

Midnighters #3: Blue Noon Study Guide

Midnighters #3: Blue Noon by Scott Westerfeld

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Plot Summary

Midnighters 3: Blue Noon is the third book in the Midnighters series. It is preceded by *The Secret Hour* and *Touching Darkness*. The series was completed in 2007. The books are designed for teenagers, grades 6 and up. The series follows the science fiction lives of five teens as they battle a secret world of dark creatures.

Scott Westerfeld, the author, has filled Bixby, Oklahoma with five very believable and relatable, distinct main characters. To match, he's given readers a dark, intense story that moves and jumps at a fast pace. The plot is enthralling and the sinister plots keep the story enjoyable in a dark way.

A midnighter is a person born within seconds of midnight. These individuals are able to live within the blue time, an extra hour that occurs at midnight while the rest of the world is frozen. It is first implied that the blue time only occurs in Bixby, Oklahoma because of its map position but as the series unfolds, the blue time spreads to many surrounding areas. As well as the ability to be awake during the blue time, each midnighter has extra abilities such as acrobatics, mind reading, and carrying flame during the blue time. In addition to these abilities, the midnighters are sensitive to bright light. The book explains many of the characters as being "Goth" in dark clothing and wearing shaded glasses, even while inside buildings.

The current generation of midnighters is considered orphaned. There used to be a larger group of them who were destroyed several decades ago by the Grayfoots. Rex has the ability to read about this history in the lore, a book of notes made by previous midnighters. The orphaned group knows of only one ancient midnighter, Madeleine, a mindcaster who shares the history of midnighters with Melissa who also has the ability to mindcast. Jessica is the newest midnighter to the group and has the flame bringing ability. It is implied that this power is what the darklings are after and that the events of Samhain are plotted specifically to destroy the flame bringer. The five orphaned midnighters are friendly but not the best of friends. They do not always work well together and there is quite a bit of personal conflict between them.

The third part of the trilogy, *Blue Noon* tells the story of what happens when time freezes in the middle of the day during a school pep rally. The book is all about the task of trying to keep the secret time in the secret hour. The midnighters begin to experience the secret hour more and more frequently during daylight hours. In addition to that, Rex's darkling side begins to make more appearances and Rex is unable to control himself at times. He is becoming stronger every day. By using Madeline and other resources, the midnighters discover that the secret hour will extend to last a full 25 hours. They determine this will take place at midnight on Samhain, the ancient Halloween. They learn of a rip in the blue time that is sucking up daylighters. This rip expands like the seam in fabric. Jessica has ongoing trouble with her younger sister Beth who is curious about Jessica's secretive lifestyle.



Ordinarily there would not be a problem with society knowing of this secret hour but the blue time is full of nightmarish creatures called darklings and slithers. These creatures plan to use the extended blue time and rip to feast on the humans in town. Jessica and her boyfriend Jonathan stop the rip from spreading to the whole world but as a sacrifice. To do this Jessica brought to life a frozen lightning bolt and unfortunately gets sucked into the blue time. Jessica's parents become very sad about their daughter's "disappearance" and are still grieving about her loss when Beth comes to visit Jessica for the last time. Both sisters share an emotional few last words. Finally, with only a few more minutes to spare, Jonathan flies Jessica and Beth on their last flight through the blue time.



Chapters 1 - 2

Chapters 1 - 2 Summary

Chapter 1: Melissa arrives at Rex's house to pick him up for school. She stands in as his alarm clock since the buzzing of electronics gives Rex a headache. It has only been two weeks since Rex was turned into a part darkling. As they arrive at school, they realize it is the day of the school's pep rally. Melissa promises to help Rex through it. As midnighters, they both have trouble being around large groups of people but together, they help each other control their emotions.

Rex forgets one of his school books and quickly runs back to his locker before the pep rally starts. He runs into Timmy Hudson. Timmy has bullied Rex since 5th grade. Timmy tries to threaten Rex yet again but he has not met this new Rex yet. Rex is unable to control himself and he gets violent with Timmy. He regains composure and walks away. It is this point where he questions his humanity.

Chapter 2: Melissa waits in the top row of the school gymnasium. She tries to keep her mind quiet but the sounds and thoughts of everything around her swarm through her mind. She views the remaining midnighters across the gym and can taste the tension as well. She waits for Rex to arrive when a slight shuddering begins. Everything goes blue at 9 a.m.

Chapters 1 - 2 Analysis

As the third book in a trilogy, Blue Noon jumps right into the storyline. This is the reader's first chance to see Rex as his new self, a halfling. The narrator describes in detail what each smell or sound is like for Rex. The Midnighters series does not follow the minds of the darklings and slithers so this is the only understanding of the antagonists in the story.

The reader is given a play by play of a romantic encounter between Rex and Melissa. While possibly unnecessary, this shows the readers the midnighters' human side. They often feel disconnected from their peers so having this bond with one another is important. Right away, readers can relate to the teenagers as normal people and not as supernatural beings with whom they have nothing in common.



Chapters 3 - 4

Chapters 3 - 4 Summary

Chapter 3: The five midnighters stare at each other across the gym floor as they realize time has frozen in the middle of the day. They try to figure out why and go outside the gym to view the moon. They recap that it seems like an eclipse. Melissa can hear the minds of the darklings deep in the desert. She says that they sound as if they are celebrating. Jonathan does not seem worried and instead thinks the extra time with his ability to be weightless is a gift. Rex is upset because he has studied the history of the midnighters for years and this has never happened before that he can recall reading about.

The blue time ends just as suddenly as it started. Jessica realizes it is ending and jumps up to try to pull Jonathan down as he is flying around. They come crashing down together causing Jessica to sprain her ankle and a car alarm to begin sounding. No one else is outside to see them except one of their teachers, Mr. Sanchez, but he does not realize they appeared out of nowhere because he is hiding in a corner smoking.

Chapter 4: Jessica waits outside for her dad to pick her up from school. She is not allowed to ride home with her friends or take the bus because she is grounded after being arrested for breaking curfew last month. Her dad is late which makes her worry. He finally arrives with Jessica's sister, Beth, in the front seat wearing a majorette uniform. Beth had been a decorated majorette in Chicago at their old school but left the team to do more popular things. They had moved to Bixby two years ago. Don Day, Jessica's dad is unemployed. Beth keeps a very close eye on her sister. She knows Jessica has a secret but is not aware of what it is. Beth protects her sister though and covers for her when needed.

Chapters 3 - 4 Analysis

The narrator introduces each of the main characters from the previous two books early in this one. The reader gets a brief introduction to each of the five midnighters but the narrator also spends time explaining important roles such as Madeleine and Beth. Madeleine plays a key role in that she mentors Melissa. She is also the subject of tension between the two halves of the midnighters group.

The introduction of Jessica's family is another device the narrator uses to draw the reader in. Yes, Jessica has a secret life but she also has a very normal life where she deals with punishment from her parents, being picked up late from school and other "mortal" issues. If readers cannot totally relate to the goings-ons of the midnighters, they can certainly relate to the routine side of Jessica's life.



Chapters 5 - 6

Chapters 5 - 6 Summary

Chapter 5: Dess, Jonathan, Rex and Melissa visit Madeleine to compare stories of what happened during the eclipse. Dess reflects on how they first found Madeleine a few weeks before. Melissa had used her mindcasting to read Dess' dreams in which Dess had discovered the location of Madeleine in latitude and longitude. This makes Dess bitter.

