

# Unraveling the Web of Lies: "Look Closer" Thrills & Chills | Book Chat # BuddyReads

**Welcome back to the podcast, everyone. Today we discuss February budy read thriller title**

Tamara: Welcome back to the podcast, everyone. I'm your host, Tamara. Today we are discussing our February budy read thriller title. If you would like to see this in video format, head on over to Patreon and you can watch this and see our pretty faces. along with no commercials, no ad breaks. If you don't have Patreon or you're not interested in Patreon, you can also check out the audio version on the Spreaker app. If you sign up as a supporter, you'll have access to the after shows and other exclusive content in audio only. If you prefer video, including reading vlogs and other things that require you to see it, you'll need to hop on over to Patreon. You can also join me and my two co hosts over on the book clubs app for even more book chats. Please subscribe and like the podcast, wherever you are listening, if you'd like to reach out to me, you can find me almost everywhere at shelf addiction. Joining me today is feature co host classy from the bookish virtual assistant. Welcome back, classy.

Classy: Hey, hey, Tamara. Happy February.

Tamara: Happy February. And yes, so of course, tell everyone where they can find you online.

Classy: you can find me on Instagram, Facebook, and X, under the bookish virtual assistant as well as classy green on Instagram. It's classy green one because

somebody tried to hack me, but yeah, just one on Instagram.

Tamara: But yeah, you can find me over there.

Classy: Come see a girl, come check, come check me out.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: Going over to say hi to classy?

Classy: Yes, please.

## **With book chats, we talk full spoilers so be warned**

Tamara: Okay, so before we begin, as always, we just want to remind you that with book chats, we talk full spoilers. Spoiler alert. You have been warned. Today we are discussing the book. Look closer. Written by David Ellis. The audiobook is narrated by Will Damron, Hillary Huber, Elizabeth Garrett, and Steve west. It was published on July 5, 2022 by GP, Putnam Sons and Penguin Audio. The hardcover comes in at 448 pages and the unabridged audio is 13 hours. Classy. Would you kindly share the synopsis?

Classy: Absolutely. Simon and Vicky couldn't seem more normal. A Wealthy Chicago couple, he a respected law professor, she an advocate for domestic violence victims, a stable, if unexciting marriage. But one thing's for sure, absolutely nothing is what it seems. The pair are far from normal, and one of them just may be a killer. When the body of a beautiful socialite is found hanging in a mansion in a nearby suburb, Simon

and Vicky's secrets begin to unravel. A secret whirlwind affair, a, \$20 million trust fund about to come due, a decades long grudge, an obsession with revenge. These are just a few of the lies that make up the complex web, and they will have devastating consequences. And while both Vicki and Simon are liars, just who exactly is conning who?

Tamara: And you know what? This is a web. And if you're on Patreon, you can see. Okay, I had to make a little chart. I made an impromptu chart. I said, this person to this person, this person to that person, this over here, this over there. And I made some notes.

Classy: Look at you.

Tamara: Because I'm like, whoa. Okay, this is getting.

Tamara: Yeah, it was a lot. Yes.

Tamara: So I am ready to break it down.

**Simon: I loved the author's storytelling, and I loved it. What did you think when you finished the audiobook**

But first, high level. What did you think when you finished the audiobook?

Classy: Okay, because I wrote this down. The long game.

Tamara: That is a very long game.

Classy: Even the author's storytelling, and I loved it. Who is the con?

Tamara: Who?

Classy: Lies are built on a sliver of truth.

Tamara: And I was here for all of it.

Classy: It was a cat and mouse game at its finest.

Tamara: Yes.

Classy: Nothing is what it seems. And just like the title said, look closer.

Tamara: I wrote down four con artists trying to best each other. That's what that whole book was. Four con artists trying to. Trying to best each other.

Classy: November 3 no longer holds the same, importance to me because November 3 is usually like election day.

Classy: But in this book, November 3 was their 10th anniversary. And the day they get that trust fund.

Tamara: The trust money. Yeah. Okay, now I've got to know. So you know me, I try to look for the obvious, and I even wrote down what chapter it was. Okay, it was in chapter

61. That is how soon. And I felt inklings before that. But when I got to chapter 61 again, spoiler alert, I said, they're in it together. It's there together. That was solidified, what happened in 61. I said, no, I'm like, it still doesn't make sense all the way quite yet. Yeah, but they're doing this together.

Classy: And I felt the same way, too. Yeah, they're in it. But the way he wrote it, like the diaries and the flashbacks, he did make you question like, are they. Is she getting revenge on him? and that was the great part about his writing, is even though we knew they were together in on it, it didn't take away from the story. For me, it did not take away from the story, because it still was like.

Tamara: But, why and how? And it came together in the end. And the thing is so, like, with Vicki's character at the very beginning of the know, she is helping battered women. She works at a shelter. I'm like, this woman is so nice. This conflicts so bad with what's happening. I'm like, now, wait, something is wrong.

Classy: I picked up on that too, because,

Tamara: Her sister.

Classy: Something up with the sister and her mark. Vicki's m. Mark. I'm like, they're too damn smart. Like, she just didn't pick homeboy Christian, aka Nikki. yeah, but yeah, it was. And when you can write a story and like, you and we, if we.

Tamara: Can figure out the who, why, what.

Classy: When, whatever we like.

Tamara: I already figured this out.

Classy: Yeah, but this one, this convoluted man.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: David, did I applaud know. And you might could kind of tell from my feelings about this book. I mean, there's some plot holes and all those type of things, but I think he did a really great job on keeping my interest. The convolution, like you were saying.

Tamara: I mean, you did a web.

Classy: You did a damn.

Tamara: I had to. At first I'm like, wait a minute. And I noticed, and this was the killer. And I noticed this, like maybe about 30 or 40%, maybe 35%. I said, wow. So everyone has a point of view. M except for Lauren.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: So I'm like, so Lauren, the person who's murdered, we don't hear from.

Tamara: No, not at that.

Classy: Yeah. And the thing is, someone who's doing the audiobook, we already know that there's four points of view, like ASAP, because there's four narrators.

