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MFA Project

The Creation of Suspense

Purpose

My goal with this project was to familiarize myself with thriller and/or suspense texts as this is the type of novel I am working on for my thesis. When I started working on my thesis, I was only vaguely familiar with novels within these genres (strange as it sounds). I was, perhaps, more familiar with shows that fell into these genres and watched way too much Sherlock Holmes growing up. In order to better understand the field in which I was writing in, I knew I was going to need to do some reading. A lot of reading, at that.

While working on my thesis, I quickly became defeated by trying to find a happy balance between forward movement and character development. My concerns resulted in a first draft that had too much forward movement and not enough of the characters I had developed in my head. Looking at these texts helped me see different approaches to this balance between forward movement, suspense, and character development. Some of these texts were good examples of what I might want to do with my thesis or future writing, and others turned out to have approaches I know I want to avoid. Regardless of which category the texts fell into for me in the end, reading all of these books with an eye on craft gave me many ideas on how to build and maintain suspense throughout a longer work. Below are the fifteen novels that I looked at, my observations, as well as my conclusions. At the end, I created a list of techniques I saw employed to build and maintain suspense and addressed how they might play into my thesis.

Texts and Observations

Flynn, Gillian. *Gone Girl*. New York, NY: Crown Publishing Group, 2012. Print.

Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn is suspense-filled and uses many different techniques to create and maintain that suspense. One of the techniques is the way the text plays with time and perspectives. The first half of the book is Nick Dunne's story in the present (after Amy has gone missing) paired with Amy's prior diary entries that paint Nick in a negative light. We want to believe Nick's story in this portion as he seems to be finding enough proof that his wife faked her disappearance that it seems like he is the good guy and she has done him wrong (in spite of the diary entries). Then, the second half of the book takes what we think we know and spins it on its head. Nick is no longer our "good guy" as we learn of his affair with one of his students, and it is confirmed that Amy is alive and framing Nick. In other words, both of the characters are reliable and unreliable in their own ways, requiring the reader to figure out what to believe. A technique that works hand in hand with this is the well-placed backstory. We don't find out about Nick's affair until the second half of the book, which allows us to be seduced by his story and picture him as a "good guy" early on.

Another technique this novel uses is the notes and clues from Amy during the annual scavenger hunt she creates for her husband. The scavenger hunt's clues are not always obvious, so it sometimes takes Nick (and the readers) a while to figure out what they could mean. Even without knowing what the clues mean, though, we know that they are only leading Nick into more trouble, adding to the overall suspense.

Flynn, Gillian. *Sharp Objects*. New York, NY: Shaye Areheart Books, 2006. Print.

Sharp Objects by Gillian Flynn builds suspense in multiple ways including setting, subplots, and use of a foreground and background mystery. This book takes place in the small town of Wind Gap, Missouri, which is important to the story line (the cases) but also important to Camille, the main character who grew up there. The fact that it's a small town (and that the case of the missing girls seems to have been done by someone living in the town) creates an immediate sense of suspicion in every character we come across in the town. Flynn plays with this, introducing new characters and revisiting others, which makes the reader go back and forth about who could have committed this horrible crime. This book also has multiple subplots that help round out the story, but also feed into the larger plot. One of the major subplots is Camille trying to rebuild relationships with both Adora and Amma (her mother and step sister), which eventually turns into a mystery of its own (feeding into the investigation into the missing girls).

This balance between foreground and background mysteries is also particularly interesting when thinking about this text. There is the foreground investigation into the two missing girls (which is what brings Camille back to her hometown to begin with) and a background investigation where Camille tries to figure out what keeps her from having a solid relationship with her mother (and step-sister, but mainly Adora). This gives the reader twice as many things to think about as they progress in the book, which helps maintain both forward movement and suspense. In turn, this helps with character development and gives it all a real world feel without slowing things down.

In addition, this book has a main character who has a memorable characteristic. Camille Preaker has cut words into her skin all over her body. This self-harm plays an important role in the overall work, but also creates empathy in the reader. This investment

in and empathy for her character can help keep the reader engaged in the text and plot.

This trait is brought up more and more as you get into the book while Camille finds herself unwinding during the solving of all of the books mysteries. In that sense, it has a clear sense of what is at stake (at least for Camille who is clearly at risk of ending up back at the hospital/rehab).

Flynn, Gillian. *Dark Places*. New York, NY: Broadway Books, 2010. Print.

