

The Blue Sword Study Guide

The Blue Sword by Robin McKinley

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Contents

The Blue Sword Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapter One.....	4
Chapter Two.....	6
Chapter Three and Chapter Four.....	8
Chapter Five and Chapter Six.....	11
Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight.....	15
Chapter Nine and Chapter Ten.....	18
Chapter Eleven and Chapter Twelve.....	21
Chapter Thirteen.....	24
Chapter Fourteen.....	26
Chapter Fifteen through Chapter Seventeen.....	28
Characters.....	32
Objects/Places.....	38
Themes.....	40
Style.....	43
Quotes.....	45
Topics for Discussion.....	47



Plot Summary

The Blue Sword by Robin McKinley is a fantasy novel about a young orphan girl, Harry, who is taken from her privileged life in Home, and thrust into the world of the Hillfolk. Through her keeper, King Corlath, Harry learns she has magical power, and learns to use that power to help save their people from a demonic army.

Angharad Harry Crewe is a young orphan woman who is sent to live in the harsh desert of Daria with a family known to her brother, Richard. Bordered on the North by the Hillfolk, the Homelanders keep to themselves and rarely have relations with the native Damarians, although they often hear stories of the magic of the Hillfolk. With the threat of war, however, the Hillfolk King, Corlath, comes to request the aid of the Homelanders. When he is rejected, he kidnaps young Harry at the urging of his kelar, or magic.

Harry is treated well and refuses to let her circumstances defeat her. She quickly learns the way of the Hillfolk and begins to forge a rocky relationship with Corlath, as well as with a hunting cat named Narknon, and her horse, Sungold. Knowing she has kelar, Corlath has her trained for the laprun trials by Mathin, who quickly becomes a friend to Harry. Harry wins the trials, and becomes a King's Rider who wields the sword of Gonturan. She is a powerful force, and Corlath knows she is valuable for him and for his people. Lady Aerin, the original Queen of the Hillfolk, begins to visit Harry in visions, proving her power. Corlath also begins to have feelings for Harry, and Harry begins to recognize her own love for Corlath.

When the threat of the Northern army approaches, however, Harry knows she must go her own way to warn the Outlanders and to protect a gap in the mountains she believes the North will use to sneak up on the Hill army. Corlath refuses to listen to her concerns, even though he is aware of the threat. Harry and two friends abandon Corlath and his army and ride back to the Homelanders, where she gathers more supporters. As she travels, more arrive to assist Harry, the Lady Hero of Damar. She and her small army are able to defeat the demonic Northern army with magic from herself, as well as Corlath, and with the support of her friends and new allies. She returns to Corlath, fearing rejection, only to find he loves her and wishes to marry her. Harry realizes her own feelings for Corlath, and the two marry, and have several children. The Blue Sword is a story of love, hope, and the power of friendship and loyalty.



Chapter One

Chapter One Summary

The Blue Sword is the story of Harry Crewe, a young orphan girl who rises from an inexperienced Homelander to the Queen of Damar, wielder of the sword of Gonturan. The story is one of friendships, love, leadership, and a passion to help a nation.

In Chapter One, Angharad Crewe, known as Harry, is sent to Istan in the Province of Daria, following the death of her father. Lady Amelia and Sir Charles Greenough have agreed to take in the young orphan, and although her new home is much wealthier than her previous home, she is attempting to make the best of things. Richard, her brother, was in the military in Istan, and had asked Sir Charles for advice on what to do with his unmarried sister, as her heritage is questionable due to unknown actions of her great grandmother. Charles and Amelia offered Harry residence, but Richard is worried. Harry has a wandering nature and is not considered a "proper" young lady, as she tends to be proud and opinionated. Harry is a tall woman and believes she is less than beautiful. She learns about her new town, Istan, which the Homelanders overtook from the natives, and she begins to settle in well. She even makes a few friends, namely Elizabeth and Cassie Peterson, whom she sees as beautiful. Harry doesn't realize that a few of the soldiers, such as Tom Lloyd, actually find her attractive.

At breakfast one morning, Harry plans to go riding with Beth and Cassie, but when Sir Charles arrives for breakfast, he breaks the news that he is waiting for Colonel Jack Dedham and Richard to return from an expedition. Charles notes that there has been trouble brewing the North, where the old kingdom of Damar still exists, ruled by King Corlath who predominately ignores the Homelanders. North of the kingdom, however, the Northerners threaten the Homelanders. When Jack and Richard arrive, Jack tells the women that Corlath himself is coming to Istan. He explains to Harry that the Damar are rumored to be magical sorcerers, and he himself believes this to be true, as "odd" things often happen to foreigners who come into contact with the Damar. Corlath himself is the ancestral line of Aerin and Tor, both of whom were great sorcerers. Jack hopes Corlath is coming to ask for help in keeping the Northerners out of his lands, in that this would also help the Homelanders in maintaining their holds against the Northerners. Amelina offers to have lunch made for the group, as the men hope Corlath is coming for business only.

Chapter One Analysis

Chapter One introduces several key characters in the novel, as well as introduces the background information necessary for the course of the novel. First, Angharad Crewe, known as Harry, is depicted in this chapter so that readers understand she is a self-reliant, strong, opinionated, resilient character who also has a good heart. Wild as a child with her brother, Harry never quite learned to settle down properly. Her mother, like



her, preferred horses to dinners and balls, and preferred a life outdoors to the prim and proper life of a "proper" woman. When her mother passed and her brother left for the military, Harry was left with her father and his friends, all of whom treated her as an equal, as opposed to a "young woman". There is clearly a family secret, in that there is mention of Harry's great-grandmother and her tainting of the family bloodline. This foreshadows information about Harry's grandmother as a Hillwoman later in the novel. Harry clearly feels ill at ease in her new surroundings, but her pride and care for her brother and her new guardians lead her to behave as is expected. This duality foreshadows Harry's actions later in the novel as she is more able to explore her adventurous side.

This chapter also introduces Sir Charles and Amelia, who are now the guardians of Harry. Both clearly care for Harry, and have already come to think of her as one of their own. They are kind and quick to spoil Harry as they do not have their own children. Sir Charles is the head of the military establishment and his wife is a proper woman, although she too already shows a spark of womanly self reliance. It is clear Sir Charles is worried about his responsibility for the town, and is concerned about the coming of the Damar King, Corlath.

Also introduced in this chapter is Richard, the brother of Harry. Richard was very close to Harry as a child, but he grew up and left Homeland for Daria, to serve in the military. Having spent time in this location, Richard not only wants the best for his sister, but also wants her to represent him well. He fears she is too unrefined to make a good impression, but he does love her, as is shown through his escorting her to several local balls and dances, as he introduces her to others.

King Corlath, although not yet seen in the novel, is also introduced in this chapter, as is the theme of the magical abilities of the Damar's. It is clear Jack, also introduced in this chapter, believes strongly in the magical abilities of the Damar. The abilities of the native population foreshadows the development of this theme throughout the novel, and when mixed with Harry's adventurous nature, foreshadows her involvement with the group. Mentions of possible war with the Northerners also foreshadows battle later in the novel.

Finally, this chapter also introduces the character of Jack Dedham, a local military man who knows much of the Hillfolk and who seems to believe in their powers. Jack, throughout the novel, shows both intelligence when it comes to dealing with the natives, as well as tenderness and compassion. His stories of the magic of the Hillfolks as well as his clear wariness of them shows he knows they are not a power to be ignored.

This chapter also introduces the setting of the novel, which is imperative to understanding the events happening within the book. The explanations of Home, the town of Istan, military positions in the Province of Daria, the Northerners, the Damar, the Ramid Mountains, and the Hillfolk all serve to help orient the reader to the world in which the events in the book take place. Describing Istar and the surrounding desert, as well as explaining the heat and lack of moisture in the land, help set the stage for the novel, as the landscape plays an important role in the development of the story.



Chapter Two

Chapter Two Summary

In Chapter Two, Harry is told by Amelia to bring her friends to lunch. As she rides to meet them, she wonders about what King Corlath will look like. In the heat of the desert, Harry thinks about the forests and jungles of Home, where she grew up. She realizes she is no longer homesick and has come to like the desert, although others repeatedly discuss their hatred of it. Those who have lived in Istan all their lives are accustomed to it, and some, such as Beth and Cassie's father, actually like the area. Harry discovered, at a dinner party, that Jack also enjoyed the desert. With the conversation, Jack learned Harry was a strong, mischievous woman, and he finds he enjoys her wit and charm.

As Beth and Cassie join her, the group speaks of the coming of the King. Few know Hill speech, so Sir Charles has several, including Jack, on hand who can. The girls speak of Hillfolk, as Harry knows little of them. Lovers of horses, the Hillfolk have the grandest animals, and wear robes covering their bodies, including their faces. The girls admit that they, too, have heard stories of the magic of the Hillfolk, and the madness of Corlath, said to stem from having a power greater than mankind. The girls decide to return home to await the King, only to find, as they ride into the Residency, that the King has already arrived. Seven beautiful horses stand outside the house, and all are without bridles or stirrups, Harry notices as she dismounts. The girls wonder how the King arrived without them seeing him, when suddenly, there is commotion at the door of the Residency. The king towers over those she knows, including Charles, Jack, Richard, and Mr. Peterson, and wears a white, flowing robe that seems to make him more majestic. The King is clearly angry, and begins to move away, but Jack stops him by saying something in Corlath's own language. Harry notices the air around the King seems to vibrate, and when he looks at her, she notices his eyes are yellow gold, and furious. She nearly staggers at the power in his face. He mounts his majestic horse, as do his followers, and rides away. Harry notices only that the others appear relieved, and that she has a pounding headache.

Chapter Two Analysis

Chapter Two further describes Harry's character, as well as introduces Corlath as an actual character in the story, as opposed to a mere rumor. It is clear in the beginning of the chapter that Harry has already begun to leave behind her old life. While she loved Home, she finds she does not miss it, but has already grown to love the lands of the desert. This foreshadows her willingness to stay with Corlath's group later in the novel, as she continues to enjoy her new landscape. Her thoughts back to home, as well as her stories of her childhood, show she is adventurous and willing to take on a challenge, further showing her to be a strong, able character, as she continues to show herself to be. Jack is shown to already enjoy Harry, and share in her love of the desert, foreshadowing his willingness to stand with her later in the novel against the North.



Beth and Cassie's stories show clearly that the Hillfolk are not friends with the Homelanders. While it is certainly true that they can exist with one another, as they do during the fair, it is also blatant that neither side is particularly comfortable with the other. Mr. Peterson's refusal to speak of the magic of the Hillfolk shows his own belief in the powers, while the girls' stories of Corlath and his own madness as a result of his magic foreshadow revelations about kelar, or magic, and the power of the king, and all who hold kelar in their blood. Stories of Corlath also foreshadow information about Corlath's magic, and his attention to his kelar, even when it makes him make decisions that seem questionable.

Corlath's arrival, unknown to the girls, shows his powers already in the novel, as it is clear the girls should have seen the dust of his horses. This magical image is only furthered when Corlath makes his appearance, as his shimmering presence, gold eyes, and flowing robes all seem to imply a sense of power and mysticism. Corlath's anger foreshadows the revelations later in the novel as to what Corlath was requesting, and Jack's attempts to smooth over the situation again show him to be a friend of the Hillfolk, as is seen later in the novel. The horses in this section, so vividly described, foreshadow Harry's own experiences with the great beasts later in the novel. Finally, Harry's headache at the end of the chapter, immediately following her meeting of eyes with Corlath, suggests a link between the two that is further divulged in later chapters.



