

Snakecharm Study Guide

Snakecharm by Amelia Atwater-Rhodes

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Plot Summary

Snakecharm is the second novel in The Kiesha'ra series by author Amelia Atwater-Rhodes. In this novel, Zane Cobriana is the leader, the Diente, of the serpiente and avian people that are now living in peacetime. Part of the peace came when he took on his pair bond, Danica, an avian, as his queen and wife. When the couple find out that Danica is carrying their first child, their thought processes start to change. While they have always striven for peace between their once warring people, they hunger for it even more now that they are about to be parents.

As the novel unfolds, the two try to decide how they are going to raise their mixed-blood child. Because each society has different rituals, customs and cultures when it comes to raising children, Zane and Danica are struggling with what is right not only for their child but also for their people as a whole. In the meantime, Safka, one of the original avian people, is in serpiente territory looking for a falcon criminal.

While the hunt for the falcon criminal is ongoing, Zane and Danica learn the true identities of two of the Royal Flight guards who are closest to Danica and Zane—Rei and Erica. Rei turns out to be the heir of the avian throne on the island, but his mother and the empress set him free from his duties and return him to serpiente land. In the end, preparations start to build a new united society, where the serpiente and avian can live side-by-side and as one.



Prologue

Prologue Summary

Zane Cobriana is telling the history of his people that he now rules. He is the first to lead his people during a time of peace rather than war. His civilization began back when Egypt was a young country. At the time, two powers ruled, an evil one and a good one. The two powers were required to rule in harmony in order to keep balance. When the high priestess Maeve seduces Leben, she gets him to grant her and her people the black scales and garnet eyes of a cobra.

Those who worship the good side have been granted the wings and talons of falcons. Zane Cobriana descends from the Cobriana line, with their jet-black hair and garnet eyes, the serpente or serpent kin of the ruler Kiesha.

Prologue Analysis

The god of darkness and the goddess of light represent the sides of evil and good. Requiring the people of the civilization to worship both sides keeps the balance between good and evil so that no one side takes over. The animals that the people represent are also symbolic of good and evil. The dark side of the people are given the features and powers of serpents, which are seen as evil animals. Alternatively, the other side of the people are given falcon-like features and powers, and falcons are generally not seen as evil animals.

Zane talks about the fact that he is the first ruler of his people to rule during a time of peace. He also speaks of an uneasy feeling that he carries with him while he sleeps and is still there when he awakes. This foreshadows a war breaking out between the people. He briefly mentions Danica. The inference is that Danica and Zane descend from opposite lines, and if a war breaks out that he and Danica technically would be on different sides.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Syfka lands in Zane's land. She is looking for a falcon criminal that she thinks might be hiding among his people. Danica, who is Zane's pair bond, joins Zane in greeting and speaking with Syfka. Even though Syfka and Zane's people have a peace agreement with each other, they still do not like each other.

Danica has been practicing a special dance with the teacher A'isha. She seems a little dizzy and woozy, which has Zane concerned. After Syfka flies off to return later, Zane and Danica talk about trying to find the criminal with Erica. Zane tells Danica about his brother Anjay, who had been the heir prior to Zane, talking with Empress Ahnmik to try to get her help in the war effort. When he had returned, Anjay had discovered his sister's death, so he had gone off, leaving Zane and the others not knowing what had happened with the Empress.

What Zane doesn't tell Danica is that Anjay had been trying to kill Danica's mother, Tuuli Thea. Anjay had been killed in the process. When Zane had found out, he had gone to Hawk's Keep, which is where he had wound up in Danica's room and had held the princess while she was asleep. Zane thinks this is when he had fallen in love with Danica. Later, the two had been forced to marry to form an alliance between the avian and serpiente people, but the two are really in love.

Zane sets out to find Valene. Valene turns out to be Erica's aunt. She might also know more about the avian people because she is a scholar.

Chapter 1 Analysis

It is ironic that one of the avian people, who is a criminal, is trying to hide amongst the serpiente people. Technically, the two sides are not at war, but there is still dissension amongst the different groups. The secret Zane is keeping about his brother trying to kill Danica's mom might come back to haunt him. It foreshadows Danica finding out and it causing a rift between the lovers.

Danica's dizziness and tiredness are symptoms of her pregnancy. Neither Zane nor Danica know she is pregnant yet, so this is foreshadowing of them discovering the pregnancy. Additionally, there is an implication that the serpiente people might try to protect the avian that is hiding among them. This, of course, could cause a war to break out, with the outcome unfolding as the novel continues.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Zane and Danica are talking about their childhood as they head to the sha'Mejay, which is the nest where the dancers live, eat, practice and study. Danica is telling Zane about Sebastian, a playmate of hers until the war broke out. Zane settles in and Danica goes to the stage to dance for her king and mate.

As she is dancing, Danica gets dizzy and almost falls off the stage. Zane catches her before she falls. A'isha suggests Zane gets his brother-in-law to make Danica some raspberry tea. This suggestion brings a smile to Zane's face. When Zane touches Danica, she is cold; normally, as an avian she is always warm because she is warm-blooded. Zane sends for someone to bring Danica's doctor from the Keep.

Chapter 2 Analysis

It is ironic that Danica, who is from avian descent, is learning an ancient dance of the serpente people. It is also symbolic of the melding of the two civilizations into one. When A'isha suggests Zane's brother-in-law make Danica some of his raspberry tea, A'isha is suggesting that Danica is pregnant.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Rei arrives at the nest after fetching Valene to speak with Zane. Zane and Valene talk in the room next to where Danica is resting so Zane is nearby in case something happens to Danica. Zane tells Valene about Syfka asking for their help to find a criminal falcon that might be living among them.

