

# **Enchantment Study Guide**

## **Enchantment by Orson Scott Card**

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# Plot Summary

Enchanted is a novel by fantasy writer Orson Scott Card. In this novel, Ivan Smetski is only ten years old when his father decides to embrace their Jewish religion in order to move his son from Kiev to America. During a brief stay at a cousin's farm, Ivan finds what appears to be a sleeping woman in the middle of a chasm. Years later, Ivan returns to the chasm to see for himself that it was only a fantasy. However, Ivan is surprised to find that the girl really exists and is being held captive by a large bear. Ivan wakes the girl and goes into her world, beginning an adventure that will take him physically and emotionally beyond anything he has ever believed himself capable of. Enchanted is a modern fairy tale that relies heavily on the Russian fairy tales that often ended badly for the prince and his princess, leaving the reader on pins and needles until the final pages.

Ivan is ten when his father tells him that he must be circumcised and embrace their Jewish heritage. Ivan refuses until he sees his father undergo the circumcision that he has so dreaded. After Ivan's surgery, his father begins to arrange for the family to leave Ukraine, to escape the oppression of the Russian government and embrace the freedoms of America. However, it takes time for the visas to come through. Ivan and his family find themselves homeless and left to the mercy of family and friends. Eventually they come to live with Cousin Marek for several months as they await their future.

Ivan runs, often running for miles and miles each day. Ivan discovers the soft leaf bed of the forest and enjoys running through the trees. One day, Ivan discovers what appears to be a perfectly round meadow with a raised portion in the center. On the raised portion, Ivan catches a glimpse of a pretty woman. At the same time, Ivan sees a motion in the leaves around the raised portion, revealing a chasm. Ivan becomes frightened of the creature in the chasm and runs away. A short time later, Ivan's family leaves for America.

Ivan becomes a star athlete and a scholar like his father. When Ivan graduates from college and begins working on his master's, his father suggests he pick a title for his dissertation that he can research in his native Ukraine. Ivan is resistant at first because he has become engaged to a nice Jewish girl, but later agrees. Ivan spends more than a year in Kiev studying Russian fairy tales, often forgetting write letters home to his mother and fiancée. When Ivan is done, he decides to visit his Cousin Marek and put to rest the nightmares he has had from the chasm in the forest.

Shortly after arriving at Cousin Marek's, Ivan finds himself at the chasm. Ivan discovers a bear in the chasm guarding the beautiful girl. Ivan manages to hit the bear in the head, causing it to lose an eye and distracting it long enough for Ivan to jump onto the platform where the girl rests. Ivan wakes the girl with a kiss and she instructs him to propose marriage. When she accepts, the bear disappears.

The girl takes Ivan across a bridge only she can see and to her home village. There Ivan learns he must marry the girl who the evil Baba Yaga will steal her kingdom.



However, on the day Ivan and Katerina are married, a friend overhears a plot to kill Ivan. Katerina and Ivan run away to Ivan's time. There, they discover that Ivan's mother is a witch and she knows many spells that help Katerina in the fight against Baba Yaga.

Back in Katerina's time, Ivan and Katerina wage their own battles against Baba Yaga. Ivan gives Baba Yaga's husband, Winter Bear, a message from his mother's teacher that breaks the bond between them. Baba Yaga loses a great deal of her power, making Katerina stronger than her. Katerina defeats Baba Yaga, forcing her to leave the area. Katerina and Ivan later have four babies and raise them in both worlds.



# Chapters 1-3

## Chapters 1-3 Summary

Enchantment is a modern fairy tale that is based on many of the fairy tales that come from Russia, including the evil witch Baba Yaga.

In Chapter 1, Ivan learns that his parents have decided to embrace their Jewish heritage. Ivan is given a Jewish name, Iztak Shlomo, and told he will have to be circumcised. Ivan leaves the house and runs for miles to escape the circumcision, but after his father has one and he learns a Jewish story in which a warrior had a whole city circumcised before attacking, he decides to go through with it. Shortly after, Ivan's father loses his job and the family is homeless. They are forced to move in with family until their visas come through. While living with Cousin Marek and his wife, Sophia, Ivan continues to run, but this time for pleasure. Ivan loves to run on the leaves in the forest. One day, Ivan finds a perfectly round meadow where he discovers a platform that holds a beautiful woman. Around the platform is a chasm in which Ivan can see a creature moving under the leaves. Ivan becomes afraid and runs away. A short time later, the visas come through and the family moves to America.

