

Shiver Study Guide

Shiver by Maggie Stiefvater

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Contents

[Shiver Study Guide..... 1](#)

[Contents..... 2](#)

[Plot Summary..... 3](#)

[Chapters 1 through 14..... 4](#)

[Chapters 15 through 26..... 7](#)

[Chapters 27 through 33..... 10](#)

[Chapters 29 through 45..... 13](#)

[Chapters 46 through 67..... 16](#)

[Characters..... 20](#)

[Objects/Places..... 23](#)

[Themes..... 25](#)

[Style..... 27](#)

[Quotes..... 29](#)

[Topics for Discussion..... 31](#)



Plot Summary

Grace Brisbane is about eleven when she's pulled from her tire swing by a pack of wolves, taken into the woods and mauled. Sam, a wolf himself, initially watches but eventually intervenes. Grace holds a special fondness for the wolves after that and looks forward to the winter months when she knows "her wolf" can often be seen hovering near her home. Sam, who turns back into a boy in the heat of the summer months, sometimes sees Grace but never works up the courage to speak to her. Grace doesn't realize the wolves are werewolves until after the death of a classmate, Jack Culpepper.

Soon after Jack is mauled and apparently killed by wolves, several men gather to kill off the wolf pack. Grace attempts to stop them, saying that she has a friend in the woods taking photographs that day. She arrives at home to find Sam, in human form, collapsed on her door with a bullet wound to the neck. Grace takes him to the hospital and he is healed within minutes of being stitched up. They leave the hospital without waiting for a release because Sam knows he won't be able to explain the quick healing. Grace accepts him for what he is and recognizes him as the wolf that saved her.

Sam is dealing with the scars of his childhood. Beck, another werewolf, had changed him when Sam was very young. Sam's parents, seeing him change, were horrified and believed he was possessed by a demon. They slashed his wrists in an effort to save him. Beck is the leader of the pack while the werewolves are in human form. He takes Sam in, teaching him academics during the summer months when they are human. Beck had been a lawyer in his previous life and he owns the house the pack uses during the summer. Beck knows he'll soon change for the final time and fears for the future of the pack. In an effort to keep them safe, he changes several others. He hopes the younger members will become responsible for those who are not changing as early or as often. Sam hates that Beck has changed more humans and sees only the cruelty of it.

Grace's parents are seldom home and never pay attention to her when they are, making it easy for Sam to spend time in her house. They are soon deeply in love. Meanwhile, Jack has begun to change form erratically and learns that Grace was also bitten but never turned. He believes she has a cure. In an effort to force her to share the cure, he bites her good friend, Olivia. Jack's sister Isabel soon learns the truth about the werewolves. With the information that Grace ran a very high fever soon after being bitten, Isabel, Grace, Sam and Jack come up with an idea to infect Jack, Sam and Olivia with meningitis in order to produce a high fever. Jack and Sam take the chance on the cure. Olivia decides that she'd rather be a wolf. Jack takes the shot and quickly dies. Sam is turned immediately after the shot and eventually returns in human form.



Chapters 1 through 14

Chapters 1 through 14 Summary

In chapter one, Grace remembers the day she is attacked by wolves. They are "licking me, biting me, worrying at my body". She notes that she doesn't scream. She catches the eye of one and holds his gaze. She believes she'll die but doesn't. In chapter two, Sam remembers seeing the other members of the pack drag the girl off her tire swing in her back yard. He does nothing about it at first but then intervenes. In chapter three, Grace says that she sees the wolf after that, always in the winter, for the next six years. The wolf never comes too close to her but is always present.

In chapter four, Sam almost works up the courage to talk to Grace. He is in his human form and working at his job in the bookstore when she enters with her friends, Olivia and Rachel. Sam knows there are reasons he should keep his distance from her when he's a wolf and that those reasons don't exist when he's human, but he still doesn't approach her. Sam believes she'll recognize him if she looks into his eyes but she leaves the store without making eye contact.

In chapter five, Grace says she realizes only after Jack Culpepper is killed that the wolves are werewolves. She is a junior in high school at Mercy Falls, Minnesota. Her mother is talking one evening about Jack's death, saying that it happened in Boundary Wood, which begins at the back of Grace's home. Mom says wolves killed Jack but Grace says Jack could have passed out and wild animals dragged his body away.

Grace hates summers because the wolves aren't around. Grace's friend Rachel calls later and suggests that she, Grace and Olivia leave Mercy Falls for the Christmas holiday. Grace doesn't agree but says she'll think about it.

Grace saves a piece of raw meat and steps outside with it. She sees Sam, who has blood on his muzzle. She hopes the blood isn't Jack's. She asks if he "did it", and Sam lowers his head and tail and closes his eyes. She reaches out and he doesn't move away so she buries her hand in his fur. Then the she-wolf arrives and Sam growls at the newcomer. Grace returns to the house and the she-wolf grabs the meat and runs away.

In chapter six, Grace's father arrives home, announces that he got a raise and that he'll buy Grace a better used car to replace the undependable one she's driving. That night Grace is drawn to her bedroom window. She is startled when the she-wolf stands on her hind feet, paws on the window. Both Grace and the wolf are surprised when Grace growls at her, and the wolf runs away. In chapter seven, Sam recalls the scent of Grace's hands on his fur.

In chapter eight, Officer Koenig speaks to Grace's life skills class. Though he asks if anyone is going into law enforcement and attempts to remain on track, students ask about the rumor that Jack's body had disappeared from the morgue. Koenig initially



refuses to answer until the teacher expresses interest as well. He says the rumor is true. On further questioning, he says he believes the wolf attack was an "isolated incident." A student named Elizabeth points out that Grace was also attacked but Grace assures the officer that it was "years ago". Grace wonders how long it will take people to arm themselves and go after the wolves.

Olivia spends some time at Grace's house that evening and they look through photos Olivia had taken, many of the wolves. Grace recognizes Sam as "her wolf", and Olivia gives her a print. Olivia's brother John arrives to pick her up and lightly flirts with Grace. They leave and Grace steps outside just in time to hear a scream.

In chapter nine, Grace believes the voice is that of Jack Culpepper and he's screaming for help. Grace rushes into the woods and suddenly comes upon three wolves, one a scraggly young male. When Grace looks into his eyes, she recognizes them as belonging to Jack. She says his name but the wolves are soon running away. That night she hears the wolves howling and is torn between wishing she could join them and wishing they'd stop as she struggles to understand what she'd seen.

In chapter ten, Grace shares her idea with Olivia, the only person she believes might understand, her idea that Jack is a werewolf. Olivia asks if all the wolves are werewolves and Grace says she hadn't thought about it. Olivia says Grace's "obsession is getting kind of creepy", and the two stop the conversation as it is turning into an argument. Grace is approached by Isabel Culpepper, Jack's sister. Isabel hasn't heard the conversation but heard that Grace is sympathetic to the wolves. She reminds Grace that the wolves killed Jack. She then says that there are men in the woods hunting the wolves at that very moment. Grace rushes to the woods and finds Officer Koenig just as her car quits. She tells him that she has a friend in the woods taking photos and is concerned about her. Officer Koenig promises to alert the hunters but Grace rushes into the woods as she hears a gunshot. She fears she's already too late.

