

# **Angel Fire East Study Guide**

## **Angel Fire East by Terry Brooks**

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## Plot Summary

"Angel Fire East" by Terry Brooks is an intriguing novel in the Word and the Void series about the battle between good and evil in the world. After locating and capture the mysterious gypsy morph that is capable of aiding either side in the battle between the Word and the Void, John Ross travels to Hopewell, IL to ask for Nest Freemark's help to protect the morph and learn its purpose. The two battle several demons with the use of their own magic to protect the morph and try to discover its secret. "Angel Fire East" is an extremely entertaining and interesting novel about the challenges Nest and John Ross face as they search for the answer to the riddle of the gypsy morph.

During a dream, John Ross has a vision of himself being crucified in the future and he is sent on a quest to find and protect the mysterious gypsy morph. Findo Gask appears on Nest Freemark's doorstep in Hopewell, insisting that she does not aid Ross and the morph when they appear and Nest angrily refuses to agree to any of Gask's demands. While Nest attends church, Penny Dreadful, Gask's demon assistant, learns of Larry Spence's infatuation with Nest, and Gask plans to use Larry to achieve his desires. Returning home after surveying Sinnissippi Park with Pick, the sylvan who maintains the balance of magic in the park, Nest finds Bennett Scott, a childhood friend, and her daughter, Harper, waiting on her porch. Bennett tells Nest about her history as a drug addict, and when she admits that she has returned to Hopewell hoping Nest will help her, Nest invites Bennett and Harper to stay with her as long as necessary. After a Christmas caroling adventure during which Twitch, another of Gask's demons, attacks Nest's church group, Nest returns home, and late that night, John Ross arrives at her house with the gypsy morph which has taken the form of a little boy whom John calls Little John. He has come to Nest because the morph spoke one word, Nest, after taking his current form.

As Bennett takes a walk in the park with Harper, Penny approaches her and offers her drugs, but Bennett's indecision is saved by the appears of Two Bears who speaks to Nest about his intention to rejoin his ancestors and suggests she try talking to the gypsy morph to ascertain why it spoke her name. When Nest takes Harper and Little John tobogganing at the park, Gask uses magic to open a hole in the ice, but luckily Pick warns Nest, and she manages to save herself and the children from the danger. Upset about the night's events, Bennett takes a walk and runs into Penny who persuades her to indulge in her addiction, and Bennett does not return to Nest's during the night. The next day, Nest encounters Two Bears again who again encourages her attempts to talk to the gypsy morph, and when the demons pursue Two Bears after Nest leaves him, Two Bears disappears in a whirlwind of snow. That evening, Nest and her houseguests attend a Christmas party at her friends' house. Bennett slips away, leaving a note in Nest's pocket, and meets Penny at Nest's house. After supplying Bennett with an excessive amount of drugs, Penny and Gask lead Bennett to Sinnissippi Park where they trick her into jumping off the cliff. Realizing Bennett is missing, Nest returns home with the children where they are attacked by the ur'doch, but Wraith releases from Nest's body to defend them. Little John, seeing Wraith across the room, clings to Nest and calls her mama, but he is visibly upset when Wraith returns to her body.



On Christmas Eve, the police find Bennett's body and Nest offers to raise Harper as her own daughter. With the help of Larry, who is being influenced by Gask, the demons kidnap Harper and Little John, offering to trade them in exchange for the gypsy morph because they do not realize that Little John is the gypsy morph. Nest and John Ross plan a preemptive strike. Nest sends Wraith into the park to find Pick to help scout the demons' house, but Wraith's connection to Nest is severed. After Pick determines that the children are guarded by the ur'doch in the basement, he leads Nest into the house while John attacks the demons from the front upstairs. Wraith arrives at the demons' house to fight the ur'doch, and the ur'doch dies when Nest turns the light on. Ross kills Penny and Twitch, but he is mortally poisoned by Penny's dagger which is coated with demon poison. Gask confronts Nest in the backyard, but when Nest tells Gask that the gypsy morph is gone, he leaves her alone because she no longer has anything he wants. Before leaving the basement, the morph had told Nest what it wanted, and when she agreed, it became a child in her womb. After Nest leaves, Ross crawls to the park, and as he looks at the river, the Lady arrives and calls him home, causing him to drop his staff. Two Bears appears, retrieves Ross' staff and stares across the river, contemplating the continuous struggle between the Word and the Void.



# Section 1: Prologue & Chapter 1

## Section 1: Prologue & Chapter 1 Summary

"Angel Fire East" by Terry Brooks is an intriguing novel in the Word and the Void series about the battle between good and evil in the world. After locating and capture the mysterious gypsy morph which is capable of aiding either side in the battle between the Word and the Void, John Ross travels to Hopewell, IL to ask for Nest Freemark's help to protect the morph and learn its purpose. The two battle several demons with the use of their own magic to protect the morph and try to discover its secret. "Angel Fire East" is an extremely entertaining and interesting novel about the challenges Nest and John Ross face as they search for the answer to the riddle of the gypsy morph.

In the Prologue, John Ross stares at the ravaged man hanging on the cross in front of a burned church as he hears the screams from the village in the distance. When Ross moves to help the man, the man warns him away because those who crucified him have also poisoned him after catching him without magic to protect him since he was already weakened from escaping earlier. Noting that he has failed in his efforts to save mankind, the man on the cross suggests Ross was sent to him by the Word as a final chance at redemption, and he tells Ross about finding a rare gypsy morph, providing details to help him on the hunt and asking Ross to promise to do this. Ross cannot do otherwise, though he knows it may be his own undoing. Waking with the sun on his face while hitchhiking in Pennsylvania, Ross is haunted by the images from his dream. Undaunted by the challenge, Ross is haunted by his dream "for the face of the man hanging on the cross had been his own" (pg. 6.)

Sunday, December 21 begins with Chapter 1 in which Nest Freemark is dressing for church when a knock sounds on her door. The old man in black at the door introduces himself to Nest as Findo Gask, a minister of the faith, but his speech about the importance of church makes Nest uneasy, and her uneasiness increases when he questions her about John Ross who she has not seen or communicated with in over ten years. Gask claims Ross has something that belongs to him. When Gask looks into Nest's eyes as he attempts to walk past her to talk in the house, Nest realizes she is talking to a demon. Gask knows what she is as well and asks if Ross is inside. Wraith, the demon protector connected to Nest, wakes inside Nest, sensing her danger, and Gask claims Nest is her father's daughter and should not pretend to be what she is not. He further explains that he is a servant of the Void and tries to argue that their faiths are not very different. Gask wants Nest to deny and shun John Ross. He will have Ross anyway but has no reason to claim Nest as well. Fighting to keep Wraith under control because she does not want Gask to know about Wraith until it is absolutely unavoidable, Nest decides she needs to know more about what is going on because there is no chance of her agreeing to Gask's demands. Though she says Ross is not here, Gask claims he will be and she must not help him when he arrives. Ross has magic that he would attempt to use against Gask, and when Nest asks if Gask would



attempt to use the magic against Ross, Gask claims he has taken up enough of her time and will let her return to her Sunday worship.

## Section 1: Prologue & Chapter 1 Analysis

In the Prologue, Ross falls asleep and has a prophetic dream in June. As a Knight of the Word, Ross cannot help the man on the cross; his magic can only heal Ross himself. With feeders standing in the shadows waiting for the man on the cross to die, Ross decides to take the man down, and he realizes the man on the cross is also a Knight of the Word when he notices the remains of a polished black staff, like his own, on the ground. As a Knight of the Word, Ross lives one life in the present where he is given the chance to change the world and one in the future where he must live forever with the consequences of his failure to do so. After living with this charge for nearly twenty-five years, Ross knows the magic of a gypsy morph can provide leverage to change everything in the war between the Word and the Void. The gypsy morph will be born three days after Thanksgiving, and Ross will be able to capture it if he is present and quick enough. Then, he will have about thirty days to change history before the morph dies.

Sunday, December 21 begins with Chapter 1 and continues through Chapter 7. The setting changes from Pennsylvania to Hopewell, Illinois, in the home of Nest Freemark, a young woman with the gift of magic who serves the Word. Walking down the hallway to answer the knock at her door, Nest passes the photographs of the women in her family and admires the resolve in their eyes. They all had entered into the service of the Word to help the sylvan keep the magic in the park in balance, and they were all born with their own magic, though not all of them managed it well. Nest thinks of her grandmother's dark secrets, her own deceptions in the workings of her magic, and how her mother had died young, victim to her demon lover's treachery, because she was too fragile for the magic's demands. The struggle between the Word and the Void has been going on for a very long time, and though it will not end anytime soon, Gask believes the Void will win one day because the Void embraces the world's evil and turns a weakness into a strength. Gask informs Nest that he is not easily deterred and his interest in Ross is important so it is in her best interest to let him move her aside because he will destroy her if she stands in his way. Nest threatens to shoot Gask if he ever sets foot on her property again which would leave him in his demon form for however long it would take to put himself back together. Speechless as his face undergoes terrible transformations, Gask walks away, and once he is out of sight, Nest slams her front door so hard that the photos on her wall are knocked askew.



## Section 2: Chapter 2 & Chapter 3

### Section 2: Chapter 2 & Chapter 3 Summary

In Chapter 2, Nest considers the prospect of another encounter with John Ross on her way to church, and her feelings are mixed because he made a huge impact on her life in the week she has spent with him in the past fifteen years. As she walks into church with Josie Jackson, she wonders if Josie still thinks about Ross because there was something between them years ago. After working in the nursery for two hours during which Nest tries not to think about her ex-husband and the pain of never becoming a mother, she joins the fellowship after the service ends. Larry Spence joins Nest and asks her about running, but she says her competition days are over and asks about his children. Larry invites Nest to spend Christmas with him and the children, but she declines. While Nest is talking to another friend, a young woman approaches Nest, introduces herself as Penny, and praises Nest's running career before disappearing. Though she thinks the conversation was odd, Nest assumes Penny is new in town, and she rushes out the door when she notices that Larry is still watching her.

In Chapter 3, Findo Gask watches the church from across the street while he waits for Penny to return. When she returns, Penny tells Gask that Nest is not anything special, but Larry Spence has it bad for Nest and would do anything to help her. As they wait for Penny to point Larry out, Gask warns her not to underestimate Nest. After Larry emerges from the church, Gask orders Penny to follow him as Gask lovingly passes his hands over his Book of Names, a record of the humans he has dispatched over the centuries. Larry pulls into his driveway, and Penny circles back and parks in front of Larry's house. They knock on Larry's door, telling him they are from the FBI. Gask tells Larry that he is interested in Nest's friend, John Ross, who Nest has a crush on, playing on Larry's jealousy, and Ross is a very dangerous criminal. Gask believes Ross will come to Hopewell and asks Larry to visit Nest daily and inform him if he sees signs of Ross' presence. Penny objects to involving Larry because he will just get in the way, but that is exactly what Gask is planning on.

### Section 2: Chapter 2 & Chapter 3 Analysis

In Chapter 2, Nest thinks about how little time John Ross has spent in her life in contrast to how greatly he has affected her life, changing it irrevocably each time she has encountered him. He first came to her when she was fourteen and just discovering the truth about her family, and he helped her learn the truth, kill her demon father and get her life back. Five years later, Nest encountered Ross in Seattle when she saved him from being claimed by a demon, but she has not seen or heard from him in ten years. Nest thinks it is strange if Ross returns to Hopewell now, and it certainly means trouble if a demon is chasing him, but Gask seemed certain Ross would visit Nest. Larry's wife, Mary, abandoned her husband and children when she was twenty-four, and now, he tries to pursue Nest. Nest thinks he has no idea what he is doing trying to pursue her, so



she refuses to encourage his interest. Larry's interest foreshadows his importance in this novel as a tool to use against Nest. Nest excuses herself to talk to her friend, Robert, about his wife and their children. When Robert mentions Larry's attentions to Nest, he also recalls chasing Danny Abbott the summer before high school, but Nest made him fall over his own feet, claiming she dabbled in magic. Robert never understood what really happened though. This shows the problem Nest has maintaining the secrecy of her magical abilities. Robert also reminds Nest of the Christmas party on Tuesday night, and she promises to be in attendance, foreshadowing the events of the party. Penny Dreadful is introduced briefly at the end of the second chapter, but in Chapter 3, the reader learns that Penny is a demon helping Gask as she reports to Gask concerning Larry's infatuation. The conversation at Larry's foreshadows Gask manipulating Larry against Nest. After Gask and Penny leave Larry's house, Gask thinks about the struggle between the Word and the Void, believing the Void will always gain ground because of humanity's weaknesses.