Chapter Three and Chapter Four

Chapter Three and Chapter Four Summary

Corlath leaves the Residency, angry at the Outlanders for being so difficult to work with. He fights to contain his magic, or kelar, and remembers that his father once told him their kelar was useful in battle, but often a curse otherwise. He mentioned that Luthe's blood is more pure, so his kelar is more useful. Corlath notes that his own seems to be repeatedly showing him the young woman of the Residency. He wonders about the girl's strength and nearly believes her to possess kelar, except that no Outlander has the Gift.

Back at the Residency, Harry, her guests, and the men of the meeting discuss the situation. Jack admits he tried to smooth things over in the end of the meeting with Corlath by asking to be friends in the Old Tongue. Jack notes he does not believe Corlath will make alliances with the North. Jack explains that Corlath spoke no Homelander throughout the meeting, but he did have an interpreter. In the end, Corlath was asking for men to help close the mountain passes against the Northern army. Jack notes that he understands Corlath's dilemma, as his lands, in the event of an attack by the North on Home, would become a battlefield. Sir Charles, however, reminds everyone that they know nothing of the North. Peterson points out that Sir Charles virtually asked Corlath to give up his people and his lands for protection, and Jack defends, stating that neither side was willing to listen to the others' terms.

Back at Corlath's camp, Corlath knows his people will fight the Northern army, but that there are too few of them to win. He thinks to himself that Jack seemed to believe in kelar, and in the people of the Hills. His interpreter, Forloy, knows as much of the Outlander language as Corlath himself. He sees Harry's face again as he explains to his Riders that the Outlanders have refused to assist them. Corlath thinks to himself that Thurra, the magical and non-human leader of the North, has been successful in bringing together his people, although he knows Thurra's army will not last forever. Finally, Corlath speaks again to his Riders, noting that they will take the girl from the Residency with them when they leave.

In Chapter Four, Harry finds herself unable to sleep. As she sits in the window that night, she recalls that Jack admitted that he promised his loyalty as his parting comment to the Corlath. Recalling the conversation, Harry finally falls asleep. Corlath and his men, meanwhile, camp near the Residency while Faran, a Rider, begs the King not to take an Outlander. Corlath explains that the girl is to be a political prisoner, to be respected by all, including him. Three days later, Corlath and two of his men sneak onto the Residency lands. Corlath easily walks onto the property, walks through the walls of the manor, and finds Harry, asleep. Feeling a moment of pity, he gently covers her with a cloak and says a spell to make her continue to sleep.

When Harry wakes, she is being held upright on a horse. She struggles a bit, and her escort immediately stops to hand her to others waiting on the ground, but she faints.



When she wakes again, she is lying on a blanket in the desert. Seeing her to be awake, a man rises and comes to her, bringing her hot liquid to drink, and food to eat. When asked, he removes his hood, and Harry is shocked to see that her kidnapper is King Corlath. Corlath inwardly wishes he could reassure her, but knows he cannot. As she rises, Corlath brings his horse, Fireheart. Corlath allows her to ride facing forward, and even helps her to mount the giant horse. Corlath continues to treat her well, and the group eventually arrives in camp.

Chapter Three and Chapter Four Analysis

Chapter Three reveals more about Corlath, as well as more about the Northerners, and their plans. It is clear that Corlath understands his own magical abilities and the problems his kelar can cause. His memories of his father's statements about kelar being used for healing during the time of Aerin foreshadow Harry's use of this same magic for healing at the end of the novel. Luthe is mentioned in this chapter, as well, foreshadowing his appearance as an oracle later in the novel. Additionally, Corlath's belief that Harry may have kelar suggests this may be why his own kelar is showing him her image, as well as foreshadows her visions in upcoming chapters as proof of her magical ability. Corlath's comments that no Hill person contained kelar, when combined with the knowledge in previous chapters about bad blood within Harry's family, suggests her great-grandmother may have had relations with Hillfolk.

Corlath's anger in this chapter shows he is a good King who cares deeply for his people. Although he was unwilling to submit his people to the power of the Homelander, he none-the-less at least sought their assistance. He gave them the opportunity not only to help, but also to defend their own lands. His thoughts about Jack, combined with Jack's own admissions in this chapter that he feels for the Hillfolk, foreshadow his involvement with the Hillfolk later in the novel. Further, Jack's comments to Corlath in the Old Tongue, and Corlath's willingness to accept his words, show the two can be on good terms. Corlath's thoughts about the Northern army show them to be inhumane, and suggest not only strength, but a demonic force that is likely related to the kelar of the Hills. It is clear Corlath fears Thurra, even if he is mortal, and even though Corlath knows his people will be able to survive, at least in hiding. His final words to his people, that he will kidnap Harry, foreshadows her kidnapping in the next chapter.

Chapter Four reveals still more about Corlath, but also reveals much about Harry. First, Corlath makes it very clear that he is not abducting Harry for sexual reasons, although it is vaguely apparent that Corlath has done such things in the past. Even he admits, however, that he would not do without her consent, showing him not to be a cruel and deviant man. On the other hand, this also shows him to have the needs and desires of a normal man, foreshadowing his relations with Harry at the end of the novel. His pity as he takes her from her room suggests not only that he has true feelings, but also that his kelar, although always followed, is not always a blessing. In addition, his treatment of her on the way to the camp, through his kind words, gentle handling, and genuine desires to reassure her, all show him to be a king-hearted, caring man who is, admittedly, being forced to do unkind things due to political situations.



Harry's reactions to being abducted show again that she is not only a very capable young woman, but also that she is stubborn and prideful. At no time does she whimper or cry, and even when she faints, she recovers with dignity. She does not ask questions, scream, or even fight her kidnappers, but instead maintains a sense of dignity and grace. She is clearly angry at the situation, confused, and a little homesick, but she remains calm and collected. This shows not only that Harry is a stable young woman, and strong, but also that she is intelligent, and even curious about her new situation. These traits foreshadow her abilities later in the novel as a King's Rider. The reaction of Corlath's men show they are not comfortable with the kidnapping, suggesting the men to be, like Corlath, good men who are being forced into situations by politics.



Chapter Five and Chapter Six

Chapter Five and Chapter Six Summary

Immediately in Chapter Five, Corlath begins giving orders in camp as the two riders discuss Harry, noting her pride and honor throughout the journey. Corlath encourages her to enter the largest tent, which is clearly the King's tent. Color blazes inside from a variety of wall tapestries, rugs, and other ornate decorations. Four men arrive and begin to fill a large bathtub. When they finish, they gesture, and attempt to help her remove her clothing, to which she hotly refuses. Corlath sends the men away and informs Harry that his men were merely showing her royal courtesy. He fears he has offended her and is sorry but realizes they know little of one another's customs. As Harry's anger ebbs, Corlath finds himself grabbing her head gently to look into her eyes, and in them he sees hints of kelar.

After bathing, dressing, and combing her hip-length hair, Harry watches as more men carry in many bowls and plates of various wonderful foods. Harry is seated at Corlath's left, and another eighteen men arrive and take their places. As they eat, the men talk, but she understands little, and she occupies her thoughts with trying to figure out why she is here. After dessert, Corlath motions to his men, and one of them brings a heavy leather bag with a drinking horn. The bag is passed around the table and each man drinks, many speaking a few words or phrases after his turn. Harry is surprised when she is handed the bag and is told by Corlath to drink.

Almost immediately, Harry sees a broad grassland, with huge mountains and a small gap within them. She sees a small army on one side of the gap, with a few archers and several riders, and on the other, she sees a vast force of thousands. The small band, however, gathers up, and is led by a horseman whose sword gleams blue. A moment later, Harry finds herself back in the tent, with Corlath holding her up, looking at her with a sort of pity. He explains that she drank the Water of Sight, or Meeldtar, and that her vision was possibly a vision of the future. When he speaks to her again, she does not understand, as he is not using Homelander or Darian. When pressed, he admits that he is speaking in the Old Tongue and is simply repeating what she has just said, while within her vision.

In Chapter Six, Harry falls asleep on cushions near the table as the men continue to talk into the night. Corlath, looking down on her as everyone leaves, feels pity and shame, but knows he had no choice, as her kelar can help his people. He hopes she can learn to love the Hills as he does, although he fears she will hate them all for stealing her. He reminds himself that his interpreter's wife, who was a Homelander, did not wish to hate the Hills, but she did. Later that night, Harry awakens and begins to cry, softly so as not to wake anyone, but the King hears each sob. Even after Harry returns to sleep, the King is awake, facing the grief he feels at causing Harry's sorrow.



The following morning, Harry wakes alone to warm water for bathing, hot food, and new boots. She watches as all the tents are packed neatly and stored on the giant Hill horses, and notices there are also large hunting cats in the group, all of whom are the size of dogs. Harry is amazed as one befriends her, and shoves her head under Harry's hand to be petted. Corlath comes to her, and helps her to put on a hood to protect her from the sands as they ride. He also gives her a horse, Red Wind, who is gentle enough for her to learn to ride without bit and bridle. The group travels for several days, and the cat, Narknon, follows her, and begins sleeping with her. Each day, following breakfast with Narknon, she gives herself riding lessons, but very few in the camp speak to her. She is homesick on occasion, but realizes she is missing only an idea. She recalls tantrums as a child, and realizes her new life seems to want to draw out of her the same fire and passion.

One evening, as they set up camp, a bonfire is set, and many in the camp begin singing ballads. Feeling alone, Harry locates Corlath in the crowd and sits near him as he explains the songs. Suddenly, Harry sees a red-headed female leap from the flames, and the image grins at her in a friendly manner. The vision reaches for Harry and she reaches back, only to find herself reaching toward nothing, knee deep in the sand. Corlath picks her up gently as she weeps, and carries her to his tent, pity filling him as he promises himself to help her however he can.

Harry wakes the following morning, ashamed of her behavior, and finds one of Corlath's men, Mathin, waiting for her. He slowly teaches her to say Good Morning and spends several days patiently teaching her the Hillfolk language. Days later, Corlath returns to camp, and presents Harry with Sungold, a gorgeous war horse. She rides him well, and at the end of the lesson, Corlath presents her with his sword, which she wields clumsily. After breakfast, however, Corlath presents her with a smaller sword. He explains that since Harry has seen Aerin in the fire, and seen visions of war, she is likely to become a fighter. She begins to protest, but Corlath helps her adjust the sword properly in her hand as he explains that she has become a hope to his people. He questions why she is called Hari, and she admits she dislikes her real name, Angharad. Corlath begins calling her Harimad-sol. He admits his kelar advised him to bring her to camp, and advises that she learn to trust her own power. At dinner, spies return to tell Corlath that the Northerners are preparing an army for battle. Harry also learns that the group is headed toward the Hillfolk City, where the king's palace resides. At the end of the meal, Corlath tells Mathin that he is to train Harry for the laprun trials, occurring in six weeks.

Chapter Five and Chapter Six Analysis

Chapter Five reveals the kelar hidden within Harry, and explain much of Corlath's actions so far in the novel. Harry, for her part, is very angry with the situation at hand, as is shown by her reactions to Corlath and the men who try to help her bathe. Harry is not intentionally mean to the servants, but she is used to a certain way of living that allows her to bathe alone. As Corlath notes, while this slight is unintentional on his part, and is actually meant as a compliment, such gaps in culture are difficult to overcome, when one knows little of the other's culture. Although Harry is enamored with her



surroundings, as rich as they are with beauty and trinkets, she is also keenly aware of her position, and of the anger within her at being abducted. This is clear when Corlath grasps her head and looks into her eyes. At this point, it is obvious that Corlath sees within young Harry a very strong kelar, but that Harry herself is unaware of her power.

