

Fifty Shades of Grey: Book One of the Fifty Shades Trilogy Study Guide

**Fifty Shades of Grey: Book One of the Fifty Shades
Trilogy by E. L. James**

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Plot Summary

Fifty Shades of Grey is the first in a trilogy of erotic novels by E.L. James. In this novel, Anastasia Steel meets business tycoon, Christian Grey, while doing an interview for her roommate, Kate. Ana is instantly attracted to the handsome Christian Grey, but he lives in a world completely alien to her. Despite his initial reluctance, Ana and Christian grow closer and he introduces her to his world with all the honesty and patience that he can muster. At first it seems like an adventure to Ana, but soon Ana finds herself involved in things that she does not fully understand. Fifty Shades of Grey is a novel of intimacy that explores the darker side of humanity and how some people come to deal with it.

The story begins with Anastasia Steel volunteering to do an interview for her friend, Kate, when Kate comes down with an untimely case of the flu. The interview is of Christian Grey, a young business tycoon who is an important donor to their university. Ana is nervous and ill-prepared. The interview goes well despite this, except when Ana asks Christian a question that clearly annoys her. Ana is disturbed not by the interview, but by Christian's intensity and his amazing good looks. Therefore, when he shows up at the hardware store where she works a few days later, she finds herself unable to hide her nervousness.

Christian agrees to a photo shoot for the article that Kate is writing based on Ana's notes. Due to the fact that Ana set up the shoot, she attends the event. Afterward, Christian asks her to coffee. They have a pleasant conversation, but he ends the date by telling her that he is not the man for her. Ana is disappointed by this announcement. When Christian sends her some very expensive books a few days later, she is also confused.

Ana goes out drinking with her friends after their final exams are finished. Ana becomes very drunk and decides to call Christian. Concerned for her safety, Christian comes to pick Ana up and arrives just in time to find her fighting off the advances of a friend. Christian whisks her out of the bar and takes her back to his hotel room. When Ana wakes the next morning, Christian again tells her that he does not do girlfriends. However, Christian tells Ana that if she is interested in a sexual relationship with him, there are things he needs to show her and paperwork she must do.

Ana goes to Seattle with Christian where he takes her to his home. Once there, Christian shows Ana a room in his home that she calls the Red Room of Pain. This room contains equipment used in sexual play between Dominants and Submissives. Christian then explains his rules and the contract Ana would have to sign if she were to agree to be his submissive. For several days, Ana and Christian discuss the contract back and forth. Ana becomes overwhelmed and decides to go to visit her mother in Georgia for a few days.

While in Georgia, Ana finds herself missing Christian despite their constant communication over email. Christian surprises her by showing up unannounced. Ana



and Christian spend the night together and she bribes him into telling her some of the secrets of his past. Afterwards, Ana agrees to sign his contract.

Christian leaves Georgia unexpectedly. Ana follows the next day. Ana goes straight to Christian's apartment. They argue over Christian's desire to punish her for rolling her eyes at him. Ana finally gives in, asking him to punish her to the extreme so she will know what to expect when she signs the contract. However, Ana is so shocked by the brutality of this punishment that she decides she can no longer be involved with Christian. Ana leaves.



Chapters 1-4

Chapters 1-4 Summary

Fifty Shades of Grey is the first in a trilogy of erotic novels featuring Anastasia Steel and Christian Grey.

In Chapter 1, Anastasia Steel prepares to interview Christian Grey for her friend Kate Kavanagh. Kate is the editor of the school paper at the university they attend, WSU Vancouver, and she has just come down with the flu. Ana is nervous because she feels ill prepared for the interview. All she has is a list of questions Kate had planned to ask. When Ana arrives at Christian Grey's office building, she feels underdressed. This feeling increases when Ana meets the receptionist and other female workers on Christian's floor since they are all blond and well dressed. Then Ana is called into Christian's office and promptly falls as she steps through the door.

Christian Grey is a very young and good looking man. He immediately helps Ana to her feet and attempts to make her feel at ease. They begin their interview. Ana tries to stick to the questions Kate prepared, but finds herself adding a few questions of her own as they speak. Christian tells Ana about his interest in farming technologies, the reason for his large donations to WSU. Then they turn to the personal, but Ana finds Christian reluctant to reveal much about himself. In fact, he appears to become irate when Ana asks him if he is gay, a question from Kate's list. However, he is not irate enough to fail to offer Ana an internship after her college graduation in a few weeks.

In Chapter 2, Ana, deeply disturbed by Christian Grey for reasons she does not fully understand, returns home and gives Kate the tape of the interview. Ana then goes to work. When she returns home, Kate compliments her on the interview. Kate also teases Ana because of the flirtatious tone Christian took with her. A week passes. Kate and Ana study for finals and spend some time with friends, including Jose, a close friend of Ana's since the beginning of college. Then, that Saturday, Ana is surprised when Christian suddenly shows up at the hardware store where she works. Ana helps him pick out a few items he requests, such as cable ties. They talk about the article and Ana tells him that they could use some pictures to go with the article. Christian agrees to a photo shoot.

