

Shattered Mirror Study Guide

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Plot Summary

Sarah Vida is a vampire hunter by night but carries on the semblance of a normal teenager during the day. She attends school and has just been forced to change schools as the story opens. Sarah has gone alone into a den of vampires and been injured, prompting a visit to a healer, Caryn Smoke. Caryn warns Sarah that there are vampires at her new school in Action, Massachusetts, but assures her that they are living a peaceful lifestyle. Sarah promises that she won't start any fights with any of the vampires who are attempting to live peacefully. She soon meets a pair of vampires that she initially believes to be twins, Christopher and Nissa, but later learns that Christopher is actually the twin of the famous vampire, Nikolas, and Nissa is their older sister.

Sarah constantly feels inferior to her mother and sister, both who are famous and seem to be perfect vampire hunters. As her friendship with Christopher and Nissa grows, Sarah knows her mother would greatly disapprove. She comes to realize she's going to have to tell Christopher and Nissa the truth about her family and dreads it because she has come to regard them as friends. Then Sarah learns that Nissa was changed to a vampire by force and that she chose to change Nikolas because he was about to be executed and she wanted to save him. Nikolas changed Christopher. Nikolas spirals out of control while Christopher and Nissa try to live peacefully.

Sarah also discovers a young student named Robert is seeking revenge on the vampire who bonds to his sister. Robert gives Sarah some valuable information and she zeroes in on Nikolas and then discovers that he is Christopher's identical twin that Nissa had told her about. Sarah puts herself in danger in an effort to kill Nikolas but is injured for her efforts. Sarah later finds another of the famous vampires, Kaleo, and discovers he's not as evil as she had initially believed.

As the story comes to a climax, Sarah finds herself fighting Christopher and Nikolas. Sarah is unable to win against the pair who fight as if they are of a single mind. Sarah eventually falls to their strength and both bite her neck. They take only a little of her own blood but Christopher then cuts a small gash in his own throat and Sarah, weakened and under the control of the combined minds of the twins, is unable to resist. She sucks at his blood and then repeats at Nikolas's throat.

Adianna, Sarah's older sister, finds Sarah and knows she's too near death to save. Christopher arrives and admits that he'd lost control during the fight. Both Christopher and Adianna know the only way to save Sarah's life is to turn her into a vampire and Christopher does this as Adianna leaves. Sarah wakes and knows that she will now be battling her family and that the honorable thing would be to kill herself, but she doesn't. She also refuses to remain with Christopher, saying she has to find her own way to live.



Chapters 1 through 3

Chapters 1 through 3 Summary

As the story opens, Sarah Vida is pulling up in front of a house where there's a party underway. Sarah is a witch and a vampire hunter and she is on the trail of an infamous vampire named Nikolas. Sarah's family has a history with Nikolas who has roamed and killed since the 1800s. His first victim was Sarah's ancestor, Elisabeth Vida, who was also a vampire hunter. Sarah has been tipped off to a party in which humans who are "bonded" to vampires allow their vampire counterparts to feed off them. Sarah says she doesn't like being alone in this situation but she hadn't had time to make many calls on the drive over and no one had answered. Sarah knows she's in danger because she's the only vampire hunter in a huge group of strong vampires, but she doesn't leave. She also knows the killing of the humans who are at the party will begin at midnight, referred to as "the Devil's Hour." When that time nears, Sarah manages to be alone with a relatively weak vampire. He says he isn't certain Kaleo meant for that room to be used. Sarah is momentarily taken aback by the mention of Kaleo's name and notes that he's also an infamous vampire who most hunters would love to kill. Sarah distracts the vampire by baring her neck and, while he is staring there, she retrieves her knife from a sheath on her back and stabs him, killing him quickly and silently with her magic knife.

Just then Sarah realizes there's another vampire in the room. She recognizes him as Kaleo and considers trying to kill him as well even though she knows it would mean her own death. Kaleo's first words are to point to the place Sarah has hidden the body of her victim and to say that the man was "rather a pain." Sarah reaches for her knife as the chapter comes to an end.

In Chapter 2, Caryn Smoke asks if Sarah drove herself home and Sarah says she did. Sarah remembers the fight with Kaleo, including having both bones in her right forearm broken in the opening blow of the fight. Sarah says that it was only because the vampires were so engrossed in their feeding that she was able to escape. Sarah's mother, Dominique, arrives and checks in on Sarah. She's very disapproving and says Sarah was careless. Caryn finishes setting Sarah's arm and says she'll need "a week or so to heal completely." Dominique apologizes for having brought Caryn out so late but Caryn says she was visiting a SingleEarth hospital nearby. Both Dominique and Sarah don't show their dislike for SingleEarth, an organization dedicated to allowing all creatures - including vampires, witches, shapeshifters, and humans - to live together peacefully. Caryn asks if Sarah will be at school the following day and Sarah assures her she will.

Sarah has recently been expelled from her former school after a fight with a vampire resulted in that vampire's death and the destruction of school property. The vampire's body wasn't found, thanks to Sarah's sister, Adianna. But the broken school property resulted in her expulsion. Sarah is slated to begin a new high school in Acton, Massachusetts, the following day. Sarah knows her mother will have no sympathy and



that Sarah will be expected to begin on time. Caryn warns Sarah that there are "a few vampires" at the school but that they are all living peacefully. She warns Sarah against hurting any of them and Sarah says she won't if they are harmless. Just then Adianna arrives, notes the cast, and says Sarah obviously needs a week off the vampire hunting.

In Chapter 3, Sarah arrives at school where she's registered as Sarah Green. Her first class is American History. The teacher says she must sit by Robert - a boy who looks vaguely familiar to Sarah - but Robert says that seat is taken. Another boy, Christopher Ravena, offers Sarah an empty seat by him. Sarah immediately recognizes him as a vampire but knows he doesn't actively feed off live human victims. She knows that he's weak as a vampire and, because of that, doesn't recognize her as a vampire hunter. With no real option, Sarah takes the seat. Christopher asks if Sarah has moved to the area and she says her mother has just secured a teaching job in a nearby town. When he asks how she hurt her arm, she says she was thrown from a horse. Christopher offers to help Sarah with her backpack. She tries to refuse but he's very nice about it and she gives in rather than making a scene.

Her third period class is art and Sarah finds herself seated near Christopher's twin, Nissa. Sarah notes Nissa's weak aura and realizes that Nissa and Christopher must be from Kenda's line of vampires, a fact Sarah deduces from Nissa's evident artistic talent. Sarah is staring at Nissa's elaborate sculpture of a young man seated on a bench. When Nissa looks up, Sarah compliments her on the sculpture. Nissa then invites Sarah to join her for lunch, saying Christopher will be there as well. Sarah goes back to her locker, hoping Nissa will lose interest and go ahead without her, but Nissa remains near Sarah and Sarah finds she again has no option other than to be rude or make a scene. When Sarah arrives at her locker, she finds a piece of paper inside. It's a drawing of Sarah with Christopher's initials at the bottom, and Sarah realizes Christopher probably drew it while she was trying to ignore him during her first period class.

