

19 MINUTES

STUDENT PRODUCTIONS

Timeline: Houghton family

- Lewis Houghton (economic professor at college) and Lacy Houghton (midwife) got two sons. Peter who is born in 1990 and his older brother Joey.
- On the first day of Kindergarten, Peter (5 years old) got on the school bus. He had a Superman lunch box with him. A boy began to tease him and threw his precious lunchbox out of the bus. It was the first day Peter got bullied.
- Still in Kindergarten, Peter got glasses and was very lucky that he can finally see. Unfortunately, his classmates teased him again and called him “Four-eyes” or “blind as a bat” p.77
- The only person who liked Peter was Josie. They were best friends already before Kindergarten and they used to play together. Josie was always the one defending and helping his friend. She once stroke Drew because he punched Peter, who is not able to defend himself. He is too “sensitive” and weak. “Some kids are simply magnets for teasing” (p.72)
- His mother Lacy spoke with Peter’s teacher who recommended her to learn Peter sticking up for himself. p.73 Lacy is a very caring mother, she loves children and really likes her job as a midwife.
- Peter was very sad about the fact that nobody liked him and he felt alone: “I want people to like me. (...) People who aren’t you” p.74 (Peter says this to Josie).
- Peter and Josie used to play a couple and they do if they were married p.78 (maybe Peter already evolved feelings for Josie. It’s too early to claim that he’s in love with her but he definitely likes Josie very much)
- Nearly every school day, Peter’s schoolmates are throwing out his lunch box but Peter didn’t manage to defend himself. (p.79)
- One day, Peter showed Josie Lewis’ gun. Peter knew where the safe is and he saw where Lewis had hidden the key. Alex (Josie’s mother) noticed this and was very furious so that she prohibited Josie to play with Peter ever again.
- Lacy and Alex used to be very good friends until the incident with the gun. Lacy meet Alex in the hospital when she was pregnant with Josie. First Alex didn’t want to keep the child, but Lacy could change her mind. So Lacy helped her to get through the pregnancy and they both became close friends.
- Lacy wanted to be a good mother and tried to make Peter understand that you have to learn how to respect guns. Lewis showed Peter how to charge a gun and how to use it. Peter himself didn’t like hunting but he wanted to make his father proud of him and he liked the feeling of “leaving Joey at home”. He wondered “how it would feel to be doing something with his father that was just *theirs*” (p.88) He wanted that Lewis payed also attention to him and not only Joey.
- Lewis tried to find a formula for happiness (p.128)
- When Peter was 11, he and Josie still hung out together but they never saw each other outside of school (p.139)
- Lacy forced Peter to play soccer. There, Drew still bullied Peter. When he and the other players got under the shower, Peter looked by accident at Drew’s penis (Peter had no glasses on and couldn’t really see anything) Drew made fun of him and captioned him as gay. (p.148)
- At soccer, Peter met his first male friend Derek whose mother also forced him to play there. (p.153) They used to create video games together. Peter’s favorite game was “Hide and Shriek” where he imitated the school shooting
- When Peter was 15, his dog Dozer had to be put down (einschläfern) because his kidneys (Nieren) had shut down. Peter got Dover when he was 3. This loss was very emotional for the family especially for Peter.
- Peter and Josie stopped hanging out with each other (p.160). Josie decided to be with the popular students like Courtney. She dressed differently and Peter didn’t recognize her first when they worked together at a copy shop named “QuickCopy” (p.202)

