



Midwinterblood, Free Chapter Sampler

Marcus Sedgwick

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Download the chapter sampler of *Midwinterblood*, the Printz Award–winning novel by Marcus Sedgwick.

An archaeologist who unearths a mysterious artifact, an airman who finds himself far from home, a painter, a ghost, a vampire, and a Viking: the seven stories in this compelling novel all take place on the remote Scandinavian island of Blessed where a curiously powerful plant that resembles a dragon grows. What binds these stories together? What secrets lurk beneath the surface of this idyllic countryside? And what might be powerful enough to break the cycle of midwinterblood? This is a book about passion and preservation and ultimately an exploration of the bounds of love.

Midwinterblood, Free Chapter Sampler Details

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Author : Marcus Sedgwick

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From Reader Review Midwinterblood, Free Chapter Sampler for online ebook

Manar Aziz says

This book is about a man and a woman through different time periods. I thought that was very confusing when I started reading this book but I liked how the author gave history behind each section and how he connects the man and women in each time period. I didn't understand what was happening at the beginning of the book but once I passed the first section the book got interesting. It was a good book.

Lara Dunning says

I really, really liked this book and zipped through it in a few days. The seven stories were intriguing, and I would classify this as a story and place driven book, not a character-driven book. The characters reemerge in all the chapters, but I felt less of a connection to them and more of a connection to the landscape and the island's history and secrecy.

As someone who reads a lot of YA I was confused as why this was put in the YA category as the characters were not young adults, in fact, the story starts out with characters in their mid to late twenties, and in the rest of the chapters they are a range of ages from child, preteen, adult and elderly. There is a vampire element, but it is very minute and I didn't feel it was a strong enough component of the storyline to make it a YA book. After reading it I would really be interested in knowing if teens are reading this book and what they like about it.

Jessie says

This is a really cool collection of interwoven short stories. Each story takes place on the same mysterious island during different time periods. Stories are very atmospheric.

Cassidy says

This book is about a man and a woman through different time periods. I thought that it was very odd and very confusing when I started reading this book but I did like that the author gave history behind each section. It is broken up into different sections and time periods. The author would somehow connect this man and woman in each time period. I didn't understand what was happening in the first section but once I got passed that the book got very interesting. I liked how the author put it into sections and made connections to the two main characters, it is not something you usually have in a book. I thought that this book deserved three stars because it was very interesting but at the beginning it was very confusing. I would recommend this to about anyone who just likes to read in general. Or to anyone who likes having history behind the story.

April says

I had to shelf this book because during the 14 days I had it from the library, I found myself disliking it more and more. I would read other reviews in hopes of getting excited about the parts to come, but in reality, I couldn't will myself to enjoy it. Maybe I have outgrown YA lit, but I think that it's more likely that I have outgrown overcomplicated plots.

Jenn says

This amazing novel is hard to characterize, but I loved it. It reminded me of David Mitchell's novels because it consists of several intertwining stories that progress backwards in time until Viking times (which was one of my favorites of the stories) and then wraps it up in some ways and leaves some great questions open in other ways. I loved how the novel contains the question, "Why am I me and not this other person? What if I was another person in another life?" I've loved novels like this from Virginia Woolf's Orlando to Mitchell's Cloud Atlas - such an amazing premise and so beautifully written - loved the characters and the setting on Blessed Isle and the way the stories connected. My favorite story was The Painter, and apparently an inspiration for this story was an actual painting called Midwinterblood by the Swedish painter Carl Larsson (his painter is Eric Carlsson :)), but I loved the heartbreaking beauty of this story in particular. This is overall an amazing and unique novel.

(I guess it's YA, but it doesn't feel like YA and I guess it's a little bit fantasy-esque, but also not.)

Madeline says

Excellent!

This is a quick read with straight-on storytelling that gets to the point. Love the characters and the magic realism woven into the story.

