

# The Demon King Study Guide

## The Demon King by Cinda Williams Chima

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# Contents

<a href="#">The Demon King Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 1: The Hunt and 2: Unintended Consequences.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 3: Ambush and Chapter 4: A Dance of Suitors.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 5: Old Stories and Chapter 6: Fellsmarch.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 7: In the Glass Garden and Chapter 8: Lessons to Be Learned.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 9: Eyes and Ears and Chapter 10: Back in the Maze.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 11: Sanctuary.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 12: Bread and Roses.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 13: The Riggers.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 14: On the Wrong Side of the Law and Chapter 15: Strange Bedfellows.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 16: Demons in the Street and Chapter 17: Party Warfare.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 18: On the Borderland and Chapter 19: Name Day.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 20: Willo and Bird and Chapter 21: Blood and Roses.....</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 22: Desperate Measures and Chapter 23: Name Day 2.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 24: Unholy Ceremony and Chapter 25: The End Of Days.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 26: Secrets Revealed and Chapter 27: Gifted.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">43</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">48</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">50</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">52</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">54</a>



# Plot Summary

Hanalea is considered the savior of her people, and a saint to all who know the story of the Breaking. It is a time of great chaos between the clans, the royal family, and the wizards which escalates to such a degree that the world is almost lost in the process. As a result of a wizard named Waterlow, who is also known as the Demon King, the world very nearly breaks in half. Waterlow is killed and Hanalea is able to negotiate the Naeming - an agreement that balances the powers between clan, wizards, and the royal family.

Hanalea then goes into seclusion, and there the stories vary. One consistency remains throughout all of the stories, however. The eldest girl born to Hanalea ascends to the throne, as has every girl in the bloodline since that time. Even now, a descendant of Hanalea, Marianna ana'Rissa, rules the Queendom. Like her ancestor, she also sacrifices for the good of the people, marrying Lord Averill Demonai, the Patriarch of the Demonai clan in order to solidify the bond between clans and royals, making them powerful enough together to hold off the wizard houses. As part of the agreement made after the Breaking, the High Wizard - Lord Gavan Bayar - is bound to the Queen and can only act in her or the Queendoms' best interests. To ensure that the Wizard Houses are never able to cause such destruction again, their power is limited by the clans who make the amulets from which their power is drawn. All former amulets are to be surrendered as part of the Naeming agreement, and new ones issued which have limitations including how long they last. Unknown to all, the Bayar family manages to retain some of the original amulets, buying time and waiting for the right opportunity to enmesh themselves in the royal family by marriage. When the Queen's eldest daughter Raisa reaches her name day at the age of sixteen, she is officially made heir to the throne, but by then Lord Bayar has managed to get around his binding to the Queen and instead he enchants her into attempting to marry her daughter off to his son in secret. Raisa escapes, and with the help of Amon - the son of the Captain of the Guard - she hides in plain sight, joining his triple as they return to school at Oden's Ford as a first year cadet.

Hanson Alister is a street lord in Ragmarket, the district closest to the Castle Close in Fellsmarch. When it becomes too dangerous for his family, he quits the life and turns to an honest and lawful means of supporting his mother and sister. They live above a stable, exchanging a place to stay for Han's work helping to keep the stable clean. His mother is not sure of his reform, and constantly looks for signs that he has returned to or never left his life of crime. After a run in with Micah Bayar, Han forces him to relinquish the amulet he is illegally using since he hasn't been issued one yet, and hides it. It is a piece from the time before the Breaking, when no restrictions were imposed, and it is stronger than any made currently. Lord Bayar is not happy that his son stole it from him, and even less impressed that someone took it from him. His search to have it returned results in the death of most of the Riggers gang, and most of the rival Southies gang. When Bayar finally discovers who really has the amulet, he endeavors to get it back, but Han surprises him, sticking a knife into his side to buy himself enough time to get away. He isn't quick enough to save his mother and sister who die in the fire



set by the Guard sent to his home by Bayar. Vowing revenge, he leaves and joins the Marisa Pines Camp where he had spent most summers as a child. His best friends in the clan, Fire Dancer and Bird, have reached the age where a vocation is to be chosen and both will soon leave Marisa Pines to enter into their training. Han may have a clan name, called Hunts Alone when with them, but it doesn't qualify him as one of them. Feeling more alone as their departure date approaches, Han is oblivious to the drama unfolding around him. A meeting takes place that changes everything Han had ever believed in. He learns that he is a descendant of the man most call the Demon King - a wizard of some caliber. The magical cuffs he's worn since birth protected him from magic - that which would be used against him, and his own. Now Han has a choice to make. Live his life as it is now, with the cuffs binding magic around him, or take them off and begin training to develop his magical gifts for use in support of the Queen and clan.



# Chapters 1: The Hunt and 2: Unintended Consequences

## Chapters 1: The Hunt and 2: Unintended Consequences Summary

Han and Dancer go to the sulfur pits to collect rare sulfur lilies but finding only three they decide to head to Burnt Tree Meadow to hunt fellsdeer. A dozen are grazing there but above them a purple and green fire is burning. The fellsdeer run, escaping their arrows, and Han and Dancer are forced to dodge the flames behind a rocky prominence. The fire roars past and three riders follow on expensive horses. Micah Bayar, their leader, tells them they are on Queen's orders to drive the fellsdeer down to her hunting party below. Han argues, and Dancer questions Micah's underage use of an amulet, recognizing him as a Charmcaster or Wizard. They stand each other off, but once Dancer learns the amulet is Micah's father's, he knows Micah is already in deep trouble. When Micah threatens to cast a spell against Dancer, Han nicks an arrow and Dancer follows suit. Han tells Micah to take off the amulet and drop it. He argues, but recognizes he has no choice. Han carefully uses a stick to put it into a piece of leather and into his bag.

Princess Raisa, her sister Mellony, Queen Marianna, Lord Bayar, Captain Edon Byrne and a triple of soldiers wait for Micah and his cousins to show up so that they can begin the hunt. Raisa is impatient and as Edon and Lord Bayar verbally spar, Queen Marianna announces they should go. They travel west and pass through a narrow canyon where Raisa first sees the gray wolves that blooded Queens sometimes see at times of opportunity or of danger. Raisa feels the danger, and she soon smells the fire racing down the hillside. Micah, Arkeda and Miphis are riding hard in front of it. They hurry for the canyon opening, and work their way through it, the smoke getting thicker. Emerging on the other side they find that the fire rages there as well. Lord Bayar calls Micah and his two cousins for help. They join him and, using their collective strengths, manage to snuff out the magical burn. The three young men collapse, exhausted while Lord Bayar accepts the Queen's gratitude for saving them all.

## Chapters 1: The Hunt and 2: Unintended Consequences Analysis

Discouraged by the lack of success in their collection of sulfur lilies, Han and Dancer go hunting in Burnt Tree Meadow. When they get there, the dozen fellsdeer that are grazing are scared away by the strange fire that comes down the mountain on the wind, colored purple and green. When the fire and fellsdeer are gone, Han and Dancer see three riders following. The leader, Micah Bayar, tries to convince them that they were there on mission from the Queen, but Dancer stands up to them. Han has no choice but



to join his friend. Micah and his companions use Valespeech to communicate with each other, not realizing that Han and Dancer understand them, and inadvertently reveal that Micah had stolen the amulet he used to create the fire from his father, the High Wizard. Han decides that the amulet is the price for their freedom and insists that Micah throw it down before they leave. Han is reluctant to touch it, having heard the stories that it would cause him to burst into flames if he did. Instead, he uses a stick to push it into a scrap of leather, and tucks it into his bag. Somehow, trouble always seems to find Han.

Raisa voices her displeasure at having to wait for Micah, even though she had looked forward to going on the hunt with him since their argument the night before. Lord Bayar tries to convince Captain Byrne that he and his troops are unnecessary, but Byrne argues that if a herd is chased into the mountain, Lord Bayar would be forced to remain behind. The Queen, hearing them, suggests they go ahead without Micah and his cousins. They do, and as they ride through a narrow canyon, Raisa sees her first vision of the gray wolves that blooded Queens are sometimes said to see as a warning of danger or opportunity. Her immediate inkling is that they are in danger. The feeling of impending trouble continues through lunch until Raisa's suspicions are confirmed. Micah and his cousins race down the hillside in front of the approaching flames shouting warnings. They all make their way into the narrow canyon but the exit on the other side provides no respite from the flames which have come that way as well. Lord Bayar insists on help from Micah and his cousins, knowing they were somehow responsible, and when they've finally doused the flames and added rain for safety, Micah, Arkeda and Miphis are spent - too exhausted to even stand. Lord Bayar tells a worried Raisa that perhaps they will remember the experience as he tries to be graceful in accepting the Queen's thanks for saving them all.



## Chapter 3: Ambush and Chapter 4: A Dance of Suitors

### Chapter 3: Ambush and Chapter 4: A Dance of Suitors Summary

Half a mile from camp, Han realizes they are being followed. He doubles back, tackling the figure into the creek to discover it is Dancer's sister, Digging Bird. She suggests they head for Marisa Pines Camp where Willo welcomes Hunts Alone and finds him some clothing he can wear, taking his boots to clean them as well. Bird brings a basin of hot water and soap, and he washes while she scrubs the cuffs on his wrists - a gift from his mother when he was too young to remember. Magical, they grow with him and cannot be removed. Bird asks if he plans to come to her renaming feast, and he asks what vocation she's chosen. She admits she wants to be a warrior, and train at Demonai. He says she'll be a great warrior, and she leans in and kisses him without warning. When he makes his way back to the common room, he hears Dancer and Willo arguing about their encounter with the Charmcasters. Han backs away quietly, not wanting to interfere, and sees her obvious distress when she discovers not only who they confronted, but that Han held a bow on them. Willo says she will talk to the queen in an effort to get her to enforce the Naeming which keeps the wizards out of the mountain regions. Willo asks Dancer if he's been taking the flying rowan she gave him, and Han wonders what is wrong. Flying rowan, known as mountain ash, is used to make talismans and amulets to ward off evil.

Raisa loves the new apartment she convinces her mother to allow her to have. One reason is the three sided view, and the other is the secret passageway that leads to the solarium. Raisa notices a plain envelope waiting for her, and opening it she learns that Amon is back and inviting her to meet him in their usual place. Raisa is overjoyed, and wants to leave immediately, but Magret insists a bath is more important. Raisa relents and gets ready for dinner. Micah is there, surrounded by girls, but reluctant to discuss the fire he helped to extinguish. He claims the clan may have set the fire to keep people out of the mountains, but Raisa corrects him, knowing no clan member would set fire to Hanalea. The queen arrives and personally acknowledges the four who doused the fire, and then welcomes Amon Byrne back to court. Amon is dubbed Corporal Byrne and dinner begins. Raisa excuses herself, complaining of a headache, and leaves. Passing Amon, she mutters he should join her in the usual place as soon as he can.

### Chapter 3: Ambush and Chapter 4: A Dance of Suitors Analysis

Dancer is silent all the way back to Marisa Pines Camp. Han can tell that he isn't interested in discussing what just happened, so they silently make their way back down.



About a mile from camp, he senses someone behind them, and doubling back he ends up tackling Digging Bird before he realizes who she is. Bird teases him, threatening to rename him Hunts Bird. Clan names change often until one is found that suits and until a person's personality is stable. She continues teasing him mercilessly, having been friends with him since they were small. Han had always enjoyed her company, but lately he feels awkward around her, and doesn't understand why. When they get back to Marisa Pines, Willo finds him some clothing to wear while his is cleaned and dried. Bird walks in on him just after he finishes dressing, bringing warm water and soap, and making him glad that he'd managed to put pants on. She helps him to clean the cuffs, worn since he was a baby, and tells him about her plans to become a warrior. It is an unusual vocation to choose, but Han has to admit that she would make a great warrior. When he says so, she leans forward without warning, and kisses him on the mouth. Before he can recover and respond in kind, she is gone. Han goes to the common room to discover Willo and Dancer deep in animated conversation regarding their encounter with the Charmcasters. Willo questions him, revealing anxiety when she learns Micah was there, and that Han had pointed his bow at them. Not wanting to eavesdrop, but unable to walk away, Han listens as Willo announces her intention to try to fix the situation by talking directly to the queen. Willo asks Dancer if he is still taking the flying rowan she gave him, and knowing it is used as an amulet to ward off evil, Han has many questions, but can't ask any of them.

