

Days of Blood & Starlight Study Guide

Days of Blood & Starlight by Laini Taylor

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Plot Summary

"Days of Blood and Starlight" by author Laini Taylor is a fantasy novel about the battle for peace in the midst of a constant and horrible war. In the world of Eretz, two races have been battling each other since time before memory. The seraphim are angelic humanoids with the ability to fly, but they are just as capable of cruelty as any human. The chimaera are demonic-appearing creatures that have been battling the seraphim for reasons unknown, but inside, they are just as human as the seraphim. Before the novel, a seraph named Akiva fell in love with the Kirin female Madrigal, and they were discovered by The White Wolf, who desired Madrigal's love. As retribution, he executed Madrigal in front of Akiva, and in his rage, revealed to the seraph that the chimaera had the ability to bring back the dead. Akiva survives this encounter and returns to his people, leading them to return to Loramendi, the great city of chimaera. The angels destroy the city completely, and commence destroying all the land controlled by the chimaera.

However, Madrigal's spirit has survived and lived on in human form, in a girl known as Karou to her friends, Zuzana and Mik. The novel opens just as Karou has disappeared after Akiva and his Misbegotten siblings come after her near a bridge in Prague. Karou flees to help the surviving chimaera regroup, and as she is the only one left amongst them capable of resurrecting the dead, Thiago, The White Wolf must tolerate her existence, though he plans to kill her as soon as possible.

As the war continues, Akiva begins to resent his own decisions that led to the destruction of the innocent chimaera. His siblings sympathize with his feelings, and soon begin to help him as he actively warns chimaera of their approaching armies. Thiago, on the other hand, begins sending his warriors into the seraphim empire to slaughter innocents as well, and the war continues to escalate. Akiva comes to realize that the only way he can stop the killing is by assassinating the emperor, which he and his siblings Hazael and Liraz manage to accomplish. Their victory does not last, however, as emperor Joram is quickly replaced by his even more dangerous brother Jael, who has intentions to travel to Earth and use the fighting technology on the distant planet in order to conquer the entire world of Eretz.

Joined by her two human friends Zuzana and Mik, as well as another chimaera friend Liraz whom she thought permanently dead, Karou finds the strength to stand against Thiago, but nearly loses her life in the process. The evil warlord attacks her viciously, and she manages to kill him just as Akiva appears before her with his sister and slain brother Hazael. The Dominion follows them quickly, and the group must prepare for an even greater war.



Chapters 1-6

Chapters 1-6 Summary

In chapter one, it is night time in Prague as Zuzana and Mik watch Kaz talking to a news crew about his recently vanished ex-girlfriend, Karou. According to Kaz, Karou flew away after fighting the angels that attacked her near a bridge. Zuzana is frustrated with Kaz and already dislikes him due to his self-centered nature, so she fills a water balloon with perfume and baking soda, climbs the stairs up the house in front of which the news crew is conducting the interview, and drops the balloon on Kaz's head.

In chapter two, Akiva prepares to enter a portal above Uzbekistan. He worries about Karou and blames himself for the death of her family. He enters the portal and goes back to his world of Eretz, and begins searching for Karou.

In chapter three, Zuzana sends an email to Karou in which she describes her present situation with Mik and sends her her best wishes.

In chapter four, Akiva and his siblings, Hazael and Liraz, are confused about the recent passage of events. They were the angels who attacked Karou near the bridge at Prague. Akiva has recently returned from Earth, after having betrayed them in that encounter and letting Karou escape. Just as he is wondering what they will do to him for his betrayal, they attack him suddenly, and though Akiva understands from how they are fighting that they almost certainly mean to kill him, he knows that he cannot bring himself to harm either of them. They disarm him and ask him what happened to Karou. He tells them she is dead.

In chapter five, Zuzana sends another email to Karou. She tells Karou that she kept Karou from destroying the Earth and begs her to respond.

In chapter six, Akiva looks for Karou in the Adelphas Mountains. He searches a series of caves, and finds a thurible, which can contain captured souls of the dead. On the thurible is a piece of paper with 'Karou' written on it.

Chapters 1-6 Analysis

The novel opens in the aftermath of a baffling mystery, containing a great deal of shortened backstory that involves two worlds. Both viewpoint characters are busy looking for Karou at the moment, clinging to any sign of hope that this otherworldly girl is still alive. Akiva holds out much hope that this is the case, and it is clear he was at one point in love with Karou. His siblings, however, claim to be incapable of love, and resent the fact that Akiva is capable of such feelings, and that he kept such a secret from them. However, Hazael and Liraz are clearly not heartless, and the bond they share between themselves and with Akiva is solid proof that they recognize familial bonds above those of their allegiance to the emperor. They spare Akiva's life because, like him, they could

never imagine taking the life of someone they hold close. They are very likely just as capable of love as Akiva, but have never had the opportunity to find love, as they have been soldiers for their entire lives.



Chapters 7-12

Chapters 7-12 Summary

In chapter seven, Zuzana emails Karou once again, beginning to fear that her best friend is dead.

In chapter eight, Akiva is back in his old life as a soldier in the emperor's war against Chimaera. He dreads going back to the battles, because he no longer believes in the cause. He also knows that Karou's soul is alive and out in the world somewhere, but it was not in the thurible he found inside the caves. He returns to Prague and discovers Zuzana and Mik in Karou's old room. He has also found out that someone has been killing angels north of the empire.

In chapter nine, Mik is together with Zuzana. Mik asks Zuzana if Karou used to collect teeth, which Zuzana confirms. He shows her something on television.

In chapter ten, Bethena and another Seraph soldier encounter an abandoned village and move to see if there are still any living Chimaera inside. They are mysteriously slain.

In chapter eleven, a Field Museum in Chicago has captured proof of a phantom girl. Zuzana follows the story as the girl is spotted in other natural history museums shortly after. The phantom girl is stealing teeth in each separate case.

In chapter twelve, Karou responds to Zuzana's email, letting her know that she is alive. She also says that she is happy.

Chapters 7-12 Analysis

Karou suddenly resurfaces. As so much of the book to this point has been about her, the reader can take her reappearance as a sign that she is the main character, and that things ended in the last book with the other characters in total disarray after Karou's escape from Akiva and his siblings. Zuzana of course misses her friend deeply, and the email is unlikely to provide much reassurance to her that Karou is safe. Karou stealing teeth has not yet been explained, but this is an element to the story that was most likely introduced in an earlier book, and will probably be explained soon.



Chapters 13-18

Chapters 13-18 Summary

In chapter thirteen, Karou wakes up after a dream of Akiva. She is collecting teeth from the museums in order to create revenant necklaces, and she is worried about asymmetry. She has brought Amzallag back from the dead with one leg missing a few days ago, which is what happens when the necklaces aren't completed correctly. She knows how to make these necklaces because she has taken over her mentor's position of resurrectionist. The White Wolf knocks on her door.

In chapter fourteen, the White Wolf is the Warlord's son, and is in control of the remaining army since his father's disappearance. The White Wolf's actual name is Thiago, and he comes to tell Karou that he has nightmares too. He wishes to enter her room, but she stands her ground and refuses to unbarr the door for him. She is still in disbelief that her home town has been destroyed, and knows further that Akiva was responsible for the destruction.

In chapter fifteen, it is revealed that Karou the human was actually Madrigal the Kirin in a former life. Though she was chimaera, she fell in love with the angel Akiva, and recalls his attempt to kill the White Wolf. Thiago had been listening to their plans to end his life, and he set fire to the temple they were in. As they tried to escape, Thiago closes in on them and assaults Madrigal. Thiago then attacks Akiva and tortures him in the prison of Loramendi.

In chapter sixteen, Karou demands the tooth Thiago is holding. He has brought the spirit of Amzallag in a thurible. He enters her room and reminds her that the Chimaera race is almost completely destroyed, and that they must set aside their disagreements for the time. Thiago grabs her tool bag and offers to tithe the pain that will allow them to bring Amzallag back to life.

In chapter seventeen, Thiago attempts to apologize for what he once did to Karou, when she was Madrigal, but Karou is still revolted by his presence. Thiago is grateful to Brimstone, her old mentor, for not allowing her to die completely. Karou has already prepared a new body for Amzallag, which is part deer, part tiger, part man, and winged. Karou is still partly in disbelief over the monsters she is creating. She is making these monsters for revenge against the seraphs, and she is doing it on Earth to hide from the enemy.

In chapter eighteen, a slave caravan approaches a village and discovers bodies strung up on the aqueduct. Fearful, the caravan makes camp. At night, the slaves begin to sing, which frightens the slave traders, and when they try to silence the slaves, they are attacked by Nightmares and killed to the last man.