In chapter twelve, Grace encounters some of the hunters and insists they stop, citing her fear for her friend. Grace goes the rest of the way home on foot through the woods. She is immediately aware of a "ragged breathing" and sees Sam in his human form on her back deck. She knows it's him even without his fur and before she sees his eyes. She finds the wound on his neck and it's bleeding a lot. She asks his name and he tells her. She then says she's taking him to the hospital. In chapter thirteen, Sam says he is not quite wolf but not yet quiet human as he hears Grace say his name.

In chapter fourteen, Grace is at the hospital when a nurse asks if she knows why Sam tried to kill himself. Grace assures the woman that Sam isn't suicidal but the woman points out scars on his wrists as proof he's tried it before. Sam wakes, though he was supposedly sedated to sleep throughout the night. He says he's in human form because it's spring and Grace tells him it's actually September. He then says he has to leave before anyone checks his wound and shows Grace that, under the bandage, it has almost healed. Grace tells a nurse that she's wet her pants under the strain of the situation and he provides her a set of scrubs. Sam puts them on and they sneak away.



Chapters 1 through 14 Analysis

There's an interesting comment in chapter two. Sam says the pack was pressing around Grace and that she seemed very small. He then says, "wanting to trade her life for ours." It's not certain whether he means that the wolves were wanting that and were looking at Grace as sustenance, or if he means that Grace was wanting to trade away her life as a human to join the pack. The former seems most reasonable but the reader will later learn that Grace is unhappy with her life.

Grace has put a great deal of energy into watching the wolves near her home, and by the time of Jack's death, she has learned to recognize several of them. She talks about one that is shaggy and unhealthy looking, and a white female that spends a lot of time with the pack leader. She will later learn the identities of these wolves. The white she-wolf is Shelby. The leader is Paul. Grace's connection with the wolves is hinted at here but will not become completely evident until much later.

Grace's mother is somewhat scattered and is not particularly "parental", a point Grace will make later when her mother asks her to stop seeing Sam. Her mother seems to have made the statement many times over the years that wolves are basically peaceful animals. It's likely that she has done this as a way of reassuring herself though she's ostensibly trying to reassure Grace. The personalities of Grace and her mother and the dynamics of their relationship are seen at least to some degree when the two are in the kitchen and Grace's mom starts cooking dinner. Mrs. Brisbane is prepping the ingredients for the meal and Grace steps in, saying, "You're just messing it up". Mrs. Brisbane gives in and leaves Grace to finish the job. Grace doesn't have to take over but feels compelled. She believes her mother incapable of doing the domestic chores and takes them on herself, putting them both in a reversed-role situation in which Grace is more the nurturer and her mother is the weaker of the two.



Chapters 15 through 26

Chapters 15 through 26 Summary

In chapter fifteen, Sam initially goes to bed on the floor near Grace's bed, but she invites him onto the bed where it's warmer. He has explained by now that the cold makes him change into a wolf. There is no pretense that he's not a werewolf but he's confused because Grace was also bitten. He says she should have changed into a wolf as well. She says she sometimes wishes she had and he says he wishes it also.

In chapter sixteen, Sam goes to a shed deep in the woods where the wolves keep clothing, food and a heater for when they've shifted back to their human forms. There he encounters Shelby, the white she-wolf, and he knows she can detect Grace's scent. He also encounters Paul, the pack's leader. Sam returns to Grace's house and they connect immediately, bantering and talking about their situation as if it were normal.

In chapter seventeen, Sam goes with Grace to the car lot, where she chooses a Bronco as her next vehicle. Grace questions Sam about his life, including what he eats. His answer is "bunnies". He says he remembers differently when he's a wolf and doesn't want to tell her that he can't remember her name then. He answers other questions, including that his parents are serving life sentences for having tried to murder him. In chapter eighteen, Grace thinks about Sam that night while they are in bed together, knows that she "can't live without this", and that "there has to be a cure".

In chapter nineteen, Grace goes to school and learns there was a wolf on the campus the previous day. Sam recalls a girl named Christa who had been turned and had killed two people before Beck killed her. Sam knows that "angry people didn't make good werewolves". Sam is worried about Jack, feels responsibility for him, and hopes Jack doesn't hurt anyone.

In chapter twenty, Grace and Sam look through photos Olivia had taken. Sam identifies the various pack members, including the she-wolf, Shelby. Sam says he and Shelby see things differently. Sam knows that he's not quite human and that he shouldn't be spending time with Grace, but he also knows he'll do anything he can to stay with her. In chapter twenty-two, Sam can detect the faint odor of wolf at the school and is frustrated that he can't find Jack. He wishes for Beck but feels that he'll have to help Jack make the transition unless Beck shows up. In an effort to find Jack, Sam goes to the Culpepper house. It's a mansion. Sam breaks in the back door. He can smell an odor that seems to be wolf, but it's faint and there's something not right about the smell. He follows it and discovers a foyer filled with mounted animals, including a wolf. He wonders who the wolf was before it was shot and thinks about a pack-mate, Derek, who had been "riddled with bullets" the night Sam was shot.

In chapter twenty-three, Grace learns that her father had been with Tom Culpepper and the other men the day they'd hunted for the wolves. She asks why and he says only



that, "Something had to be done". Grace knows her father is aware of how she feels about the wolves and she feels betrayed by his actions. In chapter twenty-four, Sam is reading while Grace does homework. Sam asks if she'd like to go to Beck's house to search for Jack and she agrees. At Beck's, Grace asks if Jack is likely to "come at us all slathering and horror movie". Sam says being a werewolf takes away the inhibitions. Grace, recalling an incident in which Jack had beaten up a classmate, is worried.

Sam sniffs the air and waits for Grace to say she can also detect scents, but she refuses. They walk through the woods until they come to a clearing. Grace says she recognizes the place because Sam showed it to her. He tries to explain that wolves communicate through a series of images and that she wouldn't have recognized it if she hadn't received his images. Grace suddenly realizes that the temperature has dropped and they are very cold. She catches the scent of a wolf and knows she has to get Sam inside.

In chapter twenty-five, Sam says they don't run back to the house because doing so would have forced them to admit that his time as a human was about to come to an end. As they walk, he recalls the look of horror on his mother's face the first time he changed. They head for the Bronco but Grace remembers that she locked her keys inside. They go in the house instead and Sam is so cold that he's fighting off the urge to change. Grace tries to warm him but finally realizes she has to do something desperate. She shoves him under the spray of the hot water in the shower, though he's frantic, reliving the abuse his parents had put him through. The scene is traumatic but Sam manages not to change. Grace tells him he has "beautiful eyes". Sam says that's the one thing about them that doesn't change when they become werewolves.

In chapter twenty-six, Grace finds canned soup and some bread in the freezer and puts together a make-shift meal. Grace asks how Sam sent her the images of the woods but he can't really explain it. She asks him to send her one now and he says he can't remember how. Grace sees a photo of Sam and the she-wolf, Shelby, and asks about her. Sam says Shelby had a bad life, loves being a wolf, and is obsessed with Sam because she sees it as a way of belonging to the pack to an even greater degree. They kiss and Sam says it's difficult to "behave" when he's with Grace. Grace pleads with him to come home with her and Sam agrees.

Chapters 15 through 26 Analysis

By the time Sam is back at Grace's house for the first time, the timeline has been firmly established as September. Sam is concerned because he knows that he is unstable at this time of year and could turn back into a wolf at any time. He is also worried because he hadn't changed at all over the summer months. Wolves, as he will later explain, only change a certain number of times. Sam feels certain that this will be his last time as a human.

