

Hold Me Closer, Necromancer Study Guide

Hold Me Closer, Necromancer by Lish McBride

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Plot Summary

This study guide uses the May 2012, paperback edition of Lish McBride's "Hold Me Closer, Necromancer". ISBN: 978-0-312-67437-3

Hold Me Closer, Necromancer is the story of Sam, a young man working a dead-end job at a fast food restaurant, who learns he is a necromancer (one who can bring the dead back to life). One night while playing potato hockey in the parking lot with his friends, a bad shot takes out the taillight of a foreboding man. When the man comes into the restaurant to confront them about the broken taillight, he's struck by Sam. He asks Sam why he hasn't registered with a mysterious group called The Council. Later, a man claiming to have been sent by Douglas Montgomery comes to see Sam, and ultimately, Sam is attacked in the parking lot, leaving deep gashes dug into his back.

With the help of his friends, Ramon, Frank, and Brooke, Sam begins to piece together what is happening to him. But when Brooke's reanimated head is delivered to Sam's doorstep, Sam is confronted with no other choice than to meet with Douglas Montgomery. While Sam takes Douglas' threats seriously, he doesn't understand why he's been chosen or why Douglas thinks Sam possesses the gift of necromancy, bringing the dead to life. Douglas wants Sam to become his apprentice, giving Sam a week to decide.

While Sam contemplates Douglas' offer, Sam confronts his mother Tia. During their discussion, Tia reveals that she is a witch and that Sam's biological father's family has a dominant gene for necromancy. Nick, Sam's uncle, and Tia joined forces and placed a powerful binding spell on Sam as an infant in order to protect him from falling under control of Douglas and the Council.

Sam struggles to understand what's happening and contacts June, another necromancer who lives in another territory. Unfortunately, June is unable to help Sam before he refuses Douglas' offer, which forces Douglas to escalate his demands. One night while out for a walk, Sam is abducted by a werewolf in Douglas' employ. Sam is thrown in a cage with Brid, a fey-werewolf hybrid, whom Douglas has abducted. Brid is able to inform Sam about Douglas and the world of the hybrid wolves. They form a bond and vow to plan an escape, but first Sam must endure the horrors of Douglas' tutelage. Douglas tries to teach Sam how to use his necromancy, but Sam fails. Douglas isn't sure if Sam's powers are that weak or if he's deliberately working against Douglas.

When Sam goes missing, Ramon seeks to help and contacts June. She gives Ramon explicit instructions to have Tia break the binding spell and asks him to contact Brannoc, Brid's father and Council member. Tia breaks the binding spell and enlists the help of Sam's neighbor Mrs. Winalski to help with Sam's rescue. Ramon joins with the wolf pack in the attack on Douglas' mansion to rescue Sam and Brid.

The binding spell broken, Sam newfound powers are unleashed. While Douglas seeks to steal Sam's power, Sam brings to life all the people that Douglas has harmed over



the years. A battle ensues between the undead, Douglas, and the wolves and other shapeshifters. Sam harnesses his newfound powers to defeat Douglas.

While recuperating at a hospital clinic run by the werewolves, Sam learns that he has inherited all of Douglas' worldly possessions and his place on the Council.



Chapters 1-6

Summary

Chapter 1 “Dead Man’s Party” opens with Sam at Plumpy’s where he is a fry cook. He works with his friends Ramon, who he has known since the sixth grade, and Frank and Brooke. Sam’s full name is Samhain Corvus LaCroix and was named by his mother after a pagan holiday to spite his father. The manager of the restaurant is Kevin, who is referred to as the “Lesser of Two Kevins” because he shares a name with Sam’s biological father. His parents are divorced.

Ramon and Sam are protective of Brooke and Frank has a crush on her. During their break, Ramon and Sam play potato hockey in the parking lot. Brooke watches until she gets a turn. During the game, they break a taillight on a Mercedes. Back in the restaurant, they play “Guess What I Put in the Fryer.” Sam is under a table scraping gum when a man comes in and holds out the potato and demands to know what happened. Ramon asks if there’s a problem and Brooke tells the man that he’s lucky his car was not impounded for being in the lot, since he is not a customer. The man leans down and drags Sam out from under the table. He asks Sam what he’s doing and why, if he lives in Seattle, he has not petitioned the Council. Sam is confused and the man insists that he would have known about Sam if he has lived in Seattle his entire life. Kevin tries to convince the man it’s a case of mistaken identity.

Chapter 2 “Well, Ain’t That a Kick in the Head” opens with Sam asking questions about the Council and why the man asked about where he was born. Brooke leaves and Frank watches her. As Sam, Ramon, and Frank all prepare to leave, a man approaches Sam and explains that Douglas Montgomery sent him. Sam tries to brush him off and the man attacks Sam, leaving deep gashes on his back. Before he leaves, the man comments that Sam smells a bit like Douglas, smelling of death. Frank and Ramon speed over in Frank’s Jetta and the man stops the car. Sam gets in and they take off. The man tears off the rear bumper. Ramon does not think it’s over.

Chapter 3 “These Are a Few of My Favorite Things” shifts the novel to third person for the first time. It introduces Douglas in his car, following and watching Brooke. The reader also learns that the man who attacked Sam is Michael and that Douglas is not pleased that Michael escalated things so quickly with Sam. Douglas ponders why he had not identified Sam as a necromancer before and suspects that Sam’s powers are small. He needs to put Sam in his place.

In a flashback, Douglas reflects on when he first realized his own powers as a boy. He was staying at his grandmother’s house wearing dress clothes. He sees his cousin Charlie wearing pajamas. When he tells his mother that he played with Charlie, she explains that Charlie got sick and died. After the funeral, Auntie Lynn took Douglas to stay with her. She explained to him that people like them were rare. When Douglas



turned 16, he poisoned Auntie Lynn and stole her powers. The flashback ends and Douglas gets out of the car and goes inside Brooke's house.

Chapter 4 "Brown Paper Packages Tied up with String" returns to the first person narrative from Sam. Sam describes his one-bedroom apartment and explains that he's a college dropout. His neighbor is Mrs. Winalski, a septuagenarian widow with an active social life. She tries to encourage Sam to get out and date. Ramon, Frank, and Sam all discuss what happened and whether they should contact the police. Because they fought back, they're not sure they want to involve the police. Sam goes to take a shower and surveys the bruising on his face and the deep scratches to his back. After his shower, Ramon is tasked with bandaging the wounds for Sam. All that's in the house is the medicine kit that Sam's mother prepared for him, which is made up of salves and oils. They talk more about the attack and Sam goes to bed. He does not get to sleep quickly and ends up taking some Tylenol and looks at his medicine bag, which is a pouch his mother gave him with crystals. It has a crow stitched onto the leather because a crow is Sam's totem animal. Sam remembers his mother giving him the pouch and how she told him that it would protect him from bad dreams when he was a child.

The next morning, Sam wakes to a knock at the door. A package is sitting on the door mat. As Sam prepares to open it, he gets an unsettled feeling. Inside the box is Brooke's severed head. Sam drops the box and Brooke starts talking to them. Frank runs and hides, Ramon hides behind a chair, and Sam jumps on the counter. Frank tosses a mouthwash bottle at Brooke's head and she tells him to stop. Sam jumps down and picks Brooke up, placing her in a chair. She tells them that she was watching a movie when it happened. She asks for some water and tells Sam that she needs to give him a message and indicates that the note is in the box. It gives Sam directions to meet Douglas in the zoo and to come alone.

Chapter 5 "She's a Lady" returns to third person and introduces Brid, who is locked in a cage after having been drugged, beaten, and stripped of her clothes. She can smell a wolf nearby and finally determines that it's Michael. She looks over the room and determines that the cage is designed for a werewolf like her. She overhears Michael talking with another man, who is angry. He yells at Michael that he wanted a hybrid, not the heir to the throne. The man taunts Michael about how Brid beat Michael the last time they fought. This provokes Michael and he grabs Brid by the neck and slams her on the bars. She bites him and tears off a piece of flesh. She spits it out, rejecting the meat, which is something wolves do not do. He tells her that he should have been next in line. Brid knows that Michael does not understand that packs are led both by brains and brawn, and not just brawn. Douglas finally reveals himself and asks if Brid knows who he is. She says she can guess and she's correct. She tells him that she knows he does not intend to set her free because she's dangerous to keep, but it would be worse to let her go. She tells him that werewolves and shifters will kill Douglas when they learn that he's built a cage that can hold a wolf-fey hybrid. Douglas tells her to have a good evening and leaves.

Chapter 6 "Sweet Dreams are Made of This" stays with Brid and the aconite in the cage giving her fever dreams. She dreams of sparring with her brother Sean and her father



Bran teaching her how to fight an opponent. The reader also learns that Brid and Sean's mother is dead. Brid and Bran discuss the position of leading a wolf pack. He tells her mistakes are the best teachers, while she suggests that it's pain. Brid doubts her father's choice in selecting her and he reassures her that he's made the right choice. While Brid is dreaming, under the influence of the aconite, Douglas checks her pulse. He carries her to the wall and hangs her with manacles. He begins to take fluids from Brid, explaining to Michael that he wants to make the best of the situation. Douglas takes notes and then passes the notebook to Michael, instructing him to take notes. He then slices into Brid and then watches the wound heal. He repeats, clearly impressed.

Analysis

The novel opens by introducing Sam and demonstrating the ordinary aspects of his life in a first-person narrative. The themes of identity and relationships are introduced through Sam and his friends. They are a close-knit group who work and live together. They are each other's family, with Sam and Ramon being protective of Brooke. They view her as a younger sister who may need protecting. That is not to suggest that they don't regard Brooke as having personal agency for herself. During the game of potato hockey, Brooke demonstrates that she is ready and willing to play just as hard as the boys. Commenting on protecting Brooke then suggests foreshadowing that Brooke may find herself in danger, as she eventually does.

