

Abhorsen Study Guide

Abhorsen by Garth Nix

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Contents

Abhorsen Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	4
Prologue.....	5
Chapter 1.....	6
Chapter 2.....	8
Chapter 3.....	9
Chapter 4.....	11
Chapter 5.....	12
Chapter 6.....	13
Chapter 7.....	14
Chapter 8.....	15
Chapter 9.....	17
Chapter 10.....	18
Chapter 11.....	19
Chapter 12.....	20
Chapter 13.....	21
Chapter 14.....	22
Chapter 15.....	23
Chapters 16.....	24
Chapter 17.....	26
Chapter 18.....	27
Chapter 20.....	28
Chapter 21.....	29
Chapter 22.....	30



[Chapter 23..... 31](#)

[Chapter 24..... 32](#)

[Chapter 25..... 33](#)

[Chapter 26..... 34](#)

[Chapter 27..... 35](#)

[Chapter 28..... 36](#)

[Chapter 29..... 37](#)

[Epilogue..... 38](#)

[Characters..... 39](#)

[Objects/Places..... 42](#)

[Themes..... 44](#)

[Style..... 45](#)

[Quotes..... 47](#)

[Topics for Discussion..... 50](#)



Plot Summary

Abhorsen is the third novel in The Abhorsen Trilogy series by author Garth Nix. In this novel, the Abhorsen-In-Waiting, Lirael, and Prince Sameth, who is a Wallmaker, must confront and bind the evil spirit Orannis before it can destroy all life.

It turns out the Ninth Power, which is Orannis, was broken into two pieces and buried inside of two silver hemispheres at the beginning of time. The two hemispheres were then buried deep in the ground. That is until Hedge uses the Dead to dig up the hemispheres in an attempt to reunite the hemispheres and set Orannis the Destroyer free.

Since Lirael, the Abhorsen-in-Waiting, and their son Prince Samuel believe the Abhorsen Sireal and her husband the king are dead, Lirael and Sam set out to stop Hedge. Lirael and her cohorts—Sam, The Disreputable Dog and Mogget—are the only ones that have the power to stop the Destroyer from emerging from the hemispheres and destroying everyone.

The group battles the Dead Chlorr, the Dead armies and magical powers in their attempt to save their world. Lirael transitions from the world of Life and Death in her race against time.



Prologue

Prologue Summary

The fog is rolling into the city of Corvere. King Touchstone is standing inside of the castle. Touchstone's wife, Sabriel, is writing a letter to an old school friend. Touchstone still feels a little shock at seeing his wife dressed in Ancelstierran clothing. Sabriel insists they must attend the garden party of Corolini, which seems to be the opposing party to that of King Touchstone.

As Sabriel puts on her coat and boots, she talks with her husband about how close she is to forming an alliance against Corolini. Touchstone spends his time making sure his pistols are loaded and ready for the party, just in case.

As the two vehicles drive out of the gate, Darned, one of the bodyguards, says that the escort isn't following them. He suggests they change the route they were going to take, but run into a group of demonstrators for Corolini. To make matters worse, there isn't one police officer in sight. As Darned is ordering the cars to back up, a horse and wagon blocks the way. Armed men emerge and start shooting.

The cars are bullet proof, but then one of the agitators throws a bomb. Darned grabs it to sail it back in the enemies' direction but the bomb explodes in the air. It kills Darned instantly, blinds and injures those around it.

Prologue Analysis

The fog acts as a cover for murder and mayhem, which foreshadows one or more of these occurrences to happen as the novel unfolds. Once both are dressed, Sabriel and Touchstone look similar to their guards, which is the plan. Twelve people walk out to the cars together so that any of the Corolini supporters and agitators on the other side of the wall cannot discern who is who.

It appears as if there is a civil war, or at least a coup uprising in the city of Corvere. Corolini is the opposing party to that of King Touchstone and Queen Abhorsen. Corolini seems to be on the side of allowing magic to run freely. Touchstone and Abhorsen, on the other hand, know what kind of havoc allowing this to happen can cause, so they are trying to control magic instead.

The opposing party starts celebrating because they think they have killed the first king and queen in 300 years. It foreshadows, however, that Abhorsen survives the attack and will carry on the work that she and Touchstone have been planning all along.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

A fog is moving over the area 600 miles north of Corvere. This is the area where the wall separates the Old Kingdom from Corvere, and is also the dividing line between where Ancelstierre's modern technology is at work and the magic of the Old Kingdom began. The fog here is gray, compared to the white fog in Corvere. This gray fog originates from Free Magic. The gray fog makes its way to the river, which encircles Abhorsen's House. Abhorsen's birthright is to manage Life and Death with a mixture of necromantic bells and Free Magic.

The maker of the fog has a master plan. The master knows that Abhorsen is not in the house, but Lirael, a woman, and the son of the king and queen, Sameth, are inside the house. A cat and a dog are also in the house with the two. The cat and dog are thought to be derived from magic, so the four together, with each of their powers, could put up a good fight against attackers.

The fog is Chlorr of the Mask, who is dead now, but was once a necromancer. She is the one taking orders from the master. Chlorr's orders are to trap the residents of the house inside until it is too late for them to help resist. Sameth is looking out of a telescope and reporting to Lirael that there are at least two hundred corpses on the bank, which he knows Chlorr is behind controlling.

As the Abhorsen-in-Waiting, Lirael consults with the talking dog and cat about possible escape routes, besides the stepping stones, the air or a boat, all of which have deadly consequences. The Disreputable Dog suggests an alternate route deep beneath the surface, but also suggests that it is a route that Mogget the cat will not like. The dog says they can climb down the well, but that someone used to live there and that there might be dangerous remnants of her left.

Lirael decides they will escape down the well. Mogget and the dog insist if the magic is still in the well that they cannot speak to her or let her touch them.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Corvere and the white fog rolling over the city represent the side of good. The gray fog and the Old Kingdom represent the opposite of good, which is evil. Free Magic is also symbolic of evil and all of the bad that derives from its use. The author reveals that the maker of the gray fog is a female. Since Corolini is a male, it infers that there is someone else behind the intended destruction of Touchstone and Abhorsen.

Both Lirael and Sameth are having thoughts that imply Chlorr waged an attack on them the previous night, but they were able to fight Chlorr off successfully. The fact that the gray fog stops at the river and a waterfall, and the house has much running water



through it, indicates that the dead and the Free Magic are afraid of water. There is an indication that water holds magical powers that are good and can defeat the evil Free Magic.

The implication is that something evil lurks beneath the surface, or did at one time. Additionally, there is an inference that a friend of the family's, Nicholas, is down at the river bank trying to dig something up that could be dangerous.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

It takes an hour for them to dress in their battle gear before they head out. One of the items Lirael packs is her magic mirror, which allows her to look into the past. Lirael also packs the bell-bandolier, which is seven bells that bears the marks both of Charter and Free Magic.

Sam shows Lirael the message he has written to his parents to be delivered by hawk. Before they leave the house, Mogget jumps into the pack on Sam's back and tells them to wake him if the danger ever appears or he might get wet. As Lirael looks back, she sees the spirits of the house pressed up against the windows as if they are saying goodbye because they will never see her again.

When they reach the cover of the well, it is marked with magic. Sam reads the spells, but only understands one of them. He says each spell is two different ways to open the well. Sam and Lirael take turns blowing on the four chains, which move enough for them to push the lid aside and for them to climb down into the well.

After they all enter the well, the cover slips back into place. They realize they won't be going back that way.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The bell-bandolier is symbolic of the coming together of good and evil magic. The combination allows the two different types of magic to balance each other out so that no one magic overwhelms the other. When Lirael takes her first step into the well, it represents her first move as Abhorsen.