Classy: You know what I mean? But if you're doing the printed version and you're reading, you don't come across that until you come across the fourth character. M. But, yeah, that was like that plus part of, listening to the book. And I don't know if it's a plus or it was just like, oh, okay. You know what I mean? Because from us, we're just like, okay, so it's four narrators. So that means. Yeah, so all of a sudden, like you were saying, my brain was already clicking like, m, what's going on? We got two men and two women.

Tamara: Yeah. And it's actually really smart of the author to exclude Lauren because she is the.

Tamara: Yeah. Ah.

Tamara: She would have given away. Even if he tried to hide it. We would know all the things that Simon was those, okay, so when he was writing in this journal, I'm like, what an asshole. Why is he writing in this?

## **For a long time I thought Vicki and Simon were hooking up**

Tamara: Then suddenly I'm like, the thing that.

Tamara: Triggered me, that kind of told me so there were two things that told me that Vicki and Simon were working together.

Classy: Okay.

Tamara: It first hit me when it came out that Vicki knew who Gavin was. I'm like, wait a minute, how do you know? And then it really, like, after that, it started tumbling out that she knew everything about this guy. And I'm like, okay, christian.

Classy: Or, because Gavin was what? Christian's friend.

Tamara: So when he started dealing with this, he's like, I know he told Gavin, or I know Gavin's helping him. So I'm like, well, she's done a deep dive on this guy.

Tamara: She knows a lot about him, but how does she know all this and why? So I'm like, she's trying to m. On one hand, it's pretty plain to me that Vicki is playing, what's his name? Christian. Christian. Vicki is playing him. And it's pretty obvious. Yeah, but Christian is so big headed he can't see it. But on the flip side, for a long time I thought that Simon and Lauren were hooking up. And I said, how? And I'm like, why? And especially when it came out that Lauren was hooking up or his daddy, I said, no.

Classy: I figured that out really quick. That she was the one, uh-huh. That Lauren was the mistress.

Tamara: I figured that out pretty quick.

Classy: But they didn't expose that until, was it 90% of the book? But you could kind of tell.

Tamara: But then David distracted me with,

Classy: His writing that I just totally forgot that I think Lauren is the one that was the



mistress. And Simon is getting revenge because he made Simon so freaking nerdy and desperate for love.

Tamara: The way he wrote it, that this.

Classy: Guy was so desperate to love Lauren or he had a crush on her so big that he would, in my mind while reading as a reader, that he would just forget that. Yeah, you liked my dad, but I just thought you were just so much.

Tamara: And then it came out that she slept with him on his 18th birthday.

Classy: Yes, exactly. It was just a birthday gift.

Tamara: What? A birthday gift. She like, don't think we're going to be together.

Classy: I was just gifting you some kuchi. That was birthday kuchi.

Tamara: It was. It was happy birthday to you. but I don't want to be with you. Thank you.

Classy: That's all it was. I separated the two and you know what I mean. And that's that writing that here, he kind of let us know that she's a possible mistress.

Classy: But she also gave him some birthday sex, basically. So is she not? But he was so geeky and nerdy.

Tamara: I mean, to make himself calm, he.

Classy: Figured out equations and different, patterns with words and what rhymed. So you made it think like he was kind of like rain man kind said, I think christian described him as someone who could quote the quadratic equation.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: I enjoyed Mr. Ellis's writing because he threw me off a few times.

Tamara: Even though I knew a few things.

Classy: He still distracted me and I enjoyed the distraction.

Tamara: Yeah, I think, he did a.

Tamara: Good job making the journal believable for as long as he did. Ah. And he explained later how the character was able to do that because I think he was putting his feelings for Vicki in there.

Classy: Yeah.

Tamara: How he felt about Vicki, how he would have been with Vicki if she had said yes to him. So like the character said, there's always some truth in here.

Classy: There's always a little truth.

Tamara: Yeah.

## **With Simon's flashbacks, the thriller suspense part seemed to amp up**

So I think that the author was very smart in like, it sounds ridiculous, but I was still like, oh my God, why is he writing the first thing? I'm like, why in the hell are you writing this down in a journal? I couldn't figure it out.

Classy: And not just any journal.

Tamara: A green.

Tamara: A green journal.

Classy: So fucking obvious. Read this part before you started. I didn't even read the last sentence in Goodreads. It described it as part gone girl, part strangers on a train. Look closer is a wild roller coaster ride. And I will have to give him credit. This might be one of the few books that you could say was kind of close to gone girl with the diary entries and all those type of things because a lot of people like to use that as a selling point. and I'm glad I did not read that. Prior to us reading this book, I.

Tamara: Didn'T even see that.

Tamara: But honestly, outside of the journal, I didn't have any gone girl ties. I couldn't figure out anything else. And girl on a train, I read that, a very long time ago. I couldn't really tell what was girl on the train.

Classy: Maybe just the flashbacks. That's all I could think of because with his flashbacks, that was something that I really didn't like. It seemed like the closer we got

to the end, his flashbacks became more frequent and shorter and the thriller suspense part seemed to amp up because there was at one point in the chapter.

Tamara: and it was kind of hard.

Classy: Because you're doing audio where.

Tamara: He was.

Classy: Reading, know, we were listening to Simon and then Simon's all of a sudden slips back into the time where he's talking to his, uh-huh know, and then he slipped back into the current time and I was like, ooh, I like this. I would love to see how that was written in print because the narration.

Tamara: Amped it for me.

Tamara: I wonder if it was italics, because I did go back looking for the ebook on everand or some other places and I could not find it. So I'm like, oh, I want to see the ebook. What does it look like?

Classy: Because I did. I haven't gone back yet, but I think Libby has it. If Libby doesn't have it. It used to be called access 360 in my library. Now it's boundless. Everybody has new, apps now.

Tamara: But you're right.

Classy: I did like that. and I think that was probably the girl on the train thing, because

didn't she have like amnesia or something? The girl on the train, or she fell.

Tamara: Well, she forgot something. And every time she passed the house, it's like she would have memories or something. She would pass these town homes, remember?

Classy: Yeah, right. He didn't have any memory loss. He's a diabolical babe.

Tamara: He is someone. You never want to be an enemy. But the thing is, though, even though. Okay, so when Jane, who is the detective or sergeant, she's a sergeant. As she was getting closer, I didn't want her to was. And this is different. I found myself rooting for Simon and Vicki. I wanted them to get away with it. I said, she's going to figure it out, but it's not going to be enough. It's not going to be enough.

