

Hourglass Study Guide

Hourglass by Myra McEntire

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Plot Summary

Hourglass is the first novel by writer Myra McEntire. In this book, Emerson Cole has been seeing what she believes is dead people since just before her parents die in a terrible accident. However, when Emerson meets Michael Weaver she learns that these visions are not the dead, but snapshots of the past and that Michael also can see what she sees. Emerson and Michael prove to be parallel souls who together can change a wrong, but at what cost to them and those around them? Hourglass is an impressive premiere novel that takes a unique look at the idea of time travel.

Emerson Cole has just returned home to her small Tennessee home from boarding school, facing her senior year among her former classmates after learning that her scholarship to the boarding school has been discontinued. Emerson is less than happy about the prospect of facing the same classmates she once had a complete mental breakdown in front of, but her brother, and guardian, refuses to discuss the idea of allowing her to simply test out of school. Thomas is wants Emerson to have as normal of a life as possible following her depression and mental struggles after the deaths of their parents four years ago. However, the fact that Emerson can see dead people places a damper on his attempts to give her a normal life.

Thomas has hired a great number of people in the past who thought they could help Emerson, but each proved to be some kind of charlatan, leaving Emerson skeptical. Therefore, when Thomas tells Emerson about Michael Weaver and Hourglass, she is reluctant to meet him. That night, however, Emerson is intrigued by the fact that Michael can see some of the same things that she can see. It also helps that Michael, who is close to Emerson's age, is very good-looking.

Over the next couple of days, Emerson and Michael meet often and discuss their gifts. However, Emerson becomes annoyed when Michael refuses to answer her questions directly. Finally Emerson backs Michael into a corner and forces him to tell her the truth about their gifts. Michael says that it is not the dead that Emerson sees, but snapshots of the past as part of an ability to travel into the past. Michael claims that he has a comparable gift, but that his gifts allow him to move into the future. Michael claims that they are soul mates, meant to use one another's gifts to move in time. In fact, Michael tells Emerson it was she, from the future, who told him to come to her.

When Emerson follows Michael to the headquarters of Hourglass, the organization he works for, she learns about Michael's mentor, Dr. Liam Ballard, the founder of Hourglass. Liam died six months before in a fire in his laboratory. However, Michael believes that it is possible for both him and Emerson to save Liam from his fate without disrupting the time-space continuum due to the circumstances of his death. Emerson is willing to try, not only for Michael, but for Liam's son and Michael's best friend, Kaleb. However, on the night they make their attempt, Michael is killed in the fire that was meant to take Liam's life.



Emerson, devastated by Michael's death and the knowledge that he knew he was to die, agrees to return to that night with help from Michael's adviser, Dr. Cat Rooks. However, after saving Michael, Emerson and Michael find themselves confronted by the man they believe caused Liam's death originally, Jonathan Landers, who, it turns out, is Cat's lover. Emerson manages to trick Landers into believing she has given him what he wants, the formula for exotic matter that will allow him to time travel. However, what she really gave him was a formula for a drug to keep his empathy in check and from becoming overwhelmed by other's people's emotions.



Chapters 1-5

Chapters 1-5 Summary

Emerson Cole is a seventeen-year-old girl whose parents died in a shuttle bus crash while on a skiing trip, leaving her in the care of her older brother, Thomas, and his wife, Dru. Emerson began seeing what she believes is the dead just a few months before her parents' death, a fact that brought on a mental breakdown in the months after their deaths.

In Chapter 1, Emerson returns to the loft she shares with her brother, Thomas, and his wife, Dru, forced to walk through a woman dressed like Scarlett O'Hara as she approaches the front door. Emerson was on medication that caused the visions of the dead to stop, but she stopped taking it, a fact she has failed to tell Thomas or Dru. Thomas is at home and reminds Emerson of a party that night for the opening of a new restaurant Thomas and Dru have renovated and decided to keep and run themselves. Emerson does not look forward to the party because the building is old and she knows she will see more of her visions there. Thomas also tells Emerson that he has arranged for her to meet with someone who claims he can help her with her visions, one among many attempts Thomas has made to help her. As Emerson leaves the room to get ready for the party, she sees a man in the living room who calls her by name.

In Chapter 2, Emerson calls to Thomas and by the time he comes, the stranger has disappeared, confirming that he was a vision. Emerson is shaken, but she tries to hide this from Thomas. Later, Emerson goes to her friend Lily's to dress for the party. Lily announces she cannot attend the party, but helps Emerson dress for it.

In Chapter 3, when Emerson arrives at the party, she attempts to keep to herself, always afraid she might begin speaking to one of her visions without realizing it and make a fool of herself. Emerson sits behind a jazz trio, but freaks out when she tries to set her glass on the piano and it falls through it. Thomas takes Emerson outside where they are joined by a good-looking stranger that Thomas introduces as Michael Weaver from Hourglass.

In Chapter 4, Thomas is called back to the party and leaves Emerson alone with Michael. As Michael makes small talk, then attempts to assure Emerson that he genuinely thinks he can help her, she expresses her skepticism. However, Emerson is shocked when Michael tells her he could also see the jazz trio.

In Chapter 5, Emerson punches Michael in the stomach to make sure he is not another of her visions. Emerson then begins to ask a lot of questions, but Michael makes her stop and makes plans to meet her the next day. Emerson is careful in her appearance the next morning before going to meet Michael at Lily's family coffee shop. Michael tells Emerson a little about his background and about the mentoring aspects of the Hourglass. Michael explains that he hopes to help Emerson the same way someone



once helped him. However, each time Emerson tries to get specific answers from Michael, he tells her it is complicated. Finally, they agree to meet for dinner. Michael, however, makes it clear that there cannot ever be anything romantic between them because of Hourglass policy.

Chapters 1-5 Analysis

The first chapters of this novel introduce the main characters and describes the conflict that will propel much of the plot. The main character, Emerson Cole, is the first person narrator of the novel. Emerson is seventeen years old, a young woman who has been struggling with her mental health since the deaths of her parents. Emerson suffered depression following the tragic deaths, but also has struggled with what she describes as phantoms who often appear to her in a form that makes it difficult for her to tell which are real and which are not. Therefore, Emerson has learned to become introverted, to avoid speaking to strangers in public. This has become an ordeal for Emerson ever since she found herself yelling at a person who only existed to her in school one afternoon in the cafeteria. That episode led to a stay in a mental hospital that still causes Emerson shame and some amount of fear that it will happen again.