In Chapter 3, Ana immediately calls Kate and they make plans for the shoot. Later, at home, Ana speaks to Jose and talks him into shooting the photos for them since Kate's regular photographer is busy. The shoot is arranged for the following day. When they arrive the following morning, Ana and her group are given a suite in the hotel where Christian is staying for the shoot. Christian arrives and behaves aloof and professional. When it is over he asks Ana to join him for coffee. They have a pleasant conversation, but again Christian is vague about his personal life while Ana is very open. As Christian walks Ana back to the hotel to pick up Kate's car, Ana nearly falls into the street in front of a biker.



In Chapter 4, Christian saves her, but does not kiss her as Ana would have liked. Instead he warns her that he is not the man for her. Ana rushes away after saying a polite goodbye and bursts into tears in the darkness of the garage. When Ana gets home, Kate immediately notices something is wrong and tries to console her. Ana cannot get Christian off her mind.

At the end of the week, Ana and Kate finish their finals. To celebrate, they decide to go out drinking with a couple of friends, including Jose. Ana becomes very drunk for the first time. While waiting for the bathroom, Ana calls Christian to ask why he sent her a set of very expensive, first edition books by Thomas Hardy. Christian hears the alcohol in her voice and asks where she is so he can pick her up. Ana refuses to tell. When she rejoins her friends, she buys some beer, but then decides she is too drunk and goes outside for some fresh air. Jose follows and tries to kiss Ana. She tries to push him away. Christian shows up and forces Jose away from Ana. As they argue, Ana becomes sick. Jose leaves Ana with Christian. When Ana recovers herself, Christian insists on taking her home. Ana insists on telling Kate, only to find her happily dancing with Christian's brother, Elliot. Then Ana passes out.

Chapters 1-4 Analysis

The first few chapters of the novel introduce the main characters. The narrating character, Anastasia Steel, is a twenty-one year old college senior who is just a few weeks from graduation. Ana is something of an introvert, preferring her books to anything else. Ana interviews Christian Steel as a favor for her friend and roommate, Kate Kavanagh. Kate is the editor of the school paper and she arranged the interview, but became ill before she could do it. Ana is instantly attracted to Christian in a way she has never been with another man. However, Christian is a very wealthy, very successful man who seems to be out of Ana's league.

Christian Grey is business tycoon in his late twenties. Christian is very controlled, very confident. However, the reader soon picks up on the idea that Christian has secrets and a past that he is not open to sharing. The reader learns that he was adopted as a young child and he has an interest in feeding the masses. Other than this, the reader, and Ana, know very little about Christian's personal life. The fact that he also claims to be the wrong man for her leaves the reader quite curious about him and his past.

Kate is Ana's roommate and best friend. Kate is a very opinionated and forceful personality. She is clearly the fore behind Ana, encouraging her to come out of her shell and do things she might not do otherwise. It is clear that Kate's opinion matters greatly with Ana. There is also Jose, a young photographer Ana met early in her days at the college who is almost like a surrogate brother to her. However, Jose has romantic feelings for Ana and tries to kiss her when Ana is drunk. This suggests a questionable character on Jose's part and presents a conflict with Christian even as he claims to not be interested in a relationship with Ana.



Chapters 5-8

Chapters 5-8 Summary

In Chapter 5, Ana wakes in Christian's hotel room. She is confused until Christian comes into the room and tells her that he brought her there to prevent her from vomiting in his car on the longer journey to her apartment. Christian then goes to take a shower. When he emerges, Ana is out of bed, so he tells her that he sent her clothes to be washed and his assistant, Taylor, bought her some new clothes. Ana takes a shower and dresses before joining Christian for breakfast. Over breakfast, Ana asks Christian questions about his personal life and he tells her a few snippets of his romantic life, but stresses that he does not do relationships. However, Christian admits to being unable to stay away from Ana. For this reason, he invites her to his home in Seattle to explain his reluctance in getting involved with her and to have her sign some paperwork. Christian then takes her home, kissing her during the brief ride on the elevator.

In Chapter 6, Christian and Ana arrive at her apartment to find Kate and Elliot there. They are clearly deliriously happy, making Ana feel awkward in front of Christian. Ana spends a long, difficult day at work while anticipating her trip to Seattle with Christian. When Christian picks her up, he takes her to a heliport where they board his helicopter for the ride to Seattle. Ana is surprised to find that Christian is a pilot, but she enjoys the ride. When they arrive in Seattle, Christian lands the helicopter on a helipad on his apartment building. They go down to his apartment and talk over a glass of wine. When the conversation turns to sex, Christian asks Ana to sign a non-disclosure agreement, promising not to talk to anyone about anything he should do or say in her presence. Then he takes her to see his playroom.

In Chapter 7, Ana is shocked by the things that she sees in Christian's playroom. It seems like a medieval torture room to her. Christian, concerned about her opinion of him, tries to explain that he is a Dominant or a person who likes to have control over his sexual partner in everything. Christian has a very specific contract that he has his partners sign and over dinner, Christian shows Ana the rules section of the contract. Ana does not understand and it soon comes out that she is a virgin who has very limited sexual experience.

In Chapter 8, Christian is upset to learn that Ana is a virgin. However, he decides not to let it stop them. In fact, he decides that before they talk anymore about the contract that he should relieve her of her virginity. Christian and Ana spend several hours together before Ana falls asleep. Ana wakes in the night and finds Christian playing the piano. Ana asks him to come back to bed, but he claims he never sleeps with a woman. This time, however, he makes an exception.