Classy: And that's exactly what, you know, this was one of the few times where you didn't have a bumbling Barney Fife police department.

Classy: They were good.

Tamara: They were on it. But like you were saying, Simon and.

Classy: Vicky were just ten steps ahead of them.

Tamara: Yeah, they were so like he thought so far, like he had contingent for a contingent, for a contingent.

Tamara: And the perfect example is when Jane came with that stupid, champagne and the two wine glasses, he like, what's this about? I don't understand what's happening. I

said, oh, no, because I'm like, obviously Lauren's fingerprints was on it instantly. I'm like, oh, because, the St. Louis police office called and said, we got prints. And I'm like, oh, no.

Classy: But he had saved them for what?

Tamara: How many years?

Tamara: You want to talk 19 years or some shit. He saved it, y'all.

Classy: This man, in his long game, he.

Tamara: Got a very long game, man.

Classy: And I know, I think even not Lauren, Vicki had said he can hold a said. And that was the other part, like she said, but you think he thinks he's the only one that can hold a grudge? And at that point, at one point, like you were saying, I knew they were working together, but when she made that comment, I was like, whoa, did he do something to her? And she's trying to get back at him. But her grudge wasn't with Simon. Yes.

Tamara: Because that was the piece that was missing until the very end. I'm like, okay, so she helped you with this, but what's her motivation? especially because when we find out, so this whole thing was over \$21 million, and then at the end, I'm like, simon gives up the money. He doesn't keep any of it. Vicky doesn't want any of it. I'm like, these are good people doing bad things.

Classy: Exactly.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: And they're not out here killing indiscriminatory. They went for who they thought deserved it.

**David: Christian was a horrible person. Very smart. Um, he was just a tiny little man**

Classy: Yeah, because, I mean, they met up in that support, group for suicide support. Yeah, grief support. And it was kind of like the, oh, gosh, not Robin Hood, but just trying to kind of like a Batman kind of feeling where we're going to get the bad guys and we're going to kind of lurk in the background.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: But it was their own revenges, personally, their own. Christian was a horrible person.

Tamara: Horrible. Very.

Tamara: And so was Lauren. Lauren was a gold digger in the most traditional way. Christian recognized her asapped.

Classy: Soon as Vicki said, this bitch got me.

Tamara: Like, she trying to steal. He like, hold up. This bitch ain't getting the money, right. He's not getting the money.

Classy: Doing to Simon what I'm doing to Vicky. I was like, yeah. Game recognized.

Tamara: Game.

Tamara: Exactly. He's like, she not going to win. This is my money.

Classy: 21 million. And Vicki knew it. Like, the stakes were high.

Tamara: Yeah. And I think when she found out, remember how she went to Christian August strat? She had the laptop, she had the diary. And when she went into Simon's office and it was just left out, I'm like, no, he just leave that out. He didn't just leave that out for her late.

Classy: And I was like, that's evidence.

Tamara: You just don't leave it. And she went. Sat down and just put in the password.

Classy: That was od to me, too, at first. That you're having an affair and your wife knows where passwords are.

Tamara: I know.

Tamara: That was weird. So some things really were loud, like flashing, look here, look here. This is a clue. Because I'm like, I don't care how in a hurry he is, he would hide



that journal if he didn't want her to see it.

Classy: Yeah, because I mean, that was glaring. That was damning evidence. I don't care how late you're running.

Tamara: you don't do that, girl.

Tamara: If I found some kind of journal like that, I might turn into a killer. Don't let me find no mess like that. It's going to be od with the skillet.

Classy: Yeah, because it wasn't just some little anime evidence.

Tamara: This was a freaking silicy a love story.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: And he's like, oh, but I don't want to hurt my wife.

Classy: Right? And you about to make me lose 21 mil, bruh.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: That's like a perfect plot for murder.

Tamara: Yeah. And he was like, I told her I didn't want to do this to Vicki, she deserves the money, but then she comes with the pregnancy story. I'm like, oh my God.

Classy: And the way David painted. Know from high school, he was this little dorky, skinny little thing that the wrestlers was know one guy?

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: that he was just tossing and he was geeky. He was what? The valedictorian? So it just made him seem like he wasn't attractive.

Tamara: he fell in love quickly.

Classy: Yeah, he was just a tiny little man who fell in love quickly. Very smart. was lucky to have someone who loved know who fell in love with a beautiful woman or beautiful women, because Vicki was beautiful as well. So I m love the way he painted Simon. his know, as far as geeky. And then like you said, the one that this is the one person that.

Tamara: You think you could get over on.

Classy: But who would know that his long game?

Tamara: Well, as you said, he was a valedictorian. He's very smart. Both of his parents are lawyers. His mother was like, she was extremely good at practicing law. Better than his father.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: So there might have been some nature kicking in there as well. He's very intelligent, he knows the laws. I mean, who is the best person to get away with murder?

A lawyer.

Tamara: Yes.

Classy: And I loved in those last couple of scenes because they were,

Tamara: Let me just tell.

### **The detective chapters are brilliant in this book**

Classy: Okay, I'm sorry, I'm just like gushing about this book, but the detective chapters are brilliant. okay, let me just go back a little bit. Some of the things I loved about.

Tamara: This book, it's set in Chicago. I'm from Illinois.

Classy: When they started pinking the towers. That's right where I work, girl.

Tamara: I was just like. You're like, oh, no.

Classy: Daily center.

Tamara: What?

Tamara: Have you seen that restaurant he was stopping at?

Tamara: Yes.

Classy: I was just like, I know where in the Chicago title? the building where he kept saying he had to go to the Chicago title.

Tamara: And I was just like, I was glued.

Classy: I was so tuned in. And then when the detective part where they were doing the cell towers, and I was like, that's why his ass kept going to that place to make his phone calls, those detective scenes. And we've read a lot of books.

Classy: Let me just say this. We have read a lot of books and there are not too many. We have talked about some dumb ass.

Tamara: Detectives, but this one, when they were.

Classy: Not matriculating, but when they were doing the pings and saying how, I was just like, this is good.

Tamara: Honestly, it all spanned. Like, the author made the connection so easily and smooth. When we found out about how the kid poisoned himself, quote unquote, in high school and the other police department is.