Thomas is Emerson's brother. Thomas is much older than Emerson and was established in an architecture career and newly married when their parents died. Thomas has custody of Emerson and has tried since the tragedy to help Emerson have a normal life, even inviting help from what Emerson believes are charlatans. This leads Thomas to introduce Emerson to Michael, a young man close to her own age who also can see some of the phantoms Emerson can see. Michael promises that he can help Emerson with the help of the organization he works with, Hourglass. However, Michael is cryptic and refuses to answer many of her questions. There is also a great amount of sexual tension between Michael and Emerson, a new thing for Emerson since she has spent most of her adolescence trying to avoid strangers, that is complicated by Michael's insistence that they cannot have a romantic relationship.



Chapters 6-15

Chapters 6-15 Summary

In Chapter 6, Dru helps Emerson dress for her dinner with Michael.

In Chapter 7, when Emerson arrives at the restaurant, Michael clearly enjoys the sight of her dressed up. They talk and Michael reveals that he plans to rent a loft in the same building where Emerson lives with Thomas and Dru. Michael then encourages Emerson to ask him questions, but again answers most of her questions with claims that it is too complicated to explain. Emerson then tells him about her mental breakdown and her stay in the mental hospital. Michael assures Emerson she is not crazy and this gives her some relief.

In Chapter 8, Emerson takes Michael to look at the empty lofts and he tells her he would like either. When they touch in the hall, the lights dim as they had done in the restaurant, sending electricity through Emerson. She begins to wonder what would happen if they kissed. That night, as Emerson is drifting off to sleep, she becomes aware that the strange man she had seen the night before is watching her sleep.

In Chapter 9, Thomas confronts Emerson about holding hands with Michael and warns her there are security cameras throughout the building. As they argue, Dru comes into the room and announces she is pregnant. Emerson leaves to give them space to celebrate. Emerson is running through town when she literally runs into Michael. Michael joins her, but Emerson is angry because he had frightened her. When Michael offers a truce, Emerson throws him over her shoulder and walks away.

In Chapter 10, alone in the loft, Emerson uses Dru's computer to do research on Hourglass, but has little success until she searches the founder's name, Liam Ballard. This brings up a story about Dr. Ballard's death in a fire six months ago. Michael comes over and when he sees what Emerson was searching, he becomes angry and tells her to mind her own business.

In Chapter 11, the next day Michael moves in to the loft next door, but Emerson continues to be angry with him. Jack, the phantom who knew her name, comes to visit. Jack is flirtatious and charming, making Emerson feel good about herself. Dru comes and asks Emerson to help her sort through the new baby clothes she has just bought. Dru assures Emerson that even with the new baby, there will always be room for her. Later, while taking some trash out, Emerson runs into Michael and they fight again.

In Chapter 12, while having breakfast at Lily's family restaurant, Emerson sees they are looking for help and asks for the job.

In Chapter 13, as she is about to settle down to watch a movie with Dru and Thomas, Michael comes to the loft to ask to speak to Emerson. They go down to the patio and Michael begins with an apology. Then Michael tells Emerson that her gift is not about



seeing the dead, but about seeing snippets of the past. Michael says that Emerson can travel to the past because of a specific gene. Michael can travel to the future. Michael then tells Emerson that she, from the future, traveled to speak to him.

In Chapter 14, Michael says future Emerson told him how to approach Thomas and later how to gain her confidence. Michael then tells her that they are like soul mates, two halves of one whole, and that is why electricity sparks when they touch and why there is a strong attraction between them. Michael then comes close to kissing her, only stopping when Emerson notices a security camera in the corner.

In Chapter 15, Emerson tries to break the security camera, but has no luck. Michael then tells Emerson there is something they need to do together, but that he cannot tell her yet. Emerson agrees to trust him and wait.

Chapters 6-15 Analysis

The physical connection between Michael and Emerson continues to grow as they get to know one another more. However, Michael is so resistant to encouraging a romantic connection that Emerson soon becomes confused, especially when a jolt of electricity literally jumps between them when they touch. Even more confusing for Emerson is the fact that Michael seems to have all the answers she needs to understand the phantoms she sees, but he is refusing to tell her. Finally, when Michael becomes angry when he sees Emerson trying to research Hourglass and Dr. Liam Ballard, she begins to wonder if he is really the person she thinks he is. Even the reader is beginning to wonder what Michael is hiding and what that might mean to Emerson's future.

As Emerson struggles with Michael, she continues to live something of a normal life, taking a job at her friend's family restaurant in order to make extra money, and adjusting to changes in her immediate family with the announcement that her brother and sister-in-law are about to have a baby. At the same time, Emerson begins having conversations with one of her phantoms, Jack. Jack is a charming man whom Emerson believes is from the past, someone who lived and died long ago. However, Jack is different from the other phantoms because he knows her name and is more confident, more forthcoming with her than most of the other phantoms. These differences go unnoticed by Emerson, but should catch the reader's attention.

Finally Michael breaks down and begins to tell Emerson more about her gifts as well as his own. It turns out they are not seeing the dead, but seeing snippets of time. Both are time travelers who have become this way due to a gene they inherited. Michael and Emerson are two sides of the equation, she a traveler into the past and he a traveler into the future. Together they are soul mates, drawn to each other by their gifts and their genes. Michael even admits to a certain amount of attraction to Emerson, but continues to refuse to tell her everything, leaving the reader to wonder if Michael is really as innocent and gentle as Emerson has come to believe.



Chapters 16-25

Chapters 16-25 Summary

In Chapter 16, Emerson goes to work and is nearly surrounded by a scene from the 1950s. While Lily is out of the room, Emerson pops the scene. After their shift, Lily catches sight of Michael across the street and makes an attempt to approach him, but Emerson pulls her back and explains the situation.

In Chapter 17, Michael drives Emerson home and tells her that he is leaving town for a few days. Michael also gives Emerson a binder and a book to help her understand time traveling.