These introductory chapters give the reader a sense of who the characters are in their everyday life. They are relatable. They mess around at work, but do take their jobs seriously. Sam may view himself as an underachiever, but it doesn't diminish his intellect. He is a young man who hasn't quite found his calling, even if he is not looking for it just yet.

The reader gets some information about Sam's family background and his absentee father. Like the reader, Sam does not yet know the true reasons for why his father abandoned him, foreshadowing that Sam has much to learn.

Chapter 2 introduces the name Douglas Montgomery, building the reputation of the character prior to his introduction. Michael references Douglas as though he is someone that Sam and the others should know, establishing the importance of Douglas' character to the story prior to meeting the character. Because the novel is in the horror/science fiction genre, the reader is likely to witness the introduction of characters representing good and evil. While most works of fiction possess a protagonist and antagonist, polarizing these characters is appropriate. Sam is the hero and Douglas is his nemesis.

Sam is attacked in the parking lot after his shift by Michael. Deep gashes are left on his back, giving readers an early glimpse that something may be out of the ordinary. This is the first true indication of the theme of supernatural. The attack is designed to prepare readers to expect the unexpected.



In Chapter 3, the narration shifts to the third-person. This may jar the reader, demanding attention that something different is about to happen. This is the first time that Michael is addressed by name and Douglas makes his first appearance. An origin story is given for Douglas. Through the use of a flashback, the reader learns that Douglas discovered his power of necromancy as a young boy when he was able to see his cousin who recently died. The flashback concludes with Douglas revealing that he killed Auntie Lynn in order to take her power, establishing that Douglas' evil doesn't have boundaries and that he desperately craves power. The flashback serves to illustrate the themes of the supernatural, death, and power.

When the narrative returns to first-person in Chapter 4, Mrs. Winalski is introduced. Her introduction furthers the theme of relationships. In her seventies, Mrs. Winalski has an active social life and wants the same for Sam. She notices that he doesn't go out as much as one might expect from a young man. It is clear that Mrs. Winalski has Sam's best interests at heart, setting her character up for the reveal of her true identity later in the novel.

More is learned about Sam's identity. As Ramon tends to Sam's wounds, he makes use of the oils and salves that Tia, Sam's mother, has prepared for him. While Sam isn't opposed to traditional Western medicine, as is later evidenced when he takes Tylenol, it is clear that Sam didn't grow up in a traditional house. Sam also uses his medicine bag for protection. This introduces the reader to the symbol of the crow, which can often represent death, indicating that either death is coming (and death is soon to arrive when Brooke's head is delivered) and that Sam has a strong connection with death, foreshadowing that he may be a necromancer like Douglas. The medicine bag is a source of protective power for Sam. It is something that he has had since he was a young boy and was given to him by his mother. Initially Sam was told that the medicine bag would ward off bad dreams. Given what the reader learned about Douglas seeing his dead cousin as a child, this foreshadows what Sam was actually experiencing.

Sam wakes to a knocking sound and Sam, Ramon, and Frank make a horrible discovery. Brooke has been decapitated and her reanimated head has been delivered to them. The guys react as one would expect, freaking out. They adjust as well as possible for Brooke's benefit. Brooke's murder is a warning to Sam and demonstrates how far Douglas will go to get Sam under his control. This reinforces the theme of power.

The themes of supernatural, power, and identity are all explored in Chapter 5. Returning to the third-person narrative, Brid is introduced. The reader may expect that, given that the novel deals with a necromancer, other elements of the supernatural would appear. It is clear that Brid has suffered at the hands of her captor(s). She is stripped of her clothes, leaving her exposed. She has also been drugged and beaten. Given the hostility apparent between Brid and Michael, it is likely that Michael took advantage of overpowering her to beat up on her. Brid challenges Michael, even from the confines of the cage and in a diminished capacity. This illustrates the extent of Brid's personal power. She would likely be able to overcome Michael in a battle if they were matched evenly. When Douglas finally appears, however, it is revealed that kidnapping Brid was



not the intent. Douglas wanted a hybrid werewolf, but Michael returned with the next in line. This establishes greater stakes for Douglas, but he does not make an effort to release Brid and attempt to get the hybrid he actually wanted. Instead, because of Douglas tremendous craving for power, he keeps her. He shows his power over her and his lack of fear of the repercussions. Brid taunts him by suggesting that she and the rest of the pack would destroy him, but Douglas doesn't indicate any fear.

Brid's fever dreams give some insight into Brid's background. She dreams of her family, in particular her father. They discuss power and learning how to lead. Brid is a dutiful student who is eager to learn. The conversation between Brid and her father reveals that Brid is not completely sure that she is the right choice to inherit her father's position. This is not Brid demonstrating modesty, but rather that she is coming to terms with the responsibility of what being the pack leader entails. Just as her father teaches her that being a good leader is not merely about being powerful, but also intelligent, Brid thought process reinforces why Brannoc has made a correct decision.

As the section concludes, Douglas subjects Brid to testing. The fey part of Brid allows her to heal quickly. He slices her open in sections just to watch her heal. She heals more slowly than she would were she not drugged, but this brings Douglas pleasure. He has an affinity for torture and enjoys inflicting pain. This gives further insight into his character.

Discussion Question 1

What is important about both Sam and Douglas smelling of death?

Discussion Question 2

Why does the author alternate between first person narrative and third person narrative?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Douglas taunt Michael about Brid defeating Michael in a previous fight?

Vocabulary

enthusiasm, pictogram, prehensile, yakuza, plausible, pagan, accoutrements, sauntered, ogling, devious, vamoosed, aristocracy, clientele, stance, covet, fiend, immolate, tuber, vapid, disdain, remnants, primitive, leveraged, enunciating, unfurling, ominous, anticlimactic, eccentric, marquee, redundant, puny, dilated, radiate, hysteria, inopportune, adage, foresee, necromancer, parasite, feebly, ruckus, etiquette, sedative, rogue, honed, insignificant, flimsy, justification, obscenities, alleviate, decrepit, scrawny, asphalt, furrows, antiseptics, salve, quaver, crestfallen, conundrum, haven, omnivorous,



totem, aromatherapy, extensive, paranoid, grotesque, cauterized, brandished, irrational, chivalry, snippets, patina, exasperation, skittered, queasy, bode, hybrid, implication, emanated, mongrel, aconite, filigree, euphemism, contingent, clout, feigned, hectic, metaphysical, runes, incision



Chapters 7-12

Summary

Chapter 7 “I’m Gonna Keep My Sheep Suit On” switches to third person and find Douglas arriving at the Tongue & Buckle, a pub, for a Council meeting. The other members of the Council are Brannoc, Brid’s father and fey hound; Kell, a vampire; Ariana, a fury; and Pello, a satyr. They vote on petitions and it’s clear that Douglas views himself above all the others. Douglas asks Brannoc whether Brid will eventually take Brannoc’s place on the Council as well.

Chapter 8 “Hold Me Closer, Necromancer” returns to Sam and the first person narrative. He arrives at the zoo and remembers going there with his family, including his stepdad Haden. Sam reveals that he took his stepdad’s last name of LaCroix and that his biological father’s surname is Hatfield. He observes the animals in the cages and finds a spot to wait for Douglas by the Asia exhibit. Douglas arrives and asks Sam about his last name, which Sam does not reveal. Douglas likes that Sam is cautious. Sam asks about the Council and Douglas tells him that his guide should have informed him about it. Sam does not know what he’s talking about. Douglas does not think Sam is being truthful, instead he believes that Sam must have suspected before now that he was a necromancer. Douglas tells Sam that one of the pandas died the first night at the zoo and that the zoo contacted him to raise the panda from the dead, which he did. They continue their discussion until Sam tells him that he will not work with Douglas because Douglas murdered Brooke. Douglas justifies his action by explaining “I had to get your attention” (102). Finally, Douglas tells him that Sam must join him or he will die, giving him one week to decide.

Chapter 9 “The Future’s So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades” finds Sam returning to his apartment. Brooke is sleeping and he wonders about whether she needs to sleep. He settles onto the couch and she startles him by asking about the zoo. She’s been watching the news to find out whether or not her body has been discovered. Sam explains that she was murdered as a message to him. Ramon returns with a pile of books about “voodoo, death, and the spirit world” (108). They discuss whether or not they’ll be questioned by the police about Brooke’s death. Frank shows them a bowling bag to carry Brooke around. Later they go to a part of Seattle called Ballard to meet with a seer named Maya LaRouche. She tells them that she will not begin until Brooke is removed from the room. She also tells Sam to remove his juju bag because she cannot see anything with the medicine bag blocking her. Sam’s aura is not normal and that only the outline is visible; she explains that someone has bound his magic and that the medicine bag is designed specifically to make Sam invisible.

Chapter 10 “Waiting, For a Girl Like You” returns to Brid in the cage and the third person narrative. Brid is able to tell that she’s been out of the cage, smelling that she’d been cleaned and fed. It bothers her that the cage does not give her enough room to sprint or to change. She overhears Douglas and James, who gives Douglas information about



falsifying a trail for where Brid may have go to keep Brannoc away. James wants to know why Douglas does not just get rid of Brid and he explains that it's because Brid is also a hybrid fey.

Chapter 11 "She Loves Me Like a Rock" opens with Sam going to confront his mother Tia about the binding. As he arrives at her house, he takes notice of her garden which the mailman describes as "the forest of LaCroix." His mother has an herbal shop and an online business. Sam's sister Haley greets Sam and Ramon at the door and asks Ramon if the bag is a present. Tia fixes a tea in the kitchen. She offers them tea and asks Sam what happened. He tells her he got in a fight, but that he's not on a social call. Avoiding more family secrets, Sam lets Ramon open the bag. Brooke is relieved to have air. Tia sends all but Sam into the other room; Sam confronts Tia about the medicine bag.