Tamara: Like, he did that to that kid.

Tamara: And we think he killed his father, but we can't prove it. And when they were talking about the stuff that they had and couldn't nail him on, she was listening.

Tamara: Everybody else was like, but the evidence, the evidence. She's like, okay, look,

the evidence can be real. Two things can be true. The evidence does say this, but that doesn't mean he wasn't pulling someone's chain exactly in his wheelhouse to do this. And no one wanted to believe her.

Tamara: No, not at all.

Classy: And she was like, wait a minute.

Tamara: I remember this kid.

Tamara: I remember.

Classy: And when you start thinking back as the revenge part, that here you have.

Tamara: This kid who was basically ridiculed the.

Classy: Whole time he was in high school, basically because the wrestler start messing with him when he was a freshman.

Classy: And I can't remember how old the wrestler was.

Tamara: They weren't in the same grade. So he had a couple of years with them, probably.

Classy: But that image follows you, you know what I mean? Like, nobody forgets. And then to find out. And basically, I bet you nobody messed with him after what he did to the wrestler.

Tamara: Well, he did say he grew to like 511. Right? So he did get runner height on him. yeah, he's a runner. So he just changed. And he probably changed right after that kid graduated, but he couldn't get a scholarship or so he lost out on wrestling because he had a drug in his system.

Tamara: That would hide other drugs.

Tamara: Yeah, right.

Classy: In sports, that's a no no.

Tamara: Yeah. Good for you.

Tamara: He knew this fool is going to take this Gatorade every fucking day.

Tamara: Yes.

Tamara: Where's my take two?

Classy: And the other thing was that that drug lasted in his system so long that he couldn't tell exactly when what.

Tamara: Happened because he did that to him every day. And he probably didn't even think it was him because he took his shit every day.

Classy: And then you drank other.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: Even though.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: So he didn't draw a direct line to, know.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: Every day. So, yeah. I really enjoyed, David Ellis's writing. I loved his long game because he had to set up. I think we even talked about that, that you were like, it didn't pick up until. I can't remember what chapter I was on, but it took a little time, but he really had to set the scene. And I enjoyed his opening scene. You want to talk about a banger of a scene?

Tamara: Yeah, it was crazy. Yeah, it was crazy.

Tamara: And then.

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So coming out of that, then we hear about Vicki's experience, like, doing crazy, like being a sex worker. I'm like, oh my God, what is these people? yeah.

Classy: Who are these people? Because the story opens up with Lauren's dead body

hanging in her own home, and Simon is there and leaves and you just.

Classy: You. I'm immediately drawn.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: And then it flips right away to that hospital where she's trying to talk someone into coming to the home. So we switched perspectives really quickly.

Tamara: Yeah, right.

Classy: Because Vicki is a social worker for a domestic abuse.

Tamara: I think she just works for that domestic, the home that they hide the women. I don't think she's actually a social worker.

Classy: Yeah, she's an advocate for domestic violence, so.

Tamara: Right. Just those two different.

Classy: I was drawn in.

Tamara: I'm like, I could not believe anything about Vicki because I'm like, she is two very different people. What is.

Tamara: Clearly.



Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: She can't be the con woman and be this really sweet, let me save the women people. Like, how can you be two things? But that's because one was fake.

Classy: Exactly. Almost kind of reminds you of, what was the one story we read where the girl was a grifter and she conned the teacher and her stepdad? You know what I mean? Like, those kind of things.

Tamara: But yeah.

Classy: It was a little slow.

Tamara: Burn for the first part, but he.

Classy: Drew my attention in so quickly that I just wanted to know what was going to happen and he didn't disappoint.

Tamara: Yeah. Okay. Actually, I think this is a great time to take a quick break, you guys, by listening to these commercials, you are supporting the podcast. While you're listening, head on over to Amazon and pick up the book review journal, available now. It's not too late to start a new journal for this year. And we'll be right back. Today's episode is brought to you by the shelf addiction merch store. Check out all the bookish t shirts, notebooks, mugs, and more. Don't miss out on these original designs. Perfect for any book nerd. Support the podcast and visit [shelfdiction.com](http://shelfdiction.com) merch and pick up your next favorite bookish item.

## **David Ellis' debut novel has some interesting twists and turns**

All right, welcome back, guys. Let's pick up where we left off.

Classy: I enjoyed the story. I may have to look, I'm not sure. I don't think this is his debut novel. I believe he may have written with James Patterson or something. But I'm really glad we picked this book. I don't know what else to say.

Tamara: Yeah, me too.

Classy: I am really glad. This, is February, and in my.

Tamara: Opinion, we got a good one. Yeah.

Tamara: And I do think people who would enjoy this book are people who like a very twisty story, something that has a lot of groundwork laid before that the guts really starts. And that, groundwork is important because, the tension becomes so high at a certain point, and that pays off. So, like, all the work that he did on the onset, it pays off. And that's, like, what's difficult for a lot of authors to do. They have this really intense situation with a lot of story, a lot of characters, a lot of detail, and the pace never improves. Yes, they have a hard time tying all the loose ends, but David Ellis was able to do that. So it made the payoff worth, I think.

Tamara: Yeah, right. And four.

Classy: Know that's hard, in my.

Tamara: Opinion, to, keep it all together.

Classy: And to tie it in cohesively. I mean, you had to do a web of tying everybody together. and when you did do that.

Tamara: Was it cohesive to you?

Tamara: Yeah. So I did this in the first quarter of the book. So I did it early on because I felt like there was something I was missing. Because even Conrad, who was Lauren's husband, we had a little bit of him, but not much. So I was kind of trying to figure out who the couples were and who was sleeping with who and why this person was trying to get the money and all this stuff. I was trying to figure that out, so it helped me. And then once I had it down, I had the characters. I wasn't struggling with them. Once I took the time to just write it down, right.

Classy: It was like, follow the money. And it didn't get a little convoluted.

Tamara: Because it was like, but her husband has money.

Classy: But then when you realize he was going to divorce her, she was just.

Tamara: And she needs the money.

Classy: She's like, oh, I'll just find more money.

Tamara: I'll just move on to the next one.

Classy: And lo and behold, who lives nearby.

Classy: But my former boss's son, who I know has money. Yeah.

Tamara: What a mess.