The well represents the beginning of the journey the foursome are taking. Once the lid on the well covers the opening, it represents the ending of the life they once knew in the Abhorsen House. Their new life lies before them, not behind them at this point.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

They continue to climb down the ladder until they finally reach stone instead of bronze. A bucket of torches sits at the bottom of the ladder and entrance to the passageway. As Lirael tries to take one, it disappears. As she reaches for each torch, it disappears, and finally the bucket holding them disappears too. Lirael and Sam each draw their swords as they enter the passageway.

At an entranceway of one of the passages they come upon is a pile of bones and bells. They have found Kalliel, who has been missing for years. Lacking confidence, the dog chooses one of three passageways for them to continue. Lirael feels cooler air moving through the passageway and notices black water swirling at their feet. As they move deeper into the tunnel, the bells start to vibrate in the leather strap on Lirael's chest.

Lirael's sword transforms into a snake until she rams it back into the holder. The Charter light goes out and leaves them in darkness. They hear clothes ripping and Sam cry out. A sinister laugh that is Mogget's but not Mogget's rings out. When light starts to come back into the tunnel, the backpack where Mogget had been is torn and ragged where Mogget broke free. Lirael senses Free Magic, and when Dog comes into the light, the shape of Dog is still there, but her Charter marked collar is gone and she looks and sounds slightly different.

A woman forms out of light and the river of death flows around her feet. Lirael knows that she is bringing death to them. Dog, who is now full of Free Magic, tells everyone to run. They run until they can't anymore. When they cannot run anymore, Dog returns to herself. Lirael demands to know who the woman is. Dog tells them she is Astarael, The Weeper. Dog says she no longer exists, but they brought her back to life for a little while. Now that they are gone, Astarael no longer exists. Dog says that their task lies ahead and Mogget lies behind them now, so they must go on without the cat.

When they see sunlight and start to emerge from underground, they realize they spent a full 24 hours underground. This upsets Lirael because time is precious in the task at hand. Dog assures them that Life and Death sleep side by side and therefore they have not lost a day, but only about an hour.

Chapter 3 Analysis

The tunnels in the well are full of magic. The people and animals entering the passageways are carrying Charter magic. The underground area holds Free Magic. The two types of magic are clashing as the people and animals make their way through the tunnels. Sam's concern about leaving Mogget behind has something to do with endangering his mother. Mogget, without his collar, must be some kind of threat to Sabriel. Dog assures him, however, that his mother is safe behind the wall.



Astarael, controlling Life and Death, has created another balance for the group. It is representative of the good and evil magic coming together to create a balance. In this case, the balance saves the group time in their journey to keep Hedge from digging underground and releasing evil magic into the air, and to save their friend Nicholas.

Lirael is concerned that they do not have a more concrete plan to stop Hedge and save Nicholas. She mentions this briefly. This suggests that their lack of a plan and a strategy to accomplish their goal might just come back to haunt them because they will be reacting to circumstances, rather than proactively attacking.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

The sun is almost setting when they reach the base of the cliff. They decide to rest and eat for a few hours and then climb the cliff by moonlight. Dog hunts down some rabbits for them to eat. Sam sews the hole Mogget made in the top of his bag. While he sews, he tells his aunt, Lirael, that he is relieved that he is not the Abhorsen-in-Waiting. He says that the coat his ancestors sent for him to wear makes him believe that he is meant to make things instead.

At midnight, Lirael wakes, eats and then they start climbing the steps up the cliff. Each step is the same size so the climb is easy but exhausting. Sam thinks about his parents, who are in Ancelstierre trying to find a way to stop the Ancelstierre refugees from being forced over the wall and to their deaths at the hands of Hedge, who is a necromancer. Sam thinks about how parents believe it is no coincidence that this is happening at the same time Hedge is trying to dig up evil magic from near the Red Lake because they think Hedge is trying to create an army of dead. As sunlight breaks, Sam notices the steps are made of brick, but do not appear to possess any magic. As they start to reach the top of the cliff, Lirael senses that death awaits them. She is right. When they get to the top, there are bodies of dead men and mules scattered all along the top with vultures feeding on the dead bodies.

They can tell from the way the bodies lie that they were fleeing from something. When Lirael comes across a guard she knows, she throws up. Sam throws up too, because Lirael threw up. The group notices that something is pulling one of the dead mules into the gully. As they reach the gully, they smell Free Magic. They watch as a mud snake forms out of the gully and questions why they are disturbing his long overdue meal.

Sam pulls his sword and casts a spell that Lirael immolates. The spell causes such a bright light that Dog says now everyone will know where they are.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Sam is wondering what Hedge is trying to dig up near Red Lake. This foreshadows that it is an evil power with which none of them are yet familiar. Additionally, Sam's friend Nicholas plays a part in Hedge's well-thought out plan.

While Sam cast a spell he thought would bind the Free Magic creature, he might have accomplished the opposite. According to Dog, the spell didn't bind the snake, although it appears to be gone. Instead, the spell might just draw attention to the group, putting them in more imminent danger than they already are.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Dog tells them the creature is a Ferenk, which is a scavenger made of stone and mud. He also says that a Ferenk should not be on a path that is so well traveled. Lirael continues to question what killed the people and animals because she doesn't recognize the weapon that would cause two holes with scorching around them that each body possesses.

Dog takes a guess at the Free Magic creature that killed the people and animals. He also says the creature was accompanied by a necromancer, which they conclude is Hedge. Lirael confirms after examining the bodies more closely that they have been dead for eight days.

The three go from body to body, performing a rite that turns the bodies to ash and sends their souls into the afterlife. Lirael sees a raven sitting on a mule head and she realizes it is a dead spirit, once human, that has come back. Before Lirael can grab her bells to stop it, the raven flies away. The group decides it is time to move on and they prepare for their journey that should take them three to four days. They walk until they come to a shepherd's hut surrounded by a waterfall, which will keep the dead away. Part of their plan is to use magic to summon the rain clouds and scare off the ravens from following them. When they wake up, they see an albino dwarf in the water fishing. He accidentally rings a bell that is around his waist, and responds by saying he cannot sleep now, that he has to work. Dog senses that something is following them.

Chapter 5 Analysis

When Hedge is mentioned, Sam looks at the scars on his wrists. This is an indication that Sam has battled against Hedge before. It also implies that Hedge is the one that left the scars on Sam's wrist. The raven is symbolic of evil. Since the water is constantly moving, it seems to represent a living being. This might be why water keeps the dead away.

An albino dwarf is a very rare creature. The group seeing the dwarf might be a symbol of special magic. At this point, it could be magic that is helpful to them or harmful to them. They do not know yet. Dog, sensing that something is following them, suggests that it is an evil force that is coming after the group.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Nick and Hedge are 120 miles north of Abhorsen House. They are digging up opposing hemispheres with a crew of the dead, so if they get the two hemispheres too close together, there is a magnetic field that pulls the two hemispheres back together. Hedge is calling Nick Master. As the rain comes in, the group recognizes that it is some kind of magic that is summoning the rain. The rain also seems to adversely affect Nick, making him weak so that he has to be carried back to his shelter.

Chapter 6 Analysis

The two hemispheres are symbolic of the two types of magic—good and evil. The reason there is a magnetic force in between is when they stay together; one type of magic offsets the other, which creates balance. This is why the two hemispheres keep coming back together as Nick, Hedge and their crew try to separate the two.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Two days after summoning the rain with magic, it is still raining onto Lirael, Dog and Sam. They are getting close to Red Lake. As they are wiping the mud out of their eyes and climbing a gully, they run across a dying Guardswoman. Lirael decides that she has to step through Death's door that was created by the dying guard so she can find out what Nick and Hedge are up to before they journey on. She decides to take Dog with her and leave Sam behind warning him not to use any magic.

Lirael uses the bell to get the attention of the guard whose body is floating up ahead toward the First Gate. Lirael tells the guard who she is and asks the guard what she knows of Nicholas. The guard, Mareyn, confirms Nicholas killed her and some others. Mareyn asks that Lirael not return her to Life so that she has to work for Nicholas.