Chapter 12 "Sweet Child O'Mine" opens with Tia explaining to Sam about how she was upset with his father in the hospital when Sam was born. She explains that she's a witch, but not Wiccan and did not want to deliver at a hospital, but Kevin, Sam's father, insisted. She presents Sam with a cross-stitched family tree, detailing his mother's family, but his father's side is not filled in. While she tried to piece together Kevin's family tree, she discovered that Kevin has a brother, Nick, who lived in Oregon. She went to visit him. Nick, unaware that his brother married, invited Tia in. There is tension between them and Tia went to get food to make them something. While they ate, Nick told her that she was "wasted on my brother" (141). He told her that she would have to hide being a witch is she wanted to stay with Kevin. He told her that he is a necromancer, but that his brother is not. Tia asked if it was a dominant gene and Nick told her that there was a chance that their child would not become a necromancer, but if the child was, Kevin would abandon it. When Sam was born, Tia performed a test on Sam and realized he took after Nick. While she was deciding on a name, a crow came to the window ledge and she took it as a sign; other crows landed. She told the nurse she needed more time to figure out the name. After the nurse left the room, Tia took Sam to the ledge and introduced him to the crows: Samhain Corvus Hatfield. The crows flew off after the introduction. In the present Sam asks his mother if he was the reason the marriage failed. She explains it failed because of "too many secrets" (151).

Analysis

Chapter 7 introduces other Council members. They are varied in their supernatural abilities, but the characters are not explored through the remainder of the novel. The novel takes place in present-day Seattle, but has created a world in which a vast array of supernatural characters can exist. One reason for the inclusion of these characters may be to set up their appearances in future novels.

Sam goes to meet Douglas at the zoo and learns that Douglas brought a panda bear back to life to save the zoo embarrassment after advertising the latest addition to the zoo. Douglas has demonstrated the dark side of his power by killing Brooke. While Brooke was murdered, he did return Brooke to her friends in a reanimated state. They



are subjected to the loss, but also to the possibility that the loss may not be as horrible as it seems. This may be how Douglas sees it, but Brooke has suffered a tremendous loss. In meeting Sam at the zoo, he shows a more user-friendly version of himself. There is a practical application to the power of necromancy. The zoo contacted him and employed his services. This may be an effort to coax Sam into joining forces.

Douglas sees potential in Sam, telling Sam that he is “Cautious...that’s a good trait, too” (93). Any attempts that Douglas makes to lure Sam are of little consequence unless he threatens harm. Sam is not fooled by any pleasantries Douglas may exchange. Further, Sam still is not clear on what Douglas wants and, more importantly, what his own powers are. Sam remains lost in the conversation with Douglas. While Douglas may interpret some of Sam’s reluctance to answer questions as Sam being cautious, he neglects to recognize that Sam may be telling the truth in that he is unaware that he has any supernatural powers. Douglas gets frustrated when he doesn’t get his way and resorts to using powers of intimidation to get what he wants. He justifies what he did to Brooke, thinking it was the best way to get Sam to notice and respect him. This is not respect built on trust or admiration; Douglas wants respect for his power. Giving Sam time to consider whether or not he will join Douglas is a formality. Douglas has no intention of taking no for an answer.

When Sam returns to the apartment, he has a discussion with Brooke. Their relationship is evolving. Sam is trying to figure out what Brooke may or may not need any more, and Brooke is trying to figure out her place in the world. She is unaware that Sam may have the ability to reverse the spell that keeps her undead, but if that is what she wants, it is unclear. The theme of identity can be seen in how Brooke relates to others in her new form, but also in how she must find herself now that she is absent a body.

Ramon’s interest in voodoo and the spirit world demonstrates his willingness to open his mind to what is happening. Ramon may not know exactly what is happening, but he knows that he needs further information. Douglas is a real threat to all of them and has knowledge and experience using the supernatural to his advantage. Ramon tries to counter that by educating himself and his friends. He also does it to support his best friend Sam. Their relationship is strong and Ramon wants to be there for his friend.

Building on the theme of relationships, Frank provides Brooke with a bowling bag to help her achieve mobility. She can now travel with her friends while remaining undetected. The consequences of what has transpired finds focus in the group. They know that Douglas is a danger to them, but they are also aware that the police pose a different kind of threat. Police will be looking for Brooke’s killer and they possess a key piece of evidence: Brooke’s head. Understanding that they need to be proactive in keeping themselves safe, Ramon puts Sam in contact with Maya LaRouche. When Sam meets with her, he begins to understand more clearly the power of the medicine bag his mother gave him. Until now, the medicine bag was viewed as a type of security blanket that had more symbolic power rather than actual power. Sam learns that this bag makes him all but invisible in the supernatural world and that his magic has been bound. This revelation may offer Sam some insight on why he is being pursued by Douglas, but it also creates more questions.



After leaving Maya LaRouche, Sam knows that he must confront his mother. He is angry and confused and hurt by the secrets. Because of this, he is upfront with showing his mother and sister what happened to Brooke. It is jarring and prompts Tia to be more forthright with Sam than she might have been without being exposed to Brooke's situation.

Tia's story starts the longest flashback in an otherwise, straightforward, linear narrative. It does not slow down the momentum of the book, but rather enriches the development of Sam's character. As the reader learns about Sam's family and the relationship between Tia and Nick, the theme of the supernatural becomes apparent. Tia is a witch and Nick's family has a genetic propensity to necromancy. Together they worked to protect Sam. Nick quickly assessed that Sam's powers were strong, which made him agree to help Tia bind Sam.

This is the second appearance of the crow as a symbol. A crow landed on the window ledge while Tia was trying to come up with a name for her baby right after Sam was born. Other crows appeared and they only left after Tia presented the infant to them with his name. This reinforces the theme of identity as well.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Douglas like that Sam is cautious?

Discussion Question 2

Why didn't Tia tell Sam she's a witch?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Sam ask if he causes his parents' divorce?

Vocabulary

contrite, fey, benign, tedious, arbitrary, quarry, satyrs, skirmishes, condensation, punctuality, subtlety, affinity, aura, echolocation, incandescent, onslaught, retort, appellation, frolic, insolent, condone, decapitate, recourse, pantomimed, levity, intent, turmoil, surveillance, errant, occult, phenomenon, relegated, innately, pariah, dejected, laden, billowed, surreal, subservience, juju, accomplice, deviating, fluke, nestled, bribery, scuffles, compunction, infuriated, coven, pungent, subterfuge, grimace, forlornly, reproach, tangible, lycanthropy, karmic, resignation, ambiguous, omen, brambles



Chapters 13-18

Summary

Chapter 13 "I Put a Spell on You Because You're Mine" continues the previous chapter. Sam asks about the binding spell and Tia remembers back to the hospital. Nick arrived in the middle of the night and Tia suggested that they bind Sam's aura to hide him. Nick thought it was dangerous. After he looked at the baby, he changed his mind and told Tia he would help with the binding. He told her that they should bind him and hide him under Douglas' nose. They did the spell twice because the first didn't work.

Chapter 14 "The Devil Inside" stays with the conversation between Tia and Sam. She explains that Sam's aura kept leaking. Sam remembers having nightmares as a child and Tia tells him he was seeing spirits and that is what prompted her to make the medicine bag for him. They continue their discussion and Sam is able to read his mother's emotions, something Douglas managed to awake in him. He senses that his mother is afraid of him and confronts her. She protests, but he insists and she confesses that Douglas' power is "worthy of my fear" (163). They embrace and Sam realizes he can feel all her anxiety and fear. She apologizes and he screams for her to leave, crumbling to a ball on the floor. Ramon comes to get him and Sam realizes the magnitude of how his life has changed. As Sam, Ramon, and Brooke prepare to leave, Haley comes outside to talk to Sam. She defends their mother, but Sam tells her she doesn't and can't understand. He asks her if she wants to go visit their dad's grave next week and tells her he loves her.

Chapter 15 "I Hear You Knockin', but You Can't Come In" finds Sam and his friends back at the apartment. Ramon changes the dressing on Sam's wounds. Brooke sees her house on the news; her body has been found. Sam goes to sleep and is waked by knocking. Det. Dunaway arrives to talk to them about Brooke. He has already talked to Mrs. Winalski who told him that Sam "looked a little roughed up" (174). Sam shows Dunaway his back. Dunaway asks why he didn't report the attack to the police. Before he leaves, Dunaway takes photos of Sam's face and back. Sam thinks about Douglas' deadline.

Chapter 16 "Papa was a Rolling Stone" finds Sam going to visit his biological father to track down Nick and get the binding spell reversed. He takes the ferry to Bainbridge Island and goes to the house. Elaine Hatfield answers the door and Sam tells her he's looking for Nick Hatfield. She invites him in and tells him that she's only met Nick once, after Lilly, her first daughter, was born. When Kevin saw Nick hold the baby, he freaked out and the brothers got into a fight. Nick told them that Lilly "might be dangerous" (182) and might need a guide. She asks if Nick is Sam's father and explains that Sam looks a bit like Nick and Kevin. As they talk, Sam begins to understand that Kevin led Elaine to believe that Nick is Sam's father. As Sam readies to leave, he meets Lilly. Elaine goes upstairs to tend to her other daughter Sara. Lilly says to Sam: "You're like me" (186) and he confirms. She tells him that something is wrong with his inside and he tells her he's



working on getting it fixed. She takes him into another room and shows him drawings of her friends, which all appear to be adults. She asks him “The Shadow People aren’t imaginary, are they?” (188). Sam confirms and he asks her to get some of her father’s hair from a hairbrush. She says she’ll do only if it won’t hurt him. Elaine returns with Sara and Sam gives her his phone number in case she needs it. Lilly gives him a small travel hairbrush.

