

Dead Is the New Black Study Guide

Dead Is the New Black by Marlene Perez

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Plot Summary

Dead is the New Black is a novel by author Marlene Perez, and is first in the series of the "Dead" novels. In this novel, Daisy Giordano, the youngest of three daughters in a psychic family narrates the story. Daisy takes readers into the lives of her family and the other people living in the town of Nightshade, California.

As the story unfolds, the readers learn about the many secrets that the family has and that the town of Nightshade has. It starts when Samantha Devereaux, head cheerleader, returns from summer vacation with a whole new look of wearing all black with pale white skin and blood red lipstick. She's also dragging a coffin-like book bag on wheels. It leaves daisy Giordano and her other classmates wondering if Samantha has undergone a transformation or if it's simply a fashion statement.

Suspicious about Samantha really start to heat up when teenage girls start winding up dead and in near death experiences. While Daisy's mom, as a psychic, helps the chief of police solve cases, the two adults are dumbfounded when a dead teenage girl's body goes missing from the morgue. To add to the mysterious circumstances, a sighting of the dead girl around town casts even more suspicion about what's going on in the town of Nightshade.

Daisy enlists her best friend, soon-to-be-boyfriend, and son of the police chief, Ryan Mendez as her sleuthing sidekicks. By the end of the novel, Ryan and Daisy discover that there is a secret society of werewolves, vampires, and banshees in Nightshade. They also find out the identity of the vampire that is sucking the souls out of the teenage girls.



Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

Daisy, the main character, stands in the hallway of her height while watching her ex-best friend Samantha Devereaux walk down the hall revealing her new look. Over the summer Samantha went from being a preppy to looking as if she is dead, with pale white skin, black clothes and dragging a coffin behind her. When Daisy goes home, she is responsible for cooking dinner for her two sisters and her mother. Daisy is the only member of her family that doesn't have psychic abilities. When Daisy's mom comes home she asks her oldest daughter, Rose, to help her on a case. Daisy's mom works as a psychic consultant for the police. Daisy called her best friend Ryan, who is the son of the police chief, to meet her at the diner and bring his father's keys with him.

Daisy and Ryan meet at the diner, but Ryan is late. The waitress, Flo, tells Daisy that the jukebox in the diner turns it off and on. Daisy tells Ryan that she needs his father's keys to get into the morgue to look at a dead body. As the police officer on duty is on a smoke break, Daisy and Ryan go into the morgue. Daisy examines the dead girl's body but doesn't find any vampire fang marks. As the police officer on duty approaches the morgue, Ryan pretends as if he is kissing Daisy. The police officer admonishes Ryan for bringing another girl to the police station to make out with her. Ryan walks Daisy home and Poppy is looking out the window as Ryan tries to kiss Daisy again.

Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

The locket Samantha Devereaux wears around her neck intrigues Daisy. It also foreshadows that Samantha Devereaux might be involved in the case Daisy's mom is working on with the police, which is the murder of a teenage girl. Even though Ryan and Daisy grew up together, Daisy is starting to develop romantic feelings for Ryan, but Ryan has a crush on Samantha Devereaux. This foreshadows a transformation of the relationship between Daisy and Ryan as the novel unfolds. Daisy asking Ryan to bring his father's keys to the police station office also foreshadows Daisy helping her mother to solve the case in her own way, even without psychic abilities.

Daisy's need to get inside of the morgue foreshadows her looking at the body of the dead girl involved in the case by Daisy's mom is helping the police to investigate. What the police officers say to Ryan and Daisy when he catches them suggests that Ryan has snuck into the police station with girls before. Ryan trying to kiss Daisy again and the way they both feel suggests Ryan and Daisy like each other.



Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

Ryan and Daisy are in gym class on a Wednesday. Ryan has not mentioned the kids spent that happened and he seems to be dodging Daisy at any chance he gets. When Rachel, one of their classmates, collapses in gym class, the gym teacher asks Ryan and Daisy to escort her to the nurse's office. Daisy notices that the white streak in Rachel's hair is becoming whiter as she lies on the nurses table. When Daisy returns to the gym, the gym teacher tries to convince Daisy to try out for cheerleading to replace Rachel. After changing her clothes, Daisy finds Ryan waiting for her outside the locker room. When Daisy tells Ryan what the gym teacher asked, Ryan laughs, which changes Daisy's mind and she decides to try out for cheerleading.

Ryan chases after Daisy. He tells her that someone stole the dead girl's body from the morgue the other night. Daisy saves Ryan's life by pulling him out of the street from being run over by a speeding hearse. When Ryan walks Daisy home, he kisses her again. Poppy tells Daisy that Samantha called for her.

Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

The white streak in Rachel's hair and the paleness of Rachel's skin indicates that she is undergoing some sort of transformation, such as that of a human into a vampire. Daisy thinks she can compete with Ryan's crush on Samantha Devereaux by trying out for the cheerleading team. Ryan seems to have something important that he wants to talk to Daisy about, which Daisy assumes is their kiss, but which seems to be something completely different.

Someone stealing the body indicates someone is trying to keep the police from finding out who killed the girl. Daisy knowing to pull Ryan out of the street foreshadows her forming psychic powers. Samantha calling Daisy suggests Daisy knows something about the dead girl.



Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 5 and 6 Summary

When Daisy gets to school the next morning, she realizes Samantha called her the previous night because cheerleading tryouts are today. Daisy tries out and makes the squad. Samantha, her boyfriend Sean and Ryan plan to take Daisy to the Black Opal to celebrate, which is the club stamp the dead girl in the morgue had in her hand.

Daisy arrives home to get ready for her date. Before getting ready, Daisy asks her sister Rose what she knows about the ankh symbol, which is the pendant that Samantha came back to school wearing after the summer. Poppy help[s Daisy get ready for her date and Ryan arrives to pick her up five minutes early.

Chapters 5 and 6 Analysis

Ryan and Daisy are using the celebration as a ruse to investigate the Black Opal. The ankh symbol is an Egyptian symbol that suggests reincarnation, which confirms what daisy believes about Samantha—that she came back from the dead, which is why her appearance changed so much over the summer. Daisy foreshadows that the investigation doesn't go well at the club.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

When Daisy gets to Ryan car, she sees Samantha sitting in the front seat and Sean sitting in the back. Daisy thinks Samantha is using car sickness as a ploy to get Ryan's attention. When they arrive at the club, Rose's ex-boyfriend, Nicholas Bone is working as a bouncer at the front door. Nicholas leads daisy and her friends into the club. While Daisy and the rest are dancing, Daisy spots Rose heading toward Nicholas and start to kiss him. As Daisy tries to follow her sister and Nicholas as they head down the hall of the club, Daisy hears a scream come from the women's restroom. When Daisy enters, a streak of white runs past her and then Daisy finds a dead body on the floor.

When Daisy checks the pulse of the girl, it is faint, but she is still alive. In her head, Daisy hears the girl asking for her help. They call an ambulance and Ryan's dad shows up to question Daisy. Ryan drives everyone home. While taking Daisy home, Daisy spots Nicholas's car and tells Ryan to follow it because she thinks Rose is in it. They follow it to Mort's Mortuary, Nicholas's family business. When Daisy and Ryan go inside, they find vampires, werewolves and banshees getting ready for some kind of ritual. It turns out to be a council meeting of the underworld, where they are discussing the attacks on the young girls. Daisy discovers Nicholas is a werewolf and then Rose sends a message to Daisy telepathically that daisy is in danger if she doesn't leave. A werewolf starts to chase Daisy and Ryan as they run back to his care. When Rose returns home, she and Poppy tell Daisy about the secret society that the 13 founding families of Nightshade founded decades ago. The society makes decisions on the paranormal events in Nightshade.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

It's ironic that Samantha is openly flirting with Ryan when her boyfriend is sitting in the back seat of the car. In another twist of irony, Daisy seeing Nicholas working the front door of the club is interesting because Daisy thinks he is the one that was driving the car that almost ran Ryan down. This indicates that Nicholas is somehow involved in the dead girl's murder and he is trying to eliminate the people involved in trying to solve the case—in this case Daisy and Ryan. Instead of her new uniform of head-to-toe black, ironically, Samantha is dressed in head-to-toe white to go out to the club, which she says symbolizes mourning in China. The streak of white Daisy sees running out of the bathroom suggests it is Samantha that was in the bathroom with the dead body. It foreshadows that Samantha, who comes to the Black Opal often, and is wearing the immortal ankh symbol might be involved in the murders or might know more than she letting on to Daisy and Ryan. It would also explain Samantha's sudden niceness toward Daisy, as in the old adage, "Keep your enemies closer."

When Ryan finds out the founding families are members of the secret society, he seems shocked. This seems to foreshadow that his family is one of the founding families, which also means that his family is either a werewolf, banshee or vampire race.