Raisa moves to a suite of rooms in one of the turrets when she returns from Demonai Camp. The apartment has a view of mountains and the town on three sides. It also has a secret passage to the solarium - a glassed in garden that Raisa loved, despite its disrepair. When they return from the fire on Hanalea, Raisa finds a plain envelope in her suite that is from Amon, inviting her to join him in their spot if possible, and she is ready to do so despite her state of disrepair, but Magret steps in and insists she avail herself of the bath already drawn and waiting. By the time she is clean and dressed, it is time for dinner. Micah sits beside her but soon becomes frustrated with the lack of attention paid to him by Raisa. Raisa can hardly wait to get out of there, excited at the prospect of seeing Amon again, and somewhat stunned by the changes in him at the same time. She feigns a headache as soon as she can, noticing a faint smile on Elena's face as she excuses herself. Micah offers to walk her to her rooms, but she insists that as one of the guests of honor, he should remain. Passing Amon, she whispers without looking at him that he should join her as soon as he can.





# Chapter 5: Old Stories and Chapter 6: Fellsmarch

## Chapter 5: Old Stories and Chapter 6: Fellsmarch Summary

Han stays on at Marisa Pines as long as he can before descending Hanalea, having sold everything but the snagwort. Now, he has coins in his purse, leatherwork and fabric in his pouch, enough smoked venison for a meal and some clan remedies to return with. He also still has the amulet at the bottom of his bag. On the way down, he stops at Lucius Frowsley's to pick up bottles of alcohol to take to town, and before Han leaves, Lucius asks him if he still has his cuffs on, insisting he see them. Grunting with some satisfaction, he claims to have smelled hex magic. Han asks Lucius about magic, and wizards. He warns Han that the Bayars are the most powerful family since the Waterlows - a house that died out years ago - and then tells him a version of the Breaking story now a thousand years passed. It is a story of love, and of heartbreak and is different from the stories Han grew up hearing. When he describes the signia and crest of the Waterlow house, the strongest wizard house ever, Han digs in his bag and holds the amulet. When Lucius handles it, he becomes agitated, asking if the Bayars know who he is and warns Han that they will kill him if they find him.

Han goes to Southmarket to sell his snag-wort, and from there to the Keg and Crown where Matieu takes the bottles from Lucius. Han heads for the bridge to Ragmarket, but is trapped in Brickmaker's Alley by Shiv Connor and some of his Southies. Shiv insists on a share of the profits Han made while doing business in Southmarket. Han tries to negotiate, but they jump and beat him. Shiv tries to relieve Han of the cuffs, threatening to remove his hands if necessary. He finds Han's purse and sorting through his carry bag, comes across the leather wrapped amulet. He opens it and green light emerges followed by a blast knocking them all down. A group of guards arrives, and Han runs. He washes most of the blood from his head and face before going home to the small room he shares with his sister and mother. Mari flings herself at him, telling him they'd been so worried. He learns his mother is still out looking for him, and feeling guilty, he takes out a pork bun and gives it to Mari. When he hears footsteps approaching, he steps back into the shadows. His mother comes in and tells Mari she couldn't find Han, her voice breaking. When she realizes he is there, she crosses to him, angry now for the worry he caused. She sees his injuries and accuses him of unlawful behavior, but he swears that isn't the case.



## Chapter 5: Old Stories and Chapter 6: Fellsmarch Analysis

Han lingers as long as he can in Marisa Pines Camp, feeling more at home there than anywhere else, despite the fact that he isn't a clan member. Finally, having sold everything, he heads home, stopping at Lucius's homestead on the way to pick up more liquid gold from his still and deliver it to his customers in Fellsmarch. Lucius tells him a story about the Breaking which is altogether different from the one he'd grown up hearing, but Lucius insists it is the real version. Han allows him to handle the amulet, which has the signet and wizard crest of the house of Waterlows, now long gone. He is extremely nervous and suggests that Han hide it away since it is a forbidden magical amulet. Lucius is full of dire warnings when he hears the story of their run-in with Micah Bayar, warning Han that the Bayar wizards will kill him if they discover he has the charm.

Matieu complains to Han that the supply he brought from Lucius will hardly last out the day, but Han can only carry so much. He wheedles four pork buns from Matieu after agreeing to talk to Lucien on his behalf. He heads back to Ragmarket, but before he can reach the bridge, he is confronted by Shiv Connor and some of his gang. They close in on Han, insisting he fork over some of the wealth he is purported to have, but all Han has is a few coins, Lucius's money, some pork buns and the amulet. Han is ready to argue that shorting Lucius would only cost him his job with him but Shiv drags out his leather wrapped amulet instead. A green light fills the alley followed by a blast that upends them all. Han comes to his wits first, and sees the queen's guard at one end of the alley. Seeing his opportunity, he runs, stopping only to wash away some of the blood on his face and head so he wouldn't scare Mari when he got home. He finds her alone, cold and hungry in front of the hearth. He gives her a pork bun and she can hardly believe she is allowed to eat the entire thing. His mother is out looking for him she says, and a few minutes later she returns, devastated that she has been unable to find him. Han steps out of the shadows and her worry turns to anger as she accuses him of behavior he promises her he's quit for good.



## **Chapter 7: In the Glass Garden and Chapter 8: Lessons to Be Learned**

### **Chapter 7: In the Glass Garden and Chapter 8: Lessons to Be Learned Summary**

Raisa goes to her rooms where she surprises Magret by returning so early. When she tells her that she is leaving to see Amon, Magret forbids it, threatening to tell the queen. Still, she refuses to let her go without a chaperone, and Magret ends up going as Raisa's escort. Raisa takes Magret the long way, unwilling to reveal her secret passageway to just anyone. Leading her through leafy tunnels with confidence, Raisa makes her way to where Amon waits, quietly practicing his intended conversation. Magret had included a dinner tray at Raisa's suggestion and Amon eats while they talk. Magret falls asleep while they do, and Raisa talks Amon into leaving her there, promising to return to walk her out in the morning. She takes him the rest of the way through the secret passage to her room, and he is stunned at their destination, immediately seeing the security risk. He insists it should be boarded up, and Raisa changes the subject as she opens the door. She kisses him on the cheek just as Micah shows up, drunk and aggressively questioning her earlier escape due to headache. When Raisa tries to beg off, he grabs her arm and Amon draws his sword to bring him to his senses. He leaves and takes Micah with him.

Han gets Mari ready for school and when he gets her there, Jemson announces that the subject for the day will cover the Breaking. He stays for a while, sitting in on a lesson and it is almost midday when he arrives at the Keg and Crown to pick up the empties. Matieu looks at him as though he is a ghost. He tells Han that six Southies had died the night before - tortured and then garroted, and that the general theory is that he is responsible. Han barely gets out the door before he is put up against the wall by his old nemesis of the Guard, Mac Gillen. The bluejacket brings his club down on Han's head, making him see stars before another soldier interrupts, insisting he stop. Corporal Byrne tells him that if anything, he could take Han in for questioning but without beating him and also insists he return Han's purse. Han is pulled to his feet and feigns nausea so the guards hold him near the bridge railing and seizing the opportunity, Han manages to shake free of his captors and jump into the river. Despite the search that follows, Han eludes them.

### **Chapter 7: In the Glass Garden and Chapter 8: Lessons to Be Learned Analysis**

Amon and Raisa discuss the past, and Raisa's hopes that they would be able to spend more time together. Amon explains the reasons that it would be impossible. Raisa asks his opinion regarding current wars. After brief hesitation, he tells her about the



conversations he and his Da have had. Raisa asks him to be her eyes and ears in the unvarnished version of the city. Amon is tired and has duty in the morning. Raisa talks him into leaving Magret where she is, and leads him to the opening of her tunnel. Amon goes down first. She follows, falling the last few feet right into his arms. He staggers, and chastises her for putting herself at risk when in reality, had anything happened to her, he would have been answerable to his father. When he refuses to put her down, she threatens to call the guard. His face becomes stony and brings Raisa to tears as she begs him to forgive her and tells him that she needs a friend. When he lifts her chin, she kisses him and without thinking, he returns it at first, but quickly comes to his senses. Beyond tired, Amon has trouble not yawning as they talk and Raisa realizes he needs to sleep. She takes him the rest of the way through the passage to her room, but as she says goodnight to him at the door, Micah shows up, angry and liquored. He pushes the boundaries of propriety, grabbing her arm and forcing Amon to draw his sword to restore him to his senses. Amon suggests Raisa go to bed, while he takes Micah away.

Seeing Han's interest in the subject of the Breaking, Jemson manages to talk him into staying as well instead of just dropping his sister off for her lessons, promising they'll look after Mari later so that he can still run his errands. Han asks questions throughout the lesson, learning that the pictures and statues of Hanalea might not represent her as she was. When Jemson shows them a painting of the Demon King and Han sees that it is holding a green amulet with a tangle of green serpents, he feels sick. He asks about it, and Jemson claims it was likely destroyed long ago but Han's unease grows when he learns the painting was created by Mandrake Bayar. He heads for the Keg and Crown after the lesson and Matieu is shocked to see him, and looks frightened. He tells Han that six Southies were killed the night before, and the Guard believes Han is responsible. Despite his assurances that he wasn't, Matieu still nervously tells him that he doesn't want any trouble. When Han leaves, he is immediately spun around by a Guard nemesis of his - Mac Gillen. Gillen is also convinced of Han's guilt and would have beat him half to death if not for the interruption by Corporal Byrne who insists that he be taken to the guardhouse and questioned correctly without beating. When Gillen and his guards try to take Han their, he feigns illness so well that the guards lean him over the wall to throw up into the river. Instead, Han takes advantage of their dropped guard and jumps over the wall and into the river. They are unable to locate him, and he manages to make it to the other side.



## Chapter 9: Eyes and Ears and Chapter 10: Back in the Maze

### Chapter 9: Eyes and Ears and Chapter 10: Back in the Maze Summary

Raisa is then summoned to the Queen's chambers where the Queen wants to discuss Raisa's upcoming sixteenth name day, voicing her opinion that a southern alliance would probably not be a good idea. Raisa tries to talk politics of war with her mother, but is quickly shut down. The Queen seems to want Raisa settled soon. The Queen warns Raisa that her clandestine meetings with Amon have to stop, having been told about them by Magret. Raisa, filled with indignation, tells her mother that her behavior with the High Wizard isn't appropriate either, and all reason leaves the Queen. Raisa drops a curtsy and leaves, the Queen promising to discuss the issue with Captain Byrne. Raisa sits in the small temple on the roof and thinks about the conversation and its implications. After a time, she is joined by Elena Demonai who tells her it is one of the few places in the Vale left with power. Raisa voices her misgivings regarding her mother and the High Wizard, and tells her about the wolves she'd seen. Elena admits that Lord Bayar no longer behaves bound to the Queen and gives Raisa a ring on a chain, telling her it once belonged to Hanalea. A talisman that will ward off evil, she tells her not to take it off. Later, Raisa wakes there, wondering if it was all just a dream, but the chain is around her neck and the ring with the running wolves still hangs from it.

Raisa has to threaten to visit Amon in his barracks before he finally agrees to meet her again. She uses the secret tunnel to get there, and bluntly asks why he's been avoiding her. Amon admits that his father threatened to have him posted to Chalk Cliffs if he hears any more. Raisa begs Amon to help her by providing eyes and ears in the queendom, and everywhere else. Amon tells her some hard truths about people he sees in Southbridge and Ragmarket. He reveals the recent murders, and that Cuffs is the main suspect. He also tells her that her people are starving. Raisa is shocked and doesn't want to be the kind of queen who is selfish and shallow. Then she has an idea. She asks Amon to take a message to Elena Demonai asking her to send one of the best traders to Southbridge Temple. After that, she wants to see Southbridge herself and talk to Jemson at the Temple. He finally agrees, although reluctantly. She uses the secret passage to return to her rooms, asking him to close the hatch behind her.

### Chapter 9: Eyes and Ears and Chapter 10: Back in the Maze Analysis

When the Queen summons Raisa to her room, Raisa is nervous, unable to remember the last time something of that nature had happened. She is even more surprised to see that it is just the two of them. Still, it provides her with an opportunity to talk to her



mother alone - with the High Wizard at her side. They talk about Raisa's time with the Demonai, and Raisa uses the talents she learned while working in the market there to read her mother's face, and can tell the Queen is not in a 'buying' mood. The Queen mentions her upcoming name day, and discourages her from becoming interested in any princes from the southern regions. Raisa is immediately shut down and told to concentrate on her studies when she tries to have a political conversation. Next, her mother attacks her visit with Amon, and Raisa defends Amon's friendship, and curtsies out of the room angrily after telling the Queen that her relationship with the High Wizard had attracted more attention and was unseemly as well. The Queen adds that Captain Byrne will hear about it all. Raisa goes up to the garden maze and is soon joined by her grandmother Elena, who gives her a ring on a chain that was once Hanalea's. She warns her to keep it with her always. Later, Raisa wakes in the garden temple, and would have thought it all a dream but for the ring of circling wolves still around her neck.