Chapter 17 “Strangers in the Night” picks up after Sam has told Ramon and Brooke about meeting his half-siblings. Sam gets a phone call and excuses himself. June Walker, Maya’s sister, is calling. He asks what she knows about Douglas and she admits that it was better to leave her family instead of stay near Douglas. He asks if she knows about necromancy and she replies “I can raise the dead so fast, your head might spin clean off” (194). He tells her everything that has happened and asks for her help. She explains that because she’s in a different territory, she would have to petition the Council and that would alert Douglas. She promises to try and send him help. Sam decides he needs to go out and sees that Frank is Googling necromancy. Ramon offers to join Sam, but Sam wants to be alone. Someone takes Sam while he’s out on his walk.

Chapter 18 “Don’t Rock the Boat, Baby” switches to third person and Douglas watching as Michael throws Sam into the back seat of the car. They take Sam back to Douglas’ mansion and Michael throws him in the cage with Brid. Brid and Michael have words, both insulting each other’s family. In Douglas’s study, he speaks with James about his progress. James reminds him that the police have found Brooke’s body, but Douglas scoffs. James is worried that Douglas is acquiring too much of a power base with Sam, Brid, and his testing. This surprises Douglas and he asks James if he thinks he will lose. Douglas assures James that he will win because if he “stopped every time [he] did something risky, [he] wouldn’t have gotten this far” (205).

Analysis

The theme of power continues with Tia’s revelation that she and Nick performed the binding spell twice because the first didn’t work. Sam ended up with two spells binding his magic because Tia doubted her spell was strong enough. The idea that they decided to hide Sam under Douglas’ nose calls to mind the Poe’s story “The Purloined Letter” where the letter is undetected by being left in plain sight. This is likely homage to a device seen in other genre fiction.

The conversation between Tia and Sam gives a lot of back story and context for Sam’s current situation, but it also examines the theme of relationships, particularly between mother and son. Tia does not seem ashamed of being a witch, although Sam does not realize it. Sam comments that it should have been obvious to him. Much as Tia and Nick hid Sam in plain sight, Tia appears to have been hiding in plain sight as well. Tia’s decision to bind Sam originates for a place of protection, not embarrassment or shame. This differs from how Sam’s father reacted. Kevin could take a chance on having a child and the gene for necromancy not being dominant, but Tia coming from a line of witches



complicated his relationship with his son. It was easier for him to walk away. The reader learns later that even when Kevin has children with a woman who doesn't have any supernatural gifts, his children still carry the trait.

While Sam is processing the reality of being a necromancer and all the information Tia has given him, it is not until they embrace that Sam is overwhelmed. He realizes that his mother is afraid of him, and he never thought that he would be capable of instilling fear in his mother. It devastates him when he realizes it. He is able to feel her feelings and this is jarring. This overwhelming sensation foreshadows how Sam will react when his powers are unleashed.

It may be that Sam is scared that his powers will change his relationship with his mother, but his reaction may also be symbolic of how Sam will interact with the world going forward. He is now one who can and does instill fear in other people. Whether it is through a fear of death, or power, or the fear of the unknown, Sam is tasked with trying to make sense of it all and quickly. He reaches out to his sister Haley before he leaves. When Sam leaves, Haley is concerned about a rift growing between Sam and their mother. Haley makes an effort to keep the peace and this prompts Sam to reach out. He knows that his life is changing rapidly and that it has become dangerous. He asks Haley to join him at the cemetery to visit their father's grave. While Haden was not Sam's biological father, he raised Sam and they had a loving relationship. Haley and Sam visiting the grave gives them an opportunity to share an important part of their lives – even if it is a loss – and celebrate part of the family they grew up in. Sam may be changing, but his dedication to his family is not waning.

Sam attempts to seek out Nick. The only place he knows to start is with his biological father. The reader is never introduced to Kevin. In this way, he remains an absentee father. Sam meets Elaine and pieces together that Kevin suggested that Nick was Sam's father. This gave Kevin the opportunity to deny the power his son has, should it ever come up. Kevin wants to be normal. Sam quickly recognizes that Lilly and Sara both have the power of necromancy. He has a conversation with Lilly about the "Shadow People" (188) and this confirms his suspicions. Sam has the opportunity to lie to Lilly and tell her that they do not exist, but instead tells her the truth. After his discussion with his mother, Sam is in a place where lying, even if it is to protect someone, is the wrong thing to do.

By Chapter 17, June Walker is introduced. This is the closest Sam will come to a guide to help him deal with Douglas. June is a powerful necromancer, but maintains a fear of Douglas, not just for Sam, but also for herself. This reinforces the theme of power. Douglas' power reaches far beyond his own territory. Others fear him, even if they have similar skills. June does not leave Sam on his own, however. She makes arrangements for Sam to receive assistance.

As the section concludes, the narration returns to the third person narrative after Douglas and Michael have kidnapped Sam. Douglas gave Sam a deadline and Sam hadn't officially made a decision. He left his friends in the apartment, claiming to want to get some air. In doing so, he makes himself vulnerable, but offers some protection to his



friends. Sam may have made an indirect choice in going out alone, assuming that Douglas would be after him, but he did it with the best intentions for the people around him.

The theme of power is evident once Douglas has Sam back at the mansion. James warns Douglas that he may be amassing too much power, but Douglas scoffs. He is comfortable with his power and craves more and more. Just as Sam is, he is unaware of the extent of Sam's power.

Discussion Question 1

Why was the binding spell performed twice?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Lilly ask Sam if the "Shadow People" are real?

Discussion Question 3

Why is James concerned about how much power Douglas is obtaining?

Vocabulary

gesture, solace, cavalier, coalesced, myopically, spectral, inevitable, persecution, scoffing, gingerly, incident, mimicked, fester, mecca, futile, abrasions, dubious, calcified, teeming, leaden, theoretical, hereditary, unsavory, irreconcilable, dainty, rendition, curriculum, longhouse, besmirches, torrent, proverbial, anguish, skullduggery, inert, mercurial, aviary, revulsion, exerting, heralded, agitated, repercussions, plied



Chapters 19-24

Summary

In Chapter 19 “Kick-Start My Heart,” Sam wakes on the cold floor of the cage. The light is bright and Brid tells him to pull his shirt over his eyes to adjust to the brightness. She tells him they’re in a basement when he asks and also says he smells odd. He’s attracted to her and tries a lame pick up line. She smiles and they talk; she’s entertained by him. They make introductions and discuss what they know and don’t know about where they are. Brid explains that she’s next in line in her pack and Sam is distracted by her nudity and asks her to put something on, giving her his t-shirt and boxers. The cage is built of iron, which “inhibits any fey” (213) and the runes are silver. Because Brid is half werewolf, half fey, the cage is designed to diminish her powers. She gives Sam some background on her parents and how the mixing of a werewolf and fey hound was frowned upon by other packs, thinking it would weaken the species. Sam replies that “Hybrids are usually genetically superior” (215).

It gets colder in the basement and Douglas appears. He asks Sam to become his apprentice. He explains that the strength of powers in a necromancer is on a spectrum and that Sam is very weak. Necromancers can also bring the dead back to life in varying degrees of reanimation. Sam likens this to zombies and the Michael Jackson “Thriller” video. His understanding is somewhat in line with what Douglas is describing, but not fully. Douglas also describes making a circle and how to modify it for strength and purpose and how it will protect him. The protection is enhanced by invoking “with blood and my will” (223), he explains. In the circle, ghosts and spirits begin to crawl out of the floor. The spirits begin to attack Sam before Douglas returns them to the ground and leaves. Brid asks why they didn’t come after her and Sam understands that it was meant to demonstrate Douglas’ power and how he could attack Sam with the undead.

Chapter 20 “C’Mon, Baby, Don’t Fear the Reaper” opens with Brid and Sam begin dragged outside by Michael and Sam recognizes him from the attack in the parking lot. They are taken to a bathroom to wash up and Brid helps clean Sam’s wounds on his back. When they get back to the cage, they are given food, with much more food given to Brid because of her metabolism. Sam, a vegetarian, tosses his meat to her. Brid knows they’re putting a sedative in the food, but eats to live. Later Douglas gives Sam another lesson, but struggles to get his powers to cooperate. Douglas explains that in order to raise the dead, a necromancer must offer a sacrifice. He instructs Sam to kill a dove, which Sam objects to doing, but relents; Sam holds the bird while Douglas slits its throat. A businessman zombie appears and Sam is instructed to ask him questions. He doesn’t really know what to ask, and defers to “Why is a raven like a writing desk?” (236), a quote which Brid recognizes from “Alice in Wonderland.” He then asks him questions about his name and age. The zombie’s name is David and it’s revealed that zombies are incapable of lying. Douglas makes him clean and do calisthenics and relive how he suffered when he died at Douglas’ hand. That evening, Brid and Sam have the same meal and Sam gives her the ham from his plate. They talk and Brid says she’s



struggling without being able to change and run. Sam tries to comfort her and assure that they'll come up with a plan to escape. They end up having sex, which Brid initiates. Afterwards, they hear Ashley, who has a young sounding voice, arrive, complaining about running into furniture. When they see her she's wearing a Catholic school girl's uniform and she asks for Sam. She's had trouble finding Sam because she didn't know his given name was Samhain. She explains that she's a Harbinger. Sam asks what that means and Ashley explains that she guides "souls from this plane to, well, I can't tell you where" (248). June sent her to help.

Chapter 21 "Make a Little Birdhouse in My Soul" finds Sam explaining everything to Ashley, including telling her that he has two half-sisters who also have the gift. Ashley says it is part of her job to protect them. Sam asks if he must always kill something to use his power. Every necromancer has a different take on whether a sacrifice must be made, but casting a circle is imperative. Blood strengthens the circle, but spit will work, just not as well. Ashley reveals that both binding spells worked on Sam. They ask her if she can let others know they're okay, but she can only appear if she's collecting a soul or in the presence of a necromancer. Ashley then discusses payment, but Sam says he doesn't have anything to offer. Brid asks what she would like and Ashley wants waffles and they negotiate on how many, settling on one every day for six months.