In Chapter 18, at home, Emerson tries to study the binder Michael gave her, but fails to understand most of the technical information. While cleaning in the kitchen, Emerson finds Dru's keys. Dru calls and asks Emerson to let the furniture delivery men into Michael's loft. Afterward, Emerson cannot resist exploring the empty loft. In Michael's bedroom, Emerson finds a couple of business cards with the address of Hourglass on them. Before Emerson can leave, Jack joins her. Jack tells her that he can pass through walls. Emerson notices, however, that Jack pointedly avoids furniture. Emerson touches Jack to see if he will pop like her other phantoms, but instead he is made of some type of jelly.

In Chapter 19, Emerson packs a bag and borrows Dru's car to check out Hourglass.

In Chapter 20, Emerson finds Hourglass, but is surprised to find it is housed in a residential home, not an office building. Emerson parks and sneaks around the side of the house where she overhears Michael talk with an unseen man about her. Emerson then sneaks back to her car only to find Michael sitting there waiting for her.

In Chapter 21, Michael forces Emerson into the car and drives her to the house where he lives while attending classes at the university. Michael is angry with Emerson for following him and placing herself in danger, but refuses to tell her what kind of danger. At the house, Michael introduces Emerson to the house mother, Cat Rooks.

In Chapter 22, Michael explains to Emerson that when Liam Ballard died, Hourglass was taken over by Jonathan Landers, a man who does not have a gift and who is jealous of those who do. As a result, Landers is using his position to further his own agenda. Michael also tells Emerson that he and others, including Ballard's son, Kaleb, believe that Landers killed Ballard.

In Chapter 23, Michael tells Emerson that he wants her to help him stop Landers from killing Ballard. Michael claims that with Emerson's help, he can travel back in time and save Ballard by replacing his body with a cadaver from the university and hide Ballard for six months. By doing it this way, they can prevent any trouble with the time-space



continuum. In fact, Michael tells her that it was she who told him this by introducing him to the Novikov Principle.

In Chapter 24, Emerson wakes from a nightmare and finds herself still downstairs with Michael. Emerson cries and tells Michael about her guilt associated with her parents' deaths. Emerson was supposed to be on the shuttle bus with her parents, but she dropped her bag and told her mother to go on, that she did not need her. A short time later, the shuttle bus slid off an icy road and fell into a frozen lake, killing everyone on board. Emerson expresses a desire to save her parents, but realizes she cannot change something that huge.

In Chapter 25, Emerson wakes in Michael's bed and dresses before Michael comes to introduce her to Dr. Rooks.

Chapters 16-25 Analysis

Emerson learns more about her gifts through Michael after she breaks a promise and follows him unwittingly to Hourglass. Emerson learns of the conspiracy by Jonathan Landers to take over Hourglass and use it to his own purpose, to find a way to use the gifts of others so that he might travel in time himself. Emerson also learns of the death of Dr. Ballard, which she had already learned a little about earlier, and the Novikov Principle that Michael thinks makes it possible to change the past.

Emerson's relationship with Michael appears to be changing, evolving, as she continues to deal with her overwhelming attraction to him. Michael seems to be having the same feelings toward her, as Emerson overhears him mentioning to a friend, but he is resistant to indulge these feelings for a reason Emerson does not quite understand at this point. However, the reader can be assured that the nature of their gifts make it impossible for either to avoid a relationship with the other.

These chapters introduce two new characters that the reader will get to know much better in the following chapters. These are Dr. Cat Rook and Kaleb Ballard. Dr. Rook is the house mother of the residence where Michael lives while attending college, a beautiful scientist who teaches at the school. Kaleb Ballard is Liam's son and Michael's friend, the man Emerson overhears speaking with Michael about her in these chapters.



Chapters 26-35

Chapters 26-35 Summary

In Chapter 26, Michael introduces Emerson to two other residents in the house, Dune and Nate. They are then joined by a third, a young girl named Ava who clearly has some romantic claims on Michael. Emerson's jealousy instantly flares as Ava insists she has something private she needs to discuss with Michael.

In Chapter 27, Michael explains to Emerson that the others also have certain talents that involve the manipulation of time. Michael then asks Dr. Rook to explain time travel to Emerson, particularly the kind in which they will use. Dr. Rook explains how a special metal can help focus her gifts and how she can build bridges with her own gift, the ability to create exotic matter. Michael then goes to speak to Ava while Emerson continues to speak to Dr. Rook. Dr. Rook asks about Emerson's reaction to Michael and reveals that it was the same between Dr. Ballard and his wife, both of whom have similar gifts to Emerson and Michael.

In Chapter 28, Emerson goes to see Lily after dropping Michael at his car. Lily is still taken with Michael and flirts with him when he joins them at the coffee shop. In the car, Michael tells Emerson how Dr. Ballard's wife tried to commit suicide after his death and how that is impacting their son, Kaleb. Emerson tells Michael she is willing to help him save Dr. Ballard.

In Chapter 29, Emerson and Michael meet with Thomas and Dru at their restaurant to tell them about Emerson's gifts and their plan to save Dr. Ballard. Thomas is supportive, but Dru is skeptical. Thomas then speaks to Emerson alone, making her assure him that she is not helping Michael simply because she has a crush on him.

In Chapter 30, going on something Michael said, Emerson goes to her room and calls for Jack. Emerson wants to know what Jack is because he does not really fit any of the descriptions of rips or travelers that Michael described to her and Thomas. However, Jack fails to appear. When Emerson returns to the restaurant, she learns that Ava came and took Michael away with her. Thomas then takes Emerson's phone because Michael has asked that they keep Emerson from following him or contacting him. The next morning, when Michael has failed to call, Emerson is determined to go find him. Against Thomas' wishes, Dru gives her the car keys.

In Chapter 31, Emerson goes to Lily and tells her she knows she has the ability to find people and objects with her mind and asks her to help locate Michael. However, Lily refuses because she has promised her grandmother she will not use the power to find people.