The dinner in Corlath's tent serves as an introduction to the King's Riders, a group Harry will soon belong to. It is apparent that this group of individuals is close, and would give their lives for one another. It is also clear that these individuals cherish their King, not only as a ruler, but also as a man, suggesting that he is a good King. The fact that the men eat together shows camaraderie, and Harry's comfort with them foreshadows her acceptance of them as mentors and equals later in the novel.

Harry's visions in this chapter strongly foreshadow her later participation in the battle to protect Corlath's army by stopping the Northerners at the Gap, as well as her ability to wield a sword. At the time, however, the vision only appears as a vision either of the past or future war, and suggest that Harry may participate in such a battle. More clearly at this point, the vision, and the following conversation with Corlath, confirm that Harry possess magic of the Hills, as she speaks, in unconsciousness, the Old Tongue. His pity for her, as well as his tenderness with her, show again he is a good, kind person.

Chapter Six again shows the humanity of Corlath, as well as introduces new characters and concepts about the camp. First, Corlath's reaction to Harry as she cries in the night shows he is a caring man who truly does despise what he is having to do. He knows Harry can help his people, and understands that his kelar is right, but he also knows how his actions have hurt the young woman. The comparison of Harry to Forloy's wife not only foreshadows information about this relationship later, but also suggests Corlath is already beginning to see Harry as more than a simple prisoner. This, combined with his admittance that he wants Harry to share his love for the Hills, shows he may be considering romantic feelings for the strong woman.

Much of Chapter Six serves to introduce Hill life by explaining the tents, and the animals and people within the camp. Narknon, the loyal cat, is introduced, and she plays a sidekick role throughout the rest of the novel. This chapter also again shows that Harry has kelar, and that it is very powerful. Indicated by her memories of her early tantrums and the power of those tantrums, this power is clearly coming back to her in her new life. This, along with her visions of Aerin in the fire, not only show that Aerin has an interest in her, but foreshadows the power Harry will reveal later in the novel.

Again, the scene between Harry and Corlath at the bonfire show clearly he feels for young Harry, and his tenderness with her betrays his growing concern for her. While his thoughts show that he does not want to need an Outlander, his actions show that he does, in fact, need and care for her. His own memories of the kelar headaches suggest Harry's own headaches mentioned in the novel were also caused by kelar. Conversely, Harry's actions at the fire show that she is very lonely. Not only does she seek out Corlath, as he is the only one to speak with her, but when she is finally at the end of her rope, it is Corlath she looks to for comfort. Her shame in the morning, however, shows she is growing as a person. Corlath's response to Harry's loneliness serves not only to



show again his sincerity in care for her, but also to introduce a new character, Mathin. From the beginning, Mathin is depicted as a kind but serious man who is a patient teacher. His actions help Harry to be able to speak to more Hillfolk, as well as to understand more of what is happening around her. This not only helps to lessen her loneliness, but also helps the other Rider's feel at home with her.

It is when Corlath presents Harry with a war horse and a sword that the foreshadowing of previous chapters comes to light. Harry is quick to learn how to ride the larger horse, and Gonturan, the sword of Aerin, has been seen by Harry in her visions. Even as Harry protests, she knows that within her lies the instinct to be a fighter, and this suggests again there is some Hill blood within her. This also suggests that the blue sword she has seen in her visions, and the rider, were actually her, in an upcoming battle. Corlath helps to confirm these suspicions by naming Harry a Hill name with a high ranking name, and through his assurances to Harry that she is hope to his people, and that Aerin has chosen to protect her. The knowledge of the Northern armies movements foreshadow that this may be the enemy of Harry's visions, while Corlath's decision to have Mathin train Harry foreshadow her participation in the trials later in the novel.



Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight

Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight Summary

In Chapter Seven, Harry and Mathin leave the camp at dawn to begin her training. The first day, Mathin works with Harry on mounting her giant horse. At camp that night, Harry is awoken by Narknon, who has followed her from the tents. Mathin laughs, surprising Harry, as he has been serious throughout the journey. She falls asleep more at peace, knowing Mathin is a good man. Harry wakes at dawn and finds herself almost being unconsciously driven, as she routinely goes through the process of training. Mathin gives her light stimulants for better performance, but warns her she will want to sleep after her trials. Harry learns to carry a sword and shield during the days, and at night, Mathin teaches her to sew.

One day, during practice, she manages to throw Mathin from his horse. Mathin, proud, promises his honor to her, and Harry realizes Mathin has become a friend. Mathin explains, one day at lunch, that his family are horse trainers, but that he had a wandering soul and chose instead to be a Rider. He admits that he requested the right to train Harry, as he had himself trained Corlath. When pressed, Mathin also admits that Forloy, the interpreter, had once fallen in love with a woman. While she agreed to come live in the Hills, she never liked it, and died within a few short years. Harry begins to realize, as she learns more of the Hill culture, that within her lies memories of the culture that likely belong not to her, but to Aerin. She is grateful for them, as she knows they aid in her training. One day, Mathin shows her three ways to make fire, but admits Corlath can show her a fourth. She realizes there is much Mathin cannot tell her, because he lacks kelar, but he does tell her much of Lady Aerin. The sixth week arrives, and the two begin heading toward the City, where the laprun trials are held.

In Chapter Eight, Mathin provides Harry with a maroon sash, a symbol of a sword bearer. For two days, they ride, and arrive on the night of the first day of the trials. There are hundreds camped in a plain before the mountains, and Harry asks if there are other women in the trials. Mathin admits there are some, but that a female winner, dalamur-sol or Lady hero, would be a great thing for the women of the Hills. Around the fire that night, several of the Riders come to wish her luck, calling her their prodigy. In the morning, Mathin gives her the kiss of luck, calling her the Daughter of the Riders.

Over the course of the day, Harry wins several riding competitions and sword competitions, while in the afternoon, she begins one on one trials. Mathin explains that it is common to slice the sash of the losing opponent, which Harry successfully does repeatedly, but that it is taboo to draw blood. Finally, she is pitted against a taller, more skilled rider and swordsman, and is angered that he seems to be letting her win. Her anger rises, and she discovers the opponents horse giving, just enough. She slices the hood from the rider, cutting him slightly, only to find it is Corlath, and to find he has successfully sliced her sash.



Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight Analysis

Chapter Seven expands the character of Mathin, as well as shows Harry's training, and her abilities, as they progress. Mathin is a tough trainer, as he shows from the beginning when he makes Harry learn to mount properly. At the same time, however, his thoughts show he enjoys Harry, and believes in her tremendously. It is no surprise, then, at the end of the chapter, to learn that he asked for the right to train Harry. His conversations with her throughout her training show he is a kind man with a wandering soul who simply enjoys being a Rider. He proves to be not only an excellent cook, but a strong friend to Harry, and this relationship continues throughout the novel. Although he does drug her, he does so with only her success in mind. His pride as Harry's kelar allows her to dehorse him is clear, as is his own lack of kelar. Finally, his story of Forloy's wife, which was foreshadowed earlier, help explain Corlath's concern about his beloved prisoner.

Harry, in this chapter, proves herself to be a strong rider and a strong fighter. She understands from the beginning that there is a part of her that is being driven by Aerin's own spirit, and a part of her that is being awakened. While it is unclear that Harry understands her kelar, what is clear to the reader is that she does possess a tremendous amount. The reader can also sense a slow change in her, as she begins to follow her destiny, and enjoy it. She begins to realize that Mathin is a friend, and, as always, appreciates his help. Narknon's appearance serves not only to show Harry has an added companion in the cat, but also to foreshadow Narknon's constant appearance for Harry. As she has shown throughout the novel, Harry is proud, stubborn, and always seeking a challenge. Her kelar grows stronger, and her pride in her own abilities begins to appear. Mathin's comments about her abilities, his swearing of his honor, and his comments about kelar all foreshadow Harry's success in the trials.

In Chapter Eight, readers see the result of all Harry's difficult training. Her sash is the first reminder that she is battling for the right to wear a sword. Mathin's comments about a win by Harry providing hope for the women of the hills reconfirms the fact that Harry has become a symbol not only to Corlath's immediate people, but also to the population in general. When combined with the nickname bestowed on her of prodigy, people begin to see the pressure on Harry not only to win, but to win in such a way that her people and those who look up to her can be proud of. Mathin's bestowing of the "Daughter of the Riders" label seals the concept that Harry is definitely seen as a part of the Rider's group, even though she herself may not yet feel such.

The trials prove that the Rider's have reason to be excited about Harry's chances. She neatly wins every challenge handed to her and finds herself bored as she continues, showing she is above the skills of many of the competitors. The knowledge about the slicing of the sash not only foreshadows her own slicing of the sashes of such fighters as Senay, who appears later in the novel, but also shows the importance of the sash that has been mentioned several times throughout the novel. Her final fight allows the reader to again see a bit of Harry's inner magic show, but also shows that Corlath is eager to prove the skills of his young prodigy. Her ability to force Fireheart to give, just a

little, shows not only her abilities, but also shows the kelar that lies within her. Her drawing of blood, however, shows that while she is accomplished, she still has things to learn.



Chapter Nine and Chapter Ten

Chapter Nine and Chapter Ten Summary

In Chapter Nine, the crowd cheers and rushes Harry to congratulate her as the winner of the trials. Many of her opponents come to pay their respects to her reverently, as do the Riders. One woman, Senay, whom Harry noticed as talented at the trials, comes to pay her respects, and Harry takes more time speaking with her. In the morning, the Riders travel to the City of Corlath's castle. Harry is sore, but does not allow it to slow her down. In the City, Harry is in awe of the stone streets, stone houses, and stone walkways. Innath admits he, too, is always surprised at the lack of use of wood in the city, as it is mostly made of stone. Harry is greeted by the people of the City as Laprun-minta, first in the trials, as the children chant her name. In the middle of the City is Corlath's giant castle, where Mathin leaves her.

Corlath arrives, and is amused that Narknon has traveled with her. He explains that she and the rest of the best at the trials will ride with the army, who is to strike out to fight the Northerners soon. Corlath takes her to a smaller stone cottage inside the palace, that has a grassy courtyard and a running stream and fountain. Corlath notes that the small area has not housed anyone for quite some time, and abruptly leaves her. After a nap, she allows a group of servant women to help her bathe. She is richly dressed, and left in a banquet room, where Mathin soon arrives, and attempts to put Harry's torn sash on her. Mathin quietly explains to her that the slashed and mended sash is a sign of honor, and she allows him to apply it. At the feast, all the Riders appear and discuss the laprun trials, but soon, the Water of Sight is brought out. Many who drink speak of war, while Mathin speaks of feeling as though he is on fire. When it is Harry's turn, she has only to clasp the container, and she sees an image of her horse, with a rider holding a white flag as they ride toward the Residency. When Harry drinks of the water, she sees herself in battle, and her right arm goes numb. Corlath, when he drinks, sees the face of the enemy. Later in the evening, Corlath produces a smaller sword with a blue hilt, and Harry recognizes it as the sword from her visions. Corlath notes it is Gonturan, the sword of Aerin, which has been passed down through many generations. Corlath grasps the blade of Gonturan with his right hand, slicing it, and has Harry do the same with Corlath's own sword, thus making her a King's Rider. Corlath tells her to handle the sword well, or she will answer to Aerin, as the Riders rejoice in their new member.