In Chapter 22 "Easy Like Sunday Morning" Det. Dunaway meets with Ramon at Plumpy's about Sam's disappearance. Dunaway reveals that he's watched the surveillance footage from the night of the attack and admits that some strange things happened that night. He assures Ramon he's going to get to the bottom of what's happening before he leaves. Ramon takes off in the middle of his shift, returns to the apartment, and locates June's phone number. June tells Ramon to instruct Tia to break the binding spell on Sam and make a phone call. He makes the call and leaves a message. Later, Ramon goes to see Mrs. Winalski and asks her to give him a ride to Tia's house and she obliges. Once they get to Tia's house, Ramon learns that Tia and Mrs. Winalski know each other and that Tia asked Mrs. Winalski to keep an eye on Sam. Ramon gets a return call from Bran. They discuss the whereabouts of Sam and Brid. Bran tells Ramon he can come, but to not get in their way.

Chapter 23 "School's Out Forever" opens with Sam being whipped by Douglas. Douglas grabs him, wondering whether Sam is intentionally screwing up or not skilled. Sam is trying, but is unable to summon a spirit. Douglas has drawn his own circle, unable to trust the efficacy of Sam's. Sam uses the blood from his back to help summon the spirit and it works. Before him is a peculiar looking spirit named Ed who is talking to Ashley. At the sight of Ed, Douglas overpowers Sam and closes the portal. Not many are able to summon Ed. Douglas is furious, but Sam doesn't understand why.

Chapter 24 "Come Together, Right Now, Over Me" returns to Ramon parking Tia's car and checking an address, verifying that it's Douglas' house. He is struck by the immense size of the mansion. He sees other people and wolves in the darkness. Bran tells him they'll do their best to get Sam, but the priority is Brid. Ramon notices that Sean looks ready for any impending violence.



Analysis

As Chapter 19 begins, Sam is being held in the basement and meets Brid for the first time. It is unclear if Sam is aware that werewolves exist or if the jolt of his newfound powers has diminished the effects of the news. Sam now lives in the world of the supernatural. His reaction to Brid points to his acceptance of this. At the outset, Sam is attracted to Brid, which makes him unfordable because of Brid's nudity. While she does wear clothing, nudity is a non-issue for Brid; it is as natural state for her in human form as when she is in wolf form.

They discuss Brid's background and how she and her brother are a product of a hybridization of a fey hound and a werewolf. Sam readily accepts the hybrid and comments about how the hybrids would be genetically superior. Whether he understands it or not, he is also commenting on his situation. It is possible that Sam's powers are extraordinarily strong because someone with the necromancer gene had a child with a witch.

Brid instantly likes Sam and is at ease around him. This is a nice change for her after being alone or with Michael and Douglas. She wants to escape and meeting Sam gives her an opportunity to think that it is possible. Brid doesn't merely connect with Sam because he may be able to help her. She appears to genuinely like him. When they are taken outside, fed, and given the opportunity to clean up, Brid helps Sam clean the wounds on his back. When she is scared, Sam offers her comfort, and Brid is the one who initiates a sexual relationship between them. In doing so, she demonstrates her alpha tendencies. She also recognizes that Sam likely would not make the first move.

Sam's lessons with Douglas do not go well. They are disappointing to both Sam and Douglas, but for different reasons. Sam is still under the impression that his power is not that strong or is too strongly bound for him to use. Douglas, on the other hand, thinks that Sam is either trying to manipulate Douglas into thinking he is unable to use his power or that he is weaker than he originally thought. While it angers and frustrates Douglas, it works to Sam's advantage in a way. Sam unknowingly has made Douglas underestimate him, which leads to an opportunity to perhaps defeat Douglas later in the novel.

Douglas' treatment of David reveals more about the sadistic nature of Douglas' personality. He tortured and murdered David, and now, by bringing him back to life, is making him relive each agonizing moment. This disgusts Sam, further revealing that is likely to use his power in a much different way. Sam is intimidated and afraid of Douglas and is unable to stop him, but the desire to do so is rising.

Ashley's arrival marks the introduction of the afterlife. She can only appear in front of a necromancer or to someone she is supposed to guide into the afterlife. After Sam relays all the information of the last week to Ashley, begins to ask her questions about his training that he is unable to ask Douglas. Sam would not be able to ask Douglas if it is possible to conjure the dead and cast a powerful circle without making a sacrifice because Douglas' answer would always be yes. He enjoys the sacrificial part of the



ritual. Ashley can offer Sam insight. While the sacrifice enhances the power, it may not be completely necessary, and blood of any kind will help, including one's own.

In Chapter 22, the theme of a power is explored through Det. Dunaway. The police hold a certain amount of power, regardless of the situation or a person's perception of them. It may be the power to help or hinder, depending on the circumstances. Earlier in the novel, Sam and Ramon were reluctant to come forward to the police, but Sam relented and showed Det. Dunaway his wounds. Now, Det. Dunaway is meeting with Ramon. He has seen the surveillance footage from the night of the attack. While he may not understand what happened, suggesting that the world outside of the supernatural is unaware that the supernatural exists, he is open to possibility. He knows that what he saw on the video cannot be easily explained away. This makes Det. Dunaway an ally to the group, even if he is kept outside of it. It also foreshadows that when Det. Dunaway is later confronted with absolute proof of the supernatural in a later chapter, he can accept it.

Chapter 22 also reveals that Mrs. Winalski has been watching Sam for Tia. It remains unclear if Mrs. Winalski possesses any power outside of being an unexpected watchman, but she does have something in common with Sam. She, too, has been hiding in plain sight, with Sam unaware of her function.

The themes of the supernatural and power are further explored during Sam's tutelage. Outside of a civil conversation at the zoo, Douglas is not one to teach a lesson without force. It could be argued that the conversation at the zoo was forced by Brooke's decapitation and not strictly civil. But by this time, Douglas has little patience left and has resorted to whipping Sam in order to get him to comply and use his power. It is not that Sam doesn't want to summon a spirit; he does not resist doing so to antagonize Douglas. He cannot physically do anything because of the binding spell. Finally, Sam is able to conjure up Ashley and a spirit called Ed. Ashley's appearance is not a surprise, especially given that she has been sent to help Sam and may have appeared to put an end to the beating. Ed, however, suggests that something else may be going on. Ashley's comment "You even brought Ed here. Not many people can summon Ed" (278) reveals that conjuring Ed is a feat Ashley would not have been able to help Sam with and not someone that Douglas would expect to see during the lesson. It also indicates that Ashley did not appear to assist Sam. Before Sam can learn anything about Ed or continue the lesson, Douglas overpowers Sam and closes the circle. Sam's confusion about Douglas' reaction is understandable. Douglas beats Sam profusely in order to get him to summon a spirit, but once it happens Douglas is even angrier. This contradiction complicates Sam's relationship with Douglas and foreshadows the danger that is to come.

Discussion Question 1

What does Sam's vegetarianism reveal about his character?



Discussion Question 2

Why did Tia have Mrs. Winalski keep an eye on Sam?

Discussion Question 3

What does Sam's ability to conjure Ed reveal to Douglas?

Vocabulary

inanimate, instantaneous, coup, bloodthirsty, rueful, axis, apprentice, antenna, entities, summon, sufficient, ambassador, reanimation, cultivate, urgency, trifle, converged, tremor, spartan, tattered, excruciating, lackey, endure, docile, elation, decreed, tender, omniscient, keeled, ritualistic, wringer, scurry, rickets, claustrophobic, rigid, indignation, interim, rapt, invoked, chastened, analogy, compote, vortex, infinite, alternative, estranged, immaculate, visceral, tutelage, vehement, ornate, pediment



Chapters 25-31

Summary

In Chapter 25 “I’m Going to Break My Rusty Cage and Run,” Sam wakes to discover he’s been bound in leather straps on a wooden table. He can see Brid standing in the cage. She tells him that Douglas smelled like fear and that “whatever [he] did scared him” (286). They agree they need to escape. Ashley appears and is unable to free Sam; Douglas’ powers are too strong. Brid speculates that the reason Sam was able to use his power was because Tia broke the binding spell. Ashley coaches Sam through focusing his power on the magic inside the cage to try and counter it by finding a weakness. He is able to overload the spot where he senses the weakness and Brid is able to escape the cage. They hear the door unlock and Ashley disappears and Brid hides under the stairs. Michael arrives first, followed by Douglas. Douglas examines a knife. Douglas admits he was planning to kill Sam all along. He draws a large circle around him and the table. Brid shifts into a werewolf and battles with Michael, but she attacks him before he’s able to completely shift. She shifts back and taunts him. A cat warns Douglas that wolves are attacking the house.

Chapter 26, “Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting” shifts back to third person and the wolves attack from outside. Flames emerge, along with a dragon. Greek statues come to life and attack. Sean takes the gnomes and Ramon makes a run into the house and Bran runs in after him.

Chapter 27, “Unchain My Heart; Oh, Please, Please, Set Me Free” returns to Sam’s first-person narration. He watches the fighting all around him and Douglas comes at him with the knife. Sam manages to get one arm free to fight him off. Douglas cuts Sam’s arm and a drop of Sam’s blood hits the floor, summoning the spirits of the many people Douglas killed in the room. Sam struggles with the amount of his own power. Instead of telling the spirits to be quiet, he forces himself to listen and “to hear all their pain” (302). Douglas realizes he did not complete the circle and spirits and wolves are “pouring into the room” (303). Sam hears Ramon shouting from the top of the stairs.