In Chapter 32, Emerson goes to the student house and finds Michael there, angry that she disobeyed his wishes. Emerson learns that Michael spent the night searching for



Kaleb who went on a drinking binge. In the house, Emerson meets Kaleb for the first time and is instantly attracted to his large frame, dark beauty, and drunken charm. Michael then tells Emerson that Kaleb is an empath.

In Chapter 33, while trying to get Kaleb to eat something, Michael and Emerson are interrupted when Ava comes into the room. Michael goes off with Ava, causing Emerson some jealousy and giving Kaleb a chance to talk with her. They discuss the relationship between Liam and his wife, as well as Kaleb's mother's current situation. Emerson shares some of her experiences in the mental hospital in the hopes of soothing some of Kaleb's fears.

In Chapter 34, Kaleb, Michael, and Emerson go to the university to tell Dr. Rook about their plan and to ask for her help. Dr. Rook immediately refuses, basing her argument on the change it would make to the space-time continuum as well as the danger it poses for Emerson. Emerson becomes emotional and leaves. Kaleb follows. Emerson explains that she is upset for Kaleb, not for herself and this leads to an intimate moment between them. Michael comes upon them and appears jealous. Michael then asks Emerson about her experiences with boys, warning her that Kaleb is not the type to be committed to any one girl.

In Chapter 35, Emerson goes home and goes straight to bed, but her sleep is interrupted by Jack. Emerson begins asking him questions about what he is, but Jack evades most of the questions before once again disappearing again.

Chapters 26-35 Analysis

In this set of chapters, Emerson gets to know the residents of Renegade House, Michael's college housing, and begins to feel as though she has finally found a place where she belongs because all the other residents also have strange gifts like her own. Emerson also meets Kaleb, the son of Michael's mentor and founder of Hourglass, Liam Ballard. Emerson is just as attracted to Kaleb as she was to Michael initially, but Kaleb's attraction is more of a physical thing than the emotional pull she feels to Michael. However, her attraction to Kaleb is sure to give Michael a run for his money, as proven in Chapter 34 when he expresses some concern that Kaleb might be too wild for Emerson.

At the same time Emerson is getting to know the residents of Renegade House, she also meets Ava. Ava is a young, beautiful girl who appears to have some kind of emotional relationship with Michael. This causes Emerson a great deal of jealousy, especially when Michael fails to explain this relationship to her and continues to resist the feelings that Emerson has had for him since their first meeting. This complicates things for the two of them as they begin to make plans to save Liam Ballard.

Emerson's family seems very supportive about the truth of her gifts and her desire to save Liam Ballard, but it seems Thomas is more concerned about her emotional wellbeing than her physical wellbeing as he continuously tries to keep her away from a

romantic relationship with Michael while allowing him to travel in time with her. The roles of Thomas and Dru in this novel are a little confusing and seem somewhat incidental while the author is attempting to make them the most important obstacle between Michael and Emerson, leaving the reader somewhat confused as to what their role in the plot truly is.

Jack appears to Emerson one last time and again fails to answer any of her questions directly, instead immersing her in charm and flirtatious chatter that leaves her somewhat confused and feeling flattered. It is this reason why Emerson has never told anyone about Jack, leaving the reader curious what might have happened had she told someone sooner about these visits.



Chapters 36-47

Chapters 36-47 Summary

In Chapter 36, Emerson returns to Renegade House the following day and finds Kaleb alone in the kitchen. They begin to flirt and Kaleb nearly kisses her, only stopping when she begins to think of Michael. Michael walks in on them and storms out of the house.

In Chapter 37, Emerson follows Michael outside and they argue, first about his relationship with Ava and then about his refusal to admit to his feelings for Emerson.

In Chapter 38, Dune spills mud and crawfish all over Emerson. Michael allows Emerson to shower in his room while he washes her clothes. Emerson is waiting in Michael's room, wearing nothing but her under things and one of his t-shirts when Ava walks in.

In Chapter 39, Emerson sneaks down stairs and with Kaleb, eavesdrops on a conversation between Michael and Ava in which he tries to explain why Emerson is half naked in his room. When Ava leaves, Emerson confronts Michael before she storms off in anger. The following day, Emerson tries to convince herself that it does not matter that she can never have a relationship with Michael.

In Chapter 40, as Emerson, Michael, and Dr. Rook talk in the kitchen about their plan to save Dr. Ballard, Kaleb bursts in and tells them that Jonathan Landers has disappeared with Dr. Ballard's secret files that include a file on Emerson. Emerson immediately calls Thomas and tells him to get Dru and leave town immediately. Then Emerson calls Lily and warns her to be vigilant about her safety.

In Chapter 41, Michael and the others immerse themselves in planning the trip. Kaleb gives Emerson his mother's ring to help her harness her gift. Dr. Rook instructs Emerson to grab a disc with Dr. Ballard's research on it while she is in the past and Kaleb later asks her to save a disc that has the formula for medication his father made for him to help him suppress his empath powers. Michael then takes Emerson up to his bedroom and confesses that he cares about her. They share a kiss. Back in the kitchen, the plans are finalized and Emerson and Michael walk through the veil onto the bridge Dr. Rook has helped create to send them back in time.

In Chapter 42, Emerson and Michael emerge in the empty kitchen at Renegade House, six months in the past. They quickly drive to the university and retrieve a cadaver donated to the science department before making the drive to Hourglass. Several times Michael tries to convince Emerson to stay in the car, but she refuses.

In Chapter 43, Michael leaves Emerson outside while he goes into the lab to convince Liam Ballard to go along with their plan. While waiting, Emerson overhears a couple discuss their clandestine relationship.



In Chapter 44, Michael pulls Emerson into the lab and introduces her to Liam Ballard. Michael goes off to get the cadaver. Emerson tells Liam a little about what has happened to Kaleb and his wife since his death.

In Chapter 45, Emerson and Liam Ballard realize that all the time pieces in his lab are broken, therefore they have no clue what time it really is. When Michael returns, he insists that Emerson go with Liam to safety while he places the cadaver. Before Emerson and Liam are very far from the lab, it explodes.

In Chapter 46, Emerson comes to after briefly falling unconscious and realizes that Michael is nowhere to be seen. Emerson insists on finding him, but Liam Ballard forces her to admit that Michael is dead.