Dark Places by Gillian Flynn follows Libby Day as she tries to solve her family's brutal murder to figure out whether her brother, Ben, really committed the horrible crime. It's hard for me to pinpoint the creation of suspense in this novel as there is a clear balancing of reveals with the book revolving around solving the mystery behind the murder of the Day family, but it's not just that. I think suspense is also build through the use of multiple perspectives and balancing of present day with flashbacks.

The main thread of the book is the present day investigation being conducted by Libby and the amateur investigators from the murder club (who think Ben is innocent). Then there are sections ("flashbacks") where we hear from Ben and Patty (Ben and Libby's mother who was murdered that night). These sections help fill in holes that Libby perspective can't, but also help us know Ben and Patty better. Ben's sections paint him as a troubled teen trying to befriend kids in a bad crowd, and we learn that he has a secret girlfriend (who is also a part of this bad crowd). Patty's sections depict the money trouble that the family faces as they try to keep the farm afloat. These sections, then, provide important information about potential motivations for murder as well as give essential backstory for the characters. Because they are interspersed with the present day sections

in Libby's perspective, it also slows down the pacing of the story so we aren't rushing from one clue to the next in the present as Libby solves the murder of her family.

Gardner, Lisa. *Find Her*. New York, NY: Penguin Publishing Group, 2016. Print.

One of the things that really built suspense in *Find Her* by Lisa Gardner was not knowing Flora's name until a couple of chapters in. Even when Detective D.D. Warren asks Flora for her name when Flora is the victim (turned survivor/murderer) in a kidnapping case, she won't give up her name. We do know, however, that she looks familiar and other people seem to have the sense of seeing her before (although they can't put their finger on when or where). While this did feel a little manipulative at the reader (only because she wouldn't tell her name to the detective after having been a part of a crime), it worked to the extent that it did because of the dual perspectives. The novel covers both Warren's perspective and Flora's perspective (both her perspective in the present and in the past). While we're trying to learn Flora's name, then, the dual perspective helps us maintain forward movement because we can switch into D.D.'s POV which keeps the story going. In this way, we are able to stay engaged in the book even though we don't know the main character's name or story just yet. Later, these changes in perspective help us balance the two cases: the present day kidnapping of Flora and the past kidnapping of Flora. We see D.D. working the present case while also learning about the prior kidnapping incident as well, which helps keep a clear and significant connection and tension between story lines.

Another technique that was developed more at the chapter-level was the repetition of certain phrases. Sometimes these phrases would change slightly throughout the chapter ("This is all of Flora getting some rest" –a quote from her mother that runs through her

mind when she's kidnapped). This repetition and adaptations of the phrase ground you in the text, reminding you of Flora's past but also makes you think about the future. This technique was also useful in helping create chapters that could stand on their own outside of the larger work. This technique helped build a sense of urgency in the text as well as empathy for Flora as she goes through her second major kidnapping.

Hawkins, Paula. *The Girl on the Train*. New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 2015. Print.

The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins uses multiple techniques to create and maintain suspense including an unreliable main character, multiple perspectives, as well as thoughtful placement and balance of backstory. We learn early on about Rachel's alcoholism and her seeming obsession with her ex-husband, Tom, which leads us to question her story. The alcoholism is a key factor in this book's suspense as well since Rachel cannot remember what happened the night Megan Hipwell disappeared, but knows something bad happened to her that night since she woke up with injuries all over her body. The number of drinks she had that night along with the events that occurred leads her to black out. As a result, we discover the true events of that missing time period with her.

While we stay in Rachel's perspective for the first chunk of the book, we eventually here from Megan and Anna (Tom's new wife). Megan's perspective starts prior to the beginning of the novel, detailing her relationship problems and providing information that helps us piece together what might have happened to her. Anna's sections then (spoiler alert!) help us gain a better understanding of Tom who, as it turns out, had an affair with and murdered Megan.

Another aspect that helped build and maintain suspense in the novel was well placed back stories, particularly with Megan. With Megan's section coming later in the book but starting well before the beginning of the novel, we learn important information about her relationship but also her past. A particularly important part of her backstory had to do with an earlier pregnancy (before she was married), which we learn about somewhere in the middle of the book as she tells her therapist about the experience. Shortly after we learn that information, the police determine she was pregnant at the time of her death and, later still, the story of the death of her first child comes out. This worked out well because we learned the necessary background information right as it applied to the present day section rather than so early on that we aren't surprised at the later discovery of her being pregnant at time of death. This proper placing of the necessary back story is important to suspense because knowing too much too soon can make a reader feel like they know what is going to happen, ruin the element of surprise, and can result in a reader putting the book down unfinished.

