

The Book of Lost Things Study Guide

The Book of Lost Things by John Connolly

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Plot Summary

David is a youngster when his mother falls ill. He develops elaborate routines in the hope that he can save her but she has to go into a hospital for the terminally ill. David and his father spend long hours traveling to visit his mother and he feels a sense of something akin to relief when his mother dies. He immediately feels guilty for that feeling.

David and his father live in London and war has prompted most families to send their children to the country where they can be safer. David and his father remain in London only a short time after his mother's death before David's father marries a woman named Rose. She was a nurse at the hospital where his mother died and David resents Rose's presence from the beginning. They move to Rose's house in the country. Rose and David's father soon have a son. David's half-brother, Georgie, takes up a lot of time and attention. David resents Georgie and this resentment grows to a level that David can think of little else.

David hears books talking to him and discovers that one of the books belonged to Rose's uncle, Jonathan, who disappeared when he was a child. A young girl named Anna, adopted into the family, disappeared with Jonathan. David is curious about their fate. David then hears his mother's voice calling to him from the garden behind Rose's house. David enters a crack in the garden wall and steps out of a hollow tree into a magical land that David calls Elsewhere.

He believes his mother is trapped there and he wants to find her. He leaves the tree behind and the Woodsman soon finds him. The Woodsman tells David that the king of the land has a magical book, "The Book of Lost Things," and that the answers to David's questions might be found in that book. However, they are threatened by Loups, creatures that are half wolf, half man. David and the Woodsman are trapped at a bridge guarded by trolls, and David has to destroy the bridge, leaving the Woodsman on the other side. The Woodsman doesn't die, though David believes he must have.

David continues his trek and encounters magical beings, including a woman with magical salve who switches the heads of children and animals using the salve to connect the heads to their new bodies. David manages to escape only to find himself facing other dangers. He meets Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and discovers that they are not as he'd always imagined. He eventually meets a knight named Roland who helps David learn to defend himself.

Through it all, the Crooked Man follows David, helping David make it to the castle. There, David discovers that the king, now near death, is Jonathan, and that the Crooked Man feeds on the anger of children who are jealous of their younger siblings and friends. The Crooked Man promises that David and Georgie can rule this kingdom together but David sees the Crooked Man for the trickster he is. He helps destroy the Crooked Man just as the Woodsman arrives and helps David accept that his mother is



truly dead. The Woodsman then helps David return home but says David may choose to return to this land someday.

David wakes in a hospital bed with Rose at his side. He discovers that he has a new understanding for his stepmother's struggle to be part of his life and a new affection for Georgie. He lives his life with happiness, but knows that the Crooked Man was right when he said that pain is a normal part of life. Georgie dies in another war. David's father dies of a heart attack. David marries but his wife and son die as well. David winds up taking care of Rose in her old age. David lives to be an old man and a well-known writer. Just before his death, he returns to the garden wall and slips through to Elsewhere.



Chapters 1-3

Summary

In Chapter 1, "Of All That Was Found and All That Was Lost," there is a young boy named David. His mother was very sick and the opening line makes it clear that she dies. David loves both his parents but has a special connection with his mother. When she falls ill, he prays and establishes a series of routines in the hope that something he does will save her. He spends his afternoons by her bed, listening to her labored breaths. Sometimes David has a book with him and on good days, his mother asks him to read to her. They had often read together before the illness, each involved in their separate books but happy to be together. Their habit of reading together makes David very aware of books and he loves to watch as the stories come alive for him.

One day at school, David is summoned and he immediately knows that his mother has died. He believes he must have made some mistake in his routines and that mistake allowed his mother to die. He's ashamed of having failed her and cries. His final chance to see her is when she's in the undertaker's room just as the casket is about to be closed. At his father's urging, he kisses her and wishes he could find the words he wants to say. He has concerns that he can't talk about with his father.

David inherits most of his mother's books. He reads some of them, feeling a connection with her. He avoids the stories she bought with David in mind. These are stories of great adventures and fairy tales. David's memories of his mother are so attached to these books that David can't enjoy them. That's when the books begin to call to him, becoming louder over time. David's mother had told him that there was a wall separating their world from that of the oldest stories, but that the wall sometimes became brittle. Soon after his mother's death, David began seeing the Crooked Man.

In Chapter 2, "Of Rose and Dr. Moberley and the Importance of Details," David feels a sense of relief after his mother's death, and he feels guilty for that emotion. In the final days of her life, his mother is at a hospital that "wasn't quite a hospital." Only terminally ill patients are there. David's father goes to this hospital every other day after work. At least twice a week, David went as well. The trips take up most of David's time after school and his father is always exhausted. Her death means David and his father can slow down.

There is a war going on in London where David lives with his father. David continues to observe his routines, touching things an even number of times and putting his left foot on the floor first each morning. He knows these didn't save his mother but now fears leaving them behind.

When "5 months, 3 weeks, and 4 days" have passed since the death of David's mother, his father introduces David to Rose, who was the administrator at the hospital where David's mother died. They have lunch together and David is immediately angry about



Rose's presence in their lives. David has an episode that is put down to fainting but he has a memory of wolves in a forest. His head is filled with whispers after the episode. His books at home talk so loudly that he has trouble sleeping.

David begins sees a psychiatrist, Dr. Moberley, after having had multiple of these episodes. Dr. Moberley asks a lot of questions. He brings up the subject of Rose. After awhile, David begins crying hysterically. During this episode, David sees the Crooked Man again.

In Chapter 3, "Of the New House, the New Child," and the New King, the war has prompted most parents to send their children out of London. David has seen Dr. Moberley again and gets very little sense from their sessions, partly because the books are so loud that David can't hear the doctor. David's father says that Rose is pregnant and that they are going to get married. David's father assures David this doesn't change his love for David and he urges David to "give her a chance," referring to Rose. Six months later, Georgie is born. David and his father leave London to live with Rose in her house in the country. David's father explains that he works for the government, decoding messages sent by their enemies.

Rose's house is big and David has a room at the top of the house. There are lots of bookshelves in the room and there are many books already on them. David reads some of these, including a book of poetry about a knight referred to as "Childe." David likes to read the fairy tales. He finds one of these books includes handwritten stories and illustrations. These stories have basic information of the fairy tales David knows so well but with startling differences.

Analysis

From early in the chapter, it's clear that the relationship between David and his father is not as open as the relationship between David and his mother. This isn't surprising because in this time period – the first half of the 1900s – David's mother would have been the primary caregiver while his father worked. David says that he worries about his mother being alone during the nights after her death but he can't talk to his father about these feelings. This makes it clear that David's father isn't very open with his communication and that he doesn't really let David have any say in their lives. That sets the stage for David's dad marrying Rose without alerting David to the coming event or giving him time to get used to the idea, which might have changed things for David.

One of the most prevalent literary devices in the book is of personification, and an example is seen in Chapter 1 with the death of David's mother. He noted that his mother seemed tall when she was alive but that the casket seemed very short. In David's mind, "death made her small."

The Crooked Man is first mentioned in Chapter 1 but he isn't identified until later in the story. He's Rumpelstiltskin and is also called a trickster because he isn't honest. This brief mention in Chapter 1 is an obvious foreshadowing, which is another of the book's



literary devices. At the end of Chapter 3, David begins dreaming that the Crooked Man is nearby and is watching David. In the dreams, the Crooked Man refers to David as “the new king.” This will be explained much later in the book.

The reference to the knight called “Childe” in Chapter 3 is actually referring to a poem called “Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came.” This story is very similar to Sleeping Beauty. In the poem that David reads, the ending is not spelled out and David believes the author should have revealed what's in the tower. He has lots of ideas of his own, such as dragons, witches, and werewolves. He dismisses each idea as not quite fitting for the story. The books are an important theme seen in this story.

It's significant that David's room is at the top of Rose's house. There is a great deal of symbolism involved with the idea of towers, and David's room echoes this symbolism. He notices that there is ivy creeping through the cracks into his room. From outside, he notices that the ivy grows very definitely up the house to his room but isn't spread over the rest of the house. The reader can immediately imagine that there is something magical at work to cause this phenomenon, which adds to the symbolism.

Discussion Question 1

Describe what you know about David's situation up to the end of Chapter 3.

Discussion Question 2

How is David affected by his mother's death?

Discussion Question 3

Why is David so angry about the presence of Rose and Georgie in his life? Do you think he's at all justified?

Vocabulary

cowardly, consuming, labored, dormant, yearning, improvisations, subtleties, immersing, inextricably, urchins, slumbers, chasm



Chapters 4-7

Summary

In Chapter 4, "Of Jonathan Tulvey and Billy Golding, and Men Who Dwell by Railway Tracks," David is often alone and spends most of his time reading. His father urges him to make friends with the other children in the area but David isn't interested. His father demands that David be polite to Rose, so he is. However, he continues to resent her presence and it shows. This makes Rose try even harder to get David to like her, which makes him like her even less.

One day, David finds the name Jonathan Tulvey in a book. He wants to know about Jonathan so forces himself to be nice to Rose in order to pump her for information. She's excited to have a little bit of conversation with him and explains that Jonathan was her uncle, and that he disappears when he was 14. A little girl named Anna had come to live with the family after her parents died in a fire. Rose says Jonathan loved books and that David's room had belonged to Jonathan all those decades earlier. She offers to let David move to another room but he doesn't accept the offer. She goes on to say that Jonathan loved to read even though some of the stories caused him to have nightmares. After Jonathan's disappearance, his father returned to a bookstore where many of Jonathan's books had been bought. He hoped to find that other people with children might have shared some information that would help find Jonathan, but he found instead that the bookstore was boarded up and closed.

Rose is called away and David immediately hates that he let himself be friendly with her, even though he got the information he wanted. He stops by to look at Georgie in his crib and sees the infant as "a symbol of all that was wrong" in David's life. David wonders what happened to Jonathan and Anna. He thinks about a time his mother and father had talked about a little boy named Billy Golding who was killed. David never learned the details but knew there was something especially terrible about Billy's death, and that a man who lived nearby was responsible. At this time in David's life, the country is embroiled in a war. David had expected war to bring excitement to his life but that hasn't happened. He knows his father has some role in the war and the possibility that his father might know something about spies is the most exciting part of the war, from David's perspective.

In Chapter 5, "Of Intruders and Transformations," the summer is long and tense. David's father works a lot. Rose loses patience with David's attitude toward her and David's father becomes upset with both of them. David continues to see Dr. Moberley but not very often, mainly because no one has time to take him to the appointments. David has experienced few of the fainting spells that sent him to Dr. Moberley in the first place but he now has what he refers to as "waking dreams." In this state, the familiar things around Rose's house disappear and are replaced by landscapes he doesn't recognize.



