

Incarnate Study Guide

Incarnate by Jodi Meadows

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Plot Summary

Incarnate by Jodie Meadows is the story of eighteen year-old Ana who has lived her entire life with her mother, Li, in the Purple Cottage which is located in the middle of a forest setting. Li is a cruel and abusive mother and Ana's life has been joyless. Ana is a spirited young woman who can't wait to escape from her mother and her isolated life in the forest. She wants to find out what her purpose in life is and learn about her father who abandoned her when she was born. Ana is different than literally everyone else in the land.

Although she has been isolated by her mother and not allowed to have friends or even talk with anyone else, everyone knows of her. In a world that is five-thousand years old, Ana is the only "new soul" ever to be born. Everyone else has lived multiple lives before and has been reincarnated to live again and again. Li has characterized her daughter's status as a "no soul," someone without feeling or substance. She has been a disgrace to her mother and was apparently abandoned by a father who was humiliated by her birth. Ana plans to travel to the large city of Heart and visit the Grand Library and find out about her parents and maybe learn why she was born.

Li is cruel to the end by giving her daughter a broken compass. Ana gets lost in the forest and is attacked by deadly sylph which are huge shadow-like beings that burn their victims to death. She is singed on the cheek by one of them and winds up between approaching sylph and the edge of a cliff. Ana makes the snap decision and decides she'd rather fall to her death than have a terrifying and fiery death. She winds up in the dark swirling waters of a river and is close to drowning when she is grabbed by someone who pulls her to the surface.

On land, she comes around to see a young man looking down on her. He tells her his name is Sam and that he is camping in the area. They stay in his cabin for several weeks until Ana is ready to travel on to Heart. In their time together, they learn that they both like books and love music. Sam is aware of Ana's "new soul" status and encourages Ana to think more of herself and not call herself a "no soul." He tells her she is a "new soul" and counts as much as anyone and that she has the right to have emotions and opinions. It's a dangerous trip to Heart so Sam decides to escort Ana there. On the way, sylph attack and this time Ana is able to save Sam although she sustains serious burns to her hands.

Once reaching Heart, Sam talks the city's Council into allowing Ana to enter the city. In return, they declare he must take responsibility for her because she is a "new soul" and therefore not eligible for citizenship. Part of the agreement is that Ana agrees to learn and take lessons while she stays in Heart. Ana who has always been fascinated by music especially that of Dossam, learns that Sam is actually the composer and pianist Dossam. Sam writes a sonata that he dedicates to Ana. Sam teaches Ana to play the piano, another friend teaches her to dance, Sam's father teaches her to bake.



At a masquerade party, Sam and Ana both realize that they are matched souls and finally confess their love for each other. Shortly after, they are attacked by unknown assailants who try to kill them. Li convinces the Council that Sam was behind the attempted murder of her daughter. Sam is arrested and Ana's guardianship is returned to Li. Needless to say, Ana is not happy with the new arrangement. She escapes Li's house and plans to help Sam escape so they can be together. But she runs into many obstacles including being trapped in a temple that has no exits and being attacked by dragons.

In the end, Ana is able to survive all her challenges. She learns that her father wasn't the ogre that her mother had made him out to be. She meets her father and has some of her questions answered although not all of them. She and Sam are together but they do not know whether Ana, as a new soul, will be reincarnated. But she does know that even in a thousand years people will know of her. Her love for Sam and the music he wrote for her will make her immortal - she will be known as Incarnate Ana.



Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

Chapter 1: Snow

Ana is not new. When she had been five she realized she was different. In the spring equinox on Soul Night in the Year of Souls when the others talk about prior lives - as many as ten or twenty lives - and the adventures they had and things they discovered, she knows she is different. She doesn't say a word because she has no tales of a past life to share. She watches them as they laugh and dance around the trees and fire. Li takes her home and the next day, Ana is able to blurt out a question. Who is she, she asks Li who responds that she is no one, a "nosoul."

At eighteen Ana is leaving home. Li tells her to have a safe trip but Ana senses she didn't mean it. Ana is leaving with just her backpack filled with supplies and food to find out who she is and why she exists. She looks forward to escaping her mother's hostility and abuse. The world is before her. She has lived with her mother in an isolated cottage and knows only her. All the other people live in the city of Heart.

Li has only cared for her because the Council forced her to. Her lover, Menehem, had left Li after Ana was born because he had been humiliated by having a nosoul daughter. Li blames Ana for the loss of her lover. Ana is on her way to Heart to ask the Council for access to the Great Library. After five-thousand years of the same souls being reborn, there has to be a reason why she was born.

Li had beaten her and caused her emotional distress over the years. She has always told her how stupid and unskilled she is. Li has one last trick up her sleeve. She gives Ana a broken compass that purposely makes her go the wrong way. Had she not noticed that she was lost, she could have gone beyond the Range and encountered a centaur or sylph. She wastes a whole day of walking through the rugged, snow-covered terrain.

Ana spreads her sleeping bag out in a clearing by the river. After sleeping for just a short while, she awakens to hear the murmurs of someone else nearby. She gathers her things together and starts to leave when the sounds turn to moans. Could it be a sylph, she wonders. As she rushes off, the moans turn to shrieks and laughter. It is a sylph and there is no way to escape from or kill the shadowy beings. As she runs, an invisible flame burns her cheek. The sylph surrounds her in a dark circle; its fiery presence melts the snow. She fights and struggles with the invisible attacker. Using her flashlight in the darkness, she flees through the thick forest with the flames of death at her heel. If she knew where a sylph trap was, she would lead them to it. But she doesn't even know where she is.



Ana's flashlight dies. She runs and skids to the edge of a cliff. The sylph - seven or eight of them - twice her height and comprised of smoke and shadows advance toward her. She is trapped between approaching death and the edge of the cliff and certain death. She screams at them that they will not have her. She leaps off the cliff. Death would be fast and cold - at least she wouldn't be burned to death.

Chapter 2: Water

Fortunately, Ana hits water rather than solid ground and survives her fall. But the struggle to keep from drowning in the swirling water is a difficult one. As she sinks to the bottom, something grabs her around the waist and drags her through the black water. She is so exhausted that she gives in and gulps in water. The next thing she knows, she is lying on the ground with something pounding on her chest. Her lungs are being filled with someone else's air. Despite injuries from her fall, the burn on her cheek hurts the most. Everything is a blur to Ana. Just before she passes out she thinks she sees a boy's face looking down at her. She wakes up later covered in wool blankets in a heated tent. An arm is draped around her. A voice says, "Hi." It is the boy. He teases her about taking a winter swim.

Ana is frightened. What would he do to her? Is he cruel like Li? She unzips the tent and runs out into the freezing night air. After running and stumbling her way about, suddenly the boy is standing beside her with a lamp. He asks her to not try to kill herself again after he has gone to all the trouble to save her. She recalls how she almost drowned as she looks at the boy. He must be strong, she thinks; he pulls her up from the bottom of the river. He extends his hand to her and promises he won't hurt her. She has to trust him or freeze to death.

The burn on Ana's cheek still hurts. It is small and she doesn't think it would spread. A bad burn from a sylph could spread into the entire body and cause death. They return to the tent where he makes them some hot tea. His name is Sam. She is afraid to reveal who she is. He would kick her out if he knew she was a nosoul. Sam presses her for her name. She claims that she would have been fine out in the forest and maybe she had wanted to be in the river. But he had seen her jump and thrashing in the water. Finally, she tells him her name is Ana. He says, "Oh, you're that Ana." He offers to contact Li and tell her he has found her. She can't go back, she tells him. He tells her to stay.

Sam asks Ana if she has any skills. Skills are acquired through the years by the rebirth of souls. Of course, she has not benefited from that. She only knows what Li has taught her. She has taught herself to read. She has left home to find out who she is and how she fits into the world. She knows that she is different. She tells him of her plans to go to the library and how her plans had been disrupted by the sylph that forced her to the edge of the cliff. Sam tells her to rest. The trip to Heart will be an exhausting one.

Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

Chapter 1: Snow



Ana has to grapple all her life with being an outsider. She is the first "nosoul" to be born in five-thousand years. Most souls have lived ten to twenty times before. Her mother resents her, blaming her for her lost love. Her lover had been humiliated that his daughter had not lived before. As a result she is emotionally and physically abusive toward her daughter. Even though she doesn't want her daughter because she is a nosoul, she keeps her from forming any other relationships or friendships. Ana leaves home at eighteen to find out why she was born to be different and what her role in life is. She is heading to the city of Heart, a name which may represent loving and caring people as opposed to her angry and hostile mother who hates her. Alone in the big cruel world, she is nearly killed by sylph. She chooses to jump to her death in a canyon rather than be burned to death by sylph. Does she survive her fall?

Chapter 2: Water

Although Sam is kind to Ana and actually saves her life, she is distrustful because she's only known Li and Li had mistreated her. Even though Ana doesn't know anyone, apparently people know of her. Sam refers to her as "that Ana" and offers to take her back to Li. Sam is a kind person and it's obvious that he doesn't know how cruel Li has been or he wouldn't have offered to take Ana back to her. Sam senses that Ana is a troubled girl. He sees her jump off the cliff. Perhaps he thinks she had been committing suicide. She is unsure and distrustful of him and he is also puzzled by her. Although she doesn't initially refer to herself as a nosoul, she indirectly addresses her problem with Sam when she tells him that she's trying to figure out where she fits into the world. Ana has no skills. However, she is apparently bright, because she taught herself to read - a fact that impresses Sam. He tells her to rest because the trip to Heart is a difficult one. Although he doesn't offer to go with her, it will not be surprising if he decides to accompany her. He feels empathy for her and he's beginning to feel responsible for her.



Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

Chapter 3: Sylph

Ana awakens to the smell of hot coffee. Sam tells her they have to leave and that he has to pack Shaggy, his horse that he had covered in blankets outside the tent. Li had never allowed her to drink coffee because it could make her short and it was too expensive to give to a nosoul. Ana is shocked that Sam is going to help her get to Heart. She has to do her part to help him pack he tells her. She packs up the items in the tent while he feeds Shaggy. She finds a large brass egg on the bottom of the floor. She recognizes it as a weapon to capture sylph. Sam tells her to keep it with her. It irritates her that he thinks she needs help but he is right. He asks her how long she had lived in the Purple Cottage with Li. It had been all of her eighteen years. Li had moved there when she was born. He tells her she shouldn't call herself a nosoul. Even new people have souls.

Sam asks her why she left home. She told him that it was her birthday and "time to find out what went wrong" (p. 37). She had overheard the Councilor tell her mother that a soul named Ciana was supposed to be reborn in her place. But she hadn't been because of Ana. Ciana had died ten years before Ana was born. Sam remembers when she died. Sam is the same age as Ana but his soul has been around for thousands of years. He asks her if her coat and boots had been passed down to her from Li. She responds that as a nosoul she doesn't need much since she would only have one life. He corrects her again and said she is a new soul and she deserves to have her own things. She is a unique person and shouldn't have to wear old worn things.

