

# **Earthborn Study Guide**

## **Earthborn by Orson Scott Card**

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# Plot Summary

Earthborn, the fifth and final book of Orson Scott Card's Homecoming Saga is a fictional study of personality and religion, set in a far future version of Earth where humanity is struggling to come to terms with their own history and their place in the universe.

Earthborn starts from the narrative of Akma, the first son of an outcast priest called Akmaro whose family is held in captivity by a tribe of humanity called the Elemaki. The story follows Akma and his sister's humiliation at the hands of his oppressors, and introduces the figure of Didul, one of the sons of his oppressors.

Elsewhere, the free tribe of humanity, the Nafari, are ruled over by the wise King Motiak, whose youngest children Mon and Edhadeya start exhibiting rare abilities. Edhadeya experiences True Dreams (or visions) of the enslaved Akma and his family, and Mon's Truthsense allows him to detect the truth of the vision. On their insistence, King Motiak sends out a rescue party to save Akma and his family.

Unknown to the different tribes of humanity, high above the Earth is the spaceship The Basilica, populated with the computer program called the Oversoul and the human Starmaster, a woman called Shedemai. These figures have been guiding the development of humanity for centuries, but themselves are ignorant of their ultimate mission, knowing only that the Basilica and the Oversoul were created by the keeper of Earth, a god-like being whom the tribes of humanity and the other sentient species of Earth worship as a Deity. Shedemai and the Oversoul decide to interfere with the supposed will of the Keeper of Earth and guide the rescue party to a different tribe of humanity, the Zenifi, and these people are brought back to the Nafari where they must acclimate to living with the other sentient species, the Earth People and the winged Sky People.

The Keeper of Earth sends True Dreams to more of the characters, encouraging Akma's father to convert his oppressors, and guiding King Motiak to study the history of the humans on Earth. Once the oppressors of the family of Akma are converted, Akma's father leads them to the land of the Nafari, led by True Dreams. Here the different groups try to live together, but the increasing jealousy and prejudice of Akma causes religious strife between the Nafari and the Zenifi as he urges them to throw out the Earth People who were once used to oppress his family.

Shedemai the Starmaster returns to the Earth in the guise of a school teacher to avert the oncoming civil war, and herself preaches the original teachings of the Keeper of the Earth. As the divisions in society escalate, and Akma moves further and further away from his family, the Keeper of Earth intervenes and sends Shedemai a dream detailing what she must do. In the final showdown between the two camps (Akma's Ancient Ways movement and King Motiak's Houses of the Kept) the Keeper reveals its will for humanity, using Shedemai's advanced technology to do so, and Akma is forced to examine his life and actions in the light of this plan.



# Chapter 1 Captivity

## Chapter 1 Captivity Summary

In the first chapter of *Earthborn* the author introduces the reader to the tribe of the Akmari and the principle characters within it, who will later become some of the main protagonists throughout the book (namely Akmaro the renegade priest of the tribe and his son Akma). The Akmari are held captive by another tribe of humans known as the Elemaki, ruled over by Akmaro's rival and fierce enemy Pabulog and his four sons. In Chapter One we also discover that Pabulog and his Elemaki are using another species - the sentient Diggers (or earth people) as taskmasters over the Akmari, a fact which leads to simmering tensions between the two factions of humanity.

In this chapter the character of Akma encounters one of Pabulog's son, Didul, a charming and clever youth who stops him from being beaten by one of the Digger taskmasters. Didul befriends Akma and proceeds to inform the young Akma of his family's history, his father's betrayal of the old king, and the reason why the Akmari are enslaved by Pabulog. Didul explains that Akma's father was a renegade priest who had betrayed the old king Nuak by teaching everyone - including the Diggers - to read and write, before leading his people into the wilderness away from King Nuak, who was shortly thereafter assassinated. The royal line was lost as the tribes of humanity splintered and were at constant war with the Diggers. Pabulog, Didul's father, is now a chieftain who has fought and won against the Diggers and uses the race as his slaves (although they are still higher than the slaves of the human Akmari).

Didul introduces Akma to his brothers. Pabul is the oldest, followed by Udad, and the youngest brother Muwu. Akma is offered the chance to sit and eat with them. Realizing that his family would still be starving in the fields while he ate, Akma refuses the food, at which the sons of Pabulog get angry and start threatening him. As Akma remains steadfast, the sons of Pabulog turn on him, revealing their true enmity toward him and his family, smearing him with the food of the picnic and beating him up. He is then told by the Digger taskmasters to return to work, tearful and afraid.

At the end of Chapter One Akma finally has the chance to tell his parents, Akmaro and Chebeya, what has happened to him and, to his surprise, his father is not vengeful or furious, but rather concerned for his son. Akmaro perceives that Didul and the sons of Pabulog have sown the seeds of doubt in Akma's mind making him believe that his father was a traitor and created this situation for all of the Akmari.

## Chapter 1 Captivity Analysis

In Chapter One, the author places the reader firmly within the mind of Akma, the oldest son, and it is from this viewpoint that we encounter the rest of the story and the other characters. In doing this we are not allowed to fully see the whole truth of the history of



what went before the start of the book (including whether Akma's father, Akmaro, really is a traitor or not), but instead understand the history narrated through Akma's feelings of injustice, and Didul's machinations.

By using this technique the author is forcing the reader to perceive the emotional truths of the boy's existence, which is a technique that we will see employed throughout the book. The author introduces the theme of doubt into the narrative, doubt over whether what we have been led to believe is correct, and how what we have been told about history correlates with our personal feelings and experiences.

"Akma wanted to ask his father if everything else Pabulog's sons said was true, too, but he dared not, for he wouldn't know what to do with the answer. If they were right, then his father was an oathbreaker and so how could he trust anything he said?" (Akma thinking about his father in Chapter One, Captivity, Page 17)

In Chapter One, we also see how the author uses the symbols of food and hunger as metaphors for the characters' wants and desires. Akma and the rest of the Akmari are described several times as starving. "...Your ribs are sticking out of your chest..." (Pabulog taunting Akma, Chapter 1, Page 14), and offer of nourishment coming from Didul and the sons of Pabulog. We are introduced to the idea that Akma is hungry, hungry for respect, for truth, and even for revenge against the Digger taskmasters. This concept is also a foreshadowing of the darker elements of Akma's character that later develop, as his hunger for respect and for truth is not fulfilled.



# Chapter 2 True Dreams

## Chapter 2 True Dreams Summary

Chapter Two begins our introduction to the Nafari humans who live in the city of Darakemba with Mon, the fourth child and youngest son of King Motiak, dreaming about flying. In Darakemba we are led to see that the sky people, otherwise known as Angels, are a sentient winged race, the earth people (the Diggers) and the middle people (the Tribes of Humanity) all live together. The Earth people are the servants of the humans and the sky peoples. While Mon is dreaming of being able to join the sky people, he is joined by his older brother Aronha and his younger sister Edhadeya, who protests that while Mon feels unlucky to be a human, he is at least lucky that he is a man and not a woman in Darakemba society.

Edhadeya proceeds to reveal to Mon that she has been having a repeated dream of the events in Chapter One when Akma is humiliated and bullied by the sons of Pabulog. Mon immediately senses a grain of truth in what his sister is saying and together they agree to tell their father, the king, about the dream to see if he will send their older brother to save the Akmari. Edhadeya protests, knowing that the dream of a woman in Nafari society would never be listened to, so they contrive to have Mon reveal the dream later that night as his own and urge his father to rescue Akma and his family.

Halfway through Chapter Two we have the first interjection of Shedemai and the Oversoul on the starship the Basillica, high above the peoples of the Earth below them. Shedemai herself is revealed as a 'Starmaster' or a human who has been brought up to the Basillica. Alongside the computer program known as the Oversoul, she oversees and occasionally intervenes in the development of humanity on behalf of their 'deity' or 'supreme being' known simply as the Keeper of Earth. The computer program, the Oversoul, informs Shedemai of the latest developments on Earth and together they watch the activities of Mon and Edhadeya, who, Shedemai reveals to the reader, have the special psychic abilities of truth sense and true dreams respectively.

Back on earth, Mon reveals the contents of the true dream to his father in front of the council of the Nafari (which includes sky people scholars). After debate over whether the dream is true, it is decided that the people must, in some part, be one of the lost tribes of humanity, collectively known as the Zenifi. Edhadeya is uncovered as the true dreamer of the dream, and, despite the sky people's protests, King Motiak decides to send his second son Monush to rescue the Zenifi. Later that night, King Motiak meets with both of his youngest children, Mon and Edhadeya. The reader is allowed to see that King Motiak believes that his daughter Edhadeya actually has true dreams (which are sent by the Keeper of Earth), and that his son Mon has the special ability of truth sense. The expedition sets out, while the youngest children, Mon and Edhadeya, stay behind.



## Chapter 2 True Dreams Analysis

Chapter Two casts a contrasting picture to Chapter One as the reader is asked to subconsciously compare the two forms of society, the Elemaki and the Nafari of Darakemba. In the Nafari, we see that there is a belief in the supreme deity (the Keeper of Earth) and that there is a greater degree of noble and moralistic behaviors, namely that one of the other sentient races is respected (the sky people), and that the children of the king (Mon, Monush, Aronha and Edhadeya) are all afforded some degree of respect. We can compare this dynamic with the argumentative and tortured sons of Pabulog who are all constantly fighting with each other, and with the Elemaki's treatment of the Diggers and the Akmari.

However, there are still moral difficulties among the Nafari of Darakemba. "The evil humans who had joined with the diggers and lived in their dank caves and ate the sky people they kidnapped and murdered." (True Dreams, Chapter Two, Mon thinking about Edhadeya's dream, page 25). They may not do what the Elemaki do, but they still do not afford an equal respect to women, and the Diggers (the earth people) are still slaves in their society. The reader is inevitably led to conclude that while they are better, the Nafari of Darakemba are still far from perfect.

The chapter also sees the assertion of the Keeper of Earth, the deity figure who created the Oversoul and the starship the Basillica, and who sends the true dreams to certain characters throughout the book. The Keeper however is a mysterious, invisible figure whose motives are unknown. The author here paints the human predicament as one of confusion, of struggling to know the facts, but not being able to adequately decipher them.

"'Was it - the Keeper who spoke to you?' asked Edhadeya.