Melissa and Madeleine communicate through mindcasting to understand what the other experienced earlier that day. While they are in the attic, Jonathan turns on the television and hears a news story of a young girl who had disappeared at 9 a.m. Dess overhears this and realizes it was during the eclipse. She starts remembering things she learned about the Big Bang Theory and how galaxies were formed. She presents a theory to the others; that the blue time is weakened in some places and can snap, in this case sucking in the little girl.

Chapter 6: Jessica and Jonathan plan to drive to the spot where Cassie Flinders, the young girl, disappeared. They want to get to Jenks, where she disappeared just before midnight. They will meet Rex, Melissa, and Dess there. Jonathan goes to pick up Jessica but Jessica is stalled by her little sister, Beth. Beth does not want Jessica to get into trouble again. Beth knows Jessica has been sneaking out and has connected that it is always right before midnight. Jessica no longer tries to hide that she is leaving from Beth because she knows that Beth will not tattle on Jessica. In fact, in the past Jessica even shoved Beth into a closet in order to get out of the house. Beth just wants to be included in the secret.

Chapters 5 - 6 Analysis

Once the narrator moves past the introductions and background explanations, the story line begins. The blue time which has always taken place at midnight interrupted a school assembly at 9 a.m. It did not last an hour. Neither Rex nor Madeleine, both of whom know most of the midnighters' history, have any idea what it is but a young girl is somehow trapped in it.

Had it not been for Melissa trying to find Madeleine, she would not have stolen information from Dess' mind although Dess still is not fond of mindcasting, her bitterness for Melissa comes from this encounter. Beth is explained to be simply the annoying little sister but she is much more. She is so desperate to be involved in her older sister's life that she often butts in causing Jessica to scramble and lie.

As the reader first comes across the explanations of where and how Cassie became trapped, it is confusing to follow the details but they become less important as the intensity of the battles between the midnighters and the darklings pick up.



Chapters 7 - 8

Chapters 7 - 8 Summary

Chapter 7: While waiting for the others to arrive, Rex begins to examine the railroad tracks in Jenks where Cassie disappeared. He notices that they are covered in focus, trails left by darklings and slithers. He thinks there is too much focus for having only been in the area for 21 minutes which was the time length of the eclipse. They had been there before.

Rex remembers what Melissa said about the darklings celebrating. He wonders if they knew about the ripples and tears in the blue time and if they knew the eclipse was going to happen. He worries that they are right about Cassie being trapped in the blue time. Rex finds sneaker treads amongst the railroad tracks. The treads appear to be those of someone walking, not being dragged. They do not seem to have a purpose though; they appear to be confused steps. Rex follows the treads despite the warnings from Melissa and Dess. Midnight falls and he is alone in the desert. He hears Dess and Melissa warning him to return but he decides to continue on alone.

He follows the steps into a tight cave. He finds slithers disguised as a cat. Rex knows this cat is what Cassie had been following. It had lured her into the cave. Rex uses metal from his shoes to scare the slithers so Cassie can escape. The slithers surround them outside the cave and take the form of snakes. Rex attempts to scare them off when a darkling appears. The darkling is huge, in the shape of a tarantula. Rex gives his knife to Cassie and tells her to go back into the cave to hide.

As Rex begins to fight the darkling unarmed, they begin to circle each other in a predator like dance. Rex realizes he is not in fact the prey but that he too is a predator. He can hear the darkling in his mind and he is dealing with an internal battle.

Chapter 8: Jonathan and Jessica arrive at the railroad in Jenks just after midnight. Melissa immediately directs them to where Rex and Cassie are. Jessica fights off slithers as they jump across the desert. Jessica can easily kill the slithers with her flame bringing ability. She notices that the slithers are sacrificing themselves to stall her and Jonathan. It does not work and when they come across Rex and Cassie moments later, the darkling is gone.

As Melissa meets up with the four of them, the group starts to wonder if there is a different way. They do not know what to do about their secret. Melissa hears Rex's thoughts and knows what happened between him and the darkling. He refuses to share the information with the others though. Cassie is saved but the midnighters still do not have answers.

After a stressful night, Jonathan and Jessica decide to risk curfew and spend the remainder of the secret hour flying hand in hand.



Chapters 7 - 8 Analysis

The science fiction style of the story plays out in almost every scene, from following Dess' intricate math problems to picturing the dark creatures the group is fighting. It becomes obvious that this war can only end one way, with one group becoming extinct. For their first encounter, the midnighters win out. The reader is able to connect with the characters and relate to the darklings as their nightmares, though complicated theories are being explored.

The idea that Rex may be tempted by evil is first presented in this part of the book. He can hear the darklings in his mind and it takes all of his strength to resist the temptations of the dark side. Though he is successful at averting the evil in this section of the book, readers wonder how long he will be able to remain on the side of good.



Chapters 9 - 10

Chapters 9 - 10 Summary

Chapter 9: Jessica does not return home until after 2 a.m. She had been swimming with Jonathan in the river. The next morning, Jessica banter with Beth. Beth keeps Jessica's secret while they are in the presence of Don Day, their father. Once they are alone, Jessica thanks Beth who replies that she will find out what is going on, no matter what.

Chapter 10: Rex and Melissa return to Jenks the next day to clear Cassie's memory. They share a romantic encounter while waiting for midnight to fall. Melissa is able to taste much more about Rex's meeting with the darkling. She realizes Rex is becoming much stronger when he accidentally bites her during their kiss.

Once midnight arrives, Melissa reads Rex's mind and sees his secret. He had been visited by Angie who wrote to him in signs from the lore. Angie is one of the Grayfoot's agents and had been involved in Rex's kidnapping just a few weeks before. In the note Angie left, she asks to meet with Rex. Melissa and Rex discuss this and fear it is a trap but they know they need more information about the eclipses and the rip in the blue time.

They travel to Cassie's home and Melissa removes the events from the night before from Cassie's memories. She takes all of the midnighters' secrets from Cassie's mind and leaves her with a fear of railroad tracks just in case.

Chapters 9 - 10 Analysis

The narrator spends a lot of time discussing Jessica's internal battle. She argues with her sister. She is almost impossible to beat with her flame bringing. Yet, she still cannot believe this is her life. It is all so new to her, having just moved to Bixby two years earlier. She wants to confide in her sister, but knows that she cannot reveal her secret without bringing potential harm to her sister and the rest of the family.

Jessica just wants to feel normal. The narrator hints that Jessica's powers are stronger than she realizes. There are also hints that the darklings fear Jessica more than the others. She seems uncomfortable at times with this power and how to use it. Though she is well beyond her years in super powers, she demonstrates the typical teenage immaturity of staying out past curfew and deliberately disobeying her parents.



