

# **Assassin's Quest Study Guide**

## **Assassin's Quest by Robin Hobb**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

[Assassin's Quest Study Guide.....1](#)

[Contents.....2](#)

[Plot Summary.....4](#)

[Prologue, The Unremembered, Chapter 1, Gravebirth, Chapter 2, The Parting, Chapter 3, The Quest.....6](#)

[Chapter 4, The River Road, Chapter 5, Confrontations, Chapter 6, The Wit and the Skill, Chapter 7, Farrow.....8](#)

[Chapter 8, Tradeford, Chapter 9, Assassin, Chapter 10, Hiring Fair, Chapter 11, Shepherd, Chapter 12, Suspicious. Chapter 13, Blue Lake.....11](#)

[Chapter 14, Smugglers Chapter 15, Kettle, Chapter 16, Bolthole, Chapter 17, River Crossing, Chapter 18, Moonseye, Chapter 19, Pursuit, Chapter 20, Jhaampe.....14](#)

[Chapter 21, Confrontations, Chapter 22, Departure, Chapter 23, The Mountains.....17](#)

[Chapter 24, The Skill Road, Chapter 25, Strategy, Chapter 26, Signposts, Chapter 27, The City, Chapter 28, The Coterie.....19](#)

[Chapter 29, The Rooster Crown, Chapter 30, Stone Garden, Chapter 31, Elfbark.....21](#)

[Chapter 32, Capelin Beach, Chapter 33, The Quarry.....23](#)

[Chapter 34, Girl on a Dragon, Chapter 35, Kettle's Secrets, Chapter 36, The Wit and the Sword.....24](#)

[Chapter 37, Feeding the Dragon, Chapter 38, Verity's Bargain, Chapter 39, Verity's Dragon ...26](#)

[Chapter 40, Regal, Chapter 41, The Scribe.....28](#)

[Assassin's Quest.....29](#)

[Characters.....30](#)

[Objects/Places.....36](#)

[Themes.....38](#)

[Style.....40](#)

[Quotes.....43](#)

[Topics for Discussion.....45](#)





# Plot Summary

Assassin's Quest is a novel by Robin Hobb that continues the stories of the Farseer family, this time concentrating on the life of FitzChivalry, the bastard son of Chivalry. FitzChivalry was trained as an assassin for the royal family of the Six Duchies, in a land where magic is common. The magic of Skill is the ability to see into other minds and to use that ability to influence others and travel outside one's own body to other places. The magic of Wit-sense is the ability to mind-meld with a specific animal for life, and to sense pain and emotions from all other animals as well. The hero, FitzChivalry, has both magic abilities, but no training in either.

The story begins with an old man in a cottage, writing down his memories. It is Fitz, the hero of our story, in his elder years. The story is of his life after he had been raised from the dead by Burrich and Chade. Before he was captured by Regal, Fitz was an assassin for King Shrewd, but the Skill has been used against him. He chose to poison himself into a deep sleep and be buried as dead while his Wit-bound animal, a wolf named Nighteyes holds his soul for him. Fitz slowly recovers under care of the Wolf, Chade and Burrich. Fitz becomes restless and as he becomes human again he realizes he is dead to all those who meant anything to him, he is still Skill-linked with Verity, the missing King, and he is full of anger at Regal, the man who has claimed the throne of the Six Duchies falsely.

Fitz breaks his ties with Burrich and Chade and begins preparing for his trip, but is delayed. When his home is attacked by Forged Ones, strange Zombies sent by the Red Ships, Fitz and Nighteyes fight them off. Burrich arrives at the house soon after, and assumes that one of the Forged Ones, who has taken one of Fitz' shirts, is actually Fitz and he is dead. Through Fitz's ability to Skill, he follows Burrich in his new life as protector and eventually the husband of the mother of Fitz's child, Molly. Fitz sets out with Nighteyes to seek out Regal and kill him.

Nighteyes and Fitz encounter many people and many adventures in their journey. For a time, Nighteyes joins with a wild pack of wolves and is apart from Fitz. Fitz makes an unsuccessful attempt to kill Regal, and Verity commands Fitz to come to him. Fitz is unable to resist, and joins caravans and pilgrims to move through the Six Duchies and find Verity in the mountains. Fitz is wounded and brought to the home of Fool, who is a man from Fitz's past, who now says they are destined to work together to bring about some change to the world. Fitz joins Verity's Queen, a minstrel, a strange old woman and the Fool to seek out Verity.

The Six Duchies are under siege from mindless and ruthless warriors of the Red Ships. Regal has abandoned everything except his desire to find Verity and the stone dragons. As they climb higher and higher in the mountains, Fitz is plagued by dreams of Verity, and his mind is under constant assault by Regal through one of his Skillmasters, Will. Will, Carrod and Burl are a coterie that seek Fitz and Verity, and all who are with them. The band of seekers walk through a mysterious garden of stone dragons and other flying beasts, and Fitz thinks he can feel something from them. They find Verity, but he

is almost insane with a desire to carve a huge dragon from the stone in the quarry at the end of the Skill Road.

At the quarry, Verity joins with Kettle to create an Elderling, a mythical creature that kings of ancient times have brought forth from the stone to help them defeat the Red Ships in the past. Just as the armies of Regal are about to destroy them, Verity and Kettle forge their dragon with their lives. The Queen and the minstrel and the Fool all fly away to fight the Red Ships, and Fitz and Nighteyes are left to fight the army. The Wit-bound team somehow activate all the other dragons in the stone garden and the dragons eat the entire army in their hunger. The dragons fly back to Buck, join Verity's dragon and fight off the enemies. Fitz is able to reach Regal's mind through the dying body of Will, and change him to be a good man again. Regal brings his armies back to Buck and he swears loyalty to the Queen's unborn child.

Fitz and Nighteyes travel the land, but finally settle down near the coast of Buck, and decide to live out their lives there, as Fitz becomes a scribe and tells the story.



# Prologue, The Unremembered, Chapter 1, Gravebirth, Chapter 2, The Parting, Chapter 3, The Quest

## Prologue, The Unremembered, Chapter 1, Gravebirth, Chapter 2, The Parting, Chapter 3, The Quest Summary

In *The Unremembered*, a man spends his days writing, sometimes falling asleep while writing. His intention is to write the history of the Six Duchies, but he has trouble remembering and keeping his attention to the task. He is FitzChilvalry, or he was at one time. He tells the story of his mortal wounding by Regal, then his choice to take poison to die. The man was buried, and was revived by Burrich and Chade. To bring Fitz back to life, he was trusted to a wolf who had been bound to him. Fitz is thinking of his past, and he wonders if he should thank these men for bringing him back.

Fitz is still part wolf in his mind, and he is living at the home of Heart of the Pack, Burrich. Nighteyes, the wolf who has bonded with Fitz, is nearby, and wants Fitz to come hunt with him. Burrich does not allow Fitz to behave like a wolf, and is working hard to make Fitz remember that he is not Changer the Wolf, but Fitz, a man, who died and has come back. One night Chade comes to the cabin, but Fitz does not recognize the man who was once his mentor. The men encourage Fitz to drink the brandy he used to like, and while he drinks, Fitz receives messages from Verity in his mind, and tells Chade and Burrich that Verity is alive. The men do not react. Slowly, over the seasons of Spring and Summer, Fitz begins to become human again. He does not tell Burrich and Chade, but although he remembers everything that happened to Fitz, he is no longer the same man. Fitz decides he must leave these men and find new purpose in life. The devotion of Burrich and Chade to Fitz is evident, and as his memories return, Fitz knows these men did not betray his plans to save Queen Kettricken. In fact, it was Fitz's own trusting of the wrong people that caused the failure of the plan.

As Chapter 2, *The Parting* begins, the narrator tells of King Regal, and his ruthless treatment of the Buck Duchy, after the King Shrewd's death. Regal returns to Farrow, his own home, and leaves Buck and Buckkeep to his inexperienced and cruel nephew, Lord Bright. Regal continues to search for Queen Kettricken, Shrewd's pregnant widow, as her unborn child could present a challenge to his claim to the crown. In Buck Duchy, Lady Patience is quietly running the affairs of the duchy, with a loyal guard to protect her. Lady Patience is married to Chivalry, Fitz' father. Prince Chivalry abdicated the throne in favor of his younger brother Verity. The Buck Duchy is in poor shape because Regal took all their wealth and ability to trade. Fitz explains to Chade that he knows Verity is alive because Verity spoke to Fitz using Skill, a way of speaking from afar. Chade is shaken because he and Burrich had not given Fitz' statement the credibility it



deserved that night several months previous. Chade tries to convince Fitz to use his own abilities to Skill to find Verity, but Fitz runs away with Nighteyes instead. Later that night, Fitz returns and has a heated argument with Burrich and Chade. Fitz demands the right to make his own decisions, and both men leave him. The next day, Burrich returns to the cabin and tells Fitz he is leaving for good. The two men resolve their differences, and Fitz decides he has found his purpose in life: to kill Regal.

