcia, his intentions ambiguous as he edges her closer to the precipice. Torn between helping Carol and preserving her safety, Marcia is caught off guard when Vincent's subtle intimidation shifts to unwanted advances. His behavior disgusts her, yet she maintains composure, knowing Carol and her son depend on her.

Vincent's chilling interest in Marcia and his unwarranted suggestions of intimacy add a disturbing layer to their interaction. Nevertheless, Marcia extricates herself from the situation, determined to fulfill her promise to Carol while fearing the unpredictable nature of Vincent, who might not leave as planned. The constant sense of being watched troubles her, underscoring the high-stakes environment she's entangled in.



Chapter 40:

Chapter 40: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Marcia

Marcia finds herself in the calming room of Vincent's house, a sanctuary she usually adores for its neutral colors and soothing ambiance. However, today she's on edge, as she prepares to help Carol and her son Jamie escape from the clutches of Vincent, a man she deeply mistrusts. Her tension is palpable, and it seems Vincent may be catching on to her unease. He questions her distraction, and instinctively, Marcia deflects by mentioning her teenage daughter Salina's recent behavior, though her true concern lies with the escape plan.

Marcia's fears are only amplified when Vincent, exuding a disturbing presence and keen perceptiveness, appears to corner her with his probing questions and unsettling demeanor. She manages to disguise her anger towards Vincent with lies about pain, all while internally raging at his inhumane actions toward Carol.

Vincent surprises Marcia by leading her out of the calming room, past a dreaded shack that holds dark secrets, and towards a cliff. On the edge of this precipice, Vincent tries to weave his hypnotic influence over Marcia, encouraging her to let go of pain by breathing with him. The situation grows



more harrowing when he acknowledges her knowledge of his business trip, and Marcia stumbles over an excuse as fear that Vincent has discovered her plan takes hold.

In a move that crosses all boundaries, Vincent insinuates improper advances under the guise of his 'treatment'. Marcia, disgusted but aware of the precarious situation, resists revealing her true revulsion to avoid jeopardizing the escape plan. Vincent's veiled menace leaves her anxious; she worries that Vincent might not leave as promised, complicating the daring rescue.

Chapter 41

The protagonist reunites with her father, still harboring resentment from past conflicts but driven by the need for answers. Confronted by her father's smug demeanor, she relives haunting memories of her mother's suffering and perceives a world where her father could be a murderer, responsible for the poisoning of both her mother and her brother Karl.

In a heated exchange, she accuses her father of tampering with his homemade ginger beer to poison them, spurred on by information from Karl's girlfriend, Jasmin, about a recent argument between Karl and their father. Her father flatly denies the poisoning accusations, launching his own



cutting retorts about family history and his son's failures to unsettle her confidence.

Despite her accusations, the father shares a glimpse of his own stern childhood under his grandparents, where time and achievements were

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Chapter 41 Summary:

Chapter 41 Summary:

Gabby confronts her father, deeply believing he poisoned her mother, brother Karl, and even attempted to harm her. She accuses him of being a murderer, a notion he scoffs at. During this tense encounter, Gabby recalls how her mother appeared to her in a vision, begging for help against an unseen force, driving Gabby's fury. Gabby insists Jasmin, Karl's girlfriend, overheard a heated argument between Karl and their father, suspecting it led to Karl's mysterious coma after drinking their father's homemade ginger beer. The confrontation escalates as Gabby accuses her father of past infidelities and using dangerous chemicals from his workplace to poison family members. He tries to refute these allegations by sharing a traumatic childhood memory, aiming to highlight his non-violent upbringing. As Gabby questions her own convictions, a text reveals Karl is awake. Their reunion is emotional, as Karl confides shocking details about Ocean Haven, rocking Gabby's understanding of their family's dark past.

Chapter 42 Summary (25 Years Ago - Marcia's Perspective):

In the past, Marcia grapples with debilitating pain after consuming Saul's

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ginger beer. Her urgent need to help friends, Carol and Jamie, clashes with her physical agony. In her weakened state, she tries to hide her distress from her daughters, Salina and Gabby, but collapses before reaching her destination. Salina witnesses her mother's distress, calling for Gabby's help. Despite being urged to stay put, Marcia's determination to leave further weakens her. Her collapse prompts a call for an ambulance, yet in her final moments, she only thinks of Carol, Jamie, and how her children might fare without her. When Saul arrives at the hospital, with a mix of disbelief and frustration, he learns from the doctor that Marcia had not actually been visiting the hospital for tests as she claimed, although her condition is undeniably dire. As medical staff battle to save Marcia, her children watch helplessly until the unfortunate reality dawns—Marcia has passed away.

