

The Crown Tower Study Guide

The Crown Tower by Michael J. Sullivan

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Plot Summary

The Crown Tower by Michael J. Sullivan is a story of a young man who has lost his way in life and how a friend of his family attempts to set him back on the path of his destiny. His path crosses that of a second main character named Gwen DeLancy. In the course of the story, Hadrian's and Gwen's destinies are fulfilled.

Hadrian Blackwater ran away from home when he was fifteen because he felt his father was holding him back from achieving his full potential. After five years on his own, he now sees that running away was a mistake. He has done things he is not proud of and would not want his father to know. Hadrian receives word that his father has died. His father has left a last request of Hadrian. Hadrian learns about the request from Professor Arcadius at Sheridan University. Arcadius tells Hadrian that his father wanted him to have a purpose in his life. Arcadius sends him on a job to steal a book. Hadrian's partner in the theft will be Royce Melborn. Royce and Hadrian are opposites. Arcadius hopes the two will bond during their time together and become a team.

Gwen DeLancy is waiting for her destiny to unfold. As Gwen and her mother are traveling to Medford, her mother dies. Her mother's dying words are for Gwen to promise to go to Medford and make a life there. A man comes to pay his respects to her mother and gives Gwen six coins. He tells her to use one coin to bury her mother because she deserves the best. One coin is for Gwen to travel to Medford. She must keep the four remaining coins. She is not to spend them until it is absolutely necessary. A desperate man will come to Medford in the night dressed in his own blood and begging for help. Gwen must save him.

Gwen takes her destiny seriously and only uses the coins when her life is in danger. It allows her to have a place for the man when he comes to Medford. The paths of Gwen, Hadrian, and Royce are interwoven throughout the story. Their destinies combine at the end to fulfill Gwen's promise to the man and her mother.



Chapter 1

Summary

Hadrian Blackwater is robbed as he gets off a ship. It is his only bag, and he never even saw who did it. He struggles to get off the ship and get his land legs. People are all around getting off the ship, and friends and relatives are trying to get the attention of someone. Others are offering lodging and jobs. Hadrian protects his purse and follows the flow of people. Hadrian feels out of place in his Eastern attire and wishes he had worn something else.

A voice calls out to him. An adolescent boy wearing tattered clothes waits beneath a lantern. The youth has Hadrian's bag. The boy tells him that he has been protecting the bag and someone like Hadrian should not carry his own bag. The boy thinks he is a great knight. Hadrian tells him that he is not. The boy says he must be because he is so big and he carries three swords. Only a knight carries such things. The boy's name is Pickles, and he says he will carry the bag for him and that they must leave quickly. Hadrian tells him that he does not need a guide because he is not staying here. He is going to Sheridan to the university. Pickles says he must be a great scholar and tells him about a barge that leaves that night up the Bernum River. Pickles says he can be a guide for Hadrian. He has traveled far and can help Hadrian by seeing to his needs and protecting his belongings.

Hadrian says he is not a scholar. He is only visiting one and does not need a servant. A press-gang falls upon them. Pickles tells the men that Hadrian is a famous swordsman and very dangerous. They attempt to take Pickles to make him work on a ship. Hadrian tells them that Pickles works for him. The men refuse to listen. Hadrian is able to fight off the men without drawing his swords. The two head for the barge Pickles mentioned.

Pickles points out things in the city. He calls it is a filthy city. Hadrian sees that Pickles must be only four or five years younger. Pickles leads him to the dock of where he will get a ship to Sheridan. Hadrian keeps looking behind him, but he knows there are only ghosts that stalk him. He believes he reeks of death from wallowing in it. He is running from his past. Soldiers bar their path to the barge. Hadrian tells them that Pickles is escorting him to the barge that he has business up north. They believe Hadrian just came in on a ship because of his foreign attire. Hadrian asks what is wrong. He wonders if there is a problem with his hiring a guide and paying for him to travel with him. They find it suspicious that Pickles latched onto someone and is attempting to leave town. There have been several killings in the last few days, and they are looking for the killer.

The soldiers do not believe that Pickles is the killer, but they want to question him to see if he knows anything. They detain him. Hadrian tells him that once he has finished with their questions he can meet him in Sheridan. He gives him money. Pickles is to ask for Professor Arcadius. Hadrian catches the barge.



Analysis

Hadrian is in a strange place and feels out of place. He is obviously a warrior, but he has a soft heart. This is shown when he takes pity on the boy who steals his bag and offers to take him to Sheridan. The man can take care of himself, as he did with the men who tried to abduct Pickles. The fight leaves Pickles in awe of his fighting ability. He is impressed that Hadrian was able to fight the men without even drawing his sword.

Hadrian is haunted by his past. He looks behind him as he and Pickles walk through the city. This gives the reader the impression that he has things in his past that he regrets. His reluctance to discuss his occupation also makes the reader wonder what he does and why he is reluctant to talk about it.

Discussion Question 1

Who is Pickles and why does he steal Hadrian's bag?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Pickles assume Hadrian is a knight? Why does Hadrian avoid answering questions about his profession?

Discussion Question 3

Why do the soldiers detain Pickles and not let him board the barge with Hadrian? Where does Hadrian tell Pickles to meet him?

Vocabulary

Chaos, adrift, pungent, attire, maelstrom, stymied, isthmus, labyrinth.



Chapter 2

Summary

In Chapter 2, Gwen hears screaming coming from the second floor. A man is hammering a girl's head against the floor. Gwen yells the name Avon and runs up the stairs. Gwen claws at the latch on the door, but the inside bolt is locked. She throws herself against it without any results. The screams have faded to whispered moans. Gwen goes to the room across the hall where Mae is entertaining a man and Mae screams in fear. Avon's screams have interrupted everyone's evening. Gwen kicks the loose post of the bed's foot board and drives the post into Avon's door.

Raynor Grue comes up the stairs as Gwen is about to ram the door again. He tells her to stop. Gwen rams the door again shattering the frame and opening the door. They find Stane on top of Avon his hands still around her neck. He claims that she would not stop screaming. The girl is dead. Gwen attempts to attack Stane, but Grue shoves her back. Stane apologizes to Grue, and they bargain on a compensation for the death of the prostitute. Grue tells Gwen to get a bucket to clean up the blood.

Gwen is angry and proclaims that he cannot let Stane get away with killing Avon. Grue claims that Stane will pay damages. Gwen runs to the sheriff's office. She tells him that Stane killed Avon. The girls are scared of him because he hurts them and fear excites him, which makes him do more damage. The sheriff sides with Grue although he says that Stane should pay for the damages that Gwen caused since she would not have damaged the door if Stane had not been hurting Avon.

Gwen feels guilty because she knew that Stane would hurt Avon and did nothing. She knows that Grue will hurt her later for going for the sheriff. She is upset that Avon's death means nothing because she was a prostitute. Stane threatens Gwen and promises he will have her once he has paid the damages he owes for Avon's death. He looks to make sure that Grue is gone then attempts to hurt Gwen. She runs out the back door and runs until she can run no more. She is able to escape him.

Analysis

Gwen is a strong woman who is eager to help others no matter the consequences to her own self. She thinks only of Avon's safety as she attempts to break down the door to help her. She even attempts to attack a man who is obviously bigger and stronger than she is. She has a strong sense of right and wrong and does not like people to get away with murdering another human being. Women are obviously looked down upon in a society where a man can murder a woman and all he has to do is pay restitution to the man who is seen as her owner. Gwen seems out of place in this society. She is independent and head strong, which makes her stand out among the other girls at the tavern.



Discussion Question 1

Why does Gwen bust down the door of Avon's room? Why is she worried?

Discussion Question 2

Why does the sheriff side with Grue about Stane's punishment for Avon's death? What is that punishment? Is it fair?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Gwen feel guilty about Avon's death? How does it affect her?

Vocabulary

Inhuman, futile, momentum, restitution, frustration.



Chapter 3

Summary

In Chapter 3, Hadrian is on the barge headed up the Bernum River. He feels like an outsider because everything seems strange to him. He is cold because he came from the south and is dressed for the climate. Hadrian meets the others on board the barge. Sebastian, Samuel and Eugene are merchants. Sebastian believes that Hadrian is wearing three swords because of the murders that happened in Vernes. Three men were murdered over three nights. He tells Hadrian that the man on the barge dressed in a cloak looks like an assassin. He has cold eyes. The cloaked man worries Sebastian and the others because he came on board at the last minute without any baggage.

The men question Hadrian about his trade. He tells them that he used to be a soldier. There is also a woman on the barge. Vivian is beautiful and the first woman Hadrian has been around in two years. The merchants look after Vivian. Vivian is frightened of the man in the cloak. They turn to Hadrian to protect them. Hadrian is chosen to talk to the man to see who he is. The man tells Hadrian to leave him alone. The others now believe that the man is the killer and want to tie him up. Hadrian will not participate and says if they try anything he will help the man.

Hadrian talks with Vivian. She tells Hadrian that her husband was one of the men killed in Vernes. She was terrified and ran with nothing but the clothes on her back. She traded her wedding ring for fare. She thinks the killer is following her to kill her as well. He tells her that the boatman is going to go to the sheriff when they reach Colnora so there will be an investigation. If the hooded man is guilty, he will be tried and convicted. Vivian will then be able to return home. Hadrian agrees to protect her until they reach Colnora.

Analysis

Hadrian is a man who can obviously fight, but he is also awkward around women. This shows that he is used to being around men, which is typical of a soldier. Hadrian is also very trusting. He takes the merchants and Vivian into his confidence. He is happy to help them in any way in can. He does have a sense of honor, which is shown when he will not join them in their rush to condemn the hooded man of murder. He seeks justice by waiting to hand the man over to the sheriff in the next town, instead of throwing him overboard. He gives the man the benefit of the doubt.

Hadrian is honorable. He listens to Vivian and offers his assistance to her. He doesn't question her story or judge her. He readily accepts what she says as true. He is very naive.



Discussion Question 1

Who is Vivian? Why does Hadrian agree to protect her?

Discussion Question 2

Why do the passengers believe that the hooded man is the killer of the three men in Vernes? What do they want to do? Why will Hadrian not help?

Discussion Question 3

How does the hooded man react to the other passengers? What does Hadrian think of the hooded man?

Vocabulary

Envious, miraculous, transformation, infectious, excursion, declaration, swarthy, inquisitional, resignation, emergence, allure, heinous, rogue, nefarious, inexplicable, masquerade, prestigious, malevolence.



Chapter 4

Summary

In Chapter 4, Gwen is getting water from the well. Grue beat her for involving Ethan in the death of Avon. She looks at one of the buildings across the street from the tavern. Avon told her that it was once an inn. Only rats stay there now. Gwen remembers how her mother had spoken of Medford and how they would make it their home. Gwen imagined it to be a beautiful place and that she and her mother would live in a beautiful house with a fountain outside. As she sits by the well, she contemplates the very different reality.

Gwen's mother dedicated herself to reaching Medford. She traveled alone with a child. Gwendolyn is also confused by her name. It is not a name common among her people. She did not find people with similar names until she reached the North. Gwen is shunned in the North because she has darker skin.

Gwen's mother has the gift of sight and teaches her daughter how to use it. When Gwen asks her mother why they are going to Medford, she tells her that God told her to go. Gwen used most of their money to get a room for her mother Illia. It is where she died. Her mother makes her promise that she will go to Medford and be there for him. Gwen does not know to whom her mother was referring when she said "him," but Gwen promises anyway.

A man comes to see Illia, and Gwen must tell him that she died. The man gives her six coins for her mother telling his fortune at one time. Gwen is astonished and says it is too much. He tells her that it was a very good fortune. He tells her to use a coin for her mother's funeral and then a coin for her travels to Medford. The remaining four she needs to retain until absolutely necessary. He tells her that a desperate man will come to her in Medford dressed in his own blood and begging for help. She must save him.

Gwen returns to the tavern to find Stane fixing the door of the bedroom. He has paid his debt, and Gwen is scared that Grue will sell her to him for the night. She is worried he will kill her. Grue says Avon's death was an unfortunate accident and that he does not kill girls for fun. He will not believe anything else. Stane has agreed to behave. Grue promised him Jollin. He asked for Gwen, but Grue did not agree. Gwen is worried that Stane will kill Jollin.

