

The Unbecoming of Mara Dyer Study Guide

The Unbecoming of Mara Dyer by Michelle Hodkin

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Plot Summary

A teenage girl, Mara, comes to the realization that she has a terrible special ability in the novel *The Unbecoming of Mara Dryer* by Michelle Hodkin. Mara and her family have just moved to Florida in hopes the relocation will help Mara heal from the accidental death of her best friend, Rachel. Continuing deaths, however, make Mara realize that she is at the center of all the strange fatalities and may have even caused the death of her own friend. Noah Shaw, an eccentric and intelligent boy, that Mara meets in Florida, holds his own secret that might help Mara control her own ability if she makes the right choice.

Circumstances surrounding the collapse of the Tamerlane State Lunatic Asylum and the death of Rachel, Claire, and Jude are uncertain. Mara is the only survivor of the accident and she cannot remember why the teenagers were there or what made the building fall. Hoping that it will help her deal with emotional issues coming from the loss of her friends, Mara suggests to her parents that they move to Florida. Soon after the move, however, Mara begins hallucinating. In her first day of class, she visions the room collapsing. She also sees the faces of Claire and Jude when she looks in a mirror. Making matters worse, Mara imagines the cruel owner of a dog dead, and he dies just as she had imagined.

It is when Mara's Spanish teacher dies, again as Mara had imagined her death, that she decides she needs to remember the night of the Tamerlane's collapse. Her boyfriend, Noah Shaw, goes with her to a Santeria priest who helps her to remember that she was the cause of her friend's death. Noah shares with Mara that he has an ability to heal which he believes can help counter Mara's ability to kill. He also offers to help her harness her ability so that it does not hurt those whom she loves.

Meanwhile, Mara's brother, Joseph, is kidnapped. Noah has a vision of the kidnapping and takes Mara with him to rescue Joseph. Believing that the man whom Mara's father is representing in court might be responsible for Joseph's kidnapping and for murdering a girl, Mara kills again. This time her father is injured. With Noah's help, he survives his injuries. Mara decides to turn herself in to the police station but as she seeks the officer who knows her best, she sees Jude at the police department and realizes that he is still alive.



Chapters 1 - 4

Chapters 1 - 4 Summary

A teenage girl comes to the realization that she has a terrible special ability in the novel *The Unbecoming of Mara Dryer* by Michelle Hodkin. Mara and her family have just moved to Florida in hopes the relocation will help Mara heal from the accidental death of her best friend, Rachel. Continuing deaths, however, make Mara realize that she is at the center of all the strange fatalities and may have even caused the death of her own friend. Noah Shaw, an eccentric and intelligent boy, that Mara meets in Florida, holds his own secret that might help Mara control her own ability if she makes the right choice.

In Chapter 1, Mara, Rachel, and Claire play with an Ouija board. Claire tries to pass the planchette to Mara but she passes it on to Rachel. Claire is disdainful of Mara's move and kids her. Mara and Rachel had been best friends since preschool but Claire seems to be trying to move in on Rachel. Claire also enjoys torturing Mara because she has a crush on Claire's brother, Jude. Claire tells Rachel to ask the board how she will die. The three are stunned when the board spells out Mara's name. Rachel suggests that the board wants Mara to ask a question but Mara accuses Claire of pushing the planchette. Six months later both Rachel and Claire are dead.

In Chapter 2, Mara wakes up in a hospital with tubes and needles attached to her. She screams for them to be removed. Voices try to tell her she is okay. She tries to tell them that they have to get them out, but they ignore her. When Mara wakes again, her mother is standing over her. She learns she was in an accident. She was at the Tamerlane and the building collapsed. She sees yellow roses, Rachel's favorite flower, and asks when she visited. Her parents tell her the roses are from Rachel's parents. Mara's parents tell her that Rachel, Claire and Jude were with her when the building collapsed. The other three teens were killed. Mara tries to remember why she came into the Tamerlane.

In Chapter 3, Mara is diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. A psychologist suggests to Mara's parents that she needs to go to a long-term care facility. Mara suggests that they move instead. Although her family has roots in Rhode Island, they all agree to the suggestion.

In Chapter 4, eight weeks after Rachel's funeral, Mara and her family have moved to Miami, Florida. So far, she hates Florida. The new school is a private school and Mara feels that she is expected to be perfect. Mara feels out of place and lonely without Rachel. On her first day of school, Mara's candy gets stuck in the vending machine. She bangs on the machine and yells at it. She hears a boy with a British accent tell her that she has an anger management problem. Mara describes him as being in a state of disarray and beautiful to behold.



Chapters 1 - 4 Analysis

In this section, Mara and her family try to settle into a new town after she is involved in an accident in which her best friend from childhood, along with two other teens are killed. Mara has decided that a move away from the place where she and her friend grew up together would be best for her as her mother was looking at sending her to a long term care facility to help deal Mara deal the emotional troubles that she is having after the deaths.

In a brief prologue to the book, a woman who has taken the false name of Mara Dyer writes that this book will detail what she remembers of an instance that started with Rachel's birthday party. She indicates that the book is to serve as a warning to someone whom she is afraid will be killed by a girl who is a B student, but already has a body count. This prologue lends a creepy and paranormal tone to the novel. This paranormal tone continues as Rachel, Claire and Mara play with an Oijua board during Rachel's birthday party. The feeling of the unusual continues as Mara cannot remember what happened to her and her friends inside the Tammerlane, or why they even went to the old building.

There are some things to note in these first chapters. First, note the anger that Mara feels toward Claire for trying to move in on her best friend and also for Claire's constant kidding of her because of her crush on Jude. Also remember Mara's thoughts as she wakes up in the hospital the first time. She is telling the people around her that "they needed to get them out." Since Mara wakes pulling out her breathing tubes and IV's, it is assumed that she is wanting the tubes and needles out. Keep in mind that this phrase will surface again.

Also notice that the chapters are notated with titles of "before" and "after." The chapters titled "before" deal with things that happened to Mara before the accident while those titled "after" deal with the aftermath of the accident. The chapters are also titled with the places where the action is taking place.



Chapters 5 - 8

Chapters 5 - 8 Summary

In Chapter 5, when Mara looks away from the boy who spoke he disappears. She goes to her Algebra class. When she opens the door, she hallucinates that cracks are spreading up the walls of the classroom filling the room with dust and causing light fixtures to fall. Mara tries to avoid what she believes to be a falling fixture and falls. She smacks face first into the floor, causing her nose to bleed. The teacher calls for someone to get a nurse but Mara gets up to avoid the nurse and goes to the restroom to clean up. Once in the restroom, Mara tries to calm herself, afraid that she will panic at the sight of her own blood. When she finally feels that she is calm enough, Mara looks in the mirror. The face she sees is not her own.

In Chapter 6, it is Claire's face that is smiling back at her through the mirror. When Mara looks down, then back up, Claire is gone. Mara is sick to her stomach. When she settles herself as well as she can, Mara goes to back to class, afraid the teacher will send students after her if she doesn't.

At lunch, Mara looks for a place to sit by herself and read. As she sits, she hears someone laughing behind her. No one is there and she realizes that what she is hearing is Jude's laugh. It is her third hallucination of the day. Mara realizes she is almost late to class and heads toward the building. She rounds a corner to see Jude standing in front of her. He looks unfriendly and doesn't smile. Mara turns and walks in the opposite direction. When she looks back, Jude is still there, and he is closer.

In Chapter 7, Mara is late to her Spanish class but goes in anyway. The teacher has Mara stand in front of the class while she asks Mara questions that she cannot understand in Spanish. After she finishes her questioning, the teacher makes Mara sit at the front of the room, facing the class. Mara feels the teacher was picking on her because Mara told the teacher that she mispronounced her name.

When class is over, a boy named Jamie Roth tells her that she looks like she could use a hug. He tells her that Morales is the worst teacher at school, and asks how her nose is. In the sea of perfect students, Jamie is the only one who stands out from the crowd. He asks about her day and learns that Anna had been mean to Mara earlier. Jamie indicates it must be because Mara went near Noah Shaw. She learns from Jamie that Anna and Noah used to date but Noah dumped her. Before Noah, Anna had dated the big blonde named Aiden Davis, but since that time had decided he was gay. Now Anna and Aiden are best friends. Jamie tried to be friends with Aiden, and the boy hit him. Jamie indicates that he got Aiden back by threatening him with Ebola.

In Chapter 8, when Mara's mother picks her up, she is concerned Mara had never had a nosebleed before. Mara does not tell her mother about her hallucinations. When they arrive at home, Mara's mother goes inside, but Mara sits in the van. She is there until



her brother gets home. She wonders how long she's been sitting there. Mara goes in the house with her brothers. Her mother is in the kitchen, still frustrated with Mara. Mara escapes to her bedroom. She thinks about the sketches of Rachel that she didn't put up on her walls.

Chapters 5 - 8 Analysis

One aspect of Mara's personality that stands out is her dislike for doctors and nurses. One has to wonder if she had this fear before she was hospitalized after her accident at the Tamerlane. The fear of having to go to the nurse prompts Mara to take care of her own nosebleed even though she panics at the sight of blood. It is the same fear that her teacher will send the nurse after her that prompts her to return to class even though she is embarrassed by the way that she entered the class.

Reality becomes a major topic in this novel. A major question for Mara, as well as readers, is what is real and what is imagined. Mara has a variety of hallucinations on her first day of school. First, she hallucinates that her Algebra classroom is collapsing. This is obviously a hallucination because none of the other students in the room are noticing anything falling or crumbling. Mara's next hallucination takes place when she looks in the mirror and sees Claire's face instead of her own. Again, this is obviously a hallucination. Mara's next hallucination occurs when she is reading by herself at lunch. She hears Jude laughing behind her. She next believes that she sees him on the campus at school. She turns away and looks back, and he is still there, walking toward her. This episode is different from the classroom and the Claire hallucination. In both of those cases when Mara looks at what she believes that she was seeing a second time, things are as they should be, the hallucinations disappear. When she looks back at Jude, however, he is still there.



Chapters 9 - 12

Chapters 9 - 12 Summary

In Chapter 9, Mara watches television while she waits for her mother to finish dinner. Instead of local news, however, she sees the pictures of Claire, Jude and Rachel as the news anchor says the girls' bodies were recovered but the body of Jude had not been recovered because portions of the building were still standing, but likely to collapse. When her mother comes in the room, the pictures disappear. Instead, the news anchor is talking about Jordana Palmer, an area tenth grader that has been murdered.