Chapters 1 through 3 Analysis

From the first look at Sarah during her arrival at the vampire's party in Chapter 1, it's clear that she's out to prove something. Sarah notes that any vampire hunter would be proud to take down a cell of vampires this strong, but she admits to being worried about being there without backup. This aspect of Sarah's character will be seen throughout the story as she deals with situations. She will later indicate a comparison to her sister, Adianna, and feel that she's always lacking next to Adianna. When Adianna arrives in the room after Sarah has been fitted with a cast, she is wearing jeans that have a "smear of blood." Sarah notes that it was evident Adianna had "been fighting and she had just as obviously won." Adianna is only a year older than Sarah and has just graduated high school but is taking time off before starting college, apparently to look after Sarah. Sarah also reveals that she never measures up in the eyes of her mother.

There's an important moment of foreshadowing in the first chapter when Sarah has just killed the first vampire. Sarah stares at the creature for a moment, "wondering how any person would willingly become a creature who fed on humanity." Sarah will become a



vampire at the end of this book and she hungrily takes in the blood that's offered to save her life. Even then, it's noted that any true daughter of the Vida clan would kill herself rather than live as a vampire but Sarah's will to live is stronger than that.



Chapters 4 through 6

Chapters 4 through 6 Summary

In Chapter 4, Nissa leads Sarah to the table she usually shares with Christopher. Sarah thinks to herself that she's fortunate that neither of the vampires is strong enough to reach her aura so they don't know she's a vampire hunting witch, but then she modifies that thought, realizing if they did know she is a witch they might have avoided her altogether, eliminating her current predicament. Sarah hesitates but then takes a seat just as Robert approaches. Robert asks Nissa if she's going to the dance that weekend and Nissa says she's going "stag." Robert says he'll see her there and leaves. Christopher says that Robert has been interested in Nissa since they met and Nissa says that Robert is usually interested in any girl and wonders why he didn't seem interested in Sarah. Christopher and Nissa move on to other topics but something about the encounter worries Sarah. Sarah senses that Robert simply doesn't like her and doesn't like that she's sitting with Christopher and Nissa but can't imagine why that would be the case.

Christopher asks if Sarah is going to the dance that weekend and she says she can't. Sarah says that she is having a family event that she can't miss. In fact, it's Halloween and the family event is "Samhain," which Sarah says is just about the only holiday witches can celebrate without "unnerving" humans. Sarah finds she likes Christopher and Nissa but knows she can't allow herself to become more friendly with them. She can quote her mother's rule on the topic, that allows "some tolerant association" but stops at that. The remainder of the rule indicates that friendship and love is impossible because Sarah is a hunter of the vampires. Sarah knows that other vampire hunters will stop trusting her if it becomes known that she's friends with vampires. She also knows that her mother will not hesitate to punish Sarah and that it could result in a trial or even being stripped of her powers. With that thought, Sarah leaves the cafeteria and after she's gone, realizes she's already referring to Nissa and Christopher by their names. She has already forgotten she might someday have to kill them because they are vampires. Sarah doesn't have any contact with them for the rest of the day.

In Chapter 5, Sarah doesn't rest well and is sluggish when she goes to school the next day. When she finally gets her locker open, she knocks a vase of roses off the shelf, shattering the vase. The sound of the glass hitting the floor brings back memories of Sarah's father's death. Sarah had been the one to find her father's body on the front steps of their home. He'd been held by vampires for weeks, bled slowly, and died a painful death. Sarah discovered the body and had been so enraged that she'd lashed out, striking a window with her fist. Her mother was furious at Sarah's lack of control. As punishment, Sarah's powers were bound and she was forced to heal as a human would, slowly and painfully. She'd also been forced to train rigorously and taught to control herself.



Sarah brings herself back to the present and reads the poem Christopher left with the roses. The poem refers to a place "where secrets weather like untouched gold," and Sarah is touched by how true the words are, though Christopher would have no way of knowing that. Robert and Sarah are assigned to the same group for a project in one of her classes and Robert remains rude with Sarah to the point she knows she'll have to talk to him about it at some point. In art class, Sarah continues to work on her sculpture of a dog and Nissa names it "Splotch." Sarah notes Nissa's sculpture now has a face and when she asks if it's modeled after someone in specific, Nissa says it's Kaleo, someone she "used to know." She finds another drawing from Christopher in her locker, this time of her left hand - the one she's been using since her right hand is in a cast. There's also a poem that ends with the question, "Could this goddess be mortal, after all?"

In Chapter 6, Sarah asks Christopher if the poems were from him. He says they are and she's amazed by the fact that he simply admits it without asking if she liked them or offering anything resembling an apology. She asks why and he says it's because she "makes a good subject." He then extols her virtues, including the way she seems to see more than most people. Sarah is flattered and almost blushes. Just then Nissa arrives and says that Christopher has talked about nothing but Sarah since the previous day. They continue to talk, Nissa saying Christopher has an incredible artistic talent he won't hone with classes. Sarah finds herself wondering why she can't just be friends with the two vampires. Just then, Adianna arrives.

Adianna points out that Dominique will be furious if she discovers Sarah is spending time with vampires, even if they are weak and basically harmless. Adianna says she can barely stand the thought of Sarah spending time with them but says she won't tell Dominique. Adianna then says she understands that Sarah has moved away from her old hunting partners and might be having doubts. Sarah breaks in, angry, and says she doesn't have doubts. She says Christopher and Nissa are simply treating her as they would an ordinary human girl and she says that's nice for a change. Sarah then says she doesn't feel as if she has to watch her back every moment she's with Christopher and Nissa, and Adianna says this is dangerous because it means Sarah will let her guard down. Adianna points out that Nissa and Christopher are vampires. She says they are natural killers and that all vampires eventually return to that. Adianna says it is only a matter of time before the vampires turn on Sarah and that she's trying to protect Sarah. Adianna leaves with a warning that if Sarah is hurt because of Christopher and Nissa, Adianna will be the one who kills them. Adianna then says she actually came to the school to tell Sarah that Dominique is leaving town for a few days and that Adianna is headed to Chicago, meaning Sarah will be on her own. Sarah returns to the school and is thinking about the predicament. As much as she likes Christopher and Nissa, she remembers the pain of having her parents bound the day she found her father's body and won't allow that to happen again.

Sarah avoids Christopher and Nissa the rest of the day but that night she finds a card from him hidden inside her calculus book. That note prompts her to decide that she'll tell him who she is so that he'll stop making contact with her.



Chapters 4 through 6 Analysis

Sarah usually spends a great deal of her time outside school hunting vampires. While she has her arm in a cast, she's forced to stop that activity. Sarah feels "like a caged leopard" the first night she has to remain at home. This revelation is an indication that Sarah has defined herself by this aspect of her life. She seems to have no other interests in her life and this will prove to make her transition at the end of the book that much more difficult.