Chapter 3, The Quest, begins as the narrator describes the magic of Skill, which is a trait passed along royal bloodlines. A person who can Skill is able to communicate from afar, and even influence the thoughts of others. One of the side effects is that it is addictive and can reduce the person to an idiot if indulged in for too long. Burrich leaves Fitz, and Fitz tries to explain to Nighteyes his intent to kill Regal. The two, Fitz and his wolf bondmate Nighteyes, prepare for their journey. Fitz decides to let his body heal as well, and takes a little extra time. He awakes from a dream after hunting with Nighteyes one afternoon and realizes he has delayed his trip for weeks, not days, and many of his provisions and clothing have rotted. He quickly bathes, shaves and makes repairs, now determined more than ever to begin the journey. He finds a bundle that Burrich must have left for him, and it contains clean clothes and ointments. Fitz thinks of his mission to kill Regal and wonders if he should find his uncle Verity first. Fitz tries his Skill magic to reach Verity. Fitz does reach him after some struggles, and Verity is bone-weary, but live. Fitz tells Verity he has a task to do but will come when he has completed it. Fitz remembers how the Six Duchies had been attacked by the Red Ships, and only held back by the Skilling of Verity. Verity finally decided to seek out the mythical Elderlings who lived in the Mountains and had helped the Six Duchies in the past. Regal had moved against Verity as soon as he left. Fitz remembers Molly, the woman he loved, and begins to reach out for her as well with his Skill, but knows she has someone else now.

## **Prologue, The Unremembered, Chapter 1, Gravebirth, Chapter 2, The Parting, Chapter 3, The Quest Analysis**

The story begins with a terrible death for Fitz, and although he is brought back to life, his thoughts are filled with the particulars of his death. The narrator's story shows the character of Regal, a leader who cares nothing for his people, and only wants to ensure his continuing power. The mysteries of the location of Queen Ketricken and Verity foreshadows the decisions of Fitz. Fitz has recovered enough to realize it is time for him to strike out on his own to kill the man who has taken everything from him, including his life. Fitz has a relapse into wolf behavior after Burrich leaves, but finds his humanness again and tries to return to his quest to kill Regal. He reaches Verity through his use of Skill, and it brings back many memories and pain. In this chapter much of the groundwork of the story is prepared, enabling the reader to understand Fitz's determination and purpose in his quest.



# Chapter 4, The River Road, Chapter 5, Confrontations, Chapter 6, The Wit and the Skill, Chapter 7, Farrow

## Chapter 4, The River Road, Chapter 5, Confrontations, Chapter 6, The Wit and the Skill, Chapter 7, Farrow Summary

The narrator describes the geography of Buck Duchy, the oldest of the Six Duchies. It is a coastal duchy and depends on its fishing grounds and the shipping trade for its success and employment.

Fitz returns to the cabin after hunting one afternoon and finds three Forged Ones there. Forged Ones are duchy citizens who were abducted by the Red Ships and turned into zombies to fight their former families. They are emotionless killers, and it is rumored they are attracted to people who can Skill. A fight breaks out, and although Fitz kills one, he is frozen with fear and barely escapes, using his wolf abilities to hide. Nighteyes finds him and they depart that night with what is left of their provisions. Fitz and Nighteyes begin their journey, and Fitz nurtures his hate anew for Regal for reducing Fitz from a strong warrior to a frightened man. As they near a town, Fitz washes his clothes and decides to go into town to hear what people are saying. He makes friends with the minstrels who tell him how bad things are in the land. The minstrels consist of a near-blind man and his two daughters, and the father asks Fitz, who has chosen to call himself Cob, to travel with them. At first he refuses, but the man pleads because the roads are full of Forged Ones. Fitz agrees, sending a telepathic message to Nighteyes of his plans.

In Chapter 5, Confrontations, the narrator explains the magic of Wit, that bonds a human with an animal. The bond is only between a specific animal and a specific human, and they have become brothers or pack members. Fitz is having problems sleeping in the barn with the musicians, partly from fear of Forged Ones. He dreams of Burrich, yearns for Molly and thinks of Chade. As he sits in the barn, one of the minstrel's daughters, Honey, comes to be with him, but he turns her away. Later, he senses someone watching him, and realizes it is Will searching for him. Will has a strong sense of Skill, and had attacked Fitz in the past. Fitz flees his own body and roams across the land, entering one body after another, and finally runs into Verity, who recognizes him and forces him to go back into his own body.

The next day Fitz and the minstrels begin their journey, and Nighteyes follows quietly. That night as they camp, the minstrel gets Fitz to sing and asks him to join their group. Fitz refuses, saying he will take them to the next town and that is all. The next day they are attacked by three Forged Ones. Nighteyes is injured, one of the daughters, Piper,





gets a broken arm, Honey is almost raped, and the older minstrel, Josh, is hurt. Fitz kills them all, and acquires a sword. That night as he is sleeping, Fitz is attacked in his mind by Will, but is saved by the Wit through Nighteyes. However, now Regal will know that both Fitz and Verity are alive. As the chapter entitled The Wit and The Skill begins, the narrator explains the respect the citizens of the Six Duchies hold for minstrels and scribes. These professions serve as the oral history of the land, and of their people, even in the smallest towns. It is tradition for minstrels and scribes to be well cared for by royalty. Fitz leaves the minstrels at an inn in Crowsneck. As he makes his way through town he witnesses the Royal Guard beating a drunken man. He is prevented from helping by an older woman who says if he interferes they will kill the man. Fitz walks by the man after the guards leaves, and a voice he does not recognize in his head tells him to help the drunk, Black Rolf. He does, and walks the man out of town, where a large bear meets them.

Black Rolf and the bear are bonded as Fitz and Nighteyes are, and Rolf offers them both food and shelter. Fitz and Nighteyes enter the home of Rolf, where a woman named Holly is preparing dinner and there is a small hawk in the rafters. Fitz asks if they are using the Wit, but they explain it is called the Old Blood. Fitz has never met anyone else who has bonded with an animal, yet here is Rolf and the bear Hilda, and Holly and the hawk Sleet. Rolf explains that he was from a family who all had animals, and when he was ready, he went searching and found Hilda. Fitz is astounded to find that Black Rolf not only hears his conversations with Nighteyes, he can hear his thoughts and knows his plans to kill Regal. Rolf pleads with Fitz to stay with them until he learns how to handle his Old Blood skills, but Fitz and Nighteyes leave with the moon's rising.

In Chapter 7, Farrow, the narrator tells of Lady Patience, and her actions during this time of economic peril and defense of the coast against the Red Ships. She gathered soldiers around her and gave them back their pride and self-respect. She used her money to encourage trade, rebuild towns and communicate between the coastal duchies. She used sprigs of ivy as her symbol to others, and the Ivy Runners and Ivy Badges became sources of respect and loyalty to Lady Patience.

Fitz and Nighteyes are in Farrow, and one night Fitz tries to find Molly through using Skill, and is stopped by Verity. Fitz reverts to thinking more like a wolf, making progress on their journey, hunting and avoiding humans. Fitz and Nighteyes become even closer in their bonding. Then one day as they are about to hunt deer together, a pack of wolves call Nighteyes away and he leaves Fitz. Nighteyes promises to return, but Fitz is lonely and worried. As he is walking several days later, Sleet the Hawk comes to him with a message written by Rolf. Regal is actively looking for a man who is bonded with a wolf, and Fitz is glad now that Nighteyes has parted from him.



## **Chapter 4, The River Road, Chapter 5, Confrontations, Chapter 6, The Wit and the Skill, Chapter 7, Farrow Analysis**

Confirmation is received that the roads are dangerous and the Duchy is in dire trouble. Fitz realizes he needs to be with his own kind, and uses information gathering as an excuse to go into town. His new alliance with the minstrels worries Nighteyes, but Fitz realizes he must begin to make compromises. He begins his new life with the name Cob. The bond between Fitz and Nighteyes is strong and is tested here as Fitz protects Nighteyes from the Forged Ones, and Nighteyes protects Fitz from Will. It is obvious that Fitz's use of the Skill is much stronger than he had known, and he must get control of it before it is used against him. Much is learned about the Wit, or the Old Blood in this chapter, and Fitz learns that there are more people who have the abilities to share thoughts with animals. He knows that someday when his mission is done, he may come back to Rolf and learn more. As Chapter 7 ends, Fitz is now alone, as Nighteyes has pursued his own desires. Fitz has been warned that he is in danger, and the loss of his wolf's company makes him alone. Yet he is determined to fulfill his quest. Although Fitz himself doubts his strength, the author continually reveals his character as strong, dignified and caring.



## **Chapter 8, Tradeford, Chapter 9, Assassin, Chapter 10, Hiring Fair, Chapter 11, Shepherd, Chapter 12, Suspicions. Chapter 13, Blue Lake**

### **Chapter 8, Tradeford, Chapter 9, Assassin, Chapter 10, Hiring Fair, Chapter 11, Shepherd, Chapter 12, Suspicions. Chapter 13, Blue Lake Summary**

The narrator tells of the Red Ships and the Raiders who terrorize the town, bent on destruction. The first Duchy to fall to them is Bearn. Lord Bright belatedly realizes he has erred by mistreating his own Keep Duchy, so barricades himself and his soldiers, abandoning his people. Lady Patience continues to use her Ivy Runners to assist where she can, but her efforts are necessarily limited against the strong forces of the Red Ships. Fitz cleans up and enters the next town, deciding his identification would be Jory, a soldier looking for work. He is taken instead for a beggar, but accepts coins for food and begins eating.

While he is eating, he sees a cage for prisoners and learns they are bound for the King's Circle, which is some sort of gladiator style show of Forged Ones versus citizens. Two young men come to his table and begin taunting him. Fitz is surprised to feel the old fury rise inside him, but soon he realizes these are just stupid boys who have never been in battle. Fitz finds an inn and has a hot bath, shaves his beard and learns he is only a day's walk from Tradeford. That night he leaves his body again and joins in the battle for Bearn. Verity finds him and admonishes Fitz for letting his walls of protection down so far. The next day Fitz walks to Tradeford, and is not feeling in good spirits. He finds that Tradeford Hall, where King Regal resides, is not a tall fortified castle, but a sprawling farmhouse with gardens and lily ponds, and little protection.

