

Cold Days: A Novel of the Dresden Files Study Guide

**Cold Days: A Novel of the Dresden Files by Jim
Butcher**

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Plot Summary

Cold Days: A Novel of the Dresden Files is a fantasy novel by American author Jim Butcher. At 515 pages, it is the longest installment of the Dresden Files series to date, and takes Dresden from his coma in *Arctis Tor* to the fulfillment of his responsibility as Winter Knight.

In this 14th book of the series, wizard Harry Dresden must face his biggest battle yet, and learn the full scope of his place in the universe. He might prefer not to be the Winter Knight, but it has saved his life and he has a role to fill, whether he likes it or not.

For a significant period of time, Dresden has been absent from the mortal world. And the people he loves have gone on. Some of them have found love. Others have grown stronger and learned to survive without him. They haven't exactly been happy, and they have missed him, but they have lived their lives, fighting still against the forces of darkness arrayed against them in his absence.

Dresden finds that all is not what it seems to be in the dichotomy between Light and Darkness, Summer and Winter. Summer powers can be just as deadly as those of Winter. Rules can be broken, and consequences will be had from that breakage. Everyone has a mantle to bear, and struggling with the consequences of power is part of that battle.

Dresden has more power than he ever has. He has his mature wizardly power, but he also has been given the power of Winter. He fears turning into a monster, destroying his long-held moral code along with it. It is only his free will and his desire to stay true to his ethics that keep him from falling off the abyss. Everyone who cares about him must decide if he is capable of holding on, keeping the monster at bay. No one knows for sure if he is capable of doing so, even himself.

In the course of the novel, Dresden journeys back from death, and must face the people he left behind. He has to learn to trust those who have earned it, and to face his own fears. He also has to fully accept his own abilities, realizing his full potential. He finds that he can fight the grimmest, most powerful forces in the universe and outside it.



Chapters 1-4

Chapters 1-4 Summary

Cold Days: A Novel of the Dresden Files, first published in 2012, is the fourteenth book in the best-selling Dresden Files Series. The author was born in 1971 in Independence, Missouri, and still lives there with his family. The Dresden Files was made into a television series that ran for one season in 2007.

Chapter 1. Harry Dresden wakes up in the stronghold of Faery Queen Mab, Arctis Tor, recovering from his near-death and subsequent coma. He is being nursed by a changeling, Sarissa, and has been semi-conscious for some time. He is now the Winter Knight, in the employ of Queen Mab. When he's fully recovered mentally, Queen Mab visits his bedside. She tries to suffocate him with a pillow, and he escapes. This becomes a routine and goes on for 77 days. He does physical therapy with Sarissa each day, and then Mab tries to kill him and he is forced to exercise his magic skills to save himself.

Chapter 2. Dresden is invited to a formal dinner. He discovers he has a servant and guide called the Cat Sith, an ancient and legendary magical malk. Cat Sith is not respectful toward Dresden, even wants to kill him, but obeys all orders that don't conflict with those of the Queen. When Dresden asks what the occasion is for the dinner, he is told it is to celebrate a birth. Escorted by Cat Sith, this is the first time Dresden has been out of the Knight's chambers in Arctis Tor. He asks Cat Sith if there's anyone he should be worried about at the dinner, and the malk tells him he must never turn his back on anyone.

Chapter 3. Cat Sith brings him to a room. Sarissa comes in, and they talk. She is to be Dresden's escort at the dinner. Dresden asks her about herself, and her relationship to Mab. He assures her that he won't be like the previous Winter Knight, and she is doubtful. He tries to assure her he won't take advantage of his power over her. She doesn't believe him, because her experience tells her otherwise. Dresden realizes that he likes her, but also that she is being used by Mab as a temptation, so he will break his moral code. He asks her about what to expect at the dinner party. She tells him about two rules that must be followed on pain of death: that no blood must be shed without the Queen's command, and that no one may speak to Queen Mab without permission. They leave the room, led by Cat Sith.

Chapter 4. Cat Sith leads them down ever-darkening passageways, until he disappears. Dresden lights the space with his amulet, and finds they're in an ice cave decorated as a gigantic reproduction of his now-destroyed basement apartment. Suddenly the room is filled with a horde of dark beings. He plans to defend himself, but is stopped when Sarissa reminds him of the Rules. The room lightens, and the creatures of the Winter Court yell "Surprise!" and he finds it is his birthday that is being celebrated. The Winter Lady Maeve arrives, dressed very seductively. She tries to seduce Dresden, who



realizes it is actually a murder attempt. He turns her down with many insults, loudly enough for everyone present to hear. This surprises Sarissa.

Chapters 1-4 Analysis

Dresden wakes up bewildered and uncertain, surrounded by a place and creatures he cannot dare to trust. Even Sarissa, who obviously cares for him, is under suspicion because she is in the employ of the Winter Queen, and beholden to her. His servant and helper Cat Sith is a murderous, violent creature that would like nothing better than to slaughter Dresden, but must obey him in the most humiliating ways, as long as it doesn't conflict with Mab's orders. Even Cat Sith tells him that he shouldn't trust anyone.

Every day, he is toughened by Queen Mab's murderous attacks on him, and for the first time he has to fight without access to all his wizardly accessories, like his staff, his amulet, and the protection of his coat. By the end of these 77 days, he is sharper and stronger than he's ever been, even without the help of his Winter powers, though it is the mantle of the Winter Knight that keeps him from suffering from his previous and current injuries. He finds, for instance, that he's now nearly impervious to pain.

Dresden begins to realize the impact of the Winter Knight's mantle on his psyche, feeling the first whispers of it in the sexual temptation embodied by Sarissa, Maeve, and the admiring female Sidhe. He feels confident that he won't succumb to his "inner monster" like Lloyd Slate, the previous Winter Knight, but no one believes him, including Sarissa, who has experience in this regard. Dresden becomes somewhat aware that everything around him is designed to tempt or test his mortal moral code. Despite his confidence, Dresden worries about what is to come, realizing that people in general aren't as good at handling power as they think they are, and that overconfidence is a sign of taking a step toward danger.

Dresden's Birthday Party is held in a bizarre recreation of his former apartment. He is being "reborn" as the Winter Knight. What is the hugeness of the apartment furniture and other formerly familiar things meant to evoke in him? Is it to remind him that he will no longer fit in the mortal world? In any case, he is surrounded by the Winter Queen's rules and the Winter Lady's murderous intent. Despite the fact that one of Mab's primary rules is that no blood must be shed, any other kind of violence is apparently encouraged for entertainment purposes.



Chapters 5-8

Chapters 5-8 Summary

Chapter 5. Dresden feels uncomfortable, like he does at all parties. Eldest Gruff comes to greet Dresden and Sarissa. Sarissa addresses him as "Lord Gruff" and informs him that her care for Dresden was "Mab's price," which she doesn't explain to Dresden. They are also greeted by Lord Herne (the Erlking) and Kringle. Kringle's appearance and demeanor surprises Dresden. While Dresden is distracted, Sarissa is forcibly led away by a Sidhe wearing a Cincinnati Reds ballcap. Amid warnings, Dresden pursues them.

Chapter 6. Dresden goes after Sarissa across the dance floor, which is difficult until he calls upon his wizardly powers. Dresden confronts the Sidhe, who threatens to kill Sarissa. Dresden identifies him as The Redcap, a murderous faerie. Dresden insults him, and threatens to kill the Redcap if he kills Sarissa. While sparring verbally, he is surprised to find that the Redcap has lured him into a trap, and he is threatened by a large rawhead and an ogre. Mab appears. Everyone kneels except the Erlking, Kringle, Eldest Gruff and Dresden, who bow their heads in respect. It becomes apparent that Maeve has been watching and has orchestrated the potential for violence. Mab insists the party continue, and Dresden will have to fight his own fight.

Chapter 7. Dresden knows he can probably save himself, but is unsure about whether he can save Sarissa as well. Dresden suggests a game, something faeries can't resist. The Redcap tries to refuse, but Dresden turns to Maeve, and offers her a prize: he will go with her willingly if he loses, and if he wins Sarissa will go free and there will be peace. Maeve declares she's already won because Sarissa will die, but he tempts her with the prospect of winning Mab's Knight in front of everyone. She accepts, and Dresden challenges the Redcap to a fight. Sarissa is now held captive by the ogre. They fight aggressively and wound one another, avoiding the spillage of blood. Sarissa takes advantage of everyone's focus on the fight, unsheaths a rod of iron she has hidden, and hurts the ogre by touching him with it. In reaction, the ogre strikes Sarissa, splitting her lip. Her blood drops on the floor, and everything stops. Queen Mab calls upon Dresden as her Knight to punish the ogre. Using Winter magic, Dresden destroys the ogre. With the Queen's consent, he speaks to the gathering and tells them they must not abuse mortals in his presence. When one questions his right, he destroys that Sidhe too, which shocks everyone. The Queen banishes Maeve and chastises Sarissa. Mab demands a dance with Dresden, and heals his shoulder. As they dance, she praises him, and he realizes he has passed her test. She tells him he's ready for her first command, which is to kill Maeve.

Chapter 8. Dresden is concerned about his mission. Cat Sith approves of Dresden's violent demonstration of his power. Dresden wants to leave the party and asks Sarissa if she too would like to leave. She indicates that he has many female Sidhe admirers and she wouldn't blame him for going with them. He is tempted, but resists, and leaves with



Sarissa and Cat Sith. She wonders why he declined to enjoy the rewards of his station, and Dresden realizes she believes he might instead pursue her for his pleasure. He tells her he doesn't want to take advantage of anyone who doesn't have the full power of consent. Back at his suite, they sit on the couch and talk. They exchange questions, and he confesses that he has killed many people, twice when not under personal threat of death. He also confesses he doesn't speak of his family because it pains him, and he has no home to go back to because everyone thinks him dead. He doesn't discuss his affection for Karrin Murphy. She tells him she serves Mab in exchange for a cure for her genetic disease, and that her circumstances prevent trusting relationships. She also tells him that her job is to be Mab's friend and explain humanity to her. She asks whom Mab has ordered him to kill. He won't tell her, and their intimacy vanishes. She questions whether she is the target. He denies it. As she leaves, she asks if he's going to obey Mab, and he tells her he isn't sure.

Chapters 5-8 Analysis

Dresden finds himself drawn to Sarissa, even wondering what it would be like to have the domestic comforts of an ordinary life and a wife. He is driven to protect her at all costs, a usual part of Dresden's moral code, but he is dealing with the added problem of unpredictable supernatural beings and the handicap of his nearly acid-trip-like surroundings. He is surrounded by sexual temptation, but he resists it without much effort. He is understanding of Sarissa's suspicion, but without hesitation explains he will not even accept her if she offers, since by his estimation, she is incapable of empowered consent. When they bond during their conversation in his suite after the party, Sarissa begins to trust him, despite her surroundings and history, and Dresden begins to open up about himself, uncharacteristically. It is only when Dresden withholds information that their newfound intimacy disappears.

His social encounter with the iconic Erlking, Eldest Gruff, and Kringle is meaningful in that they are his equals as the Winter Knight—none of them get on their knees at the entrance of the Winter Queen. Dresden only vaguely seems to understand his rank in this context, and that they are essentially his Three Wise Elders. If he knew how, could he ask for their advice? (It is significant that they much later prove themselves all as his allies: Eldest Gruff restrains the violent temper of the Summer Queen, and the Erlking and Kringle both assist Dresden in his fight against the Outsiders during the Wild Hunt.)

Maeve proves herself to be profoundly manipulative and frightening, but Dresden sees it as part of her nature as the Winter Lady. He ends up beating her at her own game, however, taking advantage of that very nature in saving Sarissa by turning Maeve's murder attempt into an entertaining party game.

Dresden gets to exercise his newly earned fighting prowess and resistance to pain while fighting the Redcap. He calls upon all his skills—both mental and physical—and it isn't difficult to see that this he is playing directly into Mab's plans by demonstrating his power, and therefore her power in the acquisition of him as a Knight. This culminates when Sarissa's blood hits the floor, and Dresden is called upon to be her avenger. His



expression of murderous power brings the party to a peak. When it is questioned, he reiterates the point by killing without hesitation. While Maeve is banished, Dresden is praised and rewarded with healing and released to perform his first task. The most murderous of supernatural creatures, the Cat Sith, is pleased at his violence.



Chapters 9-12

Chapters 9-12 Summary

Chapter 9. Dresden tells Cat Sith he needs to go to Chicago, and the malk opens a closet door in Dresden's suite, which opens onto Michigan Avenue. For the night, it is the only entrance between the human world and the land of Faerie. As he steps out into his home, a flashy old hearse pulls up, Dresden's new car. He opens the driver's side door to find it full of Wee Folk, a tiny army of winged faeries led by Toot in Dresden's support. Dresden goes to Waldo Butters' apartment, and finds it protected by magic. He breaks in, and his presence fries the computer. Dresden's spirit assistant, Bob, greets him in shock. When Bob finds that Dresden is now Mab's hit man, he is upset. Then Dresden realizes the spirit is stalling, distracting him. He is attacked from behind by a large wolf.