One day, David views his room from outside and realizes that the ivy is climbing up the side of the house straight to his room without veering off to any of the other rooms. While he's observing this, he sees the Crooked Man in his room. Geogie begins to cry and the Crooked Man pays close attention. David rushes inside and his father goes with him to his room but they find only a bird there. A book is on the floor and someone has scribbled out the image of a wolf. David doesn't believe he saw a bird but doesn't argue with his father. David soon realizes that the books in his room have become quiet. That night, David hears his mother's voice coming from the garden. He knows he's eventually going to have to face whatever lies there.

In Chapter 6, "Of the War, and the Way Between Worlds," David's father works long hours, leaving David alone with Rose, Georgie, and the hired helpers. Rose finds David outside one day and his initial greeting is more rude than he intends. Their argument becomes heated and Rose slaps David. When David's father arrives that evening, Rose tells him the story and he is furious at David's disrespect. He orders David to remain in his room without playing or reading. After that reprimand, David notices that his books are talking more loudly than they have recently. Then the room seems to split in two and David clearly sees a castle. Then he sees another castle and hears his mother calling out to him to help her.

David wakes to find that it's dark. He can't quite remember all the details of what happened but rises to change into his pajamas. Then he hears his mother's voice, urging him to be brave and to help her. The voice tells David he must go through the garden and David puts aside his fear. He finds a gap in the garden wall and hesitates. Just then, a German bomber plane begins to fall toward the garden and David is forced to rush into the crack.

In Chapter 7, "Of the Woodsman and the Work of His Ax," David realizes that he's now inside a tree trunk. He considers returning to the garden the way he came to seek his father's help but he knows his father won't believe him without proof. David realizes that there is fire behind him and rushes out of the tree. Part of the plane erupts from the tree behind David. David immediately realizes that the land is very strange and he soon begins to refer to it as Elsewhere. He notices things about the land, including that the light is always very dim even in the middle of a clear day.

David sees the mutilated body of an animal and notices that it is wearing clothes. He can't decide what kind of animal it is because its face is missing, but it has fur. David discovers that the tree he came through no longer has an opening and he tries to mark it so he can find it again. A man arrives. He identifies himself as the Woodsman, and says that David is harming the tree. He provides a string to mark the tree without damaging the wood. The Woodsman says they have to hurry to safety. David hears howling and both begin to run.



Analysis

The conversation between Rose and David in Chapter 4 has some information that becomes important later in the story. Jonathan disappeared with a little girl who had basically been adopted into the family, which could have put Jonathan into a situation very much like David's relationship with Georgie. It's later revealed that Jonathan was jealous of the new girl, and angry about her presence. The reader also learns that Jonathan was afraid of wolves, especially those with human characteristics such as the ability to talk and walk. This becomes important when Jonathan enters Elsewhere and finds these exact creatures. Finally, the fact that Jonathan had loved books is an example of one of the story's most important themes. Both Jonathan and David love books, and their imaginations make them very susceptible to the Crooked Man.

There are several similarities between Jonathan and David, including their love of books. That love of books is an important theme in the book. Another similarity is that the two boys live in the same house as children. There will be other similarities seen later in the story as Jonathan is more fully introduced.

Billy Golding's name is part of the title of Chapter 4 but he is only briefly mentioned in that chapter. Billy is significant only because of his fate. Billy was murdered and was obviously raped because David overheard his parents discussing how the police found Billy's body. A man who lived with his mother was arrested for the crime and the events prompted David's mother to remind him that he should never go with a stranger, even if the stranger offered him candy. This entire situation is a description of one of the many dangers that face children. While this danger is very real in the real world, David will face equally dangerous situations in Elsewhere that are far outside anything his mother could have imagined him facing. The symbolism of danger is important in the story.

David's opinion about the war is an important look at the limited perspective of the story. David had expected there to be excitement associated with the war but finds that he has no direct experiences with the war. He doesn't see that as a good thing, which is an example of his immaturity in the early part of the book. He's bored by his father's talk about the war and thinks the only possibility of excitement is the possibility that his father might know about spies. This is another example of David's immaturity.

It's significant that David notices that the image of a wolf because the wolves represent the Fear that's one of the book's themes. It seems at first that the Crooked Man might have been the one to scribble over the image of the wolf but it will later become more likely that Jonathan Tulvey made those marks. Jonathan has always been afraid of wolves and that becomes one of the main dangers David faces when he arrives in Elsewhere.

There is a brief look at David's emerging maturity - part of the novel's Coming of Age theme - regarding the war when the piece of the bomber flies out of the tree that brought David into Elsewhere. He sees the camera on the plane and knows from books that the camera is used by the bomber to choose a target. Just a short time earlier, David wished he still lived in London, even though there is bombing there. He admits



that it might be scary sometimes but believes it would also be exciting. Now, with the camera as a stark reminder that the war is real, David feels anger toward the men who would look through that camera and choose targets to bomb.

Discussion Question 1

What are the similarities between Billy Golding and Jonathan Tulvey, based on the information at this point?

Discussion Question 2

Describe David's view on the war. How would his attitude likely be different if he was older or more mature?

Discussion Question 3

What do you see as the most important theme up to this point? Start a list of examples of this theme.

Vocabulary

industrious, balefully, scuttle, sinister, surly, relent, squadrons, emotively, botched, thwart, innocuous, thwart



Chapters 8-11

Summary

In Chapter 8, "Of Wolves and Worse-Than-Wolves," David is regretting his decision to enter this world. They run to the Woodsman's cottage, which is fortified against intruders. Just as they near the safety of the cottage, David sees a wolf rise up to stand on its hind legs. It's wearing clothes and David sees that it's struggling between his human side and its animal side. The Woodsman and the animal have a conversation, including that there are strange creatures in the forest and that the king has lost control. The wolf offers to protect David but David can tell the wolf is lying. The wolf says the Woodsman can't keep David safe. As the situation escalates, ivy vines rush in and grab that wolf and others that have joined him, forcing the wolves away.

In Chapter 9, "Of the Loups and How They Came into Being, the Woodsman," it seems calm once they are inside the cottage. The Woodsman says the wolves are unnatural and that the forest is trying to protect itself. He identifies these animals as Loups. He says they are neither wolf nor human, but a mixture. Their leader is named Leroi.

David listens to "The Woodsman's First Tale" about a girl who wore a red hooded cape. This girl confronted a wolf even though the wolf tried to avoid her. She was enamored with the "strangeness" of the creature. She had sex with it and their offspring was Leroi, the first of the Loups. The girl recruited more women, some by trickery though some were willing, and they created an entire race of Loups. The Loups then turned on their creators and ate them all.

The Woodsman provides David with some additional clothing and David answers questions about why he's in Elsewhere. The Woodsman tells David about Elsewhere and reveals that the Crooked Man steals children. The Woodsman gives David some clothes to replace his pajamas. He seems sad and David wonders if "something bad happened" to the Woodsman's family.

In Chapter 10, "Of Tricksters and Trickery," the Woodsman says Elsewhere has changed. David goes to sleep wondering if his father is worried about him or if life will just be easier for his father and Rose with David gone. The next morning, David goes through some of the routines he began when his mother became ill. When the Woodsman questions him, David tries to explain. The Woodsman says David should establish routines with a positive outcome, such as caring for those in his family. They return to the place David had arrived in Elsewhere and find the Crooked Man has tied identical strings around all the trees so that David can't possibly find the correct tree to return home.

The Woodsman tells David that the king might know how to help David get home. He says the king is not really in control anymore but he has "a Book of Lost Things" that might hold the answers to helping David get home. As David and the Woodsman leave



the forest, the Crooked Man steps out of his hiding place. He whispers that there is a “boy lost” and a “child lost to come.”

In Chapter 11, "Of the Children Lost in the Forest and What Befell Them," David and the Woodsman stop by the cottage and gather supplies for their trip. The Woodsman explains that the strange flowers David has seen grow whenever a child is lost in the forest. He says the flowers grow in clusters, just as frightened children will gather together for comfort.

When David finds what appears to be the burned remains of a house, he's surprised to find that it smells like chocolate. He's about to taste it when the Woodsman stops him. The Woodman then tells his second tale, this time about a boy and girl. Their mother died and their father married an evil woman who forces the father to send the children into the woods. The children find a house made of gingerbread but defeat the witch who captures them. The girl happily settles into a new life in the forest but the boy always longs to go home. He's eventually lured into the house of another wicked woman and is never seen again.

Analysis

The Woodsman represents a positive role model for David and he wants to help David improve his life. He tries to make David understand that he needs to do things for others. When David reveals his routines, the Woodsman says that David should establish new routines that will actually serve a purpose other than making David feel good. The Woodsman takes care of the forest around his cottage, and he says that those duties have become his routines. He suggests that David might do things to take care of others in his life. David sees the wisdom in the Woodsman's words but he can't imagine that there will come a time when he willingly takes care of Georgie and Rose. That time will come but David, in his childish attitudes, doesn't see it. This scene boosts several of the book's themes, including David's need for positive role models and his relationship with Georgie and Rose.

The Crooked Man is obviously someone who enjoys creating chaos and problems, as seen when he ties the strings around all the trees in the forest. He also alters the trees slightly, bending some and filling in crooks in others. He removes all signs of the plane to eliminate that as a possible clue about the correct tree. In addition, he changes the forest trail so that the Woodsman can't find any landmarks to guide him to the correct tree. David points out that the Crooked Man could just as easily have removed the Woodsman's string from the correct tree but the Woodsman says that wouldn't have made a good story. He says the Crooked Man loves to create good stories and that he manipulates people to do what he wants for the story. This is the first real look at the Crooked Man's motivations though all the details are revealed in the final chapters of the book.

The Woodsman's second story is a version of the fairy tale of Hansel and Gretel, and is obviously meant to parallel David's own life, at least to some degree. The children in



that story are happy with their father but their mother dies. When their father marries an evil woman, this evil woman sacrifices the children and forces their father to go along with her plan. This is David's view of his life with his father and Rose. He believes that his father is unable to stand against Rose and that Rose is the source of David's unhappiness. Though David is obviously old enough to have some grasp of the fact that his father was equally responsible for Georgie's birth, David sees Rose as solely to blame.

An important part of the Woodsman's second story is that the boy is never happy with his new life away from his father and that results in his death. The Woodsman is later revealed to be an honorable man who wants only to help David. He hopes that he can provide David with guidance so that David can make the right decisions for himself.

Discussion Question 1

Describe the similarities between David's life and that of the boy and girl in the Woodsman's Second Tale.

Discussion Question 2

What do you know about the Woodsman at this point? Do you see anything to indicate that he's either an honorable man or a dishonorable one?

Discussion Question 3

Why does the Crooked Man create the scene in the forest with strings tied on all the trees? What does this say about his character?