Ana tells him that death does not scare her. Sam says that if he knew he would die, he would try to get a lot of things done, things he'd been putting off. He would be afraid because he wouldn't want to stop existing. As they walk alongside Shaggy, Ana suddenly sees a shadow. "Sylph," she whispers to Sam. Ana takes the sylph egg from her pocket and charges at the large black shadow. She twists the egg and thrusts it at the sylph. But something goes wrong. The trap doesn't work and she is burned.

Sam yells at her to get back. The sylph looms over her. She holds up her hands that are red and peeling. She is sure she will die. Sam tells her to hide behind a fence. The sylph grows larger and begins to attack Sam. Ana recovers the egg from the snow, thrusts it at the sylph again just as it descends upon Sam, and is able to destroy it. But Ana is badly burned and knows that the burn will encompass her entirely and eventually take her life. Sam tries to comfort her but she tells him to go away. She tells him she hates him and everyone. Reluctantly, Sam leaves.

Chapter 4: Fire



Sam doesn't desert Ana. He comes back and sweeps her up from the snow. She tries to fight him off but she is too weak. Sam leads her to a stone bench. She can feel the fire burning up into her arms. She would soon be dead. Sam thanks her for saving him from the sylph. She had been brave. She reminds him that he is an old soul and would live again even if he had been killed by the sylph. Li had taught her that burns from sylph's cause death. Sam tells her that Li had lied to her. Her hands will heal. He wraps them in thick gauze. Knowing she is in pain, he gives her a handful of pain pills from his medical kit. Sam leads her to his cabin which has steel walls that will keep the sylph out.

On the way, they pass through a cemetery where Sam tells her his many past lives are buried. He shows her his first grave. The original materials are falling apart from being thousand of years old. The graves don't honor old lives but rather acknowledge past lives and achievements. Ana wonders what Li had done with her former lives. To understand what they had done in other lives, old souls keep journals that they archive at the Council Library so they can read about former lives when they return. Sam is quite a craftsman. He had carved all his own grave markers.

At the cabin while Sam feeds Shaggy, Ana explores his cabin. She is thrilled when she sees bookcases filled with hundreds of leather-bound books. She wants to read every one but her hands are so burned she can't even hold one of them.

Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

Chapter 3: Sylph

Sam has a good heart. He tries to help Ana build her self-esteem. He tells her that she deserves new clothes and her own things just like anyone else. Just because she's new doesn't mean she doesn't have a soul. Sam's an old soul and he is rather insensitive telling Ana that he'd be very afraid if he thought he'd die forever. Ana assumes that because she's a new soul, her soul will have only one life. Perhaps that is true but she could be making an erroneous assumption.

The evil sylph attack again and Ana bravely faces them. She destroys them but she is badly burned in her efforts. She is sure she will die from the burns she suffered on her hands. Sam tries to comfort her but she tells him to go away. She hates him and everyone else. She really doesn't hate Sam because he's been the only kind person she's ever known. But she is frightened because she is certain that she will soon die. Perhaps his words about being afraid to die if he knew he wouldn't come back hurt her and have come back to haunt her after her injury. As the chapter ends, Ana is afraid and alone. Will Sam really desert her or will he be watching her from afar? And will her burns prove fatal? The chapter leaves off with several cliffhangers.

Chapter 4: Fire

Not only did Li abuse and mistreat Ana, she also lied to her. She had taught Ana that a sylph burn would cause death. Sam straightens her out. Sylph burns are like any other and can be treated and healed. What else had her mother misled her about? Ana

displays her hunger to read and learn when she spots the books in Sam's cabin. The two young people have something in common. Apparently, Sam must like to read as well given all the books he has.



Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 5 and 6 Summary

Chapter 5: Honey

Sam finds Ana staring at his books. He realizes that she is in shock from her injuries. He senses that Ana wants to read a book but can't hold one. He takes a book from the shelves and tells her that the fifteen years are named after events that occurred in the first few generations. He tells her about the Year of the Drought and the Year of Hunger. She knows all about them. They are currently in the 331st Year of Hunger. Sam says his second favorite story is about the Year of Dreams when the people began trying to understand what the hot mud pits were. Everyone had begun to hallucinate after inhaling the hot fumes from the pits. He reads aloud from the book. It comforts her and eases her pain.

Ana falls asleep and when she awakens Sam is writing notes about their experience for his log. Ana tries to get up but can't use her hands to push the blankets away. The burning has traveled up her arms and she screams in pain. Sam rushes to her and encircles her with his arms. She tries to bite him. She thinks he is trapping her. She doesn't understand what hugging is. Sam gives her more pain pills.

Over the next few days while she recovers, Sam reads aloud so much that his voice grows hoarse. He also tells her about his skills - stone carving, textile arts, glassblowing and carpentry. He'd also been a farmer in the past. He tells her about the geysers and hot springs that surround Heart. Sam grows tired of reading and refuses to turn the pages for Ana so she can read until she tells him something about herself. But there is nothing to tell compared to what his lives have been. She could tell him what makes her happy. She responds that music makes her happy. She finds a player in the cottage library and plays Dossam's Phoenix Symphony. When she hears the music, something within her comes alive. She feels ashamed when she says she loves Dossam. Nosouls can't love.

Sam tells her she is allowed to have emotions like anyone else. She wouldn't have cared enough to save him if she didn't have a soul. He has music she can play any time but she has to ask. She summons up the courage to ask him to let her play the music. He finds the SED, his music player, and she enjoys music that is performed by a piano, flute and strings. Sam projects the SED onto a screen that shows the entire orchestra playing the music. Sam tells Ana that the man named Stef from the stories he has read to her had designed the compact music/video system. SED stands for Stef's Everything Device. The Council has made sure that everyone has a SED so they can be contacted in an emergency. Li had to have one and probably just hid it from Ana.

Sam still wants to know more about Ana. She tells him once she found honey in Li's house. When she had discovered it, Li made her go without food for two days. Sam



announces that he has to go to the Purple Rose Cottage for supplies. Ana panics. She is afraid that Li will find out she is with him. But when he returns, Li hadn't been there. He had gone inside the cottage and had taken what he wanted. He had found where she kept the honey and brought it back with him. Ana surprises herself when she grabs Sam and hugs him tight out of gratitude. They sit on the counter with spoons and eat all the honey.

Chapter 6: Butterfly

Ana and Sam stay in the cabin for two weeks after which they venture into the forest toward Heart. Ana is a little frightened to find out who she is. She might not like it. Sam tells her she can decide who she is for herself. But she has to find out why Ciana is gone forever. She is sure she'll never get over the guilt because everyone misses Ciana. She has learned everything she can about Ciana at the Cottage Library. For a while she pretends to be her.

Sam tells Ana that she is lucky in a way. She can learn from the mistakes of others unlike the old souls who keep returning and making the same mistakes over and over. He tells her that everyone knows who she is. He says that Li, who was a man in her last life, had talked so much that no one could shut him up. She wonders why no one talked to her. Had Li forbade it? The people probably don't want to get to know her because she might flit away like a butterfly and they'd never see her again. Ana tells Sam she is glad he talks to her. Other people just don't know how long Ana will be around.

Chapters 5 and 6 Analysis

Chapter 5: Honey

Sam is catering to Ana's every need. Although she is reluctant to tell him much about herself, he is a sensitive young man and has good intuitions about her. They share a love for books and reading. He extends himself by reading to her since she can't hold a book because of her burns. His reading comforts her - but perhaps it is his presence and kindness that comfort her as much as the words he reads. It is obvious that Ana has had no affection in her life because when Sam hugs her she takes it as an attack. He is not insulted and seems to have a keen understanding that Ana had been raised without love. He emphasizes that she has as much right to have emotions as anyone else. He is trying to lift her spirits so that she'll feel better about herself. He is drawn to her innocence and mystique.

Music is the only thing with which Ana has been able to connect in her life. She is moved by the music which has been the only way she has been able to vent her emotions. The music may be key to her emotional recovery from the abusive life to which she has been subjected. Ana is allowing her emotions to emerge which is displayed when she lets her guard down and hugs Sam. She is beginning to have feelings for Sam.

Chapter 6: Butterfly

The people in Heart and in the region haven't ignored Ana because they don't like her. They are afraid they will like her and that she'll disappear like a butterfly. They'll feel hurt if she flits away after they've grown to like her. But Sam thinks she is worth knowing even if it's only for a brief time like when a beautiful butterfly lights for a few moments then flutters off.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

Chapter 7: Walls

When they emerge from the forest, Sam and Ana encounter a huge white wall, with gates of iron and brass, that stretches in both directions as far as the eye can see. Outside the wall, there are graveyards, ruins and abandoned cabins. Over the wall they can see a tall tower that soars into the sky. It is the temple, Sam tells Ana. It represents an old legend that most people stopped believing in centuries ago. Sam doesn't have complete memories of the history of the city. That is why everyone keeps journals.

Ana figures that there are things that Sam doesn't want to remember just like there are many things she doesn't want to remember. He does recall hearing that everyone started out in small tribes spread across the Range. Some claim that people appeared as fully grown adults; others are certain that some were born. He doesn't remember any of that himself and it isn't written down because they hadn't invented writing. They have learned what dangers to stay away from including centaurs, dragons and, of course, the sylph. The city of Heart just seems to be there waiting for the people to discover it.

Ana asks if he thinks that it is odd that a city has been built and is awaiting their arrival. They had been preoccupied with finding shelter at the time and it was when books and writing were discovered. She had never read about any of it in Li's books. Deborl, who invented writing, had edited some of the details out of the books. There are words around the temple that tell about Janan, a great being who created them and gave them souls and eternal life and the city of Heart to protect them. Janan has never revealed himself to the people and never helped in times of trouble like the Year of Drought or the Year of Hunger. Some people still believe in Janan and think he will return someday. They believe he sacrificed himself to create the people. Some people feel resentful because he didn't save people from the centaurs.

Sam has her touch the wall. It pulses like there is blood rushing through it. It frightens Ana and she quickly pulls her hand away. She can feel a throbbing in the ground underneath them. They have the wall to protect them even though the centaurs and sylph haven't attacked in many years. Sam presses his palm on a small panel to open the gate. He warns Ana that she'll probably have to register. A man named Corin appears and greets Sam warmly. He knows Ana's name. He notices her burned hands. Sam tells Corin that Ana had saved him from a sylph.

Corin says he has to detain Ana because she isn't a citizen and hasn't been cleared. Sam says she will stay in Heart as his guest. Corin insists that it is against the rules. Anyone entering Heart has to be a citizen and all citizens must have owned a home and lived in Heart for the last hundred years. Sam becomes angry and insists that Meuric and the Council be called immediately. Sam tells Corin that no matter what, Ana will be



staying with him. The two men have a few private but angry words. It seems that the rule is that anyone but Ana can enter Heart.

