

The Silver Kiss Study Guide

The Silver Kiss by Annette Curtis Klause

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Plot Summary

The Silver Kiss, by Annette Curtis is a dark fantasy story set in a semi-fictional version of Seattle and examines the theme of death, loss, and belonging through the romance of a young girl (Zoe Sutcliff) and a three-hundred-year-old vampire boy (Simon). Through the course of the book we discover that the Sutcliff family are undergoing a quiet tragedy as Zoe's mother is currently in hospital dying from terminal cancer. It is through Zoe's burgeoning relationship with the vampire youth, and their battle with a second and thoroughly evil vampire named Christopher that Zoe and Simon struggle to come to terms with their own mortality and the loss of the loved ones in their lives.

Zoe Sutcliff is presented at the start of the book as a mature, capable girl who is forced to witness the slow loss of her mother, Anne Sutcliff and the dislocation of her father, Harry Sutcliff. She turns to her only true friend Lorraine. However it quickly becomes apparent that Lorraine does not, and cannot provide the emotional support that Zoe needs as Lorraine herself is ordered to move to Oregon with her father and her stepmother as her father has found a new job there, leaving Zoe completely alone with her grief.

Simon the vampire is entranced by this young girl who is so grief-stricken, and has to come to terms with his own awakening feelings of fondness and indeed love, whilst he tries to control his own horrific nature. His growing attachment to the mortal girl plunges them both into danger as he also seeks to finally put an end to the twisted vampiric child Christopher; his own brother who is a sadistic, vile and beastly version of what Simon could become. Despite his better judgement, Simon approaches the mortal girl and the two are forced to confront Christopher in a climatic battle at the end of the book.

The Silver Kiss takes the readers and its characters on a dark journey set in the midst of teenage life, and in this sense is a coming of age drama which leads the characters to confront their own fears of death, and even challenge what their notions of death actually is. Through the medium of a horror story, the Author uses the novella to examine different types of 'horror' such as personal horror in the form of the terminal illness, spiritual horror in the form of Christopher and Simon, the vampires, and what constitutes real loss.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

In the first chapter of *The Silver Kiss* the author introduces the reader to one of the main character's Zoe Sutcliff as she returns to a lonely house from another day at school. Zoe Sutcliff is a young girl of sixteen who is apparently quite used to being home alone as her mother is suffering from terminal cancer and is often in Hospital receiving treatments for her illness. The author writes, "The House was empty. Zoe knew as soon as she walked through the front door. Only a clock ticking in the kitchen challenged the silence" (Chapter 1, p. 29).

Zoe immediately is transfixed with fear as she wonders whether her mother Anne Sutcliff has been taken into hospital for the final time, or whether something has happened despite the fact that a note written by her Dad informs her that everything will be all right and that this hospital stay is routine.

Zoe finds a paper that is describing the brutal murder of a mother of two, and, feeling even more shocked and dislocated tries to calm down by imagining her life before her mother's illness and her family home as it once was. Before much time has elapsed she is phoned by her friend Lorraine, who herself is distraught by her own news that her father has secured a new job in Oregon and the family will be moving within two weeks. Lorraine has no choice but to move with her father and her stepmother as her own natural born mother will not let her stay with her. Zoe tries to talk to her friend about her own mother's recent admission to the hospital, but soon discover that Lorraine shuts down at the merest hint of emotional disclosure, and appears more concerned with her own "tragedy."

Within a few hours, her father Harry Sutcliff arrives back from the hospital and appears exhausted by his visit and his long day. Despite Zoe's efforts to ask him how her mother is doing her father seems unable to really talk about the issue at hand, and appears emotionally distant and distracted as his daughter informs him of her best friend's immanent departure to Oregon. Harry Sutcliff doesn't understand the emotional importance this has on his daughter, and, in a fit of annoyance decides to go out for a walk in the night air.

Her travels leads her to her local park, which is deserted at this time of night or so Zoe believes as she sits down and tries to relax from her day. It is here that she encounters the vampire boy Simon from a distance as she disturbs him as he rests in the park's gazebo. Their eyes lock and they both share a moment of fascination and fear at each other's lost, seemingly abandoned nature before he flees into the night.



Chapter 1 Analysis

The very first chapter of the book is concerned with aloneness and dislocation or the feeling of something being out of place, not right and "strange." We are presented with the main character returning to her family home where it seems the natural order of things have been turned upside down - there is no family to greet her, and this is a fact that she has apparently grown quite used to. Despite Zoe's familiarity with being alone (her making her own food and, later, deciding to go for a much-loved night-time walk) the Author wishes us to know that the girl is still not happy underneath it all, and, despite the appearance of acceptance and normality she has, is actually feeling very scared, confused, and alone. This is why she is so emotionally struck by another 'lost soul' in the park at night, and why her brief chat with her father affects her so deeply.

The hidden forces of loss and indeed, death are painted behind the scenes in the hastily written note, before they lurch forward into the reader's view through the newspaper story of the mother of two found dead, and the immediate loss of Zoe's friend Lorraine. All together, we the reader can see the danger and the tragedy around the central character building even though she herself seems unaware of it or is trying to avoid that danger and loss. There is a foreshadowing of danger implicit in the use of the newspaper headline and the night time walk, both painting the picture of a girl who appears capable and mature but is actually vulnerable. As the reader has the benefit of being outside the story the newspaper headline in particular sets the tone of the book and warns us that there is the high possibility of real danger and bloodshed before the story is over. It is with this increasing tension and trepidation that the Author lets us know that this is a Horror tale or one in which dark and disturbing themes will be discussed and examined.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

In Chapter Two, the author presents the reader with the other main character in the book, that of the vampire boy Simon as we see this chapter entirely from his perspective.

The chapter starts immediately after the incident in the park with Zoe and Simon is hunting in an alleyway for rats to drink their blood. Simon is confused at the attraction he feels for the voluptuous Zoe, and wonders whether it is was her beauty or her fear that attracts him. After feeding, and instead of going back to the park he decides to visit a house that is known to him, and the reader follows him on his journey through the city.

Simon approaches the house and steals into the backyard, where he scales a tree to watch a young, six-year old boy in bed at night reading a book. Before long the vampire youth sees the boy's apparent parents coming in to the room to chide the boy for staying up too late and tell him to get some sleep and go to bed. Simon is even privy to their conversation as it moves through the house and we find out that this is a foster home and the two adults there the boy's new foster parents. They are concerned over his delicate complexion and are worried about their new child, even though he has only been there a month.

The vampire watches the house and the child it contains all night, and, as the first pre-dawn bird calls suddenly stands up and makes his way to his hiding place, an abandoned school on the other side of the town. He manages to get in through a loose board on one of the windows and settles down with an old suitcase. His old suitcase is filled with earth - the earth of what would have been his grave site, and we are told that this grave soil is the only thing that can give him rest, and that without it he would become a shrivelled creature unable to move or feed or die. The miniature oil painting that Simon is holding is a portrait of a family; a mother, a father and two small children which Simon kisses reverentially before curling up around the suitcase and the picture and falling into a sleep-like torpor.

Before he finally relaxes into dreams, he remembers the girl that he saw in the park that night and is moved to recite poetry, likening Zoe's pale beauty to that of death.

Chapter 2 Analysis

In this chapter, the author takes us into the mind of the vampire boy Simon, and allows the reader to become aware of his own interior landscape: this encourages the reader to empathise with Simon, and to feel for his emotions, despite his horrific nature. This switch in narrative also informs the reader of the two main protagonists in the story, those of Zoe and Simon; as the events that unfold are not seen from any other character's point of view, just theirs. This technique; of using Points of View means that



the author can see both sides of the story at once, and can contrast and compare themselves what is happening between these two characters. This signals to us that Simon is in fact a hero and not a villain, because of his similarities in character with Zoe.

Simon is presented as having multiple similarities with Zoe, and yet has some contrasting features. He is too, dislocated and alone at the start of the novel. He is young and he yearns for something just as Zoe yearns for her mother and to be comforted by her friend and her father. In a similar way to Zoe Simon in a sense has no home and no way of belonging too, a theme that will be returned to throughout the book; as he carries his 'home' with him: the grave soil of his homeland. This is seen as the only thing that can really give him rest and peace of mind, and can be seen as a metaphor for 'Homes' in general; as the place which provides us security. The reader can contrast this with Zoe's 'Home' which, even though secure and stable compared to a suitcase full of soil in an abandoned school, is nonetheless feels more empty in some ways as he home cannot provide her with peace of mind (as we saw from the first chapter and the fact that she preferred to go out for a midnight walk rather than be in her own home).

Simon the vampire is presented to us in part as a hunter, a predator (in the beginning of this chapter we see him catching rats and he himself compares his actions to that of a cat). Descriptions of his stealth, his quietness and creeping is used by the author to great affect to heighten the tension and Simon's otherworldly, wild nature.

All of these things contribute to the notion of Simon being an outsider amidst the common and mundane world of mankind, a role that allows him to act outside of its boundaries and rules. This notion of 'The Outsider' we can also apply to the other main character of Zoe, although not to the same extent and is a symbol of their shared dislocation from the world.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Chapter Three finds Zoe at school, worrying about her course and her family. We discover that she is interested in poetry, but her grades are slipping as she deals with her mother's illness. Deciding that her day cannot get any worse, and that her present troubles aren't letting her study she decides to skip her independent study period, during which time she meets her friend Lorraine. Lorraine is similarly skipping class as she realizes that she will be moving schools and having to start again at a new establishment when her family moves. Lorraine drags Zoe to the girls bathroom and proceeds to break down in tears.

Her friend is distraught about her move and Zoe comforts her, understanding a little of what her friend Lorraine is going through. This emotional opening in her usually strong-willed friend gives Zoe the opportunity to reach out to her closest ally about her own imminent loss of her mother, but the opportunity never presents itself as the school bell rings, forcing a gaggle of other school girls into the bathroom between classes.

After school, Zoe goes to the hospital with her father to see her mother. Zoe feels very uncomfortable in this strange and alien environment, seeing her mother in a new light and worrying how her mother will have changed. What follows is an awkward conversation where neither Zoe, her mother or her father seem to know what to say, and are unable to talk about the most important topic in the room; that of her mother's cancer.

