

# The Woman in Cabin 10



## INTRODUCTION

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF RUTH WARE

Ruth Ware grew up in Sussex on England's south coast. She studied at Manchester University and lived in Paris for a while before settling in North London. Before becoming a full-time writer, she also worked as a waitress, an English teacher, and a bookseller. Though she enjoyed writing stories from the time she was a little girl, writing remained a hobby until she was in her thirties, when she began working on novels while her two children were in school and found her first publishing success. Her bestselling mysteries include *In a Dark, Dark Wood* and *The Lying Game*.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Ware's novel is part of a resurgence of the thriller genre that could be dated to Gillian Flynn's 2012 bestseller [Gone Girl](#) and may reflect a broader cultural fascination with true crime stories. Such thrillers often feature female protagonists, domestic strife, and psychological suspense. The pervasiveness of the internet and smartphone technology is another feature of the novel. After every few chapters, Ware includes emails, Facebook posts, or online forum posts discussing Lo's whereabouts, which illustrate the degree to which these tools have become indispensable to daily communication and one's ability to access news and information—and also how they can harmfully fuel speculation. Lo's inability to access the internet during the cruise—which cuts her off from loved ones and also forces her to solve the mystery without outside help—underscores this. The novel also makes reference to the common but underreported phenomenon of cruise ship crime, which, because it often occurs in international waters, is frequently subject to murky maritime laws and overlapping police jurisdictions.

### RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Ruth Ware's mystery plots have sometimes been compared to those of the "Golden Age" detective fiction of the 1920s and 1930s. Agatha Christie's [Murder on the Orient Express](#) (1934), for example, features detective Hercule Poirot solving a murder case aboard a luxury train. Patricia Highsmith's 1950 psychological thriller, *Strangers on a Train*, features two train passengers whose lives become entangled when one of them, a psychopathic manipulator like Richard Bullmer, convinces the other to "swap murders" with him. In more recent fiction, Paul Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train* (2015) also features a thirtysomething narrator who witnesses something shocking,

but whose reliability is questioned because of her drinking.

### KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *The Woman in Cabin 10*
- **When Written:** 2016
- **Where Written:** London, England
- **When Published:** 2016
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Mystery, thriller
- **Setting:** The luxury yacht *Aurora*, on the North Sea
- **Climax:** The woman from Cabin 10 knocks on Lo Blacklock's door, revealing that she is still alive after all
- **Antagonist:** The woman from Cabin 10/Carrie
- **Point of View:** First person

### EXTRA CREDIT

**Classic Throwback.** In coming up with the posh cruise liner setting of *The Woman in Cabin 10*, Ruth Ware was inspired by the "stifled luxury feeling" evoked in many of Agatha Christie's celebrated novels, such as [Murder on the Orient Express](#) and *Death on the Nile*.

**Subtle Shout-Out.** In the book, while Lo questions fellow passengers aboard the *Aurora*, she sees journalist Alexander Belhomme with "a volume of Patricia Highsmith" under his arm, likely a nod to Ruth Ware's own authorial influences.



## PLOT SUMMARY

Laura "Lo" Blacklock, a 32-year-old travel journalist, is trapped in the bedroom of her London flat one night while a burglar ransacks her belongings. After breaking her way out, she struggles with flashbacks and insomnia, but she's determined not to miss her big break: covering the *Aurora*, a luxury yacht cruising the Norwegian fjords to see the northern **lights**, for the travel magazine *Velocity*. Before leaving for the cruise, she argues with her boyfriend, Judah, because she's hesitant to move forward in their relationship, despite Judah waiting for months and turning down a New York job offer to stay with her. By the time she's welcomed aboard the *Aurora*, Lo is severely sleep-deprived and still suffering flashbacks to the burglary. She also uses alcohol to help her manage her anxiety. On the first evening of the cruise, Lo knocks on the door of the neighboring cabin to borrow some mascara. She's greeted by a surprised young woman wearing a ratty Pink Floyd T-shirt. The

woman seems flustered and abruptly shuts the door in her face after giving her the mascara.

During the first night's networking dinner, Lo meets a number of fellow journalists, including her ex-boyfriend, Ben Howard, but she doesn't see the girl again. She's struck by the apparent youth of yacht owner Lord Richard Bullmer, as well as the sickly appearance of his wife, Anne Bullmer, who's been fighting cancer.

Very late that night, after a drunken Lo has fallen asleep, she's awakened by what she thinks is the sound of a scream, soon followed by a loud splash. She runs out onto the veranda and thinks she sees the shape of a woman's hand swirling beneath the water, as well as a smear of blood on the neighboring veranda. By the time head of security Johann Nilsson arrives, however, the blood has disappeared. When Lo insists that she spoke to the girl in Cabin 10 earlier and that she must be in danger or dead, Nilsson tells her that cabin has always been empty.

The next morning, Nilsson takes Lo below deck so she can see for herself if she recognizes the missing girl among the ship's staff. Though no one can give her any useful information, Lo is appalled by the contrast between the luxury upstairs and the dark, cramped staff quarters. Lo remains fixated on solving the mystery of the girl's apparent murder, even when veteran journalist Tina West offers her a freelancing opportunity that could advance her career. Back in her cabin, Lo discovers that the girl's mascara is now missing. She summons Nilsson again, but he questions her judgment in light of her alcohol consumption and her use of antidepressants. Lo realizes that if she wants to find out what really happened, she's on her own.

During a mud wrap in the ship's spa, Lo falls asleep, then wakes up to discover that someone's traced a warning message in the steam on the bathroom mirror: STOP DIGGING.

That afternoon, Lo meets with Lord Bullmer personally to tell him what she'd heard last night, and he is disarmingly smooth and detached throughout the conversation. Later, Lo discovers that her veranda door can't be secured—a clue as to how the mascara, and now her mobile phone, have been stolen from her cabin. Shaken, she settles on the couch for the night, waiting for the *Aurora* to arrive in Trondheim, Norway, the next morning so she can contact the police. However, there's a startling knock on her door in the middle of the night—it's the woman from Cabin 10, still alive. Lo chases her down the hall and through a staff door, then is attacked and knocked unconscious. She wakes up to find herself stuck in a cramped, windowless room in the bowels of the ship. Trapped for an indeterminate amount of time, Lo suffers from panic, hunger, and medication withdrawal. Though she'd clearly witnessed something she wasn't meant to see, it wasn't the murder of the mysterious girl, as she had first imagined. The girl had been sneaking into her cabin all along and left her the threatening message.

The girl brings Lo food occasionally, but always leaves before Lo can catch her. Finally, Lo attacks her with the sharp edge of a tray and bargains for access to her antidepressants. When the girl accidentally wipes off her penciled eyebrows, Lo suddenly recognizes her—she appears to be Anne Bullmer. Later, she pieces together the clues that, in fact, Anne is dead—killed the night the ship left England—and the girl has been impersonating her ever since. When Lo reveals that she's caught on, the girl starves her for a couple of days in retaliation. In the meantime, Lo hears the rest of the passengers disembarking from the *Aurora* and nearly collapses from despair.

The next time she returns, however, the girl has softened toward Lo and even reveals her name—Carrie. Eventually, Carrie tells Lo how Bullmer had swept her off her feet while she worked as a waitress at his club, supporting herself as a struggling actress. The two had carried on a secret affair, with Carrie sometimes impersonating Anne in public. Lo figures out that Bullmer has intended to use Carrie all along—planning to kill Anne and exploit Carrie long enough to secure access to Anne's fortune—but Carrie still maintains that she loves Richard and can't betray him. Lo gets Carrie talking about the night she helped Bullmer throw Anne overboard—possibly alive—and the guilt that haunts her. She ultimately succeeds in forging a personal connection with Carrie, and Carrie hatches a plan whereby Lo can escape the ship.

Per Carrie's plan, Lo disguises herself in Carrie's clothes, locks Carrie in the room, and sneaks into the Bullmers' suite to get some money Carrie's left there. Bullmer suddenly returns, so Lo is forced to climb over the veranda barrier to reach the neighboring suite—but she falls into the **ocean** instead. She fights her way ashore and seeks help in a village hotel, but flees again when she realizes the hotel manager is Bullmer's personal friend. She must outrun the police and take refuge in a remote barn until she's rescued by an elderly Norwegian farmer and able to phone Judah back in England. Lo assumes that Carrie was killed by Bullmer. Bullmer is also reported to have committed suicide.

As Lo recovers from the traumatic events aboard the *Aurora*, she decides to move with Judah to New York and abandon her work at *Velocity*, rekindling her dream of becoming an investigative reporter. Two months later, after the bodies of Bullmer and Anne have been recovered from the North Sea, it's determined that Bullmer was shot by someone, and Lo receives a transfer of 40,000 Swiss francs from Carrie—confirming that she'd survived after all.



## CHARACTERS

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**Laura "Lo" Blacklock** – Lo is a 32-year-old journalist living in

the Haringay district of London. She's spent the past decade in an entry-level job at travel magazine *Velocity* and jumps at the chance to cover the maiden voyage of a luxury yacht, the *Aurora*, when her boss, Rowan Lonsdale, is sick. Lo struggles with chronic anxiety, which is severely triggered by a break-in at her apartment at the beginning of the book. She's dating Judah Lewis, but argues with him over their relationship status before embarking on the cruise. On the first evening of the cruise, Lo borrows mascara from the woman in Cabin 10, next door to her own. That night, Lo thinks she hears a body being thrown overboard and sees a streak of blood on the veranda next door. Though Johann Nilsson initially helps her canvass the ship's staff for evidence of a missing woman, he ultimately dismisses Lo's claims in light of her excessive drinking and use of antidepressants. Deciding the woman's fate is more important than her career prospects, Lo doggedly persists in questioning fellow passengers despite a threatening message and uncertainty about whom she can trust. The next night, the girl in Cabin 10 knocks on Lo's door and lures her belowdecks, where she traps and starves Lo for several days. Lo finally figures out that the girl has been impersonating Lord Richard Bullmer's wife, Anne, who'd been murdered by Bullmer that first night. She manages to befriend the girl, and the girl helps Lo escape the *Aurora*. Lo flees to the Norwegian countryside, finally outrunning Bullmer's reach. After the ordeal, she decides to go to New York with Judah and quit *Velocity* in favor of a new career in investigative journalism.

**The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie** – Lo meets the woman in the neighboring cabin when she goes next door to borrow some mascara. The woman, whom Lo mostly refers to as “the girl” in the first half of the story, is in her late 20s or early 30s, with long dark hair. When Lo first sees her, she's wearing a Pink Floyd T-shirt with holes in it. Though her facial features aren't memorable, Lo is struck by “the sheer liveliness and vivacity of her expression.” Using a wig and makeup, the girl impersonates Anne Bullmer after Richard Bullmer kills Anne on the first night of the cruise, appearing as “Anne” in the spa, in the Bullmers' suite, at dinner, and in the hallway. On the second night of the cruise, she appears at Lo's cabin door and lures her belowdecks, knocking her unconscious and locking her in a room to stop her from digging into the murder. Though the girl—who reveals her name is Carrie—initially starves Lo and deprives her of her medication, Lo gradually wins her trust, and she tells how Bullmer swept her off her feet in London, where Carrie, a struggling actress, was waitressing at the Magellan club. Though Carrie believed herself to be in love, Bullmer had actually planned to use her in his scheme to kill Anne and take her fortune. Carrie ultimately helps Lo escape the *Aurora* and, though evidence suggests she's been drowned, she actually shoots Bullmer and escapes, accessing Anne's fortune and sending money to Lo. Her childhood nickname had been “Tigger,” since no matter how hard they fall, “Tiggers bounce.”

**Lord Richard Bullmer** – Bullmer, a British Lord and wealthy owner of the *Aurora* cruise liner, is just a few years older than Lo. He is married to Anne Lyngstad Bullmer. After a privileged childhood, Bullmer was orphaned and broke by the time he entered Oxford University, then formed a successful start-up. The *Aurora* is his latest business venture. Bullmer tries to project an approachable, everyman persona despite his immense wealth, playing poker with guests and personally meeting with Lo to listen to her suspicions about the missing woman/Carrie. However, he also gives off a disarming, likely sociopathic stoicism. It turns out that Bullmer killed Anne on the first night of the cruise, having convinced Carrie—his secret lover—to impersonate her, in hopes of avoiding prosecution and securing Anne's fortune for himself. Bullmer has amassed a wide network of friends in high places, but Lo escapes and outruns him, and he's ultimately shot and killed by Carrie.

**Anne Bullmer** – Anne, around age 30, is a wealthy heiress married to Lord Richard Bullmer. Her family owned a famous car manufacturing company in Norway. She spent most of her childhood in Swiss boarding schools and speaks impeccable English. After traveling so much while young, she's now rumored to be a recluse. Anne has been fighting breast cancer, and on the first night of the *Aurora* cruise, she is plainly ill, pale and wearing a headscarf. Anne is murdered by Richard later that night. However, the woman in Cabin 10/Carrie impersonates her, resulting in “Anne's” appearance in the spa (chapter 16), in the Bullmers' suite (chapter 19), at dinner, and in the hallway (chapter 21). After she's trapped belowdecks, Lo briefly thinks that Anne and the girl from Cabin 10 are the same person, then figures out that the girl has been disguising herself as Anne, part of Richard's plot to secure Anne's fortune for himself. Anne's body is recovered in the North Sea by Danish fishermen.

**Judah Lewis** – Judah (or “Jude”) is Lo's boyfriend, 35 years old and originally from Brooklyn, New York. He works as a foreign correspondent and travels a lot. Jude wants his relationship with Lo to move forward and has spent most of the past year waiting for her to agree to move in with him, even putting a job opportunity on hold. When she's traumatized from a burglary at her flat, Lo mistakenly attacks Judah with a lamp and breaks his tooth; they also argue over their relationship before Lo leaves for the *Aurora* cruise. However, Jude worries about Lo's lack of contact during the cruise and raises the alarm about her disappearance before anyone else does. After Lo escapes Norway, they're joyfully reunited, and Lo agrees to move to New York with him.

**Ben Howard** – Ben is a fellow passenger on the *Aurora*, a travel journalist with a “hipster beard” who used to work at *Velocity* with Lo and now does investigative journalism at the *Times*. Unlike Lo, Ben is adept at networking. The two of them dated in their twenties, and Ben has lingering feelings for Lo. On the first night of the cruise, they're both drunk, and Ben makes an

unwanted sexual advance, to which Lo responds by kneeling him in the groin. He helps Lo with her investigation, though, and “raises hell” about her disappearance from the ship.

**Tina West** – Tina is a fellow *Aurora* passenger, a veteran journalist, and editor of the travel publication *The Vernean Times*. Tina began her journalism career in the late eighties and is legendary for her ruthlessness. Though Tina’s rumored to have trampled on other women in her ambition, Lo sympathizes with her scrappy pursuit of success. Nevertheless, she passes on Tina’s offer of freelancing opportunities.

**Johann Nilsson** – Nilsson is head of security on the *Aurora*. He is a big, bearlike man of about forty. He shows kindness to Lo after she reports the presumed murder, but he also second-guesses her reliability on the basis of her mental state and undermines her with the other staff, making her feel belittled and dismissed.

**Cole Lederer** – Cole is a handsome, award-winning photographer in his forties. He flirts with Lo during the first night of the *Aurora* cruise. While Lo is telling Bullmer her suspicions about the woman in Cabin 10, he breaks a champagne glass and also knocks his camera into the hot tub, leading Lo to briefly suspect him of involvement in the girl’s death.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

**Rowan Lonsdale** – Rowan is Lo’s boss at travel magazine *Velocity*. Rowan is severely ill during her pregnancy, and she offers Lo the gig aboard the *Aurora* as a way of proving herself. Lo hopes to cover Rowan’s maternity leave and then get the promotion Rowan has been promising.

**Alexander Belhomme** – Alexander is a fellow passenger on the *Aurora*, a travel journalist, and “rotund as a walrus.” He’s fond of luxurious living and gossips with Lo about various passengers’ nocturnal prowling around the ship.

**Archer Fenlan** – Archer is a fellow passenger on the *Aurora*, a weather-beaten ex-Marine whose expertise is “extreme travel.” He scares Lo while demonstrating self-defense techniques.

**Chloe Jenssen** – Chloe is a fellow passenger on the *Aurora*, a stunning ex-model who’s married to Lars Jenssen.

**Lars Jenssen** – Lars is a fellow passenger on the *Aurora*, head of a Swedish investment group. He’s married to Chloe Jenssen.

**Owen White** – Owen is a fellow passenger on the *Aurora*, an older man and UK-based investor who keeps to himself.

**Camilla Lidman** – Camilla is the stewardess in charge of hospitality on the *Aurora*. She gives Lo an enthusiastic welcome on the first day of the cruise.

**Karla** – Karla is Lo’s cabin stewardess on the *Aurora*. She tries to dissuade Lo from pursuing her investigation further, fearing for her job.

**Eva** – Eva is a spa therapist aboard the *Aurora*, a kind, strikingly attractive woman in her forties.

**Ulla** – Ulla is a stewardess and spa therapist aboard the *Aurora*, almost six feet tall and delicately beautiful. She gives Lo a mud treatment during the spa morning.

**Josef** – Josef is a steward on the *Aurora*. He sleeps with Tina West on the first night of the cruise.

**Iwona** – Iwona is a Polish woman who works as a cleaner aboard the *Aurora*.

**Konrad Horst** – Konrad is a kindly, elderly Norwegian man who discovers Lo hiding in his horse barn after she flees Bullmer, drives her to safety, and helps her contact Judah and the police.



## THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don’t have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



### ENTRAPMENT AND ISOLATION

In Ruth Ware’s mystery thriller *The Woman in Cabin 10*, journalist Laura “Lo” Blacklock finds herself trapped at several points in the story—first when her flat is robbed, and later aboard the luxury yacht *Aurora*. While on the *Aurora*, where Lo is writing a piece for a travel magazine, she accidentally catches wind of a crime that has taken place in the cabin next to hers and is later captured for knowing too much. Lo must summon all her resources to forestall panic and try to find a way out. In both situations, Lo ultimately discovers that being stuck is less frightening than finding herself completely alone. In other words, the psychological effects of entrapment, and specifically the feeling of being cut off from other people, are harder to bear than the physical ones, and—as Lo learns when she befriends her captor, Carrie—they are also much harder to escape.

The novel is bookended by examples of literal entrapment, and isolation marks the story throughout. While the experience of being physically trapped and isolated is terrifying for Lo in all these instances, the common thread is her anxiety of not being able to get help from other people. The novel begins with Lo being trapped inside her flat’s bedroom by a burglar who removes the spindle from the doorknob. She spends two hours hacking at the latch with a nail file before being able to flee to a neighbor’s flat to call the police. Her ID, phone, money, and all other vital belongings have been stolen.