Valene explains that the falcon law is so strict that it could be a criminal that cursed in front of the Empress rather than a more severe crime. Valene suggests Zane treat Syfka with the utmost of respect even though Syfka acts like and thinks she is superior to Zane. Valene also says he shouldn't let Syfka see Danica again because if she is pregnant with a cobra-hawk child, they don't know how Syfka will react. Betsy, Danica's doctor, arrives to examine her.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Valene points out the fine line between the peace and war that exists between the avian and serpente people. This leads Zane to think about the consequences of having a cobra-hawk child. It could be that the child favors one race over the other. If this is so, then it could be the demise of one of their bloodlines. It might be the news of Danica's pregnancy that causes a war to break out again between the two races.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

A'isha invites Zane to stay while the doctor finishes examining Danica. This is an honor because the dancers once rebelled against and killed an ancient king. Since that time, the sha'Mehay has been founded and the dancers have never returned to the king's palace. A'isha also gives Zane a coin on a leather necklace for Danica.

Betsy confirms that Danica is pregnant. She also tells Zane that Danica's body is adapting to grow a serpiente baby. Betsy says Zane shouldn't see Danica for a few days so that her body can adjust to the pregnancy. Betsy agrees to stay in a room at the palace to be close to Danica. When one of the dancers finds out Danica is pregnant, she starts talking about raising the baby in the nest. Zane says he isn't sure how Danica plans to raise the baby because serpiente children and hawk children are raised very differently from each other.

A'isha talks Rei into a dance so that Zane can sneak in to see Danica. Zane gives Danica the necklace and explains its significance to her. She asks him to take a nap with her.

Chapter 4 Analysis

The necklace is a symbol of protection because it is said that even enemies will not attack the wearer of it. It is an honor that A'isha is asking Danica to wear the necklace. Danica is a warm-blooded creature, but since the baby she is growing is likely half and half, her body temperature has to be cold-blooded to grow the serpiente young. This is why Betsy suggests that Danica's skin has been cool and she is feeling faint.

Even though the serpientes and hawks are living as one, there are still many dividing lines among the species. The child that Danica and Zane have conceived is new territory. There has never been a bi-species baby like this one before, so they are entering into uncharted territories. They don't know if the child will have more characteristics of one species over another or not. They aren't even sure how the child will be raised—in the ways of the serpiente or that of the falcons.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Zane and Danica wake the next morning to knocking at the door letting them know Syfka is back. Zane tells Danica he'll go alone because of the falcon beliefs about children. Syfka is not pleased to see Valene is acting as an adviser to Zane. Zane tells Syfka they don't know of any falcon hiding among their people. Syfka demands to speak to Danica's elite, specifically the Royal Flight.

As Zane is protesting that someone could masquerade so close to Danica, a mother and her son start having an argument over an interspecies relationship her son is having. As Zane and Syfka return to their conversation, Syfka continues to be appalled at the fact that one of the guards of the palace is a white serpent.

Zane agrees to have the white serpent, Ailbhe, answer any of Syfka's questions about the guard. Zane also thinks about how only two white serpents have come to the palace, Ailbhe and his sister. His sister was executed for killing Zane's mother. The rest of the white serpents still live in exile on the outskirts of the land. Zane also assures Syfka he and Danica will talk to the rest of the Royal Flight when they visit Hawk's Keep the following day.

Chapter 5 Analysis

The white serpents and black cobras are representative of good and evil. At one time, the two snakes were enemies and not loyal to each other. In peace time, however, the white serpents are welcome to live and work with the black cobras. The fact that only one white serpent now lives with the black serpents symbolizes the imbalance between good and evil that now exists. This imbalance is what caused the war to break out in the first place, so it could represent the signs of war again.

Zane also starts to question Syfka's motives for being in his land. He is starting to wonder if she is there to get closer to the royalty rather than to search for one of the avian criminals. Syfka's presence could represent the beginning of the war. She could be using the premise of searching for a criminal as her way of finding out the weak spots of the land and reporting this back to her people.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Syfka finishes questioning the Royal Flight and leaves. Valene, Rei and Andreios, the head of the Royal Flight, are giving Zane and Danica a report on what happened. Zane says if they can find her falcon, then Syfka is apt to leave them alone. Someone infers that Erica might be the falcon that is hiding among them because she has excellent fighting skills without any formal training.

Rei vehemently denies Erica could be a traitor. Valene also denies that her niece could be a traitor. Valene goes on to say that she has overheard the people speaking of Danica's pregnancy. The serpientes and the avians are both upset that their child might be heir to the throne. They are suggesting Salem, Zane's nephew, be named heir to the throne instead. This leads to a heated discussion over one of the other of the species not having an heir to their side of the throne if their child is more of one species than another.

Zane suggests they table the discussion for now. Since the child won't be born for a few months, they have time to decide how to handle it.

Chapter 6 Analysis

News of Danica's pregnancy is already causing unrest in the land. It seems as if Zane and Danica are stuck between a rock and a hard place. If they choose to have Zane's nephew as the heir to the throne, then their child won't be heir. If they choose to allow the child to be heir, it could cause a war. Additionally, if they choose not to allow the child to reign then both of the people lose an heir, which could end their bloodlines.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

That night, Danica and Zane decide to go their separate ways. Zane has dinner with his sister, Irene, his brother-in-law, Galen, and his nephew, Salem. Galen leaves the table early because he had been bitten by a petulant baby snake earlier. While it's not deadly, it's still unpleasant. While Irene is holding Salem, he is changing back and forth between a human and a cobra. Zane asks his sister outright how she would feel if Salem was heir to the throne.