The end of her visit is heralded by the arrival of a nurse, who advises her father that the doctor has ordered that Zoe should not spend too long with her mother. Feeling hurt and abandoned, her father sends Zoe home, where she decided to again walk at night to the local park. At the park, she sits and worries over her apparent abandonment by her father and misses her mother, when Simon creeps up on her and scares her.

Zoe is frightened, but is also intrigued by the beautiful youth who has approached her. What follows is a tense argument and Simon tries to initiate a conversation with the lonely girl, while Zoe reads his advances as manipulative and somewhat creepy. She brushes him off tersely, and, with an effort of will walks away. However, when we see Zoe back at her own home we discover that although she is angry, she is still thinking about the beautiful youth in the park.

Chapter 3 Analysis

In this chapter, we again switch point of view back to Zoe as she directly confronts the sources of loss in her life; Lorraine's imminent move and her mother's illness. At both times, we see how Zoe is caught between wanting to reach out and to be comforted, and yet emotionally incapable.



The depiction of Zoe in school, through the medium of the girl's own thoughts highlights the strange, muted world that she now inhabits. The school itself has lost importance (as she decides to skip her independent study hour), and in a sense has become drained of reality - echoing her home life and her situation as a whole (Zoe is being drained of her emotional strength through her situation, Simon the vampire is instrumental in draining life).

During her brief discussion with Lorraine, we also see how isolated and alone Zoe feels, as she almost finds a moment to be able to open up to her friend, but that chance is snatched away. The frustrating impotence of this situation is reminiscent of how the other pieces of Zoe's life are being snatched away from her while she feels awkward and frozen, unable to receive comfort.

The hospital itself, alongside her home, the school, and the park also exhibits this unreal, dislocated quality that we see again and again through the course of the novel. None of the above places provide Zoe with sanctuary or comfort, and finding their family together in the hospital appears to the reader (and to Zoe) as out of place and surreal.

Her brief conversation with her mother exhibits to the reader Zoe's inner feelings: that she is frustrated at not being able to talk to her mother about this illness which is between them, and that she feels shut out and alone. Zoe cannot understand fully what is happening because she is not allowed full disclosure of the facts, or adequate time to connect with her mother.

In this chapter, there is also a foreshadowing of some of the major themes of the book, as the reader is asked to internally compare the types of vampirism and draining that Simon and Christopher perform to that which is happening to Zoe's life and indeed, her mother. In a sense all the characters in this book are suffering from loss: a loss of life, of joy, passion and vitality in a metaphorical form of vampirism. Zoe's life is being drained of its comfort and affection through the removal of her friends and family, just as Zoe's mother is suffering from a draining and a loss of life through her illness.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Chapter Four again continues with the other main protagonist in the story, the vampire boy Simon. In an echo of the first chapter Simon is once more confronted by the aftermath of his encounter with the beautiful Zoe, he is confused by the fact that the girl managed to resist his supernatural advances and seems somewhat immune to his charms: "He was bemused. She had not responded correctly. Her had started to moon-weave, and she had broken it. She had snapped it with her anger" (Chapter Four, p. 61).

Following Zoe, Simon lapses into his 'half-state' - that of a mist like form which we understand is dangerous to himself as the more he removes himself from his physical form the more apathetic and unworried he becomes about physical life. He concentrates on the girl that he is following as he remembers the past victims and lovers that he has entranced in his life as a vampire.

As readers, we learn that Simon has the ability to mesmerise his victims, and either can feed from them without them knowing that he was there or even kill them. Simon feels remorse that sometimes he is unable to stop himself feeding, and, once he has tasted blood he can easily keep on feeding until his victim has died.

Upon arriving at Zoe's house, he watches her as she settles down for bed and is reminded of all that is different about himself and about this mortal. That when he was a young vampire he first became like a beast and wandered the forests of his homeland, obeying only animal instinct as he conducted horror upon beasts and the unwary gamekeepers.

Disgusted by his own nature, he decides to walk the city streets, and through his journey he feels intensely alone as he watches the other night revellers around him. He seems unable to be seen and recognised as a living person, and we see Simon feeling angry and hurt.

The chapter comes to a climax as Simon is attacked by a band of youths, one of whom is high on drugs. Despite his efforts to avoid the violence at first Simon launches an attack against his final opponent, but manages to stop himself from killing the youth and instead steals his black leather jacket. He scrawls the legend 'I Am' in blood on the roof of an abandoned car before he flees into the night, where he finds himself again waiting outside of Zoe's house, himself mesmerised by the possibility of the girl.

Chapter 4 Analysis

In this chapter, Simon's vampiric nature is finally, fully revealed to the reader. By the continuing use of the first-person narrative, and placing this chapter inside Simon's



head, the reader is forced to understand some of the emotional motivations and indeed turmoil that the youth is going through.

Simon the vampire feels deeply alone, even though he is a monster - a fact that his night of bloodshed exposes by his writing the words 'I Am' after his attack in the abandoned car park. Simon is presented as a monster but as a wild monster, one in which he is blinded by instinct and animal need. In a sense, even though he is terrible, powerful and dangerous Simon is presented as afflicted by a disease, one which he cannot control, and in a sense is not intrinsically evil. Later on in the book we are introduced to the character of Christopher, the other vampire who revels in his blood drinking and is cruel and sadistic in his conquests: this contrast is foreshadowed here and the distinction is drawn between someone who chooses to do vile things and someone who is afflicted and unable to help themselves.

There are some contrasts and similarities that the reader can draw here by this depiction of Simon the vampire and the other characters in the book. In one sense he is very different to Zoe and the other mortal characters; he has strange abilities, he is preternaturally agile and strong, and exists against the natural order of things. However his difference to Zoe in particular goes deeper as he is also depicted as a vital figure; full of blood and passion and violence (compared to Zoe's ghost-like life where she is seldom even able to eat or take any enjoyment of food). Simon the vampire is wild and is a passionate figure compared to Zoe, her father, and her mother.

There are other ways in which Simon is very similar to Zoe. He too is alone and feels desperately dislocated from the normal world around him. Totally removed he feels as though no one knows that he even exists and no one cares about him. He is intrigued by the girl who does not fall into his control and is able to resist him, and seems almost obsessive in his watching of Zoe's house.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

In this chapter, we find Zoe at the bedside of her mother Anne Sutcliff, frozen and unable to help through awkwardness and fear. Her mother is being sick over the bed after her cancer treatment, and Zoe is frozen in horror and fear for her mother. Although she feels remorse, Zoe flees the room to seek help, at which time her mother's friend Carol and her father quickly take over and look after her mother. Zoe is racked by guilt as she is driven home by her father, as Harry Sutcliff tries to comfort her but again decides to go back to the hospital. This leaves Zoe confused and worried about her level of involvement with her mother's illness.

Zoe decides to be dropped off at her best friend Lorraine rather than spend another night alone in her house, and here she breaks down in front of her friend who tries to playfully comfort her, by taking her on a late night shopping trip. Here Lorraine takes her clothes shopping with the money that her father had sent her to make up for having to move, and, after going to several clothes shops Zoe lets Lorraine buy her a cheering up present: a silver crucifix on a red ribbon.

As they decide to go home, Zoe is caught by her fear of going home to an empty household, or, even worse a phone call with bad news from the hospital. Instead they decide to dawdle and Zoe looks at a bookshop window. After a few moments Zoe sees her friend speaking to a young six year old child who is asking Lorraine to help him find his lost mother, on Zoe's arrival the child suddenly abandons his plea and flees, stating that he has remembered where he left his mother. Zoe sends Lorraine home as she goes to browse in the bookshop, but it is not long before sirens pull up outside of the bookshop and the police section off the area and a crowd starts to gather.

Appalled by the turn of events, Zoe learns that a woman has been found dead in a nearby alley with her throat slashed, and, disgusted by the press of people and their macabre fascination of the recent events she struggles her way out of the crowd. As she swoons by a nearby wall, feeling like she might be sick at the possibility of the nearby murder, a cool hand is placed on her brow and soothes her. The chapter ends with Zoe opening her eyes to her male comforter.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Chapter Five sees the increasing danger that surrounds Zoe get closer and closer as she starts the chapter with a scene of the nature of her mother's illness (Anne Sutcliff being sick) and ends with the vicious death of a stranger right outside where she is shopping (at the book store). By placing the narrative inside Zoe's point of view we are taken along with the young girl and unable to see the real causes of the events - at this



point in the story we do not yet really know whom the little albino boy is who approaches her friend, Lorraine.

The picture of Zoe and Lorraine's friendship is deepened by the author as she depicts their time together: she shows us that Lorraine is not selfish and really does care about her friend (comforting her when Zoe goes to her house rather than to her home), and we also begin to understand the two girls in a normal light. This scene of sisterly affection and joviality, as they shop for clothes and talk about boys reminds us of all the things that Zoe has lost and has been removed from by her mother's illness. We, as readers are reminded of how human Zoe is, and in many ways, how normal she is. This depiction creates feelings of sympathy and empathy for both Zoe and Lorraine as we can equate our own experiences of a happy friendship and the sorts of activities we might like to do with our friends.

However, this comparison also forces us to consider the effects of loss and of fear as both Zoe and Lorraine skirt around the major issues of the moving home and Anne's illness. Zoe seems unable to fully enjoy her time out with her friend, and at times again feels dislocated from the festivities. We are reminded as readers of the corrosive nature of loss, grief and fear as it affects Zoe internally and freezes her from reaching out to the enjoyable moments of her life. An exemplar of this is at the very start of the chapter, where Zoe is unable to come to her mother's aid even though she wants to whilst she is being sick - again the creeping, corrosive effects of loss and expected loss.

The tension of the book is increased by the use of the night time setting, and the apparent ignorance of the people all around Zoe as another murder happens and they respond with dumb fascination. As readers we can see the importance of this death (having already glimpsed into the awful history of Simon the chapter before) and we can feel the horror even though she cannot not. In this sense Zoe is an ignorant participant in the story, and we have to watch as the story unfolds around her.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Chapter Six carries on the methodology that we are now familiar with, that of switching narrative points of view to the other protagonist in the story, Simon the vampire youth. The chapter starts by revealing that it is Simon who has placed his cool hand on her brow, as he was outside the book store and sees the girl push her way through the massing crowd. He is drawn to her fear and her aloneness in the crowd, and reaches out to her and confides in her before she is fully aware of what is going on that it is death itself, so nearby, that frightens her so much.