Chapter 10. Dresden fights off the wolf, but before anyone is seriously injured, they both realize they know each other. The werewolf transforms into red-headed Andi. She is surprised to see him because she thought he was dead. Dresden struggles with his Winter-fueled rage. Andi threatens him with a gun, because he wants Bob, and she isn't sure he is really himself. Finally, she relaxes a little, wondering why he broke in. He tells her Butters can't be seen as his accomplice, and she must remain a bystander. He tells Andi he will have Bob back by dawn. He intends to knock her out, but his moral code won't let him, so he apologizes for not being able to protect her. He tells her to call the police and that she can tell only Butters about what really happened. Dresden takes Bob.

Chapter 11. Dresden tells Bob and Toot about his murderous mission. They are both shocked. Bob informs Dresden that he can't kill Maeve because she's the Winter Lady, and immortal, which Dresden is surprised to hear, since he had previously killed the Summer Lady. Bob explains that he was able to do this at a specific magical place made by the Faerie Queens for that purpose. Bob confesses he knows how to kill any immortal, but is reluctant to tell for his own protection. Dresden persuades him that Mab must want him to divulge the secret. In exchange, Bob makes Dresden promise to make him a spare vessel so he can escape if the skull is destroyed. Bob informs him that the one time immortals are vulnerable is on Halloween, when they acquire their energy from the mortal world. Halloween is the next evening, so Dresden has less than 24 hours to come up with a plan and finish the job. However, as Bob points out, there is the mystery of why Mab wants Maeve dead, since all the Faerie Queens and their Ladies are not specific individuals, and the mantle will only pass to another whose self will transform to fit the role. This reminds Dresden that he too is filling a role that is bound to change him. When he asks Bob about it, Bob tells him that he has already felt it in the intensity of his emotions. Dresden concludes that perhaps Mab just wants a weaker Lady for a time. He wonders why Mab doesn't do the deed herself, and decides it's because Maeve is a threat to her, and wants him specifically to deal with it. Toot suddenly flashes a warning



in front of them, and Dresden stops the car just before a black duffle bag drops onto the street from above and explodes.

Chapter 12. Dresden's new powers keep him from losing consciousness, but he is deeply disoriented. The car has crashed into a wall, and the windshield is broken. While he recovers and is assessing the situation, he is shot by nails, which cripple him with pain until he pulls them out. His Little Folk allies, the Za Lord's Guard, defend him against another group of tiny faeries, led by one in fishhook armor. Toot and his faeries fight well, but they are nearly outmatched by the attackers. Dresden calls up his Winter magic and blows the enemy faeries away, temporarily. Toot fights the enemy leader, Captain Hook, and is wounded. Dresden gets Toot into the car, and they try to get away, while the attackers break the windows. The car crashes and can't move, and the faeries attempt to blow it up. Dresden grabs Bob and Toot, and attempts to run for it, protected by a shield spell. He trips and falls. Cats appear from everywhere, and the attackers flee. The cats disappear, and Molly Carpenter walks out of the alley.

Chapters 9-12 Analysis

Dresden's return home is bittersweet. No one knows he is still alive, and they are all profoundly suspicious of him, disbelieving he is really himself. Even the deeply wise Bob is not privy to what has happened to him without being told. One truly can't go home again. His new role as an outsider is exemplified by the replacement of his old car by the flashy vintage hearse.

Bob returns to his role as Dresden's trusted advisor and ally, giving him the information he needs to perform his mission, and then some. The reader learns that immortals are vulnerable in certain times and places, and those times and places are clearly bound by rules. It is also made clear that all the important roles in Faerie have nothing to do with individual personalities. No matter who takes on the mantle, it is the mantle itself that defines the role of Queen, Lady and Knight, not the other way around. Dresden realizes that no matter how strong he thinks he is, the mantle will win in the end. He also sees that all his turbulent emotions are evidence of the transformation into a creature that is not himself.

During the fight with the enemy Little Folk, Dresden demonstrates that in addition to his strengths, he has also acquired the trade weakness of the faeries, the vulnerability to iron. Getting shot by nails weakens him almost fatally. He must use his Winter magic to save himself, Bob and Toot, but in the end it is only his former apprentice Molly who is capable of saving the day. This is a significant transition.



Chapters 13-16

Chapters 13-16 Summary

Chapter 13. Dresden is happy to see Molly, his former apprentice, but surprised that she knows he's alive and where to find him. She is more concerned with his injuries than answering his questions. His training and Winter magic have left him less hurt than he could be. Dresden frees the car and they slowly drive off. Molly has matured since they last met, and she veils the car with magic. They go to Molly's apartment, where she has prepared a room for him. He considers keeping his situation from her in his usual way, but feels it would be better for her safety to tell her almost everything. Dresden apologizes to her for their last meeting, but Molly is past it. He continues to be impressed by how she has changed. Molly treats both Dresden and Toot's wounds. She confesses that she's visited his island, Demonreach. She tells Dresden that she and his godmother believe it's about to explode catastrophically.

Chapter 14. They discuss the island. Only Dresden's faerie godmother and Mab also know about the impending disaster. Molly has not told the White Council about it, because they view her as a criminal fugitive. Dresden encourages her not to think of them as entirely enemy. He realizes that the reason for the Faerie lockdown is because Mab wants to give him time to deal with the island's energy buildup without interference. They go to the marina, and Dresden recalls being shot, and why. When he boards the boat he is ambushed by Thomas, his half-brother. When Thomas is convinced that Dresden isn't an enemy, he becomes angry that Dresden didn't contact him, and also that he tried to kill himself rather than turn into a monster. Dresden is repentant, and they reconcile.

Chapter 15. They go to the island. Dresden fills Thomas in on what's happening, except for his hit-mission. Thomas chastises him for not getting in touch with the people he loves, and they discuss Thomas' love life. As they arrive at the island, Molly asks why Thomas was waiting in the boat. He is surprised and tells her she herself called him and told him to be there. They realize that someone else wants them together at the island, and suspect a trap. They embark with caution, and with guns. Dresden's connection with the island tells him that they are alone, but that Molly is correct about the energy build-up. Molly and Thomas stay on the dock while Dresden goes up to the tower. He finds the cottage has been prepared for him. He wakes up Bob and they confer. Bob is confused to find that the magic at the cottage is very old, sophisticated, and unfamiliar. Dresden feels out of his depth. Demonreach appears in its visible form. For the first time in Dresden's experience, it speaks to him. It notices the presence of Bob, and admits there is trouble, and that Dresden can help. It tells Dresden that "the well is under attack" and "it must be defended." Dresden takes Bob and they follow Demonreach to a hidden staircase leading below the surface of the island.

Chapter 16. The stairs go down a very long way. Dresden asks why Demonreach called him a Warden, and the spirit tells him that there are now many, and there used to be



only one. Dresden asks who made the magical place, infused with so much power. The spirit points to a sigil over the door, and Dresden recognizes it as the sign of Merlin. The spirit shows Dresden how to enter the cavern where he had recovered from his near-death, tended by Mab and Demonreach. Dresden remembers the pain he experienced. He asks what the chamber is for, and Demonreach tells him it's for "containment of the least." Dresden looks closer and finds that there are familiar evil creatures buried under crystals in the floor. It is revealed that there are many others likewise imprisoned inside twelve long tunnels extending down from the cavern. Demonreach calls it "the well." Dresden realizes that it's a prison, and he is the warden.

Chapters 13-16 Analysis

Dresden finds that Molly is no longer young and carefree, and is instead strong both magically and emotionally, even hardened, which concerns him. He feels that he is responsible for what she's become, and he's not wrong, though it is obvious she can take care of herself. Her confidence and competence will make her a valuable ally, and she proves that in physical terms by providing him a refuge in her new apartment. He finds himself constantly impressed by her skills and demeanor. He tries to give Molly the benefit of more truth on his part, but still withholds pertinent information without any real reason. As usual, he tells himself that it is to protect her. She, on the other hand, shares her knowledge without much reservation, showing she trusts him far more than he trusts her, if not emotionally.

Thomas is a representative of all Dresden's neglected familial obligations and responsibilities, his conscience nagging at him about how he's neglected both his daughter and Karrin Murphy, with whom he has unresolved romantic business. As a "monster" himself, Thomas calls out Dresden for having had himself nearly killed rather than turn into the Winter Knight, and resentful that he didn't call upon him as his brother. When they reconcile, they demonstrate the unconditional love expected of family members, something Dresden could stand to show in his other close relationships. Despite the fact that Thomas is a vampire—a dead predatory creature—he demonstrates his ability to have more healthy loving relationships than Dresden, an irony that can't be missed.

Instead of having his closest relationships with people, Dresden is most intimate with an island, and Thomas jokingly calls him a "geosexual." Luckily for the world, this intimacy is with a deeply ancient and magical being, and is necessary, but the alien nature of this relationship is profound. Dresden has been reborn down inside its depths, as if in a mother's womb. His finding that he is not just a groundskeeper, but an essential Warden of the most important prison in the universe is another boost to his understanding of his place in the Order of Things. He isn't just a wizard or Queen Mab's servant; he is also the only thing that stands in the way of the destruction of his beloved Chicago and everyone he cares for. He also finds that all his worst nightmares are held beneath an island he knows better than any place on earth. He is the Warden of "the Well" and Demonreach is the Order, the Guard. Wells are places of unfathomable depth, and in this case it holds an impossible number of dangers. It should be heartening to Dresden

that once again he is worthy of great responsibility and revelations handed down to him by the great Merlin himself. However, he doubts his ability, even in the face of increasing proof of his competence and the trust people place in him.



Chapters 17-20

Chapters 17-20 Summary

Chapter 17. Demonreach says that while Dresden is the warden of the magical prison, he is the guard, the order. The evil creatures are held in the prison so they can do the least harm, and they cannot get loose without outside help, unless Dresden authorizes it. Dresden is concerned about being given such power. He begins to develop a headache, and Demonreach "warns it away," revealing that it is caused by a parasite that will endanger him in the future, eventually bursting from his skull. Demonreach tells him Molly will help him get it out in the future. Dresden puts this concern aside, and asks Demonreach to explain the problem with the prison. Bob translates Demonreach's explanation into language Dresden can understand, showing him that Merlin built the island in various time dimensions, and it is reinforced by many complicated enchantments. Someone is about to hit the island with a big burst of energy, and it will dismantle the containment spell through all the dimensions. The warning energy bursts are actually echoes from the apocalyptic fire that will be triggered. Dresden has to stop the attack at the precise time it is unleashed.

Chapter 18. Dresden returns to the boat, and they begin their journey back to the city. On the way, Dresden realizes again that Molly is well-trained and strong. Dresden tells Molly about the danger to Demonreach, but doesn't give her specifics about the island's purpose. They are attacked by the Redcap and Winter Sidhe on Jet Skis, who shoot at them. They try evasive maneuvers, but fail to elude their pursuers. Thomas is shot in the arm. Molly cloaks the boat by making mist come from her fingers. Dresden and Molly hex the Jet Skis, and they manage to escape. Molly is exhausted by her efforts and falls asleep. Dresden bandages up Thomas, and asks him to help "save the city" and he agrees.

Chapter 19. Dresden explains wizardly magic to Thomas, and they discuss what's been going on around Chicago since Dresden's absence. As they are pulling into a parking space at Thomas' apartment, they are confronted by Fix, the Summer Knight. Fix has heard that Dresden was the Winter Knight, but had been skeptical. He knows that Dresden has orders to kill someone. Fix's job is to stop the Winter Knight, a fact that surprises Dresden, who'd thought the Summer Knight had the same job as he does. Dresden talks to Fix privately. Fix is concerned that Dresden is more powerful than Lloyd Slate ever was in the position of the Winter Knight. Dresden attempts to reassure him that he hasn't turned into a monster yet, but Fix is unconvinced. Fix tells Dresden he has until noon to leave town, and leaves. Dresden doesn't want to fight him, thinking him a good man, but is worried he won't have a choice. Afterward, he finds that Molly has been ready to strike Fix from behind, which disturbs Dresden.

Chapter 20. At Thomas' apartment, Dresden notices the changes wrought by Thomas' girlfriend Justine. He calls someone on the phone, demanding a meeting. Dresden fries out the electronics to kill any eavesdropping devices in the apartment. He calls the Cat



Sith, which startles everyone. Cat Sith reassures them that he is bound by the rules of a guest. Dresden finds that Cat Sith knows who his associates are, which unsettles him and reminds him of how dangerous Cat Sith really is. He asks Cat Sith to distract anyone who will be observing them as they leave the apartment without killing or gravely harming them, and then to get word to the Summer Lady that Dresden wants a meeting regarding the Summer Knight. Sith tells him that his plan is unwise, because Queen Mab may be displeased. The phone rings, and Dresden finds he has a meeting at Accorded Neutral Ground.