Vocabulary

prickling, implicit, realm, consult, mockery, veneer, crucial, traumatized, supremacy, acute, enticing, reigned, virtual, recluse



Chapters 12-14

Summary

In Chapter 12, "Of Bridges and Riddles, and the Many Unappealing Characteristics of Trolls," the Woodsman kills a raven, saying the ravens and wolves hunt together. He predicts the wolves are closing in on them and urges David to hurry. They come to a ravine and David sees Harpies flying through the air. He is confused by their presence. They soon come to a pair of bridges across the gorge. Trolls are guarding the bridges and David uses a trick he learned from a book to discover which of the trolls is telling the truth about which bridge is safe to use. David is crossing the bridge when the wolves attack. The Woodsman orders David to cut the ropes holding the bridge so that the wolves can't follow, even though it means the Woodsman also can't follow. David reluctantly obeys and watches as the Woodsman is taken down by the wolves. He cries for the Woodsman's sacrifice.

In Chapter 13, "Of Dwarfs and the Sometimes Irascible Nature," David follows a road. He's very tired but is afraid of falling asleep out in the open. He encounters a group of dwarfs who are immediately rude toward him. They talk about being oppressed. They have only numbers for names. There are 6 of them and they say that "Former Comrade Brother Number Seven" has been "excised from the Party's records." David asks if he can spend the night with them. They initially hesitate, saying "she won't like it" but finally decide that "she" might be glad of the company.

As the walk, they tell David about the woman they live with. They admit that they tried to poison Snow White because she is so obnoxious, but she merely fell into a deep sleep. The judge ordered them to take care of her for the rest of her life as punishment for their crimes. She's fat and demanding, and the dwarfs are afraid of her.

In Chapter 14, "Of Snow White, Who Is Very Unpleasant Indeed," Snow White screams that the dwarfs are late the minute they arrive at the house. She demands that they prepare food for her. David questions her about aspects of her life and learns that she has a father and stepmother, but that they moved away. She says they were boring anyway.

Over dinner, David learns that the dwarfs are mining "coal-ish" things. They tell David that they can't let Snow White learn about the diamonds because she'd make more demands. When everyone else has gone to bed, David remains by the fire. He whispers that he needs his mother's help, hoping she can hear him. Meanwhile, the Crooked Man watches Georgie for a while before returning to Elsewhere.

Analysis

David's reaction to the Harpies is important for two reasons. The most obvious is that they are female in form and that they are nude. David is embarrassed at seeing them,



even though they are very old and covered with scales. This is an example of the sexuality that's seen throughout the story. The second reason is that David says the Harpies are from Greek mythology and that he doesn't believe they actually "belong in this story." He has come to see his adventure as part of a story and will later turn the entire trip into a book. Books remain an important theme in the story, and this is yet another example of that.

The encounter with Snow White and the dwarfs is one of the first important examples of the fairy tales that don't match up with what David knows from his books. He's already noted that the Harpies seem out of place for the story he is living in now. Snow White and the dwarfs are more in keeping with what David expects to find, but he discovers that the details are nothing like the stories he's read. Snow White is fat and demanding. The dwarfs actually tried to kill her because they hate and fear her so much. They say they tried to blame it on the wicked witch but that she was poisoning someone else that day. They did manage to put her to sleep but a prince woke her with a kiss. However, in this version of the story, Snow White hit the prince for "taking liberties" and the prince ran away. The dwarfs also briefly tell David about Goldilocks. They say she was eaten by the bears. David objects, saying he heard she ran away from the bears' house. The dwarfs say that in their world, that means she was eaten. These differences are vital to the story because they mean David can't expect things to go as he expects. The differences are part of the dangers that David is forced to face.

The dwarfs refer to themselves as "comrades" and mention "the Party," which seems to indicate that they are members of the Communist Party. Their lifestyles don't reflect that but they talk about being oppressed and about their loyalty to the Party. This isn't seen again in the story and it's left to the reader to decide if it's important.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think David says that Harpies "don't belong in this story?"

Discussion Question 2

Describe David's encounter with Snow White and the dwarfs.

Discussion Question 3

David sees the Woodsman fall under the wolves' attack. Do you think the Woodsman is dead? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

crevasse, emaciated, muster, oppression, pathetically, audible, inheritance, reeked, stalked



Chapters 15-18

Summary

In Chapter 15, "Of the Deer-Girl," David leaves the Dwarfs. They warn him that he should remain strictly on the path as he continues his journey because there are dangers just off the path. They give him a little food but he soon finds some apple trees along the side of the road. He thinks he can get to them without putting himself in danger and he climbs one to eat some apples. He soon sees a creature that has the body of a deer and the head of a girl. She pleads with David for help but before he can react, she's struck by an arrow and killed. A hunter appears and severs the girl's head. The hunter sees the apple core under the tree and takes David captive.

In Chapter 16, "Of the Three Surgeons," the hunter and David arrive at the hunter's cottage. David discovers that the hunter has a large collection of heads mounted on the walls, including some humans, and that there are terrible things that make him very afraid for his fate. David discovers that the hunter is actually a woman. She explains that she has a magic salve that heals any wound. She grew bored with hunting ordinary animals. She now cuts the heads off animals and children, then reattaches them to different bodies. She says children with the bodies of animals are fast and smart, making them ideal for him to hunt. Adults simply give up so the hunter doesn't enjoy hunting them. She plans to put David's head on the body of a fox the following day. David spends the entire night making a plan.

In Chapter 17, "Of Centaurs and the Vanity of the Huntress," the huntress cooks some meat the following morning. David drinks some of the tea but refuses to eat any of the meat. She says she will soon put David's head on the body of the fox, and that she'll add his body to her winter supply of meat. She says animals are incapable of adapting to the body of a human. She has created some creatures of this kind and they are alive in the forest, but are sickly and she sometimes kills them out of pity.

David mentions the centaur and says that would be the ultimate hunter because it has the head and torso of a human but the ability to run with its horse's body. The huntress considers what David says and says she believes David is right in saying that would be the ultimate hunter. The huntress says she wants to become a centaur. She says she will free David if he agrees to help her. She breaks her bows and arrows as a sign that she's telling the truth, and provides David with a map marking the way out of the forest. She leaves for a time and returns with a horse. With a single blow, she chops its head off. She then lies on the table with a guillotine positioned above her midsection. David drops the blade and she is chopped in half.

When her body is chopped in two, she reaches down and urges David to quickly apply the magic salve. He drops the blade again, chopping off one of her hands. Then he runs. She puts the salve on her hand and arm, reattaching it immediately. She then puts the salve on the two halves of her body and is healed. David gets the door open and



runs outside to find all the creatures the huntress created. They encircle the huntress and kill her as David rushes away.

In Chapter 18, "Of Roland," David continues walking through the forest, trying to follow the map. David thinks about his father and wonders if he's doing the right thing by going farther from the tree he'd used to enter this land. He considers that his father might figure out how to follow and builds a small cairn of stones with a message saying he's headed for the king's castle.

A man arrives. He introduces himself as Roland. He looks like a knight but says he is only a soldier. David gives him the brief version of how he reached this point. Roland says David seems like a good person to have around. He offers to take David to the king if David will first accompany him on his own quest. David agrees and Roland gives him a sword. Roland is riding a horse named Scylla and he helps David mount.

They arrive at a field and David sees a tank. Roland doesn't know what it is and David struggles to describe its purpose. They find dead soldiers in the area and Roland explains that a beast has caused all this death. David is alone for a short time and the Crooked Man approaches David. He shows David an image of David's father, laughing and playing with Rose and Georgie. The man says they don't miss David at all. David strikes out with his sword. The Crooked Man says he is the only one who could have helped David. He says David will need him later and then he disappears.

Analysis

David's encounter with the huntress is gruesome and bloody, and is one of the scenes that may not be suitable for young readers. There is also a sexual undercurrent in this scene as David sees the huntress naked just before he chops her body in two. He tries not to look at her nakedness but focuses on the task facing him. There is another scene in this section with a sexual tone. When David and Roland find the men who were killed by the beast, they find an old man who tells them about the battle. He says that the beast is female and that she dragged the dead and dying men into the woods and "had her way with them." It seems likely that the old man meant that she killed the soldiers, but he may have had another meaning in mind. It's left to the reader to decide.

David feels that he is at least partly responsible for the Woodsman's fate. This sense of responsibility is a sign of David's emerging maturity or Coming of Age, which is one of the book's themes.

There is no explanation for the tank David and Roland find in Chapter 18. They arrive on a battlefield and the tank is just sitting there in the middle of the field. It looks new to David, as if it has never been used in a battle at all. The reader will later learn that many things in *Elsewhere* are manifestations of Jonathan Tulvey's imagination, and this tank may be another of those.

When David tells Roland about his encounter with the Crooked Man, Roland asks if David cut the man with his sword. David says he got mad and swung the sword without



thinking. The reader may expect that Roland would tell David about the need for thought instead of reacting with violence, but he doesn't. He tells David that the Crooked Man means him harm, and that he should kill him the next time he sees him. This is an important look at the dangers David and Roland face, which is one of the book's themes.

Discussion Question 1

Describe David's encounter with the huntress.

Discussion Question 2

Why do you believe the Crooked Man shows David the image of David's father laughing with Georgie and Rose? Do you think the image was real?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Roland say David should have killed the Crooked Man? Do you believe Roland is right?

Vocabulary

significantly, obviously, pensively, injunction, covered, unadorned, equivalent, extinguishing, cairns, vindictive



Chapters 19-21

Summary

In Chapter 19, "Of Roland's Tale and the Wolf Scout," Roland stops for the night when Scylla and David are both very tired. Roland asks David to talk about his home and David is ashamed at how childish he sounds. Roland then relates "Roland's First Tale." The story is about a servant who took the place of a prince, forcing the prince to live as a servant. The false prince dies as a result of his own foolishness. Later, David hears Roland talking and sees that he's looking at a locket containing the picture of a handsome young man. Roland says the word "love" several times and David covers his head until he manages to go back to sleep.

The next morning, Roland tells David that his friend, Raphael, is missing. Roland believes Raphael is dead and has pledged to avenge Raphael's death. A wolf scout watches as Roland and David leave camp. The Crooked Man kills the scout and cuts off his snout as a message that "the boy was his."

In Chapter 20, "Of the Village, and Roland's Second Tale," Roland and David arrive at a village. There are few people around and a man demands they identify themselves before allowing them near the village. The men of the village are preparing to battle the beast. Roland says he and David saw the dead soldiers. He says those men were trained to fight and that the beast killed them. He suggests the villagers should simply leave the area until the danger has passed. The man says they won't leave their homes. They have very little food to spare but agree to let Roland and David spend the night in the relative safety of the village.

The leader identifies himself as Fletcher. Roland shows Fletcher the picture of Raphael. Fletcher says Raphael stopped at the village to water his horse. Raphael was on his way to a place the villagers call the fortress of thorns. Fletcher says no one who goes there is ever seen again. Fletcher's children beg for a story and Roland tells one.