Dog senses something evil is coming after them. Lirael asks Mareyn where the pit is that Nicholas is digging. Mareyn tells Lirael it is in the next valley over from where Mareyn's body lies.

Chapter 7 Analysis

As Lirael steps into Death, she feels the pullback of Life. She has the option to step back into life and remain in the forest with Sam, but if she does this she precludes her chance of finding out what Hedge and Nick are digging up and what the consequences might be. She is fulfilling her duties as the Abhorsen-in-Waiting.

It seems as if Lirael, Dog and Sam believe that Hedge is the one forcing Nicholas to dig the pit. Ironically, it seems to be the other way around. Hedge is calling Nicholas Master, which indicates that Nicholas is the one that is in charge of Hedge.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Sam can feel and hear something trying to sneak up behind him. He prepares his sword and himself for what might strike out at him. When Sam charges what is coming toward him, he sees it is a strange, pallid, little man. The man disappears. Then, Sam hears Mogget talking from behind him. Mogget says the man was him but it is a forbidden form, so he has turned back into the cat. Mogget gets back inside Sam's pack and tells him to wake him when they get somewhere dry that has food.

When Lirael and the Dog return, a Fifth Gate being tries to bite Lirael, but she says she is just bruised. Lirael and Dog find out Mogget has returned. They verify that the cat is still on their side and willing to help them in their journey. They decide to give Mareyn a proper burial and move on before one of Hedge's other spirits tells him of Lirael's presence.

The group has reached a point where they are a few miles away from Red Lake. They can see where Nick and his crew have dug a huge pit. Lightning is striking the area every few seconds. The group senses that the workers are dead. Dog confirms that each silver hemisphere the group is dragging apart contains an ancient spirit. He is puzzled over what would have brought the two hemispheres together in the first place and where Hedge, Nick and their crew might be taking them.

Lirael plans to don the owl suit she made and fly down to the area to try to get Nick to come with her. Sam says it will take him a few hours to walk down to the lake. Mogget warns that they don't know what kind of magic Nick has been granted and that they will most likely have to compel him to leave Hedge.

Touchstone and Sariel are alive under the car with two of their guards, Veran and Barlest. Veran gets out from underneath the car and runs firing her gun to a hydrant. Then she covers as Sariel and Touchstone, also armed, make their way out from under the car and toward the guard. They call for Barlest to follow. As they run off, they hear gunfire and then silence.

As the trio heads toward the river, they see a fisherman pull out a gun and blow a whistle. They believe it is an ambush. Veran picks Sariel and Touchstone up and puts them onto a moving boat. The King and Queen vow never to return to Ancelstierre and make plans to make their way home.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Lirael's use of the bells in Death marks her as a real Abhsorsen-in-Waiting. Although Mogget claims to be the Mogget they know, Mogget contradicts himself when he tells Sam that they should be running as fast as they can in the other direction. When they



first set out on their journey, Mogget had told them there is no point in running. When Sam confronts Mogget with the contradiction, Mogget remains silent. This suggests that Mogget in the current form is not the same Mogget that had been with them previously.

It seems as if Barlest is killed trying to protect the King and Queen so they can escape. It also seems as if danger lies ahead and behind the King and Queen.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

When Nick wakes up in his tent, he sees an owl and a winged dog staring at him. He thinks he must still be dreaming. The winged dog is telling the owl that Nick must have a sliver from one of the hemispheres in him, which is giving Nick power. Additionally, the dog says the Destroyer is using Nick as an avatar, a mouthpiece.

When Nick reaches out and touches the dog's nose, Nick realizes he is not dreaming. Lirael and Dog urge Nick to get dressed. The three then start their trek back to where Sam is waiting for them. As they are trying to escape, some of the Dead see them. Unsure of what Lirael is, they hang back, but some start to charge them.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Whatever power Hedge is using with Nick has Nick convinced that Nick is in charge. Hedge has also brainwashed Nick into believing that Nick must stay and not go home to Ancelstierre. Nick is having an inner struggle. The sliver from the hemisphere and Hedge's control over Nick is forcing Nick to stay and dig the pit at the Red Lake. Another part of Nick understands that something is wrong with him and that he has to get away from Hedge. The magic that Hedge and the sliver possesses over Nick is stronger than Nick's will, however.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

About halfway back to the rendezvous point, Nick falls and can't get back up. Lirael slings Nick over her shoulders and carries him. As she continues to walk, she finds herself about knee-deep in a marshy bog. At this point, Lirael realizes that when she fled from the Dead, she went in the wrong direction. Sam decides to pack up their belongings and walk toward Lirael.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Because Lirael is going in the wrong direction, and Sam is walking toward the rendezvous point, the two are going to miss each other. Separated like this, each group—Lirael, Dog and Nick, and Sam and Mogget—face their own dangers.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

The Clayr saw Lirael with Nick in a vision. They send them a boat. As they all board the boat, Nick asks Lirael why she is waiting to push off. When Nick looks up from the boat, Hedge is gone and the Dead are turning back and walking away from the boat. Lirael says they are waiting for high noon so the Dead will leave them alone. Nick insists that Lirael is not rescuing him, but instead is taking him away from an important scientific experiment.

Lirael gets Nick to tell her about the experiment. He says that a friend of his is creating a lightning farm. Nick insists that they have to bring the two hemispheres together to create the ultimate power. Nick also tells her about their plans to get it over the wall at Ancelstierre. Lirael questions how they will do this since the Dead won't be able to cross the wall. Nick assures her that they have a well laid plan in place, even with papers that will get them past the security in Ancelstierre.

When Nick finds out Lirael is not going to free him from her rescue, he says he won't tell her any more. He asks how she knows Sam, and Lirael says she is his aunt. Nick mentions his fainting spells and how Hedge is normally there to catch him. Nick also says he's feeling better so the fever must have broken. Lirael tells him it isn't a fever and asks if he can tell when he's going to faint. Nick says that he can tell because he gets nauseous, his eyesight gets weird and he can smell something like a burning motor.

Twenty minutes later, they see a barge. Nick gets excited because he thinks Hedge got the barge to load the hemispheres. Lirael tells Nick to be quiet and to fight the urge of the spell, but Nick's head falls back, the whites of his eyes show and smoke trickles out of his nose and mouth. Lirael declares that he is Nicholas and demands he tell her about himself to try to keep the spell at bay. Nick asks Lirael to tell him about her. She slips and says something about being the Abhorsen, which sends the magic inside of Nick into full throttle.

Dog runs to where Sam is to tell him that Lirael went into the reeds. Sam decides if he follows the Red Lake that he can find Lirael.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Whatever sliver or magic that is inside of Nick is causing his fainting spells. Hedge might be able to bring the spells on because Nick mentions that Hedge is typically there to catch him when he falls. Now that the Free Magic inside of Nick knows Lirael is the Abhorsen-in-Waiting, it is going to activate and cause Nick to attack Lirael. This is problematic because if she harms Nick to get rid of the Free Magic, she is killing an innocent man who happens to be the host of the evil.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Lirael rocks the boat until they both fall out. Lirael gets away from Nick. She continues through the marsh for hours until she finally reunites with Dog. As Lirael and Dog reach Sam, it looks as if he is aiming an arrow at Lirael's head.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Lirael is having an inner struggle with how to handle Nick. While he is Nick on the outside, some evil power is controlling Nick from the inside. At one point in the struggle, Lirael considers killing Nick. The problem is she doesn't think killing Nick will resolve the problem of the Free Magic that is inside of Nick. Lirael thinks the magic will live on and might even take over her body as a host, so she decides to just get away from Nick.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Sam is shooting crows out of the sky. Lirael rings the Kibeth bell and more crows fall to the earth. Lirael tells Sam she lost Nick. She tells him about the sliver, the lightning farm and the bringing together of the two hemispheres. They believe this will unleash evil.