Startled and shocked, Zoe confides in Simon that she is indeed scared and, when he offers to walk her home, she accepts. Simon himself is caught with fascination as he tries to talk to this girl, and finds that he is at once attracted to her fear and of course her blood but there is also something else that is attracting him and that he cannot quite understand what it is - as if he had forgotten it. This seeming irrational impulse encourages him to talk to the girl Zoe, who tells him that she is going home to lonely house.

Simon feels suddenly for Zoe, and when she asks him where he in turn lives he replies 'close' and also tells her that his own parents are dead. This strikes a chord with Zoe as he sees that she feels an empathy for them both being in a similar situation: alone and without their parents, and is surprised that he feels happy at this prospect a closer emotional connection. Zoe politely but firmly thanks him when they reach her house but does not invite him in, which he respects.

Feeling curiously energised by that encounter, Simon leaves Zoe's house and walks into the city once again, to find the foster mother of the little albino boy who appeared lost and approached Lorraine. He eavesdrops as the little boy's foster mother chides the child for running off and calls the boy by his name of Christopher. Deciding that Christopher is well occupied with his mother, Simon leaves the couple to walk home and himself prowls the streets, watching the other people come and go.

The chapter ends with Simon the vampire imagining and making up stories about the people he sees but does not talk to, as he realizes that he has nowhere else to go.

Chapter 6 Analysis

In Chapter Six we finally have a full and frank meeting of the two protagonists, Zoe and Simon, seen from the vampire youth's point of view. Whilst we are inside Simon's world, we are told facts and observations that make the boy seem more alien, and warn the reader of the heightened danger around the girl. For example, "He went to her helplessly, drawn by her fear. He couldn't help but touch her to taste it" (Chapter Six, p. 84).



Simon, the vampire, seems drawn to the girl for a variety of reasons, one of them being her closeness to 'death' and loss. Zoe's closeness to these issues draws a similarity to the vampire who himself is surrounded by death and loss, and it is this similarity in which we can see the seed of a companionship starting to grow.

Simon is also drawn to the girl not just because of her blood (seeing her as a potential food source), but also by a motivation that he has no name for. He is confused that he feels happy when he realizes that she wants him to be near her, and is not repelled by him. He also seems confused with the feelings that she stirs in him, that he has no name for when she looks at him with open eyes. In this way the author proclaims the protagonist Simon as an unreliable narrator, one in whom we cannot trust to know the full story, or to tell us realistically about his own feelings or experiences. As readers we are slightly removed from Simon the vampire and can see that the boy is falling in love with Zoe, and that these feelings that he has no name for, and the reason why is happy on her behalf, and feels sorrow for her predicament, is because he feels a strong attachment to the girl. Zoe is becoming a lifeline for him: as we can see that she recognises him, wants to know his name and represents all of the things that he most needs - affection, company, and love.

The chapter ends by reminding us of Simon's loneliness (even if he himself cannot recognise it), and also foreshadows greater horror as he watches the boy Christopher and Christopher's foster mother. At this point in the story the reader is starting to have suspicions about the albino child who so mysteriously turns up just before the scene of the murder, and as external observers we can see horrible the situation is that surrounds Zoe and the town suburb of Oakwood. Clues are given to the reader in the discussion that Christopher has with his foster mother; that he has been several times to the store, that he is an albino and gets burned by daylight, that he likes rich liver, that he grimaces at the offer of warm milk for bed, and that he sleeps all day.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Chapter Seven arrives with Zoe being woken up in the morning by her father's phone call from the hospital, and that he had not come home the previous night. He tells his daughter that he will be staying at the hospital that day and probably that night, and that Zoe will not be able to visit her mother. Zoe feels hurt and left out, and gets herself ready for school. When she arrives she realizes that in her distraught state she has missed her calculus textbook from her bag and considers going home to get it. Faced with the idea of being late to school or not even attending school at all, she decides to skip the whole day.

She thinks about her walk with the boy she met the previous night, Simon, and remembers that he said that he had also lost his parents. Idly, she wonders whether he could teach her how to survive the loss of her mother and what it will feel like when it happens. Zoe starts to daydream about magic spells that could save her mother and save her from her life, and during the day she decides to visit her favourite haunt, the local park. There she finds some angry young boys, and, disgusted by her only sanctuary being invaded she realizes that what she really wants to do is see her mother. She goes to the hospital.

Here she manages to find her mother and surprises her and her father by her arrival. Her father is worried that her playing truant is just another thing to worry about, but her mother informs them both that it is all right and she sends her husband off while she talks to her daughter.

Zoe confides everything to her mother - that she feels left out, her father has become too remote, and that her friend is leaving town. Her mother feels ashamed and worried for her daughter Zoe, but an injection of her prescription drug sends her to sleep before she can say more than but to promise to talk to her father about it. Gently, Harry Sutcliff takes his daughter downstairs to the foyer where Zoe is annoyed and has an argument with him about being shut out of her mother's illness. Frustrated, Zoe goes home where she writes a poem entitled "Spells Against Death."

Zoe is again awakened by a phone call that evening from her friend Lorraine who is calling to find out why she isn't at school, but, still angry at the world Zoe pushes her away and, in a foul mood goes out for a determined night time walk. Zoe walks to the alley by the book store where the woman was murdered, willing death to take its chance, and there finds the youth Simon hiding in the darkness. She sees that he is smeared with blood and feathers, and, terrified, she runs as sorrow twists the boy's face.



Chapter 7 Analysis

In Chapter Seven, the character of Zoe tries to move toward a reconciliation of her condition by approaching her mother, but as yet we see that she is still unaware of the full importance of her actions or what is going on behind the scenes. Zoe feels hurt and annoyed at being pushed out of the picture by her father, and reacts angrily when she is told that it is in part due to the fact that her mother does not want to have to worry about her, and also in part due to the fact that her mother doesn't want her daughter seeing her in this state.

Zoe herself is also in this respect an unreliable narrator as we see how events are moving around her and her mother and father have motivations and feelings that are greater than her own. Zoe reacts understandably hurt by this 'shutting-out' but appears too young to understand why her mother would only want to see her at certain times (when she feels stronger).

Further twisted by grief, Zoe writes her 'spell' and spurred by her argument with her only other source of companionship - Lorraine, seeks to enact it: regarding death itself as a force which she can counter by offering herself up as a sacrifice (by going to the alley way alone). Zoe appears to the reader to be immature in this belief, and hasn't really understood that no one is at fault for her mother's illness, and indeed, informs the reader that she hasn't really accepted the fact of her mother's illness yet.

When Zoe meets Simon, we can understand that he is feasting upon birds and have seen that he is trying to control his horrific nature, but Zoe cannot see this and is terrified. At one and the same time we can see that Zoe is caught up in a dangerous paradox - that she has to accept comfort from around her, and that she has to accept the fact of death.

The use of her poem 'Spells Against Death' is a subtle message by the author, indicating that Zoe is attempting to reconcile her situation but in unhelpful ways. The use of 'spells' and superstitious imagery further highlight the strangeness of the setting and the novel as a whole, but contains within it the warning that fleeing from reality can create more harm than good.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Chapter Eight finds Simon the vampire youth hacking at a broom handle (to turn into a stake, the traditional weapon against vampires). He is angry at the girl Zoe for having disturbed him, and angry at having lost his chance to talk to her. He is upset that he will never find companionship as he contemplates his plan.

He takes his newly created stake and leaves his abandoned school, full of anger as he goes to the house of the little albino boy Christopher. He we see Christopher climbing out of his bedroom window. He follows the boy child Christopher and the reader finally finds out that Christopher too is a vampire, and is the cause of Simon's woe. Christopher seems to know that someone is following him as he appears uneasy, but soon approaches his goal: an underpass by an old train station.

There Christopher finds a lone woman who is returning home and approaches her, pretending to be a lost child. As the woman and the vampire child Christopher disappear into the underpass Simon races after them, in time to see Christopher fall over and the woman comfort him.

At this point, Christopher attacks and kills the woman as Simon edges closer, transfixed by the horror of the child who is also a vampire. Unfortunately his attack is spoiled as he disturbs the fallen woman's purse, and Christopher turns around to confront him. He immediately begins to transform into a bat, and, although Simon tries to hit him with the stake he misses and the bat flies away.

Shuddering, Simon pauses to retrieve what Christopher dropped: his teddy bear that it turns out is full of soil. Simon is suddenly hit over the head with his dropped stake as Christopher has returned, retrieves his grave soil and vanishes into the night. The chapter ends with Simon wounded and alone, fleeing the body of the dead woman and thinking miserably about the promise of warmth and friendship that Zoe offers to him.

Chapter 8 Analysis

In Chapter Eight, we are shown some of the back story of the book in general, and why Simon is in Oakwood, and why there have been so many vicious murders in the area recently.

Simon, the vampire, is hunting another vampire, one to whom he is obviously intimately acquainted known as Christopher (who masquerades as a helpless foster child). The full horror of the earlier chapters, when Lorraine was so nearly entranced by the boy outside of the book store is revealed to the reader and further deepens the sense of terror that we must surely be feeling. The author uses almost obscene imagery in her choice of events and character to further craft this horror and to heighten the sense of



strangeness and dislocation from reality: Christopher appears to be a six year old child who carries a teddy bear, and when he attacks he does so like a beast or a child suckling at its mother.

In this way, the author is firmly placing her story thematically alongside such classic horror stories as Count Dracula rather than modern vampire tales such as the Twilight Series. By juxtaposing the imagery of the innocent child and the savage beast, we are reminded by scenes from Bram Stoker, where such images of innocent maidens were themselves juxtaposed against cruel beasts. For this author we can critique her work by examining how she presents the nature of her vampires: not as noble teenagers but as twisted monsters. Even Simon himself, whilst being the most approachable of the monsters in the book is presented as wild and dangerous.