Debra says

I bought this year's Michael Printz 2014 Winner after seeing Marcus Sedgwick at the awards ceremony. (The man's charming as hell.) I'm a little torn about it. It's seven stories, all involving a remote island named Blessed, coalescing around three main characters who appear to reincarnate over centuries. The stories travel backwards from 50 years in our future to way before the 10th century. The story truly does have vikings, vampires, and ghosts, all moody elements of this particular world. Very atmospheric. But I'm not sure this intriguing combination had me totally sold on the book. (Or it could've been my exhaustion flying home from a librarian convention in a VERY hot, VERY expensive city. Did you guess where? Vegas.) Still, it's a quick read, if you feel like giving it a chance.

Logoleptic Bibliophile says

I enjoyed reading it, but it was a little too weird for my tastes. I had to re-read a few pages to know exactly what was going on. Other than that, I loved the authors style of writing, and he did an awfully good job of weirding me out, lol.

Liz says

A lot of reviewers compared this book to a David Mitchell book. It's not like his books because it isn't terrible.

I would give it three stars but I love rabbits and hares so extra star for that.

Also lesbian lovers and one becomes a hare? Best part of the book no question.

Salma7-1 says

Friday, 5th December, 2014

The book *Midwinterblood* has seven different parts or seven different moon stories. There is the Flower Moon which is on June 2037, the Hay Moon on July 2011, the Grain Moon on August 1944, the Fruit Moon on september 1902, the Hunter's Moon on October 1848, the Snow Moon in the Tenth Century and the Blood Moon in an unknown time. These moons all take place on an Island called Blessed Island. The main character, Eric Seven, arrives there to right a journal entry about the island in the year 2037. When he arrives there are a few people standing to await him but one of them he recognizes eventhough they have never met before. "Recognized. But that's not possible, because he has never seen her before"(Sedgwick 14). This is the start of the whole story. Already the island is weird for Eric but things just got creepy.

In the year 2037 there is a application called OneDegree where you can see if you know someone but you just don't remember. When Eric arrived in Blessed Island and he recognized Merle he wanted to use the app but some difficulties arose. "As if to check, he pulls out his device, and is about to tap on OneDegree again, when he notices another oddity; he has no reception"(Sedgwick 14). After that he has to rely on himself and on his memory to tell him if he knows Merle or not.

After the weird incident with Merle he disappears to explore the island and finds a hill. He goes on the hill and looks at the view. He starts to daydream when Merle interrupts his thoughts and he leaves. The next day he goes out to the hill again and finds a secret passage way that he follows. That passage leads to a church and it's not like any church he has every seen. "It is wooden, of a single, high story, with a pitched roof, which he is looking at side on"(Sedgwick 51). As he enters the building he finds a painting of extreme horror when suddenly secret doors open and the Islanders merge in. They cover up the painting and the eldest ward, Tor, tells them to handcuff Eric and bring him to the "stone". There they hold him down on the stone and pull open his shirt, Tor then pulls out a knife. Eric suddenly realizes he has lived this before.

Friday, 12th December, 2014

After leaving Eric remembering in 2037, the book goes back to 2011 where an Archaeologist is working on the Island with three students to find fossils. Everytime him and his crew of students work there is a boy watching them who looks about sixteen. Eventhough he's sixteen he's big and strong like a man twice his age. There is something weird about the boy other than him staring at Edward all day long and then leaving half an hour to eat lunch and then coming back to stare at Edward again. "He never speaks, though his lips are slightly parted much of the time, as if he is about to. In his hands, like a small child, he is always, always, holding a soft toy"(Sedgwick 60). The toy is a brown hare and the boy always holds him by its long ears. The boy's mom always calls him and while Edward was day dreaming he heard the mother calling him "'Eric!' The boy leaves his mound, and goes in for lunch. 'Eric'"(Sedgwick 63). This is evidence of Eric's second life. That's what happens in 2011 in the Archaeologist's life.

