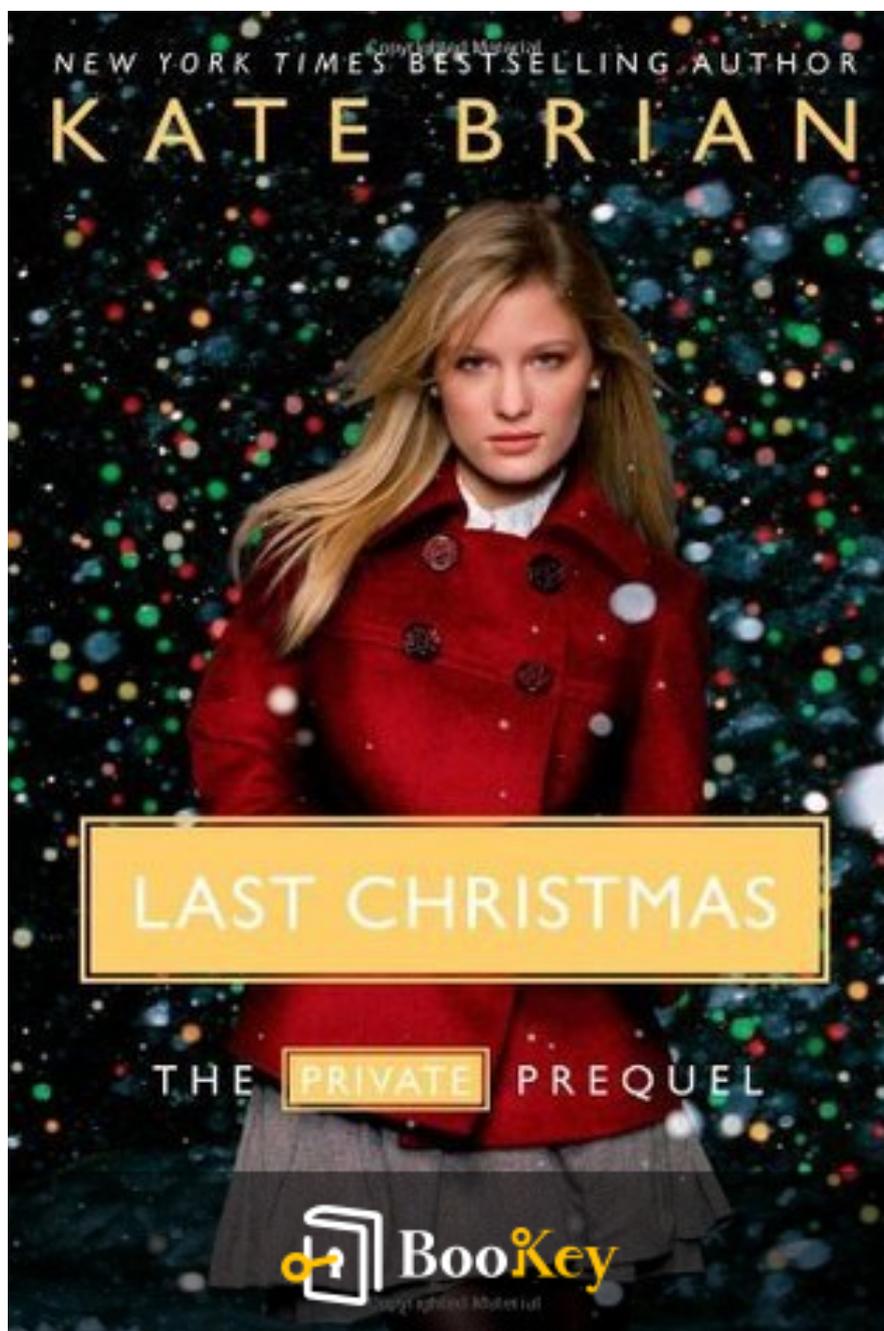


Last Christmas PDF (Limited Copy)

Kate Brian



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Last Christmas Summary

Love, secrets, and danger collide in a snowy romance.

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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About the book

In "Last Christmas," we are introduced to Ariana Osgood, a seemingly flawless student at Easton Academy. Her life is characterized by remarkable academic achievements, a delightful boyfriend, and membership in the prestigious Billings House, an elite group known for its exclusivity and influence within the school. However, as a blizzard strikes during Christmas break, Ariana's perfect facade begins to crack.

Trapped on campus amidst the swirling snow, Ariana finds herself isolated from her usual holiday plans in cozy Vermont with her boyfriend. Instead, she is drawn into an unexpected and intimate connection with Thomas Pearson, a mysterious and rebellious figure associated with the notorious Ketlar House. This encounter unfolds within an enchanting yet unsettling atmosphere, where the idyllic holiday spirit is tinged with tension and uncertainty.

As the days pass, Ariana is forced to confront the complexities of her feelings for both her boyfriend and Thomas. Their shared moments spark a sense of adventure but also stir an internal conflict about loyalty and desire. Unbeknownst to them, a lurking observer watches their every interaction, intent on transforming their festive interlude into a haunting ordeal.

This prequel not only explores the evolution of Ariana's character but also

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sets the stage for the secrets and tumultuous events that define the bestselling "Private" series. It reveals not only the transformative and tumultuous holiday experiences that shape Ariana's life but also the darker forces at play, ultimately hinting at the cataclysmic changes that are about to ripple through her world. "Last Christmas" blends themes of love, betrayal, and the quest for identity against a backdrop of suspense, laying the groundwork for the intricate drama that follows in the series.

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About the author

Certainly! Here's a smooth, logical summary of the chapters you've requested, including background information for context.

In the SHADOWLANDS TRILOGY by Kate Brian, we follow the journey of the protagonist, Arden, who finds herself grappling with the complexities of life, death, and the afterlife. The story begins with Arden's shocking death, which sets the stage for her exploration of Shadowlands—a liminal space between the mortal world and the afterlife. Here, she encounters a spectrum of souls, each grappling with their own unresolved issues.

Chapter 1: Arrival in Shadowlands

Arden awakens in a surreal world, unsure of her fate. The readers learn about Shadowlands' unique properties—time and space operate differently, and souls are often trapped, unable to move on due to lingering attachments to their past lives. Arden quickly meets a group of fellow souls, including the enigmatic and charismatic, Daniel, who becomes her guide. Daniel explains the rules of Shadowlands, emphasizing the importance of confronting one's past to find peace.

Chapter 2: Unraveling the Past

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As Arden settles into her new reality, she begins to uncover the truth about her life and the circumstances surrounding her death. Memories surface, revealing her struggles with family dynamics, friendships, and her internal battles with self-identity. Shadowlands acts almost like a mirror, forcing Arden to confront her regrets and missed opportunities. Daniel supports her but also reveals that each soul must ultimately face their own reckoning alone.

****Chapter 3: Disturbances in the Ethereal****

Tension rises as Arden witnesses other souls struggling with their pasts, some succumbing to despair while others become lost in their own stories. Here, the concept of "Echoes" is introduced—negative emotions that can trap souls within Shadowlands. The significance of these Echoes becomes clear, as Arden learns that avoiding one's pain only perpetuates suffering. The chapter concludes with a chilling incident where a soul is consumed by their Echo, highlighting the stakes involved in this alternate realm.

****Chapter 4: The Choice****

Faced with the choice of embracing her memories or hiding from them, Arden embarks on a quest of self-discovery. Daniel plays a crucial role, guiding Arden to confront pivotal moments from her past that shaped who she was. The emotional weight of her decisions bears down on her, leading to moments of introspection about forgiveness and acceptance. This chapter

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culminates with Arden making a pivotal decision to engage with her past, signaling a turning point in her journey.

****Chapter 5: The Reckoning Begins****

Arden confronts the most painful memory—the strained relationship with her family and the challenges she faced in her friendships. This chapter not only deepens the reader's understanding of Arden as a character but also emphasizes themes of redemption and healing. As the journey unfolds, other characters begin to join her, each with their own motives for wanting to move on, creating a rich tapestry of interactions and shared experiences within Shadowlands.

Through these chapters, Kate Brian masterfully weaves together themes of self-reflection, loss, and the journey toward acceptance, drawing readers into a gripping narrative that explores what it means to let go and find peace, even in the most tumultuous of circumstances. The unfolding dynamics build anticipation for the subsequent developments in Arden's journey, which promise to deepen the mysteries of Shadowlands and the fates of its inhabitants.

This summary captures the essence of the chapters while maintaining a

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logical flow of events and character development, providing a clear framework for understanding the narrative.

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Chapter 1 Summary: Prologue October Of Senior Year

In Chapter 1 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, we are introduced to Ariana Osgood, a high school senior grappling with overwhelming anxiety and desperation. The story unfolds on a tense October night when Ariana chooses to leave her friends behind and seek out Thomas, a boy with whom she shares a complex and troubled history.