In Chapter 47, Emerson and Liam Ballard return to the present. Emerson realizes that Dr. Rook is not surprised that Michael is not with them and learns that Michael knew he was going to die because of a visit he made to the future to check on how she fared the plan. Emerson refuses to believe Michael is really dead, however, and she sits up all night waiting for his return.

Chapters 36-47 Analysis

Kaleb's persistent flirtation with Emerson does more for her relationship with Michael than Michael's apparent relationship with Ava. Michael becomes visibly jealous, causing a great deal of tension between them that is only increased when Ava also becomes jealous of the whole situation. Emerson becomes frustrated, convinced that Michael will never get over his promise to Thomas and admit to his love for her. However, moments before they are to travel to the past to save Dr. Liam Ballard, Michael admits to his love for Emerson and kisses her. Emerson will later learn that Michael did this because he knew he would not be coming back from the past and that he wanted to experience one kiss with Emerson before his death.

As Emerson and the others plan their attempt to save Liam Ballard, Emerson learns that Michael has been trying to hide Emerson from Jonathan Landers all along and that he has recently learned about her anyway. Michael is concerned that Landers will do anything he has to do in order to use Emerson for her gifts, to manipulate her in some way to allow him to travel in time even though he does not have the same gift. This causes everyone to speed up their time table and it also causes Emerson to send her family out of town in order to protect them from the potential dangers of Landers coming to her home. No one suspects that Landers has already been to Emerson's home.

When Emerson and Michael go to save Liam Ballard, he seems somewhat reluctant to go along with their plan, but finally agrees because of Emerson's stories of the trouble Kaleb and his wife have experienced since his death. It would seem to the reader that a scientist like Liam would have a problem with the plan Michael and Emerson have come up with, but not only does he go along with it, but he helps save Emerson after Michael

dies in the explosion that should have taken Liam's life. It is an ironic turn of fate that leaves the reader hoping Emerson might find a way to save Michael.



Chapters 48-56

Chapters 48-56 Summary

In Chapter 48, Kaleb tries to use his gifts to take Emerson's emotional pain away, but she refuses to allow him to do it. Instead, Emerson cries in his arms and promises to pull herself together.

In Chapter 49, while allowing Dr. Rook to tend to her injuries, Emerson finally realizes that the man she saw during the fire the night before was Jonathan Landers, and that he is also Jack. Dr. Rook tells Liam Ballard what Emerson has told her and they ask her more questions about Jack and what she saw while in the past the night before. When Emerson tells them it was Ava with Jack that night, they all seem to understand that Ava was the cause of the fire and that is why the police never were able to find a cause for the fire. Later, Dr. Rook offers Emerson a way to go back and help Michael.

In Chapter 50, Dr. Rook sneaks Emerson into the Hourglass house and into Liam Ballard's office. Using her exotic matter, Dr. Rook creates a bridge for Emerson to use to go back to the past.

In Chapter 51, Emerson has some trouble making her way out to the lab and nearly runs into Jack and Ava in the dark. Emerson hides inside an old shed and suddenly finds herself transported back in time a hundred years. Emerson pops one of the people and slowly the scene fades. Emerson sees Michael going into the lab and herself from the night before running away with Liam Ballard. Emerson quickly goes to Michael and convinces him to save himself.

In Chapter 52, Michael argues with Emerson over her actions, but then she fills him in on all that has happened since his death. Michael then tells Emerson that he went into the future and saw that she was okay, that she was with Kaleb, and that gave him the strength to allow fate to play out. Emerson argues that he should not have done this. Soon they are kissing. Later, after the fire trucks have come and they feel safe escaping in the chaos of the investigation, they make their way back to the house. When they reach Liam Ballard's office, they step into the veil, but Michael makes Emerson stay on the bridge while he checks to see what is happening in the present. Emerson cannot wait very long and steps through to find Dr. Rook holding a gun on Michael.

In Chapter 53, Dr. Rook is with Jonathan Landers. It turns out that Landers has been using an artificial exotic matter pill to travel, but that the pills have run out and the formula was lost the night of the fire. That is why Dr. Rook's agreed to allow Michael and Emerson to return to the past to save Liam Ballard and why she instructed Emerson to get his research. Now they want Emerson to hand over the research.

In Chapter 54, when Emerson refuses to hand over Ballard's research, Landers tells her that he changed her past, that she was supposed to be in the crash that killed her



parents and she was the sole survivor. Then Landers returns these memories to Emerson, torturing her with the pain of her injuries from that reality. Finally Emerson agrees to give them the research, but instead of giving them what they want, she gives them the formula for Kaleb's medication.

In Chapter 55, Emerson is grounded by Thomas and Dru when she returns home. However, when Emerson stops sleeping because of nightmares, Dru encourages Thomas to allow her to see Michael. Michael comes and tells Emerson what has happened since their confrontation with Landers and Dr. Rook. Emerson then tells him about the nightmares and Michael tries to reassure her.

In Chapter 56, Michael gives Emerson her own ring to wear in order to focus her gift. Then Thomas calls her upstairs, reminding them of his continued ban against them dating.

Chapters 48-56 Analysis

Emerson travels back in time with Dr. Rook's help to save Michael. This seems to cement their relationship despite Michael's concerns that Emerson broke the rules of some unknown entity by traveling to save him, even though they did the same thing for Dr. Ballard. The author does not fully explain who this unknown entity is that makes all the rules, but the mention of them suggests that perhaps the author plans to continue this story in another book. To support this, the author also leaves some parts of the plot incomplete at the end of the novel.

Michael and Emerson discover when they return to the present that Dr. Rook has been working with Jonathan Landers in an attempt to help Landers travel in time. In fact, Landers has been using his time travels to change things in the past, such as the fact that Emerson was supposed to be on the shuttle bus that killed her parents. This could explain why Emerson and Michael have been seeing bigger and bigger rips in time with their gifts. It could also suggest that if Landers is not stopped it could cause cataclysmic damage to the time-space continuum. However, the author also leaves this unfinished, again suggesting another novel dealing with these characters and circumstances.