## Section 3: Chapter 4 & Chapter 5

### Section 3: Chapter 4 & Chapter 5 Summary

In Chapter 4, as she walks the cliffs in Sinnissippi Park behind her house, Pick chides her irritably for taking so long. She ignores the irritation of the 165-year-old sylvan whose job is to "balance the magic that was centered [in the park] so that all living things could coexist in the way the Word had intended" (pg. 44.) Pick warns her that trouble is brewing because the feeders, who feed off the energy given by the expenditure of emotions, are out in large numbers, and Nest tells him about Gask since the demon's presence likely accounts for the feeders. Nest cannot leave Hopewell because she belongs in the park, working with Pick. As they walk around the park, Nest wishes her life could be as peaceful, but it cannot because of Wraith. She thinks about how Wraith's presence caused the end of her running career. As she reaches her house, Nest sees a young woman and a little girl sitting on her back steps, and Bennett Scott stands and tells Nest she has come home.

In Chapter 5, Gask enters the Victorian house which is his present home. Finding the ur'doch, a formless demon, in the attic, Gask tells it they are going out tonight and he wants it to come along. While Penny, Twitch and the ur'doch are an unpredictable bunch, they are what Gask needs as he learned in Salt Lake City when he failed in his attack on Ross with five hired hit men. The Void had summoned Gask to instruct him to steal the gypsy morph from Ross. Gask found Ross eighteen days later in Salt Lake City, ten days before Christmas, but Ross defeated the men Gask hired so Gask knows he needs special help from other demons if he is to have any chance against John Ross. Three days ago, the gypsy morph chose a new shape and spoke one word, "Nest," so Gask knows Ross will come to Hopewell, and he will be waiting when Ross arrives.

### Section 3: Chapter 4 & Chapter 5 Analysis

In Chapter 4, Nest broods about Ross on the way home from church because he is the common link for the things that trouble her about her life, but she knows she cannot stop him from visiting if he decides to do so. She heads to Sinnissippi Park to adhere to her duty in helping Pick maintain the balance of magic in the park. As she notes the peacefulness of the park and wishes her life were equally peaceful, she reminisces on her running career. Three years ago, she was considered the greatest American long-distance runner of all time when she competed in the Olympics and won the gold medal. During her last race, Wraith nearly broke free, and Nest knew it was the end of her competitive days since he can appear whenever she loses control of her emotions. Nest returns home, moody as she thinks about her lost career. Quitting was the hardest thing she has ever done, and now she lives comfortably on money saved from endorsements, writing articles for running magazines for extra money. When Nest returns to her house, she is shocked to see Bennett Scott sitting on her porch with a four-year-old girl. In



Chapter 5, Bennett tells Nest about her life since they last met as the narrator informs the reader of their previous relationship. The introduction of Bennett and Harper into Nest's life at this point foreshadows the complications that arise from their presence in addition to Gask's demands. At the house where Gask is staying, it is silent when Penny is not there because Twitch and the ur'doch make little noise. Though he does not like them, Gask endures them because "he was intrigued by the prospect of adding John Ross to his book" (pg. 57) and he knows he will need the assistance of other demons to obtain his goal.



## Section 4: Chapter 6 & Chapter 7

### Section 4: Chapter 6 & Chapter 7 Summary

In Chapter 6, Nest struggles with the idea that Bennett Scott has returned after ten years. Bennett hoped it would be alright if she showed up without calling first because Nest is her big sister, and she introduces Nest to her daughter, Harper. After Harper goes to sleep, Bennett tells Nest that she ran away after her mother died, and she became a drug addict. She checked into rehab when she learned she was pregnant, but she never manages to get off the drugs and is forced to leave Harper with whoever will keep her when she decides to try getting clean again. Nest offers to keep Harper and invites both of them to stay as long as they need. When Bennett emerges from her bath, Nest announces she will return around 8 or 9 p.m. Leaving her house, Nest sees feeders at the end of her yard and chases them away, wondering if they are drawn by Ross' pending visit. She ignores the matter and continues across her yard without seeing the figure hidden in the shadows at the top of her walk.

In Chapter 7, Findo Gask patiently waits until Nest leaves before knocking on the door and introducing himself to Bennett as Reverend Findo Gask. Though he claims he was supposed to pick Nest up tonight, Bennett refuses to allow him inside the house, and when he asks if Mr. Ross is there, she tells him she does not know Ross and shuts the door in his face. Nest joins the Krupperts and a group of preteens on a caroling trip. When they stop at an old Victorian house, a large albino man appears at the door, causing the children to scatter while shrieking in fear. The man grabs and shakes Albert Kruppert, and Nest's impulse is to release Wraith on the man, but he shrugs aside her magic and tosses Albert, causing Nest to realize the man is not human. As the man starts to attack Nest, a voice commands him to stop, and Penny appears, apologetically explaining that her brother, Twitch, just wanted to play. When Nest returns home, Bennett wakes and tells Nest about Reverend Findo Gask's visit, and Nest is relieved Bennett did not let him in the house. A knock at the door around midnight reveals John Ross with a four-year-old boy, and Nest invites Ross inside and tells him she has been expecting him.

### Section 4: Chapter 6 & Chapter 7 Analysis

As she feeds Bennett and Harper in Chapter 6, Nest thinks how much Bennett has changed since she lived with the Freemark family after Bennett's mother, Enid, lost her children for allowing her boyfriend to beat her son. Enid had relocated to Indiana after reclaiming her children, and Bennett wrote for a while, but then Nest lost track of Bennett Scott. Remembering that she promised to check on the Petersons, Nest makes sugar cookies, and when Harper comes into the kitchen looking for her mother, Nest offers a cookie to the child. Nest feels bad for the child, thinking about her situation. This foreshadows Nest's in depth involvement with Bennett and Harper. The figure in the shadows as Nest leaves her house foreshadows Gask's visit, and this foreshadowing is



fulfilled as the next chapter begins. Luckily, Bennett does not allow Gask to enter the house. Although it is not explicitly stated, it seems that allowing the demon into the house allows him access in the future. After Gask is refused entrance, the ur'doch joins Gask and reports that Ross is not in Nest's house, so they return home to enjoy the surprise Gask prepared for Nest. During her caroling expedition, Nest meets Twitch and encounters Penny for the second time. Her realization that Twitch is not human leads to her suspicions of Penny. This incident also foreshadows Nest's realization that she knows where the demons live. Considering the conflict between Gask and Ross, Nest wonders what Ross needs from her, but though she recalls Gask's warning when Ross arrives at her house late that night, Nest disregards the demon's warning and allows Ross to enter her house, foreshadowing her decision to help him and the gypsy morph.



## Section 5: Chapter 8 & Chapter 9

### Section 5: Chapter 8 & Chapter 9 Summary

On Monday, December 22, in Chapter 8, Ross begins his search for the gypsy morph after waking from his dream about the Knight on the cross. Learning the morph will appear near Cannon Beach, Oregon, Ross travels to the town and obtains a job in a bookstore. After finding lodging, he is ready to search for the gypsy morph which he knows is in a cave hollowed by elements and time into the side of the bluffs running along the ocean. His search for the cave is unsuccessful until his landlady suggests he talk to Anson Robbington who has explored every inch of the coastline, and Ross knows immediately that this is the cave he has been searching for when Robbington leads him to it. Ross returns to the cave many times, searching for something that will help him when the morph finally appears, and as he begins to despair, a tatterdemalion summons him to the Lady in Wales.

In Chapter 9, Ross admires Nest's calm acceptance and strength as she listens to his narrative. Ross continued to Wales where he learned he was up against more than he bargained for. He informs Nest that the boy is the gypsy morph which kneels backward on her couch, looking out the window into the park. Ross drove to the cave on the day the morph was supposed to appear, and he guarded the cave from the feeders whose numbers increased as the day went on. Feeling the wild magic's presence, Ross is on his feet with the net in hand when the magic finally comes together. He captures the morph as it rapidly changes shapes and carries it to his car where the first demon appears. Ross pauses as Bennett and Harper appear in the doorway, and he introduces the boy as his son, Little John. Bennett vaguely remembers Ross visiting Nest's grandparents fifteen years ago, so she goes to get dressed while Harper plays with Little John. Ross explains that he killed the demon near his car and traveled continuously for a week until the morph's changes, which announce its location to magical beings, slowed down. Shortly after the incident in Salt Lake City, the gypsy morph changed into a little boy and spoke one word, Nest, so Ross decided to come to Hopewell. After Bennett and Harper leave for a walk in the park, Ross suggests he should leave because it is dangerous, but Nest insists they give it time to figure out what the morph might want. Someone knocks at the door, and Nest looks out the window to see the county sheriff's car parked in her driveway.

### Section 5: Chapter 8 & Chapter 9 Analysis

Monday, December 22 begins with Chapter 8 and continues through Chapter 14. In Chapter 8, John Ross recounts the tale of his search for the gypsy morph and his attempts to determine what he will do when the morph appears after he finally finds the cave where it will appear. Though gypsy morphs are legendary, there is no hard evidence of what they might become, but Ross knows that whoever gains control over one acquires "the potential to change the future in a way no one else could" (pg. 95.)



Ross continues his tale in Chapter 9 with how he was summoned to the Lady in the Fairy Glen. He tells Nest that the Lady told him a little about what to expect and gave him magic netting to capture the morph which is formed of wild magic coming together to form a whole, but the magic is unstable and can become anything. If the morph finds the shape that suits it, it will become a force in the war between the Word and the Void; otherwise, it will disappear back into the ether. Ross informs Nest that the boy with him is actually the gypsy morph, but he has no clue what the boy is doing or why. Explaining how he disappeared from the demons by continual movement, Ross tells Nest about the morph until Bennett reappears, and when Bennett invites Little John to join her and Harper for a walk in the park, Ross refuses because he cannot "take a chance on letting the gypsy morph out of his sight" (pg. 117.) Though Ross considers leaving Hopewell because it may be dangerous for Nest, Nest is intrigued by the fact that the morph spoke her name and convinces him to stay for a while to try to figure out what the morph wants. The presence of the sheriff's car in the driveway foreshadows Larry's involvement with the affair and demonstrates Gask's control over Larry.



## Section 6: Chapter 10 & Chapter 11

### Section 6: Chapter 10 & Chapter 11 Summary

In Chapter 10, Bennett hopes that things will be better in Hopewell as she watches Harper skip ahead of her, and she knows "if anyone could help her find a way back from the dark road she had traveled, it was Nest" (pg. 122.) While Harper plays, Penny approaches Bennett and introduces herself, but when Bennett tries to leave because she does not feel comfortable with this young woman, Penny offers her drugs. Though Bennett tries to walk away, she closes her eyes, lacking the strength to continue refusing, and when she opens them, she sees the Indian. Nest opens the door to find Deputy Sheriff Larry Spence who she introduces to John Ross. Larry claims that there are rumors of drug dealing in the park and asks if they know anything, claiming Ross' name came up in connection to the case from an anonymous source. Nest angrily asks Larry to leave as she insists that neither she nor Ross are involved in dealing drugs in the park. Bennett forgets everything as she simply stares at the Indian who seems to have appeared from nowhere. The Indian addresses Bennett and Harper, ignoring Penny, and when Bennett admits to knowing Nest, he asks her to tell Nest that Two Bears is waiting in the park to speak to her. When Penny tells the Indian to run his own errand and lunges at him, she drops to her knees with a shriek though Bennett does not see the Indian move.

In Chapter 11, Nest and Pick find O'olish Amaneh next to the toboggan slide. Two Bears suggests that Nest must empty her house of the bad and fill it with the good in order to free herself from being a prisoner in her household, and when Nest objects that she must deal with the trouble because everyone in her house needs her, Two Bears points out that "not all the troubles that plague us are ours to solve" (pg. 139.) Mentioning the gypsy morph, he suggests Nest try talking to it. Two Bears explains that he has come to say goodbye to Nest because he has come home to be with his people and must bond with them by giving up something of himself if the spirits of his people will accept him. However, Nest may see him again even when he is with his people, in dreams and such. Coming downstairs after his shower and learning that Nest is talking to some Indian in the park, Ross wonders what will happen if he fails to unlock the secrets of the gypsy morph. The doorbell rings, and when he opens the door, Ross finds Josie Jackson waiting on the other side.

