

Ripple Study Guide

Ripple by Mandy Hubbard

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Plot Summary

"Ripple" is a novel by Mandy Hubbard which focuses around seventeen year-old Lexi and her curse and struggles as a siren.

Horrified by the drowning death of Steven, the only boy she has ever loved two years before, Lexi has become an outcast at school, rejected by all but one boy named Cole, Steven's best friend. Steven's sister, Sienna, Lexi's best friend, has also shunned Lexi for the drowning. Indeed, Lexi's entire former group of friends taunts and bullies her on a daily basis. Lexi visits Steven's grave for the succeeding years, confessing to him that she is a siren, leading males to drowning deaths. Because of this, she has shut herself off from the rest of the world. On one visit to Steven's grave, Lexi is overheard by Sienna, who asks Lexi if she really did love Steven. Lexi says that she did and their friendship is rekindled.

In order to deal with her desire to swim, Lexi visits a mountaintop lake. At the same time, her friends return to her, and Cole and Lexi grow close. But Lexi breaks things off with Cole because she knows he will either die or leave her when he discovers that she is a siren. At the same time, a nix named Erik emerges, promising Lexi that if they fall in love, her curse will be broken. But Lexi rejects Erik for Cole in the end, and Erik tries to drown Cole and tells Sienna what Lexi really is. Lexi then kills Erik as he tries to kill her, and she and Cole confess their love to one another. Sienna later tells Lexi that if she ever comes around her again, she will expose Lexi. Lexi later learns that her curse has been broken by true love between her and Cole. She says good bye to Steven's grave one last time.



Chapters 1 - 11

Chapters 1 - 11 Summary

In Chapter 1, Steven Goode, a seventeen-year-old student at Cedar Cove High, is the first love of Lexi, whom she drowns near her sweet-sixteen party. Because of that, Lexi swims in a remote mountain lake at night in Tillamook State Forest, having killed no one in two years. But Cole Hitchens, the best friend of Steven, comes to skip rocks on Lexi's lake. Cole is attractive, and Lexi wonders why he is skipping rocks here of all places. Lexi craves the water, but Cole stands between her and the lake.

In Chapter 2, when Lexi doesn't swim, she becomes physically ill. The first day of Lexi's senior year doesn't go well. Nikki, a girl from Lexi's old group of friends, has become a bully to her. Lexi is hated by most other girls, and longed for by most guys. Lexi thinks of Cole finding her lake, and doesn't know if she will have the willpower to find a new lake. Cole appears a moment later and asks if she is okay. Cole used to be a member of the group of friends Lexi went with, but she has shut them all out. Sienna sits down in class behind Lexi and Cole. Sienna was Lexi's best friend.

Mrs. Jenson, the new teacher, begins class. As Mrs. Jenson teaches, Lexi overhears that Sienna is throwing a party. That night, Lexi's grandmother asks her about her day. She is Lexi's father's mother, and is normal as far as Lexi can see. Lexi's father walked out years before and has not come back. Lexi has not told her grandmother about her water addiction. Lexi helps to keep her grandmother's insulin ready to take, so that her grandmother doesn't forget. That night, Lexi goes to her lake, a dozen miles from their small, coastal town, Cedar Cove. She doesn't know why she craves water, and doesn't know what exactly she is. Lexi's mother has been dead for six years, supposedly having drowned by suicide then, and is the only one who may have been able to answer the question. Lexi suspects her mom's boyfriend at the time, Greg, may have had something to do with it. Lexi swims all night.

In Chapter 3, Lexi hates lunch. As Lexi heads past Sienna, Nikki, and Kristy at their table, she trips and her old friends laugh. Lexi then rushes outside to the corner of the courtyard, to a bench nearly obscured by bushes. Lexi explains that her old friends blame her for killing Steven. Cole appears, telling Lexi it isn't right what everyone does to her. Lexi says she deserves it; Cole disagrees, and then leaves.

In Chapter 4, Lexi goes to Seaside Cemetery, to visit Steven's grave, and remembers the night Steven died. They go walking on the beach, and they kiss. Lexi suggests going swimming. While swimming, Lexi feels a song in her chest, but then can't find Steven. Eventually, she finds his body floating in the water. The drowning is ruled an accident, and reporters speculate that Steven became disoriented in the darkness. Lexi's friends shun her, and she shuts them out, and begins swimming every night. She talks to Steven all the time, telling him the truth about her nature. It is revealed that Lexi



loved Steven for three years before finally getting the chance to be with him, only to kill him in the end.