Aboard the *Aurora*, Lo becomes convinced that Carrie—a young woman she knows at first as only “the girl from Cabin 10”—has been murdered, but she’s actually an accessory to yacht owner

Richard Bullmer's killing of his wife, Anne. Carrie lures Lo out of her cabin and attacks her in hopes of stopping her pursuit of the truth and silencing her. Afterward, Lo awakens to discover she's trapped in a "windowless room ... small and stifling." After realizing that the door can't be forced open, Lo must work hard to stave off a panic attack, knowing that the seemingly airless space could become her tomb. As if this weren't horrifying enough, Lo is abandoned by her oblivious fellow passengers when they disembark from the cruise at Bergen, Norway. She experiences despair for the first time, facing "the endless sentence of waiting ... for someone who would never come."

Even after Lo escapes the *Aurora*, she finds herself isolated in a different way. As she roams across endless Norwegian countryside, she's encircled by the seemingly endless reach of wealthy Lord Bullmer's sphere of influence, because he's cultivated friendships everywhere she goes for help, even among the police. She's also isolated by her lack of money and inability to speak Norwegian. Throughout these experiences, Lo shows resourcefulness and strength; it's isolation from other human beings that deeply frightens her.

After experiencing firsthand what it's like to be trapped, Lo is able to think about her captor's own emotional entrapment in a different way and seek a connection with her accordingly. Lo's and Carrie's connection is, paradoxically, the beginning of freedom for both of them and points to how being emotionally trapped can be far more challenging to escape than physical confines. Thinking over her conversations with Carrie, Lo remembers the sadness in her face and wonders if Carrie, by falling in love with Bullmer and cooperating with his schemes, "had come face-to-face with something she was not ready for." Later, musing that she might have Stockholm syndrome—a sense of emotional dependence on one's captor—Lo realizes that Carrie "had a considerably more advanced case than I did. Maybe that was closer to the truth—we weren't captor and captive, but two animals in different compartments of the same cage. Hers was just slightly larger."

Carrie brings Lo a copy of *Winnie-the-Pooh* to read while she's trapped in the windowless room on the boat, and the book becomes a point of connection between the two, as they share childhood memories of identifying with the book. The two women's connection eventually leads to Carrie's plan to switch places with Lo, at risk of her own life, so that Lo has a chance of escaping the ship. Although Carrie struggles to accept the truth about Bullmer's cruel intentions toward her, Lo's compassion has helped Carrie realize she isn't alone in her situation, and she's now able to imagine and take a chance on a life free from Bullmer's snare.

At the end of the book, as Lo talks with her boyfriend, Judah, about her ordeal, she reflects that "people can be sucked into doing something out of fear, or inability to see any other way out." Carrie, Lo knows, wore "masks ... to hide the terror and loneliness inside." In that way, Carrie was trapped more than

her captive, Lo. While Lo just needed to escape the *Aurora*—a risky flight in its own way—Carrie had to extricate herself from her love and dependence on Bullmer, as well as face up to her complicity in his crimes.

At the beginning of the book, Lo had seemed to be in a rut, isolated by her own choice—huddling in a lonely apartment, frequently using alcohol to smooth social interactions, and resistant to committing fully to Judah. After her ordeal, however, she finds she's received concerned messages even from people she'd assumed she'd alienated, suggesting that she's not as isolated as she'd thought. She also initiates the decision to move to New York with Jude. Fighting her way out of the *Aurora* seems to have renewed her confidence in her ability to connect meaningfully with others, helping her become less stuck in her own life.



## PERCEPTION VS. REALITY

Throughout *The Woman in Cabin 10*, Ware constantly plays with the differences between perception and reality. For example, the extravagance of the yacht *Aurora* conceals the dark secrets of various people aboard; the content of emails and internet posts after each section of the novel tricks the reader into guessing that Lo Blacklock has suffered a much worse fate than she ultimately does. The most obvious examples, though, are the disguise used by the woman in Cabin 10 and Lord Bullmer's deceptive self-presentation. Ware uses these deceptions to show that people and situations are not always what they seem, and that trusting in perceptions and appearances can be incredibly dangerous.

"The girl in Cabin 10"—later revealed as Carrie—and Anne Bullmer are the book's primary examples of how one's perception of reality can be easily manipulated, to dangerous effect. When Lo meets the neighbor she only knows as "the girl in Cabin 10" on the yacht, she sees a pretty young woman wearing a ratty Pink Floyd t-shirt and lots of makeup. The glimpse is fleeting, but it gives Lo a vivid impression of a lively personality.

In contrast, when Lo first sees Anne Bullmer, yacht owner Lord Richard Bullmer's rich, dying wife, she sees a sickly, pale woman in a headscarf, with a "curious, skull-like appearance." Afraid of rudely staring, Lo doesn't study Anne closely. The next day, she has additional brief encounters with "Anne." When she knocks on the Bullmers' cabin door and finds Anne tearful, Lo's face burns with "a kind of shame" at Anne's vulnerability. Later, she sees Anne leaning against a wall "as if steeling herself for something"; Anne remarks, "Sometimes it all just seems too much ... such a *performance*," before excusing herself to bed. Lo's discomfort during these momentary encounters, due to not wanting to make a cancer survivor feel self-conscious, prevents her from forming a similarly vivid impression of Anne Bullmer.

Later, Lo makes the shocking discovery that the “girl in Cabin 10” is Anne—or at least, who she *thinks* is Anne. When the girl washes her face, she wipes off her penciled eyebrows, revealing “a smooth, skull-like forehead that was instantly, unbearably recognizable.” Lo abruptly realizes that she “had been so mesmerized by the trappings of [Anne’s] illness that I’d never really looked at the woman beneath. I had tried not to look in fact.” The ease with which Lo’s perceptions were manipulated shows that appearances can’t always be trusted.

Soon, it clicks that “Anne” is actually a different woman, Carrie, who’s been impersonating the real Anne Bullmer—now dead—since the second day of the cruise. Lo thinks back on meeting Carrie and suddenly remembers seeing waxing strips and other products she’d been using to transform herself into “Anne.” Thus, the revelation illuminates Lo’s old memories, and she realizes that she hasn’t been seeing exactly what and whom she thought she was seeing.

Though the Anne/Carrie deception is elaborate, Lord Bullmer’s manipulation of others’ perceptions of him is even more calculated and sinister, demonstrating how dangerous it truly is to mistake appearances for reality. When Lo first speaks with Lord Bullmer, she notices an odd wink he habitually gives—“not avuncular ... but more as if he were trying to level what he knew to be an intimidatingly uneven playing field ... *I’m just an ordinary approachable guy.*” Though Lo interprets it as fairly harmless at first, she nonetheless senses a deceptive element in Bullmer from the beginning.

Later, when Lo tells Bullmer her suspicions about the alleged murder on the *Aurora*, she is quickly able to “see why Richard Bullmer had got to where he had in life.” As Lo narrates what she believes she’s seen and heard, “Bullmer grilled me on every single word ... the slightly mockney overlay to his speech vanished ... he was utterly focused.” Lo is puzzled by Bullmer’s stoic reactions—“I couldn’t tell what he was feeling. Was he furious, or panicked, and simply hiding it well?” At first, she feels “confident and appeased” to have finally been heard, but she realizes “he hadn’t promised anything ... there had been a lot of *if this is true ... and if what you say ... nothing very concrete.*” Bullmer’s charming, down-to-earth persona slips, and Lo perceives that she’s being manipulated, though she can’t tell exactly how.

Although Lo never encounters Bullmer face to face again, she’s relentlessly pursued by symbols of his crushing power—everything from the yacht reversing course in pursuit of Lo after she escapes, to the policeman she can’t fully trust because of Bullmer’s wide-ranging influence. Contrary to the image he projects, he isn’t a down-to-earth billionaire, but a sociopathic schemer. His manipulation of his personality to control others—as he’s tried to do with Anne, Carrie, and Lo—is far deadlier and more difficult to evade than a mere physical disguise, illustrating the towering danger of trusting in appearances.

The twists throughout *The Woman in Cabin 10* unsettle the reader by showing just how easy it is to be mistaken about one’s initial perceptions. Lo’s stubborn refusal to “stop digging”—to keep searching for Carrie despite everyone else’s denial of her existence, and not taking any *Aurora* passengers’ personas at face value—suggests the importance of continually asking questions in pursuit of the truth, especially when people leverage their power to try to control those more vulnerable.



## TRAUMA, MENTAL ILLNESS, AND RESILIENCE

In *The Woman in Cabin 10*, Lo Blacklock’s anxiety is a recurrent part of the narrative. Anxiety causes real problems in Lo’s life, and her coping strategies are sometimes haphazard. By the end of the novel, however, Lo has not only managed her anxiety successfully, she has also overcome terrifying circumstances in order to help the mysterious woman in Cabin 10. In having her smart and capable protagonist also grapple with crippling anxiety—and ultimately help others in the process—Ware de-stigmatizes mental illness and shows that conditions like anxiety can even make sufferers more resilient and empathetic to others in need.

At the start of the novel, Lo’s anxiety and trauma are all-consuming. After the break-in at her apartment, Lo is so traumatized that she semi-consciously attacks her boyfriend, Judah, with a lamp, when he comes home unexpectedly in the middle of the night. Anxiety is so pervasive in her life that Lo uses alcohol to self-medicate, particularly when she’s unable to sleep (“At 3:35 a.m. ... I gulped [a gin and tonic] down like medicine”) and when she has flashbacks to the burglary.

Lo initially sees her struggles as a limitation on her ability to network professionally. On the first night of the *Aurora* cruise, when the subject of the burglary comes up, she is reluctant to talk about it, wanting to seem “the smooth, capable journalist able to take on all comers,” not “a frightened victim, cowering in my own bedroom.” Lo even second-guesses herself on the basis of her shaky mental state. After reporting the murder she believes she’s overheard to Johann Nilsson, head of the ship’s security, she taunts herself: “Cowering in the shower because of a door blowing shut in the wind ... You’re not exactly the most reliable witness.” In light of her anxiety and responses to trauma, Lo is initially presented as if she’s not the most stable or believable person.

By giving insight into Lo’s struggles with mental health, Ware presents anxiety as a normal, manageable part of life. Lo has a matter-of-fact perspective on her illness. She reflects that there’s no obvious reason she should be stricken with anxiety, having had a happy childhood. For her, it’s something “stranger, more chemical, something that no talking cure was going to fix,” and pills are “like wearing makeup—not a disguise, but a way of making myself *more* how I really am, less raw.” Lo’s outlook

suggests that mental illness falls within the range of normal human experiences, and it shouldn't carry a stigma.

When Lo tells Nilsson about her missing mascara—the only tangible evidence she'd had of the now-disappeared girl in Cabin 10—he uncomfortably points out that alcohol and antidepressants don't mix. “No matter,” Lo thinks furiously, “that I've been taking—and drinking on—those pills for years. No matter that I had anxiety attacks, not delusions.” Despite her own occasional self-doubt, Lo recognizes that a history of mental illness shouldn't discount a person's credibility out of hand.

Though anxiety has created challenges for Lo, and she hasn't always responded to them perfectly, she is portrayed as a capable, resilient person, even in the midst of the nightmare scenario of being held captive. Not only is Lo shown to be capable despite her anxiety, but Lo's struggles with mental health even fuel her willingness to pursue the murder case and her ability to resolve it. Ware highlights that Lo's deep-rooted anxiety has actually made her more sensitive and empathetic, qualities that are instrumental in solving the murder case.

As Lo waits in the locked room in the depths of the *Aurora*, she realizes that “they would have got away with [murder], if I—frightened and traumatized from the burglary—hadn't heard the splash and jumped to a conclusion that was so wrong, it was almost completely right.” Her trauma and anxiety, then—while not good things in and of themselves—have heightened her sensitivity to possible trauma in others' lives. With this, Ware implies that Lo's trauma and anxiety can actually work to her advantage, making her a stronger ally for vulnerable people than she might otherwise be.

Ultimately, it's this openness to others' suffering that, arguably, saves Lo's life. Lo reminds Carrie, the newly identified “woman in cabin 10,” at every opportunity that “I had fought for her and tried to help her,” and it's this statement of empathy that makes Carrie decide to attempt the implausible plan to switch places with Lo, in the hope that Lo can escape the ship.

Just as importantly, due to her own struggles, Lo feels compassion for Carrie's situation. Even after being imprisoned and starved, Lo imagines that the ordeal must have taken a toll on Carrie as well—“perhaps the hours had been as slow and torturous for her, too, and perhaps she, too, had come face-to-face with something she was not ready for.” This compassion enables Lo to get Carrie talking about her own story of being in thrall to Lord Bullmer, billionaire owner of the *Aurora*. Lo even recognizes that “we weren't captor and captive, but two animals in different compartments of the same cage.” Her experiences of terror over the past week, along with the pain of shouldering her anxiety for so long, have made her ready to empathize with Carrie's own vulnerability, leading to moments of bonding and ultimately to cooperation that helps free both of them.

Ware doesn't make light of Lo's lifelong anxiety or the trauma she's recently experienced. By tightly weaving anxiety into the novel's action, she shows the impact such an illness can have on one's daily functioning. At the same time, this same condition makes Lo more attuned to others' pain, and her past experiences have given her the tools to respond to frightening circumstances. By showing that there's more to Lo than meets the eye at the beginning of the novel, Ware argues that the same should be assumed about others with similar challenging conditions.



## AMBITION AND COMPASSION

At the beginning of *The Woman in Cabin 10*, journalist Lo Blacklock thinks of her voyage on the *Aurora*—a luxury yacht cruising the Norwegian

fjords—as a step toward career advancement, “a big present, fraught with responsibility and possibilities” that lands in her lap when her boss becomes ill. She hopes this gig will propel her toward a promotion, after ten years of working as a bottom-rung reporter at travel magazine *Velocity*. Though Lo mishandles the gig itself, she stumbles onto the story of a lifetime when Carrie, the woman in the adjacent cabin, disappears, and Lo refuses to be put off her investigation into Carrie's whereabouts despite being threatened and locked up. Through Lo's experience on the *Aurora*, Ware shows that career ambition and more personal instincts, like compassion, aren't competing values; they can even work in tandem.

Veteran journalist Tina West, a fellow *Aurora* passenger, is introduced as an example of old-school female ambition. Editor of the *Vernean Times*, Tina is said to be willing to “skin her own grandmother for the sake of a story.” Tina is legendary in the world of travel journalism, having attained her status by “treading on the backs of more young women than you could count.” When Lo talks with Tina, however, she feels admiration for her, thinking “what it must have been like to be a female journalist in that generation, clawing your way up through the ranks of the old-boys' network ... maybe it wasn't Tina's fault” she couldn't handle competing with other women in the same office.

When Tina dangles a freelance opportunity in front of Lo, Lo turns her down, distracted by the murder mystery on the ship. She quickly assumes she's bungled the encounter, that her colleague Ben “would probably have scored a freelance contract by now, and sod the noncompete stuff.” But in light of a woman's death, Lo thinks, “my career didn't seem as important.” This shows that she's willing to risk her own career advancement to pursue a critical story that emerges at an inconvenient time—a story she pursues out of genuine compassion and concern, at that. Though Lo is compassionate toward those who fought to secure women's place in journalism, she isn't willing to play by the same rules that governed the earlier generation. However, her very failure in

that “game,” as she’s distracted by a lurking story, suggests that she’s a competent journalist herself.

Ironically, Lo demonstrates a better instinct for a scoop than the veteran journalists on board—precisely because she’s more motivated by compassion than by climbing the professional ladder. Instead of networking and studying the press pack she’s neglected, Lo feels compelled to interview ship staff to determine the whereabouts of the missing girl from Cabin 10—“as much as I wanted to climb the ladder at *Velocity*, some things were more important.”

On the second night of the cruise, though she’s afraid of whomever the murderer will prove to be, Lo looks in the mirror and remembers the “angry, idealistic” university student who’d dreamed of changing the world. She wonders how she can “look that girl ... in the eye, if I didn’t have the courage to get out there and investigate a story that was staring me in the face.” Though she’s faltering as a travel journalist, Lo is alert to the story in front of her, and this reconnects her to her earlier, more idealistic ambition.

Toward the end of the book, Lo’s captivity and interactions with Carrie show Lo’s journalistic skills, guided by compassion rather than self-serving ambition, in action. Lo questions Carrie extensively, but follows her instincts about how best to approach her, choosing warmth, connection, and compassion over aggressive interrogation: “I couldn’t bring myself to voice that question [who killed Anne Bullmer] ... my best hope was in persuading her that she wasn’t a killer.”

Lo relates to Carrie out of genuine kindness and is sensitive to how a traumatized Carrie is probably feeling. She recounts, “I put my hand out, almost timidly, and let it rest on her knee ... I realized how frightened she was.” Lo also notices holes in Carrie’s story (“Objections crowded to the tip of my tongue, screaming to be unleashed”), showing her sharpness as a reporter, but she recognizes that Carrie is willfully blind to the fact that Lord Bullmer is using her, and that pushing her too fast will backfire by antagonizing her.

Lo has the story of her life at her fingertips, but under the circumstances, she is concerned both with her own survival and with Carrie’s plight. But journalistic savvy is shown not to be disconnected from tender instincts like compassion and empathy. In fact, Ware implies that it’s this very fighting instinct and sensitivity that give Lo great potential as a journalist.

At the end of the book, Lo realizes that she no longer cares about climbing the ladder at *Velocity*. Her harrowing experience helped her recognize that she doesn’t want to end up like Tina, “traveling from country to country and only seeing five-star hotels and Michelin restaurants ... I want to write about the things people *don’t* want you to know ... pulling my way up from the bottom again.” Her experience on the *Aurora* shows that Lo, through her own warm and instinctive brand of ambition, is capable of distinguishing herself in exactly this way.



## WEALTH AND POWER

Lo Blacklock is not a very well-off character. Her flat, a dark space with cheap locks and barred windows, is in a downscale part of London. When she has the chance to go on a luxury cruise, Lo immediately feels ill at ease in the midst of such conspicuous affluence. Although the novel doesn’t position wealth as inherently bad, it has the potential for great harm, and Lo quickly discovers that extreme wealth can in fact be used as a weapon. Using Lord Richard Bullmer as her prime example, Ware highlights how those with wealth consequently have the dangerous power to silence, disempower, and even control the destinies of those who are less well-off.