She says she would rather lose her firstborn to the throne than get torn apart by the hate of war. She also assures Zane that they have months to decide what to do. One of his biggest concerns is if they raise the child as the Tuuli Thea, which is the ruler of the avians, if it is a girl, then she will be raised away from her parents. Avians only see their parents on formal occasions.

As Zane prepares for bed alone because Danica hasn't returned yet, he realizes his sister is right. He would rather lose his child to peace than to war. When Zane falls asleep, he has nightmare after nightmare. When he wakes at dawn, Danica still isn't there. As Zane walks through the marketplace, one of the serpent merchants tells him he is plagued by nightmares. The merchant says he heard the falcons' Syfka is there searching. The merchant says falcon wings still haunt him even though it is peacetime.

Suddenly, a falcon's screech rings in the air. Syfka lands in front of Zane and infers that the merchant to whom he is talking is a criminal, but not the one she seeks. She asks Zane's permission to host a test to find the criminal that is better hidden than she anticipated. Zane agrees as long as it doesn't interfere with his people or Danica's people.

Their attention is drawn away with a scuffle between two suitors and a girl. When the scuffle ends, Syfka implies that Zane's brother wasn't having pleasant dreams during his reign. Syfka also mentions Anjay coming to her for help during the war and how they had killed him. She isn't telling Zane anything he doesn't know. He and Danica simply choose to forgive these atrocities so they can make peace and be together.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Syfka is proving that she has the power to judge people on sight when she declares the vendor speaking to Zane as a criminal. Additionally, she seems to have insight on what people are feeling and thinking. She implies that she knows that Zane is having nightmares. She relates his nightmares with the nightmares his brother Anjay had had when he had been the Diente, or king of the cobras.



Safka is implying that Zane's nightmares are premonitions of the evil that is to come. While Zane is dreaming of the baby dying and of Danica dying, Safka points out that these are premonitions of the war that is lurking in the near future between the serpientes and the avians. Finally, Danica not returning to the palace the previous night could indicate trouble. She might have been kidnapped, which could mark the start of the war.



Chapters 8 and 9

Chapters 8 and 9 Summary

Zane's anger still shows as he walks away from the marketplace. A'isha intercepts him and convinces him to dance with her. Dancing relaxes Zane. When he heads toward the room where Danica is asleep, he hears her cry out. He rushes into the room to find she is having a nightmare.

They discuss her nightmare. It is similar to what really happened when she and Rei had been young children. They had been surrounded by serpents, but Rei had saved her. The next day, he had started training for the avian army. They discuss traveling to see her mother. Danica says she is fine to travel and she knows Zane would be disappointed if he didn't get to see her mother.

They head to the stables to board their horses for their journey. Rei and Erica are teasing each other about Rei learning to dance. Zane thinks this suggestive talk indicates there is something going on between Rei and Erica.

As they are riding, Ailbhe notices they are being followed. He alerts Zane, who alerts Danica. One follower turns into six followers that start to attack the group. Danica goes down but Zane doesn't know if she's injured or dead. Ailbhe says he'll take care of Danica and orders Erica to take care of Zane. Zane feels the pain of being struck but doesn't know by what. Then he loses consciousness.

Chapters 8 and 9 Analysis

Danica having nightmares is also a premonition of the bad that is about to come. In this case, it suggests that war is about to break out once again. Danica is being sarcastic when she says she knows Zane would be disappointed if he didn't get to see her mother. While Zane is accustomed to avians now, he still doesn't care for the company of Danica's mother.

The group following them in the forest is a combination of serpente and avian. This attack on the king and queen symbolizes an attack on the peace and truce. This is the opening attack that will launch the war.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Zane wakes up in a bed in Hawk's Keep with an avian doctor he doesn't recognize standing over him. He stumbles to the door and down to where he can hear screaming outside of Danica's door. Erica is trying to convince the Royal Flight guards to allow her to see Danica, saying that she can save her. Danica tells him the knife that struck him had avian poison.

Erica confesses to Zane that she is the falcon he thinks she is. She says she saved his life and begs for him to allow her to save Danica and the baby's lives.

Zane allows Erica to enter Danica's room. When Erica emerges, she says she's saved Danica and the baby girl. She says her use of magic makes it impossible for Danica to carry another child though so this will be the only heir. Erica also explains that she used magic to force Zane to change in order to save his life. This is also how she transformed from being a falcon into a sparrow.

As the falcon, Kel, she had tried to save Erica's life with magic. She had been unable to save Erica's life but the magic forced Kel into Erica's body. She agrees to turn herself in to Syfka because now that Zane knows who she is Syfka will be able to see through his lies.

Danica emerges completely healed. They explain who Erica is. After Erica leaves them alone, Zane tells Danica that the baby is a girl and that by Erica saving them Danica won't be able to have any more children.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Zane had had his suspicions about Erica being the criminal falcon hiding among them. His suspicions are proven correct. Danica and Zane figured that they would have other children, even if this child is named to carry on the bloodline of one throne or another. Now, they know that this will be their only child. This forces them to make a decision about the future of their child sooner than they originally planned. Additionally, this puts the child in additional danger because it is the only child they will have.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Zane and Danica go downstairs to the courtyard where the guards are holding the woman responsible for the attack. She says an avian woman approached them with the plan to attack Zane and Danica. The guards take the woman away and Zane calls from them to bring Kel. Kel confirms that the royal magic of Syfka could have compelled the six attackers to do what they did. She says she sensed the magic before but didn't have time to tell them.