Raisa tries to arrange a meeting with Amon several times, and finally has to threaten coming to him in the barracks to get him to join her again in the glass garden. He tells her that he will be posted to Chalk Cliffs if any more talk of he and Raisa reaches his father. Raisa is determined not to be the kind of self absorbed queen her mother is. She begs Amon to act as her eyes and ears, telling him that she has to know what is going on in order to be a good queen herself. He tells her that the Guard spends most of their time pushing people around and reveals the six Southie murders that had just occurred. Raisa is stunned when she learns of Gillen's behavior, and more so to learn that he can't be sent into exile somewhere. Amon also tells her about the people who are starving in their queendom, and how the war has affected food supply - especially in the winter months. Raisa has an idea, and enlists Amon's help to get a message to her grandmother at Demonai. Then, she announces her intentions to go and see Jemson in Southbridge Temple herself. Amon won't hear of it at first, but recognizes the futility of forbidding her to do so, and is forced into helping rather than walking away. Raisa goes back to her quarters leaving Amon to consider their conversation and his duty to her as well as the queen.



# Chapter 11: Sanctuary

## Chapter 11: Sanctuary Summary

Han makes his way to Southbridge Temple and it is four in the morning when he knocks. He asks for Speaker Jemson who arrives shortly after, stunned to see his injuries but glad to see that Han is still alive having feared the worst when he hadn't returned for Mari. Jemson asks Han if he had any involvement in the killings, and he swears his innocence. Luckily for Han, Willo is at the temple as well, and she is summoned to help heal Han's broken arm. She gives him willow bark for the pain. Dancer comes in, and leans forward to touch Han's face, but his skin is blazing with flames pinwheeling from his body. Willo asks Dancer to leave, but Han tries to call him back, recognizing something is wrong with him. The next time he wakes, it is late afternoon. He makes it to the door just as a dedicate brings him a tray of bread, cheese and fruit. When she sees his bracelets, she accuses him of having treasure hidden, and having the bluejacket in his pocket. Han would have laughed if it all hadn't been so stupid. Then Mari shows up, and throws herself into his arm. She had been told to take him to Jemson if he was awake. Jemson tells him two more Southies had been murdered the night before. Han explains why from a gang standpoint, these murders are stupid and that there is no profit in it. Han tells Jemson that he plans to go up into the Spirits for a while, but needs to clear his name first, or he'll never be able to return.

## Chapter 11: Sanctuary Analysis

Han barely makes it to the Southbridge Temple, filthy and in tremendous pain. Dedicate Dori opens the door and is reluctant to get Jemson at first, but relents. Jemson comes shortly afterward, and expresses his relief that Han is still alive. He takes in his condition and asks him point blank if he is at all involved in the deaths in Southbridge. Han swears he isn't, telling Jemson he'd left the life and hadn't looked back. Jemson takes him to a room and shortly afterward, Willo comes in to Han's surprise. She sets and begins the healing process on his arm, giving him willow bark for pain and using her gifts to accelerate his recovery. Dancer comes in as well, but appears to be on fire and Han worries that his friend is really sick and the details are being kept secret. He sleeps until the next afternoon, and wakes ravenous. Dori brings him a tray of food and sits with him, talking. She sees his cuffs and immediately knows who he is, accusing him of great wealth, and allegiances with bluejackets that are 99% rumor. He tries to deflect some of it but the rumors seem larger than life. Mari shows up, asking why he didn't come to take her home the night before, and when Dori asks where home is, she blurts out the answer before Han can stop her. He isn't sure why it is important to keep secret, but something tells him it is. Mari takes him to see Jemson, and then is sent away while they talk. Han asks Jemson about Dancer's illness and though the Speaker doesn't lie, he avoids the truth, and changes the subject instead. Jemson asks Han what it is he wants for Mari, and Han tells him that he wants Mari to get a good education so that she will have choices in life. When Jemson sees he can't talk Han out of seeking the real



killers, he hands him a bag from Willo who had already left but extended the invitation for Han to stay with them as long as he liked. In the bag is some henna and indigo to dye his hair, some clan clothing and a small amount of money.





# Chapter 12: Bread and Roses

## Chapter 12: Bread and Roses Summary

Raisa uses the palace laundry to find a disguise, though finding something that fits is a challenge. She practices shuffling, eyes downcast, dipping curtsies regularly. Magret takes to her bed with a headache, and Raisa sees it as a sign. She fills a bag with small art pieces and jewelry from suitors that she hopes are unrecognizable and those from foreign sources. Amon is waiting for her at the city end of the bridge, dressed in cloak and breeches and she curtsies in front of him grinning. Calling herself Rebecca Morley, she takes his arm. Raisa notices that they are being followed and realizes they are Amon's troop despite his look of innocence. He calls them in and Halley Talbot introduces herself and the others as the Gray Wolves. They get to the temple where a trader is already waiting. Raisa is overjoyed to discover the trader is her father. Calling her by her Clan name - Briar Rose - he makes certain she is wearing her grandmother's gift. Raisa outlines her intentions to Jemson, her father, and Amon. Asking her father to act as trader, she instructs him to give the monies to Jemson to aid him in his ministries. Averill tells Raisa that he will be staying at Kendall House temporarily. As they turn to the door, it bursts open and a young man runs in. Calling him Hanson, Jemson tells him they'll talk later. Amon recognizes and confronts him. Han panics and grabs Raisa, using her as a hostage to get away. Jemson tries to talk him out of it, but Han is convinced that all roads lead to gaol, and he refuses to be sent back. He apologizes to them, and backs out using Raisa as his shield. Amon is livid as Han tells Raisa to lock the door. With the dedicatates asleep across the courtyard, it would be morning before anyone rescues them. Raisa manages to pull out her knife but her hesitation costs her. Han takes it from her, recommending that next time she pull a knife she be ready to use it. He pats her down and tells her that she is heavy but he'll carry her if he has to. She agrees to walk, but what Han wants is for her to run so he takes her hand and together they race toward Ragmarket, dropping the keys in the water on the way. Once across the bridge a ways, he blindfolds her before taking her any further.

## Chapter 12: Bread and Roses Analysis

Raisa had always heard stories about blooded princesses or rulers in general and all claimed to have a natural presence that identified them as royalty, but getting out of the palace is so easy that she wonders if anyone wearing the right garb and acting like royalty can take her place. She manages to make her way out of the castle with only one small hiccup, but without being recognized. She meets Amon at the bridge who admits that he had been hoping she'd changed her mind. The streets empty quickly, and when Raisa asks, he tells her that most people know better than to be out after dark. Raisa is beginning to wonder if Amon was right. She has the feeling they are being followed and when Amon brushes it off, she realizes that they are his men and that he had asked them to follow surreptitiously, having told them she is his sister. Raisa tells Amon that he may as well call them in, and when they appear, she pulls him down for a



passionate kiss making his troop gawk, and then introduces herself as Rebecca Morley. They get to the Temple in Southbridge without incident, and Raisa is thrilled to discover that the trader sent by Elena Cennestre is her father, Averill. When he asks her about Elena's gift and confirms she is wearing it, Raisa realizes that her grandmother and father have been discussing her. Raisa greets Jemson, telling him she'd heard him speak at temple and he had impressed her, suggesting that aristocracy should do more to help the hungry and poor. Though critical, she tells him, he is right, and that is why she is there. She outlines her plans, asking Averill if he will handle the sales of the jewelry, stones and artwork and then forward the funds to Speaker Jemson. He agrees, and Jemson is already making plans, deciding that calling it the 'Briar Rose Ministry' in honor of Raisa is appropriate. Raisa would prefer to keep her donations anonymous, but when Jemson explains that attaching her name will encourage others to follow suit, and also help them to see that the elite are concerned and care about the situation they are in, she relents. They are about to leave when Han arrives, bursting in to tell Jemson that three Raggerys had been taken by bluejackets. He stops when he sees the others, and all would have been fine had Amon not recognized and confronted him. In response, Han does the only thing he can think of to stay out of gaol - he grabs Raisa and holding a knife to her throat, he uses her as a hostage to get away, locking the others in Jemson's study.

Han ignores Jemson's pleas to rethink his behavior, and hurries Raisa back to Ragmarket. She tries only once to get the upper hand, losing her knife to him in the process. He frisks her carefully, and soon after they stop running, he blindfolds her to take her the rest of the way.



# Chapter 13: The Ragers

## Chapter 13: The Ragers Summary

Han can tell that Raisa is trying to keep track of where they are going. He can hear that she is beginning to wear out, and pulls her through a narrow alley into a courtyard. Han picks the lock holding wooden cellar doors against a building and tells her there are a dozen steps down. Raisa tells Cuffs her name is Rebecca Morley and he explains that it isn't safe to let her go that late at night. He suggests she get some sleep, and curls up himself to do the same. It takes a long time before her breathing is rhythmic. Han can't stop thinking about the green amulet with the serpent. The next morning Raisa wakes and Han is still asleep at the foot of the stairs. She steps over him but the hinges squeal as she opens the doors, and now committed, she makes a run for it. She runs until she can't anymore, and then looks for a shop, but this early, nothing is open. Raisa heads for the towers until a young girl comes out asking Raisa to help her with her ailing baby sister. Raisa follows her down an alleyway until they reach a dead end and five others had closed in behind them. The girl takes her scarf asking her where she got it, and Raisa realizes they are all wearing them. She asks if Cuffs sent them, and the girl tells her Cuffs has nothing to do with them. She starts going through her bag, and another one asks if anyone will pay for her return. Then Cuffs arrives, calling out to her. Cat tells Cuffs to leave, but Cuffs claims to have seen Rebecca first. Sliding into his street slang, he talks to Cat as Raisa watches and learns that Jed, Sarie and Flinn had been taken by bluejackets. Cuffs promises that if Cat lets them go now, he'll return that night to help them spring the captive Ragers. As he walks 'Rebecca' to the Way where he plans to let her go, she peppers him with questions about his intentions to rescue the captives. When she tells him that they are likely only holding them to lure Cuffs in, he looks at her. Suddenly she digs her heels in and asks him to take her back to Southbridge Temple. She faces him off, insisting she'll go one way or the other, and he grudgingly follows her back towards Southbridge.

## Chapter 13: The Ragers Analysis

Han isn't sure why he took Raisa along with him. He wonders if Amon and Raisa had been there to be married. Her presence is inconvenient at best, and now he isn't sure what to do with her. Something about her intrigues him and he gets the feeling that he knows her from somewhere but can't quite place where. He takes her to a courtyard where he picks the door to a cellar and tells her there are a dozen steps to the bottom. She asks him not to make her go down, and he takes off her blindfold and tells her he will be coming down with her which does little to reassure her. She descends with as much dignity as possible and seeing that she is cold and wet, he offers to let her rummage the trunk for dry clothes, but she refuses. She tells him she's a servant in the Bayar house and asks why he brought her there but Han doesn't really know that himself. She asks about his cuffs, asking if he stole them and he tells her he didn't. He suggests they sleep and after a long time, she changes in the dark and then sleeps. He



manages to finally sleep himself. In the morning, 'Rebecca' wakes first. She takes a closer look at him, wondering why Han is dressed in clan garb, and why her instincts were telling her that he couldn't have done what they accused him of. Rather than wait to see if he lives up to his promise of setting her free, Raisa climbs carefully over Cuffs and up the stairs. The hinges squeal, giving her away as she dashes for her freedom. Before she can find a shop or business open, she is lured into an alleyway by a young girl, and trapped there by her five friends. Raisa is sure that Cuffs sent them and is ready to send back a scathing message, but then what the girl is saying sinks in. Cuffs is out and has been for a while. The girl leading the group begins rifling through Raisa's purse while another expresses his interest to ransom her off to someone. Cuffs shows up at just the right time, and Raisa can see at a glance that she is sweet on Cuffs. They argue about who should take possession of Rebecca, each claiming they had her first. One of the younger Raggars asks Cuffs if he's coming back and Cat quickly assures them he isn't. Raisa listens to the conversation, learning about the Raggars who were arrested, and hearing Cuff's promise to help spring them from the bluejackets that evening. Recognizing it as a trap set for Cuffs, Raisa voices her concerns as he takes her to the Way where he plans to set her free. She asks him about it, and then stops, asking him to take her to Southbridge Temple. Cuffs thinks she's crazy, but she's persistent and determined to go with or without him, so he reluctantly shuffles behind her towards Southbridge.



## Chapter 14: On the Wrong Side of the Law and Chapter 15: Strange Bedfellows

### Chapter 14: On the Wrong Side of the Law and Chapter 15: Strange Bedfellows Summary

The Guard is everywhere and a shopkeeper tells her they are searching for Cuffs Alister as a result of the murders in Southbridge. She can't help but look back at him half a block behind. When she reaches the Guard, she bows low and tells him that she is taking baked goods across the river to sell. She stands watching the guardhouse and then crosses over and tells the guards she wants to see her sister Sarie. Sergeant Gillen asks to see her, and Raisa's bowels churn. She tells him she is only thirteen, and despite Sloat's protests, Gillen takes her to see Sarie. In the cage a girl and two boys wait, thin and dirty, badly beaten. Gillen calls to Sarie, saying her baby sister has come, and tightens his grasp of Raisa's arm, adding perhaps now she'll be willing to talk. Sarie steps forward and asks Gillen who Raisa is. Raisa draws on everything Amon taught her, knowing her chances are slim. She slams both feet into Gillen's kneecaps and he goes down swearing. She shouts at the others to get him, and the three Raggars join in, but Gillen gets his hands around Raisa's throat. She is close to losing consciousness when someone plows into Gillen and he releases her. Gasping, Raisa grabs the still burning torch and jams it into Gillen's face. He screams, and tries to leave, but Raisa trips him and Sarie brains him with an iron chamber pot. Finally, he lies still.