In Chapter Ten, Harry lies awake at night, touching Gonturan in wonder. When she finally sleeps, she dreams of Aerin, who wishes her luck and skill with Gonturan. For several days, Harry sleeps, as Mathin predicted. On the fourth day, Mathin arrives to find her, asking why she was made a Rider. Mathin reminds her that she is a possessor of kelar, but he admits that even Corlath does not completely understand his actions, as he is acting on advice of his own kelar. He does point out that Harry provides hope for the Hill people, and is a role model for the women. Harry tentatively asks about Corlath's family, and is told he has no wife or children.



For several more days, Harry rides Sungold and practices fighting with Gonturan as Narknon and Sungold become friends. One day, Corlath comes to her cottage to dine with her. The two speak of the upcoming ride of war, when Harry suddenly asks to see Corlath's hand. She notices the cuts from the Rider's initiations do not fade, and Corlath explains that the salve they use before the cutting causes the scar not to fade, as the symbol is forever. Harry asks Corlath to show her the fourth way to make fire, but he gently refuses. Harry, angry, asks if Corlath sent Mathin as a teacher because he was close-mouthed, but Corlath reminds her Mathin is a patient teacher. When pressed, Corlath admits that neither Mathin nor himself wish to tell Harry the tales of Aerin, as she is part of Harry's current destiny. Corlath promises, however, that after the battle, if they are still alive, he will teach her all he knows, and Harry humbly thanks him. Corlath piles a plate with bread pieces and glares at them, causing them to burst into flame. Harry, unnerved, asks about the cottage, and Corlath admits his father built it for his mother shortly after they were married. He believes his father was trying to reassure her that he was satisfied, even if she could never carry the blue sword. With a final glance at Harry, Corlath leaves the cottage.

Two days later, the army and Riders leave the City. Narknon travels with Harry and brings her food as the Riders travel west, and then north. Corlath's spies have reported that the Northern army is thousands strong and on the move. As Corlath's own army moves, they pick up hundreds more, but they are far outnumbered. They see many women riders, and Mathin notes this is because of Harry's success. At one hollow, Corlath rides up to a group of a hundred men with a happy yell, and Mathin explains that the group is led by Murfoth and Terim, the king's old friend and his son. Terim soon befriends Harry.

Chapter Nine and Chapter Ten Analysis

Chapter Nine serves to show the deepening relationship between Corlath and Harry, as well as to introduce the City. Harry has clearly won a place in the community by becoming the winner of the trials, as is shown by the Riders, the other participants, and even the people of the City. Yet Corlath's actions, both inside the laprun trials and immediately following, show his care to be of a more personal nature. This show of sincere care, mingled with reservation, continues in the City when Corlath greets Harry once again. His attention is clearly on Harry when she arrives in the City, but he uses Narknon as a buffer for his affections. His placement of her in the small, beautiful cottage both foreshadows information about the cottage later in the novel, as well as shows that Corlath wants to impress Harry, and to make her as comfortable as possible. His abrupt departure when he begins speaking of how the cottage has been empty suggests the cottage is very special to him. Finally, his choice to make Harry a Rider shows he has faith in her, as his deep cutting of his own hand shows his eagerness for her to join him. This foreshadows revelations of his romantic feelings later in the novel.

Harry, in this chapter, seems more at peace, and more able to put aside her pride, showing she is growing up. Her new found position as a leader of the community forces her to recognize others, and to speak to others and relate to others in a new way. Her



acceptance into the Riders, both by Corlath and by the other Riders, shows her skills are improving. Her ability to allow others to help bathe her, and her ability to accept Mathin's help with her sash show she is learning to put her pride aside at times, when needed. However, her treatment of Corlath, as she appears to both be drawn to him as well as avoid him, betray her growing romantic feelings for the King.

There are several small moments of foreshadowing in this chapter, as well. First, the arrival of Senay, although brief, does show Harry is keen on having females around her, foreshadowing Senay's reappearance later in the novel. Corlath's treatment of the cat seems contrary, but is revealed later to be a sign of jealousy that the cat could be with Harry, while Corlath could not. The explanation of the mending of the sash explains why the sashes in previous chapters were noted as being patched together. Mathin's mention of being on fire when he drinks the Meeldtar foreshadows his injury at the end of the novel, and Harry's use of kellar to cure him. Harry's own visions foreshadow her own actions later in the novel, as do Corlath's.

Chapter Ten helps to set up the beginnings of a romantic relationship between Corlath and Harry. Her visions of Aerin show again that she is linked with both Aerin and Gonturan, foreshadowing her skillful battle later in the novel. Harry's questions about Corlath's family suggest she is interested in the King and in his marital status, indicating a curiosity about him as a man. When Mathin speaks of Corlath to Harry, it is clear he is carefully choosing his words, indicating that he, too, can sense the beginnings of a relationship. Harry's conversation with Corlath at dinner furthers this idea, as Corlath admits the home belonged to his mother, who was given it by his father. The fact that he leaves immediately after this statement strongly suggests Corlath, too, understands that he has feelings for young Harry. His wistfulness as he asks her about her happiness, and his promises to teach her all he knows following the war, show he is already thinking of their life following battle.

This chapter also helps to show the odds that Corlath and his army are facing. It is becoming increasingly clear that the army of Corlath, in spite of the additional soldiers they are picking up and the increased number of women, thanks to Harry, they have no chance against the Northerners. Despite Innath's attempts to convey otherwise, Corlath simply does not have enough soldiers. This helps to foreshadow Harry's own search for additional assistance. Finally, this chapter helps to introduce Terim, who becomes an important part of Harry's team, and to show the deepening relationship between Narknon, Sungold, and Harry, which is vital at the end of the novel.



Chapter Eleven and Chapter Twelve

Chapter Eleven and Chapter Twelve Summary

In Chapter Eleven, the group camps in the hollow, and Corlath explains they are heading to see Luthe and the Lake of Dreams. When asked, Mathin admits that Luthe is a seer. Corlath further explains that the army plans to head to the largest gap in the mountains. Harry asks Corlath about another gap in the mountains, where the Northerners could send a smaller army to come from behind, and notes that if warned, the Outlanders could likely hold the gap. Corlath angrily notes that they were warned. After a brief argument, Harry angrily thinks that Corlath's pride will likely lead to their downfall. The following day, thirty five of the group follow Corlath into the mountains to Luthe's. Harry thinks about the gap near the Outlanders as the group rides into the forest, which proves to be a tiresome journey. Finally, the group comes to a clearing, and Corlath speaks to a yellow haired man, as the rest of the group, exhausted, finds a long hall with a series of beds. Harry sleeps soundly, and wakes to find the others still asleep. She walks through a series of halls, and finds herself at peace, and smelling food. In a smaller room, she finds the yellow haired man, who offers her breakfast. The man is very peaceful, and Harry finds herself relaxing. The man asks if she is happy, and she notes that she wishes she could see more of what plans are laid for her. The man smiles, and agrees that choices would be nice. The man states he wishes he could give her predictions that were positive, but he can only tell her she should have faith in her choices, and that her position, that of a bridge, is never easy. He reminds her to trust her horse, Narknon, her sword, and Lady Aerin. He admits he is Luthe, and that he himself asked Corlath to bring Harry. Luthe notes that he realizes Corlath and Harry are at odds with one another, but that they need one another. He also admits Harry is a cross between Corlath and Aerin, whom he himself taught.

For two days the horses and Riders rest and relax. On the second day, Harry follows a small stream through the forest, only to find Luthe in a small clearing at the Lake of Dreams. Luthe admits the sleepy quality of his lands is encouraged as it makes mind reading easier. Only those possessing strong kelar overcome the feeling, like Corlath and Harry herself. Harry catches herself in mid thought, and although Luthe admits he did not catch it, he gently notes that he believes her question had to do with Corlath. She does not deny it, but simply rises, and Corlath does not question her.

In Chapter Twelve, Harry lingers as Corlath and his army leave Luthe's. As she bids farewell to Luthe, he notes that although he believes she will do well, he does fear for her, and he reminds her that if she needs a place to come to, she can always return. The army travels for several days, and Terim and Senay become close friends of Harry. Mathin seeks her out one evening and reminds her his honor is hers, and that he has faith in her. However, during a meeting in which Corlath discusses the plan, Harry asks him again about the northwest pass near the Outlander station, and the two again argue.



She angrily leaves, and that evening, she quietly sneaks from the camp with Sungold and Narknon. Reaching the Hills by morning, she is surprised to find Terim and Senay have followed her, and although she tries to convince them to go back, they refuse and swear their allegiance to her. Senay further notes that some in her village will also join them, and that Mathin told them, days ago, what he thought Harry was planning. Back at camp, Mathin and Innath find they cannot look at the King directly when he appears, looking for Harry. He bends to the ground and picks up Harry's torn sash, which she has left behind.

Chapter Eleven and Chapter Twelve Analysis

Chapter Eleven introduces Luthe, the oracle of the novel, and introduces the conflict between Harry and Corlath. Luthe was mentioned earlier in the novel as having more "pure" blood, and hence more kelar than some of the other Hill folk. As he has been mentioned throughout the novel as having led prior kings, one expects Luthe to be rather old. However, when Harry meets him, she finds he is timeless, as neither young nor old. His manner is very soothing, and it is clear he believes in Harry, and that he sees good things for her. Yet he also knows that Harry is a bridge between several cultures, and knows that she will have to make decisions about these cultures not far in the future. The fact that he mentions her seeing Dedham in the future, combined with the previous vision of her riding to the Residency, suggests that her journey may involve the people of Home. Luthe's comments about Harry needing to trust those who love her, as well as have faith in Corlath, show he understands that Harry will have to make decisions that jeopardize her relationships. Finally, Luthe's comments at the lake about Corlath show he also knows Harry has romantic feelings for the king.

The argument between Corlath and Harry introduce the conflict that will eventually test Harry, and will force Harry to make the decisions that she has been well prepared for throughout the novel. Up until now, it has been clear that Harry will have to make a significant choice, and that this choice will likely have to do with Home. The conflict in this chapter about the small gap that may allow the North to penetrate into Home, and therefore into the Hills, foreshadows Harry's role in seeking to protect that gap. Corlath had warned the Homelanders about the gap previously, and they had refused to listen. Corlath's pride is strong, and although he seems to know Harry is on to something, he also chooses to ignore it. It becomes clear in this conflict that Harry will likely have to choose between Corlath's wishes and her own fears.

Chapter Twelve brings to light the choice Harry has been preparing for. Harry's knowledge, and strong kelar feeling, that the northwest pass is a danger, force her to leave behind the people she has grown to love, and the King she is attracted to. Like Corlath, Harry is unable to simply ignore the signs she is being given, and her decision, foreshadowed throughout the novel, is not surprising. Her companions, Narknon and Sungold, are also not surprising, as even Luthe noted their love for her. However, the fact that Mathin supported her decision enough to let Senay and Terim go, and the fact that Senay and Terim came after Harry to support her, show they too are friends who believe in Harry, and her cause. It is also clear back at camp, however, that Mathin and



Innath know they have caused the king pain, as they cannot look him in the eye. One is left to guess how Corlath feels, finding Harry's sash left on the ground, and although it is assumed at this point that Harry has not left it behind on purpose, this is not yet clear.