Council members - Sine, Meuric, Antha and Frase - soon appear. Meuric is the leader of the Council. He expresses his fear that if more new souls are born, they might have to provide a separate community for them in Heart. Ana says she doesn't want to disrupt their city. Frase snaps back that she already has disrupted them just by existing. She didn't ask to be born - talk to Li and Menehem she tells them. Sam defends her and says she has skills and can contribute. He tells the others that the law is inhospitable because it had been created exclusively to keep Ana out. He points out that no one knows for sure that she won't be reincarnated. Sine says that if Sam wants to be responsible for her, then no one should care. Perhaps Sam can help her. The Council members agree to let her stay as long as she obeys the curfew law and agrees to take lessons and tests. It will help her if she is reincarnated. It is agreed. Ana will stay with Sam as his student.

Chapter 8: Song

Sam shows Ana around the industrial quarter where there are a warehouse, mills and factories. People take on the jobs they like, produce more than they can use, and sell the rest. Sam explains that the large pipes she sees are used to conduct geothermal energy that is attained from the volcano underneath that portion of the city. The city relies mainly on solar energy but they keep access to the geothermal energy as a backup. Heart uses a lot of energy because much of the city is automated including its maintenance systems and mechanical drones. When people get into trouble, their punishment is to monitor and clean the automated systems. If no one is being punished, the citizens have to take turns cleaning and monitoring them.

Sam explains that the Council members had planned to allow Ana to enter Heart. They had just been putting on a show. They refer to Ana being Sam's student because he is known for trying something new in every life. Sometimes he appears to be directionless to the others because he has left-over projects from other lives that he never completed. As they walk through the city to Sam's house, Ana notices that all the houses seem alike. Sam reminds her that the houses had been built for them. The people have to complete the interiors of the house. Ana begins to sense that Sam is hiding something from her.

Sam's house is white and plain like the other houses, a stark difference from the wooden cabin where she was raised. The houses in Heart are perfect but there is a coldness about them. Ana notices that the tall tower can be seen from anywhere in the city. Sam's house is spacious with a parlor that takes up the entire first floor. The furniture is all covered in white sheets which Sam asks Ana to remove while he runs up the spiral staircase to get a room ready for her. As she pulls the sheets off, she sees that the furniture is beautiful and exquisitely crafted. She is thrilled when she pulls off a sheet to reveal a grand piano in the middle of the room. She pulls off more sheets and finds that there is a harpsichord, a harp, an organ, a violin and what she thinks is a clarinet.



Ana is afraid to touch the piano even though she is dying to. It isn't her property. Sam tells her to go ahead and play something. Ana presses down on four of the keys. The energy she feels goes through her body and her cheeks hurt from grinning. Sam sits down and plays the most amazing music she had ever heard. She asks if he is Dossam. He had wanted to tell her, he says, but he doesn't want her to feel different about him. He explains that "Sam" is short for "Dossam." Ana can't believe she is with the Dossam - the man who had saved her from the lake and brought her to Heart is the musician she idolizes. He tells her the music he just played could be called whatever she wants to call it - it is hers. He had been inspired to compose it from the four notes she played and from what he knows about her. It is refreshing for Dossam to play for someone who hasn't heard him play a thousand times before. She is no longer the Ana who has nothing. She has music.

Sam shows her to her room which is decorated in shades of blue. There is a closet with women's clothing and he tells her to wear whatever fits. The clothes had been his in a prior life as a woman. There is a private washroom attached to the bedroom. Sam promises to play more music for her. Her lifetime dream of meeting Dossam has come true in the most unexpected way.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

Chapter 7: The Walls

The city of Heart is a metaphor for God or the creator. The wall that protects the people is tall and vast and so long that one cannot see the end of it - like God, it appears to be infinite. When Ana touches the wall, it is alive with blood pulsing through it. Janan, who sacrificed himself for the people, represents Christ the Son. Janan promised the people eternal life which explains why the souls return and have multiple lives. Sam tells Ana that there are still some people who believe that Janan will return as in Jesus' second coming. Others have grown cynical and no longer believe in Janan because he has allowed them to suffer and has never appeared to them - arguments that non-believers make about Jesus Christ in today's world.

The Council's reluctance to allow Ana to enter the city represents the prejudice and bias of those who reject people who are not like they are. Meuric's biggest concern is that there might be others like Ana and if they let her in, they might have to let others in. Sam tells the Council that she does have skills and can contribute to society. This episode sounds as though it was snatched from today's headlines. The controversy in America about what to do with the illegal immigrants and the issues between the Israelis and the Palestinian people both come to mind. The Council members represent both conservative and liberal views about "aliens."

Chapter 8: Song

Ana must feel that not only has she escaped from her cruel mother but that she has landed in paradise. She had idolized the musician Dossam. She loved his music and



had listened to it over the years. She even tells Sam that she loved Dossam. And, as it turns out, Sam is Dossam - the "Sam" being short for "Dossam."

Now Ana and Sam not only have their love of reading in common, but they share a love for music. Ana comes alive when Sam plays for her and his music gives her an identity that she didn't have before. He composes a sonata that is just hers - inspired by the few keys she plunks on and by what he knows about her. Perhaps that's why Sam wants to know more about Ana - he wants to compose music that will belong to her. But Ana has also brought new life and meaning to Sam. She adores his music and he enjoys playing for someone who hasn't heard it a thousand times in their collective lives together.

What could be a worry to Ana is that everyone has skills and contributes to the city. What has she to offer? Will her future depend on what she can do? Her skills are limited to what she learned from Li which apparently was as little as possible. The tower in the city has an ominous presence. It can be seen from every part of the city. Does the tower somehow watch the people and monitor what they're doing?



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

Chapter 9: Reprise

While Ana takes a bath she can hear Sam playing the music again. She sits downstairs and listens to him play while he writes the notes down. Later she sits at the piano and looks at the music he wrote. While he encourages her about music, she takes it as patronizing. He is sure since she taught herself to read that she could teach herself to read music. Sam tells Ana he considers her a friend. But nosouls don't have friends and neither do butterflies, she tells him. He reminds her about all their time together in the cabin and how he read to her. A new soul is allowed to be happy. She asks him to play the piano again. He has her sit next to him and watch the music sheet while he plays so she can learn the notes. She notices that he has changed the song. It has a softer ending. She lays her hand across his.

Chapter 10: Impulse

Sam walks her up to her bed. He sits for a few moments and tells her when she listens to music to hear all of it. Having a good ear is part of music. Sam leaves the house in the middle of the night and comes back muttering about genealogies. He must have gone to the library. Maybe he had wanted to look up something about his parents in his current life. The next morning Ana sees several outbuildings for farm animals from the kitchen window. The sunrise seems different in Heart.

Ana tells Sam about her infatuation with Dossam. She tells him it annoys her how he just sits back and doesn't react to something stupid she says. Does she want him to be impulsive, he asks her. He makes her angry when he says that she is so young he doesn't know what she knows and doesn't know. She starts to storm off but he grabs her wrist. She wants him to kiss her. He knows it but he resists. She tells him that he thinks too much.

Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

Chapter 9: Reprise

Ana is attracted to Sam as much by his personality as by his music. She resists the idea that they are friends. She doesn't feel that nosouls can have friends. But he is patient and continues to try to build her self-image. He must care for her because he puts up with the anger that surfaces in her quite often. He understands that she has been emotionally stunted by her mother.

Chapter 10: Impulse



Sam makes a mysterious trip to the library apparently to read about his genealogy. Of course, this action stumps Ana although she is reluctant to ask him about it the next day. There is something eerie about Heart. Ana notices that the sunrise seems different there. Ana's attraction grows for Sam. He knows that she wants him to kiss her but he resists. Could something he read about in his genealogy be holding him back?



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

Chapter 11: Dance

Stef comes in and hugs Sam and kisses his cheek. She is the Stef who invented the SED. She had been a man in the past and spent time in jail. Sam introduces her to Ana. Before she can stop her, Stef embraces Ana and kisses her cheek. Since Stef had found them standing in the middle of the kitchen staring at each other, she had assumed Sam was teaching Ana to dance for a re-dedication celebration that is coming up. When Sam leaves the room, Stef whispers to Ana not to let Sam break her heart because he never settles down. While Sam plays the piano, Stef gives Ana a dance lesson.

Stef explains that the re-dedication of souls is held for matching souls - some believe that souls are made in pairs and when they find each other in each new life they have a party, a re-dedication of their love. The re-dedication celebration that will soon be held will be a masquerade party because true lovers are able to find each other no matter what they look like. Neither Stef nor Sam has ever had their own re-dedication ceremony. They go to the parties; Sam plays the piano and Stef dances. It is also possible to meet one's match for the first time at one of these celebrations. Stef says maybe someone has been waiting for Ana. She tells Ana that she'll have to make her own costume. Ana feels jealous of Stef. Sam responds that she doesn't understand - the Council has made him Stef's guardian.

Chapter 12: Friends

Sam and Ana walk to town. She notices there are no signs that would help a stranger get around. She wonders why they walk everywhere. Isn't there another form of transportation? He tells her that they used to drive but the fumes had been unbearable and the vehicles had torn up the roads. The Council put all the vehicles in storage. Only families with young children and old people who can't walk are allowed to use them. Ana asks about the temple. Sam tells her that there is nothing inside and no one has ever been inside. She thinks it is strange but he has never questioned it in all his five-thousand years. Ana says she is interested in the past because she hasn't been there. Sam laughs and says he thinks she is amazing. A tension about their feelings for one another is growing.

Sam is sure the Council will let Ana use the library since they have demanded that she learn. Sam and Ana come to the open market where there are more people than Ana has ever seen. Some stare at her. One comments aloud that since Ciana has been replaced others could be next. Sam introduces Ana to Armande who is the baker and his father this time around. Armande hugs Ana and tells her he'll teach her to bake. Sam tells Ana he wants to spread the word about her fighting off the sylph so that the people



will learn something good about her — not just what Li has told them. Ana is introduced to Sarit, who is the beekeeper and supplies the town with honey. She hugs Ana and is glad she has finally come to town. She meets another girl, Ash, who is friendly to her, too. Sam says the girls will spread good words about her. Ana still wonders why Sam had left the house the night before.

Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

Chapter 11: Dance

Ana is jealous of Sam's relationship with Stef. She's actually not sure what their relationship is but Stef is aggressive and seems to want to come between herself and Sam. When Stef whispers to Ana not to let Sam break her heart, she probably isn't worried about Ana being hurt; she might be trying to discourage Ana from getting involved with Sam because she is threatened by their relationship. Sam has never met his soul-mate in all his 5,000 years. Could Ana be that person? Maybe they will find out at the masquerade ball. Maybe Sam already senses that Ana is his soul mate but is afraid to get too close because she will not live again.

Chapter 12: Friends

Sam has Ana's best interests at heart. He introduces her to his friends and wants them to like her. He also wants to spread the word about how brave she had been in saving him from the sylph. Ana meets two girls, Sarit and Ash, who seem nice and welcome her. She senses that they don't have a hidden agenda like Stef possibly has.

