

Fifty Shades Darker Study Guide

Fifty Shades Darker by E. L. James

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Plot Summary

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Fifty Shades Darker, E. L. James' sequel to *Fifty Shades of Grey*, is an erotic romance novel related from the first-person perspective of protagonist Anastasia (Ana) Steele. Christian Grey and Anastasia Steele have not seen each other for several days, following a sexual encounter that frightened Ana. Ana has begun a new job and Christian contacts her by email, asking if she still wants to attend an art show for her friend, Jose. Ana is surprised but agrees. At the show, Christian is surprised to see a series of photos Jose took of Ana. In those photos, Ana seems happy and relaxed. Christian buys the photos and admits that he wants to be responsible for making Ana look like that. On the way home, he convinces her to give him another chance.

Over the coming days, they spend time together. Ana discovers that Christian has bought the company she works for and she is upset. He says he wants to keep her safe, and that he will buy any other company that employs her. Ana's boss becomes pushy toward Ana, and makes a pass at her. Ana kicks him and rushes away. When Christian finds out, he orders Jack fired.

Christian begs Ana to promise never to leave him. He promises they will engage only in "vanilla" sex, avoiding any dominance and submission. Ana fears that he will not be happy with that situation for the long term. She also knows that he has secrets. She soon discovers that one of them is that Christian's biological mother stood by while her pimp beat Christian and put cigarettes out on Christian's body. He spent days in an apartment with his mother's body after her death. His adoptive mother was a doctor on duty at the hospital after police found Christian and his mother. These are the reasons he fears being touched and has nightmares.

Elena is a friend of Christian's mother. When Christian was a teenager, Elena had sex with him, teaching him about submission and dominance. Until Ana, Christian's only relationships were contractual with him in the role of the dominant. Ana knows these things, but knows that Christian also has an additional secret. She is beginning to feel hopeful about their relationship until Christian reveals that he is a sexual sadist and that all his submissives resemble his mother.

Ana is horrified at this revelation. Later, she talks with Christian's psychiatrist, Dr. Flynn. He assures her that dominant sex was a coping mechanism that is no longer necessary. He reminds Ana that there are no guarantees in life, but believes that Christian can have a healthy sex life within Ana's boundaries.

Christian has proposed by the time he and Ana talk with Dr. Flynn, and Ana agrees to marry him. They gather at the home of Christian's parents to celebrate Christian's birthday, and he makes the announcement. Elena manages to get Ana alone, and she is furious. She says Ana will never be able to satisfy Christian. Ana, by now certain of



her future with Christian, throws a drink on Elena just as Christian enters. He and Elena argue, but Christian's mother, Grace, interrupts them. She hears enough to know that Elena had a sexual relationship with Christian when he was a teenager. She slaps Elena and orders her out.

Once things have settled down, Christian proposes properly to Ana. Meanwhile, a man is watching them, and planning his revenge. It is Jack, and he was responsible for Christian's helicopter crash. He is angry that Christian survived, but pledges to get even.



Chapters 1 - 2

Summary

As the novel opens, Ana is on “Day Three Post Christian” (5). Ana has just finished her first day as an assistant in a publishing house. Her boss, Jack Hyde, says he is pleased with her work and Ana is pleased to have something to focus on other than the fact that Christian is absent. She leaves work and arrives at the apartment she shares with her friend, Kate, who is currently out of town. She receives flowers from Christian.

On Wednesday, Christian sends her an email, offering to take her to see her friend Jose's art show. Ana does not have a car and agrees. They talk over several emails and make arrangements to meet. At home that night, Ana is sad thinking about Christian and the fact that he does not believe he deserves love. After work on the appointed day, Jack invites Ana for drinks but Christian is waiting in a limo outside her building. As soon as she gets in, Christian snaps at her, demanding to know when she last ate. He is furious that she has lost weight. He becomes gentler and she admits that he always makes her feel like a misbehaved child. Christian's assistant, Taylor, drives them to a helipad where Christian's helicopter, Charlie Tango, waits. Christian pilots the craft and asks how Ana is doing. They land and a car takes them to Jose's show.

One of the main pieces of the show is a series of photos of Ana that she never realized Jose had taken. She considers them “invasive candid” photographs, but is not angry. Christian buys them all. He soon insists they leave. They argue but leave. Outside the gallery, Christian roughly kisses Ana and she answers, filled with desire.

In Chapter 2, Christian takes Ana to a small restaurant, orders for them both, and demands that she eat. Ana is angry that he chooses for her and he offers to let her choose the wine, though they both know she does not know anything about wine. While waiting for their food, Ana says that “nothing's changed,” and that she cannot be the kind of person Christian expects (30). Christian counters, saying that they each made mistakes. Ana's mistake was in not using the “safe word” during their previous sexual encounter. (30). Ana says she was overwhelmed, which caused her to forget. Christian's question prompts Ana to consider that she could have stopped Christian during the sexual event that went wrong, which prompts her to apologize. Christian says Ana had talked in her sleep, promising to never leave him. He says he is hurt because she left when they encountered a problem. Ana is amazed by the admission.

Christian says they will return by car to give them some time to talk. Taylor picks them up. Ana is shy about talking with Taylor in the car, but Christian proves that he cannot hear them. Christian says he wants to begin a new stage of their relationship, this time with a more traditional sexual aspect. Christian says that he will ensure that Ana begs him to have sex before their next encounter.



When they reach Ana's apartment, Christian does not go in with her but gives her a gift. She finds her laptop, BlackBerry, and an iPad with lots of books and music Christian chose for her. She listens and sends Christian a message, saying she is moved by the music. They email several times, sparring with teasing tones. Christian's final email is a single sentence, "Dream of me" (44).

Analysis

The capital letters used in "Day Three Post Christian" indicate the importance of the term. The reader who has a working knowledge of the previous novel in the series will know that Ana and Christian have separated, though both are struggling with the separation. Ana has just begun a new job, which she says provides a shift in focus, helping the day pass more quickly.

There are some events and conversations that will not fully make sense to the reader who has not read the previous book of this series. For example, Ana sometimes refers to Christian as "Fifty" or "Fifty Shades." This is a nickname that Ana began calling Christian in the first novel and suggests the many layers of his personality. There are mentions of Dr. Flynn, who is a recurring character from *Fifty Shades of Grey*, Christian's therapist, and an important part of his life.

The problems between Christian and Ana have been related to Christian's sexual history and tendencies. He was introduced to sex by an older woman when he was a teenager, and that teaching has led him to desire domination and submissive roles in his sex partners. Ana was a virgin when they met, and she did not know anything about this kind of sex. In addition, she is torn between the fact that she sometimes likes Christian's actions but is sometimes put off or frightened by them, especially when pain becomes an important aspect of the sex.

As the novel opens, Ana's feelings for Christian are clearly that of a lover, but she is struggling with other aspects of their relationship. Because the novel is written from Ana's perspective, the reader does not know what Christian is thinking or feeling until he tells Ana that he is hurting over their breakup. He says that she made him feel safe when she talked in her sleep, saying that she would never leave him, and that he was hurt when she did leave.

The writing, up to this point, has been fairly innocuous, but that changes over the coming chapters, which give details about the sexual relationship and desires of the characters.

There is an undercurrent of desire in every action and conversation between Ana and Christian, and that desire overrides her anger, frustrations, and fears. That desire is understandable to a point, but critics of the book have argued that the violence and domination are cruel, and that Ana is a victim. However, she is consumed with her desire for Christian sexually and emotionally, and she continues to hope that their



relationship can survive on some compromised level. That hope is one of the book's themes, as is Christian's dominance.

Discussion Question 1

How does Ana feel about Christian as the novel opens?

Discussion Question 2

Describe the emails between Ana and Christian after their evening together. What does this say about the future of their relationship?

Discussion Question 3

What facts about Christian are revealed in these chapters?

Vocabulary

errant, obtuse, platitude, emanating, moot, sullen, personified, subdued, perpetual, constricts, dubious, gratification



Chapters 3 - 4

Summary

In Chapter 3, Christian emails Ana at work, saying that she better be eating. She says she is eating a banana for breakfast and has begun reading Robinson Crusoe on her iPad. Christian counters that she will need more than a banana to give her the strength she will need to beg him for sex. She answers that he is the one who will be begging. That afternoon, she sends another email, saying she is bored. The final sentence in Christian's answer is that her emails on the company computer are being monitored. She is horrified and wonders how Christian knows.

Jack invites Ana to join a group from work at a bar called Fifties. She is amazed at the name. She is meeting Christian that evening, and emails him to let him know where she will be. As Ana is leaving the office, a woman confronts her. She asks Ana what she has that the woman does not, but she refuses to identify herself. She has many of the same features as Ana, and is later identified as Leila. Her wrists are bandaged and she calls Ana by name. Ana is upset by the encounter, and believes it probably has something to do with Christian. At the bar, she becomes distracted by her co-workers and by Jack's attention. Christian and Jack clash briefly as Ana leaves with Christian.

Christian and Ana go to her apartment. He seems about to take her to the bedroom, but asks if she has been taking her pill. When she says she has not, he says they have to eat. They go out to buy groceries and Ana remarks that he seems "very domestic" (65). Christian says he has never cooked before. Ana shows him how to chop vegetables, purposely brushing against him at every opportunity. When the sexual tension is at a peak, Ana pleads with Christian to make love. He agrees, and uses a condom as insurance since she has missed some pills.

In Chapter 4, Ana and Christian lie together after having sex. Christian begs her to never leave him again, and she promises. He then says he needs to eat, and playfully calls her a "wench" (71). As they eat, they talk about Ana's past, including her tendency to take care of other people. Christian says he wants to take care of Ana. Christian reveals jealousy toward Jack, and over the course of the conversation, Ana learns that Christian bought SIP, the company she works for. He says he will buy any company that employs her, and that he feels he is being protective.

The talk turns again to sex and Christian gets some ice cream from the freezer. He asks if Ana has an extra set of sheets, then drips ice cream on her body, licking it off and teasing her to another sexual release.

Later, as they are lying on "sticky sheets" (80), Ana admits that she is frightened by what she feels for Christian, and she fears that he will leave her. He reassures her, and admits to the same feelings. He invites her to join him for a party his father is hosting.



Ana agrees but realizes she has nothing to wear. Christian says he has clothes for her at his house.

Ana dreams about Leila. Christian wakes her, assuring her it was a dream. She tells him about seeing the woman, and he realizes it was Leila. He immediately makes a phone call, ordering someone to find Leila. Ana asks more about her. Christian says she was a former submissive and later got married, but is now missing and cut her wrists, though it seems a cry for help rather than a real attempt at suicide.

The next morning, Christian and Ana argue over money and cars, with Christian insisting that Ana's car was sold for 24,000 dollars. He puts an end to the argument by making a phone call to order that money put into her bank account. They go out for breakfast and then Ana announces that she wants a haircut. Christian takes her to a salon, saying that he owns this one and some others. Ana then sees Christian talking to a beautiful woman.