### Section 6: Chapter 10 & Chapter 11 Analysis

In Chapter 10, Bennett hopes that she will be able to change her life in Hopewell because she wants a better life for her daughter, revealing how much she loves Harper. Penny's introduction to Bennett foreshadows Penny's goal to destroy Bennett, especially when she offers drugs to the addict. Just as Bennett feels herself about to yield, she sees the Indian staring at them. Nest is enraged when Larry suggests that Ross is a criminal, as he was told by Gask, and she tells him to get out of her house,



though he insists he is only trying to protect her from Ross. The Indian addresses Bennett and Harper, demonstrating Penny's unimportance by ignoring her completely until she tries to attack him. After incapacitating the demon, the Indian walks Bennett and Harper part of the way to Nest's house, leaving Penny on the ground behind him as indication of how thoroughly dismissible she is to him. In Chapter 11, Nest is frustrated with the strangeness of her day as she readies herself to meet O'olish Amaneh, knowing that Two Bears' presence means trouble of the worst kind because, like John Ross, his two appearances in her life has wrought significant changes. O'olish Amaneh is the last of his people, the Sinnissippi, but he is also a prophet of the Word. When Nest joins him, Two Bears admits that he showed himself to Bennett to protect her from evil spirits, and noting that Nest has acquired a houseful of trouble, he asks what she will do. His advice to empty her house of the bad and fill it with the good seems to be a veiled message regarding her future as it concerns Wraith and the gypsy morph. While waiting for Nest to return from her talk with Two Bears, John Ross realizes he is weary of his life as he recalls his last visit to the Fairy Glen, the Lady and the secret he had discovered which he could not share with anyone. This foreshadows the discovery of this secret. Josie's visit foreshadows a romantic entanglement between John and Josie since Nest had previously wondered about their past relationship.





## Section 7: Chapter 12 & Chapter 13

### Section 7: Chapter 12 & Chapter 13 Summary

In Chapter 12, though it has been fifteen years since John and Josie have seen each other, it could have been yesterday as the emotions are frozen in time. The conversation between them is awkward as Josie explains she has brought cookies for Nest. They talk about their lives since they last met, and Ross explains that Little John is his adopted son and he needs Nest's help with him. Josie assures Ross that he can always ask her for help too. Stopping at the Quik Stop, Larry calls FBI Agent Robinson to report that John Ross is at Nest's house. Waiting for Nest to return, Josie and Ross talk, and she invites him to dinner, but he declines.

In Chapter 13, Ross thinks about Josie and wonders why he is so obsessed with her. Around 6 p.m., Robert Heppler phones to invite Nest to go tobogganing in the park, and when he agrees that she can bring her four houseguests, she explains to Ross that it might be good to get the morph to do things children like to do because it is useless if she cannot "get close enough to it to discover what it wanted of her" (page 156). Nest, Bennett, Ross, Harper and Little John go to the park, and Nest promises to watch the morph since Ross cannot get up the slide because of his bad leg. After the first trip down the slide, Bennett takes a cigarette break, intentionally avoiding Ross, but Penny approaches and pressures Bennett, mocking her attempts to stay clean. Bennett walks away, but Penny angrily tells her there is always later. Gask smiles when he sees Penny's flashlight blink twice. It is time to demonstrate to Nest the consequences of uncooperative behavior. As he touches the ice and concentrates, a crack appears and spreads toward the sled run. Atop the loading platform, the locking lever releases, and the toboggan slides out of the starting gate with Robert, Kyle, Nest, Harper and Little John, but near the end of the chute, Pick flies up to Nest and warns her that Gask cracked the ice in front of them. Yelling about the hole in the ice without earning a response from Robert, Nest grabs Robert, locking the three children between them, and throws all of them off the sled.

### Section 7: Chapter 12 & Chapter 13 Analysis

As Josie and John Ross come face to face in Chapter 12, the shock in Josie's eyes is painful as she says John's name. Fifteen years ago, he had allowed himself to pretend their two days together might lead to something permanent, but he never thought he would see her again when he left for his final confrontation with Nest's demon father. As they talk about their lives, the chemistry between the two foreshadow a continuation of their previous relationship, though Ross declines her dinner invitation because he worries about leaving Nest alone with the gypsy morph because it could be dangerous. After Josie leaves, Ross' mind drifts as Nest tells him about her encounter with Two Bears. Meanwhile, Larry phones Gask from a gas station to report that Ross is at Nest's house now. Though Larry struggles with his betrayal, whispers in his mind remind him



that Nest is at stake in this situation, and Larry is filled with anger at Ross. All of this reveals how securely Gask has manipulated Larry and foreshadows his continuing to do so. In Chapter 13, Nest convinces Ross that they should all go tobogganing because it will be good for the morph to do things that children do since it obviously chose the form of a child for a reason. At the park, Penny tempts Bennett with drugs again, and her insinuation that there is always later foreshadows her success in destroying Bennett Scott. At Penny's signal, Gask uses magic to cause a crack in the ice, intending to injure or kill Nest and the others on her sled. Luckily, Pick warns Nest in time for her to rescue Robert and the children. The ice swallows the toboggan and Nest comforts the children. When Robert asks what happened, Nest thinks that he does not want to know as she is filled with anger and fear.



## Section 8: Chapter 14

### Section 8: Chapter 14 Summary

In Chapter 14, Ray Childress closes the slide for the evening as Nest chides herself for the stupidity of thinking Gask would not try something in public as Robert notes how strange it is that Nest could see the hole in the pitch black night. Nest joins Ross and explains that Gask opened the ice. Nest and her guests return to her house, and Bennett decides to take a walk down the street because she needs time alone. After she buys two packs of cigarettes at the gas station, Penny appears and offers her a ride. Feeling the inevitability of the situation and wanting to feel good for a little while, Bennett allows Penny to lead her away. As Ray Childress goes down the slope to investigate upon hearing the sound of ice tightening, he does not see the myriad eyes watching his descent, but he notes the oddness of the silence and the situation with the Heppler toboggan. As he walks forward, the ice gives out underneath him. He screams for help as he is submerged in the freezing water, but something pulls him down as the ice shifts. Ray struggles for the hole in the surface, but he can only reach his hand through the hole as the ice forms above him and surrounds his hand. He sees hungry, yellow eyes watching him from above and they do not disappear until his hand stops moving.

### Section 8: Chapter 14 Analysis

In Chapter 14, Ray Childress shuts down the chute and rushes to Robert who does not understand what happened either. Bennett is angry at Nest for not keeping Harper safe, but Nest understands that, as an addict, Bennett must blame someone else. Pointing out that Ross was in Hopewell the last time something strange happened also, Robert warns Nest about being too trusting before he leaves. After rejoining Ross, Nest wonders if Gask was after the morph, but Ross assures her that demons cannot identify morphs unless they are using their magic, foreshadowing the fact that Gask will not recognize the morph even when he obtains it. Elsewhere, Special Agent Robinson insists that Larry check on Nest again to make sure Ross has not hurt her, and Larry agrees because he cannot let Nest be hurt since she believes the best of every one. He does not realize Gask is using him to distract Nest who is a bigger problem than Gask anticipated, but Gask knows things will change in the next day because "tonight's events had dictated the need for that" (pg. 176.) Bennett leaving the gas station with Penny indicates that she will succumb to her addiction with the influence of the demon. The chapter ends with the death of Ray Childress as the feeders watch him drown from above the ice. The fact that something drags him down into the water and that the ice closes above his head indicates that Gask is responsible for the death, showing his malicious nature as Ray Childress has nothing to do with Nest, Ross or the morph.



## Section 9: Chapter 15 & Chapter 16

### Section 9: Chapter 15 & Chapter 16 Summary

On Tuesday, December 23, in Chapter 15, Nest goes running in the snow the next morning. Bennett did not return the previous night. Last night when she was beginning to worry about Bennett, Little John had come to sit with her, but he refused to answer her questions, and Nest went to bed feeling dejected at her failure. Returning home, Nest finds that Bennett has returned, but Bennett refuses to answer questions about where she was. During breakfast, Nest suggests that they go get a Christmas tree. When Larry visits Nest to warn her that the people investigating Ross say he is a dangerous man, something clicks in Nest's mind. She describes Gask and warns Larry to check him out. After Larry leaves, Nest realizes Gask is using Larry, though she does not know why.

In Chapter 16, Nest takes everyone shopping for a Christmas tree, and as they drift toward the toboggan slide, they see emergency vehicles and learn Ray Childress fell through the ice and drowned during the night. On the way home, Gask approaches Nest, promising to go away if Nest and Ross give him the gypsy morph. Realizing Gask does not know that Little John is the gypsy morph, Nest tells him she does not like being threatened. Gask mocks Nest, claiming her accomplishments result from her demon lineage, but Nest refuses to let Gask break down her resolve. When Ross, Bennett and the children rejoin Nest, Nest insists Ross let Gask go, though he wants to follow the demon and end it now. Bennett mentions that Gask is Penny's uncle and Penny does not seem to like him either. Questioning Bennett about Penny, Nest warns her to stay away from Gask and Penny because they are dangerous, and Bennett agrees reluctantly.

### Section 9: Chapter 15 & Chapter 16 Analysis

Chapter 15 marks the beginning of Tuesday, December 23, which continues until Chapter 20. As the sun rises, Nest thinks she should have been smarter than putting them all in danger by going to the toboggan, letting Bennett out alone at night and running alone in the morning as if daring the demons to try something, and maybe she was daring them to "let them try contending with Wraith" (pg. 184.) She tries to shake off her anger because she knows reason and caution will serve her better, but she is infuriated by the whole situation. Bennett refuses to discuss her whereabouts the previous night, making it apparent that she was indulging in her addiction. When Bennett cries because she does not have a Christmas gift for Harper, Nest suggests making one and also states her intention to take Bennett to see a man who works with addicts after the holidays. Larry knocks on Nest's door and claims witnesses saw a drug deal in the park and someone in Nest's house may have been involved, but Nest insists no one in her house is involved with dealing drugs. Ironically, she realizes that it is likely that Bennett is involved with drugs in some form, though she knows Bennett does not



have money. Larry's continued involvement foreshadows his demise as a result of Gask's manipulation. After learning about the death in the park in Chapter 17 while searching for a Christmas tree, Nest knows immediately that Gask is responsible, and she is very upset when she realizes that the dead man is Ray Childress because she has known him her entire life. When Gask approaches Nest about the tragic turn of events, claiming death is the nature of the human condition, Nest is angered by his implicit threat and asks Gask if he feels safe. Gask's face becomes expressionless as Nest tells him she is not afraid of demons because she has magic to destroy them. Nest learned when she was young that she can give others power over her life by not standing up for herself, and she knows she will never be free of Gask if she gives him power by admitting she is frightened. Though Nest pretends to be fearless, she actually thinks they should all crawl into a hole because nowhere else seems very safe, but she keeps the thought to herself.



## Section 10: Chapter 17 & Chapter 18

### Section 10: Chapter 17 & Chapter 18 Summary

In Chapter 17, Nest sends the others home to begin decorating the Christmas tree while she visits the graves of her mother and grandparents. As she kneels beside the graves, Two Bears appears and encourages Nest to continue trying to reach the gypsy morph. As Gask watches Nest talk with Two Bears, Gask plans to go after the Indian instead of Nest since Two Bears is the most powerful of Nest's allies. When Gask approaches Two Bears, the Indian warns him that his understanding of humans is limited by his lack of empathy which will be his undoing. Gask, Penny, Twitch and the ur'doch surround Two Bears, but the snow funnels around him and he is gone when the air clears.

In Chapter 18, Ross decides to seek out and destroy the enemy, leaving the morph to stay with Nest and giving Nest a better chance of learning its secret. He knows it would be worth it as he recalls his last visit to the Lady at the Fairy Glen and her promise to soon set him free after one last quest and one final sacrifice. Looking at Harper and Little John, he wonders what the gypsy morph will become if it survives. After Nest returns and announces they are going to Robert's Christmas party, Ross asks to borrow Nest's car, and she agrees after convincing him that his plan to attack the demons alone is futile. Debilitated by exhaustion, loneliness and despair, Ross parks in front of Josie's house, and she seems surprised when he knocks on the door. Josie knows that Ross can only promise a few hours, but she will take that without promises of marriage or his moving to Hopewell.