Sam worries that Grace will think he's a freak. He recalls someone saying, "You're an abomination". Though it won't be explained for some time, Sam's parents were



convinced he was possessed by a demon when he first began to change. They slashed his wrists in an effort to free him and cursed at the demon they believed had control of him.

Sam's description of how the wolves share images as a way of communicating will become important later. Grace longs to be more like the wolves and feels a connection even though she's never changed. However, it's interesting that she seems to try to deny that aspect of herself. For example, when she and Sam step into the woods near Beck's house, Sam sniffs the air and seems to challenge Grace to do the same. Grace's sense of smell is extraordinary but she doesn't take Sam's challenge. This happens repeatedly and demonstrates that Grace is torn about her situation.

Grace's parents are never at home. She's left on her own a great deal and doesn't seem to mind. However, it will later become apparent that she is hurt by their indifference. This lack of parental bonding may be part of the reason she longs for the belonging that comes as being a member of the pack.

Grace asks Sam about Shelby and is clearly a bit jealous of their relationship. When Sam says that Shelby's emotion toward him is purely "obsession", Grace announces that she is also obsessed. In fact, their relationship throughout this book is based purely on emotion. Much later they'll face the facts that their lives are very different as are their dreams and goals, and it will become clear that if Sam hadn't been a member of the wolf pack, he and Grace would probably have never connected as they did.



Chapters 27 through 33

Chapters 27 through 33 Summary

In chapter twenty-seven, Grace and Sam arrive at the Brisbane house to discover that Grace's parents are home, though they are "never home", according to Grace. Sam remains in the Bronco while Grace goes inside and clears the way for Sam to get in. Sam makes it to Grace's room and notes that the cold is taking a toll on him. As he takes a shower, he knows that he has to tell her that he won't change to human again once he changes this year. At one point Sam says that he wants Grace to be "with" him, stopping himself just short of saying that he wants her to love him. As they continue talking, he tells her about the cycles of the wolves and says there will come a time when he simply won't change. He knows it's the perfect opportunity to tell her this is his last time as a human, but doesn't.

In chapter twenty-eight, Grace and Sam arrive at school. Rachel hops in Grace's car, shoving her over in the passenger's seat and, upon looking Sam over, says, "Hi, Boy". She asks Grace if she's still mad at Olivia and Grace says their argument was stupid. Rachel then asks why Sam is in Grace's car. Grace, relieved to have someone know about their relationship, joins in, asking Sam, "Why are you in my car"? Rachel says later that Sam is "supercute".

Later, Grace is in class when Isabel Culpepper says they need to talk and has Grace leave class. Once they're alone, Isabel says she's seen Jack, that he isn't dead, that he'd started "twitching" while they were talking but had told Isabel that Grace knows what's wrong with him. Isabel says she knows Grace and Olivia are "freaks" when it comes to the wolves and insists that Grace tell her what's happened to Jack. Grace struggles with the idea that Isabel has the right to know what happened to her brother and the need to protect the pack. She tells Isabel that Jack is dead and that Isabel should seek some counseling for her delusions.

In chapter twenty-nine, Sam goes to the post office expecting the typical piles of mail in Beck's box but finds only two letters, indicating that someone else had already been there. Sam recalls his life with the pack, including how he'd been educated by Beck and the others. He remembers the arrival of Shelby, who had initially refused to let anyone near except Sam. One day Shelby said it was evident that Sam would take Paul's place as pack leader and that she wanted to be his mate to become the "alpha female". Sam, as a human, doesn't want to talk about being a wolf and becomes angry with Shelby. When Beck enters the room to see what the shouting is about, Shelby tells Beck that he has to make Sam realize he won't continue to be human. Beck tells her to leave Sam alone, "or I will take you back". The threat is enough to make Shelby leave him alone. Later, Sam overhears another of the pack members, Ulrick, say that educating Sam is giving Sam dreams of a normal life that he can't ever have. Beck tells Sam that he doesn't have to do any more school work but Sam continues with the program. In chapter thirty, Grace tells Sam that Isabel believes Jack is alive. Sam begins to hold to



hope that Beck is a human and wonders if he should be searching for Beck instead of Jack.

In chapter thirty-one, Sam recalls three years earlier when the pack had been humans at the first warmth of spring, and that being together as humans made it all make more sense somehow.

Later, Sam arrives at Beck's house and discovers that Beck is there. They talk briefly before Sam realizes there's something in Beck's Tahoe. Beck says it's "the future", and opens the hatch to reveal three people who are obviously about to change. Sam is furious, but Beck says the pack needed young recruits who would still change early in the spring, therefore be available to take care of the house and to be "protectors" of the pack as a whole. Sam watches the girl struggle as she changes, tells Beck that he's "going to hell for this", and leaves.

In chapter thirty-two, Sam and Grace discuss the day she was attacked by the wolves. Sam asks if she remembers how she got home after the attack. She can't remember but eventually realizes that Sam must have turned to his human form. He confirms that but says he doesn't know how it happened. Grace points out that he changed to a human then, and that he changed when he was shot. She asks how, and he says he's tried at other times but was never able to change. They go to the Crooked Shelf, the bookstore where Sam works in the summers, and Sam takes Grace upstairs where he reads poetry to her. Sam tells her this is his last year as a human and Grace says she isn't ready. Outside the bookstore, they encounter Olivia and her brother, John. Olivia asks Sam and Grace some questions but then seems disappointed and promises to call Grace later. Grace is uneasy after the meeting but can't decide exactly why. Sam and Grace take a nap together then make dinner together. When her mother arrives home, Grace is doing homework at the kitchen table and Sam is hiding in Grace's room. Mrs. Brisbane invites Grace to watch television with her but Grace declines. As Grace leaves the room, her mom asks that she not leave trash bags on the deck because "animals are getting into it". Grace knows which animal is likely to blame.

In chapter thirty-three, Sam dreams that night about Mr. Dario's dogs. Mr. Dario lived up the road from Beck's house and had dogs that were trained to protect and attack. The dogs were kept near his property by an electric collar and boundary system. When Mr. Dario showed Beck and Sam the system, he'd had a powdering of paint on his hand from the control box. Sam feared the dogs and pleaded with Beck to teach him to defend himself against them if they attacked while he was human. Beck finally gave in and taught Sam some tactics that might save him. One day Sam is outside when he hears Paul in his wolf form, fighting Mr. Dario's dogs. Sam intervenes and is able to get the dogs off Paul but then faces them himself. Beck arrives and shoots both of the dogs. Beck and Sam stand together for a long time, heads together, connecting after the close call. Then Sam sees Shelby's hands with a smear of dried paint, and he knows that she'd turned off the boundary system, letting the dogs out on purpose. She'd wanted Paul dead because he stood between Sam and leadership of the pack. Sam knows that Shelby now sees Grace as the threat that will keep Shelby from being at Sam's side as leader.



Chapters 27 through 33 Analysis

Before Sam meets Grace's parents, he overhears Grace and her mother talking about a television show. He notes that Grace and her parents can talk freely about the unimportant things but not about the things that matter. This is true and will become even more so later in the series. It seems that at least part of the problem is that talking about important things means that Grace's parents have to accept their full responsibilities as parents. They are much too busy living their own lives to do that.