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

The following morning at school, Samantha hands out the cheerleading uniforms to all the cheerleaders, including Daisy. As Daisy walks down the hall wearing the new uniform, everyone seems to notice her for the first time. When Daisy meets up with the other cheerleaders before the pep rally starts, Samantha gives them all a silver bracelet with an ankh charm hanging from it. As the cheerleaders are forming a pyramid in the pep rally, Daisy sees the missing dead girl in the crowd. As the cheerleaders are changing out of their uniforms, Samantha's mother comes in and tells Sam how dreadful she looks in the outfit she has changed into. This causes Samantha to smile. Samantha also tells Daisy she knows who the dead girl is that made an appearance at their pep rally—a cheerleader from San Carlos High School that Samantha met at cheer camp.

Daisy is heading to meet the cheerleading squad to drive to the hospital to visit Rachel when Ryan pulls her under the stairway. Ryan admits that he likes Daisy and kisses her. When Daisy meets up with Samantha and the other girls, Samantha insists Daisy ride to the hospital with her. When they arrive at the hospital, Daisy makes up an excuse to get away from the other girls and steal Rachel's chart from the nurses' station. Poppy helps Daisy by using her telekinesis to return the file before Daisy gets caught. Poppy and Daisy go into Rachel's room to visit her and notice her condition is deteriorating. It's as if the life is being sucked out of her and the doctors don't know what is causing it.

Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

Ryan and Daisy seem to be getting more serious in their romantic relationship. Samantha giving the cheerleading squad a bracelet with the same symbol as her necklace suggests she is forming more than a cheerleading squad—that she is possibly forming her own secret society of vampires. It appears as if one of the reasons Samantha might change the way she dresses is to get her mother's attention.

Something happened between Daisy and Samantha in sixth grade that caused them from being best friends to practically being enemies. Daisy is hesitant to trust that Samantha is being nice to her now for a legitimate reason.



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

After Poppy and Daisy visit Rachel in the hospital, they meet Rose at Slim's for dinner. Rose looks over the notes Daisy jotted down from Rachel's file and confirms that the doctors don't know what's wrong with Rachel. Poppy confronts Daisy about thinking Samantha is the psionic vampire and that's why she's making all of the cheerleaders wear the ankh bracelets. While they're eating, Daisy sees Ryan walking toward the morgue with another girl. When Daisy puts a quarter in the jukebox and chooses a song, the jukebox plays "Heartbreaker" instead and then Ryan walks into the diner with a redheaded girl.

When Ryan sees Daisy and her sisters, he introduces the redhead to them as Cassandra Morris. Cassandra is the girl that Daisy found unconscious at the Black Opal. Cassandra tells them what she remembers of that night, which is seeing a white light and then waking up in the hospital. Cassandra also reveals that she has a twin sister, which is Chelsea Morris, the dead girl from the morgue. When Cassandra takes off her cowboy hat, Daisy also notices she has a white streak in her, similar to the one Rachel has. Ryan and Daisy take Chelsea home.

Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

It seems as if Daisy is forming psychic abilities of her own. For example, she wills Ryan to come into the diner after seeing him with the girl and he does. In the hospital, it appears as if Poppy is the one that returns the file to the nurses' station, but it might in fact be Daisy who does it. While Daisy thinks Ryan is cheating on her, Ryan being with the redheaded girl suggests that he is hanging out with Chelsea Morris, the now undead girl from the morgue, to try to help solve the case and the mysterious occurrences taking place around Nightshade. It infers that the vampire is Chelsea Morris and that whoever attacked Cassandra could have been trying to attack her twin Chelsea.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

After Saturday morning's cheerleading practice, Daisy waits for Ryan outside of the football locker rooms. Ryan, however, never emerges. Daisy goes home and makes plans to have a girls' night in with her sisters. Samantha calls and invites herself over. Samantha is apologizing to Daisy for spreading the rumors that Daisy's father left town with another woman when Daisy's mom walks in.

Daisy's mom invites Samantha to stay for dinner and to spend the night when she finds out Samantha's parents are out of town. When Daisy takes her mom a cup of tea into the living room, Daisy's mom tells Daisy that her father was working on something secretive when he disappeared. After dinner, while everyone is watching the movie, Ryan shows up at Daisy's house with a gash over his eye. He says he was attacked while doing some research in the library about his family. Ryan tells them he had found an old article from the 1950s about the substitute cheerleading coach, Miss Foster, but didn't get the chance to read the article when he was struck on the head. When he woke up, the article was missing.

Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

It's ironic that after all these years, Samantha chooses now to try to make up with Daisy. Samantha's motive could be real, but it could also be that she's attempting to keep Daisy from solving the mysterious deaths and attacks of teenage girls around town.

The fact that Samantha's dad and Daisy's dad both worked the university and that Samantha's dad published a famous paper after her dad disappeared, suggests that Samantha's father has something to do with Daisy's dad's disappearance. The fact that Miss Foster hasn't aged in 30 years suggests that something is keeping her young, such as sucking the life and energy out of high school girls.



Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

Daisy arrives for Sunday cheerleading practice. She notices the girls all have on the same practice uniform. When Samantha scolds Daisy for being late and not being dressed properly, Miss Foster, the cheerleading coach takes the blame—saying she didn't give Daisy her uniform. After changing in the locker room, Daisy returns to the gym to find Trina, a cheerleader having a seizure on the floor. Daisy notices her bracelet fell off when she was stretching. When Daisy runs for the nurse, she mentions the smell of hairspray, which is a scent she smelled coming from the women's bathroom at the Black Opal too, before she found Cassandra unconscious. One of the cheerleaders also mentions that the school nurse was talking to Trina before practice started. Ryan comes into the gym from lifting weights and invites Daisy to the diner. Daisy invites Samantha to go with them.

Sean meets Samantha, Daisy, and Ryan at the diner. The diner is packed, including the cheerleading squad and the cheerleading coach. When Samantha orders a cheeseburger, she orders it rare and as bloody as possible. Samantha tells Daisy that when Trina showed up for practice that she didn't look good so Miss Foster took her to see Nurse Phillips. Nurse Phillips cleared her for practice. Nurse Phillips is also in the diner and she calls Daisy over to meet some of her friends. Daisy finds out that Nurse Phillips is the singer for the band, Side Effects May Vary, that plays at the Black Opal. This leads Daisy to the conclusion that Nurse Phillips is the vampire because she was present during every attack—at school and at the club. Ryan asks Daisy to the homecoming dance. When they're done eating, Ryan and Daisy follow Nurse Phillips from the diner to the cemetery. She visits the headstone of what appears to be her dead husband. Ryan and Daisy search for headstones for Miss Foster's family members but don't find any.

Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

The smell of hairspray and the fact that the school nurse wears a lot of hairspray suggests she is involved in attacking the teenage girls. The nurse was also in the school when Ryan was attacked in the school library. Since Trina has a seizure while not wearing the bracelet, it suggests that Samantha has given the girls the bracelets to protect them rather than suck the life out of them.

Samantha ordering hamburger as rare and bloody as possible is obviously something new for her because her boyfriend looks at her strangely when she does it. It is also an indication that her transformation might just be from human to vampire.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

When Rose, Poppy, and Daisy return from dress shopping with Daisy, Daisy's mom tells them that Chief Mendez and Ryan are coming for dinner. Daisy decides what she's going to make and is mentally preparing her checklist. One of the things on her mental checklist is a salad and when she turns around in the kitchen, she finds a salad is made and sitting on the table. When she thinks it's missing cheese, she sees the fridge door open and the cheese package float in the air. When Daisy yells at Poppy to stop, Poppy comes into the kitchen and tells Daisy that it's Daisy who is doing it and not Poppy.

Daisy talks Poppy out of telling their mom or Rose about her potential psychic powers until she is sure that she has them. Ryan and his dad come for dinner. After dinner, Daisy overhears her mom telling Chief Mendez that the dead girl was spotted at Slim's Diner. Ryan and Daisy take off for Slim's and find a senior boy from their school making out with Chelsea Morris, who is the vampire's fledgling, and which can lead them to the vampire. They chase her out of the diner as the boy starts to convulse on the floor. As Ryan and Daisy are chasing Chelsea, they run into Miss Foster at her house. Daisy notices she has a pink '57 T-bird in the driveway, which she and Poppy noticed leaving the hospital when they went to visit Rachel.

Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

All along Daisy has assumed that some of the incidents were Poppy induced, but in reality Daisy is coming into her own psychic powers. More clues point to Miss Foster being the vampire, but Daisy wants to make sure she has solid proof before telling anyone that can take action.



Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

After the football team wins the homecoming game, the cheerleaders go to Samantha's house to get ready for the dance. The furniture and paintings are missing from the rooms and walls, but Samantha says they are redecorating. When Samantha notices none of the cheerleaders, except Daisy, are wearing their bracelets, she gets mad. Daisy goes down to the kitchen to make herself an omelet and she finds past due bill notices and a copy of the article about Miss Foster Ryan says he had in his hand when he was attacked. Samantha comes into the kitchen and finds Daisy with the article and explains she found it in Miss Foster's trash. Then, Samantha spots Chelsea Morris standing on her patio. As the girls run upstairs to warn the rest of the cheerleaders, they find Samantha's room empty and a line of cheerleaders walking down the street in a trance toward the high school. Daisy and Samantha fall in line as if they are in the trance as well.