Chapter 9, Assassin, begins as the narrator explains how closely the Skill is guarded within its ranks, and when the main teacher dies suddenly without truly training an heir, Galen assumes the top position, and there are only Will, Burl and Carrod to assist him. These men are strong in Skill, and loyal to King Regal, but highly competitive within their ranks. Fitz manages to find a way into the gardens, although he is not dressed well enough to enter the grounds closest to the mansion. There is a grand ball that night, and he overhears enough gossip as he is begging from the wealthy to formulate a plan to get into the mansion. Posing as a tailor's apprentice, he is able to gain entry, and finds his way into one of Regal's chambers. Verity is at the back of his mind, questioning him. Fitz is tricked by Will into coming directly to Will instead of finding the King's chambers, and it is only Verity's great mastery of the Skill that saves Fitz. Fitz steals Regal's horse and rides away. He allows the stallion to return to the stables, and obeys



the strong command he has received from Verity: to come to him. Chapter 10, begins as the narrator speaks again of slavery in the Chalced States, and that the neighboring province of Shoaks is often raiding Chalced to get their loved ones back. Fitz begins his journey through Farrow to reach Verity. In a small town called Landing, Fitz trades his clothes for warmer wear, and finds work as a shepherd for a man joining a caravan headed for the mountains. One evening he hears all the rumors regarding Chade, Kettricken, Regal, and himself.

At the beginning of Chapter 11, the narrator tells of Chade Fallstar, who is Fitz' mentor and was in service to King Shrewd. Chade knows Regal does not have right to the throne, and when Chade advises the Six Duchies of this fact, Regal puts a bounty on his head. The caravan begins its journey, and Fitz dreams of Molly, seeing her as she is right now, having a child without any assistance. Fitz is at first shocked, then glad to see that Burrich is with her. Molly delivers a daughter, and Fitz spends his days thinking of a future with his wife and his daughter.

As Chapter 12 starts, the narrator warns of the addictive nature of Skill. The caravan continues, and when the rest of the group goes into a town for entertainment, Fitz stays with the sheep. When they return, there is much talk of the bounty for the Wit-Bastard the King is seeking. Shortly thereafter, a group of King's Guard comes to the camp, and Fitz is recognized. He tries to lace the men's food with poison, but it does not seem to work. He is taken prisoner, and put in shackles. After the guards moved away from the caravan, the men become sick from the poison and within a few days, they are all dead, and Fitz is free. He is in very bad shape, though. Just a moment before he leaves the dead men, he feels a question from Nighteyes, but tells his friend to stay with his wild wolves.

Chapter 13, Fitz enters the city and uses the money he found on the dead guards to provision himself for entering the mountains. He is still in Blue Lake when Regal comes to the town, and Fitz decides to attempt an assassination. Just as he is about to enter the building, he receives a message from a ferret, through his Old Blood connections of Black Rolf. He abandons his plans and goes back to his inn, where Starling the minstrel who was on the caravan, finds him and takes him to her quarters. She suggests they travel together, so she can make a song about him and become famous. She tells him that her little brother was at a battle with Fitz, and Fitz saved the young man's life. Fitz decides to trust her.

## **Chapter 8, Tradeford, Chapter 9, Assassin, Chapter 10, Hiring Fair, Chapter 11, Shepherd, Chapter 12, Suspicions. Chapter 13, Blue Lake Analysis**

In these chapters, Fitz wavers from his loyalty to King Verity back to his own need to seek revenge on Regal. The theme of the need to sacrifice one's self for the greater good of others is displayed here, as Fitz tries to follow his own heart and is defeated at every turn.



Fitz is closer to his goals, but is ill prepared for an encounter with the King or his coterie of highly trained Skillmasters. Fitz is in a weakened physical state, and doubts his own abilities. He looks and smells like a beggar, and he has not mastered his own Skill enough to defend himself. The foreshadowing of danger is strong in this chapter, as he is surrounded by people loyal and admiring of the man he hates, and Fitz has no resources and no allies. Fitz uses his cleverness to enter, but is overwhelmed by a stronger skillmaster in the palace. Verity is angry but saves him, and Fitz realizes it has cost Verity dearly to make this effort on his behalf. Fitz is dedicated to Verity, and knowing of his daughter's existence makes him think of a future, instead of just killing Regal and dying himself. Fitz's assassin skills with poison save his life, but he is severely injured. He continues to follow the commands from Verity to come to him.



## **Chapter 14, Smugglers Chapter 15, Kettle, Chapter 16, Bolthole, Chapter 17, River Crossing, Chapter 18, Moonseye, Chapter 19, Pursuit, Chapter 20, Jhaampe**

### **Chapter 14, Smugglers Chapter 15, Kettle, Chapter 16, Bolthole, Chapter 17, River Crossing, Chapter 18, Moonseye, Chapter 19, Pursuit, Chapter 20, Jhaampe Summary**

Fitz and Starling connect with some smugglers to get across Blue Lake and into the mountains. Fitz commits the earring he was given long ago as payment to Nik the smuggler for their fare. As he sleeps that night, Fitz dreams again of Molly.

In Chapter 15, Kettle, the narrator tells of Queen Kettricken and her attempts to find her husband in the mountains. Her search only finds his guard, and the ones who survived the attack cannot remember what happened. She is convinced Verity and his guards were attacked by someone with powerful magic. The caravan begins its journey, and Fitz is tasked to drive a wagon for an old woman named Kettle. Nighteyes rejoins him, and plays the part of a family dog in order to join the caravan. As Fitz is sleeping, he is able to listen in on a Skill-induced conversation between Regal through Will and Burl and Carrod, in which the latter are told to find Fitz no matter what.

As Chapter 16, Bolthole, begins, the narrator explains more about Wit, and the bond between man and animal. It is understood that the two take on the mannerisms of each other.

The caravan continues on its journey, and Starling attempts to seduce Fitz. Fitz is committed to Molly, though, and turns Starling away gently. In Chapter 17, River Crossing, the narrator tells of the spirit of the coastal duchies, and their rebellion against the Outslanders. When the royals were defeated, the peasants rose to the task of fighting for their homeland. As the caravan begins to cross the river by means of a rope pulley barge, several men fall upon Fitz to capture or kill him. Nighteyes attacks one of the men and kills him, but in the process of the attack, falls into the freezing river and is swept away. Fitz is captured, but through his Wit connection with the wolf, knows he is injured but still alive. Fitz is taken to Burl, and the plan is to take Fitz to Moonseye, a town nearby. The minstrel Starling refuses to give information about Fitz, so Burl orders two of her fingers to be broken. The rest of the caravan people are arrested as traitors.



In Chapter 18, Moonseye, the narrator tells the history of Moonseye, a trading village close to the mountains. Chivalry had negotiated a treaty here and while in Moonseye discovered he had a bastard child. This knowledge made him abdicate his throne. Nighteyes is following Fitz safely behind, and alerts him that hunters and stalkers are about to attack the camp. It is the family of the smugglers, and they take only the caravan people, and make no attempt to rescue Fitz. Starling is taken with the pilgrims as well. Fitz's captors continue their journey to Moonseye and reach it without further attacks. Fitz is placed in a comfortable holding cell and is heavily guarded. One night the town has several fires, deliberately set, and Nighteyes and Starling are able to free Fitz. Starling and Kettle have come to his rescue, using the Smugglers' revenge raid on the town as a cover.

In Chapter 19, entitled Pursuit, the narrator tells of conditions at present. Although Regal's coastal duchies are being taken over by the Outlanders, he is pressing for war against the Mountain States.

Fitz realizes that Starling and Kettle are in danger if they stay with him, so he unhitches the wagon, puts the two women on the horse and sends them towards Jaampe, hoping he can create enough of a trail that Burl's soldiers will follow him instead of them. He and Nighteyes strike out through the mountains, and indeed, the soldiers follow them. Fitz and Nighteyes are in a terrible fight with men and hounds and even a Witted-team, but they manage to get away. Fitz now has an arrow in his back and his severely wounded.

The narrator begins Chapter 20 with a description of Jhaampe, the capital city of the Mountain States. Most of the town is tents, but the people who live there year round have constructed their homes together with existing giant trees, weaving their tents into the branches. The Mountain people are known for the beauty of their gardens, their hospitality and their joy in simple things.

Fitz is in terrible pain and collapses outside a cottage in Jhaampe. The owner of the cottage turns out to be the Fool, who had escaped with Queen Ketricken from Buckkeep, and believes his destiny to be tied directly to that of Fitz. Nighteyes is nearby, but knew that only a human could save Fitz now. As Fitz is being nursed back to health, the Fool reveals that he is actually the White Prophet and has been waiting for Fitz, who he calls the Catalyst, to arrive. Now the two of them must set the world back to rights.

## **Chapter 14, Smugglers Chapter 15, Kettle, Chapter 16, Bolthole, Chapter 17, River Crossing, Chapter 18, Moonseye, Chapter 19, Pursuit, Chapter 20, Jhaampe Analysis**

These chapters show Fitz trying desperately to follow the commands of his king, and almost dying while trying to sacrifice his actions for the greater good. There is heavy

foreshadowing of evil winning the battles so far. The bond between Nighteyes and Fitz are getting stronger, and Nighteyes has sacrificed his chance to be in a wild wolf pack for the good of Fitz and his mission. The plot moves along with considerable action and danger in these chapters, and the characters are beset with one trial after another.