The *Aurora*’s over-the-top luxury has a disorienting effect, contrasting shockingly with the living quarters of the ship’s staff. This forms a stark comparison between the “haves” and the “have-nots,” and begins to suggest that those without wealth are at the mercy of those who have it. When Lo boards the ship, she’s immediately bombarded by the **light** of an “eye-watering chandelier, suffusing the place ... it was slightly nauseating ... throwing you off-balance with a sensation like peering into a child’s kaleidoscope.” She later feels the same about the extravagant drawing room, “spectacularly impractical for a public vessel ... like a perfect replica of a drawing room in a five-star hotel,” but miniaturized, “a little like looking in through the doorway of a doll’s house.”

These details, giving Lo a sense that her perception is being manipulated, make it all the more shocking when she visits the staff area of the ship and sees the comparative dinginess of the lower decks, “a completely different feel to the passenger part of the ship ... but it was the light that made me feel instantly claustrophobic—dim and fluorescent, with a strange high-frequency flicker that made your eyes tire almost at once.” While the public sections of the ship dazzle, the staff sections stifle.

Thinking about the “windowless confines,” Lo reflects that it isn’t the space itself that’s so shocking, but “the graphic illustration of the gap between the haves and have nots ... a modern upstairs-downstairs in action.” Long before there’s much clue that Lord Bullmer, the yacht’s wealthy owner, has any connection to the sinister happenings on the ship, there’s a sense that wealth engulfs, overwhelms, and silences those whose work sustains their employer’s wealth.

This sense of contrast between the haves and have-nots is most blatantly exhibited by Carrie, the “girl from cabin 10” who’s been secretly staying on the *Aurora*—an accessory to Bullmer, but also his victim. Even more than the staff, Carrie is truly invisible and silent onboard ship. As Lo is the only character to notice her existence and disappearance, and later to detect the suffering underneath Carrie’s foolish choices, Ware suggests that only someone like Lo—herself unaccustomed to wealth

and privilege—is able to see and hear Carrie as she really is.

Carrie is very much a “have-not” swept up in a scenario bigger than she expected. Carrie met the wealthy Lord Bullmer while working as a waitress at an exclusive club, “trying to make it as an actress ... penniless me, and him, falling in love, showing me this life I’d never dreamed of.” Carrie tells Lo how Bullmer persuaded her to impersonate his gravely ill wife, Anne, so that Bullmer could—it turns out—murder Anne to claim her inheritance while at sea, forcing Carrie to perform much of the dirty work. Carrie’s situation—including the likelihood that Bullmer will dispose of her, too, since he’s mainly using her as a means of getting rid of Anne—underlines Ware’s point that those without wealth sometimes find themselves dangerously at the mercy of those who have it.

Bullmer’s reach, facilitated by his wealth, seems to make him invincible. After Lo escapes the *Aurora* and finds refuge—or so she thinks—at a hotel along a remote fjord, she hears the manager calling Bullmer instead of the police, upon which the *Aurora* immediately turns around and sails back toward her. Until then, Lo “hadn’t believed Carrie’s assertions about Richard’s web of influence, not really. I’d dismissed them as the paranoia of a woman too beaten down to believe in the possibility of escape.” Now that Lo sees the truth, she flees the hotel and, later, a policeman, suffering from exposure and injury as she wanders the Norwegian countryside. She’d been wrong to doubt that “anyone, however wealthy, could have the kind of reach” Carrie had warned that Bullmer did.

Lo doesn’t find safety until she stumbles into a barn belonging to an elderly rural farmer—a “have-not” who matters too little for Bullmer to care about. The extremity of Lo’s situation illustrates the point that one practically has to go to the ends of the earth—often displaying tremendous grit—in order to outrun influence like Bullmer’s. Though it is ultimately Bullmer’s choices that make him so malicious, his stunning wealth is what allows him to effectively control all those below him.

At the end of the book, Lo reflects on the way that wealth can control everyone and everything—including journalism. Lo’s boss at *Velocity*, for instance, “spends half her life reporting the stories that people like Bullmer want her to tell, and I don’t want that, not anymore.” Having nearly become a victim of Bullmer herself, Lo doesn’t want to enable or cater to people like him through her work, even in innocuous ways. While Ware certainly doesn’t argue that wealth inevitably creates murderous abusers like Lord Bullmer, she does suggest that it can readily become a tool to exploit and endanger those who lack its advantages.

Analysis sections of this LitChart.



## LIGHT

Light is associated with Lord Bullmer’s wealth, and more specifically the power of that wealth to manipulate those around him. When Lo steps aboard the *Aurora* for the first time, she’s disoriented by the “eye-watering” chandelier, which “[suffused] the place with tiny splashes of light ... dazzling you, throwing you off-balance with a sensation like peering into a child’s kaleidoscope.” The light of this elaborate fixture distorts one’s ability to see things accurately, from the moment one enters the artificial world of the *Aurora*. When Lo visits below decks for the first time, she’s struck by “the light that made [her] feel instantly claustrophobic—dim and fluorescent, with a strange high-frequency flicker that made your eyes tire almost at once.” The light in the staff quarters oppresses in a different way, reminding people of their subservient status. Still, it is intimately connected with Bullmer’s wealth and the hierarchy established through that wealth.

After she’d spent terrifying days trapped in the ship’s hold, often in darkness, one would think that the light above would be a relief to Lo—but when Lo escapes her prison, she experiences the light as an assault: “It hit me like a slap, leaving me blinking and dizzy, gazing at the rainbow prisms of a thousand Swarovski crystals.” This time, the light represents Lord Bullmer’s deadly proximity, in almost mocking contrast to the darkness she’s just endured.

Near the end of the book, Lo finally sees the “eerie green and gold streaks of the northern lights” and laughs at the bitter irony, as Bullmer had described this natural wonder as “something that everyone should see before they die.” With the police after Lo, these lights signify Bullmer’s relentless influence even beyond the *Aurora*. However, at this point, this natural phenomenon could also be read as symbolizing Lo’s imminent escape and freedom from Bullmer’s manipulation.



## THE OCEAN

The ocean in *The Woman in Cabin 10* symbolizes crushing isolation. As she stands on the *Aurora*’s deck early in its voyage, Lo observes “the dark gray waves stretched out like a desert—mile upon mile, stretching to the horizon, no sign of land of any kind, nor even a ship ... There was literally no way of calling for help.” She is realizing just how isolated she is on the ship, both geographically and in terms of her lonely search for a murderer. She feels something similar a few days later, when she’s imprisoned in the ship’s hold and knows she must be far beneath the waterline: “I felt again the horror begin to creep over me, the tons and tons of water weighing on my head and shoulders, pressing against the hull ...



## SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and

and me here suffocating in my own panic..." She's beyond the help of other passengers, alone with her helpless terror. Again, when they're docked at Bergen, Lo senses just how easily a murder—including her own—might be concealed, with no one ever knowing what became of her: "I could feel the shifting mass of water all around us ... unimaginably deep and cold. A body sunk into those kinds of depths might very easily never be found." In each instance, the ocean water threatens to completely consume its victims, forever cutting them off from any hope for assistance.

vastness of the remote North Sea. Second, there's an unreality about the lavish perfections of the public-facing parts of the *Aurora*, especially the dim, cramped quarters allotted to the staff. Perhaps most of all, the sense of "imprisonment" points to the literal imprisonment Lo will experience, thanks to the sinister schemes of owner Lord Richard Bullmer, who, like his prized yacht, isn't everything he seems.



## QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Scout Press edition of *The Woman in Cabin 10* published in 2016.

### Chapter 5 Quotes

☝ It seemed impossible that everything mentioned in the brochure—library, sunroom, spa, sauna, cocktail lounge, and all the other things apparently indispensable to the *Aurora's* pampered passengers—could fit into this miniature vessel. Its size, along with the perfection of its paintwork, gave it a curiously toylike quality, and as I stepped onto the narrow steel gangway I had a sudden disorienting image of the *Aurora* as a ship imprisoned in a bottle—tiny, perfect, isolated, and unreal—and of myself, shrinking down to match it with every step I took towards the boat. It was a strange feeling, as if I were looking down the wrong end of a telescope, and it gave me a dizzying sensation almost like vertigo.

**Related Characters:** Laura "Lo" Blacklock (speaker), Lord Richard Bullmer

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 36

#### Explanation and Analysis

This quote occurs when Lo first arrives at the port of Hull, England, in order to board the luxury yacht *Aurora* for its debut cruise for select members of the press. She'd spent her train journey studying the ship's promotional materials, picturing a rather larger vessel. As she sees the ship for the first time, she's surprised how small it is. The disorienting, dizzying sensation anticipates many of the experiences Lo will later have aboard the *Aurora*.

First, the *Aurora* really does seem like a miniature, isolated world unto itself. During the entire voyage, Lo and the other passengers are cut off from the outside world by a malfunctioning internet connection, and even more by the

### Chapter 6 Quotes

☝ I knocked again, three sharp knocks, and then, as an afterthought, a final loud whack in case they were hard of hearing.

The door flew open, as if the occupant had been standing on the other side.

"What?" she demanded, almost before the door had opened. "Is everything okay?"

[...]

"I'm your neighbor," I said. She was young and pretty with long dark hair, and she was wearing a ratty Pink Floyd T-shirt with holes, which somehow made me like her quite a lot.

**Related Characters:** Laura "Lo" Blacklock (speaker), The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 54

#### Explanation and Analysis

On the first evening of the *Aurora* cruise, Lo is getting dressed for a fancy networking dinner when she realizes that her mascara was among the items in her handbag, which had been stolen during a recent robbery. She hears someone in the neighboring cabin and goes next door to see if she can borrow some makeup from the occupant. Unknowingly, she stumbles on a knocking signal that Bullmer had arranged with the girl in Cabin 10; otherwise, Carrie would never have opened the door to her, and Lo might never have become interested in the mysterious girl's identity. When they do meet, however, Lo instinctively likes Carrie, perhaps because she doesn't match her ritzy surroundings—like Lo herself. The girl hurriedly slams the door after handing over the mascara, leaving Lo puzzled but intrigued, alert to a possible story worth writing about. As events on the ship unfold, it turns into a bigger, more life-changing story than Lo had ever imagined.

## Chapter 8 Quotes

☹️ I felt an odd reluctance to go into details, not just because talking about it brought back unpleasant flashes of what had happened but also out of a kind of pride. I wanted to sit at this table as a professional, the smooth, capable journalist able to take on all comers. I didn't relish the portrait of myself as a frightened victim, cowering in my own bedroom [...] I should have just stayed in my room, head beneath the duvet, was the truth. Stupid Lo, sticking your neck out.

**Related Characters:** Laura "Lo" Blacklock (speaker)

**Related Themes:**    

**Page Number:** 73

### Explanation and Analysis

On the first night of the *Aurora* cruise, people ask about the bruise that's still visible on Lo's face following the break-in at her apartment. The burglar had slammed the bedroom door violently in Lo's face when she went to investigate what was happening. As she struggles to network with a crowd of more established journalists, Lo feels as if her bruise is something to be ashamed of, somehow detracting from the polish and confidence to be expected of someone in her profession. This shows that Lo is still trying to play according to the rules that govern the world of elite travel journalism. It doesn't yet occur to her that her willingness to "stick her neck out" suggests her suitedness for a different path altogether. Her harrowing journey aboard the ship will make her realize that she is more prepared to "take on all comers" than she's given herself credit for.

## Chapter 12 Quotes

☹️ We were passing the crew's cabins again, and as we passed the few open doors I glanced in, shocked afresh at the dinginess of the cramped quarters. I couldn't imagine spending week after week, month after month, in the windowless confines [...] [I]t was [not] the space itself that shocked but the contrast with the light, airy rooms above [...] But it was the graphic illustration of the gap between the haves and have-nots that was upsetting, a modern upstairs-downstairs in action.

**Related Characters:** Laura "Lo" Blacklock (speaker), Johann Nilsson

**Related Themes:**    

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 113

### Explanation and Analysis

After Lo overhears a murder happening in the cabin next door, the *Aurora*'s head of security, Nilsson, walks her through the ship to meet the staff, hoping that someone will have information to corroborate (or disprove) the existence of the girl Lo claims she'd seen there. After being lavishly wined and dined at the passengers' events the night before, Lo is overwhelmed by the contrast she observes in the ship's staff areas. The "upstairs-downstairs" remark refers to the social divides more prevalent in past eras of British history, when a wealthy family's serving staff would live in the lower parts of the house, largely out of sight. Lo feels that the same dynamic is at play on the *Aurora*, a reminder of the human cost behind the luxury she enjoys on the upper decks. She carries this impression with her throughout the voyage, and it ultimately helps to sour her on travel journalism altogether.

## Chapter 13 Quotes

☹️ ...[T]he kind of publicity that an unexplained death would generate could sink the whole enterprise. Something like this could scupper the *Aurora* before she was even launched, and if that happened, everyone on board could lose their jobs, from the captain down to Iwona, the cleaner.

I knew that.

But I had heard *something*. Something that had made me start from my sleep with my heart pounding two hundred beats per minute, and my palms wet with sweat, and the conviction that somewhere very close by, another woman was in grave trouble. I *knew* what it was like to be that girl—to realize, in an instant, how incredibly fragile your hold on life could be, how paper-thin the walls of security really were.

**Related Characters:** Laura "Lo" Blacklock (speaker), Johann Nilsson, The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie, Iwona

**Related Themes:**     

**Page Number:** 122

### Explanation and Analysis

The morning after Lo suspects she hears a murder taking place in Cabin 10, she is taken on a lengthy tour of the ship by head of security Johann Nilsson, meeting various staff members in hopes of finding the girl in Cabin 10, or someone who knows her whereabouts. Lo realizes Nilsson's

goal is to subtly undermine her confidence in her own account, so that she'll stop talking about what she claims to have witnessed. She also understands the stakes—an accusation like this, once made public, wouldn't just affect the wealthy Lord Bullmer, but all those whose livelihoods depend on him. Yet Lo can't dismiss what she heard last night, or the visceral effect it had on her. Having just experienced a burglary and feared for her own life, she feels a kinship with another vulnerable woman—almost a sixth sense for detecting trouble. It's this very insight that propels Lo to keep digging for the truth, no matter the consequences for her personally.

☛ I looked at her through the haze of smoke. Office gossip was that she had made her way up the corporate ladder by treading on the backs of more young women than you could count, and then, once she was through the glass ceiling, pulling the ladder up behind her [...] But somehow, I couldn't quite square [Rowan's] remarks with the woman standing in front of me. I knew at least one ex-colleague who said she owed Tina her career, and as I looked at her now, her heavily made-up eyes laughing at me, I thought about what it must have been like to be a female journalist in that generation, clawing your way up through the ranks of the old-boys' network.

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), Rowan Lonsdale, Tina West

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 127

### Explanation and Analysis

On the second day of the *Aurora* cruise, Lo finds fellow passenger Tina West outside smoking on the deck. Tina is renowned as a pioneer for women in journalism, having started working at Lo's own magazine, *Velocity*, in the late eighties. She's also rumored to be vicious in pursuit of her goals, not caring who she tramples on for the sake of a story. When Lo talks with Tina, she isn't sure what to make of her, but she feels a certain respect and compassion for this veteran who didn't have any of the advantages Lo herself had when she was starting out. During their conversation, Tina offers her the chance to freelance at her own *Vernean Times*, but Lo turns her down, citing her contract's noncompete clause, but actually too distracted by the murder mystery to think much about her career. While it seems that Lo has fumbled an excellent networking opportunity, the truth is that, though she hasn't recognized it yet, Lo also has ambition—it's just that travel journalism

doesn't have the investigative edge she craves.

## Chapter 15 Quotes

☛ Cognitive behavioral therapy, counseling, psychotherapy—none of it really worked in the way that the pills did. Lissie says she finds the notion of chemically rebalancing your mood scary, she says it's the idea of taking something that could alter how she really is. But I don't see it that way; for me it's like wearing makeup—not a disguise, but a way of making myself *more* how I really am, less raw. The best me I can be.

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie, Johann Nilsson

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 143

### Explanation and Analysis

After talking with Johann Nilsson about the disappearance of the mascara she'd borrowed from the girl in Cabin 10—her only physical evidence of the girl—Lo is furious. Nilsson had implied that Lo's reliance on antidepressants detracts from her credibility, prompting Lo to kick him out of her cabin. Now Lo reflects on her history with anxiety and medication. Despite trying many different therapeutic approaches to help her control her anxiety, Lo finds that, for her, pills are by far the most effective tool. Her thoughts address a common misconception, voiced by her friend Lissie, that pills somehow change the way someone “really is.” From Lo's perspective, pills actually *restore* her moods to their healthiest balance, enhancing her ability to be herself, not taking something away from it. By portraying Lo's mature outlook on antidepressants, Ware de-stigmatizes anxiety and medical treatment of mental illness in general. In this view, anxiety treatment isn't anything to be ashamed or afraid of; it's a manageable aspect of daily life.

## Chapter 20 Quotes

☝☝ If someone had been walking along the deck outside and had glanced in the window, they would never have known that I had just told him something that could deal a sucker punch to his business, and revealed the presence of a possible psychopath on board a small ship. As my story unfolded I was expecting echoes of Nilsson's distress, or the clannish denial of the stewardesses, but although I watched Bullmer's face carefully, I saw neither of those, no hint of accusation or censure [...] With Bullmer, I couldn't tell what he was feeling. Was he furious, or panicked, and simply hiding it well? Or was he really as cool and calm as he seemed?

**Related Characters:** Laura "Lo" Blacklock (speaker), Johann Nilsson, Lord Richard Bullmer

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 194-195

**Explanation and Analysis**

On the second day of the cruise, Lo finally has the opportunity to speak to Richard Bullmer personally about her suspicions. In fact, he makes a point of meeting with her privately to go over exactly what she's seen and heard. In contrast to her conversations with members of the *Aurora's* staff, however, Lo finds Bullmer totally unreadable. Throughout their discussion, he presses her on specific details, asks questions, and makes every appearance of wanting to establish exactly what's happened so that the matter can be addressed. Afterward, Lo feels confident that she's finally been heard, but as she stops to think about it, she realizes that Bullmer had neither affirmed his belief in her nor proposed specific steps to be taken. Ironically, Bullmer's unflappable demeanor also suggests that *he* might be the psychopath aboard the ship. In fact, that turns out to be the case—making his behavior during this conversation all the more chilling in retrospect. His attitude of smooth concern was just an act, an attempt to draw his snare around Lo.