In Chapter 5, on Lexi's birthday, she finds Nikki, Sienna and her boyfriend Patrick, and Kristi, waiting by the window near her locker. When Lexi opens her locker, sand pours out of it. Sienna says happy birthday, and says she will keep tormenting Lexi until she gets her brother back. Lexi goes home, and decides to cook to get her mind off of things. Lexi's grandmother brings her a gift from her mother, having kept it a secret for six years. It is an old diary of a girl named Charlotte from 1750, meant for Lexi on her sixteenth birthday. The diary describes unrequited love by Charlotte for William, who is to be married to another woman named Julia. William makes love to Charlotte, and she waits for him. Julia, meanwhile, throws a magical Gypsy powder in Charlotte's face. William later turns up dead, and Charlotte is drawn to the water, as is their sixteen year-old daughter. Their family has been cursed. Generations of entries later, Lexi finds her own mother's entry, about telling Lexi's father the truth, who then leaves. Lexi's mother, after accidentally killing Steven because of the curse, drowns herself. Lexi realizes killing Steven was unavoidable, and that she is a siren.

In Chapter 6, at school the next day, Nikki, Sienna, and Kristi, trip Lexi and laugh about it. But Cole helps Lexi up. In English, Lexi gets all As. She reflects on wanting to be a doctor or a research scientist, and wanting to give back to the world the things she has taken from it. She plans to go far away to college. Mrs. Jenson assigns groups of three for a project which includes a book report and a presentation, and Lexi is teamed up with Cole and Sienna. Cole suggests doing something inventive and creative.

In Chapter 7, Lexi and her grandmother discuss their project while playing Scrabble that night. At school the next day, Lexi, Cole, and Sienna come together to work on their selected novel, "Manhattan Prep". Sienna will be the moderator of a debate between Cole and Lexi, and Lexi will argue that the novel is a critique of upper classes, while Cole will argue the novel is simply nonsense.

In Chapter 8, Lexi arrives at Cole's house in her old Toyota. Cole lives in the biggest house on Maple Falls Road, a few doors down from Sienna. The house overlooks the ocean. Cole and Sienna discuss the debate with Lexi. Afterwards, when Lexi goes to head home, her car will not start. Cole appears a moment later, and he and Lexi get to talking about Steven. Cole knows Lexi had nothing to do with Steven's death, because he knows she would have done anything to save him. Cole hugs Lexi, and allows her to borrow his Rove Ranger while he works on her car.

In Chapter 9, the next morning, Lexi realizes how wonderful it is to have Cole believe she is innocent. Cole has managed to fix Lexi's Toyota, and the two exchange car keys at school. Cole walks her to class. In the hall, Lexi accidentally walks into Erik, the new kid in English class, and apologizes, being captivated by his attractiveness. In English, the project presentations commence. During their debate, Cole says that sometimes people believe what is on the surface because it is easiest, and digging deeper is too hard. Cole then returns to the debate script.



In Chapter 10, Lexi goes to Seaside Cemetery on Friday afternoon once more. She is confused by everything going on. As much as Lexi wants to get away, she realizes she cannot abandon her grandmother. Lexi asks Steven whether she should trust Cole, and that she needs to know if she can move on. But Sienna shows up. She is stunned that Lexi has been coming to the grave every day. Sienna wants to know why Lexi never let her know she missed Steven so much, that she loved him. Sienna wants to go get coffee, but Lexi leaves.

In Chapter 11, Lexi goes to the ocean for the first time in two years, and Cole comes across her. They sit down and watch the ocean together. Lexi wonders just what kind of siren she is. Cole tells her he misses her smile, misses her being the girl she used to be. They decide to go see a movie the following day for a date. Lexi is horrified she is letting Cole in, despite the danger.

Chapters 1 - 11 Analysis

Mandy Hubbard begins her novel "Ripple" with the tragedy of a death, that of Steven Goode, the only boy that seventeen year-old Lexi has ever loved. Immediately, the reader is catapulted into a world of intrigue and mystery, as well as fantasy, all swirling around Lexi. Lexi believes that she has killed Steven, but only later learns that it was something that could not be avoided, because Lexi is cursed as a siren, and Lexi did not know that she is a siren. She fears killing someone else, so she keeps her distance. The blame placed on her by others for Steven's death also helps cause Lexi to keep her distance, but there is one boy who refuses to let Lexi be, and that is Cole, Steven's best friend.

Immediately, the reader understands that Lexi and Cole and their fate appear to be intertwined in some way, as the events are inexorably playing out. Lexi, seeking solitude and isolation, is nevertheless sought out by Cole, who does not hold her responsible for Steven's death. Because she is a siren, Lexi has no trouble attracting boys. She is absolutely beautiful. Lexi's problem is attempting to deter boys, especially Cole. But just as a water siren draws men to their deaths in lakes and oceans, there is some undeniable attraction between Cole and Lexi. Lexi fights her feelings for Cole, attempting to use the past as justification for not following her heart. She is unsuccessful.