Chapters 5-8 Analysis

Ana wakes in Christian's bed and is happy about the situation even though she knows nothing happened between them and more than likely will not. However, when their breakfast conversation turns to his sexual past, Christian makes it clear that he is interested in Ana. In fact, he kisses her quite passionately in the elevator on his way to take her home.

Christian is highly controlling. Ana has noticed this from the first moment they met and it has continued to be apparent to both Ana and the reader as the novel has progressed. Ana does not understand what this might mean or where it comes from. However, as the novel progresses, it becomes clear that Christian has emotional issues that influence his behaviors. When Christian takes Ana to his home and introduces her to his BDSM lifestyle, it becomes clear that Christian likes to be in control, that it gives him a sense of power. This need for control extends into all aspects of his life, especially his sex life. Christian has never known romance or a normal relationship. All his relationships have involved some level of Dominant behavior. This leaves the reader wondering what happened to Christian to make him this way.

Ana is an innocent where Christian is far from it. It is not a surprise to the reader to learn she has no experience with men, but Christian is upset by it because it causes difficulties in his desire to make her his submissive. The reader must realize that this lifestyle will become a serious issue between Ana and Christian, leaving the reader wondering how far this relationship will go before it falls apart in the playroom.



Chapters 9-14

Chapters 9-14 Summary

In Chapter 9, Ana wakes the next morning and finds Christian still sleeping beside her. She leaves him to sleep and goes to the kitchen in search of some food. Christian joins her and they make a meal together. Ana tells Christian she needs to go home, but he talks her into staying until evening. Christian then takes her upstairs so they can bathe together. After the bath, Christian ties Ana's hands with his tie and makes love to her again just as his mother arrives.

In Chapter 10, Christian quickly dresses and heads to the living room to greet his mother. Ana dresses and goes to meet her as well. Ana is nervous, but Christian's mother is kind and seems really happy to see Christian with a woman. Ana later learns that Christian has never introduced a woman to his mother. While speaking with Christian and his mother, Jose calls Ana. Christian is clearly jealous as he later interrogates her about their relationship.

Christian drives Ana home, stopping for lunch on the way. They discuss his past experiences, including the friend of his mother who taught Christian the BDSM lifestyle. Once home, Ana is frustrated that she cannot share any of her relationship with Christian with Kate. However, she is pleased to discover that she has gotten interviews at two publishing houses in Seattle where she has applied.

In Chapter 11, that night, when she goes to bed, Ana reviews the contract that Christian gave her. She is shocked by the things that it discusses. The next morning, Ana is surprised when Christian has a brand new Mac computer delivered for her to do research on his lifestyle with. This begins the first round of emails in which Ana makes it clear that she thinks of the Mac as a loan and not a gift. Later that day, Ana uses the computer to do some research.

In Chapter 12, Ana goes for a run so she can be alone to think about what she has read. Many questions run through her mind and she wonders how Christian would feel about an open discussion of these questions. When she returns home, Ana sends a joke email to Christian telling him she wants to end things. Christian surprises her by showing up at her apartment. They spend a few hours together. Afterward, she apologizes for the email and tells him she has questions. He encourages her to ask anything she wants, but Ana decides to write the questions out in an email. Ana walks him out when Christian decides to leave, but is upset when he is gone. After she speaks with Kate, Ana sits down to write an email outlining all her questions.

In Chapter 13, Christian writes Ana back, detailing his response to each of her questions. This spurs a bunch of emails between them as they discuss the problems Ana has. They meet for dinner a few nights later. Ana dresses carefully, hoping to please. Christian has arranged for them to eat in a private dining room where they can



discuss the contract openly. Ana is overwhelmed by the discussion and decides to go home afterward rather than spend the night in Christian's hotel room. When Christian sees Ana's old car, he is shocked and concerned for her safety. Ana finds this sweet, but annoying. When she gets home, Christian has written her an email telling her how deeply he wants their contract to work. Ana, however, is beginning to see that Christian cannot offer her the normal relationship she wants.

In Chapter 14, it is Ana's graduation day. Ana's stepfather, Ray, arrives and they spend a few minutes catching up. Then they drive to campus where the ceremony is to be held. Ana is grateful that she sits further back in the crowd when Christian takes the stage. Christian is to hand out the diplomas to the graduates. When it is her turn to get her diploma, Christian chastises her for not returning his calls the night before or that morning. Ana was not even aware he had called. After the ceremony, Christian pulls Ana aside and again grills her about her lack of communication. Afterward, they attend a get together thrown by the university. Ana is surprised when Christian allows himself to be introduced to her father as Ana's boyfriend. Christian even seems to hit it off with Ray.

Chapters 9-14 Analysis

Ana and Christian enjoy some domestic time alone together, belying Christian's protest that he does not do the girlfriend thing and that he prefers his own company. Not only this, but Christian's mother makes a surprise appearance at his apartment and Christian has no doubts about introducing Ana to her. It is something of a surprise to Ana that Christian has never introduced a woman to his mother, but the reader, taking into account the role women have in Christian's life, the reader is not surprised. Christian is a very private person, the kind who would compartmentalize his life. It seems, however, that Ana is beginning to change things for Christian.