Roland's Second Tale is the story of a knight named Alexander who was the perfect knight. He traveled to distant lands where he became famous for his bravery. One day, he was injured. He stopped at a house and asked for help but the woman turned him away. He passed out before he could reach the next village. When he woke, he was back at the woman's house. She never let him see her and said only that her name was "Lady." She cared for him and they gradually got to know each other. He professed his love for her and she gave in to his pleas to see her face. She was a hideous beast and he shrank away from her. Roland ends the story by saying that the woman killed the knight and "wept as she devoured him."

Fletcher says most of the villagers believe the beast is going to attack them. Roland suggests they let the beast in the village walls and then kill it by burning the buildings.



The villagers hate that idea because they don't want to destroy their homes. They come up with a compromise plan, but Roland isn't happy with the situation.

In Chapter 21, "Of the Coming of the Beast," some of the villagers move to the caves while the men who are able to fight wait to battle the beast. David remains with Roland. Days drag by while they wait. One day, David talks to Roland about this land. He says there is a strange mixture of familiar things but that some things seem not to belong, such as the tank and the Harpies. He asks Roland if they are dead but Roland says he doesn't think that's the case.

On the third night, the beast arrives. It's huge and horrible. When it breaks through to the village, Roland tries to attract it to a specific place where they have a trap designed to kill it, but the beast focuses on David. David leads it to the appointed spot. As they are trying to kill it, the beast bursts open and young versions of the beast pour out. Roland lights the fire as planned, killing them before they can escape and destroying some of the buildings in the process.

Analysis

Roland says he is only a soldier but it's obvious that he has at least some of the qualities of a knight. David hears Roland talking on their first night together and sees that Roland is talking to a picture of a handsome young man. Roland carries the picture in a locket. David can't hear all the conversation but hears the word "love" several times. David doesn't question Roland but he's embarrassed by the situation. This is the first hint that Roland might be gay. The reader should remember that this story is set in the early 1900s when being gay was taboo in many places.

David is becoming frustrated by this point in the book. He believes that he did the right thing by trying to find his mother, but he also knows that she is dead. He holds to the hope that there might be an explanation and that she might be alive somewhere, but he seems to fear that isn't really the case. He has thought about the fact that the authorities would be searching through the wreckage of the bomber plane that crashed into the garden, looking for David's body. When he talks to Roland about this, he expresses the fear that he has died and that this land is an afterlife. This is an example of David's emerging maturity but it's also an example of David's fear that he really has lost his mother. This behavior represents the novel's theme of Coming of Age.

Roland's second story is a version of Beauty and the Beast, but with some major differences. The beast of this story is the woman and the knight who falls in love with her is unable to accept her appearance. The beast kills and eats the knight, though she cries as she does so. This is yet another fairy tale that isn't told "correctly" in this land. The significance could be the parallel between this story and David's opinion of the relationship between his father and Rose. Rose is the "beast" who has "devoured" David's father.



There's no clear explanation for why the beast became fixated on David but David later feels that he might have been responsible for the beast, meaning he is responsible for all the people the beast killed. It will later be revealed that everyone who arrives in this land brings their own fears with them, contributing to the novel's theme of Fear. It may be that this is literally a figment of David's imagination brought to life in this land. It may also have originated in Jonathan Tulvey's imagination and David's sense of familiarity regarding the beast may be because he read the same books as Jonathan Tulvey, and a book may have laid the foundation for imagining the beast.

Discussion Question 1

What do you know about Roland at this point? What do you think of him?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you think David considers the possibility that he might be dead? What does that say about him?

Discussion Question 3

Do you think there's any significance to the fact that the "beast" in Roland's story is female?

Vocabulary

transpired, impostor, insignia, fortifications, flask, evacuation, muttering, vagabond, resonated, conjured



Chapters 22-24

Summary

In Chapter 22, "Of the Crooked Man and the Sowing of Doubt," David and Roland prepare to leave the village the following morning. The villagers are rude even though it was the bravery of Roland and David that saved them from the beast. They blame Roland for burning down part of their village and they are suspicious because they noticed that the beast focused on David. Fletcher says the villagers will soon forget any anger they feel toward Roland and David. He wants to give David something but the villagers have little food and few extra items available. He gives David a large "blackened hook," a claw he took from the beast. He says David can always look at this claw and remember his courage when facing the beast.

As they travel, David learns more about Roland's past, including that his father sent him away because of Roland's choices in life. They talk then about David's life before talking more about Elsewhere. Roland says the king has been ruler for a long time and has no children to take over the throne.

When they stop traveling, the Crooked Man pulls David into a cavern below the snow. He tells David that he's the only reason David is still alive. He makes an insinuation about the relationship between Roland and Raphael. David doesn't really understand but knows that the Crooked Man is hinting at something bad. He then hints that Roland might have romantic feelings for David, which makes David more uncomfortable. The Crooked Man says he will help David go straight home if David will give him the name of his half-brother. David hesitates and the man yells, causing a cave in. Roland pulls David from the snow. Roland asks what happened but David pulls away and begins to cry.

In Chapter 23, "Of the March of the Wolves," David knows that the Crooked Man lied when he said Roland was romantically interested in David. He wants to apologize to Roland for pulling away but doesn't know how. He tells Roland that the man offered to get him home. Roland warns that the Crooked Man's help will come with a cost.

David sleeps and Roland stays awake to keep watch. Meanwhile, Fletcher watches from the village as the wolf army passes just outside the walls. Leroi stands at the edge of the forest. Fletcher stands up in full view of the wolves, refusing to hide in fear. Leroi acknowledges Fletcher's bravery but pledges to return to attack the village as soon as they have defeated the king.

In Chapter 24, "Of the Fortress of Thorns," David wakes to find that Roland is gone. He goes through a range of emotions, including anger. Roland returns and says he was only scouting ahead. They talk honestly for the first time about Roland and Raphael. Roland says he knows what David is thinking about their relationship. He says he loved



Raphael and that anything more is no one's business. With the air cleared, Roland says they need to get on with their journey because the Fortress of Thorns is near.

They soon reach Roland's destination, which is a castle covered in thorns. They find the heads of dead knights impaled on spikes all around the castle. They consider how to get inside as darkness falls. A light comes on inside and they see the figure of a woman just as the vines separate in front of the gate. David says it might be a trap but Roland says he has no choice but to go inside. He instructs David to wait until morning. If Roland doesn't return, David is to take Scylla and leave. The Crooked Man watches the scene. He knows Roland will die inside, leaving David alone again.

David dreams about Georgie and is surprised to find he feels a sense of affection for his half-brother. He has a vision of Roland inside the castle. When he wakes, he hears his mother's voice from inside the castle. The thorns part in front of the gates and David goes inside. The Crooked Man rushes to stop David but can't stop him.

Analysis

Roland says his father banished him from his home because of his lifestyle. This makes it clearer that Roland is living a gay lifestyle and that his father didn't approve. There is little doubt that there is a romantic connection between Roland and Raphael. David notes that there is a rude word for that kind of connection in his world. It's interesting that earlier David had felt that it would be rude to question Roland about his relationship with Raphael, but the Crooked Man's words make David think more about it. He seems to be programmed to think this lifestyle isn't right but personally doesn't really condemn it. This would have been in keeping with the time setting for this story. Tolerance was low and David is old enough to have begun learning this attitude.

The Crooked Man's insinuation about Roland's feelings toward David makes David uncomfortable. This is likely traced back to the conversation David overheard about Billy Golding's death years earlier. This also supports the idea that David has been trained to have specific attitudes about sexual actions.

Up to this point, it seems likely that the Crooked Man is the one teasing David with the voice of his mother. That changes when David enters the Fortress of Thorns. The Crooked Man had nothing to do with leading David into the castle and is enraged when David enters. The Crooked Man may have been using David's mother's voice earlier in the book, but it's now the enchantress inside the castle who is using the voice to manipulate David.

Discussion Question 1

How are David's attitudes changing? What are the causes?



Discussion Question 2

What is revealed about Roland and Raphael during this section of the book?

Discussion Question 3

Describe the conversation between David and the Crooked Man regarding Roland. How does it affect the relationship between David and Roland?

Vocabulary

pursue, balefully, solicitude, rendered, spectral, extraordinary, predicament, vengeance, incursions, ebb, recoiled, ulterior



Chapters 25-27

Summary

In Chapter 25, "Of the Enchantress and What Became of Raphael and Roland," David enters and finds signs of death and decay. David finds a table laden with food. He is so hungry that he almost gives in to the desire to eat but then sees an ant take a bite of food and die. He continues on and finds a room that looks very much like his room at home, but the sheets are yellowed with age and everything is dusty. He sees a vision through the window of his father, Rose, and Georgie, though Georgie is now several years old. His mother's voice says that they don't miss David at all, and that Georgie is soon to have a little sister.

Suddenly, David is in darkness. He is afraid but he continues forward, following the commands of the voice that sounds like his mother. He finds another room and sees that Roland seems dead, his body impaled on one of the thorns. He sees another body nearby and knows that it's Raphael. There are lots of other bodies in the room and David is suddenly furious. That emotion helps him mature quickly.

He finds his mother's body on a slab in the room. His mother's voice says he needs to kiss her so they can be together. David kisses her on the cheek. Roland rouses himself to tell David to "beware." David sees that the woman is no longer his mother. The eyes are black and she looks like Rose, but David realizes she isn't really. She is obviously evil and David wants to get away, but the woman demands another kiss. David has the claw in his pocket and he uses it to slice the enchantress. He then shoves her into the thorns. As she's dying, she says, "Thank you." When she's dead, the vines and thorns fall away. David places Roland's body next to that of Raphael.

David goes out of the castle and mounts Scylla. As he heads into the forest, the creatures back away, aware of his latest feat of bravery. The Crooked Man watches from his place in a tree and wonders how he might use this turn of events to his advantage.

In Chapter 26, "Of Two Killings and Two Kings," David admits to himself that his mother is truly dead. He realizes that he's known it all along and had just wished that she wasn't. He also knows that the Crooked Man lied when he said everything could go back to the way it was before David's mother died. David is lost in thought and encounters two thieves who demand he give up Scylla. David kills them and then he cries for all that's changed, including the death of Roland.

Leroi and the other wolves soon find the bodies of the two thieves, and they catch David's scent in the area. Leroi knows that David has grown and changed over his time in Elsewhere. Leroi takes stock of his situation. Several wolves have been killed and their snouts cut off. Leroi continues to struggle with his two sides – beast and human.



In Chapter 27, "Of the Castle, and the King's Greeting," David encounters the Crooked Man again. The man says the wolves are nearby but that he'll try to hold them off until David can reach the castle. David asks why the man is helping and he says he's been helping all along. He rushes off into the forest, changing a poem about "Georgie-Progie" and thinking that he's very near his reward. He hides and waits for the wolves.