Chapters 11 - 12

Chapters 11 - 12 Summary

Chapter 11: Constanza Grayfoot is excited by news brought to her by her grandfather. She wants to share the news with her friends: Liz, Maria, Jen, and Jessica. At the mention of her grandfather, Jessica wonders if the things she has heard about Grandpa Grayfoot are true. She has always thought of him as an evil version of Beth. He had been very nosy as a kid. When he had discovered something different about midnight, he began holding meetings in the desert in the middle of the night. He had tried to communicate with the Darklings and after much effort, he had succeeded. He had found a translator. The Darklings had had Grandpa Grayfoot complete small tasks to prove he was trustworthy. As time had gone on, the tasks they asked him to do became worse and worse. Finally, he had been asked to get rid of all the Midnighters. He had done this almost 50 years ago, wiping out the generations of souls living in the secret hour. Weeks ago, Anatea, his translator had been close to death. The Grayfoots had needed a replacement so they kidnapped Rex. Jessica, Jonathan, Dess, and Melissa had saved Rex though leaving Grandpa Grayfoot without a connection anymore.

Jessica knows Grandpa Grayfoot had been against living in Bixby because of his past so when his granddaughter, Constanza, starts telling her story, Jessica listens to every detail. Constanza's grandfather has offered to move her to Los Angeles, CA, claiming he has an acting agent all lined up for her. She is leaving in just a few days and if all goes well will never be coming back. The catch is that she is not allowed to tell her parents until after they are already in LA. Constanza is excited because many of her cousins are going to move as well to support her.

Dess spies on the conversation from behind her trigonometry book. She hears everything. By the end of the conversation, she is frantically running numbers in her head. If the Grayfoots are all leaving so quickly, there is no time to waste. Jessica notices a calendar like page that Dess drops and makes the realization: they only have three weeks.

Chapter 12: Rex, Melissa, Dess, Jonathan, and Jessica meet up in the cafeteria of Bixby High School to discuss the new possibility that the world is going to end. They try to analyze why else the Grayfoots would be leaving so suddenly. While in the cafeteria, another midday secret hour occurs. They do not tempt anything this time since they are surrounded by people who would notice if they suddenly disappear. They stay as still as possible but continue discussing the possibilities.

The Grayfoots are leaving before the end of the month. Being October, they connect that the end of the world will occur with Halloween. Dess is confused though since the numbers do not make sense. It is then that they realize the old world Halloween, referred to as Samhain, had taken place in the eighth month on the thirty-first day, the numbers together equaling 39. Rex points out that 39 is a defense against the darklings



but on the new calendar, the following day, November 1st, the sum of the numbers equals 12, the lucky number of the secret hour.

As the midday secret time ends, Dess quickly does the math. This one's length is also a multiple of 144 seconds. The darklings are definitely involved in making the eclipses happen.

Chapters 11 - 12 Analysis

The reader begins to fear Rex as his darkling half begins showing more and more. Rex can still control this side but for how much longer? The narrator states that Rex communicates with the darklings through his mind. They put their thoughts into Rex's head. This could explain why Rex and Melissa connect so well. Their minds are both full of the thoughts of others.

The characters discuss the possibility of the world ending because of all of the strange occurrences that have been taking place. Rex, Melissa, Dess, Jonathan and Jessica wonder if the end of the world will coincide with Halloween. This is significant to readers who associate the holiday with darkness and evil. It makes sense that if the midnighters are going to fight evil, it will happen on a well-known night of superstition like Halloween.



Chapters 13 - 14

Chapters 13 - 14 Summary

Chapter 13: The midnighters know they need to get answers from the Grayfoots. Their only connection is the note Angie left them. Rex decides to risk meeting with her. He comes up with an elaborate plan. He meets her in Saddleback, OK. She had refused to enter Bixby, OK because of the risk of getting frozen in the blue time, and Rex had not been comfortable going all the way to Broken Arrow, OK where all the Grayfoots would be. Angie is nervous and brings a knife. She does not trust Rex.

Rex plans for Dess and Jonathan to show up suspiciously as if they are Grayfoots following Rex and Angie. Rex would then kidnap Angie and head for Bixby. Angie would not protest because Rex was saving her life. Dess measures out the exact amount of gas that Rex would need and siphons out the rest so that they would suddenly run out of gas. This would prevent Angie from being angry with Rex. The plan is perfect in Rex's mind until the followers show up too early. Then he realizes, it is not Dess and Jonathan. Actual Grayfoots had followed them.

Chapter 14: Dess and Jonathan are waiting on the side of the road for the exact time that they are supposed to approach Rex and Angie. While waiting, they see Rex drive by, much faster than planned. Rex is being chased by two dark black cars: Grayfoots. Dess and Jonathan decide to chase after them as well. They know this is not the plan but they need to do whatever it takes to keep Rex safe.

Chapters 13 - 14 Analysis

This is the point in the book where it becomes very obvious that Rex is in charge. The reader is allowed to follow every part of Rex's plans to get more information about the Grayfoots leaving Bixby. Knowing their ancient enemies are leaving leads the group to understand just how serious the situation with which they are dealing is. Since the narrator gives the reader more information about the plan than even the other midnighters get, it allows for interpretation of how the others will react, especially Jonathan who does not feel strongly towards Rex.

It becomes clear that though the midnighters are smart and savvy, the Grayfoots always seem to be one step ahead of them. If the midnighters want to be successful, they will have to step up their game and actions to make it happen. Even the "perfect" plan that the midnighters had developed is not perfect enough to outsmart the Grayfoots.



Chapters 15 - 16

Chapters 15 - 16 Summary

Chapter 15: Angie tells Rex his home phone has been tapped, therefore giving the Grayfoots all the information they need about the meeting. Rex, knowing the car will soon run out of gas, takes his chances driving through the desert, hoping a cactus or the sand will stop the Grayfoots. This works and Rex and Angie are able to lose one of cars to a broken axle. The second car stops pursuit as well. The Grayfoots will not take the chance of being stuck in Bixby in the desert.

Angie pulls her knife out on Rex. He promises her that this was not the plan and that he will not let Melissa near her mind. Rex swears to Angie that he is the leader of the group and that they will listen to him. Rex looks around to see they are in the deepest, darkest part of the desert in Saddleback, Oklahoma. They are right in the midst of ancient darklings.

Chapter 16: Dess creates protection for herself and a frozen Angie out of wires and steel pipes. She makes intricate 13-point starts around them. Rex goes to find the darklings hoping to speak to them to get information about the eclipses. Jessica and Melissa realize something must have gone wrong with the plan because midnight falls and Jonathan has not come to pick them up yet. Melissa concentrates to read their minds and updates Jessica. Jonathan finally arrives on foot. He holds hands with both of them to give them his anti-gravity and together they jump to where Dess is. They argue over saving Rex. Dess tells them Rex made her promise to attack anyone who tried to go after him.

Chapters 15 - 16 Analysis

Dess is given the opportunity from Rex to stand up to Melissa to protect Angie's mind from Melissa. The narrator does not say so, but the reader can gather that this gives Dess a lot of self-esteem being in control of the one she hates the most.

Rex must fight to keep the group solidified. This is difficult to do because paranoia in the group is on the rise. As the group's leader, he knows that it is his responsibility to keep everyone together to have the most strength. The weight of this responsibility would be too much for the other members of the club but Rex has the mental fortitude to take on the role.



Chapters 17 - 18

Chapters 17 - 18 Summary

Chapter 17: Rex speaks to the ancient darklings. They tell him the hunt is coming. They tell him they are hungry. They try to get Rex to join them. They put their thoughts into Rex's mind. Rex considers being the predator but knows the darklings have already given him the information he needs. He uses a diversion by chanting, "Unconquerable" to escape the darklings.