## Chapter 21 Quotes

☝☝ As I applied mascara borrowed from Chloe in the bathroom mirror, I found myself searching for the angry, idealistic girl who'd started her journalism course at uni fifteen years ago, thinking of the dreams I'd had of becoming an investigative reporter and changing the world. Instead, I had fallen into travel writing at *Velocity* [...] And that was fine—I wasn't ashamed of the writer I'd become; like most people, I'd taken work where I could find it and tried to do the best I could in that job. But how could I look that girl in the mirror in the eye, if I didn't have the courage to get out there and investigate a story that was staring me in the face?

**Related Characters:** Laura "Lo" Blacklock (speaker), The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie, Chloe Jenssen

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 202

**Explanation and Analysis**

It's the second evening of the cruise, and Lo has had a harrowing day—especially receiving a threatening message while she slept in the spa that morning, warning her not to pursue her suspicions any longer. As she gets ready for dinner that night, she's scared, even tempted to “stop digging” to spare herself the ongoing fear and anxiety. But she thinks back to her youthful self and the way she'd gotten deflected from pursuing her original dream of investigative reporting. To be true to that young woman, she needs to press on. This is a major development in Lo's character, both in terms of coping with her anxiety and of adjusting her ambitions. Also, it's probably not accidental that this moment occurs while Lo is applying mascara, since if Lo had not knocked on Carrie's door to borrow makeup, then she wouldn't have gotten drawn into Carrie's plight. This detail also hearkens to Lo's earlier remark that makeup, like anxiety meds, helps her be the best version of herself.

☝☝ I was so busy thinking about Ben that as I rounded the corner near the upper-deck toilet, I almost tripped over Anne Bullmer. She was leaning back against the wall as if steeling herself for something, although whether to return to the party, or make her way back to her cabin, I wasn't sure. She looked extremely tired, her face gray, the shadows around her eyes darker than ever [...]

“I'm fine, I'm just very tired. Sometimes...” She swallowed, and her voice cracked for a moment, something in the cut-glass English accent slipping. “Sometimes it all just seems too much—d'you know what I mean? Such a *performance*.”

**Related Characters:** The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie, Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), Ben Howard, Anne Bullmer

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 214

### Explanation and Analysis

After dinner on the second evening of the cruise, Lo is heading back to her cabin when she stumbles upon the person she thinks is Anne Bullmer. She interprets “Anne’s” words to mean that the weary society wife, exhausted from years of cancer treatment, is tired of putting on masks in public. As is revealed later, however, the woman is actually Carrie, disguising herself as Anne—suggesting that her words are an ironic, but accurate, reflection of Carrie’s own feelings, sick of pretending to be Anne. The woman’s appearance of steeling herself suggests that Carrie is preparing herself for the task, later that evening, of luring Lo out of her cabin and imprisoning her in the ship’s hold. Her weariness also suggests that, even at this point, Carrie is cracking under the pressure of her role in Bullmer’s plot—something Lo will detect and use to her advantage in due time.

## Chapter 25 Quotes

☝☝ It wasn’t just the blood she wiped away. When she came out, I froze. With that one simple act, I realized who she was. In wiping away the blood she had wiped both her eyebrows clean off, leaving a smooth, skull-like forehead that was instantly, unbearably recognizable.

The woman in Cabin 10 was Anne Bullmer.

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), Anne Bullmer, The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 251

### Explanation and Analysis

When Lo is trapped in the *Aurora*’s hold by Carrie, she is driven to desperation by sleep deprivation, hunger, and medication withdrawal within a couple of days. She fashions a crude blade out of the edge of a tray and slashes Carrie’s arm the next time she cracks the door open. This leads to Lo and Carrie finally having a face-to-face conversation, though Lo doesn’t get satisfying answers as to why Carrie’s holding her captive. However, when Carrie washes her face, out of fear of “him” (Bullmer, it’s later revealed) finding out

Lo had attacked her, she accidentally reveals more than she intends. Merely washing off her carefully drawn eyebrows transforms Carrie’s face, making her look like the cancer-stricken Anne whom Lo had met the first night aboard. Upon further reflection, Lo figures out that Anne is already dead—Carrie has been impersonating her ever since that first night, and Lo hadn’t realized it because of her reluctance to study Anne’s ravaged features too closely. Thus, this scene leads to the unraveling of the mystery of the woman in Cabin 10, and it also shows just how easily—and devastatingly—appearances can be manipulated.

## Chapter 26 Quotes

☝☝ While Richard was back in Lars’s cabin, establishing his alibi with an uninterrupted poker game, the woman in Cabin 10 had bundled the real Anne overboard and hoped that the body would never be found.

And they would have got away with it, if I—frightened and traumatized from the burglary—hadn’t heard the splash and jumped to a conclusion that was so wrong, it was almost completely right.

So who was she? [...] I had no idea. But I knew one thing—she was my best hope of getting out of here alive.

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), Anne Bullmer, The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie, Lars Jensen, Lord Richard Bullmer

**Related Themes:**    

**Page Number:** 259

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote, part of Lo’s unraveling of the murder mystery while trapped in the *Aurora*’s hold, establishes a few significant plot-points and underlines key themes. First, it confirms that Richard Bullmer had forced Carrie, his secret lover, to do his dirty work of disposing of his murdered wife’s body—resulting in the splash that had jarred Lo awake that first night of the cruise. Second, it marks Lo’s realization that, if she hadn’t been so traumatized from the break-in at her flat the week before, she might well have slept through the entire event. But rather than seeing this as something to be entirely regretted, Lo appreciates the fact that her anxiety gives a certain paradoxical strength—she’s alert to the sufferings of others, such that even when she guesses wrongly about what’s happened, she’s still in a position to intervene. Finally, Lo recognizes that the key to her escape

lies not in antagonizing her captor, but in finding common ground with her.

## Chapter 27 Quotes

“Shut up!” She put her hands over her ears, shaking her head. “You don’t know what you’re talking about. Neither of us wanted to be in this situation!”

“Really? You think it’s coincidence he fell in love with someone who bears a startling resemblance to Anne? He planned this from the beginning. You’re just a means to an end [...] All the money, without the controlling wife—I think he had that carrot waved in front of his nose by Anne’s illness [...] And when the doctors gave her the all clear, he didn’t want to let go of it—is that right?”

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock, The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie (speaker), Anne Bullmer, Lord Richard Bullmer

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 263-264

### Explanation and Analysis

After Lo figures out that Carrie has been impersonating the deceased Anne Bullmer, she confronts Carrie the next time she visits Lo’s room. She decides to press the point that Bullmer can’t be trusted, sensing that her relationship with Bullmer is Carrie’s weak spot. While Carrie insists that she and Bullmer still love each other, and she’d never betray him, Lo argues that Bullmer has been plotting to exploit and then dispose of Carrie ever since he saw her waitressing at his London club. She perceives that Bullmer has a pattern—if he was willing to marry Anne for her money and then get rid of her, surely he’d be ready to do the same with an (in his eyes) poor nobody like Carrie. If Carrie suspects the truth of Lo’s statements, however, she’s not yet prepared to admit it to herself—she punishes Lo by withholding food for a couple of days. While Lo fears she’s pressed her luck and might never get out, the long wait weighs on Carrie, ultimately softening her toward Lo and forcing her to face the reality of her situation.

## Chapter 30 Quotes

“I didn’t think she was a killer, not by choice, anyway. And something had happened these last few days that had made her realize that. I thought of the long, nightmarish wait for her to come, the way the hours had ticked past so slowly for me, my hunger growing and growing inexorably. But now, for the first time, I thought that perhaps the hours had been as slow and torturous for her, too, and perhaps she, too, had come face-to-face with something she was not ready for. She must have imagined me down here, growing weaker and weaker, clawing at the door. Until at last her resolve broke and she ran down with a stolen plate of lukewarm food.”

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 278

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote marks a hopeful turning point in Lo’s and Carrie’s relationship and also in Lo’s captivity. After Carrie starves Lo for a few horrible days, she returns genuinely apologetic and ready to tell Lo more of her own story. Reflecting on this sequence of events, Lo doesn’t know exactly what’s happened in Carrie’s heart, but she can identify with that feeling of encountering “something she was not ready for.” The entire mystery aboard the *Aurora* has pulled Lo in over her head, forcing her to fight for her survival in ways she wouldn’t have believed herself capable of, like attacking Carrie. She perceives that Carrie, too, has been fighting for her life—she never wanted to become a killer, but she’s trapped in a relationship from which she sees no way out. Lo’s own hope of survival now rests on helping Carrie see that there is a way out, and convincing her to run for it.

“I thought about it after she left—the stupidity of thanking a woman who was keeping you captive, buying your compliance by withholding food and drugs. Was I developing Stockholm syndrome?”

Maybe. Although if I was, she had a considerably more advanced case than I did. Maybe that was closer to the truth—we weren’t captor and captive, but two animals in different compartments of the same cage. Hers was just slightly larger.

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), Lord Richard Bullmer, The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 288

### Explanation and Analysis

When Lo hears herself thanking Carrie for her efforts to bring her food, she wonders at herself—why thank the same woman who has imprisoned and tortured her? The reference to Stockholm syndrome is to a condition named after a hostage scenario in a 1970s Swedish bank robbery, marked by positive feelings toward one’s captor, even a willingness to defend him or her. Lo decides that, even if she *does* have Stockholm syndrome, Carrie is more inextricably tangled with Bullmer than Lo is with Carrie. If Lo is physically trapped by Carrie, then Carrie’s twisted love for Bullmer has trapped her in a much more damaging way. Lo’s ability to see Carrie not simply as her enemy, but as a fellow victim of Bullmer, whom she’s in a position to help, shows Lo’s compassion. It also opens up the possibility of cooperation, which is the key to liberation for both of them.

## Chapter 32 Quotes

☛☛ Somehow I would get off this boat, if not for me, then for Anne, and Carrie. No—Fuck it.

For *me*.

I was getting off this boat for me—because I had done nothing to deserve this apart from being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and I was damned if Bullmer was going to add me to the list of women he had screwed over.

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), Lord Richard Bullmer, The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie, Anne Bullmer

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 306

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes after Lo has left Carrie in the room in the ship’s hold and is running for her life. She finds herself stuck on the veranda of Richard Bullmer’s suite, with only two options—sneak through the suite, where Bullmer is still awake, or climb onto an adjacent veranda. She’s trapped once again, but she refuses to accept the situation—she will do whatever is within her power to save herself. This quote also represents Lo’s rejection of any lingering self-blame—she wasn’t wrong to dig for the truth, and she deserves to be free. In contrast to the anxiety-ridden

woman who’d boarded the *Aurora* the week before—jumping at noises, cowering in her cabin, and taking refuge in alcohol—Lo now keeps anxiety at bay and marshals her sensitive mind and emotions to her advantage. She refuses to be defeated by Bullmer’s seemingly insurmountable power and influence and makes a break for freedom.

## Chapter 34 Quotes

☛☛ The lights were not to the east but to the north. What I could see was not dawn but the eerie green and gold streaks of the northern lights.

The realization made me laugh—a bitter, mirthless choke that sounded shockingly loud in the still night air. What was it Richard had said? Everyone should see the northern lights before they died. Well, now I had. But it just didn’t seem that important anymore.

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), Lord Richard Bullmer

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 317

### Explanation and Analysis

After Lo escapes the *Aurora*, she goes to a hotel in a small Norwegian village in hopes of contacting the police, but she quickly learns that the hotel manager is friends with Richard Bullmer, so she must flee again. After the manager calls Bullmer, Lo can see that Bullmer’s even directed the *Aurora* to return to shore. As Lo wanders into the countryside, she also sees the *Aurora borealis* in the sky—the colorful light patterns sometimes visible from arctic latitudes. This rare sight, however, doesn’t bring the same delight it would have even a week ago. One of the main attractions of the *Aurora* cruise was to pursue sightings of the Northern Lights throughout the fjords, and Bullmer had opened the cruise with a rather ominous-sounding toast saying that the *Aurora* is something everyone should see before they die. Now that Lo is seeing it, she can only laugh at the bitter irony, knowing it’s still possible she will die at Richard’s hand or at least by his orders. Like the dazzling lights aboard the ship, the Northern Lights signify Bullmer’s seemingly inescapable power and influence.

●● With each step, I remembered Carrie’s frantic exhortations to get running and get out—her hysterical assertions about the reach of Richard’s influence.

It didn’t seem so hysterical now.

If only I had believed her—I should never have shown Anne’s ID at the hotel, or trusted Erik with even the few details I’d given him. But I just hadn’t quite believed that anyone, however wealthy, could have the kind of reach Carrie believed. Now I realized I was wrong. [...]

What was I going to do? [...] My best hope was finding a police station, but how? Where? And did I dare tell them the truth when I got there?

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie, Anne Bullmer, Lord Richard Bullmer

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 317

### Explanation and Analysis

As Lo wanders into the Norwegian countryside following her escape from the ship, she realizes she has made a miscalculation. Having focused all her resources on getting away from Richard Bullmer physically, she now discovers that she’s still trapped within his web of influence. Carrie had warned her that she needed to skip the country before seeking help, but Lo hadn’t taken her seriously. But she’s been naïve about the lengths to which someone like Richard can and would go to cultivate friendships wherever he believed it might benefit him. This means that, no matter where Lo goes for help, she risks confiding in someone who’s on Richard’s side and thus walking right back into his trap. Even though it would appear as if she’s finally free, Lo is once again alone, without any resources to fend for herself, even the ability to communicate. This underlines the book’s argument that wealth has the potential to be a powerful weapon, disempowering those who don’t have it.

## Chapter 37 Quotes

●● I thought of Carrie’s terror, of the bruises on her body, of her belief that she would never escape Richard. She had been right. Judah said nothing, and I could not see his expression in the dark, but I felt his silent disagreement.

“What,” I demanded, “you don’t believe me? You don’t think people can be sucked into doing something out of fear, or inability to see any other way out?”

“No, it’s not that,” Judah said slowly. “I believe that [...] But you can’t tell me that you’d do that to another person, no matter how tough things seemed—lock them up like that, imprison them—no matter how scared you were.”

“I don’t know,” I said. I thought of Carrie, of how brave she had been, and how fragile. I thought of the masks she wore to hide the terror and loneliness inside.

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), Judah Lewis, The Woman in Cabin 10/Carrie

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 333-334

### Explanation and Analysis

After Lo is safely back in Judah’s apartment in London, the two of them lie awake talking over what she’s just survived. Lo is grieving for Carrie, sad that (as she believes) Carrie died for her, but Jude argues that she deserved what she got. Jude is understandably angry about what Carrie did to Lo, but Lo can’t forget the vulnerability she saw in Carrie once she got Carrie to open up to her. Perhaps before her experiences on the cruise, Lo would have agreed with Jude, but now she knows what it’s like to be helplessly trapped and isolated, how powerless someone in that situation can feel. She, too, found herself doing things she wouldn’t have imagined herself capable of, from attacking Carrie in self-defense to outrunning the police. Because of her newfound empathy, Lo has been able to see through Carrie’s “masks” and form a bond with her. And, as she later finds out, Carrie did in fact manage to escape Richard’s clutches and have the last laugh.

“I think I lost sight of what I wanted. I don’t want to end up like Tina and Alexander, traveling from country to country and only seeing five-star hotels and Michelin restaurants. Yes, Rowan’s been to half the luxury resorts in the Caribbean, but in return she spends her life reporting the stories that people like Bullmer want her to tell, and I don’t want that, not anymore. I want to write about the things people *don’t* want you to know. And if I’m going to start pulling my way up from the bottom again, well, I can freelance from anywhere.”

**Related Characters:** Laura “Lo” Blacklock (speaker), Lord Richard Bullmer, Rowan Lonsdale, Alexander Belhomme, Tina West, Judah Lewis

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 335

**Explanation and Analysis**

Back home, Lo stuns Judah with the announcement that she’s leaving *Velocity*, where she’s worked for the past decade, in order to move to New York with him and start her career over, getting back to her youthful dream of investigative reporting. She explains that her experiences on the *Aurora* have modified her ambitions. She’s afraid that if she emulates the veteran travel journalists she’s met, she’ll spend her life writing about places frequented by the wealthy and powerful, and she’ll begin to think that such places are all there is to life. Like the other *Aurora* passengers, she’d be blind to the realities underneath luxury and privilege (like the unglamorous existence of the ship’s staff), essentially trading her journalistic voice in exchange for propping up figures like Bullmer. Lo started the cruise with the goal of climbing the ladder at *Velocity*, but her very failure in that task opened her eyes to the types of stories she believes need to be told most pressingly.



## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

## PROLOGUE

Lo Blacklock dreams of the dead body of a girl floating far beneath the surface of the North Sea. When she wakes up, she hears a roaring sound and realizes it's not part of her dream. She gets out of bed and walks to the bathroom. Inside, the shower's running full blast, and written in the steam on the mirror are the words STOP DIGGING.

*This dark prologue—which previews a scene to come in Chapter 16—hints that the story will involve a death, that protagonist Lo will be involved in some way, and that someone wants her to keep quiet about what she knows.*



## CHAPTER 1

On the early morning of Friday, September 18, Lo Blacklock wakes up to her cat, Delilah, pawing at her face—"punishment for coming home drunk," as she normally remembers to leave the cat in the kitchen overnight—and scratching at the bedroom door. She's frightened to see that her bedroom door is shut—it can only be shut from the outside.

*Ware sets the tone for the novel with a mood of mystery and even terror. Being stuck in confining places will also be a recurrent theme. It's suggested that drinking is somewhat habitual for Lo, a way she deals with everyday life.*



Lo briefly consoles herself with the thought that she just made a mistake, and that she needs to stop her midweek drinking. But when she opens the door to move Delilah, there's a man standing there. The man is wearing a hoodie and bandana, concealing all detail except for his latex gloves and shining eyes. He's holding Lo's handbag, which contains her phone.

*The unexpected sight of the man is terrifying. The man's dress, especially the gloves, suggests that he's an experienced burglar. Since he has her phone, Lo is cut off from calling for help.*



The burglar slams Lo's bedroom door, cutting her cheek. Terrified, Lo braces herself against the door and listens to her flat being ransacked. Eventually she hears the man leave, and then Delilah returns and purrs outside the door. When Lo shakily tries to open it, she discovers the burglar removed the spindle from the knob, trapping her inside.

*The possibility that the burglar might return to hurt her is terrifying for Lo. But before she can feel relieved that he's left, she discovers the horrible fact that she's stuck in her own room—foreshadowing later events.*



## CHAPTER 2

Her bedroom window is covered with security bars, so Lo spends two hours forcing open the door latch with a nail file. It's four a.m., and she wakes her upstairs neighbor in order to call the police.

*Lo's persistence with the nail file suggests that she's resourceful under pressure; rather than cowering in bed, she tackles her situation head-on.*



After a locksmith replaces her door, Lo paces around her flat, feeling that her space has been violated. When a policeman knocks on the door, Lo is so frightened she drops her tea.

