

Linger Study Guide

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Contents

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Linger Study Guide..... | 1 |
| Contents..... | 2 |
| Plot Summary..... | 3 |
| Chapters 1 through 10..... | 4 |
| Chapters 11 through 18..... | 8 |
| Chapters 19 through 29..... | 11 |
| Chapters 30 through 37..... | 14 |
| Chapters 38 through..... | 17 |
| Characters..... | 21 |
| Objects/Places..... | 24 |
| Themes..... | 26 |
| Style..... | 28 |
| Quotes..... | 30 |
| Topics for Discussion..... | 32 |



Plot Summary

Sam Roth is an eighteen-year-old werewolf. As the story opens, Sam is trying to come to terms with the fact that he's no longer a werewolf. He continually tries to remind himself that he must "believe in the cure." He'd been infected with bacterial meningitis which had apparently cured him of the "werewolfism." Sam's girlfriend is Grace Brisbane. Grace was bitten by the werewolves as a child but never turned. Sam has a brutal history and was raised by the wolf that infected him, Beck. Beck no longer takes a human form at all. Grace and Sam are happy together and still learning to trust in their love.

Sam has taken over for Beck as leader of the pack when the wolves are in their human form. Beck, believing that Sam would not be in his human form, had created new wolves, including Victor and Cole. Cole is a well-known singer who had been caught up in drugs and sex. He had made it to stardom but realized that he was miserably unhappy. When Beck explained to him about becoming a werewolf, Cole had jumped at the opportunity. However, he was apparently at least somewhat apprehensive and he convinced his best friend and band member, Victor, to join him. Victor is unhappy as a wolf from the beginning. Cole wants to be a wolf in order to forget himself and to escape his unhappiness. But when Victor is shot, Cole realizes that he has been completely self-centered. He is incredibly guilty over the loss and begins to bond with Sam, Grace and Isabel, a teenage girl whose brother had died trying to be cured of werewolfism.

Meanwhile, Grace's parents discover that Grace and Sam are sleeping together and forbid Grace from seeing Sam. Grace rebels, gathers a few clothes and goes to Sam's house. They both know that her time is limited and that it has something to do with the wolves, but don't know how to fix it. Cole, the son of a scientist, has come to believe that his own inability to remain in wolf form had to do with the drugs he'd taken. Isabel demands that he work on Grace's problem and he comes to the conclusion that she's dying because she never changed into a wolf, just as the wolves who stop changing to humans have only a few years to live. Cole re-infects Grace and she changes immediately. Sam is torn, wanting to be re-infected as well so that he can be with Grace but knowing that he now has the responsibility of finding a permanent cure for them all.



Chapters 1 through 10

Chapters 1 through 10 Summary

The prologue opens from Grace Brisbane's perspective with her explaining that it was Sam who had been a wolf the previous year and Grace's loss when he turned. This year, it's Grace who is "not firmly in my own skin."

Chapter one begins with Sam. He says that Mercy Falls, Minnesota is different to him now because he no longer turns to a wolf for the winter. Sam says that he's still trying to come to terms with the fact that he won't change into a wolf again and he's trying to build himself a new life as a boy. Sam is at his job in the bookstore, the Crooked Shelf, when Isabel Culpepper arrives. She says she's been seeing wolves in the woods near her house and that she is worried because her father doesn't like them. Sam asks that Isabel alert him if she sees any of the wolves as humans. Isabel then asks if Sam is staying in Beck's house and he says he is, but Isabel calls him a liar, indicating that she knows he's staying with Grace.

Isabel says she's looking for medical books and Sam tells her where they are just as the door opens again, admitting Officer Koenig. He is searching for Grace's friend, Olivia, who disappeared. The officer asks when Sam had last seen Olivia. Sam saw her a few weeks earlier in her wolf form but doesn't think he should tell Koenig that. Koenig says everyone knows Olivia was interested in the wolves and he asks if Sam believes Olivia might have tried to live in the woods. Sam says he doesn't think so and Koenig doesn't press. Isabel notes as she pays for her books that Sam wouldn't make a good criminal. In chapter two, Cole changes from his human form to his wolf form.

In chapter three, Isabel notes that the same day she'd seen Koenig in the bookstore she hears Grace complain of a headache, which was noteworthy because Grace never complains and is never sick. Grace and Isabel are talking during class when the teacher interrupts. Grace asks to go to the nurse for her headache.

In chapter four, Grace is at her house at the kitchen table making New Year's resolutions, something she'd done for years, though she'd missed the previous year. Grace's dad calls. Lewis Brisbane asks if Grace is alone and she suddenly realizes her parents are checking to see if Sam is there. Grace notes that her parents believe Sam is a teenage crush and that she doesn't want them to know that it's more than that. She says her parents don't realize Sam spends most nights at their house, sleeping with Grace.

Sam reveals that he'd seen Isabel that day, that he is worried because she's seen the wolves near her house, and that the police officer seems to think Grace and Sam are helping Olivia hide. Sam, realizing Grace is writing resolutions, gets an index card and writes some of his own. Grace and Sam talk about whether Grace should include "pick a college" among her resolutions. Sam says Beck, his adoptive father, had wanted him



to go to law school. Grace says they can go to college together but Sam hesitates short of a promise. He says he doesn't want Grace to put off her dreams because he can't decide. Later, when he's alone, Sam realizes that he has not yet become sufficiently secure in the fact that he won't turn into a wolf to make long-term plans. He adds to his resolution list, "Believe in my cure."

In chapter five, Cole is fully human though still bleary. Cole recalls his life as Cole St. Clair, leader of a famous band named NARKOTIKA. He remembers a day when his manager had come to him, telling him about a new review and hearing the fans scream his name. He recalls the drugs and the realization that this life wasn't what he wanted after all.

In chapter six, Isabel and Grace are walking through the woods together. Grace finds a bowl and Isabel admits that she's been putting meat out for the wolves. Just as they are about to head for town for coffee, they discover the body of a wolf. There is no obvious sign of injury, but the wolf has blood coming from its nose and a distinctive odor of almonds about it. Isabel takes a photo with her phone so they can show it to Sam, then they leave the woods.

In chapter seven, Sam is immediately struck by the scent. Grace believes it's clinging to her gloves so she goes to put them in the car. They discuss the wolf and Sam says that Beck had always said a person who changes to a wolf gets ten or fifteen years as a wolf before death occurs naturally. That length of time had been considered a wolf's natural life span and that's why Sam believes it. Grace points out that the wolf had blood coming from its nose. Just then Olivia's older brother, John comes in. He says he received an email from Olivia that she'll be returning soon. They discuss the email briefly before John leaves. After he's gone, Isabel points out that John's sister is a werewolf and that "maybe" they should share that news with him. Sam and Grace refuse. Isabel points out that she knows but Sam and Grace say Isabel had, through her interaction with her brother, figured out the overall picture before they filled her in.

In chapter eight, Sam is fully aware that he's a human on a frigid day that would normally have caused him to change. He says he's in awe of the knowledge but a little hurt by the loss of that side of his nature. Sam plays in the snow. He returns home to find a human in the house. He realizes it's one of the new recruits Beck brought home the previous year. The wolf, Cole, realizes he's going to change back to a wolf and Sam opens the door for him. However, Cole, in his wolf form, doesn't make a dash for the door as most wolves would have. Instead he stalks through and stops to look at Sam. Moments later Sam recognizes Beck at the edge of the woods, though he is in wolf form.