Analysis

Ana refers several times to her "inner goddess," including on page 68 when she and Christian are about to have sex in her apartment. This inner goddess is a manifestation of her inner thoughts, which are sometimes at odds. In this scene, the inner goddess gives Ana the idea to perform oral sex on Christian, and she does. In other scenes, the inner goddess gives other pieces of advice or takes some action. For example, Christian makes it clear that he is going to make love to Ana and her "inner goddess does three back flips" (85).

Most readers who are interested in the book are also interested in the sex scenes. The casual reader will be gratified by the amount of explicit detail, such as the scene in which Ana performs oral sex. Both the descriptions and the conversations are detailed and graphic. For example, Christian says that he does not want to ejaculate into Ana's mouth and picks her up so that she will stop. The level of detail could become redundant and lose their impact for some readers. Different readers will have different reactions to these scenes.

Christian and Ana talk briefly about a time in Ana's life when she moved away from her mother to live with a man named Ray because she wanted to take care of him. Christian uses this as an example of Ana's tendency to take care of people, even when it is not really her duty. This may be an important part of Ana's character, which drives her to want to take care of Christian. Though Christian is a wealthy man who seems to have everything, he is actually in emotional pain and Ana may feel she has the ability to help him heal. This may be a motivator in her love for him.

As Chapter 4 comes to a close, Ana sees Christian talking to a woman she identifies as "Mrs. Robinson." This is an allusion to a song by the singing duo Simon and Garfunkel, who wrote the song for the movie, *The Graduate*, which is about an older woman who seduces a much younger man. The role of this woman in Christian's life is not explained



fully in this book, but she turns out to be a friend of Christian's mother who taught him about dominant and submissive roles in sex. This foreshadowing through allusion is one example of the abuse Christian has suffered that brought him to this point in his life.

Discussion Question 1

Christian says that Ana has a tendency to try to take care of people. Why is that important in her relationship with Christian?

Discussion Question 2

Describe the sexual tension between Christian and Ana. What literary techniques does the author use to illustrate this tension?

Discussion Question 3

What does Ana learn about the ownership of SIP, the publishing company she works for? What does this say about Christian?

Vocabulary

goddess, tentatively, exquisite, magnificently, implores, wench, croons, recalcitrant, embargoed, lascivious



Chapters 5 - 6

Summary

When Ana sees that Christian is talking to Elena Lincoln, she immediately knows that this is Christian's "Mrs. Robinson" (95). Ana walks out of the shop and Christian follows, saying Elena is seldom at the salon and that he had not expected to see her. Christian admits that he sometimes took other submissive partners to that salon. Christian stops the conversation to take a phone call from Welch, who is Christian's security adviser. Christian's side of the conversation is cryptic.

When he hangs up, Christian says they are going to his home. Ana is furious with his attitude. He refuses to talk more about Elena, saying only that she is in his past. Ana says she wants to get her hair cut, prompting Christian to make a call ordering a stylist to his home that afternoon. He then says that Ana has to stay with him until they find Leila, for her own safety. When she objects, he picks her up. Humiliated, she agrees to walk.

Ana gathers some items from her apartment and they go to Christian's. Ana asks about his business arrangement with Elena. He says he dropped out of Harvard, and that Elena loaned him \$100,000 to begin his first business, leaving him feeling that he owes her. At his apartment, Christian leaves her alone to make some phone calls. She is in the closet when he finds her. He says she can send the clothes back if she does not like them. Ana asks why Christian does not find a submissive who will truly be submissive, but he says he likes that she makes him look at the world differently. She reaches out to touch him, but Christian steps back, obviously panicked. She does not fully understand why he hates to be touched.

Christian presents Ana with a file folder with her name on it. It contains detailed information about her. She is exasperated that he does not understand how she feels about this. The talk turns to money and he reveals that he earns about \$100,000 an hour. They argue more, become wrapped up in desire, but are interrupted by Taylor. Ana is actually glad for the interruption but has to stop herself from wondering what other scenes Taylor has interrupted. Christian announces that he has hired extra security until Leila is located, and that Ana should not go out alone.

Ana comes up with an idea to use lipstick to draw on Christian's body, outlining the areas she is allowed to touch so that she does not cross his boundaries. He allows it. The exercise is filled with desire and Christian is ready for sex by the time they are finished.

In Chapter 6, Christian and Ana have sex, taking time for Christian to wear a condom. Afterward, Ana is surprised to find the lipstick lines are mainly still in place. They talk and then have sex again. Later, Ana showers and is happy with spending the Saturday



afternoon with Christian. Ana looks at some of the clothes available, finding expensive underwear – one with a \$540 price tag still attached.

Ana makes a reference to spanking and Christian asks if that is what she wants. She is not certain and does not answer. He says he will not, even if she asks, which comes as a surprise. There is a steamy scene in which Christian inserts a set of balls into Ana, making her very conscious of their weight inside her. He plans for her to keep them in during the party, and makes references to the sex afterward. He then presents her with a set of diamond earrings and seems relieved when she approves and accepts them.

When she is dressed and joins Christian, Ana finds a security detail waiting to accompany them. Christian gives her an elaborate mask, announcing for the first time that they are attending a masked ball. Christian's mask is simpler, and dark. The event is a fundraiser for a charity called Coping Together. Christian introduces Ana to his grandparents. Christian's sister, Mia, introduces her to some friends. Christian's parents seem happy to see Ana again.

As Christian talks to a man seated at their table, Ana discovers that he is anxious to provide wind-up technology to people in areas without electricity, including wind-up telephones. He is not trying to profit from the technology. During the evening, Ana becomes over-stimulated by the balls, and has to excuse herself to remove them. Ana is sexually frustrated by the situation.

The food is elaborate and the guests are obviously wealthy. More than one woman eyes Christian. One of Mia's friends is obviously rude about Ana's presence. The auction begins. One of the items up for auction is a weekend in Aspen, Colorado, courtesy of Christian. Ana is upset, saying she did not know he owned property in Colorado. She asks if he owns other property. He says they will talk about it later. When the bidding in the weekend goes up to \$20,000, Ana impetuously bids \$24,000 – the amount Christian gave her for the sale of her car. She wins the bid.

Analysis

An important note about Christian's relationships is that he has always focused solely on sex and has never had emotional ties to any of the women he has engaged with. He has sometimes taken them shopping or to the salon for a haircut or beauty treatment, but is not seen with them at public events. Ana is the exception. He has been photographed with her, which could be how Leila found her, and was seen at Jose's art show. This is an important step for Christian, but the entire idea of romance and a public relationship is new to him. Ana cannot believe his insensitivity when he takes her to the salon he co-owns with Elena Lincoln, but Christian dismisses it as a fluke. He does not seem to believe there would have been a problem if Ana had not seen Elena.

The conversations tend to go around in circles, with Ana asking questions or making demands, Christian answering or refusing to answer at all, and Ana feeling that she has not accomplished or learned anything. The author spends a lot of time on the journey



and some readers may be impatient for resolutions long before those resolutions are reached.

Ana has an interesting thought as she and Christian are talking about Leila. Ana asks if she might have been trying to give Christian a message. He says that he can see that message, but only “in hindsight” (111). Ana’s next thought is “QED. No empathy” (111). The term QED is from a Latin term typically used in mathematics, which means that something has been proven. She sees that Christian has no empathy and there is a part of Ana that is disgusted by his attitude. The wording is interesting, but this is also a sign of Ana’s typical response – the feeling that she can save Christian and change him for the better.

The personification of Ana’s subconscious continues with the “inner goddess,” but Ana also talks about her subconscious in personal terms. When she is evaluating Christian’s lack of empathy, her “subconscious crosses her arms and smacks her lips in disgust” (111). The employment of personification is one of several literary tools seen in the novel.

The author spends a great deal of time and imagery in describing the Grey estate on the night of the party. The decorations are elaborate and represent a great deal of money. Ana is skeptical of her ability to fit in, evidenced by her wonder at the elaborate place setting that includes multiple pieces of silverware at each seat. The interesting thing is that Ana does not dwell on her situation, meaning she is not overly uncomfortable in the expensive clothes and setting.

Ana must know by now that Christian is very wealthy, but she still does not seem to comprehend the sum of his worth. She is surprised – and even a little angry – to learn that he has property in Colorado. It seems improbable that she would know much about him at this point, which makes her decision to bid on the weekend unexplainable. She has not even seen his entire apartment, and was surprised only hours earlier to discover that he has a library and billiard room.

Discussion Question 1

Who is Elena Lincoln? How does Christian explain their relationship?

Discussion Question 2

How does Christian allow Ana to outline the areas she is allowed to touch? Why is this important to Ana?

Discussion Question 3

Describe the party Ana attends with Christian. What imagery is used in describing this event?

Vocabulary

evasive, crux, empathy, somber, proximity, exhilarating, goading, synapses, brooding, dossier, mercurial



Chapters 7 - 8

Summary

Christian's first response to Ana's bid is anger; then he becomes pleased with Ana. He slides her touch up his leg until she can feel his erection. She strokes him, her hand hidden, and is wild with desire. At one point, he gasps slightly, which lets her know he is feeling the same level of desire.

Mia has asked Ana to help with the auction, and Ana agrees. When Mia urges her to the stage, Ana discovers that the young women will be auctioning off their first dance to the highest bidders. She is horrified. She knows that Christian is bound to bid for – and win – her dance, but she feels that she is forcing him to spend more money on her than he already has. While waiting for their turns on the auction floor, Mia tells Ana that Christian got in lots of fights when he was a teenager. When it is Ana's turn, Christian starts the bidding at \$10,000. A man Ana does not know bids \$15,000. Christian seems amused instead of angry, and Christian pushes the bid to \$100,000. The other man gives in. When she leaves the stage, Ana chastises Christian, but he still seems amused.

Christian takes Ana to the bedroom that was his. He says he realizes that she is probably overstimulated at this point, and that he will spank her because he knows she is in desperate need of release. He demands that she use the safe word if she needs to. He asks why she wants this kind of sex. Ana counters, asking if she has to know why. He says he merely wants to understand her. Christian strikes Ana 12 times and then drives her to orgasm with his hand before having sex with her.

They return to the masquerade just as the dance is about to begin. Christian and Ana dance before the man who bid on her interrupts. Christian introduces Dr. John Flynn, and leaves them together for the next dance. Ana fishes for information, but Flynn refuses to say anything. When Christian returns, Ana teases him, saying Flynn told her everything. Christian says he is certain she will be ready to leave now, and seems serious. Ana panics and assures him that Flynn said nothing.

Ana excuses herself to go to the restroom. She goes back to the tent to collect her handbag and encounters Elena Lincoln. Elena says Christian loves Ana, even though he probably does not know it yet, and threatens Ana if she hurts Christian again. Ana is furious. She counters, saying that Elena sexually abused Christian when he was 15, and that Elena is the cause of some of Christian's problems. Christian enters just as she walks away. Later, she hears him on the phone with Elena, saying that he is involved in a "regular relationship" for the first time in his life and tells her to leave Ana alone. Christian asks Ana not to let Elena spoil their evening. Ana decides to agree.