Chapter 18: As the blue hour comes to an end, the five midnighters prepare to interrogate Angie. She unfreezes shocked by the sudden appearance of everyone. Melissa reads her mind to know she is telling them the truth. As they discuss when the end will come, Angie refers to darklings and slithers as monsters. This causes Rex to transform, taller, and stronger than his human self. He warns Angie that she caused him to be this way and the group leaves, not taking Angie with them.

Chapters 17 - 18 Analysis

The overwhelming power of the evil darklings presents itself to Rex. Though he has proven to be the leader of the midnighters and demonstrated great mental fortitude, even he is subject to the temptations of the dark side. Readers are left to wonder if any of the other characters would have escaped the evil as safely as Rex did.

Even though Rex escapes the darklings, it becomes clear that he has not completely conquered the evil that lurks. Will he be able to withstand the danger that the temptation brings in the future? Readers can infer that Rex will face the evil again and wonder if the outcome will be the same.



Chapters 19 - 20

Chapters 19 - 20 Summary

Chapter 19: Jessica prepares to enjoy a quiet dinner at home. It is spaghetti night. Every Wednesday since they moved to Bixby, Beth makes spaghetti for the family. Jessica just wants to relax after everything that happened the night before in the desert. Beth surprises Jessica by inviting a guest, Cassie Flinders.

Beth reveals that Cassie and she had become close friends after Cassie shared a picture she sketched of Jessica and Jonathan. Jessica is shocked by this information and wonders what else Cassie may remember or worse, what connections Beth has made. Beth asks if she can have sleepovers at Cassie's house in Jenks. Jessica bites her tongue to keep Beth from knowing this bothers her. Jessica does not share this information with the remaining midnighters.

Chapter 20: Melissa remembers what Angie said about mindcasters manipulating the Grayfoots' business deals causing them to give up their land and the wealth in oil located there. Melissa has the history of thousands of mindcasters, none of which felt guilt or had any thoughts of this past. Melissa questions the truth but starts believing that Angie may be telling the truth.

Melissa is unable to read Rex and the thoughts the darklings gave him. His mind is blocked. They go to see Madeleine hoping her mindcasting will be stronger than Melissa's. While holding hands in a circle, the darkling side of Rex comes out. His mind attacks Madeleine. She extracts the thoughts. It is too much for her. She is left motionless. Melissa uses an aversion to pull Rex back. He has his answers.

Chapters 19 - 20 Analysis

The build up to Samhain is portrayed in very specific, laid out details. The reader is given the extra twists like finding out that Cassie has memory of being trapped in the blue time, although she does not know what it is. The narrator shows more of Jessica begging for a normal life in her family dinner and sleepover. These small sections seem insignificant during the time they are placed in the book but later become much more relevant.

Every detail about the personal lives of each character becomes part of the overall picture that the narrator is trying to convey. Being able to recall those details later in the story will help readers see the significance of earlier events. This narrative device ties all of the events of the book together and shows how minor events in life often play into the larger picture.



Chapters 21 - 22

Chapters 21 - 22 Summary

Chapter 21: Rex tells the other midnighters what he learned — the truth about Halloween. The ancient society would set bonfires all night long on Halloween, not out of joy but to protect themselves from evil. They would try to ward off the darklings from coming on November 1st of each year. Finally, once the darklings and slithers retreated to the secret hour, society thought they had won and used the holiday as a celebration. At the conclusion of his story, Rex tells the midnighters he has a plan and that they must meet in Jenks at 6:30 a.m. He then dismisses them all to enjoy the remainder of this last peaceful secret hour.

Jonathan and Jessica talk in depth about Rex's information. He told them that the world will not in fact end but that every year at midnight on Halloween, there would be an extended secret hour; the blue time would last for 24 full hours. Fearing what may happen to both of them, they spend their last night in a sentimental place, behind the Pegasus sign of a Mobil gas station where they first kissed.

Jonathan thinks about how much he hates flatland and that he would love to have unrestricted blue time but he promises Jessica that he will fight.

Chapter 22: The midnighters meet at the railroad tracks in Jenks where the rip is located at 6:30 a.m. Rex shows the midnighters how the rip has changed. As it expands, it allows new things into it. They prove that not only people can go into the rip but steel and flame as well.

Rex tells the group he knows the pattern of eclipses. He knows exactly when they will happen all the way until Samhain. Rex uses Dess' exhaustion against her and convinces her to let Melissa touch her. Melissa mindcasts all of the dates, times, latitudes, and longitudes that are in Rex's darkling mind. Dess now knows exactly where the rip will go. It is going to create a road for all of the ancient darklings in the mountains to travel straight into downtown Bixby.

Jessica practices her flamebringing and discovers that while in the rip, she can set a fire and leave it and it will continue to burn. They use this to plan a trap to stall the darklings in hopes of saving as many people as possible.

Chapters 21 - 22 Analysis

The midnighters no longer get to enjoy their extra hour, they are now forced to steal and plot a war. The book attempts to portray the midnighters as the good ones throughout the story but the reader must wonder where the truth lies. Yes, they are saving Bixby and other cities in the path of the rip from being destroyed by darklings but they do it at

the cost of breaking the laws of curfew, breaking into stores and buildings, and emptying out full fireworks stands.

Their crimes are all over the news and yet they feel no guilt over what is happening. They, and the reader, know though that if they were to come clean about what was going to happen and try to explain their secret to everyone beforehand, no one would listen and it would put everyone at risk. The midnighters are above the normal constraints of civil and criminal law because they answer to a higher calling that has deeper significance.



Chapters 23 - 24

Chapters 23 - 24 Summary

Chapter 23: Over the next several midnights, the five of them work on stealing all the supplies they will need for the trap. This includes clearing out dozens of firework stands of their goods. Jessica has a final sleepover with Constanza and begins to get sentimental over being human versus being a midnighter.

Chapter 24: While watching the Weather Channel with her father, Jessica sees that rain is predicted for that night, Samhain night. She tries to stay calm but knows this could be a serious issue. While sitting there asking her dad questions about the parts she may have missed, Beth comes in wearing her Halloween costume. She's dressed as a tarantula and says it was Cassie's idea and that Cassie is obsessed with tarantulas. Beth also announces she will be trick-or-treating in Jenks in Cassie's neighborhood. Jessica protests but cannot come up with an excuse quickly enough so she drops the issue.

Chapters 23 - 24 Analysis

Jessica's internal battle with being a human and being a midnighter becomes more pronounced as Samhain draws closer. As her anxiety grows, she begins to question the life she is leading. She does not resent being a midnighter — if anything, she resents being human instead. Being human means that she has sentimental feelings, especially towards the people in her life who are not midnighters and are unaware of the potential danger.

An example of this is when Beth announces that she will be trick-or-treating in Jenks. Jessica knows that will be a dangerous place for Beth to be, but she cannot tell her why without revealing the midnighters' secret. Instead, Jessica has to let Beth go ahead with her plans as if nothing is wrong.



Chapters 25 - 27

Chapters 25 - 27 Summary

Chapter 25: Jonathan and Melissa go to pick up Jessica just before midnight. Jessica tells them about Beth. Melissa promises to track Beth as soon as she can hear her mind. They speed quickly toward Jenks, running a red light. This catches the attention of the town sheriff, Clancy St. Claire. Using quick thinking and his experience with knowing the neighborhood, Jonathan escapes the police using a fork in the road. As they get closer to Jenks, it starts pouring rain and storming.