In chapter nine, Isabel arrives home to find that both parents are there, an unusual situation. Her father accuses her of "hanging out" with Grace and Isabel confirms it. Her father says he believes Grace has been feeding the wolves and says it might be time to "thin" the pack. Isabel makes a derogatory statement to the fact that killing wolves won't "bring Jack back." Isabel realizes she "probably" should stop feeding the wolves considering her father's attitude.



In chapter ten, Rachel and Grace are cooking chicken parmesan when Sam arrives. Sam pitches in to help. Grace's mom, Amy Brisbane, arrives home as the meal is being finished. She asks if Sam is "here again," a fact that upsets Grace. Amy takes her meal upstairs. Sam tells Rachel good-bye and leaves to "move his car." After he's out of the house, Grace admits that he's sleeping with her every night, hiding his car nearby. Grace is a little worried about making the confession but is relieved to have told Rachel. Sam slips back later but is forced to wait outside for some time until the coast is clear for him to come inside. Later in bed, Sam notes that Grace is overly hot and Grace asks him to tell her about Cole.

Chapters 1 through 10 Analysis

The email John describes from Olivia is a cause for immediate tension among Sam, Isabel and Grace. All three know that Olivia didn't send the email because she's still in her wolf form. Isabel and Sam immediately jump to the conclusion that Grace sent it, a fact she confirms after John leaves. There's a brief discussion of what John should do with the email and Isabel points out that the IP address could be traced. She seems to be theorizing that the message might have been sent from a local computer. Grace interrupts, saying that if the message was sent from a cybercafé in a large town, the IP address would be almost worthless. After John leaves, Grace says she sent the message while she was in Duluth in an effort to smooth the way for Olivia once she turns back to her human form. What's interesting is John's reaction. He says that Olivia is almost eighteen and, in his mind, has a right to live her life. He says he misses her but wouldn't want to see her "dragged back" to Mercy Falls against her will. Grace and the others are a bit surprised at his sensitivity.

Sam encounters Cole in the house much earlier than he'd expected to find wolves in their human forms. When Cole says that he's going to turn back, Sam agrees, saying it's much too early for Cole to be in human form. The wolves turn with temperature and remain in wolf form for the entire winter. Cole's change so early is a surprise for Sam. Sam watches the change and is amazed that Cole seems to embrace the pain that brings him back to wolf form. Sam is equally amazed when Cole stalks out of the house, very confident in his actions, rather than rushing away in fear as any wolf would have. Cole and two other wolves arrived the previous year with Beck, Sam's adoptive father. Beck, recognizing that he was changing to wolf for the final time, had sought out some new recruits, including Cole. Sam doesn't agree with Beck's recruitment. Beck, however, felt it was necessary. He'd wanted the new wolves to take over caring for the house and tending things after the older wolves stopped turning. It will be revealed that Beck had embraced the idea of being a wolf as a way to escape the pain of his current life and lifestyle. But Sam, encountering Cole for the first time in the house, knows that Cole will be a problem.

Though Isabel doesn't go into detail when she says that her father's killing wolves "won't bring Jack back," the reader who has already read the first book will know that Isabel is referring to her brother. Jack was bitten by wolves and believed dead from the attack. However, his body went missing and he turned up later as a werewolf. He believed



Grace was the key to a cure because she had never turned. He was infected with bacterial meningitis, as was Sam. However, Sam was in wolf form within seconds of being infected and Jack remained human. Sam was apparently cured while Jack died.

There's an interesting scene between Rachel, Sam, and Grace as they are preparing chicken parmesan at Grace's house. Rachel is dancing when Sam arrives. She has the doorway blocked and tells Grace that "The Boy" has arrived. This is Rachel's nickname for Sam, originating when they'd first met. The banter between the two is friendly and amusing. Later, when Grace admits to Rachel that she and Sam are sleeping together, Rachel says that Grace has "corrupted The Boy."



Chapters 11 through 18

Chapters 11 through 18 Summary

In chapter eleven, Grace goes to the school nurse again. She has a fever and headache. The nurse gives her aspirin, which makes Grace feel better quickly. In chapter twelve, Cole turns to a human a great distance from Beck's house in the bitter cold. He sees a mansion nearby and finds a door unlocked. He notes that the interior looks like a scene from "Better Homes and Gardens" magazine. He goes upstairs, hoping to find clothes. Instead, he encounters Isabel. She knows immediately what he is, but not who. They are still staring at each other when Mrs. Culpepper arrives, screaming. Isabel steps in, tells her mother to stop staring and they begin screaming at each other, with Isabel saying that a doctor had warned them she might start "acting out." Isabel leads her mother to believe she'd had sex with the boy and then tells him to wait for her in the bedroom. In the bedroom, Isabel says he must be "one of Sam's," and asks why he isn't a wolf. Cole tells her only his first name. She gets him some of Jack's clothes, which are still in Jack's room though they are boxed. Cole gets dressed and Isabel says she'll take him home but when the step through the back door into the sleet, Isabel turns away for a moment and when she looks again, Cole is gone and the clothes are lying in a heap on the ground. Isabel puts the clothing in an empty planter turned upside down and goes back inside.

In chapter thirteen, Sam recalls his childhood. He says he knows it's unreasonable but he misses his mother. It's his birthday and he recalls her making cupcakes, but admits that it might be that he wishes he had the memory. Grace arrives, apologizes because she doesn't have much money and presents Sam with his birthday present - a surprise because he didn't think she knew it was his birthday. It's a session at a recording studio for him to cut a demo record. Sam notes that Grace seems hot and asks if she's alright. He also notes the smell of almonds that he'd first detected after she'd touched the dead wolf in the woods.

In chapter fourteen, Sam wakes in Grace's bed in the middle of the night and, though he can't define it, he knows something isn't right. Grace sees half-wake images, including Jack and Olivia. She feels them watching her as "the one who didn't shift." Then she realizes that she's about to shift. Sam wakes when Grace screams. He immediately catches the overwhelming odor of wolf coming from Grace just as her father rushes into the room, turning on the light.

In chapter fifteen, Grace doesn't hear her father, Lewis, enter but is aware that he's there. He is obviously furious that Sam is in the room. Sam pleads with Lewis to help Grace. Lewis tells Amy to take Grace. Lewis says that if Sam ever hopes for permission to see Grace again, he'll leave immediately. In chapter sixteen, Lewis takes Sam to his car and makes it obvious that Sam is to blame for Grace's behavior. Sam is torn between wanting to be with Grace and wanting to do what her parents demand. He goes home to Beck's house.



At four in the morning, Isabel arrives with Cole. Sam has the impression that he knows Cole, though it's more like Cole reminds him of someone famous. Cole and Sam are wary of each other. It's obvious Isabel has told Cole that Sam is now in charge. Cole goes to the bathroom to warm up in a hot bath and Sam reveals to Isabel that he'd been caught in bed with Grace. Isabel, ignoring that Cole is naked in the tub, goes into the bathroom. He tells her he's from New York and almost says he was "on tour" when Beck recruited him in Canada, but catches himself. Cole asks for Isabel's connection to the pack and she says she's friends with Grace, Sam's girlfriend. Cole is relieved to discover that Sam is "in charge," meaning he won't have to take any of the responsibilities Beck had described. Cole and Isabel kiss later, a repeat of what had happened in Isabel's room. She tells him she isn't sleeping with him and goes home.