Yet we are left at the end of this chapter, despite its terrible violence, with the knowledge that we suspected before that Simon was indeed a protagonist and, a kind of hero known as an anti-hero. Simon the vampire represents the wildness that is seeking to be tamed and feels remorse for its actions, whereas the contrasting figure of Christopher obviously feels no remorse. What separates Simon from his nemesis is his conscience, or his knowledge that what he has been doing is violent and wrong, and the fact that he yearns for solace and for companionship. Christopher on the other hand obviously does not share these feelings as he masquerades as a poor, abandoned foster child to lure women to their deaths (which are often brutal and savage, we are informed). As readers we are reminded that the picture of hazard that surrounds the character of Zoe is now complete, as we fully see the awfulness of the monsters that are stalking her home suburb of Oakwood.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

In Chapter Nine, we find Zoe attempting to celebrate Halloween, alone, at her house in Oakwood. Although the recent arguments and her fright at seeing Simon had left her badly shook up, the onslaught of trick or treaters forces the girl to join in the spirit of the night. She uses up all of the treats in the house and in the end resorts to giving pennies as she dresses herself in a long black ball gown with the crucifix her friend gave her previously, with organ music playing in the background. After the festivities have died down Zoe phones her friend Lorraine to try and reconcile their friendship, but discovers that Lorraine is at her natural mother's house, possibly for the last time in a long while. A further phone call to her mother's friend Carol leaves Zoe feeling even more isolated as Carol's line is busy. Eventually the doorbell rings again, and Zoe is confronted by the sorrowful form of the boy Simon.

What follows is a terse argument through a locked door as Simon tries to convince her to let him in. At first Zoe is resistant after what she has seen, but Simon insists, pointing out that she didn't see him kill anybody, but a bird as he was hungry. Pity and loneliness wars within her as they argue, and Simon confides that he knows who the real killer is, but cannot go to the police and asks for her help. He reveals that the killer (Christopher) killed his own mother and is the cause of his own loneliness, a fact which drives Zoe to open the door and to let him in.

Zoe is enamoured with Simon, and wants to like him even though she is obviously scared of him and yet; his strange ways interest her. He speaks in archaic, polite fashion, confides in Zoe that he writes poetry (which she likes), and acts like he is a gentleman. He takes off her crucifix and throws it to the other side of the room and then begins to talk to her, but terrifies her in so doing.

Simon presents her with his oil picture of the family, and we learn that the old picture is of himself as a baby, his brother Christopher and his mother and father. Zoe doesn't believe him and is scared as Simon reveals that his older brother Christopher is the one whom is performing the murders. Suddenly, he kisses her as he mesmerizes her with his vampiric charm and Zoe feels for a second all the things that she has lost - companionship, affection, and love. Simon immediately backs away, apologizing for the kiss and explaining that he used his charms to make her kiss him, (at which she is shocked and disbelieving), but agrees to tell her his tale as she curls up beside him on the couch.

Chapter 9 Analysis

In Chapter Nine, we see Zoe now completely isolated from her family and from her friends, and is at the point at which she is most in need and most vulnerable. At this



point in the book she comes across to the reader as mature in some ways (able to organise Halloween from her house even though she doesn't feel like it), but also very much a fragile character and the most human that we have seen her yet. Her isolation and yearning for love that we have seen in this chapter and the previous chapters explains her behaviour through the course of Chapter Nine.

Zoe is obviously struck by Simon's offer of friendship and his story, and also not the least by his vampiric beauty and his similarity to her in many ways: he likes poetry, he likes rock music, and that he has lost his mother untimely.

To the reader, this coming together of the two protagonists is unavoidable as we have seen their paths match and progress in the previous story, as if it is fated to happen. The sense of unreality is heightened by the author choosing to place this event at Halloween, when all the children are in the costumes of monsters, and in a strange way makes the whole event more believable. The topsy-turvy nature of Zoe's life has meant that, for us, normality and reality have become quite malleable and we are in a world where vampires can indeed lurk and fall in love with mortal girls. This is called suspension of disbelief, and is a technique used by the author to give her story meaning and weight.

There is an interesting contrast in this chapter between the weaknesses of the two protagonists where, even though Zoe is the weaker and more fragile one of the two physically (and indeed, falls under Simon's spell), she is actually stronger than him in many ways. Simon has reached a point in his own character development where he has realized that he needs her and he wants help with his conflict with his brother Christopher, and that he is falling in love with her. In a very real sense Simon is the weaker partner emotionally as he needs the more alive Zoe to help him.

When the two finally kiss, it is presented as an answer to both of their horrible situations; and is a tender and passionate moment inferring love, lust and attraction. This moment symbolises all that both have been missing up to this point: the vampire boy Simon feeds off of passion and life in the form of blood whilst he himself feels isolated and alone, whereas Zoe is isolated from her family and friends and has been living in a grey dislocated world. In this moment that they share together, they both see a way out of their respective nightmares and find the thing that they crave the most.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

In Chapter 10, we hear the story of how both Simon and his older brother Christopher became vampires, and how they ended up where they were in Zoe's home suburb of Oakwood.

Simon explains that he was born in the Seventeenth century near the city of Bristol in the west of England, Great Britain to a fairly wealthy family. His father was a merchant who had just had a second child (himself) at the time of the family portrait as he was becoming successful. It was at this time that a mysterious foreigner named Wulfram Von Grab came into their life, pretending to offer their family many lucrative contracts with his own businessmen in the east of Europe. Von Grab stays at the family house where he is charming and witty, but soon his true intention becomes clear as one of the servants encounters Von Grab at night fussing over the child Christopher. The next night both Von Grab and Christopher have vanished, and even though Simon's family searches for them both they can find no trace and Von Grab himself appears to be an invented pseudonym. Life goes on for Simon's family and Simon grows older whilst his mother pines for her first born child (Christopher) and his father grows ever more distant. One night his mother claims to see Christopher at the window and rushes out, and the next night she is found dead in the same manner that the modern-day Christopher kills his victims.

Simon's father is destroyed and takes his son and moves to London, where again he is successful but is a mere shadow of his previous self. Simon turns into a rake, a drunkard and a young rogue when he is accosted by a boy in the street whilst drunk. The young boy takes him to his masters house to sleep it off, and here Simon realizes that he is trapped and that Von Grab is a vampire and is feeding upon him. The boy turns out to be Christopher, who offers Simon the opportunity to become a vampire to avenge himself upon Von Grab. Seeing no other way out, and near death, Simon takes the opportunity and kills the elderly vampire with a stake and then confronts his brother Christopher.

Christopher explains that Von Grab was cruel, and that he (Christopher) offered the opportunity to become a vampire to their mother, who refused, and so the child vampire killed her, at which point Simon burst into a rage, attacked his brother Christopher and fled into the night. From there we are told that Simon was for many years a wild beast in the forests, before finally retrieving his senses and vowing to avenge himself upon his brother who made him that way and killed their mother. He has been tracking Christopher down for centuries, always following the same pattern of the deaths of young women until he finally tracked Christopher down to Oakwood, where he is pretending to be a foster child not far away.



At the end of his story, Zoe asks how she could believe him and asks to see his fangs, which he does although at the price of a kiss. Simon bites her but instead of agony and pain, he makes the bite sweet and tender, and Zoe begins to fall in love with him.

At the end of the Chapter, with Zoe believing him he decides to leave her and is again full of remorse and hatred of his own nature.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Chapter 10 reveals with grand horror and tragedy the entire story to the reader, and also why Simon is motivated as he is. The author asks us to assess some of the similarities in Simon's life and that of Zoe's, both as people (when mortal) who are without their mother, and both with a distant father who doesn't seem able to relate to their child.

The horrible nature of Simon's vampirism is explained by the manipulations of the mysterious Von Grab and his own brother Christopher who had never had the chance to fully grow up, at least to the extent that Simon had. Both Simon and Zoe are victims in this story, victims of circumstance and in this way we are asked to empathise with both characters equally.

We are also asked to contrast and compare the two 'monsters' (Christopher and his brother Simon) now that we know them both the better. Simon is again and again painted as wild and as a victim of his circumstances, whilst Christopher could be said to be a willing participant of his own demise (Christopher killed his own mother, and then even sought out his own brother to turn into a vampire). There is a conscious acknowledgement of cruelty and indeed evil in the character of Christopher so that he portrays the true villain of the novel, whereas Simon is merely an anti-hero. Through Zoe's concern and emphatic assertion that Simon must stop his own brother even though he feels incapable, we can muse that Zoe has become Simon's conscience, and is acting like his moral compass, symbolising the opposite of the Outsider that he had become.

At the end of the chapter, we are presented with the bite of the vampire; but it is totally opposed to the savage attacks made by his brother Christopher. It gives to Zoe a feeling of ecstasy and release as well as pain, and in this sense The Silver Kiss itself becomes a true coming-of-age tale.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Chapter Eleven finds our protagonist Zoe ready to go to bed after Simon's visit, musing on her strange visitor that night. She is surprised that the wounds on her neck have healed almost completely, and, exhausted, collapsed into bed.

Waking up after a whole day of sleeping, Zoe receives a call from her mother and asked to come in to the hospital to visit her as her father is working late that night, she leaves that evening in the drenching rain and makes her way to the bus. Suddenly, she is met by Simon who confides in her that he is feeling ill with all the running rain water - that the mere appearance of it makes him feel sick. He asks where the girl is going and asks whether he can come. Not seeing why not, Zoe agrees.

What follows is a discussion of loss and grief as Zoe reveals her feelings of devastation and finds that Simon shares those feelings about his own mother. Despite this connection, Simon appears defensive and removed when they arrive at the hospital to find Zoe's mother asleep. Moved by the situation, Zoe asks Simon whether he could save her mother from the cancer by turning her into a vampire, to which Simon replies in horror that Zoe's mother, Anne Sutcliff would never fully recover from her cancer but spend her immortality in a living pain.

Realizing that there was now no hope for her mother, Zoe admonishes Simon for not stopping his own brother Christopher, and offers to help him do that. Simon is at once confused and overjoyed at the offer and, feeling stronger than ever with the offer of friendship and support, accepts her offer and the pair leave the hospital.

Chapter 11 Analysis

In this chapter, we are allowed to examine the difference between the natural order and that of the unnatural, or in this case: the cancer which is affecting Zoe's mother Anne Sutcliff and the living undead state of Simon's vampirism. The author wants us to highlight and understand the difference between these two states and in so doing, draw distinctions in the story, foreshadowing what has to happen by the end of the story.