Jensen, Louise. *The Sister*. London, UK: Bookouture, 2016. Print.

The Sister by Louise Jensen uses a few different techniques to build suspense including playing with reader expectations (or genre expectations), the balancing of a front mystery and a back mystery (one from Grace's past), and withholding of information.

The author plays with reader expectations throughout the novel, but especially with Anna's character. Ever since Anna enters the picture, we are led to believe that she is Charlie's sister (Charlie has passed away before the novel even began, and no one had heard of her having a sister). Later, we are told that she is not actually Charlie's sister after

all. Later still, we find out that she actually is Charlie's sister. This back and forth keeps the reader guessing and questioning what they already know. In this way, the author is playing with what the reader knows/ what the reader believes to be true, which keeps us in suspense.

In addition, the novel includes an unsolved mystery from Grace's (our main character's) past regarding vicious messages and nasty "gifts" from an anonymous person. This is balanced with the front "mystery" of figuring out who is sabotaging Grace's present day life. Grace considers that the two "cases" might be connected, and we follow her down that rabbit hole where we work to solve both mysteries. This back mystery (or subplot of sorts) worked well for this particular book because it helped maintain a forward movement during otherwise slow moments in the front story.

Another technique was the withholding of details until later in the book. For instance, we don't know how Charlie died until close to the end of the novel. Ultimately, what matters at the beginning of the book is that she is dead, but all of the possibilities surrounding her death help create some suspense in the novel as well. There is also the matter Grace catching characters doing weird things or acting suspicious, but it's left at that. Some of it is explained later on (like Anna and Dan's fling causing them to act weird), but other characters' behavior still seems strange without further explanation.

There were a few moments in the book that led to loose ends. For example, we never learn for sure if Anna followed Grace out of the country when she is trying to put space between herself and Anna (as well as Dan). It's suggested that it is Anna, or could be her, based off of the detail of a pink leather jacket, but it is never confirmed that Anna left the country. Seeing the jacket added tension for Grace who felt like leaving the country was

the only way she could be safe at that point in the book (so to be followed would totally destroy that sense of safety), but it's never confirmed as Anna. Maybe it doesn't matter, but I hate to be left with lingering questions at the end of the book.

Lapena, Shari. *The Couple next Door*. New York, NY: Pamela Dorman/Viking, 2016. Print.

The Couple Next Door by Shari Lapena uses multiple techniques to build and maintain suspense. One technique is the shifting of perspectives. We go between characters (in particular Anne and her husband Marco, but also Detective Rasback and sometimes the neighbors) which helps reveal important information but also allows the author to shift point of views at a particularly poignant moments (usually a cliffhanger of sorts). Detective Rasback's section helps with pacing of the book, allowing us to slow down and analyze what we know. His perspective also helps us connect the dots between pieces of evidence as well as raise further questions.

Another technique at play in this novel is the use of an unreliable narrator. All of the characters in this family have something to hide, but we don't know that at the beginning. For example, in the beginning of the book, Marco seems like a good father distressed at his infant daughter's disappearance from their home while they were next door. In the second section of the book, though, we realize (spoiler alert!) that he is the one who staged the kidnapping to begin with (having a partner to help the plan work). In that way, we question everything he tells us. His wife has a similar clarity of character that comes a little later in the novel when the detectives uncover patterns of violent or extreme behavior in her past. As the detectives question whether or not this could have played a role in her daughter's

abduction (did she stage it? did she kill her?), we're back to questioning her words and actions as well.

Marwood, Alex. *The Killer Next Door*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2014. Print.

The prologue of *The Killer Next Door* by Alex Marwood establishes the suspense right from the very beginning by letting us know that there is a murderer living in the small apartment complex, but we don't know which person it is. The prologue is a scene from the very end of the book that helps give us an idea of what is to come once we start reading, but also introduce the fact that there is a murderer among this small group of people. When we finally get into the book and start meeting the characters in the complex, we are suspicious of everyone. This helped establish suspense right away.