As she drives to a secluded spot, her anxiety intensifies, fueled by memories of a distressing incident involving her friends—Noelle, Kiran, and Taylor—that adds a layer of fear to her journey. Upon arrival, she discovers Thomas bound to a pole, visibly hurt and traumatized. This shocking sight sends Ariana's heart racing with guilt and horror, forcing her to confront the consequences of her friends' actions.

Attempts to rescue Thomas are met with resistance as he recoils from her, recognizing her voice and blaming her for his predicament. Their exchange reveals the depth of their fraught relationship. Ariana desperately professes her love and desire to help, but Thomas harshly reveals he has feelings for another girl, Reed, and threatens to expose their shared secrets to the police. This revelation strikes Ariana deeply, showcasing her urgent need to

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maintain control over her life and relationships.

The chapter escalates with Thomas's insistence on doing the right thing, contrasting sharply with Ariana's fear-driven selfishness. This tension foreshadows the tumultuous narrative that follows, centered around themes of loyalty, betrayal, and the complexities of teenage bonds. Ariana's emotional state serves as a powerful introduction, establishing the conflicts and moral dilemmas that will permeate the story as it unfolds.

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Chapter 2 Summary: The Good Girl December Of Junior Year

Summary of Chapter 2 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian

In this captivating chapter, we delve into the complex psyche of Ariana Osgood, an ostensibly flawless student at Easton Academy grappling with profound emotional challenges. The chapter begins with a tense confrontation between Ariana and her former classmate, Thomas, during which Ariana brandishes a baseball bat in a moment of desperation and self-defense. This violent encounter serves as a metaphor for her inner turmoil, illustrating her eagerness to assert control and safeguard her identity, which she perceives Thomas as threatening. This pivotal moment marks a significant turning point in Ariana's character arc, foreshadowing her ongoing struggles with mental instability.

As the narrative shifts to the glamour of the Winter Ball, we observe a stark juxtaposition between the chaos of Ariana's emotions and the festive atmosphere enjoyed by her peers. Though Ariana had looked forward to the event, she becomes increasingly overwhelmed, yearning for the solace of her close friends at Billings House rather than the superficiality that surrounds

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her. This internal conflict emphasizes her anxiety about fitting into the elite social structure and the pressure to meet expectations.

At the ball, Ariana navigates the complexities of her friendships, particularly with her best friend, Noelle. Their contrasting personalities—Ariana's reserved nature against Noelle's vivaciousness—create a dynamic that highlights Ariana's feelings of self-doubt. As she admires her friends' seemingly perfect lives, Ariana wrestles with insecurities about her relationship with Daniel, her boyfriend, who embodies ideal traits but also adds pressure to escalate their intimacy. The looming prospect of losing her virginity to him during an upcoming vacation heightens her sense of unworthiness and apprehension.

The chapter also illustrates the intricate social hierarchies that exist within Easton Academy, marked by rivalry and competition among students, particularly evident in Ariana's interactions with figures like Thomas and Paige. As she observes her friends and their relationships, a yearning for connection battles against feelings of inadequacy, encapsulating the complex struggles of adolescence. Themes of identity, friendship, and self-worth are poignantly explored against the backdrop of privilege and societal expectations.

In summary, Chapter 2 effectively establishes Ariana's character by revealing her emotional volatility and the turmoil stemming from both past

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traumas and current pressures. The blend of anxiety and yearning invites readers to engage deeply with her journey, paving the way for evolving relationships and the dramatic events to unfold.

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Chapter 3 Summary:

Perfect

In Chapter 3 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the intricate web of high school friendships and romantic tensions takes center stage during a formal party. The chapter opens with a light-hearted moment as Thomas playfully teases Ariana about her seemingly idyllic life. However, her boyfriend Daniel steps in to defend her fiercely, setting the tone for what becomes an increasingly charged atmosphere. Their banter takes a turn when they encounter Sergei, a shy exchange student quietly capturing moments of the party through his camera lens.

Tensions rise dramatically when Daniel, feeling possessive, confronts Sergei over his photography of Ariana, leading to an awkward standoff that leaves all parties uncomfortable. Despite Ariana's efforts to diffuse the situation, she finds herself torn between empathy for the socially awkward Sergei and frustration at Daniel's bullying. This interaction highlights Daniel's possessive nature, which exacerbates Ariana's discomfort.

As the evening progresses and with Daniel preoccupied after drinking too much, Ariana begins to feel isolated. Thomas approaches her, and their playful exchange reveals an underlying attraction amidst the awkward social dynamics. Ariana is confronted with the complexity of her feelings as she considers her loyalty to Daniel while also feeling a compelling connection to

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Thomas's more adventurous personality. The chapter ends with Daniel's abrupt call for Ariana to leave, reinforcing her feelings of confusion and dismissal.

This chapter skillfully explores themes of jealousy, societal pressures among youth, and the tumultuous landscape of first loves. Ariana's internal struggle between her commitment to Daniel and her budding chemistry with Thomas sets the stage for potential conflicts that may unfold as the narrative progresses. As such, readers are left anticipating the impact of these tensions on Ariana's relationships.

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Chapter 4: More

In Chapter 4 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, we delve deeper into the emotional landscape of Ariana, who finds herself caught between her current boyfriend, Daniel, and the captivating Thomas Pearson. The chapter opens with an intimate moment shared between Ariana and Thomas, as they sit outside together. This unexpected closeness stirs unfamiliar emotions within Ariana, leading her to impulsively touch Thomas's leg, an act that electrifies the atmosphere and surprises them both. Yet, as she quickly returns to Daniel, who awaits her, the guilt of her momentary distraction weighs heavily on her conscience, especially during their festive dance.

As the days progress, Ariana's internal struggle intensifies. Conversations with her roommate Noelle provide a sounding board for her feelings and reveal her yearning for a deeper, more meaningful connection. They reflect on the literary character Emma Bovary, whose quest for love and fulfillment resonates with Ariana's own emotional turmoil. The comparison deepens Ariana's frustration as she grapples with her inability to channel her feelings into her creative school paper, underscoring her sense of conflict between her romantic life and her artistic expression.

While Ariana displays a comfortable facade with Daniel, she increasingly recognizes a missing spark in their relationship—something essential to her happiness that remains elusive. Noelle's lighthearted banter and practical

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insights stand in contrast to Ariana's somber reflections, illuminating the complexity of their friendship and differing views on love and relationships.

By the chapter's end, the internal struggle within Ariana comes to a head. She is drawn to both the vivid memories of her past and the reality of her current relationship with Daniel. Despite her attempts to downplay her attraction to Thomas, the lingering sensations from their encounter hint at forthcoming complications in her romantic life. Throughout the chapter, themes of self-discovery, loyalty, and the multifaceted nature of love are intricately woven into Ariana's journey, setting the stage for her emotional evolution in the narrative.

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Chapter 5 Summary: Distance

In Chapter 5 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, we delve into the emotional landscape of Ariana as she prepares to meet her boyfriend Daniel's parents during a holiday trip. Overwhelmed by insecurities and questions about her feelings for Daniel, she confides in her candid friend Noelle. With her sharp humor, Noelle attempts to ease Ariana's anxiety about the upcoming trip and the pressure of their burgeoning relationship, teasing her about their first intimate moment. Despite Noelle's reassurances, Ariana struggles with doubts about whether she truly loves Daniel, reflecting the complex emotions that often accompany adolescent romance.

As Ariana grapples with her feelings, the narrative shifts when she receives a call from her mother, who is currently hospitalized. This moment adds depth to Ariana's character, revealing her worries about her mother's health and her desire to maintain a facade of happiness during their conversation. She shares hopeful anecdotes about her plans in Vermont, hoping to uplift her mother's spirits even as she feels troubled.

The chapter artfully contrasts conversations with Noelle and her mother, highlighting themes of friendship, love, and familial dynamics. Ariana's internal conflict captures the essence of growing up—navigating expectations, personal insecurities, and a longing for connection. Ultimately,

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this chapter emphasizes Ariana's struggle to balance her own emotional turmoil with the need to support her mother, deepening our understanding of her character and her journey.

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Chapter 6 Summary: Discretion

In Chapter 6 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the focus is on Ariana as she navigates the emotional complexities of preparing for a holiday trip away from home. During a conversation with her mother, Ariana feels a mixture of bittersweet joy and concern. Although her mother expresses excitement for her upcoming trip with Daniel, a close friend, Ariana can't shake the anxiety of leaving her mother alone, especially amid their family's ongoing challenges.

The narrative transitions to Easton Academy, where Ariana joins her friends—Paige, Isobel, and Noelle—for a morning assembly. The winter chill and the somber atmosphere of the chapel add weight to the scene as Headmaster Cox addresses the students about winter break rules. The hierarchical dynamics among students become evident, with seniors occupying the back rows while Ariana, as a junior, finds her place with her peers.

As the assembly continues, Ariana's thoughts meander toward her family's troubled past and her mother's struggles. Feelings of anxiety and denial about her family's history wash over her, making her increasingly aware of the emotional burden she carries. The Headmaster's stern warning about the consequences of breaking rules jolts her back to reality, reminding her of the

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need to confront her fears and unresolved feelings.