Simon's form of death (or being one of the undead) is portrayed as being absolutely opposed to the natural world: he explains that the running water hurts him and crossing it makes him feel sick: "'I am at odds with nature,'" he continued. 'And the whole natural world tries to remind me of this'" (Chapter 11, p. 163).

This is contrasted to the illness of Zoe's mother, whom, although suffering an untimely and horrible disease is still 'within the natural order' of the world.



By highlighting this difference in Simon's nature and Zoe's situation, the author is drawing the reader back to the conclusion that, although we are party to a fantastic situation where the undead walk the land, can turn into bats and are unable to die, there is still a natural order or a way in which life is supposed to work. We can see now that the author is foreshadowing the end of the book by claiming that there can be no happy ending for the monsters and vampires of the novel (the fantastical elements), and if Zoe is to return to a healthy state (the natural order) then she must once again return to a world where things make sense, and the laws of nature are not broken.

Alongside this message of possible reconciliation in the book, we also have the emotional reconciliation implied for both characters. Simon encourages Zoe to talk about her grief fully, and her anger at the world for her mother's illness, and points out that she has been pushing the people in the world away with her negative feelings. In part, the sense of dislocation has been Zoe's own doing, and the only cure to it is for her to come to terms with her mother's illness and the imminent loss of her friend.

There is a similar moment of emotional reconciliation for Simon's character too, as he realizes that he is not alone in the world, and that he must stop running and hiding and face his awful brother Christopher. Both of the main protagonists in this book have come to a point where they have realized that they just turn around and face their problems rather than the drifting that they have been doing in the previous chapters.

By the end of the chapter, we, as readers, are set up for the final showdown and now the momentum of the story must run its course as both characters are on the course which they had been destined to be from the very first paragraph of the tale.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Chapter Twelve reveals Simon's point of view as he concocts his plan of how to despatch his brother, the evil and cruel vampire child, Christopher.

Chapter Twelve finds Simon thinking over his recent discussion with Zoe, his centuries long fight with his brother and his own nature as a vampire as he digs a pit. Simon is sad as he realizes that he must not let himself care too much about Zoe, because she is mortal and her life will last for a very short time compared to his own eternal undeath. He considers how much pain and sadness that he himself has caused for others in his life as a vampire, and realizes that, just as Christopher is condemned to a childlike anger and petulance (which in time has turned to cruelty and sadism), he himself could have been condemned to a youths arrogance and selfishness by not be allowed to grow up as a normal mortal (into an adult life).

Simon remembers the death of his own father many centuries before in London, who had become old and sick and had passed away with few friends as Simon had watched him through the windows, never daring to announce his terrible nature to his father.

Finishing up the pit that he has dug that night, he retires to his own sanctuary, that of the abandoned school to find a note pinned to one of the boards he uses to enter the deserted place. It is a note from his brother Christopher, telling him that he now knows where Simon is hiding, and that Christopher will kill him before long. Simon is frightened and distraught, realising that his brother Christopher must have followed him on one of the nights that he had been out and is worried that Christopher now also knows about Zoe and her involvement with the plan.

Wondering whether he had time to warn her, Simon sees the first blush of dawn on the night sky and sees that he can do no more that night, and, anxiously settles down to rest by his suitcase full of his grave soil, frightened and angry that his vampiric nature is preventing him from even warning the only person who now knows or cares about him.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Chapter Twelve concentrates on the vampire youth Simon and how he too must come to terms with what must happen for him to find resolution and reconciliation to his problems. It can be read as a study of his character and his progression through the novel.

At the start of the chapter, we find Simon hard at work trying to resolve his problem with his brother by constructing a trap, and similarly, he is also internally trying to resolve the problem of his vampiric nature as he thinks about his attachment to his new friend Zoe Sutcliff: "He mustn't let himself care. He'd spend longer missing her than knowing her.



But was it a wonder that he had lasted this long without caring, or was it a wonder that he could care at all?" (Chapter 12, p. 175).

We are encouraged to draw comparisons with the previous chapter, which (from Zoe's perspective) sees the girl attempting to deal with her problems, and in a similar way Simon is himself undergoing an emotional sea change as he examines his nature and his motivations. Simon realizes that his character has been stuck since his death and subsequent birth as a vampire, just as his brother still has the motivations of a child, he has the motivations of a callow youth. It is by this realisation we can see how the author is presenting the character of Simon as one is at once stuck and one who has limited growth or opportunity to change.

Whereas Zoe, as a mortal starts out at a similar position (isolated, dislocated, alone, and pushing the world away, surrounded by death and removed from life), she has the opportunity for character development, to change as she grows older as a mortal, whereas we are shown by the author that Simon can not change to the same extent and will forever be a youth in some sense.

Simon finally realizes that there is an absolute distinction between his nature and that of the human world, that, even though he can reach out and indeed make connections with people as caring as Zoe, he is forever "trapped on the other side of the window."

The chapter ends with the revelation that his brother Christopher has found his hiding place and will be coming to put an end to him. Frozen with panic, and realising that there is nothing that he can do as the sun rises, Simon curses his own unnatural self for not being able to warn Zoe - further highlighting the differences between the two protagonists.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Chapter Thirteen begins with Zoe dreaming and continues as we learn that Lorraine is sleeping over for the last time before she departs, and Zoe and her father talk honestly about the effect of her mother Anne Sutcliff's illness on their lives. It ends with Simon revealing to Zoe what must be done to put a stop to his evil brother Christopher and the plan that he has put in place.

Zoe's dream is a strange and surreal one in which she sees her mother being taken away by ambulance, and she feels the need to give her mother a painting quickly before she goes. The house starts to fall down around her, preventing her from seeing her mother but, in the final moments of the dream her friend arrives and reveals that her dream mother is only going to Oregon and not to worry.

Zoe and Lorraine had their last sleep over whilst they both live at Oakwood, and it is through the course of this chapter, we see their friendship glued back together as Lorraine and Zoe laugh and giggle over boys. Lorraine explains how she feels that it is not fair that she is moving, and, awkwardly Zoe apologizes for not being there for her friend, an apology that Lorraine accepts with a joke. Lorraine seems to bring back some life even to Harry Sutcliff as she laughs and flirts with him, and they all sit down to eat. Afterwards, Zoe goes with Lorraine as she packs up the last of her things at her old house and bids her friend farewell.

Back in her own home, she talks to her father that evening, who confides that he has been going to a hospital counselling group for the families of the terminally ill and that he would like Zoe to come with him. Her father apologises for shutting her out and they make up their argument.

The very next day her father again leaves to work and to attend the hospital where his wife and Zoe's mother is having another cancer treatment (and so will be unable to see Zoe for another few days until she feels better). During that evening, whilst she is home alone Simon arrives, and tells her his plan to use Zoe to lure Christopher to the park where the gazebo is and his newly-dug pit. There they will confront Christopher, push him into the pit which is lined with wooden stakes. Zoe gets ready to go out, dressing to lure the evil Christopher and (unknown to Simon) slips on the crucifix that her friend gave her. She leaves the house and passes by Christopher's house and instantly is aware when the boy starts to follow her to the park.

Chapter 13 Analysis

In Chapter Thirteen, we see the beginnings of a resolution of the multiple conflicts at the heart of the story for Zoe's character. It starts with a dream which explains in allegorical terms the conflict and the fears of the main character, and proceeds to show her finding



some solace with her friend Lorraine, and her father Harry before deciding to take the plunge and help Simon confront his brother.

The dream especially reveals some of the inner workings of Zoe as she imagines again her mother leaving her, and feels that she is unable to reach her through the falling house. The house itself takes on the properties of the Hospital (the elevator) and reminds us that Zoe has felt dislocated and alone and in a strange reality. This tells the reader that there is also hope that she will escape from this strange, unreal reality and return to normality. The painting that she wants to give to her mother is symbolic of the fact that her mother is a painter herself, and is also reminiscent of the painting that is so dear to Simon - the painting itself has become a metaphor for family, belonging and attachment. When the dream-Lorraine finally reveals that her mother is only going to Oregon, then the dream ends and we have an unwritten promise that the illness of her mother could be dealt with psychologically by Zoe.

During the slumber party and the day that follows, the picture of Lorraine and Zoe is meant to show us all the healthy and happy things that the main character of Zoe could indeed return to if she dealt with her problems; it is a happy scene which shows trust, love and affection between her and her friend and even extends to her father. This theme of a possible reconciliation is carried over to when Zoe finally has an honest heart-to-heart conversation with her father, and her father offers her the opportunity to come to the family counselling and hugs her. Her father is reaching out and is offering Zoe a way to deal with her dislocation and loss, an opportunity that she takes.

At the end of the chapter, even though Zoe has lost her friend Lorraine, we feel that she is reconciled with her life once more and is in a much more stable, happier place than when she started the novel. Although this resolution is not the one she may have wanted (her friend has left for Oregon and her mother is still in hospital), we feel that Zoe has come to terms at least in part with the bad elements of her life and is no longer pushing them or other people away, but is instead determined to make the best of her situation and to be honest and open about her feelings. It is this stronger, much more resolved Zoe who decides to help Simon out by acting as his prey.

Also running through this chapter we can see the idea of vitality, of life, and passion exemplified by the character of Lorraine (she manages to bring some life back to Harry Sutcliff), as opposed to the dislocation and the loss of life of the previous chapters and the vampires. We are encouraged to contrast this chapter, with all its happy and joyful moments with the terrors of the entire book as an answer to Zoe's problems.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

In Chapter Fourteen, we see the confrontation of Simon and his brother Christopher, through the device of Zoe. This chapter represents for Simon what chapter thirteen represented for Zoe; a reconciliation of his previous problems as he confronts them directly.

Simon, the vampire, follows Zoe silently and considers how beautiful this girl is as he feels the arrival of Christopher to the chase. His brother has taken the form of a bat and follows the beautiful young girl silently (although she feels his approach) and, seeing that she is heading for the park arrives there ahead of her to approach her in his human form; that of a six year old, lost boy.

Simon watches helplessly as Christopher the child tries to entrance the girl Zoe by holding up his teddy bear for her to admire (pretending to be a vulnerable child), and in so doing she has to lean over and be within reach of him to attack.