In Chapter 10, Mara sees Noah Shaw in her AP English class the next day when she volunteers to answer a question. Mara becomes bored with the lecture because she has heard it before and instead reads her copy of *Lolita*. As she gets up, Mara knocks over her chair and Noah picks it up for her. The two banter over Mara's choice of reading. Mara escapes Noah from into her Algebra class. She realizes that Noah is getting under her skin. When Mara gets home with Daniel, there is a fat envelope with no return address. It seems to disturb Daniel.

That night, Mara dreams of the night that Rachel, Jude, and Claire were killed. In her dream, Mara is awakened by Jude pounding on her window. She had known he was coming but hopes that he will go away. When he does not she goes to the window and learns that Claire and Rachel are already at the asylum.

In Chapter 11, Mara wakes up from her disturbing dream. The next evening, however, she has the same dream. One morning she drives herself to school and arrives before anyone else. She walks until she hears a dog whimper. She sees an emaciated, abused dog chained in a junkyard. She calls the dog and is trying to free it when the dog's owner threatens Mara. He jerks the dog's collar making her scream in pain. As Mara runs away, she gets an image of the dog's owner with his head caved in, dead.

In Chapter 12, Mara manages to make it to class before the bell rings. She can't concentrate because she is busy thinking about how she can save the dog. Noah follows Mara from her first class to her second class trying to engage her in conversation. He even takes a seat in the class though he isn't even a member of it. In an attempt to get away from Noah, Mara goes into the bathroom. While she's in the bathroom, Mara decides to call Animal Control and file a complaint. After school, Mara walks to the junkyard to see what has happened with the dog. As she gets closer, Mara is surprised to see an ambulance there. She looks for the dog, but can only see the dog's owner. He is dead, just the way Mara imagined that he deserved.

Chapters 9 - 12 Analysis

In this section of the novel, Mara gets a tease of what happened the night of Rachel's death in a dream. She has the same dream of Jude coming to her house to get her to



take her to the Tamerlane twice. These dreams set her on edge and make her unable to concentrate in school. Mara also has a hallucination about the news around the time that Rachel, Claire and Jude were killed. The newscaster says that Rachel and Claire's bodies were recovered but that Jude's body had not been found yet. Since this is another of Mara's hallucinations, it is uncertain if the news that she hallucinates is true or not. Mara's parents, and no one else, had never mentioned to her that there was any trouble recovering Jude's body. When Mara's mother interrupts the hallucination, the newscaster is instead talking about Jordana Palmer, a Florida girl who has been murdered.

Even more disturbing to Mara is the death of Mabel's owner. Although she hated the man and believed that he deserved death, she is still horrified to discover that he has actually died exactly as she imagined. Through all of the hallucinations, it is at this point that Mara first questions her sanity.

One other aspect of these chapters that should be noted is the envelope that is received at the Dyer home that seems to bother Daniel. Joseph had been at home when a person, whom he identifies as their father's new client, brought the envelope by the house. Mara notices a strange look pass over her older brother's face, but isn't sure what he is thinking.



Chapters 13- 16

Chapters 13- 16 Summary

In Chapter 13, the officers on the scene see Mara when she throws up at the sight of the dead man. She hears them say that they plan to euthanize the dog. Mara waits until the officers go inside the house then runs for the dog. Mara carries it until she is out of sight of the cops. Mara tries to wrap her mind around the coincidence of the man dying just as she had wished that he would. She has decided to call a vet for the dog when Noah walks up to her. He offers to drive her and the dog to a vet.

In Chapter 14, Noah names the dog Mabel. The vet to which Noah drives them is Noah's mother. As Noah drives Mara back to the school, Noah tells Mara that he had found American girls boring until he met her. At the parking lot, Noah reaches across Mara just as her mother calls on her cell phone.

In Chapter 15, Mara's mother is upset because she is late. She doesn't seem to believe Mara's story about the dog. Frustrated, Mara goes to her room. She is beginning to believe that she really is crazy but she feels that she can deal with what is happening to her.

In Chapter 16, this chapter begins with Mara's memories from the night that her friends were killed. She remembers that she agreed to go with the group because she was tired of Claire kidding her because of the Ouija board incident. They plan to enter the building through the basement, and spend the night inside hoping to document some paranormal activity.

Chapters 13- 16 Analysis

In this section, Mara remembers more of the night at the Tamerlane. She has agreed to go there because she is tired of Claire kidding her but really is not interested in the building. She does remember that Claire and Rachel had hoped they would encounter some sort of paranormal activity while in the condemned building.

Mara tries to wrap her brain around the idea that the Mabel's owner died exactly as she had imagined his death. Because she is wrapped up in saving the dog, Mara does not recognize the phone number when her mother calls from her office. This frustrates her mother, who becomes even more fearful when Mara does not arrive home when she is supposed to. Because Mara's mother has training in psychology, she knows that something is bothering her daughter. She worries what might be going on in her daughter's mind. She makes a mistake when she tells Mara that she does not believe that there is a dog. This alienates Mara from her mother not only because she believes that her mother thinks she is badly disturbed, but also because it proves that Mara's mother does not believe Mara when she does tell her the truth.

Note in this section that Mara has decided that she really is crazy. However, she also believes that now that she knows that she is crazy, that she can control herself and deal with the consequences.



Chapters 17 -20

Chapters 17 -20 Summary

In Chapter 17, Mara dreams the same dream from Chapter 16 three nights in a row. Thinking about Mabel helps to keep her mind off the dream. On Monday, Noah isn't in class, so she can't find out how the dog is doing. After her English class, Mara is surprised to see that her sketchbook is full of drawings of Noah. She feels a tap on her shoulder but doesn't realize someone has taped a sign with the word "slut" on it until she sits down in her Spanish class. She throws the paper at Anna, who is roaring with laughter.

Noah appears at lunchtime and tells Mara that Mabel is hanging in. He asks her to have dinner with him that weekend. Mara tries to decline. She goes to the girls' bathroom, but he follows her. He seems truly curious to find out why Mara won't go out with him. At the conclusion of the chapter, he gets so close to her that Mara both believes and dreads that he will kiss her.

In Chapter 18, Mara and Noah are interrupted by some other girls coming into the bathroom. He walks out of the room and Mara does not see him again until Wednesday. Later, Mara hears some kids talking about Jordana and asks Jamie what they are talking about. Jamie tells her that Jordana was murdered, then asks if she is okay. She has chewed her lip to the point of drawing blood. He tells her that there was an accident before she moved in which her best friend was killed. Jamie offers to tutor Mara in Algebra. As he is leaving, Jamie points out to Mara that the flap is open on her bag.

Although the lunchtime tutoring goes well, Mara's Spanish teacher throws a piece of chalk at her, ruining her afternoon. Jamie offers to tutor Mara in Spanish as well. At the end of the day, Mara searches her bag for her sketchbook but cannot locate it. The book is also not in her locker. In the car on the way home, Daniel tells Mara he is going to a costume party. Mara asks if she can go as well. When they find news and television vans in their front yard, they forget their talk about the party.

In Chapter 19, the news vans are being packed up when Mara and Daniel run into their house. Their father is home, which is unusual. He tells Mara and Daniel that a case he is working on will be going to trial soon. He explains that he took the case from a friend because that friend withdrew from the case. As they continue to talk, Mara realizes that she is the only one in the family that did not know about the case that her father had taken before they ever moved to Florida. Mara confronts her mother about not telling her about her father's case but Daniel deflects the argument by asking permission to take Mara with him to the party at South Beach.

When she thinks about her costume, Mara decides to check out her mother's closet to see if there are any saris she could wear. When she is searching, her mother catches



her. She gives Mara a dark emerald green dress that belonged to her mother. When Mara tries to put on her makeup, she sees Claire in the mirror.

In Chapter 20, Mara calms herself enough to continue getting ready for the party. To keep from having to look in the mirror again, she asks her mother to help her with her makeup. Her mother also fixes her hair, and loans Mara a pair of emerald and diamond earrings to wear. Once they are in the car and on the way to the party, Daniel apologizes to Mara for not telling her about the case. At the party, Daniel meets Sophie, leaving Mara alone. She searches the crowd for someone she knows and her eyes fall on Noah. He is talking to a petite girl. When he notices Mara, Noah says something to the girl and she laughs. Mara believes the two are making fun of her. She decides she is ready to leave. She manages to convince Daniel to let her drive the car home while he gets a ride home with Sophie.

Chapters 17 -20 Analysis

Troubling things continue to happen to Mara in this section of the novel. She has had the same dream about the night of the Tamerlane collapse three times in a row. She tries to distract herself by thinking about the dog that she has helped to save. School continues to be a challenge as someone puts a sign indicating that she is a slut on her back. She believes it is Anna who has tagged her and throws the wadded paper at her. Also at school, Mara learns more about the death of Jordana Palmer. As Jamie tells her about the murder, Mara chews her lip to the point that it bleeds because the story reminds her of the death of Rachel.

Mara learns that her father already had planned to take over the role of the defense attorney in Jordana Palmer's murder case before she had even been aware they were planning to move to Florida. To make matters worse, Mara realizes that her brother, Daniel, also knew about their father's case and did not share with Mara. In a way, Mara feels that her family has been keeping this as a secret from her, a circumstance that Mara does not appreciate.



Chapters 21 - 24

Chapters 21 - 24 Summary

Mara returns home in Chapter 21 to find her parents aren't at home but the front door is unlocked. Nothing looks unusual in the house until Mara heads down the hall to her bedroom. She realizes the family photos are on the wrong side of the hall, as well as the three sets of French doors. Again, Mara is hallucinating as a result of her bad night. She decides that a hot bath will help her relax. When she goes into her room to undress, Mara sees an open box on her floor. It contains pictures and mementoes from her life before. Among these things is a picture of Rachel and Mara together. When she goes back to the bathroom, the water is off, but she did not remember having turned it off. When she looks into the tub to pull the plug, she sees the emerald earrings that her mother loaned her at the bottom of the water. She reaches in to get the earrings and for a moment feels nothing, then scalding pain. Mara tries to pull her arm out but is not able. Her mother finds her slumped against the tub an hour later.

Mara's mother takes her to the emergency room for treatment of her burns. When they get home, Mara's mother tells her that she is making her an appointment to see a psychiatrist the following day. Her mother asks what happened and Mara explains that she was trying to get the earrings. Mara's mother reaches out and removes an earring from one of Mara's ears. It is at this point that Mara realizes that she has imagined the entire incident.