In chapter seventeen, Sam and Cole talk briefly and Sam seems to be trying to figure out why Cole would have chosen to be a wolf. Isabel calls Grace and Grace's mother answers the phone. Grace demands the phone and talks to Isabel. She says her illness was only a virus, that she'd been treated at the emergency room and released. Isabel notes that Grace doesn't sound convinced. Just then a teacher steps into the bathroom where Isabel has hidden to make the call. The teacher says that if Isabel continues to skip lunch, her parents will be notified. Grace asks if Isabel is not eating "again," but Isabel says Grace should stick to worrying about her own problems.

Cole goes through Beck's desk while Sam is gone to work. Cole finds a newspaper clipping of a story describing how Sam's parents had been charged with trying to murder their seven-year-old son and that the boy had been taken into the custody of the state. The couple had told authorities that the child was "possessed by the devil." Cole notes the slashes on Sam's wrists in a photo of him as a child. Isabel calls and the two talk for awhile. Cole reveals that he's spent his entire life trying to live up to his father's expectations. Isabel confesses that she feels guilty for Jack's death.

In chapter eighteen, Sam is at the bookstore taking inventory with Karyn, the owner. She realizes something is wrong and questions him about it. She knows Beck and asks about him. He stretches the truth, telling her that Beck is terminally ill and that Grace is also sick. Karyn insists that Sam go home, saying the inventory can wait. He heads to the back door and steps into Rachel. Grace's parents have blocked Sam's calls but Sam uses Rachel's phone to call Grace. Sam reminds himself that they have the rest of their lives to be together as he faces being away from her another night.

Chapters 11 through 18 Analysis

The situation at Isabel's house has become close to unbearable. With Jack's death, the family has slipped into an abyss with which none of them are dealing. Isabel's father is seldom home and her mother is often drinking. Isabel is angry and it seems that at least part of her problem is that she feels guilt over Jack's death, having been the one with him the last three days of his life when he was battling meningitis.



Grace's parents are justifiably upset to discover that Grace and Sam are sleeping together. Grace's attitude on the subject becomes one of defiance. She says her parents don't understand the relationship, which is exactly what any teenager in a typical teenage crush would say. But Grace and Sam can't explain their pack connection to Grace's parents and it probably wouldn't make any difference if they did. Aside from this, Grace's anger is also justified because of her parents' role in her life up to this point. They have almost completely ignored her. She will, at one point, tell them that they have to be her parents or her roommates, but that they can't take on whichever role is convenient at the moment. In fact, they leave her alone a great deal of the time. She seldom finds them at home and they see nothing wrong in this situation. The problem is that they've come to trust that Grace knows what they expect of her and will do whatever they want without them doing anything in return. Grace misses her parents and, by the time she's sleeping with Sam, feels almost no connection to them at all.

Cole is obviously suffering from self-esteem issues. He is unable to see the success with his band for what it is—evidence of his talent. Instead, he has come to associate the band as the success and him as having no part in that success. He's talking to Isabel and suddenly realizes that he wants to be a wolf again because being a wolf brings an end to his own self-awareness.

Beck doesn't appear in this book at all, but his presence remains an important part of the book. Sam was chosen by Beck to be a wolf. Beck then adopted Sam and raised him as a son. The details of how Beck became a wolf are not revealed, but there seems to be a question about that when Sam and Cole are talking. Sam says that Cole "chose" to be a wolf, a concept he can't seem to grasp. Cole doesn't argue the point but thinks about Beck. His thoughts indicate that Beck has told Cole that he also chose to be a wolf and he will later say so to Sam.

The banter between Rachel and Sam continues when Rachel goes to the bookstore so that Sam can talk to Grace. They collide in the doorway. Rachel says that "The Boy should watch where he's going." Sam counters, saying that Rachel "should not manifest in doorways." The two are obviously bonded because of Grace.



Chapters 19 through 29

Chapters 19 through 29 Summary

In chapter nineteen, Sam goes home but stops off at a shed that's fixed up for the wolves when they are returning to their human forms. There's a television, space heater, snacks and clothing there. Sam hears voices and realizes there's a boom box playing music. Sam discovers that Cole is inside. Cole says he's trying to become wolf. Sam reminds himself that Beck chose Cole and for that reason, if nothing else, he won't hate Cole.

In chapter twenty, Cole says that he has "a couple of personas," and that he can usually tell which to bring out to charm anyone. He hasn't been able to find a way to be comfortable with Sam. Cole recalls the first big magazine article about the band. He says the photographer hadn't known what to do and had tried posing the band members in different ways. Finally Cole, in a moment of frustration, had leaped from a stairway, arms and legs spread as if in total abandon, and the photographer had taken that shot. That was the photo that wound up on the magazine. Cole recalls that the photographer's assistant had given him her number that day. Victor asked Cole about Angie. Angie was Victor's sister and Cole's girlfriend. Cole said he and Angie were through. Victor and Cole physically fought that day. Cole is remembering these things as he tries desperately to shift into the wolf's form that will bring forgetfulness.

In chapter twenty-one, Grace worries that Sam is relieved not to be with her. Sam is alone at home, awake and worried about Grace and their relationship. In chapter twenty-two, Amy confronts Grace about Sam. Amy says that if she and Grace talk, Lewis will not question Grace. Amy asks if they have used protection and then argues that Grace is making a mistake. She says the relationship is a teenage crush, a statement that makes Grace furious. Amy predicts that Grace will someday barely remember Sam. Amy then says it's lucky that she had common sense at Grace's age or she might have had more children. Grace grabs her phone, though she's been forbidden from using it, and leaves the house, saying she's going for a walk.

In chapter twenty-three, Sam goes to the shed to find Cole there with his friend and fellow band member, Victor. Victor is changing into a wolf, then back to human and back again with astonishing speed. He can't seem to settle into either form and Sam has never seen anyone shift so quickly. Victor is obviously miserable and while he's in human form for a minute, Sam says he'll help him if he can. Cole is relieved to have Sam there. Cole has no idea what to do to help Victor and wants only to escape the situation. When Sam asks Cole how long Victor has been shifting, Cole says for about a half hour. Cole recalls the day he'd convinced Victor to become a wolf. Cole says it wasn't "just" because he selfishly wanted someone to take the step with him, but also because he'd seen Victor going down the road to drugs as well. Victor asks if there's a way to become fully human again and Sam says there isn't, a fact that Cole knows to be



untrue. When Victor is human, Sam says that it's probably cold enough outside to remain wolf and the next time Victor shifts, Sam opens the door and Victor runs away.

In chapter twenty-four, Grace goes for a walk and knows that the temporary respite from the fever and whatever is wrong isn't gone for good. She encounters a wolf in the woods, and when he recoils from her, she knows that he has caught the scent of almonds. Grace remembers Isabel saying that her mother, a doctor, said some terminal patients recognized the signs of the illness that would kill them before the doctors know. Grace recognizes that in herself now. Grace sits down and several wolves gather around her, loosely forming a circle, and lay down to watch her.