Instead, Zoe snatches the teddy bear (which also contains Christopher's grave soil), and, pretending to be playing a cruel game herself tuns off with the teddy bear and calls out to the child to run after her. Zoe leads the vampire child to the gazebo and the pit, and, jumping, clears the pit but Christopher does not follow her. Christopher has seen his brother and turns, confronting Simon. They fight, struggling by the edge of the pit whilst Zoe hits Christopher over the back with a branch when another voice enters the fray. It is one of the hoodlums that Zoe noticed in a previous chapter, who turns out to be one of the youths who attacked Simon earlier on in the book. The youth mistakes the scene as Simon attacking two younger children and attacks Simon, whilst Christopher steps back to watch. Simon lets the youth slash his face with a knife and terrifies the boys as his face heals in front of them, he then charges and attacks the boys, frightening them off.

Christopher on the other hand has turned to attack Zoe, who uses the last weapon in her arsenal, the crucifix. Simon and Zoe manage to throw the crucifix around the child who is burned by the religious cross and, blinded, stumbles into the pit and is impaled by the half hidden spikes. There the child attempts to change form and writhes, turning mummy like and wizened as his souls escapes his body.

The chapter ends as Simon confronts what they have done, the loss of his brother and the only other person apart from Zoe who ever knew him. Afraid of her disgust at the fight, he sends her away.



Chapter 14 Analysis

Chapter Fourteen is the violent climax of *The Silver Kiss*, and encapsulates the final defeat of the evil vampire child Christopher, Simon's older brother. Through this chapter, we see the differences being highlighted between Simon and his brother. Through the previous chapters of the book we have seen how Simon is intensely conflicted over his vampiric nature, and whilst sometimes he cannot control himself whilst in his feeding frenzy, he feels remorse and tries not to kill his quarry or to even make it an unpleasant experience for them (by encouraging ecstasy and pleasure in Zoe when he bites her). This is compared to how his brother chases his prey, and does so calculatingly with a wilful desire for terror and violence.

Christopher is depicted as cruel, horrible, and sadistic, and several times, he shouts out that he would hurt Zoe just to spite his brother, and seems to revel in the fact that Simon is unable to kill him. This is again in comparison to Simon who is full of sorrow at not being able to control himself and would rather feed on rats and birds than on humans (in the previous chapter we saw him come to a realisation of how much sorrow that he had caused in his undead 'life').

The horror and tension of this encounter is heightened by our knowledge of the background of all of the characters, as we can place this confrontation in a centuries old tale that might not necessarily end here in such mundane settings as a park, and could easily carry on for more centuries.

Through the course of this chapter, we are also reminded of the distinction between the vampires and the mortals of the book, as in the final battle, Simon is also disgusted at his own actions and the sight of his brother's death (and at what he will eventually become). Even though Simon is motivated for good cause and now feels remorse, pity and affection, he realizes that he can never really be alive and his fight with the hoodlums of the park proves that as he reacts savagely and with beast-like ferocity. When his face is sliced open and heals itself Simon is seen to take delight in the perversion and the horror of it, and so the final line is drawn between his nature and that of Zoe's. As external observers we are forced to accept that there can really be no lasting relationship between the two main protagonists of the story, and that the death shown through the actor of Christopher is what will eventually come to even Simon.

Simon himself finally realizes this (although he has been aware of this fact since Chapter thirteen). This knowledge is so hurtful to him that he sends his only friend, Zoe, away at the end of the chapter.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

In the final chapter of the book, we find Zoe back at her house sick and distraught. In this chapter she visits her mother in hospital and has a deep conversation where she talks to her mother about her illness and probable death from cancer. The chapter ends with her last meeting with Simon, where she helps the vampire to die.

Zoe is allowed to stay home from school after her dad finds her being sick, thinking that she is ill (but is in fact feeling revulsion and shock at what she had witnessed in the previous chapter). During the day she considers what will happen now, whether she will become a girlfriend to the vampire youth, and whether she could cope with the life of a vampire (she decides that she cannot) before she goes to visit her mother in hospital.

There her mother confronts her over her feelings, revealing that she had read Zoe's poem "Spells Against Death" and that she was ready for it should it happen. This upsets Zoe to hear her mother talking this way, but her mother's humour and love supports her as her mother tells her that she must go on living her life, and that there is always the possibility of reincarnation.

Feeling strangely more at ease (although sad), Zoe returns home to find a note from Simon asking her to meet him. There he meets her and tells her that he wants her to wait up with him until sunrise, where it is his intention to let the sun burn him alive. They then proceed to throw away the grave soil from his suitcase so he can never come back and know peace, and Simon gives her his painting. The sun comes up and, miraculously, Simon starts to brighten as he fades away into his mist form and is burned up by the sun. At the very last he announces that all he had to do was to realize that he had to go willingly and to not be afraid, and tells her that he loves her as Zoe is left in the clear morning.

Chapter 15 Analysis

The final chapter of the book sees all of the characters taking a brave step towards their futures and, announcing to the reader what they have learnt and how they have progressed. Their story arc has finished and we can examine the main characters in view of their development since the beginning of the novel.

Zoe speaks to her mother about her probably death, and, although sad is supported by the fact that this death is natural, must happen, and that her mother even welcomes it in some ways as an end to her suffering. Through the course of the book, we have seen how the character of Zoe has been dealing with the concept of loss which has made her dislocated from the world, and has only now come to accept death and come to accept that sometimes death is natural and is necessary. Death itself hasn't become something



to fear, but the sadness made by the loss of her family and friends is something which she knows she has the strength to deal with.

This realization is echoed by the character of Simon when he says that he is unnatural, and that all he had to was to go willingly and not be scared of death itself. Zoe's acceptance of death, and her pushing away of her rejection is captured in her reaction to Simon's vampirism when, even before she meets him at the park, she wonders if it would in fact be a kinder thing to kill him then let him carry on for eternity as a horrible creature of the night, inflicting sorrow on the world around him.

The story ends poetically with birth of a new day, with the image of sunrise for the first time in the book. We feel that whilst the book has been spent in darkness, with most of its scenes happening at night and in a surreal grey world where the rules have become topsy-turvy, now we are entering into a new day and moving away from the dark night. In this sense although this novel is about grief and loss and is very much a sad tale, it also encapsulates a promise of new beginnings, strength and hope by reconciling each of the characters with their problems and allowing their characters to develop as far as they are able to through the course of the story.



Characters

Zoe Sutcliff

Zoe Sutcliff is a sixteen-year-old girl living in the suburb of Oakwood in a Northern American city in the present day. Throughout the course of the book, we discover that she is currently undergoing a quiet tragedy as her mother is in hospital with terminal cancer. Her story takes her on a dangerous journey as she faces the loss of her best friend Lorraine and is becoming increasingly isolated from her father who is himself dealing with the probable loss of his wife and her meeting with the strange Simon the vampire youth. Her character development is in part a classic coming of age tale as she is forced to grow up and confront her problems as well as encounters love (in the form of her attraction to Simon) and loss (in many guises throughout the book).

Zoe is one of the two main protagonists in the book, but is in many respects the more central one to the story. She is the character who shows the most character development and the most possibility for emotional growth as her personality changes from being a child at the start of the story and avoiding her feelings of loss, to becoming a mature adult towards the end.

In opposition to the other characters (and especially Simon), Zoe represents life and hope in the way that she is able to return to a resolution by the end of a novel where the vampire youth, her lover, cannot.

Her story is characterised by her feelings of dislocation from the normal world as she exists in a night time world of terror and attraction to Simon, and also from dislocation from reality as all the normal aspects of her life which she would turn to for solace; her friends, her home and her family, are turned upside down and are no longer there to provide her with the support that she needs. Zoe has to realise her part in creating this situation and pushing others away, and has to learn how to be strong for herself and to reach out and to accept help where and when it is offered.

The themes exemplified by the character of Zoe Sutcliff are, in miniature, the themes which are echoed throughout the whole novel. How does one deal with death and how do we survive with its knowledge?

Simon

Simon, the vampire youth, is in fact an old vampire who is first presented to the reader as an Outsider, an alien, and a monster who comes to learn that he can feel again for the people around him and must find his courage to confront his nemesis - his own brother Christopher, and to confront the fact of his own vampirism.

Simon was a child when first his elder brother (himself but a child) was kidnapped by the mysterious Von Grab and turned into a vampire in the seventeenth century in the



west country of Great Britain, in the city of Bristol. Born to a wealthy merchant family who fall under the spell of the vampire known as Von Grab, the family is distraught at the loss of Christopher but it is not long before Simon also loses his mother to, this time, his very own brother. Leaving for London Simon becomes isolated from his own father and himself becomes a drunkard and a rogue before Von Grab and Christopher strikes again, this time ending with Simon's own death and subsequent transformation into a vampire. At this point he goes mad and becomes as a wild beast, witnessing his own father's aged death with no family about him, and vows to avenge himself upon his brother whom he tracks for the next three centuries. Finally in Oakwood, Simon has cornered Christopher and is set to spring a trap upon him.

At the beginning of the novel, Simon is seen almost as an alien who is so removed from human concerns that he feels that even he does not exist (seen in his violent outbursts, spraying the words 'I Am' with the blood of one of his opponents). He has many strange and monstrous features, that he can turn into mist, that he cannot cross running water without feeling ill, that the very sun burns him. Through the course of the novel he encounters Zoe and feelings of pity and attraction are once again moved inside him as he learns to trust and is forced to reconcile with his own actions as a vampire.

In contrast to his brother, Simon feels remorse over what he has done and feels horrified over his own nature. We feel that his overriding motivation is one of loneliness, whereas his brother Christopher's motivation is one of spite. It is this conscience and awareness of his own inherent evil that forces Simon to finally accept the fact that he must have the courage to stop his brother before he kills again, and also to let himself die.

The vampiric nature of Simon forces us to see him as unnatural and going against the natural order of things. In this sense Simon is also a plot device in the way that he represents the unnatural desire to avoid reality, and indeed to feed off of it. For all this however, we understand that what Simon needs both metaphorically and in reality is life, passion, joy and companionship. As a vampire he feeds off the life of others, and as a youth he needs the love of Zoe to cure his loneliness and to feel alive once more.

As a literary creation, Simon the vampire crosses the bridge between modern vampire tales (The Twilight Saga, Darren Shan) earlier vampire novels (Stephen King, Clive Barker), to the classics of Count Dracula (Bram Stoker).