Chapter Thirteen

Chapter Thirteen Summary

In Chapter Thirteen, Senay, Terim, and Harry ride toward Jack Dedham's residence, where Harry plans to ask for the Outlander's help. She rides with a white flag, signaling peace, but when they arrive at the gate, it is closed. Harry hears the voice of Tom Lloyd; however, the guard on duty still refuses her access. With a leap, Harry and Sungold jump over the top of the gate, surprising everyone. Jack Dedham, hearing the commotion, comes running and recognizes Harry immediately. Tom realizes the young girl he fancied is gone, replaced by this woman of the Hills.

As Jack speaks of the effort to find her following her disappearance, Harry realizes she has lost her sash. Shame fills her, but Jack sees pain on her face, and offers food and rest. When Harry asks about her companions, he graciously receives them all as honored guests. Even Narknon is heartily accepted. After a large meal, Harry asks Jack to help them protect the northwest pass. She admits that Corlath did not send her but that he likely knows where she is. Jack is impressed that Harry has those who would support her in spite of her abandonment of the King. Jack however, also reminds Harry that the Homelander will never become involved in a Hill war. He points out that there are express orders not to get involved. That being said, he offers himself and some in his command. Jack is impressed that she is a Rider, and he notes that blood must run to blood. Jack explains, when questioned, that Harry's great-grandmother was a Hill woman of high rank. Senay and Terim note they have always known this, but Harry was never told of her history, even though Richard, her brother, knows. Harry begins to understand why she has been placed as a bridge between these cultures. As Jack prepares to gather what troops he can, Harry asks him not to bring rifles, as they will simply misfire. Jack understands that her kelar will interfere, and he agrees to bring sabers. After a bath, Harry and her companions sleep while Jack locates his men.

Chapter Thirteen Analysis

Chapter Thirteen helps to show Harry's visions earlier in the novel were visions of the future, as Harry and her small band try to gain help from the Outlanders. It is clear Harry fears this move, but also that she feels she does not have a choice. Her strong sense of kelar during the event, however, helps to suggest that her Gift may be telling her that her work here is not in vain. The appearance of Tom Lloyd in this chapter, a boy she knew before her kidnapping, brings her back to the civilized world she left, and shows she is now a person of the Hills, whether by choice or not. To those around her, it is clear she has changed drastically, and readers have watched this young woman grow from a stubborn young woman to a woman of the Hills. It is clear, too, not only that Jack missed Harry, but that in a way, he envied her as well. Jack could guess what had occurred, and he knew in his heart that Harry would be happier, and useful, among the people of the Hills.



As Harry realizes she has lost her sash, what was only suggested in the previous chapter, that Harry inadvertently left her sash behind, becomes reality. It is now clear that Harry did not forget her sash intentionally, and therefore did not throw away her link to the Hills, but instead merely lost it. This, combined with Corlath's reaction to the sash, suggests this may play a part later in the novel.

Jack's response to Harry is what she had hoped, but it is obvious to readers that Jack is taking a huge risk in abandoning his government to follow Harry. He believes in her, and in her power, but he also knows the North is a true threat to his people, as well. Whether going in respect to Harry or in service to his country, Jack is determined to follow her and help protect both her and the lands he has come to love. His added knowledge about Harry's family history, which has been foreshadowed throughout the novel, is not a surprise to anyone, except perhaps Harry herself. Her lineage as a Hill person explains so much about her personality, Corlath's response to her, her ability to fight, her memories of the Hills, and even her kelar. Her position as a bridge between these cultures is now unquestionable, as not only her upbringing has bridged the two, but even her blood is a blend of the two worlds. As Luthe predicted, Harry's position is already blending both her old life and her new, as well as the lives of the Outlanders and the Hillfolk. She is a powerful, female leader who helps both sides to see that they need one another in order to combat the North.



Chapter Fourteen

Chapter Fourteen Summary

In Chapter Fourteen, Harry wakes, and asks for a belt to replace her lost sash. After breakfast, two dozen Outlander soldiers follow Harry into the Hills. When it is announced they are heading to Senay's village, Jack notes that the Outlanders may not be welcome, but Senay, surprised, replies that they are comrades. Senay also notes that they are similar, too, in that they all follow Harry. At Senay's village, the group is warmly welcomed. The rest of the group is led to a meeting hall to eat and stable the horses, while Jack, Senay, Terim, and Harry are led inside the home of the local leader, Senay's father. After a meal and sleep, the army rides out again with sixteen more riders from the village. Jack points out, as he and Harry talk, that Ritger's gap is very narrow and should prove to be a perfect bottleneck. In a dream that night, Harry sees the Gap, and realizes Jack is right. When she wakes, she sees Corlath's face in the fire, and is saddened by the look of sorrow on his face. She then sees Aerin's face, and realizes that perhaps Aerin is responsible for her fortunate luck.

As the group stops for lunch, a female archer comes from the woods, surprising everyone. She announces she is Kentarre, and she reports that her clan, the filanon, have come to join the holder of Gonturan, as they once joined Lady Aerin when she too fought for Daria with the sword given to her by Luthe. She pledges her clan's allegiance to Harry. Senay explains that the filanon are the legendary archers of Damar, who are said to live high in the mountains and to be able to speak to their arrows to guide them. As the army prepares to leave, the filanon materialize from the trees, equaling at least a hundred with twenty hunting cats. They continue on to the Gap, which proves to be narrow indeed. Harry's kelar sees the coming army, and she knows they will be there by the following day. As she lays to sleep that night, she can hear their horses in her head, and she hears Corlath's voice say "tomorrow".

In the morning, she and the others can feel that the sharp North wind is more than just wind. She sends the arches to the trees on either side of the Gap, as she sees the first of the Northern army approach. Jack and Harry nose into the Gap, and see a huge rider leading the army on a white horse, with a banner carrier to his right. As arrows begin to fly from the filanon, Harry and her army storms through the gap to meet the Northerners, and they successfully drive the Northerners back, for a time. Retreating for a rest, Harry's army moves back to the plain. Harry, however, is stopped by the rider on the white horse. The horse has the sharp, curved teeth of a flesh eater, and when the rider clashes swords with Harry, she feels the power of the him as it nearly knocks her from the saddle, and her right arm goes numb. Sungold rears and succeeds in wounding the rider. The white horse goes mad, and as she looks into the face of the rider, she hears him laugh and she realizes the creature is of demonkind. He turns away, still laughing and Harry knows he is merely playing with her. But as the banner rider turns to follow his leader, Narknon appears, and attacks him as Sungold defends,



rising up against him. The banner carrier and Harry fight, and he is killed as the banner is trampled.

Chapter Fourteen Analysis

Chapter Fourteen brings together still more of the Damarian tribes. Although there are not many Outlander's, it is certainly more than Harry could have gathered without Jack. Senay and Terim's comments in this chapter to Jack as he wonders about their welcome in the village show that although the Outlanders may not see the Hill people as friends, that the Hill people understand the need for diplomacy to combat a common enemy. Terim and Senay both understand that they are much like the Outlanders, although their cultures are different, and that the Northerners are not even human. Additionally, they both understand, as does Jack, that all sides have come together to support Harry, regardless of the fight. While it is clear that Harry is uncomfortable with this new leadership role, it is equally clear that she has become a strong figure in the world. As even Senay's father, the leader of a village, salutes her with honor, it cannot be denied that Harry is a legend.

Harry's visions of Corlath in this chapter show what readers already know, that Corlath has found her sash, and is saddened by what he believes it to mean. The pain she feels at the sorrow she believes she has caused further shows her deepening love for him not just as a king, but as a man. Throughout the chapter she expresses a fear that Corlath will reject her when she goes back, and this fear is clearly not only rooted in a fear of being alone, or being an exile. She fears his turning away from her, because she loves him.

The arrival of the filanon again show Harry to be the bridge not only between Homelanders and Hillfolk, but between the Damarians, as well. Just as Aerin before her drew together the people of the land, so too does Harry. Kentarre, another strong female leader in the novel, sees Harry not only as a friend, but as a leader and an icon. Her people, seen in visions, believe in her enough to lose their lives for her, and for her cause.

The scene at the gap again shows Harry's visions in the novel were foreshadows of things to come. The winds of the North, magical and cruel, show the power of the Northern army, and the explanations of their looks and their darkness all help to show that they are not human. Harry's own clash with the man on the white horse, suggested to be the leader of the North, shows him to be a demon, and shows his horse to be a frightening cross between horse and carnivore. It is clear the rider is only playing with Harry, and it almost seems as though she will lose. However, as Lithe predicted, her sword, Narknon, and Sungold all come to her rescue and at least give her enough advantage to escape. In the process, they kill the banner carrier, and while this does not harm the rider on the white horse, it does send a message that they are not weak.



Chapter Fifteen through Chapter Seventeen

Chapter Fifteen through Chapter Seventeen Summary

In Chapter Fifteen, Harry rides back across the gap with Sungold and Narknon, and Harry notices half her army has been killed. Kentarre explains that the rider on the white horse is Thurra, leader of the Northern army. Suddenly, Richard arrives, and embraces his sister warmly. When Jack jokes about throwing away his career to join them, Harry is suddenly aware that Jack and the rest of his men have violated their regulations. Richard admits that he thought Father had told Harry about their Hill blood, and he is surprised to learn she became a Rider without being aware of her heritage. He pledges his loyalty to her, as Harry tells the rest of the army that if they can hold the pass until nightfall, they are free to make their way back to Corlath. She admits she will stay, and Jack, speaking for all of them, pledges to stay with her until the end. Harry gratefully accepts their pledge, but after a small meal, she rises and climbs one side of gap, noting she will return. At the top of the mountain, she finds her right arm, still numb, drawing Gonturan, as she calls out for Lady Aerin and Corlath. From the plain below, Jack and the others see a blinding white light. She screams out in the Old Tongue as the mountain begins to fall onto the Northern army below, crushing them to death and closing the pass. Jack and the others note the North wind is gone, but that Harry has also disappeared from view.

Jack, Senay, Terim, Narknon, and Richard climb the mountain in search for Harry, only to find her crumpled in a clearing. Jack sees a glint of red hair in the trees as he goes to Harry, but it disappears. Harry dreams of Aerin, who reminds her to share her glory with her friends, and who tells her Corlath is waiting for her. She awakens, and when asked, Kentarre notes that Thurra may have survived the collapse of the mountain, but that his army certainly did not. Harry explains that Corlath and his army is winning, and that they will ride to join him the following day.

In Chapter Sixteen, Kentarre explains to Harry that she and the filanon will go back to Corlath with her, to pledge their alliance. Kentarre reminds her that Corlath would be a fool to turn away the hero who buried Thurra, and tells her if Corlath does deny her, she is always welcome with the filanon. Jack and his men, including Richard, also follow Harry to ask to remain with the Hill folk, and Senay's father returns with her as well. Harry admits to Jack that she is afraid, because she wants very much to be re-accepted by Corlath.

Finally, Harry and her group reach Corlath's camp, and she rides directly to his tent. Corlath comes to her side, stiffly, and Harry is anguished at the thought he might be wounded. She notices he is wearing her sash. The two embrace fiercely, and Corlath asks if she is still of the Hills. She affirms her desire to remain with the Hill folk. Corlath notes he will return her sash, presuming she did not cast it, and her king, aside. The two



talk, and Corlath notes Luthe had warned him Harry would do something mad, and he admits he did not understand, and was afraid he had lost her. Corlath accepts those with Harry as new additions to his camp, and praises them for their honor. He also announces that he would like to keep Harry's sash, in a sign of a promise of marriage, and Harry readily accepts. Quietly, Corlath admits he has loved Harry from the time he sent her into the desert with Mathin, and that he was jealous of Mathin and even of Narknon. Harry, too, admits she loved Corlath, and feared his reaction to her departure.