Chapters 13-18 Analysis

Karou and the Chimaera resistance is detailed, and by this point the reader has more or less every bit of information she needs to know in order for the story to progress. This is why Karou's whereabouts were established, but she told Zuzana that she was happy even though that is clearly far from the case. Thiago may be in charge of the last remaining chimaeras, but he already seems every bit as vile as the forces that destroyed his people. The White Wolf is unmistakably dangerous, and all the more dangerous because he appears to have feelings for Karou. He claims to feel guilty about the way he treated her in the past, but Karou still feels uneasy around him, and remains fairly isolated. However, that may not last long, because Zuzana is determined to find her old friend.



Chapters 19-24

Chapters 19-24 Summary

In chapter nineteen, it is made known there was once a world where an angel and a demon imagined their kind could live without fighting.

In chapter twenty, Akiva, Hazael, and Liraz search the corpses of angels. The angels were slain by the Warlord's former soldiers. They are spotted by a patrol leader named Noam, who describes what he believed happened to the seraphim. They were killed in an ambush, and there no enemies dead nearby. This is part of the slave caravan massacre from a previous chapter. All of the slaves have escaped.

In chapter twenty-one, Sveva wakes up from a nightmare. She had been captured by the slavers who were killed in the surprise attack. She has her badly wounded sister, Sarazal, who has been cut on her leg from the shackles used to imprison her. Sveva tries to wake her sister, but Sarazal is too badly wounded to stay conscious, as her injury has become infected. Suddenly, Rath, another chimaera, appears and exclaims that she has to leave. The seraph are on their way, and he shows her the fires started by the angels. Sveva tries to collect her wounded sister, but Sarazal cannot bring herself to move. Rath grabs her and runs. Very surprised, Sveva follows.

In chapter twenty-two, Zuzana has been able to figure out that Karou has been back to Prague by following the news stories about stolen teet. Neither she nor Mik understand why Karou is stealing the teeth. Zuzana is upset that she has no idea what Karou is up to and also that she doesn't play a role in it personally. As she speaks to Mik, the conversation changes to marriage. Zuzana feels that she is too young to be married, and suddenly realizes the email she received from Karou isn't proof that Karou is happy, but instead a clue about what Karou is doing.

In chapter twenty-three, Karou is the one responsible for finding the kasbah, which is a sort of castle built out of dirt. The chimaera have been using it to move the army she's making on Earth back to her world. A chimaera named Ten greets her in the hall, and takes her to her food. Ten offers to be Karou's assistant, but Karou does not trust her, and she makes excuses to keep her from helping. She finally agrees when she realizes Thiago sent Ten and will not accept Karou's refusal.

In chapter 24, Razor awakens after being resurrected and attacks Karou, since he has no idea what has happened to the chimaera since his latest death. The two begin to fight, but Thiago intervenes and has Ten take Karou back to her room, telling Karou that she is too important to the chimaera to be lost.



Chapters 19-24 Analysis

The separated stories appear to be merging together, since Zuzana now has concrete information that suggests Karou is still alive, and still in their world. It is not clear, however, how the revenants who freed the chimaera slaves will fit into the rest of the story. Neither side of this war represents the side of good. Both the Seraphim emperor and The White Wolf act like tyrants over their respective subjects, and the war appears to result from hate on both sides, even if the chimaera are presently all but destroyed. The devastation of the war makes Earth an ideal hiding place from which Karou and The White Wolf can rebuild an army, but at present, none of the chimaera have brought back feel they can trust her, and her life is more endangered from her own kinsfolk than from the distant

Seraphim.



Chapters 25-30

Chapters 25-30 Summary

In chapter twenty-five, Ten takes Karou to her room, but Karou shuts her out once she is inside. Once alone, Karou thinks about her present situation and considers how likely she is to be safe. She realizes the chimaera will probably never accept her. She draws a picture of Razor attacking her, and wonders about Zuzana, hoping to see them sometime in the near future. She spots Ziri, a fellow Kirin like she once was, and she goes to see where this group of warriors is returning from.

In chapter twenty-six, Ziri spots Karou and ignores her, but only because the White Wolf instructed him to do so. However, he had a crush on her at a younger age, and still finds himself looking at her whenever possible.

In chapter twenty-seven, Rath the Dashnag is still carrying Sarazal and being followed by Sveva as the fires caused by the angels continue to grow. They come across some Caprine, and Rath wants to help them because they might have a healer with them who could help Sarazal's leg.

Meanwhile, Akiva is flying through the air along the border of the Southern Continent. The seraphim are burning large portions of this area. He is deliberately avoiding finding chimaera in order to spare their lives. Hazael asks him who he thinks is behind the attacks on the seraphim, and Akiva knows it has to be revenants. One of his group spots a group of Caprine.

In chapter twenty-eight, Sveva and the others are hiding from seraphim in the area and trying to avoid the fires. Meanwhile, the Caprine Akiva thought they'd found turn out to be aries, which they slaughter. Sveva and Rath listen to the creatures' screams. Sarazal suddenly awakens and screams with them.

In chapter twenty nine, Zuzana recounts a story in the news about a devil-spotting. She finds a report from Bakersfield, California, which she believes to be Karou. She traced the last email Karou sent her to Morocco, and finds a picture taken several days ago in the Atlas Mountains containing the angel shapes she saw before Karou disappeared.

In chapter thirty, Karou discovers that someone has removed the crossbar from her door, making it impossible for her to keep people out. She suspects Ten, who wants to journey with her the next time she goes out for teeth. Frustrated, Karou dives out her window and goes to look for The White Wolf. She is reminded that she is still human when she spots Ziri, still in his original Kirin form. Ten let her know earlier that she could become Kirin once again, and that all they would need to do was kill her and resurrect her as one, but the idea makes little sense because she must be human in order to get supplies for everyone. Thiago appears in the courtyard, with The Shadows That Live, legendary chimaera assassins.



Chapters 25-30 Analysis

Karou continues to cope with her situation, though it is unpleasant in the extreme. Her present circumstances seem bound to collide with the enemy soon, just as Sveva's path is guaranteed to cross Akiva's, though he is expressly uninterested in killing chimaeras any longer. One of the most interesting aspects of the story so far is that, for the time being, angels still represent the aggressor, and they are killing innocent "demons" or chimaeras for reasons unknown. Zuzana, despite her internet searches for odd sightings, still seems far from being able to reconnect with her friend Karou, although she's discovered where her friend most likely is. She still has no idea what kasbah Karou is in, or if she is still presently in Morocco, but Zuzana does seem determined to find and help her friend if she can.



Chapters 31-36

Chapters 31-36 Summary

In chapter thirty-one, a fight breaks out between soldiers at Akiva's camp because one of them wants to add the day's kills to his honor tally, but Liraz argues that killing the innocent should never count towards honor. Akiva and Hazael intervene. The siblings are all ashamed of their work throughout the days lately, because they do not fight warriors, but instead are sent to slaughter children and other helpless victims. Both Akiva and Hazael Sarazal's scream, but they pretend to see no one in the shallow cave.

In chapter thirty-two, Sarazel is recovering slowly, and Sveva is very thankful to Akiva and his siblings for letting them go alive. Meanwhile, the seraphs are having difficulty finding any of the chimaera, in no small part due to Akiva's intentional misleading of them. Kala, a lieutenant in Akiva's group, believes the chimaera villagers are being warned of possible attacks. Akiva, in fact, has been doing just this.

In chapter thirty-three, a guard near the center of the seraph empire discovers that him and his hundred companions have all been killed in the night. They are now spirits. He tells his commander that it was The Shadows That Live.

In chapter thirty-four, Karou is driving with Ten to get more supplies, this time for a celebration. She drives back to the kasbah, and The Shadows That Live return shortly afterwards. Meanwhile, Akiva and his siblings discuss the attack so close to the center of the empire. Liraz hints that she's aware Akiva has been warning villagers. They talk briefly about Jael, emperor Jorand's brother and the leader of the most powerful seraph military force known as the Dominion, and they are all thankful not to be working under him. Afterwards, Akiva takes to the sky to warn more chimaera that the Domion is approaching.

In chapter thirty-five, Karou wants to hear what the chimaera forces have been up to, but Thiago sends her away. Frustrated once more, she resumes her work on resurrection necklaces. With Ten in the room, she uses the invisibility power that Akiva taught her in order to vanish from sight and return to the courtyard and spy on Thiago and his warriors. She listens to what little she can, but is quickly smelled by Thiago.