Chapters 17-20 Analysis

Dresden has to face his increasing power. Not only is he the Winter Knight, but he also has the power to unleash hell upon the universe if he so chooses. He worries that people will be frightened by this power, and he feels their fright is for good reason. The uncertainty of his control over the dark impulses of the Winter Knight combined with his role as Warden make him unfathomably powerful. Should he change his alliances, he could destroy everything.

Even so, Dresden finds he is ultimately held vulnerable to the smallest of things, a parasite in his brain that has both saved him and will kill him if he is not assisted by his former apprentice Molly. The power of Molly's role strikes him once again. She is no longer his subordinate in many things, and in the end, he will have to learn to trust her like he has never done before. He also is confronted with the reality that he is an infant next to the consciousness of Demonreach, to the point that they can barely communicate. For Bob to be able to explain Demonreach's history, he has to dumb things down like he's speaking to a kindergartner. This is humbling for Dresden, in the face of all his newly discovered power.

Dresden gets updates on what's gone on in his absence, and he finds that the world has gone on without him, though his presence is missed by those close to him.

When Dresden is confronted by the Summer Knight, he is struck by the fact that their roles are not mirrors of each other. While Dresden's job is to obey Mab's orders, Fix's job is to defend the Summer Lady from the Winter Knight. While Fix is concerned about Dresden's power, Dresden too is wondering why his role is such a danger. He repeatedly must prove that he has not become a monster, but once again, people are not fully convinced.

When Cat Sith visits Thomas' apartment, even he is constrained by rules, not only those of Queen Mab and the requests of the Winter Knight, but also the iconic one of the Guest, despite his sinister nature. Dresden sees that the Cat Sith's power is only barely restrained by these rules, but just enough to ensure the safety of those around him. Even the most powerful of ancients is constrained by the natural Order of Things.



Chapters 21-24

Chapters 21-24 Summary

Chapter 21. The group goes to McAnally's. Molly hesitates outside because she senses a powerful presence inside, one they've encountered before. Dresden is pleased, because that means the man he's there to meet is present, Donar Vadderung. Donar asks Dresden about his supposed death, and Dresden brushes him off, ordering a beer. Dresden says he wants advice, for an appropriate price. Vadderung takes his offer. He tells Dresden he knows all about the island, and so does the Grey Council. He informs Dresden that the fire will kill everything there rather than let them go free, because otherwise it would be The End. He also tells Dresden that the attack is in the present, and a local threat. Vadderung tells Dresden it is his job because of his connection to the island. He leaves, assuring Dresden that he can do what must be done.

Chapter 22. Dresden tells Molly and Thomas what he has learned. He sends Molly to see Toot. When Thomas questions his wisdom regarding Molly, Dresden struggles with his emotions, which leads him to realize that the mantle of Winter is expressing itself through him. Thomas also notices, and points out that Dresden is behaving like a predator on occasion. Dresden denies it at first, but accepts Thomas' warnings, knowing he has to get these new drives under control. A stone crashes through the glass of the pub's front door, carrying a message that Dresden should come outside. With the pub owner's support, Dresden refuses. The stone explodes, and Dresden shields everyone with magic. Then a spinning creature Dresden calls Sharkface smashes through the door, and they all fight it. It tries to get Dresden to surrender, sparing his friends. It then sends out a psychic assault to all present, and they are temporarily overcome. When Dresden pushes it back, Sharkface is shocked by his power, and Dresden realizes what the creature is. Dresden then uses his old standby fire energy, but his new Winter powers transform it into something unstoppable. He punches Sharkface and puts him down. In response the creature's cloak douses the bar with alcohol, starting fires, and it escapes. Dresden douses the flames. He tells Thomas that the attacker was an Outsider.

Chapter 23. Dresden and Thomas have previously encountered the Outsiders, which are from outside the universe, extremely dangerous, and difficult to fight using magic. Dresden believes they might be the ones behind the upcoming Demonreach jailbreak attempt. Dresden asks Mac, the pub owner, about the Outsider, and how it appeared to know Mac during the fight. Mac is reluctant to explain, but he does admit he's encountered them before. As Dresden and Thomas leave the pub, they discuss where to go. Cat Sith appears in the back seat and tells Dresden the Summer Lady has agreed to a meeting at the Chicago Botanic Gardens, as long as he comes alone and keeps the peace. In exchange she will not allow him to be harmed by anything within her power. Thomas recalls the Summer Lady's previous attempts to kill him, and expresses his concerns. Dresden asks if Cat Sith approves the idea. He doesn't, but doesn't necessarily think she's going to play false. Dresden points out that faeries can't



directly lie. Thomas insists that he will stay close as backup. Sith is disgusted by Dresden's compassion for the Summer Lady's concerns. Dresden orders Sith to stay close to Thomas and rescue them if need be, without harming innocent bystanders or killing mortals. Dresden's confidence is not high about the outcome.

Chapter 24. Because of the rain, the Botanic Gardens are nearly empty of people. Dresden walks alone, feeling himself followed. He finds Lily, the Summer Lady, at the Japanese garden. She looks uncannily like Aurora, the previous Summer Lady, who Dresden killed. Dresden becomes aware of Lily's guardian creatures all around him, and is nervous about being so exposed, but goes out to meet her. He finds her beauty to be a profound contrast to that of the Winter Queen and Lady, giving warmth and relaxation. He is suddenly affected by the dark impulses of the Winter Knight, and struggles to get them under control. Lily notices his struggle, and points out she's seen the same look on Slate. They discuss whether or not these impulses were always with him, or whether they are strictly a trait of the Winter Knight. Dresden tells her he has always chosen to be something better. Dresden asks her to call off Fix, and she refuses. When he tries to get her to tell him why, she is vague, telling him he will have to figure it out for himself. He allows her to touch him to see that he is not fully possessed by the Winter Knight's mantle. She is relieved, and calls off her faerie guardians, calling him a friend. She erects a privacy enchantment and asks him what he wants to know. She speaks of the spiritual plague moving among them. He recognizes that many of the criminals he's faced have been contaminated with it, including Lily's predecessor. Dresden wonders why this is a secret, and she says no one who knows of it talks about it, in case the listener is also sick and becomes more dangerous. Maeve walks onto the bridge and comes toward them, interrupting. She tells Dresden that Queen Mab has been corrupted with the disease and is insane, and is about to destroy the mortal world. Dresden realizes it is up to him to destroy her first.

Chapters 21-24 Analysis

Donar Vadderung is another man who wears his role well. As a one-eyed, extremely powerful, older and wise man Dresden goes to for advice, who is normally accompanied by two ravens, he is obviously meant to be recognized as Odin, the Nordic god. Odin is traditionally seen as associated with war and victory, wisdom, prophecy and the Wild Hunt. (That last should be a clue to the revelation of his other identity in the final pages of the novel.) Vadderung is a reliable source of wisdom, but Dresden goes one further and attempts to shuffle off his responsibilities onto Vadderung. Interestingly, as he leaves, Vadderung reassures Dresden of his power, and that the trust being placed in him is warranted. He mysteriously implies that Dresden has already succeeded. In light of the later revelation of Vadderung's other role, it could be because he is capable of seeing time as non-linear, or it could be because Dresden has already stepped irrevocably far down the path that will lead him to success.

Dresden has increasing struggles with the predatory, violent nature of the Winter Knight. He finds a wise ally in Thomas, who as a predator himself can see the signs. Dresden's new powers as both wizard and Knight come together in the worst fight he has to



participate in to date: the battle with Sharkface. Sharkface is later revealed to be not only an Outsider, but also a Walker. Fighting this adversary stretches Dresden's skills to the utmost, but he succeeds, surprising not only himself, but also the Outsider. Dresden experiences the fact that his own wisdom outstretches that of the White Council as well, since he understands the Outsiders better than they do. (He is later vindicated in his beliefs.)

Dresden is also challenged in the trust department, since he finds that the amoral Outsider appears to know more about Mac than Dresden does. Mac's withholding of information far surpasses Dresden's reticence, and Dresden and his friends learn basically nothing of use from Mac, though he does fight valiantly on their side.

Dresden is confronted with the extreme contrasts of the Winter and Summer Ladies. Lily is full of warmth and brings on a feeling of well-being, while Maeve is a producer of anxiety and fear laced by ice. However, he is also faced with how thoroughly Lily has become the Summer Lady in a short time, now looking exactly like Aurora had looked, embodying her mantle perfectly. When close to her physically, he is more affected by the Winter Knight's mantle than ever before, and Lily, who knows all about it, discusses with him whether or not his darkness might not be something that comes from within himself, or is imposed on him from without. This is a profound question: does Dresden have free will at all? Is he blaming others for his violence, when it has been a part of him all along?



Chapters 25-28

Chapters 25-28 Summary

Chapter 25. Maeve tells Dresden that Mab's plan has to do with Demonreach, which disturbs Dresden. He now fully regrets the deal he made with Mab. Maeve assures Dresden she has examined Mab and found her infected, and that the disease is real. Maeve points to recent events as proof. Lily and Maeve say they cannot fight her themselves, because they lack the power. Titania the Summer Queen refuses; Maeve says it's because she's afraid of becoming infected. Dresden doubts his power, but Maeve and Lily assure him that as Winter Knight he can do it. Maeve confesses that her ulterior motive is that she wants to be Winter Queen, which gives Dresden pause. He doesn't want to serve Maeve. She knows that he will have to act, though, to save the mortal world. Dresden demands to know what else they aren't telling him, and they tell him he must not admit knowledge of the plague, since it would put him at risk. Lily says she will speak to Fix. Maeve confesses that her people are about to attempt to kill Dresden. The Redcap and his gang of Sidhe arrive. Lily intervenes, insisting on traditional protocols. Dresden nearly escapes but is attacked by Captain Hook and Ace.

Chapter 26. Dresden takes a beating from Ace. He is saved by the appearance of Karrin Murphy, who takes out Ace and the Little Folk. Thomas joins the fight. Then the Redcap and his Sidhe gang appear. Dresden tries to reason with the Redcap, and during the distraction of their discussion, one of the Redcap's gang disappears. A terrible scream comes from the bushes, and a bloody spine is thrown out at their feet. Another likewise disappears, and the Sidhe realize that Cat Sith is attacking them. Dresden and Thomas take advantage of their surprise and attack. Ace attempts to shoot Karrin as they flee, and Dresden tackles him successfully. Captain Hook attacks Dresden, but Dresden fends him off, though he is stabbed near his eye. They make it to Thomas' vehicle, and flee. They are concerned that Harry can be followed using magic because he left blood on the ground at the site of the fight. Thomas has been shot in the gut. They decide to go to Molly's. Dresden finds that a semi-conscious Captain Hook has been embedded in his jacket, and he loses consciousness.

Chapter 27. Dresden awakens lying on Molly's table, as Butters tends to his wounds. He recovers when the metal is removed from his skin. Butters points out that Dresden's new pain threshold isn't necessarily an asset. Captain Hook is their captive. Butters informs Dresden that Karrin has not handled his absence and return well. They discuss the dangers of the magic that can be used against them with Dresden's blood. Butters then treats Thomas' gunshot wound. While Dresden is finding a new shirt, Karrin comes into the bedroom to talk to him about how she figured out he was alive and how she found him. She is concerned that he belongs to Mab, and wants him to understand that he might become a monster before he realizes it. She demands that he return Bob, because the knowledgeable spirit shouldn't end up in potentially evil hands. Dresden reluctantly agrees. He becomes angry about her distrust of him and is temporarily



overcome with the Winter Knight's violent impulses, slamming his hand into the door near Karrin's head. She insists he trust her, and they reconcile emotionally.

Chapter 28. Dresden wonders when he'll have the time to get his life back together. Molly and a nearly recovered Toot return. The other members of the Za Lord's Guard are ready for orders. Butters finishes sewing up Thomas' wound. The group looks over a map of Lake Michigan, and Dresden and Molly mark out the intersections of the ley lines, noting that the enemy will operate from one of them. Toot's Guard will go check out each of these places. Dresden points out that the Outsiders might be the attackers, but they must have help, and he tells them about Lily and Maeve's belief that it is Mab. The group discusses the fact that Lily and Maeve cannot lie, but could be mistaken. Dresden wonders to himself which of his circle could have been infected by the contagion. Dresden's plan is to find the correct ritual site and wreck it. Butters wonders why they don't call in the White Council, but Dresden refuses. Butters continues to suggest possible allies, and they strategize how to use their various groups. Butters reveals that one of his internet pals has told him that boat rentals are way up. Dresden goes to interrogate Captain Hook, and he nearly escapes.

Chapters 25-28 Analysis

Dresden is torn between two powers he absolutely doesn't trust. Should he believe Mab, who has tried to murder him repeatedly and has demonstrated herself to be manipulative, or does he trust Maeve, who appears to be an even worse representative of Winter's nature? Lily's innocent support of Maeve sways him, and he believes that the rules have been adhered to—faeries cannot directly lie, and so he must believe in Maeve, despite the fact that he dislikes her far more than he does Mab. This also despite the fact that Mab's attempted murders appeared to have a purpose, while Maeve's appear to be strictly for her own entertainment. Faeries cannot lie, but they can at the same time be deceptive by omission. Like children, they like games. And like psychopaths, they don't much care what happens to the individual humans around them. Dresden might be faced with his usual cluelessness regarding human behavior times ten, but he actually seems to understand the faeries better than he understands humans. This is because faeries more clearly adhere to rules that are clear. They cannot directly lie. They must fulfill their roles in the Order of Things. They are hurt by iron. They will come to you if you call them by name three times. Dresden's strength is not only magical or physical, but also in his understanding of that Order.

