

Debt of Bones Study Guide

Debt of Bones by Terry Goodkind

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Plot Summary

Debt of Bones by Terry Goodkind, is a story about Abigale, a young mother, and her desperate attempt to save her daughter. Her country is at war, and Abigale is willing to sacrifice everything to save those she loves. Abigale hurries to save her daughter while trying to convince the a powerful wizard, called the First Wizard, to answer a debt of bones.

Abby travels from her home at Coney Crossing to the Keep where the Mother Confessor and all those powerful in the gift reside. The gift is the ability to use magic. Abby's mother had the gift although it skipped Abby. Abby and several others wait outside to be allowed in to see a wizard. Abby has nothing but a sack and a bracelet that her mother gave her. A sorceress, Delora, takes the group of people in the Keep. Abby asks to see the First Wizard, Zedd Zorander. An elderly woman and a nobleman say they must see the First Wizard as well.

The nobleman goes to see the First Wizard before Abby and the elderly lady. Soon one of the nobleman's servants comes back into the room holding the head of the nobleman. The elderly woman tells Abby that her name is Mariska, wishes Abby good luck and leaves. Abby asks the First Wizard to help her to save her family and those in her village as they were taken captive by soldiers from D'Hara working for Panis Rahl. Abby had heard the soldiers say that they were going to use the captives as shields so the first weapons or magic fired on the D'Hara troops would be what killed the captives. Zedd apologizes that Abby's family has been taken but says he can't help. Zedd's wife was killed by Panis Rahl agents and they kidnapped his daughter. The nobleman that was killed came to tell Zedd his wife would be killed if Zedd didn't surrender.

Abby is told to go to an inn and stay for the night and Mother Confessor, a powerful sorceress, and Delora say that they will ask Zedd to inspect a debt of Bones that Abby has brought. Abby's mother had told her that the debt of bones had been between Abby's mother and Zedd's father. That night the elderly woman, Mariska, comes into Abby's room and reveals that she will be the one that kills Abby's baby girl and husband if Abby doesn't get the First Wizard to come to a trap that has been set. Abby says she will.

The next day Zedd finally agrees to help Abby after looking at the bone that Abby had brought and said it was indeed a debt of bones. Abby, Zedd, Delora and a few soldiers start on the way. Zedd and Abby are alone when a Mord-Sith attacks them. A Mord-Sith is trained to kill one skilled in the gift, and they can only be killed by a confessor. Abby has decided she can't help Panis Rahl and begins to kill the Mord-Sith when Mother Confessor steps out and kills the Mord-Sith. Zedd tells Abby that he knew she had been forced to trap him.

Zedd gives Abby time to try and find her daughter in the camp of the D'Hara's before he unleashes a spell on the enemy that will kill all in the camp. Abby's bracelet begins to get warm while she is looking for her daughter and her bracelet leads her to Zedd's



daughter. Abby rescues the child realizing her own child will die. Zedd casts his spell once Abby is back. After Zedd has the spell cast Abby realizes that Mother Confessor and Delora were able to save the captives from the D'Hara soldiers. Abby's family and all the villagers are safe.

Zedd doesn't kill those in D'Hara deciding it is better to leave the innocent alive with the evil rather than kill the innocent with the evil. Zedd tells Abby that the debt of bones had been owed to his father by Abby's mother since his father had saved Abby's life when her mother was in labor. Zedd then tells Abby that the debt is paid since she rescued his daughter. Zedd puts boundary wardens around the wall to make sure people don't walk into it since it is a wall of death and can't be seen once it stabilizes. Zedd made enemies by leaving people alive but he is certain it was the honorable thing to do.



Page 1-45

Page 1-45 Summary

Debt of Bones by Terry Goodkind, is a story about Abigale, a young mother, and her desperate attempt to save her daughter. Her country is at war and Abigale is willing to sacrifice everything to save those she loves. Abigale hurries to save her daughter while trying to convince the a powerful wizard, called the First Wizard, to answer a debt of bones.

Abby stands at the wall of the Keep waiting to be admitted to see a wizard. There are many people standing outside the wall waiting for the chance to ask for help. An old woman asks Abby what it is that Abby holds in her sack but Abby refuses to say anything other than they are her things. As Abby waits at the Keep she watches soldiers walk by. The soldiers come from different cities throughout the Midlands fighting the war against Panis Rahl who rules in the land of D'hara.

The old woman standing next to Abby looks at the plain bracelet that Abby wears and suggests that Abby might trade that for the chance to speak to a wizard. Abby tells the old woman that the bracelet was given to Abby by her mother and is worth nothing to anyone except Abby. Abby wants to go home but knows that if she doesn't speak to a wizard there will be no home to go to.

Finally the Keep gate opens and a woman appears in a beaded robe. The old woman next to Abby whispers that it is a sorceress but Abby knew that from the beaded robe that the woman wears. Abby's mother had been a sorcerer and had the same type of robe. The sorceress leads the large group of people into the Keep and explains that there are two wizards that will take time to see them in turn. While they are walking there is a man dressed as a noble accompanied by two men. The nobleman cuts in front of the old woman and Abby. The nobleman has wrapped around his finger a small lock of blond hair. The old woman begins to say something to the nobleman, but the nobleman is rude enough that the old woman lets him be. Abby's bracelet begins to get warm. She realizes that it is because her mother was magic and since she is so close to people that are magical the bracelet is reacting.