In chapter thirty-six, Karou flees to a river and becomes visible once again. She is disgusted over what The Shadows That Live have done, and believes that it will only bring more destruction to her people. Ziri finds her, and this time it appears as though he is ready to speak. Meanwhile, Akiva is with Jael, who wants to go after a group of rebel seraphim known as the Stelians. After a brief conversation, Jael excuses himself and tells both Akiva and the Commander of the Second Legion to be ready for war shortly. Back at the Kasbah, Karou watches White Wolf ready his warriors for another assault.



Chapters 31-36 Analysis

The war has escalated rapidly between the seraphim and the chimaera. On the side of the chimaera, it is obvious that Karou is highly dissatisfied with the actions of Thiago, and it appears as though she'll be gaining an ally in Ziri soon, as the two were once close friends, and she has mistaken Ziri's projected disinterest in her for resentment, when in fact it was Thiago who ordered everyone in the camp to stay away from her so that she remains isolated and totally under Thiago's control. The appearance of the Dominion marks a new form of danger for the chimaera, and represents the futility of war, even for the side who appears to be winning, for it is almost certain that the White Wolf has more planned attacks on the empire. It is still interesting to note that no one seems even remotely interested in recalling how the conflict between the two races even began.



Chapters 37-42

Chapters 37-42 Summary

In chapter thirty-seven, White Wolf and his chimaera assault the homes and villages of the angels instead of attacking the seraph soldiers responsible for the slaughter of innocents. One team, however, flies straight into the heart of the enemy army, defying White Wolf's orders. Ziri is with them. Akiva and his siblings are called to fly once again.

In chapter thirty-eight, Karou is preparing a resurrection necklace for Ziri, still hoping he manages to return from the danger.

In chapter thirty-nine, Zuzana and Mik have traveled all the way from Prague to Morocco in search of Karou. Zuzana sees strange lights in the sky which she insists are not stars, but that is only because they look so different in comparison to how they look in her homeland. Zuzana and Mik are going to explore a kasbah twelve miles away, and it is extremely hot and dry in the desert.

In chapter forty, Karou continues to wait for the return of the chimaera soldiers, hoping Ziri is amongst them. Finally, they return, but Ziri is still nowhere to be found. More patrols arrive throughout the day. By evening, she spots two humans approaching the kasbah, alongside The White Wolf.

In chapter forty-one, Sveva's group has come near to her homeland when they spot a patrol of angels. Rath attacks the angels by surprise. Sveva sees him get struck with a sword and rushes to help him. She kills an enemy soldier, and spots another chimaera above the treeline, headed their way. The chimaera quickly destroy the seraphim. Rath sends Sveva along with the remaining survivors from the group, but stays behind to join the rebel chimaera in their fight against the empire.

In chapter forty-two, Akiva and his siblings are before a series of peaks too tall for them to fly over. He suggests to Liraz that they can be merciful to the chimaera despite what they have done. Very nearby, Ziri watches angles set fire to entire communities of chimaera villagers. He was commanded by his group's leader, Baileros, to hide in order to collect their souls after the battle. He watched Rath join the chimaera and even helped to save Sveva. He believes his entire group to be dead, and does his best to collect them inside a thurible. As he leaves, he turns to see three angels watching him.

Chapters 37-42 Analysis

This portion of the novel is broken down into very small sections, because a great deal has taken place. A number of important story elements have been linked together. Most important is Zuzana's discovery of Karou and her group of chimaera in the kasbah. It will be difficult for the chimaera to manage keeping themselves a secret if they have to dispose of Zuzana and Mik, and Karou certainly will not allow them to come to harm. On



the other hand, the two humans may make themselves useful, since Zuzana wanted to find Karou in order to help her in the first place. Also, Akiva has met with Ziri, and seen Rath join the rebels. Word of Akiva's mercy may begin to spread throughout the chimaera and the angels, depending on who gets ahold of that information first. This places Akiva and his siblings in danger from their own side.



Chapters 43-48

Chapters 43-48 Summary

In chapter forty-three, Ziri confronts Jael, along with a dozen other seraphs. They taunt each other briefly, then Jael informs him they are not going to kill the Kirin. Regardless, Ziri attacks and begins killing them. The seraph fight back, but Jael remains insistent that they do not kill him. Jael finally subdues Ziri and demands to know who Ziri's thurible is for. He wants to know who is bringing back the chimaera soldiers. Ziri refuses to tell him, and Jael prepares to torture him.

In chapter forty-four, Karou demands that the approaching humans not be harmed. Thiago believes they may be a danger, so she goes down the path to meet the hikers and take them into the granary, but is stunned to discover they are Zuzana and Mik. She realizes she accidentally gave Zuzana the clues to her location. Instead of the granary, she takes them to the main gate, where the two humans are shocked to meet the chimaera. Thiago agrees not to hurt them, but Karou suspects this is because the humans can be used as leverage against her.

In chapter forty-five, Karou tells Zuzana that Brimstone, Issa, and Yasiri are all dead. Zuzana asks about Akiva, but Karou refuses to talk about him. Despite the danger Zuzana and Mik have placed themselves in by finding her, she is still very glad to see them. She takes them to her room where a body is on the floor, waiting to be resurrected.

In chapter forty-six, Karou explains the body to Zuzana and Mik, then brings the body—of a chimaera named Bast—back to life. This excites Zuzana, who wants to learn how resurrection is done. Karou tries to explain to her that they can't be here with her and that they need to leave. She is surprised when they don't react to her admission of being a chimaera before she was a human. She shows them a drawing of the type of chimaera she used to be, a Kirin like Ziri.

In chapter forty-seven, Zuzana asks Karou what happened between her and Akiva and wants to help, but Karou explains that Akiva is responsible for slaughtering Karou's entire family and more, and that no one can help her. Karou hears Amzallag scream near the portal to Eretz. Ziri has survived and returned through the portal, but has been badly wounded by the angels, and Karou has him taken to her chambers so that she can heal him. Akiva is watching nearby, having followed Ziri, and he is surprised to discover that Karou is still alive.

In chapter forty-eight, Jael is searching for the escaped Ziri, and one of his soldiers takes him to the Fallen known as Razgut, an old seraph disgraced and mutilated long ago.



Chapters 43-48 Analysis

The book's focus narrows sharply as Karou is reunited with her old human friends, and they are somewhat safe for the time being, but that is only due to the fact that Thiago is highly manipulative and will obviously seek to use the humans' safety as a bargaining chip to get more obedience from Karou. Zuzana is adjusting to the scenario quite readily, which comes as no surprise since Karou has been her best friend, and she would be accustomed to expecting that there was something strange going on with the blue-haired girl. Her excitement demonstrates her willingness to help, and to be part of something new and strange to her, as she perceives her normal life as boring. Ziri's escape from the seraph is sudden and dealt with outside of the novel, so it is unclear how he managed to evade his torturers, a fact which must frustrate Jael in the extreme. His encounter with Razgut the Fallen will likely yield very useful information to him, as Karou has mentioned him in passing previously with much regret. Razgut has been to Earth, and knows a great deal about the other world.



Chapters 49-54

Chapters 49-54 Summary

In chapter forty-nine, Karou, Zuzana, and Mik examine Ziri's body and discover he has been fed as. Thiago tries to convince Karou to make a new body for Ziri, but Karou refuses, wanting to keep the one original Kirin inside his original body. Thiago tries questioning Ziri, but he is too badly wounded to speak, so The White Wolf gives Karou permission to try to heal him in his present body. The process takes a long time, and by the end of it, an exhausted Karou loses consciousness.

In chapter fifty, Zuzana watches over Karou, but she is starving, and suggests that she and Mik go down and eat with the chimaera. They each are somewhat concerned about what will happen to them if they get separated, fearing that one of them might be replaced by an impostor, so they come up with the code word "haberdasher," that they are supposed to use when they meet up again, since they have to use the bathroom and refuse to go in front of one another. Karou continues to sleep deeply and dreams of her past life. She misses Akiva deeply. She calls out to him, and since Akiva is very close by, he hears her. He finally spots her through her window, and sees her sleeping next to Ziri. That causes him pain, but he also comes to understand that Karou is the chimaera's resurrectionist, because he watched Ziri being tortured by Jael.

In chapter fifty-one, Karou examines Ziri's healed body. Ziri tells her that Thiago ordered everyone not to talk to her, and that he further blamed her for giving away the chimaera's secret of resurrection, but Thiago was responsible for that. She professes her innocence and Ziri believes her. They hear a scream from outside and Karou suddenly remembers that her two human friends are missing.