This chapter poignantly explores themes of family bonds, emotional turmoil, and the arduous journey of growing up amidst personal challenges. Ariana's internal struggle serves as a mirror for many young people facing similar issues, emphasizing the tension between nostalgia for the past and the necessity of moving forward.

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Chapter 7 Summary: C'est Moi

Chapter 7 Summary of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian

Chapter 7 delves deep into the emotional landscape of Ariana, who is grappling with the fallout from a harrowing incident involving her mother. During chapel, she struggles to maintain her composure, repeatedly reciting mantras to stabilize her anxiety. The pressure escalates when Headmaster Cox delivers a stern announcement tightening dormitory access, leaving Ariana feeling increasingly claustrophobic and overwhelmed by her past.

As soon as chapel concludes, she flees outside into the frigid winter air, seeking solace from her racing thoughts. Here, she encounters Thomas, who teasingly refers to her as a “naughty girl” due to their earlier flirtations. Flustered, Ariana defensively brushes him off, claiming intoxication as her excuse for their behavior. Thomas remains unfazed and playful, intensifying Ariana's internal conflict about her feelings for him.

The tension heightens when she unexpectedly runs into Daniel and Paige. Her mind races with worry about potential eavesdropping, especially regarding Thomas’s nickname for her. While Daniel seems confused yet nonchalant, Paige's icy demeanor suggests underlying hostility that Ariana



senses but struggles to articulate.

In class, a discussion on Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* prompts deeper reflections on morality. Mr. Holmes, their engaging English teacher, inspires an invigorating dialogue about the moral complexities within the text. This moment resonates with Ariana, leading her to defend Emma Bovary's choices, which reflect her own mistakes and struggles. Yet, this act of courage is shadowed by her trepidation toward Paige's judgment.

As the class wraps up, the looming deadline for a paper resurfaces, reigniting Ariana's anxiety. Although she feels unprepared, she hesitates to request an extension from Mr. Holmes, fearing the loss of his respect and exacerbation of Paige's scorn. Ultimately, she finds the strength to approach him, signaling a pivotal moment of potential growth and self-assertion that foreshadows further developments in her journey.

Themes and Character Development:

- **Anxiety and Escape:** Ariana's emotional struggles illustrate her quest for stability amidst chaos, emphasizing her need for escape from painful memories.
- **Friendships and Rivalries:** The intricate dynamics with Paige and Daniel highlight the complexity of adolescent relationships, marked by both friendship and competition.

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- **Moral Complexity:** The classroom discourse serves as a reflection of Ariana's internal dilemmas, emphasizing themes of personal accountability and the pursuit of happiness.
- **Courage and Growth:** Ariana's willingness to defend her beliefs signifies a turning point for her character, suggesting an emerging strength as she learns to confront her challenges.

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Chapter 8: Not Friends

In Chapter 8 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, we delve into the emotional turmoil of Ariana Osgood as she faces multiple pressures that test her relationships and sense of self. The chapter begins with a disappointment when she approaches her teacher, Mr. Holmes, seeking an extension on her paper due to plans to getaway with her boyfriend, Daniel. However, Mr. Holmes rules against her request, leaving Ariana feeling embarrassed and overwhelmed by the looming deadline and the pressure to excel. This dilemma heightens her anxiety about explaining to her friend Paige why she might miss their trip to Vermont, amplifying her fear of letting others down.

As Ariana navigates the busy shopping scene, trying to find a last-minute gift for Daniel, she feels a growing tension with her friend Noelle, who is impatiently urging her along in a store stocked with windbreakers. The weight of inadequacy bears down on her, amplifying her desire to prove her worth through meaningful gifts, a pressure that weighs heavily during the festive season.

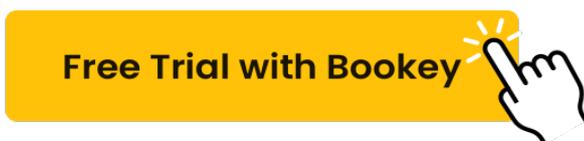
Amid this chaotic backdrop, Ariana encounters Thomas Pearson, a key character who complicates her emotions further. Their playful interaction is charged with chemistry, sparking feelings of attraction that clash with her dedication to Daniel. The situation escalates to a near-kiss, but an



unexpected interruption jolts Ariana into a panic, making her aware of the precarious position she finds herself in. Torn between her loyalty to Daniel and her undeniable connection to Thomas, she grapples with conflicting emotions that echo her struggles for identity and acceptance.

This chapter poignantly explores themes of identity, peer pressure, and the intricate dynamics of friendships and romantic relationships while set against the excitement and expectation of the holiday season. Ariana's journey through her internal conflicts reflects a broader struggle to satisfy societal norms while grappling with her personal desires, ultimately painting a vivid portrait of adolescent complexity.

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Alex Walk

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Chapter 9 Summary:

Invite

In Chapter 9 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the narrative delves into the emotional complexities surrounding the protagonist, Ariana. We begin in the midst of a panic attack triggered by a fraught interaction with Thomas, a boy she is drawn to but feels conflicted about. This moment of vulnerability unfolds in front of Paige, a friend whose critical judgment weighs heavily on Ariana.

As Ariana steps outside, her friend Noelle brings up Sergei, a classmate who has developed an obsessive crush on her, further complicating Ariana's emotional landscape. The thought of Sergei witnessing her anxiety intensifies her distress.

The setting shifts to the dining hall, where Ariana faces another layer of tension with her boyfriend, Daniel. He is disappointed that she cannot join him for a trip to Vermont due to her unfinished paper, leading to a revealing conversation about Ariana's mixed feelings for both Daniel and Thomas. Her thoughts are often consumed by romantic daydreams about Thomas, straining her relationship with Daniel.

Amidst this tension, Noelle lightens the mood with playful teasing about Ariana's "Latvian lover," providing a brief comic relief within their friend

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group. However, the atmosphere quickly darkens when Ariana receives a flirty text from Thomas, sparking jealousy in Daniel. This further complicates Ariana's predicament as she harbors secrets about her feelings for Thomas and her panic attack.

When questioned by her friends about the text, Ariana lies, claiming it's from her mother. Her defensiveness only heightens their suspicion, leading to a discussion among Noelle, Dash, and Paige about her behavior, while Daniel feels entitled to know the truth about her correspondence.

In the chapter's concluding moments, Ariana attempts to assert her independence by sharing a passionate kiss with Daniel, aiming to preserve their relationship while grappling with her conflicting emotions towards Thomas. The interplay of romance, jealousy, friendship, and a yearning for autonomy underscores the intricate web of teenage relationships that Ariana must navigate.

Overall, Chapter 9 serves as a poignant portrayal of Ariana's internal struggles, highlighting the delicate balance she seeks to maintain among love, friendship, and self-identity.

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Chapter 10 Summary: Destroyed

In Chapter 10 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, Ariana grapples with her conflicting emotions surrounding her relationships with Daniel and Thomas. The chapter begins on a chilly Tuesday evening as she prepares to submit a crucial paper before meeting Daniel. While reflecting on a fond memory with Daniel captured in a photo, she acknowledges the stability he represents in her life. In stark contrast, Thomas symbolizes excitement and uncertainty, drawing Ariana into a complicated emotional web.

After deleting a text from Thomas, which momentarily eases her mind, Ariana ventures out into the eerily quiet campus. When she goes to deliver her paper to Mr. Holmes's mailbox, she unexpectedly encounters Thomas, who is cloaked in a hood. Initially startled, she is soon calmed by his charm, highlighting their magnetic chemistry.

Despite her intentions to remain committed to Daniel, Ariana finds the attraction to Thomas increasingly irresistible. Their playful flirtation complicates her feelings further, as she battles her desire with the weight of her choices. Just as she teeters on the brink of giving in to her impulses, she reflects on the potential consequences of such a decision.

Ultimately, in a moment of impulsiveness, Ariana decides to follow Thomas



away from the familiarity of the campus and into the swirling snow, illustrating her choice to embrace the unpredictable over the safe. The chapter concludes with the two heading toward an old chapel, symbolizing a significant turning point in Ariana's emotional landscape.

This chapter is rich with themes of love, desire, and the struggle between safety and thrill, painting a vivid picture of Ariana's internal conflict and her quest for identity as she stands at a crossroads in her romantic life.

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Chapter 11 Summary:

New

In Chapter 11 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, we delve into a pivotal moment for the protagonists, Thomas and Ariana, who defy authority by sneaking into an old chapel on campus against Dean Marcus's warnings. The chapel, shrouded in dark history and decay, becomes their sanctuary—a place where they can shed the pressures of their lives and enjoy an intimate escape. For Ariana, the ambience evokes a bittersweet mix of nostalgia and joy, reminding her of her insecurities and the unresolved ghosts that linger in her life.