*The feeling of intrusion, as well as the simple terror of the burglary, are still fresh, and the sudden knock brings them back vividly. Her jumpiness also hints at Lo's ongoing struggle with flashbacks and anxiety.*



After the policeman leaves, Lo realizes she hasn't contacted the office of *Velocity*, where she works. She buys a cheap phone and calls, making the burglary "sound funnier and more farcical" than it really was and not mentioning the flashbacks she's having. The assistant editor asks Lo if she still wants to go on the luxury Northern Lights cruise she's been assigned to cover for the magazine. Lo had almost forgotten about it.

*Lo feels it might compromise her professionalism to let on that she's struggling from the fallout of the burglary, and she tries to conceal the seriousness of the incident with humor.*



Lo's current job is menial, so the *Aurora* cruise is a big break for her. Her boss, Rowan, is dealing with a difficult pregnancy and has entrusted this gig to Lo. It's a vote of confidence that could lead to Lo covering the maternity leave and even getting a promotion. Lo is insistent on keeping the gig, even though it's two days from now, and she's still shaken from the robbery. The editor asks her for an article on the *Aurora* and profiles on interesting guests.

*Even though Lo has just been through a traumatizing experience, she still wants to fill this important role, showing both her determined resilience and her professional ambition.*



That night, Lo notices how **dark** and damp her tiny apartment is and daydreams about getting away from "sordid, crime-ridden London." As she tries to relax into a bath, her internal voice chides her that she's "losing it again." She pictures her bathroom walls closing in on her and has to do breathing exercises to keep from panicking.

*Lo doesn't live in posh surroundings, in contrast to her upcoming yacht voyage. Lo's anxiety symptoms also surface, as does her particular fear of being trapped.*



Spooked by Googled statistics on repeat burglaries, Lo tries to lull herself to sleep, but at 3:35 a.m. she's pouring herself a stiff gin and tonic, which she "[gulps] down like medicine." She barely sleeps, and she struggles to pull herself together the next day, knowing the *Aurora* cruise is "an unmissable, unrepeatable opportunity to prove" herself and network effectively. She's especially determined to get the number of Lord Bullmer, the wealthy owner of the *Aurora*. However, that night she still can't sleep and has another flashback to the burglary. She stumbles out of her apartment, unable to stay there any longer.

*Lo resorts to alcohol as a coping mechanism when she's too anxious to sleep. She's still determined to use the upcoming cruise as a launching-pad for her career and suspects that Bullmer will be a key. It's a rare opportunity for someone like her to gain access to someone as wealthy and prominent as Bullmer.*



## CHAPTER 3

Walking through the London streets in her pajamas, Lo feels safer than she did in her apartment, because "out here, someone would hear you cry." She wanders aimlessly in the rain until she finds herself outside her boyfriend Judah's apartment and lets herself in, even though he's away for work. She falls asleep easily in his bed, comforted by the smell of him.

*Lo fears being alone more than anything else. That's likely why she gravitates to her boyfriend's flat and feels safe enough to finally fall asleep in his space, even though he's not there.*



Lo is awakened by the sound of a woman screaming and the weight of someone holding her down, grappling with her hands. She grabs the bedside lamp and smashes it into the attacker. Then she hears Judah calling her name and turns on the light to see blood all over her boyfriend's face and beard. Gradually she realizes what's happened—he'd come home early, and she'd semi-consciously panicked and attacked him. The screaming she'd heard was herself.

*Lo's violent reaction to Judah's unexpected return shows that she's still deeply shaken by the burglary; she couldn't distinguish between real and imagined threats in her barely conscious state.*



After Lo and Judah get home from the emergency room, they're in bed together, and Jude brings up a conversation they'd had on New Year's Eve—he wants them to move in together. Lo says she is still thinking about it. Before going to sleep, Jude wearily tells Lo that he turned down a job in New York because of her.

*Given that Lo has been putting off a big decision about their relationship for more than half a year, she clearly has hesitations about committing to him. At the same time, Jude is putting his life on hold for her.*



## CHAPTER 4

Lo wakes up after a few hours of sleep. Before she leaves to catch the train, she and Judah have a fight. Jude reaffirms that he loves Lo and wants her to move in, but Lo can't envision the future and refuses to deal with it right now. She walks out of the flat "reeling like [she] was half-drunk."

*Talk of the future has touched a nerve with Lo, since she's still struggling to deal with what's just happened, and she's barely slept in days. Though she loves Jude, she pushes him away.*



## CHAPTER 5

On the train from London to the port city of Hull, Lo distracts herself with research. She learns that *Aurora* owner Lord Richard Bullmer is only a few years older than she is, but highly accomplished and influential. He's married to a beautiful young heiress named Anne Lyngstad Bullmer. Bullmer had had a privileged upbringing, but was orphaned and broke by the time he reached adulthood. He still managed to get through Oxford and create a successful dot-com start-up. Bullmer's latest success is his ten-cabin cruise liner for luxury tours of the Scandinavian coastline. Lo studies the floor plan and hopes the boat won't feel too claustrophobic.

*Lo is impressed to learn that, although she'd assumed Bullmer had had his success handed to him, he has actually overcome adversity and forged his own path. She thinks that there's more to Bullmer than his handsome Wikipedia photo suggests. In ironic foreshadowing, she also hopes she won't feel trapped on the boat.*



When Lo is dropped off at the port, she is shocked by the *Aurora's* small size, which gives it the "disorienting image of a ship imprisoned in a bottle—tiny, perfect, isolated, and unreal." As she crosses the gangway, Lo feels a brief sensation as if falling toward the water.

*Lo is dizzied by the sense of unreality surrounding the boat. The feeling of imprisonment and isolation foreshadows things to come. The boat seems set apart from normal, everyday life, a place where things aren't quite what they appear.*



Lo is caught off guard when greeted by a beaming stewardess, Camilla, who knows her name and offers her champagne as she approaches the boat. The interior of the *Aurora* is overwhelming, filled with a curving staircase, marble and silk features, and an “eye-watering” chandelier. The chandelier’s dazzling **light** is disorienting, especially in Lo’s sleep-deprived state.

*Every detail of the boat, right down to the personalized customer service, seems intended to dazzle guests with luxury from the moment they step aboard. Lo feels thrown off balance and out of her element from the start.*



Another steward, Josef, ushers Lo to Cabin 9. The heavily carpeted corridor gives Lo a vaguely claustrophobic feeling. Inside the cabin, which is barely smaller than her London flat, Lo is instantly relieved by the light streaming into the room. She resists the pull of sleep by sitting on the cabin’s veranda until the yacht moves out of Hull harbor and into the North Sea. As the shoreline recedes, she hopes for a message from Judah, but there’s nothing, and soon reception is lost.

*The feeling of being trapped continues to mark Lo’s experience on the ship. The size of her cabin reinforces the contrast between her normal life and the lifestyle of the *Aurora*’s wealthy clientele. As the boat leaves English waters and contact with land is lost, Lo loses touch with her loved ones, an ominous feeling.*



An email from Judah, dated Tuesday (two days later), expresses concern that he hasn’t heard from Lo since the night she embarked on the cruise. He reassures her that he loves her and that she shouldn’t worry about their argument back in London. A second email from Wednesday, from Lo’s boss Rowan, asks Lo to check in, since *Velocity* hasn’t received any updates from her.

*The emails at the end of the chapter, dated a few days after the story’s present action, create dramatic tension—Lo apparently doesn’t contact her boyfriend or her office after the first day aboard, and the reader is left wondering what’s going to happen that will prevent her from doing so.*



## CHAPTER 6

Lo enjoys a fancy shower in her cabin and thinks about the “obscene” cost of the cruise, wondering how one could stand “regular glimpses into a life no regular person would ever be able to afford.” Then she hears the bathroom door abruptly swing shut and begins to panic. She calms herself, refusing to be “that person” who panics over everyday occurrences.

*Lo feels ill at ease amid so much affluence. She is still jumpy after having been trapped inside her apartment, but is able to reason with herself in the midst of her panic. Nevertheless, she feels ashamed of her anxiety, thinking it weak.*



Lo reassures herself that the slamming door was caused by the motion of the ship and continues to calm herself down. She also pours herself a drink from the minibar and instantly feels better. She emails her mother and best friend and finally, tearfully, manages to send an apologetic email to Judah.

*Though capable of working through panic attacks without it, Lo resorts to alcohol to help with her anxiety, and also to offset her stress about her relationship.*



Lo gets ready for the first evening of the cruise, dressing in a ball gown. As she puts on her makeup, she realizes that her mascara was in her stolen handbag. She hears a noise in the adjacent cabin and goes next door. She knocks three times, “then, as an afterthought, a final loud whack in case they were hard of hearing.” The knocks are answered by a surprised young woman in a ratty Pink Floyd T-shirt.

*Lo makes a casual visit to Cabin 10 that will change the course of her life. Her knocking pattern also has significance later. The woman’s outfit contrasts with the extravagance all over the ship, and she clearly wasn’t expecting to see Lo at her door, suggesting she’s not just another passenger.*



Lo asks if she can borrow some mascara, and the girl, flustered, gives her a tube and impatiently tells Lo not to bring it back, then shuts the door in her face. Lo is puzzled and thinks that the girl looked “even more a fish out of water” than she herself does. She finishes getting ready and heads to the cocktail lounge.

*The girl next door seems not to want to be interrupted, and Lo can tell she doesn't really belong here—even more noticeably than Lo herself.*



## CHAPTER 7

In the lounge, Lo is struck by yet another fancy chandelier and the miniaturized scale of the room, giving the impression of a dollhouse replica. She looks around for the Pink Floyd girl, but is interrupted by Cole Lederer, the award-winning photographer. He offers her a drink, which Lo accepts, against her better judgment.

*The unsettling, slightly unreal atmosphere persists. Lo's curiosity has been piqued by the neighboring passenger, and she's alert to a possible story. At the same time, she's uncomfortable with networking and finds that drinking takes the edge off.*



Lo takes in the other passengers, including fellow journalists Tina West, Alexander Belhomme, and Archer Fenlan, but she doesn't see the mysterious girl anywhere. Then she's startled by Ben Howard, a writer whom she used to date. When he mentions the bruise on her face, she has a momentary flashback to the burglary.

*Lo is still responding with hair-trigger anxiety to reminders of the recent break-in.*



Lo sees Lord Bullmer and is amazed how young he looks. Ben mentions that most of his money comes from his wife, heiress of the Lyngstad car manufacturing family. Lo is shocked by Anne Bullmer's apparent illness. With her headscarf and grayish skin, she contrasts starkly with everyone else in the group. Lo looks away when she finds herself staring. Ben explains that she's been fighting breast cancer and is barely thirty.

*Lord Bullmer doesn't match expectations for a stereotypical peer of the British realm—he's unusually young, and his fortune comes mostly from his wife. Anne, meanwhile, looks even more out of place among a crowd of healthy people looking their best. Lo feels uncomfortable with Anne's illness and doesn't study her appearance too closely—a point that's significant later.*



When Lo is surprised by Ben's knowledge of everyone aboard, Ben looks at her in surprise and points out that it's “not exactly Sherlock Holmes stuff.” Lo realizes that a good reporter would have done background research, but that she's been “in a haze of sleep deprivation and PTSD” and forgot.

*Lo realizes that the events of the past few days have hampered her ability to function professionally; she's forgetting to do even her basic journalistic homework.*



Lord Bullmer makes a speech welcoming everyone to the *Aurora*, using “that curiously classless tone that people from public school seemed to strive for.” He raises a toast to the ship and to the majesty of the northern lights, “something that everyone should see before they die.” Bullmer then escorts a weary Anne back to their cabin, and Lo notices her sweet smile and her face's “curious, skull-like appearance.”

*Bullmer seems to go out of his way to distance himself from a wealthy, unapproachable persona. His comment on the northern lights has a vaguely morbid undertone, especially in light of Anne's obvious ill health.*



Lo watches Ben “networking like a bastard” and thinks that this is why he’s advanced to writing for the *Times*, while she’s stuck at *Velocity*. Yet she can’t seem to make herself move. She takes another reckless drink of champagne. Cole Lederer flirts with her, but Lo deflects his attempts by joking about Tina. Cole replies that Tina “would skin her own grandmother for the sake of a story.” As the group makes their way to dinner, Lo notices Tina staring speculatively at her from a distance.

*Lo continues to feel uncomfortable with the norms of professional networking and drinks in order to deal with the pressure. She recoils both from the emphasis on schmoozing and the prevalence of flirtation. Tina seems to have taken some kind of an interest in Lo.*



## CHAPTER 8

During dinner, fellow passenger Chloe notices Lo’s bruise, and Lo feels uncomfortable talking about the burglary, wanting to appear “the smooth, capable journalist,” not a victim. As she explains how she got hurt, she thinks that she should have stayed in hiding that night instead of investigating the noises—“stupid Lo, sticking your neck out.” Archer suggests that Lo ought to learn self-defense and offers to demonstrate. Lo is pained and frightened when Archer twists her arm behind her back. Chloe stops him and pours Lo another drink.

*Lo worries that her experience as a crime victim somehow compromises her status as a professional. She also berates herself for being bold enough to face the burglar at all—seeming not to realize that her willingness to “stick her neck out” might be a mark of courage and even competence, not foolishness.*



## CHAPTER 9

After dinner, as Lo attempts to corner Bullmer, Cole abruptly takes a picture of her, and she stumbles against a sofa, spilling her coffee. Cole summons Bullmer for her in apology. Bullmer warns Cole not to take any photos of Anne, implying that she’s self-conscious about her illness. When he turns his attention to Lo, he gives an odd little wink, “as if he were trying to level what he knew to be an intimidatingly uneven playing field.” When someone calls Bullmer away, he quickly offers to speak privately with Lo the next day.

*Lo continues to fumble her attempts at networking, and Cole’s brashness contrasts with Lo’s awkwardness. Bullmer again tries to give an impression of being something other than what he is, but Lo is so relieved at his offer that she doesn’t dwell on this.*



By the time Lo stumbles back to her cabin that night, she’s very drunk. She knows she’s drinking partly because she’s afraid of another night of insomnia. As she’s fumbling to retrieve her room key from inside her gown, a drunken Ben looms over her and makes suggestive comments. Before Lo can stop him, he reaches down the front of her dress. Automatically, Lo knees him in the groin.

*After several days of barely sleeping, Lo is at the end of her rope, and she responds ferociously to her ex’s intrusion.*



Twenty minutes later, they sit in Lo’s cabin, Ben still weak with pain and Lo weeping, telling him she’s going mad from the events of the past few days. She spills out the whole story of the robbery and her helplessness at the time. Ben begins to express lingering feelings for Lo, but she cuts him short and finally convinces him to leave. She almost relents to letting him sleep on the couch, but reasons that a ship at sea is “about the safest place I could possibly be.” After he goes, she gulps down another whiskey “like medicine” and falls into a sleep so deep, it’s “like drowning.”

*Ben and Lo have a complex history; Lo doesn’t share the feelings her ex-boyfriend hints at, but she feels safe enough to confide in him. Though she tells herself she couldn’t possibly be safer than she currently is—an ironic statement, in light of coming events—she drinks a bit more to help herself sleep at last.*



A few hours later, Lo wakes abruptly, her heart pounding. She breathes slowly and steadily until she grows more relaxed, telling herself she'll sabotage her career if she keeps drinking the way she has been. Then she wonders what caused her to wake up so suddenly. For some reason, she keeps thinking of a scream. Then, she hears the subtle sound of a door sliding open, followed by a big splash— "the kind of splash made by a body hitting water."

The chapter is followed by a series of Facebook posts, dated a few days later, in which Judah asks if anyone's heard from Lo. No one has.

*At first, Lo attributes her wakefulness to anxiety, but vaguely remembers having heard something frightening. Then she hears something definite, sealing her fate for the rest of the story.*



*Following the previous frightening scene, these posts create suspense and a sense of terror as to what's going to become of Lo aboard the Aurora. They also show how much Jude cares for Lo, and that he's even more concerned for her than her other friends and family.*



## CHAPTER 10

Lo immediately runs onto the veranda and looks into the **ocean**. She thinks she sees a "swirling white shape ... like a woman's hand" beneath the water. She peers over the privacy screen and sees what she thinks is a smear of blood on the safety barrier of the neighboring veranda. Lo realizes that whomever had been next door must have seen and heard her rushing out. She locks herself back in her room, feeling "calmer than I had in ages ... This was real danger, and I was coping."

Lo calls her cabin stewardess, Karla, for help. As she waits, she notices that room service has tidied up her bathroom, and the thought of a stranger touching her things makes her want to cry. Then the head of security, Johann Nilsson, arrives. Lo describes what she's heard, but when they go outside to look, there is no longer a smear of blood on the neighboring veranda.

Nilsson looks sympathetically at Lo, making her angry. He takes her next door, where they see that Cabin 10 is completely empty. Lo insists that she saw and spoke with the girl who was staying there. Back in her own cabin, she shows him the borrowed mascara, but Nilsson, speaking with "the gentleness of a big man with nothing to prove," tells her that the mascara doesn't prove anything, and that Cabin 10 has always been empty.

*When she thinks someone is in danger, Lo doesn't hesitate to try to help. No matter the reality of what she's seen, she bravely rises to the occasion. She realizes that, in this moment, she's coping with terrifying circumstances more capably than she'd thought possible.*



*Even though it's harmless, the fact that someone was handling Lo's possessions makes her flash back to the feelings of violation she experienced during the robbery. So far, the ship staff take Lo's word for what's happened, but already the evidence seems to have disappeared.*



*Lo senses she's not being taken seriously, after feeling so sure of what she saw. Nilsson's condescending kindness gives her the feeling that she's being viewed as a hysterical woman.*



## CHAPTER 11

Nilsson explains that Cabin 10 had been reserved for another guest who withdrew from the trip at the last minute. He asks how much Lo had been drinking last night, and Lo angrily retorts that she hadn't drunk enough to lose the ability to distinguish fantasy from reality. Nilsson says he cannot pursue the situation further without proof and that they will revisit it in the morning. He takes down Lo's description of the woman and leaves.

After Nilsson leaves, Lo is too wired to sleep. She's furious, but a nasty voice in the back of her head suggests that maybe Nilsson is right—after all, Lo attacked her boyfriend in a panic and was frightened by a door slam the day before. Maybe she isn't the most reliable witness. Yet Lo can't dismiss what she saw and heard; there must be a murderer onboard, and nobody knows but her.