'Who knows?' said Father. 'Maybe it was fatherly pride. Maybe it was wishful thinking. Maybe it was the voice of the Keeper...'" (True Dreams, Chapter Two, Edhadeya discussing her dream with King Motiak, page 44).

Even the Starmaster and the Oversoul themselves do not know all of the actions and the motivations of the Keeper, as is made plain by their confusion at events below. Nevertheless, with the inclusion of truth sense and true dreams the author sets up the religious undertone of the entire book; that there is a mysterious Deity, who is an interventionist God, and who has an active interest in the fate of the humans on Earth. By using the narrative tool of the Oversoul, the Basillica and Shedemai the author also allows the reader to step outside of the narrative of the story and gain a historical viewpoint. This technique is one of the ongoing themes throughout the book, which can be seen as a discussion on humanity's proper place in history, what we 'should' be like (according to the outside perspective), what is wanted from us (from the Divine), and the conflict between individual psychologies and this 'Divine' perspective.



# Chapter 3 Resistance

## Chapter 3 Resistance Summary

Chapter Three starts from the perspective of Shedemai the Starmaster and the Oversoul aboard the Basillica, where they hatch a plan to provoke the Keeper of Earth to act. They contrive that the Oversoul will make the rescue party sent out by King Motiak stupid at a certain point of their journey so they will miss the route towards the enslaved Akmari, and instead proceed to the rest of the Zenifi tribes further away, freeing them from instead of Akma and his family from the Elemaki and Pabulog. They do this to inspire the Keeper of Earth to make itself and its plans known to the humans on earth and to the Basillica.

The rescue party led by King Motiak's son Monush undertake their journey, indeed fall stupid at the appropriate point, and take the pass that leads to the rest of the human tribes (known as the Zenifi). Here they are immediately captured by the Zenifi; they are taken to the chief of the Zenifi (Ilihiak) who is rejoiced at King Motiak's intervention and agrees to escape the Elemaki with Monush. Monush advises him that his people will have to abide by the rules of Darakemba, and live among sky people and Diggers.

Meanwhile, among the enslaved Akmari, Akmaro's son Akma has a true dream, presumably sent by the Keeper, which reveals that the rescuer's were sent out, waylaid and will not be coming to rescue them. Their despair escalates causing Akma's mother, Chedeya, to confront Didul when she is about to be beaten by the Digger taskmasters. She shames him for allowing an unarmed woman to be beaten and for not fighting his enemies himself. This, in turn, creates a bond between Didul and Chedeya, as Didul proceeds throughout the rest of the chapter to step between his brothers and the Akmari when they are being punished, shaming his brothers for their cowardice.

In this chapter, we also have the involvement of Shedemai and the Oversoul, who are overseeing their plan to influence Monush and thus provoke the Keeper of Earth. The Oversoul informs Shedemai that he has realized that the geographic landscape which the humans are now inhabiting could not have, scientifically, moved so fast in its history, destroying the earth that was and thus creating the landscape that now allows the humans, the sky people and the earth people to exist. Shedemai presumes that this is the work of the Keeper of Earth.

## Chapter 3 Resistance Analysis

In Chapter Three, Resistance, the title of the chapter also becomes a recurrent motif used throughout the chapter, especially the resistance of Shedemai and the Oversoul against the Keeper of Earth's plans, the resistance of Akmaro's wife Chedaya, and the resistance of Didul against his father's (Pabulog's) teaching.





The Resistance is seen as being both a good and a bad thing, but is ultimately a human creation (Shedemai's schemes, Chedeya's intervention). There could be a moral narrative at work here, since the actions of humans are depicted as "intrusive", while the actions of the deity, the Keeper, are portrayed as "wholesome" or "as things should be."

We are led to see that Shedemai is annoyed, and actually frustrated, with the deity and her position in a similar way to Akma being frustrated by his slavery, Edhadeya by her being a woman and Mon by his inability to fly. Both Shedemai and the Oversoul are depicted as necessarily fallible characters, whose focus is upon the Keeper of Earth and the Basillica rather than the lives of the people of Earth. Shedemai is pictured as a distant and almost inhuman figure, someone who has become so isolated from her natural community that she cares more for history than she does for people.

One of the most interesting developments in this chapter is the character development of Didul, who is shamed by Chedeya, and so feels that he is needing something else - self respect - in order to be a noble and worthy man. Didul starts to perceive that his family's policy of crushing the Akmari isn't satisfying to him any more. Indeed, this can be argued as an echo of the theme of the hunger that plagues Akma: a hunger for truth and respect. The reader is also encouraged to ask about what constitutes moral behavior, and what constitutes a "bad person."



# Chapter 4 Deliverance

## Chapter 4 Deliverance Summary

In Chapter Four, we see the people of the Zenifi delivered in part by Monush and the Darakemba. Before they begin their plan the chief of the Zenifi, Ilihiak, takes the son of King Motiak aside and proceeds to reveal to him the secrets of his people, things he thinks the man must know before he acts to save the Zenifi. The first secret is that the Zenifi assassinated the old king Nuak when the tribes of humanity split, and that in their subsequent wanderings the Zenifi traveled to the desolate desert known as the Opustoshen, the blasted landscape where nothing is thought to have lived. There, the Zenifi discovered countless long dead skeletons and an ancient artefact of a language inscribed upon gold leaves. No one can identify the language, and it raises questions of who the oldest humans were. Chief Ilihiak asks Monush to take the gold leaves to his father to decipher when they are released.

The Zenifi agree that they will intoxicate the Diggers who are surrounding their camp and thus escape with Monush back to Darakemba. This goes according to plan, but Monush is worried about how the Zenifi will adapt to Nafari society, since they hate all the other non-human species (the Earth people and the Sky people). He tells the council of the Zenifi that their prejudice could never be accepted, and thus they have to become a "new people" in order to enter the Nafari - an act done by symbolically being baptized in the river outside the land of the Nafari. The chieftain Ilihiak agrees to this, but knows that some of his people will never agree, in particular his second in command, the older man named Khideo.

Still unaware that he was originally deceived and has not saved the people about whom Edhadeya dreamed, Monush leads the Zenifi tribe away and back to Darakemba, where they are baptized, become new citizens, and are welcomed by King Motiak as old friends.

Edhadeya and Mon are both shocked when they see the Zenifi arrive, because they see that among them are not the people of the dream, and in confusion, Edhadeya seeks to talk to her father and to Monush, but is rejected repeatedly because she is a woman. Her only solace is with her Digger slave Uss-Uss also called Voorzhum, in whom she confides her feelings. Voorzhum is an elderly Digger who proceeds to tell Edhadeya that the earth people have always revered women and know that the Oversoul and the starmaster are not in themselves deities, but rather are people who intercede between the deity and the peoples of the earth.

Edhadeya again talks to her father, King Motiak, who reveals that he has been seeking wisdom from a device known as The Index, an object which allows communication between the Keeper, the Basilica, and the human peoples, when seeking information about the gold leaves of Ilihiak. The Index has told him that Akmaro will be brought to Darakemba, and thus validates Edhadeya's feelings.



Aboard the Basilica, the Oversoul and Shedemai are amused by the fact that the Diggers hold them in great reverence, and indeed remember them. Shedemai reveals to the Oversoul that she is lonely, feels isolated from humanity, and wishes that she could interact with the people of Earth.

Meanwhile, while the people of the Akmari have not been freed by Monush, their deliverance comes in a different form. The operation of charity and nobility on Didul has caused a sea change in the Pabulogi of the Elemaki. Didul has managed to convince his brothers that they should listen to Akma's father, Akmaro, and Akmaro has again become a priest. He teaches literacy and his interpretation of the teachings of the Keeper of Earth to the sons of Pabulog, and his influence is spreading throughout the Elemaki.

The effect this has on his son, Akma is profound; he is riven with jealousy and anger. Akma feels as though he has been cheated of his vengeance by his father and mother, and that Didul has usurped his place in the eyes of his father. The chapter ends with Akma full of doubt and seething anger.

## Chapter 4 Deliverance Analysis

In this chapter, we see again the continuing themes of prejudice and intolerance, as well as a discussion of doubt, moral behavior and the development of Akma's character.

The Zenifi are portrayed as an intolerant people and the reader is led to believe that they should be brought towards the libertarian society of the Darakemba by interposing scenes of their intolerant attitudes towards the sky people with scenes of the young Mon learning from his sky person teacher Bego.

The themes of ignorance and doubt continue in this chapter as we are introduced to the mystery of the Opustoshen and the earliest human writing that is older than all of the living creatures' languages. Doubt and ignorance are also expressed by Akma at the end of the chapter as he questions his father's actions. We, as readers, are led to reflect that we can always have doubts over any situation and that doubt and confusion are essentially man-made attributes.

The character of Edhadeya starts to act to highlight the plight of women in the human population of Earth, and she herself becomes an avatar for female development, wit and intelligence. The development of her insight and pursuit for truth becomes, in itself, a metaphor for the struggle of all women to reclaim their place their society.

Another characteristic of this chapter is the development of the character of Akma as he starts to really exhibit the darker aspects of the theme of hunger that we first saw associated with his character in Chapter One. This hunger for vengeance is contrasted against the hunger for knowledge exhibited by Didul and his brothers. Hunger itself is seen to take many forms and sometimes can be motivated by anger, jealousy and vengeance, in which case, in the narrative of the book it becomes an obsession.



# Chapter 5 Mysteries

## Chapter 5 Mysteries Summary

In this chapter, the author starts to reveal to the characters the history of the earth they inhabit and hints at greater mysteries. It starts a number of months after the Zenifi have entered Darakemba and have become a part of the Nafari people, but tensions are still in existence.

Mon is studying with his sky person teacher, Bego, who is lecturing Mon about the history of Earth with reference to the new gold leaves discovered by Ilihiak of the Zenifi. Bego is testing Mon as to whether his truth sense can determine the facts behind his theories as he is investigating the mysterious language contained in the gold leaves. The language seems to be akin to an ancient inscription familiar to Bego, which is known as the Coriantumr stone. The Coriantumr stone is the earliest recorded written inscription, and has baffled the historians of Earth up until now. Using the gold leaves and Mon's truth sense, Bego uncovers that the Coriantumr stone references a name (presumably a great leader), and a fight or a terrible battle that resulted in the bodies of the Oputoshen.