Christopher

Christopher is Simon's cruel and sadistic brother who, although appearing only to be six years old, is in actual fact a three-hundred-year-old vampire who is also Simon's elder brother (Christopher having being transformed into a vampire at an earlier age than his younger brother Simon).

Christopher was born in the west country of Great Britain in the seventeenth century to a wealthy merchant's family living near the city of Bristol. As a toddler he encounters the



family friend the mysterious businessman from the European Continent Wulfram Von Grab, who stays with their family as he and his father hammer out a lucrative business deal. Unbeknownst to all, Wulfram Von Grab is actually a vampire who proceeds to enthrall the toddler boy and kidnaps him to turn into a vampire. Christopher returns to the family home years later, to lure his mother out of their mansion to offer her the chance of immortality. When she is horrified and refuses him Christopher kills her and in so doing sets up his character for the rest of his unlife. Later on he lures his then elder brother Simon to the lair of Von Grab to also become a vampire (his motivation being to become monsters together with his brother), when his brother rejects him he flees, only to be chased by his brother over the centuries. Through the course of the present-day story, he is confronted by his brother and plays a deadly game of cat and mouse, one in which he is finally caught and killed with the help of the mortal girl Zoe.

Christopher is seen as all that Simon is not in many respects, and the worst possible 'type' of vampire. His repeated attacks against young women and the way he insinuates into a family as a helpless toddler is reminiscent of his very first murder against his own mother. In this way Christopher can be seen like an unstoppable, repeating pattern who is obsessive and cruel. We are forced to admit that Christopher cannot change what and who he is in the way that his character does not develop at all but has this sadistic 'pattern' that he repeats ruthlessly through the centuries.

As a monster, Christopher is a plot piece against which we compare the characters of Simon, Zoe and even 'natural death' such as cancer. Christopher is unnatural and vile and cruel, and exhibits several strange powers such as turning into a bat or his final death which marks him out as being all that is topsy turvy and truly running counter to the way the world ought to work.

Lorraine

Lorraine is Zoe Sutcliff's best friend at school, and we discover has been Zoe's friend since childhood. Through the course of the novel Lorraine discovers that she has to move to Oregon with her father and her stepmother and is unable to stay in Oakwood with her natural birth mother, Dian.

Lorraine is presented as a sassy, somewhat arrogant, and straightforward young girl who is very much concerned with boys, fashion and having a laugh with her friends at the start of the book. Lorraine's character undergoes little character development save that she becomes a little more emotionally open to her friend as she comes to herself realise all that she is about to lose in her move.

The character of Lorraine is characterised by her melodrama and her high passion, and in this way acts as a plot device to represent all the vital energy and passion that is missing from the main protagonists of the novel. She has outward, volatile emotions which result in Zoe and her breaking their friendship for a very short period, but can be contrasted to the way that Zoe and the Sutcliff family seem to keep all of their emotions inside and rarely show them even to each other.



However, Lorraine is at first portrayed as somewhat selfish as she is concerned with her own move over her friend's situation. This however mollifies towards the end of the book as we see how Lorraine has cared about her friend all along, but felt awkward about talking about the ill health of Zoe's mother. Lorraine's character development relies upon her coming to the stage where she is able to show that she is listening to her friend and understands her problems rather than focussing on her own.

Understanding that we are supposed to use Lorraine's character to compare with Zoe's, we are left at the end of the book realising that Zoe has developed more as a character than Lorraine has, and is probably more mature than her friend is, and able to deal with heavier emotional issues.

Dad

Harry Sutcliff is father to Zoe Sutcliff and husband to Ann Sutcliff, who is currently in hospital at the start of the novel suffering from what is probably terminal cancer. Harry is presented as a workaholic, a distant ghost of a man who seems good natured and caring but die to the extreme events is unable to show it to his daughter through the first half of the book.

Harry himself, as a character goes through some character development as he learns to express his feelings better to his daughter, and to listen to her concerns, but is many ways also a minor character in the book when compared to Zoe or Simon.

Harry Sutcliff is often known through his absence in the narrative, by a hasty phone call to his daughter Zoe, a note, or on one occasion, Zoe finding him collapsed asleep fully clothed on his bed. We are shown to see that he is a man who is deeply worried and troubled by the events happening to his wife, and who is working extra hard at his office to compensate for the troubles that their family is going through. It is only when after Zoe explodes and has an argument with him, that his wife Anne talks to him discretely and Lorraine stays at their house that the combination of all three cause him to start to 'come alive again.' Through his character, we can see some of the damaging effects of loss, and how it can cause psychic walls to be thrown up around the individual to prevent themselves from feeling further pain. Towards the end of the book he decides to go to family counselling for those with family members in terminal care, and it is this decision which allows him to forge a new relationship with his daughter (and we presume, his wife).

Mum

Anne Sutcliff is the wife to Harry Sutcliff, and mother to Zoe Sutcliff, who is a painter living with her family in Oakwood, North America. Before the start of the novel, Anne is taken into hospital to receive another 'treatment' for her cancer, and despite Zoe's hopes does not return home during the time period of this book.



Anne Sutcliff can be seen as a backdrop to which the whole rest of the story happens in front of, she is in many ways a metaphor and a character as her struggle with her illness encapsulates what all of the other characters are struggling with: the possibility of death. The particular illness, cancer, that she is dealing with is similar to the vampirism of the anti-hero Simon and Christopher, and in a sense the external events that Zoe is dealing with can be seen as a metaphor for the greater drama of the battle against cancer and dignity.

She appears as a humorous and kind woman to her daughter and her husband and through the author dropping hints that she was a passionate, lively painter, and that she would like to be reincarnated as a cat, we see in her just how the disease has drained her of all the many joyful and dynamic things that she used to enjoy. Anne represents too, the words of wisdom for her daughter in the book, who consults with her on a couple of occasions about her own feelings of loss and bereavement.

Towards the end of the novel, Anne Sutcliff confides that she herself did want her daughter to see her so ill, and even is not scared of death any more. Her nobility and dignity can be seen in a moral light as the answers to the inevitability of death.

Carol

Carol is Anne Sutcliff's friend through the course of the book, whom we understand has been a friend to the family for many years. She is understood to be a kindly woman who meets Zoe at the hospital when her mother is ill and comforts her when Zoe is frozen and unable to go to her mother's aid.

Carol is presented as another element of the family dynamic who is nevertheless removed from Zoe and Harry's feelings of grief and loss. She acts more in this story as a plot device to examine the on going effects of Zoe's dislocation from her family.



Objects/Places

The Oil Painting

The oil painting of Simon's family is perhaps Simon's most treasured possession, and characterises for him his attachment to the human world.

The oil painting itself is a miniature painting, designed as a keepsake common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for family members to keep with them when travelling (exactly the same as we might have a picture of our loved ones in our wallet or on our mobile phones). It depicts a respectable gentleman (Simon's father), his mother, the toddler Christopher and Simon himself as a baby. Through the course of the narrative we discover that it was painted at a happy time in their lives before the horror of the vampire curse befalls them.

Simon uses it to remind himself of his motivation (the death of his mother) and also acts as a symbol of everything that he has lost since becoming a vampire. It can be seen as a motivator for why he is attracted to Zoe, that she has a family that is itself torn with loss. The painting Simon eventually gifts to Zoe before he passes away at the end of the book.

Simon's Suitcase

Simon's old battered suitcase is the next more treasured possession, but unlike the oil painting, this treasured possession Simon keeps out of necessity rather than desire. It contains his grave soil, from what would have been his grave site had he died properly and been given an appropriate burial.

We learn that Simon the vampire has to carry his grave soil with him when he travels, as it is the only thing that can grant him rest and peace of mind when his animal-like nature becomes ever clearer. Without it, Simon confides in Zoe, he would become a shrivelled thing with no strength and unable to feed and unable to die. At the end of the book Simon and Zoe scatter his own grave soil so he really has no way of coming back or achieving peace ever again, a symbolic act.

Simon's grave soil is a metaphor for peace of mind, resolution and sanctuary. Through his needing of it to survive, it can be seen as a metaphor for his need for death, and his need for rest. Without rest and peace, he will literally shrivel up. This is an analogy of the emotional shrivelling that is happening to him internally and that is happening to Zoe because of the imminent grief at losing her mother from her life.



Christopher's Teddy Bear

Christopher's Teddy Bear operates for Christopher in the same way that Simon's suitcase of soil does, as Simon discovers that it is filled with Christopher's own grave soil from what would have been his grave site.

We discover that without it, Christopher would have no rest or peace, and would literally shrivel up and be unable to feed or die - one of the many reasons why Simon is so eager to obtain the teddy bear from his evil brother.

In the same way as Simon's suitcase Christopher's teddy bear represents all that he has lost in the world; his innocence and childhood: the fact that he uses it as a ploy to trick his victims into trusting him is further evidence of just how twisted and cruel Christopher has become over the centuries.

The Crucifix

The crucifix worn by Zoe during the novel is a belated leaving present brought for her by her friend Lorraine when they go on one of their last shopping visits together in Oakwood. It plays an important part in the story as first it is dismissed by Simon who takes it off of Zoe to avoid it's touch (he lies and claims that they have no effect on vampires - a lie that is shown to be wrong in the penultimate chapter of the book).

Finally however, and clutching at the very last straw Zoe uses it to ward off the advancing Christopher and they both use it to ensnare him before he meets his fatal end. The crucifix is shown as a silver cross on a red ribbon, and burns with a light when it is used against vampires.

In classic vampire tradition, the crucifix in *The Silver Kiss* can be seen as a symbol of hope and faith against the darkness of terror, fear and evil. It is also in a sense 'holy' - being a symbol of faith against despair, and thus represents to the reader all that the vampires (both Christopher and Simon) are not.

The Hospital

The Hospital is the often visited through the novel by many of the characters (Zoe in particular, but obviously Harry, Carol, and even Simon) as they go to visit Zoe's mother Anne Sutcliff as she is receiving treatment for cancer.

The Hospital is not said to be a traumatic place, but its atmosphere is alien, bright and antiseptic - not homely, warm and encouraging such as Zoe's family home should be. It can be seen as the twisted version of 'home' for the Sutcliff family as their own home is completely turned upside down and they spend just as much time at the hospital as they do at their own house.