Amon and the others are finally released the next morning. The Wolves search for Raisa and Cuffs while Amon goes to his father, offering to resign. They can't announce Raisa's disappearance so instead they seek Rebecca Morley, offering a generous reward. Averill Demonai helps them by saying Raisa has been with the Demonai Camp for a pre-naming ritual of some kind. For the next two days Amon hunts Raisa and Cuffs. Someone calls his name from behind and he turns to see Cuffs on the opposite side of an iron gateway with half a dozen Raggars. Cuffs tells him where Raisa is and Amon collects his Wolves, heading to the guardhouse. The prisoners have taken Gillen hostage and he calls out, identifying himself. They agree on a truce to meet, and Amon goes in leaving his sword behind. Amon takes Raisa to one side. He tells her he can get them out, but they have to surrender weapons. Telling the other guards he is taking them to the Captain, he and the Wolves march them out of the guardhouse. Once out of sight, Amon sets them free. They march Raisa back to the Castle Close as Amon fills her in on the cover story they used to explain her disappearance. She tells him about the guard's behavior and insists that he help her put a stop to it.



## Chapter 14: On the Wrong Side of the Law and Chapter 15: Strange Bedfellows Analysis

The freedom Raisa experiences as she walks through the streets unknown is intoxicating. The bubble that usually separates her from the real world is gone, and she wrestles with the idea that only her clothing makes her recognizable, and wonders if she is that easily replaceable, or is there some talent or natural ability also required. She impulsively buys eight sticky buns from a bakery and the red wool cap the clerk is wearing before she gets in line for the bridge. Her instincts are right, and the guard paws through her baked buns taking two before allowing her to pass. Fuming, she crosses and then stands by the Temple watching the guardhouse. She knows that she will have to be careful, and thinks about how she will approach them. Finally, deciding on her story, she summons the character she needs and crosses the Way. Calling herself Rebecca, she tells the guards that she is Sarie's baby sister, and had brought her something to eat. At first, she is told they will pass the food along, but she insists she'd like to see her for herself. Gillen hears the exchange and decides 'Rebecca' may be of some use after all. He takes her to the cells and tells Sarie that he will torture her baby sister to get her to talk. While Sarie is denying any knowledge of who she is, Raisa takes her only opportunity. She kicks at Gillen's knees, buckling them, and then enlists the Raggars' help to subdue him completely. It takes time, but they get the job done. Raisa is sickened and angry that everything about their conditions that Cuff's told her is true.

When Amon finally gets free the next morning, he knows what he has to do. He heads straight for his father to give him his resignation. His father tells him he should have said no to Raisa, but now that the damage is done, they can only move forward and risk everything to save the sovereign line. He tells his son that if word gets out that Raisa spent the night with Cuffs, it might affect her prospects for marriage after her upcoming naming day, and Amon realizes he is right. Not even the Queen can be told. Instead, they will enlist the aid of Averill Demonai to cover Raisa's absence. Then, they begin tearing Ragmarket and Southbridge apart in an effort to find Cuffs and Rebecca. Amon searches for two days, unable to do anything but wander the streets hoping to find her. He is surprised when Cuffs calls his name, and reveals that Raisa has been in the guard house since the day before. He collects his Wolfpack and goes in as though they are their replacements. The ruse is effective, and after negotiating a truce to talk to the prisoners, Amon manages to get Raisa and the others to agree to his plan to free them. He marches them out the front door boldly, and as soon as they are out of sight, he lets them go. Sarie and the others are stunned, but Raisa explains that since they had been treated unfairly, they are being given another chance. Then Amon and his Wolfpack escort Raisa back into the Castle Close. Raisa asks about her mother's mood, and learns of the cover up employed while she was gone. She isn't thrilled that the queen was lied to, and even less impressed that it was done in an effort to save her precious reputation. She insists that there are changes that need to happen within the guard. She tells Amon that she expects him to help her right the issues she witnessed while out among her people.



# Chapter 16: Demons in the Street and Chapter 17: Party Warfare

## Chapter 16: Demons in the Street and Chapter 17: Party Warfare Summary

Han makes his way home where even his mother pulls him into her arms, happy to see he is okay. She tells him the guard are looking for him, and Han tells her he is will go back to Marisa Pines until things are better. He leaves behind traces that make it look like he was killed but before he can get out of town, he is approached by demons wanting to know where Shiv is. They seem nervous so Han begins screaming bloody murder. One grabs Han, then shrieks and lets go, burned by the contact. Han screams till the Guard arrive. Then he points in a random direction claiming street rats stole his purse. Then he tries to put as much distance as possible between himself and the demons. When he slows down, he notices that his cuffs are glowing and distracted, and he is tackled again. At first, he thinks the demons have found him again but it is Shiv. He begs Han to call them off. Shiv doesn't believe it's a coincidence that the visits from the demons started after he and his people beat Han in the alley. Han suggests he leave until things quiet down and leaves him there on his knees.

The Bayars throw a black and white themed event in honor of their children. The Queen insists Raisa wear the emerald and ruby serpent necklace sent by the Bayars for her name day instead of the ring her grandmother gave her. Raisa's dance card is busy but she is happy when Amon comes up behind her and takes control for the time being. When the song is over, he pulls her to one side and tells her he was unable to get Gillen dismissed, and that Cuffs is dead. She is upset but from the moment she gets near Micah, she seems intoxicated. His touch awakens fire in her that has her abandoning all reason. When Amon finds her, he summons Averill who can see that she is not herself. He throws the amulet at Micah, threatening wizards with a return to the old ways. Amon kneels in front of Raisa, asking if he can get her anything, and she vomits down the front of them both. Horrified at first, she soon begins laughing, and then just as quickly crying. Averill asks Amon to take Raisa home and remain with her until he returns. Amon does so and Magret sets out a bath, and then helps Raisa into bed, just as Averill and Elena arrive. Elena Cennestre's mere presence improves things. Raisa's mind quickly clears and her confusion lifts. Her grandmother tells Raisa the neckace is a seduction amulet which works in concert with the ring Micah was wearing. Somehow, Raisa doesn't think Micah is behind it, and she wonders about the motives of whoever was. Elena asks about the ring she gave her and Amon retrieves it from the dressing table.





## Chapter 16: Demons in the Street and Chapter 17: Party Warfare Analysis

Han makes his way home to Mari and his mother who look up from the book they are reading, and Mari throws herself at him joyfully. His mother lost her job at the castle laundry after inadvertently ruining one of the Queen's dresses, but insists they will be fine because of the Ministry being funded by Raisa. She suggests Han consider going to Oden's Ford to enter the warrior school. He reminds her that school costs money, and offers up his silver wrist cuffs to help with the payment, but she says they aren't meant to come off - ever. Han resolves to ask Willo again. Mari and his mother both cry when he leaves again, but there is nothing else he can do. He sets up a fake death on the beach, and heads out of town but before he can leave, he is approached by three demons. Han realizes immediately who it was that killed the Southies. The demons ask him where they can find Shiv, but they don't look all powerful. In fact, they appear to be nervous, and keep looking behind themselves as though they fear the Guard will show up at any moment. Seeing his opportunity, Han screams at the top of his lungs, and continues to do so until the Guard arrives. One of the demons tries to grab him, hoping to stop him, but he shrieks as though he's been burned and retreats. They melt into the alley when the Guards arrive, and Han tells them that street kids stole his purse, offering a reward if they get it back. Then Han hightails it in the opposite direction, hoping to put as much distance between himself and the demons as possible. He runs until he can't anymore and then gets tackled again. Han can't believe it. This time, however, it is Shiv. He asks Han to call them off, obviously afraid, and Han tries to assure him he isn't responsible, but Shiv doesn't believe him. Han suggests he do the same thing - leave until things get better, but Shiv becomes defensive, refusing. He accuses Han of being 'golden'. Finally, he gives in, bowing his head and offering his knife to Han. He formally pledges fealty to Cuffs making Han feel worse by the moment. Han tells him he can't protect him and suggests that he run. He walks away, leaving him there and feeling terrible.

There are many name day parties during the month of June. Those who share Raisa's birth year try to hold their parties sooner so they don't have to compete with the princess's gala event. The Queen is determined to ensure her daughter remains in the castle until her name day so Amon is often asked to act as courier to ferry goods and messages to Averill. Raisa has decided to forgive Micah for the incident outside her door and is looking forward to the Bayar's name day event. Micah notices she is wearing the Bayar gift necklace immediately, pleased she is wearing it. Amon tells her that both Cuffs and Shiv have been killed. When she learns Cuff's body wasn't found, she isn't convinced but she is upset, and stalks away, straight into Micah who'd been looking for her. He takes her onto the dance floor, pulling her closer than is proper. Afterward, he takes her away from everyone and far away, she hears her father calling. Micah tells her not to answer. She follows him with no will left of her own, until Amon appears out of nowhere. He calls to Averill who examines her closely, seeing that she isn't right. She kisses Micah right in front of them, and Averill insists that they leave. He asks Micah where he got the ring he is wearing - a match to the necklace Raisa has on. Her chest is burned where the amulet rested. Averill angrily rips it off, throwing it in





Micah's face and warns him that if he tries anything like that again, the clans will go back to hunting wizards. Averill asks Amon to take Raisa home, and he does, despite her insistence to Magret that Amon kidnapped her. Once bathed and in bed, Elena and Averill show up. Raisa immediately begins to feel better when she sees her Elena Cennestre. She treats her burn and blisters, then slips the ring she gave her over her neck. Immediately, the fog and confusion lift and Raisa begins to feel like herself. It feels cold against her skin and the last thing she remembers is her grandmother, her father and Amon talking together, conspiring, no doubt.



# Chapter 18: On the Borderland and Chapter 19: Name Day

## Chapter 18: On the Borderland and Chapter 19: Name Day Summary

At Marisa Pines, the renaming ceremony is only a week away. Han's own sixteenth birthday had come and gone with scarcely a ripple, and there was no ceremony to mark his transition. He wonders why Dancer is struggling to choose a vocation. Han decides to go and see Lucius to tell him he won't be able to deliver for him anymore. The cabin looks deserted, and Dog is locked inside. Han opens the door and sees movement in the dark on the bed. Dog's dishes are empty, and Lucius is deep into his own product - so much that he doesn't realize who Han is at first. Han feeds Dog and Lucius and before long Han understands that Lucius had gotten word that Han was dead. Han explains what he had done and why, finally getting through to him that he is not a demon or an image conjured up to get information from him. Han tells Lucius that he's thinking of becoming a line soldier to save up enough money to go to Oden's Ford for an education. Lucius reminds him that Jemson is looking for a teacher, but Han has no intention of going into the orders. The best they can hope for is that the Bayars don't know who Han is.

Dancer disappears two days before his name day celebration. Everyone dresses in their finery, and Willo makes a beaded buckskin shirt and even embroiders the lone hunter symbols on the back yoke for Han. Dancer returns at the last possible moment to wash and dress. One by one, sponsors come forward to announce their new apprentices. When Reid and Shilo of the Demonai come forward, there is considerable interest, and Bird emerges as the one who petitioned them. Then Dancer is called. Willo steps forward, as does Elena who tells the story of a girl raised at Marisa Pines. Her name had been Watersong and she is renamed Willow Song on her naming day - Willo for short. Watersong had an encounter in the woods with a young man who enchanted and then impregnated her. Dancer is the result of that union. He has no sponsor, she continues, but will attend the charmcaster school at Oden's Ford. Elena gives him an amulet made of a caramel colored stone. She puts the amulet around his neck and tells him the uneasy truce they have with those who are gifted comes only if these gifts are not abused. After a moment, it begins to glow. Elena tells him as a child of their camp perhaps he is the one to bring clan and wizards together one day. Reid Nightwalker's expression indicates how likely he believes that to be, but the elders have spoken. Dancer takes off his jacket, telling Reid he needn't worry since he has no interest in anything inherited from his father. He tosses his jacket into the fire before stalking off into the woods.