Tamara: What a mess. These characters are a mess. And that was what made it so fun.

Tamara: And that's the funny part.

Classy: It's like, here you got these messy characters and you still were rooting for them at the end, which I'm not against that, but I'm just know, like, you were like, I was rooting for Simon and Vicki.

Tamara: Look, that doesn't happen often. Usually I want the villains to get theirs, right?

Classy: Yes.

Tamara: Because Vicki did kill someone. She point blank shot somebody in the head. She shot him. She shot Christian and said deuces.

Classy: But, you know, I had a feeling she was. Because she was like, when she started faking, she's like, yeah, because he thinks, basically he really thinks I love him with his big penis and his.

Tamara: And she was just, look, the minute she said, take a shower, relax. I said, oh, no. And then he chugged the wine. I said, you are drugged, sir. You are drugged. I knew

immediately. And then he's like, oh, why am I so tired? She's like, aren't you tired? I'm like, oh, she was in his face.

Classy: I was just like, oh.

Tamara: My God.

Classy: She was like, sitting on him, like, in his face, right? Yeah.

Tamara: She was like, so can you imagine sitting on someone's lap, facing them with a gun under their chin? Under their chin. And you're facing them. And that is how she killed him. And that is how he was able to brush her hand. And the shot went this way because she was facing him, and it went to the side, and she came back and shot him.

Tamara: M. Yeah.

Classy: And you're in a drugged induced state looking at somebody like, who you.

Tamara: Think cares about you, eke.

Tamara: Yeah, but that's what he deserved. He got what he deserved.

Classy: Just about to say I was like, but he deserved every bit of it.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: That's why I'm like, dude, what goes around, come around. You deserve that.

You deserved every second.

Classy: Yeah.

**Kevin: I wonder why Gavin even tried it. He did it the right way**

Had no sympathy for him. None.

Tamara: None.

Classy: I mean, how many women had he conned?

Tamara: It doesn't even matter because his name and I'm surprised the author used his own name, because when he was conning Vicki's sister, he was going by the name David. I'm like, the author used his own name because he was Christian, he was Nick, he was David, he was some other.

Classy: He.

Tamara: He's probably been doing this for years, and his little friend has been helping him the whole.

Classy: Yeah, because Gavin, he said Gavin was the coach and he was the player. So Gavin was kind of like the brains behind it. and Christian was the face because he had the good looks. He worked out. I think Christian said Gavin was a big, scary looking dude, basically. So he was the behind the scenes. yeah. So he was the brains and,

Christian was the brawn.

Tamara: Yeah, they were a team. But Christian also collected most of the money because he was doing most of the work.

Classy: Bang, bang, bang. He was getting the sex and the ladies and Kevin's like, now what am I doing wrong?

Tamara: I wonder why Gavin even tried it. So Gavin, at one point, he goes, because Vicki does not go back home, quote unquote. She goes back to her house. She leaves the state after Gavin basically confronts her about killing Christian and not being truthful and lying about her name. And he gives her a couple good kicks to the ribs, and he goes to Simon's house to kind of tattle on her because she went missing. And he introduces himself as the FBI. And Simon's like, okay, this is that dude.

Tamara: Okay, come on in.

Tamara: Come on in.

Classy: Like, dude, I've been watching you guys.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: And that was so od, too, that they've lived in the same, area.

Tamara: That Lauren lived, basically. Yeah. Yeah.

Tamara: So Gavin got run off, basically. He's like, oh, you feel free to stay and tell the police if you want to.

Classy: Got something, right.

Tamara: Yeah. Even Gavin didn't even get what he wanted. He was trying to get 10 million. He's like, I'll just make it a cool ten. Not to tell on you.

Tamara: It didn't work, right.

Classy: But it's like, come on, the guys, you haven't figured this out yet that.

Tamara: You are dealing with, but you always.

Classy: Think you're smarter than somebody else, basically. And he thought he was.

Tamara: He thought he. So. But that's the thing. I think this is why I also rooted for Simon a little bit, because even when he was up for that full time professor.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: Tenure. He just really wanted to do it right. He wanted to do the fair thing. And Vicki goes off and has her friends sleep with the guys, the daddy of the person. Know some drama.

Classy: Yeah. And records it.



Tamara: Yeah. And she's like, use this. Use this and you'll get the job. And he's like, I don't want to use that. And he didn't get the job, but.

Classy: He did it the right way.

Tamara: He did it the right way. So I'm like, he's not like, okay, yes, if you kill someone, that is absolutely bad. There's no question. But I don't think he's like, he's not serial killer bad. No, he was getting vengeance for his mother. He thought he was getting vengeance for his mother.

Classy: Yeah, right. His mother and their legacy. I mean, this woman stole 6 million freaking dollars that could have taken care of his mother, for her home health care or just her health care period. So, yeah, like you were saying he.

Tamara: Was trying to vindicate, or get.

Classy: Back, what was done to his family. And he did.

Tamara: He did. Yeah, he really did. He got that girl taken out.

Tamara: Damn.

Classy: I mean swinging.

Tamara: He walks in, he's like, oh, my gosh. She is hanging from the balcony, from the railing. He's like, what happened? Why he didn't use a gun? I'm like, oh, my God. You walk in and expect to see someone on the floor from a gun wound, and she hears she

is hanging from her banister railing. Like, what?

Classy: And what perfect timing to do it. on Halloween, it was just like every time I start thinking about this story, it just got even better.

### **Christian: I was a little bit taken aback by the Obama mask**

What perfect day to kill somebody. But on know, I know you're going to open the door to strangers in costume.

Tamara: Now look. Yeah, I was a little bit taken aback by the Obama mask. I'm like, really? What you got? Make yourself black, sir, in case anybody see you.

Classy: But you know what? I think it was because the Chicagoland.

Tamara: Area, I know that's his.

Classy: I thought about that too, and then I just kind of let it go.

Tamara: Because.

Classy: It was Obama. It was his area. Chicago.

Tamara: He didn't look like too Od, but.

Classy: Yeah, I thought that too. Yeah, the black man.

Tamara: The black man did it. And then when he puts the grim Reaper costume on over, he still leaves the mask on because he like, I got double protection.

Classy: We may need to check out David's, political stance.

Tamara: I don't like, was that like tongue in cheek or do you really like him?