When Emerson returns home after saving Michael and Liam Ballard, Thomas grounds her for an unknown reason. This keeps Emerson from Michael and leaves her alone to deal with the nightmares that Landers has caused her by showing her the reality she was supposed to have lived. Dru, however, convinces Thomas to allow Emerson to see Michael and he helps her work through some of the emotional issues left unresolved after his rescue. Michael also gives Emerson a ring of her own to help her focus her gift, suggesting that with the ring Emerson will be better able to deal with the emotional fallout of her new reality.



Characters

Emerson Cole

Emerson Cole is a seventeen-year-old girl who has lost her parents to a bus accident. A few months before the accident, Emerson began seeing what she believed were dead people. After her parents died, Emerson had an argument with one of these phantoms in the school cafeteria, a scene that ended with Emerson being admitted to a mental hospital where she was treated for severe depression. Emerson attended school in Arizona soon after in order to avoid the children in front of whom she made such a fool of herself. However, her scholarship to the boarding school has ended and she will have to finish her last semester of school in her hometown in Tennessee.

Thomas is Emerson's brother and guardian. Thomas has tried everything imaginable to help Emerson have a normal life, including paying charlatans to do their magic for her. Emerson learns that Thomas has hired someone from a place called Hourglass to try again to help her. Emerson is skeptical until she meets this man. Michael Weaver is close to her age and there is an instant attraction between them despite the fact that Michael insists there can never be anything romantic between them. Emerson becomes frustrated in her dealings with Michael at first, because of the distance he insists on and because he fails to tell her everything about her gift that it turns out Michael shares.

Emerson struggles to understand the things Michael tells her about her gift, but when he asks for her help, she does not struggle. Emerson wants to help Michael bring back the man who was once a father figure to him, to give to Michael what she cannot give to herself even though she might pay the highest cost imaginable.

Michael Weaver

Michael Weaver is a college student who has been able to see rips in time since he was a small child. Michael has been mentored by Hourglass, an organization begun by Liam Ballard in order to help people with genetic abilities dealing with time. However, six months ago Liam Ballard was killed when his lab caught fire. Michael believes Liam's replacement, Jonathon Landers, killed him in order to get control of Hourglass and all of Liam's private papers. For this reason, Michael and his best friend, Kaleb Ballard, have come up with a way to save Liam from his death. However, this requires protecting Emerson Cole from Landers while using her to help make their plan come to fruition.

Michael met a future vision of Emerson when she came to him to tell him how he could save Liam Ballard. Emerson also tells Michael of the immediate attraction that would take place between them. However, Michael resists this attraction both because he has promised Emerson's brother, Thomas, that nothing romantic will happen between them and because he feels he owes his friend, Ava, the respect of not moving on without ending things with her in their complicated relationship. Later, Michael learns from a



quick trip into the future that he will die the night he and Emerson go to save Liam and that Emerson will become involved with his friend, Kaleb, therefore he breaks his own rules and kisses Emerson before they leave, unaware that Emerson will once again break the laws of time travel in order to return to that evening a second time and save his life.

Kaleb Ballard

Kaleb Ballard is the son of Liam Ballard and his wife. Kaleb is an empath who can sense the emotions of other people. This skill is a difficult one for Kaleb to control and he often becomes overwhelmed. For this reason, Kaleb's father created a medication for him that dulled the effects of his gift and made it more manageable, but he has run out of the medication since his father's death. Kaleb has become something of a rebel, drinking and carousing, to deal with both the death of his father, the illness of his mother, and his empath gifts. Kaleb and Emerson hit it off from the beginning and Kaleb flirts with her mercilessly throughout the book.

Liam Ballard

Liam Ballard is a doctor who once did work with the parapsychology department at Bennett University and later founded Hourglass. Liam is the classic mad scientist who spends more time in his lab than anywhere else. However, he is a good friend and mentor to Michael, helping him deal with his gifts in a way no one else has been able to do. When Liam is killed in a fire in his lab, Hourglass goes into a tailspin as the new head takes over and tries to use it for his own means. For this reason, Michael and Liam's son, Kaleb, plot to save Liam from his death using Emerson Cole. They are successful, but the damage has already been done.

Ava

Ava is another of Hourglass's students. Ava has the power to throw matter through time and space, a power that no one at Hourglass fully understands. Ava also has deep feelings for Michael, a situation that causes a great deal of tension between Emerson and Michael. In the end, they realize that it was Ava who caused the fire at Liam's lab because Landers was manipulating her and her memories.

Dr. Cat Rooks

Dr. Cat Rooks is a professor at the university Michael attends and his house mother. Cat is also associated with Hourglass because she also has a gift, the ability to create exotic matter. Cat is essential to Liam, Michael, Emerson, and Liam's wife's ability to travel through time. However, at the end of the novel Michael and Emerson discover that Cat is Landers' lover and that she has been helping him find a way to travel through



time himself even though he does into have the time traveling gene like Emerson and Michael, or Liam and is wife.

Jonathan Landers/Jack

Jonathan Landers is the second in charge at Hourglass, and therefore becomes the head of Hourglass when Liam Ballard is killed. Jonathan Landers is jealous of those who can travel through time and has been searching for a way to do it himself, using the gifts of those who come to Hourglass for help. At the end of the novel, Michael and Emerson learn that Cat has been helping Landers travel through time with the use of a formula Liam developed to give those without the time traveling gene the ability to travel through time. When Emerson sees Landers the night of Liam's death, she recognizes him as Jack, a rip that she has been seeing in her home.

Lily Garcia

Lily Garcia is Emerson's best friend. Lily is a refugee from Cuba who lives with her grandmother and helps run a coffee shop. Lily is a successful photographer who also works with a local nature photographer. Lily has a special gift not unlike Emerson, the ability to find things with her mind. However, Lily has been forbidden to use it for more than searching for objects by her grandmother for unknown reasons.

Thomas Cole

Thomas Cole is Emerson's brother. Thomas is a successful architect who likes to take old buildings and renovate them. Thomas has custody of Emerson in the wake of their parents' deaths and has tried everything he can to help her live a normal life after her depression over her parents' deaths left her in a mental hospital for a short time. Thomas is very protective of Emerson and his rules for Michael are a part of what keeps Emerson and Michael separated through most of the novel.