After a short celebration, Harry notices she does not see Mathin in the crowd, and Corlath sadly tells her he has been severely injured protecting Corlath as his soul left to help Harry at the mountain. She is taken to him to find he is near death. Crying, Harry pleads with Corlath to help her, as kelar could heal in Aerin's time. She feels her eyes going blind as her tears begin to burn her face. Moving from body to body, the blind Harry touches each injured patient, feeling power rock through her and hearing their sharp intakes of breath as her touch burns them. Corlath takes her outside, where she crumbles. After a long sleep, she wakes, and Corlath is at her side. He informs her that Mathin and the others will recover, and when Corlath kisses her, she pulls him to her on the bed. Soon, the army leaves for the City.

In Chapter Seventeen, the army arrives at the City to thousands of supporters, all turning out for to see the king and his betrothed. The wedding is luxurious, and the couple spend the night in the small cottage with the waterfall. The filanon remain in the City through the rainy season, in part because, in the spring, Richard and Kentarre marry. Richard finds he is skilled with a bow, and he and his sister visit often, securing relations between the two groups. Both Kentarre and Harry have their first children within days of one another. Jack is led by Mathin to his village, where he learns to train horses, but when he is made a Queen's Rider, he elects to stay in the City. A year later, Harry has another child, this time a female with red hair whom she names Aerin Amelia. When the child is of six months, she, Forloy, Innath, Mathin, Jack, and Corlath all ride to the west to invite Sir Charles and Lady Amelia to the naming ceremony. Within hours, Amelia is hugging Harry, crying, and promising they will happily come to the ceremony. Sir Charles and Corlath's meeting is more tense, but is successful. Relations between the two groups improve as it is discovered that Charles forced Homeland to accept that Jack and his men had not deserted, but had fought a real threat against Home, and they were then listed as honorably missing in action. Charles, returning from the naming ceremony, opens formal diplomacy between the Hollfolk and the Homelander. Harry and Corlath continue to have children, and spend much of their time with Luthe in his enchanted forest, but they also spend time with their friends throughout the now united Damar.

Chapter Fifteen through Chapter Seventeen Analysis

Chapter Fifteen shows the true power of kelar, and the true purpose of Harry Crewe. First, Richard's arrival provides a heartwarming moment for the team, but it also shows Harry exactly what Jack and his men have given up for her. Richard, too, offers his life for her, and as she looks around, she can see that several have already given up their



lives for her cause. For someone like Harry, who cares deeply for those who follow her, this is a hard blow to take, and it clearly affects her. Harry's advice that the rest of the army leaves at nightfall shows she wants nothing more than to save those that are left, but their loyalty to her, and to Damar, is too great for them to leave her. Their willingness to follow Harry again shows her power as a female leader in the book, and shows she is a successful bridge of cultures.

Harry's use of kelar to bring down the mountain is the culminating point of battle with the North, and the act which her entire journey has prepared her for. Luthe knew she would act as a bridge, but he also knew she would have to call on Corlath and Aerin if she were to defeat Thurra. It is only by combining her own kelar with the strength of Corlath and the legend of Aerin that she and Gonturan are able to cause the slide that buries Thurra. The fact that Gonturan was dull, and her stone opaque, when the others find her show the sword has exhausted its supply, but Jack's sight of the red haired woman in the trees shows Lady Aerin was never far from Harry. Harry's own visions suggest that Aerin knows Harry must return to Corlath to face the remainder of her destiny.

Chapter Sixteen brings together the remaining threats of the story. Kentarre, having shown herself another powerful female leader, is determined to return with Harry, not only as a friend, but as a layer against any anger Corlath may feel. She knows Harry has saved Damar, as well as her people, and knows that she owes loyalty to Harry. Again, Harry is clearly not comfortable with her role as leader, but she handles it well, showing she has grown much during the novel. Jack and Richard's decision to follow further proves this leadership ability, as does Senya's father's decision to accompany them, as well.

Both Harry and Corlath finally express their true feelings for one another in this chapter, although no one seems surprised. Corlath's wearing of Harry's sash explains his fears about finding it, and explains why, for him, the sash was so important. Additionally, his explanations about his jealousy of Narknon and Mathin, as well as his conversations with Luthe, help to explain his actions throughout the novel toward those who cared for Harry, as well as toward Harry herself. His fear of rejection explains his inability to tell her how he felt while her own fear of rejection when she returned is explained as well by her fear that Corlath would turn away from her.

The use of kelar as a power of healing for Mathin was foreshadowed and suggested several times in the novel. First, in the beginning of the novel, the healing power of kelar was mentioned in relation to the time of Lady Aerin. Further, Mathin himself had a vision of being on fire. When the kelar flows through Harry in the tent, it is her power blended with Corlath's that creates the healing power that burns into the flesh of the wounded. It is the love the two share, much like the love between Aerin and Tor, that allow Harry to fully use the kelar for good. The end of the chapter suggests a physical relationship between Corlath and Harry has already begun, furthering this bond the two clearly share.

Chapter Seventeen, the final chapter, serves to show the lives of the characters in the novel following their winning of the battle, and shows how Harry continues to serve as a



bridge between cultures. The wedding between Harry and Corlath is, as one would expect, blissful and extravagant, and their choice to spend their first night in the cottage shows again the tie to the cottage that both Harry and Corlath feel. The marriage between Richard and Kentarre, while unexpected, does help to secure a future not only between Richard and his sister, but between the filanon and the Hill folk. The bond between Mathin and Jack helps to show a bond between the people of Mathin's village and the Outlanders, while Harry's decision to invite Sir Charles and Lady Amelia to the City extends an olive branch that helps spare those relations, as well. It is Harry's influence, combined with Jack's, that allows Sir Charles to begin his formal arrangements for diplomacy between the Outlanders and the Hillfolk. It is clear, at the end of the novel, that the people of Damar are no longer separated, but are instead the people of a single nation, and that Harry and Corlath will continue to rule the lands with the strength and compassion only a union of these two powerful forces can produce.



Characters

Angharad Harry Crewe

Angharad Harry Crewe is the primary character of the novel. Born in the refined world of Home, Harry is not like other girls, in that she longs for adventure, loves horses, and would rather play sword fight with her brother than attend dances and balls. She rejects the name Angharad, and chooses Harry instead, showing her lack of care for structure. After her mother's death, her father allowed her to be herself, but when he perishes, Harry is sent to live with a military man and his wife in Istar, where her brother, Richard, is serving in the military.

From the beginning, Harry is polite and certainly well enough refined, and she loves her new surroundings. However, it is clear she is still stubborn, and prideful. When Harry is kidnapped by King Corlath of the Hillfolk, she shows she is a proud woman, and refuses to cry or in any way show discomfort. In turn, Corlath learns to respect her. When it is discovered that Harry carries within her the power of kelar, or the magic of the hills, Corlath and his rider, Mathin, teach her to wield a sword and master her already outstanding horse skills. It is her determination and her willfulness, as well as her heritage as a kelar holder, that allow her to succeed, and to become a laprun-minta, and a King's Rider.

Although Harry begins to have feelings for Corlath, and he for her, Harry's own understanding of the world and her desire to protect force her to disobey Corlath. Corlath, too prideful to ask the Outlanders again for help when the Northerners are set to attack, refuses to give permission for her to ask for assistance, but Harry knows he is making a mistake. To protect the people she now feels are her own, she leaves Corlath to help defend the gap in the mountains that the Northerners can come through. She finds several of Corlath's army follow her, as do several of the Outlanders. Harry proves herself to be an excellent leader as she leads her small group, including other Damarian groups, to battle. However, once at battle with the North, she is able to put away her pride, and ask the help, magically, of Corlath. With their magic combined, they are able to defeat the North. Swallowing her pride, she returns to Corlath expecting anger and rejection. Corlath, however, admits his love, and the two are married. Harry's strong character in the novel serves as a role model for women, as she learns to use her skills to rise up within the ranks while still showing a softer side that is able to love, and be loved.

King Corlath

King Corlath is the King of the Hillfolk of Damar. Corlath comes from a line of Kings, and has royal blood coursing through his veins, giving him the power of kelar, or magic. Corlath is a proud man who cares deeply for his kingdom, and for his people. Realizing that the Northerners are beginning to move Southward, Corlath swallows his pride and



warns the Outlanders, asking for their help and their cooperation. However, his requests are rejected, and Corlath leaves angrily. His kelar, however, tells him to kidnap the young woman at the military camp of the Outlanders, and he therefore kidnaps Harry. It is clear from the beginning that Corlath is not a bad man, as he feels pity for his young captive, and feels sorry for his actions, although he believes them to be necessary. His treatment of Harry with care, respect, and honor show him to be a good man. When he realizes her power, he is quick to have her trained, as he realizes she is not only useful, but a wonderful role model for his people. He knows the power Harry has, both within herself, and for the Hillfolk. Further, it becomes clear that Corlath has romantic feelings for the young, willful woman he has helped to train.

When Corlath seeks Luthe's counsel, it is clear he is also a wise man, as Luthe is able to give him insight into the upcoming battle. But Corlath is also stubborn, and it is his refusal to ask the Outlanders again for assistance that drives Harry to leave him and ask their help herself. Corlath is not mean, nor does he wish harm on others, but he is prideful. However, when Harry asks for his help on the mountain to defeat the North, he is quick to lend his magic. When she returns to him, Corlath is able to put away his pride, and admit his feelings for her, as well as ask her to become his Queen. It is through his love for Harry that they are able to defeat the enemy, and by putting aside his pride, the Outlanders and the Hillfolk are able to become allies.

Colonel Jack Dedham

Colonel Jack Dedham is a colonel at the General Mundy, the military fort in Istar where Harry is sent to live following her father's death. Jack is an older officer, and one who has learned to love the hills and the desert of Daria. He is loyal to his homeland and is a good soldier and a capable leader. However, Jack also believes in the stories of the kelar of the Hillfolk. For many years, Jack has been at the fort, and has known of events that happen to those who cross the Hillfolk. He discusses, early in the novel, the history of the Hillfolk as well as their legends, magical powers, and kings and queens. It is clear Jack has spent much time learning about the native population of the land he inhabits, showing both a natural curiosity as well as a desire to know the native culture. It is Jack who tries to stem the anger of Corlath at the first meeting, and it is Jack who speaks with Harry about his love for the land. From the beginning, Jack takes on a fatherly care for Harry.

When Harry comes to Jack, seeking aid to save her people as well as the people of Istar and Home, Jack is more than willing to assist and to bring along several others he believes can help. Jack knows that by choosing to fight, he is disobeying his orders, and that he will never be able to go back into service for Home. Yet, it is through Jack's bravery and skill that Harry and her band of warriors is able to defeat the North, thereby saving not only Corlath's people, but the people of Home, as well. Jack chooses to continue to follow Corlath, not only because of his fatherly love for Harry, or his inability to return home without punishment, but also because of his feeling that he belongs with the Hillfolk.



Mathin

Mathin is one of the King's Rider's, and is the man responsible for training Harry for the laprun trials. Mathin's family are horse trainers, and they breed some of Damar's finest animals. Even Mathin's daughter, sons, and wife, along with his own father, brothers, and sisters, all train horses, but Mathin admits he was always a wanderer. He attended the laprun trials and won his sword and became a King's Rider. He is a patient teacher, and one who gives Harry not only skills and technique, but also humility, grace, and honor. It is Mathin who gives Harry pride and faith in herself. He becomes a dear friend to Harry, and the two share a special relationship of mentor and student. In the end, when Mathin is dying, it is Harry who comes to his rescue, using her kelar to help save his life.