Classy: Exactly. I thought about that too. I was just like, okay, I'm going to let this slide because I like your writing, sir.

Tamara: I always say two things to be true. I still be like, why you had to use him. You could have used anybody.

Tamara: I mean, unless he was just really trying to throw everything Chicago in there and he wasn't thinking about it like that. But we won't know because we don't know the cause.

Classy: I mean, he threw everything possible about Chicago. Chicago Cubs.

Tamara: Go Cubs.

Classy: I'm a Cub fan. I am a diehard Cub fan. So, yeah, I was tuned in. I was dialed in, man. I was really dialed.

Tamara: So he didn't have any food about Chicago, though.

Classy: He didn't really. I think he mentioned one restaurant that one didn't. I wasn't

sure about. Yeah, I'm like, I might just check that one out because I think somebody even said, I highly recommend it or something.

Tamara: Oh, you know what else Christian mentioned? Basil Hayden whiskey.

Classy: And that is one of my favorites.

Tamara: I was like, did I just hear Basil Hayden?

Tamara: Pause, let me go back. Because he had to drink some whiskey.

Classy: Before because he was a chicken shit, basically.

Tamara: He had to work himself up to murder.

Classy: I was like, david, you and I have a lot in common. You're a Chicago Cubs fan. You like baseball.

Tamara: Let's assume that those are facts and he just didn't check a bunch of Chicago stuff off a list.

Classy: Yeah, I know.

Tamara: Let's make them fit.

Classy: Right? Well, he did a good job for this girl over here. I will take.

Tamara: Let's click on him. Is he from Chicago?

Tamara: Let's see.

Tamara: He is. Oh, he's a lawyer, of course.

Tamara: He went to law school in Chicago. he served as the house prosecutor and convicted Illinois governor.

Classy: Oh, Blagovich, really?

Tamara: In the impeachment trial before the Illinois Senate, he was elected to the Illinois appellate court in 2014. Girl, he lives outside of Chicago with his wife and three children.

Classy: Okay, so he knows.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: If he could help.

Tamara: He's legit. He probably likes.

Classy: Yeah, Blagojevich. Ooh, that's a big case.

Tamara: See, I didn't look him up at all.

Classy: I just kind of went with the flow because I'm like, he knows. When he started naming the historical sites of the daily center, the Thompson, all these places, I was just like, he kept me sold. yeah, but, yeah, bogoyoviches. I'm have to look him up.

Tamara: He has written lots of books, but this is the first book that has gotten him noticed and by notoriety.

Tamara: Okay.

Tamara: Because this book, look closer, has over 35,000 reviews.

Classy: Wow.

Tamara: All his other ones, the highest rating count I see amongst all his other books is 2300.

Tamara: Wow.

Classy: And this book was 2022. Isn't that what you, listed in the stats?

Tamara: Yes.

Tamara: Right. Wow.

**So he published before this I think his last published book was 2013**

Tamara: So he published before this I think his last published book was 2013.

Classy: Really?

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: So he was doing them in one four, 5711 1213 nine. But all of those they did not get. The publisher did something different here. So I'm curious. So I'm going to look at his other stuff. Okay. He was on Putnam before for his last book, so he must have got a different publicist or something. Something was different with this or his.

Classy: Writing, know, because those are some nice gaps. and I know he like, when I looked on Libby because that's where I'd look for the book. At first I had to get it on audible because. Were you able to get it on everand?

Tamara: No, I think I ended up getting on audible.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: And it wasn't available in Libby except for the print copy. When I did a deep search, they were like, notify me if you want it.

Tamara: But I was just like, I got.

Classy: An audible by now. But, he did a lot of collabos with James Patterson. So,

Tamara: Wow.

Classy: 2022.

Tamara: That's awesome.

Tamara: Yeah. This is his best work probably, or his best work based on the amount of reviews.

Classy: Right?

Tamara: yeah.

Tamara: He might have some other good stuff in there, but to be honest, I'm kind of like at the point where I don't want to ruin a good thing.

Tamara: No.

Tamara: So I'm not going back.

Tamara: No.

Tamara: I might read his next new book.

Tamara: Onward. Right.

Tamara: But I'm not going to read his. We've already done that before and it failed. It failed the last time we did that.



Tamara: No. Onward.

Tamara: Onward and upward. Yes.

Classy: We're going to stick with where. Look, this is a good starting point.

Tamara: Yes.

Classy: And that's where we going to go.

Tamara: Yeah, he's on our radar now.

Tamara: Yeah, this was a good February started last year.

Tamara: Yeah, we're better this year, this February than last February.

Classy: I'm just going to say I was just happy.

Tamara: Let me say the narrators, will Damron, Hillary Huber, Elizabeth, I can't remember Garrett and then Steve west. I've listened to all of those narrators before.

Classy: Have you?

Tamara: And I interviewed Will Damron on shelf addiction years ago, and I know you.

Classy: Noticed at the end that they'd let us know who was who.

Tamara: Yes, that's what I noted. Penguin audio had the cast.

Tamara: I think we mentioned that, too, that.

Classy: They're good with that. Yeah, I think it was another book where. Yeah, I love that.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: You're going to make me go back and look at these narrators to see if I, listen to anything. Were any of them from our buddy reads or just books you've read.

**Steve west did the male voice in all of those books. They were all on point to me**

Tamara: So let me just do a quick look. Yes. So, Will Dameron. I actually. Oh, he did the bride, too.

Tamara: Oh.

Tamara: cool.

Classy: Looks like fantasy, right?

Tamara: Yeah. Beneath a scarlet sky. I listened to that back when I interviewed him.

Tamara: Okay.

Tamara: And that was, like, a big thing in 2017 that Mark Sullivan wrote, and that was actually historical, but, it was very good.

Tamara: Okay.

Tamara: Hillary Hoover. she's done Alona Andrews that I've read or listened to.

Classy: Yeah, I'm looking, too. I've listened to her through pretty things by.

Tamara: Mm

Classy: one of us is dead. Geneva Rose.

Tamara: Hm.

Classy: And. Come on, I thought I saw one more. She has a nice catalog.

Tamara: I think that might be the only.

Classy: Ones I've read with her. Who's the other person?

Tamara: Elizabeth Garrett.