- Peter helped Josie to find her father. He hacked into the human resources files to find out his address. (p.206)
- Peter put some chemicals in a Dumpster of the copy shop and lights it up. Fire and an explosion started but he didn't move. Josie had to save Peter. He knew that she would save him and "that's why (he) did it". Josie decided to explain this to their boss Mr Cargrew, who immediately fired Peter. (p.216)
- Peter entered a homo bar, he wanted to make sure that he is(n't) gay. A man named Kurt, wanted to play pool. The winner has to take the other one home. (p.233) Peter didn't want to but Kurt didn't let him go. Peter's teacher Mr. McCabe saved Peter and drove him home.
- Peter started working in a library. When he was taking the lift to move a projector to another room, he got stuck in it. Coincidentally, Josie also took this lift and they got stuck in there together. They began to play "truth or dare" to pass the time. Josie told Peter that she doesn't hate him, but she has to act like she would. When Josie asked Peter if he ever was in love, he immediately thought of Josie. Finally, they kissed. (p.239)
- As they got out of the lift, Peter walked home and saw that his mother and his father were crying. He thought it would be the best day of his life because he recognized that his parents were worried about his absence. But in fact, they cried because his brother Joey died.
- Joey died of a car accident by a drunk driver.
- After Joey's death, Lacy found heroine in his room, but she never told anyone about it.
- Peter and Joey didn't get along very well. Joey used to tease his brother (he told people that Peter was adopted and that his real mother would be a "crack whore"). Lacy and Lewis didn't notice this. Joey was always better than Peter (ex: soccer, better grades in school). Peter got compared to his brother and especially Lewis was the one who preferred Joey (he never said it like that). Peter admitted that when Joey died, he was glad about his death. (p.186)
- Peter asked his mother to help him with a girl. Lacy advised him to tell her how he feels. That's why Peter wrote a love email to Josie. Unfortunately, Courtney read it first and published it to the whole school before Josie recognized it.
- The day after, in the cafeteria, Matt pulled of Peter's pants and his boxer shorts in front of a lot of student. Everyone starred at his "tiny penis".
- Peter didn't dare to use an urinal in school because he was afraid of the comments about his penis (p.199)
- Peter stole a gun from a neighbor called Mr. Weatherhall
- Peter planned his school shooting. On a photo, he circled Josie's head and wrote "let live"
- On March 6, 2007 (Peter = 17), he did the school shooting at Sterling High. He exploded first a bomb in his car. Afterwards, he rushed into the school. The screens of the computers said "ready or not, here I come". He killed some people in the cafeteria. After that, he ate some cornflakes. Then, he killed another few students and one teacher. Altogether, 10 victims got killed.
- Peter was delivered to jail by Patrick Ducharme. He asked him a few question. Afterwards, Peter's defense attorney Jordan McAfee visited him few times to prepare him for the trial.
- In jail, Peter started to tease a boy. He took of his glasses and stomped on them (p.301) Peter pretended it would be his birthday and he wanted to be alone. Peter admitted that he even didn't like himself and that he thought of ending his life.
- Lacy feels responsible for Peter's actions. She says sorry about thousand things that have happened years ago and makes herself crazy. (p.256+286) She struggled a lot to be seen in public as the mother of a murderer and often blames herself that she hasn't noticed Peter's suffering and anticipated Peter's outbreak.
- Lewis didn't visit his son. He wished that Peter had died instead of Joey and he thought of how Peter "deserved to die". (p.286)
- Peter got defendant for the rest of his life
- He kills himself in jail with a sock

Timeline of the Cormier's

Alex Cormier

1. Her mother died when she was 5
2. Her father was also a superior court judge and worried more about his job than about her → he always wanted a boy and Alex can never be good enough for him
3. She had an affair with her teacher Logan Rourke and gets pregnant → he leaves her → Alex never talks about him → wants to protect Josie
4. Wants to abort because she doesn't feel ready to raise a child alone
5. Meets Lacy who supports her and becomes her best friend → Lacy persuades Alex to keep her child
6. After Peter showed Josie his father's rifles, Alex does her best to keep her daughter away from him → relationship of Lacy and Alex is broken
7. She manages to balance "motherhood" and career → she is promoted from a simple lawyer to a superior court judge → highly respected
8. As she had never a parent role-model, the mother-daughter relationship between her and Josie is not that good
9. The case of the shooting is assigned to Alex → complicates her relationship to Josie even more → decides to decline the case as she is struggling to stay neutral because of Josie → fear of a bad image and she wants to be there for Josie
10. Alex falls in love with Patrick → a year after the shooting, they marry and expect a child → second chance