Narknon

Narknon is a hunting cat of the Hillfolk. As large as a dog, with short, thick hair, long legs, and green eyes, Narknon becomes a companion of Harry early in her captivity at the King's camp. Narknon comes up to her on her first day in camp, and immediately thrusts her head near Harry to be petted. Following that, Narknon begins to follow Harry, sleeping in her bed, as well as following her through her training with Mathin. Narknon not only serves as companion, but also as a hunter for food, and a fierce fighter. It is Narknon who helps defend Harry against Thurra, and who takes down the banner-bearer of the North at the end of the novel. Narknon is as loyal a companion as any in the novel, and her skills help Harry to rise to Queen.

Sungold

Sungold is a war horse, given to Harry by Corlath once she has proven her ability to ride the Hill horses. Sungold is a golden color, and as big as other Hill horses, which means he is fairly large. He is a fast horse, who thrives on battle, but who also cares for his rider, Harry. Often, it is as though Sungold and Harry share a bond with one another, as they seem to read one another's thoughts. Sungold shifts to accommodate Harry when she nearly falls, and he helps to save her during her battle with Thurra.

Senay

Senay is another of Harry's friends in the novel, and a powerful female character. Senay first appears in the novel at the laprun trials, as Harry notices her skills and techniques. Harry defeats her, and later, when Senay appears at camp to prepare to go to war with Corlath, she wears the sash sliced by Harry, as a sign of respect and dignity. Senay proves to be a good friend to Harry, and when Harry decides to choose her own fate and leave in search of Outlander assistance, Senay, along with another friend, follows her. It is Senay who is able to raise part of the army that eventually defeats Thurra, as she is a powerful figure in her community. Senay's family helps to nourish the fighters



both before and after the fight, and Senay's father who travels with the group to pledge allegiance to Corlath, as well as to help Harry win back Corlath's good graces. Senay's loyalty and dedication to her mentor, Harry, as well as her friendship, prove to be valuable tools and a powerful allegiance for Harry.

Richard Crewe

Richard Crewe is the brother of Harry. A military man, Richard spent his childhood with Harry, sword fighting and pretending in the jungles and forests of Home. After leaving for Daria, however, he spoke little to his sister, and seemed to simply fade into the lifestyle of Istar. Even when Harry is reunited with Richard, he seems more concerned about appearances than about his sister's happiness. It is clear Richard loves his sister, but he seems wary of her, as well. It is only after Harry returns from the Hills to fight the Northerners that Richard truly expresses his feelings. Richard joins his sister at the gap, and swears his allegiance to her, admitting that after her arrival, he began recognizing his own love of the desert. When he finally explains to Harry that she is of Hill blood, having a grandmother of the Hills, that Harry finally understands where her power comes from. Richard, too, admits that his own love for the desert is likely due to the same blood. Richard chooses to continue to follow Harry after her defeat of the North, showing his love and respect for her and for the Hillfolk. Eventually, he marries the leader of the filanon.

Lady Aerin

Lady Aerin, although only a historical character in the novel, is still a primary character, as it is her spirit that drives Harry throughout the book. Lady Aerin was married to King Tor, and the two ruled Damar in its golden age. It was Lady Aerin who tamed the kelar and learned to wield it and use it at will. Harry sees Aerin appear to her several times. She is broad shouldered, with fire red hair and an affectionate grin, like that of an older sister. Gonturan is the sword of Lady Aerin, and it is given to Harry as both a strong female and a King's Rider. Aerin looks out for Harry, and seems to give her strength as well as power. In the end, Harry pays tribute to Aerin by naming her daughter after the Queen.

Luthe

Luthe is an ancient seer, who acts as an oracle of sorts for Corlath and the previous kings of the Hills. He is the keeper of the Lake of Dreams, where the Water of Sight that can help some see the future is from. Luthe lives high in the mountains, in a secluded, nearly invisible sanctuary. Luthe is very tall with yellow hair and a slight build. He is kind to Harry, and tries to explain as much as he can about her purpose in the upcoming battle. As a seer, Luthe can only see bits of what may lay ahead, and he gives Harry advice about being a bridge between cultures. He tells her to trust her horse and her cat, as well as Lady Aerin, and most of all, herself. Harry comes to value Luthe and his



peaceful existence, and after giving birth to her children, Corlath and Harry often find themselves spending time in his forest haven.

Terim

Terim is the son of Murfoth, a dear friend of Corlath's. Terim is Harry's age, and from the beginning, it is apparent that he has much respect for Harry, as a laprun-minta. Terim too won his laprun trials, but lost his battle to Corlath almost immediately. He and Harry, along with Senay, quickly become friends. When Harry leaves Corlath to protect the pass, Terim follows her, pledging allegiance to her cause. He realizes his father could easily disown him, but he strongly believes in Harry, and in her beliefs and her powers. Terim follows Harry to battle, and helps her to defeat the North, showing himself to be a true friend and companion.

Thurra

Thurra is the king of the North. Thurra has both human and non human blood, as well as a powerful form of magic. This power allows him to bring together the tribes of the North, which form a powerful demonic force. Thurra is described as having red eyes, set within a face that is almost human. On first glance, Harry realizes that Thurra is a demon, and too powerful a force to fight. He is violent, and powerful, and loves to cause pain, hate, and agony. Thurra is only defeated through the combined magic of Corlath and Harry.

Kentarre

Kentarre is the female leader of the filanon, or the archers of the forests. Kentarre comes to the camp of Harry as she prepares for battle, and offers her people's strengths in battle to help stop Thurra. Kentarre is a proud, powerful woman with many followers. Kentarre and her people help lead Harry to victory, and follow her back to Corlath to offer their allegiance. Kentarre realizes her people have sequestered themselves too long within their forests, and that they must come together as a country in order to remain powerful and self reliant. Kentarre is one of the powerful female characters of the novel and shows that women can be strong and proud leaders.

Sir Charles Greenough

Sir Charles Greenough is the man who, with his wife, offers to take in young Harry following her father's death. Charles is a kind, generous man with high standards, a sense of humor, and also a sense of propriety. He treats Harry much like a daughter, and is kind to his wife and his officers. However, Charles is also hardheaded and refuses to believe Corlath when he arrives with a warning about the army of the North. It is Charles' stubbornness that nearly costs the lives of his own people. In the end,

Harry's marriage to Corlath allows Charles to put down his pride and to accept the Hillfolk as equals.

Lady Amelia Greenough

Lady Amelia Greenough is the wife of Charles, and the woman who, with her husband, takes in young Harry when he father dies. Amelia is a proper woman, one who follows the strict societal rules of her class. However, it is also clear that Amelia is mischievous at times, and that she is keenly aware of what is going on around her. Unlike other women of privilege, Amelia seeks to understand her world and to keep it in order. Amelia treats Harry much like a daughter, and is thrilled when she and Harry re reunited at the end of the novel.



Objects/Places

Home

Home is the country where Harry and her brother originate from. Home is different than Daria, the peninsula continent, in that it is lush with forests and growth.

Daria

Daria is the peninsular continent where Harry is sent after her father's death. Daria is a desert, with very little green growth.

Damarians

The Damarians, or Hillfolk, are the native population of the country the Homelanders call Daria.

Outlander

Outlander is the term the Hillfolk use in reference to the people of Home.

Laprun Trials

The Laprun trials are trials of horse riding, and sword fighting, that are held to choose King's Rider's, or the individuals who ride with and help protect the King.

Laprun-minta

The Laprun minta is the first of the Laprun trials, or the winner of the trials. Harry, because of her win, is called the laprun-minta.

Damalur-sol

Damalur-sol is a term that indicates a Lady Hero. Harry is dubbed Damalur-sol in the book.

Istan

Istan is the town in Daria where Harry is sent following her father's death. Istan is the last of the Homelander military outposts before the Hills begin.



Gonturan

Gonturan is the short, light sword with a blue stone in the hilt that is worn by all riders for a time. The sword was Lady Aerin's, and Harry wields it in the book, as it helps her defeat Thurra.

Ritger's Gap

Ritger's Gap is a small path in the mountains where Harry defeats the Northern army as they attempt to trap Corlath's group from behind.

Filanon

The Filanon are the archer people of the hills who live in the forests of Damar.

The City

The City is the giant stone city of the Hillfolk, where Corlath's castle lies.



Themes

Growing Up

A major theme within the novel is the growth and development of the main character, Harry Crewe. In the beginning of the story, Harry is an adventurous girl who has lost both parents over the course of her life. She dreams of adventure, loves horses, and often feels differently than those around her. She is prideful and stubborn, as well, although she does care for others. When she moves from her Home to the harsh desert of Istan, she is not fearful, but looks forward to the changes. When Harry is kidnapped by Corlath and his people, Harry shows again her ability to adapt as she manages to maintain her dignity and command respect. Although she doesn't understand why she has been taken, she also does not act in a way that would jeopardize their opinions of her. Further, as Corlath teaches her of her kelar, and Mathin teaches her of swords and horses, Harry continues to show growth, both as a person as well as a fighter.

When Harry wins the laprun trials and becomes an icon for young men and women, she learns that the role comes with great responsibility. She slowly learns to lead others, as Senay and Terim follow her to Istar, and Jack and others from General Mundy follow as well. She gathers the filanon, as well as others, who wish to help protect the Hillfolk. Her skills, along with her willingness to finally admit her love for Corlath, allow her to defeat Thurra of the North. Her ability to overcome her pride and return to Corlath, knowing he could choose to reject her, shows humility. Her acceptance of her feelings for Corlath further lead her into the position of Queen. It is only when Harry is able to control her temper, and use her stubbornness and her pride for her advantage, that she is able to develop and grow into Daughter of the Riders, and Queen of Damar.

Females as Powerful Characters

Another important theme in the novel is the power of females. Harry is clearly the primary character of the novel, and she shows herself throughout to be a very highly powerful and effective character. She is a wonderful rider, she picks up skills with a sword, she is filled with magical abilities, and she is a powerful leader. Her charisma as well as her talent takes her from being a willful young woman of privilege to being a Queen. It is clear, when one reads about Istar and the women of General Mundy, that most women in the Homelander culture are expected to be obedient, cultured, well bred, and without strong opinions. While they are certainly cared for and loved, they are often expected to let the men do "business" while they care for the household. Harry is not suited for this life, as she is highly opinionated and stubborn, as well as being extremely independent. She becomes a role model for all the women of the Hills as she is named laprun-minta, as well as a King's Rider. It is her talent and her boldness that allows her to be such a strong force.



Harry is not the only powerful female character in the novel; however, Lady Aerin, prior Queen of the Damarians, is a strong character in the novel, both in her appearances to Harry as well as in the legends that bear her memory. Lady Aerin rose up and helped her kingdom maintain their independence and continues to help them by giving strength and courage to other women fighters, such as Harry. She carried the sword of Gonturan, and her people pass that right down through the King's Rider's, showing the importance.

Kentarre, leader of the Filanon, is another strong female character within the novel. Kentarre's people live separated from the other Damarians and have learned to follow their leader and survive on their own. Kentarre and the other filanon are archers, with strong fighting skills and a strong personality. Her ability to lead an entire group of individuals, as well as her willingness to rejoin the Hillfolk, show her to be not only a powerful force, but also a force of reason.