Lirael demands Dog tell them who the Destroyer is. Dog writes the name in the sand—ORANNIS. He cautions anyone from speaking the name. Dog says it's the Ninth Bright Shiner, which is the most powerful Free Magic. Lirael questions whether the Free Magic will work over the wall. Nobody knows if it will or not. She also questions how it was split in two in the first place.

Dog and Mogget say they don't remember. Lirael starts to wash the mud off from the marsh. Sam says that he thinks they should go the lightning farm to try to stop Nick from using it as a power source. He says Lirael should make an owl skin big enough to carry them as she flies, so that they are sure to make it there before the barges carrying the hemispheres.

Mogget thinks the plan stinks. Lirael also says that she might have to use the Dark Mirror to look into the past. She wants to see how the Destroyer defeated the Seven.

Chapter 13 Analysis

It seems as if the plan Nick told Lirael might be a plan to lure them into danger. It is suspicious that Nick, who thinks Hedge is on his side and Lirael is against him, would lay out the plan to unleash Free Magic on the world. Mogget's return and his reason for returning is also still suspect. While Mogget has always been a negative character, he seems exceptionally so now. Lirael suggesting that she might have to look into the Dark Mirror foreshadows her seeing and unleashing some very evil and ugly magic getting loose.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

A group of travelers witness the huge owl flying with a man in her claws. One of the travelers tells the others that the owl was accompanied by a flying dog. As Lirael sees the wall ahead, she gets excited and plans to land. Sam warns against her crossing over the wall. At the last minute, Lirael adjusts to land them, but she lands them hard on the ground.

They think they have beat Hedge and the barges but not by much. Sam says he thinks he can open one of the locked gates at the Crossing Point to get them inside the wall and Ancelstierre. Sam says he will cast illusions so that he and Lirael look like soldiers. Mogget can hide in Sam's pack and Sam will cast an illusion on Dog to make her look like a sniffer dog.

Before Sam casts the illusions, Mogget announces that he has a message for Lirael from her mother, Arielle. He says he got it when he was in man form long ago and has just remembered it after being held under the house by the Free Magic. Arielle's message is that she loves Lirael, that she has linked their lives to the Abhorsen and that leaving Lirael is not Arielle's choice.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Sam's use of magic to cast illusions for their identities to cross over the wall might be exactly what gets them found out. The guards at the wall have sniffer dogs, like the one Sam is making out of Disreputable Dog. If the dogs sense any magic, it could easily blow their covers and put them in danger. Lirael is slightly upset by her mother's message, which also makes her more vulnerable than normal. It could be that Mogget chose now to tell Lirael about her mother's message to make Lirael more vulnerable as they cross over the wall and into the city of Ancelstierre.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

The guards at the wall sense something out in No Man's Land. They see what they think are two soldiers with a sniffer dog. One of the soldiers casts out a spell of magic that sheds light on the incoming strangers. The soldiers agree that they do look like soldiers from one of the northern units. Some of the soldiers agree that Sam even looks vaguely familiar to them. As Sam and Lirael approach, one of the soldiers senses Charter magic, but assumes it is a protective charm. Tindall touches his sword to Sam's forehead to check for the Charter mark. Sam suggests Tindall do the same to Lirael, who is wounded, so they can get her inside for care.

Sam demands to use their phone to call his commanding officer. Tindall tells him their phone is out. This puts Tindall on high alert because the commanding officer of whom Sam speaks left two months ago, and Tindall had been part of his sendoff.

Chapter 15 Analysis

The Charter magic the soldier senses is a protective charm, but not in the way the soldier assumes. Tindall makes Sam and Lirael believe he is taking them to an officer's office, where the telephone might be working. Tindall is really luring them into a trap, so he can capture Sam and Lirael to find out who they really are and what is really going on.



Chapters 16

Chapters 16 Summary

When Tindall marches them into the Colonel's office, Tindall tells the Colonel that they are impostors. Sam admits their true identities and asks permission to remove the illusions. When Sam drops the magic, the Colonel in fact sees that it is Prince Sameth. He also says Lirael looks like Siraël. Sam insists he needs to get to a phone.

Lirael and Sam tell the Major about the hemispheres, Hedge and the lightning farm. The Major says he received word of some problems in the west and now he knows it's Hedge and the Dead that are responsible, from what they are telling him. He orders Tindall to take Sam to a phone.

Tindall says he knows of the area Forwin Mill, where Nick had the lightning farm built, and where they are taking the hemispheres. Tindall mentions that recently two refugee camps were placed there, housing tens of thousands refugees. Lirael insists they must act fast because if Hedge kills all those refugees, he will turn them into the Dead and put them to work for him.

The Major reports that there has been an attack at the Perimeter. They believe it is Hedge that is attacking. Lirael is baffled as to how he could have caught up with them so soon. Sam insists on calling his parents, but the Major tells him they were killed in a car bombing. Lirael tries to push down the distress of losing her sister, someone she never got the chance to get to know.

Sam and Lirael now realize she is the Abhorsen, and no longer the Abhorsen-in-Waiting. Sam calls for the trucks, the horseless carriages, to drive them quickly to the lightning farm. The Major says it is illegal to order his soldiers to follow them, but that he believes most of them will volunteer. As they look to the west, they all see a bunch of lightning. They believe it is Hedge and that he is still crossing the wall from the distance he appears to be.

A postal delivery truck delivers Sabriel and Touchstone, disguised in mail bags, to Wyverley College. The school headmaster confirms their Charter marks. She says the news is broadcasting their deaths but that she knew it couldn't be true. She delivers two messages to Sabriel and Touchstone. One is from their daughter, Ellimere, and they think the other one is from Sameth.

The headmaster orders some of the college students to bring up the Abhorsen's trunk. Touchstone and Sabriel change and arrange for one of the students to fly them to Barhedrin so that they can fight off the unknown enemy.



Chapters 16 Analysis

Lirael believing she is the Abhorsen now might actually put the group in danger. As Abhorsen, she might think she has powers that she actually doesn't possess since the real Abhorsen, Sabriel, is still alive. While the group is trying to get to the lightning farm before Hedge arrives there with the hemispheres, it is unclear how they intend to fight off Hedge and prevent him from powering the hemispheres with the lightning farm. It is also ironic that the army is not legally allowed to help the Abhorsen when it is the country the soldiers defend that is about to be destroyed by Hedge and the hemispheres.

Touchstone and Sabriel receive bits of facts from the messages. Sabriel learns she has a half-sister, but doesn't know her identity. Ellismere's message getting cut off halfway through and Ellismere not re-recording it, like she normally would, suggests that something has happened to Ellismere.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

The Ancelstierre Navy protecting the lighthouse sees hordes of people—Southerling refugees—charging the wall. They also see something unidentifiable in front of the refugees. The commanding officer orders them to shoot the red flares, which is a distress signal.

When Nick wakes up, he is on a stretcher. He's surrounded by Dead dressed like Southerlings. Hedge tells Nick they are over the wall. Hedge also says their Master will be free soon. Nick remembers Sam and Lirael. He is trying to fight off the power compelling him to carry out Hedge's orders. Chlorr appears to tell Hedge soldiers are coming. Hedge orders Chlorr to collect the dead and to kill the Charter Mages. Coroloni's assistant arrives with the permission letter for Hedge to enter Ancelstierre. Hedge burns the letter and says he doesn't need permission.

The assistant also asks for the final payment, saying they've done everything Hedge asked. Hedge cuts the assistant's head off. Chlorr says the body is now useless. He sends Chlorr away, rings one of his bells and summons more dead.

Chapter 17 Analysis

As predicted, Hedge is using the thousands of Southerling refugees to help him accomplish his goal of reuniting the hemispheres and freeing the Master. This explains the strange unidentifiable object in front of the zombie-like Southerling refugees. It is Free Magic that is compelling them to head toward the lightning farm.