Here, Mon starts to wonder why his father, Motiak, cannot use the Index mentioned in the previous chapter to translate the Coriantumr stone and the gold leaves, which then leads Bego to reveal his speculations about the Oversoul and the Index. Bego believes that the Oversoul, the creature they believe is looking after the earth instead of the Keeper, is actually fallible, and that there are gaps in his/hers/its knowledge, which is why the Index cannot translate the inscriptions. Bego alludes to the beliefs that the Oversoul is not a part of the Keeper or the deity of Earth, but is itself a machine, an idea which is heretical to Nafari culture.

Mon and Bego then petition King Motiak to use the Index with reference to what they have discovered from the Coriantumr stone, and this time they bring Edhadeya with them as the two humans who seem to be touched by the Deity. Through the course of the night Bego and King Motiak manage to translate a good portion of the gold leaves, which reveals that the Coriantumr were a race of humans who were at war with another race, that they were brought to the lands of the Earth by the Keeper, and that remnants of their armies must have fled to the mountains and eventually become the ancestors of the Nafari, Zenifi and the Elemaki. This goes against accepted teaching that the humans had always lived in their accepted region, and that history had only started with the Nafari peoples. King Motiak concludes that the gold leaves and Index have together and worked to send him a message;

"To warn us that people can be brought to Earth by the Keeper, and yet be such miserable specimens of humanity that he has no more use for them and allows them to wipe each other out" (Mysteries, Chapter 5, King Motiak talking about their discoveries, Page146).



This discovery leaves Motiak wondering how he should be acting as King, especially with the new influx of the Zenifi people who are still at odds with the non-human races of Darakemba. The discovery also troubles Mon, who is shocked to learn that the Oversoul is in fact a machine, and that all of history has been manipulated by the Keeper of the Earth. He protests to his sister Edhadeya that the Keeper should not have the power to pull the strings of humanity, and his sister replies that rather, they may be understood as working in concert with the Keeper of Earth.

The scene ends with the mysteries and the confusions undiminished, however, as King Motiak has a vision of Akmaro, sent by the Keeper of the Earth, and prays to the Keeper to return Akmaro from his daughter's visions to him.

High above the Earth, Shedemai and the Oversoul have been helped by the translation of the Coriantumr stone, since it fills gaps in the Oversoul's database and allows it to access its greater memory. It discovers that a subroutine, put there by the Keeper of Earth, has been running which did not allow it to investigate the history of Earth before its records. As it is now armed, it stops the subroutine and reveals to Shedemai that indeed there once were other races of humans who were brought to Earth by the Keeper, descended from Arabic tribes. These tribes succeeded in wiping each other out, and so the Keeper continued to bring the starships, one of which is the Basilica containing the Oversoul, back to Earth.

The chapter ends with the continuing story of the Akmari family, where now the Pabulogi are friends with Akmaro much to Akma's disgust, and now live according to Akmaro's law following his visions sent from the Keeper. Akmaro has a dream where the Keeper of Earth sends him to Darakamba and King Motiak, and he decides to lead his people back to the Nafari. Eventually, they make it through the mountains, where, instead of being ceremonially baptized in the river, Akmaro declares that his people are already new people having taken the word of the Keeper, their deity. King Motiak recognizes this and allows them to cross the bridge. After counsel, King Motiak declares to all the people that within Darakemba there shall be no slaves, that the Keeper of the Earth is their deity, and that Akmaro is now the high priest of the Nafari. Akmaro then receives many people to baptize in his teaching of the Keeper.

## Chapter 5 Mysteries Analysis

Chapter Five continues the themes of doubt and confusion seen earlier in the book, and also discusses the religious concept of Revelation. Revelation is the idea that the will of the deity is revealed at various times to humanity through the lessons of history. This idea is encouraged by the author allowing the reader to see the discoveries of Shedemai and the Oversoul, and also the discoveries of Mon and Bego, thus forming a more complete picture of the history of Earth, while the author keeps the actual characters in doubt. That doubt exhibited by the characters, particularly the human ones, is focused on the two principle actors in the story, Mon and Akma, as they begin to question the Revelations of the Index, the teachings of Akmaro, and the implied revelation of the Keeper of Earth.



# Chapter 6 Disillusion

## Chapter 6 Disillusion Summary

Chapter Six begins with the new priest of the Nafari, Akmar, traveling to all the teaching houses of Darakemba and answering the complaints and the doctrinal disputes held there. He travels to the teaching house of Didul and the other sons of Pabulog who themselves have become priests of the Keeper after the teaching of Akmaro. Here Akmaro discovers that there is still prejudice and segregation among the Diggers, the sky people, and the humans, as well as between the men and the women of each species. Akmaro is furious and troubled that the old prejudices have not died down with the new unification of all the peoples and have, indeed, intensified as some priests will not teach Diggers, most will not teach women and men equally, and now the sky people and the humans are starting to become segregated. Akmaro realizes that there are now many teachers who are claiming to have true dreams, and teaching opposing versions of the will of their deity, the Keeper. Akmaro theorizes with Didul that the prejudices are a result of there being too many people of all the races in the Darakemba, and that the containment of so many different groups has inevitably led to strife.

Meanwhile the reader discovers that Mon and Akma are now fast friends as they are both studying with Bego and spending a lot of their time discussing the new developments in their Society. Mon, led by Akma, is discussing with Bego the meaning of the gold leaves discovered earlier and the revealed history that there were other tribes of humanity of Earth before the Nafari. They approach their old scholar Bego with the idea that there might not be a Keeper of Earth, and that none of the histories revealed to them from the gold leaves and the Index actually needs a deity in order to make sense.

In the discussion that follows we see that Akma is the principle behind the idea, and that he explains that if there were humans on Earth before, then the Nafari and the Zenifi might have descended from them and that the story of the Oversoul and the Basilica might be made up. Furthermore, there is no especial kinship between the Diggers, the Sky People and the Humans, since they do not all share a deity who created them and brought them together. From this point, they reason that the races should be split and that each should have their own King. The two young men, Akma and Mon, realize that their ideas are treasonous and that they cannot ever bring them to fruition while Mon's father, King Motiak, is alive; but Akma and Mon swear that when their fathers pass on they will institute their ideas. Also in this chapter, we see Luet, Akma's sister, and Edhadeya, Mon's sister, discussing their suspicions about their brothers. They believe their brothers are hatching plans and that they are exhibiting attitudes that are not in keeping with Akmaro's teachings.

At the end of the chapter, we again see the development of Shedemai and the Oversoul. While the months have passed on Earth, Shedemai has become ever more

lonely and has eventually decided that she will return to Earth, safe with the knowledge that she cannot be harmed while wearing the cloak of the Starmaster.

## Chapter 6 Disillusion Analysis

This chapter concerns itself with developing the themes implicit in the preceding chapters: those of revelation, doubt, and confusion. As the reader listens to the competing characters of Akmaro and Didul, Mon and Akma, we are presented with different versions of the truth of the Keeper, and asked to assess and contrast which one is true from our standpoint of being outside of the narrative and privy to the discussions of Shedemai and the Oversoul.

Another theme being explored here is that of prejudice and, in particular, racial prejudice or, in the case of this book, species prejudice. In the conversations between Didul and Akmar, we can see the damages that segregation is having on the followers of the priests, splitting each group from each other, and enhancing each group's feelings of victimisation and moral superiority. When the reader arrives at the discussions between Mon and Akma, we begin to see how this prejudice begins and what form it can take. By utilizing their versions of historical narrative, Akma and Mon are trying to substantiate their plan for a complete segregation of the species forgetting that, in the beginning of the story, all of the races were segregated. We remember the Digger taskmasters and the Akmari family, the Digger slaves in Darakemba. In our understanding of this theme, we can easily see that the separatist beliefs of Akma and Mon are actually, in fact, due in part to their experiences as children (for Akma memories of how he was beaten when he worked as a slave, and for Mon as he remembers his disillusionment that he could not fly and become one of the Sky People).

We see echoes of the hunger theme described in the first chapters, since both Akma and Mon were hungry for something better, that, when they realize that their dreams do not match up to their desires, become hungry for power and respect.





# Chapter 7 Rasaro's School

## Chapter 7 Rasaro's School Summary

Chapter Seven begins with the further teachings of Akma and Mon, where Akma is seen as the motivating force behind these treasonous and heretical teachings. At this point in the story, Akma and Mon have recruited Mon's older brothers to their beliefs and the discussion involves Akma convincing them that the different species should be separated when their fathers have passed on and they are the ruling elite. Throughout this conversation there is trouble, however. Underneath the surface we are allowed to see the conversation from Mon's perspective as his truth sense keeps informing him that there is something very amiss with their discussion. The end of the discussion leaves Mon still in agreement with Akma but secretly troubled about what his conscience is telling him.

Word of the sons' uprising has reached Khideo, the once-advisor to Ilihiak of the Zenifi, who talks to his old friend Ilihiak about the heretical beliefs. It is revealed that Khideo has a lot of sympathies for Akma's teachings, and wants to split from the Sky People and the Diggers and put an end to Akmaro's teachings. Ilihiak refutes his old friend, reminding him that Akmaro is the primary teacher of the Keeper, and that he will have to speak to King Motiak about this strife in his country.

Elsewhere in Darakemba, we are taken to Edhadeya's narrative and see the rest of the events from her eyes as she takes Akma's mother, Chebeya, to a new school that has sprung up in the capital city. Rasaro's School is a new institution set up by Shedemai the Starmaster, who has returned to Earth and is now teaching heretical teachings to all the races of Earth and, in particular, women.

Edhadeya goes to investigate the new school, where she meets Shedemai who takes her on a tour of the house. Here she is amazed that all the races are mingling, and that women are afforded equal respect to men. She even finds that her old teacher Voorzhum, or Uss-Uss, is there as a respected teacher, and rejoins her affectionately. Although she is refused entry to learn from the school because she is too old, Shedemai allows her to come back and work voluntarily and thus learn while she is there. When asked how she can teach these things, Shedemai implies that she is old enough to know the original heroes from Earth's history, and that the teachings of the Keeper are far different from what is currently being believed by humanity. At the end of this scene, the guards arrive at Rasaro's School and charge Shedemai with offenses of heresy, against teaching women and Diggers, and against her claims of having direct knowledge of the Keeper in contradiction to the doctrines of the priests. Knowing that she is on trial for her life, Edhadeya and Chebeya are scared for Shedemai, who refuses to give up her teachings or flee the City. This is because, while she is wearing the cloak of the Starmaster, she cannot be harmed by mortal weapons. Shedemai takes it upon herself to go to trial and to directly contest the accepted doctrinal teachings of the priests.