Christian's father, Carrick, dances with Ana. She realizes that he is trying to find out if she could afford the \$24,000 donation she made earlier. She assures him she has the money and wants to make the donation. They talk briefly about Christian, with Carrick



offering some information about Christian's childhood. He then says Christian seems very happy with Ana, and that he hopes that happiness continues. Christian and Ana stay for the elaborate fireworks show, and the announcement that they raised almost two million dollars. When they reach the car, a body guard named Sawyer has an envelope addressed to Ana. In the envelope she finds a threat from Elena. Christian is furious. At home, Sawyer stops Ana and Christian from entering the apartment, saying someone has vandalized the Audi Christian bought Ana as a graduation gift, and that Taylor fears someone might be in the apartment. Christian leaves Ana with Taylor and goes in.

In Chapter 8, Ana wakes and discovers that Christian is not in bed. She sees a figure at the foot of the bed, but it is gone when she turns on the light and she puts it down to her imagination. A short time later, she and Christian return to the room and the balcony door is open. Ana relays seeing the figure and Christian calls security. Taylor and another agent enter. Christian says he and Ana are leaving the apartment, and orders Taylor to search until he finds Leila.

When they reach the garage, Ana asks how Leila could have known the Audi was hers. Christian responds that he bought Audis for all his submissives. He then says that "despite what I hoped," Ana had never become a submissive, meaning her Audi was a graduation gift (179). Ana latches onto that comment, feeling that Christian would never be happy with her in any other role. Christian reassures her that he no longer wants her in that role.

Christian and Ana arrive at the hotel and use Taylor's credit card to check in. The clerk greets them as Mr. and Mrs. Taylor. Once in the room, they make love. Ana remembers to be amazed at how far they have come in their relationship. He is amazed that she has not run away because of the danger. She assures him there is nothing that can make her leave, though her subconscious puts up the idea of him striking her. The next morning, Christian calls Dr. Greene to give Ana a shot in lieu of the birth control pill she stopped taking. Dr. Greene asks if Ana is certain she is not pregnant, and does a pregnancy test before administering the shot. Ana is shocked at the thought she could be pregnant. Later, Christian questions her about her mood and she finally reveals the momentary fear, heightened because she feared his reaction. In the shower, Christian allows Ana to wash off the lipstick lines, outlining where she was allowed to touch him. He is tense and her heart breaks that he has been hurt so badly that he cannot stand to be touched. She tells him he is worthy of love, though he argues that he is not. She then says she knows he loves her, and he agrees.

Analysis

In this section, the reader glimpses the first scene involving the violent sex that the novel (and trilogy) is known for. Christian and Ana are in a bedroom in his parents' house. They are both over-stimulated and Christian says he will give Ana the kind of sex she is asking for, though he previously pledged that he would not. He then demands that she remember to use the safe word if she needs it. Then Christian ties her up and



holds her down. “His palm leaves my behind and lands hard, just above the junction of my thighs. The pain connects directly with the ache in my belly” (153). Christian strikes Ana 12 times, and Ana finds release. Those who censure the book say the author is making domestic violence into something sexual, but proponents argue that case, saying this is consensual and pleasurable for both Christian and Ana. It is up to the reader to evaluate and decide.

Ana apparently does not like Dr. Flynn, but the reader does not know why in this installment of the series. She calls him a charlatan. She will later change her view, at least to some degree.

The author uses italics as a method of distinguishing between Ana's thoughts and her words. Her thoughts appear in italicized words, making it clear that she only thinks those words and does not say them aloud. In addition, the author uses traditional punctuation, including quotation marks, so the reader can distinguish the words Ana says aloud. This is an important distinction in some passages, especially when Ana is assimilating new information about Christian.

Elena's threats to Ana are important on several levels. First, she seems to be making it clear that she has a close relationship with Christian, which is tantamount to staking a claim on him. She is also making it clear that she has known Christian longer than Ana. Ana does not let Elena's threats go unanswered. She pledges that she can take care of herself, but she then goes on the offensive, basically calling Elena a pedophile who preyed on an innocent young boy and made his life worse. Christian reveals some background information, saying that he never liked to be touched, and that it was doubly hard for a teenage boy dealing with hormones. He says Elena helped him learn coping mechanisms. This is apparently news to Ana, who knew only some basic information about Christian's childhood before this.

Ana encounters a discrepancy in what Elena says and what Christian says about the Saturday Ana left Christian. Elena says she saw Christian that day, and that he was heartbroken. Christian assures Ana that he did not see Elena, and he is angry that she questions him about it. Ana obviously wants to believe Christian because it means that he did not run to Elena to be consoled. Much later, Ana learns that Christian and Elena only talked on the telephone, and that Elena manipulated it to sound as if she had seen Christian.

Some basic information is revealed in this section of the novel regarding Christian's early life. He was taken to a hospital when he was young. He was malnourished and the first doctor who cared for him, Dr. Grey, wound up being his adoptive mother. Carrick reveals that Christian did not speak for the next two years. The reader also learns that Christian plays piano and has two adoptive siblings, Mia and Elliot.



Discussion Question 1

What is Ana's reaction when she finds out how she is helping with the auction? Describe the scene that follows.

Discussion Question 2

Describe the threats Elena makes. What is Ana's reaction?

Discussion Question 3

What is Ana's reaction when Dr. Greene suggests she might be pregnant? Why does it affect her this deeply?

Vocabulary

cathartic, persona, eradicating, basking, dispassionate, tryst, eclectic, charlatan, self-deprecating, insidious



Chapters 9 - 10

Summary

In Chapter Nine, Ana is ecstatic that Christian has admitted his love for her. They make love again, and Ana is amazed at how gentle he can be. They go out, and Christian stops at a dealership to buy Ana a new Saab instead of the Audi that was vandalized. She says he does not have to, but he insists that he owes her a graduation gift. They settle on a Saab 9-3, and the dealership promises to have it available soon. They get back in Christian's car and decide on lunch next. Ana evaluates the situation, happy to know that she is not afraid that Christian will “punish” her, no matter what (207). She believes he is comfortable with the situation as well.

When they reach the restaurant on the marina, Christian lets Ana choose her drink and food, but she agrees to eat what he's ordered. They talk over the meal like they never really have before. Afterward, Christian takes Ana to his boat. She is surprised to learn he named it after his mom. Christian says he has never had a woman on board, except his mother. Liam McConnell is on board, and Christian introduces Ana as his “girlfriend.” Liam, known as Mac, accompanies them as they leave the berth under engine power, and then revert to sails. They anchor in a cove and Mac goes ashore, leaving them alone for awhile. They have sex, reaching climax together.

In Chapter 10, they return to the marina. Ana has thought about the situation that prompted her to leave Christian a short time earlier. Though she remembers the horror that led to her decision, she believes that she could not leave him again because he has said he loves her. She still has to wonder if he will be happy with this tame version of their relationship for the long-term. Over dinner, Ana addresses that. Christian says he is not changing more than he is willing. He says he still has the desire to punish her, but finds it is not difficult to ignore. He remembers what prompted her to leave him, and says he will avoid anything that might make her leave again.

At Christian's apartment, Ana greets Taylor, having just learned that his name is actually Jason Taylor. She is friendly with him, teasing him about using his credit card earlier. Christian is upset at the banter. Ana finds all her belongings have been moved to Christian's room. They have an argument about Ana's plans to go to work the following day. Christian does not want her to go. Ana insists. Christian says she need never work again. Ana knows that she has known Christian for five weeks, and that she cannot let him support her. Christian agrees that she can go to work if she takes Sawyer with her. Ana gives in to that demand, but is angry.

Christian takes Ana on a tour of the apartment. When they reach the billiard room, Ana suggests a wager. If she wins, Christian will take her to the “playroom,” which is where he normally indulges his sexual encounters playing the roles of dominate and submissive. They begin to play. Christian says that if he wins, he plans to spank Ana and have sex with her on the billiard table.



Analysis

There is another instance of personification in this section when Ana is again talking about her subconscious as a person, and this time the subconscious is smiling. Ana notes that her subconscious usually has her lips pursed in disapproval. While Ana is projecting her inner thoughts on a personified subconscious, these are really her own thoughts and fears. That means that she is often subconsciously disapproving on some level. Later, Ana's subconscious reminds Ana that Christian is not going to be happy with this tame version of life for long, and that Ana is going to have to make some compromises. She pushes the thoughts away.

Christian is not good at showing his emotions, which is why Ana is surprised when he says that he “adores” his mother, Grace. Ana has evaluated his attitude toward his mother as indifferent, but Christian says that she saved him when he was a child. This is another reference to Christian's childhood, which is revealed only in bits in this installment of the series. His mother died and Christian was alone with her body for days. He was in a serious health crisis when he was rescued, and his adoptive mother, Grace, was on duty when Christian arrived at the hospital. Christian now says to Ana that he owes his life to Grace. The author intermittently drops in pieces of information about Christian's past, acknowledging that some readers may not have read the first book of the series. This is a common literary tool used in series.

At one point on the boat, Christian is overly solicitous and Ana teasingly asks, “Who are you and what have you done with Christian?” (220). He responds that Christian is, and always will be, close by. That seems to indicate that this version of Christian is a front, and that Christian is fully aware of it. It seems impossible that he can change so completely and maintain that change forever. Ana keeps having the same thought, but she refuses to closely examine it or really consider what it means. She remembers a time when Christian chased her around his apartment, and the “hideous aftermath” when he caught her (222). Ana claims to love him, but she wants him to change. Christian claims to love Ana, but has been forced to make dramatic changes in order to keep a relationship with her. Many readers will feel the hopelessness of the situation at this point, but the author keeps adding an undertone of hope because of the love each claims to have.

Jason Taylor is an important part of Christian's life. He oversees the security for Christian, which is more important when Leila is threatening them. He sometimes drives Christian to destinations and often dictates routes and other details in an effort to keep Christian safe. He seems like a kind man, and Ana likes him. At one point, Ana teases him, which makes Christian furious. He says that she knows he is jealous, and that she cannot have that kind of friendly relationship with his employees. The next time Ana encounters Taylor, he is subdued, indicating that Christian may have reprimanded him. This seems to be another point of contention between Ana and Christian, and serves as an indication that his jealousy will always make him suspect the worst when it comes to men in Ana's life.



Discussion Question 1

Describe Taylor and the incident involving Ana's teasing. What does this say about Christian?

Discussion Question 2

List some situations in which Christian is still domineering. What is Ana's reaction to these situations?

Discussion Question 3

What has been revealed about Christian's adoptive family up to this point? What is his relationship like? Keep the list and modify it at the end of the novel.