The sorceress tells them that if their request is denied it is not because that request was unimportant but because the wizards recognize there is a greater need. Abby is praying to the good spirits that she will be successful in her request to the wizard and that the spirits will forgive her for the thing that she must do. The sorceress begins to leave, and Abby stands to address the sorceress. Abby tells the sorceress that she must see the First Wizard, Wizard Zorander. The sorceress tells Abby that the First Wizard is a very busy man and Abby pulls out of her sack the collar of her mother's sorceress robe. Abby tells her that her mother was Helsa and that lives are at stake and Abby must see the First Wizard. The sorceress agrees to take Abby's petition for an audience to the First Wizard, but before the sorceress can leave the old woman and the nobleman both insist



that they see him as well. The sorceress pauses to explain to them that the First Wizard is called the wind of death and is to be feared and asks that they each be sure of what they ask. After no one steps down the sorceress goes to speak with the First Wizard.

Abby thinks of the invasion that has caused her to come here and has put everyone she loves in danger. While she walks, her bracelet continues to tingle. Abby's mother had told her to wear the bracelet always and that some day it would be of value. Her mother didn't explain more than that. Sorceresses kept secrets from everyone without the gift, the ability to wield magic, even their own daughters. Abby had been born without the gift.

When the First Wizard agrees to see Abby, the old woman, and the nobleman, Abby steps forward. The nobleman quickly steps in front of her and announces he will be seen first. The old woman tells her to let the man go first because it doesn't matter who goes first but whose business is most important. The nobleman and his two servants enter the First Wizard's chambers. Soon Abby hears a scream and then silence. The nobleman's servants enter the room, one of them holding the nobleman's head. The sorceress has them escorted out and the old woman announces she will wait and see the First Wizard some other time. She tells Abby her name is Mariska and she hopes Abby is successful.

Abby isn't alone with the First Wizard. He has a room full of people and is talking with them all. When Abby enters the room she sees a woman and although Abby has never met the woman before she realizes that this is a Mother Confessor. The alliance of the Midlands was headed by the Mother Confessor, who is one of the most powerful women in the land. Mother Confessor commands Abby to stand and she introduces Abby to the First Wizard. The First Wizard is very young and is holding the blond lock of hair that had been in the nobleman's hand.

Abby isn't sure of talking to him while so many others are talking to him but tells him that her home, Coney Crossing, was attacked by D'Haran troops. One of the men talking to the First Wizard tells the First Wizard that they must hunt down and kill every person working for Panis Rahl, and the First Wizard tells him that he is working on that. The sorceress watches as Abby is too stunned to talk and informs her that if Abby has lost her nerve then she will escort her out. Abby tries to talk to the First Wizard again but others talking to the First Wizard are speaking about spells and how they can't be done. Everyone becomes quiet when the First Wizard shouts at the man, Thomas, and tells him that he will show him the exact spell.

Page 1-45 Analysis

The reader gets a clear picture of the fact that Abby is desperate for help regarding those she loves. It is also explained in some small detail that what she is doing is considered evil, even to Abby in some way. The reader hasn't seen what all is in Abby's bag yet. There was a mention made by Mariska, the old woman outside the Keep, about bones Abby could buy. The reader will soon find that Abby has the bone of her mother



with her. The purpose of this bone won't be explained for some time. There will be many things the reader won't find out until the last few pages of the story.

The reader has seen Wizard Zorander. While he is obviously powerful the reader doesn't know much about him as a person yet. In the next few pages it will become obvious that he is a person that is fully dedicated to his country and the position he holds. As First Wizard he must help to protect the people of the Midlands. The reader will soon find out the significance of the lock of blond hair that the nobleman brought and why the nobleman was killed.

Mariska appears to be an elderly woman that is kind and wishes Abby on her way. She didn't make Abby feel uncomfortable, but the reader will soon see that she was not what she appeared to be at all. When the reader finds out the true identity of Mariska, many of the things the old woman said will make much more sense.

The Mother Confessor and the sorceress that Abby has spoken to in the story haven't had large roles in the story. As the story continues, the two women will become more important and will provide background for the other characters in the story, and they will take part in the story in other ways as well.

The reader has seen a symbol that those with the gift use. It is the symbol that Abby calls Grace. The description of the symbol and what each line stands for is been explained. This symbol will be very important in the story because it is part of the spell that the First Wizard is working on.



Page 45-90

Page 45-90 Summary

The people in the room fall silent as the First Wizard throws open his arms. The First Wizard begins to draw the Grace symbol, the symbol that depicts the continuum of the gift. The First Wizard leaves one line open on the Grace drawing. When he arcs the magic, the line ends in the world of the dead. Thomas, the wizard that the First Wizard had been talking to, was amazed but stated it was madness to unleash such magic.

The First Wizard then turns his attention to Abby. She explains to him that her people were taken and she heard them saying that the captives were to be used as shields. The D'Haran's called it "dulling the enemies' weapons on their own women and children." The First Wizard tells her that he is sorry that he can't help her and the people, but they would condemn many more to death if they abandoned their cause to go after these few. Abby tells him she has a bone but he insists he can't help her. She tells him that the bone is of a solemn debt, and the First Wizard tells her it is one that can't be paid now.