Further complicating the situation is the fact that Sienna, overhearing Lexi's visit to Steven's grave, befriends Lexi once more, and Lexi is returned to the socially popular pantheon of students at Cedar Cove High. Everything appears to be falling into place for Lexi -from a boy she likes to having her popularity and friends restored- but this is dangerous for any of the males involved, Cole especially.

Hubbard therefore presents Lexi as a controversial and emotionally-compelling character. One empathizes with Lexi deeply, feeling her pain and desperation at being forced -and needing- isolation. But one also remains wary about her, for her cursed nature as a siren means that someone else could possibly die. She assumes something

of the bane of the leper: at once, her character cries out for help and kindness, but the danger of things mean that Lexi cannot accept, or seek, help. But Cole appears determined to find a way through to get to Lexi, and so Cole therefore almost represents an unknowing Christlike figure, seeking to help without knowledge of Lexi's true identity.



Chapters 12 - 22

Chapters 12 - 22 Summary

In Chapter 12, Lexi waits for Cole at the theater in town, and is thrilled when he shows up. They hold hands and nestle up together during the movie. They go for a walk after the movie, and begin heading toward the ocean. Lexi says she has to go home to her grandmother, and Cole walks her to her car. They kiss, and Lexi is enthralled.

In Chapter 13, Lexi and her grandmother go food shopping. Lexi's grandmother encourages her to apply to all of the colleges she wants, and explains her rotary club is considering scholarships. They run into Sienna, who agrees to come over the following day, but wants to show Lexi something that afternoon.

In Chapter 14, Lexi drives to Sienna's house. Lexi remembers the night of her birthday party, hosted by Sienna at her house. On their way to the ocean, Steven kisses Lexi. At Sienna's, Lexi and Sienna bake cookies and Sienna gives Lexi her birthday gift from two years ago, having kept it the whole time. It is a bracelet of glass seed beads. Lexi realizes it is an offer to pick up where they left off, and Lexi accepts.

In Chapter 15, things are quickly changing for the better for Lexi, but she is worried that her return to her old group will mean someone else dying. Sienna and Lexi talk, unsure about the other, but willing to keep trying. Sienna will be coming over to Lexi's for a movie night. As hopeful as Lexi is becoming, she is still worried. Lexi has lunch with everyone, and she realizes she wants her friends back.

In Chapter 16, Lexi spends the afternoon getting her house in order for movie night. When Lexi gets out of the shower, Sienna has already arrived, and is talking with and laughing with Lexi's grandmother. Lexi's grandmother excuses herself, pretending to have a headache, and leaves the girls to their movies. The girls talk about old times, and how much they have missed things. Lexi remembers the camping trip with Sienna and Steven -the camping trip where she decided she was in love with him. Sienna explains that she is happy that when Steven had to leave this world, he was happy because of Lexi. Sienna suggests a double date with her and Patrick, and Lexi and Cole.

In Chapter 17, when Sienna leaves, Lexi decides to go swimming. She realizes to her horror at the lake that Erik is watching her, and she wonders why Erik hasn't followed her in. But Erik disappears into the shadows. Panicked, Sienna runs, collides with a tree, and then returns home, feeling as if Erik is watching her.

In Chapter 18, at school, Lexi wonders how Erik resisted her song. Lexi doesn't understand why Erik is acting so normal after the previous night, either. Lexi is so confused and freaked out she spends the rest of the day in a bathroom stall, hiding.



That night, Cole invites Lexi over to watch a movie. They kiss again, but this kiss is desperate and hungry. Cole is amazed. They snuggle up together.

In Chapter 19, Erik meets Lexi at the lake and apologizes for scaring her. Erik says he is Lexi's match, that he, too, is drawn to the water. He explains that women are sirens, and that men are nixes. A nix and a siren can cure each other. The curse can be broken by love. Nixes are drawn by rivers, by the peacefulness of them. Erik's own parents have broken the curse, for his mother is a siren and his father is a nix. Erik says that Lexi will have to keep swimming until they fall in love. He then leaves.

In Chapter 20, at lunch the next day, Lexi is waved over by Sienna. Erik and Cole are sitting beside one another, and Lexi is nervous about it. Cole invites Lexi to the beach on a picnic, but Lexi excuses herself because of homework. Lexi invites Cole to watch a sunrise instead, and Cole agrees. Sienna invites everyone to a small party at her house on Friday night.

In Chapter 21, on Friday, Lexi heads to Sienna's house. The party turns out to be huge, and Erik looks stunning as he plays pool with Cole. Nikki cannot take her eyes off him. Cole and Lexi go out onto the deck to view the ocean. They hold hands. Lexi, despite feeling worried, feels as though things are perfect with Cole. As the sun goes down, Lexi feels the call of the water, and wrenches herself away from Cole. She fears if Cole discovers the truth about her, that he, like Lexi's father, will leave. Cole says he really likes her, that she should trust him, and let him in. Lexi says she does trust him, but then she leaves in order to save him.