The Archaeologist isn't finding anything that day so the group goes back to the Warehouse. They talk all night about what to do since they have one week left to find something before their time is up and they wasted money for nothing. " Mat raises a hand.' None taken. The equipment is...' He stops, realizing it's an implied criticism of Edward. '...is rubbish.' Edward finishes."(Sedgwick 66). This shows they have limited supplies, limited time and space to find something in that ground. The next morning Edward leaves early to go to the site to decide what to do. Eric is there and he tells Edward to dig near a mound but that's all he says. When the students arrive they start digging there and actually find something. "In half an hour, isabella shrieks. She actually shrieks. 'Oh God! I think I found something.' She has"(Sedgwick 72). They found a coffin from Viking times that has a big skeleton and a small skeleton in it. To conclude Eric helped Edward find something when he was completely helpless.

Later that day, at night Edward goes to Eric's house to thank him for the help when Eric's mother opens the door. Her name is Merle. When Eric was two he was hit by scythe and it changed him forever. He is very weird and says strange things. "'I just can't reach him. not how a mother should. He goes away from me, as if he's on a journey somewhere, somewhere I can't follow. Seeing things I can't see. I can't explain'"(Sedgwick 81). Merle can't get through to her son because he's in his own world where no one can get through to him. The next day at the dig the girls had found something again so Edward and Mat went to see only Mat hesitated because he had found something. Whiles uncovering it he fell of the ladder in the pit and the back end of a bomb hangs above his head. Everyone starts to panic and the girls get Merle who immediately starts to scream because Eric is launched over the pit. "He leans over, and closes his fingers around the tail fin of the rusty shell, dropped by a dive-bomber in the closing stages of the War"(Sedgwick 90). Eric takes the bomb and throws it in the water. He comes back acting like nothing ever happened. That is the end of the Archaeologist's story in 2011 on Blessed Island at about the time of the Hay Moon.

Friday, 19th December, 2014

After the story of the Hay moon, the book moves on to he Grain Moon which takes place in 1944 in World War II were it starts with a pilot falling because his fighter plane was hit. The airman's dreams are as twisted and broken as his fighter plane. He has the craziest dreams. "He sees weird visions of heaven and hell, and has a nightmare of running but being unable to run, as something chases him through fiery pits"(Sedgwick 96). He dreams he's being eaten by a dragon as well but these nightmares might come from the fact that his ankle is broken. When he wakes up he finds a big dog standing above him licking his face which might have been the dragon from his dream. The dog's owner is a large man called, Erik, and he carries David, the airman, to his house along with his son Benjamin. The farmer's wife is called Rebecka and she injects the morphine into David for him to sleep and forget the pain. When he wakes up he's in a room, undressed and hears fighting downstairs. Then a door slams and Rebecka comes up surprised to find him awake. He asks for a bathroom and she gives him a pot. When he finished his business and lays back in bed he notices his gun is gone.

When David wakes up again he finds out that the room he's in is Erik and Rebecka's room so he asks to be moved. They put him in Benjamin's room and Rebecka gets him the morphine but there are three problems, not a lot of morphine left, he has no idea where he is, pain is awful but also they are still arguing and about him. "Why are you arguing?" he says. 'You're arguing about me, aren't you?' 'No...' Rebecka says, but she is interrupted."(Sedgwick 108). After that Erik comes in to tell David why they are arguing about him. They had a 12 year old girl called Sarah who two summers ago was killed by a bomb from David's people fighting. Erik doesn't want the war brought to the island because of his dead daughter. He wants justice for his dead daughter because it wasn't fair for her to die. The island is neutral in the war but David's enemy soldiers are on the coast looking for pilots like him who have crashed so the family has to hide him.