In chapter twenty-four, Isabel calls and the wolves have retreated. Grace answers. Isabel asks if Grace is contagious and she says she doesn't think so. Isabel comes over, joining Grace in the back yard. Isabel order pizza to be delivered to Grace's house. The girls go to Grace's room where Grace picks up homework and Isabel settles in, just relaxing. Isabel says she enjoys herself, just spending time with Grace without having to talk. She says while she's relaxing, she can "almost ignore Grace's illness."

Isabel tells Grace she's met Cole, one of the new wolves, and that she took Cole to Beck's house on the night Grace became ill. The pizza arrives but Grace finds she can't eat. Grace feels extremely vulnerable and says she was more at ease in the woods when she was surrounded by the wolves. She wishes for Sam. Isabel approaches the problem by saying that she smells an odor coming from Grace like the odor they'd detected coming from the dead wolf. Isabel says Grace's illness is related to the wolves. Grace says she is aware of that but tells Isabel not to tell Sam.

In chapter twenty-six, Sam remembers a scene from his childhood. He'd been at home with all the wolves in human form. He learned that Ulrik had gone to a doctor about his "werewolfism." The doctor, according to Ulrik, had prescribed anti-psychotics and was relieved when Ulrik left the office.

Cole is back at Beck's house and is drinking They talk about being wolves and Sam says there's no meaning to life as a wolf. He says not being able to remember anything is the same as not existing. Cole says he wants only to forget. Sam challenges him to face his demons. Cole returns the challenge, pointing out that Sam won't go into a bathroom with a tub in it because he remembers his parents' attempt to kill him. Cole grabs Sam and drags him into the bathroom where the tub is. Sam fights but finally goes limp and Cole is torn in his reaction.

In chapter twenty-seven, Sam gets a phone call from Angie, who says she knows Cole is there and leaves a message that he's never to call her again. Sam is angry, knowing that Cole could bring trouble to the pack if he's contacting people from his previous life. Grace later wants to ask Sam if he believes dying people know they are dying. She hopes she's being melodramatic.

In chapter twenty-eight, Cole becomes human again to find that he had gutted a deer and was apparently in the process of eating her when he shifted. She is fatally injured



but alive and he can't bring himself to walk away and leave her. He stabs her to death. Cole says the deer is finally dead and "I wanted to be." He says he has to find a way to remain in wolf form or he'll kill himself, that he can't stand the pain of himself in human form anymore.

In chapter twenty-nine, Grace's parents are headed to St. Paul for an art show. They tell Grace that she is not to spend time with Sam while they are gone but that Sam can visit the following day. Grace points out that Sam's trip to the studio is scheduled for that day and that she wants to go. She says it's important to Sam, but her parents refuse. There's a heated argument and Grace says her parents have to decide whether they're going to be her parents or her roommates, and that they can't be both. As soon as they're gone, Grace discovers they've taken her car keys, but she has an extra set. She goes to Beck's house where Sam is waiting.

Chapters 19 through 29 Analysis

As Sam is headed to the little shed the wolves use as they are becoming human, he recalls getting locked in there once as a youngster. One of the wolves in human form, Ulrik, found him. Sam was wild with fear, having been locked in the shed as a wolf and spending hours trying to get out before turning back to his human form. Ulrik was at a loss of how to comfort Sam but he carried him inside and cooked eggs for him. Sam was in the living room eating, still shaken for the ordeal, when Beck arrived.

Cole is jealous of the fact that Sam is so concerned about Victor, though he doesn't put it in those terms. Cole is also angry at Victor, though he tries not to show it. He says that Victor simply had to take on the form of a wolf, return to human and then back to wolf, and that it wasn't that difficult. However, Cole himself is having trouble remaining wolf.

Cole seems to feel incredibly guilty over Sam's reaction to being thrown into the bathroom. He then becomes angry, saying the bathroom isn't that big of a deal and that Sam shouldn't have reacted so violently. While Sam is in this condition, Cole tells him what he knows of Beck, but not in an effort to help Sam understand. Cole's objective is obviously aimed at hurting Sam. Cole says Beck had finished law school and had everything he wanted, then realized that he didn't want any of it. According to Cole, Beck had been on the verge of suicide when Paul convinced him to become a wolf.



Chapters 30 through 37

Chapters 30 through 37 Summary

In chapter thirty, Cole arrives at the house and showers, trying to wash the blood and the scent of the blood away. Cole begins to think through the situation. He comes to the conclusion that the cold may not be the cause of the shift, but merely a catalyst for the shift. Cole reads Beck's day planner. He discovers an entry in which Beck talks about a wolf who stopped shifting some fourteen years earlier and who had died. Beck says there was an odor coming from the wolf. He also questions why one of the wolves shifted in the middle of a hot day. Cole remembers telling his girlfriend Angie that he might kill himself. She didn't respond and he'd questioned her reaction. She says that only Cole can talk himself into or out of that, so there's no need for her to say anything. He realizes she's right and doesn't mention it again.

In chapter thirty-one, Sam and Grace are headed to the studio. They talk about the session and Sam seems relieved that Grace is with him. Grace decides not to tell him that she's there without her parents' permission or that she's sick, wanting Sam to have a perfect day. They talk about what he'll name his first album and pitch around several ideas, including "Broken Toys." Grace settles on "Still Waking Up" and Sam agrees. They talk about the new wolves. Sam says there's "something broken" in Cole, and that he can see it in Cole's eyes. As they talk, Grace turns away from Sam, trying to conceal the fact that her nose is bleeding.

In chapter thirty-two, Isabel arrives at Beck's house. She opens the door and hears a noise, then quickly discovers that Cole, in wolf form, is soaking wet and in the living room. He turns back to a human within minutes and says he's involved in a scientific experiment. Cole asks Isabel for help figuring out how to remain in wolf form. She's disgusted by the idea, recalling the lengths Jack went to in an effort to be human, and tells him to figure it out for himself, but he says he has to escape into wolf form or he'll wind up killing himself. Isabel pours her heart out, confessing the depth of her guilt, and tells Cole that he has to "get over" whatever is eating at him. He says he doesn't want to, and Isabel is so struck by his honesty that she empathizes with him. Cole says he knows that everyone in the house has "reason to want to escape" and doesn't understand why he's the only one who is trying to accomplish that.

In chapter thirty-three, Sam and Grace arrive at Anarchy Recording. It's a house that's not at all impressive until they step inside and find the array of equipment. A girl named Dmitra introduces herself and has Sam sing a little. She's obviously impressed and Grace takes a seat on the couch as Sam begins to perform.

In chapter thirty-four, Cole and Isabel are at Kenny's, a local diner, for coffee. Cole reveals his theory that the drugs he'd taken are the reason he isn't remaining in wolf form. Cole says he also doesn't believe that being shut up in a hot car kept Grace from ever changing, or that the fever from the meningitis was the reason Sam has stopped



shifting. Cole tells Isabel about spending time in the lab with his father who was a brilliant scientist. Just then, some teenage girls arrive at the table, recognizing Cole as the famous singer. He plays it off, saying he isn't Cole St. Clair but that he is mistaken for him often. He overhears one of the girls saying she doesn't believe him and thinks he's just hiding out from the tabloids.