The poem Christopher writes about Sarah's left hand includes a reference to a small scar. Sarah got the scar from hitting a window when she discovered her father's body and she believes it to be a reminder of a moment when she lost control and was punished for it. However, Christopher's poem gives her a new perspective of the scar. Christopher's poem indicates that he'd looked at that scar as a mystery.

Sarah confides in Adianna that one of the reasons she enjoys having a friendship with Nissa and Christopher is that she doesn't have to wonder if she might have done something to get them killed. She is referring to her feelings with her former hunting partners and it obviously weighs on her that she might make a mistake while hunting with others that would result in the deaths of her friends. This is an interesting perspective on the roles of the individual hunters within a group but it's also interesting that Sarah seems not to have considered that her mere association with Christopher and Nissa might result in their deaths.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

In Chapter 7, Nissa's first words to Sarah are to ask if there's something wrong. Nissa says Christopher believes he's offended Sarah. Sarah assures her that isn't the problem and Nissa asks that if Sarah isn't "interested" in Christopher, that she simply say so to avoid hurting his feelings. By the time she sees Christopher, she is wavering in her pledge to tell him about herself. She doesn't have another chance but that afternoon Christopher asks if she'd like to go to lunch with him on Saturday. He asks that she think about it and leaves his phone number with her. That evening, Sarah tries to call Christopher but the phone is busy. She mulls over Nissa's words and realizes that Christopher does deserve an explanation. She decides she'll go to their house and have the conversation to get it over with. She tries to reassure herself on the way that she's doing the right thing. As weak as Christopher and Nissa are, Sarah expects to find out they are part of SingleEarth and hopes she's right.

In Chapter 8, a vampire Sarah doesn't know answers the door at Christopher and Nissa's house, but he's also very weak. She enters to discover there's a "bash" in progress, a party in which humans allow vampires to feed on them. Sarah quickly discovers Nissa on the couch, sucking blood from the neck of a boy. The vampire who answers the door asks who invited Sarah but before she can answer Christopher intervenes and the other vampire leaves. Christopher says he can explain but Sarah stops him, saying it isn't necessary. Nissa discovers Sarah's presence and the three go to Nissa's room.

The conversation is awkward at first and Nissa warns Sarah not to allow herself to land at one of the bashes hosted by Kendra's group. Nissa says Kaleo travels in that group which prompts Sarah to ask about him. Nissa begins the story of how she was turned into a vampire. Nissa says she and her family lived in the South prior to the start of the Civil War. Nissa cared for the daughters at a plantation near her home and her two brothers worked as stable hands for another family. Nissa then reveals that Christopher has a twin brother and says their mother died with the boys were very young, leaving Nissa in charge. Nissa says she was artistic and that talent drew Kaleo to her. She and Kaleo fell in love and then she found out that he was a vampire. Nissa believes Kaleo wouldn't harm people and their relationship continued. However, Kaleo offered to turn Nissa and was angry when she refused. Kaleo then killed Nissa's father and said he'd do the same to the twins if Nissa didn't become a vampire. She accepted and remained with her brothers for a few years, then changed one of them who changed the other. Sarah suddenly can't bring herself to reveal her identity because of the way Nissa bared her soul, and she instead asks why Nissa and Christopher go to school. Nissa says it's to remind them of their own humanity. Nissa asks again if Sarah is certain she can't attend the dance and she decides she'll defy Dominique with this one small act before revealing herself to the vampires.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

Christopher asks if Sarah is part of SingleEarth and it seems to make an impression on Sarah that Christopher would jump to the conclusion that she's a member of SingleEarth rather than thinking she is a vampire hunter. Christopher says Nissa hosts these events and that he "just hangs out." Christopher then asks if Sarah frequents similar events and she says she attends when she can, obviously referring to her efforts to kill vampires at the events. Christopher is immediately concerned for her, saying not all the bashes are as safe as the ones hosted by Nissa. Sarah has already noted that there is no danger to the humans at the party and that Nissa withdrew before harming her victim.



Chapter 9 through 11

Chapter 9 through 11 Summary

In Chapter 9, Sarah prepares for the dance but carefully takes all her knives, just to be safe. She knows that she has many enemies in the vampire world that would recognize her witch's aura, especially on this day. Christopher asks her to dance and she accepts though she senses the presence of another witch nearby which makes her uneasy. She suddenly realizes it's Adianna and breaks off contact with Christopher. There's a brief conflict between Adianna and Sarah but Sarah, using her mental connection to Adianna, pleads silently for time to tell Christopher what she is without putting him in danger. Adianna nods, allowing Sarah that time, and backs away.

In Chapter 10, Sarah leads Christopher to the back of the building where their conversation won't be overheard and tells him not to contact her anymore. He is obviously hurt and she tells him it's because she's a witch. Christopher says he doesn't care who she is and she reveals that Dominique Vida - an infamous vampire hunter - is her mother. Christopher responds that Sarah doesn't "seem the type" to be a vampire hunter. Sarah tells Christopher that she isn't going to kill him but she has to break off contact because she doesn't want her family to kill him. Christopher points out that Sarah is a teenager and that she's expected to rebel. Sarah says her powers and magic could be taken away. Christopher counters, saying Sarah is strong and could survive. Sarah says she's killed many vampires and would never be able to survive against her enemies without her power. Christopher walks away and is obviously angry and hurt.

In Chapter 11, Sarah rushes to her car and leaves the school property. It's almost eleven o'clock when she reaches SingleEarth Haven. She quickly finds Caryn who agrees that Sarah can remain at the facility for the night. Sarah says she can't face her mother and Caryn says she's welcome to remain as long as she does so peacefully. Sarah joins a party in progress but finds she is unable to relax. Christopher arrives and Sarah discovers he has an injured human with him. Sarah discovers the victim has been marked by Nikolas, a series of cuts identifying her as his property. Christopher says there was a fight which prompted the girl's injuries.

Sarah knows that her mother or Adianna would have demanded Christopher give information about Nikolas's whereabouts but she doesn't. She's also worried that Christopher is the one to bring the victim to Caryn but he says he wasn't at the bash and had been called only to help the victim.

Chapter 9 through 11 Analysis

Though there isn't a great deal of information revealed about Sarah, she does say that she's "a daughter of Macht." This is never fully explained though it's obviously a line of witches. It's noted that Sarah's people - unlike the "modern Wiccans," have never been



human. There are other references to Sarah's powers including her ability to heal quickly from serious injuries. At one point, she is attempting to sneak into a house and she makes herself virtually invisible. In that case, the humans who "see" her would register nothing more than a movement and would probably put it down to wind.

Christopher's feelings are hurt as Sarah breaks off their budding friendship. He is initially sad, feeling that Sarah is rejecting him. When she reveals the truth that she's a vampire hunter, he claims not to care and then grows angry. Sarah knows however that he's using the anger to cover up the sorrow. This is an important point because it helps explain Christopher's action when they encounter each other later in the story.