Erik heard that soldiers were coming to the village so he started burning all of David's clothes. When David heard of this he hurried out to save something of his that is very special to him. "She kneels beside David, who picks the wallet up and shows her the photograph"(Sedgwick 121). The photograph was of three people, David, his wife and their 12 year old daughter Merle. After that incident Erik and Rebecka planned David's escape. On the night of the Grain Moon Benjamin came in telling them the soldiers were coming. Erik and David took off to the boat house where they hid till the soldier's voices faded. David's partner Petter got home and sent for help. David went out with Erik after the voices left and took Erik's boat to escape. The soldiers then came and killed Erik but he forever remained in David's heart as well as Merle's since he is the hero that brought her father back to her.

Friday, 9th January, 2015

After the story of the Grain Moon the book talks about the Fruit Moon which takes place on September 1902 on Blest Island. Part four of the story starts with Merle's seventh birthday, where her mother allows her to go with her to the Western Isle which was Merle's biggest wish, right after a carved wooden hare, which was her favorite animal. "In her hands she clutched the carved running hare, its long ears sleeked along its back, under her tight fingers. But it wasn't hares she dreamed of. It was dragons"(Sedgwick 134). Merle was very excited to finally be able to go pick dragon Orchids with her mother so instead of dreaming about her favorite animal, the hare, she dreamt of dragons. The next morning when mother and daughter finally went to pick the orchids, Bridget, Merle's mom, explained that the only house on the western Isle belonged to an old man that wasn't very friendly or like Bridget called him "a dragon". Bridget forbid Merle to go there but of course that didn't stop her. "She closed her eyes and gripped her hare tight, but she already knew she was going to go to the painter's house, just for a look"(Sedgwick 139). The next day Merle snuck out when Bridget was pre-occupied with the orchids and ran to the dragon's house. There she found a beautiful apple tree and for three days she lay apples on the front door to the dragon's house. On the fourth day she found the door open and went to look inside only to find the dragon laying on the floor.

When Merle went to go get Bridget, she thought it was nothing at first. But then on seeing the old man lying on the floor she noticed he was very ill. She asked him where the kitchen was and sent Merle to go get Dragon Orchids for a tea. "The kitchen was small, and primitive. She hunted through the cupboards, and found very little. Some flour, some biscuits, some sour milk. On the worktop sat a couple of apples"(Sedgwick 151). Eric Carlsson, the old man and a painter, had kept the apples Merle had laid on his front door. His house was not ordinary but there was something in it that caught Merle and Bridget's eye. "A vast, vast painting. Bridget was drawn to it, her feet carrying her towards it without her thinking. Her mouth hung open, she had never seen anything like it, anything so mysterious, so compelling, so terrifying"(Sedgwick 151). The paint was showing the scene before a terrible event. The event is when the king is about to be killed by the executioner, the king knows it and everyone on the painting does too. After helping the old man Bridget promised Merle to go there everyday to help him.

Now everyday Bridget and Merle go to the old man's house to feed him and take care of him. Merle and Eric have conversations, while Bridget takes care of the food and cleaning. "It was as if Eric was the child and Merle the adult; his talk was fun, light, silly, and hers was, too, at times but scattered in her foolishness would be unexpected words of deep maturity, as if she were old beyond her years"(Sedgwick 158). When Eric finally got better he went to go see Bridget and Merle to tell them that the national museum wants to see his new masterpiece. When the men from the museum came they didn't seem to be impressed in Eric's masterpiece, *Midwinterblood*, but obviously Eric was going to draw something dark and sad since his wife died giving birth to their fourth child. Eric eventually died of grief and Bridget found him with his armchair facing the painting and a paintbrush, that still is wet, in his hand. In the painting, with no doubt was a new figure, a little girl smiling, giving an apple to the king, it was Merle.

Friday, 16th January, 2015

After the story of the Fruit Moon the book moves on to the Hunter's moon on October in 1848. Herr Graf and Frau Graf have gone to Blest Island with their twin children since Herr Graf is ill and the Island apparently has the cure. The twins have a nanny arranged to look after them. "Both children, brother and sister, thought she was very beautiful, and listened, mesmerized, as she told her stories"(Sedgwick 172). That night was the Hunter's moon so the nanny, Laura, was going to tell the kids a special story. It was about a forbidden love between a rich girl named Merle and a fisherman named Erik. "And yet, Erik also knew that the trouble would come, for a love like theirs, between such people, would never be allowed"(Sedgwick 175). One stormy day Merle was out by the bay when she saw the storm and started getting worried about Erik. Right then he arrived and she left but he followed her home. On the front steps they kissed and she told him that he was the devil that will be the death of her for their love was forbidden.

