

The Girl With No Soul

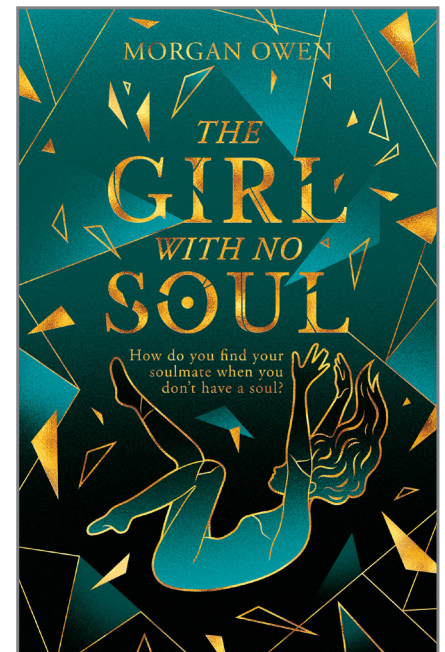
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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid Secondary



SYNOPSIS

How can you find your soul mate, when you don't have a soul?

Iris lives in a world ruled by The Order. Inspectors police the population by keeping careful watch over people's souls. If they shine their lanterns on you, your soul is projected for the world to see...and judge.

But Iris has a deadly secret...she is a hollow, a person with no soul. She must hide from The Order at all costs, scraping a living in the shadows. But when she's sent to steal a ring from a lady of nobility, she is reunited with her Spark—one of the five parts that make up her own missing soul.

Now she must rely on the help of a young scholar named Evander Mountebank to track down the other four missing pieces of her soul, all the while evading The Order.

Will she be able to protect her heart as well as find her soul?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Morgan Owen has always been a writer. One of her earliest memories is of sitting at her grandmother's dining table, folding pieces of paper to create makeshift books. Inside were illustrated stories of formless spirits and Sylvanian Families, which they read aloud together.

A former bookseller and PR executive, Morgan enjoys travelling, stargazing, eating other people's cooking, playing Animal Crossing and buying knick-knacks to put in her curiosity cabinet. She has two black cats named Salem and Binx.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class discuss what you can learn about the book from the cover, the title, and the information on the back of the novel. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
 - What can we learn about this book from simply looking at the cover?
 - What does the artwork on the front of the novel tell us about the contents?
 - What are the emotions, feelings and states of mind that are conveyed by the cover artwork?
 - What does the choice of colour palette for the cover artwork convey about the tone of the story?
 - From the blurb on the back cover of the book, what can we learn about the novel?
 - What genre would you expect this novel to fit in and why?

- Who is the protagonist of the story, and what do we know about them before we start reading?
- How does having read the blurb influence our preconceptions of the novel and plot?
- After reading the novel, revisit the discussion you had at the start of the study notes, and assess the accuracy (or inaccuracy) of your predictions, understanding, and preconceptions about the novel based on the cover alone.
- What does having no soul mean for the individual in the world of the novel? Consider your answer to this question in terms of both the primary physiological impact it has on Iris, the related psychological impact and the secondary social impact. Use evidence from the text to support your assertions.
- Why is Iris such a successful thief?
- How does Iris feel about having no soul? Why does she feel this way? Consider which aspects Iris struggles with, and which aspects she seems not to be concerned by. Use evidence from the text to support your answers.
- In the novel people's souls have five distinct aspects. In pairs or small groups write a brief outline of what these aspects are, what parts of the personality and person they influence, and what symbolic associations they have.
 - As a class discuss whether you think these different aspects and their associated character traits reflect those found in people in our world.
- People in Providence are defined by their soul's dominant aspect. If you were to be defined by your soul's dominant aspect, what do you believe it would be, how would it define you, and in what way do you think this aspect would manifest in your life?
- What, in your opinion, is the most important aspect of the soul as seen in the novel? Provide at least three separate pieces of evidence from the text to support your assertion.
- The guiding principles of The Order are stated as being 'prudence, patience, temperance, chastity, diligence, obedience, humility and charity'. How, in a perfect world without corruption, could these principles manifest themselves within an organisation? Write a short analytical piece considering these principles and their potential role within government and governance.
- Create an artwork based on the five-part soul as seen in the novel. You should incorporate at least some of the symbolism discussed within the novel as being relevant to Iris' society.
- What, in your opinion, is the most unexpected thing that happened in the novel? Why was it unexpected? What part did the unexpectedness of its occurring play in the author's development of dramatic plot-tension?
- Write an analytical description of one of the minor characters in the novel. Include in your description:
 - What they look like.
 - What their personality is like—list and explain at least three distinct behavioural traits that they demonstrate over the course of the novel.
 - Where Iris meets them for the first time.
 - What Iris' first impression of them is.
 - How and when their character changes over time, and the impact this has on Iris's actions and her understanding of them.
 - Their role within the overall narrative progression of the novel.
 - How the reader's changing understanding of the character contributes to the reader's understanding of both the world and of Iris's personal history.
 - How likeable they are, and what techniques the author has used to develop or remove reader empathy for the character.
- Which time and place in real world history do you envision Iris' world as being most analogous to? What aspects of her culture map onto your chosen setting, and which aspects differ and in what way? Be sure to include in your answer consideration of aspects that are not directly related to the fantastic aspects of Iris' world, for example: the role of women, social perceptions of disadvantage and transport and logistics.
- What is heart food in Iris' world, and how does it compare to soul food in our world?
- Create an artwork depicting the World's End as described by Iris. Choose your medium carefully, and take your time to create and include as many of the details Iris mentions as you can. You will want to experiment with light and shadow in order to create a dimly lit scene that is still fully visible. Try to convey the emotive aspects of the scene as

well as the physical specifics.

- How does the author create and maintain plot-tension over the course of the novel?
- In pairs or small groups, create a timeline of the action in the novel, relating key events and the order in which they either occur and/or are revealed to the reader. Once you have completed your timeline, discuss how each event affects the levels of tension within the story, and the affect on reader interest and engagement. Note your conclusions on the timeline, and then, as a class, discuss what the most pivotal events are in terms of plot-tension.
 - Individually write a brief piece outlining the conclusions that you, your group, and your class came to, detailing the literary techniques used to develop plot-tension throughout the course of the novel, and the affect of these different techniques on the reader's perception of both the action and the characters.