There's a statement by Christopher that prompts questions in Sarah's mind but she isn't able to follow up on it at the time of the conversation. Christopher says that whenever there's a fight, he walks away. He then says this is how he's survived for the past fifty years. Sarah knows that Christopher has been a vampire much longer than this because Nissa said they'd been changed around the time of the Civil War. This is an indication that Christopher actively hunted and fought until the past fifty years.



Chapters 12 and 13

Chapters 12 and 13 Summary

In Chapter 12, Christopher is not in school the next day and when Sarah unexpectedly bumps into Nissa, she asks if Christopher is okay. Nissa says he'd been upset after the dance and had gone to visit his brother, returning home after sunup. Just then Robert appears in the parking lot and Nissa says he was at a bash the previous night. Sarah suddenly realizes that she'd seen Robert at the bash the night she'd encountered Kaleo and she goes to talk to him. Sarah confronts him, asking why he's following the vampires. She discovers that he believes himself a hunter of sorts and he realizes Sarah had been seeking Nikolas the night she'd encountered Kaleo. Robert then reveals that his sister, Christine, had been at one of Nikolas's bashes and Nikolas had carved his name into her arm. She is now emotionally wrecked. He says she is virtually unresponsive but goes into screaming fits if she sees colors other than black and white, especially red. Robert provides an address he says is Nikolas's house.

In Chapter 13, Sarah skips school and, at ten that morning, goes to Nikolas's house. She notes a high level of vampiric aura but also knows there are some humans in the house. She goes inside to find the house is totally decorated in black and white. From Robert's information about Christine's aversion to colors, Sarah believes she's at the right place. She sense Nikolas on an upper floor of the house and makes her way there. When she sees him, she hesitates, initially believing she's seeing Christopher before she realizes Nikolas and Christopher are twins.

Nikolas uses his power to keep her helpless while he carves his name into her arm. He then begins to carve roses and ivy on down her arm and when he reaches the wrist, he has to shift his weight momentarily. Sarah manages to pull away, grab her knife, and take a swing at Nikolas but he avoids her. He then tells her to get out of his house and disappears. Sarah uses her power to search for signs of him but discovers everyone has left the house.

Chapters 12 and 13 Analysis

There's a bit of humor seen in the scene in which Sarah is captured by Nikolas. Nikolas is telling Sarah that she can avoid some of the pain by begging him to stop but Sarah refuses. Then she realizes that he's carving his name in her arm. She notes that she's going to be "really annoyed" if the cuts leave a scar. Nikolas again invites her to beg for him to stop but she still refuses. She tells him that he needs to hurry up because she's going to have to go to the drug store before she goes home. She says she's "out of Band-aids."

Nikolas says Sarah isn't "as quick as some of your kin," referring to Elisabeth Vida. Sarah then asks if Elisabeth had managed to cut Nikolas before he died and Nikolas



says she didn't cut him, indicating she did cut someone else. That person was Christopher. Christopher told Sarah on the night of the dance that he'd been cut by a Vida blade and lived to tell about it, but he didn't elaborate.

There's an interesting conversation between Nikolas and Sarah as she arrives at his house. Nikolas says he doesn't know what to do with her which seems odd because he obviously knows who Sarah is. She has killed so many vampires that it seems obvious he would kill her, but he doesn't.



Chapters 14 through 18

Chapters 14 through 18 Summary

In Chapter 14, Adianna takes Sarah to Caryn's for medical attention. Caryn sees Nikolas's name carved into Sarah's flesh and Adianna figures out that Sarah was after Nikolas and that he got away. Sarah remembers the moment she'd hesitated when she first saw Nikolas and Adianna is certain that Sarah would have had the chance to fight if she hadn't made a mistake.

In Chapter 15, Sarah arrives at school to discover a white rose and a card with an address printed on it - 129 Ash Road. Sarah goes to Nissa, demanding to know why she would be invited to a bash. Nissa insists neither she nor Christopher left the card. She also says it would be very dangerous for Sarah to go. Sarah says she can't ignore an opportunity to kill Nikolas because she's afraid. Nissa says she feels guilt for every one of Nikolas's victims because she is the one who turned him.

In Chapter 16, Nissa says Nikolas was in jail about to be hanged for murder when she changed him. Nissa says that Kaleo didn't let her kill when she hunted the first time and that she's always been grateful for that. However, Nikolas woke for the first time as a vampire while Nissa was away and Kendra took him hunting, teaching him to kill in the process. Nissa says Nikolas turned Christopher the following night and the two of them disappeared from Nissa's life for months.

In Chapter 17, Sarah tells Adianna she's going to hunt in the city but goes to Nikolas's house on Ash Road. When Sarah arrives at the house, she discovers Kaleo is there in a bright red shirt. Nikolas says he doesn't kill until midnight and that he never lies. Sarah reluctantly accepts his offer of a truce until that time. In Chapter 18, Sarah and Nikolas verbally spar and Sarah is disgusted to see the adoration on the faces of the women who have Nikolas's name carved into their bodies.

Chapters 14 through 18 Analysis

The situation in which Sarah is going hunting for Nikolas is very complicated. Apparently, Nikolas has now effectively marked Sarah as his own which means other vampires won't kill her at this bash Nikolas is hosting. Sarah believes she is only in danger from Nikolas but that other hunters would be in even greater danger. Sarah comes to the conclusion that the safest thing is for her to take down Nikolas by herself without any other hunters.

There are some interesting points of symbolism within the story, especially as relates to color. Robert's sister surrounds herself with black and white and has an aversion to the color red. Nikolas's house is black and white with little other color in the entire house. However, the night Sarah arrives at Nikolas's party, Kaleo is there and he is wearing a

bright red shirt. Later, it will be Kaleo who takes Robert's sister in, hoping to help her heal.



Chapters 19 through 21

Chapters 19 through 21 Summary

In Chapter 19, Adianna appears, saying she'd just discovered from Christopher where Sarah had gone. Nikolas tells Adianna she can leave but Adianna attacks. Sarah is attacked by some of the humans and Nikolas pins Adianna against the wall while Sarah is dealing with the humans. Sarah agrees to put down all her weapons if Nikolas will set Adianna free. Nikolas disappears with Adianna and then reappears "an instant later" without Adianna. Sarah hopes that he's simply taken her some distance away and left her but knows it's possible that Adianna is now "somewhere in Europe, trying to find a phone to call Dominique to arrange a plane home."