Every night Erik and Merle would meet in the meadows and would get the bottom of their clothes wet. One night when Merle and Erik met he asked her if she would ever leave him, she replied no. "Merle's father stood, looking down at his only child, and then his eyes fell upon her clothes, hanging over the back of a chair. He saw something and raised an eyebrow"(Sedgwick 182). Merle's father had noticed that her clothes were wet at the bottom and when she said good night to him they weren't. So the next night Merle went out as usual, but Erik didn't come so she went back home sad and tired. "Merle saw that her father was holding a pistol. He was pointing it at a figure who sat in the other armchair by the fire. It was Erik"(Sedgwick 184). Merle's father had threatened Erik and so Erik committed suicide. After that Merle wandered at night to her lover's grave like a ghost of her former beauty. She took no notice of her father and no matter what he said she went to Erik's funeral and every night she slept on his grave.

When one night on the grave a hare appeared and kissed Merle, she thought it was Erik. She went to a witch's house and asked to be turned into a hare. She waited one week and then got the potion. She would have to drink something and fall asleep dreaming of the form she wanted to be. "With such pain, and yet she remembered the witch's other words, and so, even as she writhed in agony on the grave, thrashing around on the grass, she kept her desire in mind"(Sedgwick 191). When Merle turned into a hare she waited for the "Erik Hare" but it didn't show up, instead a hunter came and shot the hare that was supposed to be Merle. After the story ended Laura started crying and the twins ran downstairs to get help. Only to find out that wasn't Laura the woman that just arrived was Laura. "This is Laura, here. She wasn't able to join us until today. I told you all this, don't you remember? Her mother has been sick, and she has only just arrived now"(Sedgwick 194). The twins, shocked, explained that a woman had told them a story about a forbidden love between poor Erik and rich Merle. Laura said she had heard of this story but only differently, Erik wasn't poor, he was rich as well but Erik was a Erika. Then suddenly in the shadows the kids saw a figure dressed in black shaking her head at the scream of her lover whom had become crazy, the hare.

Gabrielle Link says

This is the kind of book I like, creepy and a mystery trill it's really good!

Meghan B says

Really good book. Not used to reading slight horror parts so I was a little uneasy but over all really glad I read it because the love that is shown is not just the typical romantic love but also that of family, friends, and forbidden lovers.

Jacqueline I says

This book is mainly about two characters Eric and Merle (or sometimes with a name similar to these), that live seven times in different time periods and experience different situations. Each life or situation they are in they believe that they have lived this experience of met these people before. In each story they are on (or arriving) a island called Blessed(or sometimes with a name similar to these), where a plant grows with strange aging and memory properties. All seven lives or situations are linked together in some way. I enjoyed this book because it was interesting for the characters to live between different time periods and I haven't read a book that was set up in this way, so I found it interesting.

Jenn says

This book is hard to pin point. This book is about an island called Blessed. There are seven different stories in this book, and it is the reader's job to figure out ho these stories are connected. It becomes evident that this book is about sacrifice and love. The island's real name in the beginning had to do with sacrifice. The name Erik is repeated in each story. There are lots of hints about the pants on the island holding special properties. Now, it us up to the people in each story to figure out what is truly going on, on the island.

I loved this book. This book is like a puzzle. It was fun to try to figure out how each story shed a little more light on the truth about the island. If I were to use this book in a classroom, I would have my students "map out" each story so that they could make connections both visually and mentally. I think this book is a great love story and mystery book.

Warning to the reader:

Mild violence