Vocabulary

jubilant, absolution, liberating, loathing, alienated, swathes, reciprocate, plethora, melancholy, briskly, avuncular



Chapters 11 - 12

Summary

Christian wins the billiards game and announces that he is going to spank Ana with a ruler. He points out that she has been sending mixed signals, hinting that she would like this kind of sex. He pauses in the midst of the foreplay, demanding that she agree to tell him if she wants him to stop. She asks if there is a safe word, but he says that she will just tell him. He says that lovers have no need of a safe word. He then picks up the foreplay, teasing her until she is anxious for release. He hits her several times with the ruler, until she tells him to stop. When she does, he stops and they have sex. Afterward, Ana says that she likes having sex with Christian, whether it is rough or gentle. Later, they take a bath together. Christian says he is happy Ana told him when to stop.

The next morning, Christian's housekeeper, Mrs. Jones, provides Ana with breakfast and a lunch for work. Sawyer accompanies Ana to the car and Taylor drives her to work. Ana apologizes to Taylor for her "inappropriate remarks" the previous day, but Taylor assures her he did not get into trouble.

At work, Christian sends Ana an email, reminding her that she cannot talk about him as the new owner. Jack tells Ana that he wants her to go to a symposium with him in New York. They will have to stay overnight. Ana is excited, seeing it as an opportunity for her to learn. She alerts Christian by email, but he refuses. Ana is furious, saying that people in love trust each other. He does not respond but shortly after she books her flight, Jack says a new rule has just been handed down from management regarding travel, and not to book the flight. Ana sends Christian another email, begging him to not interfere in her job. He says he does not trust Jack, and does not trust Ana's ability to deflect unwelcome advances. Jack soon announces that Ana cannot attend the conference.

Jack asks Ana to get him some lunch. She knows Christian does not want her to leave the building without one of the security men escorting her, but she runs out for a sandwich. Christian calls, berating her for leaving the building, which makes Ana certain that he is having her watched. She says he is suffocating her, which catches Christian's attention. That evening, Christian and Ana have a heartfelt talk. Christian knows that Jack's assistants never last more than a few months because Jack is a sleaze ball. Christian says he loves Ana and just wants to protect her. She urges him to try to lessen his control, and he pledges to try. Ana agrees to move in with him.

In Chapter 12, Taylor announces that Elena Lincoln is waiting to see them. Ana wants nothing to do with Elena. She can hear the conversation between Elena and Christian, and accepts that their sexual relationship is in the past and that they are friends. Further, she knows that Elena is Christian's only friend. Ana and Christian continue to work toward getting to know each other, though Christian's complexity is a challenge.



Meanwhile, Ana has discovered that Jack continues to be a problem. He constantly invades her personal space and makes obvious advances. He continually invites Ana out for drinks after work. Ana hates that Christian was so right about Jack, and looks forward to discussing the situation with Kate upon her return.

Ana has agreed to move in with Christian, though they have not set a time for that. Ana's friend, Kate, is on vacation, but Kate's brother, Ethan, arrives in town. He and Ana meet so that Ana can give Ethan the key. Ana plans to go to the apartment after work to ensure that Ethan is settled in. She and Christian make plans to have dinner with Ethan as well. Christian picks Ana up after work but Christian gets an urgent phone call just as they arrive at Ana's and Kate's apartment. Ana goes upstairs alone, leaving Christian to finish his call, and finds that Leila is there instead of Ethan. Leila has a gun.

Analysis

Many of the chapters end in mid-scene, and pick up again in the following scene. Chapters 10 and 11 are examples of this tactic. As Chapter 10 comes to a close, Christian has declared what he will do if he wins. In the first sentences of Chapter 11, he does win. This type of cliffhanger is typically used to entice readers to continue reading rather than stopping at the end of the chapter.

Ana's feelings toward Elena are understandable, and they constantly color the mood of the story. Ana feels that Elena's sole role in Christian's early life was one of abuser. Elena is much older than Christian and he was a teenager when they began their sexual relationship. What Ana cannot understand is that Elena helped Christian through a harsh period of his life by providing an outlet. Readers may not approve of the method, but Christian does not see his history with Elena as a negative aspect of his life. However, this is typical of victims, who are often unable to see their abusers in any negative connotation. Whether Ana is seeing the situation clearly or if her perspective is colored by jealousy is left to the reader to decide.

While many chapters of the story end with sexual tension, the author chooses dramatic suspense as the cliffhanger ending for Chapter 12. Again, the goal is to keep the reader moving forward into the following chapter.

An interesting aspect of the language is seen in a term several of the characters repeatedly use. Christian often ends his conversations with the word "later," instead of "later." When Ana talks to Ethan again, he is using the same term, and says he picked it up from Christian's brother, Elliot. The author is apparently making the conversations seem real because some of the conversations are stilted.

Discussion Question 1

Describe the scene in the billiard room. What imagery does the author use to create a mood for this scene?



Discussion Question 2

Describe how Christian's actions and attitudes have begun to change. Do the changes seem realistic?

Discussion Question 3

What kind of character is Ana? Is she believable? Is she likeable?

Vocabulary

derriere, mantra, ambles, apex, reiterate, convictions, deft, mellow, vigilance, proximity, disingenuous, wanton, innately



Chapters 13 - 14

Summary

In Chapter 13, the first few minutes are very tense as Ana worries that Leila might have hurt Ethan. Christian and Taylor rush into the room. Christian takes on the role of the dominant, and Leila falls to her face on the floor. Christian takes the gun and orders Ana out of the room. Ana can only see that Christian is comfortable in his role as dominate, and feels that he needs this in his life. She is frozen in place, and Taylor has to carry her from the room.

In the lobby, she discovers that Ethan has just arrived and is safe. Ana tells Taylor she and Ethan are going for a drink together. Taylor objects, but does not insist. Ethan and Ana have several drinks together. Ana is obviously upset, and grows more so when she sees Dr. Flynn arrive and then leave with Christian carrying Leila wrapped in a blanket.

Ethan walks Ana back to Christian's. She has had a lot to drink, and finds he is on the phone and is frantic. He is immediately angry at her, but Ana says that seeing Christian with Leila made her realize she cannot be everything Christian needs. She wants to tell Christian she needs some time to think but he grows frantic, begging her not to leave. Then he falls to the floor and Ana realizes he has taken on the role of a submissive.

In Chapter 14, Ana is horrified to see Christian on his knees. She drops to the floor to be on his level, hoping this will bring him out of his submissive role. She tells him that he cannot think she is going to leave him, but that she does need some time to think, which she never gets. As she talks, she realizes that her main problem is that she does not know why Christian is attracted to her. She is relieved when he snaps out of the submissive state.

They talk, and Ana assures Christian that she will not leave him. Christian allows Ana to touch him in places that had previously been off limits. Ana begs Christian to tell her this secret that he is hiding. He gives in, saying that he is a sadist and revealing that all his submissives have the same general features as his biological mother. Ana is upset because this means that they will never be compatible. Christian counters, saying that he is working through the situation with Dr. Flynn, and that he now finds the idea of hurting Ana repulsive. He says he never wants to endure the pain of losing her.

Ana is skeptical that Christian can undergo such a dramatic change. When Christian says he has feared Ana would leave once she knew the depth of his secret, she "hisses" out a furious rejoinder. He is hurt but she is tired, and asks for time to sleep. He again asks if she is going to leave, but she shouts that she is not leaving, and admits that it feels good to yell. She calms, and asks how she can possibly convince him. Christian says she can marry him. Ana's first response is hysterical laughter, but she then tells him she has to have time to think things through. She says he has proposed



because he is afraid she will leave. He says the proposal is because he has finally found someone he wants to spend his life with.

Christian heats up some macaroni and cheese. As they eat, Ana asks what he did with Leila in the apartment. Christian says he gave her a bath because she was so dirty. He says she was childlike, but Ana knows that Christian and Leila have had a sexual relationship, and the idea of him giving Leila a bath upsets her. Christian continues to beg Ana for reassurance, but she insists that she needs time alone to think. She changes for bed, and gives in to tears once she is alone in the bathroom.

Analysis

The author manipulates moods in some cases, though this literary device is not seen often in this novel. One major example, however, is seen in Chapter 14 when Christian emerges from his submissive role. Ana realizes that he has come out of the role, and she is relieved. To convey that relief, the author again personifies Ana's subconscious by saying, "My subconscious staggers back into her armchair, sagging with relief, and takes a large swig of gin" (325). Later, Ana talks about her subconscious throwing the bottle on the floor. All the subconscious emotions continue to mirror Ana's own emotions, and they each contribute to the mood.

Some readers may find the language unpalatable. There are lengthy sections devoted to sexual encounters and many of the scenes include curse words. The author is apparently attempting to keep the dialogue realistic, but the sheer number of curse words is sometimes distracting from the overall action of the novel.

Ana continues to waver, which is understandable on some level. She has a myriad of fears and concerns, and all these inner conflicts contribute to her development as a character. Some readers may find her unlikeable or unbelievable because she cannot seem to make up her mind about her relationship with Christian.

Christian reveals that the secret he has been keeping from Ana is that he is a sadist. Casual readers may not understand the term or why Ana is so upset at the revelation. From Ana's perspective, this means that Christian cannot be happy with a long-term relationship that does not include the domination and violence that Christian has sought out up to this point. What seems unbelievable is that she has seen all the signs of his violent nature and knows that he has always participated in domination and submission. Having experienced these encounters first-hand, it seems that Ana overreacts when Christian puts a title on his sexual proclivities.

Discussion Question 1

What is the secret Christian reveals? How does Ana react?



Discussion Question 2

What does Christian do to get Leila under control? Why does this bother Ana?

Discussion Question 3

Describe Ana's subconscious. Why does she put her emotions off onto this personified subconscious?

Vocabulary

eon, ill-kempt, ethereal, wraith, precarious, blanches, rescinding, crux, prostrate, palpable, feral, panacea



Chapters 15 - 16

Summary

In Chapter 15, Christian holds Ana, pleading with her not to cry. They sleep in the same bed, with Christian holding her. Ana wakes around three a.m. She is hot and thirsty. She goes to the kitchen for juice and spends a few minutes thinking. She rushes back to the bedroom when she hears Christian screaming. She wakes him from the nightmare. He is upset, repeating that she had left him. Ana explains where she was, and their embrace turns passionate. Abruptly, Ana remembers Christian saying that all his submissives look like his biological mother. She tells him to stop. He does, and then allows her to touch him. She asks about his nightmares, and why he hates to be touched. He talks about his early childhood, which was filled with physical abuse. His biological mother's pimp sometimes put cigarettes out on Christian's bare skin. He says his biological mother, whom he refers to only as the "crack whore," did nothing to prevent that abuse.

Ana wakes late the following morning and has to rush. She is still 15 minutes late for work. Jack snaps at her several times during the day. She emails Christian several times, though he repeatedly admonishes her to use her BlackBerry instead of her work computer. Jose calls her, saying he plans to deliver the portraits Christian purchased, and would like to spend a night in town. He wants to visit with Ana. She promises to get back in touch with him. At another point in the day, Mia calls. She says the family is gathering for Christian's birthday and they want Ana to attend.

Jack demands that Ana stay late, deriding her for various things throughout the day. That evening, just before time for him to catch a cab for his flight to New York, Jack corners Ana in the kitchen at their office. He seems threatening.