In Chapter 22, Mara has her first appointment with Dr. Maillard. Mara tells the doctor only part of the story of the night she was burned, believing that it is not wise to tell everything. Dr. Maillard asks if Mara has ever been in the hospital before and Mara struggles to tell her about the accident that killed Rachel and the others. Because she does not want Joseph to worry about her, Mara does tell the doctor that she is afraid something is happening to her because of the hallucinations. She tells the doctor about seeing Claire in the mirror but the announcement doesn't seem to faze the doctor. The doctor prescribes Mara a medication and suggests another appointment in a week. When Mara doesn't commit to the appointment because of coming exams, the doctor suggests she take some time off from school. Mara points out she doesn't want to mess up her chances of getting into college. When Mara hands her mother her prescription after the appointment, she notices that her mother's face tenses. They pick up the prescription at a drug store, then Mara looks up information about it on the Internet. It is an antipsychotic.

In Chapter 23, Noah asks Mara if they can keep Mabel because his mother has gotten attached to her. He asks Mara to have lunch with him but she refuses. When she goes to her locker, Mara realizes a note, written on a page from her sketchbook, has been poked through the slats. It tells her to go to the vending machines if she wants her sketchbook back. Mara at first believes it is Noah who stole her book, but then thinks that it might be Anna. Sure enough, it is Anna waiting for her near the vending



machines. To make matters worse, there are also dozens of members of the student body as well as Noah, congregated around Anna. Mara believes that she has no choice but to endure her humiliation. When Anna pokes a sketch in Noah's face, he covers for Mara, telling the others that he asked Mara to draw the sketches. He goes to Mara and tells her to come with him. It is at this point that she realizes that she is his. Mara suggests to Noah that he tell the other kids that he broke up with her as a way to take care of the relationship that he created. Instead, he tells Mara that she will spend the day with him on Sunday.

As Mara's brother drives her home in Chapter 24, she refuses to talk to him about Noah. When she gets home, she runs from the car, scaring a stray cat that Joseph is trying to corral. Inside the house, the phone rings. It is Noah for Mara. He tells her that he will pick her up at 10 a.m. on Sunday. Mara goes to her older brother seeking help in getting out of the house on Sunday because she is afraid her mother will not let her go because of the burn. She agrees to tell her brother the whole story in exchange for his help.

Mara's father is at home for supper for a change. He believes that his client is innocent of the murder of Jordana Palmer. The family had begun to take advantage of Marcus' good humor when Mara realizes that her rice appears to have turned into maggots. She goes to the bathroom and puts water on her face. When she looks in the mirror, Jude is standing behind her. He tells her that she needs to "take her mind off this place" then she throws up.

Chapters 21 - 24 Analysis

Mara continues to have hallucinations in this section of the novel. The majority of her hallucinations seem to center around the evening that she is alone in her house. Remember that in this instance, Mara comes home to find the door unlocked, which she finds disturbing. She wonders if someone is in the house with her but cannot find anyone. The strange occurrences of this evening seem to fall into two different categories. One of these categories of occurrences are clearly hallucinations. These, for instance, are when the French doors and family photographs switch sides of the hall. Finding the earrings in the bottom of the tub might also be a hallucination. The second category of things that happen are simply things that Mara does not remember doing. These things include the box of photos that Mara doesn't remember having taken down from the closet. Mara also doesn't remember having turned off the water in the tub, but it is off. Another evening Mara hallucinates that her dinner rice turns into maggots. When she goes to the bathroom, she sees Jude's reflection in the mirror as he appears to stand behind her.

It is also in this section that begins to make an effort to get better. Her incentive is her memory of Joseph's fear when she was in the hospital in Rhode Island. Mara does not want to scare or hurt her brother anymore. It is this incentive that helps Mara to tell her psychiatrist about some of the things that have been happening to her. She also tries to put into words the changes that she is noticing in herself, but doesn't seem to be able to make the psychiatrist understand exactly what is going on with her.



Also in this section, Mara's relationship with Noah continues to deepen. Although Anna has set Mara up to be embarrassed, Noah saves Mara from her embarrassing situation. There has been a very volatile relationship developing between Noah and Mara. Although Noah has obviously been attracted to Mara and has been trying to win her affections, Mara has been resistant. It has only been in her times of need — such as with Mabel or her sketchbook — that Mara has allowed Noah to act as a friend to her. Now that he has told the class body that they are dating, Mara feels she has been tricked into the relationship.



Chapters 25 - 28

Chapters 25 - 28 Summary

In Chapter 25, Noah picks Mara up on Sunday. Her mother tries to convince her to take a Zyprexa before she leaves but Mara hides the pill under her tongue.

In Chapter 26, as Noah drives Mara he tells her about himself. He will tell her only that he is taking her to see a friend.

In Chapter 27, the two go to Noah's house where he plans to show her how well Mabel is doing but Mabel appears to be afraid of Mara. During her visit to Noah's house, Mara also meets his sister, Katie, the girl to whom he was talking the night of the costume party. He invites her into his room.

In Chapter 28, Mara is surprised to see that Noah's room is filled with books. He gets the key and suggests they eat first. Mara continues to ask Noah about his family. He admits that he is not close to his father and that his mother was murdered at an animal rights protest when he was five. Noah was at the protest when she was murdered. The vet is actually his stepmother.

Chapters 25 - 28 Analysis

In this section of the novel, Mara and Noah's relationship deepens when Noah has the opportunity tell Mara about himself. She learns that he has scars from losing his mother at a young age when she was murdered in front of him. He also tells her that he doesn't feel comfortable in large crowds and that there was a time in his life when he was not popular. Mara also learns that Noah has very eclectic reading interests. Noah is able to tell Mara what many of the books are about, proving that he has actually read them and they are not just vanity books.

Mara learns the identity of the girl with whom Noah was talking the night of the costume party. The fairy whom Mara had assumed was Noah's girlfriend is actually his sister. It turns out that Kate was laughing not because they were making fun of Mara but because she was happy because her brother had found a girl that he really liked.

One disturbing aspect of this section of the novel is Mabel's fear of Mara. Not only does Noah's pug dog try to attack her but Mabel appears to be so terrified of Mara that she cannot stop shaking and will not let Mara pet her. Mara remembers a past circumstance when she had scared away a cat that Joseph was trying to capture. The memory includes Joseph's words that Mara had scared the cat.



Chapters 29 - 32

Chapters 29 - 32 Summary

When they arrive at the restaurant in Chapter 29, Mara notices that Noah's face goes white and he tightens his grip on her hand. He goes outside and Mara catches a glimpse of Jude in the restaurant. She closes her eyes, hoping Jude will go away and is startled by a man talking to her. Noah returns and makes the man leave. Noah insists on paying for Mara's meal.

In Chapter 30, Noah takes Mara to the Miami Beach Convention Center for a preview of an art show. As Mara wanders through the art, she becomes separated from Noah. She believes the trees are people with their arms reaching out to grab her. She hallucinates seeing her friends in the painted pictures as well as a collapsed building that suddenly begins to put itself back together. Mara passes out.

In Chapter 31, Mara again returns to memories of the night that Rachel, Clare and Jude are killed. The group enters the building through the basement and climbs up to the first floor. Jude pulls Mara into one of the patient rooms, away from Claire and Rachel.

When Mara wakes up in Chapter 32, Noah is carrying her. He tells her that Daniel has told him about what happened to Mara and her friends. Noah explains to her that he asked Daniel about Mara. He explains to her why he acted the way he did in the girls' bathroom and also what he was thinking the night of the party, when she had just disappeared. Without meaning to, Mara admits to Noah that she believes there is something seriously wrong with her, something that no one can fix.

Chapters 29 - 32 Analysis

In this section of the novel, Mara again believes that she is hallucinating that she has seen Jude in the restaurant. She is distracted by the strange man who approaches her and does not think of Jude again but she does note that she feels unusually calm considering that she has just had a hallucination. In addition to Mara's unusual experience in the restaurant, Noah also has an unusual reaction when they first enter the restaurant. Mara notices his face go white and his grip on her hand tightens. Mara does not know what has happened to disturb Noah but this incident will be important again later in the novel.

It is also during this section of the novel that Mara has another flashback to the time in the Tamerlane. She remembers the group seeing the pulley system that controlled the patient room doors. She considers the fear that a boy who was killed in the Tamerlane must have felt when he heard the doors close behind him, trapping him in one of the rooms where he died. Jude pulls Mara away from Claire and Rachel. Notice that while Mara and Jude are in the room together, Jude says to her that "you need to take your

mind off this place" the same words that the Jude in her hallucination in the bathroom says to her.



Chapters 33 - 36

Chapters 33 - 36 Summary

In Chapter 33, when Noah takes Mara home, he tells her that he plans to pick her up for school the following morning. She feels that something has shifted between the two of them. Once inside, Mara has Daniel tell her exactly how he came to meet Noah and tell him about her problems. The next morning, Mara decides to take her Zyprexa because she wants to be normal for both herself and her family. She runs into her father as she goes out to meet Noah. He tells her that his trial is scheduled to start in two weeks. He's planning on moving to a motel to prepare for the trial and tells Mara that they will talk before he leaves. When Mara and Noah walk into the school the following morning, Noah threatens a guy who makes a lude comment to them. When the boy will not stop his comments, Noah punches him. Noah is sent to the principal's office but before he goes, he tells Mara that the crime was worth the punishment.

In Chapter 34, Jamie comments about Mara's relationship with Noah. She also overhears Anna and Aiden talking about how long Mara's relationship with Noah will last. On her way out of class, one girl elbows Mara and then another knocks her books from her arms. Jamie credits the attacks to Mara "unraveling the very fabric of Croyden society." When she is alone with Noah again, Mara asks if he had sex with Anna. He admits that Anna attached herself to him but that he had soon been free of her. He tries to get Mara to kiss him but she will not.

In Chapter 35, Noah kisses her on the cheek, then escorts her to art class to watch her draw. After the class is finished, Noah asks for the drawing that she has made of him. She agrees, then also agrees to eat in the school cafeteria with him. They sit with Daniel and Sophie. Mara wants the feelings of happiness she gets during lunch to last.

In Chapter 36, Mara feels good entering the room for her Spanish exam. She'd done well on her other tests and hadn't been seeing things since she'd been taking Zyprexa. For her oral exam, Mrs. Morales asks Mara a question not included on the study guide. Mara knows the answer from a previous class and believes she's aced the answer but her teacher demands that she leave the class.

Chapters 33 - 36 Analysis

It is in these chapters after Mara begins taking her Zyprexa that she reaches a high point. For a short while she is happier than she ever remembers having been. The high point in the novel is when Noah and Mara eat lunch together in the cafeteria with Daniel, Sophie and their friends. Mara's hope that her happiness will not end indicates that this feeling will end, soon.