Kel admits that she had been one of the guards to the Empress Cjara. Kel had discovered a secret of the empress and Kel's partner had wanted to divulge the secret. When Kel had refused to bring her partner in as a traitor, Kel had had to flee the wrath of the empress. Syfka arrives, demanding her falcon.

Chapter 11 Analysis

It sounds as if it might be Syfka that put the group up to attacking Zane and Danica. Kel confirms that Syfka is one of the royals and one of the only ones that has the power to compel the six attackers like she has.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

When they escort Kel to the courtyard to hand her over to Safka, her appearance ripples and transforms from Erica into a woman a few years older. When Safka sees Kel, the two women start to argue. Syfka claims she isn't there to find Kel and that the empress no longer cares about her. Syfka also mentions something about Danica's baby being as much of a mongrel as Kel's partner's baby. Syfka exiles Kel from the city. She also promises that someone else will be back to finish the search for the falcon they are really after. Then, Syfka flies off.

Kel questions why Syfka would leave her behind after what she said and what Kel did. They say it's because Syfka believes the greatest punishment is being exiled from the avian city. Rei tries to resign as the leader of the Royal Flight. Danica says she'll allow him a leave of absence to come to his senses. She says Kel can fill in for him in the meantime.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Syfka's words foreshadow more harm that is to come to Zane, Danica and their followers. While Kel is stepping into his spot, Rei being away puts Danica in danger. He has been protecting Danica and saving her life since they were children. With him out of the picture, even temporarily, it puts the king and queen in jeopardy.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Nacola Shardae, Danica's mother, speaks. It makes ice run through Zane's veins because he and Nacola dislike each other greatly. She mentions finding out from the guard that she is going to be a grandmother; she also says she hadn't believed it would be possible. Zane says they have enough in common, the human side of each species, to create a child.

Nacola starts questioning how the child will be raised. Danica says they haven't decided yet. Zane assures Nacola that if need be she will be raised as a Tuuli Thea and he will make Salem heir to his throne.

Chapter 13 Analysis

The relationship between Zane and Nicola has always been tense. Zane's intuition about Nacola suggests that she might be somehow involved in the attack. While she would not have tried to have her own daughter killed, she would have possibly called for her to be harmed so they could kill Zane. Since Nacola hadn't known her daughter was pregnant, it might not have prevented Nacola from ordering the attack.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

The next couple of days are a whirlwind of social events and celebration. Kel talks to Zane about her duties as flight leader. He asks about children being the prize of the avian. Kel explains that purebred children are rare and miracles. She says that mixed-blood children, however, are typically warped by the magic and it makes them go crazy. This usually leads to them destroying everything around them and then killing themselves, so they typically dispose of mixed-blood children before this can happen.

She tells Zane that she has sensed falcons in their marketplace but none with the power that would send Syfka to look for it. Zane asks if a falcon having a child in their land could be what the Empress seeks. Kel says the empress would have sent someone besides Syfka if that was the case.

Suddenly, falcons descend on the courtyard. It is Araceli, the heir of the Empress, who hasn't left the avian island in over a thousand years.

Chapter 14 Analysis

As Kel describes the avian city to Zane, she is contrasting the goods and evils of the city. The good is shown in iridescent white and light. The bad, however, lurks in privacy. Araceli arriving at the Keep is a sign that there is a much bigger falcon hiding among the people than any of them ever could have imagined. The suggestion is the Araceli is the mongrel child of Kel's partner.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Araceli calls for them to bring to her the falcon she seeks. She reveals that it is a male falcon. She also says she is there herself because she doesn't believe Syfka tried hard enough to get her falcon back. Rei steps up, presenting himself to Araceli. Araceli calls Rei by his given name, which is Sebastian.

Rei begs Araceli as his mother not to force him to go back. Araceli force changes Rei. Dabica rushes Araceli, but Araceli uses her magic to knock Danica down and hold Zane and Kel back. Araceli pulls a knife on Danica but then notices her snakecharm around Danica's neck.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Rei reveals that he is heir to the throne of moon and mountain, but that he has promised his allegiance to Danica and Zane. This suggests that it is Andreois, who goes by Rei, that is the mongrel child of Kel's old partner. Since Rei is heir to the throne but a mongrel, he had been banished into exile, which is why he has been living with Danica since they were children. The implication is that Danica has known the entire time that Rei is the criminal falcon and she has been helping to hide him. This might put the relationship between Zane and Danica in jeopardy. Not only would this mean that Danica had been lying to Zane, but also that she was putting her life and the life of their child in danger.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

After Araceli departs, Zane wonders if Rei force changes into Sebastian to save his life or to escape from living on the island. Sebastian is in the last of Danica's childhood memories and she has always wondered how Rei and she were able to survive the brutal attack they endured. Zane and Nacola run to Danica's side.

Danica is acting very calm and matter of fact. Nacola says Danica hasn't acted this way since she lost her Alistair; the only one that had been able to help her was Andreois and now he's gone. Two of the Royal Flight guards come to tell them that Kel had gone after Araceli and her group and that they've captured Kel and taken her with them.