An obvious reference is made to pollution when Sam explains that vehicles had been banned by the Council when they caused health problems for the people. It is another obvious comparison to today's world in which the environment is an important issue.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

Chapter 13: Faces

Ana realized there was a lot to see in Heart. Sam promised she could see everything after she finished her training. Sam led Ana into the meeting room of the Council. Meuric rose to greet them. He asked Ana how she liked Heart so far. She responded that she thought it was lovely. Sam reported that he was teaching Ana piano and that Stef was teaching her to dance. Armande planned to teach her to bake. Sine offered to help Ana with poetry. Sam told the Council that it was tough for Ana because people were already gossiping about her. Looking at the Council and knowing how old they really were made Ana wonder if she'd have the same feelings for Sam in one of his other incarnations. She hated that she saw Sam's first grave.

Meuric announced that Ana's access to books in the library would be limited to only those that would further her education. Ana blurted out that she'd hoped to find out where she came from. Sine was sympathetic; Ana was the only being who was a new soul in the entire world. The Council agreed that she could look into her origin and some offered to help monitor her library time. If Ana didn't adhere to her curfew of being at Sam's at the twenty-first hour of every night, she would be punished. The Council provided a list of tutors who could help Ana and ordered that monthly progress reports on her progress be submitted to them. Sam objected to some of the tutors on the list who had an open distaste for newsouls.

Meuric called Sam over for a private discussion. Later, Sam told Ana that he was disappointed that she hadn't been more positive at the Council meeting. It was difficult, she told him, to deal with a group of people who were 200 times as old as she was. He told her that the Council was threatening to take Ana away from him. Li had come to Heart. Suddenly Ana was shocked and frightened. If he can't control Ana, she would have to go back to Li and be exiled from Heart. He did not want to lose her. Ana promised to try harder.

Chapter 14: Recognition

The library was huge and not separated into different rooms and sections like Ana had imagined. But every shelf was full. The library was beautiful and cozy with big easy chairs and cushiony sofas. Sam gave her a tour of the library and told her where all the different books and journals were located. The library was twelve stories high and every floor was packed with diaries. She wanted to see photos and videos of Sam's former incarnations. He was afraid it would change how she felt about him. Sam got an album and showed Ana some photos. She spotted an unattractive, middle-aged man but knew it was Sam. The other man in the photo was Stef. Ana recognized Sam in another photo as a woman playing a violin. They played old videos and looked at photos for hours.



Ana saw him in many different incarnations, handsome and beautiful, young and old, woman and man. The whole experience was somewhat disturbing for Ana.

Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

Chapter 13: Faces

The Council is making many demands on Ana. She wants to cooperate but she is feeling intimidated by the Council members because she is the only nosoul and feels different and alone. Ana realizes that she is potentially in danger when Sam tells her that Li has returned to Heart to reclaim her. Li doesn't love her daughter and going back with Li is the last thing Ana wants. Sam fears that he will lose Ana. It is obvious that he has very strong feelings for her. He emphasizes to her that she must comply with the Council's rules or they will never see each other again. Neither one of them wants that to happen.

Chapter 14: Recognition

As Ana and Sam look at photos and videos of Sam in his previous lives, Ana is always able to spot him even if he's unattractive, older or even as a woman. Stef had commented that soul mates, or matching souls, always recognize each other. Without realizing it, Ana is behaving like Sam's soul mate since she is able to recognize Sam in all his different incarnations. Is Ana Sam's matching soul? He hadn't been able to find his soul mate thus far in the 5,000 years of his existence. Perhaps he was waiting for her.



Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

Chapter 15: Market

At home, Ana sits in her room for a long while assuring herself that Sam is still Sam despite all the incarnations of him that she has seen. Ana knows that she has to get serious and do better than the Council expects her to do. She can't risk messing up and being returned to Li or exiled from Heart. Ana goes downstairs and starts practicing piano while Sam writes in his journal.

They return to the market this time to get Ana new clothes. It is the first time in her life that she will have new clothes. She is thrilled. Sam snaps a photo of her on his SED and shows it to her. She thinks she looks dumb; he thinks she looks adorable. Ana has been progressing well in her dance lessons with Stef. Still her favorite lessons are with Sam. She had enjoyed her baking lesson with Armande the week before. Ana picks out a sweater and skirt and some boots. They meet with friends who take photos of them.

Ana tells Sam she'll meet him in thirty minutes. She needs to go buy material for her costume which he isn't supposed to see before the party. Walking alone in the market, she misses being with Sam. She buys a coil of wire from a man who tells her to stay away after he realizes who she is. Next she buys some dyed cloth. As she walks through the crowded market, she suddenly feels a hand on her shoulder. She turns. It is Li! She is just as cruel as always accusing Ana of using Sam. She tells Li to go away; she isn't a part of her life any longer. Li tells her that she has asked the Council to return Ana to her. Sam won't let them, Ana responds. But Li says he won't have any choice. No one will like her when they realize that she is the beginning of the end of them - that nosouls would be taking everyone's place.

Ana gets away from Li but is very upset. Sine sees that she is upset. She assures Ana that they will not give her back to Li. When Sam appears to rejoin her, the sky that had been clear suddenly thunders loudly. Sine shoves Ana toward the residential area. Meuric's house is the closest. She'll be safe there. Everyone is afraid because no one knows what will happen if Ana, a nosoul, dies. Dragons are about to attack Heart.

Chapter 16: Acid

The people are panicked and fleeing every which way. After Sine leaves Ana at Meuric's house, Ana doesn't stay there. She runs out into the streets to look for Sam. Ana sees three dragons flying toward the city. As they come closer, she sees their glittery scales and sinuous serpentine bodies. They are deadly but fascinating creatures. Sam calls Ana on her SED. It is so loud from the crowd noise that all Ana can hear is Sam telling her to go home.



But Ana has her own ideas. She decides to find him. Eventually, everyone has either found cover or armed themselves. The thundering bangs of the approaching dragons grow louder. Cannons are firing at the approaching beasts, hitting one. Others are hit with laser strikes which do only negligible damage. One dragon flies toward the center of Heart while the other one spews green globs of acidic matter that sizzle on the cobblestone streets. A laser blast tears into the wing of one of the dragons. The putrid smell of burning flesh is in the air. The dragon spirals toward the ground, flinging acid as it goes down.

Stef, who is armed with a laser pistol, tells Ana to get inside the Councilhouse. Green acid is raining down. The people surround the wounded dragon that has fallen and continue to fire their weapons at him to make sure he will not recover. One dragon flies to the tower, clings to it and begins biting into it. The scraping sound of his sharp teeth is deafening but he is unable to penetrate the exterior. The other remaining dragon circles around the dragon attacking the temple to protect it. Finally, Sam finds Ana and tells her to get inside. The people fire on the circling dragon and bring it down. Ana and Sam have to dodge behind a column to avoid being hit with an acid globule. Their coats are splashed with acid that burns holes into them. Ana and Sam pull off their coats as the third dragon hits the ground. The acid eats through the staircase nearby. Sam is in a daze and feels that he hasn't been brave like Ana is. She assures him that he is the bravest man she knows.

That night she reads to Sam while he holds her hand. She realizes that she has needed him her whole life even before they met. They have so much in common - their love of books and music. As he clings to her that night, she realizes that he needs her, too.

Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

Chapter 15: Market

Ana's worst nightmare comes true when she encounters Li in the market. Li warns her that she has asked the Council to have Ana returned to her. But we have already learned that Li has a problem with telling the truth. Sine, one of the Council members, assures Ana that they have no intention of returning Ana to Li. Things have been going well with Ana and Sam and they are satisfied with her progress. But still, Li's presence is disturbing for Ana. She knows that her mother is unscrupulous and cruel. She could have plans to sabotage her success with Sam, even kidnap her. Li threatens to spread word that Ana is just the first of the nosouls and her kind is a threat to the old souls.

Sine takes Ana to cover when the dragons are on the attack. Since there has never been a new soul in Heart, the Council has no idea what would happen if Ana should die and they want to do everything they can do to protect her. Does the dragon attack have something to do with Ana's presence in Heart?

Chapter 16: Acid



Ana does not seem to be fearful of the dragons. However, Sam seems to be terrorized. He apologizes for not being braver. But Ana, in her growing love for Sam, doesn't want him to feel badly and tells him that he is the bravest man she has ever known. Not that he believes it. He knows that he acted rather cowardly. He reveals that he had been killed by dragons thirty times in past lives. The dragons seem to target him because he had been killed by dragons more than any of the other old souls. Ana realizes that she has needed Sam all her life which supports the possibility that they may be matched souls or soul mates.

The dragons go after the tower with great vengeance. Ana had suspected that there was something eerie about the tower. The fact that the dragons are drawn to it makes Ana's suspicion seem more credible.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

Chapter 17: Footsteps

Sine finds Ana at the library alone and wonders where Sam is. They are always together. Ana tells Sine that Sam is resting up. Actually, Ana had insisted that he stay home and rest. Ana asks Sine if she believes in Janan. Sine likes to believe that they are not there alone and tries to maintain a belief in him. Sine tells Ana that everyone is able to feel the heartbeat in the walls. It is what makes her maintain a belief in Janan. To Ana the pulsating wall is eerie.

Sine had known Li in another life when she had battled dragons. "Li has always been formidable" (pg.198). Ana asks about Menehem. Sine says he was a brilliant chemist. Sine tells Ana that she looks like her father and possesses her mother's fierceness and her father's intelligence. Sine begins looking for Menehem's diaries so Ana can learn more about him. When Sine finds the shelf where they belong, she discovers that most of Menehem's diaries are missing. Sam had shown Ana how to look up the diaries digitally. While she goes to do that, Ana asks Sine to locate Li's diaries, too. Ana suspects that perhaps Li had taken Menehem's logs so she wouldn't be able to learn more about her father. But Ana doesn't fully trust the Council members either. Most of them don't seem to like her and perhaps one of them took her father's diaries.

Sine likes Ana. She had been Sam's mother in a previous incarnation but had died in childbirth. Ana finds Menehem's diaries on the console. Her parents don't seem to have had any deep affection for each other. Sine tells Ana that most of Li's diaries are also gone. She could look up Li's diaries on the console but it is late. Sine tells Ana they can resume their research the next day. Ana tells Sine that Sam isn't sleeping well and that she wants to help him. Sine tells her that Sam will figure it out. She needs to concentrate on her studies. Ana wonders if Sam's sleepless nights are the result of the dragon attack. Ana asks what the Council members think would happen if they didn't keep her so busy. Sine doesn't answer and tells Ana to hurry home before the curfew.

As Ana walks home in the dark, she senses that someone is following her. She hears the footsteps all the way home but never sees anyone. Sam has fallen asleep on the couch. Ana leads him to his bedroom. He tells her he is glad she's home. She leans over and kisses his cheek as he curls up in bed. Usually no one locks their doors in Heart but Ana decides she should do so that night.