Dresden finds that despite his disappearance from her life, Karrin Murphy is still there for him, despite the fact that he has hurt her and abandoned her. And she is a formidable partner for Dresden, as skilled in fighting as he, if not more. She might be small, but she is fierce. Though she doesn't fit many female stereotypes, she does fit one; she understands emotions better than Dresden. She understands that he feels even when it doesn't show, and that his abandonment of her and his daughter are not because he doesn't care, but because he cares too much. When he had talked to Sarissa back at Arctis Tor, he had told her he didn't discuss his family because it pained him. This even as his ability to feel physical pain has nearly disappeared. But as Butters



points out to him, not feeling pain isn't really an asset. It doesn't mean you aren't hurt and aren't likely to be debilitated in the end.

Karrin Murphy also is in a way Dresden's guardian angel. She doesn't need to be told he's still alive. All it takes is the noise of the chaos that surrounds him to bring her to the rescue. She also guards the Swords of the Cross and knows he must not keep Bob in his possession as long as he is not in full control of his behavior. The "monster" of the Winter Knight is contained for now, most of the time. Murphy is the one who makes sure the possibility of it getting loose won't do catastrophic harm. She does, however, appear to believe that if anyone can survive his struggle, Dresden can. Their reconciliation is a sign of a deeper trust that Dresden almost can't acknowledge. He can't tell her he loves her, or that he wants her. He doesn't even really dare to think it. He can only really allow himself the vague hope that someday his life will be relatively normal again, but any reader would doubt it based on his track record, and the fact that so much is riding on him not experiencing a normal life.

When Dresden attempts to use his bruised hands to mark out where the ley lines are on the map of Lake Michigan, it is significant that the now-fully-capable Molly takes over for him, knowing just as much as he does. Just when he must trust his friends more than ever, he realizes he can't trust at all. Any of them could be infected by the contagion, but interestingly, he doesn't suspect Maeve. Rather, he suspects the people closest to him, continually refusing to share important information with them or trust them to really carry some of his burden. He won't call on the White Council. He sends the White Court, the Guard, and the vampire group off on tasks that are minor, if not even wild goose chases to get them out of his hair. Even though he doesn't want to listen, one piece of information from Butters' internet pals takes root: the idea of boats.



Chapters 29-32

Chapters 29-32 Summary

Chapter 29. Toot tackles and recaptures Captain Hook. Hook invokes Winter Law, which means he won't try to escape, but in exchange must not be interrogated or mistreated. Dresden verbally rejects the notion of Winter Law and abruptly the mantle of the Winter Knight leaves him. This causes him to feel all his mortal woundings acutely and collapse. Within a few seconds it is restored, and he realizes he cannot challenge the order of things. He asks Toot about Winter Law, and learns its parameters. Dresden demands Hook's informal name, and learns it is Lacuna. Lacuna removes his helmet, and they see that Lacuna is a beautiful female faerie. Dresden demands information about her boss, but she tells him nothing useful. The group goes off to their assigned tasks, with Molly left at the apartment to receive calls. When they are gone, Molly lets him know that she's aware that he's got ulterior motives for getting rid of the others. Toot tries to get friendly with Lacuna, but she punches him in the nose.

Chapter 30. Dresden goes to the Magic Hedge/Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary. He builds a ritual fire and summons Titania, the Summer Queen. She is dressed for battle, enraged that her summoner is the killer of her daughter. He tells her of the expected attack on the Well, and asks if Mab has been Changed. Titania says she is uncertain, because they have not talked. He asks for her help. She asks him about his opinion of human sin, explaining that his answers will tell her something she needs to know. She asks his opinion of Mab and his reasons for serving her. She informs him that while Mab is about reason and logic, she is about emotion. When he questions what this means, she destroys his magical protection, and declares her rage for having killed her daughter. She lifts him up with one hand, and tells him of all the ways she could destroy him. But then she begins to cry and releases him. She admits that she knew why he'd killed Aurora, but she will not help him. He tries to reason with her, but she turns him away, though she does give him the proper name of the power he is facing: Nemesis.

Chapter 31. Dresden takes a cab to Graceland Cemetery. He visits his own open grave and while down inside it, he summons Mother Winter. She reaches up and drags him under the earth. She is annoyed at his summons, and declares she will butcher him and put him in her stew. While she sharpens her cleaver, he asks her about Mab. He uses the name of Nemesis, which stops her cold. She notes that he finally gets it, though it is too late. When he tries to say that he is her Knight as well, she says she can devour him, his mantle, and give it to someone worthy. She declares that Mab is too romantic, which frightens Dresden. He finds that he is shackled with Mother Winter's Will. She comes toward him with the cleaver.

Chapter 32. Dresden realizes his secret weapon is his ability to operate with free will, refusing to obey. Instead of fighting physically, he uses his mind to free himself. Winter throws the cleaver at him, and he dodges it. Mother Summer steps into the room and Dresden realizes he is in their cottage. Mother Summer chastises Mother Winter for



ruining their cleaver. Mother Winter tells Mother Summer that the Winter Knight knows one of the names of their adversary. They debate whether to show him something dangerous. Dresden insists he will do what he chooses. Mother Summer escorts Dresden out of the cottage. She attempts to explain Mother Winter's actions, and that she will take him to see something that will make him understand what is at stake. She tells him that what he sees might harm him, because he will find it too troubling, but if he chooses not to see it, then their survival will be left to chance. He chooses to know, because knowledge is better than ignorance.

Chapters 29-32 Analysis

Once again, Dresden sees the impact of Rules. Cat Sith is bound by the Rules of the Guest. The Queens and Ladies and Knights are bound by their respective roles. And their captive Captain Hook invokes the rule of Winter Law, which is basically like the Geneva Conventions. Hook/Lacuna will surrender, but in exchange, s/he may not be mistreated or forced to break any oaths she has previously made. When Dresden tries to discount the power of Winter Law, and ignore it, the Knight's mantle is stripped from him and he finds just how weak and broken he really is. Without the Knight's mantle, he is a cripple. He may not break the rules. The Rules are part of the Order of Things, and he is a part of that Order. He has a responsibility.

The segment where Dresden goes to the Magic Hedge to summon Titania is an interesting one. The Magic Hedge is a place of anonymous gay sex, but also a bird sanctuary, and a place where Dresden assumes the Summer Queen might feel at home. She is puzzled, like many humans, by the fact that the men are compelled by the world around them to hide their desires, and find connection in nature rather than the comfort of their own homes. When she wants to understand Dresden, to find out about him, she asks what he thinks of human sin, and of Mab. Is Mab truly evil and sinful? Or is she just a part of the Order of Things, as homosexuality is? The reader might suspect that just because someone is dark and cold and logical, it doesn't mean that they are evil. While Mab is about reason, Titania is about emotion, and she is the one who wants to kill Dresden, not Mab, who has only pretended to want to kill him to make him strong. Titania knows that Aurora had been tainted by the adversary, but she still wants to punish Dresden for having done what needed to be done. In this case, he has killed for good reason, and Titania knows it. She just can't bear it, because of her grief. She gives him one important gift: one of the names of the Enemy.

Dresden's grave has an interesting epitaph: "HERE LIES HARRY DRESDEN. HE DIED DOING THE RIGHT THING." Dresden's moral code is strict, and he often risks his own life for that of others, even as a matter of routine. And here, at the bottom of his own grave, he is sucked beneath the earth by the darkest faerie of them all, Mother Winter. If Queen Mab is cold and sinister, then Mother Winter is ten times that. As he has all along, he calls on his own free will as his most reliable weapon. In fact, he points to it as the one thing humans are best at. Mother Winter holds him prisoner with her will, and Dresden frees himself with the strength of his own. He beats the baddest of the bad with something so simple: the desire for freedom, and the ability to make it so just by



wanting it and believing in it. And just when he does so, he finds that he isn't in the deepest depths of the earth at all, but only a cottage which Mother Winter shares with Mother Summer. This fact is the greatest sign of all that the mantles the Queens, Ladies and Knights wear are part of the Order of Things: Mother Winter and Mother Summer are roommates! Could they be roommates if Mother Winter was truly evil, and Mother Summer was truly perfectly good? They are playing their roles, and they are ancient in their wisdom. Light may not exist without Darkness, and Logic may not exist without Emotion. He is even informed that he is capable of hurting Mother Winter, and her rage at him was merely an expression of her pain. She is, in the end, just a crippled old woman.

When Mother Summer gives him a choice about whether or not he wants to see the truth, he chooses to see, even though he is warned it may harm him. Knowledge is always better than ignorance, in Dresden's world, even if it hurts. This is ironic, because it is only a truism he holds for himself. He can trust himself with knowing painful or dangerous things, but he doesn't appear to trust anyone else with information, even those closest to him who have proven themselves time and time again. It's Dresden's most obvious blind spot.



Chapters 33-36

Chapters 33-36 Summary

Chapter 33. As they walk, Mother Summer and Dresden discuss what might happen if he disobeys Mab or kills her, and his possible fates. She suggests he can resist and retain his free will, but won't explain how. She transforms his clothes into faerie armor and takes him to the edge of Faerie, to the Outer Gates, where the vast armies of Winter are fighting an epic war against the Outsiders. It is a war that has been going on for eons to keep the universe safe from the Outsiders, who want in. If they succeed in getting past the Gates, everything will stop. It is revealed that Mab's purpose is to fight the Outsiders, and Titania's purpose is to protect the mortal world from Mab. Dresden understands that removing Mab would put Maeve in charge of the war. He also realizes that the Outsiders and Nemesis are trying to infiltrate in order to weaken their universe. As they walk toward the Gates, the Sidhe soldiers pay their respects. Dresden sees the wizard Rashid, the Gatekeeper, tending to the wounded.

Chapter 34. Dresden is confused, because he had previously assumed the Outer Gates were only a metaphor. Rashid is pleased and surprised to see Dresden. Dresden questions him about the adversary and the war, and their vulnerability should there be a new Queen. Rashid realizes why Dresden has been brought there and attempts to reassure him that he is the right man for the job. He also tells Dresden that he will clear his record with the White Council. Dresden realizes how important his role as Winter Knight really is.

Chapter 35. Mother Summer sends Dresden back to the bottom of his grave. He returns to Molly's, concerned about what will happen if he fails. Lacuna announces he has a visitor, who turns out to be Sarissa. Sarissa has been sent by the Redcap, and she gives him an envelope that contains locks of hair from Butters, Andi, Justine, and Mac, who have been taken captive. Sarissa tells him that the Redcap will trade them all if he surrenders himself. If he doesn't, they will be killed.

Chapter 36. Dresden resolves to rescue his friends. He calls upon Cat Sith, who doesn't appear, which worries Dresden. He orders Lacuna to wait for the Little Folk with their intelligence. Molly uses a tracking spell to find where the group is being held. The hearse has been repaired and returned to them. As they drive, Molly mentions that she knows of his Winter-driven desires for her, and is willing. Dresden's Winter lust wants to take her, but his personal ethical code prevents him. They go to Molly's parents' house, and Dresden retrieves his dog Mouse, but doesn't stay to speak to his estranged daughter.



Chapters 33-36 Analysis

Dresden learns from Mother Summer that he may retain his free will as the Winter Knight, but she doesn't explain how that may be. Dresden is used to faeries not telling him exactly what's going on, by now. He doesn't even protest, perhaps because he now understands that these things come in time, when they are needed, or when he is ready.

Mother Summer says she is the one who is taking him to the Outer Gates only because Mother Winter cannot. One can wonder how the journey might have differed, but it also shows that it doesn't really matter who it is who guides him. They are all different aspects of the same power. Mother, Queen, Lady, Knight. Darkness and Light. Winter and Summer. A coin cannot have only one side. When one dies, he or she is replaced and the cosmos moves onward.

Mother Summer introduces Dresden to an understanding of his true place in the Order of Things. The war is an epic battle that has been going on forever, and he is part of it. He is responsible for preventing the loss of everything, and may do so only by doing as he is told, fulfilling his role. He learns that Mab's overriding purpose in the universe is to fight the war. Titania's purpose is to protect the world from the warlike and logical darkness of Mab. Dresden finally sees that disobeying Mab will lead to chaos, putting the unpredictable and inexperienced and possibly insane Maeve in place. His only sticking point is his belief that Maeve cannot lie, and he believes he's cornered her. This is a conundrum that must be solved.

Dresden also finds that people he cannot help but see as good and wise support him and believe in him. Mother Summer trusts him. Rashid, the Gatekeeper, reassures him that he is doing what he is meant to do. Dresden is finally faced with the magnitude of his responsibility, and the fact that there is no pushing it off onto another.