Outside the First Wizard's chambers Mother Confessor consoles Abby. Abby says that the First Wizard is the wind of death and cares nothing for the people. Mother Confessor explains to Abby that he is also called Trickster and other things. Mother Confessor tells Abby that she must swear to never repeat this story, and she tells Abby about the war that they have been fighting. Panis Rahl has sent shadow people. When shadow people touch their intended victims they cause boils and sores and the victims die in agony and there is no known cure. Then he sent quads. Quads are a group of four trained assassins that torture and kill wizards. The worst that Panis Rahl has are the Mord-Sith. A Mord-Sith is a woman that is trained in the killing of those with the gift. Mord-Sith are immune to any magic save the magic of a confessor. When someone with the gift tries to use magic on a Mord-Sith, it is deflected back upon the one that cast it. Panis Rahl sent assassin after another after the First Wizard and then turned his attention to the First Wizard's family. They killed his wife in a most horrific manner and then kidnapped his daughter. The nobleman that entered the First Wizard's chamber came with a message that if he would surrender himself and give up the war, his daughter would be freed; otherwise, she would be put to death. The First Wizard realizes that to give himself up would be to doom other people to Panis Rahl's wrath and so he condemned his own daughter to death.

Abby then shows Mother Confessor the bone in her bag. She explains what her mother told her and that the First Wizard only has to test the bone. Mother Confessor and the sorceress, Delora, agree to see the First Wizard on behalf of Abby. They send her to an Inn for the night while they speak on her behalf.

While Abby lies in her bed at the Inn, the door opens and Mariska enters. She asks Abby what was said and Abby tells her the First Wizard refuses to help. Mariska smiles



and says that is too bad for little Jana, Abby's daughter. Abby doesn't understand how Mariska knows about her daughter. Mariska then says she will take a knife and cut out one of Jana's eyes and let her watch with the good eye while Mariska cuts out her father's heart. Mariska explains that this way Jana will know how bad she is going to hurt. Abby cries in despair and tells her that the First Wizard has agreed to see her the next day because of a bone she carries. Mariska warns her that if she doesn't bring the First Wizard as she has been instructed, then everyone will be slaughtered.

The next day the First Wizard agrees to see Abby. The First Wizard tests the bone and agrees that it is a debt that must be paid and agrees to help Abby.

Page 45-90 Analysis

The reader sees here the true nature of the old woman following Abby the day before. The nobleman had been sent but the message was not traceable. It is unclear if Mariska knew what the nobleman was doing there at the Keep or what he was there to tell the First Wizard. Mariska won't be seen again until much later in the book, but her role in this story is not over.

The fact that Mother Confessor calls the First Wizard "Trickster" will become important later on in the story. The name, "wind of death," calls to mind terrible images, but the reader will see that this is more of a weapons tactic rather than a fitting description of the First Wizard. The Mother Confessor will also prove to be somewhat of a trickster as the story continues.

The reader sees that Abby is torn between loving her family enough to do anything to save them and feeling like she is doing wrong. Abby made the decision she made, but the reader will see that she already seems to have some doubts about whether or not it was the right decision. As the story continues she will realize that she has not completely made up her mind as to what she should do.

Mother Confessor explains about different groups that Panis Rahl has employed against the First Wizard and the Midlands. The reader won't see many of these things. The one most feared, Mord-Sith, will be seen however. Abby will be able to face the Mord-Sith and suddenly find much of her strength.

The bracelet continues to tingle and become warm. Abby doesn't realize the significance of the bracelet at this point in time. It will become clear later on in the book that the bracelet is connected to the debt in some way. Regarding the debt of bones that Abby has invoked, the First Wizard will again prove that he is a trickster and there are some things that he hasn't explained at all.



Page 90-135

Page 90-135 Summary

The First Wizard tells Abby that they are connected now in a debt of bones and she can call him Zedd. On the way to Coney Crossing Zedd explains that his plan is to send a wave of death directed back toward Anargo, the right hand of Panis Rahl, and all the troops in D'Hara. While they ride Abby realizes that she holds great relief that her petition for help was granted and also great shame that she is leading Zedd into a trap.

They reach Coney Crossing and Abby shows Zedd where she hid while the D'Hara troops took captives. She had remained hidden so she would be able to go for help realizing that if she showed herself she would be taken captive, too. Zedd commands Delora to go and talk to the troops while he sets up for a powerful spell. Delora tells him she was commanded to stay by his side by the Mother Confessor, who had stayed at the Keep. Zedd explains that she might get hurt from the blast of the spell and sends her away. Abby is standing by Zedd when a large figure in a cloak comes out of hiding and attacks Zedd. Abby suddenly realizes this is the moment she had brought Zedd into and screams for him not to use any magic, but Zedd casts a spell. Immediately the spell is thrown back at Zedd and he lies on the ground in pain. The figure removes the cloak and it is a Mord-Sith. She looks at Abby and tells her to leave that her work is done. The Mord-Sith explains to Zedd how long she is going to torture him before she kills him.