When Samantha and Daisy arrive at the gym, the cheerleaders are standing in formation. At the front is their gym teacher, Miss Foster. Miss Foster has aged considerably since Daisy saw her last. Miss Foster admits she is the psionic vampire and starts sucking the souls out of cheerleaders before Daisy and Samantha's eyes. Miss Foster knocks Daisy out and ties her up in a chair. When Daisy wakes up, she uses her powers to call Rose for help telepathically and to crush Miss Foster with the bleachers. Samantha confirms that the ankh bracelets are what protected her and Daisy from being under the trance. Daisy's family comes in with Chief Mendez and Ryan and Poppy tells their mom about Daisy's powers. They all go to the diner for dinner.

Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

The missing furniture and paintings indicates that there is some sort of financial trouble in the Devereaux household—as if they are selling high-price items to make the money they need. Daisy assumes that if Samantha is the one with the article then she might be the vampire. It appears as if the cheerleaders have been beckoned by the vampire to the high school so that the vampire can suck out their energy as well. Since Daisy and Samantha are the only ones wearing their bracelets, they seem to be exempt from the trance.

All of the clues Daisy and Ryan uncovered led Daisy to the truth—that Miss Foster is the psionic vampire. Daisy knows that if she does have psychic powers, that now is the time to use them. Samantha confirms that she knew Daisy had powers all along and is glad that she is finally using them.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

It is the homecoming dance, which is a week after the original date because of the death of Miss Foster. All of the cheerleaders are back to normal and Rachel is out of the hospital. The white streaks have all erased from their hair. Ryan is voted homecoming king and Daisy homecoming queen.

Chapter 21 Analysis

It is as if Daisy's life has done a complete 180-degree turn. She went from being just another kid in her school to making a bunch of new friends and having her first serious boyfriend. She also helped to save the lives of her fellow classmates and get herself crowned homecoming queen.



Characters

Daisy Giordano

Daisy is a teenage girl, a junior, that attends Nightshade High School in the town of Nightshade, California. Daisy is the youngest of three girls. They live with their mother because their father disappeared under mysterious circumstances.

Daisy is the only member of her family, besides her missing father, that doesn't have a psychic ability. Her mother works as a psychic consultant for the police and her sisters, Poppy and Rose, have psychic abilities as well. Daisy's father also didn't have psychic abilities, but he disappeared years ago under suspicious circumstances. At home, Daisy is the one responsible for cooking meals for her family.

Daisy's best friend is Ryan Mendez, who is the son of the police chief of Nightshade. Daisy and Ryan decide to work together to help their parents solve the case of a dead teenage girl that turns up in the Nightshade morgue and then the dead body goes missing. As the novel unfolds, Daisy grows and matures into the young lady she is, lands her first boyfriend, has her first kiss and learns the meaning of true friendship.

Ryan Mendez

Ryan Mendez is the son of the chief of police of Nightshade. He is also Daisy's best friend. Ryan is tall with green eyes and dark brown hair. Daisy and Ryan have been friends all their lives, but Daisy is starting to develop a crush on Ryan. Ryan, however, has a crush on Samantha Devereaux. Ryan plays football for the high school football team.

Ryan helps Daisy get into the morgue to view the body of the dead teenage girl by stealing his father's keys. From this point on, Ryan is Daisy's sidekick in investigating and solving the murder and the mysterious attacks taking place around town. Ryan helps to transform his friendship with Daisy into a young romance.

Ryan kisses Daisy and he starts to show an interest in Daisy that goes beyond their lifelong friendship. By the end of the novel, Ryan and Daisy are boyfriend and girlfriend and Ryan asks Daisy to the homecoming dance.

Poppy Giordano

Poppy is Daisy's older sister. Poppy is only one year older than Daisy, but is younger than their other sister, Rose. Poppy possesses the power of telekinesis and often picks on Daisy for not having any type of psychic ability, calling Daisy a "norm."



Rose Giordano

Rose is Daisy's oldest sister. Rose attends the local community college in Nightshade. Rose too has psychic abilities, being able to read minds, but Rose does not use her powers to irritate Daisy like Poppy does. Rose's ex-boyfriend is Nicholas Bone, who is the son of the mortuary owner in town. Rose discovers that the reason Nicholas broke up with her is that he is a werewolf and is part of a secret society. He eventually confesses this to Rose and Rose attends one of the secret society meetings.

Mom, Mrs. Giordano

Mom is the mother of Daisy, Poppy and Rose. The author never provides a first name for the mom. Mom, or Mrs. Giordano, is a psychic that works with the Nightshade police to help solve crimes in the town. She believes that her husband's mysterious disappearance has something to do with his work as a professor at the university. When she is not working on a case with the police, she is investigating her husband's disappearance.