Danica goes into solitude with her mother as company. Gerard takes over interviewing for new Royal Flight members to replace Rei and Kel. Zane also finds out that Gerard is courting Nacola. When Zane checks on Danica, they speak alone. Zane says he thinks they should return to serpiente land tomorrow. Danica agrees.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Danica is beating herself up for not realizing that Rei is really Sebastian. She is also very sad and angry with herself for not mourning the loss of her very good friend Rei when he died so many years ago. While the fate of their child is still a concern to Danica, she is also concerned that the baby's right to take over the throne might be usurped by her mother's decision to remarry. If her mother has more children, then they will be heirs to the throne over Danica's baby.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Zane and Danica go straight to the sha'Mhay when they return. They tell Valene and A'isha everything that has happened. A'isha says they can save Rei because he is a dancer and the court learned long ago that they cannot contain a dancer. She sends a soldier to look for the falcon merchant to see if he might have information that can help them, but his house is cleared out. One of the serpents speaks against endangering their lives to help liars. He backs down when Danica speaks up and admits that he doesn't know Rei and Kel and will do as his Naga and Diente wish him to do. Zane is pouring over the old texts to see if there is any information that can help them.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Historical texts are kept for the very purpose for which Zane is turning to them—to provide answers. History is recorded so that those who come later know the trials and tribulations of the people who came before them. History is supposed to help later generations from making the same mistakes as their forefathers. In this circumstance, the group believes the historical texts hold the key to them rescuing Rei and Kel. It foreshadows them finding out things about the war between their people that they didn't know before.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Valene and A'isha wake Zane and Danica with excited yelling. They say they found the text that will help them free Rei. They say freeing Kel could be a little trickier. They also find in the text a similar symbol between the two races that indicates they might have lived side by side at one time.

Chapter 18 Analysis

The finding foreshadows Valene traveling to the island to fight to get Rei and Kel back. Additionally, there is foreshadowing of Zane and Danica creating a third land. In this third land, they can raise their mixed-blood child in the ways of both of their people. This would also resolve the problem of who owns which lands because both the serpente and the avian would be able to live in the new land shared land as one.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

Valene leaves for Ahnmik. Over breakfast, Danica and Zane agree that they each have to speak to their respective courts to get them to buy in on the new land—Wyvern's Court. When they tell Irene about the idea, she says she would be honored to raise her son there. She also says the two of them have never failed on a dream they've had so she has faith in them. The next night, they present the idea to Nacola. She gives all of the reasons why the new land won't work, but also says she supports their dreams. She agrees to talk to her court the next evening.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Danica and Zane are using the past as a basis to build a better future. more than for themselves, they are trying to build a place where their child can live in peace and harmony. They want her to have the best of both of their worlds. They believe that creating this new world will allow them to provide this great life to their daughter.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

When Danica and Zane return from the Keep, they walk into a small commotion in the marketplace. It turns out to be an artist that sketched out Wyvern's Court after she heard the rumors. A'isha invites the artist and the others back to the nest to discuss the details. On their way, they run into another avian, Tadeo, who suggests a land area where they can build Wyvern's Court. He offers to help as well. As the group is gathering in the nest, other avians show up and offer to help. One offers to fly to the Keep to bring back merchants, architects and scholars to help in designing the new area.

Chapter 20 Analysis

The people of both lands are coming together. Working together shows that it is possible for the two societies to blend as one. Zane and Danica realize that they are now turning their dream of a new and blended land into a reality.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

The discussions and planning continue over Wyvern's Court, as Valene returns and cannot believe they are planning a united city. She is pleasantly surprised and thinks she is dreaming because she had already fallen asleep from her long trip back and forth from the avian island. Valene reports that she spoke to the empress who said she would consider what Valene said. As they tuck Valene into bed, a dancer approaches and asks to speak to Zane and Danica. As they enter a private room, the magic ripples away and the dancer is Syfka.

Syfka says she has brought Kel and Rei back to them. After Syfka leaves, Zane and Danica find a battered and tired Kel, along with a sleeping Rei.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Things are starting to come together for the societies. Rei and Kel will now be able to live in the new city happily and free of their pasts. Because they are in love with each other, it also foreshadows them officially becoming a couple. The empress is letting go of the past, so this will also allow everyone to move forward into a better and more peaceful future than the societies have had in the past.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Kel drinks a lot of water and eats a lot. Rei steps into the room and does the same with the food and water. They tell Zane and Danica of their journey to the island and back. Rei tells the group that the empress stripped them of their past lives so they are mere mortals now. He also says that she erased the secrets Kel knew. Kel asks Danica's permission to ask for an Alistair, even though the man is the one that's supposed to do the courting. Danica grants permission and Kel and Rei make vows to each other. Everyone in the nest cheers.

Chapter 22 Analysis

The people are learning to live together in harmony. They are taking the preliminary steps to turn their dream of a united society into one. The lesson is that no matter how different cultures are, people can learn to live together, learn from each other and love one another.



Characters

Zane Cobriana

Zane Cobriana is the diente, or king, of the serpiente. When he chooses his pair bond to be an avian, Danica, he and Danica join the two societies into one. Zane is also a shapeshifter. This means that he has the ability to change from a human form into a cobra form, and vice versa.

When he is in human form, Zane has jet-black hair and garnet eyes, like that of a cobra. Zane became diente after his brother was killed while visiting Hawk's Keep, which is where the avian live and Danica is from originally. It is through Zane's hard work during his rule that the two societies, the avian and the serpiente, have enjoyed peace.