# Chapter 21, Confrontations, Chapter 22, Departure, Chapter 23, The Mountains

## Chapter 21, Confrontations, Chapter 22, Departure, Chapter 23, The Mountains Summary

The narrator speaks of diplomacy and the art of knowing an enemy's secrets.

Fitz is still recovering from the arrow wound, and Kettle, Starling, the Queen and Chade all come to see him. It is well known now that Molly has a child, and all of them want the child to claim the throne. Fitz fights against this, knowing his daughter's life would be in danger and she would never be able to be a child again. The arrow is drawn from his back, and Fitz begins the long road to recovery. He walks with the Fool, he walks with Starling. He learns that he is expected to be a part of the mission to seek Verity in the mountains, and he realizes he is once again a pawn.

At the beginning of Chapter 22, Departure, the narrator speaks of Chade Fallstar, and how he served the rightful king and queen. Fitz continues to heal, and is finally called to the Queen, to account for his actions. She is especially upset with him for not letting her know he was alive, and that Verity is alive. The night before he meets with her, he Skills with Verity, and sees how strong and addictive the Skill is. The Queen tells him she must claim his daughter as her own child and reunite the Six Duchies with this child. Fitz does not want to give her the child, but his will is overcome by the need to find Verity.

As Chapter 23, The Mountains, the narrator speaks of the Mountain Kingdom, and of the people who formed it, their view of the ruler being one of sacrifice, where the ruler sacrifices their own dreams and lives for the good of the people. Beyond this place, however, few men have dared to go, so legends of dragons, empty cities and other civilizations persist.

Preparations are made for the search for Verity. Ketricken chooses the route and the participants. Chade is going back to Buckkeep to spread the word of Verity and his heiress, Fitz's child. Fitz is surprised to hear that the Fool and Kettle plan on going with Fitz and Ketricken. Ketricken arrives one morning to tell them that Regal has sent a message to the Mountain King demanding Fitz be turned over or the attack will begin. Ketricken decides to leave immediately, and only Fitz, the Fool, Starling and the Queen herself are on the trip. Nighteyes advises Fitz that Kettle is following them as well, and on their night stop, she catches up with them. The band continues on their march to the mountains. Ketricken consults with Fitz briefly as to the best route to take, and asks him why he does not use his Skill to reach Verity. Fitz explains he cannot because it would attract other Skill users to his location but the additional truth he does not share with her is that Fitz is afraid to use Skill as he will lose his mind in the process.



## **Chapter 21, Confrontations, Chapter 22, Departure, Chapter 23, The Mountains Analysis**

Fitz is seriously wounded, and almost makes the ultimate sacrifice. He must finally face many people who have assumed he was dead, and their anger that it took so long for him to come to them. As he is healing, Fitz matures considerably and refines his goals. During this time, he realizes he has stronger allies than he ever realized, and his ability to use Skill is greater than he knew. The reader is still not sure if Verity is strong enough to fight Regal and his coterie, and if Fitz can truly let go of his love for Molly to accomplish the tremendous feat that must be done to save the world. Surrounded by an old woman, a man who has been a jester and now makes toys, and two women, Nighteyes and Fitz seem to be going into this fight as the only warriors. Only hope and belief in the power of good over evil carries the reader into the next and most critical chapters of the novel.



# **Chapter 24, The Skill Road, Chapter 25, Strategy, Chapter 26, Signposts, Chapter 27, The City, Chapter 28, The Coterie**

## **Chapter 24, The Skill Road, Chapter 25, Strategy, Chapter 26, Signposts, Chapter 27, The City, Chapter 28, The Coterie Summary**

As Chapter 24, The Skill Road, the narrator wonders at the source of magic, and whether one is born to it or can learn it.

Fitz and his band of travelers discover an ancient road, and begin to follow it. The road is strange, and game does not go near it. The road has a strange effect on Fitz, and he is often muddle-headed while walking on it. That night he dreams and Skills and finds Molly and Burrich, and learns that his daughter's name is Nettle. Verity catches him Skilling and sends him back into his own body. Nighteyes has adopted the Fool into their Pack, and protects him from the cold.

The narrator begins Chapter 25, Strategy, with an old children's rhyme about Jhaampe about wise men coming to town. Fitz's group realizes how changed Fitz is since they have been on this road. Because of the blizzard they are unable to move farther away from it, so they take turns trying to keep him awake and his mind on other things besides Skilling and sleeping. Kettle teaches him an ancient game, and challenges him with a version of it. That game keeps Fitz thinking about strategy rather than Skilling, and surprisingly, Nighteyes comes up with the solution. Fitz is not allowed to walk on the road anymore when they resume the traveling, and Fool takes the first walk with him, asking about Kettle's true identity. Starling is the next one to walk with Fitz, and she asks many questions about Fool. Finally she tells Fitz the Fool is actually a woman who is in love with him.

Chapter 26, Signposts, begins with the narrator remarks about magic, and how in some places, it might be as common as fish or signposts.

It soon becomes impossible for Fitz to travel alongside the road, as the mountain grows steep. He walks along the road with Kettle, but is overcome by the road and almost does not return this time. When he finally comes to, it is with the assistance of Elfbark, and Verity comes into his mind quickly to remind him not to use Skill. Ketricken hears of her husband and wonders how he will feel about her failing him. She goes outside and Fitz follows her, finding her crying. As he comforts her there beside the road, he sees a marker and touches it.



In Chapter 27, The City, the narrator tells of legends about the road, and how no one has ever been inspired to follow it to its end.

Fitz is lost in a ghost city that comes alive only when he touches a wall. The people do not see him, even the animals are unaware of him. He cannot remember what happened to his companions and he cannot sense Nighteyes. He roams about the city, searching for a tall tower so he can look about the land around him. When he does find the tower, and climbs it, he finds traces of Verity's presence there. Fitz makes a map and heads back to where he first appeared. He stops to drink at a river, and beholds a huge dragon, covered in Magic, part of the dream he is seeing. He returns to the place where he awoke the day before, and touches the signpost. This brings him back to his companions and to Nighteyes.

Chapter 28, The Coterie begins with the narrator speaking of Elderlings, and indicating that the images of them from the past are those resembling dragons.

Fool is ill, but Fitz and Nighteyes discover there are horses and riders behind the band on the road. The band quickly moves on, but there is little space for them to create an ambush. Nighteyes reports that the group has stopped where the band had camped, left three people, and three went to the signpost and disappeared as Fitz had the night before. After almost losing Fool in a landslide, Fitz decides to go after the three who were left behind. Kettle goes with him and kills two of the men with arrows. They remove all the supplies and Nighteyes runs off the horses, so when the three return from the ghost city, they will have no chance for survival. On the way back to the band, Kettle reveals that she was exiled from her home because she Skill-dueled a member of her coterie long ago and killed her.

## **Chapter 24, The Skill Road, Chapter 25, Strategy, Chapter 26, Signposts, Chapter 27, The City, Chapter 28, The Coterie Analysis**

These chapters cover the small band's difficult and cold journey to find Verity. Using old maps, legends, and traveling on mysterious roads heighten the suspense and the sense of confusion. When the Skill Road affects Fitz so strongly, the quest seems lost for sure. Magic is everywhere, and Fitz is constantly explaining to everyone except Kettle about how he communicates with Nighteyes, how he knows someone is coming, how he disappears into a signpost suddenly. Fitz not only battles his own mind from confusion, he must constantly set up walls against Will and Regal and the coterie attacking him. The urge to turn around and go back to civilization to find Molly and his child, and for Nighteyes to have a wild pack all must be put aside so Fitz can assist his Queen in finding their King.



# Chapter 29, The Rooster Crown, Chapter 30, Stone Garden, Chapter 31, Elfbark

## Chapter 29, The Rooster Crown, Chapter 30, Stone Garden, Chapter 31, Elfbark Summary

The narrator speaks of an old game played among the Mountain folk. When Fitz and Kettle return to the camp, Kettle is concerned that Fitz will be sought out by Regal's coterie, and he knows the three men were Burl, Carrod and Will. He tries to concentrate on Kettle's stone game, as she says it has been used by Skill people for years as protection, but at one point he is overtaken by Will and Regal and Regal tells Fitz he knows about the child and the woman. Fitz is furious and afraid, and Kettle tries to calm him. Fitz concentrates on the game, to the point of carrying a game piece in his hand as they begin travelling the next day. Another signpost is found, and the Fool hops above a stone that must also have been Skill-wrought. Many images happen to both the Fool and Fitz, and that night they go hunting with Nighteyes. Fool is completely healed from his sickness. Queen Kettricken pulls Fitz aside and tells him Starling is jealous of the time Fitz is spending with the Fool, as Starling continues to believe Fool is actually a woman.

At the beginning of Chapter 30, The Stone Garden, the narrator tells of Dimity Keep, a smaller fortress that fell early to the attack of the Red Ships. The band continues its journey, while Starling and the Fool both give Fitz worry. Fitz confronts Fool with Starling's claim he is actually a woman, and Fool makes up crazy songs and embarrasses Starling and Fitz together. The band is crossing some streams when suddenly Fitz sees a dragon in the path ahead of them. The band slips by, only to see another dragon sleeping nearby. Everyone believes these are not real, but stone carvings. Fitz knows better, as his Wit-sense tells him they are real, but in a deep sleep. That night Fitz goes hunting with Nighteyes and Starling. Fitz and Starling begin talking and mending their friendship, but then Starling tries to get him to make love to her. Fitz cannot, because of his love for Molly, and Starling is once again angry with him.