Josie Cormier

1. She was unexpected → doesn't know her father → only his name
2. Josie and Peter are best friends since they are babies (Lacy and Alex are best friends)
3. She has a strong character → always protects Peter who gets bullied
4. Their relation slowly comes to an end → Alex doesn't want them to meet anymore → at the beginning they still see each other secretly but as teenagers Josie breaks the contact with him
5. When they were in high school she meets Matt and becomes a part of the popular students → her "friends" bully Peter and she feels sorry for him but she can't help Peter because she wants to stay popular
6. Matt asks her out and she starts a relationship with him
7. Josie forces herself to be like the others → unhappy and afraid to do something wrong → starves herself to stay skinny → wants to be part of the "cool kids"
8. Her "friend" Courtney transmits a lovemail that Peter sent Josie to the whole school without the knowing of her → she felt betrayed and felt sorry for Peter
9. Josie has the feeling that, to her mother, the job is more important than herself → she can't talk to Alex about her problems
10. She does some researches to find her father → goes to his house to speak to him → he doesn't want to have anything to do with her and bribes her to stay quiet → he has a wife and children
11. Josie is desperate → agrees to have sex with Matt → gets pregnant because Matt didn't want to use a condom → physically abused in some way → tries abortion with natural medication → works
12. She wants to kill herself with an overdose of (sleeping?) pills → the pressure on her was too big (mother and high school)
13. Josie shot Matt at the end of the shooting → hated him in some way and felt relieved → Peter stood up for her and told no one what really happened
14. During the investigations, she pretends that she can't remember anything from the shooting → doesn't want to stand in court
15. At the end she confesses what she did and has to face a 5 year sentence

Patrick Ducharme

Detective on the Sterling Police Force and Alex's love interest. He's the head detective on the Sterling High case. At the end of the book, he and Alex are romantically involved and expecting their first child.

Like Alex and Josie, Patrick is also under pressure to exceed expectations and fulfill high standards. He does the same exact thing as Josie when he studies himself in the mirror after taking a shower. This may be the author's way of symbolizing and illustrating how vulnerable the characters are when they are alone and assessing themselves.

Like Alex, he is swamped with work and has an endless to do list. Although he loves his job as a detective, he frequently has self-doubt that he is not doing enough to live up to his potential. "He did not remember the proven successes—only the potential failures...He was a detective, but he didn't detect anything. It fell into his lap, already broken, every time (Picoult 12)." Patrick reveals that he too is dissatisfied with his life and actions. He does enjoy the benefits of providing comfort to the victim by doing his job. Patrick strives to do everything in his power, but in his current position, he can only do so much and this is not completely fulfilling him.

Patrick relies on his morals when he disregards commands and goes directly into the chaotic school to provide assistance. He disregards his training in order to achieve his sole purpose of stopping the shooter. Patrick is very strong-minded and makes a bold move to further make his own decisions when he carries Josie out of the school. He appears to be very heroic and blames himself for things he cannot control. This quality is good because he is striving for excellence, yet he invokes a lot of pressure when dealing with crimes that cannot possibly be prevented.

Chapter 1: Patrick is the sole detective on the Sterling police department; he has solved every single case he has investigated. His toenails are painted pink by his goddaughter. He is the first policeman at the Sterling High School after the school shooting. Patrick finds Peter in the locker room with a gun and arrests him, finds the dead body of Matt and rescues Josie.

Chapter 3: Patrick tries to stay composed as he directs the medics, EMTs, and policemen on what to do concerning the shooting. Patrick interrogates Peter Houghton. He doesn't get any answers from Peter with his questions, but as Patrick leaves he hears Peter whisper, "They started it," (55). Patrick goes back to the crime scene, where he finds out that one of the victims, Matt Royston, is the only victim shot twice, and that Peter Houghton had the makings of a pipe bomb in his car. The chapter ends with Patrick visiting the hospital to see the girl he saved, Josie, and finds out that Alex (the judge) is her mother.