Once again, Dresden is tempted by what might be considered sexual sin. Molly wants him, and declares her desire for him. Her empathic abilities mean that she is acutely aware of his own lust for her, even if she knows it's being fed by the mantle of the Winter Knight. But Dresden won't risk his ethical code. She might be willing, but he is her mentor, and though she is now fully mature, he still bears the responsibility of his age and power over her. He won't cross that line, even if asked. This goodness and adherence to morality is admirable, but then he fails in the sneak retrieval of his dog Mouse. Instead of waiting a few minutes to speak to his daughter, which he should, he runs away. For a man so brave, he is certainly afraid of dealing with his responsibility as a father. He might bear the weight of the world's safety on his shoulders, but he pushes off the raising of his daughter onto others.



Chapters 37-40

Chapters 37-40 Summary

Chapter 37. Molly establishes that Dresden knows that pursuing the Redcap is a trap. Dresden plans to go in the front door as a distraction, with Molly sneaking in the back with Mouse to release their friends. Dresden notices the warehouse is familiar. He approaches the front door, and is attacked by a Sidhe in hawk form. Then he is darted in the leg by the Redcap, who then disappears. Dresden goes in to find his friends. All of them have been bound except Mac, which Dresden and Molly both notice but don't acknowledge out loud. Dresden is bleeding freely from his poisoned wound. Suddenly, the building explodes and they are all thrown into Lake Michigan.

Chapter 38. Underwater, Dresden uses the power of Winter to lift the building with ice, saving them all. They return to Molly's apartment to find Thomas and Karrin waiting for them. The Little Folk have found two suspect sites where the enemy will perform ritual attacks. They have 25 minutes until sundown. Dresden surmises that Ace, driven by revenge, is still after him. He sends two ally crews out to the two sites pointed out by the Little Folk, believing that going himself is a distraction. Butters notices that Dresden's wound won't stop bleeding. Dresden feels the information about boats is important.

Chapter 39. Thomas talks to Dresden about not having mended his relationships with Karrin or his daughter. Thomas leaves with his girlfriend Justine to get the boat ready. Andi is taken away by ambulance. Dresden gathers everyone remaining, and confronts Mac and Sarissa with his suspicions about their loyalties, telling them he will be keeping an eye on them. Molly takes Mouse and Sarissa and Mac outside. When Dresden is alone with Karrin, she queries him about his daughter. Dresden admits that he's afraid his presence will hurt her. He is suddenly struck with insight that Mab wants him to kill Maeve because he killed the Summer Lady, and that everything is about the Outsiders. He doesn't share exactly what he's figured out with Karrin.

Chapter 40. They leave the apartment, escorted by Toot and his Guard. Molly gives Dresden a gift of a new coat. They go to the boat, and assemble their weapons. On the dock, they hear a hunting horn, and realize the Wild Hunt is beginning, with Dresden as their prey. Dresden realizes he has to stay behind, letting the rest of them go to Demonreach. Dresden goes to use the car, but it has been sabotaged. He also realizes that the blood trail he has left since the Redcap's dart has made him easy to track. Karrin pulls up on her motorcycle, and orders him to get on.

Chapters 37-40 Analysis

Dresden drops everything to rescue his friends, even knowing that the whole thing is a distraction and a trap. He is now perhaps confident enough, after his encounter with the Outer Gates, to see that he can handle all that the adversary throws at him. And he



works with Molly as a full partner, perhaps for the first time. They can communicate without even speaking, as Molly and he both notice that Mac is mysteriously unbound even as the others are. What would be Mac's motive for betrayal? Why wouldn't the kidnappers bind him anyway, for appearance's sake? These questions remain unanswered, and in the scope of the novel, remain unimportant. Mac is a wild card that still hasn't been exposed for its true nature. However, instead of staying silent about his suspicions, he is open about it, sharing it with everyone and the target of his doubts.

Despite the constant distractions and efforts to divide Dresden's attentions, he stays focused. He uses his Winter Knight superpowers to save his friends and gets back to home base in time to address his fight against the apocalypse. Even amongst all these obviously pressing issues, Thomas is still there nagging at him about what's really important: his love for Karrin and for his daughter. He might be brave enough to face the darkest elements of the universe, but he is afraid of committing himself to love or facing the possibility of rejection by his daughter. He tells himself he is afraid of hurting Karrin, or hurting Maggie (his daughter) with his presence or by making them a target, but in reality he is hurting them most with his avoidance. Karrin finally becomes the strong one and confronts his reluctance. He opens up a little bit, explaining that he's afraid of hurting Maggie if she remembers him killing her mother. This is a valid concern, but as both Thomas and Karrin remind him, though not in those exact words, "knowledge is better than ignorance." A girl needs her father. A man needs love. These are simple truths, and Dresden has neglected them for far too long.

Once again, perhaps as a force of habit, he doesn't share all that he knows about Queen Mab, Lady Maeve, or the Outsiders. She might be strong and smart, but Dresden still doesn't trust Karrin with information that she might be able to help him with. She might, after all, have insights. Instead, he forges on alone as usual. He takes his friends with him, but he doesn't trust them the way he should. Despite all that, when he lets them go on ahead to the battle without him, while he stays behind to deal with the Wild Hunt, Karrin is there to help him get away when the hearse is sabotaged. There she is with the motorcycle when he needs it most.



Chapters 41-44

Chapters 41-44 Summary

Chapter 41. Karrin and Dresden head south, weaving in and out of traffic, headed for the ruins of the former steel mills. Dresden fights off the hunt with his magical will. When he kills one of the hounds, he realizes that it was a human wearing a mask. The Hunt continues to bear down on them. When Dresden realizes they aren't fazed much by magic, he pulls out his gun and shoots at them, wounding the Erlking. They enter the mill grounds, and Dresden manages to pull Kringle from his mount. They fight. Dresden bests Kringle, surrounded by the Hunters, and recites the motto of the Hunt: "Join, hide, or die." Dresden tells the assembled that they must join him instead. The faerie power behind the Hunt extends to Karrin and Dresden on her motorcycle. Kringle asks what they will be hunting, and Dresden announces they are hunting Outsiders.

Chapter 42. They head out onto the lake, magically racing across the surface. The starlight turns blue, and Kringle tells them someone is bending time so that they will arrive too late. Kringle breaks the Hunt through the time wave, and is left behind. They arrive at Demonreach and find it under attack by boats and Outsiders. Dresden realizes the enemy plans to use one of the barges as a platform for the ritual attack. They attack the barge where Dresden has seen Sharkface, and Sharkface is thrown into the lake. When he emerges, he is spewing rage and psychic assault.

Chapter 43. Dresden suddenly finds himself imprisoned. He sees Mab approaching him, torturing him, making him want to die, and soon realizes it is a vision of the worst psychic assault he's ever felt. He gathers his senses and yells out his own full name, breaking the spell that holds him. He then summons himself a staff and armor, and demands three times that his attacker identify itself. It does, naming itself the "Gatebreaker, Harbinger, Feargiver, Hopeslayer, and He-Who-Walks-Before." Dresden realizes that Sharkface is a Walker, an incredibly powerful being. Dresden defies it, calling on the power of Winter within him combined with soulfire. He regains consciousness on the Harley to find that Karrin too is recovering from the psychic assault. The Erlking congratulates him. The Hunt goes to attack the second barge while under fire. Karrin tells them to attack the tugboat instead, and destroys it with a grenade. The Erlking and his hunters are meanwhile attacking the third barge, which is being shoved toward land by its tugboat. Dresden and his half of the Hunt join in the fight. Dresden leaps onto the tugboat, and is ambushed by Cat Sith.

Chapter 44. Dresden quickly realizes that Cat Sith has become possessed by the adversary. He instructs Cat Sith to fight the possession. The adversary speaks through the Sith, and attacks Dresden. Dresden uses magic to throw the beast through the window into the lake. He yanks the wheel, turning the barge away from shore. Dresden hides and shoots the crew members who come to fix the problem, one of whom is Ace. The barge is sunk by the Hunt. Dresden gets back on the motorcycle with Karrin. The Erlking gets permission from Dresden to lead the rest of the Hunt after the Outsiders in



the water. After a moment of respite, Dresden sees that Sharkface is moving the second barge toward shore, with the help of the Outsiders. Dresden kisses Karrin and runs to intervene.

Chapters 41-44 Analysis

Dresden and Murphy are a pair, finally, in battle. Her competence saves him, and leads him to the fight he must take on in order to save the world. On the way, he sees that killing without deliberate focus costs the death of an innocent—one of the Wild Hunt's hounds is actually a man wearing a mask, and Dresden has killed him needlessly. He has to fight more honorably, not shooting the horses, but the gods who are riding them. He succeeds in besting the old gods who ride the most iconic of Hunts, and is given the mantle of the leader of the Hunt, temporarily. That he takes this role forcibly without it being given to him is a sign that he's coming into his own. He wears the mantle of the Winter Knight, and he has now joined with the others of equal rank, and leads them into battle, fighting the most significant threat that has ever been. The only question is whether he has truly taken the mantle of the Lord of the Hunt by force, or whether he has been granted it by these old gods. Do they let him win, or do they give in?

When Dresden is psychically assaulted by Sharkface, he finds himself suffering from his worst fear, or at least what Sharkface thinks is his worst fear: Queen Mab torturing him. But he soon realizes that it isn't real at all. Mab doesn't want him to die; she has told him clearly that she wants him to live, so that he can fight for her and her purpose. Dresden, significantly, fights it by shouting out his true and full name. He declares himself to be himself. Not the Winter Knight. Not the Lord of the Hunt. He is Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden, and he carries the most power by that simple declaration. And then he exposes Sharkface for who he truly is. Rashid the wizard is the Gatekeeper. This Outsider is the Gatebreaker. Does that mean that it is inevitable that the Outsiders will win their epic war against the world? Or does it mean that this creature too is filling a role, wearing a mantle, part of the Order of Things?

Finally, Dresden takes the risk of paying attention to Murphy. Instead of rushing off, he actually takes the time, despite the emergency going on around him, to kiss her before leaving her. Is it a sign that he is finally opening up? That he is willing to take on love?



Chapters 45-48

Chapters 45-48 Summary

Chapter 45. Dresden races to intercept the barge, and hears chanting in preparation for contact with the ley line. He gathers his Winter power, and creates an iceberg in front of the barge. Sharkface retaliates by splitting into many pieces and attacking the ice. Sharkface pauses to offer Dresden a job and then a truce, which briefly tempts him. Then Dresden hears music and is shaken from his thoughts. The Water Beetle appears from under a magical veil and slams into the barge. Thomas and Mouse attack the men performing the ritual, killing many. Dresden kills Sharkface. The Outsiders flee, under attack by the Hunt. As they all get off the boat onto the shore, Dresden realizes that the Walker was only a distraction, and that something is going on up at the top of the hill.

Chapter 46. As Dresden and Thomas and Molly and the others move up the hill, they are ambushed by trip lines and fae hounds, which Dresden dispatches. When they get to the top, they are blocked by the magic security circle of the Well. Dresden, being of the island, is the only one who can go inside it, which he does.

Chapter 47. Dresden steps into the circle, and his clothes disappear. He is now both naked and unarmed. He finds that there are twenty faeries inside the circle, plus one mortal beside himself. He sees that Demonreach is under attack by Lily and Maeve, with the support of their Sidhe minions. Fix stands between Dresden and the two Ladies. The two knights fight each other. Dresden realizes that if he calls upon his Winter Knight instincts, he will give the Summer Knight too much advantage, so he instead uses his wizard powers to disappear. He taunts Fix by talking about Lloyd Slate and Lily. Dresden stabs Fix with a nail, and he is rendered unconscious. The Summer Lady is distracted by the loss of Fix, thinking him dead. Dresden attempts to talk to her, reassuring her that Fix is still alive, but she becomes enraged. He realizes that Maeve has changed his words before they reach Lily. Lily sends a huge burst of fire energy toward him.

Chapter 48. Dresden defends himself and Fix with Winter energy. He pulls the nail out of Fix's back and holds it to defend himself from the approaching Summer Lady. He tries to talk to her, explaining that Maeve has been poisoned by the adversary, and this has allowed her to lie about the Well and her own intentions. Lily's inexperience has handicapped her; she believes that Dresden has called the Outsiders to defend the Well, which she only understands to be a source of dark energy and corruption. When he tells her she has a choice, and she should be certain for herself, she turns off her rage and speaks of her pain and regret at being made into the Summer Lady when he killed Aurora. She ratchets up her power again, and declares her intent to burn him to death. Dresden realizes the full impact his killing of Aurora has had on Lily, and how he took away her freedom. She shoots a shot of flame at his heart.