## Chapter 7 Rasaro's School Analysis

In Rasaro's School we see the undercurrent of conflicts, prejudice, and doctrinal disputes starting to boil over, as the Zenifi people represented through Khideo are starting to segregate themselves from the Sky People, the Diggers and Akmaro's teachings. This motif of conflict carries on with Mon feeling dishonest and troubled by his involvement with Akma, and is finally reflected by Shedemai's school being directly opposed by the accepted elite.

In the previous chapter, we were introduced to the notion of segregation, at first developed by Akma, and in this chapter we again see it in Khideo's beliefs and we can start to feel the dangers of Akma's teachings coming into existence. This idea is directly opposed by the vision of Rasaro's School, which the author uses to contrast the other side of the argument - a place of unity and libertarian equality between races, species and genders. The reader is given a vision of what society could be like as espoused by Shedemai, and also the nightmare of what it could become as seen in Akma's vision.



# Chapter 8 Trials

## Chapter 8 Trials Summary

Chapter Eight starts with Didul talking with his older brother Pabul before the start of the trial of Shedemai. Pabul, who was once one of the oppressors of the Akmari family, has now become a judge in Nafari society. Like all of the Pabulogi, he is a reformed character and, during their conversation, we learn that neither Didul or Pabulog want to try Shedemai, realizing that her crimes are really insignificant and the trial is being used by the enemies of Akmaro to put a stop to his teachings. Didul then leaves to visit the house of Akmaro to inform him of what they have surmised.

At Akmaro's house Didul finds Akmaro, Chebeya, Luet and Edhadeya. We discover that Akmaro, as the prime priest of the Nafari, actually supports Shedemai's teachings, and is angry about the trial. The women Chebeya, Edhadeya and Luet all support Shedemai too, because they are becoming more involved with Rasaro's School. The conversation turns to the conflicted relationship between Akmaro and Akma, whom they suspect of being behind the trial. Once Edhadeya and Didul leave, Edhadeya presses Didul for the truth about his obvious feelings for Akma's sister, Luet.

The chapter progresses with the trial of Shedemai, with Pabul presiding as the judge of the case. Shedemai is called to account for her teachings and she defends herself in open court. Her accusers are fronted by a scholarly sky person, who claims that she is guilty of confusing the genders by teaching a mixed school and by naming her school after a female sage from history. Shedemai retorts, exhibiting a far greater knowledge of history, the law and the origins of words than anyone else, and this part of the case is successfully thrown out. On the greater charges of undermining the authority of the priesthood, she again retorts and shows her accusers to be fools. Pabul the judge intervenes, stating that it is clear that her accusers are trying to claim the life of a teacher by using the death sentence of the court and twisting her words to do so - itself an offense against the teachings of the Keeper, and he sentences her accusers to the same fate, that of death.

Shedemai is cowed, not wishing any harm to even her accusers. The court is adjourned, while in the crowd Akma too is subdued since he had been about to be called forward as an accuser and would have shared their fate if he had.

Akmaro leaves to discuss the matter with King Motiak, who confesses that he is in support of the reformist Shedemai but can do little other than challenge the official position of the priests and scholars of the Darakemba. He appoints Akmaro as the head of all teachings, and declares that the Trial of Shedemai to be a doctrinal, not a criminal matter. This then leaves Akmaro upset since, in the future people can not be told to do what is right by a court, but merely enter into a doctrinal dispute. He also knows that, once he has cleared Shedemai of the charges — as is his right as head priest— his

temples and teachings will be splintered, with one camp following him and Shedemai, another following the conservative teachings of Shedemai's accusers.

## Chapter 8 Trials Analysis

This chapter is one of the turning points in the development of the book, and in it we see that the author is highlighting the difference between the concept of temporal justice and divine justice. The chapter begins with Shedemai standing accused of directly challenging the temporal or social norms of the Nafai, the mixing of the sexes, and the gaining of direct wisdom of the Keeper of Earth without the intermediaries of the scholars and priests. We understand that by doing this Shedemai had known that she would instigate a sea change in Nafari society, and had known that she would make enemies, but had also been confident that, as she knew the original teachings of the Nafari people, she would be able to show the modern Nafari culture just how mistaken it now was.

The ideas that Shedemai is expressing are the same ideas that are implicit in Akmaro, King Motiak, Ilihiak and Edhadeya - and so we see that Shedemai is not really challenging the morals of society, but rather the customs of it. At the end of the chapter, when we find out that King Motiak cannot even begin to try this case as a criminal case, we are shown some of the dangers of trying to implement religion and social justice. It would be absurd to punish people for not believing certain things, and yet we can see from Akmaro that he fears that society will descend into lawlessness and heresy if there isn't legislation about what the accepted teachings are.

From our perspective, outside of the narrative, we cannot help but agree with Shedemai and King Motiak, when we consider that the modern Nafari society is a very conflicted and unsure group, itself not really knowing its own history or what the will of the Keeper of Earth really is.



# Chapter 9 Persecution

## Chapter 9 Persecution Summary

In this chapter we see the after affects of Shedemai's trial and Akmaro's decision to not institute the death penalty for deviation from the state religion. In the intervening time between the last chapter and this, the Houses of the Kept have splintered and the Schools set up by Shedemai have spread through the provinces. We join the chapter to find an enraged Didul investigating the increasing tensions and outbreaks of violence that have spread throughout the Darakemba.

The Houses of the Kept and the schools of Shedemai have all become targets for thugs and vandals, each attempting to destabilize their teaching of Digger and Sky children as well as the free inclusion of women into equal education. When Didul interviews a city guard, even the guard agrees that the Digger children should not be included and taught in the Houses of the Kept, but qualifies his remarks before Didul that there should also not be violence. Didul despairs as he turns to Luet, now his lover, and they rush to where Shedemai is treating two badly beaten Sky Children and a near dead Digger child.

It is here, when Shedemai orders Luet and Didul to leave the room while she uses her powers as the Starmaster to heal the children, that Didul and Luet first begin to suspect that Shedemai might actually be the Shedemai from ancient history - a demi-godlike figure whom they believe was summoned back to Earth to fulfill the Will of the Keeper. When Shedemai is confronted with their belief, she laughs and reminds them that she is not the one who has True Dreams and instead has come to learn about the Will of the Keeper from those who do!

While Shedemai is treating the injured from attacks across the Darakemba, Edhadeya receives a visitor to Rasaro's School. The visitor turns out to be none less that Khideo of the Zenifi, who has seen the violence and has come to realize that his belief in the segregation of the species is wrong, and he wants to learn how to live with the other species from the teachers in Rasaro's School.

After months of teaching, and as the violence escalates, Edhadeya decides to confront Akma in the palace of King Motiak. There she finds him writing speeches in the library and wonders how ever she loved him. Edhadeya confronts Akma saying that his speeches and his rejection of the Keeper have inspired this violence, and that he should do something about it. Akma is furious. He claims that since the Houses of the Keeper still operate as a state religion, but that there are no penalties for disobeying or leaving the state religion, people feel frightened and offended that their traditional religion has changed and expanded to include the Diggers and the Sky People. Akma claims that King Motiak should dissolve the Houses of the Keeper as the state religion and decree that all matters of religion are purely personal.



Edhadeya is dismayed by this young iconoclast, and the argument ends with Akma angrily railing that Luet is about to marry his childhood torturer, Didul. When Edhadeya leaves and Mon overhears he is racked with guilt as he struggles to accommodate his truth sense, his conscience and his belief in the non-existence of the Keeper of the Earth.

## Chapter 9 Persecution Analysis

In this chapter the author is exploring the tensions between state and religion, and explores the question of how a society can ask its citizens to act in an ethical manner.

Previously, the House of the Kept, the scholars, and the priests had formed the state religion of the Darakemba; heresy was equivalent to criminality. In this phase it had been easy for the Nafari to legislate ethical behavior since it was either legal or illegal, but this had also led to institutionalized belief, prejudice and bigotry. With the dissolution of the death penalty, and the consequence from the Trial of Shedemai that a person should not be criminally tried for holding different views from the state religion, all of ethical behavior in the Darakemba has become up for debate. Religious attacks and hate-crimes are in a legal grey area, because they are neither supporting or disputing the powerless state religion.

We also see in this chapter the fruition of the prejudicial and the separatist teachings of Akma and Khideo. The inevitable outcome of rejecting the brotherhood of the species on Earth is the allowance of ignorance, hatred and jealousy as one faction perceives the other as a threat or a danger.



# Chapter 10 Ancient Ways

## Chapter 10 Ancient Ways Summary

In Chapter Ten, Akma is summoned to see King Motiak and wonders with his co-conspirators, the four sons of Motiak, whether he will be accused of a crime. We learn that Akma and the sons of Motiak are now almost ready to reveal their hand: a new teaching for the Nafari that will reject the teachings of the Akmaro and expel the Diggers from the Darakamba.

In his audience with King Motiak there ensues a debate between Akma and the King, and Motiak reveals that he has decreed as Akma has wished, that all matters of religion will now be private, and that everyone has the powers of free assembly and to teach what they want. When it seems that Akma has won, King Motiak summons the others asked to attend the audience, BeGo the sky person scholar, and Akma's father Akmaro. King Motiak questions BeGo and, with the evidence supplied by Edhadeya, reveals that BeGo had been working with Khideo to disrupt the new teachings of Akmaro, and that BeGo had been leading the sons of Motiak away from their belief in the Keeper. BeGo confesses to this, but Akma and his cohorts will not recant their beliefs, and even when Akmaro, his father, questions him, Akma still remains proud that he will preach his own teachings of the segregation of the species. King Motiak decrees that no member of this new teaching will ever meet with King Motiak again, and he will only mingle with those members of the Houses of the Kept. Akmaro also decrees that Akma will bring doom to all of Darakamba, since his words will inspire war and, just as happened with the Rasulum, the Keeper will wipe out the humans of the Gornaya in disgust. None of these pronouncements deters Akma and the sons of Motiak from their teaching that night.