Zuzana and Mik are outside in the courtyard, and a chimaera named Virko is imitating the violin sound, which is the source of the shriek Karou heard from her room. Chimaera all around the two humans are fascinated by the instrument. Karou watches them with Ziri inside her room. Ziri has a thurible filled with his team's souls, but they all disobeyed Thiago's orders by attacking soldiers instead of innocents. Ziri also believes that he fell into a trap, because Jael almost certainly let him go alive on purpose.

In chapter fifty-two, Akiva and Liraz watch Jael as they surround a Kirin. Ziri describes how Jael and his seraphs tortured him to Karou. After they split his smile open, thousands of birds dropped out of the sky and separated him from the angels. Ziri escaped at this point, and later found a moth stuck in his armor. He thinks Akiva is the one responsible for his escape, since one of the magical powers Akiva has allows him to summon birds.

In chapter fifty-three, Liraz laments to Hazael that they should have killed Jael while the birds swarmed them. The two have been have been summoned by the captain of the



Dominion, who asks where Akiva is. The two siblings lie and pretend to have no idea where he is.

Karou has gone outside to Zuzana and Mik, who are conversing with the chimaera in the courtyard. The Shadows That Live are present, and Karou hurriedly brings them back to her chambers, having no idea what to do about the soul of the Dashnag that Ziri brought back in the thurible. She does, however, manage to convince Zuzana and Mik to rest.

In chapter fifty-four, Karou leaves her quarters, expecting Ten to be watching, but she finds no one on guard outside her door. She escapes to the river and wonders what Brimstone would do if he were in her situation. Akiva appears before her. Enraged, Karou attacks him, but he makes no attempt to defend himself. She feels as though she has to kill him, but cannot bring herself to continue attacking once she realizes he is trying to stop her. She demands to know what Akiva wants. Akiva had hoped she felt something for him other than hate until he met her eyes. At this point, he realizes all hope between them is lost. He tells her that he came to find the resurrectionist and discovered it was Karou. Akiva tries to explain he went mad with grief when he saw Thiago kill her, but it is too difficult for him to explain, and he tries to convince her that he wants both sides to stop the killing. He shows her the thurible with her name on it. Karou recognizes Brimstone's handwriting, and realizes he meant for her to find this thurible.

Chapters 49-54 Analysis

Both sides of the war are plotting something devastating against the other. Both Akiva and Karou are powerless to discover what their leaders are planning to do, but Karou, at the very least, has a larger number of resources and friends to draw on than she knew previously. With the discovery that Ziri and the others are not as hostile as she had once believed. Thiago is clearly a dangerous adversary, and even the chimaera who do disagree with him are unlikely to stand against him due to how badly they fear him. The growing threat of Thiago makes Zuzana and Mik's presence all the more valuable, but it is clearly becoming too dangerous for the two to remain, even if they seem unaware of the severe danger they are in. The elements of the story through this section are told slightly out of synch with one another, as Ziri's story is only made clear after he regained consciousness. Akiva was indeed responsible for saving his life, but this too is told out of order, as he arrives at the kasbah in search of Karou before the reader is informed that he was able to manipulate the birds into swarming Jael and the Dominion forces. It was known prior to this incident that he was able to use magic powers, but this was a surprisingly powerful display, and one is correct to wonder why he didn't expend the additional effort in attacking Jael, since both he and his siblings seemed to want the emperor's brother dead. He seems more interested in finding out what happened to Karou, since a major reason he spared Ziri appears to be so that he could follow the Kirin.



Chapters 55-60

Chapters 55-60 Summary

In chapter fifty five, Nevo is part of the guards assigned to escort a concubine to the emperor. She freezes briefly after leaving the harem, and the soldiers freeze next to her and wait patiently. She leaves the Silverswords without looking back when Nero and the others drop her off at the gate to the emperor's chambers, and as he leaves, Nero finds himself deeply resenting the Silversword duties, and wishes he never became a soldier. He readies himself for sleep, but the Aleph Gate suddenly crashes open. Nevo rushes towards the emperor, who is shouting in rage. He reaches Joram's bedchamber and discovers many other guards there. Joram is inside, demanding to know who left a basket of fruit in his room. He throws the girl Nevo escorted across the room, killing her when she strikes the wall. He then orders every guard on duty executed.

In chapter fifty-six, Karou wakes Zuzana and Mik to show them a resurrection she expects will greatly surprise the chimaera.

In chapter fifty-seven, Akiva has returned to his fellow soldiers and heard about the fruit basket in the emperor's room. The fruit is said to have been given to the emperor by the Stelians, and all of the seraphs near where Stelians dwell have vanished. The Stelians themselves have declined Joram's request to join the war, which is infuriating to the emperor. Fourteen silverswords were hanged as a result of the incident, even though they had nothing to do with it. Akiva tries to imagine how the Stelians might have managed to make it through the ten heavily guarded gates blocking entrance to the emperor's room. In any case, the Misbegotten are being set to retaliate against the Stelians, and Akiva has come to realize that he must build resistance against the emperor personally. Liraz agrees with her brother that it is time for peace. Akiva plans to kill Joram.

In chapter fifty-eight, Karou has made an almost perfect body replica for the soul Akiva brought her inside the thurible. She begins the ritual just as someone tries to enter the room, but Mik blocks the entrance with a pair of wooden boards wedged under grooves in the room's floor. Karou hurries to pour the soul of the chimaera into the body she's created. The chimaera she is bringing back to life is her old friend and assistant, Issa, who awakens. Karou fills her in quickly, and Issa is surprised and a little disappointed to learn that The White Wolf still lives. Karou answers the door, and it is none other than Thiago and Ten. They see Issa with Karou, and Thiago demands to know how the snake-woman's soul got into the kasbah. Karou tries to blame Ten for not informing her that the soul was in the piles of thuribles already in her room, but they are both skeptical about that accusation. Thiago denies that it could possibly be Issa, but Issa responds by asserting her identity. Thiago, clearly frustrated by the reappearance of this woman, gives Karou a look that reminds her of the day he killed her as Madrigal. She understands that Thiago still wishes her dead.



In chapter fifty-nine, Issa has spent the entire morning summoning snakes to her side. Karou asks Issa if Brimstone is still alive, but Issa does not know for certain. She does know, however, that Brimstone meant for Karou to bring Issa back to life. Issa tells her about the horrors of the war and the last days inside of Loramendi when the tragedy of the mass murder struck. She also insists that the tragedies have been Joram's fault, not Karou's, and that the love she felt for Akiva was not a curse, but a gift, since it allowed her to dream of a time when everyone could live together in peace. According to Issa, Akiva committed the murders against the chimaera out of mindless grief and rage for losing Karou. Karou believes Issa, and also knows that Akiva will not betray the location of the chimaera to the other seraphs, but she also knows that Issa has not told the entire story about what happened in Loramendi.

In chapter sixty, Karou begins to feel happy with her friends nearby, despite the danger they are all in. She has begun trying to develop a rebellion against Thiago, but cannot imagine anyone who would actually stand against him in a fight. Work goes much more quickly with Issa at her side, which at least temporarily pleases Thiago. The White Wolf now wants her friends to stay and help, and when she suggests that they might be leaving soon, Thiago threatens them. He asks again where Issa came from. She deflects the question, and Issa reveals that she has a message for her from Brimstone.

Chapters 55-60 Analysis

The novel's pace, which was already rapid, has begun moving even more quickly. The intersection of several characters has brought about a fundamental change in the war, and Joram's own aggressive policies seem to have landed him in serious trouble with a people he and the seraphim know very little about. They are bound to play a further role in the book, if not another book further into the series, and they are very likely to cross paths with both Karou and Akiva, who are each planning rebellions against their respective leaders, The White Wolf and the emperor. Their goal is not to engage in more fighting, but to bring it to a permanent end. Karou has up to now been very harsh in her treatment of Akiva for his role in the chimaera massacre, and Issa's timely appearance has served as a strong reminder that Akiva was really no more to blame in the conflict than any of them were. In fact, Issa has put almost everything in Karou's life into a new perspective. She hints quite strongly to Karou that Brimstone might even still be alive, since she did not personally witness the older resurrectionist's death. If this were the case, Karou would have found a powerful ally, because most of the chimaera seem terrified of Thiago and would only be willing to stand against him with a stronger leader. Nevertheless, now more than ever, Karou seems to have the support she'd been lacking at the beginning of the novel.