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Chapter 42 Summary:

Chapter 42 Summary:

As Marcia suffers debilitating pain in her home, she struggles with a desperate urgency to reach her friends Carol and Jamie, fearing the return of the cruel Vincent. Marcia's children, Salina and Gabby, express concern as they witness their mother's distress. Despite their attempts to help, Marcia insists on leaving, plunging into the hallway, where her collapse is inevitable. Her children, frantic, call for an ambulance. At the hospital, Marcia's husband, Saul, is confronted with the revelation that Marcia was seriously ill—contrary to his dismissive belief that she was faking her condition. The children are taken to see their mother as medical efforts to revive her prove futile. Suddenly, their darkest fear is confirmed: Marcia has passed away.

Chapter 43 Summary:

Gabby, fearful and suspecting she is being poisoned, receives a call from her doctor confirming her worst suspicions: she is indeed being poisoned with thallium, similar to what killed her mother. Battling nausea, she heads to an ominously empty house. Just as panic sets in, Craven, her partner, appears,



assisting her despite her reluctance and ill health. Together, they enter the house, searching for evidence of the poisoner. In an unexpected discovery, Gabby unearths her late neighbor Fred's valuable coin collection, stolen the night he was murdered—a case unsolved for 25 years. The evidence points shockingly to Gabby's sister Salina as the thief, and possibly, their mother's poisoner. Realizing that the thallium was in their mother's lipstick—a gift from Salina that also poisoned Gabby when used later—Gabby pieces together the horrifying truth. In disbelief, Gabby grapples with the idea of her sister's guilt, simultaneously confronting the chilling possibility that Salina has been plotting her death. Craven insists she go to the hospital while he goes to find Salina, leaving Gabby overwhelmed with the realization of the betrayal within her family.

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Chapter 43 Summary:

Chapter 43 Summary

In Chapter 43, Gabby, the protagonist, is overcome with fear upon receiving a voicemail from her doctor, Dr. Morris, suspecting that someone is poisoning her and potentially her father might be involved. Her symptoms align with being poisoned, and as she reaches out to Dr. Morris, he reveals critical information, urging her to go to the hospital and alert the police. Trembling and disoriented, Gabby struggles with intense nausea but pushes herself to her destination, ignoring her deteriorating health.

Once at a seemingly empty house, Gabby's anxiety heightens as she senses a presence and braces herself for a confrontation. However, it turns out to be Craven, a partner in her investigative efforts, who claims to have been alerted by Dr. Morris. Together, they break into the house, searching for evidence of the poison, thallium, which also killed Gabby's mother. Thallium is an odorless and colorless poison that Gabby believes she has been exposed to through their mother's lipstick, which her sister Salina gifted her.

During the search, Gabby stumbles upon an unexpected discovery in Salina's personal studio: a collection of old valuable coins linked to a decades-old



unresolved murder of a neighbor named Fred. This revelation implicates Salina, indicating her involvement in Fred's murder years ago. Overwhelmed by the shock, Gabby realizes the lipstick gifted by her sister might be the conduit of the ongoing poisoning attacks on her and suspects Salina of attempting to murder her slowly.

Craven, now informed, insists Gabby seek medical help while he confronts Salina. Gabby's disbelief in her sister's actions leaves her traumatized. Despite the evidence linking Salina to the crimes, Gabby's emotional struggle with the possibility that her beloved sister might be a murderer weighs heavily on her.

Chapter 44 Summary

Chapter 44 delves into a haunting flashback from twenty-five years ago, focusing on Carol, a woman trapped in a grim situation following a severe car accident and her husband's death. Post-accident, Carol became a shell of herself, isolated and mentally struggling. She held immense guilt for her husband's death but feared for her son Jamie's well-being.

Vincent Fortune, initially seen as a potential savior, soon revealed himself as a manipulator and a threat, especially towards Jamie. Under Vincent's influence, Carol was confined to a life filled with mental torment and physical entrapment in the oppressive environment at Ocean Haven.



As desperation consumed Carol, she relies on her mysterious friend Marcia to escape but finds herself alone with growing panic when Marcia does not appear. Driven by her motherly instincts to protect Jamie, Carol forces herself to face her agoraphobia and paranoia, derived partially from her overuse of medication, aiming to flee from Vincent's control.