Part of Mara's happiness comes from her new opinion of Noah. Since she spent the day with him, she now feels like she knows a part of him that others have not ever seen.



She realizes that he is caring and that he has had his own share of tragedy. Although she had first been angry that Daniel had spoken to Noah about her problems, once she realizes the reasons why Daniel told Noah about her, she is no longer as angry.

School continues to be an issue for Mara, especially after it becomes well known that Noah and Mara are dating. The girls are being even meaner than ever to Mara because she has, as Jamie says been "unraveling the very fabric of Croyden society." The girls have never seen Noah act as he is now with Mara. They cannot figure what they had been doing wrong and take out their frustrations on Mara.

The fabric of Mara's life begins to break down when she goes to take her oral Spanish exam. Mrs. Morales had always been mean to Mara and she acts no differently at this exam. She intentionally asks Mara a question that she was not given prior to the class. However, Mara had already known the answer to this question from a prior class. With Jamie's tutoring help, Mara is able to answer the question. As she answers the question, the teacher gets angrier and angrier with Mara, finally ordering her out of the room. Mara admits that she is unable to stop herself, even when Mrs. Morales suggests to her that she sit down. It could be questioned that Mara's antipsychotic medicine might be too strong and she might be experiencing some sort of manic state. However, it should also be noted that Mara seems to be a highly spontaneous and outspoken person anyway so this inability to stop herself from talking, even when Mrs. Morales strongly suggested that she do so, might just be an aspect of her natural personality.



Chapters 37 - 40

Chapters 37 - 40 Summary

In Chapter 37, Mara believes her actions in Mrs. Morales' class were brilliant until Jamie explains to her the folly of her actions. It turns out, however, that Jamie has recorded her answers in the class, as well as Mrs. Morales' responses.

Later, at home, Mara answers the phone and a voice informs her that she needs to tell her husband to drop the case or they'd be sorry. When she looks at the call history on the phone, she sees no record of a recent call and wonders if the call even took place. Out of curiosity, she calls her father to see what would happen if he were to drop the case at this point. Considering her options and the circumstances, Mara decides not to say anything to her parents about the phone call although she later believes that she should have.

In Chapter 38, in lunch the following day, Jamie expresses his concern to Mara that she is being played by Noah. When Mara finally asks what happens between Noah and Jamie, Jamie tells her Noah had a fling with his sister. Jamie admits he had dated Noah's sister, Katie, and that Noah had caught him with his hand up Katie's skirt. He contends Noah slept with his sister to make a point. Shortly after this, Jamie hears Anna make a snide comment about Mara and Noah. He responds to Anna's comment, standing up for Mara.

Noah meets Mara after her Biology exam and tells her that Jamie needs to talk to her. They find him at his locker, cleaning it out. He explains that he's been expelled because Aiden said that Jamie threatened him with a knife and Anna backed him up. A knife had even been planted in Jamie's backpack. The expulsion will be a mark on Jamie's record that will hurt his chances of getting into a good college. Mara is angry because of what has been done to her friend because he stood up to her. When Aiden turns on Mara, however, Noah takes up for her. Jamie pulls Mara away from the fight at the request of Noah. In the parking lot, he kisses Mara goodbye, then is gone.

In Chapter 39, Noah meets Mara in the parking lot and takes her home. Before she gets out of the car, she asks Noah why he slept with Jamie's sister. Noah seems upset when Mara indicates that she believes what Jamie told her. As they get closer to one another, Mara's brothers break up the moment by knocking on the car window with the news that their mother is five minutes behind them. After Noah leaves, Daniel takes Mara to the doctor to have the burn on her arm examined. The doctor unbandages her arm and comments that the ER doctor must have made a mistake in classifying Mara's burn as a second-degree burn. Her arm is completely healed.

In Chapter 40, Daniel interrupts Mara's drawing by telling her that grades are posted. She has gotten an "F" in Spanish. She remembers that Jamie had recorded the exam but gets angry and smashes her phone when she can't get in touch with Jamie.



Chapters 37 - 40 Analysis

Mara's happiness from earlier chapters continues to disintegrate in these chapters as her best friend is expelled because he chooses to stand up for Mara and her relationship with Noah. Mara knows that Jamie was set up by Anna and Aiden. His expulsion was in direct retaliation for Mara's relationship with Noah. Mara's anger, combined with her spontaneous personality, causes her to lash out at Aiden who threatens her. It is at this point that Noah takes care of Aiden. Noah does not want Mara to see the fight so he has Jamie take her away. Noah returns with scratches to his face and a bruised eye. Aiden, on the other hand, has an ambulance called. Noah believes that the ambulance was called for drama, not because Aiden was really hurt that badly.

In this section of the novel, the line between what is real and what isn't real becomes more and more blurred for Mara. She has not been having any more hallucinations since she has been taking her Zyprexa, but she does have a disturbing experience that she cannot determine whether it was real or not. She gets a phone call at home threatening her father to drop the murder case. When she looks back at the call history, there is no evidence that a call ever came through. She wonders if she should tell her parents about the call. Since she has no proof of the call, she does not think that they will believe her. She chooses not to tell her parents about the call and the threat. This is one of the choices that Mara makes that she later indicates that she wishes that she had not made.



Chapters 41- 44

Chapters 41- 44 Summary

In Chapter 41, the following day begins strangely for Mara as she wakes up starving at four in the morning. Three and a half hours later Mara's brothers find her still sitting at the table. She has a crashing headache and no memory of the last hours. At school, Mara goes to see Dr. Kahn. He tells Mara that there is nothing he can do about the grade. He tells her that Mrs. Morales has reported that Mara cheated on the exam. Mara leaves Dr. Kahn's office infuriated. She wishes to herself that Morales would choke on her own tongue. She even sees the image in her mind. When Mara reaches her Spanish classroom, there is no one there but Jude. When Mara blinks, the body turns into Mabel's owner. She blinks again and sees Morales on the floor. Mara blinks expecting her to go away as well. She does not.

In Chapter 42, students, teachers and EMT workers enter the room as Mara stands there. She backs out of the room and moves away from the crowd. She tries to remember if she had taken her pill for the day. She begins laughing and falls to the ground under a tree. Detective Gadsen pulls Mara to a sitting position. The detective asks Mara about the dog, then begins questioning her about any allergies that Mrs. Morales might have had. Meanwhile Noah has walked up and Mara moves away from both him and the officer.

In Chapter 43, Mara's parents are arguing about Marcus withdrawing from his trial when Mara and Daniel get home. As they continue to argue, Mara realizes her mother is asking him to withdraw from the trial because of her. In the end, her father agrees. Daniel announces their presence by slamming the door, then telling them that he and Mara are throwing a surprise party for Sophie that night. He suggests they go out. Mara goes to her room and goes to sleep. She is awakened by the sound of someone pounding on her window. It is Noah.

In Chapter 44, Noah tells Mara that they have to find Joseph and don't have much time to do so. Noah drives to Everglades City where he stops the car. Noah tells Mara that if her doesn't survive, to do whatever she has to in order to wake Joseph. They walk through the swamp until they reach a creek.

Chapters 41- 44 Analysis

The reality of Mara's life becomes more and more unclear in this section of chapters. After the unusual phone call, learning that she failed Spanish and realizing that she has no way to get in touch with Jamie, Mara has a bad night. She wakes early and fixes herself toast. She has no idea what has happened over the course of the next three and a half hours but her brothers wake her in the kitchen where she is still chewing the toast. As she is already stressed and is suffering with lack of sleep, she is ill prepared to



talk to the principal of her school the following day. She does talk to him and learns that Mrs. Morales has accused her of cheating. From the way that Dr. Kahn treats Mara it is clear that he is already convinced that she did cheat.

In her anger, Mara imagines Mrs. Morales dead. She heads for her Spanish classroom. It is uncertain why she was going to Mrs. Morales' room but when she arrives, she first believes that she is seeing Jude. When she blinks, Jude turns into Mabel's owner. She blinks again and the body becomes that of Mrs. Morales, who is laying on the floor, choking on her tongue. She has hallucinated images of the people whom she believes she has killed, along with her most recent victim. In her stress, lack of sleep and shock, Mara begins to laugh. Unfortunately, the same detective who was called to investigate the death of Mabel's owner is also called to the school. The detective recognizes Mara and seems to be suspicious of her.

Things get worse when Mara arrives home to find that her parents are arguing about her father's case. Her mother wants her father to drop the case because of the stress that it is causing Mara. Her father agrees to contact his client and see what can be done. Almost as a replay of the night that Jude, Claire and Rachel die, Mara is woken by someone beating on her window. This time it is Noah. He tells her that Joseph has been kidnapped and that they must find him.



Chapters 45 - 48

Chapters 45 - 48 Summary

In Chapter 45, Noah crosses the creek safely, but when Mara tries to cross, she is surrounded by alligators. Noah gets back into the creek to try to distract the alligators but Mara kills them all. Noah pulls her up the creek bank and they run until they reach a small concrete shed. Noah helps Mara into the shed through a small, high window. She falls and dislocates her shoulder, but finds Joseph. Mara unlocks the shed from the inside and Noah gets Joseph. They run just as a car pulls up to the shed.

In Chapter 46, they reach the car and head to I-75. When Noah realizes that Mara's shoulder is dislocated, he tells her that she needs to go to a hospital. When she shares her fear of the hospital, he tells her that he can put it back for her. She passes out from the pain and doesn't wake up when they are almost home. Joseph is already awake. Noah has told Joseph that he fell into a ditch by the soccer field, and that he and Mara had found him there. Joseph agrees not to tell his mother about the evening. Mara and Joseph sneak into the house. Mara showers, but cannot sleep. She watches television where she learns that a large number of fish had been reported dead in Everglades City. The dead fish are believed to have been caused by alligator corpses in the water.

In Chapter 47, Mara again goes back in time to the incident in the Tamerlane. She wakes in a bed at the asylum with Jude behind her. She tries to get away from him but he insists on making out with her. When she suggests that he is bad at making out, he becomes angry. He forces her against the wall. She says no, but he continues to fumble at her clothes. She smacks him and he surprises her by slapping her back. She hears Claire calling because Rachel has sent Claire to look for them. When she leaves, Jude pushes her back against the wall and unzips her pants. Mara believes that Jude deserves to die. At this time, three things happen. All the iron doors on the pulley system slam shut, Rachel calls out Mara's name and everything goes black.