Chapters 61-66

Chapters 61-66 Summary

In chapter sixty-one, Hazael and Liraz wonder how Akiva can reach the emperor to kill him even as security has been tightened. They are concerned that Japheth, Joram's son, will simply take over if they kill the emperor without making it known that seraph were the assassins. They also realize that all of the Misbegotten will be blamed and killed for Joram's death. Rumor is that the emperor is planning a full invasion. Akiva believes that something even more significant is about to happen in the empire from all of rumors floating around. Liraz gives him a scroll. It is from the emperor, summoning Akiva to make an appearance before him.

In chapter sixty-two, Liraz is frightened and wants to flee as they discuss what Joram could possibly want with Akiva. Liraz and Hazael insist on going with him. They fly there and arrive shortly and are treated very poorly by the guards who receive them.

In chapter sixty-three, Karou catches Ziri watching Zuzana and Mik kiss. Karou tells him how the two eventually got together. Karou fears for their lives and wants to remove them from the kasbah quickly. Ziri is going to a gathering called by Thiago, and he promises to tell Karou what The White Wolf's plans are. During the meeting, Thiago changes Ziri over to Razor's group to punish him for disobeying his orders. Thiago's plan is to attack a series of towns along the Tane River.

In chapter sixty-four, Issa has told something to Karou that has given Karou much hope. Ten arrives to give her Ziri's farewell, and Karou realizes that Ziri has been put on Razor's team. Ten suggests there is a good chance that Ziri will not be returning from this particular assault. Karou threatens Ten, but Issa intervenes after Ten threatens Zuzana and Mik's safety. Karou decides to move her human friends from the kasbah as soon as possible. She spends the rest of the day teaching them both to become invisible. She says goodbye to them in the evening and begins her plan with Issa the next day.

In chapter sixty-five, Issa recalls the last days in the chimaera's city of Loramendi. She and the others went into the underground cathedral to die, and the cathedral served as a giant thurible which stored all of their souls for later resurrection. Brimstone expects Karou to find her way back to the cathedral and bring the other chimaera back to life. However, he and the Warlord both understood that Joram would never stop looking for them personally, and that they would place the other souls in danger by trying to join them. They sacrificed themselves so that the other chimaera might be able to live in more peaceful times.

Karou interrupts Thiago as he is planning the next attack and tries to give them all the news that the chimaera are not dead. Ten tries to threaten her again, but Karou is unafraid of the she-wolf now that her friends have escaped. She asks what Thiago's



intentions are in continuing to fight a war against innocent beings, and Thiago responds that his only goal is to kill. Karou then has Issa deliver Brimstone's message to all the chimaera present.

In chapter sixty-six, a guard approaches Akiva and his siblings to say that the emperor is prepared to receive them. Akiva plans to kill the emperor with magic. He, Hazael, and Liraz all put their weapons down, but Akiva has made a separate pair of invisible weapons for them to sneak into the meeting. He still has no idea why the emperor has demanded to see him, but he is concerned that he has been caught helping the chimaera.

Chapters 61-66 Analysis

The plot against the emperor has come suddenly and should be something of a surprise to the reader, but does serve to reinforce the idea that Akiva is committed to stopping the killing of innocents. His bond with siblings Liraz and Hazael is very strong, and while they have not openly confessed their support for him, they clearly understand where he is coming from and look down on the war in much the same way as he does. The rumors they are hearing are not specific, and so it is difficult to tell exactly what Akiva is afraid will happen, but the general idea is that he fears the killings will come to encompass even more innocent victims, and as a soldier, he views the present state of the war as a great shame and dishonor. He has no choice but to appear before the emperor when summoned, or all of his plans will be ruined, and the slaughter will simply continue. The chances that he has been discovered are great, especially since Jael spent a great deal of time looking for Ziri and failed to find him. Meanwhile, Karou's friends have been threatened by Thiago and Ten, and it is exactly as she had feared. Her human companions are not safe here, and have become leverage that Thiago will gladly use to manipulate her with.



Chapters 67-72

Chapters 67-72 Summary

In chapter sixty-seven, Karou reveals that the souls of a great deal of chimaera, are retrievable in the cathedral. Thiago tries to change the subject by demanding to know how Issa's soul arrived in the kasbah. She continued, blaming the soldiers for the retaliatory attacks on the chimaera innocent. She also admits that Baliero's team refused to go along with Thiago's orders to kill innocent seraphim. Thiago responds by saying that the chimaera are already lost and destroyed so the only possible course of action is revenge. Karou searches for faces amongst the chimaera who might support her, and sees very few. Thiago pretends to take her suggestion under advisement, and she realizes he has done this so that she cannot truly have a victory over him in front of the others.

In chapter sixty-eight, Akiva finally meets the emperor, who is being bathed by servants. Jael is also there, which comes as a relief to Akiva because he must killed as well. Japheth, the emperor's son, is also there. The emperor announces that he is sending Akiva to speak with the Stelians in the Far Isles. They are demanding someone named Festival back from the empire, and Akiva suddenly remembers his mother and experiences sirithar, and realizes Joram never suspect him of warning the chimaera. His mother's voice reminds Akiva that he belongs to no one. He asks Joram if he killed his mother, and when he is mocked, Akiva pulls out his invisible weapon and stabs Joram through the heart.

In chapter sixty-nine, Bast comes to Karou's window to inform her that Thiago has taken the sphinxes with Amzallag to the pit. She and Issa go to investigate, but Ten is waiting right outside her door.

In chapter seventy, the emperor dies in front of Akiva. Still in the perfect state of mind for a fighter, Akiva finds himself easily fending off the Silverswords. He and his siblings defeat the emperor's guards without any trouble, but after the brief fight they realize Jael is gone. They wait for the alarm to sound, but none comes. Akiva lets Japheth live, and continues to wait for more guards to arrive. When still no guards show up, he rushes to escape, but is met by Dominion soldiers, led by Jael. They are holding out dried severed hands of revenants and use magic to subdue the three siblings. Jael congratulates his nephew Japheth on becoming the new emperor, but chokes him, then slits his throat. He turns to Akiva and thanks him for killing Joram and making him the emperor.

In chapter seventy one, Karou is at the pit. Amzallag, Tangris, and Bashees, have all been killed, and Thiago is waiting. He sees her and pushes the bodies into the pit. He calls her a traitor and mocks her plan to resurrect all the chimaera still inside the cathedral. Karou realizes that Thiago is still upset that she once chose Akiva over him. He orders the remaining chimaera loyal to him to leave, then grabs her and throws her



knife into the pit. She manages to throw him off of her, but he comes back to pin her to the ground and begins biting her. She grabs hold of a rock and smashes his face in, but still cannot manage to fight him off of her. She remembers her knife inside her boot, which she manages to pull out and stab Thiago with.

In chapter seventy two, Jael orders the former emperor's advisers killed. Ur-Magus Hellas, a powerful magician, stands next to him as one of his co-conspirators against Joram, but Jael orders him killed as well. He has the Misbegotten kept alive, since they must be publicly executed. He intends to blame them for all of the deaths, and the Domion soldiers quickly kill the advisers and the remaining Silverswords in the room. Jael turns to Akiva once Ur-Magus Hellas is dead and congratulates him on summoning the birds the way that he did in order to save Ziri. Jael tells Akiva that he has found Razgut, who has told them about the marvelous weapons on Earth. He wants to know from Akiva why Brimstone was so interested in the human girl, and reveals that he plans to go to Earth and use their technology to continue the war in Eretz against the chimaera.

Chapters 67-72 Analysis

Karou's revelation was not met with anywhere near the fanfare that she had expected, and it is mostly due to the clever posturing of The White Wolf, who still controls many of the chimaera who share his wishes in destroying as many seraphim as he can, regardless of whether or not they are soldiers. Still, there is some hope for her, as several of his followers suddenly realize she has given them the first true hope of a better world. Thus, even though Thiago effectively silenced her with his false acceptance of her revelation, she has made some progress towards her goal of ending the war. The death of the emperor comes suddenly and far more easily than the reader may have expected. Joram may have been a solidier once, but he has become lazy and corrupted with his power, and it was this corruption that led to his downfall. Jael, on the other hand, has remained a powerful soldier, and appears to have been planning his brother's murder for some time, using Akiva to commit the act only because it was easier for him to do so. They may have overestimated Joram, but they have clearly underestimated Jael. And The White Wolf is no less devious. His murder of the sphinxes so quickly after they displayed sympathy to Karou's cause proves that there is very little difference between his lust for power and Jael's.



Chapters 73-78

Chapters 73-78 Summary

In chapter seventy-three, Karou has stabbed Thiago in the throat. She is greatly weakened from the fight, but manages to remain standing. She can hardly believe she has killed her race's hero and leader, and can't bring herself to think clearly. She suddenly hears wings nearby.