Chapter 18: Past

The next morning Ana has dance lessons with Stef and begins practicing the piano before Sam comes down for her formal lesson. She plays for quite a while but still he doesn't come downstairs. She begins to play a song that is often in her head. When she



plays it, it has high and low notes like the sylph sing. It is the music of her fears. She hopes Sam will like it. She becomes concerned and goes upstairs to see why Sam hasn't come downstairs. She finds him in an almost catatonic state. She senses that the dragon attack has traumatized him. Ana comforts him and tells him he is safe. He hugs her and they sit embracing each other for a long time. Sam revealed that he had been killed by dragons thirty times before. His fears resurfaced when he heard her playing the eerie music.

Ana feels bad but Sam assures her it isn't her fault. The sound had triggered bad memories. He describes how he and Stef in another life had seen the dragons coming. He had been the slowest to run away and died from acid burns. On other occasions he had been killed when the dragons attacked Heart. No one else has been killed by the dragons as many times as he has. He tells Ana that it always hurt to die. The violent deaths had been the worst. The pain lasts even after the soul leaves the body. Even generations after being burned by a sylph, the pain could still be felt.

Everyone focuses on the future because the past is often too painful when lives sometimes ended too abruptly. Once after a dragon attack all that had been left of Sam was his hat. That is why the recent dragon attack freaked him out. The last time he had been killed by dragons was twenty years ago, before Ana was born. He had gone north because he was lonely and felt empty. Ciana had died a few years before that. Li had told Ana that Ciana and Sam had been close.

Ana is sitting on Sam's lap and he kisses her several times on the temple. Ana thinks about the music Sam wrote for her. He had made her immortal through that music.

Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

Chapter 17: Footsteps

Ana learns that Sine, the Council member who is kindest to her, was Sam's mother in a previous life. Sine helps Ana look for the diaries of Li and her father, Menehem, but the diaries are all missing. Ana suspects that it could be Li at work or it could be the Council members because other than Sine, she doesn't feel like the members like her. Ana learns more about her parents from Sine and the electronic archives she is able to access. Sine tells her that she looks like her father and has characteristics of both. Ana wants to find out who she is and starts with trying to find out who her parents were. She has to wonder why Li was so cruel to her. She fought off dragons and was formidable according to Sine but that doesn't explain why she'd mistreat her daughter.

Something follows Ana home in the dark after she finishes at the library. She guesses that it could be Li but with all the creatures in the area, it could be something worse.

Chapter 18: Past

Ana is learning that having a past, or thousands of them, does have its downside. Sam is traumatized by his memories of being killed in the most brutal ways by dragons. The



latest incident when the dragons attacked brought back all those memories. He mentions that dying is never easy and when the death is a brutal one, it stays with the soul even when it leaves the body. The fear of dragons attacking is Sam's burden to bear because of his past experiences. Once again, it is Ana who emerges as strong and brave and able to comfort Sam instead of the way their relationship began. Ana is beginning to feel better about herself thanks to Sam's support. That he wrote music that was just for her gives her the feeling of immortality at least symbolically if not in reality.



Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

Chapter 19: Knife

It is time for Ana to practice piano. Sam tells her to play what she wrote. She is right there to comfort him if it affects him adversely. Sam is behaving more like himself and is anxious to get back to the library. He has never told Ana what he's been researching so religiously. Sam encourages Ana about her music that she thinks is less than perfect. But, he tells her, even playing for many lifetimes doesn't make one a perfect musician. Sam says he wants to tell her something but from his tone, she knows he is getting serious. She tells him not yet. It is just too much for her right then.

They go to the Library where Whit, who lives there, greets them. Sam tells Whit and Orrin, another friend, that Ana has composed a minuet. Ana goes to research Menehem's diaries on the console. She wants to find out why he left when she was a baby. A lot of his diaries contain scientific information about the geothermal energy and the glowing temple. He didn't believe in Janan. Ana gets the impression that her father wasn't well liked. He was defensive and cynical. She likes the fact that he thought people shouldn't be complacent and should challenge themselves. She begins to admire a man she had always hated. The last project he was working on but didn't finish was the development of chemicals to fight against the sylph.

Ana asks Sam what he has been researching. Among other things, he is doing research on dragons and the sylph. She tells him that she thinks she had been followed the night before. When she was born, a law was passed that she couldn't be killed. But Sam is afraid for her safety, because not everyone obeys laws. He gives her a small knife so she can protect herself when he isn't with her. He can't be with her at the masquerade party because he won't know who she is and she won't know who he is. She promises to keep the knife with her. He plays piano for her that night and she melts.

Chapter 20: Silk

In the morning, Ana overhears Sam talking on the SED to someone. He is worried that "she" could be in danger and might be at risk at the masquerade party. It sounds like he suspects that Li is a danger to her. She asks him what he was talking about and he says it was a private conversation. She is hurt that he won't tell her. The walls are made of silk and sound travels right through them. He promises to tell her but not just then. He has to go out for a few hours. He'll tell her when he gets back.

Later, she is feeding the chickens when Sam comes back. Stef is with him. She overhears them talking about her. Sam is telling Stef about first encountering Ana when she nearly drowned. They both feel badly that she had been raised with Li. They talk about Ciana. Sam says they had become close. Stef says that everyone expects Ciana



to come back. New souls like Ana could be waiting to take the place of people who do not come back - like Ciana. Stef thinks that maybe Janan is responsible but Sam says that Janan isn't real. Meuric thinks that everyone is being punished for not believing in Janan. They fear that Ana is just the beginning of their punishment.

Ana makes her presence known to Sam and Stef. She is hurt and storms off with Sam right behind her. Ana accuses Sam of being in love with Ciana. Ana sulks in her room and tells Sam she has to get ready for the party and can't let him see her costume. She puts black kohl on her eyelids so that when she puts her black mask on only her eyes will show. She puts colorful butterfly wings across her face. She hides the small knife that Sam gave her in her hair. Sam calls through the door that he'd see her there and to be careful on her way there. She tells him she will know who he is even in his costume - she would always know who he was. She tells herself that she will have fun. She will not be herself that night. She will not be Ana.

Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

Chapter 19: Knife

Sam emphasizes that just because he lived many times before doesn't mean that he has reached perfection. He's trying to encourage Ana not to be so critical of herself for not being perfect in her very first life. The two are not playing games with each other's feelings. In fact, they are being careful not to hurt each other. But the emotion that simmers just below the surface is so deep that it scares them. If Sam allows his feelings for Ana to surface, it will just be painful for him because he will have to live again many times without her since she is a new soul and not expected to be reincarnated. He will long for her throughout eternity. Ana is afraid of her own feelings for a man who has lived so many lives and feels intimidated by his relationships in the past.

There is a hint that Menehem may not have been the ogre that Li painted him to be. Ana is learning things about him and is beginning to admire a strength of character that she is gleaning from the archives. It is still a mystery why he abandoned her as a baby and where he is currently.

Chapter 20: Silk

Ana overhears several conversations that Sam has about her. It's nothing vicious but she fears that his soul mate might have been Ciana. Ana's feelings for Sam are beginning to surface and from Sam's conversations she feels she is competing with Ciana, a ghost from the past. That Ana and Ciana's names are so similar could be a key to the story. They could be the same person rather than Ana being a new soul who took Ciana's place. Ana has even mentioned that she had pretended to be Ciana in the past. She tells herself that she will not be Ana at the party. Perhaps she will be Ciana. She tells Sam that she will always know who he is which is a sign that he is her matched soul. But danger lurks. Sam fears that someone is out to kill Ana. The obvious suspect would be Li but it could be someone whom no one would suspect.



Chapters 21 and 22

Chapters 21 and 22 Summary

Chapter 21: Masquerade

As Ana walks to the masquerade party, the brisk wind catches her wings. The market field is crowded with hundreds of costumed party goers. Meuric, dressed as a robin, announces the re-dedication celebration of two souls, Tera and Ash. He reminds the crowd that Janan created them to value and love one another. The music begins to play and the people begin to dance. Ana's costume is rather cumbersome so she keeps on the edge of the crowd although she feels people staring at her. Armande, dressed as a ferret, asks Ana to dance. Armande explains that Tera and Ash have always been matched mates but had killed each other in the past because they'd been the same gender - hoping they'd come back as opposite sexes. But finally they figured it didn't matter.

Ana dances with a few more people including Stef and Whit, a dragonfly and lion respectively. She flits around the party for several hours. She has never felt more beautiful. She receives many compliments on her costume. She dances with a wolf, a hawk and a lizard to a fast song - they toss her about like a butterfly in the wind. Her feet are sore from being stepped on. She is exhausted and ready to rest when strong arms from behind encircle her and lead her away from the crowd. When she stretches back to look at him, the man, dressed as a shrike, kisses her neck.

Ana dances with the shrike the rest of the night. They hold each other tight. She sees a familiar upturn of one corner of his mouth. She kisses him and he kisses her back. She pulls up his mask. It is Sam but she had known all along. And Sam had known that the butterfly was Ana.

Chapter 22: Wings

On the way home from the party, Sam apologizes for kissing her in front of the other people. He had lost control. Ana isn't sorry. He kisses her out of passion. Ana is afraid Sam is changing his mind about her or that she had misinterpreted what had happened. But Sam is concerned about how the Council members will react to their public display of affection. He fears they will take her away from him. A blue light suddenly streaks from across the street. Another flash of light hits the cobblestone and sizzles below their feet. Sam has been grazed and grabs his arm. He yells at Ana to run. Someone is trying to kill them.

Chapters 21 and 22 Analysis

Chapter 21: Masquerade



Another subtle reference to modern social debate is found in this chapter. Two females, Tera and Ash, are matched souls and are celebrating finding each other again at the re-dedication celebration. Armande explains that the two women killed each other in the past hoping to come back as opposite sexes but it never worked out. So, they have decided that it doesn't matter that they are both women because they love each other. It's an obvious reference to gay relationships and love between same sex partners.

Chapter 22: Wings

Ana and Sam love each other but he holds back somewhat fearing that his public display of affection could impact their status with the Council. He doesn't want her to be taken from him. But all that is put on the back burner when someone starts attacking them with laser fire. Who is trying to kill them and why?



Chapters 23 and 24

Chapters 23 and 24 Summary

Chapter 23: Thunderstorm

Another laser strikes Ana's wing instantly burning through the silk. Sam's wound isn't deep. Their attacker is standing in the shadows between two fir trees. Ana pulls her knife from her hair, ready to defend Sam and herself. She slashes through her wings so they won't impede them. She leads Sam through the streets while the assault on them continues. They hide behind a bush but after a few moments, Ana decides to look around and see if she can spot their attacker. Her wing is hit again. This time it melts the wire frame. Suddenly, a large figure emerges from the hiding spot. It isn't Sam. The man is chasing her. The man grabs her and throws her to the ground. She feels the stinging of another strike to her elbow and thigh. Her knife spins away from her. As she crawls to reach it, the man grabs her again and kicks her in the ribs.