In Chapter 48, Mara's family wakes her up singing happy birthday. Joseph doesn't look tired or upset and Mara's shoulder doesn't hurt so she wonders if the activities of the prior evening even happened. When Noah comes to pick her up, Mara notices that his face has almost completely healed. She asks him to help her remember the night of Rachel's accident. He tries to get an appointment with a hypnotist. Instead, they see a flier for a seminar on unlocking the secrets of the mind.

Chapters 45 - 48 Analysis

In this section of the novel, Mara begins to understand that something very unusual is going on with her. She knows that what is wrong with her is somehow connected to the night in the Tamerlane. After her evening with Noah searching for Joseph, Mara has another dream about the Tamerlane. In this dream, Jude is trying to rape her. She



remembers all of the doors slamming shut and hearing Rachel scream, but then the dream ends. Mara asks Noah to help her find some way to remember what happened the night of her friend's death.

Mara's reality continues to be confusing in this section as Noah wakes her up at night to rescue Joseph. When she falls into the shed, she falls and dislocates her shoulder. Noah puts the joint back into place for her. The following morning, Mara wonders if anything that she remembers from the prior night really happened because it all seems so unreasonable. Mara realizes that her shoulder doesn't hurt. She believes that if she had really dislocated her shoulder, it would still be sore. However, there are news reports of fish dying at Everglades City, the place where she killed the alligators as they were crossing the creek. The news reporters say that it is believed that the fish are dying because of a large number of alligator corpses found in the creek.



Chapters 49 - 52

Chapters 49 - 52 Summary

In Chapter 49, Noah and Mara attend the seminar they saw advertised. When the speaker, Mr. Lukumi, makes eye contact with Mara his eyes widen in surprise. At the end of the seminar, Noah goes to speak to Mr. Lukumi while Mara explores the store. She accidentally knocks a candle off the shelf, breaking it. Mr. Lukumi orders her to get out. Noah offers him \$5,000 to help them. They hear him kill a chicken in the back room. Then he brings Mara a concoction to drink that he says will help her to remember what happened. Mara struggles to drink the thin red liquid. She blacks out as soon as she finishes it.

In Chapter 50, Mara wakes in Noah's room. They lay together on the bed together. Noah kisses her. She returns the kiss. When she pulls away to look in his eyes, they are closed. His lips are blue. It is at that moment that Mara realizes that she killed Jude, Rachel and Claire when she caused the building to collapse. She knows that she is the reason that Morales and Mabel's owner died. Now Noah appears dead. She wrestles him, finally slapping him to bring him back to his senses. Noah believes he's just had a dream. She now believes that she is not crazy, but instead lethal.

In Chapter 51, when Noah drives Mara home she goes immediately to her room, closes the blinds and goes to bed. She worries she will hurt someone even closer to her next. She hears her parents discussing her. Her father mentions that Mara doesn't even look like herself any more. Noah comes and reads a convoluted version of *The Velveteen Rabbit* to her. When he asks her what happened at the Tamerlane, Mara tells him. When she finishes, Mara admits to Noah that he had heard her voice before he had met her. He tells her that he had also heard two other people before in his mind. He had seen and heard the death of a girl in a car wreck. Another person he heard was sick. He had believed that if he got to know Mara, he might be able to understand what was happening to him. Noah also explains to her how he knew about Joseph. He sees a document through the eyes of a man wearing a Rolex watch, he also sees this man lock Joseph in the shed. He tells Mara that he cannot fix her, though, because she is not broken. Noah offers to get her something to eat and she agrees. Before he leaves the room, she asks what she was saying when Noah heard her the first time. He tells her that her words were "get them out."

In Chapter 52, Mara tells Noah that she believes they need to go back to Mr. Lukumi's shop. Although he tries to discourage her, Mara insists.

Chapters 49 - 52 Analysis

Things begin to turn strange at this point in the novel. Noah and Mara visit a Santeria high priest with hopes that he can help her remember what happened to Mara and her



friends that night at the Tamerlane. When the priest first sees Mara, Mara indicates that he recognizes something about her and reacts to her with fear. He seems very urgent to the point that he is rude to her in his requests for her to leave. He claims that he has nothing that can help her but when Noah produces \$5,000, he is able to prepare a concoction that he says will help Mara to remember.

Mara's memory comes suddenly as she kisses Noah for the first time. She believes that it was because of her that her friends were killed. Because she was angry with Jude for trying to rape her, she made the building collapse, killing the innocent Claire and Rachel as well as Jude. To make matters worse, when Mara finishes kissing Noah, he has stopped breathing and his lips are turning blue. She believes that she has killed him as well but is able to revive him. She tells him what she has remembered about the night in the Tamerlane when he asks. After she finishes, he confesses to her that he has a special ability as well. He heard her voice the night that the Tamerlane collapsed, asking someone to "get them out." It is now clear that Mara was referring to Claire and Rachel. Even though she was angry with Jude, she did not want to harm the two girls. Noah was able to hear her voice, even from that far away, but was not able to do anything because he didn't know who she was at the time or where she was. He has had other experiences where he has heard the voices of those hurt or dying but has been unable to help because he didn't know where they were. Although Mara doesn't understand Noah's guilt about not being able to help those who seem to reach out to him needing his help, Noah seems to feel as badly about not being able to do anything as Mara feels about the pain that she has caused.

Noah also explains to Mara both his unusual actions in the restaurant the first day they went out together as well as how he knew that Joseph had been kidnapped. He tells her that at the restaurant he'd had a vision of someone wearing a Rolex watch looking at the deed to the property on which the concrete shed stood. He also had a vision of the man locking Joseph into this shed.



Chapters 53 - 56

Chapters 53 - 56 Summary

In Chapter 53, Noah tries to take Mara back to the to Mr. Lukumi's shop, but when they get to the place that they had believed that the store was, the store with that address is gone. Noah tells Mara that he believes that they are on their own.

In Chapter 54, Noah takes Mara to the zoo in an attempt to test her abilities and to see if he can counteract Mara's them. Unfortunately, Mara kills all of the creatures in the work room.

In Chapter 55, Mara begs Noah to take her home. Instead, he takes her to his house. She believes that Noah has finally realizes what is wrong with her. Once inside his room, Noah apologizes to her. He continues to tell Mara that he believes that he can fix her. Mara tries to convince Noah that it would be best if they did not see each other again but he convinces her otherwise. She indicates at the conclusion of the chapter that she made the wrong choice.

In Chapter 56, Noah wants kiss Mara but she will not let him for fear that she will kill him. Instead, she tries to have sex with him but he will not let her.

Chapters 53 - 56 Analysis

In this section of chapters, the tone of the novel turns from being tense and suspenseful to being frightening. Mara wants to go back to Mr. Lukumi because she believes that he has some insight into what is happening with her but when they go back to where the store was, the area with that address doesn't even appear to exist anymore. Noah attempts an experiment with Mara believing that he can reverse her abilities. As he continues to prompt her, she kills all of the insects in a work room at the local zoo. The experiment leaves her feeling out of control with no hope for salvation. Now that she feels she knows that she caused Rachel's death, she is afraid what she might do to her family without even intending to hurt them.

Again at the end of Chapter 55, Mara believes that she made a wrong choice when it came to continuing to see Noah. In hindsight, she believes that if she had turned away from him at that point, he would have stayed safe. Instead, she gives into his pleading and agrees that she does care for him.



Chapters 57 - 59

Chapters 57 - 59 Summary

In Chapter 57, Mara doesn't go to school the following day. Noah surprises her by beating on the door and telling her that he needs to show her something. He tells her that they have to make it to the courthouse before Mara's father's trial is finished. He shows her a copy of The Miami Herald with a picture of the crime scene showing the shed where Noah and Mara had found Joseph. Noah doesn't understand why Lassiter would kidnap his own lawyer's child. Mara explains that the day her father had called Lassiter to tell him that he was off the case. Noah hopes to get to the courthouse and have the trial delayed. When they get there, however, the jury is already out. Mara realizes that she cannot let Lassiter go free. Noah tries to tell Mara that while Jude and Mabel's owner had deserved to die, that she didn't want to hurt Lassiter. He tries to convince her that there are other ways to solve the problem. Mara knows that these other ways wouldn't work.

In Chapter 58, Mara tells Noah that she believes that killing Lassiter is what she is supposed to do. Mara believes that she can punish Lassiter without hurting anyone else around. However, not only is Lassiter struck by the bullets, so is her father.

In Chapter 59, at the hospital, Mara realizes that it is her fault that her father was injured. That he was injured because of Mara. She realizes now that she chose wrong when she didn't let Noah help her. She heads to the Metro Dade Police Department where she intends to tell Detective Gadsen that she crushed the skull of Mabel's owner and also stole Mrs. Morales' EpiPen. At the police department, however, Mara sees Jude. She realizes that he is not a hallucination. At this point, Mara knows that her worst problem is that Jude is alive.

Chapters 57 - 59 Analysis

The novel ends with a twist that may change the circumstances of the book up to this point. Mara finally realizes that Jude is really alive. She sees him at the police department where he is wearing a Rolex watch similar to the one that Leon Lassiter wore. Although Mara had been certain that Leon Lassiter was the one who had Joseph kidnapped, it now appears that the kidnapper could have been Jude, acting in retaliation against Mara for trying to kill him and for successfully killing his sister.

This leads the reader to wonder if Jude might have been responsible for some of the things that Mara credited to her "craziness." Although there is not doubt that Mara was having some hallucinations, Jude might have helped to exacerbate her stress. For instance, there are several times that she sees him on the school campus and around town. She believes that she is having another hallucination every time. Perhaps instead, Mara was actually seeing Jude. The fact that Jude is alive also accounts for some of the



things that happened to Mara the night that she was alone in her house. Again, while the French doors and the family photos switching sides of the hall with one another is clearly a hallucination, Mara came home to find the door unlocked. As she entered, she had the feeling that someone was in the house but is not able to find anyone. In her room, a box of pictures has been taken down out of her closet, something that Mara doesn't remember doing. She also returns to the bathroom where she has drawn a tub of water to find that the water has been turned off, something else that Mara does not remember doing. It is also possible that she did drop her earrings in the tub and that Jude took advantage of the situation to grab her arm and scare her to the point that she passed out. He could have then put her earrings back in her ears, making her feel that she had hallucinated the entire event.

The ending of the book raises more questions than it answers. It appears that the author is setting the stage for a sequel since so many story lines are left unfinished and in limbo.