Zane continuously works throughout the novel to maintain peace between the two societies. Additionally, he and Danica seek ways that the two societies can become more united. This is especially the case when Zane finds out that Danica is pregnant with their first child and heir to the throne.

Danica Shardae

Danica Shardae is Zane's pair bond. She is also the queen. Danica is a falcon, so she has golden hair and eyes. She also possesses the long legs of a falcon when she is in human form. She is a shapeshifter like the rest of the characters so she is able to transition between human form and falcon form.

Danica first agreed to become Zane's wife to make peace between their people. Now, the two are truly in love with each other. Danica is learning the traditional dances of the serpiente, so she is often invited into the sha'Mehay nest, which is typically off limits to outsiders. The head dancer and teacher, A'isha, accepts Danica into the nest and as a dancer so much that she gifts the Snakecharmer necklace to Danica to protect her and her unborn child.

While on a journey to visit her mother, Danica is attacked. The attack leaves her injured and puts the baby in jeopardy. Erica, who turns out to be Kel, uses her magic to save Danica's life and the life of the baby girl Danica is carrying. The process, however, leaves Danica with the inability to have any more children. This propels Danica to work even harder to create a united society alongside Zane, where both of their people can live, work and play, and where they can raise their child with exposure to both of their cultures.



Erica Silvermead

Erica Silvermead is one of the shapeshifters. She has the ability to transform from a sparrow into a human and vice versa. In the first chapter of the novel, Erica Silvermead is guarding the front door of the palace. Erica is also Valene Silvermead's niece.

It turns out that Erica is really Kel, a falcon criminal escaped from the avian island. Kel had tried to save Erica Silvermead's life. In doing so, the magic turned Kel into Erica after Erica died. After Kel saves Danica and the baby's lives after the attack, she admits her past to Zane and Danica. Kel is in love with Rei, so she goes after Rei and his mother when she comes to take Rei back to the avian island.

In the end, Rei and Kel are set free and return to serpiente land. Kel asks for Danica's permission to court Rei as her Alistair. The two plan a life together as a couple.

Syfka

Syfka is the speaker or representative for the Empress Cjarsa. According to mythology, Syfka is one of the original four people kept alive when Maeve sold out to Lebon. Syfka is one of the avian people, so she changes her form between that of a sparrow and a human. She arrives in Zane's land seeking a criminal they believe is hiding there.

Syfka still has a lot of contempt for the serpiente even though it is a time of peace. Syfka has a heat radiating aura. When she is in human form, Syfka's hair is a golden color, but fades to a silver color in the front. When she is in falcon form, the underside of her wings are golden, but she has the black, gray and brown markings of falcons.

In the end, Syfka returns Rei and Kel to serpiente land. While Syfka doesn't condone the ways of the serpiente, she also doesn't want Rei and Kel living among the avian society.

A'isha

A'isha is the head of the dancers in serpiente lands. She runs the sha'Mehay. A'isha is also responsible for teaching the ritualistic dances of the serpiente to others. One of her students is Danica. A'isha is also the one that gifts the Snakecharmer necklace to Danica, which is the necklace that ultimately saves Araceli from killing Danica when Araceli is taking Rei back to the avian island.

Andreios

Andreios is the leader of the Royal Flight. He is in charge of the group that protects Danica. It turns out that Rei is the criminal falcon for which Syfka has been searching. Rei is really Sebastian, the son of Araceli, and heir to the avian throne. He has taken on



Rei's form and has been living as Rei since he and Danica were children and escaped the war.

Throughout the novel, Rei saves Danica's life and protects her from harm. He tries to resist his mother dragging him back to the avian island. While he doesn't win the argument with Araceli, she eventually allows Rei and Kel to return to serpiente land and live out the rest of their lives as mortals.

Irene

Irene is Zane's sister. She is also the mother of Zane's nephew, Salem. Irene gives her blessing to Zane to name Salem as his heir because she says she would rather lose her son to the throne in peacetime than in war. Irene also gives her blessing to Zane and Danica to move forward on their planning Wyvern's Court.

Salem

Salem is Irene's son and Zane's nephew. Salem is a shapeshifter, so he changes back and forth between human and cobra forms. As a baby, he cannot control his transformations. At one point in the novel, Zane is considering naming Salem as his heir to the throne to become the next diente.

Nacola Shardae

Nacola Shardae is Danica's mother. Nacola still lives in Hawk's Keep. It is Nacola that Zane's brother, Anjay, had been trying to kill when Anjay lost his life instead. Nacola greatly dislikes Zane and Danica being his pair bond. Nacola ends up being courted by one of the Royal Flight. By the end of the novel, however, Nacola gives her blessing for Zane and Danica to move forward on their plans for Wyvern's Court.

Araceli

Araceli is a formidable woman and falcon. She lives on the avian island. Araceli also turns out to be Sebastian's mother. Araceli, who hasn't left the island in a thousand years, shows up at Hawk's Keep to retrieve her son when Syfka fails to do so. Araceli is about to kill Danica by slitting her throat when Araceli sees the Snakecharm around Danica's neck.



Objects/Places

Sha'Mehay

The sha'Mehay is a great nest. It is the nest where the dancers practice, study, live and rest. The sha'Mehay is built into the trees of the forest. It is built from heavy nets, leather, clay and vines. The floor is slate and contains layers of Persian rugs, pillows and blankets. In the center is a constantly burning bonfire. The nets on the ceiling can be rolled back to allow air in or out and as an outlet for the smoke of the bonfire. The sha'Mehay is the central meeting point and discussion location for numerous planning meetings and discussions throughout the novel.