## Chapter 18: On the Borderland and Chapter 19: Name Day Analysis

At Marisa Pines, Han stays with Willo and Dancer in the Matriarch Lodge but the tension between Dancer and his mother is oppressive. He wishes that he had Bird to talk to or spend time with, but she is busy with the Demonai. Han can't see why Dancer is having such a hard time choosing his vocation. Dancer explains that a vocation, once chosen, becomes the life focus, and is built into who you are. Dancer tells him that if he had the opportunity, he would apprentice under Elena and learn how to be a Demonai goldsmith, but he says Elena won't take him on. He tells Han that some people have no choice as to what their vocation will be and walks away. Han goes down to see Lucius and finds him holed up in his cabin, drinking his own product. Dog hasn't been fed, and the stove isn't lit. After some confusion, Han realizes that Lucius thought he was dead. He manages to convince him otherwise, finally, and they talk about Han's options from here forward. It seems as though Han is faced with a similar problem as Dancer is. Neither one really wants the future that seems to be the only option open to them.

Han can't help but get excited as the name day ceremonies near, despite his own feelings of insignificance. Willo gives him a buckskin shirt she made for him, and Han is touched. She thanks him for being such a good friend to Dancer revealing he will need a friend in the coming days, but won't explain. Han sits with the younger children as the ceremony begins. Elena tells the story of how clans were brought to life by the Maker, and then one at a time the sponsors come forward to announce their new apprentices. When Reid and Shilo Demonai step forward, they cause quite a stir. It is unusual for them to take on an acolyte and Bird, though solemn to match the occasion, is obviously walking on air. Then Willo and Elena come forward. Elena tells the story of a young girl who is enchanted and impregnated by a handsome young wizard in the woods just before her naming day. The girl, renamed Willow Song or Willo on her naming day had a boy called Hayden or Fire Dancer. The full extent of what she is saying hits Han like a hammer. Arrangements have already been made for his education to continue at Oden's Ford as a charmcaster. Reid reminds them that as a wizard, he is forbidden by the Naeming to stay in the Spirit Mountains. Dancer is angry and leaves them, throwing his jacket into the flames, and telling Reid he has nothing to worry about.



# Chapter 20: Willo and Bird and Chapter 21: Blood and Roses

## Chapter 20: Willo and Bird and Chapter 21: Blood and Roses Summary

Han spends hours searching for Dancer in the woods, but comes up empty. He finally finds him two days from camp just staring out at the water. Han tries to come up with suggestions but Dancer has already investigated most of them so finally Han tells him he'll go to Oden's Ford with him. At least that makes him grin. Han sees the way the Demonai watch Dancer, and doesn't like it. He keeps an eye on them as well, until Bird intercepts him with a warning. She tells Han that she will be leaving with the Demonai soon, but that Reid doesn't want to leave before Dancer has gone. The problem is that they don't particularly want Dancer to go to Oden's Ford either, afraid that training might bring him down on the wrong side of the clans. Han warns her that if the Demonai keep treating Dancer the way they are, they are more likely to drive him away from the clans themselves. Bird cries silent tears and Han puts an arm around her, trying to comfort her. She looks up at him, and putting her arms around his neck, she kisses him with the intensity reflective of their imminent parting.

After Micah's party, the Queen insists Raisa remain in her room and rest. Raisa requests an audience but it goes unanswered. Even Magret declines all invitations on Raisa's behalf. Micah sends a dozen roses each day and asks permission to visit, but Raisa doesn't reply. With Magret sleeping in her room, she is unable to see Amon either, and her thoughts alternate between him and Cuffs. Raisa misses Melissa's name day party, but she visits the next day to tell her all about it. Averill arrives, cutting their visit short to Raisa's relief, and she asks him how much trouble the Bayars are in, but then she realizes that Averill is in his traveling clothes. He is being sent to Chalk Cliffs to deal with port security, but they both know it is because the Queen isn't happy with Averill lately. Lord Bayar has told the Queen that the jewelry pieces are just harmless reproductions, and she believes him, despite the welt still visible on her chest. He tells her that her ministry is really changing things for the better, and asks her if her mother has mentioned a particular suitor for her. He tells her to save him a dance on her name day. Amon's father calls for him, and asks that Amon and his triple serve as personal guard to Raisa to ensure her safety while he and Averill are being sent to Chalk Cliffs. Amon is given a choice to bind himself to Raisa and decides to accept the honor. The ceremony is carried out immediately.



## Chapter 20: Willo and Bird and Chapter 21: Blood and Roses Analysis

Bird spends all of her time with Reid Demonai, hanging on his every word, as Han is increasingly jealous. When he finally catches up with Dancer, they talk about him going to Oden's Ford, and he assures Han that he has no choice. Han understands, and suggests that he go to Oden's Ford as well. He could be a warrior, he tells Dancer, but Dancer doesn't think Han is soldier material. Willo shares Dancer's opinion, and Han responds by sulking for the next few days. The continued Demonai presence makes it impossible for Han to speak his mind. Han is disappointed in Bird too. He can't understand why she didn't defend Dancer and he worries that if the Demonai were to catch Dancer on his own, they might take matters into their own hands, so like they watch Dancer, he watches them. One day, following Reid into the forest, he is stopped by Bird who warns him that Reid's patience is wearing and that the Demonai are much more dangerous than Han realizes. He finally tells her that he can't understand why she'd want to be part of a group that would treat her friend that way. Bird is so conflicted. Although she wanted nothing more than to be a warrior her whole life, she sees now that no matter what she does, she will be betraying someone. The thought brings tears to her eyes, and as Han comforts her, they find themselves in each other's arms, kissing with a passion that can only come from the desperation associated with the knowledge that their time together is short. Still, it is the happiest Han has been in a long time.

Captain Byrne tells Amon that he needs his help. He wants Amon and his troop to be the personal guard to Raisa. He says something has happened to muddy the waters of his connection with the Queen, and he can no longer anticipate her actions. Now, he feels as though the Queen is trying to get them out of the way. Amon is about to get his triple back out of bed when his father tells him there is one more thing. He explains that the Byrne family also has a rite of passage linked to the special bond he has with the Queen. Each generation passes it to the next, unless the honor is refused, in which case it goes to the next child in line. That is why the Captain of the Guard has always been a Byrne, he tells his son. They swear an oath, and there is a binding ceremony in the temple that involves magic. Amon is stunned. His father explains that the connection is a subtle thing allowing him to know how the Queen is feeling, and what direction her choices are likely to go in, giving him a chance to prepare and keep her safe. This same connection will be the link he has between himself and Raisa should he accept the honor but he is bound to the line first. It is what Hanalea wanted, and preservation of the Gray Wolf line supersedes all else. It doesn't take long for Amon to make up his mind to accept the honor. It is four in the morning when they go to the study where Jemson waits for them. Amon changes, and then his blood is mingled with Hanalea's line - Raisa's, and he drinks it to signify his oath. It takes effect immediately, and Amon falls to his knees as he is flooded with sensations. His father recommends that he just shut it out at first, until he can get used to it. He focuses on Raisa in the tower room, and is surprised to learn she is thinking about him. Then they go outside where the second half of the ceremony occurs. Jemson pours the remaining blood onto the soil, binding Amon to the soil of the Fells.



# Chapter 22: Desperate Measures and Chapter 23: Name Day 2

## Chapter 22: Desperate Measures and Chapter 23: Name Day 2 Summary

Han spends as much time with Bird as they can manage to sneak away for, and Han is consumed with finding a way not to lose both of his friends. He talks to Willo, but she makes it clear that what he wants and his path and those of his friends are two different things. He tries to find someone who can remove his cuffs and when that fails, he considers selling the amulet. He sneaks back into Ragmarket to retrieve it. When he reaches the stable, he sees a yellow rag hanging from the sill, signifying the presence of fever. Mari has been sick for ten days and still shows no sign of recovery. Han gets a bucket of water from another well, and uses what little coins he has left to buy willow bark and some barley soup for Mari. Leaving them to sleep, he slips out and digs the amulet out of its hiding place, and takes it to Southbridge Market. He goes to see Taz Mackney, a vendor who dealt in magical pieces on the side. When he sees Han, he takes him into the back room where Han again explains how his death was grossly overstated. He lowballs Han at first, but Han counters with a number more in keeping with its value, and promises to return in two days.

Raisa's name day is spent on preparations. The Queen stops in and Raisa mentions that her father still hasn't returned to escort her into the hall, but her mother brushes it off, assuring her he will come. Instead, Gavin Bayar knocks on the door later and tells Raisa that the Queen has sent him to escort her. Though the idea makes her feel ill, she walks ahead of Bayar eventually allowing him to take her elbow. Even Speaker Jemson is stunned when she walks in with Bayar. Jemson begins the ceremony, which concludes with the Queen placing the Gray Wolf tiara on her head. She rises as heir to the throne. Since Averill still hasn't returned, the father daughter dance is simply skipped after dinner is complete. She is nervous when Micah's name comes up on her dance card, but he behaves like a perfect gentleman. Amon is next, and he asks her where Averill is, telling her that he'd been told they left Chalk Cliffs the morning before and should have been back by now. He tries to reassure her, telling her that he and his Wolfpack have been assigned as her personal guard, and promises that he will guard the secret entrance himself until it can be permanently sealed off. Their dance finishes, and any further conversation is interrupted by Prince Liam Tomlin - the next one on her dance card. She likes him immediately, and they discuss everything from arranged marriages for royalty to politics. Afterward, since the Prince is last on her card, they sit down together. Raisa is surprised that the room has almost emptied. Before they can find somewhere quieter to talk, Micah shows up telling Raisa that the Queen requests her immediate attendance. Amon is nowhere to be seen and Prince Liam reveals he is staying at Kendall House and hopes to see her again. As they get close, he asks her for a moment and they go into the library. He tells her that he had no idea the jewelry worn



at his name day party was enchanted, and that none of this was his idea. Raisa decides she'd rather just go to bed, and asks Micah to make her apologies to the Queen, but he apologizes to her, telling her he has no choice. He has to bring her and that neither of them have a choice.

## **Chapter 22: Desperate Measures and Chapter 23: Name Day 2 Analysis**

Bird and Han spend as much time as they can together. He can't help but think of the fact that soon both of his friends will be gone. Han considers going with Bird to Demonai, but Willo tells him that isn't his calling. Han is increasingly frustrated that everyone keeps telling him what he can and can't do. He again tries to find someone to take off the silver cuffs he wears in the hopes that he can convert them into money. When none of the artisans are able to so much as mark the cuffs, he decides to try to sell the amulet that he took from Micah. To do that however, he must sneak back into Ragmarket. He manages to cross into town safely, with most of the guard still under the impression he is dead, but when he gets to the stable he notices a yellow rag hanging from the window signifying illness. He goes inside to find Mari on death's door, and his mother losing faith. Han gets them fresh water, and uses the last of his money to get willow bark and soup. More desperate to sell the amulet than ever, he makes his way to the Southbridge Market to see Taz Mackney, offering it to him for a hundred 'girlies'. Taz hesitates and Han tells him he'll return in two days.

Raisa gets ready for her name day party, distressed that there is still no sign of her father or Captain Byrne. The Queen stops in to see her, assuring her that they will arrive in time, but they don't. Instead, her mother sends the High Wizard to accompany her to her naming party, and cringing, Raisa walks ahead of him most of the way. Her entrance stuns the room, not just for her beauty, but for the escort as well. The ceremony concludes with the tiara being placed on her head, and then dinner is served. Afterward, Raisa's dance card is full. When Micah's turn comes, she is nervous, but he is a perfect gentleman. Next is Amon, and she gratefully allows him to lead her around the room, expressing her concerns for their fathers. He tries to reassure her, escorting her to a private table. They talk until Prince Liam interrupts - the last dance on her card. She finds him entertaining and unpretentious, and enjoys their time talking until Micah interrupts, telling Raisa that her mother wants to see her in her chambers. Raisa is reluctant, but goes with Micah. When they get to the door, he apologizes to her telling her that it isn't his fault. Raisa has a bad feeling and tries to go back to her chambers, but Micah insists.





# Chapter 24: Unholy Ceremony and Chapter 25: The End Of Days

## Chapter 24: Unholy Ceremony and Chapter 25: The End Of Days Summary

Inside the Queen's apartments, Raisa sees Speaker Horas Redfern, Gavan and Fiona Bayar are waiting. The Queen beams at Raisa, asking her how she likes the flowers, candles and other decorations. Raisa is stunned when her mother announces that she wants her to marry Micah Bayar, despite the fact that a union between a royal and a wizard is forbidden by the Naeming. Raisa also adds that her father should be there, and sees a flicker of something in Bayar's eyes as though he knows something. Speaker Redfern drunkenly tells her that he's issued a dispensation, allowing her to marry Micah, who tries to grab her while she is distracted. He grabs for a talisman under his shirt, and Raisa gets another surprise. He isn't supposed to even have an amulet yet. She talks her mother into letting her get a necklace from her rooms, and Micah is sent to ensure she returns. She asks him about the amulet, and he admits that their house has an advantage, given that the amulets the clan give out now have limited lifespans. She leaves Micah outside her room with a guard while Magret helps her pack simple riding clothes, clan style. She leaves through the tunnel, praying that Amon is in the garden guarding the tunnel entrance as he'd promised. Amon manages to get them to the bridge, and is going for horses when their fathers ride up. They had been ambushed by men on military mounts, the Captain tells her. Amon suggests that Raisa go to Oden's Ford with him and his Wolfpack since no one would look for her there.