Thinking of what kind of life her daughter would know and that Zedd made it possible, Abby finds a knife that had been cast down when Zedd fell and picks it up. She steps toward the Mord-Sith's back when Abby is grabbed from behind. Mother Confessor commands Abby to leave. Abby watches as Mother Confessor unleashes her power on the Mord-Sith, leaving the woman in the complete mindless control of the Mother Confessor.

Zedd explains to Abby that they knew there was something she wasn't telling them and that the enemy had to think they had fallen for Abby's trick. Mother Confessor gets the information she needs from the Mord-Sith and then kills her. After the Mord-Sith is dead, Zedd tells Abby to take her clothes off and put on the Mord-Sith outfit.

Disguised as a deadly Mord-Sith, Abby is able to walk into the Panis Rahl camp looking for her daughter and the other captives. Suddenly Abby's bracelet begins to warm her skin. She realizes that the bracelet's warmth moves her in a certain direction. She goes toward the source that makes the bracelet grow warmer and finds a tent with Mariska sleeping outside. Abby knows her daughter will be in that tent. She is able to walk to the tent, but when she steps inside she finds not her daughter, Jana, but Zedd's daughter.

Abby is able to get the child out of the camp and run to the river. When they near Zedd he embraces his daughter and whispers a spell in her ear so she will sleep until he is done casting the spell. Abby feels pride over saving Zedd's child and pain at failing her



own daughter. Abby sets the child in an abandoned house that she and Zedd had seen earlier that day, and Abby goes to beg Zedd for more time to find Jana.

When Abby reaches Zedd, he has already begun the spell and can wait no longer. Abby sees the Panis Rahl army marching forward with prisoners ahead of them. They force them on to take the brunt of Zedd's magic. Those that refuse to walk are stabbed through with the sword.

Page 90-135 Analysis

Abby has seemed like such a tender person in some regards. A mother who is mourning for her daughter and has lost her whole family. It isn't until she is asked to enter the camp of the enemy and look for her daughter that the strength that Abby has fully surfaces. She is forced to come face to face with those that have taken what she loves and she is able to hold strong. She has felt some small amount of happiness over the fact that she was able to save Zedd's child, but the reader will soon see that this happiness was short lived.

Mariska's role in the story isn't finished yet. In the last part of the book the reader will see Abby's point of view changes when she sees the monstrous deeds done by Mariska on behalf of Panis Rahl.

Abby knew that saving Zedd meant that her own daughter would be killed. In that moment that Zedd was in danger Abby also realized that by allowing Zedd to die, the only chance her daughter had of a future without Panis Rahl enslaving them would die. Abby seems to be torn by her desire to keep her family safe and her desire to do the right thing. The reader will see that Abby believes it is impossible to do both of these things and will have to choose.

The bracelet began to get warm when Abby got close to Zedd's daughter. Although this has not been explained to the reader, it will become clear at the end of the story when the reader learns it is because the debt of bones wasn't owed by Zedd but was owed to Zedd, since his father had saved Abby's mother and Abby when Abby was being born. The story had began because Abby knew that there was a debt owed but she didn't realize it was her debt to Zedd. Her bracelet was what linked her to the debt.

Zedd is often called Trickster according to Mother Confessor. As the story continues, the reason for Zedd being called this will become evident. He will have to use trickery to stop the killing. In the continuing story, the reader will find that Zedd doesn't want to kill those in D'Hara. He wants to stop the war and to have peace for his people but not at the cost of innocents who may live in D'Hara.



Page 136-162

Page 136-162 Summary

Abby watches the prisoners that Panis Rahl troops are pushing forward and knows they will be caught in the middle of the spell. Suddenly a figure is walking up on the opposite bank dragging a child. It is Mariska pulling Zedd's daughter. Mariska had followed Abby, and when the child was alone Mariska stole her back.

Mariska orders Zedd to surrender or the child will die. Zedd tells her that he can't put himself above his people and won't stop defending them. Mariska takes her knife and saws off the little girl's head and holds it up for all to see. Zedd looks at Abby and asks her what she would have him do. Abby realizes the full capability of Panis Rahl and his evil servants and tells Zedd to kill them all.

Zedd pulls Abby on top of the rock where he is standing and begins to summon the death spell. Abby is within the circle of magic that Zedd is summoning. Abby finds it intensifying and deafening. Anargo is thrown from the place he was standing and killed. Mariska begins to scream to leave the prisoners to die and for the soldiers to run for their lives. As the soldiers abandon the prisoners and flee, Abby watches as Mother Confessor and Delora begin to cross the river toward the prisoners bringing them back behind Zedd. A green wall springs up along the line that Zedd held with Abby. Abby feels intense pain and suddenly the ground splits open and the howls of the dead trying to escape can be heard. Abby realizes that the green wall of fire is a breach of boundaries between the world of the living and the world of the dead.

Zedd steps down from the rock and helps Abby down. The green wall of fire is still in place. Zedd winks at Abby which she finds to be the strangest thing he could have done. Delora is questioning Zedd as to the reason that the wall of fire isn't moving but Zedd doesn't answer. Abby tries to apologize for leaving Zedd's daughter alone. Zedd quiets Abby and turns her around. Behind Abby is her husband, Philip, and her daughter Jana. Abby looks at Zedd while she is hugging her family and realizes that part of Zedd's hair has turned snowy white. Abby also realizes without looking, that part of her hair has turned white as well.