The assailant flees and Ana crawls back to the hiding spot where she finds Sam in a prone position, passed out. As he comes around, he tells her that someone had hit him. They make it back home. Ana is so exhausted that she leans against the outside wall while Sam opens the door. She is terrified when the wall begins to pulse like the big wall that guards the city. Once inside, they call Sine to ask her to send a medic. They dress and bandage their wounds and take painkillers. Neither one knows who the attacker is. Ana thinks there had been two assailants.

Ana is upset about being attacked, about the pulsating wall and about Sam's changing attitude toward her. He senses she is angry and insists they talk. He hadn't been inspired during his last life. Hadn't written music. In fact, he hadn't been inspired in his current incarnation until he met her. He feels he died in his last life to be reborn to find her. The two kiss and hold each other. He tells her what happens next is up to her and he will go at her pace. They both agree that it is the best day of their lives. Suddenly, there is a knocking at the door. It is probably the medic. Ana gets out her knife while Sam goes to open the door. Ana looks down from the stairs. Sam is blocking her sight and she can't see who it is. She hears a voice tell Sam that he is under arrest for conspiring to murder Ana.

Chapter 24: Obsession

Ana screams "No!" and runs downstairs. One of the people is Li, who steps inside. The others are Meuric, Corin and a woman Ana doesn't know. Meuric tells Ana that her guardianship has been transferred to Li who tells Ana that Sam had been deceiving her. Ana objects furiously. She struggles and reaches out for Sam who denies his guilt. But Li pulls her back and Meuric says it is for the best. Sam is taken away.



Meuric tells Ana she could refuse guardianship but she'd have to leave Heart. Stef and Orrin are also suspected to be part of the conspiracy and are already in custody. Meuric believes that Sam had taken the missing diaries from the library. Meuric forces Ana upstairs where they find diaries belonging to Li and to Menehem as well as books on dragons and sylph. Ana accuses Li of knowing about Menehem's work on the sylph and sending them after her. Meuric says the books are very incriminating. Li claims that Sam is the one who sent the sylph after Ana so he could then save her. Meuric suggests that something bad always follows a dragon attack but doesn't say what it is. Li grabs Ana's wrist and forces her into the back of a vehicle. Li promises Ana that she will do a better job with her education this time.

Chapters 23 and 24 Analysis

Chapter 23: Thunderstorm

After they are attacked, Sam and Ana make it home. Inexplicably, the walls of the house start pulsating which frightens Ana. Ana is understandably upset about being almost killed but she is also disturbed by Sam's changing attitude toward her. Perhaps she recalls Stef's warning not to let Sam break her heart because he never settles. On top of that, the house is pulsating which completely baffles her. The others must be accustomed to the throbbing walls since they never react to them.

The cliffhanger of the chapter is Sam's arrest for attempting to murder Ana! Li is there to reclaim Ana. Li could very well be behind the plot to get rid of Sam but why does Li want Ana back? She deeply resented her all her life. Perhaps she wants to make Ana more miserable. Is there a possibility that Sam was behind the plot? It does seem so but there could be a twist to the storyline; at least that's what the author wants the reader to think.

Chapter 24: Obsession

Li is pretending to be worried about Ana's education. But she wasn't worried about her education or welfare when she lived with her. Why now? With the arrest of Sam, Stef and Orrin, everyone who could help Ana has been taken out of the picture. As it turns out, all the missing diaries had been taken by Sam. They are found in his room after his arrest. Meuric takes it as evidence of his guilt. Why did Sam take all the diaries if he is innocent?



Chapters 25 and 26

Chapters 25 and 26 Summary

Chapter 25: Trapped

Li forces Ana to run laps around the house each morning and then do strengthening exercises. She is trained on how to work at the guard stations but given no weapon. She hides the small knife that Sam had given her under her pillow. Her studies are boring about such things as irrigation systems and plows. She is not allowed to continue her other studies and can not visit any of her friends. Li slaps her on the wrist if she asks about Sam and the others who were arrested. She isn't even allowed to visit Sine. She reminds Ana that she is a nosoul and has no real feelings and barely exists. She told Li that Sam had made her real through his music and that people will remember her.

Li has possession of the sonata, "Ana Incarnate," that Sam had composed for her. Li throws it in the fireplace. Ana pulls it out and saves as many pages as she can. Ana is ready to give up her life in Heart. She goes upstairs to get her knife. Ana packs her few personal belongings and dresses all in black. When night falls, she crawls out the window, swings herself into a tree and, when the coast is clear, scrambles down and sneaks away to the Councilhouse. She sees the yellow light from the prison windows that are barred and at ground level. She looks down into the prison and sees Sam slumped over on a cot in one of the cells talking to someone. She taps on the window and Stef runs over and pulls up the window. Sam is shocked to see Ana who tells him she is leaving. She can't live with Li one more day. She has come to free them and wants Sam to come with her. Stef warns Sam that he'll have to serve time in his next life for escaping but Sam says it is worth it to be with Ana.

Sam explains that he had taken the diaries to protect her and was trying to find evidence that Li was going to kill Ana. Just when Sam is telling Ana how to get into the building, the sound of attacking dragons is heard again. Sam tells Ana to hide until the dragons leave. In the dark, Ana spins around and throws herself into a dark enclosure. It isn't the Councilhouse. It is the temple. The walls are pulsating. She runs for the door to leave but the door is gone.

Chapter 26: Impossible

There is great pressure inside the temple. The air itself is pulsating. Ana has to get out but doesn't know how. There is nothing inside the temple. Only Ana. She sees an archway and stairs that look like they go down but they actually go up. She slowly ascends the stairs to a large room. She turns back around and sees that the stairs are gone. She sees stacks of books on the floor at one end of the room. She opens one of the books that has only ink splatters. She tries another book - more ink splatters. She hears strange whispers and sticks a couple of the books in her backpack. She calls to Janan but there is no answer. The whispers change to weeping. She goes through an



archway that looks white but turns black and shiny as she passes through it. She comes into a different chamber. The light is blinding. She hears murmurs. There is a pit in the middle of the room which she steers clear of. The room twists and turns upside down. The pit climbs the walls which groan in pain. When the room stops moving, Ana is on her knees. A voice whispers, "Here, newsoul." She asks why she was born. The voice whispers that she is a mistake of no consequence. Another voice calls her name. It is Meuric.

Chapters 25 and 26 Analysis

Chapter 25: Trapped

Once again Li is keeping Ana isolated from people who could help her. She can't even see Sine who is one of the Council members. Li has something to hide and doesn't want Ana to be with anyone who may know more about the attempts on her and Sam's lives. But Ana is a spirited girl and reaches her limit and escapes from Li's house. She finds her way to the prison and tells Sam that she intends to free him and asks him to go away with her. She misses him and longs to be with him. Sam wants to go with her even if it may mean punishment in another life. To Sam, it is worth risking punishment in a future life to be with Ana in this life. The dragons come back and Ana accidentally falls inside the temple. Supposedly, no one has ever been inside the temple before. What dangers await Ana?

Chapter 26: Impossible

The temple is frightening with its blinding lights, bottomless pits and upside down rooms. But Ana shows again how brave she is. Instead of panicking, she explores the temple looking for a way out although it seems impossible. Someone is in the temple. She thinks it might be Janan but if he is a benevolent and kind creator, he wouldn't tell her that her birth was a mistake. Did Meuric come to save her or arrest her?



Chapters 27 and 28

Chapters 27 and 28 Summary

Chapter 27: Speaker

Meuric asks what Ana is doing in the temple. He had seen her enter it and has come to help her. There are dragons and sylph outside. They had never attacked at the same time before. Meruic tells her she'll be safe at home with Li. Meuric doesn't know why the room had turned upside down. She asks him if Janan is in the temple. Meruic confirms that he was. Ana asks why Janan told her that she had been a mistake. Meuric doesn't know.

Dossam thinks that Ana was a gift. Janan never lies, Meuric tells Ana. Her answers are not in the temple. But she has been a lot of trouble for the Council. She could live forever in the temple and not be hungry or thirsty. Isn't that what she wants, he asks, to live forever? Sam would think she died in the dragon attack. Ana says she'd find her own way out but Meuric says she never will. Meuric starts to drag her off and they get into quite a fight. Eventually, she pulls her knife and stabs him in the eye. She takes a thin SED-size device from his pocket. She kicks him underneath the pit which immediately sucks him up. She has killed him.

Ana presses on the images that are engraved on the top of the device. After a few tries, a door appears which she steps through. She is outside on a ledge and has her backpack, knife and the device with her. Just as she gets her bearings, she sees that a dragon is flying in her direction.

Chapter 28: Rage

Ana becomes dizzy standing on the ledge and watching the dragon approach. Just as it nears, someone shoots it with a laser blast from below. Ana is almost swept off the ledge from the wind of the dragon's wings as it dives after its attacker but she is able to cling to the wall. Ana inches toward the roof so she can climb down as hundreds of dragons attack the city. She slips on some icy water and falls to her bottom, her legs dangling off the edge. The canons that are firing at the dragons are loud and the shrieking of the dragons ear-shattering. A dragon attacks the temple tower above her. As the dragon swings its tail, Ana grabs onto it. It swings back the other way allowing Ana to jump onto the roof. The dragon is killed by laser fire and Ana uses its body to slide down to the street. Someone passing by throws her a laser pistol.

Ana runs to the prison windows but Sam is gone. Suddenly, sylph are surrounding the dead dragon. Ana fears that Li has killed Sam. She runs to Li's house. Just as she arrives, Li comes out and stands on the front porch. Ana accuses her of killing Sam but Li says she knows nothing about it. Ana aims the laser pistol at her but suddenly Li has



a shocked look on her face and falls dead. The man who killed her steps out of the house. He tells Ana that they need to talk. His name is Menehem.

Chapters 27 and 28 Analysis

Chapter 27: Speaker

Meuric is not on Ana's side. He wants to banish her to an eternal existence inside the temple. Ana has no choice but to defeat him and force him into the pit in order to save her own life, escape from the temple and reunite with Sam. Ana goes from one perilous situation inside the temple to another one outside on a ledge where she is vulnerable to attacking dragons. But she doesn't let anything stop her from getting to Sam.

Chapter 28: Rage

Ana demonstrates how clever she is by using the dragon's tail to swing to safety and his body to slide down to the ground. When Sam is missing, Ana naturally figures that Li is probably behind it. She confronts her mother and is willing to kill her if she doesn't tell her what happened to Sam. Li has been so cruel to Ana that Ana apparently has no hesitation in shooting her with her laser pistol to find out where Sam is. Ana finally meets her father after he kills Li. Although he may not have wanted Ana as a daughter, he is a better person than Li and wants no harm to come to Ana.