Mari worsens and Han travels to Marisa Pines Camp to collect Willo, but she is not expected back for days. He sleeps for a couple of hours and heads back to Southbridge, leaving word that Willo should come as soon as she can. When he gets to Taz's shop, Taz is packing. Han confronts him, and as he does, the shop door opens and Lord Bayar steps in. With a spoken word, Taz bursts into flames. Han learns that Bayar sent the demons to kill the Southies, and has already sent guards to his house. He plans to take Han back to Aerie House to wring any further information from him before he kills him, slowly. Knowing he has to get away, he feigns surrender and then plunges his knife into Bayar's side, ripping up until metal found bone. Bayar screams and Han tries to outrun the flames sent after him. His cuffs seem to deflect most of the heat. He reaches Cobble Street where the stable is on fire. A bystander tells him that the bluejackets are responsible. Cat and the rest of the Raggars keep him from running into the burning building, dragging him to their warehouse headquarters. By morning, he has Mari's fever. The next time he wakes, Willo is cradling him in her arms, rocking him gently in one of the rooms of the Southbridge Temple. A week is gone when he is finally well enough to return to the stable. He looks through the remains finding his mother and sister - all hope dying that they were still alive. Later Willo finds him standing on the





bridge in the rain. She loads him onto a horse and takes him back to Marisa Pines where he sleeps for another three days.

## Chapter 24: Unholy Ceremony and Chapter 25: The End Of Days Analysis

The Queen tells Raisa that her father's opinion isn't really important where her decision to wed Micah and Raisa is concerned. She insists they'll need the power of wizards if they go to war against Arden, but Raisa is confused. The High Wizard is supposed to be bound to them. She questions whether that link is broken and Bayar shows signs of impatience, telling Micah to calm his bride. When Micah uses an amulet to 'calm' her as his father suggested, her grandmother's ring prevents his spell from working and Raisa sees it as her only chance. She plays the role of supplicant, letting them believe that she is compliant. Then she changes tactics, trying to sway her mother by telling her that she's always wanted a big wedding, not the back room wedding of a pregnant serving girl. Her mother is conflicted, but Lord Bayar insists they can't risk waiting. She remembers the warning from her grandmother. As a last effort to forestall, Raisa asks that she at least be able to wear the necklace her father gave her. Bayar is explosive, but the Queen agrees, saying Raisa is sacrificing enough already. Micah escorts her to her rooms but is forced to wait outside the door with the guard. Raisa explains her reasons to Magret quietly, and she helps her to escape through the tunnel to where Amon is waiting in the garden. He helps her get to the bridge where they are met by their fathers, just returning from an unexpected ambush. They discuss where Raisa can hide safely, but the Realm is filled with danger for a displaced royal. Amon finally suggests she join him and his Wolfpack when they return to Oden's Ford and their fathers agree.

When Han gets back from Southbridge Market, Mari is worse again, her fever climbing. When he goes to Marisa Pines for help, he finds Willo already gone elsewhere, and leaving word for her, he returns. Taz looks extremely nervous when Han gets to his shop, and moments later, Lord Bayar enters. Han promises to give him the amulet if he leaves his family alone, but Bayar isn't buying. He thinks quickly, and feigns submission until he gets close enough. Then he sticks his knife into Bayar's side, yanking upward to do as much damage as he can. Bayar screams and as Han runs, he sends flames after him, but his Cuffs are enough to deflect the magical spell. When he reaches Cobble Street, he can already see the flames, and a bystander tells him that the bluejackets set the fire, unable to find what they were looking for. Han tries to go in and save his mother and sister, but Cat and the Raggars stop him. They'd already tried, and there was nothing left that could be done. They drag him to their hideout and keep him there. The next morning, Han has the fever. When he wakes again, Willo is holding him, crooning comfortingly to him. It is a week before he is able to get up. He goes back to the stable and finds the bodies of his family. Willo takes him back to Marisa Pines where he sleeps another three days.



# Chapter 26: Secrets Revealed and Chapter 27: Gifted

## Chapter 26: Secrets Revealed and Chapter 27: Gifted Summary

A week before Dancer and Bird leave, Willo calls a meeting. She greets everyone, and then Lord Averill Demonai addresses the group, telling them that Lord Bayar is exerting pressure on the Queen to marry Raisa to Micah. He informs them of the attack on himself and Captain Byrne on Raisa's name day, and that the Princess has escaped and gone into exile. Elena reminds them the Bayars may have amulets from before the Breaking which do not have the limitation put on those made and issued since. They discuss their options, and when everyone leaves Averill, Elena, Dancer and Willo remain behind. Lucius Frowsley joins them, looking better than usual. Willo asks Han to forgive her, admitting to having kept a secret from him for his whole life, but now, for several reasons, has decided to tell him everything. Lucius tells him that Hanalea actually had twins - a boy and a girl. The girl became the heir to the throne while the son, who was very gifted, was given up to live life with a clan. Lucius admits that he was Hanalea's husband, and father to those children. As a wizard, he is cursed with the compulsion to tell the truth. She talks of the Demon King and his descendant children - how they watched over each descendant boy while descendant girls rose to the throne. The only living male descendant of the Demon King living now is Han Alister.

Elena tells Han he has a choice. He can keep the cuffs on and live his life much as he has to date, training with Willo to learn healing, or he can have the cuffs removed, providing he keeps this secret, provided that he attends Mystwerk House with Dancer at Oden's Ford. He holds out his hands and tells Elena to take the cuffs off. He staggers outside, and Dancer follows taking his hands and stabilizing him. Dancer gives him the amulet he had just received, allowing Han to drain his excess power into it. Bird sees him and with a shocked expression, disappears into the bush. Lucius comes to him later, and tells him that any amulet given to him by Elena would keep him on a leash whereas the amulet he has taken from Bayar could be very powerful if he learns how to use it. Raisa and the Wolfpack leave the Demonai Camp a week later. Amon drills her in swordplay whenever there is a spare minute to prepare her, and she practices until she is exhausted. For the first time in a long time, both Han and Raisa have a goal, a destination, and both are feeling optimistic about the future.

## Chapter 26: Secrets Revealed and Chapter 27: Gifted Analysis

As Han sees it, there is nothing to look forward to. Both Dancer and Bird will be leaving soon, and he has no family and no home to go to. Willo seems edgy, but Han attributes



that to Dancer leaving soon. Willo holds a meeting during which Averill tells them all about the Bayars' plan to marry into the royal line by linking Raisa and Micah. Raisa escaped. Han could only think about how he hated them all - the Queen, the High Wizard and the Princess Heir to the throne. He is eager to leave the meeting, and get back to spending time with Bird while he still can, but Willo asks him to remain behind. When the others are gone, and only Averill, Elena, Dancer, Willo and Han remain, Willo begins. She apologizes to Han, admitting to having kept a secret from him. She tells him a story, during which Lucius arrives, looking sober and clean. It is the same story of Hanalea as Lucius had told him earlier, but this time he assures him it is all true. Han is told about how Hanalea had not one child, but two - a boy and a girl. The girl and her subsequent female descendants ascended to the throne while the male children were protected, watched, and raised by clan. Han Alister is the only male child living today.

Han argues, but Willo continues to explain quietly that he had been so strong at birth that she had to call in Elena who made the bracelets to absorb his magic. All descendants of Waterlow wore them. Then he remembers incidents involving magic, and knows he is descended from the Demon King who broke the world. Willo lays out his options. He can attend Oden's Ford with Dancer, and they would sponsor him, pay his fees and provide the amulet. Afterward, he could return and help them to deal with the Bayars as their champion or he could stay and learn a trade with Elena - keeping the cuffs on. It doesn't take much thought or consideration where Han is concerned. They both have to be removed at the same time, or the magical imbalance could kill him, she says, and Han thinks about all the times he had others try to remove them. When she gets them off, he feels heat as though he were burning up. Dancer helps him, even loaning him his amulet so that he can drain his excess power which otherwise seeps out unexpectedly. Bird notices Han's hands lighting up with an internal flame and shocked, runs from him. Lucius comes to him later. He reminds Han that Alger Waterlow was his friend, and Han is his blood. He warns Han not to tell anyone who he really is because he doesn't want to see Han murdered and betrayed like his friend was. As Han and Dancer get ready to leave, in Demonai, Raisa, Amon and the Wolfpack are also on the road again. All are headed to Oden's Ford, and both Han and Raisa are guardedly optimistic about the future.



# Characters

## Hanson Alister aka Hunts Alone

Han is 16 years old. He lives in Ragmarket in Fellsmarch. His father died in the Ardenine Wars and he lives above a stable with his younger sister, and his mother. Han spends most of his younger years supporting his mother and sister by running the gang called the Raggers in Ragmarket. He is a successful leader, adept at reading faces, slight of hand, pickpocketing, and a number of other games and manages to keep enough money coming in to keep his family fed. He spends most of his summers with the clan, learning their ways and developing relationships with them that would have otherwise been impossible. Han has blue eyes, flecked with gold and blond hair. His eyelashes are thick, though pale, and he wears two silver cuffs - one on each wrist - that have been there for as long as he can remember. He has already decided that they are magical, since they seem to get bigger as he does, and despite many efforts, he has been unable to remove or damage them. Unfortunately, they have become his trademark, even reflected in his nickname, Cuffs.

Recently, Han has quit the Raggers and for the past two years has made a concerted effort to earn an honest living. He has done this so that his sister Mari will be kept out of the gang lifestyle. Now, he collects rare plants and herbs to trade at market, and runs errands for Lucius like taking his liquor to town and returning with empties and cash. He earns his clan made boots by trading a deathmaster mushroom he'd found for them, although he is sure that Willo, the Matriarch of Marisa Pines Camp, gave him a generous deal. His bow is clan made, as is the deerskin jacket he favors. Even his best friend, Dancer, is a clan member, and it is in defense of Dancer that Han comes to own a serpent pendant with powerful possibilities.

## Hayden Fire Dancer

Fire Dancer is proud to announce his heritage and current home of Marisa Pines Camp, willing to take on any and all who would trespass on their rightful hunting grounds. He is tawny; bronzed skinned with a solemn face. His blue eyes range from piercing to flat and opaque. His dark hair is braided with beads and frames his bronze face. He is a better archer than Han and shows courage under pressure. Dancer is Han's best friend. He is quick on his feet, and exceptionally good with a knife. Dancer and Han spent every summer together - an arrangement made between their mothers when Han and Dancer were still very young. As such, they grew up together.

Dancer's mother is Willo, also known as Willow Song, and Watersong. Willo is the Matriarch of Marisa Pines Camp and her gifts as a healer are very strong. Her son has inherited both the gifts of his mother, and the gifts of his Wizard father. Because of these gifts, he is forced to leave his home in order to study a vocation that is forced upon him. Dancer's interests are in metal and stone work. He would happily apprentice to an



amulet maker, but because of the strengths of his gift, he is being sent to Oden's Ford to learn how to harness his magic abilities.

## **Raisa ana Marianna aka Briar Rose aka Rebecca Morley**

Raisa has just returned from three years in the Demonai Camp, and at the age of 15, she now finds it a misery to return to court life where she is expected to dress the part of princess including shoes that pinch, stockings and dresses with ruffles that make her feel like she belongs on the top of a wedding cake. Raisa is dark haired, and has olive colored skin with green eyes. Her frame is tiny, favoring her father's side of the family. Raisa is like her father in many ways. She has a clan-like concern for the entire Queendom, and is willing to take steps toward that end. She turns the myriad of simple jewels, artwork and jewelry into cash to fund a local ministry at the Southland Temple under the supervision of Speaker Jemson. She believes in the difference between right and wrong, and has a no-nonsense attitude to life and limb.

Since her return to court, Micah has flattered her with the intensity of his courtship. That it is forbidden only makes it more interesting to Raisa, despite her knowledge that this rebellion could only go so far. The flirtation is a risk, but he makes her laugh with his cynical and often savage wit, and she enjoys his company over most others of late. Part of the Gray Wolf lineage, Raisa is expected to have second sight, and this is a skill that is greatly respected, but when she sees them for the first time, she is surprised since she is not yet a blooded Queen.

As Rebecca, Raisa goes out among her people to get an unvarnished view of life in her queendom.