In a dramatic and emotional climax, after escaping the confines of her attic imprisonment, Carol reaches the edge of Cliff Heights. Haunted by her instability and the terror of Vincent pursuing her, she makes a tragic decision. With the belief that her only sanctuary and safety lies beyond this life, she clutches Jamie and leaps over the edge, illustrating a poignant and heartbreaking choice influenced by fear and the desire to protect her child from perceived inevitable harm.

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Chapter 44:

Chapter 44: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Carol and Jamie

In this chapter, we dive into a bleak moment in Carol's life, set twenty-five years earlier. Facing the torment of her past, Carol finds herself trapped in despair, confined both physically and emotionally within a grim attic. Her friend Marcia, who was supposed to help her escape, fails to show up, leaving Carol feeling hopeless and alone. Her mind is consumed by the events leading to her current predicament: the tragic accident that killed her husband Dennis and left her in a psychological spiral.

After the crash, Carol's life unraveled; her son Jamie became distant as Vincent Fortune, a charismatic yet sinister figure, entered their lives. Vincent manipulated Carol, making her believe that she was to blame for Dennis's death and subsequently driving her to submit to his twisted "treatments" which involved being locked in a box. His malevolent presence haunted her nights, especially the moment when Carol witnessed him standing menacingly over Jamie's bed.

Overwhelmed by guilt and urged by the need to protect her son, Carol is determined to escape Vincent's clutches. Despite her fear of the outside world—a fear amplified by her reliance on medication—Carol gathers the



courage, motivated by her maternal instinct, to flee with Jamie. With Jamie's hand providing the strength she desperately needs, she manages to step outside. However, her paranoia and the effects of the pills propel them into a harrowing escape through the darkness.

Reaching the treacherous cliffs of Cliff Heights, Carol is driven by desperate thoughts of keeping Jamie safe from the horrors represented by Vincent. The chapter concludes with Carol making a drastic and fatal decision, leaping over the edge with Jamie in her arms, engulfed by the tumultuous waves below.

Chapter 45

Back in the present-day setting of Ocean Haven, the protagonist is engulfed in grief and confusion. Facing an emotional storm following the revelation of her mother's tragic past, she finds herself inexplicably drawn back to the very place filled with haunting memories. Overwhelmed by a heavy sense of foreboding, she intends to leave but is intercepted by her sister Salina, whose vulnerability and sinister revelations shock her even further.

Salina, marked by psychological scars, unravels the dark family secrets, confessing to the chilling murder of a man named Fred, whom she perceived as a threat to their family unit. Her warped rationale was born from the fear of abandonment by their mother, who Salina believed was planning to leave



with Fred. Salina also reveals the sinister actions she took against their mother, using makeup to mark her face during the periods of control and resentment.

What follows is a harrowing revelation of Salina's perspective on their

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Chapter 45 Summary:

Chapter 45

Gabby returns to Ocean Haven in emotional turmoil, having avoided the hospital on Craven's advice. The atmosphere at the Haven feels heavy, and she is inexplicably drawn back, perhaps seeking a last connection with her deceased mother. As Gabby retreats to her makeshift ground-floor bedroom, she encounters her sister Salina. Salina's appearance is haunting, with vulnerability almost visibly painted on her expression alongside her mother's unique shade of lipstick, eerily reminiscent of their mother.

The confrontation between Gabby and Salina reveals shocking truths. Salina admits to killing their mother because she believed she was going to abandon them. She recalls overhearing arguments between their parents, where their mother threatened to leave due to their father's treatment, but he refused to let her take the children. Salina reveals that her behavior was influenced by witnessing their mother's interactions with other men, like Fred, who was merely a kind neighbor.

Gabby, devastated, learns that Salina's misguided actions were driven by a twisted sense of loyalty and protection. Salina also confesses to murdering Fred in a fit of jealousy, trying to disguise the act as a burglary. In her



attempt to keep their mother close, Salina's jealousy extends to Dr. Vincent, another man with whom their mother had interactions. Salina's actions are the result of misconstrued notions of abandonment, leading her down a dark and dangerous path.

Chapter 46: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Robert Delbrook and Salina

The narrative shifts back twenty-five years to introduce Robert Delbrook, also known as Vincent Fortune, a disgraced former medical professional. As Delbrook arrives at a house he has cunningly conned into his possession, following news of suicides and police activity, he reminisces about his sordid past and skill as a con artist.