Like some of the other texts I looked at, this novel also used multiple perspectives to flush out the story and build suspense (as you tend to leave off with one character at a sort of cliffhanger moment). The one thing this story did differently with switching perspectives was actually going into the perspective of the murderer without exposing who the murderer was. The sections that were in close third on the murderer referred to the murderer as "the lover." In other words, he had no name assigned to him in these moments, which made it plausible that it was anyone (although we were told that it was a male, eliminating the female residents). To maintain suspense, the book doesn't go into the male perspectives very often (although we do get scenes close on the landlord and Thomas), instead focusing on the three female residents in the building.

An additional technique this book used was the suggestion that all of the residents have a secret. They are staying in a shady place paying cash only because they are all hiding

from someone or something. Collette, in particular, witnessed her former boss brutally attack a man, and he's been looking for her ever since (because she took a great deal of his money with her when she went into hiding). Because we are aware of this thread with Collette from pretty much the beginning of the book, suspense is created and maintained in her sections by the possibility of these criminals popping up to kill her (which, of course, they do eventually appear).

Paris, B.A. *Behind Closed Doors*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2016. Print.

After reading *Behind Closed Doors* by B. A. Paris, I considered taking this book out of my project because it turned out to be more melodramatic than suspenseful (even though it is advertised and described as a thriller and suspense novel). It's sadistic, but the sadism doesn't help advance the plot and the situation (the marriage that isn't as perfect as it seems) doesn't build throughout the book (although Millie's arrival date sets a sort of time constraint on things). My decision to keep this book in my project was to have a means of comparison with this text being an example of one that didn't work for me.

To be fair, this book flips between past and present (when Grace first meets Jack to after Grace and Jack are married) like some of the other suspense novels I enjoyed did. However, the past sections didn't seem to add to the front story. Part of this is because we are aware of too many of the book's twists early on (such as the fact that they aren't the perfect couple and Jack is controlling). Not that far into the book, we get to the biggest "twist" of all when we learn that Jack married Grace to get access to Millie so he could have complete control over a person, but even this reveal falls flat. I think this is partially because the premise required too much suspension of disbelief on my part, and partially

because it was too early in the book to really be attached to any of these characters. As a result, I never really felt attached to the characters and, therefore, wasn't really invested in what was happening to them.

Stevens, Chevy. *Still Missing*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2014. Print.

The structure of *Still Missing* by Chevy Stevens is what struck me with this book. The story of Annie O'Sullivan's kidnapping that spanned over a year is told through sessions with her therapist (who we never actually hear speak, although Annie does react and respond to the therapists questions...seemingly designed so that we feel like we are the therapist and not an outsider). This structure inherently creates suspense because you only get bits and pieces of the story at a given time. Annie can stop talking whenever she wants to (which usually happens at the emotionally stressful sections of her ordeal). The sessions also strike a balance between Annie talking about her experience being kidnapped by "The Freak" (also, not knowing his true name adds an air of mystery) and her present experiences in trying to move forward in her own life.

While this book did have plot twists in that (spoiler!) her parents turned out to be behind the kidnapping in the first place and were also responsible for the second kidnapping attempt, the ending didn't really feel earned. There weren't enough (any) clues for a reader to even take a guess at that ending, and, while I do like a surprising plot twist, I like plot twists in which you can see clues for in retrospect. In other words, it seems like good suspense and plotting can't just come out of the blue. You have to lay the groundwork for these sorts of things, even if that means you're dropping clues that no one in or out of the book notices right then.

Swanson, Peter. *A Kind worth Killing*. New York, NY: William Morrow, 2016. Print.

One of the coolest things *A Kind Worth Killing* by Peter Swanson does in regards to suspense is keep a big secret from the reader without the reader feeling cheated. I normally wouldn't be a fan of this, but it worked here. The secret we're not told (spoiler!) is that Miranda (Ted's wife in the present) is Faith (from Lily's college days). I think the reason it works here is because we are given enough clues and information to see how they could overlap, but we just didn't consider that they were the same person (but if we stopped to really ask ourselves why Lily would agree to help Ted murder his wife, we might have considered this possibility).

One of the other suspense techniques that I thought was particularly effective in this novel was the way the reader doesn't (necessarily) see Ted's murder coming. Because the book focuses on Ted, we are focused on Ted and Lily's plan to murder Miranda, and so when Miranda hires someone to murder Ted (which we find out only when the murderer, Ted and Miranda's contractor, shows up at their house when Miranda is out of town) we are surprised to discover this other murder plot. Again, this is done in a way that the reader doesn't feel cheated, and it's totally believable.