## **Queen Marianna ana'Rissa**

Marianna is the direct descendant of Hanalea, and is the blooded queen of the Fells. Marianna has blond hair, and a pale creamy complexion. For the good of the throne and her people, Marianna marries Lord Averill Demonai, the Patriarch of Demonai Camp, and together they have two girls - Raisa first and then Mellony. Raisa is just reaching her naming day - her sixteenth birthday, and Marianna (on advice of the High Wizard, Gavan Bayar) tries to marry her off to Micah Bayar - son of the High Wizard. Lord Bayar, as High Wizard, is supposed to be bound by magic to support and help the Queen. Somehow, he manages to slip the magical bonds, and starts to exert pressure on the Queen to permanently link the Wizard Houses with the Royals by way of marriage between his son Micah and her daughter Raisa. His influence is so strong that the Queen actually arranges the ceremony which she tries to perform on Raisa's name day, but Raisa escapes.

The Queen is not as strong as her daughter, worrying constantly about the strength of her hold over her Queendom, but without the compassion and empathy for her subjects.



Most days, the Queen is oblivious to the actions of her Guard, the status of the food coming into the Fells, or the physical or financial status of her people. She seems unaware that many of her subjects are going without food while she continues to enjoy the best of everything within the castle walls.

## **Averill Lightfoot Demonai**

Raisa's father, Averill is a clan trader who married the Queen of Fells. He is the Patriarch of Demonai Camp. His marriage to the Queen brought clan support to her side which easily counter-balanced the Wizard Council's power. His marriage to the Queen, while powerful, only gives him the title of 'consort' to the Queen. He will never get King status, or rule the Kingdom, and in truth has no desire to do so. Averill is a trader. He spends most of his time traveling through the Realm, and as such, he is not a part of castle life most of the time. His bond with his daughters is strong, however, and Averill is determined to keep Raisa - his oldest - safe from harm and unhappiness if he can.

Averill is supposed to be the one who escorts Raisa to her name day party, but High Wizard Gavan Bayar tries to thwart their arrival by setting up an ambush. Captain Byrne, who traveled with Averill on this trip, somehow intuits the danger ahead, and they come out of the skirmish mostly unharmed. When they arrive at the Castle Close, they meet Raisa and her personal guard, Amon Byrne who have just escaped the marriage arranged by the Queen and Gavan Bayar. Averill helps her to arrange an escape, helping his daughter to go to Oden's Ford to hide, getting an education while she waits for the situation at home to improve.

## **Lord Gavan Bayar**

Gavan Bayar is the handsome High Wizard to the Queen. As is the case with every High Wizard, he is bound to the Queen for life, but Lord Bayar is sneaky and dishonest. His concern is not first and foremost for the Queen as it should be. Instead of concentrating his efforts as the magical enforcer and adviser to the Queen, he is more interested in finding a way to gain that power himself. His attitude reveals itself in many small ways. For example, when talking to the Captain of the Guard, Captain Byrne, he speaks slowly and enunciates carefully as though he is speaking to someone with limited intelligence. Bayar is ambitious and frightening. He has thick, black brows

## **Micah Bayar of Aerie House**

Micah Bayar of Aerie House has straight black hair with widow's peak, worn swept back and down to his shoulders. He has long fingers with multiple rings and a pendant around his neck, hung by a heavy chain. Silver falcons are emblazoned on his stoles with claws in an attack pose and are the likely emblem of his wizard house. Micah is underage and not allowed as yet to carry the kind of amulet he steals from his father. Micah's father is the High Wizard. Since Raisa's return to Fells March, he has courted her with a hard to resist intensity. He is an aggressive and daring hunter. Although he is





only sixteen years of age, his dark hair and good looks are an aphrodisiac to half the girls at court.

## **Captain Edon Byrne**

Captain Byrne is the latest of a long line in his family to serve as the Queen's Guard. Edon takes his position seriously. His face is windburned, and is forthright with his opinions and duty.

## **Amon Byrne**

Amon has changed in the time he has been gone. He still has the same gray eyes and straight black hair, but his face is now thinner and his bone structure is more prominent than it was. Though his body appears to be rangier than before, he has added layers of muscle to both arms and chest. Amon has been gone, training at Wien House. The military school at Oden's Ford is the training center that will prepare him to follow in his father's footsteps, and his father before him. He and Raisa had been friends since childhood - the lack of children forcing their companionship.

## **Elena aka Cennestre Demonai**

The Matriarch of Demonai Camp, Elena is the Queen's mother. She is an opinionated woman who talks openly of Vale politics, and the ever increasing influence that the Wizards have.

## **Willo aka Willow Song, aka Watersong**

Watersong is a young woman raised at Marisa Pines. She is a beautiful woman, whose magic is strong, and she attracts the attention of men from all across the Realms. Just before her naming ceremony, she meets a handsome stranger in the woods who wears a ring on his finger studded with emeralds. He asks her if she'd like to try it on, and when she does, she falls into a deep trance. When she wakes, it is dark and the young man and his ring are gone. Soon after, Watersong discovers she is expecting. Because her magic is so strong, she is apprenticed to Elena Demonai and renamed Willow Song - called Willo for short. Her son, Dancer inherits her gifts.

Fire Dancer's mother, Willo, is the Matriarch of Marisa Pines Camp, and is beautiful but her beauty is much more than surface looks. Willo has been praised for her voice which has been compared to the Dyrnnewater singing on its way to the sea; her hands, which move like small birds when she speaks draw attention; her dancing draws the forest animals out to watch and she can speak to them - mind to mind. She has dark hair which falls braided nearly to her waistline. She is also a very gifted healer - able to heal by voice and by touch. The remedies that she creates are in demand as far as Arden.



Willo has always been generous with Han, Mari and his Mam. Just being near her is enough to cheer someone discouraged; soothe someone grieving; or make a coward dig deeper for bravery. She seems to be whatever is required to bring out the best in anyone she is with.

## Digging Bird

Fire Dancer's sister, Bird is a great person to travel with. She easily finds the best camping sites, is able to build a fire regardless of conditions, and finds game at any altitude. She has a mop of dark curls which seem to dry into an intriguing tangle. Bird is better with woodcraft, tracking, and even with a bow than most others her age. She can examine a broken landscape and correctly identify where deer are hidden, and can anticipate the moves of an enemy. As such, she is well on her way to realizing her dream vocation of becoming a warrior.

## Alger Waterlow

Legend tells the story of Alger, the one true love of Hanalea. Alger ran away with Hanalea, so the story is told, and was killed for his actions, but not before other wizards had tortured him for days, forcing Hanalea to listen. By then though, the damage had been done. In an effort to save them, Alger had availed himself of dark magic, and set in motion the events that are now referred to as the Breaking which led to the Naeming agreement now in place. Over time, the story is told with Alger being given the name, Demon King, though it hadn't been his fault. Killing Alger is what caused the Breaking.

## Mellony

Raisa's younger sister, Mellony takes after her mother, the Queen. She has blond hair, and a fair and pale complexion. Mellony enjoys the court lifestyle, dressing up, and being treated like the princess she is.

## Lucius Frowley

Lucius has been living on the mountain for so long that he is beginning to look like he is a part of it. His clothes hang from his skinny body, and only serve to accent his craggy face further still. He is agile as a goat despite being blind, but rarely leaves his still, the most productive in the Spirit Mountains. Instead, he employs Han to take orders and empty containers from town, and return with full ones to collect payment. Lucius also has many books - almost as many as the temple library itself and always seems to have new ones when Han shows up.

Though he may be profane at times, and is cranky - perhaps even consuming too much of his own product - he is always fair and pays on time. He is also an amazing source of





nonjudgmental information. He has a rough coated shepherd he calls Dog who is never more than a few feet from him.

Lucius, it is revealed, was the husband of Hanalea. A wizard of some reknown, he had been best friend to Alger Waterlow, and loses his powers during the Breaking. The group that had been council at the time, and that created the Naeming rules has chosen him to carry the memory of those times to the future. He is cursed with the truth, and the need to reveal it. He is over a thousand years old now.

## **Magret**

Once Raisa's nurse, Magret is a formidable woman. She is broad and tall, with a lap large enough to accommodate several children. She still manages to wield the authority that comes with years of changing diapers, swatting royal rear ends, and scrubbing behind ears.

## **Hanalea**

Hanalea is the name of a queen of legends passed, and also the name of one of the twin peaks that tower above the flatlands.

## **Bluejackets**

Bluejackets is the name for the police who patrol Southbridge and Ragmarket.

## **Fiona Bayar**

Micah's sister, Fiona Bayar is striking. She is elegantly tall, with slender wrists and throat.

## **Raggers**

Raggers are a gang formerly led by Cuffs Alister, who rule Ragmarket and take a cut from all who earn there.

## **Southies**

Led by Shiv Connor, Southies are the gang that rule Southbridge, taking a cut from all who earn there.

## Demons

With a voice slithering and snake-like, one of the monsters called demons is convinced Han will tell them everything eagerly while the taller demon exclaims what a pity it would be if anything happened to such a pretty boy. Their hoods are forward, their faces obscured if they existed at all and their 'hands' are covered with black, leather gloves.



# Objects/Places

## Seven Realms

Once one great queendom, ruled from the seat of Fellsmarch, the Seven Realms includes the areas of Arden, Bruinswallow, Tamron, Vale, Delphi, and the Spirit mountains.

## Deathmaster Mushroom

A plant variety that has bilious green flowers, deathmaster mushrooms grow in the sulfurous matter at the edges of the thermal crust. Valuable for its rarity, Han uses one that he finds to trade for a pair of clan made boots.

## Burnt Tree Meadow

Burnt Tree Meadow is the site of a recent fire where now tall grasses and wildflowers grow attracting fellsdeer.

## Dyrnnewater

Dyrnnewater is a river that is fed by upper slopes and runs down into the valley.

## Charmcasters

Charmcasters is the clan name for Wizards who do not ordinarily consort with regular people. They live in palaces that surround Fellsmarch Castle and many serve as ambassadors to foreign countries on behalf of the Queen of Fells. Excepting for the Gray Lady council house, Charmcasters are not allowed in the Spirit mountains and do not go into Fellsmarch.

## High Wizard

The High Wizard is the magical enforcer and adviser of the Queen of Fells and most powerful Charmcaster of all.

## Northern Isles

The Wizards live in the Northern Isles.



## Valefolk

Valefolk is the name given to those who lived in the Dyrnewater valley.

## Jinxflinger

Jinxflinger is the name that clan members use to insult wizards.

## The Naeming

The Naeming is an agreement made between the Wizard Council and the clans that ended the magical calamity called the Breaking which had very nearly destroyed the world. The tenets of the Naeming include that in exchange for healing the world, the wizards would be kept on a short leash. In the Spirit Mountains, high magic and wizards are forbidden and are confined to the flatlands and the Vale. The temples in Fellsmarch belong to the clan speakers and the queens are able to attend the temple once a week to be educated in the true faith. The most powerful wizard is chosen by the Wizard Council to be magically bound to serve the queen and the land, ruled by her and wizards are forbidden to marry queens.

## Wolves

Wolves are said to appear at turning points or times of danger to blooded queens as a warning.

## Common Lodge

A large structure used for ceremonies, markets and clan feasts, Common Lodge is located in Marisa Pines Camp.

## Matriarch Lodge

Dancer and Bird live in the Matriarch Lodge with Willo and a changing mix of friends, relatives and children fostered from other camps.

## Marisa Pines Camp

A center for commerce, Marisa Pines is strategically located at the pass that opens up to the southern Spirits and the flatlands beyond that. It is a large camp, with around a hundred lodges of various sizes, built with enough distance from each other that additions can be made as families grow.



## Clan Goods

Clan Goods are a variety of goods produced by the different clans and in demand by flatlanders for their lasting quality and the good luck they bring to their owners.

## Marisa Pines Clan

Members of the Marisa Pines Clan are known for their healing, handwoven fabrics, remedies and dyes.

## The Demonai Clan

The Demonai Clan members are known for the warriors they train and the magical amulets they make.

## Hunter Clan

Members of the Hunter Clan are known for their production of smoked meats, skins and furs, and weapons without magical attachments.

## Mystwerk House

Mystwerk House is the school for wizards located at Oden's Ford along with half a dozen other academies on the border between Arden and Tamron on the banks of the Tamron River.

## Revisionists

Revisionists are those who believe that the stories about Alger Waterlow are made up.

## Waterlow House

A wizard house that existed a thousand years ago, Waterlow House was said to be the strongest house there ever was. Their signia was a raven and their wizard crest was a serpent, twined.

## Fellsmarch

Nestled at the edge of the Vale, Fellsmarch sits at the edge of a fertile valley where the Dyrnnewater makes its way down between the twin peaks of Hanalea and Alyssa. Fellsmarch has elaborate buildings that escaped destruction in the Breaking, as had



Fellsmarch Castle, the temples of the speakers and a few of the other public buildings. It is referred to as the City of Light because on all days but during a small period of time around the solstice, the sun comes over the Eastgate every morning, and sets at the Westgate every evening.

## **Flatlanders**

Residents of the Vale are often called Flatlanders. True Flatlanders are the citizens of the kingdom of Arden and of Tamron.

