

Annotation Guide

1. Summarize the chapter.
2. What are 3 questions you have about this chapter?
3. What is one connection you can make to this chapter?
4. What is one sentence that struck you or that stands out to you? Explain.

Notice and Note Fiction Annotation Guide

Contrasts and Contradictions:

1. *Give an example of a contrast and/or contradiction. This is when a character does something that contrasts with what you'd expect him to say or do.*

Aha Moment

2. Give an example of an aha moment. This is when a character realizes or understands something.

Again and Again

3. Give an example of a word, phrase or object that is repeated again and again. This is when you notice a word, phrase, or situation mentioned over and over.

Memory Moment

4. Give an example of a memory moment. This is when the author interrupts the action to tell you about a memory.

THERE'S A STRANGE THING

that happens
in the elevator.
In any elevator.

Every time
somebody gets
in, they check
to see if the button
for the floor they're
going to is lit,
and if it isn't,
they push it,
then face
the door.

That's it.

They don't
speak to the
people already
in the elevator,
and the
people already
in the elevator
don't speak to
the newcomer.

Those are
elevator rules,
I guess.

No talking.
No looking.
Stand still,
stare at the door,
and wait.

09:08:02 a.m.

A GUY GOT ON,

definitely older than me,
but not old.
Medium-brown skin.
Slim. Low haircut,
part on the side.

No hair on his face, none at all.
Not even a mustache.

Gold links dangling around his neck like magic rope.

Checked to
make sure
the L button was lit.

Going down too.

L STOOD FOR "LOSER"

when we were kids,
so Shawn and I would
stand in an empty elevator
and wait for someone to get on
and push L. And when they did, we
would giggle because they were the
loser and me and Shawn were winners
on a funny and victorious ride down to the
lobby. I thought about this when the man with
the gold chains got on and checked to see if the
L button was already glowing. I wondered if he knew
that in me and Shawn's world, I'd already chosen to be

a loser.

IT'S UNCOMFORTABLE

when you
feel like
someone
is looking
at you but
only when
you not
looking.

I'VE SEEN GIRLS

waiting at the bus stop
make men pitiful pieces
of putty, curling backward,
stretching and straining
every muscle just to get
a glimpse of what Shawn
and a lot of men
around here call

the world.

But there were no women
on this elevator, so there
were no worlds to be
checkin' for.

But he kept checkin'
anyway,
not knowing that
if he kept checkin'
anyway
he'd get

a world

of trouble.

09:08:04 a.m.

DO I KNOW YOU?

I asked,
irritated,
freaked out.

The man smiled,
adjusted the chains
around his neck.

Looked me
straight in the eyes,
dead in the face.

You don't recognize me?

he asked,
his voice
deep,
familiar.

I looked harder.
Squinted, trying to
place the face.

Nah. Not really,

I said.

He smiled wide.

A jagged mouth,
sharp and sharklike.

Then turned around
so that I could see the
back of his T-shirt.

A silk-screened photo.
Him, squatting low.
Middle fingers in the air.
And a smile made
of triangles.

RIP BUCK YOU'LL BE MISSED 4EVA

MY STOMACH JUMPED

into my chest
or my chest fell
into my stomach.

Or both.
I knew him.

Buck?

I stumbled

backward.
Couldn't be.
Couldn't be.

Ain't that what it say?

he said,

facing me.
Couldn't be.
Couldn't be.

But I thought ...

I stuttered.

I thought ... I thought ...

You thought I was dead,

he said,

straight up.
Straight up.

I RUBBED MY EYES

over and over and
over and over again,

trippin'.

Never smoked
or nothing like that.

Don't know high life.
Don't know bad trips.
Don't no dead man

supposed to be talking to me, though.

YEAH

I did,

I said,
hoping he would
come back with
I'm not dead or I
faked my death
or

something
like that.

Or maybe
I'd wake up, sit
straight up
in bed,
the gun still tucked
under my pillow,
my mother still asleep
at the kitchen table.

A dream.

Buck looked at me,
noticing my panic,
softly said,

I am.

I DID ALL THE WAKE-UP TRICKS.

Pinched the meat
in my armpit,

slapped myself
in the face,
even tried to
blink myself
awake.

Blink,
blink,
blink,

but

Buck.

I KNOW WHAT YOU THINKIN'.

That I was scared
of
to death.

BUT NO NEED TO BE AFRAID.

I had known Buck
since I was a kid
the only big brother
Shawn had ever had.

Shawn knew Buck
better than I did,
knew Buck longer than
we'd known our dad.

I TAKE IT BACK.