Chapters 45-48 Analysis

Dresden is faced with a dangerous choice when he calls up his Winter power to save the day. He has the ability to tap into the ley line's incredible power, but chooses not to. What would have been the consequences? If he had chosen the easy way, would he then have possibly played into the enemy's hands, and fomented their success? Would it possibly have given them the contact they needed to complete their ritual? In any case, he again turns aside from the temptation of the easy path. Sharkface then offers him another temptation: to join or die. He could even retreat, be given what his exhausted soul must desire more than anything: peace and quiet. To be left alone. He could save himself and all he loves, and have peace, if only he would surrender and let the Outsiders win. He can't help but consider it. His thoughts are broken by Molly, his former apprentice.

Molly blasts the refrain from Queen's "We Will Rock You," a song that has been used to inspire sports teams for years. It brings him back to his senses. He can win, no matter how difficult the path. He has been told time and time again, by everyone he respects and ought to respect that he has the skills to do so. He does, however, have to depend on those around him, Molly in particular. He has to trust them to come through for him. He has to recognize their skill.

Dresden has to enter the magic security circle naked as the day he was born. He is unarmed except for his wits and whatever his connection with Demonreach can provide. Luckily, Mab has prepared him for exactly this eventuality, back when she trained him for those 77 days. The Summer Knight and the Winter Knight, the Winter Lady and the Summer Lady—they are all fulfilling their roles. Except Maeve, who has twisted everything to the aims of the Adversary. It turns out she can, in fact, lie, if she has been poisoned by the contagion. And that simple broken rule has brought them to near catastrophe. Also, Dresden wisely notes that if he depends too strongly on his mantle as Winter Knight, he makes himself vulnerable to the Summer Knight. Since everything is twisted around, he must depend more on himself, and stay strong in his honesty, even if his words are twisted and not heard by the person who needs to hear it most.

Dresden also has to confront the results of having fulfilled his role. When he killed the Summer Lady, he hurt Lily, forcing her into a role she neither wanted nor was prepared to take. It was necessary, but it caused pain. So no matter how much Dresden might prefer to protect everyone, he cannot. The Order of Things won't allow it. He might take a lesson from this and be a father to his daughter, despite the fact that she might be hurt as a result. He also might see that hating the mantle that has been given you, or the responsibility, doesn't make it go away, or make it lessen. You don't have a choice when it comes to your participation in the Order of Things.



Chapters 49-53

Chapters 49-53 Summary

Chapter 49. Fix saves Dresden by deflecting the shot with his sword. The fact that he's alive surprises Lily. Fix tries to assure her that Dresden is no threat, and she should leave with him to get herself under control. She seems to be at battle with herself, but returns to the task of attacking Demonreach with Maeve. Dresden thanks Fix, and Fix asks if what Dresden said to Lily was true. Dresden tells Fix that he's on the wrong side, and challenges his belief in Maeve with logic and honesty. Fix relents, and Dresden figures out that the circle can't be broken until dawn, so his friends can't help.

Chapter 50. Dresden plans to kill Maeve, while Fix goes for her minions. Dresden calls up the power of the Winter Knight, fully allowing it to manifest for the first time. The Summer Knight and Winter Knight attack the Sidhe and their Winter Lady. In the middle of the fight, Maeve attempts to tease the Winter Knight into unleashing his sexual desires. Dresden fights back against the Winter in himself enough to remember what he needs to do. Maeve taunts him, declaring all her true intentions. She sics the rawhead on him, but Dresden is rescued by his friends, who have covered themselves with mud in order to enter the circle. Most of them run into the cottage while Mouse and Thomas fight the Sidhe. Then Maeve captures Murphy, and threatens her unless Dresden and his friends come out to her. They surrender.

Chapter 51. Maeve has secured Mouse, Thomas, Karrin and Fix. Dresden sees that Molly has not been captured and regains some hope. Maeve and Sarissa argue, and Dresden abruptly realizes they are actually twin sisters. Maeve accuses Sarissa of wanting to be her replacement. Sarissa responds by trying to get Maeve to accept help for her sickness, but Maeve denies it, saying she is stronger than ever. Maeve asserts that Mab has not loved her enough to intervene. Dresden summons Mab.

Chapter 52. Mab appears and stops everything, including Lily's attack on Demonreach. She asks for Dresden's leave to be on the island, and thanks Demonreach. Mab then tries to get Maeve to accept her help, but Maeve refuses, and kills Lily. The mantle of the Winter Lady passes into Sarissa. Maeve declares she has beaten Mab, but Mab is aware there is another unknown vessel on the hilltop. Dresden tries to warn Maeve she is making a mistake, but she points her gun at him, intending to shoot him. Karrin escapes her bonds with Mab's help, and shoots Maeve to death. The mantle of the Winter Lady passes into Molly. Dresden is horrified.

Chapter 53. Dresden orders the Sidhe minions to release their captives and retreat down the hill as far as they can. Demonreach gently carries Molly and Sarissa into the cottage, while Justine helps Mac, and Dresden carries the unconscious Thomas. Dresden takes Karrin's gun and goes out to confront Mab about what has happened. When he protests about what she has done to Molly, she accuses him of manipulating Molly himself. Dresden has to accept her truthfulness, and she also points out that Molly



is now safe from the White Council. Mab takes his gun and threatens him with it, and in turn he threatens her with Demonreach. She sees this as a sign of his worth, and gives him back the gun. Dresden and Mab clear up a few more questions, including how Maeve was infected. Mab buries the dead Ladies. Dresden sits outside the cottage to guard it, and falls asleep until dawn, awakening to find Kringle approaching him. Kringle passes on the message that Mab has taken the new Ladies away to Faerie, and warns Dresden not to challenge Queen Mab too directly. Dresden asks him about the Hunt. Kringle talks of mantles, and briefly reveals he is also Vadderung. Dresden goes into the cottage to find everyone asleep except for Mouse and Karrin. Mac has been healed by Mab, and they wonder what his story is. Then Karrin and Dresden discuss their relationship, and the new factor of the Winter Knight. She tells him that they can't pursue a real relationship for a number of good reasons, and Dresden agrees with some caveats. Later, everyone leaves Dresden on the island alone, in part because Demonreach can keep the parasite at bay until Molly is ready to help. Thomas chastises him for leaving Molly to tell her parents about her new job, and for neglecting his daughter. Dresden watches them leave and goes to prepare for his next adventures.

Chapters 49-53 Analysis

There is a hint here that Lily too has been fighting to control the power given her by the mantle of the Summer Lady. It might be asked, if the Summer Lady is so warm and beautiful and full of love, then what does she have to fight? It turns out that power wielded in error is a problem, whether it comes from a place of light or darkness. Again, Summer throws out a killing blow, and it is only her own protector who saves her from making a grave mistake and killing the Winter Knight. She refuses to attempt control, and returns to her mistaken support of Maeve's attack on Demonreach. She has been led to believe that Demonreach is a source of negative and dark power, and instead of maturely realizing that its existence is important, and part of the Order of Things, she sees it as something to be destroyed.

When Dresden unleashes the full power of the Winter Knight, he is nearly overpowered by Maeve's blatantly sexual temptations. She is not just "the dark side," however, she is infected by the powers of Evil Outside, or if not evil exactly, certainly something that seeks to destroy everything. It is interesting that Nemesis in mythology isn't evil so much as she balances the scales when someone gets too prideful. She is not the Enemy, but rather a remorseless agent of Revenge and Divine Retribution. So what does the author mean by this being the only name Dresden is given for the Adversary? Who or what is seeking revenge? While the White Council believes the Outsiders are insane and don't operate with any consciousness, Dresden suspects otherwise. He sees that they work in concert, and though he doesn't understand what drives them, he is not so easily swayed to believe that they don't actually have a purpose in mind. For now, all he knows is that they are Attackers, and if he allows them to win, he brings doom on everyone and everything he cares about. He can't let that happen. It is left to the future to bring him further wisdom about who or what Nemesis is. For now, he fulfills his role as savior, while also keeping his pride in check.



When Dresden nearly caves to Maeve's seduction, he also tempts her. He gets her to expose her true intentions to everyone, and even tell everyone what really drives her. It would seem that in some ways, she is driven most by the pain of her mother's rejection of her. She might be insane, but she still recognizes that her mother wants to have her killed and replace her with someone else. Even so, Mab won't do the deed herself not because she isn't powerful enough, but because despite everything, Maeve is still her daughter, and she doesn't want to upset the Order of Things. A mother killing her daughter is the ultimate in upsetting that order. Mothers bring daughters into the world; they don't take them out of it. Maeve is given several chances to surrender and be healed, but she refuses, choosing power instead. This is the opposite choice taken by Dresden. Dresden keeps his power in check, and survives.

Molly is shown to be not only a strong partner, but a proper vessel for the Winter Lady's mantle, despite Dresden's protests. She isn't a little girl anymore. This time, she saves the day not because she has skills, but because of something inherently inside her. Mab has manipulated her, but Dresden is forced to acknowledge he's been a Svengali as well, using Molly for his own ends. In the end, all Molly can do is fulfill her role, just like everyone else.

A final statement on the idea of the mantle, and roles that are taken up or discarded is pointed to by the appearance of Kringle. Kringle is the mythical and more serious expression of what modern culture calls "Santa Claus." He is not entirely benign, but he is wise and very powerful. He can even fix the movement of time. He exposes himself as two "gods" in one. Not only is he Kringle, but he is also Donar Vadderung (and therefore Odin). He takes up and discards mantles as the circumstances require.

Dresden and Murphy are left once again unable to fulfill the promise of their love. They are obviously not "just friends," but they cannot be fully lovers either. While Dresden can't trust people for dubious reasons, Murphy has very real reasons for not being able to trust Dresden, and it has nothing to do with his behavior so much as the roles he must fulfill. They both have higher responsibilities, and so consummation might be wished, but must wait. Also, despite the protests of Thomas, he must stay away from his daughter. He has to sequester himself at Demonreach to keep a parasite from exploding out of his skull, so at least at this point he has a good reason for shirking his duties as father. Once again, Dresden's actions look far more irresponsible than they actually are. In the future, Dresden will have to trust Molly in a way he never has before. She will be charged with saving his life. Dresden stays on the island, the one place he is truly safe and secure. Demonreach really is his partner in life. This alien, ancient intelligence is the one guardian he fully trusts.



Characters

Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden

Harry Dresden is a professional wizard and private investigator in Chicago, Illinois, USA, the main character and narrator of the Dresden Files Series. He is described as tall, thin and scarred. He is somewhat socially awkward, and adheres strongly to his own moral code. He tends to keep secrets from his friends and family, claiming it is for their safety.

He is now the Winter Knight, the prized servant of the Faerie Winter Queen Mab, who has nurtured him back to health after he is nearly killed.

Because of this role as Winter Knight, his usual wizardly knowledge and powers are now augmented with the power of Winter, which gives him great strength, the ability to not feel physical pain, and to blast people with overpowering cold and ice. The trade-off is that the mantle of the Winter Knight will consume him eventually, overcoming his mortal ethics and turning him into a dark monster of violence and lust for power over others. He struggles throughout the novel to maintain his moral code in the face of this impending change, and clings to the belief that he can resist it with the strength of his free will. His overarching mortal personality is marked by dark, self-deprecating humor and a deep concern for others. The Winter Knight's mantle, on the other hand, urges him to abuse people and forcibly bend them to his will.

His first mission as Winter Knight is to kill the Winter Lady, Maeve. While struggling against his inner changes, he must also figure out who is the real enemy of Demonreach, and whom he must destroy in order to save Chicago and all his friends and family. Meanwhile, he also struggles with his abandonment of his daughter and his relationship with Karrin Murphy.

Some key information comes to Dresden in this novel: he finds that he is being plagued by a brain parasite, which only Molly can cure. He is also the Warden of Demonreach's Well, a prison for the worst of the universe's evil supernatural creatures.

Mab, the Winter Queen

Mab is the Queen of Air and Darkness, Monarch of the Winter Court of the Sidhe. Her counterpart is Queen Titania, the Summer Queen.

Mab is darkly beautiful, extremely dangerous, and cold-hearted. Dresden doesn't know whether to see her as an enemy or a wise leader, but he's not foolish enough to trust her and see her as a friend or ally. As his first task, Mab orders him to kill her daughter Maeve, the Winter Lady. Dresden spends the novel trying to figure out why. Isn't she capable of killing Maeve herself? Is Maeve a threat to her, or is she just wanting a weak



Winter Lady for her own selfish, manipulative purposes? Is she the source of the attack on the Well, and Demonreach?

She chooses Dresden as her Winter Knight because of his stubborn attachment to his free will, hoping that this will enable him to fight against their common enemy. To ready him for the task, she challenges him with constant attempts on his life, and many tricks and manipulations to sharpen his skills, both physical and magical.

In the end, the readers—and Dresden—find that light cannot exist without dark, and that Mab is the leader of a war that protects the entire universe from Nemesis, the enemy Outside.

Molly Carpenter

Molly, also sometimes called "the Grasshopper," is Dresden's apprentice. He has known her since childhood.