In Chapter 22, Erik meets Lexi at the lake a short while later. Lexi explains her longing for Cole to Erik, and her fears about him leaving. Erik says he can fix it all if they could only fall in love. Erik turns eighteen soon, and he is desperately seeking a siren. Lexi agrees to spend time with him, to see what happens. Yet Lexi feels she is betraying Cole, because she still wants Cole.

Chapters 12 - 22 Analysis

Time continues on for Lexi, and bit by bit, her popularity and friendships continue to be restored. At the same time, Lexi continues growing closer and closer to Cole. Lexi herself is a mixed range of confused emotions, oscillating between sheer happiness and hopefulness, and morbid gravity because of the knowledge of what she is. As if things aren't complicated enough, the insertion of Erik into things further escalates the tension of the situation. Erik reveals to Lexi that there is a way for her curse to be broken, but that it would require her falling in love with him. A nix and a siren therefore can free one another, and someone like Cole could only become an unwitting victim to Lexi's curse.

Because of this, Lexi breaks things off with Cole, choosing to become closer to Erik. The possibility of killing Cole, and the promise of ending her curse, prove to be a siren-like call for Lexi herself. Whatever path she and Cole may have had together, appears to have been irrevocably separated by Lexi's own fears -including the fear that Cole



would probably leave her anyway if he knew the truth. In so doing, Lexi's character assumes something of afflicted martyrdom, and the reader only empathizes with her even more greatly.

Yet interestingly enough, Lexi is still drawn to Cole, by feelings she cannot name. By falling in league with Erik, Lexi feels as if she is betraying Cole in some way. In a larger, more metaphorical sense -perhaps even metaphysically- Lexi is betraying herself as well because the promises of salvation from Erik appear too good to be true, and because she is being drawn into something without real knowledge of what is going to happen -the exact thing she has tried to stop from happening to Cole.



Chapters 23 - 33

Chapters 23 - 33 Summary

In Chapter 23, not one single man has ever stuck by Lexi's siren ancestors, so Lexi considers herself naive for imagining Cole might. At school, Lexi ends things with Cole. Cole is devastated, and Lexi is torn apart. At lunch, Cole is not there, but Erik is, and he has captivated the group. Lexi sees Cole watching from the lunch line, and realizes that Cole now understands that Erik has taken his place in Lexi's heart.

Erik and Lexi later go to see the sunset. Lexi confesses all the things she wants to do, like go to homecoming, play a sport, and move far away. Erik rubs her back.

In Chapter 24, Cole confronts Lexi about Erik, and tells her to have a nice life without him. Erik and Lexi spend the next evening on the boardwalk and race gokarts. They also play putt-putt and get ice cream. Whenever they touch, Lexi finds it electric, and wonders if they really are meant to be together. They talk about the homecoming dance, and kiss. Erik brings Lexi to his house, a small, quaint rental home on the beach. It has been arranged by his parents. They kiss again.

In Chapter 25, Sienna helps Lexi dress sexily to impress Erik. Lexi explains to Sienna that things simply didn't work out with Cole. Lexi, Sienna, Patrick, and Erik are all going to be attending the fall harvest festival off Port Street. They ride a Ferris Wheel, and Lexi and Erik sit together. Erik explains that if Lexi's hunger for the water becomes unbearable, they can go to the ocean. As they walk around, Lexi sees Cole with Nikki, and thinks he may already be over her. Erik and Lexi later dance together, and Lexi is a whirlwind of different emotions, torn between Cole and Erik.

In Chapter 26, after the festival, everyone drives up Route 101, except Cole. They head to the lighthouse and go in through the unlocked, broken back door. Erik takes Lexi to the homecoming dance. Lexi discovers to her horror that Nikki's date is Cole. Erik reveals to Lexi he was in love with a girl named Kate once, but he never makes himself known to Kate, because he is waiting for his siren. Erik and Lexi then have their picture taken. When they go out to eat afterward, they find that Sienna's reservations are no good, because the restaurant has been overbooked. Instead, they go to a diner. On the way to the bathroom there, Lexi runs into Cole, who says her smile for Erik is not genuine like her smile for Steven. Cole confesses he has wanted to be with Lexi for three years.

In Chapter 27, Lexi goes to Erik's house for breakfast the next morning. Erik makes her breakfast, which is a little burned. Erik tells Lexi he loves her, but she isn't sure how to respond at first. She asks why. He says it is because she is beautiful and smart, but Lexi realizes they have never had an intellectual conversation. She doesn't know whether Erik is being genuine, or pretending to love her because it will help break his curse.