In Chapter 16, Ana realizes that Jack is out of control and that there is no one to help her. He says he has seen emails from Ana to Christian, but cannot find any emails from Christian to Ana. He questions how that is possible and suggests Ana might be a corporate spy. He then demands that she give him sex to show gratitude for her job. Ana waits until he touches her, then twists his finger and kicks him in the groin. He falls to the floor and she rushes outside. The adrenaline wears off and she sinks to the ground. Christian and Taylor are at her side in an instant. Ana gives them the basic information. Christian is furious. Taylor rushes inside but Ana convinces Christian to remain with her for a few minutes. He makes a phone call, ordering someone to delete any of Ana's emails off the company server, and to search Jack's computer for copies of the emails. He makes another phone call, demanding that Jack be fired immediately. He then insists Ana get in the car and he goes inside.

Almost a half hour later, Jack leaves the building with a cardboard box, escorted by a security guard. He gets into a cab. Christian and Taylor arrive and Christian is obviously furious. When they get home, he calms somewhat. Ana is upset, feeling that Christian



has overreacted until she understands that he was terrified at the thought that she could have been hurt. He hints at something else that was found on Jack's computer, but refuses to say what it was.

Ana says that Jose is planning to visit. Christian initially refuses to let Jose stay with them, but Ana points out that Jose is her friend, and that she has a right to friendship. She compares it to Christian's relationship with Elena. She also points out that Christian has asked her to move in with him, and even to marry him, meaning this apartment would become her home. Christian agrees that Jose can spend a night with them.

Christian says he has to work for a couple of hours. Ana wanders through the apartment, bored. She goes to the "playroom." She has not been there since things got out of hand with Christian weeks earlier, prompting her to leave. Ana is surprised the door is open. She wanders around, looking at things, and cannot identify most of the items. Christian arrives and says again that he does not want to do anything that might hurt her. Ana becomes aroused as Christian describes some of the devices, including a large bar meant to be used to tie and spread her arms and legs. Ana says she enjoys being tied. Christian refuses to take the conversation farther in the playroom. He compares it to a recovering alcoholic. While he does not crave that kind of sex any longer, he does not want to put himself in a tempting position. He picks up Ana and the spreader, and carries them to the bedroom. They pass Mrs. Jones on the way, and Ana waves. She does not believe Christian even notices the housekeeper.

In the bedroom, Ana performs oral sex, bringing Christian to orgasm, and then he does the same. He then uses the spreader and they have sex, but Christian urges her to tell him if she wants to stop at any point. They are exhausted by the time the encounter ends and Christian releases her from the spreader.

Analysis

Christian has several employees who move freely about his home. They apparently know about his sexual lifestyle and do not show any disapproval. With Christian's attitude, it is likely that anyone who mentioned it would be fired. The housekeeper named Mrs. Jones is apparently a very professional woman, as is Taylor. Taylor had to search the playroom when they were looking for Leila and it seems possible that Mrs. Jones cleans the room. That makes it clear that Christian has not entirely hidden his sexual preferences from everyone, even though they would not be accepted in mainstream society.

Ana wants to have some time with Dr. Flynn. She is skeptical that Christian will be able to make a complete, abrupt change in his lifestyle with no desire for the submissive and dominate sexual roles. She hopes that Dr. Flynn will be able to give her information. From this, it seems clear that Ana believes these are more than roles that Christian plays, but that they are ingrained and part of his character.



The author uses a different font and format when Christian and Ana are sending emails to each other. Each begins with a line entirely across the page to define it from the previous text and to separate the emails from each other. There are a series of four headings at the beginning of each email: From, Subject, Date, and To. The information on these differ, depending on the author and time stamp, but the subject lines also change from one to the next, usually leading into the coming email or responding to some aspect of the previous email. For example, in one email, Ana uses the subject “trying,” and explains that she is “trying to work” for her “trying boss.” (365). The emails also have signatures that differ. For example, Christian's emails usually end with “Christian Grey, CEO, Grey Enterprises Holdings, Inc.” But after Ana refers to his “twitchy palms,” Christian signs his email, “Christian Grey, Twitchy Palmed CEO, Grey Enterprises Holdings, Inc.” (364).

Discussion Question 1

Describe the emails between Christian and Ana. How does their correspondence on email differ from in person?

Discussion Question 2

What does Christian say about his nightmare? What does this reveal about his childhood?

Discussion Question 3

Describe the confrontation between Jack and Ana. What leads up to the confrontation? How is resolution reached?

Vocabulary

confessional, nape, intrigued, gesticulate, radically, compulsion, guileless, euphorically, placating, presumably



Chapters 17 - 18

Summary

In Chapter 17, Christian allows Ana to drive her new car to work. He rides with her and then walks from the parking garage to her office. On the way, he reminds her that they are meeting with Dr. Flynn that evening. Ana says she plans to have a list of questions. Christian says he can answer any questions she has, and is obviously worried about the meeting. Ana offers to cancel. Christian says he fears she will leave him. She counters that she will not. He asks why she hasn't yet agreed to marry him. Ana says she wants to know for certain that she will fulfill Christian's needs, and she hopes Dr. Flynn can help her answer that concern.

At work, a boss named Elizabeth summons Ana. She says Jack is no longer with the company and that Ana will be filling in for him, at least for the moment. Ana calls Christian who assures her he had nothing to do with the promotion. Ana is thrilled. Later that day, Ana stops in a souvenir shop and buys a gift for Christian. When they are out to dinner that evening, she gives him a small box but tells him he cannot open it until his birthday.

After work, Ana and Christian go to Dr. Flynn's. Ana asks for time alone with him, and Christian leaves the room. Dr. Flynn talks about Christian's treatment. He says they do not focus on what brought him to this point, but on goals to get him to a future place. Dr. Flynn says that Ana's presence in Christian's life has prompted him to take the treatment seriously for the first time. When Ana brings up the question of sadism, Dr. Flynn says the term is no longer considered a psychological disease, but is merely a "lifestyle choice" (413). Ana says she does not believe that change can be easy for Christian. Dr. Flynn disagrees, saying that Ana does not consent to the sexual sadism, which prompted Christian to change. He says that Ana's personal desires are not unreasonable. Ana fears that Christian thinks they are unreasonable.

Dr. Flynn says that Christian had chosen his sexual lifestyle as a means of coping with his past, and now – because of Ana's presence – he has to find a new way of coping. He sums it up by saying that he cannot guarantee anything for Ana, because there are no guarantees in any aspect of life.

Ana then says that she fears Christian would not want her if he were a healthy, normal man himself. Dr. Flynn says that says more about Ana than about Christian. He points out that she is attractive, which obviously makes Ana more uncomfortable. Christian returns, and they agree to continue some sessions together. Christian asks about Leila and Dr. Flynn says she is improving. Christian and Ana leave together, with Christian saying he has a surprise for her. Ana insists on driving, but pulls over to let Christian drive after he complains repeatedly about her driving. They talk about Dr. Flynn. Christian disagrees with Flynn's assessment that Christian is not a sexual sadist.



In Chapter 18, Christian takes Ana to an upper class neighborhood where they tour a rose-colored sandstone home on six acres. Christian wants to buy it for their future home. He plans to tear down the house and build a new one, but Ana loves the house and suggests they might do some updates instead. They go out for dinner and Christian teases her almost to orgasm in an elevator filled with people. Otherwise, he mostly refuses to touch her, teasing her. She finally realizes it is his retaliation for her refusal to commit to marriage.

The next morning, Ana comes up with another idea for a birthday gift for Christian. As she is looking for his ties, she goes through his clothes and finds a large box. Inside, she finds photos from the playroom. She replaces the box and reminds herself that this was before their relationship, but the images continue to bother her. She asks Mrs. Jones for a key to the playroom, and retrieves an item as another part of her birthday gift. Later, she and Christian talk via email. Ana makes a comment that indicates she is working on a surprise. Christian is immediately angry, typing, "I hate it when you keep things from me" (446). Ana can tell he is actually angry and he does not text or answer her calls for the rest of the day. After work, Ana joins Jose for drinks. Ethan joins them with his sister Kate, who is also Ana's friend. Ana still has not heard from Christian, and she is worried. Elliot calls Kate's phone and asks to talk to Ana. He tells her that Christian's helicopter has vanished, and that Christian has not returned from Portland.

Analysis

Christian continues to be controlling to an extreme degree in this section of the novel. Ana often "rolls her eyes" in response to some demand or order he issues. For example, when she is driving her car for the first time, she asks if she can turn on the radio. Christian denies her request, but she argues that she can safely drive with the music on. There are two important points in this passage that help the reader define the characters. The first is that Ana asks if she can have the radio on. She is an adult, but she defers to Christian when most adults would not. The second is that Christian initially says no, but then gives in. He says he wants her to concentrate on her driving to avoid an accident, but then turns on the radio. Some readers may be annoyed at the contradictory nature of both characters by this point, but the changes each exhibits are examples of the author's attempt to deepen the characters.

There are some flaws in the actions and attitudes of characters as well. A major one is that Ana is not wealthy and apparently did not grow up with the kind of wealth Christian and his parents have. She knows the rose-colored sandstone house they look at must be worth millions of dollars, and initially expects that Christian will have to sell his condo to pay for it. He reminds her that he can afford both properties. During their tour of the house, Ana notes that there are some aspects of the house that are "a little shabby," but could be restored (426). Most ordinary people would not use the word "shabby" to describe a house like that.

Ana is enamored with the house and it is obvious she can picture herself there. Christian has proposed and even said he wants to have children with her, but Ana



continues to refuse to give him a firm answer. This seems cruel on her part. She insists that she is not going to leave him, but will not make it official by agreeing to marry.

Discussion Question 1

Describe the conversation between Ana and Dr. Flynn. What do they discuss?

Discussion Question 2

What is the significance of the house Christian shows Ana?

Discussion Question 3

Why do you believe Ana has so much trouble fully understanding how wealthy Christian is?

Vocabulary

rapacious, affronted, conciliatory, roster, blatantly, megalomaniac, palatial, mortifying, envisage, idyll, assimilate



Chapters 19 - 22

Summary

In Chapter 19, Ana is at Christian's apartment with his parents, siblings, Kate, Ethan, and Jose. There are news reports about Christian's disappearance. Christian walks in the door, dirty and hungry but unhurt. He says the helicopter lost both engines and communications, but he was able to land without crashing. He and one of his employees, Ros, walked for hours to find a road and caught a ride. Batteries in both their cell phones died during the hours of walking. Everyone soon leaves except Jose, who goes to the guest room to sleep. Christian asks Ana to shower with him. He still has the small box that Ana gave him with instructions that he could not open it until his birthday. It is after midnight, meaning it is his birthday, and she tells him to open it. Inside the box is a plastic key-ring with a view of the Seattle skyline that lights up on an LED screen. Christian is obviously confused until Ana tells him to turn it over. The word "yes" lights up on the opposite side.