Later that day, after the decree of the King, all the people of the Darakamba are invited to the first assembly of Akma, including the Shedemai and the Houses of the Kept. Shedemai and her select followers, with some trepidation, go to hear the teachings of Akma, where he reveals his true purpose; that the teachings of Akmaro have deviated from what he calls the 'Ancient Ways' of the Keeper, ones in which he sees the different species of Earth being totally separate. Akma claims that the Diggers were naturally members of the Elemaki and that they never wanted to become civilized with the Nafari. He says it would be better if they were relocated to the mountains of the Elemaki where they will toil as a separate culture. This is met with great applause from the general audience, and Shedemai is dismayed at the stupidity of the people. Finally Akma reveals that he does indeed believe in the Keeper, but it is a naturalized force of nature rather than an active, interventionist force that sends True Dreams to some and not to others. Knowing that society will change forever, and perhaps be plunged into warfare between the Nafari and Elemaki, Shedemai leaves the conference of Akma and returns to the school of Rasaro where she is met by a distraught Edhadeya. Shedemai tells Edhadeya that all is not lost, that the princess of the Nafari is in fact sad because a part of her still loves Akma, and the fact that she loves Akma and has the opportunity to perhaps change his heart is something to cling to.



## Chapter 10 Ancient Ways Analysis

In Chapter Ten, the author shows us the abuse of power and the use of rhetoric in the support of prejudice and fascist views. By seeing the rise of Akma and the public rhetoric that he uses by playing to peoples fears and their ignorance, the author is drawing parallels with some of the fascistic regimes of European history.

By allowing the reader to see the narrative from Shedemai's and Akma's inner points of view we can see the real reason behind Akma's hatred. He seeks revenge for his treatment as a child and his perceived lack of bestowed grace from the Keeper. His real motivations are also made clear. He wants to wage a war against the Elemaki, and the lands where he grew up will one day be a place where the Elemaki will become slaves under Nafari taskmasters. The cycle of Akma's character seems complete, as the hunger for recognition and respect he exhibited as a child has now become a desire for vengeance and power.



# Chapter 11 Defeat

## Chapter 11 Defeat Summary

The chapter begins with the conversation between King Motiak and his second wife, as they discuss what to do about Akma and his new Ancient Ways teaching. King Motiak argues that something must be done and decrees that no Digger should have to leave the Darakemba, and that it would be a crime to not employ or to persecute the Earth People in any way. This decree changes little, since the Diggers still lose their jobs and have to be fed from the royal food stores.

In confusion, King Motiak consults with Akmaro and his wife Chebeya, riding out from the palace flanked with royal guards and spies. There follows a conversation in which King Motiak wonders what he should do about Akma and sends for Edhadeya. He asks Edhadeya, as the only one left able to speak to Akma with the possibility of him listening, to go on a final errand of peace between the two camps. Seeking counsel from Shedemai, Akmaro and Pabul, King Motiak discusses whether he should have Akma assassinated and is perhaps overheard by the city guards, a proposal that Shedemai firmly refuses. King Motiak can see no way out of the quandary other than outlawing or imprisoning the Ancient Ways adherents, and again Shedemai muses that this will also lead to civil war amongst the Nafari.

In the end, it is Chebeya who reveals the only sensible plan: that they must pray to the Keeper of Earth to intercede, not as they have prayed before to bring Akma around to their way of thinking, but rather just for the justice of the Keeper of Earth upon Akma - whether that means he will die or not. The characters decide that it is out of their hands and that there is nothing that they can do that will not further the bloodshed, and so must believe in their faith in the Keeper of Earth to perform its will.

Still concerned, Shedemai leaves for the Basilica starship to consult with the Oversoul over what she can do. The Oversoul suggests that she reveal her power as the Starmaster, but Shedemai again decides not to interfere, because this may only cause Akma to become even more angry. While she sleeps aboard the Basilica, the Keeper sends Shedemai a True Dream. This dream reveals to Shedemai what she must do, and reveals to Shedemai the mind of the Keeper. The Keeper shows the Starmaster that the magma flows underneath the Earth are all emitting magnetic energy that the Keeper can manipulate, and that the Keeper has been manipulating the development of planets across the entire universe, guiding the different tribes of humanity on the different worlds. She reveals to Shedemai that it is now time for all the different tribes of humanity to return to Earth, and find there a population ready to assimilate or be taken over by the newcomers. The Keeper shows her that Shedemai must reveal herself to Akma and, at that time, the Keeper will also reveal itself as the true power over Earth. Upon waking, Shedemai tells the Oversoul that it is time for the tribes of humanity to return, and the Oversoul sends out a probe to the other Oversouls overlooking their own guardian worlds. Shedemai prepares herself for her task.





## Chapter 11 Defeat Analysis

In Chapter Eleven the author finally reveals the will of the Keeper of Earth that has only been speculated before. The Keeper of Earth is still a mysterious figure, but is presented something akin to a God or a supreme being in the Universe, who guides the development of all the intelligent races so they can live together in harmony and freedom.

On the surface of the Earth, the decision presented to King Motiak is the final decision of the conflict between religion and state: should the state step in and eradicate or negate dangerous elements within its own society, when those dangerous elements threaten greater violence? If the state does so, then it is implicitly understood that freedom of thought and religion would be curtailed, and only possibly with the approval of the state.

The characters in this chapter must finally reach a resolution where they no longer want to change their society according to how they see fit, but accept that sometimes their society must change for the good of the future, and not individual whims. This is perceived in Akmaro's emotional decision to stop praying for his son's survival and change of heart, and instead pray for his son to receive justice and the consequences of his actions.



# Chapter 12 Victory

## Chapter 12 Victory Summary

On Earth, Edhadeya reaches the assembly of the Ancient Ways and finds Mon, whom she chastises for turning away from his own truth sense. Mon knows that what she is saying is true, but he is lost in internal doubt as he struggles with the truth of what Edhadeya is telling him and the charming influence of Akma. Edhadeya tells Mon that they might be in trouble, because the King thinks his own soldiers will try to assassinate them, and especially Akma. She slaps him for his disgrace and leaves.

Amidst the newer members of the Ancient Ways, Mon tells Akma his sister's warning, and Akma responds with pride that any attempt to kill them would only make them martyrs and that their victory would be complete. While they revel in their pride, at that moment the launch pod from the Basilica descends into the Assembly grounds and appears to the Ancient Ways group as an explosion. Emerging out of the wreckage is a figure made of dazzling light, which speaks to the Assembled, asking them why they have turned away from the Keeper of earth and why they are trying to cause division in the Keeper's species. Mon and the other sons of King Motiak immediately fall to the ground and beg forgiveness, wild with terror, and Mon admits that he had known all along that the Keeper of Earth was real but that he had turned away from his truth sense out of pride and jealousy. The figure made of light extends a hand and sends lightening bolts into the form of Akma, before entering the strange object and launching off again.

Believing Akma dead, the sons of Motiak weep and mourn before Mon realizes that Akma is not in fact dead, and decides to take his friend to Shedemai the healer. On their way they are accosted by the true believers, the Kept, who show nothing but kindness to Akma and try to help him. Upon meeting Shedemai, she examines Akma and realizes that he is indeed not dead, but rather kept in a form of stasis for unknown reason.

Meanwhile, the narrative jumps to Akma's perspective, and we see the event from his eyes. Akma had known that the Keeper would show its hand and realizes that a part of him is puzzled as to why it hadn't happened earlier, and why the Keeper had not previously sent him True Dreams like the ones sent to his friends. Akma is electrocuted by the Keeper-as-Shedemai and he experiences total, complete aloneness. The Keeper sends him dream after dream as he is in his isolation, at first experiencing the complete dislocation from all other creatures which is the opposite of the inter-connected welfare of the Keeper. Then Akma travels through the mind of each beaten Digger and the thug who did it, following the chain of events as they lead back to him. Last of all the Keeper allows Akma to see the entirety of itself, as it did for Shedemai, and Akma begs for forgiveness as he realizes how interconnected all of nature is.

At the end of the chapter, Akma wakes up to the faces of his father Akmaro and his mother Chebeya, from whom he begs forgiveness and falls into a recuperative sleep.

## Chapter 12 Victory Analysis

In this chapter, the author delves into the character of Akma and we see as readers that Akma has always felt alone and dislocated from his family, and it is this aloneness that is expressed in the theme of hunger. This yearning and aloneness is seen as both a positive and a negative force, as it inspires characters like Edhadeya to move closer to her friends and the Keeper, in the form of Shedemai, but it also can cause characters like Akma to reject what is offered to him and become more and more isolated, and in a sense a victim of his own segregation. Separatism and isolation are seen as the real 'sins' or great crimes in the eyes of the Keeper.

In the chapter, we also see the characters beginning to become aware of themselves as characters in their own historical narrative. This technique allows the author to show his characters that they are parts of their own story, and that their actions matter to its development. This is in contrast to the entire previous book since the different story lines for each character were separate and not allowed to fully realize the significance of their actions. In this way, the style and structure of the book echoes and represents the plot itself as the main character of Akma becomes fully integrated into the rest of the story.



# Chapter 13 Forgiveness

## Chapter 13 Forgiveness Summary

In the final chapter, the events concentrate around the character of Shedemai and her School of Rasaro. We discover that Shedemai still feels pangs of loneliness, and this is tempered by her increasing yearning to stay among the people of Earth and continue running the School of Rasaro and its attendant sub-schools. In her conversations with the Oversoul, the Oversoul asks her why she wants to stay and whether the small frustrations of life are annoying her. Shedemai realizes that the small frustrations of life are all exactly what the Keeper of Earth itself is involved in - they are the little things that tie the people together.

Voorzhum, formerly Uss-Uss, the slave of Edhadeya, comes to Shedemai's office and tries to cajole her into revealing that she really is the Shedemai of ancient legend, a fact that Shedemai will not reveal. Voorzhum reveals that she has had a true dream of a human man holding hands with a human woman, an elderly Sky Person and an elderly Digger woman. Shedemai realizes that this must be a vision of Akma, who is now recovered and is journeying to the School of Rasaro. Shedemai plans for Edhadeya and Voorzhum to meet him at the gates and sends for one of their students, the conspirator BeGo.

When Akma arrives, a vast audience has gathered as a result of Shedemai's intention that the spectacle would spread far and wide and halt the suspicions of the bigots still left among the Nafari. BeGo confides to Akma that he had been imprisoned and kept away from all books and libraries, an isolation that forced the scholar to re-evaluate what is truly important to him, his connection with his students. Akma apologizes to Voorzhum and her people. Outside, they all hold hands and the story concludes.