Zedd tells the people of Coney Crossing that it is Abby who saved them even though she didn't have any magical powers. While Zedd is addressing the people Mother Confessor smiles at Abby. Abby says that since Zedd's daughter has died there is no reason to smile, and Mother Confessor smiles larger and reminds Abby that the name that Zedd is often called by is Trickster. Zedd takes Abby to the abandoned house in which Abby had laid the child. Upon the bed the child still lies sleeping. Outside one of the doors is the body of Mariska. Zedd had known there would be someone come to cause harm to the child and so Zedd had cast a spell to kill anyone with intent to hurt her. When Mariska had entered to take the child and had died, it gave Zedd the ability to



conjure up her image. Since Panis Rahl will think the child dead, no one will come to take her again.

Zedd knows the war has ended thanks to magic but realizes that there are still many that want to live without magic and decrees that a place will be made that all may go to live without magic. A wall will be erected to prevent any from entering or leaving and will keep magic and non magic separate. Delora asks again why the wall isn't moving and Zedd explains that he couldn't send the wall to kill everyone in D'Hara since some were innocent. He put the wall up, and it will prevent anyone from crossing the boarder without walking into the realm of death and dying. To keep people from walking into the wall, which will soon become invisible, Zedd decrees a need for Boundary wardens.

Abby pulls Zedd aside and asks him what the debt was that his father had owed her mother. Zedd smiles and explains that the debt had been owed by Abby's mother, not to Abby's mother. When Abby's mother was in labor she was loosing the child and dying. Zedd's father saved both Abby's mother and Abby at great risk to himself. Abby's mother had sworn a debt to him because of his sacrifice and the bracelet that Abby wears was intended to link her to the debt. Abby is saddened wondering how she will ever repay such a debt, but Zedd looks at his daughter and explains that it is paid for already.

Abby asks Zedd why he agreed to help even though he didn't owe her anything. Zedd says that sometimes helping people is its own reward. Delora is still upset that the green wall of death isn't going to kill everyone in D'Hara, and Mother Confessor warns Zedd that leaving them alive creates many enemies. Zedd explains that enemies are the price a person must pay for honor.

Page 136-162 Analysis

In looking back at the events that happen, it is clear to see that the bracelet led Abby to Zedd's daughter even if it wasn't clear at the time. Abby's mother had told Abby when she was younger that you helped people because it was the right thing to do and not because you expected anything in return. The reader sees that the people were glad to be done with the war but that they still wanted to live free of the magic that had saved them. When Abby asks Zedd why he agreed to help her it becomes clear that he lived by the same rules that Abby's mother had.

Abby seemed to have some bitterness in her heart because her mother had died and left her. It also seems that Abby came to terms with much of her uneasiness about being born without the gift. She had stated earlier that she was ashamed of having been skipped by the gift, but it becomes apparent that Abby was not without great resolve. She walked freely among those in the enemy camp. If Abby had left Zedd's daughter with Mariska and continued looking for her own child, Zedd's daughter would have most likely been killed. Abby's daughter was safe because they believed that the child had no influence over Zedd. By saving Zedd's child Abby inadvertently saved her own child as well.



The reader is given some background information on Abby's husband Philip. She had recounted the story to herself about the time she met him and how over time she fell in love with him. We also see information about her child, Jana. Other than the information we see through Abby regarding these characters the reader never gets a chance to see them other than when they are safe after Zedd has constructed the green wall.

There are many that want Zedd to finish off all of the people in D'Hara. Zedd never says that it is safe to leave them alive but he does believe it the right thing to do. Even Mother Confessor sees that it will be dangerous to leave them alive. She tells Zedd that he will be making enemies by leaving them alive, but Zedd seems sure that in not killing even one innocent person, it is worth the risk. This will help to define much of the differences between Zedd and Panis Rahl.



Characters

Abigail

Abigail, often referred to as Abby, is the main character in the book. While Abby isn't a character that has the gift, magical powers, the reader will see that Abby has a great impact on those she meets. Abby's mother was a sorceress but the magic skipped Abby. Zedd, the First Wizard, tells her that this is nothing to be ashamed of, but Abby is ashamed of it. Abby doesn't necessarily want to have the power that comes with the gift but she does want to help others. Abby also seems to feel that the lack of the gift in herself kept her from being close to her mother. Abby explains that sorceresses kept secrets from those that didn't have the gift, even if they were family.

Abby has a dark secret when she comes to the Keep seeking the help of Wizard Zedd Zorander. While Abby feels she has no choice, soon she will realize the horrible choice that has been left to her. The story takes place over a very short period of time but the reader sees things change in Abby in this span. The conflict that Abby is faced with is understandable, and she is a character with whom it is easy to identify. The question that Abby will have to face will be how much is her own child's life worth.

Zedd Zorander

Zedd Zorander is the most powerful wizard in the Keep and the one that Abby will go to for help. Zedd is also called the First Wizard, the Trickster, and the Wind of Death. The reader will see that Zedd is a man that has realized that he must serve his people more than he serves his own wants and desires. He will appear at first to be callous and unfeeling but then the reader learns of Zedd's own personal trials. Zedd refuses to give himself over to Panis Rahl, the evil one that seeks to destroy the Midlands. When Zedd refuses to give his life to Panis Rahl, they say that they are going to kill his daughter just like they killed Zedd's wife. Zedd wants to save his daughter but realizes that putting his daughter first will be enough to damn many other people.