There's a flaw in the book at the point that Sam doesn't expect others be in their human form. It's late September when he turns and he hadn't turned at all that summer. However, because he hadn't turned doesn't mean others also hadn't. It seems reasonable to expect that some of the others would have spent the summer as human even if he hadn't, but that doesn't seem to be the case.

The confrontation between Shelby and Sam is interesting on several levels. Sam clings to his life as a human while Shelby longs to be a wolf all the time. Sam is furious when Shelby points out that he'll someday be pack leader and that she wants the role of mate to him. It doesn't seem that she's particularly interested in Sam but is vitally interested in the role his mate would play in the pack. Shelby's background isn't completely lined out but it's clear that she was unhappy in that life. Her life as a wolf is an escape and she wants only for it to be fulltime. Sam, on the other hand, has apparently always clung to his life as a human, at least partly because he loses his human identity. He refers to being human as "being Sam". This sums up his fear of losing his identity permanently. When he's fighting the change, he says that he is "still Sam".

The fact that Sam turned to a human in order to carry Grace back to her house after her attack is a testament to the depth of his love for her. It's not something that typically happens but Sam will be able to make that change again near the end of the book.

The situation when Grace and Sam meet up with Olivia and John is rather obscure until later in the book. Olivia asks Sam if he wears contacts and he says he does, even though he doesn't. Olivia will later tell Grace that she'd hoped to find some way of saying that she knew Sam was a wolf, but hadn't gotten the opening. Olivia actually needs the help of Grace and Sam but doesn't feel confident that she'll get it and decides not to ask.



Chapters 29 through 45

Chapters 29 through 45 Summary

In chapter thirty-four, Grace is worried about Olivia, who hasn't been to school. Sam asks if she is bothered by her parents' lack of caring toward her and she says she wishes for the close-knit "family" Sam has with the pack members. Sam says that has drawbacks as well and that he feels he's nothing without them. Grace and Sam are watching television when her parents arrive home. Grace tells Sam to remain on the couch, that it's time for them to meet. Sam is obviously nervous but Grace says she's tired of hiding and he agrees. Mr. and Mrs. Brisbane are welcoming and Sam asks to see Mrs. Brisbane's studio. After her parents leave the room, Grace asks Sam why he was "sucking up", and he says it's because he wants them to like him in case he's around for a long time. As he leaves to go up to the studio, Grace wonders why Sam changed and she didn't.

In chapter thirty-five, Sam goes into the studio. Mrs. Brisbane asks to paint him and he agrees, picking up a guitar and strumming while she does. They talk about music and she asks if Sam has written a song for Grace. He sings one for her. Sam is suddenly struck by the need to spend as much of his remaining time with Grace as possible and is about to leave the studio when he hears Grace's scream and a crash. In chapter thirty-six, Sam remembers Shelby showing him the scars on her belly from when she was bitten by the wolves, and her voice saying that being killed by wolves must be "a hell of a way to die". In chapter thirty-seven, Sam enters the kitchen to find that Shelby, in her wolf form, has Grace cornered. He is trying to fight her off when Mr. Brisbane shoots Shelby. The door is broken and Sam is quickly cold. He hears Grace screaming that Sam has to be moved where it's warmer.

In chapter thirty-eight, Grace is at the hospital. She tells her parents that Sam's violent reaction to the situation is because of abuse he suffered as a child. Mrs. Brisbane warns Grace that Sam might suffer long-term effects from that abuse and that Grace should distance herself from Sam. Grace flatly refuses. Grace and Sam both get shots to protect them against rabies. Grace notes that Sam could have told them that the wolf attack was provoked by jealousy, not rabies. As they are leaving the hospital, Grace believes she sees Olivia's mom.

In chapter thirty-nine, Sam and Grace begin spending a great deal of time in Mr. Brisbane's unused study. Grace asks Sam if changing into the wolf is "science or magic". Sam says a wolf bit a man one day and the "man caught it". He says the magic is that it can't be explained, and that it doesn't really matter. Grace later realizes that the wolf's body that had been on the back porch is gone, making her sure that Shelby is alive. In chapter forty, Sam spends his days looking for Shelby and Jack, the "two wolves I didn't trust". In chapter forty-one, Olivia is absent, which is a very rare thing. A teacher warns that there have been cases of meningitis reported in the area. Isabel shows Grace photos Olivia took. There is one of Jack as a wolf, clearly looking out of a



wolf's body with Jack's eyes. The next is Jack, naked and in human form. Grace realizes that Olivia must know about the wolves and is disappointed that she didn't confide in Grace. Grace hesitates and asks for a reason to trust Isabel. Isabel responds that it's because she believes that whatever is wrong with Jack is also wrong with Sam. She tells Sam that afternoon what Isabel had said and Sam says he wants to meet Isabel. Grace says they can't tell Isabel but Sam says some others have known about the pack, including Beck's wife. He says Beck was married and his wife died of breast cancer, but that she'd known about Beck's wolf side.

In chapter forty-two, Sam, Grace and Isabel are at Grace's house cooking together, though Isabel complains several times that she'd rather be talking about Jack's situation. Later, Sam agrees to answer questions. Isabel asks if Sam changed Jack and he says it wasn't him but that some of the pack members aren't "nice". Sam then points out that becoming a wolf doesn't make one a "monster", but does free a person of his natural inhibitions. Sam also explains that Sam wasn't ever really dead but that it took him awhile to recover from his wounds. Isabel asks about the pack and Sam says Jack will be accepted in, if he ever connects with them. Jack and Grace reveal that they've been looking for Jack. Isabel says Jack "wasn't very nice" when she'd last encountered him and that she isn't sure she wants to find him again.

In chapter forty-three, Grace confronts Olivia, asking why she hadn't talked to her about Jack. Grace says Jack asked her for secrecy and she felt guilty about the situation. During the conversation, Olivia seems to wonder if Grace ever changed after being bitten. She asks Grace the question twice. Grace, realizing that Olivia knew about the wolves but only admitted it after Grace confronted her, feels betrayed. When Sam picks her up, Grace detects the scent of anxiety. Sam says he wants to take her to Duluth. They stop at a candy shop and Sam takes her inside, where he challenges her to stop thinking and simply allow herself to smell the various scents of the shop. She gives in and notes the overwhelming scents as well as the subtle scents though she thinks that she isn't sure she is ready to admit "how not normal" she is. Outside the shop, Grace notes that there are footprints in the snow, a heap of clothing and paw prints leading away.

In chapter forty-four, Sam recalls the street he'd lived on as a kid. Beck calls but Sam says only that he's fine and hangs up on him. Sam recalls later that he'd been waiting for the school bus when he was attacked by two wolves, one holding him down while the other bit him. He says Beck took Sam in after his parents slit his wrists and tried to kill him, and that he had never looked past Beck's kindness to study the wolf attack. But while talking with Grace about it, Sam has no choice but to admit that Beck had chosen him, hunted him and infected him. That night, they give in to their passion. In chapter forty-five, Grace wakes to find that the power has gone off. She snuggles with Sam deeper under the covers in an effort to keep him warm. Sam's cell phone rings and Grace answers. It's Beck, who says that Paul has been hurt. He asks if Sam can come to them and Sam says he doesn't know. Sam doesn't talk any more but Grace tells Beck she's still on the line. Beck asks what she knows about Sam and she says, "everything". She then says she'd like to meet Beck.