Dru Cole

Dru is Thomas' wife. Dru is a style goddess who is very motherly and she has taken Emerson under her wing, giving her all the comfort and care Emerson might have gotten from her own mother. Dru learns she is pregnant during the course of the book with a much anticipated baby, bringing out more of her motherly instincts in this novel.



Objects/Places

Phantoms or Rips

Emerson sees what she calls phantoms or what she believes are the dead. However, Michael explains to her that they are actually people from the past, what he calls rips, that she is able to see because of her ability to travel to the past. Michael can see these things to, but his ability is to travel to the future so most of his visions are of the future.

Veils and Bridges

Veils in time exist all over the world. With the use of exotic matter, people with the time traveling gene like Emerson and Michael can create bridges in these veils that allow them to travel to specific places in time.

Duronium Rings

Michael and other time travelers use duronium rings to focus their gifts and help them travel through time. At the end of the novel, Michael gives a ring to Emerson with the infinity symbol on it, not unlike his own and those of Liam and his wife.

Crawfish

Dune accidentally spills mud and crawfish on Emerson's head while she is visiting Renegade House.

Swimming Pool

There is a swimming pool at Hourglass because Kaleb discovered that while swimming he can block out the emotions of other people, allowing him a few moments of peace.

Shuttle Bus

Emerson's parents died in an accident while at a ski lodge and traveling in a shuttle bus to the ski lifts. Emerson was originally on that bus and was the only survivor, suffering terrible burns and survivor's guilt, but Landers manipulated the past and kept Emerson off the bus in order to give her an easier life.



Old Storage Shed

While hiding in an old storage shed on Hourglass property, Emerson sees an entire scene from a time period a hundred year in the past that she makes disappear by popping one of the people in the scene.

Liam's Office

Emerson travels through a veil in Liam's office in order to travel back to the night of Liam's death in order to save Michael after he was killed when she and he returned to the past to save Liam.

Liam's Lab

Liam Ballard dies in his lab when it burns so hotly that almost nothing of his body is ever found. Later, Emerson and Michael return to the night of the fire and save Liam only to discover it was Ava, a fellow Hourglass student, who caused the fire.

Renegade House

Renegade House is the name of the off-campus house Michael shares at college with several other refugees from Hourglass. Dr. Cat Rooks is the housemother.

Hourglass

Hourglass is an organization created by Dr. Liam Ballard that is designed to help people who were born with special abilities dealing with time. Liam and his wife can travel through time together, much like Michael and Emerson.

Ivy Springs, Tennessee

The novel takes place in Ivy Springs, Tennessee, just outside of Nashville.



Themes

Time Travel

One of the main themes of this novel is time travel. The novel begins as a sort of paranormal book in which the main character can see the dead. However, as the novel progresses, the main character learns that what she really is seeing is rips in time that allow her to see people from the past who might have lived or work in the places she visits. Emerson then goes on to learn that not only can she see these rips in time, but that with the help of a ring made of a special metal and bridges formed with exotic matter, she can also travel to any point in the past that she desire. In fact, Emerson can also travel to the future with the help of her soul mate, Michael.

This novel takes a unique look at the idea of time travel, suggesting that a time machine would not be possible, but that people born with a special gene can actually use elements available on earth to help them travel. However, this book continues to be caught by the same difficulties that other time travel stories are caught with, the inability to change the past in fear of causing some kind of cataclysmic disaster that will change the future irreparably. For this reason, when Michael and Emerson attempt to change something in the past, they have to be very careful that what they do will not change the future in any way.

Time travel has been used in many ways in fiction. This time the author finds a unique way not only to allow her characters to travel in time, but to cause this ability to bring two characters together in a way that transcends normal attraction and emotional bonds. Hence, time travel is a major theme of the novel.

Love

Due to the fact that Michael and Emerson's gifts are ying and yang to one another, they are naturally attracted to one another. Not only are they physically attracted to one another, they are chemically and emotionally attracted as well. In fact, when Michael and Emerson touch, they actually spark electricity, often blowing light bulbs in whatever room they might be standing in.

Although by nature Michael and Emerson are meant to be together, they find that they cannot explore a romantic relationship because Michael has promised Emerson's brother, Thomas, that nothing romantic will happen between them. Not only this, but Michael is trying to protect a young woman who has a crush on him and believes there is some connection between them. As Emerson attempts to ignore her feelings for Michael, she finds herself drawn to Kaleb, Michael's best friend. However, Kaleb is an empath who cannot help but be aware of Emerson's feelings for Michael and is unable to ignore them.



Love is an important theme in this novel because despite all the difficulties that keep Emerson and Michael apart, it is love that finally brings them together and causes Emerson to travel back in time to save Michael from his own death. It is also love for Liam and for Hourglass that inspire Michael and Kaleb to scheme to use Emerson to save Liam, bringing Emerson and Michael together in the first place.

Family

Emerson's parents died when she was only thirteen years old. The day of their deaths, Emerson had a spat with her mother that ended with unkind words being spoken between the two of them. Emerson must live with these words and her guilt that her mother had to die believing her daughter did not need her.

After the deaths of her parents, Emerson has been living with her brother, Thomas, when not off to boarding school. Thomas is much older than Emerson, but he adores her and he is very protective over her despite her often argumentative attitude. There is a strength in their relationship that helps the relationship endure even through some of the oddness of Emerson's condition, her ability to see phantoms or rips. This includes Dru, Thomas's wife and good friend of Emerson.

At the same time, Kaleb and his parents were once very close. However, after the death of his father, Kaleb's mother suffers deep depression and eventually attempts to kill herself, leaving her in a coma. This leaves Kaleb alone and desperate to find a way to bring his father back. For this reason, Emerson agrees to help Michael and Kaleb bring back the one man they believe can right all the wrongs that have happened since his death six months before, making family an important theme to the novel.

Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the first-person point of view of the main character, Emerson Cole. The novel is written in such a way that the reader can only learn what is happening in the plot if Emerson is actually present when the event happens. Emerson is thrust into some very interesting situations in order to allow her to be present for many of the events that drive the plot of the novel.