### Section 10: Chapter 17 & Chapter 18 Analysis

As Nest walks in Chapter 17, she thinks about her symbiotic relationship with the park, and as she visits the graves of her mother and grandparents, Two Bears joins her and asks why she is visiting her ancestors. When Nest informs him that her attempts to talk to the gypsy morph failed, he suggests it may require more time and patient since the morph is young and has been hunted since its birth. She may need to use magic, but she is "too quick to dismiss your abilities and to disparage your strengths" (page 214). Two Bears is strengthened when Nest uses his name, O'olish Amaneh, as a talisman, and he disappears as Nest walks away. Gask discourages Penny's suggestion to attack Nest now because the direct approach is not necessarily the best way to hurt Nest so badly she will never be well again as he desires, and if they hurt her now, Ross will hide with the morph. Gask wants to strip Nest of her confidence and determination before killing her. Sensing the Indian nearby, Gask finds him waiting by the bluffs. As Nest walks toward the park, Pick drops onto her shoulder, informing her that Gask and his demons were watching her talk to Two Bears, but they did not follow her. Nest refuses when Pick suggests she give in to Gask. After Two Bears disappears into a whirlwind of snow when the demons try to attack him, Gask is disappointed that Two Bears' name is not in his book, but he knows that the Indian cannot return for a while after performing



such a trick, so it is time to work on the others. In Chapter 18, Ross can tell Nest's resolve has not been weakened by her encounter with Gask, and when Josie phones to invite Ross to dinner again, he claims that he cannot, though he wants to. He considers calling Josie back but does not know what to say. After Nest dissuades him from going after the demons alone, he decides to go to Josie's house, and she seems surprised by his visit. Since Josie has not eaten yet, they dine together, and Ross admits that he never stopped thinking about her. She kisses him, leads him upstairs and reminds him that she is still a bold girl, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing that their physical relationship would resume from its point fifteen years earlier.



## Section 11: Chapter 19 & Chapter 20

### Section 11: Chapter 19 & Chapter 20 Summary

In Chapter 19, Bennett makes a point of seeming happy so no one will suspect her plans during the two hours she spends at the party. After telling Harper she loves her and leaving a note in Nest's pocket, Bennett returns to Nest's house where she packs a few photographs of Harper to remind her "what it was she was trying to recover, what it was she had lost. What it was her addiction had cost her" (pg. 240.) Bennett waits impatiently for Penny to pick her up, and after they shoot up in the front entry, Bennett nearly passes out from the potency of the heroine. Findo Gask walks inside and leans over Bennett. Around 9:30 p.m., Nest realizes Bennett is gone, and when Harper says her mommy left, Nest is stricken with anger and despair as she realizes where Bennett would go without taking Harper. The demons take Bennett into the night while the drugs keep her submissive. They cross the park to the cliffs, and Bennett stands unmoving for a long time before remembering she did not come alone. Suddenly, she hears Harper calling out for her, but she cannot reach Harper as something drags her away. As Bennett lunges for her daughter, the ground disappears, and she falls away into the dark.

In Chapter 20, Nest is filled with incredible sorrow when she sees Bennett's packed bag and a syringe next to the door. Nest notices the basement door is open, but there is no reason for Bennett to go downstairs. She picks up the phone to call Ross, but the phone is dead. She hears a loud noise in the basement, and when she calls out for Bennett, all of the lights go out. Nest freezes in surprise at the sudden darkness. When she hears someone climbing the stairs, she grabs a flashlight and peers into the basement. Seeing a shapeless black shadow, she sends magic into the thing, sending it tumbling into the dark. After locking the children in her bedroom closet, Wraith breaks free to fight with the shadow figure, and when the thing leaves, Wraith freezes, a shadow in the doorway. Little John slips from the closet and, looking between Nest and Wraith, his eyes show terror and despair as well as a dark and haunting need. Stunned that the gypsy morph is finally reaching out to her in wordless desperation, Nest calls Wraith to her, trying to shield his presence from Little John, but Little John frantically throws himself at Nest and wraps his arms around her. She holds him, trying to comfort him, as he repeatedly cries "Mama" (pg. 264.)

### Section 11: Chapter 19 & Chapter 20 Analysis

In Chapter 19, Bennett says goodbye to Harper, assuring her that she loves her but saying she has to leave for a while and Nest will take care of her. Grabbing her coat, Bennett leaves a note in Nest's pocket, knowing she can count on Nest to do the right thing. She feels that, by leaving, she can give Harper a better chance at life than she had been given. Bennett meets Penny at Nest's house, and Penny quickly supplies her with an excessive quantity of drugs, leaving her dazed as Gask peers down at her.





Gask leaves the house as he found it because he does not want Nest to suspect he has been there lest "she grew too cautious [and] it spoil the surprise he had left for her" (pg. 247.) After Penny parks in front of the Sinnissippi Park entrance, Bennett stumbles through the snow without seeing the yellow eyes in the dark. The demons lead Bennett through the park and then supply an illusion of her daughter in danger, causing Bennett to jump from the cliff to her death which fulfills the earlier foreshadowing that Penny would cause Bennett's demise with the assistance of Bennett's addiction. Nest is extremely concerned by Bennett's absence in Chapter 20, and she seems to suspect that Bennett has abandoned Harper. The open basement door foreshadows the revelation of Gask's surprise, and this foreshadowing is fulfilled when the ur'doch attacks Nest and the children. She locks the basement door and jams a chair against the doorknob, but when the basement door flies apart, Nest turns to face her invisible attacker. She feels Wraith trying to break free, but she cannot let that happen in front of the children. Nest secures the children in her closet before releasing Wraith who chases the ur'doch out of Nest's house. When Little John appears from the closet, Nest tries to comfort him, and though he does not respond to being held, he looks at her with curiosity and wonders when she releases him. Nest notices that Little John seems hopeful when Wraith is out of her body, but he is distraught when Wraith reunites with Nest. His cries of "mama" foreshadow his desired form and indicate that Nest is getting closer to learning what the gypsy morph wants. Meanwhile, Ross dreams about the future. As the hunters draw near, his staff is bereft of magic, and the hunters overwhelm him, carrying him up the hill by the burnt church and crucifying him. Ross wakes, unsure if he can live with the knowledge that his death is already predetermined, and knows he must return to Nest and Little John, despite the fact that he loves Josie and wants to stay with her forever. He leaves without saying goodbye.



## Section 12: Chapter 21 & Chapter 22

### Section 12: Chapter 21 & Chapter 22 Summary

In Chapter 21, Nest walks to a payphone the next morning to call an electrician and a telephone repair man. She is puzzled and pleased by the change in Little John who would barely let go of her last night, and she knows his change has something to do with Wraith; he was excited and hopeful when Wraith was across the room but devastated when Wraith returned to Nest. Ross suggest that maybe Nest is being asked to make a choice to give up one magic for another. On the way home, Nest wonders if the gypsy morph wants her to choose him over Wraith, but she does not know how to get rid of Wraith, though she has always wanted to. At Nest's house, Ross is sure that the thing in the basement is linked to Gask, and he believes he should take Little John and leave. Thinking of Little John's look of loss and betrayal, Nest convinces Ross to wait for her to talk to Pick because she has an idea that may give them a little breathing room. After reporting Bennett's disappearance to the police, Nest finds Bennett's note in her coat pocket when she prepares to go to the park. Bennett's note says she does not want Harper around her when she is using and she cannot seem to help herself, but she will be back for Harper when she is better. In the park, Nest finds Pick and asks him to create a warning system to let her know if demons try to get into her house. Pick agrees and sets up alarms at Nest's house, warning her that the system will not work unless all of the doors and windows are shut. As Nest wonders how she got to this point in her life, where her magic seems useless, Ross comes outside to tell her that the police found Bennett.

In Chapter 22, Nest drives to the hospital where Larry escorts her to the morgue to identify Bennett. Nest wonders if the demons are responsible for Bennett's death. Admitting he was alerted to the location of Bennett's body by an anonymous phone call, Larry tells Nest that an autopsy will be performed since Bennett died under unexplained circumstances. Suggesting Bennett was involved in the drug dealing at the park, Larry insists on coming to Nest's house to question Nest and John Ross. Nest agrees, though she insists that her concern is about protecting the children from things that want to destroy them. Though she is not surprised that Gask would kill Bennett, she is very angry by the time she gets home. Nest receives a voicemail with only a phone number, and recognizing the voice, she returns Gask's call. Gask says Nest should just give him what he wants so they can put an end to this business, but Nest informs him that is not possible now. Gask threatens her with another visit from the ur'doch and insinuates that he has killed Two Bears; Nest does not believe Two Bears is dead because she would feel it if he were. Nest decided not to give up on the gypsy morph the moment she saw Bennett's dead face, and she is surprised by her overwhelming conviction that she must fight against Gask, regardless of the consequences. Nest summons Harper into the kitchen and explains that her mother died and is in heaven with the angels. Bennett loved Harper and did not want to leave, but she had to. Nest says that Harper can have a room with her and be her little girl. Crying for her mother, Harper asks if Little John has a mommy, and Nest tells her that Little John has the two of them and they must



take care of him. As she gets juice for the children, Nest fights tears, but she does not know if it is from sadness or joy.

## Section 12: Chapter 21 & Chapter 22 Analysis

As Nest considers the changes in Little John from the previous night in Chapter 21, she realizes that it has something to do with Wraith, foreshadowing the reason for Little John's aversion to Wraith. Ross suggested that Little John wants her to choose his magic over the magic of Wraith, and though Nest thinks about that possibility, she does not know how to get rid of Wraith. All of this foreshadows the later discovery and subsequent events regarding the gypsy morph's desires. Though Ross wants to leave because it is dangerous, echoing his earlier thought when he first arrived at Nest's house, Nest again convinces him to stay because she believes she is close to learning the gypsy morph's secret. Nest is heartbroken when she finds Bennett's note in her coat pocket, but it only confirms her earlier suspicions that Bennett abandoned her daughter. Nest visits Pick and persuades him to help by setting up a magical alarm to alert her if demons try to enter her house, although Pick is hesitant at first to be involved with the demons in any way, Nest convinces him to help because of the importance of the gypsy morph. Pick warns Nest that the system will not work if any doors or windows are left open, foreshadowing the subsequent failure of his security system. Ross informing Nest that the police have found Bennett foreshadows the explicit discovery of Bennett's death which has only been insinuated to this point. In Chapter 22, Nest is devastated when she learns Bennett is dead, and on the way to the hospital, she thinks of the irony of Bennett dying of a fall from the cliffs because Nest saved her from the same fate fifteen years ago. Nest suspects that the demons are responsible for Bennett's death. After arranging to pay for Bennett's funeral and burial costs, Nest argues with Larry about his suspicions of John Ross. Larry worries that Bennett was killed because of the drug dealing at the park since she had an excessive amount of narcotics in her system, but Nest tries to convince him that Bennett's death is not related to the rumors of drugs in the park. When Gask phones Nest, Nest refuses to be intimidated, despite his threats and his insinuation that he killed Two Bears. In fact, these matters convince her more than ever that she must fight against Gask. Nest is very emotional as she explains to Harper that her mommy will never come back, but Nest offers to raise Harper as her own daughter, showing that Bennett's trust was well placed. Nest is happy to have a child, though she is saddened by the circumstances that allow her to become a mother finally.



## Section 13: Chapter 23 & Chapter 24

### Section 13: Chapter 23 & Chapter 24 Summary

In Chapter 23, Ross wonders if the gypsy morph is much different from humans as he watches Little John play, and when he tries to carefully consider Little John's aversion to Wraith, he thinks that maybe Wraith's magic competes with the morph's magic in some way. When Josie phones, Ross explains that he left because he was worried about Little John, and though Ross wants to go to Josie, he knows there is no chance of their having a life together. Recalling his last meeting with the lady, Ross is "reminded anew of how deceptive hope could be" (page 295). The tatterdemalion summoned him to the Fairy Glen in early October, and Ross flew there immediately to see the Lady. When she appeared, she praised his service and told him that she would set him free after he does one more thing for her: he must protect the gypsy morph from the Void, and when it transforms for the final time, his service to the Word will be complete and he can return home. She gave him a gossamer net to capture the gypsy morph and sent him away. Ross tells Josie that he wants to promise a lot of things but is not in the position to do so, and she tells him she loves him before hanging up. Ross sees movement through the window, and Larry Spence walks toward Nest's house.

In Chapter 24, Larry tells Nest that Bennett died with a lot of drugs in her system, but she died of the cold after falling from the cliff. After finding nothing important in his search of Bennett's room, Larry asks to interview Nest and Ross. Nest situates Harper and Little John in her bedroom while she and Ross answer Larry's questions. Nest shows Larry her note from Bennett, and Larry seems nervous as Nest walks him to the door, saying he will try to fill her in if she comes by his office alone later. Nest warns him to stay away from the man with the leather book and suggests he research the supposed FBI agent's credentials. A little while after he leaves, Larry phones to warn Nest to get out because she is not thinking straight. Realizing the children are being unusually quiet, Nest checks on them to find that they are missing.