Gwen wakes the other prostitutes and tells them that they have to leave. She tells them that she has money that can help them. She did not know how best to spend it until now. Gwen does not have a plan, but knows that they need to leave quickly. She believes together that they can survive. She tells them that the hammering is Stane fixing the bedroom door and that Grue plans on letting him have Jollin as soon as he is finished. They all believe that he will kill her. They are scared to leave.



Gwen tells them that she is going to get her money. Whoever wants to go with her had best be ready to go when she gets back. When she returns, the girls are all up and packed. Grue sees them and asks what they are doing. She tells him that they are leaving. He tells them to go, but they will regret it and when they come back he will beat them. Gwen takes the girls to the abandoned inn across the street from the tavern.

Analysis

The reason for Gwen's difference is understood when the reader learns that she was not born in Medford. She does not understand why she is there. She made a promise to her mother to settle in Medford; and, she honors that promise no matter the consequences to herself. The reader learns that she has the Sight and that she is waiting for something to happen. Gwen has a special gift and she must hide it from others because she would be seen as a witch.

Gwen feels responsible for those around her. She is like a mother to the prostitutes and helps them escape from the danger of the tavern. They need someone who will look out for their interests and not just sell them for the money and not care about their safety.

Discussion Question 1

Why did Gwen imagine that Medford would be a beautiful place? How does Medford differ from what she imagined?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Gwen shunned in the north? Why does she hide her ability of Sight?

Discussion Question 3

Why did the man give Gwen so many valuable skills? Why does she hide them?

Vocabulary

Indicative, contempt, destitute, eternity, frugal, legitimate, exotic, novelty.



Chapter 5

Summary

In Chapter 5, Sebastian and the others on the barge admit that they are not sleeping. Hadrian was awake most of the night with his door open so he could keep an eye on the corridor leading to the other cabins. They ask Hadrian his plans when they reach Colnora. He tells them he does not have any that he is just traveling. He asks about Farlan, the steer man. No one has seen him. The passengers will have to take turns manning the rudder the rest of the trip.

The merchants believe that Farlan was killed by the hooded man. Hadrian does not believe it. The others want to kill the man before he kills them. Hadrian will not kill a man on speculation. He says he will defend the man if they try to hurt him. Hadrian tells the men to stay together because they will be safer in a group. He promises to protect Vivian.

When Hadrian is headed to his cabin, Vivian calls out and asks who is there. She asks him to wait. He enters her cabin and she asks him to close the door. She tells him that she is very frightened and asks him to spend the night in her room. She promises that she will keep him warm during the night. Hadrian tells her that he will sit next to the door with his back against it. Vivian begins to untie the ribbons on her gown. Hadrian mentions her husband just dying and guesses she was not the faithful type. He does not believe her husband was killed. They hear screams.

Hadrian reaches the deck with his sword in his hand. He can find no one. He finds the merchants dead. He returns to Vivian's cabin to find her dead. Hadrian goes to his cabin and gathers his belongings. The barge has stopped moving so Hadrian is able to jump from the barge to land. He does not find the body of the man who kept the horses moving, but there is a lot of blood. Hadrian ties off the bow line to a tree and unfastens the harnesses on the horses. He ties one horse to the tree and rides the other to the nearest town. He wonders if he will stumble across the hooded man along the way.

Analysis

The passengers are scared of the hooded man. The boatman has disappeared; and, no one knows what happened to him. This worries the passengers even more. They must take turns steering the boat. The disappearance makes them eye the hooded man with even more suspicion. They want to harm him before he harms them. Still, Hadrian will not side with the other passengers because it is wrong to harm someone without evidence that they did anything wrong.

Hadrian will agree to protect them. He feels that he has failed them when they are all killed. The death of Vivian is especially hard for him. Although he has seen death



before, the death of a woman he promised to protect is different. She trusted him, and he failed her.

Discussion Question 1

Why do the passengers want to kill the hooded man? What do they believe he has done?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Vivian need protection? Why does Hadrian feel obligated to protect her?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Vivian try to seduce Hadrian? Why does he leave her alone?

Vocabulary

Aloof, turbulent, dismissive, rife, resolution, worrisome, agape, oblivious, vigil, fantastical, bulbous, fastidious, impeccable, tranquil.



Chapter 6

Summary

In Chapter 6, Gwen and the girls from the tavern enter the inn. It is in shambles. There are holes in the roof. Only two walls are solid. They attempt to light the fireplace, but it is blocked and smoke fills the room. Gwen thinks back to her first day at the tavern. She thought she was being hired as a barmaid. When she found out barmaid meant prostitute she tried to leave and Grue beat her. He kept an eye on her after that. When he got careless, she ran leaving her coins under the floorboards in her room. She wondered the city looking for work, handouts or help, but found only indifference and hatred. She was even turned away by other brothels.

Gwen returned to Grue when she could take the hunger no more. He did not even beat her. He sent her to bed and ordered food brought up to her. When she felt better Grue came to her and told her that no one will help her. No one cares about her. He is a bad man. He will not cry if she dies or lose sleep if she runs. He is the only person in the world who cares about her.

Gwen believes her mother knew the price she would have to pay. Illia had made her promise to go even knowing what Gwen's future would hold. Gwen knew she had to stay in Medford and that the coins she held were meant for something more than just food. She was to wait until it was absolutely necessary and she believes this is what the man meant.

Gwen is worried though that she may end up killing all of these girls. Gwen says she will go buy food and blankets and tools in the Merchant Quarter since no one in the Lower Quarter would sell to them because of Grue. Jollin says that they cannot stay at the inn because the city will not let them. Gwen says that she does not intend that they just live there. They will start their own brothel. Jollin says that no one will want to come there. Gwen decides to go find out what they will need and what it will cost.

The merchants do not pay any attention to Gwen. Jollin takes the lead and bargains with the shopkeeper for blankets. The woman is surprised when she pays with a gold coin. Jollin says that it was a shame the woman was so rude because her lady, meaning Gwen, would be making several purchases, but no more from her to teach her not to be so judgmental. When purchasing their other supplies, they discover that they need to purchase a royal writ to open a business. You cannot open a business without the certificate of permit or you will be arrested. It can be obtained by going to the city assessor's office in Gentry Square. They go back to the inn and huddle under their blankets and eat their dinner.



Analysis

Gwen and the girls from the tavern start a new life on their own. They are seeking their freedom from the tyranny of Grue. It shows how independent Gwen is and the influence she has on others. She sees what she wants to happen and makes it happen.

Gwen does her best to help the girls, while keeping her promise to the man who gave her the coins. It is a fine balance and she does not know if she is doing the right thing. She has no one to confide in and many others who rely on her.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Gwen take the girls and run from the tavern? What do they fear?

Discussion Question 2

Why is it important to Gwen to watch over the girls and keep them safe? Why does she risk the coins to help them run from Grue?

Discussion Question 3

Why do the merchants not want to sell to Gwen? How does Jollin get the shopkeepers' attention?

Vocabulary

Dilapidated, absurdity, loathsome, indifference, gentry, judgemental, doleful, impenetrable.



Chapter 7

Summary

In Chapter 7, Hadrian reaches the city of Colnora. He is exhausted, but he cannot sleep. He sees Vivian every time he closes his eyes. Hadrian wonders the city looking for the Sheriff's office. He finds the office and bangs on the door. He tells the sheriff about the killings. The man is tired and not interested in trekking down the river in the dark and rain. Hadrian tells the man his story as they wait for daylight. The man questions him about the man in the hood who Hadrian believes is the killer. There was a series of grisly murders in the town a year ago and the killer is said to have worn a black cloak with a hood.

Hadrian takes the sheriff to the spot where he left the barge, but it is not there. They head back to town to talk to the man at the shipping dock about the missing boat. When they arrive, the man says that there was no barge due in that day and he has never heard of Farlan the boat's pilot. The sheriff suggests that Hadrian continue his trip to Sheridan before he locks him up for wasting his time.

Analysis

Hadrian is feeling guilty about Vivian's death. He had promised that he would protect her, and he did not. He does the right thing by going to the sheriff, but he cannot relieve the guilt he feels. He is confused that the barge has disappeared and cannot fathom why or how it could disappear. His sanity is questioned by the sheriff. The sheriff is upset with him. Hadrian wonders if everything actually happened.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Hadrian go to the sheriff? Why is the sheriff reluctant to investigate?

Discussion Question 2

Why is the sheriff interested in the hooded man? Could he be the same man?

Discussion Question 3

Why does the sheriff threaten to lock up Hadrian? Why does he not believe Hadrian's story of what happened on the barge?

Vocabulary

Luxury, errant, grotesque, disreputable, malcontents, rivulets, elongate, grimace, nuisance.



Chapter 8

Summary

In Chapter 8, Gwen and Rose go to the Gentry Quarter to get a royal permit. She fears that they will be run out of the inn by the sheriff if they do not have the permit. The assessor says that he does not see too many young girls getting permits to run businesses. Gwen wants to buy the inn, but she is told that all the land in the kingdom is owned by the King. He only grants privileges or a Certificate of Royal Permit to run a business. It costs them two gold coins. She will be taxed based on the income accrued. The certificate has to be renewed every year. Someone from the Lower Quarter's merchants' guild will visit and if he approves the business then their permit will be approved. The certificate can be revoked at any time.

Gwen tells the girls that the inn is theirs. While Gwen and Rose were out, the other girls had worked clearing away some of the debris and blocking up some of the holes. They need to clear the chimney and buy some lumber. They need to find help. Jollin thinks no one where help because no one cares about them. Gwen has the girls starting to clear away the chimney, while she goes out and finds someone to help them.

Gwen sees Dixon sitting next to his broken cart in the rain. She tells him that she and the girls have taken over the inn to start a brothel. She says they are going to have a nice evening meal if he would like to join them. Gwen offers him a job helping clean up the building. Dixon takes her to the docks so he can get some rope to help clean out the chimney. Gwen asks Dixon where she can find a carpenter. He tells her Artisan Row.

Gwen and Dixon run into Stane. He grabs her wrist and tells her that it was rude for her to walk out on him. Dixon protects her by shoving Stane hard against the wall. Gwen thanks him and tells him that Stane is the one who killed Avon and the girls left the Hideous Head because he was coming back for the rest of them and Grue did not care. Dixon says if Stane bothers her again he will not be anything, anymore. Dixon helps her find a carpenter. She plans on starting with one room and the roof and then doing more as money starts coming in.

Analysis

Gwen learns what it is like to become a businesswoman. She asserts herself and gets the inn for she and the girls. Gwen takes charge and sets about getting things repaired and making the inn a home. She asks Dixon to help them and he is only too happy to assist. He is protective of the girls and helps Gwen when Stane harasses her. Dixon does not see Gwen as a prostitute. He sees her as a strong-minded woman. He has respect for her and wants others to do the same.



Discussion Question 1

Why does Gwen go to Artisan Row for workers rather than find them in the Lower Quarter? What kind of reception does she get from the workers?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Dixon help Gwen to find a carpenter? How does he feel about Gwen?

Discussion Question 3

How does Stane treat Gwen? How does his view of women differ from Dixon's?

Vocabulary

Doublet, accrue, writ, hovel, nobility, dissuade, inclement, raucous, depravity, patronage, penury.



Chapter 9

Summary

In Chapter 9, Hadrian stays for five days in Colnora. He obtains a new horse named Dancer. The ghosts of his past haunt him, and he travels to Sheridan to try to distance himself from them. He stops for a rest and to get directions from a farmer. On the rest of his journey, Hadrian wonders about the letter he had received and how it had found him in the wilds. He could not understand it. The letter had led him to quit fighting. It told him of his father's death.

Hadrian reaches Sheridan University and goes in search of Professor Arcadius. During his search, Hadrian runs into Angdon. He is a student at the school and the son of a baron. He looks down on Hadrian and most others. The boy whom Angdon was bullying when Hadrian approached them shows Hadrian to Arcadius' office. Hadrian remembers Arcadius only from his visits to Hadrian's father when Hadrian was young. He would perform magic tricks. Arcadius did not visit after Hadrian's mother died and his father never mentioned him. Arcadius' office is a warehouse of oddities. Hadrian is amazed with how much is crammed into the room.

Arcadius is happy to learn that Hadrian received his letter. Hadrian admits he is not sure how that happened. The professor tells him that he sent Tribian DeVole to find him and deliver the letter. The man is tenacious and was born in the East so knows it well. He is surprised that anyone even knew he was in the East. Arcadius says he found him by magic. He asked if his father did not tell Hadrian that Arcadius was a wizard. Hadrian tells him that his father never discussed him. Arcadius says he just listened for news of a great warrior. He knew the kind of training his father had provided him. He thanks the man for contacting him and taking care of his father's affairs in his absence. He had visited Hadrian's father last year and saw how sickly he was and asked them to notify him of any change in his condition.