Zedd is called by many different names but the reader will find that Wind of Death is more to scare enemies than it is an accurate description. Zedd wants peace and doesn't want to kill. The reader will find him continually forgiving. He forgives Abby for attempting to betray him and refuses to unleash a death spell on Panis Rahl's people because he believes there may be some of them that are still good. Trickster will seem to be the most appropriate name by which Zedd has been called. The reader will find many times that Zedd will be confusing in his actions until his complete plans are understood.



Panis Rahl

Panis Rahl, from D'Hara, is the one that is responsible for sending troops to the Midlands to make war. Panis Rahl has Zedd Zorander's wife killed and his daughter kidnapped.

Mother Confessor

Helps Abby bring her petition to Zedd Zorander. Mother Confessor will save Zedd from a Mord-Sith, a woman warrior skilled in killing those with the gift.

Delora

Delora is a sorceress that is loyal to the Midlands and to protecting Zedd Zorander. Delora helps Abby bring her petition to Zedd. Delora will go with them to find Abby's daughter.

Jana

Jana is Abby's young daughter. When Jana, along with everyone else in Abby's village, is taken by D'Hara men, Abby goes to find help from the First Wizard.

Philip

Husband of Abby. Philip is one of the people taken captive along with his and Abby's daughter Jana.

Thomas

Thomas is the wizard that is next in line for the First Wizard position. He often disagrees with Zedd but is loyal to the Midlands.

Erilyn

Erilyn is the wife of Zedd. Erilyn was killed by a spell that was sent by Panis Rahl.

Mariska

Mariska is an old witch that works for Panis Rahl. Mariska tells Abby that she will kill Abby's husband and then Abby's daughter.

Anargo

Anargo is leading the troops of Panis Rahl. He laughs when Zedd orders him to let the prisoners go. Zedd uses his magic to kill Anargo.



Objects/Places

The Midlands

The country being attacked by Panis Rahl. The Midlands border D'Hara.

The Bracelet

Abby has a bracelet that was given to her by her mother. Abby's mother was a sorceress and enchanted the bracelet before she died. The magic in the bracelet allows Abby to find Zedd's daughter.

The Gift

The gift is what people in Midland call the ability to wield magic. Abby's mother had the gift but Abby does not. While magic solves many problems in the land, there are many who want to fully be rid of it in their lives.

Lock of Hair

A nobleman comes to the Keep to talk to Wizard Zedd Zorander. The nobleman carries a yellow lock of hair. It is discovered later that the lock of hair belongs to Zedd's daughter and was brought as proof that she lives but will be killed if Zedd doesn't give up himself.

Coney Crossing

Coney Crossing is the name of the village where Abby and her family lived. It is from here that Abby's daughter and the rest of the people are taken captive.

Debt of Bones

A magical debt that once called upon must be answered. A debt of this nature can be passed down from generation to generation until it is paid in full.

Mord-Sith

A Mord-Sith is a woman warrior that is skilled in how to kill those that have the gift. No magic can kill a Mord-Sith. They can only be killed by a Confessor or by a mortal weapon.



Shadow Person

A Shadow Person is a shadowy figure that is sent as an assassin to kill a specific person or people. When a Shadow Person touches someone's flesh the skin will bubble and split open. A person once touched can't be cured and will die in agony.

Wall of Death

The wall of death is what Zedd calls forth on Panis Rahl's forces. The other wizards and sorceresses believe Zedd was going to use the spell to kill all that lived in D'Hara lands, but Zed used it as a shield so no one could cross into either land. Anyone that walks into the wall will be walking into the land of death.

Grace

Grace is a symbol that those with the gift use. It is an eight-pointed star inside of a circle. That circle is inside a square which is inside another circle. The Grace symbol is a depiction of the continuum of the gift.



Themes

Duty and Honor

Abby is the main character in the book. When her daughter, Jana, and the rest of her family and village are taken, Abby is consumed with finding a way to save them. Her quest often seems to focus on Jana more than the others. Abby slowly begins to see that there are things that are more important than her one daughter. Even if they are not more important to her as an individual she realizes that she is condemning every other person in her country if she helps Panis Rahl succeed in capturing and killing Zedd. While Abby's duty and honor are themes that are often in conflict with what she considers duty and honor to her child, the reader will see that she is unable to betray what she knows to be right in the end.

Zedd is a character that the reader sees already committed to the people of the Midlands. Zedd has watched his wife die a most horrible death. This would be enough to drive a person to revenge, but Zedd isn't consumed with it. He realizes that killing people sometimes must be done but isn't always right. When Zedd is talking about what must be done, he states that it will be him that will be killing the children of D'Hara and not the council. Mother Confessor tells Zedd that by leaving people alive in D'Hara he will have made enemies. To this, Zedd simply says that that is the price of honor.