Chapters 29 and 30

Chapters 29 and 30 Summary

Chapter 29: Darkness

Menehem tells Ana that Li did not kill Sam. He had killed Li because he thought that was what Ana was going to do. He has saved her the trouble. Ana keeps her pistol aimed at Menehem as she follows him inside the house. Menehem disarms Ana and tells her that he had not tried to kill her and Sam and is not working with Meuric. He also had not sent sylph after her.

Menehem tells Ana that he had stopped a reincarnation once - the night Ciana died. Li and anyone else who dies on this day will not come back. Menehem had poisoned Janan who had been responsible for reincarnations. He will not be able to fulfill his duties at least on this day and anyone dying today will not come back and will be replaced by newsouls. She runs out to save Sam from the dragons. Menehem comes with her. He tells her he has been following her since she has been in Heart. He wants to save her because she hasn't had a full life. He isn't sure if Ana would be reincarnated.

Dragons are wrapping themselves around the tower. Cracks are beginning to appear on its exterior. Menehem says that he proved his theories were correct. Janan was not all powerful. Although he was real, he could be stopped. For the past eighteen years, Menehem had been working on stopping reincarnation. The streets are crowded. Ana calls out to Sam and tells everyone to be careful. If they die today, they will not come back. Ana shoots down a dragon with her laser pistol. She sees Stef and runs to her. Sam is on the ground but is still alive. Ana leads Stef and Sam who are both injured to a guard station where they would receive medical assistance. While Sam and Stef are being tended to, Ana looks out the window and sees Menehem. Half his face is burned by sylph who are mad at him for bringing them there. She brings Menehem inside so his burns can be treated. As he lies on a cot, Ana asks Menehem to tell her what he knows but he is badly burned and dies before he can answer. His last words are, "See you in another life, butterfly"(pg. 364). Sam and Stef survive their injuries. Sine comes by to tell Ana that Sam and his friends have been exonerated and are no longer under arrest. Seventy-two people die that night - seventy-two people who will never come back.

Chapter 30: After

Stef stays at Sam's house while they both recover. The tower begins to glow anew but the interiors and outbuildings are wrecked. There is clean up work to do at Sam's house which Ana takes on while the others recover. She tries to keep her mind off Templedark which is what they call the night the seventy-two people died. They would be gone forever. Stef leaves Sam's house after a week. Ana tells Sam everything that happened to her after the dragons attacked. Sam says they could look at the books that Ana took from the temple some time in the future. Sam wants to re-write Ana's sonata that Li had



partially destroyed. He wants her to help him. He tells her that she could do anything. She knows that in a thousand years from then even if she was never reborn that people will remember her as Ana Incarnate.

Chapters 29 and 30 Analysis

Chapter 29: Darkness

Menehem answers a lot of questions for Ana but not all of them. Some things she will just have to learn or figure out herself. He was behind Ciana not being reincarnated. He had accidentally caused her lives to end through his experiments. He explains that newsouls are waiting in the wings when people are not reincarnated. Menehem shows that he does have feelings for his daughter because he wants to save her since she hasn't lived a full life yet. The question of whether Ana will be reincarnated is something that he does not know.

Chapter 30: After

The content of the temple books is not revealed and remains a secret. Perhaps Sam and Ana will figure out what the books contain someday. In the end, it doesn't matter if Ana is reincarnated again or not. She knows that she will be remembered for the life she has lived - for her music and for the love she has for Sam. Janan had been wrong. Her life is worthwhile.



Characters

Ana

Ana is the protagonist of *Incarnate*. She is eighteen years old and has lived in an isolated cabin with her mother deep in a forest. Her mother, Li, has been cruel and abusive to Ana during her entire life. Ana's father abandoned her when she was a baby. When she turns eighteen, she leaves her mother's cabin for the city of Heart where she hopes to visit the Great Library and learn more about herself, her origin, her father and her purpose. In the world where Ana lives, she is the only "new soul" to be born in all the five-thousand years of the land's existence. Everyone else has been reincarnated and has lived multiple lives. Although she has been isolated and not allowed to have friends, everyone in the land knows about Ana.

On her way to Heart, Ana encounters deadly sylph who kill their victims by burning them to death. She leaps from a cliff in order to escape them and winds up in the dark and swirling waters of a river. She nearly drowns but is saved by Sam, a young man who is her same age. Like everyone else, he knows about Ana but unlike her mother he encourages her to think of herself as a "new soul" not a "no soul" as her mother had defined her.

Ana is brave and resourceful and saves Sam from certain death from sylph. They learn they have a lot in common - they both love music and books. As it turns out, Sam is actually Dossam a musician and composer whom Ana has always adored. Sam talks the City Council into allowing Ana to enter although "new souls" are not allowed to be citizens. Ana must take lessons and learn while she is in Heart and must agree to be under Sam's guardianship. Ana learns to play music, dance and bake. Eventually, she and Sam confess their love for each other and recognize that they were made for each other despite her status as a "new soul." Ana is challenged by dragons, sylph and being trapped in a temple with no exits but she survives it all. She and Sam are together as the story ends. She knows that even if she doesn't live again, that her life has value and meaning and that she will be forever known as "Incarnate Ana."

Sam

Sam is approximately five-thousand years old although he doesn't look a day over eighteen. Sam is an old soul who has been reincarnated many times and has led multiple lives. Like the other old souls, Sam keeps a diary in each life because when a person is reincarnated, he can recall some of his other lives but not all. By keeping the daily log, the old souls hope to avoid the same mistakes they committed in past lives.

Sam is camping in the woods outside the city of Heart where he lives. He also has a cabin in the woods. He sees a girl about his own age literally jump off a cliff and fall into the dark swirling waters of the river below. He jumps in after her and brings her to the



surface. He administers mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to the girl who seems to be on the verge of dying. The girl comes to and, he later admits, he wanted to kiss her right then. The girl is Ana and as soon as she says her name, he knows who she is. She is the only "new soul" to have been born in the last five-thousand years; a new soul is a person who is incarnate and has not lived former lives. Sam knew that he had met his soul mate, his matching soul and he didn't care if she had only one life to live; he knew that they were meant to be together even if it would only be for one lifetime.

Sam helps the high-spirited girl recover. He encourages her to think more of herself. She's not a "nosoul" like her mother taught her. She's a "new soul" who has the right to have emotions, opinions and opportunities as anyone else does. Sam accompanies Ana to Heart where he convinces the City Council to allow Ana to become his charge because no new souls are allowed to be citizens of the city.

Ana had always admired the music of the renowned Dossam and is shocked when Sam reveals that he is Sam, short of Dossam. He teaches her to play piano and he writes a sonata for her. Ana is a brave and resourceful young woman and gets Sam out of more than a few scrapes. In the end, despite many obstacles and people out to ruin them, Sam and Ana wind up together. He had been waiting all his lives for her - at least for five-thousand years.

Li

Li is Ana's mother. Ana lives with her mother in the Purple Cottage deep in the woods for her first eighteen years. Li is emotionally and mentally abusive to her daughter.

Menehem

Menehem was Ana's father. He abandoned his daughter when he realized she was a "new soul." He was a chemist who accidentally discovered how to stop a reincarnation.

Stef

Stef is a friend of Sam's. They had been together in many lives. Stef developed the SED which is a communication system named after her - Stef's Everything Device.

Meuric

Meuric is a young man who is head of the Heart City Council. When he tries to trap Ana in the temple for eternity, she pushes him to his death into the bottomless pit.



Sine

Sine is a member of Heart's City Council. She had been Sam's mother in a previous life. She is the only Council member who was sympathetic to Ana.

Janan

Janan is responsible for reincarnation. He is a Christ-like figure who is never seen and who some worship as their savior.

Sylph

Sylph are deadly beings that are comprised of smoke and shadows. They are eight to ten feet in height and travel around in groups. They burn their victims to death.

The Dragons

The dragons attack Heart several times. They have serpentine-like bodies and thick scales. They target the temple's tower and try to destroy it.



Objects/Places

Purple Cottage

Ana lives in the Purple Cottage deep in the woods with her mother for the first eighteen years of her life. Purple Cottage has a library where Ana reads and listens to music.

Sam's Cabin

After Sam rescues Ana from drowning in the river, he takes her to his cabin in the woods where she recovers in advance of their journey to the city of Heart.

Great White Wall

When Sam and Ana arrive at Heart, Ana is shocked by the tall white wall that expands on either side as far as the eye can see. The wall was erected to protect the people of Heart.

Councilhouse

Sam and Ana have to appear before the Council when they arrive in Heart. Since no "new souls" can be citizens, the Council requires Sam to be Ana's guardian while she is in the city.

Heart

Heart is the large city where most of the people in the land live. There are over one million residents in Heart and they are all old souls - souls who had been reincarnated and had lived multiple lives.

Sam's House

While in Heart, Ana stays at Sam's House. She has a bedroom on the upper floor. She takes piano lessons from Sam in the parlor.

Grand Library

Ana studies at the Grand Library in Heart. She wants to learn about her father and the purpose of her life as a "new soul." The diaries of the people of Heart that chronicle their multiple lives are kept in the library.



Open Market

The Open Market in Heart is the main shopping area of the city. There are vendors of every sort and one can find everything they need at the market.

Masquerade Party

A masquerade party is held for a re-dedication ceremony for two matching souls who have found each other again in their current lives. Everyone is required to wear a costume.

Temple

The temple is a mysterious building that no one has ever been inside. However, Ana accidentally winds up inside the temple. It is an eerie place with disappearing doors and a deadly pit in the middle of one of the chambers.



Themes

Bias

The protagonist, Ana, is raised by a cruel and abusive mother who teaches her that she is different - and not in a good way. She is told that she is a "nosoul" — a person without value or substance who has never lived before in a world where everyone else has been reincarnated and lived multiple lives. Her mother tells her that her father abandoned her because he was humiliated by having a "nosoul" daughter. Ana has fantasies about being someone else and dreams of being like everyone else. So from a young child on, Ana experiences the pain of prejudice at the hands of her own mother. Could she expect less from strangers?

When Ana meets Sam, he is immediately drawn to her and feels no animosity for her for being a "new soul." In fact, he encourages her to be herself and to believe in herself. But not everyone is as unbiased and gallant as Sam as Ana soon learns when they arrive in the big city of Heart. A law has been established by the City Council that no "new souls" would be allowed to become citizens of Heart and that a new soul could only enter the city if they remained under the guardianship of a citizen. The head of the council wonders aloud about what they would do if more new souls wanted to move in. Would they have to create a community for them? He is intimating that they would segregate the new souls and discriminate against them if more began to move in and disrupt their sanguine existence.

Everyone in the city knows who Ana is and that she is a new soul. Although some of Sam's friends open up to her and welcome her, many people are fearful of her, some are rude and some just stare - all this because Ana is different. She has never harmed anyone yet some people feel threatened because she is not like them.

Abandonment

Abandonment comes in many forms. There are the obvious ways that one person can abandon another. A friend drops a friend off at the mall and forgets to pick him up at an agreed to time. The mall shopper is definitely abandoned but other than a few angry words and an annoying inconvenience, he probably won't be scarred for life. When a mother or father physically abandons a child, the stakes escalate quite appropriately. It is a far different scenario if a parent abandons a child, especially a very young child, at a mall or some place where he is at risk and vulnerable to predators or those who would do him harm.