Christian shows Ana the contract that he normally has signed with his submissives. This contract is not legally binding, but it makes clear what is expected of the submissive and what each partner is allowed and not allowed to do. Christian, as in everything else, is very controlling about this part of his life and wants his expectations to be clear to his partners. It is even more important with Ana because of her lack of experience in this type of relationship.

Christian clearly has feelings for Ana. It is clear in his desperation in getting her to agree to his contract and in his inability to stay away from her. Ana, too, is clearly falling for Christian. The problem is, Ana has no experience with relationships and what Christian is asking of her goes far beyond her understanding of a male-female relationship. Christian is walking on fragile ground with Ana, leaving the reader wondering how far he can push her before she becomes too frightened to continue.



Chapters 15-20

Chapters 15-20 Summary

In Chapter 15, Christian comes to Ana's apartment and presents her with a new car for her graduation. Ana refuses to accept it until he promises that it is only a loan. Then they go into the apartment and share some champagne before settling on the couch to go over the soft and hard limits of the contract. Christian explains the things Ana does not understand and expresses his desire to include each item on the list. Ana agrees to most of it, but expresses concern about the punishments Christian has listed in the contract. They then retire to the bedroom.

In Chapter 16, as they lay in bed, Christian discusses birth control with Ana, suggesting that she see his doctor. Christian then rises to leave and they once again enter a conversation about Dominant and Submissive. Ana rolls her eyes at Christian, after he has warned her not to. For this reason, Christian takes Ana over his lap and spansks her. Ana is shocked by the pain, but also by the pleasure. After Christian leaves, Ana calls her mother and talks to Kate. Ana wishes she could talk to both women about Christian, but the non-disclosure statement keeps her from it. Instead, she speaks with Christian in a chain of emails. Then Christian shows up at the apartment having become concerned by a response Ana made in one of her emails. Upon his arrival, Christian learns Ana was crying after he left. Christian decides to spend the night with her, again breaking his rule against sleeping with women.

In Chapter 17, Christian wakes late the next morning and rushes out. For this reason, Ana decides to write him an email that explains her feelings about the spanking and their relationship. Christian responds and addresses each of her concerns honestly. Later in the day, Ana is at work when a courier delivers a Blackberry to Ana. Christian wants her to have it so that she will never miss another of his emails. Ana is annoyed. That night, Ana and Kate finish packing for their move to Seattle. A day later, Ana goes to a bar with Jose while Kate and Elliot spend time alone in the apartment. When Ana gets home, she discovers that she has again missed some messages from Christian and he is not happy. The following day, Kate and Ana make the move to Seattle. That afternoon, Christian has a bottle of champagne delivered to the new apartment. The following day, Ana goes to Christian's apartment where he has arranged for her to be examined by a ob/gyn.

In Chapter 18, the doctor comes and quickly examines Ana before giving her a prescription for birth control pills. Afterward, Christian takes Ana into his playroom for their first official BDSM session. Ana is unsure of what will happen, but comes to the conclusion that most of it is pleasurable. The session makes Ana very tired and Christian allows her to sleep.

In Chapter 19, Christian wakes Ana and tells her to dress so they will not be late for dinner at his parents. Ana bathes and dresses, but cannot find her underwear. Ana is



aware that Christian has it and he wants her to ask for it, so she consciously decides not to. They drive to his parents and Ana finds the entire family to be warm and receptive toward her. Elliot and Kate are there as well. Kate surprises Ana when she first tells Christian that Ana plans to travel to Georgia, something she has yet to tell him, and later that she went to a bar with Jose, another thing Ana has not told him. Christian becomes quiet and Ana is afraid he is angry. It seems she is in for a punishment when Christian takes Ana for a walk and they end up alone in the boathouse.

In Chapter 20, Ana asks Christian not to spank her and he agrees. However, he punishes her anyway by refusing her pleasure during love making. They are nearly caught by Christian's sister. They return to the house where Ana pulls Kate aside and chastises her for making trouble with Christian. Kate warns Ana against Christian, but Ana does not listen. Ana and Christian leave. Christian questions Ana's sudden desire to visit her mother in Georgia. Ana tries to reassure him, but the truth is that she needs some distance from him to think about their relationship. Christian knows this.

At Christian's, Ana and Christian head up to bed and Ana pushes her luck by asking for more information about Christian's hang ups about being touched. Christian initially refuses until Ana tells him he can spank her again. Christian does and then tells her that his biological mother was a crack addict. This, however, is all he tells her.

Chapters 15-20 Analysis

Christian continues to push his contract on Ana, trying to get her to promise to sign it and to sign it with all her fears and limits clearly established. From an impartial point of view, Christian is being very fair and rational about this. However, Ana finds that emotion continuously clouds her choices.

Ana is in love with Christian, but she has never known anyone like him. Ana has never been spanked, not even by a parent. For this reason, Ana is confused and frightened the first time Christian spanks her even though he does it in such a way that gives her both pleasure and pain. It is a confusing moment for Ana. She knows it is wrong for someone to hit another person, but Christian takes so much joy from it that she wants to give him what he wants. It is a difficult situation that leaves Ana frightened to do certain things around Christian, something that should not exist in a trusting relationship.