Arcadius has an artifact to give to Hadrian. He gives him a chain with an amulet attached. Hadrian recognizes it as the medallion that his father always wore. He never took it off. This makes Hadrian realize his father is really gone. Hadrian asks if his father spoke of him. Arcadius says he told him Hadrian had left and there was an argument. He had called his father a coward. Hadrian feels horrible for saying it to him. He asks about the medallion. Arcadius says he believes it is an heirloom that has been handed down for generations. Arcadius was asked to tell Hadrian that he should wear it always, never sell it, and give it to his son should he have one. That is the first part of what would become his dying wish. Hadrian asks about the second part. Arcadius says he will tell him after he has had a meal and rested after his long trip.

Hadrian is surprised to see Pickles when he enters the dormitory. The boy has been there two days waiting for him to arrive. Pickles likes it at the university. He says he will take care of all of Hadrian's needs, which includes finding a stable for his horse.



Hadrian allows Pickles to look at his swords and he is amazed to learn that Hadrian made two of them. Hadrian believes he sees the hooded man standing at an upstairs window as he and Pickles cross the campus.

Pickles shows Hadrian the way to the dining hall. He likes it because you walk in and they give you food. The two stand out because they do not wear the gowns like the students. Angdon approaches them and questions who they are. He calls Hadrian a peasant boy and says he does not want him eating at his table. He should take his food and Pickles and eat outside where he belongs. Pickles slams his meat pie in Angdon's face. The pie is hot and the boy screams clawing the pie off his face. Hadrian grabs Pickles and leaves the dining hall. Hadrian scolds Pickles for attacking the boy. He is a nobleman; and, Pickles could get in trouble. The boy has lots of friends. Pickles says he has a friend worth more than all of Angdon's combined. Hadrian agrees that so does he.

Analysis

Hadrian continues to the university to try and put everything behind him. He is haunted by his past and the ghosts of the people on the barge. He feels responsible for their deaths because he was unable to help them. He reaches Sheridan University and thinks of the man he is here to visit, Professor Arcadius. He only saw the man when he was young. He wonders how the man found him in the vastness of the East. Arcadius is disappointed that Hadrian's father never talked to the boy about Arcadius. He gives Hadrian his father's medallion and the fact that his father is dead is not real to Hadrian.

Hadrian is happy to see Pickles when he enters the dormitory. The boy beat him to the university by two days. Pickles takes up to where he left off in Vernes and takes care of Hadrian's belongings. He shows his loyalty to Hadrian by hitting Angdon in the face with a meat pie for saying that Hadrian and Pickles should eat outside where they belong. The two bond and their friendship is strengthened by the act.

Discussion Question 1

Who is Professor Arcadius? Why is Hadrian going to see him?

Discussion Question 2

How did the professor find Hadrian to give him the letter about his father's death? What does he give Hadrian that his father wished him to have?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Pickles hit Angdon in the face with a meat pie? Why does Hadrian scold him for doing it?

Vocabulary

Conjure, realm, culpable, inscrutable, haughty, nuance, pensive, mayhem, incarnate, missive, tenacious, heirloom, amulet, cumbersome.



Chapter 10

Summary

In Chapter 10, Hadrian wakes up early and cannot get back to sleep. He goes in search of the room where he thought he saw the man in the hood. The room is a storage room. No student would come into the room. Hadrian wanders the building until he finds his way onto the main floor and makes his way to the dining hall. There are not many people about. Professor Arcadius is sitting by the fire with the other early risers. He asks Hadrian what he has been doing since leaving home. He tells him he joined King Urith's army, but moved on when the men did not like he be bested by a fifteen year old. Under King Ethelred he was not quick to show off and he lied about his age. He made captain, but then Ethelred got into an argument with Urith and Hadrian resigned rather than have to fight against men he had fought alongside. He kept moving until he reached Calis-the perfect place for a man to disappear. The jungles changed him. There were no boundaries, no rules, and no social structure. He did not like the man that he became. He has not drawn his swords to fight since leaving Calis. His soldiering days are over. He does not know what he will do now.

Arcadius asks about his trip from Calis. He tells him that six people were murdered on the barge he took from Vernes to Colnora. Five in one night had their throats slit. A guy in a hood slipped away before he could find him and he thinks he is following him. Arcadius says they should finish their discussion in his office. When Hadrian enters Arcadius' office, the man in the black hood is there. Hadrian draws his swords and tells the professor that he needs to get out. Arcadius closes the door of his office and locks it. Hadrian is confused. He tells him that this man is the killer from the barge. The professor knows the man his name is Royce. He sent him to escort Hadrian. He told him to look for a man wearing three swords. He was supposed to show Hadrian the way to the university. He had hoped he would introduce himself and the two could get acquainted on the trip.

Royce says he got him there alive and that was enough. Hadrian says that he killed all the people and advances on him with a sword. The man moves fast and scales his way to the second floor balcony out of reach. He says he did not kill all of them. Royce says he killed them to save Hadrian. He says that the woman killed Farlan, the boatman. She killed him because he was going to have the sheriff investigate. They knew that an investigation would mean searching the barge. All of the items that they had stolen were in crates on the barge. When Hadrian proclaimed that he also would go to the sheriff, they decided to kill him as well. Vivian and the merchants were in on the crimes together. The two younger merchants attacked Royce and he defended himself.

Hadrian does not want to believe it. Royce tells him that he watched the woman kill the boatman. She sat next to him all cozy and then reached around his head and slit his throat. She could not put his body in the water so she had Samuel and Sebastian do that. He believes that is what she did to the men in Vernes. She got all friendly with



them and then cut their throats. The other three did the heavy lifting. Hadrian had known something was not right and that it was odd that everyone had insisted that the hooded man was responsible with no evidence. He sheaths his swords. Hadrian asks about Andrew. Royce killed him because he could not kill four people and leave a witness behind. Arcadius feels that he is partially to blame. He should have known better than sending Royce.

Arcadius is then able to discuss why Hadrian is there. His father asked Arcadius to look after Hadrian on his return because he anticipated Hadrian's present state and thought he would need guidance. Arcadius wants Royce and Hadrian to become partners. They both have unique skills and neither is ready for the world by themselves. Together there will be hope for both of them. He feels that once they see the value of the other person's skills they will form a long-term business venture. Royce says he does not need nor does he want a partner. Arcadius says it is Royce's payment to him. He just has to do one job. After that he can be through with both of them. He expects Royce not to set Hadrian up to fail. It has to be a fair attempt.

Arcadius says it is his father's dying wish for Hadrian to partner with Royce. He did not train Hadrian to fight so he could be a blacksmith. He did not tell a boy with dreams of grandeur his true plans for him. He would have told him, but Hadrian ran away. Hadrian can only discover the truth by teaming with Royce. The real truth must be discovered on his own. Hadrian's father felt he was too optimistic and naive. Royce is cynical. It was his last wish for Royce and Hadrian to meet.

Arcadius wants the two to steal him a book from the Crown Tower. It is considered heretical to read this book and it is locked away in the tower for safe keeping. Royce has been planning for months and believes it can be accomplished. Hadrian asks why he is to tag-a-long. He knows nothing about stealing. Arcadius says that he is an accomplished fighter and he is there in case something goes wrong. They will have to climb. The book is in the top of the Crown Tower. It is heavily guarded. The only way up is to scale the outside of the tower. Hadrian agrees to think about it.

Arcadius comes to Hadrian and asks how he is doing. Hadrian asks who Royce is. Arcadius agrees that Royce is difficult, but Hadrian should listen to him and trust him. If he does, he could make a friend for life -one that will walk unarmed into the jaws of a dragon if you asked him. Royce has never known his parents. He was abandoned as an infant in a filthy city. He does not know how he survived and he does not trust anyone. He told Arcadius that he was raised by wolves. Royce does not even know how old he is. Arcadius bought him. Royce was imprisoned in Manzant, a salt mine. Arcadius paid for his release on the condition that he came with him. Royce had been sent there for a crime he did not commit. He wants Hadrian to show him that not all people will betray and hurt him. Arcadius says that Royce is too cynical and Hadrian is too trusting. They need to find a balance. Arcadius discussed Royce with Hadrian's father, but the idea for the two to steal a book together is Arcadius' idea alone. He thinks Hadrian can learn from working with Royce. Hadrian agrees to do it if Arcadius can get Pickles enrolled in the university.



Analysis

Hadrian tells Arcadius about his life after running away from his father. He became a soldier and changed from army to army before going to Calis to disappear. He is not proud of what he did during this time and tried to hide from everyone and himself. The jungles of Calis changed him and not in a good way. He has not drawn his swords to fight since leaving Calis because he wants to be a better man. He is at a crossroads in his life. Hadrian tells Arcadius how a man in a black hood is following him after killing five people on the barge to took from Vernes to Colnora.

To see the man in Arcadius' office is a blow to Hadrian. He cannot believe that the professor knows the man. Royce scoffs at Hadrian and wonders how he has survived so far. He is so gullible and believes whatever anyone tells him. Hadrian knew there was something wrong with Vivian's story, but he could only see her as a woman who sought protection. He is very trusting, which Royce finds stupid. Arcadius is upset that Royce killed Andrew, the innocent steersman. He does not understand their concern. He could leave no witnesses. He has no qualms about what he did. He was sent to protect Hadrian and that is what he did.

Arcadius wants to protect Hadrian because Hadrian's father asked him to look after him on his return. Hadrian's father had sensed that he would need guidance. The plan is for Royce and Hadrian to become partners so that they will each have a purpose in life. They each have valuable skills. Together, they can complement one another. On their own, the two are unreliable. He wants them to steal the book together so that they can see how they are as a team. Arcadius confides in Hadrian that Royce is difficult, but he can be a true friend if he can learn to trust.

Discussion Question 1

Why did Royce kill the five people on the barge? Why does Arcadius feel responsible for the deaths?

Discussion Question 2

Who killed the boatman and why? Why were they going to kill Hadrian?

Discussion Question 3

Why was Royce on the barge? Why did he not speak to Hadrian and tell him who he was?

Vocabulary

Austere, lunacy, metaphorically, petrify, potentate, errant, impasse, grandeur, optimistic, wayward, heretical, obligation, idyllic, alchemy, tribulations, microcosm, repugnant.



Chapter 11

Summary

In Chapter 11, Hadrian is practicing scaling a wall. During the practice, Hadrian gets to know Royce better. He is amazed how Royce moves with grace and swiftness. He could scale the wall in less time than it would take Hadrian to climb the stairs. Hadrian does not like being without his swords, but the professor insisted he keep them in his room. Royce complains to Arcadius that Hadrian is useless and will never learn how to scale the wall. Arcadius asks Royce how he would get Hadrian up the wall if he had broken his leg. Royce says that he would use ropes and a harness to haul him up the wall. Royce does not understand why he cannot steal the book by himself. Arcadius tells him that he will take Hadrian up the tower to steal the book. That is the deal. Royce says they are done practicing until he makes Hadrian a harness. Hadrian tells Arcadius that Royce is right in saying that he will be a burden and he should let him do it alone.

Pickles is beat up by Angdon and his friends. He asks Hadrian if he can read and if he will teach him. Pickles says he will beat Angdon by becoming a successful merchant and making piles of gold. By achieving what Angdon wants in life by his own smarts, Pickles believes he will best the boy. Hadrian says that he will have to learn more than how to read to obtain the life he desires. Hadrian says that he will agree to the job the professor wants him to do if Arcadius can get Pickles enrolled in the university.

Hadrian is ambushed by Angdon and his friends. Hadrian does not have his swords and the boys have large sticks. They close in on Hadrian. Royce sneaks up behind Angdon and stabs him. The other boys run away. Arcadius is furious. Royce was told not to hurt the students. Royce says he told him not to kill and the boy will be fine. Arcadius is worried about the investigation that will follow. Royce says he helped Hadrian because he did not want him hurt because that would impede their mission. Hadrian and Royce must leave immediately to avoid being arrested.