In the latter portion of the book, the walls seem to be closing in on Lily as detectives are starting to piece together her involvement in the murders. This applies pressure to Lily and creates suspense as we try to figure out if they are going to piece it all together and if she is going to be punished for her involvement. There is also a sort of open ending to this book. We are left wondering (spoiler!) if the demolition crew at the old farm will find the

bodies she buried there and if that will result in her being punished after all (even though she is seemingly being let go at the end of the book).

Ware, Ruth. *In a Dark, Dark Wood*. New York, NY: Gallery/Scout, 2015. Print.

In a Dark, Dark Wood by Ruth Ware tells the story of Lenora (who goes by Nora but used to go by Lee) who is invited to the hen of someone she was best friends with back in high school and hasn't spoken to since. The book starts with Nora waking up in the hospital unable to remember what has transpired (or how she got there), but she has a distinct feeling that something is wrong and that someone is dead. As we go into the book then, we are trying to figure out what went on that weekend to land her in the hospital. Because Nora hasn't seen this friend in a while, there's a sort of back mystery at play as well (more heavily so in the beginning) as to why Nora was invited to the weekend getaway in the first place. Smaller moments of suspense are built through focus on sounds and other specific details during moments of heightened awareness (like when they are trying to figure out if someone has broken into the house). The setting itself also adds to the suspense. They are in a secluded house in the woods that is constructed with large glass panels for walls. This leaves the characters (and us) with an uneasy feeling of being watched, which certainly adds to the suspense and eeriness of the book.

Ware, Ruth. *The Woman in Cabin 10*. New York, NY: Gallery/Scout, 2016. Print.

The Woman in Cabin 10 by Ruth Ware builds a lot of its suspense through making everyone a suspect. Lo, who is a passenger on the Aurora (a small luxury cruise ship) believes she has witnessed someone going overboard, but no one on the ship is missing. In

her quest to prove that a crime has been committed (and that she's not insane), she goes about trying to put the pieces together herself. In the process, she suspects everyone else on board (a small number of people) which makes the reader wonder about all of the characters as well. It is in this first half that important bits of information are dropped, but they are small bits of information that fly under the radar until we know what to make of them later on (when we learn a bigger clue that makes sense of it all).

In addition, Lo's reliability is brought into question. The book is told in her perspective and so we are led to believe what she tells us is true. After she reports the potential crime aboard the Aurora, however, we find out (through the head of security) that Lo takes medicine which he refers to as antidepressants (although they are actually for her anxiety). With this new bit of information, the reader is left to question her reliability piecing this information together with the snarky voice in her head that has been present throughout. In the latter half of the book, Lo is confined in tight quarters in the lower level of the ship. Because she is isolated from everyone else, we don't know what all is happening elsewhere on the ship which really helps build suspense (along with the darkness itself).

One possible technique that didn't work for me was the coincidence surrounding break-ins in the book. The novel starts with Lo's place being broken into, and later we find out that the person who was supposed to be in cabin 10 had their place broken into just before the trip as well, but it isn't resolved as to whether or not these break ins were done by the same person or just an unhappy coincidence. We find out later in the novel that the break in that occurred at the intended cabin 10 person's house happened because the antagonist wanted a room at the back of the ship available. Lo also had a cabin at the back

of the ship, so it's possible her break in occurred for the same reason (and it didn't work out for them because they weren't able to snag her passport), but it's not made clear so it feels like a bit of a loose end.

White, Kate. *Eyes on You*. New York, NY: Harper, 2014. Print.

Eyes on You by Kate White gets the suspense going right away in chapter one when Robin gets a threatening note in her evening bag while at a party celebrating her new book. Throughout the book, more clues like this are dropped which adds to the suspense and adds a sense of danger as they escalate. Like the other novel of White's that I looked at, this novel regularly uses cliffhangers at the end of the chapter to keep the reader moving through the text. In addition, this book in particular did a good job with red herrings. By being in Robin's head (and from some of the clues we are given, usually information told to us by other characters), we are led to believe that one of Robin's coworkers is responsible for the majority of the book. The clues seem to add up to that conclusion and it results in no one (the characters or the reader really) being able to come up with another possible suspect until later in the novel (after another pivotal clue is dropped).