Tamara: I don't think I've heard now. Okay, so, Steve west, if you did those fantasy books with us, like, year before last, we did an ember in the ashes.

Tamara: Oh, yeah.

Tamara: Do you remember trilogy? Steve west did the male voice in all of those books.

Tamara: Oh, Steve west.

Tamara: Yeah. So the sky beyond the. Know, those four. It was four books. reaper at the gates, that grouping of books, that's where I recognize his name. But Elizabeth Garrett, now that I'm looking.

Classy: I haven't heard her voice. When I look at her catalog, she seems to do romance or erotica.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: Now that I'm looking at her, I'm like, I don't think I've listened to Elizabeth Garrett.

Classy: Oh, is that Saba Tahir? Is that what you were saying with Steve west beyond the storm? I don't know if I said her name correctly, but, yeah. it looks like he does a lot of John, Mars books, too. I think someone recommended one of those books to us in the group. John Mars.

Tamara: Yeah. Okay.

Classy: But, yeah, I enjoyed. Now that we're talking about narration.

Tamara: They were all on point to me.

Tamara: Yeah, they were all good.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: And what's crazy is that the cadence.

Tamara: Of all of them, the speed of.

Tamara: All of them, was almost the same, because I was listening pretty fast. And you know how sometimes if one person reads faster than the other, it's like, whoa, it starts to sound funny.

Classy: It's wonky.

Tamara: Yeah. But it was smooth for all of them, so they were all kind of at the same speed. They're using a metrodome or something. They were all the same.

Classy: Yes, it was. The production was great.

Tamara: yeah. I enjoyed this. I really did.

**So, is there anything, like. I know we kind of did not explain the plot to you guys**

Tamara: So, is there anything, like. I know we kind of did not exactly explain the plot to you guys. We kind of jumped all over. We didn't really go step by step or anything. We kind of just went for the stuff we liked. So I think this conversation is probably best heard if you've listened to the book or read the book.

Classy: Yeah. Sorry, guys. I just got so excited that we got a good book.

Tamara: Sorry.

Classy: Yeah.

Tamara: So hopefully you were able to get something out of it. We were all over the place, but it's fine. It was fun. It was fun for us. Yeah, it was fun for us.

Tamara: Yeah, it really was.

**There are so many twists and turns in this book that I cannot explain**

Classy: It's a great cat and mouse and I mean, it's just so many twists.

Tamara: And turns in this book that I.

Classy: Don'T know if us explaining it will give it justice.

Tamara: it's kind of one of those.

Tamara: Stories where you really need to kind.

Classy: Of just delve into it.

Tamara: Because if we do, I mean, granted.

Classy: We do spoilers, but it's just so many twists and turns in this story.

Tamara: There was a lot we did not even talk about. So there's just so much m there because so many details. Like I was saying, there's a lot of detail into setting this whole thing up.

### **Simon does love Vicki, but Vicki is so damaged**

Tamara: And then at the end there. So I do want to talk about the end real fast. So Simon does love Vicki. He loves her a lot, but Vicki is so damaged. She, like, I could not be with anybody, but if I were to be with somebody, it would be him. But it's not going to be. I was wondering if he would act crazy or do something crazy at the end. And thankfully he didn't.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: Thankfully, because I'm like, well, I'm kind of happy with that ending.

Classy: Well, because he said that she saved him. That's something that I really remember throughout the story is he kind of mentioned how much she saved him. and

it seems like from a dark place, so it's like they will always have that love for each other.

Tamara: But not, together.

Tamara: But he saved her too. He basically forced her to go to rehab.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: So they were good for each other.

Tamara: But just in more of a friendly, but not,

Classy: What's the one word? Gosh, I had it on tip of my tongue. But yeah, they can be called on for anything. If he needs her, she will be there.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: And, vice versa.

Tamara: That's exactly what happened, honestly. So at the end, Vicki was talking about how she planned to kill Christian anyway. She's like, I'm going to kill his ass. I'm going to go to Chicago and kill him. But he was trying to talk her out of it. He wanted her to let it go. She wasn't going to. And then when Simon saw,

Tamara: What's her damn name again?

Classy: Lauren.



Tamara: Lauren. He calls her.

Tamara: He's like, dude, Vicki, I saw that go. We go work together in tandem.

Classy: Guess what? We're going to kill two birds with 1 st. Oh, yeah.

Tamara: And so that's how that came together. And they did a lot of work, like putting that whole plan together. They were even careful about her not being seen with him.

Tamara: There was so much thought.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: that makes me feel like David Ellis knows how to get away with murder. It, as the show said, get away with murder. Mr. Ellis.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: And that was that one chapter. I don't know which chapter it was. It was close to the end where he's talking about the case with cell phones and the history and the tracking. it kind of just culminated the whole story of. Because I think she mentioned, the detective mentioned. But does the killer know that you can track cell phone history this far back? And they were like, but does Simon know that?

Tamara: Simon know? Of course he does. This is what he talks about, the fourth amendment.

Classy: He does a damn lecture on it. Oh, my God.

Tamara: He writes a blog about it. He knows the ins and outs.

Classy: Yeah.

Tamara: He's like, yeah, I do. So what?

Tamara: So what?

Tamara: What you gotta do?

Classy: Prove it.

### **Only person I believe was of color was his colleague at the beginning**

Tamara: Now, if I had to critique one thing, I wish, and I mean, I don't remember getting a lot of description about Jane. I wish that he had some color in here.

Tamara: Yeah.

Tamara: Because I wasn't some black characters or asian characters or something. Something.

Classy: Only person I believe was of color was his colleague at the beginning. Is it, Abdul or somebody?

Tamara: I wish.

Classy: I just. Well, I couldn't have written his name.

Tamara: It must have been like a one liner, because I barely remember. He was the one telling him that he didn't wear suits and he looked young, so that was like, literally a couple of pages at the right.

Classy: And I'm not sure if he was of indian descent or african, because he described his hair as bristle, like a bristle brush. So I was like, don't count.

Tamara: That was in and out.

Classy: Yeah, but it was. That was the only person, of color, I believe, in the book. So I'm assuming. Well, it's not. I'm going to assume he was a minority if he had that kind of.

Tamara: He's a poc, at the very least, but that's not enough for me.