Chapter 5: Patrick visits the testing labs and is processing the massive amount of evidence. There were four guns, two shotguns that weren't used, and two pistols (one of them was only shot once, the other one was used for the rest of the shootings), Peter's fingerprints are clear on gun A, which was used for most of the shooting. Gun B appears to have been shot once and then jammed before it could be fired again. The bullet cannot be found at the crime scene. A partial print on gun B is

inconclusive. He also finds a Sterling Middle School yearbook with multiple faces circled in black marker. Only one face is crossed out with the words, "Let live," underneath it-Josie Cormier. Patrick goes to the Cormiers' house to interrogate Josie about how she knew Peter. She responds that Peter stood out in school that Matt and other people bullied him, and that she and him weren't friends. Patrick watches a video of what Peter did in the cafeteria during the shooting: blinding shooting into the cafeteria, walking past dead bodies, taking the time to eat a bowl of cereal, and then standing back up to walk out of the cafeteria and going on to shooting more people. Patrick also finds out that during the shooting, Peter hacked into the school program and had every computer say, "Ready or not, here I come," on the screen. Jordan spends more time with Peter, learning that Peter feels no remorse for what he has done and considers himself the victim.

Chapter 7: Patrick finds a homosexual connection. It is discovered that one of the girls killed was the head of the school's gay group and the teacher shot was gay. Patrick plays a video game that Peter designed. "Hide and Shriek" is a violent game where you earn points by shooting the jocks and popular kids at a school. The school in the game is set up just like Sterling High's floor plan.

Chapter 9: Patrick discovers that Peter was not gay. Patrick and Alex start a friendship. They kiss. Patrick and Alex get closer through the case. Derek, Peter's friend, tells the detectives that Josie and Peter used to be best friends. Patrick and Alex happen to see each other at a Chinese restaurant and get closer. Alex decides, with Patrick's help, to withdraw herself from being the judge of the case. Alex and Patrick become romantically involved as well.

Chapter 11: Patrick and Alex begin a relationship – Josie seems okay with it. Patrick was sent by Josie's mother to watch her, and he consoles her and tells her that she isn't alone because she has her mom with her.

Chapter 13: Patrick worries about Alex while on the stand.

Chapter 15: Patrick has found the bullet lodged in the tree outside the locker room window – ricocheted from where Josie was standing.

Chapter 16: Sometime after the trial, Alex and Patrick are together and expecting their first child. On the anniversary of the shooting, they walk through the halls of the new Sterling High, a school with better security and memorials for the dead or injured students.

Daily Life

Patrick Ducharme was a police officer for the town of Sterling. Patrick lived alone in his empty apartment and had no family and no significant other. Patrick did a lot for his town and got very involved in his work. Every day seemed to be the same thing over and over. Bringing in lab results, reviewing robberies, and other normal police duty things. At the end of his shift he would go home watch some tv and then do the same thing the next day. After getting to know the Judge (Alex Cromier) better they began to connect with each other and were what they were both looking for. They then begin spending time together and get into a relationship. Later on in their lives when everything in their town goes back to normal they carry on in their lives and Alex becomes pregnant with Patrick's kid and they begin a family.

Conflicts

Patrick faces conflicts not only with his Job as a police officer but also as boyfriend to Alex and taking the role of a step dad to Josie. When Patrick began talking to Alex he had to know what he was getting himself into. He was going to have to take care of a woman playing the role of a single mom and try to help both of them through their emotional roller coaster of what happened. Patrick took care of not only Alex but also her daughter Josie when he needed to step up to the plate. He helped Josie come to terms with herself she needed to decide what to tell the court about what really happened the day of the shooting. Also over time he helped Alex recover and move on with her life with a real sense of a home and family.