Chapters 29 through 45 Analysis

Soon after Grace was mauled by the wolves, her father left her in the car after buying groceries. He forgot about her for some time and she ran a high fever later. The doctors said they weren't sure why she survived at all. There will emerge a theory that the fever is what kept her from changing. As Grace and Sam are talking one day, he asks if she is bothered by her parents' apparent lack of caring. Grace tries initially to laugh the question off but admits that it does. She wonders why she isn't able to make them love her. She points out that she almost died twice, apparently believing that should have made them understand what they almost lost.

The discussion between Sam and Isabel on the effects of the cold reveals that some had thought of moving south. They'd traveled to Texas in the fall in an effort to avoid the cold. The result was that their bodies became unstable in even slight temperature changes. If they caught the breeze from an air conditioner, they were likely to change.

At one point early on, Grace evaluates her love for Sam and equates it to a situation in which one falls in love with a savior. She can't dredge up the name for that situation but recognizes it as a possibility. This could be true, at least to some degree. What's interesting is Sam's affection for Beck is very likely a similar situation. Sam says he remembers being attacked and has always put it down to a random attack. But when he evaluates it he remembers that the wolves had "ripped" at his flesh, as if they were only trying to make him bleed. As it turns out, that was exactly what they were doing. Beck will later reveal his objectives to Grace. Sam, considering how much he hates being a wolf, has been completely out of character in his refusal to evaluate why he is a wolf. Ironically, he hates being a wolf but loves the person who made him one.

When Beck calls with news that Paul has been hurt, Sam snarls at him, asking if it was "one of the new ones". Grace doesn't know yet what that means, but it's obvious that Sam's first suspicion is that one of the young wolves Beck recruited has become a threat to the pack.



Chapters 46 through 67

Chapters 46 through 67 Summary

In chapter forty-six, Grace feels a little amazed that her parents don't realize she'd made love to Sam the night before. Grace suggests that she and Sam go to see Beck. He says he hates confrontation and she says there won't have to be a confrontation. Sam says there will be "if I have any principles left". Sam then asks Grace if she made love to him in order to get back at her parents for their lack of caring attitudes. She is furious and almost stomps away but remembers that he might turn to a wolf during the day while she's at school. She says their relationship isn't normal and she can't give in to nursing her indignation because of it. She goes to class, though she says it feels like a mistake to leave Sam.

In chapter forty-seven, Sam goes looking for Jack and returns first to the Culpepper mansion. There he hears Isabel and Jack, arguing at the back of the house. He listens in as Jack admits that he'd eaten the family pet, a Chihuahua named Chloe. Isabel asks what she's supposed to tell her parents and Jack says she shouldn't tell them anything. He then says he believes he's found a cure. Sam listens to the rest of the conversation. Isabel leaves and Jack goes into the kitchen. Sam follows quietly and asks Jack why he believes he has found a cure. Jack says that Grace was bitten but isn't a wolf, and cites that as the source of a cure. Just then Jack begins to turn and Sam waits, believing Jack will simply run hide once he's changed. As the chapter ends, Sam admits that he was wrong.

In chapter forty-eight, Grace is waiting at school when the Bronco arrives. Jack is driving. He tells her that he wants the cure. He then says he bit Olivia and knows that even if Grace won't share the cure with him out of kindness, she'll share it in order to save Olivia. Grace pleads with him to take her to Sam or tell her where he is, but he won't. Grace tries to reason with him, saying she doesn't know why she didn't change, but Jack won't listen. She finally tells him she has a cure and will contact the person who can help. She calls Beck. When he answers, she tells him that she has someone with her who needs the cure. Beck catches on to the situation and tells her to come to the front door of the house. Jack warns Grace against setting a trap and she says she'll help him because he knows where Sam is. In chapter forty-nine, Sam wakes to find it's bitterly cold and he's locked in some sort of shed.

In chapter fifty, Grace and Jack arrive at Beck's house and rush inside. As soon as they are away from the door, Beck jumps on Jack, who has changed. Together they get Jack into the bathroom and lock him in. Beck asks if Jack has his cell phone and Grace says he does, but that she didn't know the number. Beck calls it and gets a sporadic connection. Jack says he's on the Culpepper property in a shed. Grace calls Isabel and she agrees to go look for Jack. Isabel finds him and says she's taking him inside. Grace notes that several of Beck's movements are exactly like those of Sam.



In chapter fifty-one, Grace arrives at Isabel's house where Sam is near the fireplace. Isabel points out that Sam has puked on the carpet but says it's alright because her parents are angry at her all the time anyway and she wouldn't want to break up the cycle. As Sam is battling the fatigue and nausea of the near-change, the three discuss why Grace didn't change. They discuss making his body incredibly hot but Sam says he doesn't believe normal heat will matter, citing Ulrick's time in Texas. Sam says if the fever Grace ran is why she never changed, it's because she was burned "from the inside".

In chapter fifty-two, Grace and Sam are headed to Beck's house when a deer jumps out in front of them, causing them to wreck. The windshield is broken and the car won't restart. Grace calls for help, but they know it won't arrive in time to protect Sam from the cold. Sam calls Beck to say good-bye and they seem to mend their differences. Sam looks at her and reminds her to remember his eyes. In chapter fifty-three, Sam recites a verse of good-bye in which he is "losing myself to frigid regret". In chapter fifty-four, Grace is alone in the Bronco when the paramedics arrive. In chapter fifty-five, Sam watches as Grace stays in the back yard, trying to be cold enough to change, until her father comes outside and takes her in. In chapter fifty-six, Grace is very lonely and the only person she could talk to, Olivia, isn't answering her phone. Grace listens to the wolves' howl and picks out Sam's voice, filled with anguish.

In chapter fifty-seven, Grace calls and Olivia can tell that she's nearing time to change. Olivia arrives at Grace's house and says that she'd wanted to ask Olivia and Sam for help the day she'd seen them at the bookstore, but hadn't been sure they'd help her. Beck calls and tells Grace that Jack is slowly becoming more stable though he has a couple more weeks of erratic changing ahead of him. Beck asks Grace if she'll stop by to be sure Jack is out of the house when he changes for the final time for the winter, fearing that he could be in trouble if he were trapped inside as a wolf. Grace asks if she can come by to talk, and Beck agrees that she can come that afternoon. Grace next talks to Isabel, who says her mother volunteers at a local medical clinic and had discovered a case of meningitis. Isabel says she drew three vials of the patient's meningitis-infected blood - one for Jack, one for Sam and one for Olivia. Isabel says she's afraid to take it out of the refrigerator at the clinic for fear that the bacteria will die. Isabel says she drew three vials in the hope that Grace will help her get Jack to the clinic. Grace assures her she would have helped even without that and instructs Isabel to meet her at Beck's.

In chapter fifty-eight, Grace goes to the basement with Beck and discovers a huge library. He says they read a lot when it begins getting too cold for them to be outside. Beck tells about his life. He says he was infected when he was twenty, while hiking. He married anyway and they talked about having children, though she had only a few months to live. When Beck saw Sam with his parents, he believed he could do a better job raising him. He compares Sam's parents to "a pair of pigeons". He says he realizes now that he ruined Sam's life and that he's regretted it every day for years. Though Grace doesn't disagree with Beck's analysis, she says that Sam is what he is because of Beck, and that it hurts to be with him because he and Sam are so similar. Beck says he's been watching wolves for more than two decades, and that when the wolf reaches



the end of his time as human, there's nothing to be done about it. He says he doesn't understand how Sam changed to save Grace or how he changed after he was shot. Beck agrees to help them catch Sam in order to infect him.