Molly used to be more skittish, and a street waif. Now, at Dresden's return, she is all grown up—mature, strong and well-trained. She has been aided by Dresden's faerie godmother, and can now focus her magical skills well. She specializes in veiling and is also an empath. She has bought an apartment from svartalves, where she has prepared a place for Dresden to stay, since his old apartment was destroyed. She has a crush on Dresden, and though he finds her attractive, he won't take advantage of her desires. They are re-introduced to each other when she saves him (and Toot and Bob) from an attack by enemy Little Folk. She plays a key role in all the events of the novel, using her skills to save the day several times, though magic still easily tires her. Dresden is surprised to hear from Demonreach that she is the one who will save him from the parasite in his brain.

Unbeknownst to everyone, she is a vessel, and when Maeve is killed by Murphy, she becomes the Winter Lady.

Karrin Murphy

Murphy and Dresden have a long history together. Murphy is small, blonde, and well-trained in martial arts. She used to be a police officer, and now fights against supernatural criminals. In *Cold Days*, she comes to Dresden's rescue, guns blazing, when he is under attack by the Sidhe. In the final battle against the Outsiders and the Sidhe, she transports Dresden on her motorcycle across Lake Michigan with the Wild Hunt.

Dresden and Murphy are attracted to one another, though they have never truly acted on it, mostly because of pressing emergencies. However, she is also reluctant because of Dresden's wizardly long life span, while hers will be strictly and mortally normal. She also now has to contend with the problem of his Winter Knight status, which makes him a danger to anyone near him. She wants to trust that he can resist his Winter urges, but



knows he must master them before they can pursue anything. When they finally get a chance to talk, she challenges him, and doesn't let him fool himself into wishing these problems away. In essence, she serves, along with Thomas, as Dresden's reality check.

Sarissa

Sarissa is a changeling servant of Queen Mab, and charged with attending to Dresden's recovery from his long coma. She nurses him, gives him physical therapy, and acts as his escort during the challenge of his birthday party at Arctis Tor. Dresden is attracted to her, but resists despite her seeming willingness, since he suspects she is only acting as a servant of Mab. He won't take advantage of someone who isn't acting with full consent, which surprises her. She continually expects the mantle of the Winter Knight to overtake him as it had his predecessor, Lloyd Slate, who routinely abused her before his death. She has been at Arctis Tor a long time, and Dresden is never sure whether she can be fully trusted. She is in the debt of Queen Mab because she has an unexplained genetic disease that causes dementia, and Mab has kept it at bay; in exchange Sarissa must serve at Arctis Tor for three months per year.

In the final battle against Maeve, Dresden discovers that Sarissa is Maeve's twin sister. Maeve suspects that Mab wants Sarissa to replace her as Winter Lady, so she kills the Summer Lady, forcing its mantle to pass to Sarissa.

Maeve

Maeve is the Winter Lady, Mab's faerie daughter, understudy, and successor. She is deeply seductive, violent, and Dresden doesn't trust her in the least. When she attempts to seduce him, he humiliates her, and in return she takes her revenge at his birthday party. Mab has charged Dresden as the Winter Knight with killing Maeve, not divulging her reasons. Though Dresden doesn't trust her, it isn't until later that he realizes that it is she who has been infected by the adversary, and is insane, not Mab. She has deceived the Summer Lady and her Sidhe minions into supporting her effort to destroy Demonreach.

When Maeve is killed, the mantle of the Winter Lady passes into Molly Carpenter.

Thomas Raith

Thomas is Harry Dresden's half-brother, and a vampire of the White Court. He constantly challenges Dresden about his lack of attention to familial and love relationships, but he is always there as Dresden's ally and fights alongside him throughout the novel. He is devastatingly handsome, and, in contrast to Dresden, has easy relations with women. His current girlfriend is named Justine.



Cat Sith

Cat Sith is the supreme malk, an ancient cat-like supernatural creature who is very dangerous and bloodthirsty. He is bound to Dresden as his servant and guide, but ruled by Mab. He is 80-90 pounds, with black fur except for a white spot on his chest, and he can talk. He attacks the Sidhe at the Botanic Gardens, rescuing Dresden and the others. After this, Dresden calls him and for the first time, he doesn't manifest, which troubles Dresden. In the battle against the Outsiders at Demonreach, he reappears, possessed by Sharkface, and attacks Dresden. Dresden throws him into the water, and he is not seen after that.

Queen Titania

Titania is the Summer Queen, Mab's counterpart. She is the Lady of Light and Life, Monarch of the Summer Court. She is furious with Dresden for killing her daughter, the former Summer Lady, Aurora.

Mother Winter

Mother Winter is Queen Mab's elder and mother. She is even more dangerous and sinister than Mab. When Dresden summons her, she drags him into darkness and threatens to slaughter and eat him. She stops her attack when he successfully fights back and tells her the name of the adversary.

Mother Summer

Mother Summer is Queen Titania's elder and mother. She lives with Mother Winter in a cottage in the land of Faerie. She takes Dresden to the edge of Faerie so that he can see the War and the Outer Gates, and finally understand his place in the order of things.

The Redcap

The Redcap is the most murderous of the Winter Sidhe, who constantly attacks Dresden at Maeve's behest. He is called the Redcap because, according to legend, he dyes his cap with the blood of his victims.

Bob

Bob is an ancient spirit, and a longtime assistant to Dresden. He is a bit of a pervert, and occupies a skull. While Dresden has been away, he has been kept safe by Waldo Butters. Dresden breaks into Butters' apartment to retrieve Bob, so that he can get Bob's advice on Demonreach. Bob explains the history of Demonreach to Dresden, and helps him understand the magnitude of his task. He also divulges the secret of how to



kill an immortal. In exchange for this information, he gets Dresden to promise that he will create a spare vessel for him, in case the skull is destroyed. Dresden has to hand him over for safekeeping while he is still not fully in control of the Winter Knight's dark impulses.

The Erlking

The Erlking is also known as Lord Herne, and is the leader of the Wild Hunt, also the ruler of the goblins. When Dresden bests Kringle in a fight, the Erlking temporarily allows Dresden to lead the Wild Hunt against the Outsiders.

Kringle/Donnar Vadderung

When Dresden meets Kringle he finds out that he wasn't always known as "Santa Claus." He is a participant in the Wild Hunt. When the enemy distorts time in an attempt to defeat Dresden and the Wild Hunt, he corrects the problem, and stays behind to resolve it. When he reappears in the end to inform Dresden of what has happened to Sarissa and Molly, he reveals that he too wears a mantle, and is also Donner Vadderung.

Donnar Vadderung is CEO of Monoc Securities and an extremely rich and powerful man. He is over six feet tall, with broad shoulders, and well dressed, with grey hair and beard. He is also one-eyed, and wears an eyepatch. He's not a wizard, but he is a member of the Grey Council. He has two ravens named Hugin and Munin.

Waldo Butters

Butters is a medical examiner, and assists Dresden and his cohorts from time to time. He has served as the guardian of Bob in Dresden's absence. Andi the werewolf is his girlfriend.

Andi

Andi is a werewolf and the live-in girlfriend of Waldo Butters. She attacks Dresden when he breaks into Butters' apartment to retrieve Bob.

Toot-toot

Toot is the tiny faerie leader of the Za Lord's Guard, an army of Little Folk who help Dresden in exchange for pizza.



Fix

Fix is the Summer Knight, who defends the Summer Lady. He joins with Dresden in their battle against Maeve, when he realizes that the Summer Lady has been deceived.

Lily

Lily is the Summer Lady, once a mortal woman and successor to the former Summer Lady Aurora, who was killed by Dresden. She has not been in her role long, and her naiveté leads her to be deceived by Maeve, fighting with her to break open Demonreach. She is killed by Maeve, and replaced by Sarissa.

Captain Hook/Lacuna

Captain Hook is the leader of the enemy Little Folk who attack Dresden and the Za Lord's Guard. He wounds Toot. When captured, he is revealed to be a female faerie named Lacuna. Unlike the other Little Folk, she prefers celery to pizza.

Ace

Ace is a changeling who looks like a biker. His mother was mortal, and his father is the Redcap. He has been victimized by Lloyd Slate as the Winter Knight. He wants revenge against Dresden and pursues him with murderous rage.

Lloyd Slate

Lloyd Slate was the former Winter Knight, and a very bad man, consumed by the dark mantle of his role.

Rashid

Rashid is the Gatekeeper at the Outer Gates, and a member of the White Council. He reassures Dresden that he is fully capable of his task, and tells him he will clear his name with the White Council.

Mouse

Mouse is Dresden's supernatural Tibetan mastiff (a type of dog). He has been in the care of the Carpenters, and Dresden retrieves him to help in the fight against the Outsiders.



McAnally/Mac

Mac is the owner of McAnally's, the neutral ground and favorite hangout of the supernatural folk of Chicago. He is a quiet, mysterious figure, and fights with Dresden when the bar comes under attack by Sharkface. He is also kidnapped by the Redcap in order to entrap Dresden. Dresden isn't sure if he can be trusted because Sharkface appeared to know him, and when he is kidnapped with the others, he is the only one who isn't tied up.

Sharkface/He-Who-Walks-Before

Sharkface is an Outsider and a Walker, and extremely dangerous. He attacks McAnally's and Dresden, and appears to know Mac. When Dresden later demands his true name, he calls himself the "Gatebreaker, Harbinger, Feargiver, Hopeslayer, and He-Who-Walks-Before." In the battle at Demonreach, he is found to have possessed Cat Sith.



Objects/Places

Arctis Tor

Arctis Tor is Queen Mab's icy stronghold, and the place of Winter and the Dark Faeries. Dresden recovers from his coma there.

The Unseelies

The Unseelie Court is the Court of the Dark Faeries. The Unseelie Accords are a series of agreements between the nations, meant to limit conflicts between supernatural people.

Iron

Iron is the one substance that is dangerous to faeries. A mere touch of iron can cause them great pain and harm. Because of Dresden's role as Winter Knight, he too has become vulnerable to iron's disabling effect.

The Nevernever

The Nevernever is the spirit world, of which the land of Faerie is a part.

Chicago

Chicago is Dresden's home, and the main setting of the novel.

Demonreach

A mysterious island in the middle of southern Lake Michigan, Demonreach doesn't appear on any maps, records or satellite images. It is also a nexus point of ley lines, concealing a prison for evil immortal supernatural creatures. In this novel, Dresden finds that it was created by Merlin, and he is one of its wardens. It is also a living spirit, which manifests in physical form as a 12-foot tall figure in a cloak.

The Councils of Wizards

There are three Councils of Wizards. The White Council was originally created by Merlin from the chaos after the fall of the Roman Empire. They are often at odds with Dresden, and have possibly been infiltrated by dark forces. The Grey Council is a covert association, mostly from the White Council, who joined forces to save the White



Council. (Dresden's grandfather Ebenezer and Vadderung are the only two members of which Dresden is aware.) The Black Council is only theoretical, but is believed to use dark magic to influence events around the world.

The Little Folk

The Little Folk are tiny faeries. A group of them led by Toot-toot supports Dresden and calls him the Za Lord, because he supplies them with pizza. Another group is led by Captain Hook and works against Dresden in the service of the Winter Sidhe.

The Sidhe

The Sidhe is a name for the tall, beautiful and elegant faeries, who are divided into the Winter Court and the Summer Court.

The Brighter Future Society

An alliance of supernatural creatures in Chicago, the Brighter Future Society is headquartered in a small castle.

The Fomor

The Fomor is a criminal gang of supernatural creatures.

McAnally's

Also sometimes called "Accorded Neutral Ground," McAnally's is an ostensibly Irish pub run by Mac, and the favorite hangout of the supernatural folk of Chicago. It has thirteen tables, thirteen columns, thirteen bar stools, and thirteen ceiling fans. Everything is made from wood, and is designed to withstand the magical energy put out by supernatural folk.

Outsiders

Supernatural creatures from outside the human and Nevernever universe, Outsiders are extremely dangerous and difficult to fight. They are "insanely violent," and "insanely powerful," and they all work together for some mysterious purpose. At the Outer Gates, Dresden finds out that they have been at war with his universe forever.



Ley Lines

Ley Lines are streams of magic that run naturally over the surface of the earth. Where they intersect, they become resources of powerful energy.

Soulfire

According to Dresden, Soulfire is "one of the fundamental forces of the universe, the original power of creation [...] not meant for mortals. We get it by slicing off a bit of our soul, our life energy, and converting it into something else." It comes from Dresden's core, and is his most reliable source of powerful magic, taking what he is and making it into light energy.

The Water Beetle

The water-borne counterpart to Dresden's long-lost automobile, the Water Beetle reliably transports Dresden and his friends back and forth to Demonreach.



Themes

Free Will

The most important theme of *Cold Days* is the concept of Free Will. Dresden cannot escape the mantle of the Winter Knight, because its presence keeps him alive. And yet, he has to fight against the dark impulses it brings up in him. If he were a less moral person, less devoutly committed to his personal code of ethics, he could embrace that darkness and do as he wishes. But he is Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden, and he isn't going to walk away from all that he has built inside himself.