In Chapter 2, Ivan and his family settle in New York where Ivan's father gets a job working for Mohegan University. Ivan grows up a star athlete in track and field. When Ivan's father pushes him to be a stronger student, Ivan rebels. When left to his own devices, however, Ivan is a star student and chooses to get his master's degree so he can be a professor like his father. Over the years, Ivan has fallen in love many times, but his mother has always predicted that it will not last. When Ivan meets Ruth, he feels it is lasting love, but his mother tells him he is already committed to someone else and should not become engaged to Ruth. His mother also tells Ivan to never tell Ruth his true Jewish name. Ivan finds this silly and does the opposite. Ivan feels strong in his relationship with Ruth. Ivan does not hesitate when the opportunity comes up to go to Russia and do research for his dissertation.

In Chapter 3, Ivan goes to Kiev and spends his days reading old fairy tales and doing research on the old stories. In time Ivan finds himself forgetting to write letters home to his parents and Ruth. Ruth visits Ivan's parents often, but Ivan's mother feels that Ruth is not meant to be Ivan's true wife because she is not interested in having children with him. Later, when Ivan has finished his research, he decides to visit his Cousin Marek's farm again to put to rest the nightmares that have haunted him since he was ten, the chasm with its creature under the leaves. Before leaving Kiev, however, Ivan visits the neighborhood where he once lived with his parents. At the home of Baba Tila, a woman his mother once visited often. There Ivan finds a piece of paper that says simply, deliver the message. Ivan does not know what it means, but he puts it in his luggage so he might show his mother when he returns home.



Cousin Marek and his wife welcome Ivan to their home. Ivan helps out around the farm and tries to stay busy. One morning, while going for a run, Ivan finds himself going to the chasm just to prove to himself it is not really there. He is surprised to find it really is there, just as he remembers it.

## Chapters 1-3 Analysis

Ivan is a young Ukrainian boy whose father can see in the political atmosphere of 1970s Ukraine that something big is about to happen. For this reason, Ivan's father, Piotr, knows he must get his son out of Ukraine. Ivan's father decides to embrace the Judaism that he has never really cared much about before so that he can use it as an excuse to leave the country. This causes some turmoil in the family, but it also causes turmoil outside the family when Piotr loses his job and the family loses their home. Piotr and his wife, Esther, lose everything they have ever cared about in this change, but they do it because they love their son.

Ivan sees a girl on a pedestal in the forest and thinks he sees a creature under the leaves in a chasm around her. Ivan does not understand this and for fifteen years he believes it was a nightmare, a trick of his imagination. However, when Ivan returns as a grown man, he discovers that the girl and her pedestal are real, as is the creature protecting her. Ivan is a grown man, a man of great intelligence who has just spent more than a year researching a dissertation on the validity of Russian fairy tales. This man finds himself pulled into a real life fairy tale that he is not sure he is prepared to deal with. At the same time, Ivan is already engaged to another girl for whom he believes he feels great love, but the reader suspects he does not.



# Chapters 4-5

## Chapters 4-5 Summary

In Chapter 4, Ivan begins to run in a circle around the chasm because he notices that the creature in the chasm follows him and by running the creature is causing the leaves to leave the chasm. Eventually Ivan can see the creature is a very large bear. Ivan tries to figure out a way to distract the bear so that he might reach the girl. Finally Ivan decides to just run and hopefully tire the bear out. After running for most of the day, Ivan begins to see that the bear is growing tired. Ivan takes a rock that the bear threw at him and throws it at the bear, hitting it in the head and causing it to lose an eye. Ivan then uses his skills at long jump to jump over the chasm and reach the raised area where the girl lies on a wooden bed. Ivan is exhausted and falls asleep. When Ivan wakes, the bear is attempting to get onto the raised mound with him. Ivan kisses the girl, figuring this is her fault and she should be awake to see him die. The girl tells Ivan to ask her to marry him in Old Church Slavonic, a language he only knows because he and his father spoke it as a game when he was a child. Ivan asks and the girl accepts. Immediately the bear disappears. Two bridges appear, one that only Ivan can see and another the girl can see. The girl urges Ivan to take her bridge, insisting that he must marry her. In America, Esther becomes aware that Ivan has left the world.