## Chapter 13 Forgiveness Analysis

In this chapter, the author reveals the inner message at the heart of his book: that isolation is the enemy of happiness, and all division and separation is itself a sin. By giving the character of Voorzhum a True Dream, the author is stating that even the other species of the Earth all have access to the Deity, the Keeper of Earth, and all play a part in the harmony of the Earth. Through the character of Shedemai, this theme is investigated as her character is removed from its self-imposed isolation as the Starmaster, and she has decided to stay on Earth as the governor of the School of Rasaro.



# Characters

## Akma

Akma is the son and eldest child of Akmaro of the Akmari tribe of humans on Earth. Raised in captivity to the Elemaki and the Pabulogi, the story focuses on Akma's feelings of mistrust and betrayal as he struggles to learn how to live with his former enemies and new friends.

At the start of the book Akma is a young boy whose father is a renegade priest, and it is for his father's crimes that Akma and his family are kept in captivity. During his childhood, he is beaten by the Digger taskmasters and humiliated by the Pabulogi - an assault he finds it difficult to ever forget through the course of the book, until the Akmari eventually find their way to freedom.

Akma develops as a young man who is full of doubts over what is the 'right course of action' and we see him being fueled by resentment over the treatment of his sister and his family, to the extent that he even turns against his own father when his father chooses to forgive their once-persecutors.

Akma becomes a fast friend, although a malign influence, to King Motiak's son Mon, and with him they try to overturn the new understandings supported by his father and the King, and it is in the end of the book that Akma's plans and inner turmoil come to resolution.

The story of Akma is really a study of the personality, what drives people, and what drives people to perform cruel or malicious acts. We see Akma wracked by a hunger for prestige, respect and love, but he cannot articulate how he needs these things, and so becomes obsessed with his own perceived injustices. The character of Akma is depicted in contrast to the other characters — most notably Mon, but also Edhadeya.

## Mon

Mon is the third youngest son of the four children of King Motiak of the Nafari, who live in riches in the Darakemba. This story follows Mon's development as he moves from childish dreams and fascinations, through to the difficult moral and social questions that pervade his life.

As a child, Mon is presented to the reader as a young princeling of good bearing and noble intentions. He has the gift of Truth Sense, which means that he can instinctively detect the truth of any statement uttered to him, a facility which aids him and also provides him with turmoil throughout the book since the truths he can feel are not necessarily in keeping with his father's law.



As a boy, Mon desires to be one of the winged Sky People, and this sense of frustration and disappointment fuels his later turning against the other sentient races — the Diggers and the Sky People — in the development of the book. However, Mon, thanks in part to his truth sense, remains a hopeful and noble character as compared to Akma and Khideo, who never feel right with his intrigues and politics..

Mon himself develops along the story line as one of the most notable characters, and it is his struggling with the truth and with doubt that is at the heart of the story, as he at first blindly believes accepted wisdom, then rejects it entirely, before finally finding his own emotional resolution.

## **Edhadeya**

Edhadeya is Mon's younger sister, the youngest of the three children and only daughter of King Motiak of the Nafari. She is presented to the reader as an honorable and stubborn child, who feels dissatisfied with her position in society as a woman and whose journey takes her from dissatisfaction to discovery of her own sense of power.

Edhadeya grows up as a princess in the Darakemba and is the natural confidant to her brother Mon, with whom she shares unusual abilities among humanity. She, however, is gifted with having True Dreams, or dreams which are believed to be messages from the deity of the peoples in the book, an invisible being called the Keeper of Earth. Through her having these True Dreams, the entire course of the book is set, as she guides her father to rescuing the Zenifi people which in turn allows the disparate tribes of humanity to be reunited.

In her development, Edhadeya realizes that, as a woman, she has an inferior role in Darakemba society - and her frustration and isolation is shown in comparison to the similar feelings found in her brother Mon and in her friend Akma. Edhadeya, however, finds solace in Rasaro's School, and it is through contrasting her choices against her brother's and Akma's that we can understand the real tensions at the heart of the story.

## **Shedemai**

Shedemai is the Starmaster of the Basilica starship that orbits the Earth and is tasked with taking care of the Earth underneath it. Shedemai herself is the last human character from a previous book, who is kept in cryogenic slumber for hundreds and thousands of years at a time before being woken up by the Ship's sentient computer, the Oversoul.

Originally distanced from the humans she observes below her, Shedemai feels isolated and alone, and struggles to find empathy with the modern race of humanity as she mourns for her own long dead family and children. This isolation compels her to try to provoke the deity - the Keeper of Earth - into action by conniving with the Oversoul to upset the plans of humanity on Earth, all in an effort for the Keeper of Earth to show his or her hand and to show Shedemai what she should be doing.



Through the course of the story, Shedemai begins to empathize with the plight of Edhadeya and the Diggers on Earth, and thus intervenes, traveling to the Darakemba to found a school to start imparting the original teachings of her people, in direct opposition to the priests of the land. It is this confrontation which forms the tipping point for social change in the entire book.

As a character, Shedemai acts as a plot device in the way she presents a different perspective on the actions and motivations of the people on Earth, and can verify or falsify the claims of the people below. She herself has the same issues of frustration which plague the characters, but whereas Akma is tortured by these feelings and Mon is confused, Shedemai is spurred into action and through her actions we can understand the themes of conflict and doubt which serve as an undercurrent throughout the book.

## The Oversoul

The Oversoul is technically a computer program who controls the Basilica starship orbiting the Earth. It is charged with looking after the inhabitants of Earth and its resident Starmaster, Shedemai, and is believed to have been created by the Keeper of Earth, although it has programmed ignorance built into its circuits so it cannot know its true origins or history.

As a character, the Oversoul is not meant to have emotions or character development, but acts as a narrative point through which the reader can put into perspective the actions of the humans on Earth. It, itself, does seem to have similar character tensions to the other human characters in the story, as it shows itself to be frustrated that it cannot complete its programming because its computer memory has been damaged.

## Akmaro

Akmaro, the leader of the Akmari tribe of humans, is a renegade priest at the start of the story, whose teachings most resemble the original teachings of Shedemai and the Keeper of the Earth. At the beginning of the novel, Akmaro is in captivity along with his family and his people by sons of Pabulog and the Elemaki.

Akmaro resolves to show strength and to continue teaching his beliefs, although he and his family are punished for it. Eventually, however, he manages to convince the Elemaki of the truth of his words and he leads his people to freedom in the Darakemba, where he is greeted as a brother by King Motiak. In the latter part of the story, Akmaro is instituted as the head priest of the Darakemba and struggles against the peoples' opposition, fear and prejudice as his beliefs come into conflict with the social norms.

Akmaro's relationship with his son Akma forms one of the focuses for the development of his part in the story, as we understand that the two are estranged and each has failed in being able to relate to the other. It is this relationship between father and son that is the key to understanding Akmaro's character.



## Chebeya

Chebeya is Akmaro's wife, mother of Akma and Luet. While she is kept in captivity Chebeya rebels against her oppressors, shaming Didul and the sons of Pabulog of their treatment of women and the weak, and is understood to be a righteous character in the story. Throughout her development with the narrative, Chebeya stands as a moralistic but usually reserved woman, who cares more for her family and their welfare than for politics. It is only when her family is threatened or when the conflict caused by Akma becomes too great that Chebeya starts to step forward as a main character in her involvement with Shedemai and Rasaro's School.

## Luet

Luet is Akma's sister, youngest child and daughter of Akmaro and Chebeya. She starts the book in captivity alongside her family and the rest of the Akmari, and it is the threats against her by the Elemaki that causes Akma to first rebel and sparks his lasting hatred of the sons of Pabulog. Luet is seen as a sister-character to Edhadeya, although she is more reserved than her counterpart.

## King Motiak

King Motiak is the chief of the Nafari tribe of humanity, and descendant of the line of Heros depicted in previous books of the Homecoming Saga — the same Heros to which Shedemai is related. As the leader of the Nafari, he is the keeper of The Index, the object which allows him to ask questions of the Basilica's records and gain insight into the will of the Keeper of the Earth.

King Motiak acts in this book as a leader in a time of great change for the Nafari, when the disparate tribes of humanity are reunified, resulting in great social change. He is necessarily a reformist figure, who encourages his people to change their prejudices and habits, but who has to tread the fine line between maintaining the peace and encouraging change.

## Bego

Bego, or bGo in Sky People speech, is an elderly winged Sky Person who acts as a scholar and tutor to the children of King Motiak. Through the course of the story Bego discovers, with the help of Mon and, in part, Ilihiak, the true meaning behind the Rasulum Leaves, and his speculations on their meaning in part fuels Akma in his disbelief of the Keeper of Earth.

Bego is portrayed as an intelligent, wise figure, but one who is, however, still tied to the past. His scholarly investigations have encouraged him to speculate on the existence of the Keeper of the Earth, and the implied suggestion is that Bego has sympathies for the





separatists who want the Diggers and the humans kept separate, with their own rulers and kingdoms.

## Voorzhum (Uss-Uss)

Voorzhum, introduced at the start of the story as Uss-Uss, is an elderly Digger (known as Earth people), who is a house servant to King Motiak. Voorzhum forms an especially close bond with the young Edhadeya, and together they have a teaching relationship similar to the one shown between Mon and Bego. Through the course of the story, Voorzhum tells the young princess about the Digger legends of the Keeper and the history of Earth, which are in opposition to the accepted views of the Darakemba. Later in the book, Voorzhum is recognized by Shedemai as a valuable seer and acts as a teacher in the Rasaro School, where Edhadeya finally learns the inner meaning of her teachings.

The character of Voorzhum and the relationship she has with Edhadeya is set up through the story in comparison to Bego and Mon, and the reader is asked to contrast the two different styles and motivations of these characters.

## King Ilihiak

King Ilihiak starts the story as the chief of the tribe of humanity known as the Zenifi, who are held in captivity by the Elemaki, and not allowed to travel beyond their own borders. It is not until King Motiak sends a rescue party led by his son Monush that the Zenifi come back to join the Nafari in the Darakemba.