Analysis

Royce takes pleasure in being able to scale the wall in ease and watching Hadrian fall several times. When Hadrian hurts his ankle, Royce complains to Arcadius and questions why he cannot do the mission alone. The professor will not let him and tells him he must find a way to get Hadrian up the wall. He does not like the idea, but goes to fashion a harness to help Hadrian scale the wall.

Hadrian agrees to do the job if Arcadius will get Pickles enrolled in the university. He does not want to do the job, but he sees it as a way to help Pickles to have a future. He wants him to be able to be a success and not be bullied by boys like Angdon.

Angdon ambushes Hadrian because he sees him as a peasant who needs to learn not to speak back to his betters. Hadrian does not carry his swords around the university so



he has no weapons. Angdon and his friends have large sticks they plan to beat him with. Royce stabs Angdon from behind to protect Hadrian. He does not want their mission to be jeopardized by Hadrian's stupidity. Royce cannot believe he was lead into an ambush by a boy. The attack makes them have to speed up their departure to avoid being arrested.

Discussion Question 1

When Pickles is beat up by Angdon and his friends, what type of revenge does he plan? How does he plan to implement his plan?

Discussion Question 2

What does Hadrian want from Arcadius in order for him to agree to do the job with Royce? Why does he not ask for something for himself?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Royce stab Angdon? How does Angdon lure Hadrian into an ambush?

Vocabulary

Foresight, luxurious, intimidation.



Chapter 12

Summary

In Chapter 12, Grue sits in The Hideous Head with no customers. He has watched the building across the street being repaired. He knows the men working must be from Artisan Row because no one in the Lower Quarter would help them without his say-so. Groups have been gathering to watch the new building take shape. He had expected the girls to be back by now with bowed heads. He had planned to make them spend a night sleeping on the stoop to learn their lesson. He wants to break their habit of following Gwen.

Grue watches Gwen through the window. He sees her giving orders and things that this freedom will go to her head. He wonders how she is paying for all of the improvements. He knows she cannot have been skimming his profits. Raynor Grue is the King of Wayward Street. Grue goes out to Gwen who is standing on a cart. He asks what she is building and how she got the money for it. She tells him a brothel and that they are earning money as they go. He does not like staring up at her in the cart. It tells her that this is his street and that she belongs to him. He tells her that if they come back he will forget their running away. She tells him that they are never coming back. He is angry that she is defying him right in the middle of his street in front of everyone. He attempts to go into the cart after her, but ends up on his back. Dixon is standing over him. He threatens Grue if he ever touches his cart or Gwen.

Grue meets with the Inspector who will make the decision about approving or not approving Gwen's Certificate of Permit. Grue wants him to deny their permit. When the permit is denied, Grue will submit an application for one of his own and take over the building. He will make the Inspector a partner in the business and pay him a quarter of the profits.

Analysis

Grue sits alone in his tavern. He has lost his patrons because the girls have left. He does not like Gwen's independence and wants to swash it. His reputation is at stake because he is seen as the king of Wayward Street and the girls' defiance makes him seem weak. His tussle with Dixon when he tries to climb into the cart to grab Gwen also tarnishes his reputation as the whole street is watching.

Grue plots his revenge by bribing the inspector to deny the girls' Certificate of Permit. He wants to take over their business and make them work again for him. He does not want a business next to him that is more profitable than his own and run by women. It makes him look weak and takes away his power over his neighbors.



Discussion Question 1

Why does Grue want Gwen and the girls to come back to the tavern? How does their business affect his own?

Discussion Question 2

How does Gwen and the other girls' defiance affect Grue's reputation in the neighborhood? Why is this important to him?

Discussion Question 3

What plan does Grue implement with Inspector Reginald to take over the girls' brothel? Why does the inspector agree to the plan?

Vocabulary

Clarity, gruesome, proprietor, intermittent, delinquency, affront, dubious, fortitude, sullen, pragmatic, ardent, pious, squalor, rankle, supersede, nonchalance.



Chapter 13

Summary

In Chapter 13, Hadrian and Royce are traveling. Hadrian rides behind Royce because he feels beside him would seem too friendly. He does not want to be there. He believes that stealing is wrong. He is doing it to help Pickles have a better life. Hadrian does not understand why Arcadius wants him and Royce to work together. They are complete opposites. Hadrian believes that Royce would be better off going alone to steal the book. They talk about what has happened between them. Hadrian asks why Royce stabbed Angdon and killing all the people on the barge instead of telling him who he was, who they were and what they had planned. Royce likes his methods and plans to stick to them. Royce believes that Hadrian is gullible. Hadrian believes Royce is a cynic.

Royce and Hadrian stop at a tavern. Hadrian is friendly and talks to the patrons, while Royce remains quiet in the corner. Hadrian drinks with his new friends. When they are alone, Royce asks Hadrian why he does not just tell the people that they are thieves. He has already told them his name, his place of birth, and his father's occupation. He even suggested the directions they are taking while traveling. Furthermore, he would have told them who Royce was and where they were going if Royce had not stopped him. He is supposed to go unnoticed. After the job, people will be looking for them and will remember a talkative stranger wearing three swords who likely went south.

Royce says he is in there because he is expecting guests. There were five men behind them on the road. They may be from Sheridan looking for them for stabbing the baron's son. Royce tells him that there is a door off to the side. They should step out that door and wait. If the men follow, they will know they are after them. He says they will kill them and then come and kill the patrons in the tavern so there will not be any witnesses. Hadrian refuses to kill the people. They are nice. Royce sees no reason for him if he will not kill. He is supposed to be skilled with a sword.

Lord Marbury wonders over to Hadrian and Royce's table and tells them how the church took over the land. Marbury and Hadrian become fast friends. Royce moves for the rear door. Hadrian watches five men enter the tavern. They are wrapped in dark cloaks, but the sound of chains can be heard. They say they are looking for two men from Sheridan who knifed a boy. They were told that one carried three swords. Lord Marbury says that Hadrian is a friend of his. Hadrian knows that Royce is waiting outside by the rear door. They ask how long Hadrian has been there and Marbury says three days. He tells the men that Hadrian is staying with him. After the men leave, Marbury tells Hadrian that they are the enforcers of the church. Hadrian goes to look out the back door and finds that Royce is gone.



Analysis

Hadrian does not believe in the mission that Arcadius has sent him on with Royce. He is not a thief and believes it is wrong to steal. Hadrian does not trust Royce and does not see how they can become partners if they do not trust one another. Hadrian is genuinely friendly and sees the best in people where Royce is antisocial and believes the worst in everyone. This is seen when they stop at a tavern. Hadrian talks to everyone and Royce berates him for telling too much about himself and threatening the mission.

Royce stopped because there were men following them on the road. He plans to hid out back and kill everyone to cover their tracks. Hadrian likes the men he has befriended in the pub and does not like Royce's plan. While Hadrian makes plans Royce slips out the back door. Hadrian's confidence in his friends is proven correct when they vouch for him with the knights who come in looking for two men who knifed a boy. Once they leave, Hadrian looks for Royce to find him gone. He did not trust the people to cover for them and left Hadrian behind to his own fate.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Royce berate Hadrian for talking so much to the patrons of the tavern? How does it threaten them?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Lord Marbury vouch for Hadrian? How does he feel about the church?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Royce leave without Hadrian? Why does Marbury call Royce the smart one?

Vocabulary

Submission, indignation, virtuous, senile, besiege, edifice, heresy, tribunal, disreputable.



Chapter 14

Summary

In Chapter 14, Hadrian has spent the night at the tavern in case Royce returns. He spent the evening talking and drinking and looking for Royce to return. With no way to complete the mission, the next morning Hadrian saddles Dancer and starts back to the University. He is angry at Royce for leaving him behind. He times his arrival at the University for after dark. He keeps his horse saddled because he plans to tell Arcadius what happened, check on Pickles and then go he knew not where. Hadrian does not know what to do with himself. He does not want to be a career soldier. The only thing he sees as a positive to the trip is that Pickles has secured a future.

Hadrian enters Arcadius' office to find Royce there. Royce looks at him in surprise. He asks how Hadrian had survived. He left him for dead. Royce wanted rid of him and since he could not kill him he left him to the soldiers. Royce got the journal and brought it back to Arcadius because his freedom hinges on the job. Arcadius says since he did it by himself it does not count. The deal was for both of them to retrieve the book so Royce's debt is not cleared. To clear it, Royce and Hadrian must put the book back. Hadrian is his partner and the two must work together. Royce argues that Hadrian is not needed. Hadrian is to carry the book and put it back. Royce tells Hadrian they will practice with the harness that night.

Hadrian pulls himself up onto the roof of Glen Hall. Royce goes ahead of him scaling the wall and placing anchors. Hadrian merely pulls himself up drawing a rope between two metal rings at his waist. Royce tells Hadrian that his swords add wait and are not needed, but Hadrian will not leave them behind. Royce is at home on the rooftop. Hadrian does not like looking down. Royce then shows how they will descend the building. He steps off the side. Hadrian can hear the whiz of the rope passing through the rings on Royce's harness. He pushes away from the wall with his feet. Hadrian is scared, but starts his descent. The fear turns to excitement as he makes his way to the ground.

During the day, Royce and Hadrian must stay in their room so that they are not seen. Hadrian is disappointed because he wants to see Pickles. A boy brings them their evening meal and a note from Arcadius asking them to visit his office after eating, but try to be seen by as few students as possible. He tells them that he has finished the book and it is ready to go back. He suggests that they go immediately as their presence there is precarious. Councilor Sextant arrived the morning after they had left. He likes to drop in and see if he can catch the University doing anything seemly. Arcadius believes that the delegation think they corrupt the nation's youth by indoctrinating them into heresy with the allure of witchcraft. Most believe that is what he teaches. Hadrian asks him what he teaches. Arcadius teaches lore—history, fable, myth, and mysteries. He teaches all things that came before the church's order and secrets. Hall's notebook is a book of lore.



Unfortunately, Baron Lerwick, Angdon's father was with the delegation. He was upset by the attack on his son. Angdon said it was an attempted assassination. He identified Hadrian and Royce as the culprits and his friends back him up. The baron was furious and demanded that Sextant send his knights to deal with the men. The knights will likely be back soon. So it will be best if Hadrian and Royce leave at first light and not return for at least a year. Arcadius says it would be good to see them return together. He thinks they will make a good team. He wants them to continue working together once the job is done. Hadrian and Royce have other plans. They do not want to see each other again once the job is done.

Arcadius tells Hadrian that Pickles is dead. Angdon accused Pickles of trying to kill him and his friends back him up so the boy was executed for conspiracy to murder a nobleman. Arcadius could not stop it. The church holds absolute authority. Hadrian is upset by Pickles death, but will still go on the job because Arcadius held up his part of the bargain by getting Pickles enrolled at the school.

Analysis

Hadrian spends his time talking and drinking at the tavern as he waits for Royce to return. He does this because he believes that Royce will return because he would return for Royce if the tables were turned. The next morning he realizes that Royce is not returning and has just left him. He becomes very angry. When Hadrian enters Arcadius' office, Royce is amazed that he is not dead. He ruthlessly left him behind to take the heat off of himself so that he could do the job by himself. He did not care what happened to Hadrian.

Arcadius is upset because the two were supposed to do the job together. Since they did not, it makes the mission void. They must return the book. Royce is not happy with this plan. He does not understand why Hadrian has to be along. He is better off without him as he has proven. Royce has to practice with Hadrian on using the harness that he made and never planned to use. Hadrian is disappointed that he does not get to see Pickles. He must keep out of sight because of the stabbing. Hadrian and Royce do not like working together and do not plan to see each other after they finish the job no matter what Arcadius thinks. Before they leave, Arcadius tells Hadrian that Pickles is dead. He was killed for conspiring to murder a nobleman. Hadrian is upset that Pickles died for something he had nothing to do with and that he was not there to protect him. Hadrian still agrees to the job because he gave his word. He will keep his promise.

Discussion Question 1

Why is Royce surprised to see Hadrian alive? Why did he leave him at the tavern?



Discussion Question 2

Why does Arcadius say that the mission was not completed even though Royce got the book? Why does he make the men take the book back to the Crown Tower?

Discussion Question 3

Why is Hadrian upset by Pickles' death? How did he die?

Vocabulary

Timbre, solace, explicit, pantheon, postscript, precarious, allure, ruffian, formidable, heretic.