Police Chief Mendez

Police Chief Mendez is in charge of the police station in Nightshade. He is also heading the investigation of the dead teenage girl that winds up in his morgue. When the girl's body goes missing, the police chief ramps up the investigation of what happened to the body, along with the other mysterious attacks taking place in town. Police Chief Mendez is also Ryan's father and works closely with Daisy's mother on solving cases.

Samantha Devereaux

Samantha Devereaux is the head cheerleader and the most popular girl in school. When Daisy and Samantha were in junior high school, they were also best friends. Samantha is Daisy's prime suspect as the vampire when Samantha goes from preppy and peppy cheerleader to a cheerleader that looks like a vampire. In the end, it is Samantha that helps Daisy solve the case and stop the real vampire from sucking any more souls out of the cheerleaders and teenagers in Nightshade.

Miss Foster

Miss Foster is the substitute gym teacher and cheerleading coach. She is taking the place of the permanent teacher and coach that is on maternity leave. It turns out that Miss Foster is the vampire that is sucking the souls out of the teenage cheerleaders in town. When Samantha and Daisy uncover Miss Foster's true identity, they work together to kill her—Samantha pushing her and Daisy using her newfound psychic powers to drop a set of bleachers on the vampire.



Nurse Phillips

Nurse Phillips is the school nurse. She is also the lead singer in a popular local band, Side Effects May Vary. At first, Daisy suspects the nurse is the vampire because she is present when all of the attacks take place. Nurse Phillips is even present at the attack at the Black Opal club because her band is playing there the night the girl is attacked.

Chelsea Morris

Chelsea Morris is the teenage girl that winds up in the Nightshade morgue. Her body is also the one that goes missing. The stamp on her hand is what leads Ryan and Daisy to investigate the Black Opal. In the end, it turns out that Miss Foster turned Chelsea into her fledgling, so while under her trance, Chelsea is helping Miss Foster to gain strength from the souls of the teenage girls. Once Daisy kills Miss Foster, Chelsea returns to normal.

Cassandra Morris

Cassandra Morris is Chelsea's twin sister. Cassandra is also the girl who is attacked at the Black Opal the night that Daisy and Ryan are there investigating. Daisy finds Cassandra collapsed on the bathroom floor and saves her life by calling 9-1-1.



Objects/Places

Nightshade, California

Nightshade is the small town in California where the novel takes place. Daisy describes the town as full of strange occurrences and odd inhabitants. Nightshade is formally a frontier town that is a couple of hundred years old.

Slim's Diner

Slim's Diner is a local restaurant in Nightshade. It is where Daisy asks Ryan to meet her at the beginning of the novel. It is also Daisy's favorite place to eat. The diner possesses a jukebox that turns itself on and off and plays the songs that it wants to play.

Ankh

The pendant Samantha is wearing when she returns to school from summer vacation is the ankh symbol. The ankh symbol is an Egyptian symbol that represents immortality. According to the research Rose does for Daisy on the symbol, the tomb paintings in Egypt often show the deities of the afterlife giving the symbol to a mummy, which seems to represent giving them the gift of life. Later in the novel, Samantha gives all of the cheerleaders a bracelet with the same symbol. It turns out Samantha does this as a way to protect them from the vampire.

Black Opal

The Black Opal is a club where a lot of the teenagers of Nightshade hang out. It's also the club where Nurse Phillip's band, Side Effects May vary, plays. The dead and unidentified girl in the morgue is wearing a stamp from the club when Daisy views her body in the morgue. When Daisy and Ryan see this, Ryan recognizes it as the club stamp.

Ryan arranges for Daisy, Samantha, Sean and he to go to the club under the disguise of celebrating Daisy's making the cheerleading squad, but really to investigate the club to help Daisy's mom and Ryan's dad solve the case of the dead girl. While they are at the club, Daisy finds Cassandra Morris unconscious in the bathroom.

Slim's Diner Jukebox

The jukebox in Slim's Diner seems to be possessed. The jukebox plays the music it wants to play rather than the music the patron's request. At different points in the novel,



the jukebox seems to play songs that represent messages to Daisy to help her in solving the case.

Hairspray

The smell of hairspray seems to permeate in all of the cases where the girls are attacked. The smell is what initially leads Daisy to believe it is Nurse Phillips who is the vampire. Because the nurse wears so much hairspray, when Daisy smells the same hairspray when she finds the body at the Black Opal and after a few other attacks, Daisy assumes the nurse is involved.

Giordano Kitchen

The Giordano kitchen is focal point in the novel. First, Daisy is responsible for making all of the meals for the family. Second, it is in the kitchen where Daisy first believes she might possess psychic powers of her own. Finally, cooking relaxes Daisy, which is what leads Daisy to the clue in Samantha's kitchen that breaks the case wide open.