In chapter fifty-nine, Beck has hamburger with Benadryl hidden inside and calls to Sam, who eventually appears as Beck changes into a wolf and disappears. In chapter sixty, Isabel complains several times about the "wet mutt smell" that's coming from Sam, who is in the back of Isabel's SUV. Isabel is driving and Jack is whining in the front seat, somewhere between human and wolf. Olivia and Grace are in the back, holding hands. Isabel has stolen a key to the medical clinic and Jack helps get Sam into one of the rooms. They prepare to give Jack the first vial of blood and Isabel is obviously afraid. Grace takes over and slaps Jack when it seems he might be losing control. Olivia is next but she balks, saying she isn't sure she wants to risk death. Grace understands and Olivia doesn't take the injection.

In the exam room, Sam is fully awake. They have a theory that the infection would only work if the infection were introduced to the human form. They debate giving him the shot anyway but Grace decides to try to reach Sam by sharing images with him. She squats beside him and tries to communicate, and he's suddenly changed to the human form. They rush to give him the blood and get only about half injected before he turns back to this wolf form. Grace's thoughts were that she had probably killed him.

In chapter sixty-one, the door is left unattended and Sam runs away. Grace sees Shelby before they leave the clinic. In chapter sixty-two, Grace is worried after not hearing from Isabel for a couple of days. Grace goes to the Culpepper house and discovers that Jack is human and has stopped changing, but is very ill. Grace says they have to take him to the hospital, but Isabel says she can't take him to the hospital because he's supposed to be dead. Grace says they can take him to Duluth where his face hasn't been recently on the news and they'll come up with a cover story for when he is recognized. Olivia, meanwhile, says it's time for her to change and that she isn't going to fight it any longer. She gives Grace a note and asks her to get it to her parents. Grace agrees and Olivia bounds out the door, turning to a wolf in a seamless, painless jump. Grace goes to warm up the car, but Jack dies fifteen minutes later.

In chapter sixty-three, Grace encounters Olivia in her wolf form. She says she wants to ask if Olivia has seen Sam and believes Olivia wants to tell her she hasn't. Isabel and Grace spend some time together. One day they go to the bookstore. Isabel buys a cookbook and Grace buys the book of poetry Sam had read from. They bake cookies together and Isabel says Jack had always been fond of Christmas but she had decided she wouldn't celebrate it anymore. In chapter sixty-four, Grace knows that she won't be at home for Christmas but will be with Rachel on a beach in Florida. In chapter sixty-five, Sam watches Grace from the woods. In chapter sixty-six, Grace goes outside to fill the bird feeder. In chapter sixty-seven, Grace hears a sound and realizes it's Sam. He tells her to "say something".



Chapters 46 through 67 Analysis

As chapter forty-six opens, Sam is obviously feeling guilty about making love to Grace. She admits to feeling guilty as well but the emotion isn't nearly as strong in her as it is in Sam. Sam then tells her that he hates confrontation and that he doesn't want to see Beck because he fears the confrontation that will happen. Grace says there doesn't have to be a confrontation but Sam says there does, "if I have any principles left". He is obviously feeling guilty about having made love to Grace but he is also feeling that he has to speak up to Beck about changing the three new pack members.

The scene in which Isabel is searching for Jack is very humorous. As she looks into the sheds on the property, she keeps up a running commentary with Grace. At one point she says that if Jack has turned into a wolf and if he "rips my face off, I'm having my family sue you". At another point, she says that it's cold out and that she's walking across the yard where her dog used to pee "before my ... brother ate her". When she enters one shed, she says Sam isn't there unless he's turned into a bicycle. She calls his name, "Sam", and "Wolf-Boy". When Isabel does find him, he's obviously changing. Isabel's reaction is very interesting in that it shows details about her true character. She doesn't run away. She tells him to get control of himself and then says, "Don't you dare do this to her", obviously meaning Grace and indicating that she cares about Grace's feelings in a way that hasn't been obvious before.

Grace gave a great deal of thought to giving Sam the infected blood, knowing that many people who got meningitis died, even if they were treated. She wonders if it's what he would want even though Sam had told her he would try anything to escape his fate as a wolf. Beck confirms it. What's interesting is that Olivia's acceptance of becoming a wolf is apparently what makes the difference between her transformation and that of Sam and some of the others. Olivia's change is seamless and painless. She is running out of the house, pulling off her sweater, and then she's a wolf, joyfully bounding into the woods. Another interesting point is that Sam remembers Beck's painful changes. Apparently, even though Beck held an important place in the pack and was willing to change others, he fought the change as well.



Characters

Grace Brisbane

Grace is headed into her senior year of high school when she first meets Sam in his form as a human. Grace is very young when she's snatched and bitten repeatedly by werewolves. She doesn't fight them and might have died at their hands except for the intervention of Sam Roth, who was also a werewolf at the time. Sam saves Grace and she survives. Miraculously, she also doesn't turn into a werewolf but finds she has a strong connection with the wolves. She has enhanced senses as well, especially of smell. She also feels a strong connection to Sam and loves the winters when he's often in the woods near her house. Grace is a strong-willed person and lacks a creative or imaginative side except when it comes to the wolves. At least part of her practical side comes from her disdain for her mother, who is an artist. Grace seems to feel the need to be more practical to make up for her mother's free-spirited, lackadaisical nature. Grace feels a fierce loyalty to the wolves and tries to intervene when they are being hunted. She also tends to want things compartmentalized, with everything in its proper place. This is seen when she insists on meeting Beck, who she sees as Sam's father. Grace has that same kind of loyalty to her friends, but she is also willing to help those she encounters who are in need. This is seen when she steps in to help Isabel give Jack a cure. It's unclear why Grace doesn't change into a werewolf after being bitten, but it seems likely that it's at least partly to do with the fact that she had a serious fever soon after being bitten.

Sam Roth

Sam is a werewolf who spends a great deal of his winters in wolf form, living near Grace's house. As a boy, he is eighteen years old the year he meets Grace. Sam is just a child when he was bitten by Beck and turned into a werewolf. Sam hates the life but loves Beck. Beck takes care of Sam and the others, acting as the "pack leader" when the members are human, and Sam looks to Beck as a father figure. Because he hates the life as a wolf and because he looks at Beck as his father, Sam feels incredibly betrayed to discover that Beck has brought three new people into the pack, initially as humans but then being changed into wolves. Sam is deeply in love with Grace and has been since he initially saved her from the pack. Sam's love for Grace was so strong even then that he was able to change from the wolf to human form in order to carry her to safety. Sam has been educated by the members of the pack in their human forms, with Beck taking the lead for his education. He loves to read and is intelligent. He works in a bookstore during the summer months and tells anyone who asks that he was homeschooled. Sam is the natural choice to take over as leader of the pack for Beck when the wolves are in their human forms and for Beck when they are in their wolf form. That's part of the reason a werewolf named Shelby is so interested in him.



Jack Culpepper

Jack attends high school in Mercy Falls at the same school as Grace. His family is very wealthy and he's spoiled and mean. Jack is shooting the wolves with a BB gun when the wolves turn on him and he's bitten. He changes, sporadically at first, as is to be expected of young wolves. He is believed to be dead but shows himself to both his sister Isabel and to Grace's friend Olivia. He bites and infects Olivia in the hope of forcing her to tell him why Grace didn't change. When Jack is presented the option of becoming infected with meningitis as a way of making his fever spike, he takes the treatment though it means he will likely die. He spends three agonizing days before he dies of the meningitis.