In Chapter 20, Christian realizes that Ana gave him the box with her answer before they saw Dr. Flynn. She says she wanted to be sure he knew she was not relying on the doctor's words for her answer. They shower and have sex. Christian admits to her that the problem with the helicopter was more serious than he let on to his family, and that he was afraid he would not be able to land. Later, Ana points out to him how much his family loves him. She tries to make him see that he is worthy of being loved by so many people.

When they wake the following morning, Ana cooks breakfast for Christian and Jose. Christian and Jose talk about fishing and Ana tunes out that part of the conversation. By the time Jose leaves, they seem to be on good terms although Christian says that Jose still wants to have sex with Ana.

After Jose is gone, Ana says she has two additional gifts for Christian. The first is a miniature helicopter like Christian's Charlie Tango. The blades operate on solar power. Christian is enthralled. The second is a series of items related to the playroom. Christian asks Ana if she is certain. She qualifies the question, saying there will be "no whips and stuff," and Christian agrees. Christian takes her hand.

In Chapter 21, Christian uses a combination of sexual toys to bring Ana to orgasm, then takes her to bed for sex again. Later, he goes to the office in his apartment to work for awhile and Ana hears him talking about the helicopter. Christian announces that he has asked Ana's stepfather, Ray, for permission to marry. Ray asks Ana to slow down but she assures him they love each other. Ray gives his permission and is moved when Ana asks if he will give her away. Ana has a painful conversation with her mother, who immediately asks if Ana is pregnant. Her mother grudgingly wishes Ana the best, but focuses mainly on the fact that Ana's father did not live to see her grow up.



As Ana and Christian talk, she reveals that she found the photos. Christian says they were all in a safe as a means of ensuring that none of his submissives talked. He surmises that Leila must have moved them from the safe.

Ana goes to the store for chocolate to ice the birthday cake she baked and discovers that she has an extra \$50,000 in the bank. After they have a slice of cake, they go to the Grey estate. Christian's father gives him a hug, wishing his son a happy birthday. Kate immediately breaks up the conversation, furious with Ana and demanding to talk.

In Chapter 22, Kate reveals a note she found. It is a copy of an email between Ana and Christian, discussing the contract Christian initially wanted Ana to sign when they were discussing a purely sexual relationship between a dominate and submissive. Ana first makes certain Kate has not told anyone, including Christian's brother Elliot. She then assures Kate that she is fine and Christian reveals that they are getting married. Kate asks several times to ascertain that Ana is happy and safe, and then agrees that it is none of her business.

There are more people present than Christian and Ana expected. After they toast Christian's safe return and his birthday, Christian announces that he and Ana are getting married. A short time later, Mia asks to talk to Ana. She says she likes Ethan, but that Ethan is refusing to date because his sister and Mia's brother are dating. Ana suggests she try to be friends with Ethan first, and that she talk to Kate about it. Mia leaves the room but Elena confronts Ana before she can leave. Elena is furious. She says Ana cannot fulfill Christian's needs. Ana reacts angrily, throwing a drink on Elena. Christian walks in on the scene and becomes furious. He says that Elena never said she loved Christian, prompting Elena to say that love is ridiculous. Christian's mother, Grace, arrives at that point. She has overheard enough to know that Elena and Christian had an affair, but not enough to know the details. She slaps Elena and orders her out of the house. Ana rushes from the room and goes to Christian's childhood room to give herself a few minutes to think. When Christian finds her, he says Grace is very upset with the situation, and with Christian.

While Ana has a few minutes in Christian's room, she looks at a picture of Christian's mother on his bulletin board. She searches the image for similarities. Their hair is of similar color, but not exact, and there are no others. She is relieved.

Christian and Ana rejoin the party; then Christian takes Ana to the boathouse. They have a history in the boathouse but Ana implicitly trusts Christian now. She finds the loft has been covered with flowers. He recounts a time when she said she wanted hearts and flowers. He says he has her heart and she can see all the flowers. He then gets on one knee and proposes, presenting her with a large, simply-cut, diamond ring.

Outside, a man watches the property as he smokes a cigarette. He knows he was daring when he tampered with Christian's helicopter, and cannot believe the man was able to land it. He is still nursing some sore ribs from Christian's men, who warned the man to stay away from Ana. He had reached goals, but Christian ruined that. Now, he settles in to wait, knowing he will eventually have his chance.



Analysis

There is an important piece of foreshadowing when Christian and his father are talking about the helicopter crash. Carrick asks Christian for some details. When Christian says that both engines failed, Carrick begins to say something but Christian cuts him off. Carrick is apparently about to refer to some fail safe that should have kept that from happening. That conversation ends there, but the foreshadowing is clear. Most readers will remember that conversation when Christian later issues instructions for a thorough investigation into the crash.

Ana is horrified while she waits for news about Christian. She begs God to return him. Near the end of the book, she tells Christian she wants to go to church, an acknowledgement that God brought him back to her, and that she is grateful.

The book ends with an open-ended scene, which is the first that is not presented from Ana's perspective. The change in perspective is noteworthy and a dramatic literary tool. The new narrator's perspective is not identified by name, but it seems clear that it is Jack. He mentions being sore from the beating he took at the hands of Christian's men, who warned him never to touch Ana again.

Discussion Question 1

Describe the final scene of the book. Why does the author change perspective?

Discussion Question 2

Describe the final showdown between Elena and Ana. What is the resolution to this conflict?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Ana look for similarities between her appearance and Christian's biological mother? What does she conclude?

Vocabulary

exorcised, reverential, eclipsed, piqued, bemused, penurious, deduce, conspiratorially, incestuous, scuttles, adversary, glacial



Characters

Anastasia Steel

Usually referred to as Ana, Anastasia Steele is a young college graduate who is involved with the wealthy Christian Grey, although there are several issues facing their relationship. Ana was naïve when she and Christian first met in the previous book (*Fifty Shades of Grey*), and she has learned a great deal during her brief time with Christian. Ana is certain of her feelings for Christian, but is often in doubt about his feelings for her. In addition, she is not convinced that love is enough to sustain their relationship. Though Ana feels love for Christian, she is concerned that the scars from his past and his own doubts will be enough to tear down the love she feels for him.

Personally, Ana is insecure. She is amazed that Christian cares for her, and especially so when she thinks about the changes he is willing to make for her. When Christian says that she is beautiful, Ana is skeptical. She becomes upset when she thinks about the women in his past—partly because of human jealousy but also because of what those relationships indicate about Christian. Ana feels compassion for Christian when she thinks about the pain he has endured in his past, which is an important part of her character.

Ana is also insecure when it comes to money. She has trouble comprehending just how wealthy Christian is, and she thinks his gifts are extravagant, though the expense is insignificant compared to his finances.

Some readers may not be able to identify with Ana for various reasons, but most readers will find some aspects of her character understandable, if not admirable. While she is unable to resist Christian, she does what she can to try to make their relationship sustainable.

Christian Grey

Christian is a wealthy young man who has a troubled past that affects his relationship with Ana. When he was a teen, he was taught about masochistic sex, and those experiences have left him scarred, both physically and emotionally. He has serious personal issues, many related to the sexual aspects of his early adulthood. He is so serious about casting women into the roles of sexually submissive partners that he has then sign contracts, up until he meets Ana. Ana is constantly frustrated that Christian will not allow her to touch him, and that he continually insists on rules for their relationship. Christian's reasons for some of his rules and issues are not revealed in this book.

Christian cares deeply for Ana, and he wants them to be in a relationship together. However, he does not really understand how to make that happen. He wants to protect her, so he buys the company she works for. When she confronts him, he claims that he wanted to branch out into the publishing business, which prompted the purchase, but he



does not deny that he wanted to take care of her and that he would buy any other company that employs her. He sees the reactions of other men in her life and it bothers him. He admits to her that he would not be able to stand the thought of her with other men, and that he is happy she did not have a sexual history.

Christian makes major changes in his life by the end of the novel because he wants to make Ana happy.

Most readers will not identify with most of Christian's actions and attitudes. His childhood and early adulthood are not what most people can understand. Some readers will find him unbelievable, egotistical, and selfish.

Jack Hyde

Jack is Ana's boss at the publishing company where she works. He exhibits signs of being attracted to Ana, but she does not return the feeling. Christian is jealous of Jack, and says that he will have Jack fired if Ana says Jack is acting inappropriately. Jack later does make a pass at Ana, and makes it clear that he will not accept no for an answer. Ana hits Jack and runs away. Christian has him fired and escorted from the building. As the novel comes to a close, the reader learns that Jack was responsible for the helicopter malfunction that almost cost Christian his life. Jack pledges revenge.

Jason Taylor

Known only as Taylor, he is an important part of Christian's life, serving as a driver and general assistant in several aspects of Christian's life. He seems kind and courteous, and Ana genuinely likes him. He is a professional man who takes his job seriously. When he believes Ana or Christian might be in danger, he rushes to do everything he can to ensure they are not harmed.

Elena Lincoln

Elena is a woman who is the same age as Grace, Christian's mother. Elena is a sexual dominant who had a sexual relationship with Christian when he was a teenager. Elena is furious when she learns Christian and Ana are getting married. She says Ana will never be able to make Christian happy sexually. Ana stands up to her and Christian supports Ana. When Grace learns about the sexual relationship, she orders Elena out of her house.

Dr. John Flynn

Dr. Flynn is Christian's psychiatrist. He is a strong character and self-assured. He refuses to talk to Ana about Christian when they meet at a social event, but does talk to her when she and Christian make an appointment to see him together. Dr. Flynn



believes that Christian is not a sexual sadist, but that he has engaged in this kind of sexual play as a means of coping with his past. Dr. Flynn ends their session by reminding Ana that there are no guarantees in life, and that she should give Christian a chance to prove himself to her.

Grace Grey

Grace is a doctor who was on call when Christian was taken to the hospital after his mother died. She is Christian's adoptive mother, and she loves him dearly. She is very upset when Christian is missing. She is happy that Christian seems happy with Ana. Grace is furious when she learns that Elena had a sexual relationship with Christian. She orders Elena out of the house.

Jose

Jose is Ana's friend who is a photographer. He made a pass at Ana in the previous book of the series, which makes Christian reluctant to let Ana and Jose spend any time alone. Jose's exhibit includes photos of Ana that she had not realized he took, and those photos become a wake-up call for Christian. Jose spends a night at Christian's apartment, and the two men get to know each other a little the following morning, though Christian still insists that Jose wants to have sex with Ana.

Carrick Grey

Carrick is Christian's adoptive father. He is a kind man who tells Ana that she has made Christian happy. He clearly loves Christian, though Christian cannot seem to accept that he deserves love. Carrick gives Ana some pieces of information about Christian's past, such as the fact that he did not talk for the first two years he was in the Grey home.

Mia Grey

Mia is Christian's younger sister. She is also adopted and she adores Christian. Mia is a happy, excitable young woman, about Ana's age. She is attracted to Kate's brother, Ethan.

Symbols and Symbolism

Ana's Inner Goddess

This is what Ana calls her inner thoughts that give her ideas, and it symbolizes her sexual self. For example, this inner goddess prompts Ana to perform oral sex on Christian during one of the early scenes in the book.