In Chapter 28, at last, Erik speaks again, saying they could go to Port Street, another touristy area. Lexi agrees, but doesn't know what exactly she feels for Erik. She begins wondering what Erik's life has been like, what he's all about. Despite all of Erik's attention, Lexi admits to feeling unfulfilled, as though something is missing. But then she realizes that Erik doesn't care about who she is, but what she is.

In Chapter 29, Erik and Lexi return to his house, hand-in-hand, though she feels weird about it now. More and more, Lexi realizes that everything with Erik is about the curse, and not her. Lexi wonders aloud if they are trying too hard; and Erik explains that it is very real to him, that Lexi is amazing to him. Despite his eighteenth birthday being a week away, Erik agrees to give Lexi two days of space to figure things out.

In Chapter 30, despite the promise for space, Erik shows up at the lake when Lexi goes to swim. He says he is worried she is leaving him, but Lexi assures him she needs space. When Erik leaves, Lexi goes swimming, and suddenly feels as she did the night Steven died. Looking around, she finds Cole's body floating in the water. She drags him to shore, and he begins coughing up water. Lexi knows he has almost drowned. When she is sure he will be okay, she leaves.

In Chapter 31, Lexi stays home from school the next day. Lexi knows she has to tell Cole the truth. The next day, Lexi waits for Cole, but Erik finds her instead. Lexi has missed a morning date with Erik. Lexi later goes to the beach outside Cole's house, waiting for him, and Cole asks her what she wants. Lexi tells him to grab his iPod, and they go to the lake. She confesses everything to Cole about herself, about Steven, and about almost drowning Cole. She tells him to put on the iPod as loud as possible, and ties Cole to a tree with his belt. Lexi then goes swimming, and when she comes up, Cole looks terrified. Erik then emerges from the shadows. Sienna emerges from behind another tree. She asks Lexi what she is, but Lexi tells Sienna if she's ever trusted her, she will leave, and Lexi will explain everything the following day. Sienna leaves. Lexi is surprised Erik lets her go.

Lexi begs Erik to let Cole go, but Erik explains that for him, as a nix, the curse can never be broken. He can drown people whenever he wants to, and he feels like it frequently. He has drowned at least a thousand people in the past four hundred years. Erik has taken to drowning sirens because they are a challenge. Erik throws Cole to the ground, and Cole, tied up tightly, struggles to get up. True love can break the curse of Lexi, but it can be true love between a siren and a human. Erik throws Cole in the water, and Lexi lunges for Cole, but crashes into Erik who gets in the way. In the water, Lexi sees that Erik is a hideous, red tentacled monster.

Cole, meanwhile, manages back to shore and has untied himself. Lexi breaks free for a moment, and tells Cole to run, which he does. Cole then swims back into the water and breathes into Lexi's mouth, giving her more air. They struggle to the surface, and Lexi takes Cole's belt, and uses it to strangle Erik. Cole and Lexi then bring Erik's body to the river, dump it in, and let it wash out to the ocean. Cole then tells Lexi that it matters who she is, not what she is. Cole then confesses he loves Lexi.



In Chapter 32, on the way to Cole's house, Lexi and Cole stop at Sienna's, and Lexi goes in. Sienna tells Lexi to never come around her again, or she will expose Lexi for what she is. Cole meets Lexi outside with open arms. Lexi showers at Cole's house, and then they talk. They confess love to one another. A short while later, Lexi jolts awake. She realizes she has been sleeping, and they rush out to the beach. Lexi does not feel the need to swim. The curse is broken. They kiss.

In Chapter 33, Lexi goes to Seaside Cemetery with Cole. Lexi knows she must move on, and she can do it with Cole, because Cole has broken her curse. Lexi then says good bye to Steven.

Chapters 23 - 33 Analysis

Lexi makes the dramatic step to end things with Cole, securing her own position as a martyr, and securing for Cole a place of anguish. Yet, anguish is a perfect word to describe the relationship -or, rather, pseudo-relationship- that Lexi enters into with Erik. Erik appears to be the fulfillment of all of Lexi's dreams, being her date to the homecoming dance, and bringing a sense of normality to her otherwise quite abnormal existence. Despite this, Lexi still feels haunted by Cole, by Steven, and by the fact that Erik seems too good to be true.

Yet, like a meteor in the night, Cole breaks into Lexi's life again. He has overwhelming feelings for her, and he cannot help but try to figure out just what is going on between her and Erik. Cole has wanted Lexi for three years, and doesn't seem as if he is going to give up. Neither does Erik. But as Erik and Lexi grow closer, Lexi's feeling that something is not right with Erik continues to grow. Erik seems primarily concerned with what Lexi is, rather than who she is. The danger that the reader has been feeling associated with the presence of Erik's character reaches a crescendo.