There are other serious forms of abandonment that are more oblique. A parent who cares for a child, who keeps him clothed, fed and sheltered and sees that he gets an education, on the surface seems like a good parent and earns green check marks in many of the most important areas of child rearing. But that same child who appears to



be well cared for may be just as abandoned as that little lost child at the mall. The danger is not as immediate but in the long-run can be nearly as damaging and the devastation can last a lifetime.

It is the case in *Incarnate* that the young protagonist is emotionally abandoned by her mother, Li. Her mother doesn't go traipsing off and leave her daughter alone in the woods. Ana's mother is present, always present, and always prepared to tell her daughter, in so many words, that she is worthless, that she is less than the others. . . that she doesn't measure up and, in fact, is bereft of emotions and feelings. While Li doesn't physically abandon Ana, she abandons her just the same. Emotional and mental abuse is a form of abandonment in that the parent reneges on his responsibilities as an adult. A good parent wants the best for her child and feels that her child could accomplish anything she puts her mind to. A bad parent damages a child's self-esteem and self-image and, in essence, isn't a parent at all; this type of parent abandons her child just as much as if she left her alone with strangers. Li is a negative force in her daughter's life and is literally an enemy and competitor which does not describe a good parent.

Self-Worth

The novel, *Incarnate*, addresses the important subject of self-worth and self-esteem. When a child is born, he not only needs to be nourished by food and protected from harm, he needs to hear that he is important, has value and can realize his dreams. However, when a parent - like Ana's mother, Li, in this story - tells a child the opposite, that he has no value or abilities and therefore has no hope or future, the child accepts that assessment because that is all he knows. Li has been emotionally and mentally abusive to Ana her entire life. Despite her mother's emotional abuse, there is a spirit within Ana that compels her to seek her own answers. Although she buys into the fact that she is a "nosoul," a person without purpose or substance, something within her tells her there might be more.

When Ana meets Sam, he tells her not to refer to herself as a "nosoul." Just because she hasn't been reincarnated multiple times doesn't mean that she does not possess a soul - she is just a "new soul." After a lifetime of hearing that you have little value, it is not easy to dismiss that image and it is a struggle to fight against those words that have always defined you as worthless.

Ana takes the right steps as any young emotionally abused person needs to do to find herself and leave the abusive and harsh words behind. She finds that people like her for who she is and that she has skills and intelligence and the ability to learn and grow. She learns to dance and play the piano and she also discovers - in ways she couldn't have imagined - that she is brave and resourceful. Ana finds herself and realizes that she has great value. In the end, she knows that whether or not she is reincarnated or not she has the same rights and opportunities as anyone else and that she has the talent and ability to contribute greatly during her lifetime.

Style

Point of View

Incarnate by Jodie Meadows is told in the first person by the protagonist, Ana. This perspective allows the reader to be privy to the feelings, thoughts and intentions of Ana. It is a proven way for the reader to have insight into the character of the protagonist.

It is apparent that the author has some strong opinions on social and political issues of the day. When two matched souls find each other in their new incarnation, they are both women. They renew their love for each other in a re-dedication ceremony. One of the characters explains that the two had killed each other in past lives in an effort to come back as opposite genders. It never worked out and the two women have decided that it doesn't matter what gender they are because they are soul mates and they love each other. There are also strong references to the pain and suffering that prejudice causes and to environmental concerns caused by man's pollution.

There is a religious element to the story in that the city which is named Heart has a giant white wall that is virtually infinite and pulsates as though it has a heart. Some believe in Janan who sacrificed himself for them while others are disappointed that he seems to have abandoned them.

Setting

Incarnate by Jodi Meadows takes place in the future and in a land that is populated by reincarnated individuals who have lived many lives before. As a new soul, Ana, the protagonist, is the exception. She is born having never lived before. She lives an isolated existence deep in the forest quite a distance from the city of Heart where most people live. She lives with her cruel and abusive mother in the Purple Cottage. The cottage has a library with books and music which Ana depends on to keep her sanity.

On her eighteenth birthday, Ana strikes out on her own. She is leaving home and heading for the City of Heart. On the way, she is attacked by deadly sylph who force her to the edge of a cliff. She jumps and lands in the dark swirling water and is rescued by Sam. They stay in his tent one night and travel to his cabin where they stay two weeks while she recuperates. The cabin walls are lined with books which occupy Ana's time.

They travel to the City of Heart where they first encounter a tall white wall that extends to either side as far as the eye can see. When she touches the wall, it pulsates as though it has a heartbeat. Inside the city, the one million residents walk most of the time so that they can limit pollution from motorized vehicles. The houses are all the same color, white, and all have the same simple design. The houses had been made for the people and awaited their arrival when the city was first established. There is a large masquerade party that takes place outdoors in the open market area of the city.



There is a large temple that has no doors, has nothing inside and where no one has ever stepped foot. However, when trying to escape from attacking dragons, Ana falls into a door and lands inside the temple. The door she enters disappears and she is trapped inside. The temple is eerie and is nearly empty except for some books that have writing that she doesn't recognize. There is a dangerous pit in the middle of one room which she avoids. The room turns upside down with the pit landing on the ceiling. Ana discovers a device that allows her to escape from the temple.

There appears to be a connection between the pulsating walls, the name of the city (Heart), the temple and the creator who some think is an individual named Janan.

Language and Meaning

There are unique terms that are used in the book *Incarnate*. Ana is an individual who is born as a "new soul" - she has never lived before which is a unique status in the land. Her mother, who criticizes and taunts her, tells her that she is actually a "nosoul" a person who has no purpose or value. There are references to certain struggles that the people of the land have endured in the past. There was the Year of the Drought, the Year of Hunger, Year of the Souls and Soul Night. Janan, the one responsible for reincarnation, is temporarily sidelined by poison one night. Those who die on that night, which comes to be known as *Templedark*, will not be reincarnated.

There are dangers in the land. One of the most terrifying are the sylph. These beings are comprised of smoke and shadows and are eight and ten feet tall. They roam in ghostly groups and attack people, causing fiery deaths for their victims. Ana is able to defeat sylph who attack Sam on one occasion by using a large brass egg-shaped device that is a weapon that captures sylph.

The people keep detailed diaries of their lives which are stored in a Grand Library where they can study them when they return so they don't repeat the same errors of the past. It is believed that each soul has a matched soul, or soul mate. When a soul encounters his matched soul, he recognizes him immediately no matter what new form he may have taken in his current life.

The figure of Janan, who is responsible for reincarnation, is a metaphor for Jesus Christ. The people believe in him and feel he sacrificed himself for them. The temple and pulsating walls represent their creator or God. Those who no longer believe in Janan base their loss of faith on the fact that he has never appeared to them and has allowed them to suffer which is also a direct parallel to Jesus Christ. The bias that the old souls have for new souls is a metaphor of the bias that some have for those who are perceived to be different.

Structure

Incarnate by Jodi Meadows is told in a straightforward and chronological manner. It covers a relatively brief time span of probably less than six months. Episodes occurring



prior to the story are referenced but not told in flashbacks. The book contains thirty medium-sized chapters.

The author makes frequent use of the literary device known as the cliffhanger. For example, one chapter ends with Sam and Ana being attacked by unknown assailants. Another chapter has Sam arrested for conspiracy to commit Ana's murder. Ana is literally left on a ledge, struggling to hang on as a dragon flies directly at her in another chapter.

The first chapter introduces the protagonist, Ana, in her current life in which she is isolated and mistreated by her cruel mother. The next few chapters describe how Ana escapes from that life and travels through the dangerous forest to the city of Heart where she hopes to find answers to some mysteries in her life. She wants to learn her purpose and to discover why her father abandoned her when she was born. During her journey she is saved from deadly sylph by Sam who eventually becomes her love interest.

The majority of the story takes place in the city of Heart where her relationship with Sam develops and deepens and where she finds some of the answers to her questions. However, the story ends with some questions still unanswered which could indicate that a sequel is in the works.



Quotes

"Sylph floated by the woods, seven or eight of them, creatures twice my height made of shadows and smoke. They glided forward, melting snow as they trapped me between them and a cliff over Rangedge Lake." (Chapter 1, page 15)

"I'm not going to waste time being angry about things I can't control. If I only have one life, I should make the most of it." (Chapter 3, page 38)

"Why wouldn't he just leave? I was going to burn up, anyway, with fire creeping up my arms to consume me. My eyes ached with fresh tears. I hated crying." (Chapter 4, page 47)

"In my experience, friendship happens naturally. By talking, doing things together, learning." (Chapter 9, page 115)

"I'd seen him old and young, skinny and fat, male and female, ugly and beautiful. None of those looked like my Sam. I just knew they were him." (Chapter 14, page 171)

"I needed to focus on the Council threatening to take me from him. No matter what didn't matter, I couldn't let them put me back with Li. I couldn't risk being exiled. Which meant I needed to take everything seriously, do better than they expected." (Chapter 15, page 173)

"I saw a black shape that separated into three as they drew closer. They had long, serpentine bodies with wings that stretched wide. Sunlight glittered off scales. They were sinuous and elegant, deadlier than sylph." (Chapter 16, page 188)

"I've died so many times. It always hurts. . . .It feels like being ripped out of yourself. Like being caught in giant talons or fire or jaws. It's suffocating. And then there's nothing for what seems like eons, but when you come back just as painfully, it's only been years. Any time you're killed - sylph, dragon, giant, anything violent -the pain lasts even after your soul is out." (Chapter 18, page 218)

"Music is the only thing that ever mattered to me. . . . Every time I hurt, I had one place to turn. I need to be good at it." (Chapter 19, page 226)

"A wolf. A hawk. A lizard. Soon they surrounded me. The music became a frenzied blur in my ears, and the world a dark and bright smear on my eyes. They tossed me about like a butterfly in a gale." (Chapter 21, page 259)

"He's five-thousand years old, Stef. Let him make his own decisions." (Chapter 25, page 316)

"A thousand years from now, even if I was never reborn, people would remember me: Ana Incarnate." (Chapter 30, page 374)

Topics for Discussion

Why does Ana want to leave her mother's house as soon as she is eighteen? What is their relationship like?

Why are the sylph? What kind of injuries could they cause and how does Ana defeat one of them?

Why does Ana call herself a "nosoul?" Why does Sam want her to call herself a "new soul?" How does he encourage her to feel better about herself?

What does the temple in Heart represent? Who is Janan and how can he be compared to Jesus Christ?

Why does Sam take Li and Menehem's diaries from the libraries? What research is he doing at the library and why?

Why does Li want Ana back after Sam is arrested? Who is responsible for the attack on Sam and Ana?

Will Ana be reincarnated? Why does she feel that she will be remembered whether she is reincarnated or not?

What contemporary issues are addressed in the story?