## **Way of the Queens**

Way of the Queens is a broad boulevard that ends at Fellsmarch Castle after running the length of the city.

## **Southbridge**

A region of the city that the queen never travels to, Southbridge is a shabbier neighborhood where the streets are narrower and filled with predators and prey alike. Southbridge is a place you don't venture after dark.

## **Ragmarket**

The region of the city of Fellsmarch that Han lives in, Ragmarket is the region closest to the Castle.

## **Chalk Cliffs**

Chalk Cliffs is a port hundreds of miles from the Vale on the Indio Ocean.

## **Keg and Crown**

Keg and Crown is a tavern on the river's edge in Fellsmarch run by Matieu.

## **Room Of Romantic Entanglements**

Room Of Romantic Entanglements is the name Raisa gives to the small closet where Magret locks away the gifts sent by hopeful suitors after recording them in a ledger.



## **Great Book Of Bribes**

Great Book Of Bribes is the name Raisa gives the ledger in which Magret keeps a list of all the gifts that come from hopeful suitors,

## **Kendall House**

Located within the castle close, Kendall House is where Averill stays until room can be made for him in the keep.

## **Briar Rose Ministry**

Briar Rose Ministry is the name given to the ministry started by Raisa which helps those in need of food two or three times a week. The Ministry is funded by the sales of gems, jewelry and artwork given to Raisa as pre-naming gifts in the hope of currying favor.

## **Oden's Ford**

Oden's Ford is a school for warriors or wizards - one on each side of the Dyrnnewater River.

## **Gray Wolves**

Amon's troop, referred to as the Wolfpack or Gray Wolves consists of Wode, Talia, Mick, Keifer, Halley and Garret.





# Themes

## Queens - Present vs Future

The current Queen of Fellsmarch is Queen Marianna, and the future Queen is Princess Raisa. In appearances, they couldn't be more different. Queen Marianna is fair haired and skinned. She is a regal Queen who rules with the help of the Queen's Guard led by Captain Byrne. The Queen is kept well insulated from her subjects, socializing mostly with other royalty, or the High Wizard who is bound to her magically. The Queen is concerned with appearances, and keeping them at all costs. She is somewhat vain and self involved. Her husband is a Clan trader named Averill. He is away frequently and the Queen spends much of her time in conference with High Wizard Bayar.

Princess Raisa favors her father more in looks. She has long, dark curly hair and green eyes and a tiny frame. She is outspoken, and though she carries herself well as an heir to the throne, she also feels a greater responsibility to those in the Queendom. She is willing to seek and act on the truth when she finds it, and values life and people over baubles and artwork. Raisa begins by giving all of the generic style gems and art to Speaker Jemson, enabling him to feed and nurture a greater number of those in need. Raisa isn't afraid to dress as a commoner and walk among them.

## Bound By Blood

The Byrne family line has been connected to and has served the Queen's line for generations dating back to the first Byrne - a soldier who died for Hanalea when she encountered the Demon King. She was so grateful that once she returned to her throne, she decreed that the Captain of her Guard be bound to her, and that soldier's son was the first to be bound. This bond has since passed from generation to generation. The ceremony that binds the Byrne soldier to his Queen involves a binding ritual that takes place in a temple ceremony. The bond, once made, cannot be broken, and a bound soldier is unable to act in a contrary manner to the good of the line. The Queen is unaware of this binding, but despite that, the guard has something of a sixth sense where his Queen is concerned. It enables the soldier to anticipate trouble and predict their behavior to a degree. Surprised by the existence of this bond, Amon nevertheless agrees to go through with the ceremony binding him to Princess Raisa for the rest of his life. As such, he becomes the next guardian of the line. A part of the ceremony also binds him to the land.

## Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely

In The Demon King, there are three factions that are competing for power in the Fellsmarch. The clans live in harmony with green magic - a gentle existence of harmony with the space they are in. The wizard houses collectively support their High Wizard, Gavan Bayar, as he enchants and manipulates the Queen to his wishes in an effort to



gain power for their group. Gavan's plan is to have his son marry Princess Raisa, the Queen's heir to the throne. Though the Demon King is successful in managing to convince the Queen to support his plan, Raisa is not under magical influence and at first opportunity, she runs. Elsewhere in the Realms, wars wage between three brothers. Each brother believes in the success of their campaign and are willing to go to great lengths to ensure they are the victor, In both instances, there are betrayals, deaths, and secrets. Soldiers are sacrificed, innocents are killed, and trusted advisers can no longer be trusted. All sides believe that the power is rightfully theirs. All sides will do anything to get it, or keep it. All sides would be entirely different people if the power were not involved. Raisa, who has no power as yet, watches as all sides battle for it. She keeps a unique perspective, born to accession to power, but never having fought for it. Her desire to be a good queen, learn about political issues and maintain the path that best serves the Realm is what will set her above the rest when the time comes, and align the population to her.



# Style

## Point of View

The Demon King, by Cinda Williams Chima, is a fictional story involving Queens, Kings, Princes and Wizards who live in a region called the Seven Realms. The story is told in the first person perspective from the two main characters - Raisa, the Princess heir to the throne, and Han, the former Ragger King. Though both rulers of a sort, these characters come from opposite ends of the financial spectrum. Raisa is a Queen in waiting, with servants at her command, guards who are sworn to keep her safe even at the expense of their own lives, and a duty to her Queendom that extends to encompass whom she marries and what direction her life takes. Han, on the other hand, is the leader of the Ragers only until it becomes too dangerous for his family. He gives up the position, backing out of the Ragers and supports his family with a series of odd jobs and luck. The book is set up in twenty-seven chapters which alternate perspectives from one to the other almost all the way through. In some instances, they are both involved in a chapter, but the point of view remains consistent with the character that starts the chapter as such. There is a small amount of omniscient narrative in which Amon's feelings are revealed as he struggles to help Raisa while maintaining his emotional propriety.

## Setting

The Demon King is set in the Seven Realms, but concentrates on several regions within the Realms. The Seven Realms were once ruled from the Queendom at Fellsmarch, but since the Breaking things have changed. In those days, grain came from Arden, and the bread baskets were filled by Bruinswallow and Tamron. The coasts provided fish and game while gems and minerals came from the Spirit mountains. Fellsmarch Castle is surrounded by the Dyrnnewater and Fellsmarch is called the City of Light. A broad boulevard runs the length of the city and ends at the castle. The city of Fellsmarch is divided into two sections - Ragmarket, and Southbridge Market. A portion of the story takes place within the city, or the castle itself. The rest is divided between several clan camps including Marisa Pines Camp, and Demonai; the Spirit Mountains; and Oden's Ford where clansmen and wizards alike go to further their vocations or hone their crafts.

While there is discussion of Wizard Houses, such as Aerie house where the Bayars live, there is no actual time spent in that area excepting the name day party that is thrown for Micah and Fiona Bayar. The other wizard houses, while occasionally mentioned, are not visited. The latter portion of the story reveals a possible shift in power, and the princess in exile, heading for Oden's Ford.



## Language and Meaning

The Demon King is written in what is mostly regular English language with few exceptions. There are liberties taken with descriptions in some cases. Wizards are also called Charmcasters or the more inflammatory 'jinxflingers' by those who are not gifted. Exclamations of surprise include outbursts like 'blood and bones' and coins are referred to as girlies. Demons are conjured by Wizards seeking information, and the rite of passage from childhood to adulthood is marked with a 'name day' celebration. Pants are breeches; and they wear cloaks instead of coats. Hose are worn by nobles of both sexes, and people are divided into three groups. There are the clans, divided into their own groups; there are the Wizard Houses, also divided into their own family groups; and there is the Royal Family. The region is called a Queendom, ruled by the Queen, whose husband, a clansman, is called her royal consort. The use of alternate phrasing lends a certain authenticity to the story. Teachers in the temple are called Speakers, and are able to preside over unions of marriage. Up in the mountain is the Wizard Council house from which the Vale was once ruled by Wizards. The princess heir has been raised primarily by a nursemaid named Magret and the book is charged with spells, charms, guards and danger.

## Structure

The Demon King is three hundred and twenty-eight pages in length and is divided into twenty-seven chapters. Each chapter is titled with a brief reflection of the chapter's content. For example, the first chapter is called The Hunt, and is primarily about Han and Dancer going to the Burnt Tree Meadow to hunt fellsdeer and come home empty handed of meat. Before they can let loose their arrows, the smell of smoke reaches them and the fellsdeer almost at the same time. The next chapter, titled Unintended Consequences, centers around the Princess heir to the throne in Fellsmarch, Raisa and her family who are out on a hunting trip. Three wizard youths, one of them the son of the High Wizard Micah Bayar and the other two his cousins, set a magical fire to drive the deer to the hunt. The unintended consequences are that they burn much more than they intended to and it takes help from Lord Bayar himself to put it out. From there the chapters alternate characters and locations from Castle to Clan and back again. The chapter lengths run from seven to sixteen pages in length, averaging about twelve pages overall.

The Demon King is the first of a series of four books by this author.



## Quotes

"They'll recover; though I daresay it's a lesson they'll never forget." Ch. 2, pg. 30  
Lord Bayar to Raisa after she asks him if Micah and his cousins will be okay, having watched them collapse after helping Lord Bayar to extinguish the fire threatening them all.

"Welcome, Hunts Alone. Will you share our fire?" Ch. 3, pg. 38  
Traditional ritual greeting of the clan.

"Keep the amulet hid, and stay out of the way of the Bayars." Ch. 5, pg. 68  
Lucius to Han after Han tells him about his encounter with Micah Bayar and his cousins, and 'shows' him the amulet.

"I knowed just who was responsible, and I knowed just where to find you." Ch. 8, pg. 105  
Sergeant Gillen to Han when he catches him coming out of the Keg and Crown.

"You can't assume that because you have plenty to eat that everyone does." Ch. 10, pg. 124  
Amon to Raisa as he tells her some hard truths about her queendom.

"Nobody can know where I live or that I even have a sister." Ch. 11, pg. 128  
Han to Jemson as he expresses concern for his family.

"It would send the message that they are important, that their rulers haven't forgotten them." Ch. 12, pg. 148  
Jenson to Raisa when he tries to convince her to appear at their school in person to inspire the students by letting them know that they matter.

"I'm cold and wet and tired, and I just want to quit walking for a while, all right?" Ch. 13, pg. 156  
Han to Raisa as he tries to tell her that he has no interest in ravishing her.

"She's been sick lately, and three days in gaol can't be doing her good." Ch. 14, pg. 171  
Raisa as she talks her way past the guards and into the cell where three Raggars are being held without cause.

"Bloody street rats took my purse and threatened to cut my throat, they did!" Ch. 16, pg. 193  
Han to the guards, lying about the demons who had confronted him.

"A vocation is not something you slap on, like a coat of paint, and change whenever you want." Ch. 18, pg. 218  
Dancer to Han as he tries to explain why he is struggling with choosing a vocation.



"The only reason I would look for my father is if I decide to kill him." Ch. 20, pg. 231  
Dancer to Han as they discuss the option of Dancer going to Oden's Ford.

"The union of royal blood and wizardry will make us once again the most powerful  
kingdom in the Seven Realms." Ch. 24, pg. 281  
Lord Bayar to Raisa as he and the Queen attempt to marry Raisa off to Micah Bayar.

"Gavan Bayar represents a grave threat to the queen and the royal line." Ch. 27, pg.  
317  
Willo to Han as she explains his options and their reasoning.



## Topics for Discussion

What is unique about the relationship the Queen has with Averill? What are the positive and the negative aspects of having this kind of relationship? What is the most difficult issue they face and why?

Who is Hunts Alone? Where did he get his name from? What other names is he known by in this story? How does each persona differ from the other? Which name/life seems to suit him best and why?

How do the Queen and Princess Raisa differ? Which one will likely make for a better queen and why? Who are the people likely to support?

What does Raisa do that is unlike anything done by other royals? What motivates her to do this? Where does she get the information that prompts her to action? Who does she enlist for help and what does she ask of them?

Why does Raisa want her help to go unremarked on? Who convinces her that this is not the wisest move, and why? What does advertising her involvement do to improve the situation?

Who are the love interests in Raisa's life? What do each of them bring to the royal line, if anything? Which one does Raisa favor most, and why? How likely is that relationship to be consummated?

What is Oden's Ford? Where does it get its name? What is unusual about this place and why is it unusual? Which of the main characters find themselves heading for Oden's Ford and why?

What magical intervention is attempted on Princess Raisa? Who tries it? What is the reason or motivation to do so? Is it successful, and why or why not?

What link is established between the Byrnes and the Royals? Why is this link so important? Who shares a similar link and with whom? Can that link be broken? If so, how?

What are the cuffs that Han wears? Where does he get them? Why does he wear them? Who insists he should keep them on, and why are they finally removed? What happens when they come off, and why?