The dynamics shift when Thomas sends a deceptive text to Ariana's boyfriend, Ryan, suggesting she can't leave for the holidays because of unfinished work. This act of rebellion annoys Ariana at first, but it simultaneously ignites a spark between her and Thomas, whose warmth draws her in and makes her question her feelings for Ryan. This tension culminates in a passionate kiss that momentarily washes away her worries, encapsulating the allure of their secret encounter.

Their moment is soon disrupted by Eli Tate, Thomas's former roommate, whose carefree demeanor and surprise arrival with a joint bring mixed emotions for Ariana. As she grapples with her feelings of being sidelined by the men in her life—namely Daniel and Ryan—Ariana remains attracted to

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Thomas, even as Eli's presence complicates matters. Her longing for connection with Thomas grows, prompting her to try the joint and push her boundaries, leading to a humorous yet humbling experience.

With Eli's departure, Ariana seizes the opportunity to suggest they continue their revelry at a nearby hotel, only to discover that all local accommodations are fully booked due to heavy snowfall. Undeterred by this setback, she playfully lies in the snow, inviting Thomas to join her. As they share another tender kiss, the abandoned chapel transforms into a backdrop for their deepening bond, highlighting their desire for freedom and emotional connection.

Throughout this chapter, the themes of rebellion, desire, and the quest for self-identity resonate strongly. Thomas and Ariana's willingness to break the rules reflects their longing to escape societal constraints and explore passionate, unguarded moments. As their relationship blooms, both characters discover joy in their reckless choices and the exhilarating possibilities that lie ahead, leaving readers eager to see where their journey will take them next.

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Chapter 12: Breaking And Entering

In Chapter 12 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, Ariana experiences a pivotal moment of vulnerability after a romantic encounter with Thomas. Initially awash in warmth and happiness, her feelings quickly turn to panic when she spots a hat belonging to Daniel, a figure who embodies her greatest fears. The hat's presence in the snow jolts Ariana into the realization that Daniel's watchful eye could threaten everything she and Thomas have begun to build together.

Despite her attempts to downplay her anxiety to Thomas, insisting that the hat could belong to anyone, Ariana grapples with the truth—Daniel remains a powerful and intimidating force in their lives. This internal conflict heightens her vulnerability and reveals her deep-seated fears about the risks of her relationship with Thomas. In their conversation, Thomas recognizes Ariana's distress and provides comfort. However, his own frustration with Daniel surfaces, hinting at the complexity of their situation and hinting at deeper feelings for Ariana.

As tension mounts between them, Thomas's annoyance leads to a conflict, which underscores the strain their secret relationship puts on both of them. This dynamic enriches the character development as it reveals Thomas's

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vulnerability, reinforcing the bond between him and Ariana, yet also reflecting their shared anxieties.

To escape the mounting pressure, they seek refuge in Ketlar Hall, where Thomas cleverly rigs the door to let them in. Once inside his sparsely

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Chapter 13 Summary: The Morning After

In Chapter 13 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the tension between Ariana and Thomas intensifies as they find themselves alone in his dorm room, setting off a cascade of emotions. Thomas's casual invitation for Ariana to join him in bed ignites an internal conflict for her. Caught off guard by her attraction to him, she grapples with feelings of desire while feeling the weight of her loyalty to her boyfriend, Daniel.

As they lie together, playful banter suggests a deeper connection, yet this moment is overshadowed by guilt and anxiety. The comfort of Thomas's attention clashes with her commitment to Daniel, who is metaphorically lurking in the background and complicating her burgeoning feelings for Thomas.

The narrative shifts to morning, where Ariana is jolted awake from a nightmare that echoes her fears and regrets. Thomas's comforting presence starkly contrasts her troubled inner state, as he brushes against her and makes suggestive remarks. This only heightens her struggle between giving in to her desires and honoring her relationship with Daniel.

A turning point arrives when she receives a text from Daniel, urging her to

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reach out. This message amplifies her feelings of guilt, forcing her to confront her actions and the implications of her choices. The chapter closes with Ariana feeling ensnared between two emotional worlds—drawn to the excitement that Thomas brings, yet tethered to the life and commitment she has with Daniel.

Key Themes and Character Developments:

- **Conflict of Loyalty:** Ariana's torn feelings between Thomas and Daniel underscore the theme of emotional struggle intrinsic to relationships.
- **Desire vs. Guilt:** The chapter poignantly explores the tension that arises from physical attraction and the accompanying guilt of potential betrayal.
- **Self-Realization:** Ariana's emotional turmoil signals her journey toward understanding her own values and priorities, laying the groundwork for her self-discovery.
- **Intimacy and Vulnerability:** The proximity of the dorm room catalyzes a deeper emotional connection, revealing Ariana's vulnerabilities in the face of attraction.

Overall, this chapter effectively builds suspense and sets the stage for Ariana's emotional reckoning as she navigates the complexities of her feelings for both Thomas and Daniel.



Chapter 14 Summary: Not Sorry

Chapter 14 Summary: Last Christmas

In this poignant chapter of "Last Christmas," Ariana finds herself reeling from a distressing encounter with Thomas, a character who represents a potential distraction and temptation in her otherwise complex emotional landscape. When Thomas makes a pass at her, she reacts instinctively by rejecting him, spurred by her desire to return to Daniel, who is in Vermont. This moment marks a significant point for Ariana, as it encapsulates her internal conflict—her yearning to reconnect with Daniel in hopes of alleviating her guilt and doubts about their relationship.

As Ariana trudges through the storm towards Vermont, her mind drifts to cherished memories with Daniel. Their bond is illustrated through tender moments, notably a romantic birthday surprise in Manhattan that showcases Daniel's affection for her. Yet, these memories are tinged with unease; she cannot escape the darker recollection of a violent confrontation Daniel had in August when he aggressively confronted another man for merely looking at her. This troubling incident creates a complex emotional tapestry for Ariana, leaving her to grapple with her love for Daniel alongside her fears stemming from his uncontrollable jealousy.

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Seeking refuge in the shower, Ariana aims to find solace, but her moment of peace is disrupted by unsettling noises in the house—mysterious creaks and looming shadows that evoke a sense of dread. This tension serves as a metaphor for her growing unease with her situation. It reflects her inner turmoil as she questions her loyalty to Daniel in light of his possessive behavior, while also navigating the uncomfortable implications of her interaction with Thomas.

Overall, this chapter intricately explores Ariana's emotional conflict as she strives to balance her deep feelings for Daniel against her growing concerns about his temperament. The themes of love, guilt, and the pursuit of self-clarity resonate throughout her journey, drawing readers deeper into the labyrinth of her heart and mind as she attempts to navigate the treacherous waters of her romantic entanglements.

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Chapter 15 Summary: Pleading Mantra

In Chapter 15 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, Ariana confronts a mix of anxiety and unexpected solitude as she spends her first night alone in Billings House. Fresh out of the shower and uneasy in her unfamiliar surroundings, she experiences a moment of panic when she realizes her towel is missing. This feeling of vulnerability escalates when Thomas Pearson, a fellow resident with whom she previously had a heated altercation, barges into the bathroom. His unexpected entrance shocks Ariana, leading her to scream in embarrassment.

Thomas, displaying a relaxed demeanor, attempts to defuse the situation by explaining that his intention was merely to discuss their earlier argument. As Ariana struggles with the remnants of their past conflict, she begins to relax, particularly when he reassures her he hadn't meant to frighten her. However, she can't shake the feeling that her boyfriend, Daniel, may have been playing a prank on her, which adds to her discomfort.

Complicating matters, a fierce snowstorm has prompted the governor to declare a state of emergency, trapping Ariana and Thomas together in the Billings House, creating a tense, claustrophobic atmosphere. Acknowledging their predicament, Thomas suggests they aim for friendship during their

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enforced isolation, understanding her commitment to Daniel which precludes any romantic developments. This proposition prompts Ariana to reflect on the nature of their relationship, as she grapples with her growing attraction to Thomas.

Themes of miscommunication, emotional tension, and the complexities of loyalty permeate this chapter. Ariana's internal struggle highlights her divided feelings, caught between her loyalty to Daniel and the undeniable connection to Thomas. This conflict sets the groundwork for deeper exploration of her relationships as the story unfolds, underscoring the challenges of navigating love and friendship amidst a backdrop of isolation and emotional turmoil.

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Chapter 16: Pancakes And Grilled Cheese

In Chapter 16 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the story delves into the emotional turbulence faced by Ariana as she navigates her feelings for Thomas while trying to remain committed to Daniel. Following an awkward yet charged moment of intimacy, where Thomas suggests they should be "just friends," the tension escalates when they hear footsteps approaching her room. In a moment of desperation, they hide together in Noelle's overflowing closet. This experience not only heightens the physical closeness between them but also amplifies Ariana's anxieties about her precarious situation at Easton, particularly her fear of expulsion and the disappointment it would bring to her mother, who has high expectations for her.