In Chapter 20, Sarah says she can't kill Nikolas without her knives but that she also refuses to beg for her life. Nikolas is just brushing her throat with his fangs when Christopher tells him to stop. There's a long conversation between the brothers as they remember their past, including hunting together and how they'd bonded Marguerite to them. Christopher, weak from lack of blood, is wavering under Nikolas's pleading. Nikolas begs Christopher to rejoin him and says they can hunt together again. Sarah sees Christopher wavering, trying to withdraw but unable to fight the blood lust he's feeling. Sarah is bleeding from her hand and Christopher licks the blood away. Sarah finds an opening and lunges away. She pins Christopher with her magic and threatens to kill him. When Nikolas calls her bluff, saying she won't kill him, Sarah points out that Christopher had just licked the blood off her hand and she takes that as a threat. Nikolas eventually agrees to allow Sarah to leave safely. As she's leaving, Sarah warns that Christopher will have to feed soon or die from her magic. Nikolas pulls Christopher to his own throat as Sarah leaves.

In Chapter 21, Adianna is furious when Sarah returns home. She says Sarah has forgotten that her role is to protect humans from vampires and that she isn't supposed to put herself into dangerous situations where she'll be killed over a personal insult. Sarah knows that she's going to have tough decisions ahead and that she'll probably have to kill Nissa and Christopher.

Chapters 19 through 21 Analysis

Sarah fully believes it means she'll die at Nikolas's bash but willingly gives her knives up anyway. She notes that the Vida line must go on and that Adianna hasn't done anything to disgrace the family, including befriending vampires. Sarah believes that Adianna is "a better Vida than Sarah could ever be." It's interesting that Sarah isn't angry at Adianna for allowing herself to get into this position. Sarah also doesn't point out that she wouldn't have to give up her weapons to save Adianna's life if Adianna hadn't shown up.

Sarah is beginning to sympathize with the vampires she's hunting. She is seeing the relationship between Nissa, Christopher and Nikolas, especially the bond between the twins. Sarah is willing to admit that she'd do whatever is necessary to protect Adianna.



Chapters 22 through 25

Chapters 22 through 25 Summary

In Chapter 22, Sarah insists that Robert take her to meet his sister. Robert refuses until Sarah takes off her jacket and shows him the jagged scars of Nikolas's inscription. Robert then agrees, saying that he doesn't believe Christine will talk to Sarah but he hopes the meeting will somehow help Sarah kill Nikolas.

In Chapter 23, Robert warns Sarah not to "bully" Christine into talking. Christine doesn't initially acknowledge Sarah but then Sarah moves so that her wounds are in Christine's line of sight. Christine stops what she's doing and asks if "he" send Sarah. She is obviously hoping this is the case but that she wants to talk about Nikolas. Christine begins to talk, saying a girl named Heather took her to the bash. She says the rooms were filled with color and that she'd been nervous until she saw Nikolas. She says she doesn't remember when Nikolas made the marks on her but that it didn't hurt. Christine says Nikolas had taken some of her blood and that it had felt good. However, when Nikolas says he wants to make Christine his own, she says she has to go home because her brother would be sad if she didn't. She says Nikolas then pushed her away and told her to get out. Christine stops talking then.

In Chapter 24, Nissa arrives and says that Nikolas is looking for Sarah. She notices Christine and says that even though it's Nikolas's marks on her, there's evidence that it's Kaleo's work that made her mentally unstable. Nissa says she knows someone who might help and Sarah agrees. Nissa disappears and when Robert is surprised, Sarah says that's a common vampire tactic. She says Nissa could be anywhere in the world in seconds with no more effort than a human's blink. Sarah moves so that her back is against the wall, waiting for Nissa's return and hoping she won't have to fight. Nissa returns shortly with Nikolas. Nikolas questions Christine and discovers that Kaleo had bitten her. He says he's going to take her away and protect her but Robert objects until Nikolas says that Kaleo has been repeatedly feeding on her since the initial attack. Nikolas says he couldn't protect his father from Kaleo but that he will kill Kaleo for what he's done to Christine. He promises that he'll return Christine to her home once he's certain it's safe.

In Chapter 25, Nissa leaves Robert and Sarah alone. Sarah has a note Nikolas threw to her as he was leaving and she takes time now to read it. It's a poem that ends in the words, "A shattered mirror shows a shattered truth." On the opposite side of the paper is a drawing of Christopher and Nikolas, or perhaps Nikolas looking at a reflection of himself. The words "Midnight, my house" appear below the drawing. Robert asks if Sarah is going but she says Nikolas, despite his recent actions, will try to kill her if she does. Sarah says she'll be hunting for Kaleo later but for now she's going to focus on finding a way to kill Nikolas. Robert says she can't because Nikolas is trying to help Christine. Sarah says Robert has forgotten that Nikolas is a killer.



Chapters 22 through 25 Analysis

There are several names in the story that are not consistent throughout the story. For example, Christopher and Nicholas are Nissa's twin brothers but they change their names to Kristopher and Nikolas when they distance themselves from Nissa and begin hunting together. Christopher returns to his original spelling when he returns to Nissa. In another instance, Robert's sister is named Christine but Nikolas apparently convinces her she should be called Kristin. For the sake of continuity, the names Christopher, Nikolas, and Christine are used throughout this study guide.

There's a convoluted conversation between Nissa and Sarah in which Nissa tries to figure out why Nikolas is protecting Christine. Sarah points out that Nikolas has pledged not to kill Christine but that he will kill some other innocent girl. Nissa says Nikolas and Christopher have always had plenty of admirers who are willing to let the twins feed off them. They have also encountered many people throughout the years who wanted to die at the hands of the vampires. She says despite this, neither of the boys is cruel. However, she goes on to say that she doesn't fully understand how their minds work. She does say they are not as cruel as most vampires.



Chapters 26 and 27

Chapters 26 and 27 Summary

In Chapter 26, Sarah is wakened rudely by her mother who has Nikolas's poem. Sarah's transgressions against the family code are listed and Dominique accuses Sarah of protecting a killer. Sarah's magic is bound by her mother and Dominique says Sarah has until the following evening to prepare for her trial. Adianna tells Sarah that she'd revealed the situation to Dominique because she'd felt that preferable to allowing Dominique to find out some other way. She then tells Sarah to run away. Sarah says Adianna will be punished for helping her escape but Adianna says that no one except her mother will blame Adianna for helping her sister. Sarah is left alone in her room and knows the only choice left to her is to kill Nikolas. She arrives at Nikolas's house at one minute before midnight.

In Chapter 27, Sarah finds Christopher is also in the room at Nikolas's house. She asks about Christine and Nikolas says Christine is fine. Sarah immediately realizes that Christopher's aura is different and knows he's had human blood though he hadn't killed his victim. Christine enters the room and Sarah is amazed at the transformation. Sarah asks why Nikolas has invited her there and Christopher realizes that Nikolas plans to blood bond Sarah. Nikolas points out that Sarah's own family plans to kill her. Sarah finds an opening and pulls her knife on Nikolas, managing to cut him slightly. However, Christopher quickly attacks and Sarah realizes she's made the mistake of thinking Christopher wouldn't hurt her. The twins argue, Nikolas saying that Christopher is bound to want Sarah's blood and Christopher responding that he does, but that he has the self-control to deny that want. Sarah is quickly on the defensive again and she knows she's no match for the twins, who fight as one being.