Christian admits to Ana that he is messed up. He calls himself fifty shades of messed up. This lets Ana into to the idea that there is some emotional damage that is causing Christian to behave as he does, but he refuses to share with her the truth of this damage. Christian seems to be afraid that Ana will be frightened off if she knows the truth about him. However, knowing what causes Christian's problems is important to Ana and she fights to learn the truth. To this point, however, all Christian will tell her is that his biological mother was crack addicted. This, in addition to other things the reader knows about Christian, begins to explain some of Christian's need for control.



Chapters 21-26

Chapters 21-26 Summary

In Chapter 21, Ana wakes the following morning and finds herself alone. She goes out to the kitchen and is surprised to find Christian's housekeeper there. Ana then goes in search of Christian and finds him in his study. They talk for a moment and make love on the desk. Afterwards, they have a discussion that leaves Ana feeling hurt and confused. At breakfast, however, the old Christian is back. Later that day, Ana has her interviews and feels they both went well. At home, Ana has words with Kate about Christian. Kate has come to the conclusion that Christian is odd and he will hurt Ana. Ana ignores her, however. Ana then leaves for the airport to catch her flight to Georgia. When she arrives, she is surprised to learn that Christian has had the ticket upgraded to first class.

In Chapter 22, as Ana travels, she thinks about Christian. While waiting for a connecting flight, Ana writes a long, emotional email to Christian to let him know how she feels about him. Ana arrives safely in Georgia and spends the morning on the beach with her mother. After lunch, Ana discovers that Christian has responded to her email with a long essay that addresses her concerns and his feelings for her. Later, through email, Ana learns that Christian had dinner with the woman who introduced him into the BDSM lifestyle. Ana is jealous. The following day, she is unhappy when she does not receive a single email from Christian. Then, while she is having drinks in a hotel bar, she is shocked to find that Christian is in Georgia. In fact, he is in the same hotel they are in.

In Chapter 23, Christian joins Ana and her mother. Ana's mother likes him immediately. When Ana's mother gets up to go to the restroom, Ana argues with Christian over his dinner with his former lover. Therefore, when Ana's mother rejoins them, Christian politely excuses himself. Ana's mother encourages Ana to make amends with Christian. For this reason, Ana goes up to Christian's room. They talk a little more about Christian's ex-lover before they move into the bathroom and have a bath together. In the bath, Ana realizes small scars on Christian's chest are not from an illness as she had previously thought. Ana tries to get Christian to tell her more about his past, but again he refuses. However, he does reveal more about his ex-lover.

In Chapter 24, Christian wakes Ana early the following morning and takes her on a glider ride. Afterward he takes her home where her mother is frantically preparing for the dinner she invited Christian to the night before. Later, while Ana and her mother are at the grocery store, Christian calls and tells Ana that a problem came up and he cannot make dinner. Instead, Ana spends a relaxing day with her mother.

In Chapter 25, Ana flies home the following day and goes straight to Christian's with Taylor. Taylor tells Ana that Christian has been moody without her and he is happy she is there. However, when Ana arrives at Christian's, she finds him distracted and stressed. However, he seems pleased to see her. Ana shares with Christian the news that she has gotten the job she wanted with a small publishing house. He seems



pleased. Later, Christian orders Ana into his playroom where they spend several hours together.

In Chapter 26, the next morning, Ana wakes early to take her pill. She finds Christian once again playing the piano. They talk for a while, the conversation eventually moving around to the contract. Christian tells her she no longer needs to sign the contract, but he still expects her to follow the rules. When Ana rolls her eyes, Christian demands the right to spank her. Ana runs from him and he chases. Ana tells Christian that she dislikes being spanked as much as he dislikes being touched. Christian is shocked by this. When Ana sees how emotional it makes him, she tells him to spank her as painfully as he can so that she might know what the extreme end of the punishment prism might be. Christian does so with a belt. The spanking is so painful and so humiliating that Ana refuses to let him touch her afterward, running to hide in the bedroom he has assigned to her. When Christian comes to her, Ana tries to explain to him how she feels. Christian tells her that it is necessary for him to be able to punish her. Suddenly Ana realizes that there will not be a relationship with Christian without this life and she is sure she cannot do it. Ana tells Christian that their relationship is over, returns his gifts to him, and walks out.

Chapters 21-26 Analysis

Christian's controlling nature comes to a new height when he suddenly shows up in Georgia where she has gone to get away from him. On one hand, Ana is annoyed by his inability to give her space, but on the other hand she is pleased to see him. They spend a lovely night together getting to know one another better. Ana feels she has better insight into Christian when he admits that the woman who brought him into the BDSM lifestyle might have saved his life by giving him an outlet for his emotions. Ana is slowly beginning to understand Christian better.

Ana still struggles with the contract Christian wants her to sign. She wants to be with him at any cost, but she is afraid of the darker side of his Dominant lifestyle. This is especially true of the physical abuse he wants to submit her to. For this reason, Ana asks him to show her the worse so she might understand what she will face in the future. When this happens, Ana cannot handle it. Christian, who can clearly see how upset Ana is, refuses to back down. For this reason, Ana knows that she cannot remain with him. Ana walks away from the only man she has ever loved. It is a heartbreaking ending because the reader can see how damaged Christian is and how much Ana has already altered his life in the short time they have known each other. Therefore, this ending leaves a clear opening for the next novel in the series.