As Chapter 31, Elfbark begins, the narrator speaks of the prophecies and legends concerning the Catalyst and the White Prophet, none of them bode well for either men. Nighteyes and Fitz go hunting, and although originally the Fool comes along, he turns back. Suddenly Nighteyes finds Burl, and is prepared to kill him. Burl finds Fool instead of Fitz, and as Nighteyes and Fitz close in to kill him, Burl finds another signpost and escapes. Fool is injured by Skill, so Fitz must enter Fool's mind and fight them - but as he enters, Fool tells him the attackers were scattered by another's Skill wave. The band realizes it was Verity. Kettle gives Fool some Elfbark to help him recover, but tells Fitz his use of it has probably stunted his ability to Skill. Fitz decides to sleep without Elfbark.



## **Chapter 29, The Rooster Crown, Chapter 30, Stone Garden, Chapter 31, Elfbark Analysis**

As the band leaves the Skill Road, Fitz is able to think clearer, but as he tries to puzzle out the meaning of the Stone Garden, he is once again thrown into confusion. The Queen is also downcast, thinking there are not many places to continue searching for Verity. The novel is beginning to come to the end of the story, and the reader sees many puzzles and mysteries left to be solved. Foreshadowing of pursuit, of more confusion brought on by the use of Skill, and mutterings from Kettle, who is not what she let everyone believe she was.



# Chapter 32, Capelin Beach, Chapter 33, The Quarry

## Chapter 32, Capelin Beach, Chapter 33, The Quarry Summary

The narrator explains that the Wit is a misunderstood magic, and may be the only true communication. Fool follows Fitz to where he is washing his clothes and asks if Fitz wants him to go to Molly if anything happens to Fitz. Fitz tells Fool where Molly is, then Fool collapses. Fitz is concentrating so deeply on the prophesies of his own death, that he fails to see the importance of this behavior by Fool, and does not even wonder when the Fool does not remember the conversation.

In Chapter 33, the narrator speaks again of the ancient civilizations of the Mountains, but no record is ever found of what made the people disappear. The band follows the Skill road to a huge stone quarry. Once there, they find the body of Carrod. Nighteyes and Fitz realize there is something else in the quarry, further back. They all approach warily, past stunningly beautiful but disturbing statues, to find Verity. Verity is alive, but immensely aged, and he remembers not his wife. Verity is carving a huge dragon from stone, and he does not stop, even while talking to Fitz. They are able to convince Verity to eat and rest, and they try to figure out why he is carving this stone dragon.

## Chapter 32, Capelin Beach, Chapter 33, The Quarry Analysis

Capelin Beach is the name of the place near where Molly and Burrich are hiding. This chapter is important because one of the prophesies about the White Prophet and the Catalyst is fulfilled, and Fool is an unwitting betrayer to Fitz. The coterie has been using Fool for sometime to hear Fitz's thoughts and ideas, and as soon as they find out where Molly and the child are, they abandon Fool, causing him to collapse.

Finally, Verity is found. But rather than being the answer to all their problems, he raises new questions. Here is a man who is truly sacrificing his life for the greater good, but will not allow help from anyone, does not recognize his Queen, and speaks only to Fitz. The group of weary travelers are at the end of their quest, but at the beginning of entirely new challenges. Everyone is alarmed at Verity's condition, and it appears that even if Fitz recovers from his dazed and confused state, he will be little helped by his King.



# Chapter 34, Girl on a Dragon, Chapter 35, Kettle's Secrets, Chapter 36, The Wit and the Sword

## Chapter 34, Girl on a Dragon, Chapter 35, Kettle's Secrets, Chapter 36, The Wit and the Sword Summary

The narrator tells how Prince Verity was supposed to be trained in Skill by Galen, but did not receive the correct instruction. Verity had sought someone to help him, especially when the Red Ships came, but was not able to find any help. Verity wants to return to work on the dragon, even when he is with his Queen. Kettle understands that Verity believes he can bring the dragon to life and fly away to fight the Red Ships alone. As Fool is tending Verity he touches his silver hands and is silvered on a few fingers. Because of the heavy magic of Skill on his hands, Verity cannot touch his wife. Fitz and Fool have a long conversation about the Elderlings, and Fool believes Regal wants to control them before Verity finishes the dragon.

The narrator speaks of the Witness Stones in Buck, and how they are ancient and unreadable, but highly feared and respected. Fool and Fitz go to the statue of the girl and the dragon, and Fool touches it with his magic fingers and is thrown onto his back, hurt. Kettle is upset and rails at the two men, and this makes Fitz furious because he is tired of everyone knowing but not telling. He goes to Verity and Kettricken and tells them everything he has thought and done since Verity left his side long ago. Kettle tells Fitz she cannot Skill anymore, and asks Verity for help. Verity says he cannot help because he does not feel he has Skill anymore either. Fitz joins with Fool and Nigteyes and together they free Kettle. Kettle is now able to help Verity on the dragon.

In Chapter 36, The Wit and The Sword, the narrator tells of the origins of the Red Ships. Legend says Buck was originally settled by people from the OutIslands, and it is unknown why one OutIslander, Kibal Rawbread, was particularly vicious and began raiding the Six Duchies only to rape, burn and destroy, and not occupy the mainland. Fitz asks Verity if he can help with the dragon, but is told he cannot. That night he dreams of Molly and Burrich, and someone is trying to hurt them. Fitz watches as Molly and Burrich fight and are able to escape. Molly uses her bees to save them. Verity pulls Fitz away from his Skill. The next day, Verity asks Fitz to go to the Stone Garden and try to awaken the dragons that are there. Fitz goes and is unsuccessful, but while he is there, three guards come to kill him and to trap Verity if he uses the signposts to travel. Fitz is able to defeat some of the guards, and then Verity comes to his rescue. One of the guards reveals himself as a Buck man who once served Verity. Verity allows him to return to Buck and spread word of Verity's plans to save the Six Duchies.





## **Chapter 34, Girl on a Dragon, Chapter 35, Kettle's Secrets, Chapter 36, The Wit and the Sword Analysis**

The significance of the title of this chapter refers to an unfinished sculpture at the mouth of the quarry, where a woman was ready to pour her heart into the stone dragon to make it come alive, but cannot bear to give up her own shape as well. She was not willing to sacrifice her beautiful body for the greater good. Fool is fascinated with the statue and what he senses behind it, and cannot leave it alone.

Tension rises as nothing seems to work, Molly is in danger, Fitz cannot rouse the stone dragons, and now Regal's army is quite near. The band seems doomed, and Verity cannot raise the stone dragon, everyone is getting weaker, and the Red Ships are making their way into the heart of the Six Duchies.



# **Chapter 37, Feeding the Dragon, Chapter 38, Verity's Bargain, Chapter 39, Verity's Dragon ,**

## **Chapter 37, Feeding the Dragon, Chapter 38, Verity's Bargain, Chapter 39, Verity's Dragon , Summary**

The narrator provides an update on the war with the Red Ships. The raiders are able to get past Buckkeep and begin to go deep inside the Six Duchies. No help is coming from Regal, as he is intent upon his own war with the Mountain states. Verity and Kettle continue working on the dragon, and finally finish it, but Verity feels he has failed. The band is overcome with failure, knowing the armies of Regal are on their way to kill them.

The narrator speaks as if he Red Ship raiders were in the past, and that tales of their numbers were exaggerated. Verity and Kettle sleep, and Fitz moves towards the dragon. Verity meets him there, and decides he must sacrifice Fitz as well as himself in order to save the Six Duchies and bring the dragon to life. Fitz asks to see Molly one more time, and he sees her with Burrich as they decide they are in love with each other. Then Fitz gives his life to Verity to give to the dragon. Verity and Fitz exchange bodies, and Verity uses Fitz's body to conceive a child with Kettricken. The next morning Fitz goes to wash his clothes and Starling joins him, and they make love. Nighteyes comes to get Fitz because the others are ready to wake the dragon.

In Chapter 39, Verity's Dragon the narrator says that Tradeford is about to be attacked by the Red Ships, and that the Tradeford people have grossly underestimated and misunderstood the Red Ships' intentions. Verity and Kettle become the dragon, and it becomes a living thing. Fitz stays with Nighteyes and Fool, while the Queen and Starling ride Verity away. As Fitz is packing to leave, Burl attacks the Fool while Fool is still working on Girl on a Dragon. Nighteyes kills Burl and that is enough to free the Dragon from its stone. Will is attacking Fitz, and his Skill is so strong because Regal has built three more coteries to defend him. Regal's goal is the stone quarry itself, so that he and the coteries can build more dragons to rule the Six Duchies. Nighteyes and Fitz follow Will through the pillar and then face hundreds of Regal's men. During the fight, Fitz backs against Realdar, one of the stone dragons, and bleeds on him. Fitz reaches out to the dragon with Wit, and with Nighteyes assisting him, they are able to awaken that dragon and many more. The dragons are very hungry and eat Regal's army. Then Fitz and the Fool decide the dragons and other stone creatures must fly to assist Verity, and they do, leaving Fitz and Nighteyes alone.