Isabel Culpepper

Jack's sister Isabel learns that Jack has been bitten by a werewolf. Isabel comes to believe that infecting Jack and the others with meningitis while they are in their human forms will cure them of being werewolves. When she learns of a case of meningitis in the clinic where her mother works, she draws infected blood and gives it to her brother. Isabel is somewhat snotty and spoiled but is also a strong person. She is able to cope with the news that her brother is a werewolf. She has a very sarcastic sense of humor.

Olivia Marx

Grace's friend Olivia is an avid photographer and takes many pictures of the wolves in the woods. She is bitten by Jack while he's human and, though it takes awhile, she eventually changes into a wolf. When Olivia is given the opportunity to take an injection of the meningitis-infected blood, she chooses not to, preferring to take her chances with the pack. Her change is seamless and painless.

Beck

A werewolf, he is a former lawyer and is the one who changes Sam. Beck says that he'd been horribly selfish to change Sam. Beck said he had done it because he'd watched Sam with his parents and believed he could raise Sam better than Sam's parents. Beck owns the house and other material possessions being used by the pack in their human form. He has unrealistic dreams for Sam. When he begins Sam's education, he has hopes that Sam will go on to college and establish himself in a career. It seems that he hopes Sam will carry on in his own career choice much as a biological parent would hope for with any child. Beck is the person who leads the pack during their human time.



Shelby

A young female werewolf, she is incredibly interested in Sam. She feels that she would make a good mate for him and is furious when Sam isn't interested. It's unclear whether Shelby's motivations come from what she knows about Sam or from the fact that he is the natural next choice to lead the pack both during their wolf times and during their human times.

Rachel

Another of Grace's friends, Rachel doesn't understand Grace's infatuation with the wolves. She is outgoing and teases Sam, calling him "The Boy". Rachel knows nothing about the wolves or the connection between Grace, Sam, Olivia, Jack and the wolves.

Officer Koenig

The police officer who confirms that the rumor that Jack's body is missing from the morgue. He is in the woods later when the men are hunting for the wolves and Grace intervenes.

Mrs. Brisbane

Grace's mother is an artist and is lacking in her duty as a parent. She is not particularly concerned about Grace and seems somewhat disdainful about Grace's practicality, which is in sharp contrast to Mrs. Brisbane's artistic side. She initially welcomes Jack into her home but warns Grace that he might be dangerous after learning of Jack's traumatic childhood.



Objects/Places

Mercy Falls, Minnesota

The town where Grace lives.

The Crooked Shelf

Where Sam works in the summer when he's in his human form and where he takes Grace to read poetry.

Boundary Wood

Where the wolves spend most of their time and where Jack is bitten.

Mercy Falls High

Where Grace attends high school.

Beck's House

Where the pack lives when they're human.

The Bronco

The vehicle Grace has and that she wrecks on an icy road on the way to Beck's house.

The Clinic

Where Mrs. Culpepper volunteers and where Isabel keeps the blood that's infected with meningitis.

Florida

Where Rachel and Grace plan to go for Christmas vacation.

Chloe

The name of Isabel's dog that Jack eats.

Duluth

Where Sam takes Grace to a candy shop.



Themes

The importance of family/belonging

Family, for Beck, Paul, Sam and the others, is defined as their pack. This desire for a family is seen in Beck's confession about his wife and his decision to change young Sam into a werewolf. Beck says that he'd known his wife had cancer and that they'd talked about children, though she had only months to live and both knew it wouldn't happen. Beck had seen Sam with his parents and believed he could do better raising Sam. He admits to being incredibly selfish on this point and it seems that his motive was not to save Sam from a life with his parents but to save himself from being childless. Beck holds to the idea that he can somehow build the basis of a productive adult life for Sam through education. He seems to hope that Sam will follow in his footsteps, becoming a lawyer, though another pack member points out the impossibility of this idea. Another example of this theme is seen in the dynamics of Grace's family. Her parents are basically indifferent to her, leaving her on her own for hours at a time. Grace craves parental attention and has come to resent her parents for the lack of it, especially from her mother. Grace is often in the position of the nurturer, being responsible for cooking meals and taking responsibility for herself with regard to school attendance and homework. Another minor example of this theme is seen in the reaction of Sam's parents to his change into a werewolf. They believe he is possessed by a demon and, in an attempt to free him, slash his wrists.

The Power of the Wolf

The wolf drive within those who have been bitten is powerful to the point that fighting it is almost impossible and often painful. This is seen as Sam fights to retain his identity. Sam hates the fact that his identity changes when he's a wolf. Toward that end, he fights the change and changing becomes very painful for him. This is a stark contrast to the change for Olivia who bounds effortlessly into her wolf form for the first time. Grace never changes but the power of the wolf within her is evident just the same. For example, her sense of smell is heightened and she can detect slight scents that would otherwise have escaped her. This power is also seen in Grace's reaction to the howling of the wolves in the woods near her house after Sam has changed. Once they've changed, the wolves are powerful in and of themselves as seen in their power to heal. Sam is shot in the neck as a wolf and takes on his human form. Grace takes him to the hospital where the wound is sutured. As soon as the bleeding is stopped, Sam is able to heal himself in a matter of minutes. He notes that the wound was so serious that he might not have survived without the stitches that stopped the blood flow. This power is also seen in Jack's case. Jack's body is taken to the morgue but Sam says that Jack wasn't ever really dead. His wounds were so serious that it took him awhile to get over them, but he healed.



Accepting the wolf

The people who were werewolves in this story were not given the option of becoming wolves. Sam was sought out by Beck and bitten in order to bring him into the pack. Jack was bitten by the wolves after shooting them with a BB gun. Olivia was bitten as a way of blackmailing Grace. With the exception of Olivia, all experienced excruciating pain as they changed into wolves and fought desperately to keep from changing as long as possible. Olivia's willingness to accept the wolf and the other's lack of acceptance is seen more clearly only after Olivia's change. Until then, it seems that all changes are painful. The fact that Olivia changes seamlessly and painlessly seems to indicate that the others are fighting the change so hard that they make it more painful than it has to be. Shelby is another who accepts the wolf, though it is unclear whether her change is painful. Though Sam hates the fact that he is a werewolf, he embraces that side of himself to a degree. This is seen when he takes Grace to the candy shop in Duluth and encourages her to give in to her sense of smell. He wants Grace to experience the joy of the subtle scents of the shop. She eventually does give in to his urging, and she's glad she did. The fact that Shelby is so willing to accept the wolf is apparently her way of escaping a bad human life. There's really no reason Olivia is so willing except that she's established a connection as she spent time photographing the pack.



Style

Point of View

The story is presented in a limited perspective from the alternating view of Sam and Grace. Each chapter is titled with the name of one of these two main characters. The chapter is then presented from the personal perspective of that character. The perspectives are completely limited. For example, Grace doesn't know what Sam is thinking and Sam doesn't know what Grace is thinking. Neither knows the thoughts or even the actions of other characters that are out of their sight at the moment, though there are hints along the way. For example, Grace sees a woman she believes to be Olivia's mother at the hospital but doesn't realize the significance until much later. The reader knows only what Grace knows - that she believes she's seen Olivia's mother at the hospital. The alternating perspective is an effective means of presenting the story. The fact that each is presented in first person could become confusing unless the reader pays attention to the titles. Even without the titles, there are clues. For example, a chapter that's presented from Grace's perspective may include something Sam tells her. In that case, Sam's name is presented but Grace refers to herself as "I". In some cases, the chapters overlap in their time frame, presenting the same scene from the two perspectives. That's seen in the first several chapters of the book. When Grace is taken from her tire swing in the back yard, she talks about the feeling of the wolves pressed in around her and her first sighting of Sam. Sam talks about seeing the others take Grace and his decision to intervene.