David goes through a canyon to reach the castle. Soldiers greet him, saying they've been expecting him. When they are inside the castle, one of them introduces himself as Duncan, Captain of the King's Guard. David briefly meets with the king who promises they'll talk more the next day. Duncan takes David to his room.

David eats then falls quickly asleep. He wakes later and looks outside his door. He sees the Crooked Man seated on the throne talking to the king, who has long white hair. The king says the man promised to let him "die at last." The Crooked Man says David is expecting to find help from "the book" and that both the king and the Crooked Man will "have our reward" once David learns the book is useless. The king makes it clear that he had a bargain with the man, and that he has paid a heavy price for that. When the king and the Crooked Man leave the room, David goes into the room and finds "The Book of Lost Things."

Analysis

David hears the voice saying that he has to continue into the castle in order to find his mother. The voice promises that once he finds his mother, they will have their old lives back. The voice says that David and his mother will take the place of Rose and Georgie in David's vision, and that they will be happy as a family again. David's grief over his mother's death has driven a great deal of the story up to this point, and this grief makes him want to have his old life back. He hasn't yet come to fully accept that his mother is gone and that his life has changed.

The enchantress takes on the form of David's mother, then of Rose. As Rose, David recognizes her as "his father's lover." This indicates that David is aware of the sexuality of their relationship. Sexuality remains an undertone in many scenes of the book.

There is an important moment in the fortress when David is furious. In that moment, he becomes more mature because the anger helps him see things more clearly. This is one of several examples of one of the book's themes – Coming of Age. There is another look at Leroi during this section of the book. He recognizes the emerging maturity in David. While he respects it to a degree, he also fears it.

Leroi is struggling to maintain appearances in front of the other wolves. Inside the Fortress of Thorns, he considers that he might desecrate the bodies of Roland and Raphael. He doesn't but only because he realizes that is something an animal would do. That makes it clear that he's fighting to be more human than beast, but that he can't really win that battle. He admits only to himself that he is glad to leave the castle because he doesn't understand what's going on there.



There's another example of the literary device personification in this section. The “day passed, a poor, sluggish thing.” This makes it clear that the sunlight in this land is strange, which makes it more scary for David than it might otherwise be.

David gets mixed signals about his arrival at the castle. The soldiers say they've been expecting him but don't say how or why. They surround David to escort him to the castle and David feels both protected and imprisoned. That night, Duncan says the door to David's room won't be locked, but asks that he not leave the room. These all combine to make David at least slightly worried about his situation, which helps him be more prepared to face the dangers to come.

The conversation David overhears between the Crooked Man and the king is designed to raise suspense. The effect is that of creating more mystery regarding the Crooked Man's true intention. This building of suspense is one of several literary devices used by the author to move the plot forward with momentum.

Discussion Question 1

What happens to David inside the Fortress of Thorns?

Discussion Question 2

Describe the evolution of Leroi and his struggles.

Discussion Question 3

Describe what you know up to this point about the Crooked Man and the king. What do you think the Crooked Man's motivations might be?

Vocabulary

intricate, sinister, opulently, alabaster, putrefaction, insubstantial, ultimately, perils, brandished, retching, luxuriate, dwindled



Chapters 28-30

Summary

In Chapter 28, "Of the Book of Lost Things," David opens the king's book. He finds there are pages covered with childish writing and drawing, and mementos such as photos and a ticket stub, a page from a book, and a tuft of hair. David recognizes these things as belonging to his own world rather than Elsewhere. There is writing about a little girl who arrives at his house and his resentment of the girl's presence. David feels both a kinship with the boy who wrote these things and a dislike for him. David returns to the first page of the book and discovers the words, "Jonathan Tulvey. His Book."

David begins to explore the castle. He finds a huge hourglass with only a little sand left in the top. He then finds a jar with tiny girl inside. She glows and David learns that she is Anna and the Crooked Man killed her. Through his conversation with her, David discovers that Jonathan gave her to the Crooked Man in return for the opportunity to be king, because he was jealous of her arrival in the family. Anna reveals that the Crooked Man stole her heart. Anna says that the Crooked Man is nearing the end of the time he stole from her and that he's now searching for another to take her place. David realizes that the Crooked Man wants David to give him Georgie. David takes Anna from the dark room where she's been for years.

In Chapter 29, "Of the Crooked Man's Hidden Kingdom and the Treasures That He Kept There," David discovers that the tunnels under the castle are huge. This is the Crooked Man's lair. David finds terrible things there, and says many of these things are much worse than Anna. There are many rooms and each represents horrible stories the Crooked Man has created. David eventually returns to the main rooms and finds a chance to get to his room undetected. There, David realizes that the wolves are preparing to attack. Anna says she worries about Jonathan because she loves him and believes he's sorry for having betrayed her. It's clear that her light is becoming dimmer.

In Chapter 30, "Of the Crooked Man's Act of Betrayal," the Crooked Man is in the hourglass room where he watches the sands run through. He's becoming weaker but feels certain he'll convince David to save him. Meanwhile, Duncan says David is to go to the throne room. The Crooked Man goes into the woods and shows himself to the wolves. He then hops down into a tunnel that leads to the lair and into the castle. The wolves have been unable to find a way into the castle and Leroi recognizes this as a way in.

Analysis

"The Book of Lost Things" that belongs to the king is obviously a book of things he has lost. The book provides a personal look into Jonathan's life before he gave in to his jealousy and gave Anna to the Crooked Man. The book details Jonathan's love of books



and pieces of his life. There is a tuft of hair with a note that “Lucky” was a good dog. There's a ticket stub with a note saying, “My first play.” Later, there are notes about Anna's arrival and the fact that Jonathan is jealous and angry because of her presence. These things make the book very important to Jonathan and it's easy to see why it would become a legend that the book is powerful in some manner. The information in the book makes David see that he's acted badly himself.

There is a great deal of detail about what David sees in the Crooked Man's lair. These terrible things include a room where children were forced to learn about sexual acts long before they were prepared, which made them into cruel adults. There was a room depicting a scene in which the Crooked Man tricked a greedy man into a deal in which the man ended up with a literal bellyful of gold. There were other similar scenes throughout the lair, all making it clear that the Crooked Man is a deceitful, cruel creature and that he deserves the death that's coming to him.

The Crooked Man and Jonathan tell David a lot of lies in their effort to get him to remain in Elsewhere as king. Jonathan is trying to get out of his obligation to the Crooked Man and the Crooked Man is trying to save his own life. Neither is reliable and David quickly accepts them for the liars they are. One of the things the Crooked Man says is that David will face hardships and loss if he chooses to return to his own world. That isn't a lie and David knows that he's going to face those things as a normal part of life because everyone does. When he returns to Elsewhere at the end of his life, he accepts that the Crooked Man's “prophecy” on this subject was correct, but also knows that he can't experience the joys of life without experiencing some of the pain as well

While there is suspense and mystery around the situation, it's clear that David is – at heart – a good person and that he's going to do the right thing in the end. There may be moments where a happy outcome doesn't seem to be a given, but those moments are overridden by the undercurrent of hope that David is maturing into an honorable young man, a process that is part of the Coming of Age theme in this novel.

Discussion Question 1

What sustains the Crooked Man's life?

Discussion Question 2

Describe "The Book of Lost Things," including its importance to the king and to David.

Discussion Question 3

David solves the mystery of what happened to Jonathan and Anna. What does he discover and how does he make these discoveries?

Vocabulary

nostalgia, conjured, relics, meager, perpetrate, treachery, desolate, impregnable, manipulate, bluster



Chapters 31-33

Summary

In Chapter 31, "Of the Battle, and the Fate of Those Who Would Be King," David arrives in the throne room. The king says that people from their world have always ruled Elsewhere. He says David has to accept the throne or the Crooked Man will kill him and find someone else. David realizes the king, who he now knows is Jonathan, is trying to convince him to take the throne so that Jonathan will be released.

The Crooked Man arrives just as David says he knows Jonathan's identity and what happened to Anna. The Crooked Man demands that David say his half-brother's name but David refuses. The wolves arrive in the throne room. The Crooked Man says he can save David if David will give up Georgie. Leroi kills the king. David is in serious danger and fears that he might die. The Crooked Man shouts that David has to give him the name immediately or they'll both die. David says, "His name is brother" and refuses to say his name. The Crooked Man dies a horrible death. Bugs emerge from his body. Leroi advances on David but then his body begins to tremble. David says that Leroi is a figment of Jonathan's imagination. Since Jonathan is dead, the wolves who stand on their hind legs and talk like humans will no longer exist.

Just then, the Woodsman arrives. He says he was able to get to safety and survived the wolf attack. He now points out that the castle is falling to ruin and urges David to run with him. David finds Scylla and returns with the Woodsman to the forest where he'd first entered Elsewhere. There, all the string is gone except for the correct tree that leads to David's world. The Woodsman says it's time for David to return home.

In Chapter 32, "Of Rose," David pauses. He says he isn't certain he wants to leave. The Woodsman says that David has family waiting for him, and that he's important to them. The Woodsman gives David back his original clothes. David notices that he feels childish and silly wearing them. The Woodsman says he'd hoped to help David defeat the Crooked Man but that David wasn't ready to hear the truth about the man or about himself when he arrived in Elsewhere. The Woodsman notes that David is now more mature and ready to return to his life. He says that "most people" choose to return to Elsewhere "in the end."

David steps into the tree and is suddenly in a bright place. He's in a hospital and Rose is by his bed. It's obvious she's been there for days. She tells him that everyone has been worried about him. David tells Rose, "I'm sorry," before falling back into sleep.

In Chapter 33, "Of All the Was Lost and All That Was Found," David's father talks a lot about how close David came to death when the plane crashed into the garden. The doctors talk about David having one of his fainting spells and lapsing into a coma, probably because of the trauma of witnessing the crash. They don't question David a lot, even when all the details of his side of the story don't make sense. His father and



Rose quickly notices that David is kinder toward Rose and Georgie, and more thoughtful in general.

David's father and Rose eventually divorce. Rose remains in the big house with Georgie. David and his father visit often. Another war erupts and Georgie joins the military. He's killed in action. David's father dies relatively young of a heart attack. David marries a young woman named Allyson and she dies giving birth to their only child. David never marries again. David ends up moving back to Rose's house and he takes care of her in her old age. David has the crack in the garden wall sealed up so that no other child could ever wander in there by mistake.

David becomes an author, and one of his books is what the reader has just finished. He continues to live in Rose's house and many children like his book. When he's old and no longer able to write, he has the gardener open a space in the garden wall. As his life nears its end, David enters the space and discovers that he's soon back in Elsewhere. The Woodsman is waiting to greet him. David learns that the land is now a peaceful place. David goes farther into the land and finds Scylla waiting for him. He then sees a beautiful young woman, holding an infant, in the doorway of a cottage. David knows that "each man dreams his own heaven," and David closes his eyes, knowing that he's found everything he'd lost.