### Section 13: Chapter 23 & Chapter 24 Analysis

Chapter 23 is spent with Ross wondering about the gypsy morph, what it may become and how different it is from humans. He thinks that the morph may not be very different from humans as its life force is housed in its body's shell just like a human's spirit. He knows that time is running out and Gask will come for the morph tonight, and he believes they should hide until they resolve the secret of the gypsy morph. John Ross is convinced that the answers to the gypsy morph are concealed in the reason that it chose the shape of a little boy. During his phone conversation with Josie, it is obvious that Ross loves Josie, but he knows that he cannot truly have a life with her because of his duty to the Word. As he recalls the Lady's promise to free him from service to the Word, he realizes that he might have mistaken her meaning as time begins to run out for the gypsy morph. The sight of Larry Spence from the window foreshadows Larry's



continued involvement over the dispute with the gypsy morph as a result of Gask's manipulation. In Chapter 24, Larry's appearance serves to irritate Nest as she knows that he is being influenced by Gask, though she does not realize the extent to which he is being manipulated. Nest attempts to warn Larry that Gask is a fraud in his disguise as an FBI agent, but Larry dismisses her suggestion. When he phones to warn her to get out shortly after leaving, the nervousness in his voice causes Nest to realize that the children are being unusually quiet, and when she checks on them, she realizes they are missing, foreshadowing the realization that they have been kidnapped.



## Section 14: Chapter 25 & Chapter 26

### Section 14: Chapter 25 & Chapter 26 Summary

In Chapter 25, Nest finds Bennett's window open and realizes Larry opened the window to give Gask access to the house because he is under Gask's sway. Ross knows that Gask will want to trade the children for the gypsy morph because he has not realized that Little John is the morph, and when Gask phones fifteen minutes later, he gives them until midnight to make the exchange. Nest and Ross plot on how to save the children since they do not have the morph which means they cannot accede to Gask's demands. Knowing something is wrong but not what, Gask sends the ur'doch to watch the children and make sure they do not try to escape. Larry phones Agent Robinson because he wants to meet and ensure the children's safety; Gask knows that Larry has researched him and discovered he is a fraud, but he gives Larry his address, claiming he would be grateful if Larry picked the children up. As Nest ponders what they can do, Ross tells her about dreaming of his crucifixion and the Lady's promise that he would be released from his commitment to the Word if he is successful in protecting the gypsy morph through its final transformation. Ross suggests they meet with the demons, and Nest will save Harper while Ross tries to save the morph, but Nest realizes that, since the demons will expect that, they will kill Ross and the morph will still be lost. Realizing Gask plans to kill them all anyway, Nest needs to get a step ahead of him, and wondering where he is keeping the children, she realizes she has known all along. Nest tells Ross they are going to get the children now instead of waiting on Gask's call.

In Chapter 26, Nest convinces Ross to let her attack the demons with him only after she promises to leave as soon as she obtain possession of the children. She knows where the demons are staying because she saw Penny and Twitch at the old house on 3rd Street when Twitch strangled Allen Kruppert. Thinking of a strange idea, Nest goes to the park and releases Wraith to find Pick, but everything goes black for a moment when she feels her connection with Wraith snap; she is stunned to realize the ghost wolf has broken free. Larry pulls up to the Victorian house on 3rd Street, knowing he made a mistake about the children and must get them back. After Agent Robinson invites Larry inside, Larry demands to know who he is since the FBI has never heard of him or his assignment. Robinson says he can influence humans' actions by playing on their addictions, and he was able to manipulate Larry by knowing his feelings for Nest. When Gask takes Larry's gun, Larry cries and begs as Gask smiles without warmth. Nest is frantic with despair because she knows Wraith will never be found if he does not wish it. When Pick joins her, she recounts everything that has happened since Larry came to her house, explaining that she wants Pick to check the demons' house for traps he may have set, and after she tells him that she has lost Wraith, Pick points to Wraith standing in the trees in Nest's neighbors' yard. Though Nest tries to call Wraith to her, he will not come, and she realizes he stayed because she had subconsciously decided not to let him go. When Pick wonders what changed, Nest can only name the gypsy morph, and though she is unsure whether she will lose Wraith's magic if she sets him free, she



decides to take the chance and wishes him good hunting as she returns to her house and John Ross.

## Section 14: Chapter 25 & Chapter 26 Analysis

When Nest finds Bennett's window open in Chapter 25, it fulfills the earlier foreshadowing that Pick's security system would be breached as well as the foreshadowing that Gask would use Larry to further his goals in harming Nest. Nest and John Ross realize that Gask will offer to trade the children for the gypsy morph, but they also know that he has not figured out that Little John is the gypsy morph. This is confirmed when Gask calls shortly after, giving them until midnight to make the exchange. Ironically, Gask already has what he wants but does not know it. As Nest and Ross plot how to save the children, Gask is plagued with the sensation that something is not quite right, but he does not know what the problem is. Meanwhile, Larry researches Gask finally and, realizing the FBI agent is a fraud, phones with the demand to see the children. Gask knows his secret has been discovered and encourages Larry to retrieve the children, foreshadowing his malicious intentions for Larry Spence. Ross finally tells Nest the promise that the Lady made him during his last visit to the Fairy Glen, and they continue planning to rescue the children. Nest rejects Ross' idea to meet with the demons because the demons will kill them, and realizing that the demons will kill them anyway, Nest thinks of how to get ahead of Gask. Recalling the caroling incident and Penny's presence at the house on 3rd Street where Twitch attacked Albert Kruppert, Nest realizes that she knows where the demons are staying and, thus, where they are holding the children, so she informs Ross that they will plan a preemptive attack, taking the demons by surprise and providing them with a better chance of survival. In Chapter 26, Nest realizes she needs Pick to scout the demons' house for magical alarm systems, so she sends Wraith into the park to find Pick. Unfortunately, Wraith manages to break free from his connection to Nest, and she panics as she realizes she cannot force him to return. Meanwhile, Larry arrives at Gask's house, and his interaction with the demons causes him to realize that things are very different from what he initially thought. When Pick joins Nest and points out that Wraith is nearby in the trees, Nest realizes that she has forced Wraith to stay inside her body though neither of them were happy with the arrangement. Nest sets him free, foreshadowing the discovery of the gypsy morph's secret as it is apparent that Wraith was a hindrance to Nest's connection to the morph.





## Section 15:Chapter 27 & Chapter 28

### Section 15:Chapter 27 & Chapter 28 Summary

In Chapter 27, Nest wishes she had done more to scare Larry away when she sees his cruiser in front of Gask's house. As she and Ross sneak towards the house, Pick joins them to report that the children are being kept in a playroom in the basement and are guarded by something that he could not see, so Nest asks Pick to go back downstairs with her to point out where the ur'doch is hiding. She believes Wraith will return to her if she needs his protection, but she is not sure. Ross gives Nest twenty minutes before he will attack the demons from the front of the house. When Pick leads Nest into the basement, she is surprised when Little John looks directly at her. Pick points to the ur'doch behind the children, and Nest is hopeful since her path to the children is open, but she does not know what to do now. Her problem is solved by the explosion that rips through the house upstairs. After Nest's twenty minutes end, Ross hurls magic into the front door, sending it flying off its hinges. He scuffles with the demons and Larry who is still under Gask's compulsion. Penny manages to stab Ross before he sends her flying away from him, but Twitch wraps his hands around Ross' neck and begins to squeeze. Rushing for the children, Nest yells at them to run, and though she expects the ur'doch to attack her, she is still not prepared when it emerges from the shadows and slams her into a wall. She throws her magic at it but has little strength left. Wraith appears and attacks the ur'doch as the children finally reach and cling to Nest. Although Nest needs to get the children to safety, she cannot leave Wraith alone with the ur'doch after he came to protect her. Impulsively, she turns on the light, and the ur'doch explodes into smoke. Ross frees himself from Twitch by hitting the demon in the nose, and when he evades Penny's knife, she stabs Larry instead. Ross shatters Penny's skull with his staff as Gask watches with his leather-bound book clasped to his chest. Ross kills Twitch next but is too weak to move as Gask sets fire to the house, and Gask mockingly tells Ross that he is dying because Penny's knife was covered in demon poison. Now, Gask will check on Nest in the basement. After the ur'doch is destroyed, Nest tries to comfort the children while Wraith prowls about. Little John seems suspicious of Wraith, so Nest calls him to her. She is shocked to realize that Little John's eyes are green like hers, though they were once blue. When Nest asks if Little John wants to be her son, he looks at Wraith, so she assures Little John that Wraith will not be returning to her body because he does not belong there. Telling the morph she loves him and begging him to reveal what he wants, Nest is shocked "when he did [because] it was not at all what she had expected, but ever so much more than she had any right to hope" (pg. 354).

On Christmas, in Chapter 28, Gask is irritated that Nest managed to surprise him so badly as he waits for her in the backyard. As she descends the stairs with Harper and Pick but no sign of the boy, Gask tells her their game is over and she should have listened to him when they first met. He demands the gypsy morph, but Nest tells him that, ironically, the boy was the morph, but he disappeared because time ran out. Gask plans to kill Nest because she has been a source of much irritation, but she warns him not to come closer, motioning toward the big wolf watching him from the shadows. As a





crowd gathers out front due to the fire, Gask decides to walk away since Nest has nothing left that he wants, thinking that the life of a Knight of the Word is a reasonable trophy. After Gask is out of sight, Nest carries Harper towards her house. She cries as she thinks of Ross because she knows that he would have come for her by now if he was not already dead, but they did not fail though she wishes he could have lived to see the baby. She will name her son John Ross Freemark when he is born next fall, and he will be created of wild magic and may become anything. She feels the gypsy morph in her womb, transformed into what he had sought to become all along. She knows Wraith was such an obstacle because the morph needed the sacrifice to know that Nest wanted this as much as he did. Nest does not know why the morph chose to become her child, but their joining feels right. Tomorrow, she and Harper would open Christmas gifts, and it "would mark the beginning of a new life" (page 365). After ensuring that Nest safely escaped Gask, Ross decides to go to Josie, and he struggles to the banks of the Rock River where he watches the water, feeling peaceful. The Lady appears, praises John for fulfilling his duty and releasing him from his service to the Word. John is weary but satisfied as she tells him to come home with her where he belongs. As the staff falls from his hand, John disappears with the Lady. The staff is covered by snow, bit by bit, until a big man with copper skin and a long black braid appears from the shadows and retrieves the staff. He looks out across the ice and beyond to "where the Word's battle against a sleeping world's ignorance and denial still raged" (pg. 368.)

## Section 15:Chapter 27 & Chapter 28 Analysis

In the penultimate chapter, Nest and John Ross pursue their intention to preemptively attack the demons as they arrive at the Victorian house on 3rd Street. Nest is upset by Larry's involvement when she notices his cruiser in front of Gask's house. Nest and Ross follow their plan which is for Nest to rescue the children while Ross attacks the demons upstairs, first giving her twenty minutes to gain access to the house. Nest uses nearly her entire time allowance to reach the children, and as she wonders how to save the children from the ur'doch, Ross uses his magic to cause an explosion above. Ross grapples with Penny and Twitch while Nest tries to defend herself and the children from the ur'doch, but luckily, Wraith arrives to battle the ur'doch while Nest tries to get the children out of the demons' house. Nest is seized with guilt at the idea of leaving Wraith when he came to protect her, despite no longer being bound to her physically, so she turns on a light, causing the ur'doch to disappear into smoke. Upstairs, Larry is killed when Penny attempts to stab Ross, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing that his involvement with Gask would be to his detriment. Ross manages to kill Penny and Twitch, but he is stabbed in the process of his struggle with Penny. Gask sets the house on fire and mocks Ross that he will now die because Penny's knife was covered in demon poison. Then, he leaves to check on Nest in the basement. In the basement, Nest tries to reassure Little John who seems hesitant around Wraith. Nest is shocked by the fact that Little John has changed to look more like her since she first met him, and she asks if he wants to be her son. Little John's aversion to Wraith and Nest's reassurances that Wraith will not return to her body fulfills the earlier foreshadowing that Wraith's presence in Nest's body hindered her connection with the gypsy morph, but Nest is happily shocked when Little John tells her what he wants.