Christopher manages to grab Sarah's wrist and Sarah knows the fight is over, as does Christopher. They are all excited from the fight and Christopher's self-control is wavering, allowing the vampiric nature to take control. The boys hold her still and Sarah feels Nikolas bite into the left side of her neck while Christopher bites her on the right. Christopher then makes a small cut on his own neck and Sarah tries to turn away but the insatiable thirst that always occurs when a vampire bites his victim is too strong to resist and she drinks. She then falls unconscious.

Chapters 26 and 27 Analysis

Sarah has made a fatal mistake in her fight against Christopher and Nikolas in that she's underestimated their loyalty to each other. These family dynamics are an important theme in the book and that theme is clearly seen in the fact that Christopher, despite his love for Sarah, will protect Nikolas. That same theme is seen when Adianna urges Sarah to run away. Sarah fears that Adianna will be blamed for Sarah's disappearance but Adianna says no one will blame her for helping Sarah escape.

Dominique's attitude with regard to family loyalty is so fanatic that she's willing to kill her daughter in order to make a point.



Chapters 28 through 31

Chapters 28 through 31 Summary

In Chapter 28, Adianna arrives at the house. She immediately sees dried blood and knows that Sarah has probably been injured. She then sees Sarah and notes a serious wound though it is quickly healing. This makes Adianna fear because she knows that not even a witch can heal that quickly. Adianna realizes what's happened, that Sarah has fed on vampire blood. Sarah is feverish when Adianna touches her. Sarah is a white witch and Adianna knows the vampire blood and the witch blood will battle inside Sarah's body, probably destroying her body in the process. Adianna knows there is one hope - a process by which she will use her own powers to sever the vampire blood. The cost of this is high and means their descendants will be born with vampire blood. Adianna is willing to pay that price anyway and she sets out to begin the process. However, she immediately realizes it's too late for this to work. Adianna next eliminates the ties of Dominique's magic over Sarah's magic. Adianna believes that if she eliminates Sarah's magic, the battle within Sarah's body might come to a stop, saving Sarah's life though meaning Sarah will no longer have her powers. Adianna is on the verge of taking that step but she knows Sarah would rather die than live without her powers and she withdraws without taking action.

Just then Christopher arrives in the room. He asks how Sarah is and Adianna is furious, pointing out that Christopher must have known what this would do to Sarah. Adianna says Sarah is going to die and Christopher says that he'd lost control. Christopher says he loves Sarah and won't allow her to die. Adianna knows he means to turn her into a vampire. Adianna seems ready to object but Christopher says that at least Sarah would be alive. Adianna hesitates but Christopher points out that Sarah is strong and, if she decides she would rather die, she'll have the strength to kill herself rather than living as a vampire. Adianna leaves the house as Christopher cuts himself and allows Sarah to suck on the wound. Adianna rushes away, praying she'll never again see Sarah.

In Chapter 29, Sarah finally wakes and Christopher is by her side. Nissa and Nikolas argue about whether to allow Sarah to hunt or to take her to SingleEarth. Christopher takes her to his own throat while they are arguing. In Chapter 30, Sarah wakes as she takes in Christopher's blood. With his blood, she experiences a great many of his memories. He remembers being stabbed by Elisabeth Vida, the knife barely missing his heart. He'd have died except that he'd taken in the witch's blood himself. In another memory, there's Nissa, feeding on a young man and later refusing to feed at all because of her guilt over that kill. In another memory, Christopher sees Sarah for the first time and wonders about his attraction to her. He understands when he discovers her true identity but already loves her. When he steps back, Sarah can see the wound already healing. Christopher says she can do whatever she wants now and she realizes he fears she'll kill herself but she doesn't.



In Chapter 31, Christopher professes his love for Sarah and pleads with her to stay with him. She knows, however, that he means with him and Nikolas and she knows she can't live with the killing Nikolas does. Nikolas speaks up, saying he hopes she won't leave Christopher because of him and that she shouldn't blame Christopher for Nikolas's transgressions. Sarah says she has to find her own way. She knows she can find a peaceful lifestyle but also knows that the centuries of hatred can't be undone in a moment.

Chapters 28 through 31 Analysis

Nissa, Christopher, and Nikolas are faced with a serious decision when Sarah first wakes. There are references to the need of a fledgling vampire to eat immediately after waking for the first time and the desire to kill. Nissa had been taught patiently and taught not to kill. Nikolas was allowed to kill for his first meal. There seems to be a relationship between the later ability to control the urges and those first experiences. Nissa's first instinct is to take Sarah to SingleEarth where there are people willing to allow the vampires to feed. The problem with this is that witches at SingleEarth still feel a loyalty - or fear - for Dominique and will likely tell her that Sarah has been turned. Though Adianna knows about the situation, keeping the truth from Dominique for as long as possible will be important. It's noted that Nissa and Christopher each has relatively easy times following their change to vampires. Nikolas, however, had experienced mind-numbing pain," which is similar to Sarah's experience. There's no explanation of how this happened or why there were differences.



Characters

Sarah Vida

The main character of the story, Sarah is a vampire hunter who is the daughter and sister of famous vampire hunters. Sarah uses the name "Sarah Green" in school. For the purposes of clarity, the name Sarah Vida is used throughout this study guide except in direct quotations. Sarah is a strong character although her main weakness is her desire to live up to her family's expectations. She counters this weakness by putting herself into situations that are inherently dangerous. Sarah has worked with a group of hunters prior to moving to her new high school. There she befriends a pair of vampires and when her sister questions her about her choice, Sarah reveals that she's relieved to be in a situation in which she isn't going to be responsible for the deaths of her friends. Sarah has grown up with a complete lack of tolerance for vampires but she finds herself questioning this attitude as she learns more about the lives of Nissa and Christopher, their relationship with each other, and their motivations. Sarah's ability to think for herself regardless of tradition is one of her main strengths. Another of Sarah's strengths is her will to live. As the book draws to a close, Sarah is turned into a vampire. Upon waking, she is immediately given the choice to live as a vampire or to take her own life. Though Sarah knows any other member of her family would kill herself rather than live as a vampire and that her mother would expect her to commit suicide, Sarah chooses to live.

Christopher Ravena

Nikolas' twin, he is a vampire who is attending school at Acton and pretending to be Nissa's twin. In truth, Christopher is Nikolas's twin though the two are very different in many important ways. Christopher was a child in the period prior to the Civil War. He apparently lived a happy childhood until Nikolas was jailed for murder. Nissa changed Nikolas to save his life and Nikolas changed Christopher. For many years, Christopher remained with Nikolas and the two were infamous in their killing. However, Christopher changed his lifestyle some fifty years prior to the opening of the story and he says that he's lived by walking away from fights ever since. Christopher falls in love with Sarah soon after meeting her though he can't initially figure out what the attraction is. When he learns that she's a daughter of Dominique Vida, he remains faithful in his love though he's hurt by her rejection. Christopher claims to have the ability to deny his vampiric yearnings but when he's in the middle of a fight with Sarah, he is overtaken by his blood lust and is involved in causing Sarah's death and turning her to a vampire. Christopher's devotion to his family is one of his strengths though he doesn't agree with Nikolas's decisions or lifestyle.