Although Delbrook feigns shock and sorrow when questioned by the police about a local woman's death, his main concern is maintaining his deceptive lifestyle. As he ponders potential police surveillance, an unexpected encounter occurs in a nearby shack, notorious for its ominous aura. Here, Delbrook meets a teenage Salina, who would later be known as Gabby's sister.

The confrontation is tense, with Salina accusing Delbrook of trying to take her mother away through romantic interactions. Despite Delbrook's attempts to manipulate the situation with charm, asserting Marcia's admiration for



Salina's talents, the encounter takes a deadly turn. Salina, aware of Delbrook's intentions and armed with his shotgun, confronts him with deadly resolve. The altercation ends with Delbrook's demise at Salina's hand. Burdened with her decisive act, Salina buries his body and symbolically spits on his grave, marking the depth of the message and her complex motivations in protecting her family in a misguided manner.

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Chapter 46 Summary:

Chapter 46: Twenty-Five Years Ago - Robert Delbrook and Salina

The chapter delves into the transformations and shadows of the past, focusing on Robert Delbrook, a disgraced and manipulative former doctor turned con artist, and his fatal encounter with a girl named Salina.

Twenty-five years ago, Delbrook returns to chaos, where a desperate woman, Marcia Lewis, had signed over her property to him unknowingly. As a practiced deceiver, Delbrook skillfully conceals his intentions, intending to lay blame elsewhere. His false calm, seasoned by his past criminal lessons, shields him from immediate suspicion as the police investigate nearby suicides. An unusual noise interrupts his calculating thoughts, and upon investigation, Delbrook encounters Salina, a teenage girl who confronts him over her mother's apparent betrayal and Delbrook's inappropriate advances.

Salina accuses Delbrook of trying to take her mother from her and shows no fear confronting him. In response, Delbrook attempts to defuse the situation with charming lies, a tactic he's honed over the years. However, Salina is unshakeable and reveals she knows about her mother's death, surprising Delbrook. His shock intensifies upon seeing Salina brandish a shotgun — his shotgun. Before he can react, Salina pulls the trigger, ending Delbrook's life instantly. She methodically buries his body in the shack, ensuring no



evidence remains, leaving only her spit on his unmarked grave.

Chapter 47: Confrontation and Revelation

The narrative shifts to a modern-day timeline, where the protagonist is confronted by shocking revelations from Salina, her younger sister. It reaches the climax of a complex web of family betrayal and hidden crimes. Salina admits to killing Robert Delbrook to protect their mother, whom Salina had inadvertently poisoned out of misguided conviction. She believed her mother needed her care and used thallium to make her dependent, tragically misjudging the dosage. Another revelation strikes — Salina had suppressed evidence and misled others to keep her secret buried, figuratively and literally, in Ocean Haven's past.

Salina's unraveling is now dangerous; she poisons her sister with a homemade toxic perfume, leaving her incapacitated. In the delirium, Craven, a potential ally, attempts to intervene, but Salina attacks him. After regaining some clarity, the protagonist tries to escape, fleeing into the night, chased by her sister's mounting madness. Amidst a reflective and eerie coastal backdrop, the desperate chase leads them towards a deadly cliff. As Salina corners her, a dangerous struggle ensues, mirroring the chaotic blend of emotions and impending doom.



In a gut-wrenching finale, Salina's relentless pursuit ends at the cliff edge, where her footing fails. The ground crumbles beneath her. Despite brief compassion from her sister, offering help, Salina falls to her death, the tragic consequence of her own madness. Her body is reclaimed by the tide, symbolically cleansed, leaving behind a poignant reminder of lost innocence and fractured bonds. The protagonist, fraught but resilient, finds solace in the ambiguity of their surviving futures, as Craven, miraculously alive, provides the support and comfort she desperately needs amid the shadows of their past.

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Chapter 47 Summary:

In the dramatic climax of the narrative, Gabby confronts the horrifying truths about her family's dark past, centered around her sister, Salina. Gabby is engulfed in disbelief as she learns of Salina's confession to murdering Robert Delbrook and later unintentionally their mother through poisoned makeup. Initially, Salina's actions seemed driven by a twisted form of affection, wanting their mother to stay with them, fearing abandonment. This revelation ties to Salina's past manipulation involving a forged letter to conceal Delbrook's whereabouts, which was an attempt to prevent the sale of their estate, Ocean Haven. Salina's obsession with keeping people from leaving her and her willingness to use poison, which she learned about from historical sources, portrays her descent into madness.