Just as Cole almost succumbs to Lexi's siren call, so too does Lexi almost succumb to the siren-like call of Erik. Erik is a sociopathic nix who kills for fun, and is over four hundred years old. He has the blood of more than a thousand people on his hands. In a dramatic final struggle, Lexi and Cole come together to make a stand against Erik, and they dispose of his body together. The love that Lexi and Cole share is strong enough and real enough to break the curse on Lexi, and she sleeps for the first time in years. Unfortunately, Sienna's discovery of Lexi's true nature is enough for her to end their rekindled friendship, seemingly for good.



Characters

Lexi

As a beautiful seventeen-year-old girl, Lexi seems like she shouldn't be an outcast at Cedar Cove High School, but she is. Held responsible by her former best friend, Sienna, for the death of her brother, Steven, Lexi has shut the world away. Lexi is a siren, having called Steven to his drowning death without realizing what she is. Lexi lives with her grandmother, for her mother is a siren who committed suicide, and her father abandoned the family after her mother revealed what she was to him.

Despite Lexi's best efforts to remain alone, Steven's best friend, Cole, has fallen in love with Lexi, and pursues her. Lexi is morally torn by her love for Cole, and the danger she knows he could be in if she lets him in. At the same time, Lexi visits Steven's grave to speak to Steven, and one night is overheard by Sienna. Realizing that Lexi loved her brother, Sienna welcomes Lexi back into their old circle of friends, and their own friendship is rekindled. Lexi and Cole begin a tenuous relationship.

Lexi, worried about the possibility of Cole being killed, breaks things off with him, and befriends new English student Erik. Erik is a nix, who explains that if Lexi falls in love with him, their curses will both be broken. Lexi gives Erik a try, but then returns to Cole. Erik, who turns out to be a murdering sociopathic nix, tries to kill both Cole and Lexi, but Lexi manages to kill Erik instead. Sienna, upon learning the truth about Lexi, threatens to expose her if she ever comes around again. Despite this, the love between Cole and Lexi is enough to break Lexi's curse and Lexi has a bittersweet ending to her story.

Mrs. Wentworth/Lexi's Grandmother

Mrs. Wentworth is Lexi's grandmother, who suffers from diabetes, and wants to see her granddaughter happy. Lexi cares for her grandmother, taking care to help her manage her diabetes. Mrs. Wentworth helps to rekindle the friendship between Lexi and Sienna, and gives to Lexi the old family diary of entries by past generations of sirens. This better helps Lexi to understand who she is.

Lexi's Mother

Lexi's mother is a siren, in a long line of sirens. She is heartbroken after Lexi's father leaves, and commits suicide by drowning herself.

Sienna

Sienna is the wealthy, extremely popular former best friend of Lexi. Sienna runs the group of friends Lexi used to run, and uses her power to bully Lexi on a daily basis.



Sienna holds Lexi responsible for the death of her brother, Steven, years before. When Sienna discovers that Lexi loved her brother, and has been visiting his grave for years, their friendship is rekindled, and Sienna brings Lexi back into the fold. But upon discovering what Lexi is, Sienna rejects Lexi's friendship and threatens to expose her if she ever comes back around.

Cole Hitchens

Cole Hitchens is the wealthy and extremely attractive best friend of Steven Goode. Cole has been in love with Lexi for three years, and he is the only student at Cedar Cove High who does not bully Lexi. Even after Lexi rejects him, Cole pursues Lexi. Cole is almost killed by Erik, and helps Lexi to dispose of Erik's body. Despite Lexi's being a siren, Cole does not leave. His love for her, and her love for him, breaks the curse of the siren.

Steven Goode

Steven Goode is the first love of Lexi's life, whom she drowns accidentally, not knowing she is a siren. Steven is the brother of Sienna, and his death prompts Sienna to turn her back on Lexi.

Erik

Erik appears as the new kid in English class, but is in actuality, a nix. He attempts to woo Lexi, telling her that their love for one another can break the other's curse. In reality, Erik is over four hundred years old, and is a sociopathic murdering nix, who only wants Lexi to kill her. After attempting to kill both Cole and Lexi, Lexi kills Erik, and together with Cole, dump Erik's body in the river that flows out to sea.

Nikki

Nikki is one of the popular girls in Sienna's clique. Nikki serves as a date for Cole on several outings.

Kristi

Kristi is one of the popular girls in Senna's clique. She bullies Lexi along with everyone else.

Patrick

Patrick is the boyfriend of Sienna, and appears several times throughout the novel as Sienna's date to various places.



Objects/Places

Cedar Cove

Cedar Grove is the tiny, coastal town in which Cedar Cove High School is located. It is also where Lexi, Sienna, Cole, and the other students who attend Cedar Cove High, live.