In chapter thirty-five, Sam works hard at his music and is amazed by the results of the soundtrack Dmitra produces. He takes a break to go to the bathroom and on the way back sees a collection of magazine and album covers on the wall. He catches a glimpse of Cole and immediately recognizes him. Sam realizes this means there are thousands of people looking for Cole and who will recognize him if they see him.

In chapter thirty-six, Isabel asks Cole about the girls who had recognized him and he reveals his true identity. Isabel says she doesn't care that Cole is a famous rock star. He says he's even more famous for being self-centered. Isabel takes him to her house, ignoring the fact that it's not a good idea and doing it partly because it's a bad idea. Isabel offers to have sex with Cole but he suddenly realizes he wants to be a decent person and refuses. They argue, each wanting on some level to hurt the other.

In chapter thirty-seven, Sam and Grace are returning home from the studio. Sam gripes about the fact that Cole is famous and the impact that could have on the pack. He realizes that he's ruining a day Grace worked hard to make perfect for him and touches her hand. She's hot and he's torn, part of him wanting to see if she smells like wolf and part of her ignoring the fact that he already knows she does.

In chapter thirty-eight, Sam and Grace walk into Beck's house to discover that it's a wreck. Cole is trying to clean up. Sam is immediately defensive but Grace, in a light voice, asks if Cole had "problems." He smiles and says there was a "herd of cats," but that he's cleaning it up. Cole immediately likes Grace and she realizes that he looks like a rock star, even with a broom and dustpan in his hand. Grace asks if being a wolf is what Cole expected and he says it's better, going on to compare it to drugs. He then asks if she feels cheated that she never changed. She says she doesn't know but has always wondered about it. Cole suddenly feels good about recent actions, including walking away from Isabel.

Grace believes that Cole could become a friend to Sam if she's not around. She thinks about Cole's question and knows there would be some payoff with turning. She does, however, think about all the things in her life that she'll miss if she turns or dies, including going to college with Sam and simply being herself. Grace is obviously exhausted and Sam knows she has to go home, especially after she admits that she isn't supposed to be there. Cole drives Grace's car and Grace rides with Sam. Sam offers to go inside but Grace refuses, saying she wants to face them alone. Cole and Sam talk briefly in the drive and Cole comes to realize that he will accept Cole, simply because Beck chose him. He says as much to Cole as Grace goes in.



Chapters 30 through 37 Analysis

Cole begins working on the cause of the shift, theorizing that the cold was not the reason they shift but just the catalyst that prompts the shift. There's an interesting note as he's first trying to figure out the problem. He is thinking about it scientifically and will later reveal that he has a brain for scientific problems. But when he is pushing himself initially to figure it out, he puts his head down on the desk and wonders why he's bothering. He says the end result will be that he becomes wolf forever, and that he'll have achieved his ultimate goal - to save himself from committing suicide. He realizes, however, that he won't remember the person he was and then wonders if there's a point in saving himself from death. This is the first time Cole had considered the situation from Sam's point of view, though he still hasn't realized that it's Sam's perspective.

Grace's first nose bleed is significant because she'd seen the blood from the nose of the dead wolf in the woods. Some readers may believe that Grace contracted something from the wolf but the full impact will later be revealed.

Cole and Grace immediately connect. It could be at least partly because of the pack connection but it seems more likely that it's because of their natures. Grace is a friendly, accepting person and she may recognize a similar nature in Cole, though it's largely hidden.

Cole and Sam coming to an understanding is an example of the coming of age theme but is also an example of another theme, the pack/family connection. Cole has spent some time thinking of someone other than himself, a fact that means he's maturing. It seems likely that at least part of this maturity is because of Sam's attitudes. Sam, meanwhile, realizes that he can't change what Beck did and that he wants to accept Cole. The fact that he says so to Cole makes a great deal of difference in their relationship.



Chapters 38 through

Chapters 38 through Summary

Grace expects her parents to begin yelling at her the moment she's inside, but they don't. They seem to want her to confess but she doesn't. Her mother says Grace has been "extremely disrespectful," and that Grace has been given "room to roam." Grace is furious. She says she can't remember the number of times her parents called to say they were out with friends or would be late coming home. Grace says her parents are angry because she's made a choice on her own. Her father says she's never to see Sam again. Lewis says he doesn't like "the person Grace has become" since spending time with Sam. Grace's nose begins to bleed and she grabs a tissue to hide it from her parents, then goes to her room.

In chapter forty, Grace is desperate for answers. She believes if she only knew what was wrong and how long it would take to run its course, she could be at peace. She notes that she has to "push back the wolf inside me." Grace thinks about her parents. She recalls the argument with her mother about whether Sam was merely a lustful teenage crush. She remembers her father stepping into the room, ostensibly to check on Grace but actually to make sure Sam wasn't there. She can't remember the last time they'd asked if she was alright or needed anything. She gets out of bed, puts a few clothes in her backpack, and leaves the house.

In chapter forty-one, Sam is at home, listening as the wolves howl. Grace arrives and Sam asks if she's certain this is what she wants to do. She says it is, puts her few possessions away, and lay down together on the bed. Grace asks if Sam misses being a wolf. He denies it so quickly that she doesn't think he's really thought about his answer, but then he explains that he wants to be himself, to remember what he's doing and "to matter." Grace notes the smell of almonds coming from skin.

In chapter forty-two, Grace and Sam wake the next morning to find that Grace has dried blood on her face. Sam says he wants to take Grace to the doctor. She says there won't be anything for them to do, but Sam says he'll feel better. She gives in. Grace says she doesn't expect anything but can't help but hope for something that will explain the illness and provide a cure. An hour and a half later she's been told to take allergy medication, iron supplements and use saline nasal spray.

Rachel reaches them on Sam's cell phone while Grace and Sam are at Kenny's. Rachel says Grace's mother has called and that Grace's parents are "slightly concerned." Rachel says she told Grace's mother that Grace was at Isabel's house. Rachel says it was better than telling Amy that Grace was at "The Boy's" and having Grace's parents "kill both of you." Rachel asks if Grace is ever going home. She says she'll have to eventually in order to pick up clothes. After the conversation, Grace tells Sam she wants to go home and he knows without asking that she means Beck's house.



In chapter forty-three, Sam and Grace arrive at Beck's house to discover Tom Culpepper's vehicle in the drive. Tom asks for Beck but Sam and Cole, who has come from the house, say he's not at home. Tom has the body of Victor in the back and drops it on the drive, telling Sam that he'll kill any other wolf he finds near his property. Cole wants to hit Tom but notes that Sam has the same glint in his eye, and that helps Cole restrain himself. When Tom is gone, Cole drops to the ground by Victor's body and says he's sorry, over and over.

In chapter forty-four, Cole and Sam get shovels and set to work digging a grave. Sam says he doesn't know what to say to Cole. As they prepare to bury Victor, Cole remembers when they'd formed the band. He then tells Victor that he'd thought he had nothing to lose, but now realizes that wasn't true. As they are gathered around the grave, they see Beck in wolf form though he doesn't come too close. They each see something different in Beck's eyes. For Sam, it's the past, but for Cole it's the present and for Grace it's the future. Then the wolf begins to howl and the pack joins in.