*Nilsson is put into a difficult position by Lo's insistence that he raise an alarm without any proof of foul play, but Lo is furious about not being taken seriously, and worried about the missing woman. Her feelings of helplessness surrounding the robbery no doubt feed into her present reactions.*



*Aware of the ways her anxiety has played tricks on her, Lo briefly wonders if Nilsson was right to dismiss her fears; yet she's sure of what she saw, and she won't let go of that fact.*



## CHAPTER 12

Lo sleeps after all, but she's awakened by Johann Nilsson the next morning. Lo, feeling seasick, regrets asking him to return so early. Nilsson tells her that no one has been reported missing among the staff, and she agrees to accompany him belowdecks to see for herself. As soon as they venture into the depths of the ship, everything feels different—"the walls were closer together and painted a dingy shade of beige, but [it was the light that made me feel instantly claustrophobic—dim and fluorescent, with a strange high-frequency flicker that made your eyes tire almost at once.](#)"

The staff mess hall, with its drab décor and smell of institutional cooking, reinforces the impression of difference between the upper and lower decks. Nilsson introduces Lo to some of the staff, and they speculate about the identity of the woman Lo saw. The staffers seem shocked by Lo's mention of hearing a scream, and they claim they're a tightly knit, happy crew who would have known if anyone was in trouble.

Lo can't shake the feeling of "being hemmed in, trapped below" [the ocean](#), but she pushes her anxious thoughts away, refusing to give up her investigation. When Lo is introduced to one of the *Aurora's* chefs, she nearly panics, seeing dark hairs showing through his latex gloves. Though the staff is polite, Lo doesn't see the girl from Cabin 10 or hear any clues to her identity.

*The staff areas of the ship contrast jarringly with the luxurious public areas. Everything's darker and more cramped, with no attempt to cater to anyone's comfort or taste. The wealthy get completely different treatment than the workers.*



*The lower areas of the ship plainly aren't meant to be seen by its wealthy patrons. The distinction is further underlined by the way the staff close ranks when questioned by somebody from up above.*



*Even though being belowdecks makes Lo feel trapped, she's able to keep her anxiety at bay in order to focus on the matter at hand, showing her resilience. However, the gloved chef reminds her strongly of her apartment burglar, which nearly shatters her calm and shows how debilitating flashbacks can be.*



When Nilsson notices Lo's discomfort, he mentions that the *Aurora's* staff accommodations are much nicer than those on rival ships. Lo thinks that what really shocks her is not the space, but "the graphic illustration of the gap between the haves and have-nots." As they continue through the ship, Lo feels queasy and thinks of the work she's neglecting for *Velocity*, but she reminds herself that "as much as I wanted to climb the ladder ... some things were more important."

Lo talks with spa therapist Eva and stewardess Ulla, but neither of them is the girl from Cabin 10, nor are they able to shed light on the girl's identity. When she gets some fresh air on deck, Lo can't help looking out at the **ocean**, thinking of a body falling through the "swirling blackness" to rest on the "lightless seabed." As she and Nilsson chat about the ship's northward course, Lo is startled to learn that there's been a change of plan, and they're headed to Trondheim instead of the expected stop at Bergen. She dislikes the feeling of being "a helpless passenger with someone else at the wheel." She's also troubled by the nightmarish sense that she's going mad, since nobody can corroborate the existence of the missing woman.

## CHAPTER 13

As Lo eats a solitary breakfast, she replays last night's events and is not only sure that the girl was there, but that she had interrupted the girl in the middle of something. Despite Nilsson's approach of interviewing the staff, Lo also doesn't believe that the girl, with her expensively maintained nails and hair, could have been just a maid. She suspects that Nilsson wants her to start questioning her own account. She doesn't blame him, knowing that bad publicity could ruin everything for the *Aurora*, its owner, and its employees.

After being startled so suddenly in the middle of the night, Lo is convinced that she heard *something*. What's more, she knows "what it was like to be that girl—to realize, in an instant, how incredibly fragile your hold on life could be, how paper-thin the walls of security really were."

Lo briefly considers getting the borrowed mascara tube DNA-tested, then realizes how pointless that would be. She tries checking her email and sees there's no Wi-Fi connection. Then Ben comes into the restaurant. He's still apologetic about the previous night. He tells Lo that after he left her cabin, he'd ended up playing poker with Bullmer and Lars Jenssen until four o'clock in the morning. Lo considers telling him about what she heard last night, but isn't sure she trusts him.

*The disparity between the extremely rich and those who aren't bothers Lo; it contributes to a sense of disenchantment with the *Aurora* and even with her profession. She also cares more about the fate of one woman than she does about advancing her own career—showing her compassion and her eye for what's most important.*



*Even as she finds relief in the open air, Lo keeps thinking about the oppressive darkness and depths below. She also hates feeling trapped by someone else's itinerary, and isolated by the fact that nobody else shares her knowledge of the missing girl. Even though she briefly questions her grasp of reality, these things don't deter her from her search, showing her determination.*



*Lo thinks that, by systematically interviewing the *Aurora's* staff, Nilsson is trying to raise enough doubts in Lo's mind to make her second-guess her story. However, Lo can't set aside her vivid memories of the girl, and she thinks there's something more to the situation than mistaking the identity of a staff member.*



*Lo identifies with the girl in Cabin 10. Her own experience of being intruded upon and trapped—terrified and helpless—inclines her to be sympathetic to the girl's plight and to want to help her.*



*Lo keeps running into dead ends, including the fact that she's cut off from communication with land, and she doesn't know who else to confide in.*



Trying to find her way back to her cabin, Lo wanders onto the deck and finds Tina there, smoking. Tina teases Lo about her hangover, and Lo wants to leave, but forces herself to stay and network. She's heard rumors of Tina's ferocity, especially toward other women, from Rowan. But she wonders what it must have been like to forge a career in Tina's day, "clawing your way up through the ranks of the old-boys' network."

Lo is repulsed by Tina's recommendation of alcohol and sex as the best remedy for a hangover. But Tina abruptly switches gears to ask about Lo's career hopes. She tells Lo she's always looking for "savvy little things with a bit of ambition." Lo tells her she's on a staff contract that doesn't let her freelance. She immediately suspects she's fumbled this exchange, but "right at this moment ... my career didn't seem as important."

Lo sizes up Tina, too, wondering if she could have been involved in the girl's disappearance. She asks, "Did you have a good time last night?" Tina shoots her a fierce look in response, warning her that "a clever girl like you knows better than to make enemies in this business." Unsure what's just happened, Lo returns to her cabin and finds that room service has cleaned it thoroughly while she was gone—and the borrowed tube of mascara has vanished.

The chapter is followed by a news article from the *Harringay Echo*, dated to the following Saturday, which reports that Lo is missing and has not been heard from since Tuesday. The article says that an *Aurora* spokesperson claims that Lo was thought to have left the cruise early when the boat stopped at Trondheim, so no one raised an alarm about her disappearance until Friday.

## CHAPTER 14

Lo tries not to panic, realizing that someone who knows what she's heard and claimed must have been in her room. She resists the urge to hide under the bed or have a drink from the minibar. She asks the cleaning woman, Iwona, if she's seen the mascara, which she hasn't since the night before. Lo then calls Nilsson, who comes to see her. While she waits for him, Lo feels violated and taken advantage of by whomever has been in her cabin.

*Lo doesn't have much patience for the rituals of professional networking. Even though she's heard negative things about Tina, she still has an instinctive sympathy for the lonely, pioneering situation Tina must have faced early in her career, helping to clear a path for women like herself.*



*There seems to be a generational disconnect between grizzled veteran Tina and Lo, but Tina is nevertheless intrigued by Lo. Lo's failure to seize on Tina's offer suggests that, subconsciously, she's not that invested in her current path. In any case, she's single-mindedly focused on the story right in front of her—in other words, she has her own ambitions.*



*Lo seems to have stumbled onto something Tina doesn't want her to know, possibly burning whatever bridge there was between the two of them. Now that the mascara's missing, Lo has lost her only tangible link to the woman in Cabin 10.*



*The news article builds suspense by heightening expectations that Lo is about to be involved in foul play of some sort (it's still only Monday in the story, meaning tomorrow is the last time she'll be heard from).*



*Lo succeeds in refraining from unhealthy coping mechanisms, in spite of how anxious she's feeling; this shows she's capable of managing emotions that trigger memories of the burglary at her flat.*



When Nilsson arrives, Lo explains about the missing mascara. Nilsson reaffirms that all the staff have been accounted for. He also says that he's spoken with Ben Howard, who told him about the break-in at Lo's flat. Nilsson goes on to say that he knows Lo hasn't been sleeping well, and that alcohol doesn't mix with antidepressants. Though Nilsson is apologetic, Lo is furious that Ben's made her sound like "an unreliable, chemically imbalanced neurotic."

*Though he doesn't want to be a jerk, Nilsson is obviously trying to tamp down Lo's investigation, in light of Lo's recent difficulties and their presumed effects on her judgment.*



Lo reasons that she's been "taking—and drinking on—those pills for years," and that she has anxiety attacks, not delusions. She angrily tells Nilsson that just because she takes antidepressants, it doesn't give him the right to dismiss what she saw. Nilsson points out that Lo has not actually seen anything, but has jumped to conclusions, which doesn't warrant a murder investigation. Lo furiously kicks Nilsson out of her room.

*While Nilsson is right that Lo doesn't have solid evidence warranting an investigation, and it's hard to see what more he could do, Lo's anger is also understandable. Nilsson is also jumping to conclusions about Lo's experiences with medication and trauma. Plus, after feeling so powerless in her flat during the robbery, feeling belittled and unheard would be especially difficult for Lo to take. If she wants to figure out what happened to the girl in Cabin 10, she's truly on her own.*



## CHAPTER 15

Thinking back on her childhood, Lo reflects that there's no concrete reason for her to be dependent on antidepressants; she'd had "nothing but love and support, but that wasn't enough somehow." The depression she'd fallen into as a young adult seemed to have a chemical basis that no counseling could cure.

*By portraying Lo's background as fairly "normal" and untroubled, Ware shows that mental illness isn't necessarily a result of adverse life circumstances; it can be just one aspect of an average person's experience.*



Lo sees taking pills as something similar to wearing makeup—"not a disguise, but a way of making myself more how I really am, less raw." She reflects that Ben saw her "without makeup" when they were dating, and she doesn't blame him for breaking up with her. However, she's furious about what he's done now.

*Ware further normalizes anxiety with a relatable comparison between medication and makeup. As difficult as anxiety can be, Lo seems to take it in stride as part of her life. However, she's angry that Ben talked about her recent scare with Nilsson.*



Lo bangs on Ben's cabin door and angrily asks him how he could have told Nilsson these things about her. Ben, distressed, tells her he'd been hungover and didn't understand why Nilsson was questioning him about her. He asks Lo if something happened last night. Lo finally takes a deep breath and tells Ben the whole story. Ben says he believes her, having never known her to make up anything.

*Though Lo is angry, she believes Ben when he says he'd felt cornered and hadn't meant to sabotage her reputation with Nilsson. Despite their complicated history, she trusts Ben enough to tell him what happened, and it's a relief for her to finally confide in someone she trusts.*



Lo agrees with Ben that Nilsson’s reluctance to believe her makes sense, since crime taking place in international waters is a gray area—there’s no clear police jurisdiction, so onboard security has an incentive to brush things under the rug. They speculate together about who could have swiped the mascara, and Ben encourages Lo to speak to Bullmer himself. He says he can vouch for Bullmer’s whereabouts all night, since they were playing poker along with Archer, Lars, and Chloe. Besides, Bullmer “seems like a decent bloke.”

*Ben’s input makes sense—especially the fact that there’s only so far Lo can likely get with Nilsson—and has a calming effect on Lo. It also points to how helpless they really are in the middle of the ocean. However, his perception of Bullmer is based on a slight, casual acquaintance, not a genuine knowledge of his character.*



Lo and Ben agree to meet after the scheduled morning activities so that they can question other passengers. Lo tells Ben she can’t stop dwelling on the horrible details about what the girl from Cabin 10 must have felt. Ben tells her not to let her imagination run away with her. Lo replies that she knows what it’s like when someone comes for you in the middle of the night.

*Lo’s experience of the burglary enables her to sympathize with the missing girl on a visceral level. When Ben encourages her not to fixate on this, she takes it personally, because it’s as if he’s being dismissive of her experience, too. It’s that deep empathy that motivates Lo to keep hunting for a killer, no matter the cost to herself.*



## CHAPTER 16

Lo joins Tina and Chloe in the ship’s spa for scheduled treatments. To her surprise, Anne Bullmer arrives, too. She looks “less sallow, her face somehow slightly less drawn,” but she still has deep shadows under her eyes. Lo struggles against a panic attack as the group descends to the lower level of the spa, and she realizes they’re below the **ocean’s** surface with no apparent exits.

*Lo is surprised that Anne, so sick the night before, would show up for a spa treatment, but her face looks vaguely better than it did the day before. Lo feels trapped in the cramped, dark environment belowdecks, knowing they’re surrounded by water.*



As they walk down the hall, Tina makes a quick apology to Lo for having spoken so sharply to her earlier, but Lo still feels uncomfortable around her. Ulla welcomes Lo into a treatment room, where she’s been booked for a mud wrap. Lo is dubious about the mud wrap, but she’s surprised how soothing it is, and she soon finds herself drifting into much-needed sleep.

*Tina makes what seems to be a kind gesture to Lo, but Lo doesn’t quite trust her. Lo feels claustrophobic and out of sorts in the fancy spa, but in her still sleep-deprived state, the mud treatment brings welcome relief from the stresses of the past days.*



While she naps, Lo dreams about the girl from Cabin 10—her dead body drifting far beneath the **ocean’s** surface. As Lo wakes up, she realizes that the roar in her ears is not part of her dream. She discovers that the shower is running in the next room, and the room is filled with steam. When she turns on the light, she sees words written across the bathroom mirror: STOP DIGGING.

*Lo is haunted by what’s become of the woman. When she wakes up, she finds that she wasn’t safe from intrusion even while asleep in the spa. Someone wants her to stop investigating the murder.*



A BBC News website article, dated to a week later, reports that Danish fishermen have found the body of a woman off the coast of Norway, and that it’s speculated to be the body of the missing Laura Blacklock.

*The suspense continues to build, as the article shows that Lo will go missing for at least a week. It’s also a chilling echo of the dream Lo just had.*



## CHAPTER 17

Lo starts having a panic attack. She curls up in a fetal position and focuses on conscious breathing and gradually relaxing her body. It doesn't help much, but somehow the reminder of a hated former therapist takes the edge off her panic. She finds a phone, but before she can call for help, the letters on the mirror fade, and she realizes that even if Nilsson comes, he won't believe what she saw.

Lo leaves the empty spa and finds out that Ulla had left her alone to sleep longer. Lo asks Eva, in reception, if there are other entrances to the spa, and Eva explains that besides the main entrance, there's only an alarmed fire exit that opens into the staff quarters. She also says that Ben had come to the spa looking for Lo.

Lo goes to the lounge and finds Chloe and Cole eating lunch. She questions them about last night's poker game and learns that Ben had briefly left the game to get his wallet. Cole shows Lo the photos he's taken so far during the cruise. Lo scrolls through the pictures and freezes when she lands on one of Alexander and Archer. In the photo, there's also a waitress holding a tray of canapés—it's the girl from Cabin 10.

*Strong, distracting emotions seem to help Lo cope with anxiety better than specific techniques. She feels stuck and alone as she realizes that, once again, she has no solid evidence to present to Nilsson—he will think she's dreamed or imagined what she saw on the mirror.*



*The suspense builds as Lo tries to figure out who else could have had access to her spa room while she was asleep.*



*It sounds as if Ben wasn't being completely truthful when he claimed to be at the poker game all night. Lo is shocked to recognize the missing girl in an unexpected context.*



## CHAPTER 18

Lo debates whether she should ask about the photo of the girl and risk Cole deleting the picture, if indeed he has something to hide. She ends up not saying anything and hurries out of the lounge, almost crashing into Ben on the way back to her cabin. Ben claims he'd left a note under the door of Lo's spa room. She doesn't know if she can trust him or not, but tells him about the message on the mirror. They discuss who else could have had access to the room while Lo was asleep. Ben points out that Eva wasn't actually there the whole time; only Anne Bullmer had been there when he walked in.

Ben had been wanting to tell Lo that he saw a contact listed on Archer's phone who looked a lot like the girl Lo described; she was even wearing a Pink Floyd shirt. Lo tries to Google Archer, but the internet still isn't working. Lo suddenly feels claustrophobic, "as if the stifling opulence of the boat were closing around" her. She escapes onto the windy deck. As she looks across the **ocean**, "the dark gray waves stretched out like a desert." A big wave hits, and Lo throws up over the side of the boat.

*The mystery is becoming more and more complicated as possibilities mount as to who was involved—and whom Lo can trust. They both take for granted that sickly Anne could not be involved.*



*It's impossible to know whether Ben's lead actually means anything, since there's no way of connecting to information or help beyond the ship—adding to the sense of being trapped and isolated. This, combined with seasickness, finally overwhelms Lo as she sees the vast ocean all around them.*



As Lo and Ben reenter the ship to avoid Tina on the deck, Ben comments that he would bet on Tina's involvement in foul play, since "she's a stone-cold bitch ... I swear she'd kill for a story or a promotion, and it's women she seems to pick on." Lo is shocked by the trace of misogyny in Ben's tone, but also isn't sure if she can dismiss his words—remembering Tina's aggressive behavior earlier. Ben shares the gossip that steward Josef had come out of Tina's room early that morning. Lo can't laugh at this, having seen the staff quarters; she wonders, "how far might someone go to escape their confines?" They come upon Alexander Belhomme and chat about the people he saw wandering the ship in the wee hours, but Lo is so tired and confused she isn't sure what makes sense anymore.

*Lo is bothered by the contempt in Ben's tone, but has gotten aggressive vibes from Tina herself. The fact that Tina apparently slept with Josef would explain her behavior toward Lo earlier. Lo wonders if living in such a claustrophobic environment has a negative effect on the staff, leading some to behave in ways they otherwise wouldn't.*



## CHAPTER 19

Lo goes to the Nobel Suite for her prearranged meeting with Richard Bullmer. She is thrown when Anne Bullmer, with a tear-stained face, answers the door. Lo isn't sure what to say, finding both the tears and Anne's gaunt face "unsettling." She has trouble squaring Anne's wealth and privilege with her helpless suffering. She finally explains why she's come, and Anne tells her to find Bullmer in the hot tub or at dinner. Lo feels "shame" when she awkwardly wishes Anne "luck" with her ongoing cancer treatment.