Chapter 28 occurs on Christmas Day, in the early hours of the morning. Gask approaches Nest as she exits his house and is surprised that Little John is not with her. He threatens her and demands the gypsy morph, but Nest laughs at him since he had the morph without knowing it. Gask's intention to kill Nest anyway is disrupted by Wraith's presence, and Gask opts to leave rather than risk death when Nest has nothing more that he wants. Mockingly, he tells her that the life of one child is not important so he will allow her and Harper to leave. However, the conversation between Nest and Pick after Gask leaves reveals the irony of his statement since the morph's final transformation was into a child in Nest's womb, thus the life of one child, the gypsy morph, may be very important in the future. Nest is upset about Ross' death, knowing that he would have come for her if he were still alive, but she is happy with her plans for the future with Harper and her unborn son whom she plans to name John Ross Freemark. Nest realizes that Wraith was an obstacle to the gypsy morph obtaining its desires because it could not inhabit her body while Wraith did and it needed to know that she wanted it as a child as much as it wanted her as a mother. Nest is happy with the course of events concerning the gypsy morph. Ross is dying, but he is not dead. However, he is too weak to follow Nest, so he decides to go to Josie who can nurse him. He is shocked to find himself at the banks of the Rock River, on the opposite side of town from where he intended to go, after struggling for some time. He relaxes against a tree and feels peaceful watching the water, foreshadowing his pending peace. The Lady comes to summon John home to the Fairy Glen and release him from his service to the Word. After John disappears, dropping his staff, Two Bears appears to retrieve the staff and contemplate the continuation of the battle between the Word and the Void, indicating that the story has not ended.



# Characters

## Nest Freemark

Nest Freemark is one of the protagonists in "Angel Fire East." She is a human who has been gifted with the ability to use magic, like many of her female ancestors, by the Word. Nest uses her magical abilities to help Pick tend Sinnissippi Park and maintain the balance of magic within the park. She is also the custodian of Wraith, a ghost wolf created from her demon father's magic to be her protector. Each time she crosses paths with John Ross, her life changes drastically, so Nest dreads the repercussions of his pending visit when she learns from Gask's threatening visit that Ross will soon come to Hopewell.

Findo Gask appears on Nest Freemark's doorstep in Hopewell, insisting that she does not aid Ross and the morph when they appear, and Nest angrily refuses to agree to any of Gask's demands. While Nest attends church, Penny Dreadful, Gask's demon assistant, learns of Larry Spence's infatuation with Nest, and Gask plans to use Larry to achieve his desires. Returning home after surveying Sinnissippi Park with Pick, the sylvan who maintains the balance of magic in the park, Nest finds Bennett Scott, a childhood friend, and her daughter, Harper, waiting on her porch. Bennett tells Nest about her history as a drug addict, and when she admits that she has returned to Hopewell hoping Nest will help her, Nest invites Bennett and Harper to stay with her as long as necessary. After a Christmas caroling adventure during which Twitch, another of Gask's demons, attacks Nest's church group, Nest returns home, and late that night, John Ross arrives at her house with the gypsy morph which has taken the form of a little boy whom John calls Little John; he has come to Nest because the morph spoke one word, Nest, after taking his current form. Two Bears speaks to Nest about his intention to rejoin his ancestors and suggests she try talking to the gypsy morph to ascertain why it spoke her name. When Nest takes Harper and Little John tobogganing at the park, Gask uses magic to open a hole in the ice, but luckily Pick warns Nest, and she manages to save herself and the children from the danger.

The next day, Nest encounters Two Bears again who again encourages her attempts to talk to the gypsy morph. That evening, Nest and her houseguests attend a Christmas party at her friends' house. Realizing Bennett is missing, Nest returns home with the children where they are attacked by the ur'doch, but Wraith releases from Nest's body to defend them. Little John, seeing Wraith across the room, clings to Nest and calls her mama, but he is visibly upset when Wraith returns to her body. On Christmas Eve, the police find Bennett's body, and Nest offers to raise Harper as her own daughter. When the demons kidnap Harper and Little John, Nest and John Ross plan a preemptive strike. Nest sends Wraith into the park to find Pick to help scout the demons' house, but Wraith's connection to Nest is severed. After Pick determines that the children are guarded by the ur'doch in the basement, he leads Nest into the house while John attacks the demons from the front upstairs. Wraith arrives at the demons' house to fight the ur'doch, and the ur'doch dies when Nest turns the light on. Gask confronts Nest in



the backyard, but when Nest tells Gask that the gypsy morph is gone, he leaves her along because she no longer has anything he wants. Before leaving the basement, the morph had told Nest what it wanted, and when she agreed, it became a child in her womb.

## John Ross

John Ross is one of the protagonists in "Angel Fire East." He is a Knight of the Word and has been for nearly twenty-five years. During a dream in the Prologue, John Ross has a vision of himself being crucified in the future, and he is sent on a quest to find and protect the mysterious gypsy morph. Ross begins his search for the gypsy morph after waking from his dream about the Knight on the cross. Learning the morph will appear near Cannon Beach, Oregon, Ross travels to the town and obtains a job in a bookstore. After finding lodging, he is ready to search for the gypsy morph which he knows is in a cave hollowed by elements and time into the side of the bluffs running along the ocean. His search for the cave is unsuccessful until his landlady suggests he talk to Anson Robbington who has explored every inch of the coastline, and Ross knows immediately that this is the cave he has been searching for when Robbington leads him to it. Ross captures the gypsy morph when it finally appears and tries his best to avoid demons as the morph changes continually. Shortly after Gask attacked Ross in Salt Lake City, the gypsy morph changed into a little boy and spoke one word, Nest, so Ross decided to come to Hopewell.

Late at night on December 21, John Ross arrives at Nest's house with the gypsy morph which has taken the form of a little boy whom John calls Little John; he has come to Nest because the morph spoke one word, Nest, after taking his current form. Ross wants to attack the demons first after the tobogganing incident, but Nest dissuades him. Instead, Ross visits Josie Jackson, resuming the physical relationship they had fifteen years earlier when he was last in Hopewell. After the demons kidnap Harper and Little John, Nest and John Ross plan a preemptive strike. After Pick determines that the children are guarded by the ur'doch in the basement, he leads Nest into the house while John attacks the demons from the front upstairs. Ross kills Penny and Twitch, but he is mortally poisoned by Penny's dagger which is coated with demon poison. After Nest leaves, Ross crawls to the park, and as he looks at the river, the Lady arrives and calls him home, causing him to drop his staff.

## Findo Gask

Findo Gask is the antagonist of "Angel Fire East." He is a demon who serves the Void and the Void sends him to retrieve the gypsy morph from John Ross. After failing in his attempt to steal the morph in Salt Lake City, Gask relocates with a group of demons, Twitch, Penny and the ur'doch, to Hopewell, Illinois, knowing that Ross will come to Hopewell because the morph uttered one word, "Nest", after its last transformation. Gask has survived for many centuries because he kills out of curiosity rather than greed or hatred like other demons. He wears black and appears to be an old-time preacher



the first time that Nest sees him, and he carries a leather-bound book with the names of everyone he has killed over the centuries.

Findo Gask appears on Nest Freemark's doorstep in Hopewell, insisting that she does not aid Ross and the morph when they appear, and Nest angrily refuses to agree to any of Gask's demands. While Penny Dreadful, Gask's demon assistant, learns of Larry Spence's infatuation with Nest, Gask plans to use Larry to achieve his desires. When Nest takes Harper and Little John tobogganing at the park, Gask uses magic to open a hole in the ice, but luckily Pick warns Nest, and she manages to save herself and the children from the danger. Gask is disappointed when his attempt to kill Two Bears results in failure. After supplying Bennett with an excessive amount of drugs while Nest is at a Christmas party, Penny and Gask lead Bennett to Sinnissippi Park where they trick her into jumping off the cliff. By influencing Larry to help him, Gask kidnaps Harper and Little John, offering to trade them in exchange for the gypsy morph because he does not realize that Little John is the gypsy morph. After surviving Ross' attack on the demons while Nest rescues the children, Gask confronts Nest in the backyard, but when Nest tells Gask that the gypsy morph is gone, he leaves her alone because she no longer has anything he wants.

## Little John

Little John is the name John Ross gives to the gypsy morph when he arrives at Nest's house after it transforms into a four year old boy. The gypsy morph is created of very powerful, unpredictable magic, and it has approximately thirty days after its creation to find the form it desires or the magic will return to the ether. It is an "enigma waiting for an answer" (pg. 139.) The gypsy morph is the reason for the contention between Nest, Ross and the demons. Ross is sent on a mission to find and protect the gypsy morph for the Word, while the Void sends Findo Gask to retrieve the morph from Ross. When the morph changes into a little boy and says Nest's name, Ross takes the morph to Hopewell on the chance that Nest can help. When Nest takes Harper and Little John tobogganing at the park, Gask uses magic to open a hole in the ice, but luckily Pick warns Nest, and she manages to save herself and the children from the danger. Realizing Bennett is missing from the Christmas party, Nest returns home with the children where they are attacked by the ur'doch, but Wraith releases from Nest's body to defend them. Little John, seeing Wraith across the room, clings to Nest and calls her mama, but he is visibly upset when Wraith returns to her body.

With the help of Larry, who is being influenced by Gask, the demons kidnap Harper and Little John, offering to trade them in exchange for the gypsy morph because they do not realize that Little John is the gypsy morph. When Wraith appears to help Nest rescue the children, Little John is hesitant around Nest, but when she explains that Wraith will not be returning to her body, Little John tells her what he wants. Nest leaves the basement of Gask's house without Little John, convincing Gask the gypsy morph ran out of time and disappeared. In reality, the gypsy morph wanted to become Nest's son and completed its final transformation into a child in her womb. Nest plans to name him John Ross Freemark when he is born next fall.



## Larry Spence

Larry Spence is the deputy sheriff who is infatuated with Nest and Gask uses his obsession to learn when Ross arrives at Nest's house by pretending to be an FBI agent. Under Gask's control, Larry opens a window in Nest's house, allowing the demons to kidnap Little John and Harper. While Nest is rescuing the children at the house on 3rd Street, Penny kills Larry in an attempt to stab John Ross.

## Penny Dreadful

Penny Dreadful is an unpredictable demon whose aid Gask employs. She seduces Bennett with drugs, eventually killing the woman by playing on her addiction. Ross kills Penny at Gask's house on 3rd Street while Nest rescues Harper and Little John.

## ur'doch

The ur'doch is a formless demon whose aid Gask employs. After the tobogganing incident, the ur'doch attacks Nest and the children in an attempt to kidnap Harper and Little John, but Wraith defeats it. When Gask kidnaps the children, the ur'doch guards the children, battling Wraith when Nest arrives to rescue Harper and Little John. The ur'doch is killed when Nest turns on a light.

## Twitch

Twitch is a large, albino demon whose aid Gask employs. While Nest is caroling with other members of her church, Twitch attacks Albert Kruppert. He is killed at Gask's house on 3rd Street while Nest rescues Harper and Little John.

## Pick

Pick is the one hundred and sixty-five-year-old sylvan in charge of maintaining the balance of magic in Sinnissippi Park. As a sylvan, he is a forest creature composed of sticks and moss, conceived by magic and born in a pod. Pick helps Nest by warning her when Gask cracks the ice, by setting up magical alarms to alert Nest if the demons try to enter her house and by scouting the demons' home for possible alarms.

## Bennett Scott

Bennett Scott is Nest's childhood friend who was temporarily taken care of by Nest's grandparents when her mother lost custody fifteen years earlier. She is Harper's mother and a drug addict who comes to Hopewell to get Nest's help getting clean to provide a better life for her daughter. Penny manipulates Bennett into using drugs again, so Bennett decides to leave Harper with Nest until she can get off the drugs; however, the



demons provide her with an excessive amount of drugs and use an illusion, making her think Harper is in danger, to convince her to jump from the cliffs in Sinnissippi Park, and Bennett dies from the cold.

## Harper Scott

Harper is Bennett's four-year-old daughter. After Bennett dies, Nest offers to raise Harper as her own daughter. When the demons kidnap Harper and Little John, Nest rescues them while John Ross battles the demons upstairs.

## O'olish Amaneh

O'olish Amaneh is a prophet of the Word and the last of the Sinnissippi people. His name in English is Two Bears. He visits Nest to say goodbye because he plans to rejoin his ancestors, and he advises her to try talking to the gypsy morph to learn what it wants. When the demons try to attack him, Two Bears disappears in a whirlwind of snow. After the Lady summons John Ross home, Two Bears appears, retrieves Ross' staff and stares across the river, contemplating the continuous struggle between the Word and the Void.