Nissa

Older sister of Christopher and Nikolas, she is a vampire who is attending school at Acton and pretending to be Christopher's twin. Nissa was the first of the three to be turned. She was changed into a vampire by Kaleo and choose to change Nikolas in order to save him from being hanged for murder. Nissa loves her brothers and insists they aren't evil though she admits that she can't explain their actions.

Robert

Another student at Acton, Robert seems standoffish when Sarah first meets him and Sarah eventually learns that Robert is looking for Nikolas because of what's happened to his sister, Christine.

Christine

She becomes known as Kristin and by the time Sarah meets her, she is struggling to maintain a grip on reality. Robert says Christine was taken to a bash by a friend and was later found almost dead on a lawn with Nikolas' name carved into her arms.

Nikolas`

Christopher's twin, he is somewhat ruthless though honorable. Nikolas becomes an infamous vampire because he marks his victims though he takes care of those he chooses. This is seen when he bonds Christine. When Nikolas asks if she wants to remain with him, she refuses, saying she wants to return to her brother. This prompts Nikolas to release Christine though he takes her back into his fold after Kaleo is brutal with her. After Sarah becomes a vampire, Nikolas asks that she not hold Christopher responsible for his actions and invites her to remain with them.

Caryn Smoke

The woman who serves as healer to Sarah and others, Caryn believes there should be peace for all creatures. Caryn is tolerant and wants others to be as well. It's Caryn who first realizes that Nikolas has marked Sarah as his own.

Dominique Vida

Sarah's mother, she is a famous vampire hunter. Dominique is ruthless in her dealings with everyone and everything, including her daughters. Dominique discovers that Sarah has befriended vampires and says Sarah will have to stand trial for her transgressions.



Kaleo

An infamous vampire and the one vampire Sarah really wants to catch and kill as the story begins. Kaleo is ruthless and takes a girl marked by Nikolas as his own, brutally destroying her so that she's hysterical most of the time. Kaleo turned Nissa into a vampire and killed Nissa's father.

Adianna

Sarah's sister, Adianna is something of the perfect child in Dominique's eyes. Adianna is a year older than Sarah but feels it's her responsibility to take care of Sarah. Adianna appears at a fight between Sarah and Nikolas but is overpowered. It's Adianna who tells Dominique of Sarah's friendship with the vampires.



Objects/Places

The Devil's Hour

This is midnight and the time when the vampires are known to feed off their human prey.

Samhain

This is the holiday celebrated by witches at Halloween.

SingleEArth

This is the organization dedicated to the idea that all beings should be allowed to live in peace.

Massachusetts

This is the state where Sarah and her family live.

Acton

This is the name of the small town where Caryn lives and where Sarah goes to school.

Splotch

This is the name Nissa gives the dog Sarah is sculpting in her art class.

American History Class

This is where Sarah first meets Christopher.

A Bash

This is an event hosted by vampires in which humans are either killed or offer themselves for food.

Black and White

These are the colors that dominate Nikolas's house.

Ash Road

This is where Nikolas's house is located.



Themes

Tolerance

Tolerance is a lesson being taught by the people involved with SingleEarth and as the story opens, Sarah is completely opposed to the ideals of that organization. Her attitude seems the result of a lifetime of teaching by her mother. Dominique Vida is an intolerant person who isn't willing to listen to any opinion other than her own. This is seen clearly when Dominique discovers Sarah has befriended vampires. She is so furious with what she considers a betrayal that she's willing to condemn Sarah to death. Sarah may never have learned any tolerance except for her friendship with Nissa and Christopher. She initially tries to shy away from the two but their overt efforts to be nice to her capture her attention. She finds herself unwilling to be rude simply because they are being so nice. Then Sarah learns about their lives and how they came to be vampires. She also learns about the lifestyle choices made by Nissa and Christopher that mean they don't kill humans. With this knowledge comes tolerance though Sarah fears for herself and her newfound friends, if their friendship is discovered by her mother. As Sarah matures on this point, she spends a little time with Caryn Smoke at SingleEarth and comes to have a respect for Caryn's efforts. After Sarah is turned, her immediate reaction is to realize that she has a new view for Nikolas because of her blood bond with Christopher.

Family Dynamics

The dynamics become an important aspect of this story based on the interactions of Sarah with her family and of Sarah with Christopher's family. Sarah's family has a history of hunting vampires. She has been taught to hate vampires because of that family history. Sarah has a great deal of self-confidence but she feels she constantly has to prove herself to her mother and sister. It's because of this need to prove herself that Sarah puts herself in incredible danger, eventually becoming a vampire herself. The family dynamics of Christopher's family are another important example of this theme. Sarah believes that Christopher and Nissa are twins and she knows they are vampires. However, Sarah comes to discover that Christopher's twin is actually a boy named Nikolas and that Nissa is their older sister. Nissa became a vampire against her will but she changed Nikolas to help him avoid being executed. Nikolas apparently changed Christopher because of his devotion to his twin brother. Nissa points out that the twins moved off on their own for a time and had nothing to do with her during that period, obviously a statement of their devotion for each other. However, Christopher eventually breaks ties with Nikolas because he doesn't approve of Nikolas's choices and returns to Nissa. To a lesser degree, Robert's family is an example of this theme. Robert's devotion to his sister is so great that he's willing to put himself into any situation in an effort to help her. As the story comes to a close, Sarah is faced with a decision - to live with Christopher and Nikolas or to find her own way. She decides on the latter, admitting that she has this new level of tolerance but needs time to get past the years of hatred that have been ingrained in her.

A Need for Friendship

The need for friendship drives Sarah into a relationship with Nissa and Christopher and is also the catalyst for much of the action of this story. Sarah is moving to a new school as the book opens. She doesn't know anyone and no one knows her. At Sarah's old school, many of her "friends" had been hunters as well and they associated mainly because of that connection. When Sarah is befriended by Christopher and Nissa, it's as a person rather than a hunter and Sarah savors this idea. When Adianna calls her out on the subject, Sarah verbalizes this idea. She says that being friends with other hunters means she can never let down her guard because it's their lives that could be endangered because of a moment of carelessness on her part. Sarah enjoys the idea that she isn't going to be responsible for the lives and deaths of her friends. She knows that Christopher likes her simply for herself. Another important aspect of this theme is seen when Sarah asks Nissa why she and Christopher attend school. The two have been alive for more than a century and Sarah is curious about their decision. Nissa says that being around humans helps them maintain their own humanity. While Christopher couldn't put his finger on the reason he was attracted to Sarah, he does seek out her friendship.