Quotes

"If Patrick didn't get involved, if he didn't give a hundred percent, then that victim was going to be a victim forever-which was why, since Patrick had joined the Sterling police, he managed to solve every single case. (pg 12)" Patrick is a really nice man just trying to do what he can to help others even if he isn't happy himself. His job is to help others and that is what he does best. Patrick knew that it was hard to be a victim and he didn't want anyone to deal with that feeling so he took his work very seriously to help anyone he could.

"Everyone thinks you make mistakes while you're young, but I don't think you make any fewer when you grow up. (pg 423)" Patrick was a wise helpful man and did his job well. He knew many things and this was one of them. People always say you make mistakes when you're young so you know what you're doing when you are older but he thinks when you're older you make just as many mistakes trying to figure things out.

"This school wasn't a safety zone, nothing was, no matter what you'd been told. (pg 144) Patrick explains that when you go to school you think its a safe place. Kids all around you learning and teachers giving lectures. You would never guess that something so tragic could happen at a place you were 5 days a week for 8 hours a day. When people think of a school they think of a safe place and Officers on duty protecting them there if anything were to happen. After the accident, no one thought of the school as a safe place to go.

Jordan McAfee:

- he had been an attorney for nearly 20 years
- moved to Sterling after Selena, his wife, got pregnant
- he accepts to take the case defending Peter
- the whole town seemed to gang up on Jordan 'How can you live with yourself?'
- talks to Peter and asks him why did he do it
- he thought of the Battered Woman Syndrome defence for Peter's case
- he decides to call Josie to testify in the hopes of saving the case
- Battered Woman Syndrome : medical issue that was triggered from abuse by a wife's husband. It caused the woman to act crazy and even kill their husband because they were bullied. Jordan took notes from Dr. King Wah's presentation as he realized how similar it was to Peter's situation.
- he visits with Selena Derek, Peter's only friend and understood how mean kids really were to Peter. Jordan feels guilty, so he informs Josie she will not be called on to defend
- he begins his defence by informing the judge and jury about the endless bullying Peter endured. He continues his speech by calling Dr. King Wah, a psychiatrist, who explains that Peter was suffering from an illness called post-traumatic stress disorder
- Jordan questions Drew, and Mr. Spears (gym teacher)

Mother-daughter relationship

- Alex's father always wanted a boy, so he gave her a male name
- Alex's mother died when she was 5 because of breast cancer, and she was raised by her father, who wasn't affectionate → she used academics to get his attention
- First, Alex wanted to have an abortion
- The moment when Lacy gave Peter to Alex to hold him in her arms, Alex decided to keep her baby

The relationship before the shooting:

- Alex is a loving but distant parent who prioritizes her job above her daughter
- Like her father, Alex is more at home in a courtroom than in her own home with her child
- Josie is never really able to connect with her mother
- She feels pressured by Alex to be perfect in every area of her life
- Alex seems like she doesn't understand anything about Josie's life
→ No communication, no honesty
- However, Alex tries to be a good mother
- Difficult situation because she's a single mother

The relationship after the shooting:

- Alex's relationship with Josie is fraught with tension
- Alex tries to show Josie that she is more important than her job, but their relationship doesn't begin to improve until Alex removes herself from the case
- The two spend time talking and cooking together
- Alex continues to show her support for Josie after her confession
- Alex did a lot to help Peter in his situation when he stood trial

Father-son relationship

The relationship before the shooting:

- Lewis is not as close to Peter as Lacy
- He prefers Joey, Peter's dead brother, over Peter
- He tried to introduce Peter to hunting but he never liked the sport
→ disappointed Lewis
- Lacy and Lewis don't monitor Peter's computer use and miss several clues that he might be planning something violent

The relationship after the shooting:

- Peter took the gun of his father to "run amok"
- First, Lewis never visited his son in jail, instead he went to the grave of the victims of the shooting → shows that he blames himself for his son's actions and questions which of his parenting decisions caused Peter to lash out so violently
- Later on, Lewis visits Peter in jail and apologize to him