## Josie Jackson

Josie Jackson is a lifelong resident of Hopewell who is in love with John Ross. They had a relationship when he was in Hopewell fifteen years ago, and that relationship resumes when Ross returns in "Angel Fire East." Josie knows that John cannot promise her more than the present, and she accepts that. John Ross loves Josie, but he knows they cannot have a future together no matter how much he wishes they could.





# Objects/Places

## Hopewell

Hopewell is the main setting of "Angel Fire East." It is a small town in Illinois where Nest Freemark lives.

## Sinnissippi Park

Sinnissippi Park is the park in Hopewell to which Pick is assigned to maintain the balance of magic. Nest cannot move away from Hopewell because, like many of her female ancestors, she must serve the Word by helping Pick. Gask attacks Nest and the children during their toboggan ride in the park, and later, he tricks Bennett into jumping off the cliffs after providing her with an excessive amount of heroine.

## Feeders

Feeders are shadowy creatures that lurk on the edges of people's lives, lapping up the energy given off by an expenditure of emotions. They respond to their instincts and do not judge or make choices. Humans do not see feeders except when their deaths are violent and unexpected when they see bright yellow eyes in the dark, and only those born with magic, such as Nest, know about feeders. In this novel, the feeders appear in large numbers when the gypsy morph forms, when Ray Childress is killed and shortly before Bennett's death.

## Wraith

Wraith is formed of Nest's demon father's magic and bequeathed to her as a child. Created to be her protector, he lives inside her, and his presence threatens her in ways she can barely tolerate, though she cannot get rid of him. Nest must constantly work to conceal Wraith who appears as a black wolf outside of her body when she feels threatened. Wraith's appearance is the reason Nest gives up her running career. Wraith appears to fight the ur'doch when it attacks Nest and the children at her house, and Little John is very upset when Wraith returns to Nest's body. When Nest releases Wraith to find Pick in the park, their connection severs, causing Nest to realize Wraith does not like being trapped in her body any more than she does. Though she releases him, he returns to help her battle the ur'doch again at Gask's house when she is rescuing Harper and Little John. After Nest assures Little John that Wraith will not return to her body, the gypsy morph becomes a baby in her womb; it needed her to release Wraith to become pregnant with the morph to show her desire to have the gypsy morph as her child.





## **The Void**

The Void is the embodiment of evil in the world and the enemy of the Word. Gask, Penny, Twitch, the ur'doch and other demons serve the Void.

## **The Word**

The Word is the embodiment of good in the world and the enemy of the Void. John Ross, Nest Freemark, Pick and O'olish Amaneh, among others, serve the Word.

## **Victorian House on 3rd Street**

Gask and his demons take up residence in the Victorian house on 3rd Street when they move to Hopewell to await John Ross' appearance with the gypsy morph. This is where Twitch attacks Albert Kruppert, allowing Nest to realize where Gask is holding Harper and Little John after he kidnaps them. This is also the scene of the final battle between Nest, John and the demons. Nest rescues the children, but Ross is fatally poisoned by demon poison.

## **John Ross' Staff**

John Ross' staff contains his magic as a Knight of the Word and can be used to heal Ross if the need arises. He drops the staff in the park when the Lady calls him home, and Two Bears retrieves it.

## **Fairy Glen**

While waiting for the gypsy morph to appear, John Ross is summoned to the Fairy Glen to talk to the Lady, and she promises that his service to the Word will be completed after he fulfills one final mission, protecting the gypsy morph through its final transformation. As Ross is dying in the park in Hopewell, the Lady appears and summons him home, presumably to the Fairy Glen.

## **Cannon Beach**

Cannon Beach is a small town on the west coast of the United States of America where John Ross lives while waiting for the gypsy morph to be created from wild magic in a nearby cave.



# Themes

## Family

Family is an important theme in "Angel Fire East" as evidenced by the emphasis placed on familial ties throughout the novel. The women in the Freemark family, including Nest, are born with magic to aid the Word and they do so by helping Pick maintain the balance of magic in Sinnissippi Park. Additionally, Nest's mother was not strong enough to handle the magic, and it is implied that this is why she dies. Nest's father is a demon, and he is the one who bequeaths her Wraith, demon magic created as her protector. Nest was raised by her grandparents and her grandmother also possessed magic, as a Freemark woman. Unfortunately, her grandparents also died, and Nest frequently wishes for their advice and even visits their graves. Nest also laments the fact that her ex-husband left her and that she will never be a mother. John Ross is jealous that others have families but he cannot because of his service to the Word. Two Bears visits Nest to say goodbye because he wants to join his ancestors. Larry Spence's wife abandoned him and their children.

Bennett considers Nest to be her older sister because Nest's grandparents took Bennett Scott in for a time when her mother lost custody of her children after permitting her boyfriend to beat Bennett's brother. This is why Bennett returns to Hopewell and Nest when she wants help getting off drugs so that she can be a better mother to Harper, her four year old daughter. When Bennett succumbs to her addiction, she leaves Harper with Nest because she knows Nest will do the right thing and she wants her daughter to have the chance at a better life than she had; however, Bennett plans to return to Harper once she is free of her addiction. The demons trick Bennett into jumping from the cliffs to her death by using an illusion that Harper is in danger. After Bennett's death, Nest offers to raise Harper as her own daughter. When Wraith leaves Nest's body to fight the ur'doch after the Christmas party, Little John calls Nest "mama", and after Wraith leaves her body for good, the gypsy morph confides his desire for his final transformation: he wants to be Nest's son. The gypsy morph becomes a baby in Nest's womb and will be born in the fall. Nest plans to name him John Ross Freemark, and she happily looks forward to the future and having children.

## Magic

A recurring theme in "Angel Fire East" is the theme of magic and its uses. Magic is viewed as a source of power which can be used for good or evil, depending on the intentions of the being wielding the magic. In this world, there are two main sources of power that those with magic serve, the Word and the Void. The Word is the epitome of good in the world, while the Void is the antithesis of that, being the source of the world's evil. As a Knight of the Word, John Ross has magic which he uses with the aid of his staff, and he uses his magic to defeat the demons near the end of the novel. Because of his status in the service of the Word, Ross also lives two lives simultaneously: one in



the present and one in the future through his dreams. Pick is a one hundred, sixty-five year old sylvan in charge of maintaining the balance of magic in Sinnissippi Park. As a sylvan, he is a forest creature composed of sticks and moss, conceived by magic and born in a pod. O'olish Amaneh also possesses magic as a prophet of the Word and the last of the Sinnissippi people. When the demons try to attack him, Two Bears disappears in a whirlwind of snow. After the Lady summons John Ross home, Two Bears appears, retrieves Ross' staff and stares across the river, contemplating the continuous struggle between the Word and the Void. Nest has magic as part of her Freemark family heritage, as did most of her female ancestors. Because her father was a demon, she also contains Wraith, a protector created from demon magic, in her body until she releases him shortly before rescuing Little John and Harper from the demons.

Findo Gask is a demon who serves the Void and is sent to obtain the gypsy morph from John Ross. He utilizes his demon magic to break the ice at the park while Nest is tobogganing with the children. He also drowns Ray Childress by causing the ice to reform after Ray falls into the water. Gask sends the ur'doch, a formless demon made of shadows, to kidnap Little John and Harper after the Christmas party, but Wraith defeats the ur'doch. After injecting Bennett with heroine, Gask causes her to see the illusion of Harper in danger, leading to Bennett jumping from the cliffs to her death. Penny coats her knives in demon poison so that she nearly kills John Ross when she stabs him. The gypsy morph is created of very powerful, unpredictable magic, and it has approximately thirty days after its creation to find the form it desires or the magic will return to the ether. It is an "enigma waiting for an answer" (pg. 139.) Since its magic can be used for good or evil, Ross and Gask fight over the gypsy morph, each intending to use it to aid the cause of the one they serve, either the Word or the Void, respectively.

## Good versus Evil

The major theme in "Angel Fire East" is the battle between good versus evil as portrayed by the continuous struggle between the Word and the Void. Since all magic can be good or evil depending on the inclination of the being wielding the magic, the servants of the Word battle the servants of the Void to control the gypsy morph since the magic of the gypsy morph can be used to tip the scales in the continuous battle between these forces of good and evil. Nest Freemark, John Ross, Pick and Two Bears are servants of the Word, the source of good in the world. It is suggested that the Lady whom Ross visits in the Fairy Glen also serves, or is at least inclined to support, the Word. The Void's servants that appear in this novel are Findo Gask, Penny Dreadful, Twitch and the ur'doch. Wraith is created from demon magic, but since it is Nest's protector, Wraith tends to fight on the side of the Word, despite being created from evil.

Demonstrations of the theme of good versus evil can be seen in the actions of the demons throughout the novel. The demons constantly antagonize the servants of the Word in their attempt to steal the gypsy morph. Gask threatens Nest, tries to injure her in the tobogganing accident and sends the ur'doch to kidnap Little John and Harper after the Christmas party. Additionally, Gask and Penny kill Bennett Scott. The demons eventually kidnap the children, leading to the only offensive position that Nest and Ross



take throughout the novel. During the story, the servants of the Word act only to protect themselves, not to attack the demons, until they are attacked outright. When the children are kidnapped, Nest and Ross plan a preemptive strike against the demons, rescuing the children and killing all of the demons except Gask who leaves since Nest no longer has anything he wants. Little John becomes a child in Nest's womb which he could not do previously because of Wraith's presence.



# Style

## Point of View

The point of view utilized in "Angel Fire East" is the third person. This point of view is omniscient and reliable, which is evidenced by the fact that the narrator is privy to the thoughts and feelings of all of the characters in the novel. Additionally, the narrator knows about the characters' pasts and is able to share this knowledge with the reader when it is deemed necessary to understand the present events. This is significant to the novel as it provides the reader with access to the motivations behind each of the characters' decisions and actions.

The novel is written using approximately three-quarters exposition, with the remaining quarter being written as dialogue. This distribution is very effective as it allows the narrator to explore the minds of the characters, providing the reader with extensive descriptions of the situations presented. Because the narrator knows the characters' pasts as well, the reader also gains access to the correlation between the past and present, obtaining a very comprehensive view of why the novel progresses in the way that it does. The viewpoint in this novel alternates primarily between Nest Freemark, John Ross, and Findo Gask, with some deviations into the viewpoints of various minor characters as well.

## Setting

This novel is set in the real world, in the small town of Hopewell in the state of Illinois in the United States of America. However, this is a fictional variation of the real world as magic runs rampant throughout "Angel Fire East". Though Hopewell is the main setting of the novel, there are other places, mostly in America, that John Ross travels during his adventures with the gypsy morph before seeking Nest's help in Hopewell. In Hopewell, the small town mentality is obvious as Nest's friends treat John Ross with suspicion because he is not a local. The characters in this novel are demons and humans. The demons are servants of the Void, the source of all evil, while some of the humans, Nest, John Ross and Two Bears, serve the Word, the epitome of good in the world. Most of the humans in this novel are oblivious to magic and the continuous battle between the Word and the Void, causing a strain in Nest's relationships with her neighbors as she cannot explain what is going on in her life during "Angel Fire East".

Hopewell is the main setting of "Angel Fire East". It is a small town in Illinois where Nest Freemark lives. Sinnissippi Park is the park in Hopewell to which Pick is assigned to maintain the balance of magic. Nest cannot move away from Hopewell because, like many of her female ancestors, she must serve the Word by helping Pick. Gask attacks Nest and the children during their toboggan ride in the park, and later, he tricks Bennett into jumping off the cliffs after providing her with an excessive amount of heroine. Gask and his demons take up residence in the Victorian house on 3rd Street when they move



to Hopewell to await John Ross' appearance with the gypsy morph. This is where Twitch attacks Albert Kruppert, allowing Nest to realize where Gask is holding Harper and Little John after he kidnaps them. This is also the scene of the final battle between Nest, John and the demons. Nest rescues the children, but Ross is fatally poisoned by demon poison. While waiting for the gypsy morph to appear, John Ross is summoned to the Fairy Glen to talk to the Lady, and she promises that his service to the Word will be completed after he fulfills one final mission, protecting the gypsy morph through its final transformation. As Ross is dying in the park in Hopewell, the Lady appears and summons him home, presumably to the Fairy Glen. Cannon Beach is a small town on the west coast of the United States of America where John Ross lives while waiting for the gypsy morph to be created from wild magic in a nearby cave.

## Language and Meaning

The language used in "Angel Fire East" tends to be mostly casual and informal as is appropriate for the time period and location in which it is set, the twenty-first century in the United States of America. Occasionally, certain characters speak more formally, in a style somewhat out-of-date, but this is also appropriate as the characters using this language tend not to be mortal and have thus lived for much longer than modern speech has been utilized. The sentences are constructed properly, and the language is easy to understand since it is written in the modern style that most readers are familiar with.