After the intruder leaves, Ariana is struck by a sense of violation when she discovers a photo—one taken by Daniel—missing from her belongings. This object holds sentimental value, further intensifying her emotional turmoil. In an attempt to distract Ariana from her distress, Thomas suggests a lighthearted cooking adventure, leading them to the housemother's apartment. This escapade becomes a vehicle for deeper connection as they candidly share their backgrounds.

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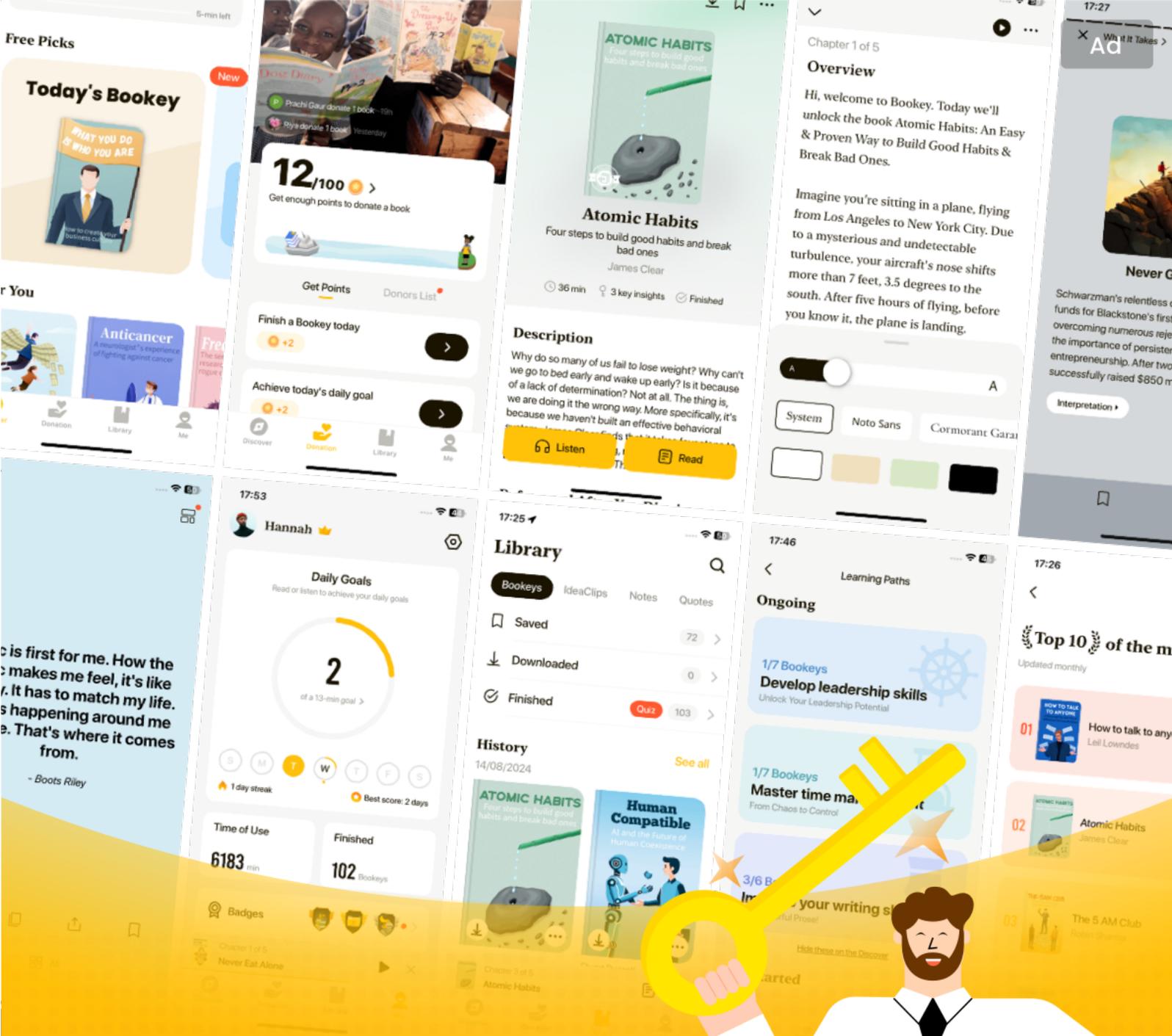
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Through their conversation, both characters reveal their familial struggles. Thomas opens up about his strained relationships and feelings of disconnection, while Ariana shares her painful childhood experiences shaped by her mother's mental health issues, culminating in a past suicide attempt. This exchange of vulnerability fosters a burgeoning bond between them,

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Chapter 17 Summary: Near Miss

Summary of Chapter 17 from "Last Christmas"

The chapter unfolds on the last day of school before the Christmas break, setting the stage for a pivotal conversation between Ariana and Thomas. As the winter chill permeates the atmosphere, Ariana reflects on her past trauma—specifically the painful memory of her mother's overdose. Her voice becomes flat and detached as she shares this burden, illustrating her emotional struggles with love and loss.

Caught in the weight of her memories, Ariana is taken aback when Thomas inquires about her complicated relationship with Daniel, the boy her mother insists she spend the holidays with. This question strikes Ariana as intensely personal; she's rarely had someone genuinely ask her about her feelings. The conversation deepens as Thomas challenges Ariana's perception of Daniel, suggesting that Daniel doesn't love her as she believes. This comment ignites a protective fury within her, prompting a heated exchange between them.

In a moment of mischief, Thomas proposes a bet: he will try to prove that Daniel isn't a virgin, and if he fails, he will help clean up one of Ariana's messes. However, if he is correct, Ariana must kiss him. With her loyalty to



Daniel at stake, Ariana feels compelled to accept the bet, eager to defend her feelings for him.

As they step outside, a fierce snowstorm envelopes them, symbolizing both the external and internal challenges they face. Despite the biting cold and deep snow that make their journey difficult, moments of camaraderie emerge between them. Ariana finds herself comforted by Thomas's presence, even as she insists that their hand-holding is merely a survival tactic against the elements.

Their adventure takes a tense turn when they spot a shadowy figure lurking nearby, igniting a flicker of fear and suspense, which contrasts starkly with Ariana's thoughts about her friends celebrating the holidays elsewhere. This moment heightens the stakes, emphasizing the jagged edges of Ariana's emotional landscape and reflecting her sense of isolation.

Key Themes:

- **Emotional Burden:** Ariana's engagement with her past trauma underscores the weight of her family issues and how they shape her present.
- **Relationship Dynamics:** The interplay between Ariana, Daniel, and Thomas delves into the complexities of love, trust, and loyalty.
- **Friendship and Support:** The budding connection between Ariana and Thomas suggests that even amidst personal turmoil, meaningful

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relationships can flourish.

Through a blend of heartfelt dialogue, physical struggle against the snowstorm, and a suspenseful encounter, this chapter vividly portrays Ariana's inner conflicts and her gradual path toward self-discovery.

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Chapter 18 Summary: The Bet

In Chapter 18 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the stakes are high as Ariana and her friend Thomas explore the tension-filled atmosphere of their college campus during winter. The chapter opens with Ariana spotting Isobel, a fellow student who has returned to campus, which highlights the need for discretion in their actions. Thomas candidly shares the pressure he faces from his wealthy family, revealing that being caught could lead to his disinheritance. This context sets a tone of urgency and risk for their upcoming escapades.

The plot thickens as they engage in a reckless bet related to Ariana's boyfriend, Daniel. Despite her initial hesitation to invade Daniel's privacy, Ariana finds herself stepping into his chaotic dorm room, cluttered with clothes and personal items. The playful banter between Thomas and Ariana injects humor into the scene, providing a contrast to the undercurrent of tension as they search through Daniel's belongings for revealing secrets.

As they dig deeper into Daniel's life, Thomas attempts to unlock his laptop, symbolizing the lingering themes of trust and betrayal that permeate their investigation. Ariana insists that she trusts Daniel, yet her anxiety suggestively pokes holes in her confidence. Despite this emotional turmoil, her friendship with Thomas shines through, offering a dynamic interplay that



keeps readers engaged.

The chapter reaches a dramatic cliffhanger when Thomas successfully accesses Daniel's computer, revealing private conversations that threaten to destabilize Ariana's trust in her boyfriend. This shocking development propels readers forward, eager to discover how these revelations will influence Ariana's relationship with Daniel and reshape the dynamics within the group. With themes of loyalty, betrayal, curiosity, and the consequences these traits can unleash, this chapter sets the stage for pivotal moments ahead.

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Chapter 19 Summary:

Trapped

In Chapter 19 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, readers are plunged into an emotional storm as Ariana confronts the painful truth about her relationship with Daniel. The chapter opens with Thomas, a supportive friend, revealing a chat log that exposes Daniel's betrayal. Initially viewed as a devoted boyfriend, Daniel is unveiled as deceitful, with messages indicating infidelity. Ariana's heart sinks further when she discovers a haunting spreadsheet that catalogs the names of the girls Daniel has been involved with, each entry striking her deeply—most painfully, her own name.