Chapter 26: Dess and Rex arrive at the empty warehouse where they had planned to set off the bomb. The door was just open hours before and has been open for weeks as they prepared but tonight it is padlocked with a chain. They need this bomb to go off in time to wake everyone up right at midnight. After several attempts of slamming himself into the door, the darkling side of Rex takes over and kicks the door down. This breaks Rex's ankle but he works through the pain to get to the fuse.

They light the bomb but realize it is too late because of the delay. Rex goes back to light the fuse closer to the bomb. He barely makes it back in time before the sonic boom goes off. It is just in time, they hear car alarms begin to ring.

As midnight falls, Rex spots a frozen lightning bolt going into the Pegasus sign at the Mobil. He remembers that as children he and Melissa always chased after the frozen bolts but never succeeded. He thinks about everything he learned in the lore and he suddenly has a new idea. Without telling Dess what is going on, he asks for silence and begs for Melissa's help in his mind.

Chapter 27: Jessica, Jonathan, and Melissa are in Jenks with the largest pile of fireworks. This is where they will distract and stall the darklings and slithers. Melissa is searching her mind for Cassie and Beth's tastes. They are not at Cassie's house. Melissa hears a faint plea and knows it is Rex. After arguing about the change in plans, she sends Jonathan to help. Just after he leaves she finds Cassie and Beth exploring the cave where they first met Cassie. Jessica leaves the fireworks to save her sister. Before she goes, she lights an oil lantern so Melissa can start the fireworks.

As Melissa waits for the darklings to begin their descent from the mountains, she hears the mind of a camper out in the desert tonight. She listens as he is attacked, first just scratched and scared, then bitten and eaten. Melissa gets sick; her body goes numb and she loses control, dropping the lantern and causing fire to spread. It quickly heads towards the pile of fireworks but they cannot go off yet, it is too early. Melissa still wet from the rain rolls on the ground to put the fire out. She is now alone and has no fire.

Chapters 25 - 27 Analysis

The carefully laid plans of the midnighters begin to unravel quickly. Though they have taken their time to plan out the perfect way to stop the darklings and slithers, when reality hits, everything begins to crumble. The midnighters are strong enough to know that they must keep going and be innovative. What they lack in strength in regards to the darklings and slithers, they make up for with smart ideas.

Melissa's mind-reading seems to cause more trouble than it is worth at times. While it is a great way for Rex to communicate with her, it distracts her from her true tasks. Hearing the mind of the camper who is attacked and killed in the desert causes Melissa to lose her fire and be completely alone in the wilderness. Her super power actually appears to be more of a burden in this section of the book.



Chapters 28 - 30

Chapters 28 - 30 Summary

Chapter 28: Jonathan reaches Rex and Dess. Rex says he needs Jessica now. Jonathan and Rex fly back to Jenks.

Chapter 29: Jessica stumbles around to find Beth. She thought she remembered the way but it seems further away than she recalls. Melissa guides Jessica's mind to the right place. Jessica finds the cave and finds a powerful old darkling covering the entrance. She hears screaming from inside the cave. The old darkling does not respond to Jessica's flashlight and instead Jessica has to light several flares to destroy the midnight creature.

As Jessica rescues Beth and Cassie, she urges them to move quickly. Jessica knows what kind of trouble they could find themselves in if another of those darklings comes near but Beth refuses to budge. She will not leave until Jessica explains what is going on. Beth does not trust Jessica who has been covering up this secret for a long time now. Jessica gives Beth the short version of the story just as Jonathan and Rex appear. Rex instructs Jonathan to take Jessica back to the lightning bolt as he leads Cassie and Beth back to Melissa.

Chapter 30: As Rex leads the girls back to Melissa at the mound of fireworks, they come across a darkling. The darkling is smart though; instead of getting close enough to be destroyed by the flare Rex is holding, it sweeps through the trees knocking the rain water onto the group. The wetness causes the flare to flicker. Rex is worried their only fire is going to be gone. Cassie suggests using the leaves to make a small bonfire. The top layer of leaves is soaked from the rain but she points out to Rex that the leaves underneath are still dry. They make a mini bonfire to keep themselves safe. Rex attacks the darkling with his knife and defeats him.

Melissa shows up to help just as another darkling appears. The darkling turns to go after Melissa so Rex jumps on it and stabs it as well. This allows just enough distraction for Melissa to spear the darkling with a large steel rod.

Melissa and Rex run back to get Cassie and Beth who are safe but have just barely enough flame to get the flare lit again. As they are running back to the main ground, they are continually attacked by more darklings. Beth is bitten. Melissa uses the bottle rockets from her backpack to fight them off. It works but as they start to light the pile, Melissa shows Rex what is in her mind, a darkling swarm larger than they could have ever imagined. Their only hope is Jessica.



Chapters 28 - 30 Analysis

Jessica is finally forced to reveal her secret to Beth. She does it out of necessity because Beth's life is in danger if she does not tell her the truth. Normally, Beth would probably find Jessica's statements to be outrageous, but after the events of the night, it becomes clear that what Jessica says is true. It is unclear if Beth is more or less terrified at her sister's revelation.

The darklings demonstrate some resilience and intelligence as the midnighters try to destroy them. It becomes clear that the darklings will not be so easy to kill. It will be an epic battle to destroy the dark beings that will take every ounce of strength, super power and craftiness the midnighters have to offer.



Chapters 31 - 32

Chapters 31 - 32 Summary

Chapter 31: Jonathan and Jessica use the blue time rip to get back to Bixby. They make good time until they exit the rip and the frozen rain drops hit them like a tidal wave as they jump. Jessica is blinded by so much water. They use flare after flare to try to fight off the darklings that are already attacking the citizens of Bixby. They arrive at the lightning bolt just in time. Jessica is amazed by how beautiful the Pegasus is. As she reaches her hand towards the bolt, she can feel the power and energy behind it. She knows what will happen if this works but she knows she has no other choice.

She reaches in. The entire sky flashes with the bright light as the rip seals. The darklings are gone. It worked.

Chapter 32: Jonathan and Melissa drive to pick up Dess. They then stop to pick up Beth. Beth is nervous. They drive to Jenks, to the railroad tracks where it all began. Using her GPS, Dess locates the exact point and circles it with rocks. She throws in a few tridecograms as well for good measure. The darklings are long gone since Samhain but it is an old habit. Beth stands in the exact spot where a tiny piece of the rip still exists.

Rex is not with them today and they will likely never see him again. He has decided to stay in Bixby. He will care for his father and now he will care for Madeleine as well who has been an invalid ever since the darkling in Rex's mind attacked her. She is recovering daily but does not have the strength to be alone. Rex is used to providing this care and this is what makes him feel human.

As midnight falls, Beth is frozen in her circle for just a moment. The rip reaches her and she is awakened to find Jessica behind her. She does not believe it. Everyone thought Jessica was gone and to most, she is. She is trapped in the blue time, a new form of midnight creature. She lives for only one hour a day. It is Jonathan who first discovered this. He cannot live without her. He tries not to think about what their future will be like, her only living one hour a day, him living 25 hours. He will age much more quickly than she will. As midnight comes to an end, Jonathan shows Beth one last secret: how to fly.