Chapter 15

Summary

In Chapter 15, Gwen's building is coming along nicely. It has windows, dormers, and a fresh coat of paint. It is painted mostly white with accents of powder blue along the trim. It makes the building something special. It still has a long way to go, but they are getting customers and making the place their home. Gwen is taking Inspector Reginald on a tour. He questions how she has gotten so much work done on the building in only two weeks. She is attracting customers from the Artisan and Merchant Quarters so is able to charge more. They offer better quality women and so men are willing to come there and pay more. Since the women own the business, they make sure each customer is satisfied so that they will return and tell their friends. They want the business to succeed.

Gwen asks the Inspector if he will approve their certificate. He says absolutely not. He tells her as a woman her success would threaten business because women would start wanting to own their own businesses. She knows that Grue put him up to it. Gwen goes to the office of the assessor. She tells him that the Inspector will not give his approval for the certificate. In two weeks, she has turned an eyesore in the most attractive building on Wayward Street and is doing good business. It could be the most successful business in the Lower Quarter. Gwen tells the assessor that the Inspector is rejecting her because he has a deal with Grue. Once the women's permit is declined, Grue will put in for a permit of his own and will be approved. Grue will make the Inspector a business partner and provide him with a quarter of the profits.

The assessor tells her that this is not against the law. Gwen is offering the deal to the assessor. She will give him a quarter of the profits for the certificate. The assessor accepts it as a gift and not as a partnership. He gives Gwen the certificate for the business.

Rose tells everyone the story when they get back to Medford House. Gwen goes out onto the porch. She questions her decision to spend the gold coins. She has saved herself and others, but was this supposed to happen? Those coins were entrusted to her. Since her mother's death, she has awakened with a purpose greater than herself. By spending the coins, she had relinquished the only proof that the man with the coins had existed. She chose security over faith and feels she has lost a bit of herself. She could replace the coins, but she is not sure if she is on the right path. She only knows bits and pieces of what will happen.

Dixon comes to find her. He tells her that she has done a good thing in providing the girls with a home and thanks her for taking him in. He asks Gwen to marry him. She tells him that she is not sure. He asks how she knew about the Inspector and Grue's plans. Gwen does not want to tell him because she thinks he will dislike her. He says that it is not possible for him to dislike her. So, she tells him that she can read palms.



Her mother taught her how. Dixon wants her to read his palm and she must tell him whether it is good or bad.

Gwen sees his past and his future. She sees him dying in a battle in the Gentry Quarter. His right hand stops in a battle in Medford, but his left says he will die in a different fight at a fortress years later. She tells him that they will be good friends their whole lives. Gwen looks again and sees Dixon with his cart being pulled by a horse. Men are lying on the ground and a man is waving calling for help. The cart is on Wayward Street, and one man is climbing out of the cart covered in blood. She asks if he has gotten a new horse. He says he has been looking at one. Dixon tells her that he has been thinking of resuming his hauling business. He has already gotten a job to haul a load of lumber up north.

Dixon does not have the money for the horse yet. Gwen tells him that he has to get the horse. If necessary, she will cover the loan to buy the horse. She makes him promise that he will take the job. She tells him that if it is raining when he gets there and he finds two men who are hurt, he must bring them back to Medford.

Analysis

Gwen realizes that when she is taking the Inspector around the building that something is not right. Gwen is proud that her business is thriving. The women work hard to make the business a success because they want to be independent and not have to return to the horrible conditions at the Hideous Head. The inspector tells her that the women will disrupt the balance of the community by having a business owned by women. This community obviously has no respect for women, but Gwen feels there is more to it than that. She knows Grue is behind the plan of their failure so she goes above the inspector's head to the assessor. She uses her power of persuasion to make a deal with him to give his approval for the certificate.

Gwen is seen as a hero by the other women. They see her as independent and strong. She goes after what she wants and makes it happen. Gwen does not have such confidence in herself. She is unsure if she has done the right thing by using the coins to secure the women's future. She does not know if she is on the right path to save the man she sees in her vision. Dixon's proposal and her trust in him reveal that she is on the right path and that Dixon will play a part in bringing the man to Medford. It is important that her vision occurs just as she sees it. She will help Dixon in any way that she can so that he will make his trip to the north and be able to help the man.

Discussion Question 1

Why does the Inspector deny Gwen the approval of the certificate? Why does she go to the assessor? What kind of deal does she make with him?



Discussion Question 2

Why does Gwen doubt the path she has taken? Why has she lost the purpose she had in her life when she had the coins in her possession?

Discussion Question 3

What does Gwen see in Dixon's palm that makes her see that she is on the right path? What is Dixon's part in the vision?

Vocabulary

Pristine, spectrum, balustrade, melancholy, discernible, bardic, dominant.



Chapter 16

Summary

In Chapter 16, Hadrian and Royce make it to the Crown Tower. Hadrian keeps thinking about Pickles and how he let him down. He would like to see the body to say goodbye. Hadrian and Royce have been traveling by night to avoid the Seret Knights, who would probably ride during the day. They stop at a base camp that Royce used on his last mission. After the job, they will be traveling fast and not stopping so this will be their last time to rest. Royce wants them to go their separate ways after the job.

Hadrian tells Royce that Pickles is dead. He was executed for the crime Royce committed. Royce does not feel any remorse. He says that Pickles was killed by the sort of people who live in the tower. Royce sees Hadrian as weak and ignorant. He believes that if someone intends you harm and you have the opportunity you should kill them. He did not kill Angdon because he promised he would not kill the students. The promise was not to Arcadius. He will not tell Hadrian the name of the person to whom the promise was made. Royce does not care that Pickles is dead.

Hadrian refuses to cook or eat with Royce. Royce tells him that the climb will be very difficult and they will have to rely on each other to make it to the top. If Hadrian falls, Royce will not care and just leave with his obligations fulfilled. Hadrian glares at him and tells him that he will show Royce what his swords are for.

Hadrian follows Royce through the city to the tower. Hadrian climbs the wall fueled by his anger for Royce. The climb is hard and much more difficult than he imagined with the wind buffeting him around. He thinks about his life, while he risks it climbing the wall. He wonders why he has a fear of dying. He has no one in his life and no goals to reach.

Analysis

Hadrian feels guilty about Pickles' death. He is upset that he never got to say goodbye to the boy. He gets into an argument with Royce because Royce shows no feelings about Pickles' death. He stands by his stabbing of Angdon and believes that if someone intends you harm you should kill him if you have the opportunity. He did not kill Angdon because he promised he would not kill the students. Royce's indifference makes Hadrian angry and he threatens to show Royce what his swords are for once they have fulfilled their obligations.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Hadrian feel guilty about Pickles' death? Why does he want to see Pickles' body?



Discussion Question 2

Why does Royce not care that Pickles is dead? Does he have any remorse for stabbing Angdon? Explain.

Discussion Question 3

Why does Hadrian become so angry with Royce? Why does he still agree to do the job even though he cannot stand the man?

Vocabulary

Behemoth, remorse, veritable, quaint, hamlet, oblong, adjacent, oblivion, singular, clarity, buoyant



Chapter 17

Summary

In Chapter 17, the trip to the Crown Tower is different this time around for Royce. There are riders everywhere. He has never returned to the site of one of his crimes days after committing the crime. He had planned the job carefully before knowing all of the routines of the people, but now it was chaos. Royce believes Hadrian to be an idiot and wonders why Arcadius wants them to work together. When Arcadius had paid to get Royce out of prison, he thought he wanted a killer to exact revenge on someone. Instead the man wanted to educate him. He has never understood Arcadius' motive. Nothing made since on this job.

Royce believes Hadrian to be soft. He does not see that he has the killer instinct. He had yet to draw his swords and had plenty of opportunities. Royce goes to cut the rope that secures Hadrian to the wall of the Crown Tower, but stops when his dagger gleams in the moonlight. He has an internal argument with himself saying that he only promised not to kill the old man, but he had made a bargain with the only person who had ever mattered. The man is dead, but Royce still cannot go back on the promise.

Royce thinks about his past. He misses Merrick. He had met him in Colnora when he was new to the city. They were both new inductees to the Black Diamond thieves' guild. Merrick came from a rich family and chose his life of thievery, while Royce had to steal to survive. Merrick taught him his letters and numbers as well as escape routes and safe houses. Merrick became like a brother to him. He had been the one to betray Royce and send him to prison. It proved to Royce that no one can be trusted. It taught him to always look out for himself.

There is a priest seated in the room that Royce enters. The man turns and screams when Hadrian enters. Royce slits his throat. Royce tells Hadrian to drop the book and run for the rope. They two get separated and Hadrian knows Royce is leaving him behind. He can hear men yelling, but he cannot tell from where. When he reaches the harnesses, he notices there are two. He knows Royce has not made it to the rope to rappel.

Royce finds himself trapped by tower guards. He sees no sign of Hadrian and does not expect to. He believes Hadrian made the better choice and was able to get away. He believes Hadrian has done to him what Royce planned to do to Hadrian. The men are making no serious move to hurt him and he wonders why. When the guards come in behind him, he knows what the others were waiting for. Royce is attempting to come up with a plan when someone screams. The fighting begins and Royce is able to fight the men off and make a run for it. He wonders why no one is following then he hears the clank of steel and another cry. Royce looks back along the walkway and sees four blood-soaked guards and amidst them Hadrian is standing.



Royce cannot believe that it is Hadrian. He wonders why he is still there. Royce slips past Hadrian to bolt for the rope. Two guards block his passage. These are not like the footmen. Royce has never seen anything like them. They have gold breastplates and their faces are behind cages of mesh. They hold long halberds with ornately curved blades at both ends. They advance upon him. Royce runs and runs into Hadrian again. Hadrian puts himself between Royce and the guards. Hadrian tells Royce to run to the rope and head down once he starts fighting. Royce notices that Hadrian is wearing his harness. Hadrian tells him he almost went down, but realized Royce was in trouble. Royce watches in awe as Hadrian fights the guards. The guard's weapon splits Hadrian's two swords in half. He has to fight with the third sword he keeps on his back. He is able to ward off their attack with it, but Royce is seriously wounded and Hadrian is stabbed in the thigh. Royce tells Hadrian to leave him behind. He then blacks out.

Royce wakes up to find Hadrian carrying him as they rappel down the tower. He cannot believe how stupid Hadrian is for not leaving him behind. He believes he will slow him down and get them both killed. They realize that they will never make it to where they left the horses. Hadrian suggests the river. They grab a wooden crate from an alley and jump into the river.

Analysis

Royce does not like returning to the scene of the burglary just days after committing it. He does not like not having a plan. The first attempt was meticulously plan and executed. Now there are many unforeseen variables including having Hadrian along to slow him down. Royce does not understand why Arcadius wants the two to work together. He sees no benefit in having Hadrian along. He plans to leave him behind the first chance he gets to show that he needs no one to survive. The reader learns that Royce did make a promise to someone not to kill the professor, since he says that the man is dead it makes the reader wonder if it could be Danbury Blackwater, Hadrian's father.

Royce's life experiences have made him cynical and unable to trust anyone. The reader can see why the professor put the two men together to help Royce see that not all men are untrustworthy and for Hadrian to see that not all men can or should be trusted. Royce learns what type of man that Hadrian is when he returns to help Royce when he could have made his escape and left Royce to his fate. Royce thinks he is mad for risking his life for him and tries to make him leave him behind and save himself as Royce would have done given the opportunity. Hadrian's actions make him think of his own. Royce watches in awe as Hadrian fights the guards and realizes that the professor was not lying about the man's fighting abilities. Hadrian protects Royce throughout the fighting pushing him behind him to keep him from more harm. He risks his life to save the man who almost cut his rope and let him fall to his death during the climb.



Discussion Question 1

Why does Royce contemplate cutting Hadrian's rope as he is climbing the Crown Tower? Why does he not do it?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Hadrian go back to help Royce after seeing that his harness is still next to the rope? Would Royce do the same for him? Explain.

Discussion Question 3

Why does Royce tell Hadrian to leave him behind after he fought so hard to try to escape on his own? What prompted this change in Royce's behavior?

Vocabulary

Inconspicuous, indicative, opulent, cornucopia, variable, bane, ruse, apocalyptic, cynical, agile, flange.



Chapter 18

Summary

In Chapter 18, Gwen blocks a man trying to enter Medford House. She will not let him enter without taking a bath. The man does not want to take a bath. She tells him that he can go somewhere else then. He says that the others are not worth paying for because they do not smell good. She tells him that the ladies agree with him and that is why he should bathe.