This revelation leaves Ariana feeling humiliated and questioning her self-worth. The emotional weight of the betrayal overwhelms her, leading her into a tumult of despair. Yet, amidst her turmoil, Thomas's steadfast support offers a glimmer of hope. He gently reminds her that she deserves more than the pain Daniel has caused, which becomes a pivotal moment for Ariana. Empowered by his encouragement, she begins to reclaim her sense of self, pushing against the hurt that had been inflicted upon her.

As the tension shifts, so does their dynamic; Ariana and Thomas share a passionate kiss that ignites the chemistry between them, marking the beginning of an emotional rebirth for Ariana. In a bold act of rebellion against her past, she decides to lose her virginity to Thomas in a place that

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once represented her pain—Daniel's dorm room. This choice symbolizes Ariana's assertion of her autonomy and her readiness to embrace new experiences, turning a page on her past.

Key Themes:

- **Betrayal and Self-Worth:** Ariana's journey illustrates the emotional scars left by deception in young love, as she grapples with her shaken identity.
- **Empowerment and Reclamation:** Through her resolve to stand up for herself, Ariana embodies strength, demonstrating that resilience can emerge from vulnerability.
- **Passion and Rebellion:** The chapter captures the complex dynamics of teenage relationships, highlighting the transition from innocence to a more nuanced understanding of love and desire.

This combination of betrayal, support, and personal growth weaves a compelling narrative that underscores the significance of self-discovery and the courage to move beyond hurtful relationships.

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Chapter 20: The Leap

Summary of Chapter 20 from "Last Christmas"

In this pivotal chapter, Ariana Osgood finds herself in a moment of vulnerability and connection with Thomas, a significant contrast to her tumultuous past with Daniel. As they settle into the intimacy of Thomas's room, Ariana experiences a profound sense of safety and acceptance for the first time. Unlike Daniel, who often made her feel insecure, Thomas understands her challenges and embraces her true self, deepening her feelings for him.

However, the serene atmosphere is abruptly disrupted by the blaring fire alarm, instigating a wave of panic as they scramble to escape the impending chaos. The piercing siren amplifies their urgency and presents a risky choice for the couple: jump out of the window or face a very real threat of disciplinary action as dormitory rules are enforced. Initially paralyzed by fear, Ariana hesitates, but Thomas's unwavering confidence instills a newfound courage within her. Together, they leap into the snow below, narrowly avoiding the consequences of being discovered.

Their escape is fraught with tension as they hide behind a tree, acutely aware

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of the stakes. The situation escalates when Ariana spots Dean Marcus approaching—an enforcer of the school’s strict rules, notorious for punishing students with expulsion for infractions. Just as their fear mounts, a power outage plunges the area into darkness, providing them with a fleeting cover and a chance to evade capture.

This chapter weaves together themes of love, trust, and the importance of companionship amidst fear. It marks a significant development in Ariana's character, as she gains confidence in her relationship with Thomas while simultaneously confronting external pressures that test their bond. The juxtaposition of tender romantic moments against the backdrop of their precarious situation captures the complexities of young love and the lengths they will go to protect it.

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Chapter 21 Summary:

Easy

In Chapter 21 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the tension reaches a boiling point as Ariana grapples with the repercussions of her tumultuous relationship with her ex-boyfriend, Daniel, whose threatening messages have left her feeling vulnerable. Their complicated history adds an undercurrent of dread, especially with Daniel's dangerous tendencies prominent in her thoughts.

Amid her struggle, Ariana is deeply concerned for her friend Thomas, who has injured his ankle and relies on her support. As they take refuge together in the chilly environment, Thomas exhibits a casual disregard for Daniel's menacing attitude, but for Ariana, the fear is palpable and ever-present, suggesting that the danger isn't just external—it seeps into the very fabric of their lives.

Determined to alleviate Thomas's pain, Ariana bravely ventures to his room, overcoming her terror of encountering Daniel. The icy atmosphere heightens her apprehension as she searches Thomas's desk for painkillers. In a moment of harrowing discovery, she unearths not only the Vicodin concealed beneath a false bottom but also a compromising photo of herself and Thomas taken during a vulnerable moment in Daniel's space. The image encapsulates her worst fears: that the remnants of her past could obliterate

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their lives.

As her panic intensifies, an unsettling awareness of another presence in the room grips Ariana. The chilling sensation of warm breath against her neck triggers her fight-or-flight response, prompting her to grasp a broken bottle for protection. This stark moment of confrontation illustrates her transformation from a sheltered figure to one ready to defend herself and her future against the shadows of her past.

The chapter's exploration of paranoia, fear, and resilience underscores Ariana's character development. Her struggle against the ghosts of her relationship with Daniel accentuates her determination to safeguard the burgeoning bond she shares with Thomas. The escalating tension serves as a gripping reminder of the vulnerabilities faced in the complexities of love and past trauma, ensuring that readers are glued to the page in anticipation of what comes next.

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Chapter 22 Summary:

Blood

In Chapter 22 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the tension escalates as Ariana finds herself in a precarious situation in Thomas's dorm room, feeling the presence of an intruder. In a moment of sheer panic, she jumps out of the window into the snowy night, injuring herself—a stark reminder of the emotional and physical stakes at play. This frightening escape marks one of the most terrifying moments of her life, echoing the traumas she has faced in the past.

The chapter deepens its exploration of vulnerability as Ariana reunites with Thomas, who is visibly weakened and injured. Their connection is strong yet strained; Ariana longs for his reassurance but is painfully aware that he is unable to provide the protection she needs. Together, they decide to seek refuge in the Drake dorm, hoping to find warmth and safety amid their chaotic reality.

As they make their way through the deep snow toward the basement of Drake, fears and doubts cloud Ariana's mind, particularly concerning Daniel, another key figure in their story. Upon arriving at the dorm, they encounter various challenges, yet their teamwork enables them to navigate these obstacles. Despite Thomas's condition, influenced by painkillers, he attempts to inject humor into the situation by reminiscing about lighter moments from

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their past, showcasing the depth of their relationship even in dire circumstances.

Ariana's resilience shines through as she aids Thomas into the basement, embodying strength despite her own exhaustion and fears. The chapter encapsulates themes of dependency, survival instincts, and the complexities of their bond, illustrating how they lean on one another while confronting the uncertainties that lie ahead. Their journey together underscores not just individual struggles, but also the importance of solidarity in the face of fear.

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Chapter 23 Summary: Duplicity

In Chapter 23 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the story reaches a gripping moment of crisis as Ariana grapples with the consequences of a recent traumatic incident. The chapter opens with Ariana in sheer panic, her hands and coat stained with blood. Initially, she fears that the blood might belong to Thomas, but a horrifying realization dawns on her—it could stem from someone else, possibly even a victim of her own actions. This shocking acknowledgment plunges her into a deep well of fear and disgust, particularly towards her abusive ex-boyfriend, Daniel, whose violent nature and manipulative lies loom over her thoughts.

As she cradles an unconscious Thomas, whom she genuinely cares for, Ariana reflects on the stark contrast between his kindness and the mistreatment she experienced with Daniel. This moment intensifies her feelings for Thomas, illuminating her desire for safety and respect in their relationship. In a moment of desperation, Ariana attempts to reach Daniel, hoping that his absence will provide her with a semblance of safety. However, her phone dies, amplifying her sense of helplessness and entrapment.

The tension escalates when Ariana hears footsteps approaching. In a frantic attempt to protect Thomas, she drags him to hide just as Mr. Holmes, a



respected teacher, enters the basement. The fear of being discovered by Mr. Holmes transforms the situation into one filled with dread; she understands that exposure could lead to devastating repercussions. This scene encapsulates the chapter's primary themes: the interplay of fear, identity, and the instinct to protect those we hold dear amidst a backdrop of personal turmoil.

Throughout this chapter, Brian artfully balances suspense with profound character introspection, delving into themes of love, betrayal, and the deep emotional scars left by toxic relationships, further complicating Ariana's path to healing and safety.

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Chapter 24:

Stalker

Chapter 24 Summary: Betrayal and Secrets

In this gripping chapter, Ariana finds herself in a precarious situation, hiding in a basement with her friend Thomas. The emotional weight of shame and self-hatred bears down on her as she reflects on her choices that have led her to this dark moment. With their teacher, Mr. Holmes, actively searching for them, Ariana is plagued by the fear that the lies she has told—especially regarding her identity—will come crashing down and ruin their relationship.

The tension amplifies when she unexpectedly witnesses a shocking encounter between Mr. Holmes and Isobel Bautista, a fellow student. This revelation of an illicit affair between them shatters Ariana's previous beliefs about their integrity, intensifying her feelings of anger—not only towards Isobel, who she considers a traitor, but also at herself for being so easily deceived by two people she trusted.

In a moment of desperation and opportunity, Ariana spots Mr. Holmes's phone and seizes the chance to gather crucial information. As she clumsily activates the video recording feature, she unwittingly captures incriminating footage of the affair, further complicating her feelings of disgust and a



deep-seated need to document the betrayal for her own protection.