*As before, Lo feels compassion for the apparently sick and troubled Anne, but she struggles to respond to her appropriately on the spur of the moment. She recognizes that, even though Anne seems to have everything she could want, she's vulnerable, fighting for her life.*



Lo goes outside onto the cold, misty deck and finds Lars, Chloe, Bullmer, and Cole in an enormous Jacuzzi. Lo says she isn't sure if now is the right time to speak to Bullmer. He replies, "What feels like prudence is almost invariably cowardice—and someone else gets in there before you." Bullmer orders a champagne for Lo, which she awkwardly accepts, then launches into her story, describing the noises she'd heard from the neighboring cabin last night.

*Bullmer's statement sounds a bit odd, under the circumstances, but Lo decides to take it to heart and say what's on her mind, even with an audience. Talking about a possible murder with champagne in hand is an uncomfortable contrast and underlines the awkward tension between affluence and malice aboard the Aurora.*



Just as Lo reaches the part of the story where she saw that the blood had disappeared from the glass on the veranda, Cole breaks a champagne glass and cuts his hand. As Bullmer smoothly jumps into action to help the bleeding man and the shaken Chloe, he tells Lo to wait for him in the restaurant, where they'll run through what she actually saw and heard.

*The timing of Cole's shocking interruption seems suspect, as though he wanted to stop Lo from speaking further. Bullmer, though, is unfazed.*



## CHAPTER 20

Within an hour, Lo "could see why Richard Bullmer had got to where he had in life." He grills her on her story and presses her on specifics. Without offering any speculations, he just fires questions at her, "the intonation ... pure Old Etonian and 100 percent business, with no emotion on his face."

*Lo is impressed by Bullmer's seeming businesslike detachment and focus. The chummy, everyman façade he'd given off before vanishes as he zeroes in on the matter at hand, suggesting he's invested in what she's saying.*



Lo is a bit puzzled by Bullmer’s stoic reaction, unsure what he’s actually feeling. Finally, Bullmer promises to speak with Nilsson and the captain and suggests that Trondheim, the next day’s stop, is the nearest place where help could be found. Plus, if the incident took place in British or international waters, there might not be much that Norwegian police could do.

After Bullmer gives a sympathetic smile, Lo abruptly tells him about Nilsson’s reaction to her drinking and medication. Bullmer apologizes for the way Lo was treated and promises that he takes her completely seriously. Lo feels relief at finally being believed and thinks that “if anyone had the power to get this sorted, it was” Bullmer.

When Ben comes along and asks about the conversation, Lo reflects that, though she’d felt “confident and appeased” at first, Bullmer hadn’t actually promised anything concrete or stated explicit support for Lo’s claims. They talk about Lo’s plans to speak to the Trondheim police tomorrow, and Ben mentions that when Cole cut his hand on the champagne glass, he managed to knock his camera into the hot tub as well, ruining the photos.

Lo figures that someone must have taken advantage of the bustle surrounding Cole’s injury to intentionally destroy the camera, but she has no way of knowing who it was. She feels like the answers to the mystery must be right in front of her, if only she could put the pieces together. There’s still no phone reception, so she’s banking on making it to the police at the nearest opportunity.

## CHAPTER 21

As Lo nervously gets ready for dinner that night, she thinks about the “angry, idealistic girl” who’d dreamed of becoming an investigative reporter 15 years earlier. She wonders how she can look that girl in the face if she refuses to pursue the story that’s right in front of her. She decides she won’t “stop digging,” no matter her fears.

Karla knocks on Lo’s cabin door to remind her about dinner. When Lo mentions that she’s going to the police and promises to protect Karla if she shares any information, Karla looks upset. She says that Nilsson says that Lo is paranoid and attention-seeking, that she and the other staff need their jobs, and begs Lo not to make further trouble just because “perhaps someone let a friend use an empty cabin.”

*In contrast to other characters who’ve heard Lo’s story, Bullmer doesn’t give a reaction she can clearly categorize. Bullmer also doesn’t offer much hope of anything being done right away to address the situation. Their position as a vessel in international waters isolates them.*



*Bullmer projects trustworthiness, moving Lo to tell him more. After all she’s been through, it’s a big relief for her to feel heard at last. Though Lo doesn’t think of it now, if Bullmer has the power to fix the situation, it also means that he has the power to silence it.*



*Upon further reflection, Lo realizes that her talk with Bullmer hadn’t been entirely satisfactory, showing her sharp mind. Lo is chilled to realize that the accident with the camera must have destroyed the only other evidence of the girl from Cabin 10.*



*Despite her geographic isolation and the sense that only she can unravel this mystery, Lo hangs onto the hope that the authorities will be able to settle everything.*



*Lo reconnects with her youthful ambitions and decides she can’t give up on them, no matter how scared she is, and no matter how they might complicate the path she’s currently on. She deals with her anxiety for the sake of the crisis at hand.*



*Nilsson has been undermining Lo’s reputation with the staff. Karla can’t afford to lose her job and understandably feels threatened by Lo’s digging—she feels trapped in a way, too. It also sounds possible that she knows something more about the girl’s existence—or at least there’s a live possibility that someone could be smuggled aboard.*



At dinner, Bullmer has been called away to deal with an emergency, but Anne is there, with a dark bruise on her collarbone, which she claims she got from tripping in the shower. Separately, Lo chats with Alexander about Anne. He explains that she's something of a recluse, after losing her parents at a young age and spending years in different parts of Europe. Then Cole joins their table, in pain from his injury and depressed over the loss of his photos. Lo learns that the photo she'd seen of the girl from Cabin 10 was taken at an exclusive London club, the Magellan.

Lo halfheartedly networks during the dinner. Afterward, Ben offers to walk her back to her cabin, and Lo accuses him of lying to her about his whereabouts the night before. He replies that he wasn't lying; he just hadn't thought of the fact that he'd left the poker game for his wallet at one point. Lo doesn't wait for further explanation.

Lo is so distracted that she almost trips over Anne Bullmer as she rounds a corner. Anne, looking tired and gray, is leaning against the wall "as if steeling herself for something." When Lo asks if she's okay, her clipped accent breaks slightly as she says, "Sometimes it all just seems too much ... Such a *performance*." She then excuses herself to bed.

Ben reappears, hurt by Lo's accusation and suggesting that she's not looking at things rationally. Lo, furious, refuses to talk with him further and goes to take a shower. As she emerges, she looks forward to speaking to the police the next morning and then catching an early flight home, cutting the cruise short. Then she realizes her phone is missing. After searching her entire cabin, she notices a wet footprint near the veranda door. She goes outside and discovers that there's no way to secure the sliding door—someone could enter from the outside at any time, meaning that her cabin can be accessed by anyone strong enough to climb over the privacy screen. She gets dressed and hunkers down on the couch for the night, knowing she'll never sleep.

A week later, an online "armchair detective" forum speculates on the identity of the body that's been recovered from the North Sea. A poster who identifies himself as Judah joins the discussion and angrily shuts down insinuations about Lo's mental state, pointing out that it's still a missing person case.

*Both of the Bullmers' excuses sound a bit flimsy. Lo gathers more clues about the origins of the mysterious girl.*



*Lo's attention isn't primarily focused on networking for Velocity. Although it's understandable that any half-truth or omission is upsetting to her, in her quest to find out what happened last night, Lo also seems to be rushing to judgment, suggesting the strain she's under—no one can be fully trusted.*



*The encounter with Anne is puzzling, but Lo assumes that she is talking about the constant strain of being a society wife.*



*Ben gets too close to Nilsson's earlier accusation for Lo to brush it off. She's eager to put the Aurora behind her entirely and move on with her life. But then she makes the discovery that she's never been able to secure her cabin completely, no matter how hard she tried. Her safety has been an illusion all along.*



*The case of Lo's disappearance is high-profile and becomes a focus of online discussion. Judah's involvement reflects his care for Lo, as well as his refusal to jump to conclusions based on her mental health—unlike Ben and Nilsson.*



## CHAPTER 22

Lo wakes up trapped, in a small, stifling room. She thinks back on what's happened. As she'd sat on the sofa in her cabin, waiting for dawn, she'd suddenly heard three taps, followed by a louder tap, on her cabin door. When she peered through the door's peephole, Lo was stunned to see the woman from Cabin 10 standing there, "like nothing had ever happened."

As the woman from Cabin 10 begins to walk down the corridor away from her, Lo runs out of her room in pursuit. Just as the girl disappears through the staff door, Lo squeezes in behind her. It's **dark** inside, and just then, someone grabs her hair, twists her arm behind her, and slams Lo's head against the door, causing her to lose consciousness.

When Lo returns to consciousness, she's lying on a bunk in a locked, windowless room, with a terrible headache. Determining there's no way out of the room, she forces herself to stay calm and logical. She doesn't know what day it is, but she assumes it's Tuesday, meaning that the *Aurora* has probably already stopped in Trondheim and returned. Lo clings to the hope that someone noticed she never left the boat. She fears this room will become her tomb.

## CHAPTER 23

Lo wakes up some time later, hearing the door click. Someone's left a plate of food and a glass of orange juice beside her bed. Lo doesn't trust this and refills the glass with water from the bathroom, then gradually talks herself into eating the food, reasoning that if her captor had wanted to kill her, they would have done so already.

Having no way of telling the time, Lo feels disoriented. She also notices a "weak shiveriness" in her limbs and is frightened to realize it's been a few days since she took her antidepressants.

Lo thinks back to her first panic attacks as a teenager. Around the time she started work on her university entrance exams, "coping with anxiety had become a full-time business, and the walls began to close around me." She saw a series of therapists, but none of them held the key to a cure.

*Lo is trapped—the state she's most feared finding herself in again. The pattern of knocks on her cabin door is the same one she'd used when she knocked on the door of Cabin 10 the day before. Out of nowhere, the missing girl is back.*



*After the past day's dead-end search, Lo can't let the woman get away; her instinctive pursuit shows her determination and courage in following a lead. However, it's a trap.*



*Faced with her worst nightmare, Lo manages to keep herself from panicking and look at her situation rationally. Her biggest fear at this point is that people will assume she left the cruise in Trondheim, meaning no one will look for her onboard.*



*It's hard for Lo to trust her captor not to have poisoned her food, but she reasons that they've gone to the trouble of dragging her here, and deadly poisons might not be easy to find. They're interested in keeping her alive for the time being.*



*Since she's reliant on the pills to help her manage anxiety, the thought of not having access to them—and going through withdrawal in the meantime—is a terrifying scenario for Lo.*



*Lo's experience with anxiety has been part of a pretty typical life. Even in the course of normal rites of passage, with nothing notably traumatic happening, she's experienced the feeling of being trapped. She's found that there's no magic technique to cure this. Lo's experience shows that anxiety is a fairly normal occurrence, and also that it doesn't look the same for everyone who experiences it.*



Things seemed to improve during Lo's university years, but after she graduated and started work at *Velocity*, things fell apart. She'd tried tapering off of her pills while life was going well, but "cracked" and stopped coming to work within two months. Back on the medication, she felt better almost immediately, so she'd never tried stopping the pills again.

Lo alternates between panicked thoughts and fitful sleep, unsure how much time is passing. She has a horrible nightmare about the girl from Cabin 10 peeling off her own clothes, hair, features, and finally her own skin, until she's "just a bloody streak, muscle and bone and sinew, like a skinned rabbit." Even though no one is likely to hear, Lo screams and screams.

As she'd expected, Lo's screams get no response. She wonders what she's done—"I had *made* myself a target, by my refusal to be silenced about what had happened in that cabin. And yet ... what *had* happened?" Lo seemingly did not overhear a murder, as she had first thought—so who *is* the girl from Cabin 10, and why has she been hiding? Lo decides that, since the girl is alive and there's no murder cover-up, it must be her identity that's important—her relationship to someone else on the *Aurora*.

Lo tries the light switch and realizes the electricity has been cut entirely. She feels increasingly claustrophobic, the effects of medication withdrawal ever more apparent. But she feels a flood of anger towards the girl from Cabin 10 and clings to this like a lifeline. She realizes the girl has been in on the plot all along, after all Lo's done for her. Lo must have seen something she wasn't meant to—but if someone *else* died, then who was it?

## CHAPTER 24

Lo is next awakened by the lights flickering on and a tray of food being left beside her bed, but she's too slow to stop her captor. She figures it's at least Wednesday by now, and she's feeling the dizzying effects of medication withdrawal more and more. Feeling hateful toward the girl from Cabin 10, she breaks the food tray in half, producing two sharp-edged pieces. She crouches next to the door and waits.

Lo spends most of that day fighting to keep herself awake. When the girl from Cabin 10 finally cracks the door open, Lo pounces, stabbing at the girl's arm with the jagged edge of the tray. The girl forces her way into the room and locks the door. Lo growls to be let go and asks why the girl is doing this. The girl replies, "You wouldn't stop digging, would you? ... If you'd just kept your mouth shut about what you saw in that bloody cabin—"

*Lo's previous experience of prematurely stopping her medication sheds light on the fear of being deprived of her meds now—it's had devastating results in the past.*



*The lack of connection with other people, or even the ability to know what day and time it is, continues to disorient Lo. Her nightmare about the girl suggests that the girl isn't what she seems, and that whatever is underneath her appearance is still more frightening.*



*Even though she is mentally and emotionally frayed at this point, Lo starts to ask questions and think through exactly what did happen, since it's not exactly what she had suspected all along.*



*Lo put her professional and personal credibility on the line to try to help the girl, and now she feels betrayed. But Lo focuses on her anger at the girl to keep herself from dissolving into panic.*



*Lo is afraid, angry, hungry, disoriented, and suffering from withdrawal. It's little wonder that she's devising a weapon from whatever limited means are at her disposal.*



*Lo follows through on her plan and manages to inflict some damage on the girl, showing how desperate she is—and how determined, despite how sick she is with hunger, sleep deprivation, and withdrawal. Her suspicions also prove correct—she witnessed something the girl didn't want anyone to know.*



The girl from Cabin 10 says that “he” would never let her release Lo. Before asking any questions about that, Lo negotiates with the girl for access to her antidepressants. The girl agrees to give her pills in exchange for good behavior. While she waits, Lo puzzles over the identity of the girl’s male accomplice.

*One of the male passengers is complicit in Lo’s imprisonment, but she makes sure to bargain for her pills before pursuing that lead any further.*



## CHAPTER 25

The girl from Cabin 10 comes back with food, one pill, and a book for Lo to read. In the mirror, she catches sight of blood on her face, left from Lo’s attack, and goes to wash it off. When she comes back, Lo sees that she’s wiped her penciled eyebrows off in the process, “leaving a smooth, skull-like forehead that was instantly, unbearably recognizable.” The woman is Anne Bullmer.

*The girl makes good on her promise in bringing things back for Lo, showing she’s not completely hostile to her. The sudden, unexpected revelation of her (apparent) identity is shocking.*



## CHAPTER 26

Stunned, Lo wonders how she had missed figuring out the identity of the girl from Cabin 10 earlier. She and Anne Bullmer have the same dark eyes and high cheekbones. The girl’s hair (a wig) and penciled eyebrows completely transform her look from deathly fragile to vibrantly alive. Lo realizes that, when she spoke to Anne in the past, she had avoided looking at her face too closely, distracted and discomfited by the marks of her illness.

*There has been an elaborate deception going on aboard the Aurora. Lo had always felt too uncomfortable with Anne’s gaunt appearance to study her closely. It seems that the girl had banked on this reaction from others, too, in order to pull off her disguise.*



Lo realizes she must have stumbled on a prearranged code when she knocked on Cabin 10 that first evening. If she hadn’t, she might never have known the girl was there and would not have wound up in this situation. Lo continues to puzzle over exactly what she’s stumbled upon and what will become of her. She realizes she needs to get “Anne” on her side, if she has any hope of getting out alive.

*Instead of giving in to anxiety or despair, Lo continues to think through what she knows and look for a way out. She realizes that opposing “Anne” will not do her any good.*



As Lo thinks about the two women, she can’t square what she knows about the wealthy, elegant Anne Bullmer with the girl in the Pink Floyd T-shirt. It’s as if there are two Annes. Then it suddenly clicks for Lo that this is exactly what’s happened—the real Anne died the night the *Aurora* left England; the girl has been impersonating Anne ever since. Lo had interrupted the girl in her cabin while she was transforming herself into “Anne.” The girl and Richard Bullmer had been banking on no one noticing the minor differences in the two women’s features—for example, ensuring that no photos were taken of the actual Anne.

*After days of stubbornly puzzling over them, the pieces are finally falling into place in Lo’s mind, as she realizes just how elaborate the deception has been.*



Lo realizes that Bullmer and the girl almost got away with their scheme. If she hadn't been awakened by the splash that first night, they probably would have. Now Lo's hopes for survival rest on figuring out who the girl really is—and getting through to her in some way.

*If Lo hadn't been so recently traumatized and on edge from the break-in, then there's a good chance she wouldn't have heard what she did. Now she needs to channel that same sensitivity into connecting with the girl and finding a way out.*



## CHAPTER 27

The next morning, the girl comes in with a breakfast tray, dressed as Anne. At first, she reacts fiercely when Lo reveals she's figured out what she and Bullmer have been up to. When she asks why Lo couldn't stop digging, Lo explains, "Because I knew what it was like to be you ... what it's like to wake up in the night, afraid for your life." When the girl angrily snarls that that's *not* her, Lo points out, "It will be, though."

*Once again, Lo's own traumatic experience has equipped her to recognize and desire to help someone else who's trapped in a bad situation. She also perceives that, whether the girl yet recognizes it or not, her own life will soon be at risk, when Bullmer is finished with her.*



The girl insists that she and Bullmer are in love. Lo seizes on this, pointing out that if it were true, Bullmer would have divorced Anne long ago—but then he'd have missed out on her fortune. More likely, Bullmer saw the girl at his club and hatched a plan whereby he could still wind up with Anne's money, even if she survived her cancer. The girl furiously storms out of the room and doesn't reappear with food for supper. Lo begins to fear she's made a terrible mistake.

*Lo zeroes in on the girl's weak spot, perceiving that Bullmer's love for her isn't genuine, and that deep down, the girl knows it—in other words, she, too, is trapped. Though Lo fears she's pressed her captor a step too far, her intuition and courage are evident.*



## CHAPTER 28

Lo spends long hours alone in the room, fearing she's failed in her quest to forge a connection with the girl. At some point, she senses that the *Aurora's* engine has stopped. That means it must be Friday, the final day of the cruise, and the ship must have stopped at Bergen, where everyone will disembark.