In chapter forty-five, Sam, Grace and Cole go back inside. Isabel asks what he's going to do now and Sam says he doesn't know. Isabel yells at him, reminding him that it's his responsibility and that he has to take action rather than waiting for a situation that requires reaction. Grace and Cole talk about Cole's situation. Cole says his parents won't care where he is but the media will and that news that he's alive in Mercy Falls will prompt a great deal of attention on the area. Cole says Beck had recognized Cole as suicidal and was trying to save him. Cole also says that Beck probably didn't think about the potential repercussions.

In chapter forty-six, Grace and Sam make plans for their life together. Grace says she wants to buy a red coffee pot and Sam promises he'll get it for her. Sam says he wants to go to the ocean after they're married and Grace says they will. Remembering Isabel's advice from earlier in the day, Sam asks Grace what's wrong with her and she says she doesn't know. She admits that she's afraid and that confession twists at Sam. When her nose again begins to bleed, they call an ambulance. Cole helps Grace hold a towel to her nose while Sam holds her hair away from the blood.

In chapter forty-seven, Grace thinks about herself in third person, saying Grace Brisbane lived a life and that she doesn't want to leave it behind. In chapter forty-eight, Sam thinks in a lyric that he is "still waking up" while Grace is "still sleeping" in the ICU. In chapter forty-nine, Cole goes with Sam to the hospital and Isabel arrives. Amy and Lewis arrive and Lewis, without stopping for anything, punches Sam.

In chapter fifty, Sam knows the punch is coming but doesn't even try to evade it. Sam is ordered out of the room by the Brisbanes. Cole realizes Grace is dying and there's nothing anyone can do to stop it. Sam and Isabel push Cole to come up with an answer. Cole says the doctors are "geniuses," but Sam and Isabel point out that Cole is also a genius and that he has information the doctors don't have. In chapter fifty-one, Cole prays that he won't receive word that Grace is dead.



In chapter fifty-two, Cole comes up with a theory. He says he believes the wolves that die in the wild are dying from a cause, not old age. He says he believes the cause is related to the fact that they no longer shift. With that theory in mind, he believes that Grace will survive if she shifts. Sam argues that it takes weeks for the first shift after being bitten but Cole also believes that the toxins are built up in Grace's body, and that she'll shift quickly. Sam hates the idea of losing Grace to the wolf form but hates the thought of her dying more. Cole, as the only werewolf in the group, believes he could cut Grace and spit into a vein, reintroducing the toxin and prompting a shift. The problem is that no one can be in the room. First, no one would allow it and second, they don't want anyone to see in case Grace does shift.

In chapter fifty-three, Isabel notes that Lewis is out of Grace's room and she enters with a story that she has something to tell Amy but wants to be away from Grace, in case Grace can hear. Isabel has no idea what she's going to say but the two leave the room. Cole cuts Grace and notes that she bleeds a lot. He knows that she'll probably die from blood loss if the plan doesn't work. Sam is watching and they both note that Grace begins to shift. Cole opens a window and breaks out a screen. As she shifts, Sam urges her to remember him and pledges to find her.

Cole offers to re-infect Sam as well. Sam considers it but knows he needs to find a permanent cure. Sam urges Cole to run away as well to keep people from seeing his face and Cole runs, promising to help Grace reach the woods. Sam then leaves the room and tells the officials that he "tried to stop her," referring to Grace. In chapter fifty-four, Sam keeps watch on the woods. He notes that Tom Culpepper's hatred of the wolves is growing and that he is waiting for Grace. He also knows he'll have to find a cure for Grace but also for himself.

Chapters 38 through Analysis

As Sam is listening to the wolves on the night they are howling, he realizes that he misses the other members of the pack. The particular howls are "discordant," and Sam knows that sound is usually reserved for the times when either Beck or Paul - one of the pack's two leaders - is human and missing from the wolf pack. But on this particular night, Paul and Beck are both with the wolves and only Sam is missing. There could be significance there but it isn't explained more fully.

Sam often thinks in lyrics or poems. As he and Grace go to bed together for the first time after their time apart, he comes up with a short verse to describe his feelings. "Folded in my arms you're a butterfly in reverse; giving up your wings inheriting my curse."

When Cole and Sam are burying Victor, Cole is obviously shaken. He says aloud that he wishes he were a wolf in order to escape the pain he's feeling. What he doesn't say aloud is that he's suddenly aware of himself in a way he's never been before. He realizes that he can't run from his problems. He silently tells Victor that he's sorry it took the death of his best friend to make him realize this.



In chapter forty-six, Grace makes plans for what she wants to do later. She says she wants to buy a red coffee pot. She's mentioned this red coffee pot before. There could be some symbolism in the color or it could just be that she's looking for something outrageous and away from the norm as a goal.



Characters

Grace Brisbane

Grace is a senior in high school and is in love with Sam Roth who was, until the previous Christmas, a werewolf. Grace was bitten by wolves as a child but, for some reason, never turned into a wolf. It's believed that because she was left in a hot car soon after her attack the infection that should have turned her into a wolf was killed. Despite having never changed, Grace feels a strong connection to the wolf pack as a whole and to Sam in particular. She sometimes feels regret that she never changed. Grace is exceedingly loyal to her friends and is willing to help others, regardless of their particular needs. Grace is headstrong and determined. She has spent most of her life up to her senior year as a straight-A student who never gives her parents any problems. But deep inside, Grace is hurt by her parents' apparent lack of caring. Grace finds the courage to stand up to them as she feels her life slipping away. When she realizes that she's dying, she ignores her parents' demands that she stay away from Sam. She is in love with him but there is also a part of her that is likely drawn to him because of the pack connection. Grace does turn into a wolf as the story comes to a close.

Sam Roth

Sam is eighteen and is spending his first winter as a human since being infected as a werewolf when he was very young. Sam is a sensitive person and hated being a wolf because he felt he lost something of himself with that change. Sam clung to his human life even before he was infected with meningitis the previous year, eliminating his turning into a wolf each winter. Sam is somewhat shaky with his new identity as a human and wavers between being thrilled that he is experiencing the cold without turning to a wolf and fearing that he might turn. He is a musician and cuts a demo record, the time in the studio having been given to him as a birthday present from Grace. Sam knows there's something wrong as soon as he catches the scent of almonds on Grace's hand after she finds the dead wolf in the woods, but he continues to ignore it. Sam is Grace's model for asking people how they feel but when it comes to asking Grace about this point, Sam is fearful of the answer. When he finally faces up to the fact that Grace is dying, Sam is desperate for a cure. He takes her to the doctor though he knows there won't be a cure for "werewolfism." As the story comes to a close, Sam wants to take on a wolf form again so he can be with Grace, but his responsibilities and the possibility of a long-term cure convince him to stay.

Mr. Brisbane

Grace's father. Mr. Brisbane catches Sam in Grace's room and is furious over the situation. He initially seems to accept the relationship but later tells Grace she is never to see Sam again. Mr. Brisbane is working on the assumption that Grace is a typical



teenager and doesn't realize that she's very ill until it's too late. When he does come to realize it, he strikes out in anger.