Ryan's Car

Ryan's car plays a pivotal role in the novel as well. The car is what transports Daisy, Ryan, Samantha and Sean to the Black Opal in the first place. The car is also the source of transportation for Ryan and Daisy to conduct the investigation in various parts of town, including getting them back and forth from Slim's Diner.

Nightshade Morgue

The Nightshade morgue is where the dead body of Chelsea Morris is stored. It is also the location where Daisy gets a glimpse of Chelsea's dead body and the clues that lead to Daisy's investigation. The morgue is also where the police officer on duty is attacked and Chelsea's body goes missing from.

Nightshade High School Gym

The Nightshade High School Gym is the main location of many integral parts of the novel. It is where the cheerleaders practice and several of the cheerleaders fall ill. The gym is also the location where Daisy finally uncovers Miss Foster as the vampire and brings Miss Foster's wrath to an end.



Themes

Relationships

One of the primary themes running through the novel is relationships. The novel reveals that even the individuals that make up a family have different relationships among the family members. For example, Rose and Daisy have a closer relationship than Poppy and Daisy. Poppy and Daisy, however, have a unique relationship of their own.

Friendship is another type of relationship the novel tackles. It seems as if Samantha and Daisy were very close friends in junior high school. After Samantha spreads rumors around town that Daisy's father left them for another woman, however, Daisy stops being friends with Samantha. The two girls resume their relationship, however, in high school when they join forces to solve the mystery of the attacks taking place on their fellow classmates.

Romantic relationships are also tackled in the novel. Ryan and Daisy have been childhood friends, but as they go through puberty, their relationship transitions into a romantic one. It is the first time that Daisy has a boyfriend, so it is also her first when she kisses Ryan.

Coming of Age

One of the primary themes that run throughout the novel is growing up and coming of age, even against adversity, such as having a parent go missing or having classmates killed and attacked by a supernatural being. Daisy struggles with the fact that her coming of age does not include gaining psychic powers like those of her mother and sisters. Daisy deals with the responsibilities in life of having a single mother, such as taking on the role as the cook for the family.

Daisy also faces the rite of passage of having her first boyfriend. Along with having her first boyfriend, Daisy experiences her first kiss. Daisy faces the possibility that Ryan might want to have sex with her, so she is also processing these types of feelings and obstacles while trying to solve the case in the novel. She especially struggles as to whether she possesses the psychic powers that she suddenly discovers she might have and learns how to channel them just in time to save the lives of the entire cheerleading squad.

Family

Family is the central theme throughout the entire novel. This is because the storyline is about the lives of this particular family—the Giordanos and their psychic abilities. While every family has their trials and tribulations, Daisy's family has its own family dynamics

that are the same and that are different from those of other families. In the end though, they are a family and they will get through it together, one way or the other.



Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the first-person point of view. The narrator of the novel is also the main character of the novel, Daisy Giordano. The narrator is telling the story as it unfolds, but she also switches back to some past events in her life to provide the reader with some prospective.

The point of view of this novel is an intimate point of view that allows a reader to connect closely with the main character, who also happens to be the narrator of the story. The point of view also allows the author to inject her own opinions into the narration and to expand on the events taking place to her, the members of her family and the people of the town without having to move out of character or interrupt the flow of the narration. Hence the point of view works well with this novel and the author's writing style.

Setting

The novel is set primarily in Nightshade, California. The author never states the specific year or time period. The setting of this novel is important because it is about the mysterious occurrences in this particular town—supernatural occurrences—that sets the scene for the entire plot of the novel. The main characters of the novel are teenagers that work to help their mother and their father solve the mystery of a dead girl, the missing body of the dead girl and the attacks on teenage girls around town.

The setting of this novel works well with the plot. At first, the reader is not aware of all of the family and town secrets that exist. However, as events unfold, one secret after the next is either explained or inferred.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is modern. The language of the novel is not formal and appears to be set in modern times, such as the '90s or 2000s. The language is educated, strong and descriptive enough that it creates a flow that leaves the reader impressed with the words as much as the plot when the novel ends.

The language of the novel is appropriate to the plot because it is accurate to the characters in the novel and the education level of the writer. The novel is not in love with its own words, but it is descriptive enough that the reader finds enjoyment in the words as well as the plot. The language is not difficult to understand, however, and everything is clear in its context. For this reason the language of the novel fits well with the plot of the novel.