Meanwhile, Jael explains to Akiva that the seraphim will be worshipped when they enter the human world. He will use guns and advanced weapons to fight the war against the Stelians and conquer them as well as the chimaera. He brought Akiva in front of Joram knowing that Akiva would kill the emperor. Akiva also learns that Jael was scarred on his face by his own mother, who is the same woman Festival that the Stelians are demanding be returned to them. The Dominion soldiers close in on the siblings. Hazael is stabbed badly. Liraz screams, and a large explosion rocks the world. Far away in Eretz, the Misbegotten gather in the Kirin caves waiting for Akiva to return.

In chapter seventy-four, Zuzana and Mik are in a hotel. Zuzana is still worried about her friend Karou and wants to know that she's okay. She really wants to return to the kasbah and help Karou more. Mik teases her by pretending to ask her to marry him.

In chapter seventy-five, Karou is back in her room, thinking about having just killed the leader of her people. She hears the wings nearby once more. Issa is there as Karou attempts to pierce her ear for pain that a spell requires. They hear another sound, and three figures appear on her floor suddenly. It is Akiva, with Liraz and Hazael, who has been killed.

In chapter seventy-six, Akiva is on the floor with Liraz and Hazael, though Hazael is clearly dead from injuries he sustained in the fight with the Dominion. Liraz begs Karou to save him. Akiva realizes that Karou has been badly hurt and knows immediately that The White Wolf is responsible. Karou agrees to save Hazael and asks for the thurible, but they do not have one. With horror, she realizes that his soul is gone and Hazael is lost.

In chapter seventy-seven, the two seraphs take the news of Hazael's permanent death very badly. Akiva is still trying to comprehend what he did in Astrae during the fight and after Hazael's death. Liraz attacks Karou out of rage. Issa pulls Liraz away and pushes her back to Akiva. Ten comes in to see what the noise is about, and she is followed by The White Wolf.

In chapter seventy-eight, it is revealed that Karou brought the body of The White Wolf back to life after she killed him, because he is absolutely necessary to keep alive. She is deeply disturbed by this decision, but the soul inside the body of The White Wolf is not Thiago's.



Chapters 73-78 Analysis

These chapters begin to establish the adventures the group of protagonists must face during the next installment of the series. Akiva and Karou seem reunited once again, but under less than optimal circumstances, as the fighting now must continue in order to prevent Earth from becoming involved in the conflict. Many of the dramatic events were given out of order to the reader in order to maintain tension, and as a result, many of the encounters at the beginning of chapters appear to back up chronologically in order to cover the points of view of other characters. Akiva's escape from Jael is a perfect example of this literary technique, and reinforces the idea that he is still lost after having briefly entered the mindstate he had sought after his entire life. However, he cannot even begin to enjoy his victory, as it came at the cost of one of his own siblings, who in the end proved more loyal to him than they were to the empire. Hazael and Liraz are clearly capable of compassion, decency, and even love, despite what Liraz said at the beginning of the novel. Also clear is that Akiva's powers are just beginning to become clear even to himself. This will become very important to everyone in the next installment of the story, as they must now prevent Jael's ambitions of world conquest from coming true.



Chapters 79-Epilogue

Chapters 79-Epilogue Summary

In chapter seventy-nine, Akiva focuses on the bruises all over Karou's body. Liraz is besides herself with grief and goads The White Wolf into attacking. The White Wolf, however, is actually Ziri now, who has become disguised in order to help Karou.

In chapter eighty, when Thiago's soldiers returned to the pit, Karou made no effort to run. Ziri approached her earlier to find out what she had done. Karou makes it clear that they will force her to bring Thiago back in any case, and Ziri takes his own life so that he can inhabit Thiago's corpse. Issa knows the truth, but they are keeping the secret from everyone else. She has gotten the souls of Amzallag and the other sphinxes out of the pit and plans to resurrect them soon. Ten has been replaced by Haxaya already.

Back in Karou's room, they decide to let the angels escape.

In chapter eighty-one, it is made known that the connection between the worlds is an extremely strange place.

In chapter eighty-two, Zuzana and Mik are still in Morocco, and Mik is undertaking challenges that he half-jokingly agreed to face in order to marry Zuzana. The local population suddenly begins rushing indoors. Mik spots a TV inside a building and suddenly everyone begins screaming.

In chapter eighty-three, Akiva wakes up, feeling somewhat better. He wakes up Liraz, and they prepare to honor Hazael. They do not know if Jael is still alive, but they gather Hazael's ashes into a jug and make their way to the Kirin caves.

Akiva goes to Karou's room one last time to tell her he's sealing the portals between worlds in order to keep Jael from entering the world of Earth. Karou decides to return to Eretz to continue the fight, because she is ultimately chimaera.

In chapter eighty-four, Karou feels Akiva leave, extremely worried about the consequences of the seraph on Earth. Issa comforts her, saying that it is okay to have fallen in love with Akiva. Unknown to her, the Dominion has already arrived on Earth. Zuzana and Mik have rushed back to the kasbah to warn the chimaera that angels have arrived. Akiva has returned, and offers to help the chimaera fight the Dominion with his Misbegotten.

In the epilogue, the two armies are inside the Kirin caves, and the leaders are worried about how poorly the Misbegotten and the chimaera revenants get along. They prepare for battle against the Dominion the next day.



Chapters 79-Epilogue Analysis

The novel is brought to a conclusion just at the introduction of several unexpected events, most notably the replacement of Thiago and Ten with friends who will support Karou rather than try to destroy her hopes of peace. This drastically changes her situation, and for now the chimaera can be made to follow her example instead of risking total destruction by continuing to attack innocent citizens in the seraphim empire. Since Akiva managed to kill the emperor and flee at the same time as Karou killed Thiago in self-defense, he was able to show up on Earth at the exact right time, just before the Dominion arrived, which puts everyone in a position to begin an epic battle in the next novel.



Characters

Karou

Formerly Madrigal. Karou is a blue-haired human girl who was once a chimaera, a Kirin known as Madrigal. Madrigal was a resurrectionist who fell in love with a seraph soldier named Akiva, and together the two made plans to end the war between their kind. They were discovered by The White Wolf, who desired Madrigal and killed her in front of Akiva as punishment. In her human life, Karou never felt as though she belonged, and she eventually fell back in with Thiago, who needed her talents as a resurrectionist to continue his war. She is fiercely loyal to her ideals and just as loyal to her friends, and though she hates Akiva at the beginning of the story for his role in the destruction of her people, she comes to understand why he did what he did. She is clever, stubborn, and in her position as resurrectionist remains heavily isolated from the other chimaera, though she believes this is because they hate her and it is actually because Thiago has ordered them to stay away from her. She eventually stands up to Thiago and manages to take his life in self-defense, leaving her in charge of the chimaera just as the seraphim invade the Earth.

Akiva

Akiva is a male seraph, and though technically a son of the emperor, he is considered one of the Misbegotten, who is forced to spend his life as a soldier in service of the emperor. He once fell in love with Madrigal, a chimaera Kirin, but was discovered by Thiago, who had Madrigal executed before his eyes. Thiago told Akiva that the chimaera could bring their dead back to life while he was torturing the captured seraph, and Akiva managed to escape and use this knowledge to devastate both the armies and the innocent people of the chimaera. He rapidly grew guilty, and upon discovering that Madrigal lived on in human form as Karou, began actively undermining his side's war effort in order to end the slaughter. He eventually managed to assassinate the emperor, but that only made matters worse as the empire was taken over by Jael, the leader of the Dominion. Akiva is a powerful spellcaster, and nobody truly knows the limits of his abilities, but he seems to get his powers from his mysterious mother, who was a Stelian known as Festival. He is extremely loyal to his siblings Hazael and Liraz, who are aware of his efforts to stop the killing, and eventually join him. He still loves Karou, and tries to grapple with the fact that he has earned her hatred for what he did to her people.

Thiago

Known as The White Wolf, Thiago is a powerful chimaera, son of the Warlord, but whereas the warlord was often benevolent and wise, Thiago seeks only to destroy all the seraphim he possibly can. He is jealous, controlling, and manipulative, ordering all of the chimaera to stay away from Karou so that he might control her more easily. He also



sends his lieutenant, Ten, to spy on Karou to make sure that she is not planning anything that might threaten his power. He also blames Karou for given away the chimaera secret of resurrection when he is the one responsible for giving Akiva that information. He escalates his attacks on the seraphim in ways that horrify Karou and force her to stand against him, but he dismisses her claim that the souls of the chimaera are still alive in the cathedral under Loramendi and tries to kill her when she confronts him. Though he was a tyrant to his people, they viewed him as a savior and a hero, so that when Karou must kill him in self defense, she brings his body back to life with the soul of her friend Ziri inside. In this fashion, she hopes to control the war effort and eventually bring about peace.