Amy Brisbane

Grace's mother is very angry when she discovers that Grace and Sam have been sleeping together. She has been very lax as a parent up to this point and the fact that she tries to give Grace advice about dating makes Grace furious. She is an artist and seems to resent that Grace is such a practical young woman while ignoring the fact that she has shaped Grace into that person by leaving her so often on her own.

Isabel Culpepper

A wealthy young girl who is Grace's friend. Isabel is somewhat snotty and spoiled but is also a strong person. She knows about the wolves because her brother Jack was bitten and died when she tried to save him by infecting him with meningitis. She has a very sarcastic sense of humor. Isabel is experiencing growing pains but doesn't really know what she wants from life.

Cole St. Clair

Lead singer of the band, "NARKOTIKA," Cole is very young but is spiraling out of control in a series of drug and sex-induced trips when he meets Beck. He is self-centered but is trying to escape the pain of his life. Cole comes to realize that he is not the center of the universe. He learns the guilt of having cost a friend his life and is the one who figures out why Grace seems to be dying.

Rachel

Grace's best friend, she is constantly teasing Sam. She calls him "The Boy," which seems somewhat derogatory but is really intended to be playful. When Grace is not allowed to talk to Sam on the phone, Rachel acts as go-between so the two can communicate. She is somewhat flighty but loyal to her friends, including Grace.

Geoffry Beck

Sam's adoptive father Beck is a werewolf and the leader of the pack when they were in their human forms. Beck has changed for the final time as the story opens and is not expected to take his human form again. Beck has taught Sam about the werewolves and Sam knows Beck expects him to take charge of the situation.



Victor

Cole's friend and a member of Cole's band, Victor was encouraged by Cole to join him in becoming a werewolf. Cole says that he did it because he wanted to save Victor from the drugs and lifestyle that were so difficult for him but admits that he hadn't wanted to take the challenge of living as a wolf alone. The first spring, Victor begins shifting back to human form but can't hold it and shifts dozens of times, human to wolf and back in a matter of seconds. He is killed by Tom Culpepper.

Karyn

The owner of the Crooked Bookshelf bookstore where Sam works. Karyn doesn't know all there is to know about Sam and his life, but she does know Beck, Sam's adoptive father. Karyn realizes that Sam is hurting over something and sends him home from the store to have work on his problems.



Objects/Places

NARKOTIKA

The name of Cole's band.

Mercy Falls, Minnesota

Where Grace and Sam live.

The Crooked Bookshelf

The bookstore where Sam works.

St. Paul

Where Mr. and Mrs. Brisbane are headed the day Grace goes with Sam to cut his demo.

Kenny's

The coffee shop where Isabel and Cole go for coffee.

Anarchy Recording

The name of the studio where Sam cuts a demo record.

Still Waking Up

The name Grace says Sam should give his first album.

Beck's house

Where Sam is staying when he's not at Grace's house and where the werewolves go when they are in their human forms.

New York

Where Cole is from.

Boundary Wood

Where the wolves spend most of their time and where Victor is killed.



Themes

The Complications of Werewolfism

The werewolves of this story are not the same as werewolves are typically portrayed. The werewolves of this story are turned by temperature, though the process is very complex and isn't fully understood by any of the characters. Grace was bitten as a child but never turns. She was left unattended in a hot car and had a raging temperature, and it's believed this is the reason she never turned. Those who do turn do so when the weather is cold.

Cole seems to be an exception and he turns human well before any of the other wolves do so, holding on to his human form when it's cold enough that others would have turned. Cole comes to believe it's related to his drug habit. Victor turns back and forth more quickly than anyone Sam has ever seen and can't hold to either form, a phenomenon that isn't solved during this book.

Another important part of the equation is that wolves only turn back to their human form in the summers for a certain number of years, though that number varies from one wolf to the next. It's believed that is just the normal lifespan of a wolf but Cole theorizes that it's actually because the wolf stopped changing. In other words, Cole believes that the lack of change is what causes the wolf to die. With this theory, they come to believe that Grace is dying because she didn't change at all.

The Family/Pack Connection

Grace and Sam are connected by their love but also by the fact that they belong to the same pack. This is true even though Sam no longer changes into a wolf and that Grace has never changed. Grace feels an indescribable longing when she hears or sees the wolves, which is evidence of this connection. In sharp contrast is Grace's need for that same kind of connection with her parents. Grace feels abandoned by her parents who are seldom home and so busy with their own lives that they can't be bothered to oversee Grace. They expect that she will live her life as they dictate and are furious when she doesn't. While she is still a teenager and still living in their home, she considers their lack of caring to be grounds for ignoring their demands with regard to Sam.

Sam's connection is equally complicated. He was brutalized by his parents who tried to kill him when he continued to change into a wolf, believing that he was possessed by a demon. Beck adopted Sam formally but their connection was deepened by the fact that they were both werewolves. Isabel's connection to the wolves is different. She has not been infected but her brother was. Cole, ironically, doesn't expect to feel this connection when he accepts the werewolfism, but comes to an ever-deepening friendship with Isabel, Sam and Grace.



Coming of Age

The three characters who exhibit this theme are Sam, Cole, and Grace though Sam and Cole are the more overt examples. Sam is chosen by Beck to become leader of the pack in its human form. As such, he's expected to see to the house and oversee the wolves when they are human and living at home. Ironically, he's also Paul's choice to oversee the pack when they are in their wolf form. This gives Sam a great deal of power but also gives him a great deal of responsibility. Sam isn't happy or comfortable with the first role and he isn't seen in the second. When Beck is no longer expected to return from his human form, Sam finds himself thrust into the role as leader. It's not until it's evident that Grace is dying that Isabel yells at him, telling him it's time to take action. At that point, Sam steps up and takes the role of leader as Beck had intended, beginning with his attempts to figure out what's wrong with Grace.

Cole is self-centered and thinks only of himself when he arrives. However, he comes to care for those around him, accepting his guilt over Victor's death and an emerging friendship with Grace, Sam and Isabel. When Isabel seems willing to have sex, Cole accepts responsibility for his actions and doesn't. His emerging coming of age reaches a new height when he goes with Sam to the hospital and when he steps outside his own world to try to figure out what's wrong with Grace.

Grace's coming of age is different in that it's the fulfillment of what happened many years earlier. Grace was bitten by the wolves but never changed into a wolf. She always felt an intense connection with the wolves and a longing she couldn't really describe. In her case, the coming of age theme was involuntary with her changing to a wolf.



Style

Point of View

The story is presented in first person from a limited perspective. The point of view alternates between Sam Roth, Grace Brisbane, Isabel Culpper and Cole St. Clair. The varying perspectives are identified by subtitles and each chapter is presented from various perspectives. The changing perspectives do not change the flow of the story. The narrative portions of the story remain consistent in tone and language. The dialogue also remains consistent. The changing of perspectives does not disrupt the flow of the story. The various characters are often used to present the same piece of information from different perspectives. For example, Cole is using cold water in an effort to force himself into changing into a wolf. That initial portion of that scene is seen from Cole's perspective. When he's changed into a wolf, he tears the house up. That scene is then seen from each of the four characters' perspectives. Each has a different view and different thoughts on the scene. For example, Isabel is typically sarcastic but Sam is moved by the fact that Cole is cleaning up the mess. Grace notes that she would normally be trying to help but is too tired. Later, Isabel and Sam argue loudly in the kitchen over Grace's condition and Sam's lack of action. The perspective then changes so that Grace and Cole are sitting in the dining room and hear the argument. The changing perspective is acceptable for the story and gives the reader various points of view in an interesting format. The overlap is not lengthy and does not detract from the story line or significantly slow the action.