The girls are happy in their new home. Gwen has taught them to look fine and respectable. This has garnered them respect in the community. Gwen has gained the respect of every craftsman on Artisan Row. Men who had scoffed when she entered their shops now came to her for advice. She is working hard to help make Medford House a success and the girls respectable. She holds dances. When the weather is cold invites the destitute in for dinner. Rose sees Gwen as a real lady.

Stane comes to Medford House. Gwen tells him that he is not allowed there. Stane knows that Dixon is out of town so there is no one to protect them. He says that he will have Gwen. She stands toe-to-toe with him starting into his eyes. She looks at him in revulsion and apologizes to him. Gwen tells him that he is going to be killed. It will be slow and the man will cut him apart and hang him in Merchant Square and decorate him with candles. Stane will not know the man. He will be asking him why, but the man will not answer. Stane keeps telling her to shut up as she recounts what will happen to him. He calls her crazy and leaves.

Rose gives Gwen a porcelain cup and saucer the girls got as a present for Gwen. It is supposed to be for Wintertide, but Rose thinks she could use it now and they will get her something better for Wintertide. The two go out on the porch and wrap in blankets. Rose asks her what happened with Stane. Gwen tells her that she looked into his eyes and saw his death. She tells Rose that she has the Sight. The palms are the safest, but the eyes can be an open window to the soul. Her mother had the Sight and so does Gwen. Gwen asks if she is scared of her. Rose says no. She has just never seen anything like it. Gwen is her hero. She saved them all.

Rose tells Gwen about her family. Her family starved because her father could not provide for them. He left them to starve. Rose slowly watched her mother starve to death. Rose wanted to live so she left her pride behind and begged her way to Medford. She wished only to see the next dawn. Gwen changed that. She gives her hope. Rose asks Gwen about Dixon and if it is true that he proposed. She tells her that he is a good man, but he is not "him." Rose thinks it is romantic that she is waiting for a man she does not know even exists. Gwen tells her that he is coming. She has sent Dixon to bring him. Gwen tells her about her mother's death and the stranger who gave her money. Gwen does not know who this man will be or what connection they will have, but she wants to believe they are to marry.



Rose asks her to read her future. Gwen tells her that she is going to fall in love. She becomes still and just stares at Rose's palm. Gwen reaches for her tea and the cup and saucer slip from her hand shattering it. She hugs Rose to her tightly and cries.

Analysis

Gwen has set rules for her brothel and treats the girls like they are ladies. She demands respect from the clients, or they will not be admitted into Medford House. She wants the girls to be respected and not treated like property as they were before. The men must act properly and not cause any harm to them. If they respect the women, they will be less likely to harm them. This attitude and her business prowess has gained Gwen the respect of the craftsman on Artisan Row.

Stane's appearance at Medford House threatens to destroy what they have worked toward. Although Gwen is frightened, she stands up to him. Looking into his eyes scares her especially when she sees his death and how many deaths he has caused. The manner of his death is similar to the murders that the Sheriff in Colnora described to Hadrian. Those murders were attributed to a man in a black cloak. This foreshadows events that will happen in the future and makes the reader question if Royce will be the man who kills Stane. The episode frightens Stane and leaves Gwen shaken. Rose helps to calm her after Stane leaves, but the calm is broken when Gwen reads Rose's palm. Rose believes that Gwen is apologizing about the cup and saucer she breaks, but the reader knows that she is apologizing for the future that she saw in Rose's palm. It is a future that the reader does not know at this moment, but it involves something that makes Gwen apologize to the young girl.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Gwen insist that the man take a bath before he is allowed into Medford House? Why does Gwen expect respect from her clients? How does her brothel differ from others in the city?

Discussion Question 2

How is the vision of Stane's death that Gwen sees similar to other deaths mentioned in the novel? What are the similarities and where did the murders occur? Do you think the murderer could be the same in both instances? Why?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Gwen drop the cup and saucer after reading Rose's palm? Why does she apologize to Rose? Is it for dropping the present that the girls gave her or because of what she sees in her palm? Why?

Vocabulary

Abide, destitute, deprive, revulsion, servitude, asinine, figment.



Chapter 19

Summary

In Chapter 19, Hadrian and Royce are still in the river being carried along by the box. They are in Lake Morgan and not far from the tavern. Royce says they cannot go to the tavern because the roads will be filled with soldiers. Hadrian tells him that they need to dry and he needs to dress Royce's wound. To survive they need food, dry clothes, and bandaging. Hadrian says they can get those things at the tavern. Hadrian helps Royce to the tavern and Dougan, the bartender, lets them inside.

Hadrian takes care of Royce's wounds. As a soldier, he had lots of practice in caring for the wounded. Royce knows he would be dead if not for Hadrian's help. He does not understand why Hadrian helped him and did not leave him to die on the tower. Royce asks where they are and is told in Dougan's bedroom. They cannot go to Lord Marbury's. He has been arrested. Royce asks where Dougan is and is told he went to get water. Royce wonders why he is not back yet and Hadrian tells him that Dougan said the well was in the village. Royce says they must go because Dougan is betraying them. Last time they were there Dougan told them that everyone drew water from the lake. The village does not have a well.

Hadrian gathers their stuff and helps Royce leave. Their progress is slow. When Royce can walk no more, they make camp. Royce asks Hadrian why he came back for him. Hadrian tells him because he is his partner. Royce wants to know the real reason. Hadrian says he came back for him because that is just who he is. He is tired of running. Every time he runs away, someone left behind dies.

The rain that started that night when they went to sleep is still going, but getting harder. Royce sees riders on the hills below them. He also heard bells. Every village and town for miles was ringing the alarm. Royce tells Hadrian about his childhood. He escaped a workhouse when he was five or six. There were a lot of orphans in Ratibor. He joined the Wolves, a gang. They taught him how to survive. Royce asks how Hadrian learned to fight. He tells him that his father trained him almost from the day he was born. He got no days off. He thought there was a purpose to the training, but does not know what his father wanted by training him to be a killer.

Hadrian and Royce realize that the men have dogs helping in the search. The dogs could be using the bloody rags they left at the tavern to track them. They catch their scent and the men must find a place to hide. They find a farm and walk into the farmhouse. Royce threatens them and Hadrian apologizes for the intrusion. The man deduces that the two are the thieves that everyone is looking for. Royce tells him that he is going to convince the men that he has not seen anyone and keep them from entering the house. Royce and Hadrian will be in the backroom with his wife and son and will harm them. Hadrian denies that he will. Hadrian tells the man that they have done nothing wrong and asks for his help.



The man offers them food, but his wife protests. She does not think they should help them because they are criminals. The man says that he wants to do what is right and not what is safe. His name is Tom the Feather. They eat, while they wait for the Knights to arrive.

Analysis

With Royce hurt, Hadrian is taking over as the lead for the mission. He takes them to the tavern that they stopped at during their previous journey to steal the book. The bartender lets them in so that they can dry their clothes and Hadrian can tend to Royce's wounds. Hadrian is still naive and needs Royce's cynicism to see that the bartender is not friendly and is going to turn them in to the knights. He sees the logic behind what Royce is saying and quickly gets their belongings together. They work well together as a team. Hadrian was able to get proper bandages and tend to Royce's wounds by being trusting and asking for help and Royce was able to save them from being caught by being suspicious of the bartender's actions.

Hadrian learns why Royce is so cynical when he tells him about his childhood as an orphan and growing up as a member of a gang of thieves named the Wolves. Their teamwork works again when they must run from the Knights and take shelter in a farmhouse. Royce threatens to kill the farmer if he does not do as they wish, but Hadrian assures them that he will not. The threats make the family not see them as weak because they are wounded. The kindness of Hadrian makes the farmer believe that they are not criminals.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Royce not trust the bartender? How does he convince Hadrian that the man is going to turn them in?

Discussion Question 2

What kind of childhood did Royce have? How does this explain why he does not trust anyone?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Tom the Feather offer food to the two men who they believe are criminals? What does he mean when he tells his wife that he wants to do what is right not what is safe?

Vocabulary

Conspicuous, diabolical, calamity, premeditation, cleft, cadavers, pallid, oblivious, fanatical, intrusion.



Chapter 20

Summary

Royce listens to the soldiers come to the door of the farmhouse. They tell him that they are looking for two men who are wounded thieves. Tom the Feather says he has not seen anyone. The knights say the dogs have tracked the thieves to his door. Tom tries to prevent the knights from entering his house. The knight pushes him and draws his sword.

Hadrian and Royce enter the room. They kill the knights in the room. They then have to decide their next move. The knights will most likely burn the house if the two do not do something. They make a plan to attack the Knight and get the horse so they can make an escape. Hadrian and Royce threaten the family to make it look like they are not helping them so the knights will not retaliate against the family. They make a plan to rush the knight. Tom the Feather offers to help them. He was an archer so he can take out the soldiers. He believes it is the only way the two men will survive. They must execute the nine Knights so that they will not hurt the farmer and his family.

Hadrian and Royce rush out of the house. Royce goes for the knight on the horse. Royce topples the knight and his horse on him. Hadrian rushes to his aid and is hit by an arrow. Tom the Feather takes out the remaining knights. Unfortunately, the horse is killed during the attack. The rain pours down, and Hadrian collapses. Royce's stitches are ripped, and he cannot stand.

They hear the clapping of horse hooves. They think reinforcements are there for the knights. Tom calls for help. Royce is lifted into a wagon and Hadrian is placed beside him.

Analysis

Royce listens as the soldiers question Tom the Feather and push their way into the farmhouse. Hadrian, unwilling to let anyone get hurt for protecting him, rushes into the room to protect Tom. Royce follows knowing what Hadrian is planning because he has learned a lot about him after he stayed to save his life at the Crown Tower. The two are forming a bond and are able to know how each other will react to a given situation. Royce is also starting to care more about innocent people. He does not want to see Tom the Feather and his family harmed. He attempts to make the knights believe that the farmer is not helping them so that he and his family's lives will be spared if Royce and Hadrian are captured.



Discussion Question 1

Why do the knights pull a sword on Tom the Feather? Why does Hadrian and Royce go to his rescue?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Tom the Feather help Hadrian and Royce? How is it protecting his family?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Royce think Hadrian should have left him at the Crown Tower? Why does he think their impending deaths are his fault?

Vocabulary

Impudent, havoc, momentum, wallow, lunatic.



Chapter 21

Summary

In Chapter 21, Royce wakes up when the cart stops. He is in a lot of pain. There is a tarp over the cart. He cuts a hole in the tarp so that he can see. They are in a city. He does not recognize it. The driver of the cart is gone and the streets are deserted. The wagon looks like a peasant's cart. He can hear Hadrian struggling for breath. Royce pulls himself up to a sitting position. The pain is horrible. He wonders how long they have been in the wagon.

Royce acts without a plan for the first time in decades. Merrick had taught him to always have a plan. He knew Hadrian was dying and he had to act. He lets himself fall to the ground. He ignores the pain and crawls to the closet door and hammers it with his fist. There is no answer and he moves back into the street. The pain is too much. He starts screaming for help. He feels a hand on his arm and a voice tells him that she has him and he will be all right that he is safe. It is a woman with long dark hair and almond-shaped eyes. She calls to Dixon to get the other man out of the wagon. Royce hears a man's voice say that Hadrian took an arrow, but should live.

The woman tells Dixon to get them both inside and then fetch Dr. Linderman from the Merchant's Quarter. Royce begs her to save Hadrian. The woman tells him that she knows everything and that she will save them both. She has been waiting for them a very long time.

Analysis

Royce is confused about where he is and what is happening. He does not know who put him and Hadrian in the cart. He believes it is the reinforcements for the knights that they fought at the farmhouse. Royce does not think about his own self. Instead, he thinks of Hadrian who risked his life for him on several occasions. This marks a change in the man who only cared for himself. His time with Hadrian has made him see that there are good, honest men in the world that you can trust. He cannot let Hadrian die. He risks getting out of the cart to go look for help. He is greeted by Gwen who finally has fulfilled her destiny by helping the men.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Royce climb out of the wagon? Why does he not worry about his own wounds?



Discussion Question 2

Why does Royce beg the woman to save Hadrian and not himself? Why does he think Hadrian's life is more important than his own?

Discussion Question 3

Who is the dark haired woman who says she will save Royce and Hadrian? How does she know who they are?

Vocabulary

Woozy, vague.