The language used in this novel characterizes the modern time period and the characters as pertains to their familiarity, or lack thereof, with magic. The language that the characters use can also serve to indicate whether their loyalty lies with the Word or the Void. The novel is written using approximately three-quarters exposition, with the remaining quarter being written as dialogue. This distribution is very effective as it allows the narrator to explore the minds of the characters, providing the reader with extensive descriptions of the situations presented. The language in this novel aids reader comprehension since it is commonly used, thereby avoiding confusion with terms. Overall, the language is easy to understand.

## Structure

"Angel Fire East" is divided into twenty-eight chapters in addition to the Prologue, and the novel consists of three hundred and sixty-eight pages. The chapters are fairly short, ranging from ten to fifteen pages in length generally, and they are numbered, rather than titled. These chapters are also very detailed as the entire book encompasses only five days in the characters' lives, December 21 through Christmas Day, with each chapter detailing a portion of the day.

"Angel Fire East" by Terry Brooks is an intriguing novel in the Word and the Void series about the battle between good and evil in the world. After locating and capture the mysterious gypsy morph which is capable of aiding either side in the battle between the



Word and the Void, John Ross travels to Hopewell, IL to ask for Nest Freemark's help to protect the morph and learn its purpose. The two battle several demons with the use of their own magic to protect the morph and try to discover its secret. "Angel Fire East" is an extremely entertaining and interesting novel about the challenges Nest and John Ross face as they search for the answer to the riddle of the gypsy morph.

The pace of the novel is fairly quick, and it is easy to read. Lots of flashbacks occur as Ross details his hunt for the gypsy morph which occurs before the novel begins. Nest also recalls her past career as a runner and her two previous encounters with John Ross and Two Bears. The novel is very entertaining and enjoyable to read.



## Quotes

"John Ross stands motionless for the longest time, pondering the implications of the horrific scene before him. There is nothing he can do for the man on the cross. He is not a doctor; he does not possess medical skills. His magic can heal and sustain only himself and no other. He is a Knight of the Word, but he is a failure, too. He lives out his days alone in a future he could not prevent. What he looks upon is not unusual in the postapocalyptic horror of civilization's demise, but is sadly familiar and disturbingly mundane" (Prologue, pg. 1-2.)

"He was a Knight of the Word, living one life in the present and another in the future, one while awake and another while asleep, one in which he was given a chance to change the world and another in which he must live forever with the consequences of his failure to do so. He had accepted the charge almost twenty-five years ago and had lived with it ever since. He had spent almost the whole of his adult life engaged in a war that had begun with the inception of life and would not end until its demise. There were no boundaries to the battlefield on which he fought- neither of space nor of time. There could be no final resolution" (Prologue, pg. 5-6.)

"I also said I was a minister of the faith. You assumed I meant your faith naturally, but you were mistaken. I am a servant of the Void, and it is the Void's faith I embrace. You would pretend it is an evil, wicked faith. But that is a highly subjective conclusion. Your faith and mine, like you and I, are not so different. Both are codifications of the higher power we seek to comprehend, and to the extent we are able, manipulate. Both can be curative or destructive. Both have their supporters and their detractors, and each seeks dominance over the other. The struggle between them has been going on for eons; it won't end today or the day after or anytime soon" (Chapter 1, page 14)

"Life in a small town is filled with moments of trying not to notice" (Chapter 2, pg. 28.)

"Over the past fifteen years she had attempted to move away from the park. To leave the park was unthinkable for Pick; the park was his home and his charge. For the sylvan, nothing else existed. It was different for her, of course, but Pick didn't see it that way. Pick saw things in black-and-white terms. Even an inherited obligation- in this case, an obligation passed down through six generations of Freemark women to help care for the park- wasn't to be ignored, no matter what. She belonged here, working with him, keeping the magic in balance and looking after the park. But this was all Pick knew. It was all he had done for more than one hundred fifty years. Nest didn't have one hundred fifty years, and she wasn't so sure that tending the magic and looking after the park was what she wanted to spend the rest of her life doing" (Chapter 5, pg. 46-47.)

"You've always been old. You were old when I was born. You've already lived twice as long as most humans" (Chapter 5, pg. 50.)

"Come on inside, John. I've been expecting you" (Chapter 7, pg. 90.)





"She told me how the morph was formed, that it was all wild magic come together in shards to form a whole. It doesn't happen often, as I've said. Very rare. But when it does, the joining is so powerful it can become almost anything. I asked her what. A cure or a plague, she said. You could never tell; it was difference each time and would seek its own shape and form. She wouldn't elaborate beyond that. She said wild magic of this sort was so rare and unstable that it only held together for a short time before breaking up again. If it could find a form that suited it, it would survive longer and become a force in the war between the Word and the Void. If not, it would dissipate and go back into the ether" (Chapter 9, pg. 105.)

"Shortly after that, it changed into the little boy it was now and spoke a single word- Nest. When it said her name twice more in the space of a single day, Ross decided to take a chance and come back to Hopewell" (Chapter 9, pg. 115.)

"I have a failed marriage, no family, no future, a ghost world living inside me, and a house full of trouble. I don't have time for pride" (Chapter 11, pg. 135.)

"Sometimes change is necessary. Sometimes we recognize the need for it, but we don't know how to achieve it. We misread its nature. We think it is beyond us, failing to recognize that our inability to act is a problem of our own making. Change is the solution we require, but it is not a goal that is easily reached. Identifying and disposing of what is troubling to us requires caution and understanding" (Chapter 11, pg. 138.)

"Bereft of family and friends, of loved ones, of relationships, of an existence of the sort other people enjoyed, he was one of the homeless he had worked with years ago in Seattle. It was only natural, he supposed, that he should want those things that others had and he did not" (Chapter 13, pg. 155.)

"Demons can't identify morphs unless a morph is using its magic, and that usually happens only when it's changing shape. Little John hasn't changed since we got here. Maybe Gask guessed the truth" (Chapter 14, pg. 171.)

"She probably should have been smarter about a lot of things- like running along in the early morning hours when she was vulnerable to an attack by the demons stalking John Ross and the gypsy morph, almost as if daring them to try something. And perhaps, she thought darkly, she was. Let them try contending with Wraith" (Chapter 14, pg. 184.)

"Remember what Mommy told you about angel fire? At the beginning of every day, the angels go all over the world and gather up a little bit of the love that mommies have for their babies. They take bits and pieces, just scraps really, because mommies need most of it for themselves, to keep their babies safe. But the angels gather as much as they can, and they bring it all together, before anyone's awake, and they use it to make the sunrise. Sometimes it's really bright and full of colors, like today, because there is more love to spare than usual. But there is always enough to make a sunrise, enough to begin a new day" (Chapter 15, pg. 188.)

"History always repeats itself. There is nothing you can do to change that. Even in the small things in our lives, we make the same mistakes" (Chapter 15, pg. 195.)



"Perhaps you should take a closer look at yourself, Miss Freemark, before you expend all of your energy judging others. You are not an ordinary, commonplace member of the human race with which you are so quick to identify. You are an aberration, a freak. You have demon blood in your body and demon lust in your soul. You come from a family that has dabbled more than once in demon magic. You think you are better than us, and that your service to the Word and the human cause will save you. It will not. It will do exactly the opposite. It will destroy you...Your life is a charade. All that you have accomplished is a direct result of your demon lineage. Most of it you have repudiated over the course of time, until now you have nothing. I know your history, Miss Freemark. I made it a point to find out. Your family is dead, your husband left you, and your career is in tatters. Your life is empty and useless. Perhaps you think that by allying yourself with Mr. Ross, you will find the purpose and direction you lack. You will not. Instead, you will continue to discover unpleasant truths about yourself, and in the end your reward for doing so will be a pointless death." (Chapter 16, pg. 202-203.)

"Haven't looked all that hard. Calling up the spirits of the dead takes a certain amount of preparation. It takes effort. It requires a suspension of the present and a step across the Void into the future. It means that we must meet halfway between life and death. No one lives on that ground. Only visitors come there" (Chapter 17, pg. 213.)

"Brave Knight, your service is almost ended. One more thing you must do for me, and then I will set you free. One last quest for a talisman of incomparable worth. One final sacrifice for all that you have striven to achieve and all you know to have value in the world. This only, and then you will be free" (Chapter 18, pg. 229.)

"What she could manage, [Bennett] decided, was to leave Harper with Nest. What she could manage was to give her daughter a better chance at life than she'd been given. Maybe something good would come of it. Maybe it would persuade her to find a way at last to kick her habit. Maybe. Maybe not. Either way, Harper would be better off" (Chapter 19, pg. 241.)

"His time as a Knight of the Word is ended... He remembers a dream he had- long ago, when there was still hope- of being in this time and place, of hanging broken from a cross. He remembers, and thinks that perhaps the measure of any life is the joining of the past and the future at the moment of death" (Chapter 20, pg. 257.)

"When he saw me standing there, while Wraith was still across the room, he had such excitement and hope in his eyes, John. But when Wraith came back to me, he was devastated." Nest, Chapter 21, page 268

"Findo Gask could talk about making choices and suffering consequences all he wanted. She had made up her mind the moment she had seen Bennett Scott's dead face that she wasn't giving up the gypsy morph and its magic to the demons no matter what happened. A line had been crossed, and there was no going back. She didn't know what her decision might end up costing her, but she did know the cost of capitulating now was too great to live with" (Chapter 22, pg. 287-288.)



"Do you understand, Harper? Mommy's gone. She's in Heaven with all the angels she used to tell you about, the ones who make the sun bright with all the love that mommies have for their babies. She asked me to take care of you, sweetie. You and I are going to live together right here in this house for as long as you want. You can have your own room and your own toys. You can be my little girl. I would like that very much" (Chapter 22, pg. 289.)

"Shadows nestled comfortably in the corners and draped the bed in broad stripes. The puzzle and toys lay scattered on the floor. Harper's cup of apple juice sat half-empty on her nightstand. But the children were gone" (Chapter 24, pg. 311.)

"What do you say, John? I'm tired of being pushed around. Let's not wait on Findo Gask and his phone call. Let's go get the children back right now" (Chapter 25, pg. 320.)

"Addictions come in all sizes and shapes, and the people who have them always think they're something else. Dependencies, Deputy Sheriff. They give an illusion of control you lack. Yours is a small dependency, but deeply ingrained, and it rules you. It's why you've been so helpful to me. I give you the illusion of control over your need to influence Miss Freemark and you're ready to walk over coals" (Chapter 26, pg. 331.)

"Pick, I can't explain exactly why I have to do this, but I do. I feel it the way you feel a breach in the magic. I know it's the right thing. Harper's all alone, and there's something about Little John, something that has to do with me... This is important to me, Pick. I have to go after those children. With or without your help, I have to" (Chapter 26, pg. 335-336.)

"Get them out! Wraith is only something made of magic! He isn't real! It doesn't matter what happens to him! Get the children out!" (Chapter 27, pg. 349.)

"I'll be leaving now, Mr. Ross! Time to check on Miss Freemark. Down in the basement, isn't she? Don't bother getting up to show me the way. I'll find it on my own. Get on with the business of dying, why don't you? It was all for nothing, Mr. Ross! All of it! You've lost everything!" (Chapter 27, pg. 352.)

"Here's a piece of irony for you, Mr. Gask. You've had what you wanted all night, and you didn't realize it. It's been right under your nose. Little John was the gypsy morph. That boy was what you were looking for. In his last transformation before coming here, that's what he became. How about that, Mr. Gask?" (Chapter 28, pg. 359.)

"Nest started the car and let it warm up for a moment. She felt the inevitability of what had happened with the gypsy morph stir in her memories. She looked back and saw clearly all the workings of its transitions and of its journey to reach her. She could feel its final moments outside her body, pressing against her, then into her, then transforming for the last time. She could understand why Wraith had been such an obstacle to its needs. For the gypsy morph to become what it wanted, Wraith could not remain inside her. Her body must belong to her unborn child alone. It had needed to know she wanted this as much as it did. It had needed a sacrifice from her that she herself did not know until tonight she was capable of making" (Chapter 28, pg. 359.)



## Topics for Discussion

Who is John Ross, and what is his mission?

What is the relationship between Nest and Wraith?

Compare and contrast John Ross and Findo Gask.

Who is the most powerful of Nest's allies, and why?

What is the gypsy morph, why is it important, and what does it want?

How is Gask's failure at his goal ironic?

During this novel, what does Nest lose, and what does she gain?