Setting

The story is set in the fictional town of Mercy Falls, Minnesota, during modern times. The exact time setting is not presented and is not important. The time was likely around the time of the book's release. The largest nearby town is Duluth, which is a real town. Duluth is unimportant to the book but the proximity to a real town may make the fictional town of Mercy Falls at least slightly more believable. There are several specific settings within the story. Sam and Grace spend a great deal of time at Grace's house. The rooms most thoroughly described are Grace's room and the kitchen. Another important setting is Beck's house, where Sam lives now that he is no longer changing into a wolf. Neither of these settings is described in great detail. The author offers some description of the Culpepper house from Cole's perspective. That house is a stark contrast to Grace's house. The Culpepper house is large and modern and has a modern style that Cole says could have come from a magazine.

There is a brief description given of the studio where Sam and Grace go to cut a demo. There is also a brief description of the nurse's office at the school. The wooded area near the homes of the Culpeppers and Brisbanes is important in that it provides sanctuary for the wolves. It is also where Grace finds the body of the wolf and first detects the almond smell that becomes significant later.



The final specific setting of the book is the hospital room where it appears that Grace is dying. None of the settings are described in minute detail but all are presented in sufficient detail for the reader to create a mental image. The settings are reasonable and appropriate for the story.

Language and Meaning

The story is written in a foreboding but hopeful tone that is filled with suspense and has dark undercurrents. The story picks up where the first book of this trilogy left off, with Sam's first winter as human. Because he has become accustomed to changing into a wolf with the cold weather, he is often worried that he is going to change. He continually reminds himself to "believe in the cure" that was the ending of the first book - a case of bacterial meningitis that apparently cured him. Sam's skepticism is clearly conveyed to the reader and, as is discovered late in the book, is warranted. This book revolves more around Grace's apparent illness that appears to be fatal. The progression of the illness begins with a scent and it's soon obvious that it's very serious. This foreboding tone is complicated by the fact that everyone involved can sense the impending doom but no one really knows what to do about it. The book ends without a final resolution, the result of the fact that there are three books in the series. The majority of the story is presented in a straight-forward manner. The story flows chronologically from several perspectives and a reader with an average vocabulary will have no trouble understanding the story.

Structure

The book is divided into fifty-three chapters of varying lengths. For example, chapter thirty-eight is ten pages but chapter thirty-seven is less than three. Chapters are titled by number only, which means the reader has no clues about what's coming in that chapter. The formatting of this book includes subheads in each chapter. These subheads are titled the names of the four main characters - Grace, Sam, Isabel and Cole. The four subheads repeat at random and indicate the perspective of that particular section of the book. In some cases, a chapter has only one subhead. Chapter eleven, for example, is three pages in length and has only a single subhead - Grace. Chapter twelve is twelve pages in length and has two subheads - Isabel and Cole. Chapter forty-four is about seven pages in length and has three subheads - Sam, Cole and Grace.

The book is the second in a trilogy. A reader not familiar with the first book of the series will miss some references to the actions and characters of the first book and will not understand others. However, as a whole, this book could stand alone. It should be noted that this book does not come to a satisfactory conclusion. As the book ends, Sam decides that he will not return to a wolf form in order to be with Grace, though he considers it. He also realizes that he will die in a few years just as Grace almost died unless he can find a permanent cure. Grace is a wolf and Sam is alone as the book comes to a close, meaning most readers will want to read the third book of the trilogy.



Quotes

"An unknown human past hides behind each pair of eyes; Sam is the only one I ever truly know, and I have him beside me now."

Prologue, p. 2

"The air smelled like begin a wolf, and yet I wasn't. The knowledge both thrilled and hurt me."

Chap. 8, p. 53

"Either you're one of Sam's, or you're a random naked pervert who smells like dog."

Chap. 12, p. 83

"It was a night full of tiny coincident that collided into something bigger. If Grace hadn't gotten sick that night, if her parents had been out late as they usually were, if they hadn't discovered us, if I hadn't gone back to Beck's house, if Isabel hadn't heard Cole outside her back door, if she hadn't delivered Cole to me, if Cole hadn't been equal parts junkie and ... genius - how would life have unfolded?"

Chap. 16, p. 108

"I needed to find a needle to slide under my skin or a pill to dissolve under my tongue. No. what I needed was to be wolf again."

Chap. 16, p. 121

"I didn't know where my girlfriend was, my phone battery had died, I was living in a house with a possibly insane new werewolf who I sort of suspected was suicidal or homicidal, and I was miles away from all of it, counting the spines of books."

Chap. 18, p. 137

"I'm bored out of my mind and I want to talk with Sam, but you guys won't let me and I have to do something or I will start throwing stuff around in my room like an angry chimp."

Chap. 22, p. 166

"He goes in for werewolfism, comes out with a script for antipsychotics."

Chap. 26, p. 199

"She was so interesting-looking and unpretty that she actually traveled through ugly to someplace on the other side that was almost as good as pretty: huge, beaked nose, sleepy-looking dark brown eyes and sharp cheekbones."

Chap. 33, p. 247

"Maybe, maybe they'll do blood work on her. What do you think they'll find? I'm guessing 'werewolf' won't show up on most panels, and there isn't a diagnosis for 'smells like sick wolf.'"

Chap. 45, p. 329



"I wasn't big on making small talk. I considered calling Grace to ask her what I should say to a reticent suicidal werewolf, but I'd left my phone somewhere."

Chap. 34, p. 253

"So here is me, and I am a boy watched - by her parents' suspicious eyes since they cannot prove that I kidnapped Grace but believe it nonetheless - and I am a boy watchful - because Tom Culpepper's bitterness is growing palpable in this tiny town and I will not bury Grace's body - and I am a boy in waiting - for the heat and fruitfulness of summer, waiting to see who will walk out of those woods for me."

Chap. 54, p. 359



Topics for Discussion

Describe Sam and Grace. What is their relationship? What is the basis for their close connection?

Describe the role of the wolves in the story. What is Sam's connection? What is Grace's connection? What is Cole's connection? Who is Beck and what is his connection?

Who is Sam? What kind of person is he? Who is Cole? What kind of person is he? How are the two similar? How are they different?

Who is Isabel? What kind of person is she? Who is Grace? What kind of person is she? How are the two similar? How are they different?

What do you consider to be the most important theme of this story? Why? Give at least two examples of the theme.

Who is Rachel? Amy Brisbane? Victor? Tom Culpepper? Jack Culpepper? Karyn? What are the roles of each in the story? How are each connected to the main characters, Grace, Sam, Cole and Isabel?

Describe the relationships of Grace and Sam to their parents. How are their relationships similar? How are they different? What is the effect of the relationships on Sam and Grace?