Beth knows she must keep all of this from her family and friends. Cassie knows about the secret hour and will be her only confidant. Beth will never see her sister again. Jessica is leaving Bixby as are Melissa and Jonathan. They plan to find more midnighters as they awaken to the scary blue hour to teach them about their secret. Dess will stay behind. She wants to live a normal life and this is as close as she will get.



Chapters 31 - 32 Analysis

As the final chapters begin to play out, the reader is not only brought to the end of a battle with the darklings, they are brought to the end of a series. They have watched the relationships between Rex and Melissa and Jonathan and Jessica develop and unfold before their eyes. They have examined the conflict among the group and wondered if it would affect their teamwork. The reader is brought to the very final moment of sacrifice and has to wonder if it has all been worth it.

The narration of the final battle gives a better picture of the darklings than the reader has gotten up to this point. It was done this way, assumedly to build the tension in wondering how it would all end. As each part of the plan seems to go not quite as planned, the reader is left to worry that the darklings may truly come out on top. They had been on the land first and all.

The ending of the story is very unfair for the midnighters. The reader has invested and connected with the relationships and friendships formed among them. Rex and Melissa who have been best friends since they were 8 and fought for their relationship decide to simply part ways. Jonathan and Jessica have a very romantic and peaceful kind of love and are forced apart. Jessica finally shows the protectiveness she feels towards her little sister and must leave her. And Jonathan and Melissa end up joining forces to travel together to find other midnighters, a very unlikely pair. These endings are not what the reader expected.

As the story comes to a conclusion, the full explanations and details the reader was provided the entire series come abruptly to a halt. Jessica reaches her hand into the frozen lightning bolt and without any understanding, the rip is closed. The epilogue made the attempt to cover what exactly happened but the reader is left begging for more; many unanswered questions. The author may have intentionally done this to provide for additional story plots but the reader is not given any indication that more will be coming.

The only option readers have is to come to their own conclusions and use their imaginations to decide what took place. Giving the readers the opportunity to interpret the final pages of the book is both impactful and frustrating, depending on the reader. One thing is for certain though — the memorable conclusion of the trilogy is representative of all of the pages that lead up to it.



Characters

Rex Greene

Rex Greene is the only seer in the group. He was born a midnighter. He can read the lore, which is the history of the midnighters local to Bixby, Oklahoma. In a prior book of the trilogy, he is turned into a halfling, half midnighter and half darkling. He is the self-imposed leader of the group. He decides this because he is the only seer and because he enjoys being in control. The others do not always agree with this but for the most part do not mind.

As a half darkling, Rex fights with the stronger forces inside of him. He sometimes views his classmates and people around him as prey, and thinks they appear tempting and delicious. Rex is incredibly uncomfortable around all human things. He thinks human things are out to trick him. Dess has to do his math homework and they re-do his locker combination since anything in combinations of thirteen feels like an attack to him. Melissa is his closest friend. He is in a romantic relationship with Melissa as well.

Melissa Hayes

Melissa Hayes is a mindcaster. She has the ability to hear the thoughts of those around her. She is also able to manipulate people mentally by adding or removing thoughts. In addition, she has the ability to completely incapacitate a person by making them forget how to take care of themselves, including moving their muscles, eating, and talking. The other midnighters refer to this as a mind rip and are disgusted by Melissa for her ability to do this.

She typically describes her mind reading as a sense of taste, because in certain behaviors, moods or thoughts are associated with certain bitter or sweet tastes. She can use her power during regular time but she much prefers to use it during the blue time because the subject is unaware and cannot stop her. Upon meeting Madeleine, she further hones in on her abilities to make them stronger and control them better.

Melissa is in a romantic relationship with Rex with whom she has been friends since she was 8 years old. Throughout the book Rex refers to her as "Cowgirl" in reference to how they met.

Melissa is often referred to as rude and many of her friends, especially the midnighters (with the exception of Rex) do not trust her. The midnighters tolerate her because of her useful abilities.



Jessica Day

Jessica Day is a flame bringer. This is a talent that allows her to create fire and use electrical devices such as flashlights during the secret hour (or other blue times). She is powerful in this way since she can use this ability against the darklings and slithers that fear light because they are creatures of darkness. Jessica's power is useless in regular-time.

Jessica is in a romantic relationship with Jonathan. Her parents are discussed as well. Her sister is Beth Day.

Desdemona Flood

Desdemona Flood, or Dess for short, is a polymath. This means she is well versed and a genius with math. Her skill with numbers has not been seen anywhere else. She uses her ability to examine the latitude and longitude on maps to determine how extensive the blue time is. This helps her predict the changes that occur. She is also able to work with numbers easily in other ways, for example she can quickly identify thirteen letter words. This is a source of weaponry since these words serve as the names of tools the midnights use against the darklings and slithers. As a defense, her ability is only good during midnight but as an offense, she can use her knowledge during the day to prepare for the secret hour.

Dess has a hatred for Melissa because of her mindcasting ability. She thinks Melissa is manipulative. This tension is said to have started when Melissa stole information from Dess' mind. Dess constantly speaks out against Melissa. She refers to her as "the bitch goddess," both mentally and verbally. In the end though, she does acknowledge that her hatred towards Melissa is resolved.

Jonathan Martinez

Jonathan Martinez is an acrobat. During the blue hour his gravity is reduced which allows him to increase the distance of his jumps to create a flying effect. Jonathan loves this freedom and very much likes regular time as a result. He is able to share the effect of reduced gravity with anything he holds on to, including people. Unlike some of the other powers, Jonathan's gravity-less acrobatics only function during blue time, stopping immediately once light reappears.

Jonathan is in a romantic relationship with Jessica.



Timothy Hudson

Timmy Hudson is a school bully. He has teased Rex since they were 10 years old for being weaker, nerdy and wearing glasses. He provokes Rex and is the first person Rex sees as true prey although Timmy does survive the interaction.

Madeleine

Madeleine is an ancient midnigher. She is a mindcaster like Melissa. She had gone into hiding in a cave-like home covered in tridecograms when the Grayfoots began hunting midnighers. She reappears after 50 years when Dess uses her polymath skills to locate her and Melissa steals the information from Dess' mind.

Anathea

Anathea was a young seer back in the old days. She was just thirteen when she became frozen in the blue time. She was turned into a halfling and used to help the Grayfoots communicate with the darklings. She died the night Rex was kidnapped and turned into a halfling himself.

Mr. Sanchez

Mr. Sanchez is a teacher the midnights find outside during the first non-midnight blue hour. He is outside the gym while the pep rally is going on, smoking. Mr. Sanchez is so involved with his own secret that he does not realize the five students appear suddenly when the blue time ends as abruptly as it began. This helps protect them unknowingly.

Don Day

Don Day is Jessica's father. He lost his job and has been unemployed for a couple years now. He is extremely reliable with time and does not miss much of what is going on in his daughters' lives. The longer he stays jobless, the more spineless he becomes.

Beth Day

Beth Day is Jessica's younger sister. She is really smart for her age. She knows Jessica has a secret but does not want their parents involved so she protects it. She makes the connection that the secret has to do with midnight and she knows Jessica is sneaking out every night. She remains suspicious and watches Jessica closely.



Cassie Flinders

Cassie Flinders is a 13 year-old girl who gets trapped in the blue time when she slips through a hole during the first eclipse. The story of her missing is on the news and provokes the midnighters to learn more about the changing blue hour. She becomes friends with Beth Day.