White, Kate. *The Wrong Man*. New York, NY: Harper, 2015. Print.

One of the key suspense builders in *The Wrong Man* by Kate White was the use of cliffhangers at the end of chapters. They were obvious in their use (has the sort of authorial intrusion or overly crafted feel at times), but they did work to keep a reader engaged and moving through the text. A useful secondary technique in this book that helped create suspense was being in Kit Finn's head and knowing her thoughts. Her thoughts (especially

when the man she thinks she's going to go meet is not the man she ends up meeting) helped us think through the evidence with her and gave us some insight to her character.

Techniques

From reading these texts, I developed a sort of list of suspense building techniques that I saw and could potentially try. The list is as follows (in no particular order):

1. **Create an unreliable narrator, or a character whose reliability we question.**

Give us a character we think we can trust and then take that trust away so we question everything we've believed to be true. (See: *Gone Girl*, *The Girl on the Train*, *The Couple Next Door*, *The Woman in Cabin 10*, etc.)

2. **Character back-stories need to have the perfect placement.** Character back-stories can be big reveals in the work, and it is important to make sure they are placed in the best spot possible. As with *The Woman in Cabin 10*, we don't find out about our narrator being on any sort of medication until part way through the book. Having this information arise when it does lets us believe her to be telling the truth at the beginning and then causes us to reconsider what the truth really is.

3. **There needs to be a clear sense of what's at stake, and usually that means someone's life.** All of these novels had a clear sense of danger to them for at least one of the characters that is essential in keeping us invested in the story line. There are other things at stake as well in the novels (money, reputations, relationships, etc.), but there always seems to be at least one person who could end up dead or severely hurt.

4. **Include subplots or front mysteries and back mysteries.** Many of these texts had something going on outside of the main story line that helps maintain forward movement and usually adds to the suspense. For example, *Sharp Objects* has a front mystery where Camille is trying to figure out who killed these two little girls and a subplot of her trying to fix the relationship with herself and her family (specifically her mother and her sister). The novel *The Sister* has two mysteries going on (that we are led to believe are connected) with the awful occurrences in Grace's present day life (tied in with the arrival of Anna) and the memory of the vicious letters Grace got when she was a teen.
5. **Switch point of views.** Switching perspectives can help build suspense and maintain forward movement by filling in gaps we can't fill from the main character's perspective. With novels like *Find Her* and *The Couple Next Door*, this switching of perspectives is important in order for the reader to piece together what's really going on. Each perspective provides important clues and information that helps us make sense of the larger work and stay invested in the characters.
6. **Use red herrings.** *The Killer Next Door* uses red herrings throughout the text to make you question all of the residents in the building. These misleading clues are helpful in maintaining suspense because they can send the reader on a different train of thought and lead to a startling realization.
7. **Lay the groundwork upfront for plot twists.** You need to drop clues in the story early on for any good plot twist to avoid the reader feeling cheated or entirely misled. The best clues for this seem to be the ones we don't always recognize as clues right away but later come back to us (usually at the point of the plot twist).

This was the difference between coming across really cool plot twists in *A Kind Worth Killing* (Miranda has Ted killed while Ted is plotting her murder and Miranda is actually Faith!) and plot twists that flopped like in *Still Missing* and *Behind Closed Doors*.

8. **Try using cliffhangers at the end of chapters** (especially if you can cut to another character or a later moment and come back to the aftermath of the cliff hanger).

Kate White's novels *Eyes on You* and *The Wrong Man* used these in the most obvious way and at the end of the chapter, but they did work to propel the reader through the text. Other novels used cliffhangers at the ends of chapters a little more sparingly, and had the same result of moving the reader through the text. My conclusion with these is that you don't need a clear cliffhanger at the end of each chapter, but that they can be useful at the ends some chapters to help build and maintain suspense.

Conclusions

In my thesis, I hope to at least try some of these techniques. I know that for this book I won't be using the multiple perspectives, but techniques like well-placed back story, balancing of front and back mysteries or subplots, and laying appropriate ground work for plot twists (to avoid the reader feeling cheated) will be techniques I look at in my own novel. Overall, this reading and in-depth analysis of these thriller and suspense novels helped me gain a better understanding of the genre in which I am writing for my thesis and provide me inspiration on techniques for building and maintaining suspense.