King Ilihiak is a similar figure to King Motiak, in that he is also a reformist figure. When he first encounters Monush of the Nafari he reveals to him the scandalous history of the Zenifi and the discovery of the Rasulum leaves in the Optushen. After the reunification of the tribes of humanity, Ilihiak forms a bond with Akmaro and supports his reforming efforts, himself becoming a mediator between the more prejudiced Zenifi and the rest of the Nafari.

## Zhideo

Zhideo starts his career as the chief counselor to Ilihiak when he is king of the Zenifi in captivity. He is depicted as a manipulative figure, a believer in all the traditional values of the Zenifi including the segregation of all the sentient races of the Earth, and indirectly opposes the teachings of Akmaro later in the book. Upon the reunification of the tribes of humanity Ilihiak resigns his kingship of the Zenifi in deference to King Motiak, and Zhideo takes his place as the chief of the Zenifi population in the Darakemba. We learn that Zhideo is distrustful of the Nafari and King Motiak, and is secretly working against the teachings of Akmaro by his involvement in the trial of Shedemai.

## Didul

Didul is the third youngest son of Pabulog, the leader of the Pabulogi tribe of humanity otherwise known as the Elemaki. At the start of the book, Didul is a typical Elemaki, who uses the Diggers as servants and the Akmari as slaves. At first he is used by his father and elder brothers to taunt and humiliate the son of Akmaro, Akma, which results in a lasting hatred on Akma's part.

Through the course of the story, Didul grows as he is shamed by Chebeya, Akma's mother, and himself yearns to feel respect and to be accounted as noble. This yearning leads him to Akmaro's teachings, and from there he encourages the rest of the Pabulogi to do the same. As a changed character, Didul follows Akmaro as a teacher in the new teachings of the Keeper and rejoins the Nafari society later in the book as a respected priest.

Didul's character throughout the book is placed in contrast to the characters of Akma and Mon, as someone who started off a rogue and a mean character and becomes an honorable person. As such, he is motivated by noble intentions, whereas Akma is motivated by fearful ones.



# Objects/Places

## The Basilica

The Basilica is the orbiting starship containing the computer program, the Oversoul, and programmed by the invisible creature/deity, the Keeper of Earth. The Basilica and the Oversoul come from the planet Harmony and are drawn to Earth by the Keeper, where they involve themselves in the life of the humanity of Earth in the preceding novels of the Homecoming Saga. At the start of Earthborn, the Basilica is regarded by the inhabitants of Earth as a fixed star, and onboard it currently houses the Starmaster, the ancient human Shedemai.

## Darakemba

Darakemba is a region ruled over by the Nafari, under King Motiak at the time of the start of the story. Darakemba is located on the Gornaya region of Earth and is understood as the last vanguard of the original human races. At the start of the story, Darakemba is an alliance of two sentient species — the winged Sky People and the Middle Peoples, the humans — who live in peace; underneath them are the Earth People, the Diggers, who are held as bonded servants.

## The Gornaya

The Gornaya is the large plateau ringed by mountains that is home to all of the sentient species on the Earth. Thought to be the most life-sustaining region of Earth, it acts as a melting pot for all the groups, cultures and ideologies on Earth.

## The Opustoshen

The Opustoshen mentioned in the story is a large desert-like region outside of the Gornaya thought to be harmful to all forms of life whether Earth, Sky or Middle peoples. During the course of the story, it is discovered that the Opustoshen contains the remains of many thousands of human bones, presumably the scene of a large battle, and is also where the Rasulum Leaves are found.

## Rasaro's School

Rasaro's School, named after one of the ancient Heroines in an earlier book of the Homecoming Saga, is a teaching establishment created in the course of the story by Shedemai the Starmaster, as an answer to the divisive teachings of human priests. It is situated to be especially close to the poor Digger people's tunnels, and to encourage perches for the winged Sky people to have access alongside the humans.



## The Index

The Index is a round ball held by King Motiak of the Nafari, and is linked to the Basilica and the Oversoul. The Index acts something like a personal computer, where the King can communicate with it and receive answers from the Oversoul's data records. The link is not infallible, however, because King Motiak does not know how to use The Index fully. Through the course of the story, the Index is also shown to be some kind of link to the deity, the Keeper of Earth, as King Motiak receives visions and instruction directly from the Keeper.

## The Coriantumr Stone

The Coriantumr stone is an ancient stone inscription held by the previous generations of Sky People scholars, who claimed that it was narrated to them by a long lost human long before the tribes of the Nafari ever appeared in the Gornaya.

## The Gold Leaves of Rasulum (the Rasulum Leaves)

The Rasulum Leaves are the inscribed gold leaves found by King Ilihiak of the Zenifi when their people traversed the edges of the Gornaya. They contain an unknown language similar to the Coriantumr stone in the Darkemba and, through the course of the story, it is revealed is actually an account of a previous human settlement on Earth, the Rasulum tribe.

## The Nafari

The Nafari people is a collective name for all of the tribes of humans on Earth, and also refers to the directly descended group, led by King Motiak, who rule the Darakemba. They are depicted as the most civilized, and the ones who are closest to the historical teachings of the Keeper.

## The Zenifi

The Zenifi are a splinter tribe of the Nafari, who are a broken tribe from an old conflict between the Nafari and the Elemaki. The Zenifi, at the start of the story, are held in bondage by the Elemaki and themselves exhibit the prejudices against all the other sentient races and species of the Earth.

## The Akmari

The Akmari are an enslaved tribe of people held captive by the Pabulogi and the Elemaki. They are named after and led by Akmaro the high priest, who in the book



stands as the noblest individual who is a recipient of the Keeper of Earth's original teachings.

## **The Elemaki**

The Elemaki is a collective term for the tribes of humanity which are depicted as the 'enemies' in the story of Earthborn. They are depicted as ignorant, controlling and evil by being led by the Pabulogi or renegade humans who are in alliance with an evil tribe of Diggers. The Elemaki directly oppose the Akmari and the Zenifi by enslaving both tribes of humanity.

## **The Diggers**

The Diggers are another sentient race on the Earth, depicted by their greater strength, claws, and the fact they dig and live in tunnels. The Diggers have their own earth-based religion that still has reference to the Keeper of the Earth and are depicted as some sort of marsupial-type creature. Throughout the story, the Diggers are either seen as cruel and ignorant, or as slaves to humanity.

## **The Sky People**

The Sky People are a winged sentient race who inhabit the Earth alongside humans, envisaged as something similar to bats or other flying mammals. The Sky People are in alliance with the Nafari, but are treated as enemies by the Zenifi and the Elemaki. The Sky People are renowned scholars who hold the oldest histories of Earth.



# Themes

## Religion

One of the major themes throughout the book is the revelation and appreciation of Religion or Spiritual truth, exemplified by the suggested actions of the Keeper of the Earth as he/she/it tries to guide the disparate tribes of humanity to live in harmony with the other intelligent races of Earth, the Diggers and the Sky People.

While it is not called Religion, but 'teachings' in the Saga of the Homecoming, spiritual wisdom plays a constant role as each character reviews whether they are acting according to the teachings and the Will of the Keeper of Earth, or whether they are deviating from it. In particular, we see Mon 's character coming into conflict as he struggles with the idea of the god-like figure of the Keeper of Earth, believing a childlike version of it/her/him before disbelieving in the Keeper, but constantly being reminded by his conscience that he is deviating from the truth of the Keeper's existence.

Religion is presented in a number of lights through the development of Earthborn, and is variously contrasted against History, the scholarly teachings of the priests of the Nafari, and the prejudices of the characters throughout the story. True spiritual wisdom is shown as only being able to be understood by the individual on a psychological level, since every time the spiritual teachings are applied to history in the questions BeGo and Mon have about the Rasulum Leaves and the Coriantumr Stone, doubt and speculation arise. Similarly, as the characters try to apply spiritual wisdom to society when Akmaro tries to institute the Houses of the Kept, there results the backlash against Rasaro's School and the trial of Shedemai. The spiritual wisdoms, revealed through True Dreams and truth sense to Edhadeya, King Motiak and Akmaro, are contrasted to the teachings of the scholars, who themselves display a prejudiced view against women, against the unification of the different races, and against the fact that anyone can have access to the Keeper through the experience of a True Dream.

## Prejudice

Prejudice plays a key role as a theme throughout the saga of the Earthborn. In the beginning of the story we are introduced to the prejudice displayed by the Pabulogi and the Elemaki against the Akmari, who are held as slaves and treated harshly with beatings, insults and humiliations. Later on in the book we are introduced to the theme of Prejudice in the form of the conservative views of the Zenifi, who cannot live in peace with the other sentient species of Earth, the Sky People and the Earth People known as the Diggers, to such an extent that when the tribes of humanity are finally reunited in the Darakemba, the Zenifi chief, Khideo, seeks to destabilize the status quo by encouraging the prejudiced views of the Nafari scholars and priests, persecuting Shedemai.



Through the development of the book the situations change for the characters. The Akmari and the Zenifi are freed and the Nafari receive a new priestly teaching, but the facts of prejudice still remain the same. Through the development of the characters we come to understand that prejudice has its roots in the emotional needs and fears of the people. When both Akma and Mon come, at one point in the story, to propose a segregation of the different species of the Darakemba, a manifestation of their prejudice, we understand that these views stem from their need for recognition, respect, and their fear of change.

The course of the book can be called a study in the root causes and the negative affects of prejudice on individuals and society, as Shedemai is persecuted for teaching women and Edhadeya is ignored for being a woman, as Voorzhum the Digger teacher and BeGo the Sky Person teacher in the Darakemba are both gently ridiculed by the young children of King Motiak. The elite establishment of the priests of the Nafari oppose Shedemai and the School of Rasaro because they fear that their position at the head of Nafari society will be challenged, and are scared of all the changes that are happening to their society. This fear turns to hatred as they turn on Shedemai and seek to try her for heretical teachings and sue for the death penalty.

## Hunger

Hunger is used as a theme throughout the book to describe the emotional motivations of the characters in Earthborn, especially Akma, Mon, Edhadeya and Didul. In particular, the character of Akma starts the story as being affected by a physical hunger resulting from his life as a slave to the Elemaki. This hunger continues through the story as he cannot find a deeper kind of sustenance - the satisfied and sated feelings of respect and confidence. Akma struggles with the teachings of his father as they do not provide him with the respect he feels that he deserves after his ordeal, and his hunger for respect turns to a hunger for power and revenge.