The Will of a wizard is a strongly developed thing, but it is not necessarily a match for the mantle of the Winter Knight. His predecessor might not have started out an evil man, but he certainly became evil in the end, abusing everyone who got in his way. Dresden takes this example as fair warning, and previously, he tried to have himself assassinated to prevent him having to take on the struggle at all. Now he is faced with fewer choices, but he still clings obsessively to the idea that he doesn't have to do everything he's told. He has the power of choice, and he takes it whenever he can. It is this power that saves him time and again, and it appears it is exactly this self-awareness and stubborn attachment to his free will that has attracted Mab to him in the first place. It's not only that he's a particularly powerful wizard, it's that he's not going to be cowed by his own fears, and he's going to take his own path. Mab hopes it is this trait that will help her keep the order of things intact.

Through all his experiences in *Cold Days*, Dresden has to learn the difference between taking responsibility and exercising his will. Just because he doesn't have the choice about being the Winter Knight doesn't mean he has to behave in certain ways, or be a victim. He learns to recognize the difference between what is truly himself, and what is the Winter Knight, and when to use that power in necessity. There is some mystery: has the Winter Knight's mantle just been stripping away his conscience, exposing his true nature, or have those emotions been lurking there underneath all the time?

Dresden is repeatedly warned by others about his struggle, but he is all too aware of it. However, Karrin Murphy is the one who truly understands that perfectly decent people can make choices that lead them down dark paths toward murder and mayhem. Dresden has great power, and must call upon his Free Will to keep it under control.

When he does call upon his Free Will as a weapon, it serves him well. He uses it to break free of Mother Winter's bonds, proving to her he is worthy of his mantle. When Sharkface imprisons him in his own mind, he fights it by declaring his own identity, refusing to submit to this Outsider's will. He takes his full power, then, and uses it to save the world.



Order

Dresden finds out just how deeply bound the universe is to the proper order of things.

Demonreach represents Order. He is the guardian of the darkest well on earth, while Dresden is the Warden, or power. Dresden's role is important in that without him, the worst forces of the universe might be unleashed. So not only does he have the monumental power (and potential darkness) of the Winter Knight to deal with, he also has control of the most powerful weapon on the planet. Luckily, Dresden respects his place as protector, and doesn't seek to use his power for his own ends.

As Winter Knight, Dresden is showing the power of embracing your destiny, despite its dangers. The mantle will mold you to it, whether you like it or not, but you still can work within that order to work for good.

By the end of the novel, Dresden has fully realized the roles for which they all hold responsibility. Queen Mab is simply the other side of the coin from Queen Titania. They are opposites, but not Good versus Evil. Light is not the same as Good and Evil is not the same as Darkness. They are doing their duty, and Dresden finally finds out what those duties are explicitly. Mab has the duty of protecting the world from the Outsiders. Titania has the duty of protecting the mortal world from Mab's darkness. Maeve and Lily have their roles as Winter Lady and Summer Lady. The Knights too have their duties, though they are not the same. The Gatekeeper and the Gatebreaker too have their place in the order of things. The epic war has gone on forever, and the balance must not be upset. The Outsiders eternally seek entry, and the powerful must eternally fight them off.

When Dresden briefly shirks his responsibility of upholding Winter Law, his powers are briefly stripped from him, and he sees the consequences of not playing your part. He might be able to bend the rules for good purpose, but he may not break them.

Distraction

Throughout the novel there exists a constant repetitious thread of distraction after distraction. Dresden is continually being tempted aside by female seductresses who want him to use his powers inappropriately. Mab leads him to believe she is a murderer, but it is Titania who truly hates him and would kill him if not for the intervention of others.

Dresden is pulled in many different directions by the forces arrayed against him, but he stays focused for the most part. He isn't fooled by the many ritual decoys, or the kidnapping of his friends, but he manages to deal with them as they are shot across his bow.

He uses distraction himself to his own advantage, allowing Molly to use her skills fully in fight after fight. She wields her veiling skills to great effect, and this allows them all to survive to fight another day.

Style

Point of View

Cold Days is told exclusively from the first person-limited point of view of wizard Harry Dresden. The reader is confined to Dresden's thoughts and experiences, and consumed—right along with him—with his doubts, inner battles, and feelings. The reader is limited to knowing only what Dresden knows, and so discovers the answers to various mysteries as he does, many of which have been carried over from previous novels in the series. Because of this limitation, many of the feelings and motivations of Dresden's friends and enemies remain a mystery, aside from his own assumptions and beliefs about them. The narrator Dresden often references his own cluelessness in regards to love and family and the trust required to maintain them.

Setting

The setting of *Cold Days* is in present-day Chicago and the eternity of the Nevernever, which overlap at various points, so that Dresden can cross from one to the other. The entirety of the action of the novel takes place on a single day, Halloween. When Dresden is recovering from his coma in the Nevernever, he is there for months, conscious for 77 days of physical and magical therapy at the hands of Mab and Sarissa. However, since time is of no consequence in the Nevernever, it is unknown how long he has been there in human terms. It is certainly true that he has been presumed dead in Chicago for some time, but how long exactly is not specified. All action in Chicago, the bulk of the novel, takes place from the wee hours to the evening of Halloween.

Language and Meaning

The Dresden Files novels are written in a casual contemporary style, meant to evoke the running commentary going on in Harry Dresden's own brain and his interpretation of his experiences. He makes many sly, even oblique, references to the music, movies, television and literature of his own lifetime, which appears to coincide with author Jim Butcher's. This means that pop cultural allusions span from the 1960s to the 2010s, and can be as obscure as a song lyric or the name of a television character. They might seem out of context to the uninitiated reader, but they fit the conversational style of modern Midwestern America. The novel is filled with sarcastic, dark humor, and rife with slang.

Structure

The Dresden Files is a series, and *Cold Days* is book 14, excluding an anthology of related short stories. *Cold Days* is 515 pages long, divided into 53 fairly short chapters that proceed in a completely linear fashion from his time in the Nevernever and Arctis



Tor to the final battle with the Sidhe Ladies at Demonreach and its aftermath. There is nearly no skipping of events to speed the action forward. There are no flashbacks, and any references to Dresden's previous history is narrated as if it's his own memory. The novel begins in Dresden's weakness as he recovers in the Nevernever to the full strength of his realization of his power as the Winter Knight and his capacity to fight the most powerful of supernatural forces, including those from outside the universe. He progresses from a rebellious person to someone who recognizes and even embraces his role in the cosmic order of things.



Quotes

"'Surely you have no reason to fear,' she whispered, her breath tickling my lips. 'You are mine now. If you are not well, I cannot use you to work my will.'"

(Chapter 1, p. 5)

"As a rule, people aren't good at handling power. And the second you start to think you're better at controlling your power than anyone else, you've already taken the first step."

(Chapter 3, p. 20)

"None of us is what we once were. Everyone has a history. Everyone comes from somewhere. Each moves toward a destination. And in a lifetime as long as mine, the road can run far and take strange windings—something I judge you know something about."

(Chapter 5, p. 39)

"Caution was a critical survival trait in Winter, and as far as she was concerned, I was most likely a monster in the process of being born. A monster she'd been given to, no less."

(Chapter 8, p. 68)

"'You keep thinking of the Faerie Queens as specific individuals, Harry,' Bob said. 'But they aren't individuals. They're mantles of power, roles, positions. The person in them is basically an interchangeable part.'"

(Chapter 11, p. 99)

"'You're like... her guided missile. She can't know exactly what's going to happen, but she knows there's going to be a great big boom.'"

(Chapter 11, p. 101)

"So I gave it to her, straight, succinct, and with zero editing except for the bit about Halloween. It felt sort of strange. I hardly ever tell anyone that much truth. The truth is dangerous."

(Chapter 13, p. 122)

"I suddenly felt very young and very arrogant, and not terribly bright. I mean, I'd known I was going to be out of my depth when I first hooked up with the island, but I thought I'd



at least be in the same freaking ocean."
(Chapter 15, p. 151)

"The fire of my tribulations had not simply been pain to be endured. It had been an agent of transformation. After all that I'd been through, I'd changed."
(Chapter 16, p. 157)

"I'd just been handed what amounted to a great big ugly weapon of mass destruction and potential havoc. To the various powers of the supernatural world, it wouldn't matter that I would never use it. All that would matter was that I had it to use."
(Chapter 17, p. 163)

"Now her blue eyes looked weary, wary. She wasn't looking at the beauty in life as much as she once had. Her eyes scanned for danger both nearby and farther down the road, heavy with caution and made wise by pain—and they had far, far more steel in them than I had ever seen there before."
(Chapter 18, p. 174)

"Not even Mab should get to decide who lives and who dies, Harry. Life is too precious to be wasted that way. So when she sends you to kill someone, someone gets in the way. That's me."
(Chapter 19, p. 189)

"Wizard... you have been dead and returned. It has marked you. It has opened doors and paths that you do not yet know exist, and attracted the attention of beings who formerly would never have taken note of your insignificance."
(Chapter 21, p. 211)

"Pride. Possession. Territoriality. That wasn't me. That was the mantle of Winter talking through me."
(Chapter 22, p. 215)

"I don't care how gentle or holy or sincere or dedicated you are. There are bad things in there. Lust. Greed. Violence. You don't need a wicked queen to make that happen. That's a part of everyone. Some more, some less, but it's always there."
(Chapter 24, p. 240)

"No one just starts giggling and wearing black and signs up to become a villainous monster. How the hell do you think it happens? [...] It happens to people. Just people. They make questionable choices, for what might be very good reasons. They make



choice after choice, and none of them is slaughtering roomfuls of saints, or murdering hundreds of baby seals, or rubber-room irrational. But it adds up. And then one day they look around and realize that they're so far over the line that they can't remember where it was."

(Chapter 27, p. 273)

"They get caught up in right and wrong. Or right and left. But none of that stuff matters if people aren't free."

(Chapter 30, p. 303)

"HERE LIES HARRY DRESDEN. HE DIED DOING THE RIGHT THING."

(Chapter 31, p. 309)

"Mortals had the short end of the stick on almost any supernatural confrontation. Even most wizards, with their access to terrific forces, had to approach conflicts carefully—relatively few of us had the talents that lent themselves to brawling. But mortals had everyone else beat on exactly one thing: Free will."

(Chapter 32, p. 316)

"I could lift my will against that of anything, and know that the fight might be lopsided, but never hopeless. And by thunder, I was not going to allow anyone's will to stretch me out on the floor like a lamb for slaughter."

(Chapter 32, p. 316)

"What we need is you. You have what you have for a reason. Unwitting or not, virtually your every action in the past few years has resulted in a series of well-placed thumbs in the adversary's eye."

(Chapter 34, p. 341)

"It's the night when everyone looks like something that they aren't.[...] But I'm about to start ripping off masks. And we'll both see where everyone stands."

(Chapter 39, p. 388)

"We do not need you to fight our battles for us. But if you stand aside, we will accord you respect and leave you in peace. You and those you love. Take them to a safe, quiet place. Stay there. You will not be molested."

(Chapter 45, p. 439)

"You can't tell me that. [...] Not you. Do you think I wanted this? Do you think I wanted pain and death and fear and war? Do you think I wanted this mantle, this



responsibility?"
(Chapter 48, p. 463)

"To fulfill one's purpose is not to be a slave, my daughter. [...] And you are not free, child, any more than a knife is free because it leaves its sheath and is thrust into a corpse."
(Chapter 52, p. 494)

"Many, many mantles are worn—or discarded—on Halloween night, wizard."
(Chapter 53, p. 506)



Topics for Discussion

Who is Harry Dresden? What is the new role he has to play? What is dangerous about it? What is his most powerful weapon against its dangers? What are some of the enemies he has to face? How does he defeat each of them? What is his role on Demonreach? How does he protect it? What is the one thing he is avoiding? Describe Dresden's place in the order of things.

Who is Molly Carpenter? What has she been doing in Dresden's absence? How did she acquire an apartment? What are her greatest skills? What are her feelings toward Dresden? What happens to her after Maeve is killed?

Who is Karrin Murphy? What are her feelings toward Dresden? How has she handled his absence? How does she help during the Wild Hunt? What is she keeping safe from Dresden? What other concerns does she have about Dresden?

Who is Mab? Who is Titania? How do their mantles differ? How do they behave toward Dresden? Describe their roles in the order of things.

Who is Maeve? Who is Lily? How do their mantles differ? How do they each behave toward Dresden? How does Maeve persuade Lily to join forces with her? Why is Lily angry? Why is Maeve angry? What happens in the end of the novel to Maeve? What happens to Lily?

Who is the Redcap? What does he do during the birthday party? What does he do at the Botanic Gardens? What does he do to Dresden's friends? How does he wound Dresden? What are the consequences of that act?

What is happening at the Outer Gates? Who are the Outsiders? Why are they so dangerous? Who is Sharkface? What does he look like when they first encounter him at McAnally's? What is his most powerful weapon? How does Dresden defeat him?

Who is Thomas Raith? How is he a "monster"? How does he feel about Dresden's long absence? What is his main concern regarding Dresden's relationships?

What is Demonreach? What is Dresden's relationship to it? What are the consequences if it is destroyed? What will happen if it is attacked? Who attacks it and why?