As the events unfold, Gabby becomes physically incapacitated by a perfume laced with thallium, concocted by Salina, who has lost her grip on reality. In a struggle for survival, Gabby witnesses Salina's violent attack on Craven, her confidante, who is rendered unconscious by Salina's deadly concoction. Gabby manages a fraught escape attempt, fleeing through treacherous landscapes towards the Tinfields lighthouse, seeking refuge and help for Craven. Salina, relentless and dangerously unstable, chases Gabby, who navigates through undergrowth and towards the edge of a cliff, driven by fear and desperation. Gabby's struggle against her sister culminates when Salina, attacking with malice, finds herself hanging perilously from a



crumbling cliff edge, pleading for help. Despite the history of betrayal, Gabby instinctively reaches out, yet Salina's fate is sealed as she tragically slips and falls to her death.

Following the harrowing events, Gabby confronts their father with the tragic news of Salina's death. Her father's dismissive reaction, blaming Salina's fate on her nature, further ignites Gabby's rage. She accuses him of failing to protect their family, revealing that he covered for Salina's past crime while unjustly shifting suspicion onto her brother, Karl. Her father's cold demeanor and his historical neglect, manifested in acts of destruction of family mementos and the emotional abuse of his children and wife, are exposed as the root of their dysfunctional family. A profound revelation settles over Gabby—her family had been poisoned not only by Salina's actions but by their father's relentless emotional abuse. Deciding to sever these toxic ties, Gabby leaves, resolute never to return to the place that birthed so much pain.

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Chapter 48:

Chapter 48 Summary

The protagonist returns to their childhood home, confronting their father with the shocking news of their sibling Salina's death. Upon hearing the news, the father shows an initial shock but quickly reverts to a contemptuous demeanor, dismissing Salina as a "bad seed." This heartless response reignites the protagonist's deep-seated hatred for him. The protagonist accuses their father of failing to prevent their mother's murder by Salina, a revelation that leaves him in denial. The protagonist recalls hearing from Karl, another sibling, that their father knew about Salina's involvement in another murder and helped cover it up to avoid public shame. Despite being complicit, the father had accused Karl of the crime. The protagonist confronts the father about his neglect and cruelty, claiming he was the true poison in the family. After years of insight, the protagonist realizes that their father's destruction of family mementos was an attempt to break them mentally. With a sense of closure, the protagonist leaves, vowing never to return or see their father again.

Chapter 49 Summary

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A year later, Ocean Haven, once shrouded in darkness, is rejuvenated and filled with life during the christening of Flora, the daughter of Karl and his wife, Jasmin. The event signifies the family's healing and their new beginning. The protagonist observes the joy of the occasion and wishes their mother could witness how Karl's life has blossomed. Jamie Craven, a close

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Chapter 49 Summary:

Chapter 49: A Year Later

A year has passed, and Ocean Haven, once shrouded in darkness, is now a beacon of joy, filled with the laughter of children and the chatter of guests. The grand house, beautifully restored, hosts a special event: the christening of little Flora, daughter of Jasmin and Karl. As they celebrate with family and friends, Karl, holding his child lovingly, reflects on his happiness. The narrator, observing this scene, wistfully wishes their mother could witness Karl's transformation into a loving father.

Meanwhile, Jamie Craven, a playful presence amidst the festivities, leads the narrator away from the crowd to a quieter spot by the trees. The absence of ravens, once guardians in a tumultuous time, is noted. The narrative reflects on past troubles, including Robert Delbrook's fraud that led to personal and collective upheavals. Luke, once deeply affected by the fallout, has moved away, yet remains an enduring part of the family, thanks to continued efforts to keep in touch.

Craven, hosting guests for the first time, nervously questions if the event is going well. The narrator reassures him, acknowledging the positive transformation of Ocean Haven from its shadowed past. The two have an



arrangement: living separately within the house but sharing dinners three times a week. Their personal spaces have gradually merged, reflecting a growing closeness. As Craven invites the narrator to join him, taking his hand signifies a significant step in their relationship.

Authors' Note

This book is dedicated to women who have experienced inequality in healthcare and the compassionate medical professionals dedicated to their well-being. For those interested in the intersection of history, medicine, and women's health, the authors recommend "Unwell Women: A Journey Through Medicine and Myth in a Man-Made World" by Elinor Cleghorn. This work offers a rich and comprehensive exploration of these themes.

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