Teenage culture on campus – hopes & fears

➤ Hopes:

- get into a popular group
- fit in
- have a good time, learning/preparing adult life/ further studies
- finding new and valuable friends
- p.205 : Peter hopes that deep inside Josie remembered what it felt like to hang out with him and that she still wanted it (“Maybe it was just because she had forgotten that she liked hanging out with Peter”)

➤ Fears:

- Not being accepted
- having no friends
- having issues with late puberty - not looking /good enough/like you’re “supposed” to
- p.210 : High school is a “fishbowl where anything you said and did was being watched by everyone else” → you have to be careful about what you do or say, otherwise people will immediately judge you and might pick on you/ start bullying/ etc → Josie “can’t” talk to/ hang out with Peter in school, because he isn’t part of the cool/popular kids (also on p.160 → hanging out with Peter would risk Josie’s spot with the popular kids --- atmosphere is created, that pushes people to do things they normally wouldn’t, drags you in a corner)
- p.205 : “if you take one wrong step, you’re going to fall” → this is what It feels like to Josie to be at the top, you must always be afraid to do something wrong, your spot is never secure → p.160: “you’re such a fake with them” “I’m just not the way I am with you” ... “There’s different kinds of real” → **you have to change yourself in order to fit in**
- **all about reputation, image** p.199 toilet-wall-writing (you are able to know embarrassing/privat things about someone you don’t even know)

p.195-230 (chapter “One Year Before”) p.210,218,205,220-230, p.160

American high school culture

- Sport culture: cheerleaders & football players rule on the campus ground
- Teachers aren’t motivating their students either → p. 210: lines 1-3
- Different categories of popularity → p.210 Peter did a pie chart about popularity representing the different groups in his class: the popular ones, the geeks, the normal ones, the outcasts and the ones who can fit into more than one category (Josie)
- You have to fight for your spot in the popular group and to keep it → p.218: Matt beats up Peter to show his dominance/power

Bullying/ School violence

- It is known that bullying causes many problems for the victim but also for the bully himself. Starting with the problems of the victim, as also seen in the book with Peter, he might be psychologically distracted for the rest of his life. Victims of bullying might suffer from the abuse because they are ashamed, it's not sure that change will happen if they tell others. It's also the case with Peter who has to cope with different situations where he thinks about telling his secrets to another person. (p. 85-92 Twelve years before // p.493 // 350 // 171 // One year before // Email incident Josie and best friend ,p.405).
- A good example for bullying in the book is the email scene between Josie and her best friend where Peter was also involved. Courtney sees the email from Peter and realizes it is a love message. She doesn't know that Josie and Peter get on well with each other. She sends it to everybody so that the whole school sees that Peter texted her and she has to react and humiliate Peter in front of the others just to keep her social status. (Matt and his gang don't accept Peter and Josie wants to be part of the gang).
- Matt calls him 'Homo', 'Fag' and beats him up which leads Peter to question his sexual orientation. He's humiliated in front of the school, which is one of the worst forms of bullying, when you're exposed alone in front of a group of people in school for example. Then, Matt also pulls down Peter's pants, which is also a big public humiliation where Peter feels destroyed inside. There's also a scene in the book where Drew teases him.
- Peter's also bullied by the kids who crash his lunchbox which shows that don't even young children respect him.
- After he got his new glasses, he feels even more excluded from his classmates, it's right to say that they're a 'mark of distinction'. These are many examples for Peter's bullying at school.
- The school system at Peter's school also gives us some information about his relations to other teachers, when a teacher says for example 'I'm showing Peter how to stand for himself' while he doesn't punish the other students who bully him, even not teachers who should be a reference for young students respect him the way he really is. Usually kids who are bullied search help from teachers, this is proved but in Peter's case this isn't a possibility which must be very depressing for him.
- Then, even in his family, there are huge differences for his father between Peter and his brother. He likes his brother more and this gives the final kick to Peter who doesn't find a way to escape this torture neither in his friends, nor while talking to his teachers, but when even his own family doesn't accept and respect him, this must be the worst form of humiliation. While they're playing soccer with each other, the father always prefers Joey, his brother by telling that he's smarter and more responsible, to give a concrete example from the book.