Ahnmik

Ahnmik is an island. It is the island where the avian live and rule. Ahnmik is where Araceli and the empress still live, as well as Safka. This is where Araceli takes Kel and Sebastian/Rei when she captures them from Hawk's Keep.

Hawk's Keep

Hawk's Keep is Danica's homeland. Nacola still lives in Hawk's Keep. Throughout the novel, Zane and Danica return to Hawk's Keep to visit Danica's family. This is where the couple is when Araceli shows up to take Rei/Sebastian and Kel back to Ahnmik.

Marketplace

The marketplace is a communal place in both societies. It is where vendors of all kinds sell their wares. In serpiente land, it is also the prime location for people to interact and rumors to spread. Several incidents take place in the marketplace throughout the novel.

Wyvern's Court

Wyvern's Court is the new land Zane and Danica are working on building. It will be the meshing of the two societies—avian and serpiente—into one community. Toward the end of the novel, architects, artists, scholars and more are working on the plans to build the new territory. Wyvern's Court represents a community where everyone can live together in harmony and where both of the cultures are embraced as one.



Ancient Texts

The ancient texts are written in the original language of the serpentine and avian societies. Zane and Danica turn to these texts when they are trying to find a way to free Kel and Rei. A'isha is one of the falcons that has the ability to read and understand the ancient language. She helps them find a loophole that might work to free Rei and Kel.

It is while reading and interpreting the ancient texts that Zane and Danica conjure up the idea for Wyvern's Court. The text suggests that their people lived side-by-side at one time. This gives them the idea that they can recreate this society now.

Dais

A dais is like a stage or platform. The sha'Mehay has a dais inside of it where the dancers perform for the audience. Danica is dancing on the dais when she faints.

Bonfire

The bonfire is the central point of the sha'Mehay. The fire is in the middle of the nest floor and acts as a gathering place for the patrons of the nest. The bonfire keeps the nest warm, which is how nests need to be in order to hatch the eggs of the avian.

Raspberry Tea

When Danica faints in the nest, A'isha suggests Zane have his brother-in-law make Danica some raspberry tea. A'isha suggests the raspberry tea because she thinks it will help Danica overcome her pregnancy symptoms. Danica doesn't understand that she is pregnant at first so she tells Zane that she hates raspberry tea.

Sketches

The sketches are the drawings and plans for building Wyner's Court. It starts with an artist that creates a layout of the new city after hearing rumors about it being built. Architects and other planners join in the planning stage so that new sketches are created to turn the dream of the city into a reality.



Themes

Relationships

One of the primary themes running through the novel is relationships. The novel reveals that even the individuals that make up a family have different relationships among the family members. For example, Sebastian, who is living as Rei, denies his claim to the avian throne and chooses instead to live in serpiente land.

Friendship is another type of relationship the novel tackles. While Rei works for Danica, they also have a special bond and friendship. Danica is grateful to Rei for all of the times he has protected her and saved her life. It turns out that one of the reasons the two are so close is that Rei is really Danica's childhood friend, Sebastian. It seems as if many of the various characters throughout the novel are more than just close friends or members of the society, but instead are more like family.

Even with the close bonds of friendship, there are moments of tension. For example, A'isha permits people to come into and visit the nest that would not normally be invited to attend dances and events. Additionally, A'isha teaches Danica how to dance and Rei how to dance, even though they are avian, and the dance is primarily a serpiente tradition.

Romantic relationships are also tackled in the novel. Danica and Zane start a new peaceful society by bonding and becoming a couple. Additionally, as a couple, they create a new mixed-blood race that they use as the basis to create a new society. Nacola falls in love with one of the Royal Flight, Gerard. Even Kel and Rei turn out to be in love with each other and vow to be together.

Good versus Evil

Another primary plot throughout the entire novel is that of good versus evil, or that of opposing forces. The two societies, for example, are avian and serpiente. In nature, hawks and snakes are enemies. In the novel, the societies have been enemies for centuries. It is only since Zane takes power as diente, and takes Danica as his pair bond, that the two societies are living in peace.

Peacetime versus wartime is another symbol of good versus evil. During wartime, the society members have had to do treacherous things. Primarily, this involves killing each other. Wartime represents the evil that each of the members of society has within them. Peacetime represents the good side of society. These are the times when the members of society learn to work together and live in harmony, side-by-side.

The unborn child of Zane and Danica represents what is good and evil to both the serpiente and the avian societies. Since the baby is the melding of the two societies, what the baby looks like and how it will be raised embrace both cultures and both



societies. If the baby has avian features, it represents more of the evil side to the serpiente. If the opposite is true, then the baby represents evil to the avian society and good to the serpiente.

Family

Family is the central theme throughout the entire novel. This is because the storyline is about the lives of the family Danica and Zane form. While every family has their trials and tribulations, Zane and Danica's family is really the avian and serpiente families coming together as one. This family has dynamics that are the same and that are different from those of other families. In the end though, they are a family and they will get through it together, one way or the other.

By the end of the novel, it also becomes about the coming together of the two societies as one to form a new family and a new community. The family symbolizes two societies and cultures learning to accept their differences, while also retaining their culture and traditions.



Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the first person point of view, from the viewpoint of Zane Cobriana, also making him the narrator of the novel. The narrator is telling the story as it unfolds, but he also switches back to some past events to provide the reader with some perspective.