Style

Point of View

The book is written in the third person from the limited perspective of Sarah Vida. Sarah is a vampire hunter and has been raised in a family that is adamantly intolerant of any vampire, regardless of their personal choices. However, Sarah is more tolerant and this is an important part of her perspective. Sarah's willingness to see her mother as she is rather than believing her mother is perfect is a testament of Sarah's strength of character and also of her largely unbiased perspective. Sarah, however, struggles greatly with the need to kill all vampires - including two who become her friends - and her willingness to tolerate those who choose a peaceful lifestyle. Her struggles are detailed fully with Sarah admitting what her mother would think and her desire to come to her own decisions. The limited perspective is necessary to provide some twists and surprises in the story. For example, Sarah encounters a student named Robert both at vampire events and at school but can't initially figure out his purpose or role. The reader doesn't learn Robert's story until he tells it to Sarah. There is an important variation of this perspective seen in the closing pages of the story. After Sarah loses the battle against Nikolas and Christopher, she is feverish and unconscious. At that point, she is no longer able to relate the details of what happens to her. Adianna arrives and finds Sarah in that condition and watches as Sarah is changed into a vampire. After Adianna leaves the room, the perspective reverts back to Sarah.

Setting

The story is set in a real area of Massachusetts, including the town of Acton. The specific settings, including the school and several houses, are not real. The use of an overall setting that is a real place is likely designed to lend believability to the story. The exact setting is not overly important to the story line. There are no references to specific places in the area and any of the specific settings could be located anywhere. The most important of the specific settings are several houses and the high school where Sarah, Nissa, and Christopher attend. The high school is not described in great detail and that should not be a problem for the reader. The high school is apparently very ordinary with the typical amenities including classrooms, an art room, and the cafeteria. Among the houses that are described, the description of one is particularly important. She arrives at a house where she believes Nikolas is going to be and goes inside where she notes the entire house is black and white. In one room, she notes a vase of white roses on a black table and that the green leaves of those roses are the only splash of color in the entire room. The most important part of the setting is a room in which there are huge murals of vampires on the walls, including Christopher and Nissa. It's this setting that alerts Sarah to the fact that Christopher and Nikolas are twins.



Language and Meaning

The story is written in a straight-forward manner and the action flows quickly. The story is written as if vampires are real and there are several twists used to preserve the suspense of the story. There are references to some humans who become "bonded" to vampires, meaning the human does not become a vampire but is forced to become completely dedicated to that vampire with disregard for everything else. Sarah is said to "swath herself in magic" as she's approaching the house where she finds Nikolas. The reader knows the magic is used to cloak Sarah's progress across a yard so that neighbors won't notice her presence but the reader will likely have unanswered questions about the source and extent of that magic. An important aspect of the language of the book is that this is the first of a series. There are explanations of some of the important people and places, including a safe haven called "SingleEarth" and a healer named Caryn though these places and people play only a minor role in the action of this book. The reader who goes on to read additional books of the series will find many of these characters and places introduced again. It should also be noted that the book has an open-ended conclusion in preparation of the next book in the series. The reader with an average vocabulary will likely find only a few unfamiliar words. The majority of these meanings can be discovered through the context of the words.

Structure

The story is divided into thirty-one chapters. Each of the chapters is identified by title only which means the reader has no clue about the action to be revealed during any chapter. The story flows in chronological order though there are pieces of historical information provided through conversations or memories. For example, Nissa is talking to Sarah about how she and her brothers became vampires. The details of that change are presented through the conversation. Nissa reveals that she'd lost track of her brothers for a time and that she'd been prevented from hunting immediately after her conversion and hints this makes a difference in the life a vampire leads. The book opens with Sarah's arrival at a party in which she knows there are vampires and the reader soon has a glimpse of another break in the chronological order. The action moves quickly and skips over a great deal of the events of the evening so that Sarah is at the party and then is seeking aid from a healer. The reader learns later that the vampires had tormented Sarah but the reader never learns all the details of that night. The book does not come to a conclusion, as is to be expected with a book that is part of a series. The book opens with a poem by W.B. Yeats titled, "The Two Trees." The poem refers to the "bitter glass," which apparently refers to a mirror, tying the poem to the title of the book.



Quotes

"The trick was to avoid being killed - or munched on. She was posing as free food, human and helpless, but letting a vampire feed on her was further than she was willing to go." Chapter 1

"Already she thought about the pair with some affection - they were Christopher and Nissa, not two leeches she might one day have to kill." Chapter 4

"They kill by nature, and eventually that nature will destroy whatever shreds of humanity they may have left. If at that time they are still your 'friends,' it will simply mean you are handy for a snack." Chapter 6

"Nevertheless, she was here, talking with two vampires, two friends who just happened to be bloodsucking fiends." Chapter 8

"Caryn led her downstairs where the SingleEarth party was bustling with activity. Humans mingled with vampires and witches, laughing and joking together as if they were all the same kind." Chapter 11

'Nikolas was one of the few vampires who had killed a Vida and lived to tell about it.' Chapter 13

"I'm the one who gave him the vampire blood, Sarah. Every kill he makes I feel the guilt for." Chapter 15

"With luck, he had simply put some distance between Adianna and this house. With less luck, she was somewhere in Europe, trying to find a phone to call Dominique to arrange a plane home." Chapter 20

"I will never understand how my brothers' minds work, but they aren't ... evil. They could never be that." Chapter 25

"Sarah gasped as twin sets of fangs pierced her skin, Kristopher on the right and Nikolas on the left. Without her magic she had no further defense, and she collapsed beneath the combined pressure of their minds." Chapter 27

"He meant to change her, to make her into one of the creatures that Sarah has spent her whole life hunting." Chapter 28

"A true Vida would have fallen on the knife the moment she had become a vampire, but Sarah did not want to die. She had made friends with Nissa, and with Christopher, and they had taught her that vampire blood did not turn a person into a monster." Chapter 30



Topics for Discussion

Describe Sarah. What kind of character is she? What are her strengths? What are her weaknesses? Is she likable? Do you believe her?

Who are Christopher and Nikolas? What is their relationship to each other? How do they relate to Nissa? How do they relate to Sarah? How are they similar? How are they different? Why are they different?

What is the role of Sarah's line of people? What is Sarah's life like because of this role? What does Sarah do with her time? How does this compare with Nissa's life and lifestyle?

Sarah begins to identify with vampires during her first days at her new high school. What is Adianna's reaction to this? What is Sarah's reaction? Why is the relationship dangerous?

What is the most important theme in this book? Why do you believe it's important? Give at least three examples of the theme.

Who is Adianna? Dominique? What kind of characters are they? Are they likeable? What are their strengths? Weaknesses? How are they related to Sarah? Describe their relationships to Sarah.

Who is Robert? Christine? Caryn Smoke? Marguerite? Elisabeth Vida? What is the role of each in the story?