Cedar Cove High School

Cedar Cove High School is located in Cedar Cove. It is the school attended by Lexi, Cole, Sienna, and the others.

Seaside Cemetery

Seaside Cemetery is where Steven Goode is buried, and where Lexi spends part of every night talking to Steven. It is where Lexi confesses to Sienna that she loved Steven, thus rekindling their friendship.

Lexi's Lake

Lexi's Lake, located in Tillamook State Forest in Oregon, is where Lexi goes to satisfy her unbearable urge to swim. It is where she first encounters, and later kills Erik, and where she saves Cole's life.

The Ocean

The ocean is where Lexi goes swimming with Steven, causing him to drown. The ocean is where Lexi and Cole discover her curse has been broken.

Port Street

Port Street is a touristy area of Cedar Cove. It is where the autumn harvest festival is held, and where Erik, Lexi, and the others go to hang out.

Family Diary

The family diary is given to Lexi by her mother and grandmother. It explains the siren history of their family, and is how Lexi learns what she truly is.

Toyota

A Toyota is Lexi's principle means of transportation. It breaks down, and is fixed by Cole. She uses the car to go from place to place, including her lake in the state forest.

iPod

An iPod is what Lexi has Cole listen to while she demonstrates that she is a siren.

Cole's Belt

Cole's belt is what Lexi uses to tie Cole to a tree, so that he will not follow her into the water. It is also what Lexi uses to strangle Erik.



Themes

Friendship

Friendship is a dominant theme in the novel "Ripple" by Mandy Hubbard. Friendship exists throughout the course of the novel, both in presence and absentia by lack of friendship. It affects much of the plot, primarily between Lexi and the other students.

In absence, friendship has a negative effect on Lexi. Without friends, which she longs for, Lexi feels alone and isolated. Though this is partly by her own choice, Lexi still can't help but feeling inferior. Her former friends are relentless in torturing her by bullying her and taunting her. They do everything from insulting her to tripping her and laughing at her. Furthermore, this lack of friendship means Lexi really has no one to turn to, apart from her grandmother. It can be plainly seen in the way that Lexi carries herself, hiding in the corner of the courtyard and choosing to remain at home.

In presence, friendship means everything to Lexi. Sienna, Nikki, and Kristi, as well as the others represent a place of belonging for Lexi. It is with her friends that Lexi feels normal, as though she is not really a siren, though the thought always plagues her. Her friendship with Sienna means movie nights, fashion advice, and companionship. Sienna helps Lexi make herself up for Erik, and proves to be a confidante when it comes to her breakup with Cole.

But as strong as the rekindled friendship between Lexi and Sienna seems to be, Sienna's discovery of Lexi's true identity means the rejection once more of Lexi.

Love

Love is a dominant and overarching, driving theme in the novel "Ripple" by Mandy Hubbard. Love serves as a catalyst for the events of the book, and as a source for the book's conclusion. The presence of love swirls mainly around Lexi, and appears in genuine and disingenuous form between her and Cole, and her and Erik, respectively.

In genuine form, love appears between Lexi and Steven, and later between Lexi and Cole. Lexi is in love with Steven, so his accidental drowning, which Lexi knows is her fault, hits her especially hard. Her love of Steven brings her to his grave nightly for almost three years. It is Lexi's love that serves as a way back to friendship with Sienna. Indeed, Lexi's love for Cole causes her to push him away so that he will not succumb to her curse as a siren the way that Steven had. But it is Cole's love for Lexi that causes him to risk his life for her, and it is Lexi's love of Cole that causes her to risk her life for him by going after Erik. Ultimately, the love between Lexi and Cole proves strong enough to break the curse, meaning that Lexi is no longer a siren. And Cole continues to remain with her.



In disingenuous form, Erik attempts to get close to Lexi by encouraging her to fall in love with him so that he may kill her. Yet is genuine love of Cole that forces Lexi toward Erik, seeking to find a solution to her problems. Erik prays on Lexi's love for Cole, but doesn't understand the power of love, which ultimately proves to be his undoing.

Mistaken Apperances

Mistaken appearances, thematically, is a major force in the novel "Ripple" by Mandy Hubbard. Mistaken appearances occur in three principle places in the novel, and focus around the characters of Lexi, Erik, and Cole.

For Lexi, the fact that she is not a normal seventeen year-old girl, but rather a siren, is the mistaken appearance given off to others, and to herself initially. Further, the accidental killing of Steven appears to Sienna to have been an avoidable accident, but one that was not avoided because of Lexi. When Sienna realizes that Lexi did in fact love Steven, the truth of things come out, and Sienna seeks to resume their friendship. But when Lexi is discovered to be a siren by Sienna, Sienna wants nothing more to do with Sienna.