Analysis

The Woodsman wants to guide David when he's in Elsewhere the first time, but he doesn't get the chance. When David returns, he "saw himself reflected in the Woodsman's eyes, and there he was no longer old but a young man, for a man is always his father's child no matter how old he is or how long they have been apart." The Woodsman seems to be a symbol of David's father from the beginning, but that symbolism is taken to a new level in this passage. It may be that the Woodsman literally is David's father. It's left to the reader to interpret this scene.

David finds that his wife and infant child are waiting for him when he returns to Elsewhere. It's noted that, "Each man dreams his own heaven." This seems to indicate that this might be David's version of heaven. The reader who wants to believe this is a literal statement could believe that David was near death after the plane crashed and that he was never in another land at all. It could be interpreted that David was dreaming the entire time he was in the coma and that the entire scene was only in David's dreams.

Discussion Question 1

What happens to Leroi and the wolves?



Discussion Question 2

Do you think the Woodsman is David's father or just a symbol of him? Why?

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think David returned to Elsewhere at the end of his life?

Vocabulary

mocked, rebuke, ascended, abdicate, impunity, carnage, fissures, labyrinth, blandishments, garlanded, tomes



Characters

David

David is a youngster when his mother falls ill. He establishes routines that he believes might save her life. This is the first indication that David is mature enough to know his mother might die and that he has the hope that he might be able to save her. This hope is ill-founded and his mother does die. David holds onto the idea that he could have saved his mother if he'd only done something more. It takes time for him to develop the maturity to accept that his mother is dead and that he couldn't have done anything to change that.

David's jealousy over the presence of Rose and Georgie in his life makes him the right person for the Crooked Man's next victim. When the Crooked Man promises that David will have dreams fulfilled if he just speaks Georgie's name, David is tempted. Up to this point, he's sick of Georgie's presence and believes his life could be better if Georgie wasn't there. It's not until David watches and learns from the Woodsman and Roland that he comes to understand that he has a responsibility to protect Georgie. David's role as a protector is cemented with that understanding and he helps kill the Crooked Man.

David's adult life is a mixture of happiness and sadness. He establishes a good relationship with Georgie but Georgie dies in a war. He spends quality time with his father but his father dies of a heart attack at a relatively young age. David marries but his wife dies in childbirth and his son dies along with her. Despite it all, David returns to live with Rose, caring for her in her old age and taking up residence in Rose's large country house. He becomes a writer and his work includes the story of his travels in Elsewhere. As his life draws to a close, David realizes that he wants to return to Elsewhere and he makes that trip, arriving to find the Woodsman is waiting for him. He is also greeted by a young woman and an infant, David's wife and son.

Roland

Roland is a knight in Elsewhere. He encounters David when David is trying to reach the castle in the hope that the king has answers that will help him escape Elsewhere. Roland is on a quest of his own but agrees to help David reach the castle if David will first help Roland find out what happened to his friend, Raphael. There was apparently a romantic connection between Roland and Raphael. The Crooked Man tells David that Roland has romantic ideas about David as well, which makes David tremendously uncomfortable. That strains the relationship between David and Roland for a short time, but David accepts that Roland is a good person and that he has only good intentions toward David.

Roland is an honorable person as evidenced by the fact that he is going into a dangerous situation to find out what happened to Raphael. He is also willing to pause



his own quest to help the villagers who are being threatened by a beast. The villagers are angry at Roland after he helps kill the beast because they can only see that he damaged their village. Roland doesn't argue the point and leaves the village without making demands or telling the people that they are being ungrateful. He is also willing to help David though he expects David to be a burden. He tells David that he is surprised that David has been courageous and helpful, which shows that Roland is willing to give credit where it's due. Roland dies in the castle where Raphael was killed.

David's Father

David's father is a kind man who works for the government during the war, decoding enemy transmissions. He feels the need to take care of David but is somewhat ineffective because he doesn't really know how to communicate with David. He marries Rose soon after the death of his first wife, and Georgie is born soon after that. The timing indicates that there might have been a connection between them even before David's mother dies.

Jonathan Tulvey

Jonathan Tulvey was a young boy when his family took in the girl named Anna. Jonathan was jealous of Anna and that jealousy made him a prime target for the Crooked Man. He handed Anna over in return for the Crooked Man's promise that he would be king of Elsewhere, but he soon realized that he had paid a high price and that he was basically trapped in the Crooked Man's land. Jonathan tried to help the Crooked Man trick David into the same trap because he wanted to be allowed to die to escape his torment. Jonathan was very afraid of the idea of the Loups, which is why they overran the land. He was killed by a Loup which in turn caused the Loups to die.

Rose

Rose is a nurse and the woman who marries David's father soon after the death of David's mother. David sees her as an intrusion into his life. In his grief, he blames Rose and Georgie for the unhappy life he's living after his mother's death. Rose is actually struggling to find a place in David's life while David spends so much energy resenting her. When David wakes in the hospital after his return from Elsewhere, Rose is by his bed, apparently having spent a lot of time caring for him and waiting for him to wake. She and David become closer after that and David is the one who moves into Rose's house and cares for her in her old age.

Georgie

Georgie is David's half-brother, born to David's father and Rose. David initially sees Georgie as an intrusion and as part of the reason he isn't living a happy life with his mother and father. By the time David returns from Elsewhere, he realizes that Georgie



is an important part of his life. David and Georgie become incredibly close throughout their lives. Georgie dies in a war as a young man and David names his only son after Georgie.

The Crooked Man

The Crooked Man is Rumpelstiltskin, and is also known as the Trickster. He has been alive since the beginning of time and is a cruel being who loves to torture other people in various ways. He lures jealous youngsters into his world then makes threats and promises to make them give up their younger siblings or friends. He then eats the heart of the younger sibling and puts the child's spirit in a jar. The Crooked Man then lives only as long as the youngster's spirit lives. When David refuses to give Georgie to the Crooked Man, the man dies.

The Woodsman

The Woodsman is the first person David encounters when he arrives in Elsewhere. The Woodsman meets all the people who arrive in Elsewhere in the hope that he can save at least some of them. The Woodsman is an honorable person who tries to do what's right. He wants to help David realize truths about his life, including that his jealousy toward Rose and Georgie is unwarranted. When David arrives, the Woodsman learns about David's routines that he had hoped would save his mother's life. He urges David to create routines that have some meaning, such as taking care of the people who mean the most to him.

Anna

Anna was a young girl when she was taken in by Jonathan Tulvey's family. She was very fond of Jonathan even though he resented her. Jonathan took her to Elsewhere and gave her to the Crooked Man, who ate her heart and trapped her spirit in a jar. She remained in the castle until David found her and took her to a balcony where she died.

David's Mother

David's mother loves books and passes on that love to David. She is a good mother and a kind person. She becomes ill very early in the book and dies, which has a tremendous impact on David's attitudes after that point. David hears her voice beckoning him to Elsewhere and he hears her voice several times in Elsewhere, but it's soon obvious that the voice was a trick of the Crooked Man and that his mother was actually dead.



Symbols and Symbolism

"The Book of Lost Things"

"The Book of Lost Things" is the title of this book but it is also the title of the book held by the king of Elsewhere. David believes the king uses the book for guidance in times of trouble and the Woodsman suggests the king might use it to help David get home. When David finds that book, he discovers that it's actually Jonathan Tulvey's journal and that it represents all the things he lost when he fell for the Crooked Man's trick.

Towers

Towers are seen throughout the book and are symbolic of David's life. In some cases, the towers represent something out of reach. For example, when David first sees into the world he refers to as Elsewhere, he sees a "single great tower" and hears his mother's voice from that tower. In the case of David's room at Rose's house, the tower is a combination of a place to escape with his books and a prison in a house that he hates because his mother isn't there.

Loups

The Loups are half-wolf and half-human creatures. They can run on all four legs but can also stand on their hind legs. The first of the Loups was the result of the union between Red Riding Hood and the wolf she seduced. David encounters the Loups when he first arrives in Elsewhere and recognizes them as more dangerous than the wolves that are part of their pack. The Loups only exist because they are one of Jonathan's greatest fears. When a Loup kills Jonathan, the Loups all die as well.

Routines

Routines are seen throughout the book – David has his routines that are obviously OCD. He touches specific things a specific number of times. The Woodsman tells him that he should have routines that mean something. The Woodsman sharpens his ax, cares for the forest, and tends his garden. He urges David to find routines that matter. David knows he's right but can't bring himself to believe that caring for Georgie and Rose could be part of his routine.

Books

Books literally speak to David when he is a child. They represent the opportunity to escape from his life into magical and mysterious worlds. He shares the love of reading with his mother and clings to it after her death.



The Flowers of Elsewhere

There are not many splashes of color in Elsewhere but David soon sees little clusters of flowers that have the faces of children. The flowers close their petals whenever David comes near them and the Woodsman says he believes they are “the forest’s way of remembering” children who die in the forest. The flowers tend to grow in groups, just as scared children might gather together.

Danger

Danger is an important piece of symbolism seen throughout the story. David remembers his mother warning him not to go with a stranger, even if that stranger offered candy, after a man raped and killed a little boy in their neighborhood. The dangers that await David in Elsewhere are other examples of this theme. David has to face down many dangers over the course of the story and he becomes a better man for it.

The Camera on the Bomber

When David arrives in Elsewhere, a piece of the plane erupts from the same tree. That piece has the camera that the bombers use to choose their targets. This camera brings David closer to the reality of the war because he knows that the men choose their targets by looking through these cameras. This camera is an important symbol of the true dangers of the war.

Scylla

Scylla is the name of Roland's horse. When Roland is about to enter the Fortress of Thorns, he says David should take Scylla if Roland doesn't return. After Roland's death, David does take Scylla on the remainder of his journey. When he returns to Elsewhere at the end of his life, Scylla is waiting for him.

The String

The Woodsman ties a string on the tree David used to arrive in Elsewhere but the Crooked Man ties identical strings on all the trees in Elsewhere. The Woodsman's string represents safety but the other strings represent the Crooked Man's trickery.



Settings

Elsewhere

Elsewhere is the name David gives to the land he reaches through the crack in the garden wall. It's an enchanted land and he's drawn there by the Crooked Man. The land is where he encounters the Wolves and where he is forced to begin dealing with his own fears. The land is home to fairy tale creatures and people, including Snow White, but the stories are twisted from the traditional tales. The land is dangerous because each person who arrives brings their fears with them. The Loups imagined by Jonathan Tulvey is one example of this. Elsewhere turns out to be a place where people sometimes return as their lives come to an end, serving as a type of heaven for those who choose it. David spends days in Elsewhere as a child, writes a book about it, and does return there when his life is drawing to an end.