In Chapter 28 “Beep Beep’M, Beep Beep, Yeah,” Mrs. Winalski tears into the driveway with Tia in the passenger seat and Haley in the back. Tia hears Sam’s crow.

Chapter 29, “Ballroom Blitz” returns to the battle in the basement. Douglas throws Sam’s blood around and starts to draw a symbol on Sam’s head. Sam punches Douglas with his free hand and manages to get the knife away from Douglas, which causes a deep cut in Sam’s hand. Sam stabs Douglas in the neck and can feel Douglas’ pain. When Douglas moves away from Sam, he pulls the knife from his neck, blood spraying out from an artery. Blood falls into Sam’s mouth and Sam can feel Douglas’ heart shudder; the spell is complete. Sam feels a surge of power throughout his body. He screams until Brid grabs him by the face. She tells him to return the dead to where they came from. He does and the power subsides.



As Chapter 30, “Back in Black” opens, Sam wakes in a hospital facility and with Sean reading the comics in the newspaper. They talk and Sean tells him that Sam has “reached semihero status” (315). Sam asks for waffles with strawberries and whipped cream, remembering his deal with Ashley. Ashley appears and enjoys the waffles. Brannoc enters the room and introduces himself. He thanks Sam for helping keep Brid safe. When Sam asks where he is, Bran tells him that Tia knows where he is. Later, Tia arrives and hugs Sam tightly; Haley is with her. Mrs. Winalski tells Sam that she “never lied to you about anything, I just didn’t tell you everything. Big difference” (319). A man arrives to see Sam with a large stack of papers. He needs to transfer Douglas’ estate to Sam. Sam is confused and the man verifies that Sam did indeed kill Douglas and that “in accordance with Council Law, you inherit his position on the Council” (321) in addition to all his possessions, including the mansion. After the lawyer leaves, Ashley tells Sam that she is going to be one of his guides, since he’s now a powerful necromancer. Later, Brid comes to see Sam. She explains about the hospital facility being run by the wolves. Bran reveals that Ramon was exposed to a bear blood sample during the battle and explains that Ramon is family now.

Chapter 31, “Live and Let Die,” finds Sam being released from the hospital. He goes to his apartment and speaks with Frank and Brooke. Sam is remorseful for killing Douglas, even though he knows he was a bad man. Sam has received several calls from Det. Dunaway, but first he must honor Brooke’s request. She wants to be returned to her body. They go to the cemetery and Det. Dunaway shows up. Brooke tells Det. Dunaway that she can explain. Sam begins the spell to put Brooke back. He raises her body and gives her head back. Brooke embraces him and thanks him. Later, Sam sleeps with the help of sedatives he got at the hospital. Brooke wakes him up, revealing that Ashley told her that he would need another advisor. Sam meets with Det. Dunaway. Deciding that the apartment was too small, they all move into Douglas’ mansion.

Analysis

Following a brief chapter in which Ramon joins up with the wolf pack to storm the mansion on a rescue mission, Sam wakes and discovers that he’s been tied down to a large table in the basement. Douglas has literally bound Sam’s power by strapping him to the table. Brid, having been able to smell fear on Douglas, suggests that the binding spell Tia and Nick performed has been broken. Because Sam is unfamiliar with controlling his power, he is at a disadvantage. The theme of power is evidenced by Ashley being unable to free Sam from the table. Unsure of what to do next, Ashley tries to coach Sam into freeing Brid from the cage. If they have any chance for escape and survival, Brid needs to be freed before Douglas comes back. With Ashley’s help, Sam is able to locate and exploit a weakness in the design of the cage to free Brid. Once Douglas returns, he reveals that his intent has been to kill Sam all along. While this may be true, Douglas knows that he must kill Sam in order to retain his power. Further, the act of killing Sam will transfer Sam’s power to Douglas. Much as James warned Douglas about amassing too much power, Douglas is vulnerable. His desire may put him in danger that he is unable to recognize.



The theme of the supernatural is further explored with the battle outside the mansion. The wolf pack comes upon an array of creatures. Statues and garden gnomes come to life to fight them off, and even a dragon appears and breathes fire. There is a battle outside the mansion and a battle inside the mansion. This mirrors Sam's situation. He is faced with battling external forces, namely Douglas, but is also subject to battling and controlling that power in him that has been unleashed.

It is unclear as to whether the outpouring of spirits from the floor is being raised by Sam or Douglas or a combination of the two. Sam is overwhelmed by the emotions of the spirits and their pain and suffering at the hands of Douglas. He allows the feelings to linger with him so that he can understand and respect them. While Douglas would want them to relieve their pain for his amusement, Sam wants to feel their pain in order to empathize. That Sam is willing to endure that pain demonstrates his goodness in the face of evil and his respect for the power that he has.

Before the battle ends, Tia, who is outside the mansion, hears the crow, marking the final time the bird appears. It foreshadows death, and because the crow is Sam's totem animal, the expected death is Douglas'.

Ultimately, Sam is able to free one of his hands from the strap and manages to get control of the knife. He stabs Douglas in self-defense. He is unaware that consuming Douglas' blood is the key to his ultimate defeat and assuming his power. The blood splatter just happens to land in his mouth. Sam would not have known to even try something as such. Sam shares the experience of feeling Douglas' heart stop beating. The unrest does not conclude with Douglas' demise, however. Brid tells Sam to put the spirits away. While Sam witnessed Douglas do this during one of their lessons, Sam is so overwhelmed by the experience that he is at a loss for what to do. Brid, having witnessed the lessons, is able to assist Sam and the spirits are returned to where they came.

With the battle complete, Sam learns more about his power and his family, even learning Mrs. Winalski was watching him on behalf of his mother. He recuperates in a hospital facility run by the werewolves. Sam connects with Sean, Brannoc, and Brid, building on the theme of relationships. Sam still has his family, but his family has now grown to include them as well. Similarly, when it is revealed that Ramon fell on a vial of bear blood and is fighting through his transition, Brannoc accepts Ramon as family.

Once Sam is released from the hospital, he must contend with Brooke. She asks to be put in her grave with the rest of her body. She cannot fathom going on as a head in a bowling bag. She would rather sacrifice having any type of life than continue as she is. Sam complies with her wishes. While they are in the cemetery, Det. Dunaway arrives. He achieves some type of closure for his investigation and perhaps even his own curiosity. Brooke is laid to rest, but is offered another opportunity. Ashley makes her another one of Sam's guides, keeping Sam's extended family together, reinforcing the theme of relationships.



As the novel concludes, the story is designed to set up a sequel, as this is the first book in a series. Sam's resolution comes when he is awarded Douglas' belongings and Council seat. This position on the Council may only be temporary, and it may not be something Sam would even want to pursue, but Sam is given a tremendous amount of power by the novel's end. Sam has demonstrated throughout the novel that he can handle the power fairly and compassionately, in direct contrast to how Douglas handled power.

Discussion Question 1

What does Douglas' reaction to Sam's ability to do what he asked reveal about Douglas?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Bran consider Ramon family?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Ashley want to be buried with her body?

Vocabulary

nefarious, exponentially, malevolent, vapor, gout, minotaur, amalgam, din, incantation, jackknifed, hilt, viscous, torment, cavalry, desecrating, quota, tumultuous, volatile, upheaval, envision, derogatory



Characters

Samhain Corvus LaCroix

Samhain Corvus LaCroix or “Sam” is the a college dropout working at a fast food restaurant. One night he is confronted by a man asking why he hasn’t registered with the Council. Sam learns that he is a necromancer and that his mother and uncle performed a powerful binding spell on him to hide his powers from Douglas.

When Douglas learns about him, Sam is confronted with a decision to become Douglas’ apprentice. He understands that joining Douglas is the wrong choice, especially after Douglas murders Brooke in an effort to intimidate Sam.

After Sam is kidnapped, he meets Brid, a hybrid fey-werewolf. They have an instant attraction and vow to find a way to escape. Sam is unsure of his powers or how to harness them. Once the binding spell is lifted, Sam’s true power is revealed and he is able to defeat Douglas.

After Douglas meets his demise, Sam is surprised to learn that he has inherited Douglas’ property and Council seat. He isn’t sure he wants either, but he wants to use his powers for good.

Douglas Montgomery

Douglas Montgomery is a powerful necromancer who discovered his gift as a young boy. When he was sent to live with his aunt, he ended up killing her and stealing her powers to become more powerful.

Douglas wants to control all necromancy and is stealing the powers of any and all necromancers, no matter how weak their powers may be. When he learns of Sam, he tries to get Sam to become his apprentice, but he is easily frustrated by the limits of Sam’s understanding of his own powers.

Douglas is responsible for the murders of many, including Brooke. He is behind Brid’s kidnapping and has designed a cage that will hold and limit Brid’s powers.

He is ultimately defeated and killed by Sam.

Brid

Brid is a hybrid fey-werewolf. She is being held captive by Douglas and was kidnapped by Michael, a werewolf who despises her. When Sam is abducted, she is already being held in the cage.



Brid bonds quickly with Sam, amused by his personality. Brid makes the first move romantically on Sam while they're being held captive.

She struggles, being kept in a cage. She knows that the food she is being given contains sedatives, but without the food, she knows she will die. She is restless without being able to run and shift.

Next in line to lead her pack, she is concerned with being able to lead effectively and powerfully. She prides herself on her strength and intellect.

Ramon

Ramon is Sam's best friend, roommate, and co-worker at Plumpy's. He is loyal and wants to help Sam, so much so that he's willing to risk his own life.

Tia

Tia is Sam's mother. She is a witch, but has hidden that fact from Sam. After Sam was born, she put a binding spell on Sam with the help of Nick.

Brannoc

Brannoc "Bran" is Brid and Sean's father. He is the pack leader of the hybrid werewolves. He is earnest and just and has selected Brid as his successor. He aligns with Ramon to free Brid and Sam, but his primary focus is Brid and tells Ramon to stay out of the way. After the battle, Brannoc considers Ramon family.