## **Chapter 37, Feeding the Dragon, Chapter 38, Verity's Bargain, Chapter 39, Verity's Dragon , Analysis**

The dragon can only be brought to life when it is fed the life force of humans. Verity has spent months giving the dragon all his emotion, sadness, pain, joy, and fears; Kettle adds her tremendous guilt and secrets, but it is not enough. Fitz offers to give his life as well, but even then they don't know if it will be sufficient. This chapter adds new meaning to the theme of sacrifice, as each character seems strained to the very limits of their abilities, all to help a kingdom.

Fitz bargains with Verity to save his daughter from being used by the royal family, and in order to complete this bargain, Verity must take Fitz's body, lie with his Queen and create another heir. Blood is the missing ingredient to inspire the Stone dragons to life, and much blood is shed so they may rise. The magic combination of Wit and Blood saves the kingdom.



# Chapter 40, Regal, Chapter 41, The Scribe

## Chapter 40, Regal, Chapter 41, The Scribe Summary

The narrator speaks of the Catalyst. As Nighteyes and Fitz gather provisions from the army camp of dead men, Nighteyes hears something and they go to find Will, struggling to reach the pillar. Fitz uses Will to reach Regal, and finally enters his mind and changes it, using his Skill to its maximum. Fitz and Nighteyes leave the Stone Garden to find a better place. Fitz is still able to see all that is happening with Verity and the Queen, and sees how the dragons rid the land of the Red Ships and the raiders. Regal arrives a changed man, offering assistance and armies and vowed his loyalty to the child carried by Kettricken. Regal returns everything he has stolen and rights every error he can, yet he still meets a bloody death as an animal kills him in his sleep.

## Chapter 40, Regal, Chapter 41, The Scribe Analysis

The author uses an interesting turn of words to make the reader at first believe that Fitz has killed Regal. Then later in the chapter Regal rides to the rescue of the Queen with all his armies and a changed heart. Evil eventually loses though, even after an attitude adjustment, as one of Regal's murders was a man who was wit-bonded to a ferret with a very strong determination to carry out his master's last wish. Fitz reflects upon his lives, and his loves, and is content with his part of history. He and Nighteyes are comfortable companions as they begin old age together, and Fitz knows his sacrifices were worth the price he paid.

In Chapter 41, The narrator speaks of the circle of life, with Red 'Ship raiders hating the power of the dragons, but wanting their own dragons as well. The old man who writes sets down his pen and thinks of all the things he has written. Fitz is the Scribe, now, and Nighteyes is still with him. Starling comes by to see him often, and two years before she brought him a boy named Hap to live with him. Starling brings him news, as well. Queen Kettricken has a boy named Prince Dutiful. Fool was at Buckkeep Castle and is honored as a warrior, along with Chade. However, Fool left the castle, no one is sure where he went. Fitz and Nighteyes spent some time with Black Rolf, but eventually made their way back to Buck and they live in a small cabin, with Hap.

Nighteyes and Fitz dream of carving their dragon.

# **Assassin's Quest**

**Summary**

**Analysis**



# Characters

## FitzChivalry

FitzChivalry is the protagonist of the novel, *Assassin's Quest*. He is the bastard son of Chivalry, brother to Regal and Verity, of the Farseer Family. He did not know his mother, but knew she was of the Mountain folk. Before this tale begins, Fitz was an assassin in the service of King Shrewd. Verity had gone to the mountains to find the Elderlings, and in his absence, the younger brother Regal has tried to turn the people against him, and cause Verity's pregnant wife to flee Buckkeep. Fitz was captured, beaten and gave his soul to Nighteyes, his wolf, to keep safe while he enters the world of the dead to escape Regal.

As the story begins he is still part wolf, living with Burrich, who is trying to bring the human part of Fitz back to life. Fitz has been severely beaten at the order of Regal, the man who has unjustly claimed heir to the throne. A betrayal by someone close to Fitz has caused the death of King Shrewd, the flight of Queen Kettricken and the Fool back to the mountain kingdom, and Fitz is considered dead. Although he has been brought back to life, his memories are of fear and of being beaten, and he constantly resists any attempts to bring him back to being a human. When he does come back, he is no longer the man he was, and is very confused, unsure of which direction to go and to whom he owes his loyalty. He greatly misses his woman, Molly. Fitz cares deeply for the wolf who is bound to him through Wit-Sense, Nighteyes. The two are in constant communication, and it is only when Fitz is caught in the Skilling or when Nighteyes chooses to live with a wild pack, that they are not able to speak.

In the process of Fitz's attempts to regain his honor and self-esteem, he travels throughout the Six Duchies, at first to find Regal and kill him. When that attempt fails, Fitz obeys the command of his king, Verity, and tries to find him. Fitz was in love with Molly, and when he finds out Molly has born his child, he yearns to reunite with her and the child. Starling and the Fool are both in love with Fitz, but he is unable to return their affection because of the confusion in his heart. He is bound to his King, and is committed to die for that King. Although many times it seems Fitz will meet his end during this quest, he lives through it all, to become a writer late in life and record these adventures.

Fitz is a killer, but a good man devoted to his King, his wolf, and his child. He feels the pain of all animals, and is granted the ability to Skill and to Wit, although he has never received the proper training. Before he was beaten, Fitz was a handsome man, and still has a warrior's bearing. He is a modest man, who readily acknowledges his failings. He honors his commitments to all, he hates Regal with a passion, and is slow to judge others. His own survival is not as important to him as those of his child, his wolf, and his King.



## Verity

Verity is a noble man who has only the good of the people of the Six Duchies in his heart. When he could no longer use the Skill to keep the Red Ships at bay, he went to the Mountains, following old maps to seek out the Elderlings. Verity knows that if he cannot find these older ones who helped the Six Duchy kings in the past, the land will fall to the ruthless Red Ships. Although he has been missing for some time, he is able to Skill thoughts to Fitz and protect him somewhat from Regal and other threats.

Verity loves his wife Kettricken, but must abandon everything and everyone to save his kingdom. He even resists the seductive pull of the Skill to remain dedicated to his task.

In the story, Verity exists only in Fitz's mind until the band of seekers find him in the Stone Quarry. He was once a handsome and virile young man, but the burdens he has born have aged him beyond his years. He has difficulty concentrating, and explains that he is giving everything to the dragon. Verity loves Fitz, and protects him from being drawn into the dragon as well.

Verity is named well, as he is a good and true man who never wavers from his commitment and dedication to his people. When he becomes the dragon, he fights bravely and is successful in destroying the Red Ships in the harbor on his own. Verity is all a king should be: loyal, faithful, strong, wise and committed. In comparison with Verity, Fitz is a confused lad, and Regal is a pitiless and unmerciful bad leader.

## Nighteyes

The wolf is bound to Fitz, but is able to use his wit sense to sometimes persuade others in the band to listen to him and do his bidding, for the good of them all. Nighteyes sees the world in terms of the next meal, a warm place to sleep, someone to rub his ears and his belly, as a wolf or any wild predator would be. However, he also is wise, makes decisions, protects those he considers to be in his pack, and yearns for cubs of his own.

As Nighteyes and Fitz stay with the Fool so Fitz can heal, the wolf becomes very close to the Fool, and sees that Fitz spends time protecting the Fool when Fitz is well again. Nighteyes enjoys the camaraderie and sharing of the group when it includes Kettle, Starling and the Queen, and begins to think of this group as his own Pack.

Nighteyes is a strong animal, with clear goals, and lives a purposeful life of hunting, sleeping and finding peace in his life. Fitz is the one creature dearest to him in the world, and he would sacrifice his life for him.

## Fool

Fool's name has been lost to everyone, as he takes on the name of his profession, which is court jester for King Shrewd. Fool is not exactly human, as his skin and eyes



change colors, he is never ill, and it is difficult to even truly discern his gender. Starling the minstrel comes to believe he is actually a woman, but when Fitz confronts Fool about it, his feelings are hurt that his masculinity is in question. Fool does not have Skill, but feels a bit of it when he is on the Skill-wrought rock near one of the pillars beside the Skill Road. Fool believes he is the White Prophet of the ancient legends, as he has been making prophesies since he was a child. Fool also knows that Fitz is the Catalyst spoken of in the legends, so when the group forms to seek out Verity, he knows he must follow Fitz on whatever venture is taken.

Fool is very adept with his hands and constructs toys and puppets. When his fingers are damaged by Skill, he begins carving wood with an even deeper feeling, knowing where the wood was harvested, how old it is, and what forms are waiting to be carved out of it. At the end of the novel, Fool emerges as a hero and a warrior, much celebrated by the Six Duchy people, but he leaves them all to travel to unknown areas.

## Regal

Regal is the antagonist of the novel, and is a ruthless, cruel man who loves to give pain. As the smaller brother of Verity and Chivalry, he becomes jealous of the bigger brothers and seeks ways to take whatever they have. Instead of admiring and striving to be a better person like his brothers, Regal becomes a mean and vicious man, especially dangerous when he seizes the throne and uses the people and resources of the land to create a hell for the Six Duchies and expose them to harm from the Red Ships. Regal is obsessed with power and might, but does not know how to use it for anything but his own goals. He hates Verity and Fitz, and does everything he can to destroy them and their loved ones.

Regal does not have Skill, so rides Will as if Will were a pack animal to see through his eyes when Skilling. Regal loves no one but himself. He has no loyalty to the people, to his kingdom, or even his home. In the end, he is turned by Fitz to be a good man again, but is killed in his sleep by an animal seeking revenge for the death of his bond-mate.