Jose's Pictures of Ana

Jose has a series of photographs of Ana in the show, and they represent her true nature. Ana did not know Jose had taken them and they capture her in vulnerable, honest moments. Christian recognizes them for what they are, and he buys the entire set. He later tells Ana that he wants her to have the opportunity to be like that all the time.

The Silver Balls

These are sex toys that Ana likes, and they represent a level of sex that both Ana and Christian find acceptable. Christian inserts them into Ana before they attend a charity event at his parents', but Ana becomes so overwhelmed that she has to remove them before they leave the event.

The Submissives

The submissives symbolize Christian's sexual history and coping mechanism. The women who signed contracts and entered into sexual relationships with Christian agreed to be submissives. Ana refuses to become a submissive, and becomes Christian's first and only true lover.

Fifty Shades of Grey

This is the title of the first book of the series and the nickname Ana uses for Christian, and the term symbolizes the depth of Christian's life and pain. Nothing in his life is literally black or white, making this a play on the word "grey."

The Masks

Ana and Christian wear masks to the charity event at the Grey estate, and those masks symbolize the ability to hide oneself while being oneself. The masked ball means that no one can see the faces of the others present, though most people know the identities



of other guests. However, the ability to hide behind a mask often gives people a sense of invincibility and invisibility that they would not otherwise have.

The Plastic Key-ring

The key-ring has the word “yes” in LED lights, which is Ana's way of telling Christian she will marry him. The key-ring symbolizes her willingness to marry, but it also symbolizes her trust in him.

Charlie Tango

This is the name of Christian's helicopter, which symbolizes his wealth and status. The helicopter becomes important after Jack tampers with it, causing the engines to malfunction and almost killing Christian.

Grey Enterprise Holdings, Inc.

This is the name of Christian's company, and it symbolizes his success as a businessman.

Christian's Boat

Christian named his boat in honor of his mother, which symbolizes his love for his mother, though he is unable to show that affection in a traditional way.



Settings

Christian's Apartment

Christian's apartment is luxurious and expansive. Ana refers to Escala when she talks about returning to Christian's apartment, but that term is not explained in this book. It is actually the name of the condominium complex where Christian's apartment is located. The complex is real.

The Playroom

This is a room in Christian's apartment where he stages the sexual encounters with his submissive partners. Ana refers to one of their encounters in the room, which left her hurt and confused, and prompted her to leave Christian. During this book, Ana wanders into the room one day and Christian explains that he does not want to have sex in that room because he does not want to tempt himself to return to that lifestyle. The room is painted red, and is sometimes referred to as the red room.

The Grey Estate

This is the home of Christian's parents, where Christian and Ana attend a charity event soon after they are reunited. Ana describes the elaborate decorations for the event, including a view of a spectacular sunset. The estate is expansive and large enough to accommodate hundreds of guests.

The Pink Sandstone House

This is a house in an upper class neighborhood that Christian suggests they buy as their home. The house is described in detail, including colors and the view. Ana says it is "palatial" and she can imagine herself there from the moment she sees the front lawn for the first time. The house represents Christian's hope for the future.

The SIP Office

Ana works at the SIP office, which is a publishing company that Christian purchases after Ana begins working there. The office seems to be typical of similar office buildings. There is a kitchen area, where Jack attacks her one day.



Themes and Motifs

The Power of Love

Christian and Ana love each other, but that love is tempered by their personal fears and issues. Each knows the strength of their own feelings, but must come a long way to trust those feelings in each other. Their backgrounds and personal insecurities add to those feelings of fear, which makes the love even more important once they are able to fully trust it. Christian falls in love with Ana very early in the previous book, though he does not recognize or accept it as such for a long time. Ana knows how she feels for Christian, but she does not believe it is enough to keep them together. Both Christian and Ana have to learn to accept the power of love.

Ana knows that she loves Christian but she also knows about his previous sexual relationships. He has never had a true lover, but has only engaged in sexually dominant and submissive relationships. These put Christian in complete control without requiring that he give or accept love. Ana worries that this is an ingrained part of his nature, and that he can never be happy without that dominant/submissive relationship. After she has a conversation with Dr. Flynn, she understands that Christian's love for her makes it possible for his sexual needs to change. Because of their love, he does not need or want to dominate her in that manner, but wants her to freely participate in their sexual encounters.

At one point during their conversation, Ana admits to Dr. Flynn that she cannot imagine why Christian loves her. She is exhibiting her own lack of self-confidence, making it clear that she does not feel worthy of his love. Ana grew up in a loving home and has a good relationship with her mother and stepfather, but she feels that she is not on an equal footing with Christian. She knows that he is very handsome and very rich, and believes that makes her the lesser partner in their union. It takes time for Ana to accept that Christian's love for her is strong enough to make him put his previous sexual lifestyle away, and it takes time for him to accept that her love is strong enough to keep her from leaving him.

An interesting aspect of this theme is seen in Christian's adoptive family. He was adopted when he was young, and has two adoptive siblings, Mia and Elliot. The three siblings and their parents are close and spend time together, but Christian is not secure in their love, mainly because he does not feel worthy of love. When Christian goes missing after his helicopter crash, his family gathers together to wait for news. When Christian arrives at the apartment, his mother is the first to rush into his arms. His father, Mia, and Elliot also hug him, obviously relieved that he is there. It strikes Ana that Christian is more loved than he could possibly know, and that the problem lies in his ability to accept it.



Dominance

The idea of dominance in this book is often related to the sexual aspects of Christian's life, but he is also a dominant personality who has trouble letting that side of his personality go for any reason. The sexual aspect of the book has garnered opposition, with people equating the dominant-submissive relationships in the novel to domestic violence.

Christian is wealthy beyond what Ana understands until he breaks it down to an hourly rate. That wealth carries some natural privileges, and it has created a situation in which Christian is always the person in authority. That power has added to the dominance Christian was taught as a young man, which makes him tend to try to rule every aspect of life, including Ana's. When Christian sees Ana for the first time in a few days at the opening of this novel, he realizes that she has lost some weight. His first reaction is to furiously demand to know when she ate last. He becomes gentler as he continues to fuss at her, making her promise that she will eat. She does promise, but admits to herself that it is just a way of making him stop complaining. Over the coming days, he continues to push her to eat, even though she is an adult.

Christian also buys the company where Ana works. He says that he had wanted to get into the publishing business, but agrees that Ana's employment affects his decision of what publishing company he should buy. He also says that he would buy another company that hired her. He insists that he is trying to look out for her, and the fact that he cares for her could make that true, but most readers will see it as domination and a controlling attitude that refuses to let Ana live her own life without Christian's interference.

Christian bought Ana an Audi for a graduation gift, and he promises to replace it after Leila has vandalized the car. Christian initially plans to purchase another car exactly like the Audi, but then takes her to a Saab dealership instead. He asks what color she wants, but when she suggests black, he says black is more difficult to see. She responds by asking him what color he wants her to have and he chooses white or silver. This conversation is typical of Christian's domineering nature, even when he seems to be giving Ana a gift and the chance to make her own decisions.

Another aspect of this theme is seen in Christian's fear that Ana will leave him. In his previous relationships, Christian has always been in full control of his partners. Those submissives meant nothing to him on an emotional level, and they are virtually his property during the length of the relationship. With Ana, Christian has to accept that she has the freedom to leave him, and he struggles with that. At one point, Christian is so afraid that Ana will leave that he drops to the floor in the traditional role of a submissive. Ana is horrified that he is putting her in the role of the dominant and she gets on the floor to ensure they are on the same level physically, though it takes some time for them to come to the same terms emotionally.



The Effects of Personal History

A person's history is naturally a large factor in determining their character, but Christian's history is filled with tragedy and darkness, making it a bigger factor in his life. When Ana begins trying to reconcile her limits with Christian's desires, his history becomes one of her main stumbling blocks, furthering Christian's fears and making his history an even more important part of his current life.

Some people are able to get past childhood hurts and traumas, but Christian's childhood was extremely brutal and tragic. Christian never refers to his mother by a name, but only calls her the "crack whore." She was neglectful of Christian's basic needs, but she also allowed her pimp to brutalize Christian. That trauma hurt Christian, but his mother's indifference hurt him more and created a lack of self-worth that follows Christian as an adult. Though he is surrounded by people who love him, Christian cannot accept that he is worthy of their love. Ana is a major player in that list of people, but it extends to his family as well.

Christian is fearful of being touched, especially in certain areas of his body and regardless of whether the touch is done with love. This fear extends back to his abusive childhood, though he is unable to fully explain how or why he feels this way. He recounts his mother's pimp who put cigarettes out on Christian's torso when he was very young as a partial explanation.

In addition to a childhood of pain, Christian was seduced by an older woman when he was 15 years old. His mother's friend, Elena, introduced him to dominant and submissive sex, forcing Christian to fill the submissive role. That teaching was so ingrained that he falls to the floor in front of Ana once when he fears that she will leave him. It also makes Christian believe that he is incapable of love, and that he is a sexual sadist. Ana fears that may be true for awhile, but she comes to accept – as does Christian – that he has simply been waiting for the right person to love.

After Christian's sexual relationship with Elena, he enters into a series of sexual relationships with other women. These women are all submissive to Christian and they all sign contracts related to their relationship. These relationships are all focused only on Christian's pleasure as the dominant person in the relationship, and they create another level of pain. The women never have any say in what happens and their pleasure is not important.

Based on his past sexual experiences, Christian does not know how to establish a relationship based on mutual need and respect, as Ana expects. He struggles to figure out how to behave and how to accept the situation.



Lack of Self-Awareness

Most readers would expect characters in this kind of novel to be ultimately self-aware, but Christian and Ana are exceptions to that expectation. Interestingly, Christian and Ana each feel that they are self-aware, but both are actually lacking on that front.

Christian believes he is a sexual sadist who chooses his submissives based on their resemblance to his biological mother, who neglected him and allowed her pimp to abuse him. Though Ana knows all about Christian's traditional relationships with women as the power in the dominant-submissive roles, Christian is afraid to tell her these two details. Christian believes that he is fully aware of his motives and the result of these motives. However, he is able to put aside that sexual need once he discovers that he wants to please Ana. His self-diagnosis as a sexual sadist would mean that he was unable to live without the sadistic part of his life, but that turns out to be untrue. Ana is sickened by the fact that Christian feels he chooses submissives based on their resemblance to his biological mother, but then she has a chance to closely examine a photo of Christian's mother. She finds that they each have brunette hair, though each is a different shade, but finds no other resemblances at all. That reassures Ana, but it also makes it clear that Christian does not understand his motives. He has assigned a set of criteria that does not even exist, and his self-awareness is so low that he has never realized it.