As dawn breaks, Ariana returns to Drake Hall, feeling an eerie sense of danger lurking in the shadows. The threat of an unseen stalker looms large, and her unresolved feelings for her boyfriend, Daniel, weigh heavily on her

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Chapter 25 Summary: The Mission

Summary of Chapter 25 from "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian

In this gripping chapter, Ariana becomes increasingly preoccupied with a haunting photo that reveals a dark smudge in a mirror, which she soon identifies as belonging to Sergei Tretyakov, a student whose unsettling obsession with her has raised serious concerns. Accompanied by Thomas, a friend who is dealing with a sprained ankle, Ariana grapples with the implications of her discovery, feeling a blend of excitement and anxiety.

As they delve into the past, Ariana remembers unsettling instances where Sergei had captured photos of her, particularly at a recent event that took a troubling turn. This recollection leads her to suspect that Sergei has been stalking her since she returned to campus. Fueled by a determination to uncover the truth, Ariana proposes that they break into Sergei's room to confront the situation head-on.

Despite Thomas's initial hesitance, he assents to her plan, and the banter that ensues lightens the mood; he humorously comments on the potential dangers they might confront— playfully referencing his less-than-fashionable clothing choices. Their light-hearted exchanges create a brief moment of

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levity amid the ominous circumstances, reflecting the strength of their friendship.

As they prepare for the daring infiltration, the snowy beauty of their campus serves as a stark contrast to the looming threat posed by Sergei. This chapter underscores essential themes of camaraderie, courage, and the relentless pursuit of truth, as Ariana and Thomas brace themselves to uncover the mystery that surrounds them.

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Chapter 26 Summary: So Easy

In Chapter 26 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, tension mounts as Ariana becomes captivated by a door in the dorm adorned with snapshots taken by Sergei, a mysterious character known for his keen eye and troubling obsession with her. These photographs offer a glimpse into the authentic lives of Easton Academy students, showcasing their true selves, free from the façades they typically cultivate. When Thomas, Ariana's friend, reveals a picture of her, it sparks a flood of emotions, reminding her of a time when she was innocent and carefree, in stark contrast to her current struggles.

Upon entering Sergei's meticulously organized room, Ariana stumbles upon a black-and-white photo of herself among others on his camera, leading to the horrifying realization that he has been stalking her. Panic sets in as she comprehends the potential consequences of his actions; the images could be used to blackmail her, threatening her dreams of graduating from Easton and attending Princeton, a prestigious university.

Despite Thomas's attempts to comfort her, Ariana's anxiety escalates, heightened by the sudden appearance of Sergei at the door. His expression reflects a mix of desperation and fear, intensifying Ariana's dread. Sergei's abrupt escape propels Ariana into action, driven by a fierce determination to confront him and protect her future.

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In a gripping chase through the snow-covered landscape, Ariana's resolve to catch Sergei reflects her deep-seated need to safeguard her identity and happiness, even at the risk of Thomas's safety. This chapter poignantly explores themes of vulnerability, the quest for self-identity amidst external pressures, and the paralyzing grip of fear that compels individuals to act in desperate ways. The events underscore Ariana's transformation as she navigates adolescence, grappling with her past while striving to forge a stable future.

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Chapter 27 Summary: Everything

In Chapter 27, titled "Last Christmas," of Kate Brian's gripping narrative, the protagonist, Ariana, confronts a critical juncture in her life as she pursues Sergei, whose increasingly dangerous presence threatens her future. The chapter unfolds in a dense forest that serves as both a literal and metaphorical maze for Ariana, filled with uncertainty and high stakes tied to her personal relationships and reputation.

As the tension escalates, a violent confrontation culminates in a chilling episode on a frozen lake. In a shocking turn, Sergei falls through the ice and clings desperately to Ariana's ankle, pleading for help. This moment forces Ariana into a moral quandary, torn between her instinct for self-preservation and the anger she harbors towards Sergei for his past actions—particularly for having taken compromising photographs of her with her love interest, Thomas.

In a moment of grim clarity, Ariana makes the harrowing decision to push Sergei beneath the ice, thus liberating herself from his manipulative grasp and potentially securing her future. The weight of her choice bears down on her but is momentarily overshadowed by an unexpected tranquility that washes over her after Sergei disappears into the icy depths.

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When Ariana reconnects with Thomas, who senses her turmoil but is only presented with a carefully concocted story of the encounter, the layers of her psychological state reveal a mix of relief and burgeoning guilt. This chapter delves deeply into themes of betrayal, survival instincts, and the moral complexities that emerge in life-threatening situations. Through Ariana's actions and emotional turmoil, readers are invited to consider the intricate nature of human decisions and the lingering consequences of choices made under pressure.

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Chapter 28: Hardest Thing

In Chapter 28 of "Last Christmas," the atmosphere is charged with tension as Ariana and Thomas cope with the emotional fallout from a tragic incident involving a boy named Sergei, who has fallen through the ice while they were nearby. As they come to terms with the reality of the accident, Ariana struggles to contain her fear and anxiety, particularly at Thomas's suggestion to involve the police. She vehemently opposes this idea, worried about potential repercussions that could jeopardize their futures, including expulsion or even arrest.

Their conversation deepens their bond, revealing mutual fears—Thomas's dread of losing everything he values, including Ariana, provides a sense of reassurance amidst the turmoil. This moment of vulnerability and connection brings a flicker of romance to their shared crisis, allowing Ariana to feel comfort and warmth from Thomas in the face of despair.

As they prepare to leave the site of the incident, Thomas proposes they separate temporarily to avoid drawing attention, which evokes Ariana's anger. She firmly expresses her desire to stay close, signifying their developing relationship and the reliance they have on one another during such a trying time. Eventually, Thomas relents, and they agree to navigate the coming days with caution, determined to face whatever lies ahead

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together.

The narrative transitions to a poignant moment in downtown Easton, where they stand at a cold, empty intersection, mirroring the heaviness of their situation. Ariana grapples with conflicting emotions regarding her secret

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Chapter 29 Summary: Worth It January Of Junior Year

In Chapter 29 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, Ariana grapples with her conflicting emotions for two significant figures in her life: Thomas, a source of deep attraction, and Daniel, her boyfriend who represents her current commitments. After spending an isolating two weeks in a motel due to a severe snowstorm, Ariana has carefully constructed an alibi to maintain her relationship with Daniel while concealing her true feelings for Thomas.

As she prepares to leave the motel, a poignant moment unfolds between Ariana and Thomas. Their heartfelt exchange underscores her confusion, as Thomas gifts her a subway token, symbolizing his hopes for her and offering a tangible connection between them.

Upon returning to Easton, Ariana is eager to reconnect with Thomas, which casts a shadow over her interactions with Daniel. Her conversation with Daniel reveals tension; while he expresses both frustration and a sense of relief over her return, she feels compelled to meet him at a lodge rather than the train station, indicating her desire to mentally prepare for the role she must play.

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The reunion with Thomas at a secluded building on campus is charged with passion and intimacy, capturing the essence of their attraction. However, the looming presence of Daniel complicates their relationship. Just as the chemistry between Ariana and Thomas intensifies, she is interrupted by a call from her friend Paige, forcing her to pull away from the moment.

The chapter concludes with a mix of exhilaration and apprehension for Ariana, as she looks ahead to her secret rendezvous with Thomas while needing to uphold her obligations to Daniel. This internal struggle highlights the central theme of the narrative: the tension between longing for freedom and the weight of romantic duty.

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Chapter 30 Summary: No Good Reason

In Chapter 30 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the tension remains palpable as Ariana grapples with her complicated feelings for Thomas Pearson. After an emotionally charged goodbye kiss, she heads to Gwendolyn Hall, acutely aware of the facade she must uphold in her life.

The narrative shifts to a diner where Ariana meets her boyfriend, Daniel. His late arrival is marked by aimless chatter, which only deepens the disconnect between them. While Daniel discusses a tragic drowning incident that recently made headlines, Ariana struggles to maintain an air of concern, secretly relieved that the victim is not someone she knows. This moment underscores her growing dissatisfaction with their relationship, particularly as Daniel shares his ambitious plans for the future, including a long-distance romance when he goes to Harvard. Ariana feels trapped, torn between pretending to share Daniel's enthusiasm and her undeniable connection with Thomas.

As the conversation continues, the atmosphere shifts dramatically when a mysterious girl confronts Ariana during Daniel's absence. The girl has alarming knowledge of Ariana's past with Thomas, hinting at a dark history filled with secrets and betrayal. She reveals that she once harbored feelings for Thomas and threatens to expose the hidden truths of Ariana's

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relationship with him. Furthermore, she suggests a link between Ariana's secrets and the recent drowning, deepening Ariana's sense of vulnerability and trepidation.

This chapter adeptly explores themes of love, betrayal, and the heavy burden of secrets, highlighting the dissonance between appearance and reality. The psychological tension between characters intensifies as the specter of loyalty—caught between past and present—casts a shadow over Ariana's choices, leaving readers questioning how long she can maintain her carefully constructed life before the truth comes crashing down.