Characters

Mara Dyer

Mara Dyer is the main character and narrator of the novel. She is the sixteen-year-old daughter of Marcus and Indi Dyer. She has two brothers, Daniel and Joseph. Mara also has a form of telekinesis that allows her to kill people and animals with the power of her mind. Mara slowly discovers her power throughout the course of the novel as she investigates the cause of her friends' deaths when a building in which they were exploring collapsed. Mara is the only one who survives the accident.

Although she realizes what her family will be giving up, Mara believes that moving away from their hometown will help to ease the emotional difficulty that she is having with the loss of her friend and her inability to remember the details of the accident. Once they move to Florida, however, Mara's symptoms worsen. At one point she is prescribed anti-psychotic medications to help with the hallucinations that she is having. She believes that the medication works at first, but when her Spanish teacher dies, just as she had imagined, Mara begins to wonder if she may be at the root of the strange deaths around her.

Mara is helped by her boyfriend, Noah Shaw, to remember what actually happened the night of the collapse at the Tamerlane. Mara is even more upset when she realizes that the death of her best friend was her fault because she made the building collapse as a result of her anger when Jude tried to rape her. Noah tries to help Mara learn to harness her ability and control her anger, but Mara chooses to get revenge her own way.

It is when Mara causes her father to be injured and an innocent woman to be arrested when she tries to take revenge against a man whom she believed kidnapped her brother that she realizes that she is a menace to her family. However, when Mara goes to the police station to turn herself in for the deaths of both Mabel's owner and Mrs. Morales she realizes that Jude is still alive.

Noah Shaw

Noah Shaw is Mara's boyfriend in Florida. The two have a very unusual connection as Noah tells Mara that he heard her voice before he ever met her. It turns out that he heard her the night of the collapse of the Tamerlane, begging someone to get Rachel and Claire out of the building before they were hurt. Because Noah has such a close connection with Mara, he believes that he can help her learn how to harness her anger and control her killing ability.

Although Mara knows him differently, Noah is known at school as a playboy. It seems the other students have the opinion that Noah will date a girl only until he gets sex from them and then he will drop them. Although he tries to act differently with Mara and show the other students that their relationship is different, his old reputation still affects Mara.



Even though Mara tries to push Noah away, even to the very end of the novel, he continues to try to get through to her as he tries to get her to allow him to help her with her struggles.

Jude Lowe

Jude Lowe is Claire's brother. Mara has a crush on him at the beginning of the novel. When Mara remembers what happened at the Tamerlane, she realizes that she caused the building to collapse because Jude tried to rape her. Jude's body is never recovered from the ruins of the building because it was too dangerous for the workers. After her family moves to Florida, Mara sees Jude on several occasions. She believes that all of these sightings are hallucinations. At the end of the novel, however, she realizes that Jude is still alive. This realization that Jude is still alive puts a new twist on many of the occurrences during the novel. Mara wonders if Jude might have been responsible for the things that happened to her the night that she was burned by the water in the tub. Since Jude is also wearing a silver Rolex when Mara sees him at the police station, it makes the reader wonder if it might have been Jude who was responsible for Joseph's kidnapping and perhaps even the death of Jordanna Palmer.

Daniel Dyer

Daniel Dyer is Mara's older and smarter older brother. Daniel tries his best to take care of his younger sister. He covers for her when she makes mistakes and tries to keep her parents from realizing exactly how much trouble Mara is having. Although Mara appreciates her brother's help, he may be hurting her by not allowing her parents to know exactly how troubled Mara is. On the other hand, Daniel also works with their parents to keep some things from Mara that they believe might upset her. For instance, Daniel keeps the fact that their father agreed to take the case in Florida before they even decided to move there a secret from Mara. Daniel also befriends Noah and gives him some background on Mara's problems. This upsets Mara at first, but Daniel explains that he talked to Noah because he really likes him and wants things to work out between Noah and Mara.

Marcus Dyer

Marcus Dyer is Mara's father. He is absent from Mara's life because he is busy trying a murder case in which a teenaged girl was killed. Marcus is representing the man who is accused of killing the teen. He truly believes that the man is innocent. Because of Marcus' trial, Mara gets a threatening phone calling warning her husband to drop out of the trial. At one point Indi asks Marcus to drop out of the trial because Mara's condition is getting so much worse. Noah believes that Joseph, Mara's little brother, is kidnapped because of Marcus' involvement in the trial. At the conclusion of the novel, Marcus is hit by a bullet from Cheryl Palmer's gun when she shoots Leon Lassiter, whom she



believed was guilty of killing her daughter. Noah's presence helps Marcus survive his gunshot wound.

Claire Lowe

Claire Lowe is a girl who has just moved to Laurelton, Rhode Island six months prior to the beginning of this novel. Claire latches onto Mara's best friend Rachel, which makes Mara angry. Claire also enjoys tormenting Mara because she has a crush on Claire's brother, Jude. It is Claire who suggests to Rachel that she ask the Ojua board how she will die. Mara believes that Claire pushes the planchette to make it spell out her name. Claire is a member of the group of teens that is killed when the Tamerlane collapses. Even after Mara and her family move to Miami, she continues to have hallucinations of Claire.

Anna Greenly aka Vending Machine Girl

Anna Greenly is the girl who tries to make Mara's life miserable while she is at Croyden. Anna quickly picks up on the fact that Noah wants to date Mara. One of the worst things that Anna does to Mara is stealing her sketchbook and announcing to the student body that Mara has drawn sketches of Noah. It is at this point, however, that Noah announces that he and Mara are a couple so the plan to embarrass Mara backfires on Anna. Anna also backs up Aiden's claim that Jamie pulled a knife on him, getting Jamie expelled from Croyden. Mara first knows Anna as "vending machine girl" because it is by the vending machines that she first meets and is threatened by Anna.

Aiden Davis

Aiden Davis was formerly Anna Greenly's boyfriend. Since he had admitted that he is gay, they are best friends. Aiden helps Anna in making Mara's life at Croyden miserable. Before Mara had moved to Florida, Jamie had gotten in trouble for threatening Aiden with Ebola. Later, when Jamie stands up for Mara, Aiden claims that Jamie threatened him with a knife. This lie gets Jamie expelled from Croyden. Mara gets angry with Aiden for lying about Jamie and threatens Aiden. Aiden in turn, threatens Mara. Noah hears the threat and beats Aiden to the point that the boy requests an ambulance to take him to the hospital.

Detective Vince Gadsen

Detective Gadsen is one of the officers who responds to the death of Mabel's owner. He is the one who sees Mara and suggests that she get checked out by the EMT's. He questions Mara about the man's death and she admits that she was the one who called the abuse of the dog to the attention of animal control. Detective Gadsen is also the detective who comes to investigate Morales' death. When Mara attempts to turn herself



in to the authorities at the Thirteenth Precinct of the Metro Dade Police, it is for Detective Gadsen that she asks.

Owner of the Abused Dog

The owner of the abused dog is another person whom Mara believes that she has killed. Mara meets the man when she hears his badly abused dog whining as she takes a walk one day before school. She is trying to find a way to free the dog when its owner accosts her for messing with the dog. He is hateful. As Mara walks away, she hears the dog yelp in pain as her jerks her collar. Anger fills Mara and she pictures the man dead with his head bashed in. When she goes back to the man's house later in the day, she discovers that he has died just as she imagined that he would.

Leon Lassiter

Leon Lassiter is the man accused of killing Jordana Palmer. Mara's father is representing the man in the murder trial. Mara's father does not believe that Lassiter committed the murder. Noah, however, has a vision where he sees a man wearing the same watch as Lassiter looking at the deed to the land where the small concrete shed in which Joseph was held hostage is located. Noah believes that Lassiter may also have been involved in Joseph's kidnapping. Lassiter is found not guilty of Jordana's death but is killed by a gunshot from Cheryl Palmer during a press conference just after the trial.

Indi Dyer

Indi Dyer is Mara's mother. She is of Indian descent. Mara's mother is also a psychiatrist, which makes her very concerned about what is happening with Mara in the aftermath of the accident and death of Rachel. Although Mara believes that her mother is being overly protective of her, Indi is actually very concerned about what is going on with her daughter. Despite her training in psychology Indi does not fully understand or know what is happening with Mara. Indi believes that medication and therapy will help her daughter. After Mara burns herself, Indi requires that she attend therapy sessions.

Abel Lukumi

Abel Lukumi is the Santeria high priest to whom Mara goes for help in remembering the night in the asylum with Jude, Claire and Rachel. When he first looks at Mara, she believes that she sees recognition in his eyes. He seems distracted and agitated, and asks Mara to leave but Noah gives him enough money that he agrees to help her. He concocts a drink for Mara which includes chicken blood that causes her to remember that she was the cause of Jude, Rachel and Claire's deaths.



Jamie Roth

Jamie Roth is Mara's first and only friend at Croyden. Jamie stands out at the school because of his dreadlocks and unconventional way of dressing. Jamie shows Mara the ropes at Croyden and even tutors her in both Algebra and Spanish. He also warns her of Noah's reputation as a playboy and his sister's experience with Noah. Even though Mara does not heed Jamie's warning, Jamie remains her friend and stands up for her when others make fun of her for being Noah's girlfriend.

Mrs. Morales

Mrs. Morales is Mara's Spanish teacher. From the first day, Mrs. Morales pronounces Mara's name wrong and is cruel to her. At her Spanish final, Mrs. Morales gives Mara a question that she believes that Mara will not be able to answer. Mara, however, is able to answer the question. Instead of giving Mara a passing grade, Mrs. Morales fails Mara and tells the principal of the school that she caught Mara cheating. Mrs. Morales dies as she chokes on her own tongue just as Mara imagines her doing.

Rachel Watson

Rachel Watson has been Mara's best friend since preschool. She is described as being the opposite of Mara. When she is with Rachel, Mara feels courageous. Rachel seems to be affected by her new friend, Claire, in investigating her interest in the paranormal. It seems it is Claire who encourages the visit to the Tamerlane even though Mara knew that Rachel had always wanted to visit the old psychiatric hospital.

Rebecca Maillard

Rebecca Maillard is the therapist that Mara sees at her mother's request. Mara suspects that her mother has already told Dr. Maillard about her problems. Mara confides to Dr. Maillard that she has hallucinations, and that she thinks that something is happening to her. It is Dr. Maillard who prescribes Mara the Zyprexa. It appears in the novel that Mara has only one meeting with Dr. Maillard.

Cheryl Palmer

Cheryl Palmer is the mother of Jordana Palmer, the Florida girl who is murdered. Mara's father is the lawyer representing Leon Lassiter, the man accused of killing Jordana. After the trial and the man has been declared not guilty, Cheryl Palmer shoots and kills Lassiter. A bullet from her gun also injures Mara's father.