## Queen Kettricken

Kettricken was the daughter of King Eyod of the Mountain people. She had been betrothed to Verity as a way of bringing the kingdoms together, and although it was an arranged marriage, she fell deeply in love with her new husband. She was a good manager of the kingdom at her husband's side, and when Verity left for the Mountains to find the Elderlings, she stood fast to wait, only abandoning the throne when Regal took over and became vicious towards her. She is steady and commanding on the search for her husband, and Fitz admires her greatly for her abilities.

Kettricken must stand by helplessly as Verity works himself to death on the dragon, and then becomes a dragon. Knowing she can never have her true husband back, Kettricken accepts the body of Fitz into her bed, knowing Verity has traded minds with him. Kettricken loses her first child, but delivers a strong young son Prince Dutiful, after





Verity's death, and assumes her rightful place as ruler of the land until her son is old enough to become the King.

## Starling Birdsong

Starling Birdsong is a minstrel who is seeking a song that will make her famous. She has lead a rough life, with many disappointments and narrow escapes along the way. She is an attractive woman with a quick laugh and bright eyes, and has a good voice. She plays the harp well, even after her fingers have been cruelly mangled by Regal's men. Starling stays with Fitz because she realizes his path will lead her to great songs to sing. Starling is a brave traveler, and proves observant and faithful to her band of seekers. She uses her charm and songs to work her way through life, and eventually ends up as the minstrel for the restored Buckkeep royalty.

## Kettle

Kettle appears to be a pilgrim in the caravan headed up into the mountains, but as Fitz gets to know her better, he realizes the old woman is keeping many secrets to herself. When he is injured by the arrow and recovering with the Fool, Kettle becomes part of the group that gathers around him. Kettle is full of ancient knowledge and prophecies, especially about the White Prophet and the Catalyst. She is stronger and wiser than anyone has guessed. As the story progresses, it becomes obvious that she has the Skill as well. When she and Fitz go out to kill those who are hunting them, she reveals to Fitz she is actually over 220 years old, and was a Skillmaster who was exiled when she killed her own sister and the coterie she belonged to, long ago.

Kettle reveals even more of herself to Verity as they work on the dragon, and she is finally freed from her self-imposed guilt about her sister and joins Verity inside the dragon, to live forever with the soul of her sister.

## Will

Will is a highly adept Skillmaster who has been bent to the power and needs of Regal. With his coterie of Burl and Carrod, he presents a formidable power of cruelty, but he becomes only a shell of himself as Regal takes over his soul.

## Burl and Carrod

These two men are in Will's coterie for Regal, but are not as strong as he is in the Skill. They use their talents and magic to satisfy Regal's demands, but instead of rewarding them he uses their fear to drive them further. Both men die horrible deaths.



## Burrich

Burrich was the stable master for King Shrewd, and the man who raised Fitz. He was older than Fitz and Fool, but younger than Chade. Nighteyes refers to Burrich as Heart of the Pack because of the respect he has for him. Fitz tried to fight him once to escape to be a wolf, but Burrich holds him down. Fitz respects his strength and admires his dependability. When Fitz decides he must seek out Regal and kill him, Burrich leaves his side to go assist Molly, Fitz's woman, who is pregnant with Fitz's child. When Burrich believes Fitz is dead, killed by Forged Ones, he continues to stay with Molly and eventually Molly and Burrich fall in love, marry and raise Fitz's daughter Nettle together.

## Molly

Molly was a beautiful young woman who fell in love with Fitz and bore his child. She was a beekeeper and worked with herbs and flowers, and was a gentle soul. Her life was in danger when Regal discovered she had Fitz's child, and became a strong protector of her daughter when challenged. Burrich was by her side during the birth of the baby and afterwards, and she fell in love with him. Molly was a young woman who grew up quickly when she decided to leave Fitz and make it on her own.

## Chade Fallstar

Chade Fallstar is believed to be part of the Farseer family, and served the family as a spy, loyal to the rightful King or Queen. Chade is the person who taught Fitz Chivalry to be an assassin, and when the Duchies were invaded by the Red Ships, Chade worked for the royal family to bring them back into power. An older man who seemed somewhat tired and gray in peacetime, Chade blossoms into life when the wars begin, and is revitalized to live a long life in the service of Queen Ketricken when she is restored to the throne.

## Nettle

Nettle is the child of Molly and Fitz, and her stepfather is Burrich. Fitz was not aware of Molly's pregnancy when Molly leaves him, and only views his daughter from afar, through the Skill.

## Black Rolf

When Fitz is traveling to find Regal and attempt to assassinate him, he assists an older large man who has been beaten by Regal's guards for being drunk in public. The urge to assist the man, Black Rolf, was pressed upon Fitz by the Wit-Sense of an old she-bear who is bonded to Black Rolf. Rolf welcomes Fitz and Nighteyes and tells them their communications with each other can be heard by everyone within miles. Rolf offers his

home to the pair, and says he will teach them all they need to know about Wit-Sense, which he calls the Old Blood.



# Objects/Places

## Forged Ones

Forged Ones are people who are captured by the Red Ships, then by some sort of Black Magic, made to be violent killers who rape and pillage the Six Duchies. They are extremely strong and hard to kill.

## Buckkeep

This is the fortress of the Duchy of Keep, and the home of Fitz, Chivalry, Queen Kettricken, Verity and Regal. It is known throughout the Duchies that if Buckkeep falls to the Red Ships, the remaining Six Duchies are in mortal peril.

## The Six Duchies

These are the lands that encompass the peninsula and where this story takes place. The Duchies are Buck, Rippon, Bearn, Tilth, Shoaks and Farrow. They are bounded by the Mountain Kingdom and the Chalced States. There are islands off the coast occupied by the murderers who man the Red Ships and continually pose a threat to the Duchies.

## Mountain Kingdom

A land, adequately named, in the tall mountains bordering the Six Duchies. It is commanded by King Eyod, and there is trade and commerce between the two.

## The Stone Garden

Off the Skill Road in the mountains lies a heavily forested area where finely hewn statues of dragons and other winged beasts lie. They appear to be real, but are cold as stone to the touch. Fitz senses Wit about them, but cannot stir them when he is commanded to do so by Verity. When he and Nighteyes return to the garden to fight Regal's armies, the combination of the men's blood and the Wit-sense of Fitz and Nighteyes brings all the statues to life, and they are the Elderlings.

## Stone Quarry

At the end of the Skill road is a huge quarry of black stone. This stone is the same as used to create the dragons in the Stone Garden. It is here where the Girl-on-Dragon statue is, and the dragon statue that Verity is working on when Fitz finally finds him.



## **Fitz's Earring**

Fitz has an earring that Burrich gave him long ago. He learns that the earring was once belonging to a freed slave, but Fitz does not have the entire story. When Fool comes to Fitz asking what will happen to Molly's child when Fitz passes away, Fitz removes the earring and gives it to Fool to be given to Nettle someday.

## **Fitz's stick pin**

The silver stick pin encircling a sapphire is a beautiful symbol of King Shrewd's respect and love for Fitz, and he wore it constantly. He realizes after he starts out to kill Regal that his pin is gone. He learns much later that it was on the shirt the Forged One had stolen, and is one of the reasons Burrich thought it was Fitz who was dead. Burrich gives the pin to Molly, and she keeps it until she and Burrich flee their cottage and set out for a new life on their own. Molly sells the pin for a good price and this allows her to finance the new family on their travels to safety.

## **Skill**

Skill is magic, somewhat like extra-sensory perception, but much stronger. It is not learned, but is passed on through generations. The use of Skill can be addictive, and if someone spends too much time using it, they can become idiots. Also, use of the Skill alerts other Skilled individuals of a person's thoughts and location.

## **Wit-Sense**

Wit-sense is the ability to talk to one animal who is bonded to you. Black Rolf says the correct term is Old Blood. It was originally believed that a man was required to have physical relations with an animal to achieve the ability to communicate, and that is why some people are so disgusted with the skill. The Wit-Sense is actually a type of magic that is granted to very few, and is more of a brotherly contact rather than a sexual one.

## **Pillars/Signposts**

These are large stone obelisks remaining from an ancient civilization that allow one to travel from one pillar to another.

## **ElfBark**

This is the bark of a tree, and makes a hypnotic powerful tea. The use of ElfBark allows a man to recover after using Skill, but over time limits his ability to Skill.



# Themes

## Sacrifice for the Greater Good

Sacrificing one's needs and desires for a higher purpose is a continuing theme in this novel, as Fitz continually obeys the commands of his King, sacrificing his love for Molly and his desire for a peaceful life. Verity gives the ultimate sacrifice by merging with a dragon to save his people from the Red Ships.

Queen Kettricken was raised with the concept of sacrificing as the greatest duty a royal person has with regard to their people. This theme is repeated throughout every character in different ways. Fitz rails against his duty to sacrifice his purpose to Verity's needs, but he does follow the commands to the letter, no matter how he would rather be hunting with Nighteyes.

Nighteyes continually forgoes his own safety for that of the pack, the Fool surrenders himself to the destiny of the White Prophet and the Catalyst. Regal is despised for many things, but mainly because he does not adhere to the principle of sacrifice. Regal sacrifices nothing for his kingdom, rather, he makes them sacrifice their wealth, their peace of mind and even their lives to satisfy his wanton needs and cravings

## Abuse/Misunderstanding of Talent

Skill and Wit are two forms of magic in this novel, and as with many concepts that people do not completely understand, there are crazy legends and superstitions about both. Wit is despised by people who have no real knowledge of its true purpose, because they choose to believe it is perverted rather than open their minds to its beauty. Fitz keeps his Wit-sense and Wit-bonding as a secret because he has never been trained to appreciate what has happened to him with Nighteyes. As Fitz grows older, and goes through many life-threatening adventures with the wolf at his side, he learns to appreciate this brother above all other creatures and people in his life.