Abortion in America

- America's abortion rate has steadily declined since the 1980's
- Abortion patients are disproportionately young, nonwhite and poor
- A first-trimester abortion costs about 500\$. Most women pay that out-of-pocket.
- Abortion clinics are closing and the number of providers is rapidly declining
- Roe v. Wade guarantees a legal right to abortion
- But States still have legal authorities to restrict abortion access
- States passed 231 abortion restrictions between 2011 and 2014
- Abortion restrictions appear to lead to fewer abortions, though the evidence is mixed
- Obamacare doesn't fund abortions
- Americans views on abortion aren't so black and white
- The pro-life movement is the movement to block women's access to legal abortion and to recriminalize the procedure.
- Alex plans to abort her baby because the father wants nothing to do with the child
- Although Alex is ultimately unwilling to choose abortion.
- Lacy motivates Alex to get the child.
- Lacy meets Lewis at a proabortion rally.
- When Josie suspects she is pregnant, she researches different abortifacients online, but miscarries before using any of them.

Teens/Sex/Homosexuality

-Matt & Josie are an example from the book where two teens are having a relationship, which consists mostly in having sex with each other or using the other one for his own benefit

-Matt controls the relationship and Josie's pressures herself to have sex with him to stay with him because she wants to stay with the cool people so to not get excluded she does everything to stay where she is however unpleasant that might be

-Having sex with Josie is more like passion for Matt then doing it because he loves her

-Matt is disappointed in Josie when she decided to not accept having sex without protection because it reminds her of the discussion with her mother when she had her first period at thirteen, that getting pregnant is „Fifty-fifty“. So she knows what might happen but in the end she still lets it happen because he is pressuring her and a little time later she finds herself being pregnant

-Matt didn't care much about it, because he was too focused on his hockey career and had no time to care about something like a child. In fact he didn't show any attention to Josie or her child which led to an abortion. As a consequence you should think that they learned from it but Matt still doesn't care and continues his sexual desire if she likes it or not

-Sex is not only a desire for Matt but for Josie too, she likes having sex with him even if after the first time she was unsure about it. What is more there are many opportunities for her to stop him or deny him the sex but she didn't do it, what shows a little self-interest in the after all

-Of course Josie wants to stay in a relationship with Matt because of her social status and that is the reason she keeps having sex with him and why she is insecure. The fact that sex is often related to pressure and insecurity for many teenagers is shown in the book by this "couple". And in the end Josie shoots Matt what shows how she really feels about him and all the anger she built in the time they were together

-Another important theme in this books is homosexuality and its' influence on teenagers and how they feel about it. In the novel you can see that the word "homo" for example is used by the sports team to bully Peter. As a conclusion you notice that being homosexual brings huge problems for a teenager.

-In that age kids often don't realize that being homosexual isn't really something bad or something you should bully others with. The fact that they bully someone who is gay puts great pressure on that person and he might feel very uncomfortable and vulnerable to it. As a consequence they are hiding it and hope no one finds out. They get scared and feel unwell being in school because they know that the others will bully them.

Morality of High School Shootings

Who is to blame?

The very beginning of the dilemma is that Peter gets bullied, and that since his whole school career. Bit by bit, this has a negative effect on his self-confidence and makes him feel apart. He can't belong to the "cool kids", because apparently, he is too different. Even his family doesn't support him, his brother had always been the better son.

The only person that wants to be part of his life, is Josie. However, she's is ashamed to be a friend of him when other people are around, because she also wants to be part of the "cooler kids". Her social status is more important to her than a real friend- or relationship with Peter.

The bullying that Peter was suffering under throughout his whole life has a big consequence, when suddenly, enough was enough. After being the victim all the time, he took action and shot ten students. Of course, this act can not be justified, but Peter definitely had his motives which animated him to do it. If you observe the entire situation, every person that bullied him, is carrying a part of the fault.