*Even though none of the other passengers know where she is, Lo has taken comfort in knowing they're still above her on the boat. If they leave—and if she indeed fails in making the girl her ally—then Lo will be totally alone.*



Lo panics and begins to yell desperately and bang on the ceiling as she hears the thumps of luggage and people on the gangway far above her. At last she collapses in despair, thinking of her loved ones and the "endless sentence" that likely awaits her.

*This scene harkens back to Lo being trapped in her flat at the beginning of the novel. Now it's an even more desperate scenario because she has no ready means of escape, and by the time it's realized she's missing, it may be too late. Her despair is much darker and more resigned than mere panic.*



A devastated email, sent by Judah to a list of family and friends on the following Tuesday, reports that photographs of clothes, including vintage boots that were unmistakably Lo's, were shown to him by Scotland Yard for identification.

*Strangely, there's no body for identification, just Lo's clothing. This suggests that there might be more going on than meets the eye.*



## CHAPTER 29

Lo spends seemingly ages waiting for the girl to reappear. It must be late Friday by now, and she's terribly sick with hunger. When Lo hears someone coming down the corridor, she stands up and promptly faints. When she comes to, she finds the girl looming over her worriedly. She apologizes for being away so long and explains that it's late Saturday. She gives Lo some food, which Lo eventually manages to keep down.

Lo asks the girl her name—it's Carrie. Carrie gives Lo another pill. Because it's the first time Carrie has lingered and watched while Lo eats her food, Lo is emboldened to ask what is going to happen to her—if Bullmer will kill her or not. The girl doesn't answer, but Lo sees that she's crying as she leaves. Then she notices that Carrie has left another book for her—it's Lo's copy of *Winnie-the-Pooh*. Pooh is Lo's comfort read "from the time before [she] started getting afraid," and she'd packed it at the last minute.

That night, Lo lies awake thinking over her conversation with Carrie and the need to secure Carrie's help if she's to escape. Until a few hours ago, Lo was sure Carrie wouldn't help her. Now, she suspects that Carrie has realized she isn't a killer, and she wonders if "perhaps the hours had been as slow and torturous for her" as they were for Lo while she waited, starving.

## CHAPTER 30

The next time Carrie appears with food, Lo gets her talking again, but refrains from asking too many questions about Anne's death at first—she wants to persuade Carrie that she isn't a killer. Instead, she finds out that Carrie had pretended to be Lo, exiting the boat at Trondheim, so that everyone would think she'd left the *Aurora*. If Lo had never entered the picture, Carrie would have faked Anne's disappearance in Trondheim, later to "meet" and publicly fall in love with Bullmer herself.

When Lo timidly touches Carrie's knee, Carrie flinches, showing Lo "how frightened she was—how much of that vicious energy had come from terror, not hate." Carrie slowly reveals more of the story—that she'd met Bullmer at the Magellan club when she was a waitress there, supporting herself as a struggling actress. Bullmer had swept her off her feet.

*Lo has lost track of the passage of time and is beginning to starve. The girl has deprived her of food out of anger, but seeing what bad shape Lo's in, she's clearly upset, suggesting she's not a cold-hearted killer.*



*During the time the girl has been gone, she's obviously softened toward Lo—she's willing to tell Lo her name, she isn't in a hurry to leave, and she shows emotion over the situation. The book she leaves also has a softer, more personal touch. Lo has succeeded in forming some sort of connection with Carrie, though a tenuous one.*



*Lo's insight into Carrie's mindset shows great compassion on her part, especially after all she's been through. She senses that Carrie's gotten in over her head, and that acting cruelly towards Lo has taken a toll on her, weakening her desire to continue being Lo's enemy. She's able to envision a Carrie who isn't the angry woman she'd hated and been willing to harm earlier.*



*Lo shows her savvy investigative skill, but also her natural compassion, in trying to continue connecting with Carrie's humanity. In doing so, she's able to learn more about Bullmer's scheme.*



*Carrie's cringing reaction suggests that she isn't used to being touched lovingly—perhaps the opposite. Lo readily sees that much of Carrie's angry bravado had been a façade, showing her compassion once again. She also learns that Carrie doesn't come from a privileged background and had been easy prey for Bullmer.*



Carrie explains that she and Bullmer had carried on a secret affair until, one day, imitating Anne's mannerisms and wearing one of her outfits, she went out with him in public. They pulled this off successfully a few more times, until Bullmer suggested smuggling Carrie on board the *Aurora*. Anne would be leaving the cruise early, he claimed, so Carrie could cut her hair and impersonate Anne for the rest of the trip; they could be like a real couple at last.

On the first night of the cruise, Bullmer had come to Carrie in Cabin 10 and told her that he and Anne had had a fight about the affair; he'd pushed Anne, he claimed, and she hit her head and died. Bullmer said that if there was a police investigation, Carrie could be prosecuted as his accessory. So they'd have to tip Anne's body overboard in hopes of nothing being traced back to them.

Listening to Carrie, Lo restrains herself from voicing objections to various holes in the story. It seems clear to her that Bullmer had never meant for Anne to leave the ship alive, and that Carrie is willfully blind to the truth.

Lo tells Carrie that Bullmer is going to kill them both, but that Carrie is capable of getting them both out of there. Carrie insists that she loves Bullmer and would never betray him. Lo asks if Carrie loved him so much that she helped him kill his wife. At this, Carrie cracks. She says that at one point, the suitcase containing Anne's body had opened, and she thought she'd seen Anne's eyelids flutter. She screamed, but Anne's blood still felt cold, so she shut the case and threw it over the side.

Lo sees how guilt-stricken and afraid Carrie is and appeals to her conscience—Carrie doesn't want another death weighing on her; she can stop worse from happening. Carrie says she'll think about it. As she leaves the room, she notices the copy of *Winnie-the-Pooh* and comments that she'd loved the book as a kid. Her mom had called her Tigger, because no matter how hard she fell, she always bounced back.

Lo briefly wonders if she's developing Stockholm syndrome, but she realizes that, in any case, Carrie "had a considerably more advanced case than I did ... we weren't captor and captive, but two animals in different compartments of the same cage."

*It's apparent that Bullmer is using Carrie to advance his own scheme, but Carrie seems to be blind to this fact.*



*It sounds as if Bullmer had this plan in mind all along, dragging Carrie into it at the last minute, when she didn't have much hope of escape.*



*Lo perceives that Carrie has been strung along and manipulated by Bullmer from the beginning, but if she's fully invested in Bullmer's story, then Lo's logic is unlikely to sway her right now.*



*Lo finally hears the full story of what she'd overheard that first night, including the scream and the splash. Carrie is haunted by the possibility that she might have thrown Anne overboard while she was still alive.*



*Having seen Carrie's humanity and vulnerability already and built up some measure of trust between them, Lo tries to reach that part of Carrie again. The two have a further bonding moment over a childhood favorite they have in common.*



*Stockholm syndrome is a psychological condition in which a captive develops an emotional bond with his or her captor, as a survival strategy. Even though Lo is physically held captive by Carrie, it's clear that Carrie is emotionally captive to Bullmer. In a certain way, she's more trapped than Lo.*



After Carrie leaves, Lo spends the day pondering her fate and Carrie's. She's sure that Bullmer only intended for Carrie to live long enough to perform her part in the plan. That evening, Carrie bursts into the room again with news—Bullmer, who'd been off the ship in Bergen, has sent a message saying he's coming back tonight.

On Tuesday, September 29, the London *Telegraph* reports that a second body has been found in the search for Laura Blacklock.

## CHAPTER 31

Carrie tells Lo that they've got to get her off the boat. She'll have to take Carrie's passport and disguise and pass as Anne. Lo tries to convince her to come with her, but Carrie says she has a plan. Lo doesn't understand why she can't leave Norway under her own name, but Carrie explains that Bullmer has friends everywhere, including high up in the Norwegian police force. Lo thinks she sounds paranoid, but she agrees to swap clothes.

Lastly, to Lo's horror, Carrie bashes her head against the side of the bunk, to make it look to Bullmer as if Lo had attacked and overpowered her. She asks Lo to give her 24 hours before she goes to the police. Lo agrees, and she locks Carrie into the room as she instructs. Leaving a bleeding Carrie behind is the hardest thing Lo's ever done.

## CHAPTER 32

When she reaches the upper levels of the ship, Lo is shocked by the dazzling **light** of the chandelier and by the convincing sight of "Anne" she glimpses in the glass. She forces herself to maintain a measured pace and fight back panic as she makes her way to the Bullmers' suite. It's 11:15 at night, and Richard will be back any minute. She puts on some of Carrie's street clothes underneath Anne's kimono. She finds the wallet filled with money that Carrie had told her to take, then fleetingly considers taking a handgun she finds, but leaves it behind. She hears someone speaking to Bullmer in the hallway, turns off the light, and sneaks onto the veranda.

Lo hides out of sight of the window, but in the reflection on the glass safety barrier, she can see Bullmer sprawled on the bed, watching television. Lo waits for a long time, eventually hearing the boat's engine start up. Bullmer is still awake, so Lo realizes she has no choice but to climb over the glass barrier above the **ocean** in order to make her way to the adjacent cabin.

*Lo sees the full terrifying picture of Bullmer's exploitation of Carrie; the question is whether Carrie will come around to seeing it, too. With Bullmer on his way back to the Aurora, things are coming to a climax.*



*This builds suspense as it becomes clear that someone else is about to die—but whom?*



*Lo has succeeded in gaining Carrie's help in escaping, though it's going to be a great deal more complicated than she'd bargained for.*



*Lo is finally free from her confinement, but the terror is far from over, and she fears her escape will come at the cost of Carrie's life.*



*Given the evil truth about Bullmer, the oppressive glare of the chandelier is like a slap in the face, not a welcome relief, as Lo emerges from the depths of the ship. Despite the terror that's engulfing her, she manages to hold herself together and act the part of Anne, following Carrie's plan.*



*Even under the most terrifying circumstances, Lo maintains sufficient calm to fight for her own survival.*



Lo manages to pull herself up so she's sitting astride the wall of glass, at least two stories above the **ocean**. She's in full view of Bullmer, but he doesn't turn to look out onto the veranda. She then pulls herself up to a standing position, ready to swing herself around to the veranda on the opposite side. But her shoes get no purchase on the slippery glass, and soon she finds herself falling toward the depths of the fjord below. She hits the icy water and feels herself being pulled under by a current.

*Lo manages to avoid Bullmer and to escape the Aurora, but it still might be the death of her.*



## CHAPTER 33

Lo desperately kicks herself free of the gripping **ocean** current; it's so **dark** that she doesn't know which way is up. But soon, behind her eyelids, she sees "lights [begin] to spark and shimmer, terrifyingly close to the shards of light and dark that fragmented my vision when I had a panic attack." When she opens her eyes, she finds that she's seeing moonlight. Soon she's bursting above the surface, sobbing and coughing.

*Lo's survival instinct is incredibly strong, and the bright lights seem to symbolize her escape from the horror of the past days.*



Despite shaking convulsively, Lo forces herself to swim toward the **lights** of the quay, fearing hypothermia—not to mention getting dragged under by the ship if it starts moving. Finally, she pulls herself up a ladder onto the quay and finds herself in a small village. She staggers to a hotel, seeing the *Aurora* moving out to sea behind her. She bangs desperately on the door.

*Lo has gotten away from the Aurora just in time, her survival instinct overriding all else.*



Soon Lo finds herself under a blanket, holding a cup of coffee and sitting on a glassed-in terrace overlooking the bay. The hotel's general manager approaches, wanting to know how she's come to have Anne Bullmer's credit cards; the Bullmers are personal friends of his. Lo asks him to phone the police for her; despite what she'd promised Carrie, she thinks it's the only hope for both of them.

*Lo is lulled into believing she's safe at this point, and that the authorities can sort out the rest.*



Lo is practically falling asleep when suddenly she hears the manager say "Richard." She looks out on the fjord to see the *Aurora* coming to a stop, then turning around. Next she hears the manager speaking in Norwegian to what sounds like the police. She's briefly frozen, realizing that what Carrie had said about Richard's influence wasn't just paranoia. Lo slips quietly out the door.

*Lo's illusory sense of relief and rest is jarringly disrupted as she realizes she is not safe after all. Richard has cultivated friendships everywhere, and Lo won't be able to escape the web of his power as easily as she thought. She snaps back into survival mode and flees.*



## CHAPTER 34

Lo runs through the village and down the road along the fjord until she can't run anymore, watching as the *Aurora* draws closer to shore. She notices **light** in the sky and thinks it must be dawn, then realizes she's actually seeing "the eerie green and gold streaks of the northern lights." She laughs at the bitter irony of seeing them now.

*The northern lights had been the original destination of the Aurora cruise, but they just don't seem that important to Lo anymore. At this point, she doesn't know if they're a portent of freedom or a threatening sign of the extent of Bullmer's power.*



As Lo continues walking, she thinks about Carrie's warnings—which she'd dismissed as hysterical—about the reach of Bullmer's influence. She now realizes Carrie was right. She left the wallet when she fled the hotel, so she has no money, no ID, and no idea how to find a police station—or if she can trust the police.

*Lo realizes that Bullmer's wealth permits him to manipulate a huge web of people in order to protect himself. Thus, even though Lo's escaped, she's still trapped, in a way. She's also isolated by her lack of resources and Norwegian language skills.*



Just then, Lo is startled by a car rounding the bend. It's coming fast, and she tumbles into a ditch, hurting her ankle, as she steps off the road to avoid it. A man gets out of the car and calls to her in heavily-accented English. As the man helps Lo out of the ditch, she realizes he's a policeman. When she hears him say "Laura Blacklock" into his radio, Lo freezes, wondering what to do. Then she takes off running down the side of the fjord.

*Lo's suspicions about Bullmer and the police seem to be coming true. She hadn't believed Carrie's warning the first time, and it cost her; she doesn't want to make the same mistake again.*



## CHAPTER 35

Hours later, Lo is stumbling through the Norwegian countryside. At last she sees a rickety shack with two shaggy horses outside. She gratefully drinks from their trough, then curls up in a horse blanket inside and falls into a deep sleep.

*Lo wanders far off the beaten track before she feels safe enough to stop, and even rainwater and hay feel like a refuge.*



Lo is awakened by an elderly, bearded, and very surprised man who finds her in his horses' barn. Lo jerks away when he reaches out to help her, but after Konrad tells her his name and shows her a picture of his wife and grandkids, she allows herself to be gently coaxed toward his car.

*Lo has been under strain and unable to fully trust anyone for so long that she's jumpy about the old Norwegian farmer, too. However, it seems he's insignificant enough to be beneath Bullmer's notice and influence.*



As Konrad drives Lo back to his house, she realizes just how far she'd run the other night. She also looks at his mobile phone and realizes it's Tuesday—she'd slept for a full day and a night. When there's finally enough cellular reception, Lo dials Judah's number.

*Lo is finally free, emerging from the isolation imposed on her by Bullmer and reconnected with the real world beyond his reach.*



## CHAPTER 36

Back in England, Lo reflects on how she finally reached safety. Judah had immediately called Scotland Yard upon hearing Lo's story, and Lo had relented to let the Horsts call the Norwegian police. Soon she was driven to a police station, where a British embassy official was waiting for her. She learned that two bodies had been recovered the day before—a man, dead from an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound, and a slim woman with shorn hair, who'd drowned.

*From what the authorities are able to tell her, it sounds as if Bullmer committed suicide and that Carrie, too, had been killed—that Lo hadn't been fast enough to warn the police on her behalf.*



## CHAPTER 37

Lo and Judah have an emotional reunion back at Jude's London flat. Jude gives her a list of messages people have left, including some surprising ones, like a kind one from Tina. She also learns that Ben had been "raising hell" since the boat left Trondheim without her.

Lo flips channels and comes across a news bulletin about Bullmer's death, which jars her. She also spots Anne in the video footage and perceives something trapped in her expression, but also sees a hint of a fighter in her.

Later that night, Lo wakes up Judah with her crying. She says she can't stop thinking about Carrie. Judah feels that Carrie deserves what she got, but Lo insists that nobody can know what's going on inside another person's relationship—that people "can be sucked into doing something out of fear, or inability to see any other way out."

Lo changes the subject to Judah's job opportunity in New York—she thinks he should accept it. He's flabbergasted, until she explains that she wants to come with him; she doesn't believe there's a big break in store for her at *Velocity*. Even if there were some way of pulling herself further up the ladder, it's no longer what she wants.

Lo goes on to explain that she doesn't want to end up like Tina, Alexander, and other journalists she's met, traveling the world and reporting the things people like Bullmer want them to write about. She wants to write about the things people *don't* want others to know about.

Before they fall asleep, Lo puzzles over the fact that Judah had been asked to identify Lo's clothes, not a body. She can't figure out why Carrie would have discarded her clothes. She also can't imagine Bullmer committing suicide. But she pushes these thoughts aside, instead focusing on the leap of faith she's about to take.

*Compared to how isolated Lo had seemed at the beginning of the book, she's now surrounded by more support and seems happier to lean on others. Contrary to her earlier suspicions, too, Tina extends kindness, and Ben has been on her side all along.*



*Seeing an unexpected glimpse of Bullmer is understandably traumatic, and Lo also feels a certain kinship with Anne, believing she would have resisted Bullmer to the end.*



*Lo's experience aboard the Aurora has shown her that people aren't always what they seem; and her own experience of being trapped and helpless has given her a deep sympathy with the plight of someone like Carrie.*



*Lo's time on the Aurora has forced her to rethink her priorities. She now commits unhesitatingly to Judah, as she was so fearful of doing just a couple of weeks ago. She's also rethought her career ambitions, after striving to advance herself through this reporting gig.*



*Lo's experience has also reconnected her with her youthful ambition of becoming an investigative journalist. Now that she's seen the dark side of what wealth like Bullmer's can do, she can't ignore it in the future.*



*There are lingering loose ends as to what really happened on the Aurora, but Lo tries to look to the future, emboldened by what she's done and survived over the past weeks.*



A newspaper article, dated about two months later, reports that one of the two recovered bodies belonged to Anne Bullmer. The other is Lord Bullmer's, and it's been determined that his gunshot wound was not self-inflicted after all. A handgun was found near his body, wrapped in clothes belonging to Lo.

A few days later, there's an online banking live chat between Lo and a customer service representative. Forty thousand Swiss francs have been credited to Lo's account with the reference "Tiggers bounce." The bank can't identify the sender, as it's from a private Swiss account, but Lo is pretty sure she knows who it's from.

*Neither of the bodies belonged to Carrie after all, and it's implied that she must have been the one to kill Bullmer.*



*Carrie has survived and has access to the Bullmer fortune, from which she sends Lo a gift. In keeping with her mother's childhood nickname for her, Carrie has bounced back.*





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