Characters

Anastasia 'Ana' Steel

Ana is a college student who is about to graduate from WSU when the novel begins. Ana is a shy, reserved girl who prefers the company of her books to the company of people. However, when Ana meets Christian Grey, she immediately feels a connection with him that she has never felt with a man before.

Ana is young and inexperienced. This causes Christian to push her away, but she becomes somewhat obsessive about him, finally convincing him not only to take a chance on her, but helping him overcome some of his hang ups when it comes to relationships.

Christian Grey

Christian Grey is a very young business tycoon who is highly successful. Christian is very controlling, not only in his business but in his private life as well. As the reader gets to know Christian, it becomes evident that he is emotionally damaged from a difficult childhood. Christian was born to a crack addicted mother and, although he was adopted at four, his mother neglected him and abused him to such a degree that he struggles with several emotional hang ups.

Christian was introduced into the BDSM lifestyle when he was only fifteen. Christian claims this was done out of love and if he had not experienced this, he would have ended up on drugs like his biological mother. In the past Christian has had lovers who were familiar with the lifestyle and had no trouble with Christian's needs. However, Ana is young and inexperienced, therefore she is not familiar with the lifestyle and cannot why it is so important to Christian. In the end, Ana leaves Christian because she feels she cannot deal with his lifestyle.

Kate Kavanagh

Kate is Ana's roommate. Kate is a strong, determined young woman with strong opinions. Kate often offers advice to Ana that is not requested in her attempt to care for her friend. Ana finds Kate's concern touching at the beginning of the novel, but when Kate tells Christian some things that lead to him wanting to punish Ana, Ana becomes annoyed with Kate and her inability to understand Christian despite the non-disclosure agreement that prevents Ana from explaining the situation completely.



Jose

Jose is a friend of Ana's. Ana and Jose met when Ana first came to Portland to attend college. Jose is the son of an old military buddy of Ana's father, making them almost like family. Jose has a crush on Ana that he attempts to act on one night while they are out drinking together, causing some tension in their relationship. However, they make amends and continue with their friendship. This relationship is a source of jealousy for Christian during his relationship with Ana.

Elliot Grey

Elliot is Christian's brother. Elliot is a fun loving, good looking young man who hooks up with Kate the first night they meet. Elliot is everything Ana wishes Christian can be: relaxed, happy, and normal. Elliot is the complete opposite of Christian, a character who is used to underscore how odd some of Christian's behaviors are.

Ray Steel

Ray is Ana's stepfather. Ana's mother married Ray shortly after her biological father died and their marriage lasted into Ana's teens. For this reason, Ana considers Ray her father and she even lived with him when her mother left the marriage to marry her third husband. Ray is a simple man who never has much to say. Therefore, it surprises Ana when Ray and Christian hit it off immediately.

Carla

Carla is Ana's mother. Carla is the kind of woman who is in love with being in love. Carla married Ray shortly after Ana's father died and remained married to him for over ten years, but then left him for another man. Carla's third marriage did not last long and Ana is not sure of the details of that marriage, except to know that it was not a pleasant marriage and the man was no good for her mother. Carla then married a fourth time, to Bob, a man who is kind and gentle, the kind of man Ana wants for her mother. Ana and Carla are close despite the distance apart in which they live. Carla, like Ray, likes Christian immediately.

Taylor

Taylor is Christian's assistant. Taylor lives in Christian's apartment and he always on hand to do anything Christian bids him to do. Ana finds herself drawn to Taylor. Despite his military look, Taylor is a gentle man who clearly likes Christian and he is also drawn to Ana, liking her for who she is and for the effect she has on Christian.



Dr. Grace Trevelyan-Grey

Dr. Grace Trevelyan-Grey is Christian's adoptive mother. Grace is a pediatrician. Grace has always worried about Christian because he is so controlled and he has never introduced a woman to the family. In fact, Grace is concerned that her eldest child might be gay. When Grace surprises Christian and Ana at his home, she is clearly pleased to meet Ana. Grace is kind to Ana, as is the rest of the family.

Mia Grey

Mia is Christian's younger sister. Mia is a happy, enthusiastic young girl who is also the opposite of Christian. Mia has been living in Paris and recently returns toward the end of the novel. Mia and Ana hit it off immediately. Mia is the typical little sister, clearly adoring of both her older brothers.



Objects/Places

First Editions of Tess of the D'Urbervilles

After attempting to end his relationship with Ana, Christian sends Ana a set of three first editions of the novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy. Ana returns them to Christian because of the extravagant cost.

Photos

Christian poses for pictures to be added to Kate's article. Ana later finds some of these photos on Google.

Tie

Christian uses one of his silk ties to bind Ana's hands during sexual play. Later, to tease Ana, Christian wears the same tie to her college graduation.

Blackberry

Christian gives Ana a Blackberry so that he might stay in constant contact with her.

Mac Laptop Computer

Christian gives Ana a Mac computer for her to use to do research on his Dominant lifestyle. They also use the computer to exchange emails.

Audi

Christian gives Ana an Audi as a college graduation gift because he is concerned about the old car she drives. Ana will only accept it as long as they both agree it is a loan, not a gift.