Mrs. Winalski

Mrs. Winalski "Mrs. W." is Sam's neighbor. In her seventies, she has an active social life and encourages the same in Sam. Tia asked her to keep watch over Sam.

Nick Hatfield

Nick Hatfield is Sam's uncle and is also a necromancer. He, along with Tia, put a binding spell on Sam when he was a baby in order to protect him from Douglas.

Brooke

Brooke is a friend of Sam's and works at Plumpy's until she is murdered. In spite of her plucky nature, both Sam and Ramon are protective of her. She is decapitated by Douglas and her head is brought back to life and delivered to Sam in a box. Once



Douglas is defeated, she asks to be buried with her head, but with the help of Ashley, becomes a guide to Sam.

Frank

Frank is one of Sam's friends who also works at Plumpy's. He is less savvy than the others, but has a good heart. He has a crush on Brooke and comes up with the bowling bag for her head.

Michael

Michael is a werewolf without a pack. He works for Douglas and thinks that Brid is a lesser wolf because she is a hybrid.

Haley

Haley is Sam's younger sister. Her personality is direct and accepting.

Lilly

Lilly is Sam's half-sister. She is also a necromancer.

Ashley

Ashley is a Harbinger. She died of cancer as a young girl and now guides souls into the afterlife. June sends Ashley to help Sam.

Sean

Sean is Brid's brother.

June

June is a necromancer from another territory. She sends Ashley to help Sam and instructs Ramon to have Tia remove the binding spell on Sam.



Symbols and Symbolism

Medicine Bag

The medicine bag represents Sam and how his powers were blocked. His mother did this out of love and in order to protect him. Much like the stones tucked inside the bag, Sam's powers are locked inside of him.

Binding

The binding spell represents how people, including Sam, are conditioned to not see or recognize the magic in the world. It represents Sam coming to terms with behind a necromancer and being thrust into the world of the supernatural. It also represents the reader accepting the unique world of the book.

Cage

Similar to how the binding spell represents Sam's acceptance of his supernatural gift, the cage symbolizes the shapeshifters, Brid in particular. The cage is designed to prevent the werewolf from changing and be able to run. It also prevents Brid's fey powers, like healing quickly. This all works to lock Brid in her human form.

Circle

The circle symbolizes the presence of danger around all of them. Douglas teaches Sam to cast a circle for protection during the necromancy spells. Casting a circle is a common ritual in witchcraft and the occult.

Harbinger

The Harbinger symbolizes a bridge between two worlds - the living and the dead. A Harbinger is a guide that transports souls to the afterlife. When the Harbinger arrives it connects Sam with the afterlife, confirming, not its specifics, but its existence. Sam's ability to see Ashley the Harbinger without dying demonstrates how Sam exists as part of both worlds.

Wolf Pack

The wolf pack is symbolic of family and how it works to protect and care for loved ones. It is not merely a biological family, but is accepting to others. As Brannoc's pack accepts Ramon as family, it mirrors how Sam's stepfather accepted him.



Dove

Douglas instructs Sam to kill a dove as a sacrifice to power the necromancy spell. Sam is a vegetarian and isn't comfortable with the killing of an animal. He isn't given a choice and must participate under pressure from Douglas. The dove, which is often considered a symbol of peace, represents Sam's choice to participate in the ritual to keep the peace with Douglas, ensuring his and Brid's safety as much as possible.

Crow

Sam's middle name Corvus literally means crow and he was given the name after Tia spotted crows on the window ledge at the hospital. Sam acknowledges that the crow is his totem animal and a crow is stitched on the medicine bag his mother gives him. Crows are traditionally considered a messenger of death. In this way, the crow is symbolic of Sam's skill as a necromancer.

Circle

Douglas teaches Sam to cast a circle for protection during the necromancy spells. Casting a circle is a common ritual in witchcraft and the occult. The circle symbolizes the presence of danger around all of them.

Blood

Blood is used in the spell to conjure spirits and Sam's blood strengthens the circle in the final battle. Douglas' defeat is marked by his blood splattering into Sam's mouth. The blood is symbolic of the life force.



Settings

Plumpy's Restaurant

Plumpy's is a fast food restaurant where Sam, Ramon, Frank, and Brooke all work. It's in the parking lot the restaurant where the potato hockey game takes place. It is also where Sam is attacked by Michael and ends up with the gashes on his back.

Sam's Apartment

Sam's apartment is a one-bedroom that Sam shares with Ramon. Mrs. Winalski lives next door and the apartment is where Brooke's head is delivered. Det. Dunaway also meets with Sam, Ramon, and Frank for the first time in the apartment

Douglas's Mansion

The mansion has gargoyles, garden gnomes, and Greek statues that all come to life during the battle sequence at the end of the novel. Most of the action that takes place in the mansion occurs in the basement where a large cage has been constructed of iron and silver and charged with aconite to render Brid powerless. There is a large restraining table and manacles hanging on the walls. It is where Sam ultimately defeats Douglas.

The Were-Hospital/Clinic

The werewolves have designed their own hospital/clinic to treat shapeshifters and the like. Sam and Ramon are treated there after the battle at the mansion. Brannoc comes to see Sam and explains that because of Ramon's injuries, Ramon is family now. While Sam is recuperating, he orders waffles and summons Ashley to make good on their agreement.

Tia's House

Tia's house has a large garden in the front yard, which the mailman refers to as the Forest of LaCroix. There is a cobblestone walk and herbs and plants all around. The walk up to the house is meant to be meditative.



Themes and Motifs

Identity is a malleable idea

The novel shows through its many characters searching for, or defining, their identity that identity is a malleable idea that not only changes between each person's perception of another, but that one's perception of oneself (personal identity) can also change throughout life.

Sam's name is given to spite his father and honoring the witch side of the family and the crow, his totem animal. His father, rejecting Sam and his mother because of their connection to the supernatural, calls him Sam in an effort to normalize the child.

Sam's mother protects Sam from knowing his true identity. She doesn't tell him she's a witch or that his uncle is a necromancer like Sam. Instead, the two of them join forces and put a binding spell on Sam in an effort to protect him. They know that Sam's powers are strong and they want to hide him from Douglas and keep him from discovering his power.

When Sam is first confronted with the knowledge of his true identity, he is confused and somewhat in denial. He has no evidence that there is anything remarkable about him. When his mother reveals the truth, he does remember having nightmares as a child and learns that he was actually seeing spirits. Sam adapts to acceptance fairly quickly, not because he wants to, but because he lacks another choice. With Douglas leading his tutelage, Sam struggles to accept his power because Douglas is evil.

Douglas' identity lies within his desire for power. He craves control so desperately that he's willing to take power from any necromancer, no matter how weak he perceives the power to be, as with Sam.

Michael and Brid both find their identity linked with pack mentality. While Michael has been ostracized from a pack and works for Douglas, he isn't comfortable with Brid as the successor to Brannoc. Brid has worked hard to earn her place in the pack, but harbors some doubts about why her father has chosen her. Further, her identity is wrapped up in being a hybrid of fey and werewolf.

Relationships as motivation

Throughout the novel, the different relationships between characters - ranging from friends, to family, to enemies - is the motivating factor for most of the characters' actions. From the outset, the reader is introduced to a group of friends: Sam, Ramon, Frank, and Brooke. With the exception of Frank, they all undergo a significant change: Sam discovers he is a necromancer, Ramon gains the ability to shift into a bear, and Brooke is murdered and becomes a guide in the afterlife. The friends are loyal to each other and help in the others time of need.



The relationship between Sam and Douglas is both as student and teacher as well as representative of good and evil, or protagonist and antagonist. They share the power of necromancy, and once his power is unbound, Sam discovers his power is stronger than Douglas'. When Douglas realizes this, he knows he must destroy Sam and take his power to save himself.

The relationship between Sam and his family has many dynamics. He is close with his mother Tia and sister Haley, and was close with his stepfather. He is estranged from his biological father. When Sam reaches out to his father's family, it's not to connect with his father, but rather to learn where he can find his uncle Nick. In doing so, Sam learns he has two half-sisters who also have the gift of necromancy. While he has only met Lilly once, he asks June to help her as well, knowing she'll need it.

The relationship between Brid and Michael is rooted in jealousy. Michael views himself as a strong, alpha male. While he has been ostracized from any pack, he makes his opinion known that he doesn't approve of Brid being Brannoc's successor. His reasoning is two-fold: Brid is a hybrid and Brid is female. Their relationship is competitive and strained and comes to a head during the battle when Brid escapes the cage and fights with Michael.

Acceptance of the supernatural as a metaphor

Through the relative ease in which supernatural elements are accepted by all characters in the novel - whether those elements be raising the dead, supernatural hybrid species, or simply learning of the existence of supernatural elements at all - the author is arguably making a metaphorical argument for the acceptance of differences.

Many elements of the supernatural are explored throughout the novel. The first and most obvious is necromancy. This is a powerful skill that Sam is unaware that he possesses. In addition to not having been told, the binding spell is a result of Tia and Nick trying to protect him.

Tia, Sam's mother, practices her craft outside of a religion. This gives her agency for herself instead of leaving her power to outside forces. She has a belief in her power, but acknowledges its limits. She believes she needs Nick to assist her in aptly protecting Sam in the binding spell. But as is evidenced by Maya's observation, the binding spell is much stronger than anyone anticipated.

Another way the supernatural is explored is through Brid and the rest of the wolf pack. Brid and Sean are different from other werewolves, in which they are part fey hound, which they get from their father Brannoc. This elevates them in the supernatural world. There are traditional werewolves, like Michael who don't like that they're hybrids, feeling that it lessens the power of the werewolf.