In an interesting twist, Ana is actually a more important example of this theme than Christian. Christian knows that he has issues but is unable to fully explain them. Ana, however, believes that most of their problems exist because of Christian's issues and his inability to deal with them. Ana's self-awareness is so low that she does not even realize she has issues of her own. The reader first sees this lack spelled out when Ana is talking to Dr. Flynn. She says that she cannot understand why Christian would choose to be with her. Dr. Flynn comes back to that immediately, understanding that Ana has low self-esteem. She does not see herself as attractive. She knows that Christian is handsome and rich, and sees herself as a lesser partner in their relationship.

There are other examples of Ana's lack of self-awareness. Christian knows that Jose is attracted to Ana, but Ana cannot see it. She sees Jose as a friend and believes Jose must feel the same. Christian also knows ahead of time that Jack is attracted to Ana, and that he is going to try to force her into a sexual situation. Ana believes she can handle Jack, but more importantly, she does not realize the extent of Jack's attraction. While some of that is a product of her naiveté, she simply does not credit the fact that she is a beautiful woman who attracts male attention.

Communication

Ana and Christian face a myriad of problems, and at least some of them are caused by a lack of communication, miscommunication, and their individual fears of honest communication.



Ana and Christian briefly separated at the end of the previous novel of this series because of a lack of communication. They had a sexual encounter that frightened Ana, but she was unable to adequately communicate that to Christian until she was terrified. As they reconnect and begin to work on their relationship, Christian pushes Ana to communicate her feelings to him. This example is focused mainly on their sexual encounters, but they deal with communication issues on other fronts as well.

Christian is the product of an abusive childhood and a brutal sexual experience at the hands of a dominant woman. He fears being touched but is unable to explain exactly why. As Christian and Ana begin to plan for a lifetime together, Ana works on teaching Christian to communicate as well. Through her tolerant patience, he reveals more about his childhood and begins to endure her touch, which is a step toward his healing.

Their sexual preferences are also topics in this new level of communication. Ana learns to tell Christian what she likes and what she does not, and feels free to explore without fearing that Christian will hurt her. He constantly communicates his love for her, promising that he will not hurt her. At one point, they are about to engage in rough sex and Ana asks for a safe word. She expects that she will need that safe word to communicate with Christian, but he says that she merely has to tell him to stop. That is a sign of a new level of communication, which is no longer that of a dominant and his submissive, but of a man who loves a woman and will not hurt her.

Another aspect of this theme is seen in the sex scenes. Christian and Ana learn to communicate with each other, though some of these conversations are nonverbal in nature. Christian is usually the one to take initiatives, but he talks to Ana anytime he is trying something new with her. He reassures her and makes it clear that she has the ability to stop the session at any point.

Finally, they learn to communicate through casual conversations, emails, and phone calls. Ana learns to read Christian's moods and Christian begins to learn that his words have the power to hurt Ana.



Styles

Point of View

The story is written in first person, exclusively from the perspective of Ana Steele. The limited first person perspective means the reader does not know the thoughts of other characters, unless they are revealed to Ana. In some cases, the thoughts and feelings of other characters are revealed through dialogue. In other scenes, Ana guesses at them. In both cases, she has no way of knowing for certain if she is correct in her assessment. That means the reader is also not certain.

The first person perspective also means that Ana is constantly revealing her thoughts and feelings. In some scenes, she wavers so fully from one extreme to the other that some readers may lose interest. In that respect, the first person perspective may be too revealing.

Ana seems to be honest and reliable as a narrator. She does not hold back her hopes and fears, and she sometimes shows her naïve attitudes. She fully relates her sexual emotions, fears, and desires, as well as her lack of knowledge when it comes to the sex toys Christian owns. The perspective is appropriate for the novel.

The only exception to the first person perspective is seen in the final scene of the novel. Here, the narrative transitions to the first person perspective of an unnamed narrator. The narrator is upset because Christian survived the helicopter crash, despite the man's effort to cause Christian's death. The man pledges revenge, and it becomes clear that the man is Jack Hyde. The change in perspective is abrupt and provokes the reader to step outside the happiness Ana and Christian have found. It seems an appropriate ending for the second novel of the trilogy.

Language and Meaning

The story is graphic with many sex scenes that are spelled out in detail. The graphic nature of the novel has prompted a great deal of controversy. The characters use curse words in their thoughts and dialogue, sometimes in reference to sexual acts and sometimes simply as expressions.

There are additional aspects of the language that are specific to the novel, most aimed at making the dialogue more realistic. Christian and his brother use the term, “laters” as a means of saying good-bye. One of Ana's friends, Ethan, picks up the term and begins using it as well. Christian often calls Ana “baby,” both in tender situations and in cases involving sex and sexual tension.

The novel is divided between dialogue and narrative. The fact that it is written in first person means the reader also sees Ana's thoughts. In some cases, Ana expresses those as outright dialogue while they are merely her thoughts in other instances. For



example, she and Christian discuss whether his mother's pimp was Christian's biological father. Ana feels his pain as he talks, and she thinks, “the horror is too grim to contemplate” (201). In this case, her thoughts are presented only as her thoughts. Later, Christian takes her to see his boat. Her first thought is “Holy cow” (209). That thought is written in italics, making it appear that she is having a conversation with herself rather than just thinking the words.

The American reader will likely find few unfamiliar words and phrases. The majority of the novel appears with the same font and spacing, though the author changes those fonts and style to show the emails between Christian and Ana.

Structure

The novel is divided into 22 chapters of slightly varying lengths. The chapters are titled by number only. Many of the chapters end in mid-scene or with cliffhangers, which prompt the reader to continue reading into the next chapter. Chapters 15 and 16 are prime examples of this tactic. As Chapter 15 ends, Jack is threatening Ana. Chapter 16 picks up with the scene as Jack makes a pass and Ana retaliates.

As the novel opens, Ana is sad because she and Christian are no longer seeing each other. The storyline follows a basic chronological timeline, with historical information presented as thoughts, dialogue, and fact. Ana discovers details about Christian's childhood from Christian, his family, and his psychiatrist. These details are presented out of chronological order, but are generally set in specific context that helps the reader understand their meaning and significance. The novel is the second of a trilogy. While it could be read as a stand-alone book, the reader without a basic understanding of the trilogy's premise will be confused at some points.

The narrative plot follows a traditional arc, with the exposition establishing Ana and Christian's history in the first chapters. The rising action of the plot occurs when Ana and Christian become involved again in their affair and face multiple obstacles in their journey toward being a couple. With the threats from Leila and later Jack, the tension builds toward the climax, which occurs with Christian's helicopter crash and subsequent disappearance. Christian's return from the crash signifies the falling action of the narrative, and the denouement comes with the final scene, where Jack narrates and plots his revenge. As this is the second novel in a trilogy, it is fitting that the conclusion of the book ends with a cliffhanger—thus urging the reader to continue to the third novel.



Quotes

Perhaps – perhaps I can tell him I've changed my mind ... No, no, no. I cannot be with someone who takes pleasure in inflicting pain on me, someone who can't love me.”

-- Ana (Chapter 1 paragraph 27)

Importance: Ana misses Christian very much, and she is trying to figure out a way they can be together. At this point, she believes Christian cannot have sex without inflicting pain, and that she cannot abide that.

What do you have that I don't?' she asks sadly.

-- Leila (chapter 3 paragraph 47)

Importance: This is the first time Ana sees Leila, and she does not yet know who she is. Leila is obviously hurting, apparently believing Ana has taken her place in Christian's life. The situation with Leila escalates over the coming chapters until Leila is literally holding Ana at gunpoint.

I want to get my hair cut, preferably somewhere where you haven't fucked either the staff or the clientele.”

-- Ana (chapter 5 paragraph 41)

Importance: Christian has taken Ana to a hair salon he owns with Elena, and Ana is angry to find that Elena is there. Christian apologizes, but only because Elena was there. He says he did not know she would be there, as if that makes the situation acceptable to Ana. This is one of the first instances in which Ana shows how much she disapproves of Elena.

He teases me with his fingers, my nipple growing hard and elongating under his skillful touch. His hand moves to my jeans, and he deftly undoes the button, tugs the zipper down, and slips his hand inside my panties, sliding his fingers against my sex.”

-- Ana (chapter 6 paragraph 8)

Importance: This is one of many sex scenes in the book, which is one reason the book and movie gained huge followings. Many of these scenes are even more graphic, with details and wording that some readers may find offensive.

He won't tell you because he probably doesn't realize it himself, notwithstanding what I've said to him, but that's Christian. He's not very attuned to any positive feelings and emotions he may have.”

-- Elena (chapter 7 paragraph 215)

Importance: Elena is talking to Ana, and says she can tell Christian is in love with Ana. Ana is sad that Elena is the first person to say this to her. Elena goes on to make it sound as if she and Christian were together the day after Ana left him, but that turns out to be untrue.



And I know in this moment that my heart is big enough for both of us. I hope it's big enough for both of us.”

-- Ana (chapter 9 paragraph 3)

Importance: Christian has just told Ana he loves her for the first time, and she is filled with hope that they can find their way through to problems they face. That hope, and Christian's inability to trust Ana's love, are themes seen in the novel.

No, no safeword, just tell me to stop and I'll stop.”

-- Christian (chapter 11 paragraph 19)

Importance: They are about to engage in sex and Ana is looking for a way to ensure Christian will not hurt her. There are several important issues here. Christian trusts Ana to tell him if she wants to stop. Ana trusts Christian to stop if she says so. This trust is an undercurrent in many scenes of the novel.

My subconscious swoons into a dead faint, and I don't think even smelling salts will bring her back.”

-- Ana (chapter 13 paragraph 2)

Importance: This is one of several examples of personification of Ana's subconscious. These are really Ana's own emotions, and her subconscious serves as a means of expressing her inner thoughts.

The image of a powerful man who's really still a little boy, who was horrifically abused and neglected, who feels unworthy of love from his perfect family and his much-less-than-perfect girlfriend ... my lost boy ... it's heartbreaking.”

-- Ana (chapter 14 paragraph 9)

Importance: Christian has just fallen to the floor in the position of the submissive person in a dominant-submissive relationship because he fears losing Ana. His past, which has brought him to this point, is one of the novel's themes.

So we need to work out a deal. A deal where you keep me happy. D'you understand what I'm saying?

-- Jack Hyde (chapter 16 paragraph 17)

Importance: Jack is informing Ana that he expects her to have sex with him, which is what Christian had predicted but which Ana had not expected. Ana tries to reason with him, but winds up hitting him and running away. Jack is beat up and fired, which prompts him to try to kill Christian and leads to the drama of the next novel of the series.

I close my eyes in silent prayer, rocking gently. Please let the rest of his life not be this short.”

-- Ana (chapter 19 paragraph 20)

Importance: Ana is at Christian's apartment with friends and family, waiting for news



after Christian's helicopter crash. She has just remembered his words when he proposed, saying that he asked her because he found someone he wants to spend the rest of his life with.

Yes, I'll marry you.”

-- Ana (chapter 20 paragraph 3)

Importance: Christian has opened Ana's birthday gift, the keyring with the word “yes” in LED lights, but then asks Ana to say that she will marry him in order to confirm it. He is elated and this scene is a symbol of Ana's willingness to trust Christian.