Zuzana

Zuzana is Karou's best human friend who, alongside her boyfriend Mik, searches for the blue-haired girl until she finds her in Morocco. She has known all along that her friend was unusual, and is not disturbed by the fact that she was once far from human.

Mik

Mik is Zuzana's boyfriend, who follows her in good nature and seems to adjust easily to the circumstances that follow, including the chimaera, who readily admire his violin playing skills. He is playful, and has a good sense of humor.

Kaz

Kaz is Karou's ex-boyfriend. He seeks attention and fame, and Zuzana dislikes him intensely.

Liraz

Liraz is another Misbegotten, who considers herself a sibling to Hazael and Akiva. She is harsh on the outside, but vulnerable on the inside. She agrees with Akiva that the killing of innocents must stop, and helps him kill the emperor, but is totally grief-stricken when their assault leads to the death of Hazael.

Hazael

Hazael is another Misbegotten who considers himself a sibling to Liraz and Akiva. He is constantly good-natured, and often diffuses confrontations brought about by Liraz' stern temper. He is killed in their attack on the emperor.



Ten

Known as the she-wolf, Ten is Thiago's lieutenant, who intends to learn how to resurrect chimaera so that they may kill Karou. She is loyal to Thiago, but is killed swiftly at the end of the novel and her body is inhabited by a sphinx friendly to Karou.

Amzallag

Amzallag is a chimaera sphinx who agrees with Karou that they should stop killing innocents.

Svevi

Svevi is a chimaera fleeing the seraph army. She is worried for her sister, Sarazal, who is badly wounded and unable to move, but the two are saved by Razor.

Sarazal

Sarazal is a chimaera fleeing the seraph army. She is badly wounded from the shackle that the slavers used to imprison her. She is rescued by Razor, who carries her to safety.

Razor

Razor is a Dashnag chimaera, bred to be a warrior. He helps the group of chimaera Svevi and Sarazal are with escape to safety, then joins the rebel army to continue the fight against the seraphim.

Jael

Jael is the captain of the Domion, the empire's elite fighting force. He is also the emperor's brother, and incredibly devious. He allows Akiva to kill the emperor only to take his place and plans to take over Eretz by using the Earth's technology.

Joram

Joram is the emperor of the seraphim. He is a tyrant, and has grown lazy and careless. He was once a soldier, but is killed by Akiva and replaced by his more capable—and more evil—brother, Jael.



Japheth

Japheth is the emperor's son, who Akiva let live only to face death at the hands of his own uncle, Jael.

Issa

Issa is a serpent woman and an old friend of Mardigal who supports her unwaveringly.

Razgut

Razgut is a Fallen Seraph who has been to Earth and tells Jael of the ways in which humans make war.

Ziri

Ziri is a chimaera and fellow Kirin, like Karou once was. He had a crush on her long ago and begins helping her after he manages to escape from Jael and the Dominion.



Objects/Places

Thurible

A thurible is a container used for storing souls so that they can be transferred into new bodies and brought back to life.

Teeth

Karou must steal ancient teeth for the resurrection necklaces she makes.

Necklaces

Resurrection necklaces play a vital role in Karou's ritual of bringing back fallen chimaera.

Wings

All of the seraphim have wings, and travel is very easy for them, so they cover great distances in short times.

Swords

Swords and knives are the common weapons used in the seraph war against the chimaera.

Seraphim

Seraphim are angel-like humanoids at war with the chimaera.

Chimaera

Chimaera are a demon-like race, but come in many shapes and sizes. They are involved in a war against the seraphim, and losing badly.

Stelians

Stelians are distant cousins of the seraphim with no desire to join their war. They appear to have great magical powers.



Kasbah

A kasbah is a castle-like building frequently seen in Morocco. Karou has led the chimaera to earth and hidden them inside one at the beginning of the novel.

Prague

A major city in the Czech Republic where Karou, Zuzana, and Mik originally come from.

Morocco

A country in northern Africa where Karou hides with the rest of the surviving chimaera.

Eretz

Eretz is the land where the seraphim and chimaera come from. It is not nearly as technologically advanced as Earth, but contains many fantastic creatures.

Kirin Caves

The location of the Kirin Caves are not entirely clear, but they are the place that the Misbegotten come to serve Akiva when Jael becomes emperor.

Misbegotten

Illegitimate offspring of the emperor Joram. They are all soldiers, and they are all treated like slaves. They share a hatred of Jael with a passion, and serve Akiva when Jael becomes the emperor.

Silverswords

Poorly trained imperial guards, given the name because of their shiny but weak weaponry.



Themes

War

The largest theme evident in the novel is war. Though the novel is generally simple in terms of character interactions, its portrayal of the war between the seraphim and the chimaera is anything but simple. Firstly, the reasons for the war are unclear, and neither side even appears to remember why the war began in the first place. Second, the escalation of the war, and the reality that no one ever emerges as a true victor from the conflict, is a stark contrast with the classic view of good against evil, or the good army against the evil army, which is commonly featured in such works. Instead of good versus evil, the war that ravages both sides of the conflict is simply evil in the extreme, and the protagonists seek to stop it before it becomes even more damaging. It has already corrupted the most powerful leaders of both sides—The White Wolf is so far gone that he refuses to acknowledge the possibility of hope even when Karou reveals that many of the chimaera still have a chance at a good life. On the side of the seraphim, war has led to corruption and eventually a devastating play for power by the most powerful warrior in the land—Jael, the emperor's brother, assumes the crown after Joram's death, and seeks only to escalate the conflict further. This novel takes a fairly sophisticated view of war and argues the point that war never leads to a better future.

Racism

Just as the novel deals with the concept of war in a fairly complex way, racism is also approached, though through the symbolic forms of the seraphim and chimaera. It is clear from the depictions of innocent people on both sides that they are far more similar than they would care to admit, but their previously held prejudices against the other race leads them to continue a meaningless fight. Thiago represents the ravages of racism most clearly, as he is so far gone that he refuses to believe any seraphim can possibly be of any good to the world. Jael and Joram hold similar beliefs about the chimaera. Each side simply believes the other must be completely wiped out, which is a theme unfortunately visited countless times here on Earth. The results are never good. Each side suffers huge tragedies instead of victories, and seeks revenge against the other side as opposed to a peaceful resolution. Jael also takes advantage of a form of racism when he realizes that his kind will be worshiped on Earth, since they resemble angels and would be presumed to have been sent from heaven. The protagonists must end this racism in order to end the war between them.

Courage

The courage of the important characters in the novel comes through not in their skills at facing war and combat, though that is certainly common enough for some of them. Instead, each of the major characters holds to his or her principles with unflinching



conviction. In Karou's case, it is the belief that the chimaera can have a better life sometime in the future. For Akiva, it is the knowledge that he can end the senseless slaughter of innocent people. For Zuzana, it is the belief that her friend is part of something very important and an overpowering desire to help her. In all of these instances, the beliefs lead the characters to do what would otherwise be impossible, and a major challenge to the power of Thiago and Jael is issued as a result. The courage of their convictions drives these characters to acts of heroism and sacrifice in every instance, and the novel argues that in order to stand in the face of war and racism, such conviction is necessary or the only changes that will occur is that things will become far worse than they were. Even at the end of the novel, the characters stand ready to face overwhelming odds in order to defend what they believe in.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of the novel is third person, with a few exceptions in which Zuzana writes emails to Karou. The point of view typically follows one of the main characters, typically a protagonist, but can at times break away to describe other events that will be come related to the characters' quest for peace later on. The narrators are generally reliable, except for brief instances when they become overwrought emotionally, as when Akiva believes that Karou will always hate him because of his role in her people's destruction. The story is told primarily through exposition, with a great deal of dialogue and some action. Events are often described in the place of having a character describe them to another character, and these events often form their own chapters and take place out of sequence from the rest of the novel as a result. The book is likely organized this way due to the fact that the major characters are in different places throughout the book, and showing the action in a separate scene is often more effective than simply having one character relay it to another in dialogue. This means that the plot is often advanced to the point at which two characters meet and a story is related from one to another. Do to the large amount of territory the novel covers in terms of geography, the novel is very well constructed as a result of its viewpoint technique. It also helps preserve dramatic tension by withholding information from the reader until a critical encounter occurs.