The first-person point of view is one of the most intimate points of view an author can choose to utilize, bringing the reader into the mind of the main character and allowing the reader to see everything that goes into the thoughts and emotions of that character. However, this point of view can also be limiting, allowing the author to only show events in the plot that take place when the main character is present. In this novel, the author handles this with the best tools available to her, making her character do some things that might be out of character for others in the same situation.

Setting

The novel is set in the small town of Ivy Springs, Tennessee, which is just outside of Nashville. This location creates a small town atmosphere that influences some of the main character's actions because of her embarrassment related to her ability to see phantoms or rips. This location also gives the novel something of a southern flare that adds to the uniqueness of the main character.

The setting of this novel is well written and handled with the grace of a new writer. While the writer tends to get a little confused as to the locations of some of her own creations within the setting, she does a good job using the southern flavor of the location to add some charming flare to the characters and the setting, as well as using the small town atmosphere to influence some of the conflicts within the plot.

Language and Meaning

The novel is written in simple English. The novel is intended for young adult readers, therefore the language of the novel is simple and written as though through the mind of a young adult, giving it a feel that most of the intended readers will recognize and relate to. There is little slang in the book and little that might lend to confusion on the part of the reader.

The author has used a language in her book that not only is directed toward her intended audience, but also reflects the age and maturity of her main characters, keeping her language authentic to both her plot and her characters. The author is careful not to use any language that might confuse her audience and to keep to the true



nature of her characters, including some turns of phrase that every young reader will recognize while some older readers might find amusing.

Structure

The novel is written in fifty-six chapters. Each of the chapters tends to be fairly short and the author often tries to end each chapter on something of a cliff hanger in order to encourage the reader to continue reading on. The story is told in linear fashion that is easy to follow. The story is written in both narration and dialogue that keeps the story jumping from scene to scene.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows Emerson Cole as she learns the true nature of her gift, her ability to see phantoms or rips. One subplot follows Emerson's budding emotions toward Michael and his reluctance to act on them. Another subplot follows Emerson and Michael as they attempt to save the life of Michael's mentor, Dr. Liam Ballard. All the plots come to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



Quotes

"My small Southern hometown is beautiful in the haunting way an aging debutante is beautiful. The bones are exquisite, but the skin could use a lift" (Chapter 1, p. 1).

"His words sent a wave of relief through me. Not just what he said, but the way he said it, as if he wouldn't accept any other alternative" (Chapter 7, p. 56).

"Magnificent. I could already imagine trying to sleep knowing he was practically lying beside me" (Chapter 11, p. 76).

"Staring at Michael, I wondered which one of us was the nut job" (Chapter 14, p. 97).

"I looked into his eyes, wondering what he saw when he looked back at me." Chapter 22, pg. 150

"I had to hand it to my brother. Maybe he believed I'd experienced some sort of relapse and had somehow used my feminine wiles to rope Michael into my delusions. Maybe he was faking the calmness to keep me from going even further off the deep end. Or maybe he'd been all ramped up to take me down for spending the night with Michael, and my news threw him for a loop" (Chapter 29, p. 195).

"The pain in my head caused my stomach to churn in protest. I wanted my bed. And complete darkness. And chocolate" (Chapter 35, p. 246).

"I felt like I'd run a marathon or been hit by a truck. It was a familiar - an terrifying - feeling." (Chapter 39, p. 271).

"I opened my eyes. The veil shimmered in front of us, and I could see the room we'd just left, now empty and cloaked in darkness" (Chapter 41, p. 297).

"Then the world exploded" (Chapter 45, p. 314).

"I reached out and tapped her gingerly on the shoulder, rather than lunging into her as if my arm was the rapier and she was the target" (Chapter 51, p. 348).

"I had everything I needed" (Chapter 55, p. 387).



Topics for Discussion

Who is Emerson Cole? Why does she believe herself to be insane? What kind of medication is she on? Why does she stop taking it? Why is she reluctant to tell her brother she has stopped taking this medication? Why does Emerson's brother keep hiring people to help her even though none of them have really helped? What outcome is Thomas hoping for with Emerson? How does Emerson feel about this?

Who is Thomas? Why is Emerson living with him? Who is Dru? What is Emerson's relationship like with Thomas and Dru? What changes for Emerson when she learns that Dru is pregnant? How does Dru handle this situation? In what ways does Thomas seem over protective toward Emerson? For what reason? How does Emerson feel about this overprotective attitude?

Who is Michael Weaver? Why has he come to meet Emerson? What is Emerson's first impression of Michael? How does Michael win over Emerson's trust in their first meeting? What question does Michael ask Emerson when they have breakfast together for the first time? What is Emerson's response? What is Michael's continued answer to most of Emerson's initial questions? Why does this frustrate Emerson so much?

Who is Jack? How is Jack different from the other phantoms or rips that Emerson can see? What does Emerson think of Jack? Why does Emerson not tell Michael about Jack right away? Why does Emerson touch Jack? What is the result of her touching Jack? How does this make Emerson question Jack's true nature? Where does Emerson later see Jack? How does she finally come to realize who Jack really is?

Who is Kaleb? Under what circumstances does Emerson first meet Kaleb? What does she think of him? Why does Kaleb begin flirting with Emerson? Is Kaleb honest in his flirtation with Emerson or is he only teasing? How does Emerson feel about Kaleb? How does Michael feel about Emerson's growing affection for Kaleb? Why does Emerson want to help Kaleb get his father back? How are Kaleb and Emerson's situations similar? How are they different?

Who is Ava? What is her relationship with Michael? What does Emerson think the nature of Ava's relationship with Michael is? Why is Emerson jealous of Ava? How does Michael handle Emerson's jealousy of Ava? What does Emerson later realize Ava has done? How do the others react to this news? Is Ava a bad person? Is she a danger to Liam and the others? Explain.

Who is Dr. Cat Rooks? What role does she initially play in Michael's life? How does she help the time travelers travel? Why does Cat initially refuse to help Michael and Emerson save Liam from being murdered? Why does she later agree to help? Why does Cat help Emerson go back and save Michael from the fire in the lab that was supposed to kill Liam? What might have been the main motivating factor in Cat's betrayal of Hourglass and Dr. Ballard?