For Erik, the mistaken appearance to all but himself and Lexi is that he is a normal seventeen year-old teenage boy. In actuality, he is a nix. Unbeknownst to even Lexi, Erik is actually a sociopathic murdering nix, who wants to kill her rather than save her, as he claims.

For Cole, the mistaken appearance is that he is a male like any other to Lexi. Lexi assumes that if Cole knows the truth about her, he will leave, just like her father. But Cole's love of Lexi, and his courage prove Lexi wrong. He is not just any other male. Indeed, the love that Cole and Lexi share for one another is powerful enough to break the curse that Lexi has dealt with since the night Steven died.



Style

Point of View

Mandy Hubbard tells her novel "Ripple" in the first-person perspective from the point of view of her main character and protagonist, Lexi. Because the novel deals with such dramatic and emotionally-compelling events, the story is told from Lexi's eyes. Doing this allows the reader to emotionally connect with Lexi, despite her dangerous and controversial nature as a siren. It also allows the reader to discover she is a morally-centered and emotionally-beautiful person, who does her best in spite of her reality.

Setting

Mandy Hubbard sets her novel "Ripple" in the tiny seaside town of Cedar Cove, and in the mountains of Tillamook State Forest of Oregon. The setting, full of misty mountains and gray skies works perfectly for the mood of the novel, the plot of which is emotionally stormy for Lexi. Indeed, the isolation of the lake in the forest, visited by Lexi, serves to be metaphorical for her own social isolation. It is also a perfect setting for Lexi because her desire to be drawn to water can be fulfilled either by the ocean in one direction or the mountain lake in another.

Language and Meaning

Because Mandy Hubbard tells her novel "Ripple" from the point of view of a sad, yet hopeful seventeen year old girl, she employs language that is simple with touches of poetic elegance. Doing this reveals that Lexi's character is not only intelligent, but emotionally complex, and worthy of attention. It further makes the novel that much more believable, because the language seems to genuinely come from a teenager.

Structure

Mandy Hubbard divides her novel "Ripple" into thirty-three consecutive and chronological chapters, which suits the novel well. Because the focus of the novel is on Lexi, and the whirlwind of events around her, Hubbard chooses not to confuse the reader with complicated structuring of the novel. Rather, she allows the plot to proceed unhindered, thereby causing a smooth flow and transition between chapters.



Quotes

"I need water like I need air" Chapter 2, p. 12).

"It's so hard to be around Sienna and not think about everything we shared growing up... How can it be two years now since we shared that stuff" (Chapter 7, p. 55).

"And now, despite the risks, I'm letting Cole in, inch by inch. And the scary thing is, this time I know what could happen" (Chapter 11, p. 86).

"Trust me, it's beautiful. There's a sort of mist that clings to the ocean, and it makes it feel like you're the only person in the world" (Chapter 20, p. 140).

"If he knows what I am, he'll never talk to me again. Just like my dad" (Chapter 24, p. 163).

"Our car stops at the tip-top, so that Sienna and Patrick aren't in view anymore, and it's just Erik and me, like we're the only souls on earth. The faint sounds of the band still trickle up to us, but it's a ballad now, a sweet violin solo as our only company in the darkness" (Chapter 25, p. 177).

"Because even when he was dead, I couldn't compete with Steven" (Chapter 26, p. 199).

"He doesn't even know who I am, and yet it doesn't seem to bother him. It's about what I am" (Chapter 28, p. 208).

"He's the only thing that's ever mattered. He's the only person I've wanted to be close to ever since I knew the truth about myself. It's him or no one" (Chapter 31, p. 223).

"I don't give a damn about all this. It might be what you are, but it's not who you are" (Chapter 31, p. 246).



Topics for Discussion

Discuss the theme of mistaken appearances in the novel "Ripple" by Mandy Hubbard. What are mistaken appearances? How do they affect Lexi, Cole, and Erik? How do mistaken appearances affect the trio of characters, and why?

Lexi holds herself responsible for the death of Steven Goode, even though she did not know she was a siren, and his death was unavoidable. Is this an accurate assertion? Is Lexi truly to blame for the death of Steven? Why or why not?

Discuss the theme of love in the novel "Ripple" by Mandy Hubbard. Why is love such a powerful force in the novel, and how does it drive the plot? What conclusions come about because of love's presence in the novel?

Lexi takes great pains to cut herself off from her friends, and from a social life. Why is this the case? What does she fear? Is her isolation totally self-imposed, or partially forced? Why? How does Lexi feel because of this isolation?

Discuss the theme of friendship in the novel "Ripple" by Mandy Hubbard. In what places does friendship appear, and how does it help drive the plot of the novel? Why is Lexi's friendship with Sienna so important to her? Is the friendship between Sienna and Lexi real? Why or why not? Provide evidence to support your position.