Nick continues to have an inner struggle inside of himself. Part of him is still the same Nick that he has always been. The other part is the Free Magic inside of him. The good side and the evil side. The two sides continue to rage a battle inside of Nick's body. Eventually, one of the sides will have to win out, which might cost Nick his life.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Lirael wakes in the back of a truck when it stops on the Perimeter Road. The Major encounters a soldier riding horseback. The soldier says everyone is dead but him. He says Southerlings that are horrible monsters came to life as his whole platoon fell. Lirael senses hundreds of Dead approaching led by Chlorr.

Lirael uses her bell to send Chlorr back in Death. Mogget warns Chlorr—telling her to run. They get back into the truck because they think Hedge is bringing the hemispheres in by sea near the lighthouse. Lirael decides to take on Chlorr. The soldiers with them stand up against the Dead. The problem is thousands of more Dead are on the way.

Nick wakes on some straw near a hut. He is very sick and weak from crossing over the wall. He sees two men die as they try to maneuver the hemispheres. Nick sees a silver object with symbols on it where he was laying. When he touches it he gets ill but remembers who he really is.

The Dead get one hemisphere off the barge. The second barge moves in for unloading. Hedge approaches Nick and asks what other instructions the Master has for them.

Chapter 18 Analysis

The realms of Death and Life are mixing together as the hemispheres get closer to being rejoined. The silver Nick finds when he stands up is the Free Magic that has been controlling his body to work for Hedge and the Master. Now, that it is outside his body, it suggests that Nick will return to his normal self and won't continue to work for the Master in reuniting the hemispheres and freeing the Master. Right now, Lirael is one of the only ones who has the ability to help manage both sides of the realm—Life and Death. She is trying to use the power she has but right now the Dead outnumber Lirael and all of the soldiers they have on their side to try to stop the joining of the hemispheres.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

From the looks of the storm, Lirael and Sam surmise the hemispheres are at the lightning farm. As they try to make their way to the farm, droves of the Dead seem to be heading toward the farm too. Lirael sees one hemisphere has been unloaded and the other barge is being unloaded. She reaches for a bell but Dog says they are too late to stop the joining. Dog also says it's too late to save Nick because the shard inside him will burst when the hemispheres are joined.

Lirael takes the Dark Mirror into Death to see how the Destroyer was defeated at the beginning. Since her physical body stays behind, she puts Sam in charge of protecting her body while she is in Death. The Dead are coming through the gates of Death as Lirael goes through each of them.

Chapter 20 Analysis

The novel has reached a turning point. All of this time, they have been trying to save Nick and keep the hemispheres from joining and releasing the Destroyer. All of their work is for naught. It is too late to accomplish either of these things. Lirael has not given up hope, however. She is hoping that information from the past will reveal how they can stop the Destroyer or at the very least minimize the havoc the Destroyer wreaks.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Lirael and Dog enter Death. Lirael and Dog get past the First Gate. This is the first time Lirael has ever been this far into Death. She has only her book studies to guide her on which way to go and what to expect.

They get past the Second Gate. As they approach the Third Gate, they hear the wave of water behind them and start to run. They make it out of the Second Gate, through the Third Gate and the Fourth Gate. In the Fifth Precinct, they are attacked by creatures. Dog also goes through a transformation and warns Lirael that he senses something is behind them.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Lirael and Dog are entering uncharted ground. It is similar to studying a subject in school, but then having to apply what is learned to an actual situation. While Lirael has studied the gates and precincts in Death, she has never experienced them firsthand before. They have two more gates to go before Lirael can hope to find the answer she is seeking and return to Life with the solution to their problem—stopping the Destroyer.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Nick runs into Tim Wallach. Tim says he has to stop Hedge. Hedge killed all his workers. Tim says what they're doing is wrong. Nick continues with his inner struggle of stopping the joining of the hemispheres and carrying through with the orders of the Master.

Sam promises Southerlings land to help him fight. Sam meets Tim Wallach. Tim tells Sam about Nick and how to possibly disable the nine lightning roads. Mogget is missing.

Chapter 22 Analysis

Nick's former and current life are crossing paths. Nick had been friends with Tim Wallach prior to being invaded by Free Magic. The Free Magic leverages this relationship to get Tim Wallach to work for Nick, Hedge and ultimately the Destroyer. It seems as if Nick might have misrepresented the purpose of the work to Tim.

Now that Tim knows what they intend on doing with the lightning farm, he is drawing the line between right and wrong. This is especially true because Tim's workers, who are innocent, are murdered by Hedge. Tim tries to do the right thing and tries to talk some sense into Nick; unfortunately, Nick's mind and body are still too poisoned by the evil to compel Nick to do the right thing.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

When Lirael and Dog reach the Fifth Gate, it is a waterclimb instead of a waterfall. They see three Dead coming at them to attack them. Lirael and Dog are able to fight off the Dead. Dog tells Lirael that he thinks it is Hedge that is following them.

Chapter 23 Analysis

Lirael and Dog continue to battle and overcome the obstacles of Death. It foreshadows that they will make it and find out some answers on how to stop the Destroyer. It also infers that Hedge is in hot pursuit of them. Hedge's goal is to stop Lirael from obtaining the answers she needs to ultimately stop the Destroyer.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Nick tries to get to the locked unit where the nine junction boxes are. What's inside of him wants him to check on the progress of the hemispheres, but Nick is too weak. Mogget comes for Nick. Mogget turns into the little white albino man so he can carry Nick away since Nick is too weak to walk on his own.

Mogget says they're going to watch the joining of the hemispheres. Nick says he can show Mogget how to stop it, but Mogget says it's too late. As they see the hemispheres on flatbed railway cars, Nick feels the sliver in his heart. The sliver starts to take the same path it had taken when it had been put in there the year before.

Sam and Major fight off about a dozen Dead. They know more are on the horizon. The second wave of Dead come. Sam plays the panpipes while the soldiers fight the Dead. When Sam pauses to take a breath, the Dead surge at them.

Chapter 24 Analysis

The battle between good and evil rages on. Nick is having this battle and struggle within his own body. It still isn't clear whether Mogget is on the good side or the evil side. Sam and the Major represent the good side, so they are trying to fight off the evil side, which includes all of the Dead that are coming at them.



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

Lirael and Dog run through the Seventh Gate with a fiery man chasing behind them. As they enter the Eighth Precinct, Lirael has to cast a spell to fight off the flames of fire coming out of the water at them. Lirael admits to Dog that she Hedge.

Dog and Lirael make it to the Ninth Precinct. Here, the stars call out to the Dead. At first Lirael raises her arms to the stars and elevates off the ground. As Dead get swept up into the starry sky, Lirael returns to her senses. Dog tells Lirael that she should do what she came here to do. Lirael takes the Dark Mirror out. When she sees that the Destroyer has the power to kill everything and that it hates all living things, she urges Dog to hurry because they don't have much time left to stop it.

As they rush back toward the Eighth Gate, Hedge lunges through and strikes Lirael in the arm with his sword. Lirael drops the Saraneth bell and it gets washed away in the water below. Hedge uses his Saraneth bell to freeze Dog and make her sit. Lirael is able to overtake Hedge and force him to look up at the stars. The stars call him and he moves up skyward.

Dog picks up Lirael's Saraneth bell and returns it to her. They move toward the Eighth Gate once again. Lirael is deep in thought about how she and Sam have to stop the Destroyer. She thinks that Sam will have to act as a Wallmaker, not just wear the coat with the markings of one.

Chapter 25 Analysis

Lirael and Dog are able to defeat Hedge. In fact, he is now Dead and cannot return to Death or Life. Since Hedge cannot return to Life, Hedge is no longer able to move along the process of joining the two hemispheres and giving the Destroyer its ultimate power. Now, Lirael is the only one who knows how to stop the Destroyer. The problem is that it will take all of the powers both she and Sam have. Even with all of their powers, Lirael is not convinced that it is enough to stop the Destroyer.



Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

Sam, the Major and the soldiers continue to fight. Some of the Dead are taken down by the Ranna pipe when Sam starts blowing the pipe again. Some other Dead are killed by the bayonets and swords. The Major urges Sam to play the Ranna pipe again because the Dead are getting close to the frozen body of Lirael that is left behind when her spirit crosses into Death.

When Sam plays Kibeth, many of the Dead retreat back into Death. A group of soldiers also runs away down the hill, defecting. The Major, Sam and the remaining soldiers circle around Lirael's frozen body to protect it from even one Dead reaching it before Lirael returns.

Four Shadows Hands come toward Sam and the others protecting Lirael's body. Sam tries to compel them to obey him, but the Shadows Hands are stronger and more powerful than the Dead Hands. As Sam continues to play the Sraneth pipe, he is growing weak from not taking a breath. The Shadow Hands are moving in on them and Sam is starting to feel defeated.

Suddenly, bells ring out from the air and the Shadow Hands are sucked away. Three Paperwing airplanes come into sight and begin to land. Mogget sees what is happening, but ponders as to who is playing the bells. As Mogget fights off a Shadow Hand, he bounds over the ridge with Nick over his shoulders. Behind them, the lightning storm is starting to abate.

Chapter 26 Analysis

The three Paperwings are piloted by Touchstone, Sabriel and other reinforcements. They are there to help Sam and the others stop the Destroyer from killing life as they know it. It is still unclear which side of the fight Mogget is on. He is now in the process of saving Nick, so it seems as if he is on Sam and Lirael's side. The fact that the lightning storm is subsiding suggests that everything everyone is doing is withdrawing the Destroyer's power and that eventually they will be able to defeat the Destroyer and return their life and country to the way it was before.



Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

Sam is relieved to see his parents, his sister and two Clayr disembark from the Paperwings after they land. Tim points out that the thunder and lightning has stopped. At the same time, Sam sees that fog is thicker and has turned a bright, flame red. As the red fog comes toward them, Sam smells Free Magic, but he also hears Mogget saying that it's him and that he has Nick. Sam sees Mogget in the form of the little albino man he had seen at Red lake carrying a very thin and fighting body that might be Nick.

Nick's body jolts and points back toward the direction from which they had come, and the shard flies out through Nick's finger. Mogget turns back into a cat and Sam tries to use his healing powers to save Nick's dying body. Nick returns to consciousness for a moment to tell Sam that he fell through the broken road and that's when Hedge took control of Nick. Nick also tells Sam that Hedge thought he was Sam.

Nick apologizes to Sam. Sam tells him it isn't his fault. Lirael and Dog return just as Nick dies. Lirael tells Sam that he can't help Nick now, but that she knows how to defeat the Destroyer. She needs Sam to make her a gun and the Clayr are able to see what they need to defeat the Destroyer, which is why they had arrived with Touchstone and Sabriel.

Lirael instructs Sam to get blood from her, his parents, sister and the Clayrs. He uses his sword and magic to do so and to create a new sword. While Sam is doing this, Lirael is making a diamond of protection. She needs to make two more, if there is time. Dog tries to bring Nick back to life, but his Charter magic efforts do not work.

Chapter 27 Analysis

The pieces of the puzzle are starting to come together. If Lirael, Sam and the others can do what they need to do in time, they can save everyone. If not, they will all perish. The fact that Sam's healing powers and the powers of Disreputable Dog cannot heal and bring Nick back to life suggests that the power of the Destroyer is more powerful than all of them, and much more powerful than any of them understand, except maybe Lirael.



Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

After each gives their blood, Sam sends them up the hill to help Lirael make the three diamonds of protection. As soon as the group arrives, Lirael starts shouting orders at them. They complete the three diamonds as the column of red surges toward them. Lirael places everyone, including Nick's body, inside of the diamonds. She then instructs each of the seven to take hold of a bell.

Lirael knows that the wall of fire barreling toward them is just the first of the anomalies of the Destroyer that they will have to overcome. As Lirael presents the bells to the two Clays, she realizes they are twins, that their spirits are intertwined, and that they can only hold one bell between the two of them. This means that they are only six and that they are missing the seventh person they need.

Lirael says she will hold the last bell, but Disreputable Dog admits to being a part of Kibeth and says that she'll stand as the seventh with the Kibeth bell.

Sam finishes his spell just as the wall of fire approaches. Lirael instructs them all to look away as the Destroyer emerges because the two hemispheres have joined. As the Destroyer roars through the valley, it vaporizes everything in its way. Each of the three diamonds takes the brunt of the explosion and eventually, one by one, each of the diamonds crumbles around the seven.

Lirael instructs them all to take cover from the heat as ash rains down like snow around them. The sword Sam has created can defeat Orannis, but at the same time, it will take the wielder's life, which is Lirael.

Lirael tells them to form a circle around the wall of flames. As they do so, Lirael notices that Mogget is missing, even though he had been in one of the diamonds. Tongues of fire lash out at the seven as they stand in a circle.

Chapter 28 Analysis

It's ironic that Lirael, the Abhorsen-in-Waiting is barking orders out to the King and Queen. The seven represent the seven of the original ancestors that created the binding. As the symbols of the original binding, these seven should be able to create the binding again.

Lirael is sacrificing her own life to save the lives of her family and the residents of the Old Kingdom and Ancelstierre. Mogget being missing either means he is going to save them, or that he is part of the opposing force.



Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

Orannis speaks to the group, announcing that Hedge has failed her. Orannis says that the seven that are assembled have thin bloodlines and won't stand up against her power to defeat them. Lirael starts the binding spell. Each of the seven says that they stand for their bell against Orannis.

They start to sing the song that bound Orannis deep within the earth at the beginning. Just as Lirael thinks that Orannis is going to destroy all of them, Sam unleashes Mogget toward the wall of fire that is now forming a human-like shape. Lirael realizes that Yrael, which is Mogget, is the Eighth Bright Shiner. As the Destroyer retreats back into the silver hemispheres, Lirael knows that it is time for her to strike with the sword Sam has made her.

Lirael plunges the sword into the Destroyer. Dog ends up biting off Lirael's hand at the wrist. The hemispheres blow apart and Dog lies on the ground, looking as if he has aged suddenly. He tells Lirael that he must leave her now.

Chapter 29 Analysis

In life, a dog is man's best and most devoted friend. In the novel, Dog is always the loyal and devoted friend to his mistress, Lirael. Dog gives his own life to save Lirael in her fight against the Destroyer. Now, Lirael will have to go through life without her hand, but she will be able to know what it is like to have a family. Lirael will now have the chance to embrace her heritage and who she truly is.



Epilogue

Epilogue Summary

Nick is standing near a stream when he notices the dog from his dream is standing next to him. They introduce themselves to each other. Nick asks the dog if he knows where they are and Dog says they are in Death. Nick asks about the hemispheres.

Dog tells Nick that Orannis is bound once again in the hemispheres. He confirms the hemispheres will be reburied under earth and spell to contain the Destroyer. When Nick asks about Sam and Lirael, Dog tells him they are alive but not unscathed. He says Lirael lost her hand, but that Sam will make her one out of gold and she'll be forever known as Lirael Goldenhand. The Dog tells Nick of the charter mark that Dog placed on Nick's forehead. The Dog says he is sending Nick back to Life.

When Nick wakes up, he is surrounded by the remains of the diamond in which he had been encased in and other forms of destruction. The seven are approaching Nick as Mogget sniffs Nick. Mogget looks past Nick, as if he sees the Dog, and says he should have known. The Dog shakes the water from her coat and trots off wagging her tail.