Classy: Yeah. Like you said, and Jean or Jane was very nondescript. None of the police officers, to be honest, no clue of their ethnicity at so.

Tamara: Yeah, I agree.

Classy: I had wrote that down too, that I wasn't sure that was the only character.

Tamara: Everybody else was white. Yeah.

Tamara: How they look, they have that. Typical as you would expect a good looking white person to be. Right.

Tamara: Yeah. With money.

Classy: Yoga, tennis, that neighborhood, all that.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: The poor neighborhood struggled. You want to talk about an eye roll?

Tamara: But you know what, looking from Mr. Ellis's information here, he's affluent himself. So he wrote what he knows.

Classy: Exactly. He did. He wrote what he knew. Stretch at all.

Tamara: Just the one plc that he knew in law school, he wrote.

Classy: And that's probably it. And that's that one black or, color friend that he had.

Tamara: You're right.

Tamara: Why am I, if I had to nitpick, that's something that was missing.

Tamara: Yeah.

Classy: And the jogging through the struggle neighborhood. I love jogging through here

because these people, they fight for what they want, their struggle. I'm m just like, if you don't get your ass, the police would be like, what are you doing here? And I would be too.

Tamara: Get out of here. Back to the country club. Get out.

Tamara: You didn't get robbed.

Classy: Nobody stuck your ass up. Talking about some you love jogging through. Get your ass out this damn neighborhood. If that was one little click mark.

Tamara: Thank God it was brief.

Tamara: And the Obama mass don't count either.

Tamara: Shit.

Classy: So that's three little marks. No poc Obama. And you jog it through the damn struggle hood.

Tamara: Yeah. So that's the thing though. No book is really perfect.

Classy: No.

Tamara: And he wrote what he knew.

Tamara: Yeah. And I give him credit for that, obviously. He knows the law very well. And

again, I do believe that he could get away with murder. I'm just saying. Yeah, I too, don't come for me.

Classy: I think you're right.

Tamara: I got some vicky in me. That's all I'm going to say.

Tamara: Don't come.

Classy: I felt the same way, that he could get away with murder and.

Tamara: Yeah, what did you say?

Classy: Like, life is stranger than fiction. But I mean, if he's a lawyer and seen enough cases. And I loved how to get away with murder.

Tamara: Me too. That was one of my favorite.

Classy: This was, this was a good story and I enjoyed it, like I said, except for those three little issues. David Ellis, if you have something coming out in the future, you will be on my list to read.

Tamara: Yeah.

**David Ellis: The pacing did get a little slow, but it was worth it**

Okay.

Tamara: So last thing. Let's rate it. Let's rate the book.

Classy: Let you go first.

Tamara: You go first.

Tamara: Okay. I would rate. Look closer. A solid four out of five. I really liked it. Okay. So it was a bang on entry, and then it was kind of medium paced. Medium to slow paced until we got to a turning point, and then things got really interesting. And again, you've heard the couple of issues I had. So four is really good rating from me. I definitely recommend it. And I think this would be a good book club book, too, for other book clubs as well. Lots to talk about. What about you? Classy.

Classy: Yeah, man, it was getting to be a five. But like you were saying, there were.

Tamara: Just the pacing because this is like.

Classy: What 400 was, this 400 something pages an hour damn book?

Tamara: yeah, but it was worth it.

Classy: The pacing did get a little slow.

Tamara: but you got to hang in there.

Classy: And there are a few plot holes. Not potholes, plot holes. and those other issues, that we discussed.

Tamara: But a solid four. thoroughly enjoyed the ride.

Classy: Banging entry or best. Can I just digress just a little? And you and I, we went to thriller fest last year, and after sitting through some of those sessions, at first it was just like, these are just for writers, blah, blah, blah. But a lot of that that we went through, I'm beginning to see when I read, like, that first sentence, I think we went to, one of the workshop was like, that first sentence or that first chapter or whatever, and how important it is. And I know some people were just.

Tamara: Like, but this one is a prime.

Classy: Example of that first sentence or that first chapter or those first paragraphs. The way he starts this book just draws you in. Granted, it does get slow, but that's.

Tamara: The point of having a really strong entry. If it's strong enough, people will wait. They will know. They'll be like, oh, my God. So I have to find out what happened. And they will wade through the other parts to get back to the juicy part.

Classy: Yeah, it was like a series. It wasn't just a quick two hour movie. This was maybe a two three. I'll say a two three episode.

Tamara: A bit of miniseries.

Tamara: Yeah.



Classy: but that's what I was thinking about when we went there to some of these different workshops and just listening to, the structure of writing a book and how these authors, their craft, and you really do begin to enjoy true craftsmanship.

Tamara: And he did that.

Classy: but, yeah, a solid four. Great narration, great production.

Tamara: It was a good book. Highly recommend it.

Classy: Like you said, this is a great book club book. There are so many things that we didn't even delve into. M I can't wait to talk about.

Tamara: This with the shelf addiction book club.

Classy: Yeah, I can't either.

Tamara: I know our crew will have things to say.

Classy: They're going to dissect this.

Tamara: Yes, piece by piece.

Classy: So, yeah, I'm ready for our book club meeting for this one, but yes, solid four. I was almost at a five, and then it's just like. But I'm happy that we started off.

Tamara: You know me. I can't just let everything be roses and candy.

Classy: No. Yeah, the more I sat on it, too, it was just like, there's a few little things, but to start off.

Tamara: With a four, that's really good. Yeah.

Tamara: I'll be back for your next one.

Classy: We need our curve to keep going up.

Tamara: Yeah. Okay. We challenge you, David Ellis. Make your next book a five for us. You can do it.

**We believe if you get a four, we're good. But we want a five. I'm itching for the five**

Classy: Yes. We believe if you get a four, we're good.

Tamara: We're good.

Classy: But we want a five.

Tamara: Yeah, we do want a five. I'm m itching for the five. I still haven't hit one this year yet.

Classy: No, neither a historical one, but yeah, but my m mystery thriller suspense.

Tamara: No m. Okay, I think we'll end things there, you guys. If you want to hear the rest of our conversation today, then you'll need to subscribe on Patreon or on speaker and check out the after show. We'll talk to you guys next time. Take care of yourselves. Bye, guys.

Tamara: Bye.

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