The Woodsman's Cottage

The Woodsman's Cottage is a fortress against the creatures that have invaded the forest where David arrives in Elsewhere. The cottage is outfitted with spikes, bars, and other security measures to protect the Woodsman against the predators, including the Loups who threaten David and the Woodsman soon after David's arrival.

Rose's House

Rose lives in a large house far enough outside London that they are safe there from the majority of the fighting that occurs in London. David hates the house when he moves there as a child, mainly because it represents this new family unit that he resents. The house has been in Rose's family for a long time and David learns about Jonathan Tulvey after finding one of his books in the room that becomes David's. Ironically, David returns to the house as an adult and takes care of Rose in her old age. After her death, he could have sold it but he remains there, living out the rest of his life in that house.

The Garden

There is a garden outside Rose's house with a wall that has a crack in it. It's through this wall that David first makes his way to Elsewhere. Presumably, Jonathan and Anna arrived in Elsewhere through this wall as well. The garden is then where the airplane crashes and a piece of it sails through the wall into Elsewhere. As an adult, David has the wall sealed up to ensure that no other children can mistakenly make their way to Elsewhere. As an old man, David has a gardener create a hole in the wall so that he can return to Elsewhere as he nears the end of his life.

The Castles of Elsewhere

There are two important castles in Elsewhere. One is where the king lives and the second is where Roland finds out the fate of Raphael. The castle where the king lives is a large building that is also home to the Crooked Man. This seems to be a traditional structure with a huge underground area where David finds Anna's soul trapped in a jar. The castle where Roland finds Raphael is a magical castle that is covered with thorns. It's obviously a form of a fairy tale castle.



Themes and Motifs

Fear

Everyone who arrives in Elsewhere brings their own fears and those fears color the landscape and events for everyone who lives there. The Loups are an important example of this theme. Jonathan fears monsters so that monsters become common in the forests. He has a general fear of wolves but his more specific fear is of animals that become human. The Loups are evidence of Jonathan's fear. He has literally created the Loups with Leroi as their leader. The wolves torment and threaten everyone in the kingdom and Jonathan is really too afraid to begin fighting them. The irony of this fear is that one of the Loups does kill Jonathan. Then, without Jonathan's fear, the Loups vanish from existence. There is an important piece of imagery here in that Jonathan imagined something that frightened him and when that thing killed him, both Jonathan and his greatest fears died.

The dimness in Elsewhere is the manifestation of another of Jonathan's fears. David notes from his arrival that the sunlight is not very bright. It doesn't get bright at all during the day. Many people, especially children, tend to be afraid of the dark. That's the most likely explanation for the lack of direct sunlight in Elsewhere. David notices that the sunlight has returned to normal when he returns to Elsewhere at the end of his life. By that time, David is no longer the child who is afraid of the dark and Jonathan has died, which probably eliminates the source of the dimness.

David's fears are equally important examples of this theme. He fears the wolves and sees that their two sides are battling for supremacy. Their beastly nature is fighting for control even as they become more human. David fears that battle because he knows that both human and beast are more dangerous while fighting for dominance within the wolves. While David is afraid of the creatures he finds in Elsewhere – including the Loups, the huge worm-like beast, the trolls, and more – he is also fighting other fears both before and after his time in Elsewhere. He fears his mother's death and he fears his life without her.

Coming of Age

David is very young when his mother dies and it's no surprise that he tries to find some way to save her. He begins a series of routines that he observes each day. He believes that his mother won't die if he finds enough routines and if he is careful enough about following them. When his mother dies, David believes that he didn't have enough routines or that he didn't follow them carefully enough. His attitude on this point is very immature and it's obvious that he's not yet able to face the reality of the situation. This immaturity on this point is seen again when David believes he hears his mother calling to him from Elsewhere. In his head, he knows that she is dead, but his heart wants to believe that it's possible for her to be alive and trapped in another place. It's not until



near the end of his time in Elsewhere that he is able to admit that his mother really is dead and that it was all a trick of the Crooked man.

The Woodsman discovers David's routines on the first morning of David's arrival in Elsewhere. David explains about the routines and the Woodsman understands, but he suggests that David should find routines that have true meaning. The Woodsman takes care of others and the forest on a daily basis, and he suggests that David establish new routines that include taking care of the people in his life. At that point, David is still angry and jealous of Georgie and Rose, and can't imagine making them part of his caring routine. By the time he leaves Elsewhere, his attitude has changed.

David ages only by a few days during his time in Elsewhere but he matures dramatically. As he arrives in Elsewhere, he is filled with anger and jealousy. These emotions are so high that he doesn't even try to hide them from the people he meet. The Crooked Man has already seen David's jealousy which is why he was lured to Elsewhere in the first place. It's not clear whether David would have given up Georgie's name to the Crooked Man upon his arrival in Elsewhere, but it seems that his jealousy was so intense that he might have. However, by the time the Crooked Man actually asks for the name, David has begun to mature and realizes that he doesn't want to cause Georgie harm.

To a great extent, David learns his new, mature attitudes from the Woodsman and Roland. Both are honorable and brave, and both are willing to do whatever it takes to help others. The first example of this is seen when the Woodsman remains on the edge of the chasm, fighting the wolves, in order to give David a chance to get away. Another important example is seen when Roland halts his own quest in order to help the people of the village. He puts himself in danger and the villagers are angry at him after the beast is killed, but he doesn't grow angry over it. David takes note of these things and learns from them so that he matures rapidly during his time in Elsewhere.

Abandonment and Betrayal

David's mother dies when he is very young. In David's mind, his mother abandoned him which is the ultimate act of betrayal for a mother. His mother is taken to something like a hospital for terminally ill patients for some time before her death, and David and his father travel often to this place to see her. The trips are brutal for David because he then has little time to do things that are still required, such as school work. His father is often gone, even when David doesn't make the trip, which David is bound to see as yet another person who isn't there for him. When his mother dies, David feels a sense of relief, then he feels guilty for that emotion. No doubt, he feels that his relief is a betrayal to his mother.

Another example of this theme is seen in David's relationship with his father, Rose, and Georgie after the death of David's mother. David's father demands that he be polite to Rose and he obeys the letter of the command but refuses to warm up to her. David sees his father's relationship with Rose as a betrayal of David's mother. The timing of the



marriage and of Georgie's birth indicate that there might have been something between David's father and Rose even before David's mother died. At one point, David admits that he wanted a younger sibling but that he wanted that child to be part of his original family. This means that any affection David might feel toward Georgie would feel to David like yet another betrayal.

When David arrives in Elsewhere, the Woodsman takes David under his protection but he makes it clear that he can't really keep David safe from the wolves on a long-term basis. David is afraid in this new land but is determined to follow the sound of the voice that he believes is his mother's. Having enduring the feeling of betraying her already, he doesn't want to repeat the actions he sees as a mistake and becomes determined to find his mother. But he is also immediately aware of the dangers of this new land and he becomes dependent on the Woodsman from the first moments of their meeting. When they begin their journey to the castle, David depends on the Woodsman for protection. When they reach the bridge, the Woodsman has to remain behind to fight off the wolves. David is forced to cut the ropes of the bridge, leaving the Woodsman behind. He's devastated by his action but has no choice. David feels a sense of abandonment again because he is again alone to face the dangers of this new land.

The ultimate betrayal is seen when the children of the story give up their siblings to the Crooked Man. The Crooked Man feeds on the jealousy of youngsters, promising them they will serve as the kings of Elsewhere if they give up their younger siblings. He has been alive for thousands of years, since the beginning of time, and has always found children so overcome by jealousy that they are willing to give up their younger siblings. The children exhibit the anger outwardly so that the Crooked Man is able to choose victims who will fall in with his plans.

Books

The importance of Books in David's life is a theme seen from the beginning of the story. David and his mother spent a lot of time together, each reading from their own book but happy just to be together sharing their love of reading. After his mother's death, David inherits all the books "suitable" for him and he immerses himself into reading because it makes him feel closer to his mother. He doesn't understand all the books but continues to read because of that connection. However, David doesn't care to read the books his mother bought that were obviously meant for David. They include tales of knights, beasts, folk tales, and fairy tales. David's mother had loved these stories as a child and imparted that love on to David. After her death, David tries to avoid these books because they painfully remind him of his mother. The narrator notes that the books refused to allow David to ignore them and that they talked to him. The voices of the books become louder over time.

The personification of books is another aspect of this theme. David says that books only come alive when they're being read, whether it's one person reading aloud to another or someone reading silently to themselves. Later, the books literally come alive for David. They talk to themselves and to each other, and only David can hear them. When he's in



the psychiatrist's office, the books on his shelves are very vocal in their disdain for the doctor and his opinions. He sometimes has trouble even understanding what the doctor is saying because the books drown out all other sounds.

The parallels between the stories in fairy tale books and the adventures David encounters in Elsewhere is yet another example of the importance of books to the story. David encounters traditional story book characters and situations, but all have twists. The Woodsman tells David that the story he's always believed about Little Red Riding Hood isn't how the story actually happened. David encounters Snow White but she's fat and demanding to the point of being rude. The dwarfs are literally her slaves. The dwarfs tell David that his traditional version of Goldilocks was wrong, and that the bears actually ate her. In the traditional stories, knights were searching for damsels in distress and they always triumphed. Roland, a brave and honorable knight, is on a quest to find out what happened to his dead lover and Roland dies on the quest.

"The Book of Lost Things" in Jonathan's possession is one of the most important examples of this theme. David sets out for the king's castle with the belief that this book can help him find his way home. Instead, the book proves invaluable in helping David discover the truth about the Crooked Man, Elsewhere, and what would happen to him if he gave in to the Crooked Man's demands. With this knowledge, David is able to defeat the Crooked Man, which gives David the ability to return home.

Jealousy

Jealousy is a key theme in "The Book of Lost Things." The Crooked Man feeds on children who are experiencing high levels of jealousy toward a sibling or friend. Jonathan and Anna were one set of the Crooked Man's victims. In their case, Jonathan was an only child until Anna was orphaned and became a member of their family. Jonathan was jealous of Anna and angry at her presence. When the Crooked Man gave Jonathan the option of giving him Anna, Jonathan apparently thought about it for awhile but eventually decided to do it. He wrote in his book that he had made that decision. When David reads Jonathan's book, he feels that he and David are in similar situations. He doesn't like what he reads and realizes that he doesn't really like Jonathan because of Jonathan's actions. His recognition of Jonathan's poor choices is one of the early signs of David's maturity.