The Desire for Power

Panis Rahl is never actually seen in the book. The reader meets who is described as Panis Rahl's right hand man, Anargo, briefly before Zedd destroys Anargo on the battlefield. The character working for Panis Rahl that is encountered the most often is Mariska. These characters are looking for a way to control Zedd and have power over him. They try to destroy him directly but Zedd is too well protected. It isn't long before they manage to kill his wife. With his wife gone they kidnap his child in an attempt to have complete control over Zedd. When this doesn't work they take every person in Coney Crossing, save one. The one they leave, Abby, they have power over because of her family, so she will go and petition Zedd to give himself up.

Panis Rahl, and those that work for him, don't ever divulge the extended reason for desiring this power other than simply wanting to take over Midlands. The reader isn't told if they want to take over the lands and kill the people, take money and food, or simply gain control over it. Regardless of the reason that Panis Rahl wants to have the country, the war is based on his desire for power and control and the means by which he attempts to gain that power.

As the main character in the book, Abby also seems to be looking for power. She comes to the Keep with the intent of finding someone capable of helping her to save her family.



Zedd also has been reading books and looking for a power that will enable him to stop the war and finally defeat Panis Rahl

Self-Searching

Abby is torn throughout much of the story. She has to decide whether she is able to sacrifice her one and only child in order to help save all those in the Midlands. When Abby enters the Keep, the reader sees that Abby is engulfed in the emotions. She is desperate to save her daughter and the others but guilty in that what she is doing is wrong.

Abby continually says that asking the good spirits for help is useless because she knows what she is doing is wrong. While Abby remains firm on the fact that she has no choice, she realizes when Zedd's life is in danger that she does have a choice. Abby hates the choice she is faced with, but it becomes obvious that she must decide to do what is right. Even if Abby saves her child from captivity by the death of Zedd, she will condemn her child and the rest of the country to captivity that will be much worse. With Zedd gone there will be no rescue or hope for any.

Abby must decide what kind of person she is. Although the reader doesn't realize it Zedd and Mother Confessor realize that Abby is having a crisis of conscience and are waiting for her to fully choose a side as well. Even after Abby makes what she knows is the right decision, she finds that it doesn't make her feel good inside. Abby weeps for the child she feels she has condemned to death. Abby had been ashamed at the beginning of the story at not having the magic gift her mother had. She had also felt sure that she had to rely upon someone to help her. By the end of the book Abby appears much more calm and happy with the life she has for herself.



Style

Point of View

The story is written from Abby's point of view in first person. The reader will have a limited point of view, able to see only the emotions of Abby. While the author uses her to give an account of what is happening, the reader will find many times that it is known what Abby is feeling but not why. For instance, Abby feels that what she has come to ask the First Wizard for is wrong, but the reader doesn't understand why she feels that way until after Mariska has shown up and told Abby she intends to kill Abby's young daughter.

Zedd is a character that always seems to know more than he is telling. This will add to the plot of the story for the reader since knowing all the things that Zedd knows would have ruined much of the climax in the story. Zedd knew Abby was leading him into a trap and went regardless. If the reader knew that he was waiting for the attack from the Mord-Sith while with Abby, it would have created different feelings when Abby was desperately attempting to warn him and then save him.

Zedd was also fully aware that Abby's debt of bones was not for him to pay, but for Abby to pay. The fact that he wasn't indebted to her would have made the reader feel differently about things that happen, and it created a definition to Zedd's character that he knew all this and didn't say anything.

There is a lot of exposition in the story. This gives the needed background of Abby since the story takes place over such a short period of time. This is useful so the reader understands the events prior to her family's capture and her request of Wizard Zedd Zorander and the position of characters in the book. There is dialog between the characters, such as Mother Confessor and Abby, that will further explain past events and the descriptions of things such as Shadow People and Mord-Sith.

Setting

The story takes place in a fantasy land that seems to closely resembles our own from the times of knights, castles, kings and queens. Despite the fact that much of the story could be real, it is filled with magic, wizards, sorcery and elements that are pure imagination. Abby, the main character in the book, goes to the Keep to ask for help. The Keep appears to be a castle in which the leaders of Midland live. Midland is bordered by D'Hara and Westland. D'Hara is at war with the Midlands but little mention is made of the Westlands.

The setting is not described in great detail since much of the scenery seems to resemble our own. The author does take considerable time to explain the customs and beliefs of the characters in the story since they are crucial to understanding the characters. The first half of the story takes place near the Keep while Abby is trying to



convince Wizard Zedd Zorander to help her save her family. After that they travel to Abby's village. It is on the border here that the final battle with Panis Rahl from D'Hara will take place. To give the reader a better understanding of the land and where each border is, the author provides a map that shows the borders of Midland and D'Hara.

Language and Meaning

The language is very casual and easily read. While the language is casual the reader will find much of the story devoted to describing terms and phrases that are unique to the book. Much of the story is exposition and so there are few places for the dialogue of the characters to demonstrate unique speech and language. The author has used intellectual language for the characters since they are intelligent characters. There are only a few characters in the story that speak more than a couple of times. There are five characters that the reader will see the most throughout the story, but the language that they use won't differ very much.

Much of the story is left to Abby's point of view and so is left to her interpretation. Abby is the one that will describe the Grace symbol that is used. It will be to Abby that Mother Confessor is explaining the different spells and assassins that have been used by Panis Rahl. Since the reader is only allowed to see the world through Abby's eyes, this has an influence on how things are explained. She finds it to be embarrassing that she is a skip, one born of a sorceress or wizard who has not the same type of powers. Zedd however doesn't seem to think that she should be ashamed of it. Zedd has a lot of power and Abby seems to think that anything Zedd wants to do should be just as easy as thinking it, but Zedd doesn't indulge in his own desires.