Skill is respected mainly because it is conducted between humans and therefore better understood. Skill is also rightly feared, because it has been abused and twisted to harm people. The theme of power being abused is a common one in novels, and it is prominent in this novel with the story of Regal's rise to power, and his command of his coterie. Regal drains the life from his coterie, using them to achieve his own cruel goals. Fitz learns to respect the Wit-sense and treasure it; he learns to respect the Skill, and to use it for good, but only at the end, when there is no one left for him to practice his Skill on anymore.

## Good vs Evil

Through much of the novel, evil, in the form of the Red Ships and Regal, is clearly winning. Evil can be a powerful force, and the characters of Fitz, Verity, Kettle and Kettricken spend their days and even sleeping time fighting against it. Evil snatches away every chance of rest, security, and deprives the main characters of any form of peace until they are able to eliminate the cruel forces from the land.

The critical conversations between the main characters deal with choices between running away and protecting their own lives versus standing to fight for the good of others, knowing it could cost the ultimate price of losing life.



# Style

## Point of View

The beginnings of each chapter are presented by the Omniscient Point of View, a narrator who knows the story, knows the land, and relates valuable bits of information before the action begins. The narrator often repeats what was said in earlier chapters, relaying legends, and sometimes talking about events or people who have nothing to do with the current action. Still, the narrator is important to the story, providing insight, updates on action not seen through Fitz's eyes, and weaving the story together.

The remainder of the novel is related through the First Person Point of View, through the eyes of Fitz, the Protagonist. This point of view is related through Fitz's memories, his feelings, dialogue with all other characters, and especially his conversations with Nighteyes. By using the Skill, the author allows Fitz to follow the subplot of Molly, Burch and her daughter, and even minor characters who are experiencing the devastation and violence of the Red Ships.

Through Wit and Skill, the author uses Fitz to give all aspects of the story through the experiences of this assassin and Wit-bound man who is struggling to find his place in the world.

## Setting

The story is played out completely in the lands of the Six Duchies and the Mountain Kingdom. The land is occupied by a people who do not have much in the way of technology, not even weaponry as advanced as guns. Their government is set up with a King and Queen ruling over all duchies, and Lords of each Duchy. Their enemies are the Out Islanders who come to raid in large ships with red sails, and each attack comes stronger and stronger until the Kingdom is in real peril. The people of the Six Duchies are free to trade with other Duchies, to till the land, to build and have lives of their own, with fealty to the King. The Mountain people live a different, more joyful life than those in the valleys, but there are good feelings between them all until Regal takes over.

Travelling between towns is easy, and when Verity and Shrewd were Kings, it was safe from bandits and Forged Ones. The land is almost lost before Verity can become his dragon and save them all.

There are legends of ancient civilizations, and it is obvious from the relics found by Fitz and his band of seekers that the technology and magic of these older civilizations was far advanced than their own. Much of the land is yet to be explored, partly because someone has used Skill to dissuade people from following their natural curiosities to study the land.





## Language and Meaning

The author uses a formal style of English, employing words that are common in language, but when used with capital letters, Wit and Skill are meant to refer to magical abilities that only a few people in the Six Duchies can master. When citizens speak to the Royalty, the manner of their speaking becomes very formal, and the word of the royalty is not to be questioned. Fitz speaks in short emotional sentences to his wolf, Nighteyes, and is often short tempered with everyone else.

When Nighteyes and other animals speak to humans, it is clear they are looking at the world from the eyes of those who are interested only in the here and now and not much in the future.

Forged Ones speak cruelly and strangely, because they are devoid of most emotions, left only with an empty anger and violence.

The author gives careful descriptions of the surroundings, and includes many of the daily habits of the characters, such as eating, working on swords or puppets, gathering firewood, and putting up the tents. In such a way, the characters are firmly drawn. The names of people closely resemble their characters, i.e., Verity being a man dedicated to truth, and Kettle being a store of knowledge.

## Structure

The Assassin's Quest is 757 pages long, consisting of 41 chapters and a prologue. The begins with an older man's thoughts as he writes, and at the end of the book, the reader realizes it is Fitz, the hero of the story, who is the scribe shown at the beginning. Each chapter thereafter is begun with words in italics, written by someone else, a narrator who is clearly one of the citizens of the Six Duchies, but never identified. In each of these italicized writings at the beginning of the chapter, different information about the Duchies, its legends, and current events are brought to the reader, and sometimes, especially towards the end, there is a message referring to the action about to be relayed in the chapter.

The novel is a tale of a man's quest to revenge himself and to somehow regain his own soul back from the commitments he has been required to make for his King. Fitz has been tortured, manipulated and deprived of everything dear to him except his Wit-bound wolf, Nighteyes. He lives in a land full of magic, unseen enemies and misunderstood abilities, but is determined to fulfill his destiny. Fitz is called an assassin, but seems unskilled for little except hunting with Nighteyes, blundering through relationships and dedicating himself to dying kings. With the assistance of Kettle, Starling and the Fool, Fitz is able to learn about his own inabilities, serve his King, and do noble things in his life.

There are many long descriptions and dialogues between characters, and mention of characters and objects from previous novels in this series, but the book otherwise could

stand alone without the series. The fantasy world of dragons, magic and talking animals is not so exotic it cannot be understood and engages the reader well.



## Quotes

Chapter 2, The Parting, page 39, Fitz:

"Maybe I needed to get free of him. Of all he'd done for me, even when I didn't want him to do it. He has to stop doing things I can never pay him back for. Things no man should do for another, sacrifices no man should make for another man. I don't want to owe him any more. I don't want to owe anyone anything."

Chapter 5, Confrontations, Page 116, Nighteyes

"I understand now why we must kill them all, he said calmly. If we do not, they will never let us be. We must hunt them down to their own liar and kill them all."

Chapter 17, River Crossing, Page 344, Fitz to Burl

"In helping me, she serves the true king. And when Verity returns, you will feel his wrath. There will be no one to shield you or the rest of your false coterie".

Chapter 19, Pursuit, Page 369, Fitz

What I had felt from him just now was so far beyond what I could understand in terms of cruelty that it was almost incomprehensible. Forged ones had lost their humanity, but in their emptiness was the shadow of what they had been. Had Regal opened his breast and showed me a nest of vipers, I could not have been more shocked. Regal had thrown humanity aside, to embrace something darker. And this was the man the Six Duchies now called King.

Chapter 22, Departure, Page 431, Fool speaking of Kettle.

"Do you not feel there is something about her, something..." He shook his head angrily. It was the first time I have ever seen Fool searching for words. "Sometimes I feel she is significant. That she is wound up with us. Other times, she seems but a nosy old woman with an unfortunate lack of taste in her choice of companions."

Chapter 23, The Mountains, Page 446, The Fool

"I have known since I was a child that together we should do this task. It had not occurred to me to question that I would go with you. I have been making preparations since the day you arrived here."

Chapter 28, The Coterie, Page 551, Kettle

"It was so unthinkable, to do what I had done," Kettle said wearily. "It had never happened before. Oh, between coterie, once in a great while, for rivalry for the King's favor. But I Skill-dueled a member of my own coterie, and killed her. And that was unforgivable."



Chapter 31, Elfbark, Page 591, Nighteyes

You live in the now and refuse to think of what may come. But I, I find I can think of little else save what may come to be. These times have been good for me, my brother. Living with others, hunting together, sharing meat.

Chapter 33, The Quarry, Page 626, Fitz

It was another dragon. This one was the size of a ship. It was all of black stone, and it sprawled sleeping upon the block of stone it was emerging from.

Chapter 36, The Wit and the Sword, Page 682, Verity

"But what concerns us now is waking the Elderlings. You look about us and see a lovely day. I see fair seas and a clean wind to bring Red Ships to our shores. While I chip and scrape and labor, Six Duchies folk die or are Forged."

Chapter 40, Regal, Page 747, Fitz

I thought of peace returning to the Mountain Kingdom, of Red Ships driven from the coast of the Six Duchies. I healed. Not completely. A scar is never the same as good flesh, but I stops the bleeding.

Chapter 41, The Scribe, Page 757, Fitz

We dream of carving our dragon.

## Topics for Discussion

Discuss Queen Kettricken. Her experiences in this novel are continually those of suffering, beginning with the flight from her castle to the mountains. How does she face these trials? What character traits does she possess that allow her to survive and even flourish during these events?

Is the Fool a man or a woman? Does it matter?

What was the purpose of Fitz' life? If Starling had not promised to keep his exploits on the voyage a secret, what would the song have sounded like?

Discuss a leader's role in the lives of his subjects. Do the leaders assume responsibility and commit to sacrificing their own lives for the good of the people they rule?

What sacrifices did Nighteyes make? Who was the stronger character, Nighteyes or Fitz?

Fitz admits he is not a good assassin, or husband, or subject for the King. Is he being modest, or is he correct? What was he good at? Was he great, or did he bring out the greatness in others?

When did Burrich realize he was in love with Molly? When did she realize she was in love with him?

Discuss the Skill. Does it represent the ultimate power in this novel?

One of the main themes in the novel is sacrifice for the good of others. Look at each character and define what sacrifice they made in the story.

What happened to the Elderlings after the cleansing of the Six Duchies?