I was scared.

What if he had come
to get me,
to take me
with him?

What if he had come
to catch
my breath?

ANAGRAM NO. 1

ALIVE = A VEIL

09:08:05 a.m.

CATCHING MY BREATH, I ASKED,

So why you here?

I wiped
the corners
of my mouth, thought,

*Please don't say
you've come to
take me.*

*Please don't say
I'm dead.*

Please.

Actually,

he said,
doing the bus-stop
lean back again,

*I came to check
on my gun.*

MY RESPONSE

...

Then, finally,
in an almost-whisper, he added,

Your tail is showing.

I PUT MY HAND BEHIND MY BACK,

felt the imprint
the piece, like
another piece
of me,

an extra vertebra,
some more
backbone.

THOUGHT ABOUT MOVING IT

to the front,

but Shawn used to always say
dogs,
even snarling ones,
tuck their tails between their legs,

a sign of fear.
A signal of

bluff.

I REMEMBER

*when I gave
that thing to Shawn,*

Buck said,

*He was around your age.
Told him he could hold it for me.
Taught him how to use it too.
Taught him The Rules.
Made him promise to put it
somewhere you couldn't get it.*

and I replied
with as much
tough in
my voice as
I could.

But I got it.

AND I'M GLAD I FOUND IT,

because I'm gonna need it,

I explained.

Shawn's dead now.

No need to tiptoe around it.
Plus, I figured Buck already knew.
Figured dead know dead stuff.
Damn.
(Dumb thing to think.)

Happened last night.

*Followed him from the store.
Caught him slippin',
gave him two to the chest
right outside our building,*

I said,
anger sour in the back
of my throat.

*But I know it was the
Dark Suns. Riggs and
them. Had to be.*

Buck folded his arms.

I see,

he said,
shaking his head,
his mouth fading
into frown.

So what you 'bout to do?

My eyes turned
to razor blades.

*I'm about to do what
I gotta do. What you
woulda done.*

I squared.

Follow The Rules.

09:08:08 a.m.

THE ELEVATOR RUMBLED

and vibrated
and knocked
around like the middle drawer,
like something off track.

Scared the hell outta me.

*What's taking
this stupid
thing so long?*

I asked,
pounding the door

as hard
as my heart was
pounding inside me.

*This rickety thing
has always moved slow,*

Buck said,
grinning.

*Yeah, but this
is ridiculous,*

I replied,
palms wetting.

Might as well relax,

Buck said.

*It's a long
way
down.*

MAYBE HE DIDN'T HEAR ME

or didn't take me seriously.

Old people always do that.
Always try to act like what I'm saying ain't true.
Always try to act like I'm not forreal.

But I was forreal.

So forreal.

RELAX?!

I snapped.

*Relax?
I ain't got time to relax!
I got work to do.
A job to do.
Business to handle,*

I said,
feeling myself,
my macho
between

my shaky legs,
masking
my jumpy heart.

BUCK LAUGHED, AND

laughter,

when it's loud
and heavy
and aimed
at you,

I think
can feel just
as bad as
a bullet's

bang.

YOU GOT WORK TO DO?

A job to do?

Buck teased,
wiping laugh-tears
from his eyes.

*Right, right. You gon' follow
The Rules, huh?*

Yeah, that's right,

I said,
opening my stance
to let him know this
wasn't a game,
that I was forreal.

Buck pressed
his finger to my chest
like he was pushing an
elevator button.
The L button.

*But you ain't
got it in you, Will,*

he said,
cocky.

Your brother did, but you

you don't.

HE ASKED ME

If I had even checked
to see if the gun was
loaded.

I hadn't.

And now almost shot
myself trying
to figure out
how to.

GIVE IT TO ME

*before
you hurt yourself.*

Buck clicked something.

The clip slid from the grip
like a metal candy bar.

*Fourteen slugs.
One in the hole.
Fifteen total,*

he said,
slamming
the clip back in.

*How many
should there be?*

I asked.

*Sixteen.
But, whatever.*

09:08:11 a.m.

HE HELD THE GUN OUT.

I grabbed it,
but Buck wouldn't let go.

I yanked and yanked, pulled and pulled,

but he

resisted and resisted,
laughed and laughed,

Bucked and bucked.

BUCK FINALLY LET GO

and I stumbled into the comer,
slamming against the wall

like a clown.

You don't got it in you,

he repeated
over and over again
under his un-breath
while sliding a pack
of cigarettes from
his pocket.

Tossed one in his mouth,
struck a match that sounded
like a finger snap.

Then the elevator came to a stop.