The items that had been found in Peter's bedroom show, that he was quite often in contact with different types of violent media. On one side, he played video games that include violence and read violent books. He also listened to music from the band called 'Death Wish' that wrote the song 'Judgment Day'. This song has lyrics like "gonna blow them all away", which in Peter's case could be referred to his classmates. On the other side, and that is probably the biggest difference to other students that have done a school shooting, he also developed his own video game, called 'Revenge of the Nerds', in which he could kill his classmates that bullied him. Compared to statistics, different to the idea that is often spread in the media, only 15% of school shooters are actually playing violent video games, but more than a third are creating their own "content" by writing poems, essays or stories. In our case, Peter is creating his own video game about his plans. Another item that had been found in his bedroom was a DVD of 'Bowling for Columbine', a documentary which shows the primary causes for the Columbine High School massacre in 1999.

Another hit for Peter was the E-Mail that he sent to Josie to admit his love to her. Josie's friend, Courtney, saw it when Josie let her alone in her bedroom and sent it forward "to the whole wide world". This in addition to his failed relationship with Josie stroke him further down, like 98% of school shooters that have trouble with significant losses or failures in relationships or in their family.

Even though Peter was in jail and should have been condemned to the death penalty, he could escape it, because he was suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder, according to the doctor. He wasn't completely aware of what he was doing, at least for a part of his act. He didn't plan to kill Matt and Courtney, he wasn't acting with premeditation and deliberation, he had been provoked.

To conclude, we can say that Peter obviously has the biggest fault on that act, because he executed it, but a various accumulation of situations and compartments of other people made him stand apart and so depressed, that he decided to take action and revenge. The correctness of that is to doubt, but we can't be sure of the control that he had on himself at that time.

How does the media react to school shootings?

School shooting in the USA is nearly nothing special anymore nowadays. The first school shooting goes back to the 18th century in Greencastle, Pennsylvania. Owning a gun as an American citizen is not unnatural in these days, even bullets are purchaseable at the barber. Nearly every child grows up with a gun, so it's very easy for them to get access to one in order to do a school shooting. The media informs people about the shootings, but how does the media handle this subject?

The media banalizes school shootings. It has become something normal and the media also transmits it like that to the people. It is irresponsible because school shooting is a very delicate subject. The media should talk about this subject in a way that people are getting really worried about it and not in a way that people see school shootings as a normal thing. Many teenagers that do these shootings do it because they see a chance to get in the focus of many people. Media talks about it as something normal and the teenagers get their attention in that way that they possibly didn't get before.

Although many terrorist groups, such as ISIS, use these kind of shootings to achieve their goals, school shootings do not get classified as terrorist acts. Media does not refer school shootings to terrorist acts although both of them have the same goal: defending themselves and to terrorize other people. School shooting in the USA is something trivial but a shooting from Muslims is always seen as a terrorist act.

The media shifts the attention to the minor problems instead of going to the root of the shootings. If guns wouldn't be legal in the USA, it would be much more difficult for teenagers to get access to a gun in order to do a school shooting. The media often refers school shooting to mental problems of the ones who did it or family problems but never accuses the real troublemaker: the government. If they legalized guns in the households or introduced a firearms license, the problem of school shootings would downgrade a lot. People would draw their attention to that kind of problem and realize who the real troublemaker is because the media informs them about it.

There is also a positive side if the media tells a lot about school shootings. They get many people to think about it and to react in a good and efficient way. They alert the people about the importance of school shootings and how important it is to do something about it. The media has a very large reach so they can tell many people about the problem.

In conclusion, the media mainly reacts wrong to this kind of information, but it also has some positive effects. Even though a lot of people can get the information through the media, they often get told about the wrong problems of school shootings and not the main root of it, the lax gun laws. If they slightly change their attitude and their reasoning, the school shooting problem can be solved to a minimum.