The point of view of this novel is an intimate point of view that allows a reader to connect closely with the main character, Zane. The point of view also allows the author to inject her own opinions into the narration and to expand on the events taking place to the characters of the novel without interrupting the flow of the narration. For these reasons, the point of view works well with this novel and the author's writing style.

Setting

The two primary settings of the novel include the serpiente land and Hawk's Keep. The characters go back and forth between these two primary locations. These two settings are where all of the events occur and the novel unfolds. The author never states the specific year of the novel. The setting of this novel is important because it is about the dividing line between these two very different societies that are now trying to live as one that sets the scene for the entire plot of the novel. The main characters of the novel work to mend the destruction of past centuries and wars to create a communal and peaceful existence for the two societies.

The setting of this novel works well with the plot. At first, the reader is not aware of all of the magic and secrets that exist. However, as events unfold, one secret after the next is either explained or inferred, and secrets are revealed.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is modern. The language of the novel is not formal, but also includes words the author invents. The language is educated, strong and descriptive enough that it creates a flow that leaves the reader impressed with the words as much as the plot when the novel ends.

The language of the novel is appropriate to the plot because it is accurate to the characters in the novel and the education level of the reader. The novel is not in love with its own words, but it is descriptive enough that the reader finds enjoyment in the words as well as the plot. The language is not difficult to understand, however, and everything is clear in its context. For this reason the language of the novel fits well with the plot of the novel.

Structure

The novel consists of 22 chapters. Each chapter is anywhere from five to 10 pages long. The chapters tell the story both in exposition and dialogue. Zane is the narrator of the book, so it seems as if he is injecting his own voice throughout the novel. This allows Zane to provide his own opinions of the events surrounding the setting of the novel, as well as the actions taking place within the plot.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows the various relationships between the characters in the novel. The subplots involve good versus evil and the trials and tribulations of the family.



Quotes

"Did those ancient serpents know their days were numbered by an enemy they had not yet even encountered?"

Prologue, p. 3

"She was exiled by Danica's mother for her dealings with the serpente and ended up living as a recluse on the edge of our land."

Chap. 1, p. 14

"Is she right?"

Chap. 2, p. 22

"The falcons prize children above almost anything, but Syfka might not see a cobra-hawk as a child."

Chap. 3, p. 28

"A'isha was right; Betsy just confirmed it."

Chap. 4, p. 36

"Your own sister was executed for murdering the woman you say trusted her. Do you truly hold no hatred for that? Can you really not care?"

Chap. 5, p. 46

"I don't think Syfka will go seriously out of her way to cause trouble, but I wouldn't put it past her to try to stir things up a little if left alone."

Chap. 6, p.

"Ask them why a crow as young as Andreios was promoted so soon. Ask them how long the fifteen-year-old heir to the Tuuli Thea grieved for her slain Alistair."

Chap. 7, p. 68

"They didn't care about a crow-child. But a hawk..."

Chap. 8, p. 71

"Change shape."

Chap. 9, p. 76

"When she died, the magic clung to me, so when I opened my eyes...they were Erica's."

Chap. 10, p. 81

"Don't fight for me."

Chap. 11, p. 92



"The child you accuse me of harming is more of a mongrel than the one your partner bore, and it will suffer the same fate."

Chap. 12, p. 94

"Zane and I haven't decided how we will raise the child."

Chap. 13, p. 103

"There is no place more beautiful, but at the same time, there is no place more horrible."

Chap. 14, p. 109

"Since when does the Tuuli Thea wear a Snakecharm?"

Chap. 15, p. 118

"First, I miss Andreois, and then I feel foolish for missing someone who was never who I thought he was..."

Chap. 16, p. 128

"The serpiente were only in Alastair's city for a single night. How could words like those have been written just hours before the avian-serpiente war began?"

Chap. 17, p. 135

"Zane, if this is true...can you imagine what kind of world it could have been?"

Chap. 18, p. 142

"I will present your Wyvern's Court, with all my blessing."

Chap. 19, p. 149

"I wanted to create it."

Chap. 20, p. 151

"Thank you, milady...Danica, my true queen."

Chap. 21, p. 161

"I accept."

Chap. 22, p. 167



Topics for Discussion

Who is Zane Cobriana? Why does he take Danica on as his pair bond? What does Zane recall about the first time he saw Danica? Why do you think Zane keeps his brother's intentions a secret from Danica? How does Danica's pregnancy change Zane's life?

Discuss the relationship between Danica and Zane. Are they really in love? Is there love, guilt or a sense of obligation in their relationship? How does Danica feel about Zane? How does Zane feel about Danica?

How does Kel become Erica Silvermead? How does this affect the future? How does Kel lose her powers? Why does Kel give up her powers to return to serpiente land? How does Kel feel about Rei?

Who is the true Rei? Why is he serving Danica? Why do you think he escapes Ahnmik after turning from Sebastian to Rei? What do you think will happen to the relationship between Rei and Kel? Do you think they will be able to assist in building Wyvern's Court?

Who is Syfka? Why does she continuously try to disrupt the society throughout the novel? What happens after Syfka fails to return the falcon criminal to Ahnmik? Why do you think Syfka returns Kel and Rei to serpiente land?

Who is Danica? Do you ever find out why she becomes Zane's pair bond? Why do you think Danica learns to be a dancer? Do you think Danica will be able to have more children in the future, even though Kel says Danica will not?

Discuss the building of Wyvern's Court. What impact does the concept have on the characters of the novel? How does it motivate them or hold them back? Why is it an issue to the characters? Does it have anything to do with way the relationships between the characters develop and evolve?