Chapter 22

Summary

In Chapter 22, Rehn is in Professor Arcadius' office watching him open a dispatch. The professor is visibly shaken. Rehn tries to warm himself. He has been out in the snow and is still damp. Rehn wonders where the professor gets the exotic animals he has in his office. Professor Arcadius tells Rehn that they are safe; at least, he thinks they are. There is no report of them being killed or captured, so he assumes they made it out alive. Rehn asks where they are. Arcadius tells him that they are in the city of Medford, but the church believes they have disappeared. The search for the thieves of the Crown Tower has been called off. Officially, the burglary never happened. Internally, they are baffled. They cannot figure out what happened or why.

The only clue they have is that tavern keeper in Iberton says Royce and Hadrian were there and badly wounded. Rehn asks how badly. Royce was barely conscious and Hadrian was hurt, but not bad. Arcadius does note that a patrol also disappeared in the same area. It was a ten man patrol. Rehn questions how they could take on ten men especially since they were wounded. Arcadius says they will not know what happened until the two return and that will not be for a long time.

Rehn questions how Arcadius knows they are in Medford if the church lost track of them. Arcadius tells him it is magic. Rehn has to leave because Royce and Hadrian cannot come back and find him alive. He asks why Arcadius sent Royce and him to Vernes. He tells Rehn that he was his eyes and ears. Arcadius did not know if Royce would bring Hadrian back alive. Rehn is no longer needed by Arcadius for the moment, so he says he can go anywhere. Rehn is upset that his disguise as Pickles led him to be detained in Vernes and that Hadrian almost got him caught reading in the dormitories. He hit Angdon with the pie to defend Hadrian to get on his good side. Arcadius said he secured Hadrian's trust and his sympathy. If it wasn't for Pickles, Hadrian would not have gone on the job with Royce. Arcadius told him that Pickles had to die because it risked dividing Hadrian's loyalties. Hadrian needed to be alone and isolated just like Royce for Arcadius' plan to work.

Rehn asks him if the professor got what he needed from the stolen book. Arcadius tells him that he did not need it. It was an impossible goal to forge a bond between the two. Rehn says he will contact Arcadius to let him know where he is so that the professor can find him if he is needed. There is a war coming. Arcadius believes that Royce and Hadrian are their hope to win.

Analysis

The reader learns that Pickles is alive and his actual name is Rehn. He was also sent to Vernes to watch out for Hadrian. Pickles and Hadrian formed a strong bond, so the



professor had to sever it to make his plan for Royce and Hadrian to team up to work. Hadrian had to feel alone in order to form a bond with Royce. This is important to the professor. He knows that they have a destiny together and that they must fulfill it. It is unknown how the professor knows so much about Hadrian and Royce's journey and that they made it to Medford. The reader can only speculate that, perhaps, he is the man who gave Gwen the money to help the men when they came to Medford . Or, perhaps, he is one of many who know of something to come and the need for Hadrian and Royce to form a bond and survive to fight another day.

Discussion Question 1

Who is Rehn and what is his connection with Hadrian? How does he feel about Hadrian?

Discussion Question 2

Why did Professor Arcadius tell Hadrian that Pickles was dead? Why did he feel it was necessary?

Discussion Question 3

Why did Arcadius have Royce and Hadrian steal the book? Why was it so important?

Vocabulary

Reprimand, urchin, whimsical.



Characters

Hadrian Blackwater

Hadrian Blackwater is an ex-soldier who is traveling to meet Professor Arcadius to obtain an heirloom left to him by his recently deceased father. Hadrian is haunted by his past and the men that he has killed during his life as a soldier. He is at a crossroads in his life. He gave up the life of a soldier when he learned of his father's death.

He finds much adversity on his trip north. He meets Pickles who he takes as a servant to help the boy escape from a violent city. He misses the barge and Hadrian goes on to Colnora on his own. Hadrian is friendly with all the people on the barge. He will not side with the other passengers on tying up the hooded man. He tries to befriend the man, but is rebuffed. He promised to protect Vivian since she is so scared and believes the hooded man is after her. He feels guilty when she and the other passengers are murdered.

Hadrian continues on his journey to meet Professor Arcadius. At the university, he sees the hooded man and is told that he was on the barge to protect Hadrian. He killed the passengers because they were going to kill Hadrian. He is too trusting and naïve so Arcadius wants him and Royce to team up because Royce is too cynical.

Hadrian is an excellent warrior, but he does not want to draw his swords to fight unless he absolutely must. He wants to leave that life behind him. When he and Royce go to the Crown Tower to return the book, Hadrian must fight to save Royce's life. He shows that that training he learned from his father has made him into a powerful warrior. He may be naive and too trusting, but he can protect himself and his friend when the need arises.

Gwen DeLancy

Gwen DeLancy is a young woman from Calis. She and her mother have the gift of the Sight. They set out to reach the city of Medford after her mother reads her palm and sees her future. Before Gwen's mother dies on the way to Medford, she makes Gwen promise to continue to Medford and make a life there. A man gives Gwen six coins. One is to bury her mother, one is to get to Medford, and four are to keep until it is necessary to spend them. The man tells her that a man will come to Medford. The man will be covered in his own blood, and she must help him.

Gwen travels to Medford and keeps the four coins hidden. She becomes a prostitute to survive. She only uses the coins when she must help her and the other girls at the Hideous Head Tavern and Alehouse escape from the tyrant owner who does not care about their safety. Gwen uses the last of the coins to fix up and start her own brothel. This gives her money and the respect of the community.



Gwen wonders if she is on the right path. Then, she sees the vision of the man covered in his blood in the hand of Dixon Taft. She knows she must help him to get to the north to save the man and his friend. Gwen's destiny is met when she goes to Royce when he is calling for help in the street covered in his own blood.

Pickles/Rehn

Pickles/Rehn met Hadrian in Vernes. He attempted to help Hadrian to the vessel that would be taking him to the University. Pickles is detained by the authorities and must make his way on his own without accompanying Hadrian to Sheridan University. He makes it before Hadrian. Pickles defends Hadrian against Angdon and is beaten up by Angdon and his friends. Arcadius tells Hadrian that Pickles was killed for being an accomplice in the attack on his son. This turns out to be untrue. Pickles name is actually Rehn and he was sent to Vernes to watch over Hadrian on his journey to Sheridan. The professor told Hadrian Pickles was dead because the two were coming too attached and it threatened the mission. Rehn is an associate of Arcadius. He has fulfilled his task and is allowed to go wherever he chooses until he is needed again.

Royce Melborn

Royce Melborn is a thief and murderer. He was an orphan who grew up in a gang, the Wolves. They taught him to steal to survive. Arcadius paid for him to be released of Manzant prison where he was imprisoned for a crime that he did not commit. He was betrayed by his best friend, Merrick, who had him imprisoned.

Royce is sent to keep an eye on Hadrian, while he travels to Sheridan. He kills the people on the barge to protect Hadrian. Royce is antisocial and cynical. He does not trust anyone. He agrees to steal the book from the Crown Tower because Arcadius has agreed to release him if he is successful.

Royce does not want anyone to ruin his chances of freedom so he ditches Hadrian at the pub and goes to get the book on his own. He does not trust Hadrian and thinks he will only slow him down. When the two must return the book, he forms a bond with Hadrian who risks his life to save him even though he does not like Royce. Royce is the man from Gwen's vision who is covered in his blood and calls for help.

Professor Arcadius

Professor Arcadius is a professor at Sheridan University. Arcadius teaches lore—history, fable, myth, and mysteries. He teaches all things that came before the church's order and secrets. Arcadius was a friend of Hadrian's father. He wants Hadrian and Royce to become partners. He has them agree to steal a book from the Crown Tower. He does this to force a bond between them. Arcadius tells Hadrian that Pickles is dead because he feels that the bond between Pickles and Hadrian is threatening the bond between Royce and Hadrian.



Raynor Grue

Raynor Grue is the owner of The Hideous Head Tavern and Alehouse. He does not care what happens to the girls, which leads them to leave the tavern. He tries to ruin their business by bribing the Inspector. He wants the women's permit to be denied.

Stane

Stane kills Avon and then threatens Gwen. He is the reason the girls leave the tavern and start their own brothel. Gwen will not allow him in their brothel. She looks into his eyes and sees his death making him run away in fear.

Vivian

Vivian is a passenger on the badge going to Colnora. She claims that her husband was murdered and is on the run from the men who killed him. She is actually the murderer from Vernes. She has killed three men by slitting their throats. Her accomplices, the three merchants, also on board the barge then robbed the men. Vivian kills the boatman who is going to start an investigation as soon as they get to Colnora. She attempts to seduce Hadrian so that she can get close enough to him to slit his throat, but she is thwarted by Royce who then kills her to protect Hadrian.

Rose, Mae, Jollin

Rose, Mae, and Jollin are prostitutes that worked at the Hideous Head Tavern and Alehouse. They ran away with Gwen and helped her start the Medford House.

Dixon Taft

Dixon Taft is a Carter in Medford. Gwen solicits him to help her clean up the old inn. He asks Gwen to marry him, but she says no. Dixon is the driver of the cart that carries Hadrian and Royce to Medford.

Angdon Lerwick

Angdon Lerwick is the son of a baron. He is studying at Sheridan University. He bullies Pickles and attempts to assault Hadrian. Royce stabs him.



Symbols and Symbolism

Crown Tower

Crown Tower is the home of the Patriarch and center of the Nyphron Church. Professor Arcadius sends Royce and Hadrian to steal Edmund Hall's Journal from the Crown Tower.

Alverstone

Alverstone is the name of Royce Melborn's dagger.

Gentry Quarter

Gentry Quarter is the wealthiest region of Medford.

Edmund Hall's Journal

Edmund Hall's Journal is a book that no one is allowed to read because it is considered heretical. It is kept in the Crown Tower so that no one can get it.

Hideous Head Tavern and Alehouse

Hideous Head Tavern and Alehouse is a brothel and tavern run by Raynor Grue in Medford.

Gwen's Six Coins

Gwen has six coins that were given to her by a stranger to give to a man who will come to Medford covered in his own blood. She must use the coins to help him.

Medford House

Medford House is the brothel that Gwen and the prostitutes start after running from the Hideous Head Tavern and Alehouse.

Nyphron Church

Nyphron Church is the predominant church. The members worship Novron and Maribor.



Royal Permit

A Royal Permit is needed by the businesses in Medford for a person to run a business. Gwen must spend two of her six coins on the permit.

The Sight

Gwen and her mother have The Sight, the ability to see the past and the future.

Swords

Swords are important to Hadrian. As a soldier he used them to fight. His father was a blacksmith so Hadrian made two of the swords he carries. His father taught him how to use them. Hadrian is reluctant to use his swords unless it is necessary.

Eastern Star

Eastern Star is a vessel that transports passengers and freight from Vernes and Dagastan.



Settings

Medford

Medford is the city where Gwen DeLancy was told to settle and wait for a man who will arrive in town covered in blood. Gwen lives in the lower quarter of the town where the poor live. She makes her living as a prostitute as she waits for the arrival of the man she is supposed to help. After a life threatening experience, Gwen and her friends leave the tavern where they work as prostitutes and find shelter in an abandoned inn. They turn the Inn into their home and start their own business. The brothel is very successful and allows Gwen to help her friends as she waits to fulfill her destiny. Medford is not a great town, but Gwen makes it her home because she must. Her friends help her to endure being away from the land where she was born.

Sheridan University

Sheridan University is where Hadrian goes to find Professor Arcadius. Hadrian is told that Arcadius has the last requests of Hadrian's father. The University is a headquarters for Hadrian and Royce as they prepare for the job Arcadius requests they perform together. They must steal a book from the Crown Tower. The two must learn to work together and use the University buildings to practice scaling walls. They must do so while avoiding the students and professors at the school as much as possible. This is made necessary because Royce stabs Angdon, the son of a baron, in an attempt to save Hadrian. The university turns from a safe haven to a place they must flee quickly. After their adventures, they cannot return to the university for some time. They must travel to lands they have never been to keep safe.

Vernes

Vernes is a city at the mouth of the Bernum River. Hadrian uses it as just a stopping point on his way to Sheridan University. It is a rough town where people are kidnapped and made to work on boats. Hadrian meets Pickles in Vernes. He steals Hadrian's bag so that he will make him his servant so he can insinuate himself into Hadrian's life. It is a dirty city that Pickles wants to leave as quickly as possible. There have been murders in the city and the authorities are looking for anyone suspicious. They detain Pickles and let Hadrian leave because he has just entered the city that night. He is happy to leave the dirty city behind him.