Wanda

Wanda is Ana's Volkswagen Beetle, a car that Christian feels is too old and safe for her to drive. Taylor sells the car for an undisclosed amount of money.



Charlie Tango

Charlie Tango is Christian's helicopter. Christian uses this helicopter to transport himself and Ana to Seattle the night he informs her of his unusual sexual lifestyle.

Non-Disclosure Agreement

Christian has Ana sign a non-disclosure agreement before he will tell her anything about his past or his sexual habits. This agreement forces Ana to keep to herself anything she might learn about Christian.

Contract

Christian presents Ana with a contract that dictates the rules and limitations to their Dominant, Submissive relationship. Ana wavers on whether or not to sign the contract until Christian finally tells her it is unnecessary.

Red Room of Pain

Christian shows Ana his playroom, a room she dubs the Red Room of Pain. This is the room in which Christian most often indulges his BDSM lifestyle.

Seattle

Christian lives in Seattle, Washington. Ana and Kate move there after their graduation from WSU Vancouver.

Portland

Ana and Kate live in Portland at the beginning of the novel where they attend WSU Vancouver.



Themes

Love

Ana is a typical young woman who has grown up reading such books as *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Hence, she is aware that love is not always an easy road, but she believes that when it happens, it will be a wonderful thing. Ana has never had a relationship with a boy because she never felt a connection with a boy. All this changes when Ana meets Christian.

The chemistry between Ana and Christian is instantaneous on both parts. Ana cannot stop thinking of Christian and he cannot stay away from her even when he knows he should. For this reason, they continuously seek one another out. However, Christian lives a lifestyle that does lend itself well to a romantic relationship. Christian makes this clear to Ana on several occasions, but she still asks for more.

Ana is in love with Christian and feels he is the only man she ever wants to be with. However, Christian will not even share a bed with her for anything more than sex and insists to her that he cannot commit to more than a few months at a time. Christian even wants her to sign a contract that will dictate the terms of their relationship. However, as time passes and Christian gets to know Ana, he begins to relent on some of his restrictions. Unfortunately, it is not enough.

Childhood Abuse

Christian is a very controlling man. He controls everything that goes on around him, from his business to the behaviors of his lovers. Christian does not allow women to sleep in his bed. Nor does he like to be touched. Christian also has a thing about wasted food and people going hungry. All of these things seem to either stem from, or contribute to, his BDSM lifestyle.

As the novel progresses and Ana begins to get to know Christian, she wonders about his restrictions. Many times Ana asks Christian where these things come from and at first all he will tell her is that he is messed up. Eventually, however, Ana learns that Christian was born to a crack addicted woman and that he was abused physically. Ana never learns the details of this abuse, but it is clear that it has had a profound impact on Christian's life. In fact, it is clear that this is the main reason for Christian's need to indulge in the BDSM lifestyle.

Child abuse comes in many forms and it impacts the victims in many ways. For Christian, the abuse only lasted four years, but it was clearly long enough to change basic human instincts, such as the way he deals with personal interaction. For this reason, child abuse is an important theme of the novel.



Innocence versus Cynicism

Ana is innocence. She is twenty-one, but she has never had a boyfriend, never even been kissed with more passion than that of a good friend. For this reason, she is deeply innocent of the ways between a man and a woman.

Christian was abused as a child and has been involved in the BDSM lifestyle since he was fifteen. Christian is very controlled in his life, keeping everything clear and honest, but also indulging in some of the darker sides of the Dominant lifestyle, such as spankings and canings. For this reason, it is clear that Christian is very cynical in his approach to life.

When Ana and Christian meet, there is instant attraction. At the same time, there is a clash between their levels of experience. Christian teaches Ana things that take away some of her innocence, while Ana brings to Christian a level of emotion that helps alleviate some of his cynicism. For this reason, innocence versus cynicism is a theme of the novel.

Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the first-person point of view. Ana is the narrator, telling her story in her own voice as she first meets Christian Grey and then begins a relationship with him. The author also includes in the novel emails between Ana and Christian that allow a little insight into Christian's point of view through his own written word.

The first-person point of view is a very intimate point of view that allows the reader to see the entire plot through the eyes of a single character. This point of view is more personal than the third person point of view, allowing the reader to feel almost a singularity with the main character. However, this point of view limits the readers understanding of other characters and events in the novel as the reader can only know and understand what the main character understands. In this novel that limit is appropriate because the plot would be altered if the reader were to understand more about Christian and his lifestyle than Ana.

Setting

The novel begins in Portland, Oregon where Ana and Kate attend college. As the novel progresses, the main character moves to Seattle, Washington where she hopes to take a job at a publishing house. The novel also takes a short trip to Georgia as Ana flies there to spend some time with her mother, Carla.

The setting of the novel is a modern world mostly in Washington State. The author does not make a big deal out of the setting by spending much time on descriptions of the setting. Instead, the author glosses over the setting to a certain degree. What is more important about the setting of the novel is Christian's home and his playroom. This setting is described in detail, especially the playroom, because it has a direct impact on the main character and the overall plot of the novel. The setting works well with the plot as Christian's apparent wealth and sexual proclivities are clearly defined in this particular setting.