Epilogue Analysis

In the end, Lirael and the others are able to defeat the evil magic. For this reason, good magic once again prevails. Nick being sent back to Life by the Disreputable Dog is a second chance for Nick to live the life he was meant to live. This helps to negate the guilt Nick feels for being a part of the destruction set forth by Hedge, Orannis and all of the Dead that had been working for them.



Characters

Sabriel

Sabriel is the Abhorsen. She is also the wife of King Touchstone. She is an educated woman who has completed college and still writes letters to her old schoolmates from Ancelstierre. She dresses in Ancelstierre clothes. This is ironic since she should be wearing her Abhorsen clothes. She is wearing a silver dress with a hussar's pelisse on one of her shoulders and a pillbox hat on her head.

Her Abhorsen clothes consist of her blue tabard, the Abhorsen bells across her chest and a sword in a sheath on her side. Sabriel is working with her husband to form an alliance against their opponent Corolini. Sabriel has two children, a daughter and a son. Her son is Prince Sameth. Her daughter is Ellimere.

At the beginning of the novel assassins try to assassinate Sabriel and her husband. They do not succeed, however. Sabriel makes it to Ellimere's school, where she and Touchstone receive a message. This is when Sabriel learns that she has a half-sister, which is Lirael, and that Lirael and Prince Sameth require his parents' help.

King Touchstone

King Touchstone is originally from the Old Kingdom. His wife is Sabriel, who is also the Abhorsen. King Touchstone and Sabriel rely on Charter Magic, which is the good magic in the novel. They are battling against Free Magic, which is the evil magic in the novel. In conjunction with his wife, King Touchstone is trying to stop Corolini from gaining power.

After an assassination attempt on his and his wife's lives, Touchstone journeys with Sabriel to get to their children and help to stop the Destroyer. King Touchstone also dresses in Ancelstierre clothing. He wears a shirt with a stiff collar and a tie, and a double-breasted wool coat with a sword blade.

Lirael

Lirael is the Abhorsen-in-Waiting, which means that she takes over the powers of the Abhorsen when and if something happens to Sabriel. Lirael has recently found out that she is Sabriel's half-sister, which is how she earned her role. This also makes her Sam and Ellimere's aunt. Prior to finding out she is the Abhorsen-in-Waiting, Lirael worked as a librarian.

Lirael is at the Abhorsen House with Prince Sameth. When they decide they must journey to where Hedge is digging to stop him, they set out on a journey together. Lirael uses her newfound powers to move back and forth between the realms of Life and



Death, using her knowledge from reading, to apply her powers to attempt to stop the Destroyer and the destruction of the world.

Ultimately, it is Lirael who ends up saving everyone.

Disreputable Dog

Disreputable Dog is a talking dog that possesses magical powers. Dog wears a collar around her neck with Charter Magic inscriptions on it and she is the loyal companion of Lirael. Dog helps Lirael throughout the novel to try to stop the Destroyer. Ultimately, Dog sacrifices her own life in order to save the lives of Lirael and all of the other characters.

Mogget

Mogget is a white cat. He also possesses magical powers and can talk. The characters find out later in the novel that Mogget is also able to transform into a small, old albino man. When Lirael and Sameth first start out on the journey, Mogget gets trapped in Death. When Mogget returns, it is questionable as to whether the cat is on the good side of magic or the evil side of magic.

Mogget is very selfish. He is always concerned about himself, and has little regard for the safety of others. Occasionally, he offers advice, but he is typically moody, sleepy and hungry.

Hedge

Hedge is a necromancer, so he is able to summon Dead to work for him. He uses his powers for evil. It is Hedge that has taken over Nicholas's body with a sliver of magic to put Nicholas to work for him. Hedge is in charge of digging up the two hemispheres that the Destroyer is locked into. Hedge is also the one arranging the transport and joining of the hemispheres so that the Destroyer will be released.

Nicholas

Nicholas is a childhood friend of Sameth. Hedge places a sliver of magic into Nicholas's heart, which takes over Nicholas's body to work for Hedge and releasing the Destroyer. Throughout the novel, Nicholas has an inner struggle. His human self continuously struggles with the magic inside of him because he knows that Hedge is doing evil. Nicholas dies at the end of the novel, but is brought back to life after Orannis is destroyed.



Chlorr

Chlorr is one of the Dead. At one time, Chlorr had been a living necromancer. When she makes a mistake, her punishment is as a servant to Death but in the realm of Life. Chlorr is working with Hedge to raise the Dead Hands and command them in their mission to dig up, move and rejoin the hemispheres.

Orannis the Destroyer

Orannis the Destroyer is the Ninth Bright Shiner. This is the most powerful of Free Magic. Orannis is the one that fought the Seven at the Beginning. Orannis was buried in the two hemispheres in the ground to contain it. Once the hemispheres are dug up and joined, however, Orannis the Destroyer is released. Orannis has the power to annihilate the world.

Tim Wallach

Tim Wallach is Nicholas's friend. Nicholas hired Tim Wallach and Wallach's workers to build the lightning farm. After Hedge kills all of Wallach's workers, Wallach pleads with Nicholas to stop their plan to join the hemispheres.



Objects/Places

Corvere

The city of Corvere is the primary setting for the opening of the novel. It is while trying to leave Corvere that King Touchstone and Sabriel are attacked and attempts are made on their lives. The city of Corvere is completely filled with fog, which is making it difficult for people to see.

The trouble in Corvere had started when Corolini and his thugs rose up against Touchstone. The uprising sends the ordinary citizens of the city out and leaves only the criminal element behind. It is while attending the University of Corvere that Nicholas and Tim Wallach meet.

Ancestierre

Ancestierre is a city in the novel. It is where the university that Nicholas, Tim Wallach and Sabriel attended is located. Because Sabriel attended school there, she understands the people, their ruling and their culture. This is why she chooses to apply her diplomatic efforts in the city. It is when Free Magic makes it over the wall that surrounds Ancestierre and runs amok in the streets of Ancestierre that civil unrest ensues.

Abhorsen's House

Abhorsen's House is the home of Sabriel and King Touchstone. It is where Lirael, King Sameth, Mogget and the Disreputable Dog are while Touchstone and Sabriel are being attacked in Corvere. The House has the responsibility to maintain the borders between the realms of Life and Death. The Abhorsen uses the bells of magic to send the Dead that come into the realm of Life back to Death. This is the house that Lirael and the others leave behind when they set out on their journey to stop Nicholas and Hedge.

Death

Death is a realm in the novel that is the opposite of Life. Free Magic, which is the evil magic, flows freely in the realm of Death. When Lirael and Sam leave the Abhorsen's House, they have to journey through Death. During the journey through Death, the Dead constantly try to derail the group.

Later in the novel, Lirael goes back and forth between Life and Death. While in Death, she journeys through the different precincts and gates to help her find the answer to stopping the Destroyer.



Life

Life is the opposite realm of Death. The characters in the novel seem to have the ability to transition back and forth between the two realms, depending on their level of magic.

Lightning Farm

Tim Wallach was hired by Nicholas and Hedge to build the lightning farm. The lightning farm is the final destination of the two hemispheres. The intention is to use the power of the lightning rods to join the two hemispheres and free Orannis the Destroyer.

The Bells

There are seven magic bells. Each bell possesses a specific magical power. The Abhorsen possesses all of the bells. At the end of the novel, Lirael has each character represent one of the bells, which is what needs to happen to stop Orannis the Destroyer.

The Book of Dead

Prince Sameth is meant to be the heir of the Abhorsen's bells and the The Book of the Dead. The Book of the Dead is a detailed description of each of the bells and the powers the bells possess. It also contains spells and incantations. Throughout the novel, Lirael references The Book of the Dead to resolve issues and get them through the obstacles before them.

Protective Diamonds

The protective diamonds are diamonds Lirael creates at the end of the novel. She has drawn this information from The Book of the Dead and her look into the past when the Destroyer was first created. She places each character into the diamonds she creates so that when the Destroyer approaches them, the diamonds protect them.