Angie

Angie is responsible for Rex's kidnapping according to the midnighters. They are very wary of her. She can also read the lore and in the past worked closely with the Grayfoots to communicate with the darklings.

The Grayfoots

The Grayfoots are a group of people started by Grandpa Grayfoot and his Native American tribe. His granddaughter is Constanza Grayfoot. He also has a grandson, Ernesto Grayfoot. He had led the army to destroy all the midnighters decades ago and had succeeded. All are gone but Madeleine. He communicates with the darklings and views the midnighters as the bad guys.

Darklings and Slithers

Darklings and slithers are ancient creatures that once dominated the desert. They come in many shapes and sizes and have the power to change their appearance at will. They typically take the form of their prey's nightmares. Their weaknesses are intelligence, specifically the number 13 and multiples of 13 as well as language, or words with 13 letters. They are also weakened by new technology, light and heat. As humans begin hunting darklings and slithers, they retreat to create the blue hour and collapse the 25 hour day into 24 hours for humans. This freeze in hours allows them to roam free without the interference of man's craftiness.



Objects/Places

Bixby High School

The school is the setting for many conversations between various midnighters. Two of the midday eclipses also take place at the school.

Madeleine's Home

The midnighters spend a lot of time planning at Madeleine's house. The house is covered in 13 pointed safety nets to protect them from the darklings and slithers. It provides them a hideout. They also frequent Madeleine's house to get her help in saving Bixby.

Jessica's Home

Important scenes take place in Jessica's home, especially conversations between her and Beth. This is where Jessica learns about the rain on Samhain as well as re-meets Cassie and finds out about her new friendship with Beth.

Jenks, Oklahoma

Jenks, Oklahoma is near Bixby and the area where Cassie Flinders disappears. The midnighters go there to try to figure out what happened to Cassie and battle the evil.

Saddleback, Oklahoma

Saddleback, Oklahoma is the location where Angie agrees to meet Rex when she is too frightened to return to Bixby. It is more of a desolate area and Rex and Angie soon discover that they are in a deserted area.

Magnetosphere

Magnetosphere is Rex Greene's family dog. He is referenced as a protector of the family. His name is a 13 letter word to ward off darklings. Rex avoids the dog now that he is a halfling because his name gives Rex a headache.



Melissa's Ford

Melissa's Ford created the scene for the first chapter in which we meet Rex and Melissa. It later becomes a main part of the plan to get information from the Grayfoots. Melissa's Ford dies in the desert that night.

Acariciandote

Acariciandote is the 13-letter name Jessica gives to her bracelet. The bracelet is given to her by Jonathan, a family heirloom passed down from his mother. Jessica believes the bracelet gives her strength.

Pegasus Mobil Sign

The Mobil sign is where Jonathan and Jessica shared their first kiss. It is a huge overlook to the city and the large Pegasus is a landmark. This is also where the frozen lightning bolt is located.

Geostationary

Geostationary is Dess' GPS. It is not a magic device. It is something Dess can only use during normal time. It has been given a 13 letter name as protection from the darklings and slithers during midnight.



Themes

Good versus Evil

The midnighters all share an obvious question of their own humanity. They have this secret ability and often wonder if they are using it for the good of the community or causing more harm. Rex and Melissa have more powerful abilities that plague them even during the day. Melissa knows of the mindcasters' past and wonders if they really did some of the rumored evil things she has not learned about. She believes Angie's story that the mindcasters manipulated business deals in the past. Melissa knows she has even ripped minds apart like Rex's dad, leaving him an invalid. She assures herself that she did this to stop the abuse he was giving to Rex but Melissa is still unsure of herself. Rex's strength as a halfling causes him to feel like the bad guy when his anger builds up. Even in the very first chapter as Rex attacks Timmy Hudson, Rex questions if he is good.

Jonathan views his evil differently than the others. He is powerless during the day and therefore loves being in the blue time. He has to convince himself to fight to save the town from a constant blue time even though he knows what freedom this would give him. Jessica is a hero of sorts as the flame bringer. She can fight the evil by destroying the darklings and slithers. She does not view herself as evil like some of the other midnighters view themselves but she does feel guilt over having this secret and wonders why she was chosen for it.

Friendship and Trust

The five midnighters are connected by a very special bond. They know very few others like themselves. There are two sets of romantic relationships among them: Jonathan and Jessica and Rex and Melissa. Dess often feels like the fifth wheel. They each have their own histories and stories but are still unable to disconnect from one another. They are friends by requirement for a lot of the book. Melissa is the outcast, not liked by Jessica, Jonathan or Dess. Rex is the self-proclaimed leader. The five teens often bicker and disagree about plans.

Their relationship has to be more than a friendship though. They develop an irreplaceable trust for one another. They do not have to be best friends but in order to save Bixby and complete the task at hand as well as simply to stay away from darklings and slithers on a nightly basis, they must have this trust. When Melissa tells Jonathan he must leave Jenks and get back to Bixby as quickly as possible, he questions this but ultimately relies on the trust he has that she will not steer him wrong. Jessica is guided by this same trust when she places her hand in the lightning. Rex knows this is what needed to happen.



Family Sacrifice

The book follows the five teenagers as they discover the changes in the midnight hour in their town. Each of them has family but Jessica's relationship with her family is the most obvious. Her family moves to Bixby after her father loses his job. They all sacrifice for each other. Jessica's mom is a workaholic and sacrifices her family time to provide income for the family. Beth sacrifices her integrity by covering up for Jessica. She does not feel badly though about lying to her parents because she wants to know Jessica's secret. Jessica feels guilty putting Beth in this place and constantly feels her little sister is simply annoying.

Jessica makes the ultimate sacrifice to save her family when she traps herself in the blue time to save Bixby from the darklings and slithers. Her family is destroyed by losing her but they have no idea where she is or what sacrifice she made. Beth is the only one who knows the truth but she cannot tell them. The sacrifices the two sisters make for each other show their true family bond.

Style

Point of View

The story is narrated by a third party, likely the author, since the narrator is not a part of the story line. Each chapter is written from a different midnighter's point of view. There is third-person writing as well as dialogue between characters. The combination gives readers all of the information necessary to understand the events of the book. The author makes it possible for the readers to see the characters' thoughts and the contrast between those thoughts and what they actually say. There is a disconnect between thoughts and spoken word and this emphasizes the fact that the midnighters are human, just as much as super-human. If the author chose to simply describe everything on his own, readers would miss out on the dynamics of the midnighters and the way that each personality fits perfectly into the storyline.

By giving all of the characters a chance to give perspective, readers get a more complete picture of what is going on in the story. If the perspective of just one character was presented, it would not provide all of the vital information that readers need to piece all of the details of the book together. This is an especially strong narrative device since this is the third book in a trilogy and details from the previous two books are intertwined in this story. It is almost as if readers are invited to be mind-readers, like Melissa, by seeing the thoughts of the midnighters and having more of the pieces of the puzzle than the characters do themselves.

Setting

The book takes place in the deserts of Oklahoma, specifically the town of Bixby, Oklahoma. It also makes reference to nearby towns such as Broken Arrow, Oklahoma and Jenks, Oklahoma. The book states that the secret hour only takes place in Bixby because of its longitude and latitude. Those geographical numbers make up multiples of 12, a number strongly associated with darklings and slithers. There are practical and superstitious reasons for the setting of the book and the author uses both concepts to round out the details of the book. Setting the book in a place with areas of desolation adds boundless plot opportunities and locations where epic battles of good and evil can take place.