Language and Meaning

The novel is written in simple English. The language of the novel fits the age and experience of the main character, making it a language that is simple for the reader to comprehend and relate to. There is little in the way of foreign words or phrases as well as slang that might confuse the reader.

The language of the novel fits the characters well. However, the author seems to have forgotten in certain places that her novel is set in America. The author, while using a clear language that leaves the reader with little trouble understanding the meaning,



tends to use language that is common in Europe, especially her native England, rather than using language that is more common in the United States. For this reason, some of the language can be jarring to the reader who is surprised by the formal speech and terms used for common items that are not common terms in America.

Structure

The novel is divided into twenty-six chapters. Each chapter varies in length, but most are more than fifteen pages long. The novel is written in both narration and dialogue, showing rather than telling a story. The novel is written in a linear style, telling the story from beginning to end without the use of flashbacks or other devices.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows Ana's growing relationship with Christian Grey. One subplot deals with Ana's relationship with her friend and roommate, Kate. Another subplot introduces the tension of Jose's crush on Ana. Another subplot deals with Christian's family and his legacy as an adoptee. Most of the plots come to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel, while some of the questions raised in this novel are left unanswered, presumably to be addressed in the other two novels in the trilogy.



Quotes

"To be honest, I prefer my own company, reading a classic British novel, curled up in a chair in the camps library" (Chapter 1, p. 11).

"No man has ever affected me the way Christian Grey has, and I cannot fathom why" (Chapter 2, p. 21).

"He cares enough to come and rescue me from some mistakenly perceived danger. He's not a dark knight at all but a white knight in shining, dazzling armor— a classic romantic hero—Sir Gawain or Sir Lancelot" (Chapter 5, p. 66).

"I wander to the far corner of the room and pat the waist-high padded bench and run my fingers over the leather. He likes to hurt women. The thought depresses me" (Chapter 7, p. 91).

"People stare at us as we drive through the streets. For a moment I think it's at him...and then a very paranoid part thinks everyone is looking at me because they know what I've been doing during the last twelve hours, but finally I realize it's the car" (Chapter 10, p. 133).

"For the first time in my life, I voluntarily go for a run" (Chapter 12, p. 157).

"I'm not knowledgeable, Anastasia, I just know what I like" (Chapter 15, p. 206).

"I open my eyes, and I'm draped in Christian Grey. He's wrapped around me like a victory flag" (Chapter 17, p. 233).

"I sigh and peek up at Fifty Shades. I could stare at him forever" (Chapter 19, p. 272).

"And in this quiet moment as I close my eyes, spent and sated, I think I'm in the eye of the storm. And in spite of all he's said, and what he hasn't said, I don't think I have ever been so happy" (Chapter 23, p. 338).

"I become aware that once again the only empty seat is beside me. I shake my head as the thought crosses my mind that Christian might have purchased the adjacent seat so that I couldn't talk to anyone. I dismiss the idea as ridiculous—no one could be that controlling, that jealous, surely" (Chapter 25, p. 360).

"Deep down, a nasty, unbidden thought comes from my inner goddess, her lips contorted in a snarl...the physical pain from the bite of a belt is nothing, nothing compared to this devastation" (Chapter 26, p. 391).



Topics for Discussion

Who is Anastasia Steel? Why does she go to interview Christian Grey? Why? Why does Ana have trouble forgetting Christian Grey? What is her initial impression of him? How does this impression grow and change as Ana gets to know Christian better? What does Ana want from Christian that she is afraid he cannot give her?

Who is Christian Grey? How did he make his wealth? Why is it unusual for a man so young to be so successful? Why is it important that Christian was adopted? How does this impact his actions? What kind of family was Christian adopted into? Why does Christian call this family perfect? Is it?

Who is Kate Kavanagh? What is her relationship with Ana? How does she feel about Christian at first? How does her impression of Christian change over time? Why? What advice does Kate give Ana regarding Christian at the beginning of the novel? Later in the novel? With whom does Kate begin a relationship in this novel? How is this compared to Ana and Christian's relationship?

Who is Jose? What is his relationship with Ana? How does Ana feel about Jose? How does Jose feel for Ana? How does Ana come to realize Jose's feelings for her? What does Christian think of Jose? Of his treatment of Ana? Why does Ana continue to be friends with Jose? Why does she feel afraid to tell Christian about Jose's upcoming photo exhibit?

Who is Ray? What is his relationship like with Ana? For what reason? Who is Carla? What is Ana's relationship like with her? For what reason? What advice does Carla give Ana about Christian? Does Ana take this advice? How does it impact her relationship with Christian? What do Ray and Carla think of Christian? Why does Ana find this strange?

Who is the woman Ana refers to as Mrs. Robinson? What did she do to a young Christian? Why does Christian claim this was done with love and that it saved his life? Why is Ana jealous of this woman? Why does Ana think of this woman as a child abuser? Is she? How might Christian's life be different if this woman had not come into his life? How might Christian and Ana's relationship be different if not for Mrs. Robinson?

What is the contract? What does it cover? Why does Christian want Ana to sign it? Why does Ana hesitate to sign it? What problems does Ana have with the contract? Why do Ana and Christian discuss this contract so much throughout the novel? Why does Ana eventually agree to sign it? Why does Christian eventually take the contract off the table? What does this contract say about Ana and Christian's relationship?