Before David goes to Elsewhere, he is very much like Jonathan. He is jealous of Georgie's presence and hates that Rose is part of his life. He is rude and uncontrollable with regard to Rose and sees both Rose and Georgie as interlopers in his life. He wants his life to return to the way it was before his mother's death. David allows himself to be lured to Elsewhere by his desire to find his mother is still alive. His desire to return to his old life is taken to a higher level by his jealousy of Rose and Georgie. He sees his father spending so much time with Georgie and Rose, and he longs to have all his father's attention. This jealousy is the emotion that captures the Crooked Man's attention and puts David in Elsewhere.



David feels this jealousy and anger toward Rose and Georgie until he spends time in Elsewhere. It seems possible that he might never have gotten past these emotions without spending the time in Elsewhere. It's only when the Crooked Man threatens Georgie that David realizes he feels some affection toward Georgie. When the Crooked Man offers to fulfill David's dreams in return for giving up Georgie's name, David recognizes it as a trick. When the Crooked Man threatens David unless he gives up Georgie, David still refuses.

David is very much like Jonathan before David encounters the dangerous situations in Elsewhere. Those situations help David accept that his mother is really dead and that he's actually feeling a level of affection toward Georgie. This is David's newly developing maturity, the coming of age that is another of the book's themes.

David's relationship with Georgie changes dramatically after David's return from Elsewhere. They become much closer and Georgie's death seems to be one of the things that hurts David in his adult life.



Styles

Point of View

The book is intended to seem that it's presented from David's point of view and that perspective remains limited throughout the majority of the book. This means that the reader only knows what David knows, and only becomes aware of facts as he becomes aware of it. For example, David believes he hears his mother calling. Though the adult reader will believe that David's mother is dead, David believes he is hearing his mother's voice. Elsewhere is a magical place and it seems possible that David might find his mother or some reincarnation of his mother. He finally admits that his mother is dead, making it clear to the reader that she isn't going to reappear in the story. While the story is written in third person with David as the main character, the author gives the story an interesting twist near the end of the book when he reveals that David wrote the story. The author says that this book was one of many works written by David and that children often wanted to meet him because of the book. This revelation doesn't appear until near the end of the story. The author could have chosen to present the story in first person but that would have eliminated the twist in the perspective.

There are a few exceptions to the limited perspective. In one passage, the perspective switches to Fletcher, a man who lives in the village that was attacked by the beast. In that scene, Fletcher faces down Leroi, the leader of the Loups. It's not clear why the author chose to make that one of the exceptions to the limited perspective, but it may have been to make it clear that Fletcher was a brave and honorable man, or that the Loups were organizing quickly to follow David. There are a few other exceptions to the limited perspective. The Crooked Man has a confrontation with Leroi and David doesn't witness that scene. The Crooked Man also visits Georgie's room, which has a sinister element that seems more intense because David doesn't know he's there.

Language and Meaning

Personification—meaning describing or treating inanimate objects as though they were alive or had human characteristics—is one of the literary devices seen in the book. An important use of this device is seen when the books are personified. The books literally speak to David and become an incredible distraction when he's having his sessions with Dr. Moberly. There are other instances of personification, such as death and the sun which are given human qualities. Metaphors and similes are another literary element of the book. In Chapter 2, David compares the students who drift away from each other over the summer as, “scattered ... like dandelion seeds.”

Another important literary device seen in the book is symbolism. Georgie, David's younger half-brother, is one of those symbols. David is unable to love Georgie in the early years because David sees Georgie as a symbol of the changes that David hates. Georgie would never have been born except for the death of David's mother. While



David doesn't blame Georgie for his mother's death and for his father's marriage to Rose, the baby reminds David of those things.

The book is set in London and there are some British terms and phrases seen in the book. For example, David hears the books in Dr. Moberly's office arguing while he's having a session there. One of them says "poppycock," which is a traditional British term that means nonsense. David refers to his mother as "mum," which is another traditional British word meaning "Mother."

The overall language is fairly straightforward and there are no curse words found in the book. The young hero, the references to fairy tales, the magical land, and the adventures seem to lend themselves to a young audience but there are passages that could be disturbing to young readers. For example, the Crooked Man's methods of torture are somewhat gruesome and some contain sexual content. He forces youngsters into the beds of adults where they learn about sex. This torments the youngsters so that they grow up to be sadistic adults. There are some other sexual overtones that may not be appropriate for young readers.

Structure

The book is divided into 38 chapters. Each is titled by a number presented in Roman numerals and by a title. The titles give clues about the upcoming events. In most cases, the titles are very clear, as is seen in Chapter 14, "Of Snow White, Who is Very Unpleasant Indeed." In this chapter, David meets Snow White and the 7 dwarfs, and Snow White is not at all like the traditional fairy tale character. There are a few titles that are somewhat more cryptic. For example, the first chapter is titled "Of All that Was Found and All that Was Lost." The title doesn't really give a good indication of what the reader should expect from this chapter.

The story is presented in chronological order. The book opens as David and his father are dealing with the illness and then the death of David's mother. By Chapter 3, David is living in Rose's house with a new half-brother. In Chapter 4, David learns that one of Rose's relatives, Jonathan Tulvey, had once lived in the house and that he had vanished along with a girl being adopted by the family. Chapter 6 through 31 take place in Elsewhere, beginning with David's arrival there, his meeting of the various characters, his encounters with the Crooked Man, and his return to his own world. The next chapter details events that happen after David's return. The book's final chapter is a play on the words used in the title of the first chapter. Chapter 1 is "Of All that Was Found and All that Was Lost." Chapter 33 is "Of All that Was Lost and All that Was Found."

Quotes

Once upon a time – for that is how all stories should begin – there was a boy who lost his mother.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 1, "Of All That Was Found and All That Was Lost" paragraph 1)

Importance: The story opens with the classic line, “once upon a time,” in keeping with the idea that David is about to wind up in a land filled with fairy tale creatures. The fact that the line includes the information that the boy “lost his mother” is an indication of the significance of that event. The entire story is driven by the fact that David's mother died, putting him in the position of having a stepmother and half-brother, and of experiencing all the jealousy and anger of that situation. It also put him in the position to believe he might be able to save his mother, which pushes him to go on through the opening into Elsewhere.

But the feeling of relief went away after only a few days, and the David felt guilty for being glad that they no longer had to do all the things his mother's illness had required of them, and in the months that followed the guilt did not disappear.

-- Narrator (Chapter 2, "Of Rose and Dr. Moberley and the Importance of Details" paragraph 6)

Importance: This quote indicates David's guilt about his emotions following his mother's death. His first reaction is that he's relieved that he and his father don't have to spend so much of their time traveling to the hospital to see his mother but he soon feels guilty about that reaction. This guilt makes him more susceptible to the suggestions by the Crooked Man that his mother might be alive and that David might be able to rescue her.

The strangest thing of all was that one of the voices sounded like his mother's. It was the one that spoke loudest and clearest. She called to him from out of the darkness.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 5, "Of Intruders and Transformations" paragraph 15)

Importance: David is describing the voices he hears from the books. The fact that he hears his mother's voice indicates his desire that she is still alive. He says the voice tells him that she is alive and that sets the stage for David to enter Elsewhere in search of his mother.

The bombsight made what they had been doing seem more real, somehow, more awful. He thought of the families huddled in their Anderson shelters, the children crying and the adults hoping that whatever descended would strike far away from the, or the crowds gathered in the Underground stations, listening to the explosions, dust and dirt falling on their heads as the bombs shook the ground above.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 7, "Of the Woodsman and the Work of His Ax" paragraph 8)

Importance: When they moved into Rose's house in the country, David had wished that they remained in London where he believed life would be more exciting. That camera,



known as a bombsight, makes David realize that war is not an adventure and that the dangers are horrible and real. This is one step in David's emerging maturity.

Could a mistake have been made? Maybe she wasn't meant to die, and now she was trying to hold on here in the hope that someone would find her and bring her back to those whom she loved.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 10, "Of Tricksters and Trickery" paragraph 3)

Importance: David is still holding onto the idea that his mother might not be dead. He will have to face more danger in the days to come before he gives up on this idea and admits what he already knows – that his mother is really dead.

I've seen them in my book of Greek myths. For some reason, I don't think they belong in this story, yet here they are ...”

-- David (Chapter 12, "Of Bridges and Riddles, and the Many Unappealing Characteristics of Trolls" paragraph 18)

Importance: David has just encountered the Harpies for the first time. He is realizing that this land is like a book or a story, and he has the sense that the Harpies aren't in keeping with the rest of the creatures he's encountered. This is the first clue that there's something or someone manipulating Elsewhere.

He had quite liked the dwarfs. He often had no idea what they were talking about, but for a group of homicidal, class-obsessed small people, they were really rather good fun.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 15, "Of the Deer-Girl" paragraph 16)

Importance: David is just leaving after spending the night with the dwarfs. This sums up what David knows about them, including that they tried to kill Snow White and that they are obsessed with the idea that they are living in an oppressed society that seems to resemble Communism.

As he spoke, he could not hide his resentment of Rose and her baby. It made him feel ashamed, and more like a child than he wished to appear in front of Roland.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 19, "Of Roland's Tale and the Wold Scout" paragraph 9)

Importance: David is telling Roland about his life and his world, including how Rose and Georgie came to be part of his life. He realizes that he sound petty and jealous, and Roland makes David want to be a better person. This is part of the Coming of Age theme seen in the book.

Roland, are you dead? Are we dead?

-- David (Chapter 21, "Of the Coming of the Beast" paragraph 39)

Importance: David is frustrated by what he doesn't know about this land and the situation, and he is considering the fact that he might actually be dead already and that



this is some sort of afterlife. It later appears that David returns to this place upon his death and that he might be here now as the result of being in a coma in his own world.

Find me here and we can have our old life back again. Rose and Georgie will be gone, and you and I will take their places.”

-- The Enchantress (Chapter 25, "Of the Enchantress and What Became of Raphael and Roland" paragraph 18)

Importance: David hears these words inside the Fortress of Thorns when he is still holding out hope that his mother is alive. It's only a short time after this that David has to accept that his mother really is dead.

David felt a kinship with the boy, but also a dislike for him. His anger at the girl, and at his parents for bringing her into his world, was so intense that it veered into pure hatred.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 28, "Of the Book of Lost Things" paragraph 2)

Importance: David has begun reading some of Jonathan Tulvey's book, which is "The Book of Lost Things." This book helps David figure out what's really going on and that he has to resist the temptations offered by the Crooked Man. This is another example of the Coming of Age theme. David recognizes that he is very much like Jonathan and that the characteristics they have in common are not admirable traits.

They love you, and without you their lives will be poorer. You have a father, and a brother, and a woman who would be a mother to you, if you let her.”

-- The Woodsman (Chapter 32, "Of Rose" paragraph 3)

Importance: The Woodsman is urging David to return to his own world because he has a family there. David was not ready to hear these words when he arrived in Elsewhere, but he is ready now.