Setting

The story is set in Minnesota during modern times. The exact dateline is not presented and is not important. The characters have technology available that sets the story around the time of its release in 2009. There are computers in the school and the characters have cell phones with photo capabilities. The exact time setting is relatively unimportant because of the fanciful nature of the story line. The town of Mercy Falls appears to be completely fictional. There is no indication of its location other than the fact that it's an hour from Duluth, Minnesota. Duluth is a real town and the fact that the characters traveled there makes the fictional setting of the book more believable. There are several specific settings within the story. Grace's house is a major setting and a great deal of the action happens at or near her house. Sam describes it as a comfortable place, a two story house with Grace's room on the ground floor. There is a study and the couple spends a lot of time in Grace's room, the study and the kitchen. There are several other important settings in the story. The Culpepper house is where Jack and Sam confront each other, prompting Sam to change. It's described as a "mansion" and is hugely sterile compared to Grace's home. Another setting is Beck's house. The house isn't described in great detail but it does have a basement. The book store, a candy store in Duluth and the Mercy Falls High School are all secondary settings. Descriptions of the various settings vary but all are reasonable and believable.



Language and Meaning

The story is written in a fairly straight-forward manner and the story moves along fairly quickly. The overall tone is one of hope against odds and the reader will likely hope that the love of Sam and Grace will prevail. This turns to hopelessness after Sam returns to his wolf form and seems unlikely to change back. The ending is a surprise and seems to be a miracle of sorts. The highly-improbable return of Sam in his human form may be unexpected for some, especially considering that the book is the first of a trilogy. The rest of the story is left to the reader's imagination unless the reader goes on to read the remaining books. The book is also somewhat suspenseful. There are several instances of foreshadowing that encourage the suspense. One of those is seen at the end of chapter twenty-four. Sam and Grace are kissing when a gust of wind swirls around them. When Grace looks into Sam's eyes, she realizes that she sees fear there. The author doesn't explain that fear and it's left to the reader to decide what's meant. In the following chapter, Sam doesn't immediately answer the question of his fear. The reader has to discern that it's his fear of turning back into a wolf that Grace has seen. Later, Sam confronts Jack in Jack's house and says that he believes he has the situation under control. The chapter ends with Sam realizing that he was wrong. The suspense in that case builds with the following chapters beginning with Jack showing up to pick up Grace, leaving the reader to wonder for an entire chapter what happened to Sam.

Structure

The book is divided into sixty-seven chapters, ranging in length from only a few sentences to more than ten. Each chapter is numbered and titled with the names of one of the two characters, Sam or Grace. Chapters titled with Grace's name are presented from her perspective. Those titled with Sam's name are presented from Sam's perspective. Each chapter is subtitled with a temperature. That temperature is vital to understanding the story because Sam's change into a werewolf is determined by the temperature. For example, as the temperatures range in the high forties and fifties, Sam has less trouble remaining in human form. By the time the temperature drops to the thirties, he struggles a great deal. The story is presented in chronological order, though there are several years that are completely omitted. Grace is very young when the wolves pull her from the tire swing in her back yard one winter. That scene is presented from both Grace's and Sam's perspectives followed by a chapter that indicates a pattern of the two seeing each other regularly in the winters over the next six years. The book covers only a relatively short period of time and the time that passes is not clearly defined. There are events that make the time passage obvious, such as Grace's need to return to school on a Monday or a phone call from her parents indicating their plans for an evening. There are many two to four-line lyrics or poems presented from Sam's perspective in keeping with his love of poetry. These are italicized. Some are the words of famous poets but many appear to be original.



Quotes

"And so it was an unbroken pattern for six years: the wolves haunting presence in the winter and their even more haunting absence in the summer."

Chap. 3, p. 7

"I turned toward the dark parking lot, feeling more alive and more happy and more afraid than I ever had before."

Chap. 15, p. 73

"I'm trying to make you think I'm a decent person. Telling you I saw you naked while I was another species does not help my case."

Chap. 16, p. 85

"Seeing beyond the obvious meaning of my wolf skin to what was inside. To whatever it was that made me Sam, always."

Chap. 30, p. 177

"I'm Grace's boyfriend. Please notice the chaste distance between us. I am very responsible and have never had my tongue in your daughter's mouth."

Chap. 34, p. 223

"The entire room was brilliantly lit by lamps fitted with bulbs meant to mimic natural light, and the effect was a cross between a desert at noon and a Wal-Mart."

Chap. 35, p. 227

"I would say that by virtue of your not acting parental up to this point, you've relinquished your ability to wield any power now. Sam and I are together."

Chap. 38, p. 239

"Like me, Sam had to get a series of rabies shots - standard hospital procedure for unprovoked animal attacks. It wasn't like we could tell the staff that Sam knew the animal personally and that said animal had been homicidal, not rabid."

Chap. 38, p. 241

"So what am I supposed to tell the parental units? Mom, Dad, Jack's a werewolf, and guess what, you know how Chloe's been missing? He ate her."

Chap. 47, p. 307

"We're just trying to survive with the crappy lot we've been given. We don't need some smarmy rich punk like you revealing us to the rest of the world so they can come after us with pitchforks."

Chap. 47, p. 310

"Sam, it's Isabel, if you're a wolf in there, don't rip my face off."

Chap. 50, p. 329



"crashing into the trembling void; stretching my hand to you; losing myself to frigid regret; is this fragile love; a way; to say; goodbye"
Chap. 53, p. 341

"And she ran out into the yard, stripping sweaters as she did, and before she got to the tree line, she was a light, light wolf, joyful and leaping. There was none of the pain of Jack's or Sam's change - it was as if she had been meant for it."
Chap. 62, p. 378



Topics for Discussion

Describe how Sam and Grace come to know each other. How does their relationship evolve over the years? Why does it evolve? What are the similarities of how they are connected when Sam is in his human form compared to when he is in his wolf form? What are the differences?

How is Sam changed to a wolf? What is his relationship with Beck? Why does he have that relationship with Beck? What are Sam's feelings toward Beck? How and why do they change? What are Beck's feelings toward Sam?

How is Jack changed? Why is he changed? Why does Sam feel responsible for Jack? Should he? Why is Jack so willing to take the treatment he believes will be a cure?

How is Olivia changed? What is her connection to the wolves prior being bitten? Describe her first transformation. How is it different from Sam's typical transformations? Why is it different? What does Grace feel as Olivia is leaving for the woods for the first time?

Who is Isabel? Describe her personality. What is her role in Grace's life and why does she become involved?

How do Grace and Isabel come up with the idea of infecting the wolves with meningitis as a possible cure? What does Jack say about the possibility? Why does Olivia refuse it? How do Isabel and Grace infect Jack and Sam? Which is apparently successful?

In what ways does this story differ from a traditional werewolf story? Is this more or less believable than the typical legends? Why?