Mabel

Mabel is the name that Noah gives to the dog that Mara rescues from its abusive owner. Although Noah's veterinarian mother had not believed that the dog would survive, Noah's special ability helps the dog to heal. When Noah takes Mara to visit Mabel at his house, they are both shocked because Mabel appears to be deathly afraid of Mara.

Stephanie Roth

Stephanie is Jamie's older sister. Jamie believes that Noah slept with his sister and then humiliated her in order to make a point about Jamie dating Noah's sister. After her incident with Noah, Stephanie requests to be transferred to a different school and is allowed to do so.

Katie Shaw

Katie Shaw is Noah's little sister. Mara first sees her at the costume party and believes that she is Noah's girlfriend. Jamie dated Katie for a short while and believes that Noah humiliated his own sister because he caught Jamie with his hand up Katie's dress.

Mr. Walsh

Mr. Walsh is Mara's Algebra teacher at Croyden. It is into Mr. Walsh's class that Mara's makes her grand entrance falling and busting her nose when she hallucinated that the classroom was falling apart.

Joseph Dyer

Joseph Dyer is Mara's youngest brother. He is kidnapped during the course of the novel. Mara and Noah go to find him. Noah believes that Joseph was kidnapped by the man whom Mara's father was representing in a murder trial.

Jordana Palmer

Jordana Palmer is the teenaged girl who is murdered in Florida just before Mara and her family move to that state. Mara's father has taken over as the defense lawyer for the man accused of killing Jordana.



Nathan Gold

Nathan Gold is the lawyer who was representing Leon Lassiter before Mara's father took over his case. Mara learns that Nathan had withdrawn from the case and allowed her father to have it before they even moved to Florida.

Albert

Albert is the valet for the Shaw family. When Mara asks Noah what he thinks about hypnosis to help recall suppressed memories, he has Albert try to make them an appointment with a hypnotist.

Alain

Alain is the boy who tries to make a pass at Mara in the Cuban restaurant to which Noah takes her. Noah says something in French to Alain which successfully makes him leave after several attempts on Mara's part to get him to leave her alone.

Dr. Kahn

Dr. Kahn is the principal at Croyden. It is to Dr. Kahn's office that Mara goes to try to dispute her Spanish grade but Dr. Kahn appears to have already made up his mind that he believes the teacher, who has told him that Mara was cheating.

Carmella

Carmella is one of the nurses who takes care of Mara while she is in the hospital after the accident. At one point during her recovery, Mara hits Carmella, leaving a welt across the nurse's cheek.

Ruby

Ruby is a pug dog belonging to Noah's family. The dog tries to charge Mara on her first visit to the family's home.

Animal Control Officer Diaz

Animal Control Officer Diaz is the woman to whom Mara speaks when she calls to report the abused dog.



Roxanne

Roxanne is the name that Mara gives to the spider with which she is playing on the day that she and Daniel are to go to Croyden for their first day of classes.

Sophie

Sophie is a violinist at Croyden. She is Daniel's girlfriend.



Objects/Places

Laurelton, Rhode Island

Laurelton, Rhode Island is the town where Mara Dyer and her family live when The Tamerlane State Lunatic Asylum collapses and kills three of Mara's friends.

Ouija Board

Mara, Claire and Rachel are playing with an Ouija board during Rachel's birthday party when the board indicates that it will be Mara who will kill Rachel.

Rhode Island Hospital Providence

Mara is in the Rhode Island Hospital Providence when she wakes up after being in a coma following the accident at the Tamerlane.

The Tamerlane State Lunatic Asylum

The Tamerlane State Lunatic Asylum is the condemned building that Mara and her friends are exploring when it collapses, killing everyone except Mara.

Laurelton Memorial Cemetery

Rachel is buried at the Laurelton Memorial Cemetery.

Miami, Florida

Miami, Florida is where the Dyer family moves in an attempt to help Mara overcome her emotional disturbances associated with the accident that killed her friends.

Croyden Academy of the Arts and Sciences

Croyden Academy of the Arts and Sciences is the private school in which Mara and her brother, Daniel, are enrolled in Florida.



Lolita

Lolita is the book that Noah catches Mara reading during their English class. He tries to strike up a conversation with Mara about the book. Lolita is also the name of a killer whale at the Miami Seaquarium.

Piece of Looseleaf Paper with

Someone at Mara's school, Anna presumably, sticks this piece of paper on Mara's back after one of her classes. Mara doesn't notice it until she sits down in her next class. She wads up the piece of paper and throws it at Anna, angering her.

Emerald Green Silk Dress

Mara's mother allows her to wear her grandmother's emerald green silk dress to a costume party.

Emerald Earrings

Mara believes that she is reaching into the tub to retrieve her mother's emerald earrings when something grabs her and holds her arm under the water, causing second degree burns.

Zoloft

Zoloft is the medicine that Mara at first believes that she has been prescribed by her psychiatrist.

Zyprexa

Zyprexa is the anti-psychotic medication prescribed to her by her psychiatrist. At first, Mara is afraid to take the medication. When she does start taking the medication, it seems to help at first until Mara realizes what is really wrong with her.

Mara's Sketchbook

Anna steals Mara's sketchbook from her bag and confronts her with the sketches of Noah in front of the rest of the student body. Noah covers for Mara by telling the students that he asked Mara to draw the pictures.



Mireya's

Mireya's is the Cuban restaurant where Noah takes Mara to eat during their date.

A Knife

Jamie is expelled from Croyden because Aiden says that he threatened him with a knife. Anna backs Aiden up on his lie.

Everglades City

Everglades City is the place to which Noah takes Mara to find Joseph after he is kidnaped.

1821 Calle Ocho

1821 Calle Ocho is the address of Mr. Lukumi's store. When Noah and Mara try to visit it a second time, however, there is nothing at that address.

Mr. Lukumi's Concoction

It is a concoction of chicken blood and other ingredients that Mr. Lukumi makes Mara drink so that she will remember what happened the night of the accident at the Tamerlane.

The Velveteen Rabbit

When Noah visits Mara in her room after she remembers what happened at The Tamerlane, he tells her a convoluted version of The Velveteen Rabbit to try to cheer her up.

Leeches

It is the leeches that Noah intends for Mara to kill at the zoo. Instead she kills all of the animals in the shed.

The Zoo

It is to the zoo that Noah takes Mara to try out her ability to kill with her mind.



Alligators

While they are trying to cross a creek to save Joseph, Noah and Mara are surrounded by alligators. Mara kills these alligators.

The Miami Herald

It is crime scene photos in The Miami Herald that lead Noah to believe that Lassiter is the one who kidnapped Joseph.

A Rolex Watch

Noah has a vision in which he sees someone wearing a Rolex watch looking through documents at the Collier County archives. He sees the same watch on the man who kidnapped Joseph. The next time a Rolex is mentioned in the novel, it is on Jude's arm.

A Little Concrete Shed

It is in this little concrete shed that Noah and Mara find Joseph. This same shed is also in the crime scene photos in which Jordana Palmer's body was found.

Thirteenth Precinct of the Metro Dade Police

When Mara attempts to turn herself in for the murders that she believes that she has committed at the Thirteenth Precinct of the Metro Dade Police Department that she realizes that the Jude she has been seeing is not a hallucination but that he is really still alive.



Themes

Reality versus Unreality

What is real and what isn't is a very important theme in this novel as Mara struggles with hallucinations. At the conclusion of the novel, it appears that not all of the things that Mara had been blaming on her emotional disorder were actually the result of this disorder. Knowing that Jude is, indeed, alive puts an entire different slant to many of the things that have happened to Mara. One of the main things that she points out at the end of the novel is the way that the knowledge that Jude is alive might change her opinion of what happened the night that she was burned. Mara had believed that she had dropped her earrings into the tub of hot water. If Jude was really in the house with her, it is not a stretch to believe that she might actually have done so, then Jude had recovered the earrings and replaced them while she was passed out.

Another instance in which Mara has trouble deciding if what has happened to her has been a dream or a reality is the night when she and Noah rescue Joseph from the concrete shed. Because Mara's dislocated shoulder does not hurt the following day, and Joseph does not seem to be disturbed by his ordeal, Mara assumes that it didn't really happen. However, she sees on the news where a large number of alligators were killed in the same area where she and Noah had rescued Joseph. Later, when Noah and Mara are discussing their strange abilities, Noah speaks of that evening and Mara realizes that it was not all a dream.

Mara and Noah's Abilities

The central theme of the novel centers on Noah and Mara's special abilities. Through the course of the novel, Mara searches to discover what caused the deaths of her three friends when the condemned lunatic asylum, the Tamerlane, collapsed with them inside. As time progresses, and Mara learns more and more about the night, the knowledge seems to exacerbate her condition. She has more and more of what she believes are hallucinations and even begins to imagine the deaths of two people, her Spanish teacher and the owner of an abused dog, before they happen. At the conclusion of the novel, Mara believes that she is responsible for killing these people. She believes that she is a danger to herself, her family and society as a whole. At the conclusion of the novel, she has gone to the police station to turn herself in as a killer when she realizes that Jude, a boy whom she believed that she had killed, is still alive.

In the meantime, Noah admits to Mara that he has special abilities of his own. He has the gift of healing, a gift that he believes can offset Mara's destructive gift. It is because of Noah's gift that the badly abused Mabel survives and improves after Mara kidnaps her. Mara's burned arm also heals with no blisters or scarring because of Noah's gift. Noah also saves Mara's father from dying after he is hit by a stray bullet from Mrs. Palmer's gun when she tries to kill Leon Lassiter.



Beyond these abilities, Noah and Mara seem to have some sort of special connection to one another. After they have spent some time together and Noah has learned some of Mara's background, he admits to her that he heard her voice long before she ever came to live in Florida. Noah heard Mara asking someone to get Claire and Rachel out of the Tamerlane before the building collapsed. Because Noah did not know who Mara was at the time or where she was, he had no way to help her or her friends.

Mara's Choices

There are several times in this novel, usually at the ending of a chapter, that Mara indicates that she made a wrong choice pertaining to a decision that she had made. The first of these choices occurs when Mara chooses not to tell her parents about the strange phone call that she receives warning her father to drop his role as defense attorney in Jordana Palmer's murder case. Noah believes that it is because of Mara's father's role in the case that Joseph was kidnapped. On the larger scale, if Mara's father had not defended Lassiter in the case, Mara might not have been put in the position where she felt she had to kill Lassiter in order to bring justice. This killing of Lassiter not only resulted in her father being shot as well, but also resulted in the arrest of Jordana Palmer's mother, an otherwise innocent woman.