Other spirits come to life and Ashley, a Harbinger, also reinforces the theme of the supernatural. While they remain undeveloped in the story, a vampire and fury sit on the Council.



Individuals may respond differently to the supernatural elements in large part because these are genre specific elements. The story of an underdog who is mentored by a master and then completes his training when the underdog defeats his mentor may appear to be a familiar story. These elements can be recognized in the novel, adding the elements of the supernatural to enhance the story by offering greater risk and consequence. Sam assumes Douglas' power without intent. Douglas, however, intended to kill Auntie Lynn and others to take their power. By comparison, Sam will take his training and become a more benevolent necromancer.

Death is not necessarily the end of life or influence

Hold Me Closer, Necromancer argues that death is not necessarily the complete end of someone's life or influence.

Literal death befalls a number of characters, including Auntie Lynn and Brooke. Brooke is murdered and her head reanimated, allowing her character to participate throughout the entirety of the novel. Ultimately, Brooke chooses death over being part of a necromancer's spell. Sam obliges and returns Brooke to her body in the cemetery. It is only after her death is completed that she is offered an afterlife. Via Ashley, Brooke becomes a guide and returns to help Sam.

Douglas dies a literal death and his power is assumed by Sam. While it doesn't appear that Douglas is offered an afterlife, it is possible that part of his energy may live on through Sam or that Sam, if he wanted, could bring Douglas back.

Be it through necromancy or some other supernatural element or belief, death is a gateway to the afterlife. In some respects, Sam dies, albeit not in a literal way, but the discovery of his gift does change his life completely. He is not only aware that there is an afterlife, but that he is connected to it through necromancy.

Ramon also dies a figurative death. When he falls on the vial of bear blood in Douglas' mansion, he is infected by it. While he is recuperating at the were-hospital, Brannoc reveals that Ramon is not part of his family. He is a hybrid human-bear.

These changes see Sam, Ramon, and Brooke all entering an individualized afterlife.

People use power and control for causes they believe to be right

Hold Me Closer, Necromancer shows that people tend to use their power and control over others for what they personally believe is right - whether others agree or not.

The theme of power and control is most readily observed through Douglas' character. Douglas has craved power since he was a young boy and discovered his gift of necromancy. After he was sent away to live with Auntie Lynn, Douglas killed her to



assume her powers. He continued to collect power from other necromancers, and kidnaps Sam in order to obtain his as well. He also has a tremendous need for control. He arranges for Brid to be abducted and keeps her in a cage specifically designed to render her powerless.

Sam, unaware that he is actually a powerful necromancer, is faced with maintaining control in Douglas' presence. He resists giving Douglas information about himself, rejects his offer to be his apprentice, and objects to sacrificing the dove. He ultimately relents, in large part because Douglas has greater power and control over Sam. When Sam defeats Douglas and assumes his power, he doesn't do so intentionally. In the act of saving himself, he does so out of necessity. Much like killing the dove, Sam will not exert his power and take a life unless it is an absolute necessity.

Tia and Nick both demonstrate their power by using a binding spell on Sam. The spell ultimately diminishes and hides Sam's power by controlling it. Nick is initially reluctant to bind Sam, but after he recognizes the extent of Sam's power he is compelled to do so. While Tia believes in her power as a witch, she doubts that her strength is enough. She and Nick both must perform the spell for it to work.

The tense relationship between Brid and Michael also exemplifies the theme of power and control. Michael doesn't understand why Brid is next in line to lead the pack. While Michael is excluded from any pack, he still doesn't think that Brid should lead. His issues stem from his inability to accept leadership from a woman and, further, from a woman who isn't a purebred. Michael believes that only the most physically powerful werewolf should lead the pack. Brid understands that there is more to leadership than physical strength and that leadership requires intellectual strength as well.



Styles

Point of View

Hold Me Closer, Necromancer is told primarily from the first person point of view of Sam. The narrative switches to a third person narrative intermittently throughout the novel. In doing so, it focuses the narrative on the characters that aren't in direct contact with Sam. This happens when Douglas is in his mansion and the focus shifts to him. It also occurs when Brid is introduced and Ramon meets up with the werewolves to rescue Sam and Brid.

Sam is a youthful narrator. He is a college dropout in his early twenties. He is sarcastic and self-deprecating. His perspective is a fish-out-of-water narrative as he learns and comes to terms with his necromancy powers.

When the point of view shifts to Douglas, the tone is foreboding. Douglas appears to be in control and is calm and menacing. His power over Michael, James, and Brid is evident.

Brid's point of view is sympathetic. She is being held against her will and is rendered powerless in the cage. Her narrative moves out of the cage through recalling a memory, notably of her father Brannoc teaching her.

Language and Meaning

The language throughout the novel is accessible. The vocabulary is easily understood, with any advanced words largely understood by context. The dialogue is natural and appropriate for the ages of the characters.

Swear words and slang are not used in the book. The characters are young, and colloquial language may be appropriate for the characters, but the intended audience is 8th grade and up. The language used is appropriate for those ages.

The tone of Sam's narration is conversational. Sarcasm is used, which helps convey the youthfulness of the characters. Sam is a kind young man and doesn't use sarcasm to hurt others, though he sometimes becomes self-deprecating.

The violence largely occurs off-page. As the narrative reaches its climax, some gore is referenced, but not to excess. Sam and Brid do have sex, but the act is implied rather than described in detail.



Structure

The novel is told in a linear fashion with few flashbacks. The flashbacks include Brid reflecting on Brannoc teaching her and Sean during a sparring match, Douglas remembering when he first discovered his power of necromancy, and Tia telling Sam how he got his name and how she and Nick performed the binding spell.

There are 31 chapters in the novel. Each chapter takes its title from a song lyric. The songs are mostly from 80s music and classic rock. Younger readers may not get the references.

The overall structure is the story of an underdog who is taken under the wing of a master and taught a special set of skills. Sam is a reluctant student and understands early on that he is involved in a battle between good and evil.

The chapters are of medium length, with some longer chapters interspersed, as well as very short chapters. There is a fair amount of dialogue throughout.

The novel makes use of many horror tropes: the necromancer, werewolves, vampires, fairies and ghosts. Statues come to life to fight and Douglas lives in a mansion with a dungeon where bad things happen. The reader accepts that the author has created a world in which these type of creatures exist.

The resolution of the novel deliberately sets up a continuation of the story. While it doesn't end on a cliffhanger, it opens up the possibility of a series. A sequel follows this book.



Quotes

I wasn't much older than Brooke, but she was young enough and tiny enough that Ramon and I both spent more time protecting her than ogling her."

-- Sam, as narrator (chapter 1 paragraph 18)

Importance: This quote demonstrates Sam and Ramon relationship with Brooke and foreshadows how they will care for her.

Still, a necromancer left unchecked could create all sorts of trouble. Best to put him in his place now."

-- Narrator (chapter 3 paragraph 6)

Importance: Douglas is concerned about Sam avoiding his radar. He doesn't view Sam as a genuine threat to his power, but it demonstrates that no matter how small the power, he doesn't want anyone else to have it.

But Brid could tell she was alone, and with the heavy musk of wolf around her, that shouldn't be."

-- Narrator (chapter 5 paragraph 1)

Importance: The quote gives the reader a sense of Brid's heightened senses that come with being a fey/werewolf.

He'd never been able to understand that in wolf packs, were or otherwise, it wasn't always the biggest who ruled."

-- Narrator (chapter 5 paragraph 43)

Importance: The quote shows how Michael, an outcast from any pack, is incapable of understanding how a pack effectively runs, thereby explaining the root cause of why Michael isn't welcome in any pack.

Pain is a good teacher, not the best."

-- Bran (chapter 6 paragraph 51)

Importance: Bran is teaching Brid how to be a strong leader. Brid suggests that pain is the best the teacher and Bran corrects her, telling her that mistakes are the best teacher.

Something told me that, as much as I didn't want him angry with me, I didn't want him interested in me, either."

-- Sam, as narrator (chapter 8 paragraph 32)

Importance: This quote illustrates Sam's awareness of self and the desire for self-preservation. He doesn't want conflict, but peace.



What I do find strange is that only the outline of your aura is visible. That's not normal."
-- Maya LaRouche (chapter 9 paragraph 123)

Importance: This quote demonstrates Maya's skill, but reveals that someone else has used their powers against Sam. It indicates that Sam may be more powerful than originally thought.

She'd also never mentioned she was a witch, but I was more amazed that I hadn't figured that out than I was hurt by it."
-- Sam, as narrator (chapter 12 paragraph 91)

Importance: Sam learns a lot about himself and his family. The reveal about his mother being a witch doesn't unsettle him; he realizes how obvious it was with her garden and medicine bag and herbal remedies.

This cage is built out of iron. Cold iron inhibits any fey, and I'm half fey."
-- Brid (chapter 19 paragraph 75)

Importance: Brid reveals that she is more than just a were-wolf, but a hybrid. This sets her apart from the rest of the pack. It mirrors how Sam is the product of a witch and a family of necromancers and that has strengthened his powers, just as it has Brid's.

Good enough for me to see a guy stopping a car with his fist."
-- Dunaway (chapter 22 paragraph 36)

Importance: This quote indicates that Dunaway is open to possibility when it comes to solving the case. He isn't quick to judge and falsely place blame.

He'd drawn his own circle earlier after telling me that he still didn't trust mine."
-- Sam, as narrator (chapter 23 paragraph 11)

Importance: This quote demonstrates how Douglas views Sam as weak. He doesn't trust the circle for fear that something might hurt him.

His blood struck my tongue – a viscous, heavy saltiness. My heart shuddered. No, not my heart. Douglas's heart."
-- Sam, as narrator (chapter 29 paragraph 8)

Importance: This quote marks the shift in power from Douglas to Sam. Sam isn't seeking the power, but instead it is thrust upon him.