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Chapter 31 Summary: The Truth

Summary of Chapter 31: Last Christmas by Kate Brian

Chapter 31 unfolds with Ariana grappling with a deep emotional crisis, sparked by a chilling confrontation with a mysterious girl who reveals unsettling truths about her life. This girl, dressed in an aura of foreboding, knows intimate details about Ariana's connection to Sergei—whose tragic death looms large in Ariana's heart. For too long, Ariana has carried the burden of guilt, believing herself responsible for Sergei's fate. However, the girl's taunts hint at a more sinister manipulation, suggesting that others may have orchestrated the tragedy, leaving Ariana ensnared in a web of shame and anxiety.

Overwhelmed by panic, Ariana retreats to a nearby diner, where the weight of her emotions nearly suffocates her. In a desperate attempt to reclaim her composure, she steps outside into the frigid winter air, seeking clarity amidst the chaos enveloping her life.

The chapter intensifies as Ariana confronts Thomas, her boyfriend, demanding explanations about Melissa—a girl from his past who claims deep feelings for him. Ariana's frustration boils over as she learns about

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Melissa's existence and realizes that Thomas's past may be entwined with their present turmoil. This revelation stirs feelings of betrayal and mistrust within Ariana, who fears that Melissa could jeopardize their safety and relationship.

Key themes of betrayal, guilt, and the quest for truth underpin this chapter, highlighting Ariana's descent into emotional turmoil paired with a burgeoning resolve to uncover the reality behind their struggles. As she battles her internal demons, the stakes of her journey grow increasingly higher, pulling readers deeper into the complex mysteries surrounding her life and the dangers that loom ahead.

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Chapter 32: Peace

Summary of Chapter 32 from "Last Christmas"

In this gripping chapter, Ariana opens up to Thomas about a disturbing encounter with a girl named Mel, who poses a serious threat to their secret relationship. Mel, exhibiting manipulative behavior, blackmails Ariana, threatening to reveal their romance to Daniel — Ariana's current partner — and insinuating that Thomas could face legal troubles with the police. The weight of this revelation sends shockwaves through both characters, emphasizing the precarious situation they find themselves in as Thomas realizes the implications for his life at Easton, a backdrop of social complexities and peer scrutiny.

Ariana's anxiety deepens when she recalls how Mel must have detected their connection after spotting them together at a North Face store. This moment serves as a turning point, highlighting the vulnerability of their relationship. As Thomas grapples with his fear and anger towards Mel's manipulative tactics, Ariana's calm demeanor helps him regain control, signaling the strength of their emotional bond amidst escalating tension. Their mutual concern about Mel's invasive presence underscores the fragility of their situation.

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Determined to take action, Ariana senses that Thomas is beginning to distance himself for her protection, which stirs a sense of urgency within her to confront Mel directly. The chapter transitions to a tense school environment, where Ariana resolves to track down Mel. Her pursuit leads her to Mel's house, climaxing in a suspenseful confrontation as she surprises

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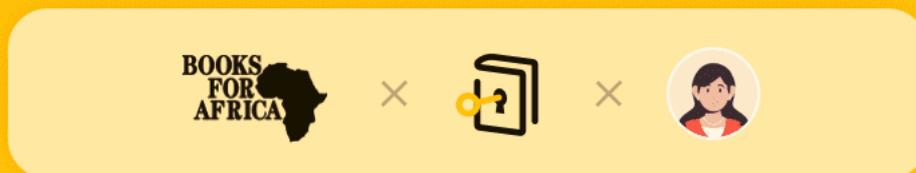




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Chapter 33 Summary: I-l-l-e-g-a-l

In Chapter 33 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the narrative delves into Ariana's psychological turmoil as she faces the repercussions of her actions involving Sergei. The chapter opens with a confrontation from Mel, who accuses Ariana of killing Sergei and vividly reminds her of his desperate pleas for mercy before she betrayed him. This accusation catalyzes a surge of rage within Ariana, forcing her to confront her emotions and seek a fragile peace amidst the escalating chaos surrounding her.

As the tension mounts, Isobel, a classmate, further complicates Ariana's turmoil when she hints at knowing about the incident that marred Ariana's break. Isobel reveals that the school's gossip instigator, Noelle, has disseminated the scandalous information, striking terror into Ariana's heart. Fearing that her dark secret has surfaced, Ariana is caught between Isobel's playful demeanor regarding her personal life and the anxiety that lurks beneath the surface.

The classroom setting amplifies Ariana's distress when Mr. Holmes announces assignments and subsequently critiques her paper harshly, resulting in a humiliating C+. With academic excellence being a cornerstone of Ariana's identity, this moment of vulnerability showcases the stark contrast in her life: while she presents an impeccable exterior to the world,

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deeply rooted issues and emotional strife threaten to unravel her.

Throughout the chapter, pivotal themes emerge, including **guilt and consequences**, as Ariana's internal conflict manifests in the haunting weight of her past actions. Simultaneously, the narrative explores **identity and image**, revealing how external perfection often conceals deeper flaws—exemplified by characters like Isobel. Lastly, the fragility of **peer dynamics** is highlighted; friendships and alliances fluctuate under the pressure of gossip and hidden secrets, illustrating the precarious nature of teenage relationships.

Ultimately, Ariana's journey in this chapter underscores her struggle to maintain control over her social persona while navigating the equally complex and unsettling realities of her past. As she grapples with her anger and feelings of injustice, she understands that careful navigation of her relationships is essential to surviving the emotional labyrinth she finds herself in.

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Chapter 34 Summary:

Stupid

In Chapter 34 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the story intensifies as Ariana demonstrates her boldness by confronting Mr. Holmes, her teacher. After her classmates leave the classroom, she strategically reveals a scandalous video on her phone that implicates him in an inappropriate relationship with another student, Isobel. This act of manipulation serves as leverage for Ariana to negotiate a higher grade for her assignment. Mr. Holmes, initially appearing stern, is taken aback and ultimately succumbs to her demands, marking her paper with an A as a desperate concession. This moment underscores Ariana's cunning nature and her lack of remorse for putting Mr. Holmes in such a precarious situation; in her eyes, he deserves the fallout from the revelation.

Following this tense encounter, Ariana's focus shifts to her romantic interest, Thomas. Eagerly anticipating their time together, she confirms their plans and feels a powerful sense of control over her life. Ariana admires Thomas not only for his charm but also for his hidden vulnerabilities, which others often miss. However, as they reunite, Thomas expresses concern about potential gossip, particularly from Melissa, a rival who has previously jeopardized their relationship. Confident in her ability to manage the situation, Ariana reassures Thomas that she has dealt with Melissa, showcasing her growing assertiveness.



This chapter explores themes such as the dynamics of power, the complexities of manipulation, and the nuances of young love. It vividly captures Ariana's evolution into a more empowered and self-assured character who is unafraid to assert her influence to achieve her desires.

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Chapter 35 Summary: Epilogue September Of Senior Year

In Chapter 35 of "Last Christmas" by Kate Brian, the relationship dynamics between Ariana and Thomas reach a critical turning point. The chapter opens with an intense confrontation where Ariana endeavors to explain her actions regarding a girl she perceived as a threat to their relationship. Instead of finding solace in her honesty, Thomas reacts with a mix of fear and anger, illustrated by his clenched jaw and retreating posture. This acute shift in his demeanor leaves Ariana feeling vulnerable, adding depth to her character as she grapples with the fallout of her decisions.

As the dialogue progresses, Thomas articulates his concerns about being drawn into the ramifications of Ariana's actions. He questions her alibi, underscoring his anxiety about the potential risks that weigh heavily on both of their futures. Despite the escalating tension, there is a poignant moment when Ariana reassures Thomas regarding her situation, defusing some of his apprehension and suggesting a sliver of hope. This exchange highlights Ariana's steadfast commitment to their relationship, showcasing her readiness to face any challenges for the sake of their love.

The chapter masterfully encapsulates the emotional rollercoaster they

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experience—Ariana's confidence wanes under the weight of fear, only to be replaced momentarily with relief when Thomas decides to remain true to their plans. Their bond is reaffirmed through a tender kiss, symbolizing their determination to overcome the obstacles in front of them.

However, the epilogue shifts the narrative to September, where Ariana finds herself back at school amid a sea of oblivious classmates. The contrast is stark when she sees Thomas interacting with a new girl named Reed, sharing smiles and an intimate moment over a subway token—a nostalgic emblem of their connection. This scene leaves Ariana feeling heartbroken and insecure, forcing her to confront the painful reality that Thomas may be moving on, igniting feelings of betrayal and abandonment.

Overall, this chapter delves into the nuanced themes of love, loyalty, and the intricate web of relationships that can be disrupted by external pressures. The emotional depth and complexity of Ariana's journey illustrate the swift transitions between trust and insecurity, making it clear how fragile personal connections can be when faced with unforeseen challenges.

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