Structure

The novel consists of 21 chapters. Each chapter is anywhere from three to 12 pages long. The chapters tell the story both in exposition and dialogue. The author is the narrator and main character of the book, so it seems as if she is injecting her own voice throughout the novel—as if she has become Daisy. This allows the author to provide her own opinions of the events surrounding the setting of the novel, as well as the actions taking place within the plot, but from the eyes and words of Daisy.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows the various relationships between the characters in the novel. The subplots involve coming of age and the trials and tribulations of the family.



Quotes

"Coffin, Mort's Mortuary. Burnished mahogany. Scaled to size for those of us with petite frames" (Chapter 1, p. 2).

"New jukebox. It's a little touchy. It plays what it wants to" (Chapter 2, p. 17).

"Daisy, we need to talk" (Chapter 3, p. 28).

"Saturday night. Something conked Denton on the head, and when he woke up, the morgue had been trashed and the body was gone" (Chapter 4, p. 34).

"I mentioned to Sean and Samantha that we might be heading to the Black Opal tonight, and Samantha thought it might be a great way to congratulate the newest cheerleader" (Chapter 5, p. 48).

"Ancient Egyptian Symbol? I'm pretty sure it represents immortality" (Chapter 6, p. 51).

"Of course. We come here all the time" (Chapter 7, p. 63).

"The culprit is a different kind of vampire, a psionic vampire. Instead of blood, this type of vampire drains its victims of their energy, their life force."
Chap. 8, p. 75

"Yes, Chelsea Morris. From cheer camp. Goes to San Carlos High" (Chapter 9, p. 90).

"The doctors are stumped, Daisy, and it's getting worse" (Chapter 10, p. 102).

"This song is 'Heartbreaker' by Pat Benatar. It seems to be trying to tell you something" (Chapter 11, p. 110).

"Did you get your hair highlighted recently" (Chapter 12, p. 114).

"Why'd you do it, Sam? Why did you tell everyone that my dad left my mom for another woman" (Chapter 13 p. 124).



"Your father didn't leave us for another woman. He was working on something—something secret—when he disappeared" (Chapter 14, p. 126).

"Beauty has its price. It's not easy being the best, the prettiest. Sometimes, sacrifices have to be made" (Chapter 15, p. 136).

"I think the vamp is Nurse Phillips. She was there every time a girl was attacked" (Chapter 16, p. 147).

"Dinner with the parents already? It's the kiss of death" (Chapter 17, p. 152).

"I can just see the county coroner's face when we tell them that the dead girl was spotted at Slim's Diner tonight" (Chapter 18, p. 159).

"Right now we have to warn the other girls that there's a vampire in the vicinity" (Chapter 19, p. 173).

"Well, Daisy, as you so tactfully pointed out, I'm no spring chicken anymore. And the older I get, the more souls it takes to maintain my appearance. Plus, it seems I've worn out my welcome in Nightshade. I need something a little extra to tide me over until I get to the next town" (Chapter 20, p. 177).

"Once a cheerleader, always a cheerleader" (Chapter 21, p. 188).



Topics for Discussion

Who is Daisy? Why does she feel like she is an outsider in her own family? What does Daisy recall about her childhood? What is Daisy's biggest demon that haunts her throughout her life? Why is this important? How does it change her life?

Discuss the relationship between Daisy and Ryan. Are they really in love? Is their love, guilt or a sense of obligation in their relationship? How does Daisy feel about Ryan? How does Ryan feel about Daisy? Why does Daisy think Ryan has a crush on Samantha? What does she do about it?

How does Daisy's father disappear? How does this affect the future of the family? How does each family member react emotionally to his disappearance? Why does Daisy decide her father is missing? Does anyone in the family ever really determine why Daisy's father is missing?

Who is Ryan? Why does he agree to help Daisy in the investigation? Why does there seem to be a strain in the relationship between Daisy and Ryan at times? Why does Ryan hesitate when he finds out that the founding families of Nightshade have a secret society? How does Ryan feel about his dad? How does Ryan feel about his mom? How does the reader know this?

Who is Samantha Devereaux? Why does she continuously try to help Daisy and Ryan throughout the novel? Why do you think the furniture and art pieces are missing in Samantha's house? What happens when Samantha finds out the cheerleaders aren't wearing the bracelets she gave them? Why does Samantha think Daisy has special powers?

Discuss the culture of Nightshade. What impact does the culture have on the characters of the novel? How does it motivate them or hold them back? Why is the culture an issue to the characters? Does the culture have anything to do with the way that the family relationships develop and evolve? What impact does it have on the overall desire to expose the truth as to why the teenagers of the town are being attacked?

What do you think happened to Daisy's dad? Do you think Samantha's father has anything to do with his disappearance? Why?