Structure

The story is 178 pages long. It doesn't have any chapters and the reader will find that often to signify the change of a scene or a span of time gone by, there is a double space inserted in between the necessary paragraphs. Although it has little to do with the story, the reader will find an introduction at the beginning of the book. The introduction provides an explanation as to the reason that Debt of Bones was written and its purpose. The author states that the book is supposed to lay ground work for the series The Sword of Truth, an eleven book series. The author also hopes that this book helps explain the world into which the characters Richard and Kahlan will be born. These two characters, however, aren't present in Debt of Bones.

In addition to the Author's Introduction there is also a place in the back that provides a brief excerpt from the book Chainfire. Chainfire is the ninth book in The Sword of Truth series. This excerpt doesn't contain any characters that were present in Debt of Bones but adds to the story line as a continuation.

The author provides illustrations in the story to ensure that the reader and the author have similar ideas of things being depicted. There is a picture of the Keep where Abby goes to ask for help and a picture of what Zedd looks like upon the rock calling on the

death wall. In addition a map helps to understand the lay of the land that is engulfed in the war between the Midland and the D'Hara.

The main plot of the story is Abby's desire to save her daughter. In addition to this is the war between the two countries and Zedd's rescue of his daughter. The addition of sub plots in the story fit in well with the main plot and won't create any confusion. The story is a little slow at times since the author takes so much time explaining what the characters are feeling at crucial moments. This appears to be done to create a climatic point in the story but can make the flow of the story seem uneven.



Quotes

"Abby knew she would be condemned to an eternity with the Keeper of darkness in the underworld. She had no choice." Page 18

"This close to a person of such power it didn't surprise her that the bracelet was warming. Her mother had told her to wear it always, and that some day it would be of value." Page 26

"If they decide to turn and attack, they plan to drive the captives ahead. They called it 'dulling the enemies' weapons on their own women and children.'" Page 50

"Mord-Sith are women who, along with their red leather uniform, wear a single long braid as the mark of their profession. They are trained in the torture and killing of those with the gift." Page 65

"Before he denied your daughter help, he had just refused the offer, thus sentencing his own innocent daughter to death." Page 68

"This involves a debt bound in magic. Such a thing must be considered seriously." Page 71

"Arrive late and I will stab my knife in little Jana's eye. Stab it through. I will leave her the other so that she can watch as I cut out her father's heart, just so that she will know how much it will hurt when I do her." Page 78-79

"We are bound, you and I, in a debt of bones. Our life paths have intersected." Page 91

"The figure standing over the wizard glowered at Abby. 'Your part here is finished. Go.'" Page 105

"We used you. We wanted them to think they had succeeded." Page 111

"She hurried onward, wending where the warmth from the bracelet directed." Page 118

"She was happy for Zedd, and even felt pride at having rescued his little girl, but as she ran for her home, she was near to dying with grief over her failure to recover her own family." Page 129

"'For killing my love, my Erilyn, the mother of our daughter, and all the other innocent loved ones of innocent people,' Zedd whispered, 'I send you, Panis Rahl, the gift of death.'" Page 147

"Oh, it was a debt all right, but not owed to your mother, but by your mother." Page 157

"'Enemies,' said the wizard, 'are the price of honor.'" Page 160



Topics for Discussion

Discuss duty. Initially Zedd doesn't want to help Abby. Even though they disagree greatly about things, they both feel they have a duty. Explain the main difference between the two characters at the beginning of the story that creates this difference of opinion. Is it Abby alone that changes her mind or does Zedd begin to feel differently also since he agrees to help? Explain.

Zedd is called Trickster and wind of death. Explain which name is more appropriate. Would the name that is more appropriate be different for people of Midland as apposed to people of D'Hara? Explain.

Abby's bracelet begins to warm when she is at the Keep waiting to speak with the First Wizard, Zedd Zorander. Explain if there was any indication that she should have realized bracelet was connected to the debt of stones. Why?

Abby had decided there was no choice except to deceive Zedd into going to Coney Crossing where the Mord-Sith was waiting. Would Zedd have been inclined to go if she had been honest with him from the start? Explain. Why was it only when Zedd was in front of the Mord-Sith that Abby decided to help Zedd?

Describe Abby's feelings towards her mother when the book begins. Abby says that she is angry with her mother for having died before Abby's daughter was born. Explain if Abby's feelings may have changed at the end of the book regarding her mother. Explain your answer.

Panis Rahl had been destroying as much of Midland as he could for some time. Zedd said that only now was the war beginning to change in Midland's favor. Explain why it was good that Zedd left the people of D'Hara alive; explain why it was maybe not the best choice. Which would you have done?

Abby feels proud she is able to save Zedd's daughter. Is it possible she was feeling this because of the magic of the debt of bones or was Abby feeling those feelings from within herself? Explain your answer.

Abby didn't know that Zedd's daughter was alive at the end of the book. It says that Zedd looked over at her and winked and she thought that it was unbelievable that he winked at her. Speculate on why Zedd winked and what this signified.