Themes

Relationships

One of the primary themes running through the novel is relationships. The novel reveals that even the individuals who make up a family have different relationships among the family members. For example, Lirael and Sirael do not even know each other, even though they are sisters. Lirael and Sameth, on the other hand, are very close and have formed a very strong bond even though they recently met.

Friendship is another type of relationship the novel tackles. It seems as if Sameth and Nicholas are long-time friends. Now that Nicholas is working for an evil man, Hedge, Sameth questions their relationship and Nicholas's true motives.

In many ways, the relationships in the novel are those of friends, but the bonds are more like "family" than just close friends. For example, Lirael is very close with the Disreputable Dog. He is her loyal companion until the very end of the novel when Dog sacrifices his own life to save Lirael and the others. Additionally, Lirael looks to Dog for advice and help in determining the right way to stop the destruction of the world.

Good versus Evil

Another primary plot throughout the entire novel is that of good versus evil. In the novel, Charter Magic is considered a good kind of magic. The individuals that use this type of magic, generally, use it for good purposes, and to fight off the evil magic. The evil magic is Free Magic. This is the type of magic that the Death side and people who are Dead use for evil purposes and to try to win one over on those using Charter Magic.

The dividing line for the two types of magic seems to be the wall of Ancelstierre. Additionally, the line between Life and Death also separates the two types of magic. Based on this division of magic, Lirael represents the good, while Hedge and his followers represent evil. Throughout the novel, Lirael is seen as someone who uses her powers for good, while Hedge is someone who uses his magic for evil. As the truth comes out, Lirael has an evil side of her own because she is able to master both the light and dark powers.

Family

Family is the central theme throughout the entire novel. This is because the storyline is about the lives of this particular family—the Abhorsen and her family—and their magical powers. While every family has their trials and tribulations, the Abhorsen family has its own family dynamics that are the same and that are different from those of other families. In the end though, they are a family and they will get through it together, one way or the other.

Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the third person point of view, which works well with this novel and the author's writing style. The narrator of the novel is also the author of the novel, Garth Nix. The narrator is telling the story as it unfolds, but he also switches back to some past events to provide the reader with some perspective.

The point of view of this novel is an intimate point of view that allows the reader to connect closely with each of the main characters. The point of view also allows the author to inject his own opinions into the narration and to expand on what happens to the characters of the novel without interrupting the flow of the narration.

Setting

When the novel first begins, the primary setting is the city of Corvere, where Sabriel and King Touchstone are. After the novel moves to Lirael and Sameth, the primary setting becomes the Abhorsen House. For the remainder of the novel, the primary setting changes according to the location of the group as they travel toward Ancelstierre to try to stop the joining of the hemispheres and the release of Orannis the Destroyer. The author never states the specific year of the novel. The setting of this novel is important because it is about mysterious occurrences —magical occurrences—that set the scene for the entire plot of the novel. The main characters of the novel work to stop the rejoining of the hemispheres that will also set the evil Orannis the Destroyer free to wreak havoc on the world.

The setting of this novel works well with the plot. At first, the reader is not aware of all of the magic and secrets that exist. However, as events unfold, one secret after the next is either explained or inferred, and secrets are revealed.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is modern and fits well with the plot. The language of the novel is not formal, but also includes words the author invents. The language is educated, strong and descriptive enough that it creates a flow that leaves the reader impressed with the words as much as the plot when the novel ends.

The language of the novel is appropriate to the plot because it is accurate to the characters in the novel and the education level of the reader. The novel is not in love with its own words, but it is descriptive enough that the reader finds enjoyment in the words as well as the plot. The language is not difficult to understand, however, and everything is clear in its context.

Structure

The novel consists of 29 chapters, a prologue and an epilogue. Each chapter is anywhere from five to 20 pages long. The chapters tell the story both in exposition and dialogue. The author is the narrator of the book, so it seems as if he is injecting his own voice throughout the novel. This allows the author to provide his own opinions of the events surrounding the setting of the novel, as well as the actions taking place within the plot.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows the various relationships between the characters in the novel. The subplots involve good versus evil and the trials and tribulations of the family.



Quotes

"Yet I am so close to forming an alliance against Carolini." Prologue, p. 3

"It's possible some other Free Magic sorcerer could have raised this mist." Chap. 1, p. 9

"Well, we won't be going back that way." Chap. 2, p. 27

"We should have a proper plan." Chap. 3, p. 36

"At least we're alive." Chap. 4, p. 37

"I'm sure Nick doesn't know he is doing anything bad. He's a good man. He wouldn't do anything that would hurt anyone intentionally." Chap. 5, p. 51

"You see, Master, we cannot move the hemispheres any closer together. There is a force that keeps them apart, no matter what methods we employ." Chap. 6, p. 56

"Watch over my body while I'm gone, please." Chap. 7, p. 61

"I saw a man. His hair and skin were white, white as snow." Chap. 8, p. 68

"There is something of the Destroyer in him." Chap. 9, p. 77

"The experiment will go on without me you know." Chap. 10, p. 81

"Lirael. I'm Sam's aunt." Chap. 11, p. 91

"Nick...the thing inside...called out to him from the reeds." Chap. 12, p. 99

"There's a fragment of the Destroyer inside him, and it took him over." Chap. 13, p. 100



"A dog with wings!" Chap. 14, p 108

"Something funny's up, lads." Chap. 15, p. 117

"Impostors, sir." Chap. 16, p. 118

"R-red rockets, sir?" Chap. 17, p. 135

"Chlorr of the Mask, return to Death!" Chap. 18, p. 150

"Word of a Sayre. I must stop this." Chap. 19, p. 157

"But if the hemispheres join..." Chap. 20, p. 162

"I thought someone...something was following before." Chap. 21, p. 171

"Whatever he's doing...you're both doing...it's wrong!" Chap. 22, p. 172

"We're getting closer." Chap. 23, p. 181

"It's too late for that." Chap. 24, p. 183

"Besides, you wouldn't bother with me if It were already free." Chap. 25, p. 192

"Who wields the bells?" Chap. 26, p. 198

"Nick's dying, the healing spells won't..." Chap. 27, p. 202

"Mother! Father! I'm...I'm so glad you're not dead." Chap. 28, p. 204

"We stand as one, for Mosrael, against you." Chap. 29, p. 212

"I'm sending you back." Epilogue, p. 217

Topics for Discussion

Who is Lirael? Why does she feel like she is an outsider in her own family? What does Lirael recall about her life before finding out she is the Abhorsen-in-Waiting? What is Lirael's biggest demon that haunts her? Why is this important? How does it change her life?

Discuss the relationship between Sabriel and King Touchstone. Are they really in love? Is there love, guilt or a sense of obligation in their relationship? How does Sabriel feel about Touchstone? How does Touchstone feel about Sabriel?

How does Sameth gain his powers? How does this affect the future? Why does his coat represent that of the Wallmakers? How does Sameth find out why he has a Wallmaker jacket? What does he do to fulfill his destiny and stop Orannis?

Who is the true Nicholas? Why is he working for Hedge? Why do you think he is cured of his illness at the end of the novel? What do you think will happen to the relationship between Nicholas and Sam? Do you think they will be able to reestablish their friendship after everything Nicholas did?

Who is Mogget? Do you think he tries to continuously help or hinder throughout the novel? What happens after Mogget returns from Death? Do you think Mogget remains Lirael's loyal companion?

Who is the Disreputable Dog? Do you ever find out why he sacrifices his life at the end of the novel? Where do you think he goes when he dies? Do you think he ever comes back into Lirael's life?

Discuss the different types of magic—Charter and Free. What impact does the magic have on the characters of the novel? How does it motivate them or hold them back? Why is the magic an issue to the characters? Does the magic have anything to do with how the relationships between the characters develop and evolve?