Mara also indicates that her choice to interfere in the Lassiter case was a bad decision on her part. She has realized that she should have listened to Noah and let the justice system handle Lassiter. It becomes especially clear how bad this decision was at the end of the novel when Mara realizes that Jude is still alive. Like Lassiter, Jude also owns a Rolex watch, indicating that he could have been the one who kidnapped Joseph instead of Lassiter. If this is true, Mara took vengeance on an innocent man and hurt her father in the process.

A final decision that Mara indicates was not a good one was her decision to not let Jude help her. He believes that he can counteract Mara's destructive urges. Because Mara believes that allowing Noah to help her will make him feel like he has to be her babysitter, she refuses his assistance. The day at the hospital where she watches her father recover from his gunshot wound, Mara realizes how bad this decision was. If she had listened to Noah, she would not have tried to take charge of punishing Lassiter and her father would never have been shot.



Style

Point of View

This novel is told in the first-person point of view from the point of view of sixteen-year-old Mara Dyer. Mara tells her story in the past tense. It is precluded by a brief note that makes Mara's story appear to be what she is telling the police, or her family, about her history. The majority of her story covers the time period in which Mara and her family have moved to Florida and the events that happen there. There are sections of the novel that tell about Mara's life prior to the accident at the Tamerlane and the death of her friends.

As this story describes the changes that Mara undergoes, it is appropriate that it be told in the first-person point of view. This keeps the attention focused on Mara, what is happening to her and how she is interpreting these changes. The reader also knows firsthand Mara's reasoning for acting as she does and her reactions when her choices do not turn out as she hoped that they would.

Setting

The action in this novel is divided between two major settings. The first major setting is Laurelton, Rhode Island where Mara lived with her family before the accident at the Tamerlane. The second is Miami, Florida, where Mara and her family move after the accident.

Important settings in Laurelton, Rhode Island include the Tamerlane State Lunatic Asylum where Rachel, Claire and Jude are killed when the building collapses. Rachel's home is also an important setting as this is where the friends are playing with an Ouija board when it spells out that it will be Mara who will bring about Rachel's death. It is at Rhode Island Hospital Providence that Mara learns that her friends died at the Tamerlane and that she was injured in the accident. Another important setting is Laurelton Memorial Cemetery where Rachel is buried.

There are also a variety of important settings at Miami, Florida, the place to which Mara and her family moves after the accident. One of the most notable settings in Florida is the campus of Croyden. It is at school that Mara is plagued by the local bully Anna, hallucinations, and the affections of a boy whom she is not sure that she should like. Anna's home is also an important setting. It is here that many of interactions of the Dyer family play out. It is also here that Mara has the only experience in which she hurts herself. She reaches into a bathtub of hot water to retrieve her mother's earrings but feels that her arm is held under the water. Another important setting is the courthouse where Mara's father is shot when Mara believes that she is doing the world a favor by killing Leon Lassiter, the man whom her father was defending. A final important setting is the police department where Mara realizes that Jude is really still alive.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is very informal. It is probably intended for older teenagers or young adults and for this reason it is easy to read. Although it does not have a lot of complicated vocabulary there are some words that the reader probably doesn't often encounter such as "puritanically" and "canonical" that they might learn for the first time.

Much of the story is told in exposition as Mara describes what happens to her and the changes that she sees in herself. This exposition also allows Mara to describe what is going on around her. She describes her new school and how inferior the perfect campus makes her feel. She also describes the interactions between herself and other characters like Anna, Aiden, Jamie and Noah. There are some parts of dialogue. Most of this dialogue takes place between Mara and Daniel or Mara and Noah.

Structure

This novel is divided into fifty-nine chapters. It includes a brief prologue in the form of a letter to the police department where Mara confesses that she has a body count. Several of the chapters include an indication of when and where they take place. This is especially true in the first few chapters where Mara tells of an experience with Rachel and Claire where an Ouija board predicts that Rachel will die at the hands of Mara. The book then moves forward six months to the day that Mara wakes up in the hospital after the accident at the Tamerlane. Next, time moves forward to Rachel's funeral, then, eight weeks later the Dyer family has settled into its new residence in Florida. Time basically passes in a linear structure after this point with no major gaps in time. There are instances when Mara has dreams about what happened the night at the Tamerlane. All of these instances are notated at the beginning with the word "before" indicating that there are instances that took place before the collapse of the Tamerlane.



Quotes

"I stared hard at the yellow roses from Rachel's mother instead, then squeezed my eyes shut and searched for a memory, any memory, of that night. Why we went. What we were doing there. What killed them" (Chapter 2, p. 13).

"Nightmares and visual hallucinations were my new normal, apparently, and something about my behavior in the psychologist's office made him recommend a long-term care facility" (Chapter 3, p. 15).

"Nothing but trees. Of course. Because Jude was dead. Like Claire. And Rachel. Which meant that I'd had three hallucinations in less than three hours" (Chapter 6, p. 35).

"It was more than the uniforms; everyone somehow managed to look exactly alike. Perfectly groomed, perfectly well-behaved, not a hair out of place. Jamie, with his dreadlocks and tongue stud and exposed T-shirt, was one of the only standouts" (Chapter 7, p. 39).

"I needed to remember the night I lost Rachel — for her sake. For mine. Even though my mother wouldn't agree; my mind was protecting itself from the trauma, she'd say. Trying to force it was 'unhealthy'" (Chapter 11, p. 68).

"The dog's owner was dead. Exactly as I had imagined it" (Chapter 12, p. 80).

"My mother worked with only the mildly disturbed. I was full on delusional. Abnormal. Psychotic" (Chapter 15, p. 103).

"I was speechless. Noah's mother died — was murdered — and he was there when it happened" (Chapter 28, p. 213).

"My father had told me and my brothers plenty of times how dangerous the old building was. Before he switched to criminal law, he'd sued the property owners and the township on behalf of the boy's family, and he should have won; his files overflowed with evidence" (Chapter 31, p. 231).

"I could take drugs, do therapy, whatever. But I knew enough to know that psychotics can't be cured, only managed" (Chapter 32, p. 239).

"In the past week on Zyprexa, the nightmares had stopped, the hallucinations were gone, and I walked into Spanish feeling prepared, but still nervous" (Chapter 36, p. 269).

"What could the detective possibly know? That I thought Morales should die and she died? Crazy. That I wanted the dog's owner punished for what he did to her and he was? Laughable. Thinking something does not make it true. Wanting something does not make it real." (Chapter 42, p. 313).



"Which meant that last night had to have been a nightmare. All of it. The asylum. The Everglades. Had to have been" (Chapter 48, p. 355).

"When I spoke those words, it hit me with exquisite clarity. Everything that had happened - the hallucinations, the paranoia, the nightmares - it was just me needing to know, needing to understand what happened that night. What happened to Rachel. What happened to me" (Chapter 48, p. 357).

"She believed in therapy and in drugs that could take weeks, months, years. I didn't have that kind of time. My life was unraveling, my universe was unraveling, and I needed to know what happened to me now. Not tomorrow. And not Thursday, at my next appointment. Now. Today" (Chapter 48, pg. 358).

"Please join Botanica Seis for the seminar 'Unlocking the Secrets of Your Mind and of Your Past,' with Abel Lukumi, ordained high priest. March 15th, \$ 30.00 per person, walk-ins welcome" (Chapter 48, p. 359).

"I tried to orient myself, to figure out what I'd done that was so insulting and examined Mr. Lukumi's face in the process. His eyes met mine, and something flashed behind them. Something I didn't expect. Recognition" (Chapter 49, p. 366).

"But neither did the pills. And the alternative was waiting. Waiting and talking to Dr. Maillard, while my nightmares got worse and my hallucinations became harder to hide, until I'd eventually be pulled out of school - dashing any hope of graduating on time, of going to a good college, of having a normal life" (Chapter 49, p. 370).

"I laughed at him in my crazed fury, which shook the asylum's foundation and crushed it. With Jude and Claire and Rachel inside" (Chapter 50, p. 378).

"And now that I knew, now that I remembered, all I wanted was to forget" (Chapter 50, p. 380).

"But the kiss wasn't a dream. Noah was dying. The asylum wasn't an accident. I killed them" (Chapter 50, p. 380).

"The husk of a girl not-named Mara stared back at me. I wondered how I would kill her" (Chapter 51, p. 385).

"Before you moved here, Mara. I heard your voice before you moved here" (Chapter 51, p. 388).

"I closed my eyes, just now beginning to fully realize what Noah's ability meant. Every reaction I had - every reaction I had to him - he would know. And not just mine - everyone's." (Chapter 52, p. 398).

"I was, of course, the top priority; I had to figure out what prompted my reactions if I was going to have any hope at all of learning to control them" (Chapter 54, p. 407).



"As I spoke the words, I knew that that was exactly what he thought. That despite all rationality, he did think he could fix me, like he could fix everything else" (Chapter 55, p. 420).

"Right would have been allowing his question to go unanswered. Letting Noah believe, impossible though it was, that I didn't want him. That I didn't love him. Then this would all be over. Noah would be the best thing that almost happened to me, but he would be safe" (Chapter 55, p. 424).

"Noah was the one I never knew I'd been waiting for, but I chose to let him go. And I chose wrong" (Chapter 59, p. 449).

"But was a mental hospital where I belonged? I knew my parents — they'd make sure I went somewhere where there would be art therapy and yoga and endless discussions about my feelings. And the truth was that I wasn't crazy. I was a criminal" (Chapter 59, pg. 450).

"The plan wasn't perfect, but it was the most self-destructive thing I could think of, and I so badly needed to self-destruct" (Chapter 59, p. 450).

Topics for Discussion

Discuss Mara's fear of nurses and needles.

At the beginning of the novel, when Mara is in the hospital after the accident, she tries to make her parents understand that they need to get "them" out. Who is she referring to in the beginning of the novel? How does this phrase become important later in the book? What is Mara really trying to get out at the end of the novel?

Consider Mara's hallucinations. What clues show that Jude might not be a hallucination?

Research post-traumatic stress disorder. What is this disorder? What causes it? What are the symptoms? Which of these symptoms does Mara exhibit?

How does Daniel help Mara with her disorder? In what ways does he enable Mara not to get the help that she really needs?

Discuss the choices that Mara makes throughout the course of the novel. Which choices do you believe were good choices? Which ones were bad choices?

Discuss the special abilities displayed by both Mara and Noah.

Why is it significant that Jude is still alive? How does this make things more difficult for Mara?