The Park

The local park, with its swings, bench and gazebo is where Zoe goes to be alone and to think. It is at one and the same time a sort of sanctuary, but a dangerous sort. The park is integral to the novel as it is the place where Zoe first encounters the vampire Simon, where she meets him through the novel again, and where they have their final showdown against Christopher and where Simon achieves the peace he has so long been seeking.

The park is a semi wild, a feral place which acts as a sort of substitute for the notion of 'Home' for Zoe as Zoe uses it to clear her head and feels like her own Home has lost its meaning. However it is also dangerous, a place which should be safe but is in actual fact becoming ever more dangerous as first young hoodlums invade it, and then the child vampire Christopher does towards the end of the novel.

The Abandoned School

The Abandoned School is Simon's version of The Park, a sanctuary that he can escape to and call 'Home' although its inadequacies prove that it can never be his 'Home'. The vampire Simon sneaks into its boarded up classrooms and there hides during the day with his suitcase of grave soil and his oil painting, resting before the night arrives once more.

As a metaphor, the Abandoned School represents the sanctuary of a home that Simon the vampire can never have and its features of being disused, dusty, and in ill repair are analogies for Simon's own feelings of belonging.



Themes

Death

Death plays a major part as a theme throughout the entire novel of *The Silver Kiss*, seen either in its most direct form in the death of the victims of the vampires (and indeed the vampires themselves), or implied through the encroaching loss of Anne Sutcliff, Zoe's mother, and even the death of the close friendship between Zoe and Lorraine.

Death is perhaps the silent character though out the novel as we see its effects on the character of Zoe and her family around her. It is through experiencing and dealing with the notion of death that both the main characters of the book, Zoe and Simon, comes to achieve resolution and develop their respective character's.

The possibility of the loss of her mother is the most obvious way in which death interfaces with the character of Zoe, and it is though her avoidance and reluctance to deal with this issue that she comes into character conflict. Similarly, the theme of death is examined in the character of Simon and yet it would in fact be the natural answer to his unnatural immortality. Death itself is not seen as the enemy in the book, but rather the avoidance of its fact becomes the more dangerous force, creating the other theme of dislocation for the main character of Zoe.

Life

The notion and symbol of life is another theme that runs through *The Silver Kiss* and becomes a balm for the characters, what they yearn for, and what they are removed from during the conflict in the book.

Life can be examined in *The Silver Kiss* in its subtle forms, passion, joy, vivacity, as well as in the form of love, affection, and friendship. Alongside this Life is the aspect that the characters are at danger of losing at every chapter in the book, they could either be attacked by vampires and be killed or they could exist in an emotional 'un-life' as grief overtakes them.

Life is presented as a balm to the spirit as Zoe begins to emotionally 'wake up' and rekindle her friendship with Lorraine, her family relationship with her father, and even, bizarrely, in her awakening passion and love for Simon. Similarly, the attraction, passion and love that Simon feels for Zoe is also an expression of the life that he craves, needs, but can never have.

In just the same way that the characters are at risk of losing their life, many of the characters are living an emotional 'half life' where grief and loss have left them numb to the outside world or even their own feelings. The symbolism of the vampire becomes



clear as someone who needs to feed off life to be sustained because they have no way of experiencing real emotional life for themselves.

Dislocation

The third major theme in *The Silver Kiss* is that of Dislocation, or, those feelings of unreality, of being out-of-place, things being 'not right' and not working as they should. We first can see Dislocation in the book in the way that Zoe relates to her home life; the fact that it is not in actual fact a home at all, but a place where she and her father collapses after tiring days and nights at the hospital, at work or at school. This predicament is made all the worse by the loss of Zoe's mother from the home situation, until towards the middle of the book we see Zoe's home as little more than a strange and lonesome place.

Dislocation can also be seen in the major characters of the book, that of Zoe and Simon and to a lesser extent Harry and Lorraine as they are all removed from their emotions and exist in an unreal situation. Lorraine is facing an immediate move which is dislocating her from her friend and her birth mother, whilst Harry appears entirely dislocated from his own emotions.

For Zoe and Simon, this dislocation presents itself as an increasing withdrawal from outside society. Simon feels like he doesn't even exist and that no one would care for him once he is gone, and Zoe begins to feel ever more isolated and lonely as she takes to walking the to the Park at night, away from people, friendship, and love.

Style

Point of View

In this book, the author switches between two different points of view in a third-person and personal narrative voice. These two different points of view are always originating from Zoe or Simon, as each makes their way through the story along similar lines.

Through the use of the two different narratives, the author is able to tell the same tale from two different angles and thus highlight the differences and similarities between the mortal girl Zoe and the vampire youth Simon. By using these two narratives, we are allowed to share in each character's story and the author uses this technique to encourage empathy for the characters (even though one of them is a monster).

This technique of the split narrative allows the reader to enter into the story more fully and yet remain an observer of events (unlike the two main protagonists). When Simon finally enters Zoe's house, because of our insider knowledge of Simon, we know that he is really a protagonist, but also we can feel even more scared on the behalf of Zoe as we have seen what he is capable of.

The narrative accounts of each main character shows us that each is, in their own way an unreliable narrator - they cannot adequately diagnose their own wants and fears and it requires the other character to say it to them for them to realise the actions they must take in order to achieve a resolution to the plot.

The different points of view encourages the reader to fully empathise with each character and allows us to understand why each character acts how they do as they are seen from the other character's eyes and from inside their own minds. This use of the two narratives also heightens the tension, the conflict and the horror when, for example, we see the final chase from Simon's point of view and feel his anguish over the possible that harm that could come to the 'silent' Zoe.

Setting

The setting for the story of *The Silver Kiss* is that of modern day Earth, in a North American suburb of Oakwood. It is depicted in a realistic and believable manner so that we could actually see these events happening in the present day, in any forgotten urban suburb of any city.

The novel concentrates itself on the home of Zoe Sutcliff and her travels to the local Park, the shopping precinct and the hospital in which her mother Anne Sutcliff is currently receiving treatment for cancer. Other notable locations are the Abandoned School that Simon calls 'home' and the school where Zoe and Lorraine are both studying at during the beginning of the book. With the use of minimal locations, and making them very 'down to earth' places the author is allowing us to believe that this



story could be happening right now and immediately gives us a sense of empathy and familiarity for the characters.

The setting is heightened by the appearance of these strange and horrible monsters (the vampires) into this quiet suburb, and becomes a surreal and alien environment, full of danger and threat as the main characters confront Christopher.

Through the perpetual use of the night time through out the story, these few places in the setting become surreal and threatening and is used by the author to deepen the atmosphere of the story and to lead us into believing these fantastical events.

Language and Meaning

The author has written *The Silver Kiss* in a poetic style that evokes strong emotions such as both horror and the romance equally in the text.

By making both of the main characters interested in poetry, the author allows the story some room to play with the allegorical and poetic language and thus creating the feeling of events much more vividly than by description alone. This poetic approach gets us into the characters emotions and hearts, and affects our own imaginations much more deeply than just a factual presentation of events. In this way, the vampire youth Simon is described as 'angel-like' and "eyes like stars" or Zoe as "walking in beauty."

For the most part, the language is constructed as each of the main characters would use it inside their own heads (as we see the story from two different points of view); Zoe's narrative is sometimes sarcastic and sometimes funny, like a young person in her situation could be. Simon's language is more morose and archaic, his language strives to echo the archaic speech of his long ago real life in the seventeenth century but prone to violent emotional outbursts as he declares that he will never know peace, or that he is entirely alone in the universe. Both of these language styles work to reinforce the characters and their viewpoints rather than detract from them.

Structure

The structure of the novel is the progression of fifteen chapters, each alternating from one narrative point of view to the next, and then back again so each of the two main character's (Zoe and Simon) have an equal say in the story, with a slight emphasis on Zoe.

Each chapter is relatively short and picks up where the previous left off, so we are afforded the opportunity to examine the reactions of each of the main character's as they end 'their chapter' and their partner's voice takes over. The chapter's are fairly businesslike in the way that they quickly move the story on from one point to the next and only in a few places (notably Simon's) do we have flashbacks and 'flash forwards' to other parts of the narrative.

This switching narrative and short chapters encourages us to be gripped by the rising tension and the emotional drama between the two characters as they struggle to deal with their own issues and with each other.



Quotes

"...she felt like yelling at a God she wasn't even sure existed. Am I being punished? What did I do" (Chapter 1, p. 35).

"I'm afraid to...I'm afraid my mother will die, and my father will grieve forever, and i'll always be alone, because you're going too..." (Chapter 3, p. 51).

"He wanted to be noticed. He wanted people to see him. It was dangerous, this want" (Chapter 4, p. 64).

"But we never do anything together now, she thought, not even be unhappy together. He makes decisions without asking me, like i'm a little child" (Chapter 5, p. 72).

"It unnerved him when her eyes caught him like that, but it brought something else he couldn't explain, something that didn't seem normal for him. he wanted it again. He wanted to discover what it was" (Chapter Six, p. 85).

"She looked tiny, and pale...before this her mother's dying had been a possibility..." (Chapter 7, p. 100).

"He thought of Zoe, and the glimmer of life she kindled in him that he had thought doused for good" (Chapter 8, p. 116).

"Zoe,...dont let the anger make you push people away. Dont take it out on the people who love you" (Chapter 11, p. 167).

"It's not going to go away if you ignore it. There are no spells against death, Zoe" (Chapter 15, p. 217).

"Its up to me now, she thought. But somehow it wasn't scary anymore" (Chapter 15, p. 226).



Topics for Discussion

Describe Simon's attraction to Zoe. Is it just physical attraction? What does he like about Zoe? What does she represent to him? How does their relationship progress through the course of the book?

Contrast and Compare the similarities and differences between Simon, the vampire, and his brother, Christopher, the vampire.

What are the main similarities between Simon and Zoe?

Is death always a bad thing? Compare the different sorts of dying in this novel

In what ways can Simon be said to be a victim of the story? Consider the fact that he has also done bad things.

Discuss the importance and the role of the "Home" in *The Silver Kiss*.

Describe all the ways that Zoe could have resolved her problems with her friend, her father, her mother and even with Simon. Was she right to act as she did?