The desert setting is important to the story because it is the housing ground for the darklings and slithers. In the daylight, they hide deep under the sand for protection. It is also implied that the warm desert climate helps them thrive. This is not the type of story that could be set anywhere because the setting lends itself heavily to the plot line. The details of the story would not make sense in any other setting or climate and the author chose Bixby, Oklahoma purposefully. The hometown feel of Bixby is one to which readers can relate on a more complete level than if this particular story had been set in a major city or exotic locale. Bixby has characteristics that are often found in small to



medium towns across the country and as a result, more readers are able to connect their own lives to the setting of the story.

Language and Meaning

The writing is very easy to follow and the story flows from chapter to chapter. The language is very basic, and sometimes even foul, because the characters are young teenagers. This makes the book a fun read, even for adults, because it captures the essence of teenage interactions. The author is careful to make the characters sound their age, even if they are super humans. What may at first seem like a lengthy book becomes a breezy read because of the fun and simplicity of the language.

The narrator gives a lot of background information and combines it with the characters' present day thoughts. Dialogue between the midnighters moves the story along quickly. Details about setting are usually described by the author but the actual events are often told through dialogue instead. This helps the story to move along without weighing readers down in heavy sections of prose. The author wants the story to belong to the characters and relies on their unique voices to move it along. This also enables readers to form closer relationships with the characters and decide which ones they can relate to the best.

Structure

There are 32 chapters of varying length in the book that is nearly 400 pages. The chapters are mostly the same length with the exception of a few more important ones. There are some very short, filler chapters as well. This variety keeps the reader turning the pages and keeps the plot moving along concisely. Each chapter encapsulates an idea or theme, though some are deliberately suspenseful. Blending real-time events with flashbacks to the past gives readers a more complete picture of what everything means in the course of the book.

The main plot of the book is the midnighters' fight against the darklings and slithers who are trying to take over Bixby. The subplots of the book include finding out why the secret hour is occurring outside of midnight, why it is expanding outside of Bixby, and the relationships and struggles between the midnighters themselves. There is also a subplot regarding one of the main characters, Jessica. The story follows her family more closely as Jessica makes the ultimate sacrifice in the end.



Quotes

"Hmm. Maybe kissing is sort of like nature's coffee."
Chapter 1, Page 5

"He felt elated, confident, and powerful, finally cleansed of the fear that stalked him through the halls of Bixby High School every day for the last two years."
Chapter 1, Page 13

"But this wasn't midnight. This was a Monday morning pep rally, which was just about as far away from the magic of the blue time as you could get."
Chapter 3, Page 26

"Wolves didn't eat other wolves, after all."
Chapter 7, Page 94

"The river stretched out before them, motionless wavelets glittering like scales made of diamond, reflecting a shattered imagine of the dark moon."
Chapter 8, Page 111

"She needs to study trigonometry about as hard as a darkling needed to study scary."
Chapter 11, Page 135

"'A timequake.' He looked at her. 'A what?' 'A spontaneous fluctuation of the prime contortion. Releasing the energies built up over the centuries.' 'Um, yeah.'"
Chapter 13, Page 162

"They're Grayfoots, brought up so they'd rather die than be in Bixby at midnight."
Chapter 15, Page 177

"Even here in Madeleine's house Melissa could taste the darklings inside him, as dry as a mouthful of chalk dust leeching the moisture from her tongue."
Chapter 20, Page 223

"Her shame at her own past, her worries that she'd already lost Rex to the darklings, her fear of what Madeleine might do to his mind - all of it squeezed into a single tear."
Chapter 20, Page 230

"The long midnight will happen every Halloween, the rip getting bigger and bigger every



time. From now on, humans are the candy."
Chapter 21, Page 245

"The whole last week had been spent preparing for a battle that seemed unwinnable."
Chapter 23, Page 278

"I'm going trick-or-treating even if it's raining golf-ball-sized hail. Or even golf balls."
Chapter 24, Page 283

"In general, Jonathan, storm fronts don't have minds. So I have no idea."
Chapter 25, Page 288

"Funny. I really thought we'd fixed her memories."
Chapter 27, Page 312

"She struck her own head with her hands, trying to drive the images out, and stumbled half blind across the tracks, dizzy and close to vomiting, her mind caught in the whirlwind of hunger and death."
Chapter 27, Page 316

"Tendrils began to writhe as she approached, slithering from the arms and legs of the small, pale figure in the cave's entrance, abandoning their grasp of the stone spire."
Chapter 29, Page 326

"As the boundary of red time struck the rain, it released vast sheets of water, like a huge crimson tidal wave plowing through downtown Bixby's streets."
Chapter 31, Page 353

"This was what he'd always tried to avoid since the day his mother had departed and not returned: this feeling that if you lost someone, your world would come crashing down."
Chapter 32, Page 369



Topics for Discussion

Who is Rex Greene? What has he changed into? What characteristics about Rex make him the clear leader of the group? Who is Melissa? What relationship does she have with Rex? Why does Melissa go into the pep rally alone? Who does Rex meet in the hallway? What impact does he have on Rex Greene? What do we learn about Rex's past early in the book? Describe the tension between the midnighters? What happens during the pep rally?

Who is Beth? How does Beth affect Jessica? What happened to Cassie Flinders? How does Beth play a role in saving Cassie? Who is Grandpa Grayfoot? In what ways are he and Beth alike? Is Grandpa Grayfoot the enemy? Why or why not? What is Angie's connection to Grandpa Grayfoot? Do the midnighters trust Angie? Why does Rex's plan fail? What does Angie reveal? How is this important to the midnighters? How does Rex respond to being called a monster?

What is Samhain? How is its date significant? What will happen on Samhain? How do the midnighters find this out? Who gives the information to Rex? Why does Rex need Madeleine's help? What happens to Madeleine? What plan do the midnighters come up with? How does Rex know about the 6:30 a.m. eclipse?

How does the time manipulate Dess? What does Dess decide to do? What does Dess discover about the rip? Will the world end like they first thought? What will happen every year on Samhain from now on? How does this affect the midnighters' secret?

What do Beth and Cassie dress up as for Halloween? Where do they decide to trick-or-treat? In what way do these things affect Jessica? What internal battle is Jessica going through? Where do Beth and Cassie end up? Who finds them? How? Why does Beth refuse to leave? Who else arrives? Why does Jessica leave Beth? What happens to Rex, Cassie, and Beth? What idea does Cassie come up with? What image does Melissa share with Rex?

What does Jessica need to do to close the rip? Where does this take place? How is the location significant to her and Jonathan? What does Jessica feel as she gets closer to the lightning? What happens to her? What does Jonathan think? How does Jonathan find Jessica? How is Beth able to see Jessica again? Where does Rex go after Samhain? Where does Dess go? What happens to Jonathan and Jessica? What secret must Beth keep? Why is she allowed to tell Cassie? What is Melissa going to do with her time now?

In what ways do the trials that the midnighters face bring them closer together? Why do you think each character was chosen to be part of the Midnighiter's Club? How does Oklahoma play a role in the book? Why do you believe the author chose an area like Oklahoma for the setting? Which character do you relate to most and why?