Crown Tower

Crown Tower is the place that Professor Arcadius wants Royce and Hadrian to burgle. It is the home of the Patriarch and center of the Nyphron Church. This is the prominent church in the area. The Crown Tower is a large tower that no one can scale or least that



is what is believed. Royce scales it on his own to steal the book and must take Hadrian with him to return the book. Although no one was expecting him the first time, the second time is a different story. The two men are set upon by tower guards who are like no other the two have ever seen. Hadrian has two swords snapped in half by their weapons and the two must fight for their lives. They maneuver the tower attempting to get to their harnesses so that they can make it down the tower. The two men are lucky to escape with their lives.



Themes and Motifs

Guilt

Guilt is a theme of the novel. Hadrian travels with the ghosts of his past which weigh him down with guilt. He feels guilty for running away from home when he was fifteen and calling his father a coward. He wishes he could take that back and to know what plans his father had for his life. Hadrian feels guilt and shame over his time as a soldier and for his life in Calis. He does not want anyone to know what he did there. He hopes that Arcadius did not find out when he sent his man to deliver the letter about Hadrian's father's death.

On his journey's north, Hadrian is again assaulted by guilt when he is unable to save Vivian from being murdered. He feels it is his fault because he promised that he would protect her. His guilt is slightly assuaged when he discovers that she was the true murderer on board the barge and Royce killed her to save Hadrian's life. This does not help the guilt he feels for the death of the young steersman, Andrew, who Royce killed because he was a witness. Arcadius also feels responsible for the young man's death since he sent Royce to protect Hadrian.

Hadrian feels guilty when he learns of Pickles' death. He feels that he ran off and left the boy alone to face a fate that should have belonged to him and Royce. Pickles was innocent and did not deserve to die such a horrible death. Royce's indifference to Pickles' death infuriates him because he feels so much guilt and Royce will not share the blame.

Hadrian is a caring person and wants to protect those around him. When he cannot do so, he feels it is his fault and the guilt eats away at him. This trait leaves him vulnerable to the Vivian's of the world who prey on any weakness that is offered. Arcadius hopes to harden Hadrian a bit by giving him a glimpse of the world through Royce's jaded eyes.

Honor

Honor is a theme of the novel. Hadrian has a sense of honor. He agrees to protect Vivian even though he believes her fear is unfounded. He leaves his door open so that he can view the hallway and make sure that no one approaches her room. Because he agreed to protect her, he does it to the best of his ability.

Hadrian does not back out of the job with Royce when he finds out that Pickles has died. The one reason he agreed to the job was so that Pickles would get an education. When Arcadius tells him that Pickles is dead, he questions if Hadrian will back out of the job. Hadrian tells him that he gave his word that he would do it and he does not go back on his word. He has a sense of honor and does not deviate from it.



Hadrian will not leave Royce alone on the tower to fend for himself even though that is what Royce would do to him. When he discovers that Royce's harness is still by the rope, he knows he is in trouble and will not leave him. Hadrian goes to find him killing many guards along the way. Royce is surprised to see that Hadrian has on his harness. He realizes that Hadrian could have escaped and left him to fight the men by himself, but he did not. It shows that he is a man of honor. This makes Royce feel guilty for planning to leave him behind. Royce then tries to make Hadrian leave him behind because he will slow him down and get them both killed. Royce shows that he can have a sense of honor as well. Hadrian will not leave him and gets them both off the tower alive.

Friendship

Friendship is a theme of the novel. Hadrian is a very friendly person who talks to people where he is. This makes him seem naive and gullible, but also makes people like him. Hadrian and Pickles form a tight friendship over the short time that they know each other. Hadrian is happy to see Pickles at the university. He wants to help the boy better his life so he agrees to do the job with Royce if Arcadius can get the boy enrolled in the university. He asks for no other payment than this. It shows that he cares about the boy and wants to see him succeed.

Royce easily makes friends in the tavern where he and Royce stop on their journey to the Crown Tower. Lord Marbury vouches for the man when the knights come in looking for Royce and Hadrian. He likes him and does not want to see him harmed by the Church's enforcers. He risks his life to vouch for Hadrian. This act does lead to Lord Marbury's arrest for treason when Dougan later tells on him. Hadrian is so trustworthy that people feel the need to help him.

Royce finally succumbs to their friendship when Hadrian risks his life to save Royce. Royce does not understand his sacrifice, but knows that anyone that will turn back to help someone when they could have escaped is someone that you can trust and who will not betray you. Hadrian is able to get past the man's barriers and show him that there are people out there you can trust. Royce repays Hadrian's risks by dragging himself out of the cart in Medford and trying to find help for his friend so that he does not die. Royce shows that he can be a true friend who also is self-sacrificing.

Destiny

Destiny is a theme of the novel. Gwen travels to Medford with her mother because her mother has seen her daughter's fate in her palm. She must go to Medford and settle in the town. Gwen knows that she must go to Medford and wait for a man who is covered in his own blood who is calling for help. She knows her destiny is to help this man she just does not know how or why.

The man gives her coins to help her bury her mother, get to Medford and to save the other four and not use them in less necessary. She is unsure of what this means so



when she uses them to help her and the girls from the Hideous Head escape the cruelty of Grue and his patrons she does not know if she is following her destiny or destroying it.

When she sees the man when she reads Dixon's palm, she knows that she has taken the right path. She has the money to help Dixon buy a horse for his cart so that he is able to travel north. If she had not started the brothel and befriended Dixon, he would not have been able to fix his cart and be thinking of buying a horse to take a load of wood north and she would not have the money to help him. She held onto the money until she deemed it absolutely necessary to use it and everything worked out.

Even when her life was difficult as a prostitute for Grue, Gwen knew she had a purpose. Her destiny kept her grateful that she woke every morning and gave her a reason to endure such pain and misery. Knowing that her mother had seen this in her palm and still sent her to Medford, makes Gwen believe that her destiny is important. She is excited when she is certain that it is near and waits for it with anticipation.



Styles

Point of View

The point of view of *The Crown Tower* is third person. It is told through the eyes of several characters. The viewpoint switches from chapter to chapter. Hadrian Blackwater is a soldier who is tired of killing and has just lost his father. His thoughts and feelings about his former life and his life with his father are shown through his eyes. The reader feels his guilt and shame for the life he has led. Gwen is a young girl with the Sight who has traveled to Medford because her mother has told her she must go there. A man gives her six coins to give to a man she will meet in Medford one day. Gwen's belief of her destiny and her strong will are visible when she tells her story. Hadrian and Gwen's viewpoints dominate the book with other viewpoints appearing near the end of the story. Other viewpoints include Royce, Rose, Rehn/Pickles, and Grue. This allows the reader to see how all of these characters interact and how their stories meld into one. It gives the reader a complete view of each side of the story and the character's life. This allows the reader to understand the characters and their actions.

The story is told through exposition and dialogue. This allows the reader to become acquainted with the characters and their idiosyncrasies. The dialogue shows the passion that drives each character. Each has a tragedy in their past that drives them to pursue a better life. This is shown in their words and actions. Hadrian is attempting to run from his past life as a soldier and Gwen is attempting to fulfill her destiny, while keeping herself and others from being harmed. The viewpoint of the story switches often so that the reader can see how the different characters interact and think and feel about one another.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple yet powerful. The book is intended for a general audience so the language is not difficult or formal. The sentences are simple and make the book quick and easy to read. The language allows the reader to see each character individually and what kind of person they are. It gives the characters their own unique voice.

The chapters are short and concise. They tell the characters' stories in simple easy to follow chapters that draw the reader into the lives of the characters. Hadrian's journey and Gwen's waiting to fulfill her destiny is told in short concise chapters to keep the story moving quickly, while engaging the reader in the story of the characters' lives.

Structure

The Crown Tower is comprised of twenty-two chapters. The chapters are short and concise and show how quickly that life can change and lead a person down a different



path than they would have chosen. It draws the reader in and makes them a part of the story. It is an easy, quick, and enjoyable read.

The plot of the novel is simple. Hadrian is a soldier who has recently lost his father and goes in search of his father's friend to learn of his father's last wishes. The novel follows him as he begins a journey to discover who he is and what he can accomplish with the help of people he can trust. Gwen is a strong-minded woman who attempts to hold onto the coins she is given, but must use them to save herself and those around her. In so doing she becomes a successful businesswoman who has more resources to fulfill her destiny.

The novel is a quick read with short concise chapters. It chronicles the path of two characters that are destined to meet and fulfill their destinies. The words are simple and make the book easy to read. It is a story of characters who are struggling to learn who they are and fulfill the roles they are to play in the future.



Quotes

Their women practice witchcraft and tell fortunes, but I say it is best not to know too much about one's future.

-- Pickles (Chapter 1 paragraph 5)

Importance: This quote foreshadows the use of destiny and the Sight used in the novel.

Avon ain't the first. There was another girl in Roe. If I can pay, they'll wrap you in a bow.

-- Stane (Chapter 2 paragraph 4)

Importance: Stane's comment shows the danger that Gwen and the other prostitutes are in and how much power the men have over their lives. Gwen is independent and does not like feeling that she and her friends lives have no significance. As prostitutes, they are seen as property that men can treat however they like.

A man accustomed to killing has the look of a wolf—empty of soul and hungry of blood.

-- Sebastian (Chapter 3 paragraph 12)

Importance: Sebastian says this about the hooded man, but this could also be said for Hadrian. As a soldier, he has killed many men and feels guilty for it.

I'm actually a bit tired of what's allowed. What's allowed is for men to beat and kill us, to keep us as slaves and make money off our humiliation.

-- Gwen (Chapter 6 paragraph 11)

Importance: This comment shows how women are treated. Gwen does not like that she is seen as less than men. She believes that women should be able to control their own lives.

He was coming back for the rest of us, and Grue had no problem with that.

-- Gwen (Chapter 8 paragraph 15)

Importance: Gwen tells Dixon what her life and the lives of the girls were like at the tavern. They were less than nothing and treated horribly. She wants a better life for them and that is why they ran away.

Both of you are at an impasse, both have unique skills and yet suffer from the question of What now? As a teacher of young minds, I can tell that neither of you are ready for the world by yourself.

-- Professor Arcadius (Chapter 10 paragraph 12)

Importance: Arcadius is worried about Hadrian and Royce. He sees potential in each of them, but they lack certain skills that will help them function on their own. Royce is antisocial and cynical, while Hadrian is too naive. Arcadius believes that being together will help them balance these qualities.



Because I don't want to do this job, but I can see I'm going to anyway. So I might as well get something for it--or at least one of us should.

-- Hadrian (Chapter 11 paragraph 12)

Importance: Hadrian is selfless. Even though he does not want to become a thief, he does it to help Pickles obtain a better future. This shows the kind of man that Hadrian is and what kind of friend he can be.

I know, I know, I have those wolf eyes that good old Sebastian warned you about. Remember him? The nice man who, along with his nice lady friend, was planning to slit your throat?

-- Royce (Chapter 13 paragraph 7)

Importance: Royce tries to drive home that Hadrian is too naive. He wants to believe the best of people and some people are not good. Royce wants Hadrian to see that his judgement can be clouded by his sentimental feelings.

It was possible that you might have surprised me and actually taken Hadrian with you the first time.

-- Professor Arcadius (Chapter 14 paragraph 9)

Importance: Arcadius knows that Royce is devious and likes to be on his own. He is trying to make him be more of a team player and must force him into being social. He wants the two men to get along and forge a friendship that will help them overcome their personal weaknesses.

You stand up for yourself and for others. You make the world be the way you need it to.

-- Rose

Importance: Rose looks up to Gwen. Rose thinks that Gwen is so responsible and cares for others. Rose has not met anyone like her with such confidence and poise.

I would have left you to die. Tried to, in fact.

-- Royce (Chapter 19 paragraph 5)

Importance: This comment shows Royce's inner character. He does not understand why Hadrian did not leave him to die. He values no one except himself.

I know everything, and I'm going to save both of you. You'll see. I've been waiting for you—I've been waiting for so very long.

-- Gwen (Chapter 21 paragraph 14)

Importance: Gwen is able to fulfill her destiny. She is happy that the wait is over and she is able to finally fulfill the purpose that she came to Medford to accomplish.