Still another strong female character in the novel is that of Senay. One of the laprun trial leaders, Senay is a strong fighter with excellent sword and horse skills. Senay does not merely follow Harry but holds her own, not only in battle, but also in her own family group. In is Senay's people who follow Harry back to help her win the King's forgiveness, and it is Senay who helps Harry win the battle against the Northerners. Although there are not many female fighters, Senay is a perfect representation of the powerful force these women can be.

In her own right, even Lady Amelia is a strong female figure in the novel. It is true that Amelia is privileged, and leads the life of a military wife. However, it is clear in the way Amelia speaks to her husband, and to Harry, that she is a shrewd woman who does not sit idly while others care for her. She is very much aware of circumstances around her, and is as active politically as her husband. While she does see to the household duties, she does so with a keen eye on her husband and his affairs. Her strength, while not the same as Harry's, is nonetheless important in her environment.

Bridging Cultural Gaps

Another major theme in the novel is the bridging of cultural gaps. From the beginning of the novel, it is clear there are several gaps in the relationships not only between the Homelanders and the Damarians, but among the Homelanders themselves, and among the various people of the Hills. Harry, from Home originally, realizes early on that Home is where the refined women of society are taught and bred. This is confirmed when the novel mentions that the Peterson sisters are sent Home to "acquire polish". Clearly, there is a separation between Home and the lands the Homelanders call Daria. Home is considered "proper", and the women of Istan and the desert lands of Daria are expected to bridge the gap between their harsh lands and that of Home through finishing education, dinner parties, and other events considered vital to the proper upbringing of a lady.



In Daria, there is a cultural rift certainly between the Homelanders and the Hillfolk. The Homelanders, or Outlanders as they are called by the native population, are refined, privileged, and structured. The natives, or the Hillfolk or Damarians, are unrefined, and more wild than the Homelanders. They are a more private population, and try to have little to do with the Outlander cities. There are some events, such as the annual Fair, where the two populations blend, but these are few and far between. Even at such events, there is little relationship between the two populations. Corlath, at the beginning of the novel, tries to bridge this gap, but the Homelanders are too proud and too naive to believe his claims about the drive of the Northerners to invade. Jack Dedham, on the side of the Homelanders, also tries to bridge the gap, but is unsuccessful, as he is only one man, fighting an entire military system. It is only when Harry is kidnapped and returns to ask the help of Dedham that he and some others find the inner strength to join forces. Later, this tentative relationship is further forged by Harry, and her marriage to Corlath seals a relationship between the two sides.

Even within the populations of the Damarians, there are gaps. Corlath works to reunite the many clans of his people as his fight with the North increases. Harry helps this through her relationship with Senay and Kentarre of the filanon. Again, we see Harry working as a bridge to unite not only Homelanders and Hillfolk, but even the Hillfolk themselves. Without Harry, it is likely the North would have succeeded in their quest to defeat not only Corlath and the Hillfolk, but Istan and the Homelanders, as well.

Style

Point of View

The point of view in the novel is third person. This point of view tends to be reliable and omniscient, as is shown through the ability of the narrator to know actions and events occurring in several different places at once. Additionally, this point of view allows the narrator to convey the emotions of several characters in the novel. This is important, since one of the themes of the novel is the coming of age of Harry, the main character, as well as her relationships with those around her, as she attempts to bridge the relationships between the Homelanders and the Hillfolk. These relationships could not be as easily described without the emotional insight into the characters the narrator is able to give.

The story is told with a blend of dialog and highly descriptive, detailed passages that provide vivid images of Harry's world. This method is useful, in that the reader is able to focus on several important areas in the novel, without confusion. Harry travels between Home, rich with vegetation, to Damar, which is desert, to the Hills, which is a blend of desert and rocky outcrops, to the City, made of majestic stone, to Luthe's home, which is again lush vegetation. These important transitions would be difficult to follow were it not for the vast differences in their landscapes. Further, as the novel follows Harry through her transition from young girl to Lady Hero, her thoughts and relationships are vital to the progression of the novel. Without the narration blend of description and dialog, these aspects of the novel would be lost.

Setting

The novel is set in a mythical world, and through the novel, the characters move through a variety of different landscapes. Harry begins her life in Home, which is an area of lush green forests, jungles, and grasslands. Following her father's death, she is shipped to a town called Istan, located at the edge of the great northern desert on the peninsula continent of Daria. At the outer edge of Istan is the Outlander military fort of General Mundy, where Richard, Harry's brother, is enlisted. Istan is situated in a desert, with searing heat and very little vegetation. There are no seasons, as there are in Home, but there is a short rainy period, after which everything grows rapidly, but dies quickly, as well. Beyond Istan to the north and east are the Ossander mountains, where the Hillfolk live with their King, Corlath. These native individuals call the kingdom Damar. Within the mountains is Ritgar's Gap, which is a passage that stems from the Northern territory through the mountains to Istan. Within Damar lies The City, which is the home of Corlath and his people. The City is made nearly entirely of stone, and within the City is a lovely guest area where Harry spends much of her time in the city. To the north of the city, within the mountains, is a lush jungle and forest, in which Luthe, the oracle, lives, and where Harry and Corlath visit often later in their lives.



Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is informal but structured, resulting in an easily readable book. The language used is aimed at young adults, and as such, is not difficult to comprehend. However, as it is a fantasy novel, there are many new terms and phrases one must master before moving forward in the novel. While these new phrases and terms make the reading a bit slower, at times, they are vital to the feeling of fantasy and to the introduction of new lands and territories that is so important to the progression of the novel. The language makes the world believable and more realistic than it would be without the new language.

Further, the language used in the novel helps to distinguish characters and cultures within the novel. The Hillfolk speech is clearly different than the Outlander speech, and by moving between the two, it is easy to distinguish characters, and their alliances. Since the relationship between the various cultures in Damar is important to the story, this differentiation helps. Additionally, the descriptive passages about the landscape helps the reader to distinguish one area from another, which is also an important aspect of the novel.

Structure

The novel has seventeen chapters, each of unequal length. Each chapter is named by number alone, so does not indicate any specific information about the chapter. While some of the chapters contain long bouts of dialog, others are completely without dialog, in which many months or even years can pass in a few paragraphs.

The plot of the novel is simple, although there are several sub plots within the story, as well. The story focuses on the life of Harry Crewe, a young woman who develops throughout the novel from a somewhat unruly young, privileged woman to becoming one of the Hillfolk's King's riders to becoming Queen of the Hillfolk, and wife to Corlath, the king. Harry is forced to struggle between her privileged life as a Homelander and her new, more versatile life as a King's rider. Harry helps to build bridges between the Filanon, or the archery people of Damar, the Hillfolk, the Outlanders, and other tribes within the mountains.

The pace of the novel tends to be fast, with many periods of action. With its simplistic language and engrossing plot, along with characters that the reader learns to care for, the novel is easy to read. Its blend of fantasy concepts and realism allows the reader to break from this world without leaving familiarity behind.



Quotes

"She had always suffered from a vague restlessness, a longing for adventure that she told herself severely was the result of reading too many novels when she was a small child. As she grew up, and particularly after her mother died, she had learned to ignore that restlessness. She had nearly forgotten about it, till now."

Chap. 1, p. 8

"There seemed a roaring in the air that beat on her eardrums and pressed against her eyeballs till she blinked. Then he looked up abruptly, as if from some unfathomable depth of thought, and saw her; their eyes met. The man's eyes were yellow as gold, the hot liquid in a smelter's furnace."

Chap. 2, p. 32

"'The Outlander girl,' Faran said slowly, with the air of an honest man who will be just at any cost. 'I did not know the Outlanders taught their children such pride. She has done herself honor on this ride.'"

Chap. 5, p. 56

"He wondered if she'd learned by accident not to focus her anger, or whether people she hated had a habit of falling downstairs or choking on fishbones - or if perhaps she had never hated."

Chap. 5, p. 63

"Corlath was a light sleeper. On the other side of the tent he opened his eyes and rolled up on one elbow and looked blindly toward the dark corner where his Outlander lay. Long after Harry had cried herself to sleep again, the Hill-king lay awake, facing the grief he had caused and could not comfort"

Chap. 6, p. 75

"'My honor is yours, lady, to do with what you will. I have not been given a fall such as that in ten years, and that was by Corlath himself. I'm proud to have had the teaching of you - and lady, I am not the least of the riders.'"

Chap. 7, p. 104

"There have been more graceful kings and riders since the world began, but we'll do...Take your sword, and mind you treat her well. You will have Aerin's shade to answer to, else."

Chap. 9, p. 138

"There is no one on both sides with you, so you must learn to take your own counsel; and not to ear what is strange, if you know it also to be true...It is not an enviable position, being a bridge, especially a bride with visions. I should know."

Chap. 11, p. 164



"There never was a choice. I ride the only way open to me, and yet often and again it seems to me I am dangerously unfit for it...It seems to me further that it is very odd that fate should lay so careful a trail and spend so little time preparing the one that must follow it."

Chap. 13, p. 184

"She raised her eyes to where his should be, under his blazing white helm, and saw spots of red fire; below that, teeth were bared in a grin in a jaw that might once have been human. The power that washed over that face, that rolled down the arms and into the sword and shield, was that of demonkind, and Harry knew she was no match for this one, and in spite of the heat of Gonturan in her hand, her heart was cold with fear."

Chap. 14, p. 213

"What was she to say? The prodigal has returned? The mutineer wishes to be reinstated? The subordinate, having gone to a great deal of trouble to prove her commander wrong, has come back and promises to be a good little subordinate hereafter, or at least until the next time?"

Chap. 16, p. 234

"I have loved you long, through at first I did not know it; but I knew it when I sent you into the Hills with Mathin and Tsoin for your teachers, for I saw then how I missed you. And when in the City I found that Narknon had followed you, I was jealous of a cat, who could go where she wished."

Chap. 16, p. 237

"And Harry and Corlath attended to their administrative duties as earnestly as they had to, but no more and much of their time they spent wandering alone together through the City, or across the plains before the City...and as often as they could they slipped away north through the Hills to Luthe's valley. They took the children with them - Aerin was followed by Jack, and Jack by Hari, as the years passed - for Luthe was fond of children."

Chap. 17, p. 248



Topics for Discussion

Describe the growth of the character of Harry Crewe. How does she first appear in the novel? What characteristics does she show during her kidnapping? What does her training reveal? How does her relationship with Corlath develop? What is shown by her determination to plug the Gap, regardless of the King's beliefs? What does her return to the King following this show?

Explain kelar. What is it? Where does it come from? How does Corlath use it in the novel? How does Harry learn to use her kelar? From where does Harry inherit her kelar? How does her kelar help her? Is kelar always useful? Why or why not?

In the novel, Thurra and his Northern army are seemingly not human. Describe the Northerners. What are they? How do they look? What is their power? Why do you think Harry, using the kelar of Corlath and Aerin, is able to defeat them? Do you think they are forever defeated? Why or why not?

Compare and contrast the view of women between the Homelanders and the Hillfolk. What is expected of women in the Homeland? How does this compare to the women in the Hills? Which does Harry fit in with better, and why? Why do you think such a difference exists?

Animals play an important role in the novel, as both companions and their usefulness. Describe how the author uses the horses, cats, and other animals in the novel. Who are Harry's animal companions? Do they have other purposes? What are they? What does this relationship between animals and Hillfolk imply?

Describe the character of Luthe in the novel. What does his character represent? Why does Corlath see him prior to battle? What insight does Harry gather from Luthe?

There are several important men in Harry's life by the end of the novel, including Richard, Jack, Corlath, Mathin, Luthe, and Terim. Explain how each of these men play a role in the development of Harry's character. What does each represent? Why is this important to Harry's development?