Setting

Much of "Days of Blood and Starlight" takes place in the fantastical land of Eretz, where angelic beings known as the seraphim conduct a permanent war against the chimaera in hopes of eliminating them completely. The lands once controlled by the chimaera are now almost all entirely in flames, and the few surviving chimaera are desperately fleeing anywhere they believe will hold safety. On the other hand, the seraph live in relative safety. The seraph's capital city of Astrae lies at the heart of their empire, and their emperor is guarded by ten gates and a personal legion of warriors known as Silverswords. As the inhabitants on this land are not technologically advanced, most of Eretz is still undeveloped wilderness, containing many mountain ranges that the seraphim can easily glide over. Magic exists, but not many are skilled enough to use it well. Karou is a resurrectionist, and able to bring back the dead, while Akiva seems to have a wide range of magical powers, many of which have still gone completely undiscovered.

Karou hides her warrior chimaera on the planet of Earth inside of a kasbah, which is a type of castle built mostly out of mud in Northern Africa. The area is large and fairly remote, though Zuzana and Mik do manage to find it.



The novel opens in Prague, a city in Eastern Europe, where a news story involving the sightings of several angels is being reported.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is relaxed and highly conventional. As this is a modern Young Adult novel, the language is completely contemporary and easy to understand. None of the characters speak in an unusual fashion, but each of them is still distinguished through their personalities, which always colors their dialogue. A few unusual words are thrown in here and there from the world of Eretz, such as "thurible," and the names of several types of chimaera, but these words are few and very easy to recognize in the contexts in which they appear. Even the imperial characters such as Joram and Jael speak in readily recognizable fashion, and this allows the story to continue seamlessly without disruption.

The language of the novel tends to be invested towards telling the story as opposed to establishing a realm of fantasy, which is instead accomplished through the actions and situations presented throughout the novel. This makes the book very easy to read and still manages to make it engaging for the audience to which it was geared. It also emphasizes the fact that the major characters are still "human," despite how different they may appear to be. Thus, while keeping the language simple, the author has allowed the reader to more easily identify with the characters involved in every scene.

Structure

The novel is divided into eighty-four chapters and an epilogue. Each of the chapters is headed with a brief sentence describing an important event that occurs. The chapters tend to be very short, averaging about five pages. Some are as short as a few sentences. Given the epic nature of the novel, the structure is very appropriate for the plot, and its brevity serves to rapidly increase the pace of events throughout.

The plot is fairly complicated, being overrun with many important subplots. The war between the chimaera and the seraphim involves rebels on both sides who wish to see peace instead of conflict. On the side of the chimaera, Karou seeks to convince her kind that a better alternative is possible, and hopes to overthrow Thiago. Thiago, on the other hand, seeks to continue killing seraphim, and does not seem interested in any other outcome. Zuzana seeks to help Karou, but her own story contains a further subplot of romance between her and Mik. On the side of the seraphim, Jael seeks to gain the technology of Earth in order to continue the war, while Akiva and his siblings attempt to end the slaughter completely.

The subplots are all constructed in such a way that they come together at the end of the novel, and rather than producing a solid outcome, instead produce the themes and plotlines which will begin the next novel of the series.



Quotes

"And when, three minutes later, a pink balloon plunged from above to land squarely on Kazimir's head, he owed Mik a debt of gratitude, because it was not "bladder tea" that burst all over him. It was perfume, several bottles' worth, mixed with baking soda to turn it into a nice clinging paste." chap. 1, p. 10

"Damn, now I've gone and done it. I've made hello go all abstract and weird. It looks like an alien rune now, something an astronaut would find engraved on a moon rock and go, A strange moon word! I must bring this back to Earth as a gift for my dead son!" chap. 5, p. 25

"The Chimaera's eyes, though Bethena, would be accustomed to the dark; light would dazzle them. Get it over with, she thought, and gave her signal." chap. 10, p. 37

"She was Madrigal of Kirin. She was in love. She was in the grip of a huge, bold dream. For a month of secret nights, she had flown in darkness to the temple of Ellai, where Akiva waited, restless with new love and on fire as she was to remake their world." chap. 15, p. 51

"Akiva, Hazael, and Liraz walked among the dead angels. They didn't speak, only looked, and their silence was brittle with anger. These corpses, they were torn, as mice by cats." chap. 20, p. 68

"How could she have done it: loved Akiva—or rather, thought she had? Because now, whatever there had been between them wore that pall of filth—angel-lover—and looked nothing like love." chap. 25, p. 98

"How could she sleep when anyone could waltz right in? She slept poorly as it was. It struck her then, a swift little thought like the jab of a needle, that she had slept just fine with Akiva only a few feet away, that night in her flat in Prague." chap. 30, p. 121

"Karou pinched awake from some stupor. It wasn't that Thiago didn't want her bothered with details, it was that he flat-out didn't want her to know what he was doing." chap. 35, p. 147

"The Wolf appeared beside her, and Oora pointed downhill, into the distance. Karou had to squint to see what they were looking at, and when she did, she breathd, 'No. No no. No.'" chap. 40, p. 168

"Another shiver went down Zuzana's spine. What had she walked into, brought Mik into? She'd gotten caught up in the mystery and the challenge; of course she'd known something was going on with Karou." chap. 45, p. 190

"Karou's sleep was haunted and dangerously deep. She lost the thread of her days and nights, or her lives—human and chimaera—and wandered through tableaux of memory like they were rooms in a museum." chap. 50, p. 218



"Almost as soon as Nevo settled eyes on her, she tipped slowly sideways. He watched it happen, remembering how slowly she had walked across the skybridge. This was like that, his mind tried telling him, just like that. But then: the rubbery jounce and splay of limbs as she subsided on the floor, the tinkle of her bangles settling, and stillness. The fire of her wings dimmed." chap. 55, p. 256

"The message. Karou was mute. A space hung between them—a silence that was deeper than the music, waiting for her to fill it with a question. What had Brimstone wanted her to know?" chap. 60, p. 287

"The cathedral was the massive cavern that lay beneath the city. Few had ever seen its carved stalactites but the revenants who woke on its great stone tables. Whatever blessings and weddings Brimstone had dreamed for it when first he found it and built a city on it, it had only ever seen the one purpose: revenant smoke and hamsas." chap. 65, p. 312

"They weren't two fighting off eight. They were two cutting through eight. Slight as Liraz was, her first blow dislocated the shoulder of the guard who blocked it. His uff of pain was followed by a clatter as his sword flew from his hand; she didn't finish him as he staggered back but spun toward another guard with a low lightning kick that took him out at the knee." chap. 70, p. 337

"She felt like she was still at the edge of the pit, that fetid darkness threatening to drag her down. She jammed the needle through her earlobe, hard. It served to thrust the memory away again, but nothing could keep it from coming back—and the piercing hurt." chap. 75, p. 369

"That was it, all there was to say. Ziri knew it, too; they didn't have to talk whatifs. It was Ziri who saw what to do and who did it. Karou grasped his intent when he drew his crescent-moon blade; she gasped, tried to stop him." chap. 80, p. 389

"Zuzana's head is on Karou's shoulder, and Issa is on her other side. The Wolf isn't far; Ziri has grown easier in his new body, and, lying back on his elbows beside the fire, he is elegant and exquisite, the former occupant's cruelty absent from his face unless he remembers to try to put it there, and his smiles no longer seem learned from a book." Epilogue, p. 411



Topics for Discussion

Why does Karou think that she hates Akiva? Does she actually hate him? Was she right when she began to believe that she never loved him?

What makes Zuzana so determined to find Karou? What is Zuzana's reaction to Karou when she discovers what has been going on? What does this say about their relationship?

Joram is the father of all of the Misbegotten, but Akiva, Lira, and Hazael don't think twice about ending his life. Why is this the case? Who does Akiva hear when he attacks the emperor and how does this change the fight for him?

Compare and contrast the characters of Thiago and Jael. What about these two is similar? What is different? What does each of them want?

Why does Thiago spend so much effort keeping Karou away from his plans? What does he do to the chimaera that even appear to sympathize with her beliefs?

Temples and cathedrals are mentioned very briefly in the novel, here and there. Discuss what this might mean, and how it relates to Jael's plan to use his appearance as an angel to get help from humans on Earth. (Hint: are the temples and cathedrals mentioned in the book still places of worship?)

Discuss the siblings Liraz, Hazael, and Akiva. Why are they so close to one another? Are their personalities complementary, or do they tend to conflict with one-another?

Briefly discuss how you think Liraz would feel about Karou at the opening of the next novel. Will she still blame Karou for Hazael's death? Will she embrace her new ally?

Why do the Misbegotten vow to serve Akiva after he kills Joram? Why do they view him as their new leader as opposed to Liraz or another Misbegotten entirely?