The characters of Mon and Edhadeya also exhibit this trait. They start the story as pampered, well provided-for children of the King of the Nafari, but still are hungry for personal fulfillment. In Mon's case, he feels dissatisfied with his fate as a human and inability to fly, and desires that he could be like the Sky People. For Edhadeya, she is hungry for respect and recognition, and feels that she cannot speak up for herself because of the views that the Nafari have about women in the society of the Darakemba.

The course of the plot describes how each of these characters fulfills their hunger, in useful and misdirected ways. Mon turns against his Sky Person teacher BeGo when his hunger for respect and freedom cannot be fulfilled, before finally understanding that he must realize what intrinsic value he has as himself, rather than what he is not. Edhadeya struggles to satisfy her yearning by learning and studying under Shedemai - effectively finding ways to satiate her hunger. Akma has a more difficult task ahead of him, since his efforts at revenge and power are foiled when his friends become more

content and favored. His journey has to deal with his hunger for fatherly love and recognition.



# Style

## Point of View

In the course of this book, the author uses several points of view from multiple narratives, but all of them share the similarity that they are all from the third person stance; by moving between these different narratives the complete story is revealed to the reader.

The initial point of view is the narrative of Akma, as we are allowed to understand what he is thinking and feeling while he is held in captivity by the sons of Pabulog of the Elemaki. This immediately allows the reader to understand his subsequent actions through the story. The point of view of Akma is met by the narratives of Mon and Edhadeya in the Darakemba as they are allowed to perceive visions of Akma's life, making them similar to the reader in having a glimpse at the meta-plot of the story. The author repeatedly uses the technique of contrasting the unreliable narratives of the characters against each other throughout the story to reveal the underlying themes of Religion, Prejudice, Revealed Wisdom and Hunger.

Each of the major characters, at one time or another, is made a central point of view at different times through the course of the book, and thus reveals a little more of the story entire. For example, in the start of the book Didul is an antagonist whose actions form the character of Akma but, later on when Didul has become a reformed character in the Darakemba, we perceive the Trial of Shedemai and the teachings of Akmaro through his eyes.

These different narrative points of view allow the reader to understand why each character acts as they do, and what effect their actions has on the feelings of the others. Even Shedemai and the Oversoul, who are, at first, occupying the gods-eye view of looking down upon Earth from the Basilica starship, themselves become subject to other character's perspectives, as Shedemai's actions at the School of Rasaro are seen through Edhadeya's and Akmaro's eyes.

The repeated suggestion of the unreliable narrative is implied throughout the text, as even the characters of Shedemai and the Oversoul cannot see the actions or the motivations of the Keeper of Earth, and themselves are subject to doubt, confusion and misdirection. It can be said that the author is exploring the themes in this book from each character's perspective, but he also makes it clear that everyone is an unreliable narrator. By suggesting the existence of the Keeper of Earth, the author is implying that indeed there is an omniscient third person narrative but the characters of the story and the readers both are unable to see it. In that sense, the reader joins the characters in their doubt and confusion over the true will of the Keeper and its motivations.



## Setting

The story of *Earthborn* takes place on the planet of Earth, in a number of locations, the choice of which becomes highly significant to the implied message of the story entire. The story shifts between the fertile region of the Darakemba, controlled by the Nafari tribe of humanity, to the surrounding regions of the Gornaya. The Gornaya is understood to be the only life-sustaining place on Earth, and is ringed by tall mountains - beyond which lie mysterious unknown lands and the terrible wasteland of the Optushen. The mystery of why the Gornaya is the only life-sustaining place on Earth, and why all three of the different sentient races (the Humans, the Diggers and the Sky People) are kept contained within this region is suggested through the book and reveals one of the essential mysteries at the heart of the book.

Inside the Gornaya, however, we are introduced to an important distinction: outside of Darakemba and within it. The peoples who start the story outside of the Darakemba are all presented as being plagued by troubles; the Akmari have become slaves, and the Zenifi are encircled by the Elemaki. It is only when these two groups manage to travel to the Darakemba is it possible for them to attempt to live in peace. In this sense, the Darakemba region is used as a goal of the tribes of humanity, and also as a melting pot within which the author can start to explore the underlying themes of the book.

The other setting used in *Earthborn* is that of the Basilica, the crippled starship orbiting Earth, and housing the Starmaster Shedemai and the computer program, the Oversoul. The setting of the Basilica is used as an alternate point of reference from which we can view the regions of the Gornaya, its surroundings and the Earth entire in a way to understand the hidden messages of the book and reveal the Earth's history. In this way, we can describe the Basilica setting as a plot device used by the author through the course of *Earthborn*.

## Language and Meaning

In the story of *Earthborn*, the author has developed an intricate picture of the language of the tribes of humanity on Earth, and the differences and variances of words come to play such an important role that it can be said that language itself becomes a recurring motif through the course of the book.

The language that the author uses is straightforward and emotive. The characters describe their feelings and their emotions with ease, and use simple descriptors such as "I feel isolated..." This technique is employed by the author because he is seeking to describe how each character's actions effect and have ramifications on the other characters. This straightforward emotive style encourages the reader to empathize with each character. Even when some of the characters exhibit distasteful views we are allowed, by understanding their emotions, to see why they are acting as they are.

As the narrative moves from character to character, the choice of language changes accordingly. Akma uses strong, declaring statements which belie the fact that he is



feeling very frightened, alone and powerless in the face of all the change going on around him. Both Edhadeya and Mon display strong emotive language, letting the reader know that they are used to being heard because they are the children of the King of the Nafari, and when Mon has to use misdirection and rhetoric to express his dissatisfaction in his lectures with Akma, we are allowed to see that he feels unhappy and untruthful. Shedemai, on the other hand, uses direct language reflecting her great wisdom and age, and describes the fact that she is less caught up in the emotional dramas and confusions of her younger counterparts.

The choice of the terms used by the characters, 'ro' for teacher, 'da' as a term of endearment, also becomes important as the story progresses. The right - or wrong - choice of words leads the characters into conflict with the establishment as Shedemai is put on trial for naming her school Rasaro's School rather than Rasa's School, because Rasa was a historical woman, and 'ro' is generally understood as a masculine form of 'teacher'. When Chebeya uses the term 'da,' it is understood by Akma as a rebuke, since for him it appears to be belittling him when in fact it is not.

## Structure

The structure of the novel is the progression of thirteen chapters, each roughly equal in length but within which we can detect broad changes. In the first three chapters, we switch narratives from outside of the Darakemba, and concentrate on each individual character's development to the next stage in the story, where the tribes of humanity are united and there they must resolve their interpersonal and psychological conflicts. The second half of the chapters (from chapter seven onwards) concentrate on the actions of the people within the Darakemba, and the narrative of the Oversoul almost completely stops.

Inside the chapters, the structure is presented by the author as different narrative points of view, contrasted by the narrative of Shedemai aboard the Basilica at the start of the novel. While each narrative is usually kept separate and is unknown to the other, the reader is allowed to switch between them and see the hidden effects of each one on the next.

As the story progresses, the structure changes subtly, and instead of switching between the different narratives quickly and allowing comparison between them, it concentrates on fewer scenes with fewer points of view. In this way, the development of the themes and the inner motivations of the characters is deepened as the author concentrates more on the intricacies of each character's emotions.



## Quotes

"The evil humans who had joined with the Diggers and lived in their dank caves and ate the Sky people they kidnapped and murdered."

Chapter Two, True Dreams, page 2

"Akma wanted to ask his father if everything else Pabulog's sons said was true, too, but he dared not, for he wouldn't know what to do with the answer. If they were right, then his father was an oathbreaker and so how could he trust anything he said?"

Chapter One, Captivity, page 17

"'Was it - the Keeper who spoke to you?' asked Edhadeya.

'Who knows?' said Father. 'Maybe it was fatherly pride. Maybe it was wishful thinking. Maybe it was the voice of the Keeper...'"

Chapter Two, True Dreams, page 44

"As for Didul, Akma imagined a long confrontation between them: with Didul finally pleading for his life.."

Chapter Three, Resistance, page 63

"'The Truth has been hidden from me, but I know the Keeper is involved in all of this.'"

Chapter Three, Resistance, page 77

"'I won't rest until father admits how disloyal he's been. Admits that he loves them more than me, and that it's wrong for him to have been so unnatural as to forgive them without asking me first...'"

Chapter Four, Deliverance, page 126

"'To warn us that people can be brought to Earth by the Keeper, and yet be such miserable specimens of humanity that he has no more use for them and allows them to wipe each other out.'"

Chapter 5, Mysteries, page 146

"'I don't want to be part of the Keeper, that's what I don't want to be a part of. Who knows or cares what he's planning?'"

Chapter Five, Mysteries, page 153

"'...the next king will have a kingdom in which Diggers are not citizens. This will encourage the newly freed Diggers to leave and return to Elemaki territory where they belong.'"

Chapter Seven, Rasaro's School, page 209

"'Beating a teacher isn't unbelief,' Didul would say, 'It's assault.'"

Chapter Nine, Persecution, page 286



"She saw all at once more than forty worlds that had been colonized from Earth, and all of them being watched by some kind of Oversoul, and all the oversouls being watched by the Keeper."

Chapter 11, Defeat, page 365

"'I've been alone,' he said, unable to explain more of his experience in solitude than that. 'I'm done with that.'"

Chapter Thirteen, Forgiveness, page 415



## Topics for Discussion

What role does doubt play in Earthborn? What characters exhibit the most doubt about the Keeper of Earth? Why are they in doubt? Is doubt necessarily a bad thing?

What role does the theme of Hunger play in Akma's character, and how does it influence his actions?

Is the Keeper of Earth a necessary character for the story? What is the author trying to say by using the figure of the Keeper of Earth?

What effects does prejudice have on Nafari society?

Discuss the role that religion and spiritual belief plays in Earthborn. What are the characters' relationship to it? How does the book try to convince the reader of religious dogma?

Why does Mon turn away from his truth sense? What motivates him to follow Akma?

Discuss the role of women in the course of the book. When does Edhadeya begin to feel slighted for being a girl? Examine the characters of Chebeya, Shedemai and Luet.

In what way can Shedemai and the Oversoul both be said to be unreliable narrators? What is an unreliable narrator?

Why is King Motiak in doubt over what to do with the Akma's Ancient Ways Movement?