Baba Yaga is in her room when Bear, her husband, returns. Bear is angry that he has lost an eye and asks Baba Yaga to repair it, but she refuses. Baba Yaga is a witch who was once married to a king, so cruel that she once killed her only child to show her husband that she would not do what she was told. When her husband died, Baba Yaga took over his kingdom claiming her rights by widowhood. Baba Yaga then married Winter Bear because he is a god and she gains strength from his powers.

In Chapter 5, when Ivan steps off her bridge, his clothes disappear. Ivan asks the girl, Katerina, for her hoose so he can cover his nakedness. Katerina is deeply shamed by this, claiming that a man wearing a woman's clothing is unheard of. As Ivan continues to insist, Katerina hands over the hoose, but she continues to argue, refusing to look at Ivan. Finally Ivan gives up and throws the hoose into the chasm. They walk through the woods toward Katerina's kingdom, Taina. As they walk, Katerina begins to wonder if Ivan has been sent by Baba Yaga in another attempt to steal her kingdom. In the end, however, Katerina realizes she has no choice but to marry him in order to save the kingdom from the curse Baba Yaga placed on her. When they reach the village, the people cheer and Katerina's father, King Matfei, welcomes them both with open arms. However, King Matfei quickly comes to the conclusion that Ivan is not an ideal husband for his daughter—he is too small, too unskilled, and seems to be simple in the head. Ivan does not help himself when he tries to impose his modern day ideals on their ninth century world.

The king invites his knights to his house for a meal and a chance to hear Ivan tell the story of how he saved Katerina. However, before Ivan can tell the story, he sees a



woman choking and he saves her with the Heimlich maneuver. The woman's brother, Dimitri, does not appreciate Ivan touching her and tries to kill him, but the king saves him. In New York, Ivan's mother, Esther, searches all day for a black bowl. Esther uses the bowl to create a magic mirror in which she can see Ivan.

## Chapters 4-5 Analysis

Ivan manages to stop the bear by wearing it out and then hitting it with a rock. Ivan did not intend to ruin the bear's eye, but this happens anyway. Ivan then jumps across the chasm and wakes the girl with a kiss. The girl makes him propose and the next thing Ivan knows he is committed to marrying a girl he does not even know even though he is already engaged to Ruth. The girl has no pity for Ivan and finds him odd, not impressed with his athletic build or his lack of morality. The girl is shocked when Ivan wants to use a piece of her clothing to cover his nakedness. Ivan shows his character not only when he saves her, but when he puts up with humiliation in order to please her displeasure at his desire to use her clothing to cover himself.

Everyone in Katerina's world believes that Ivan is some kind of wimp because he does not have the classic large muscles and cannot lift a sword. However, Ivan saves the life of a knight's sister, but even this is seen as a disgrace when Ivan does it naked and by placing his arms around the woman. This is not a good beginning for a happily ever after.

At home, Ivan's mother seems to be aware that he has left her world and she worries enough to reach into her knowledge of witch craft to attempt to find him. At the same time, Baba Yaga, a famous Russian witch from fairy tales, proves to be behind the spell that caused Katerina to be asleep for thousands of years. Baba Yaga wants to have Katerina's kingdom and she will stop at nothing to steal it. Baba Yaga, however, has to do it through legal means or the Rus in Kiev will take it back from her. This is why Baba Yaga has cursed Katerina and created the situation that has led Ivan to finding her.





# Chapters 6-8

## Chapters 6-8 Summary

In Chapter 6, Katerina expresses her fear to her father that Baba Yaga has somehow sent Ivan to them. King Matfei, however, tells Katerina that he believes that Ivan has a king's heart. However, Matfei worries that Ivan does not have a king's mind and cannot lead his people into battle. In the forest, a weaver named Nadya gets a visit from an old woman she has befriended. The woman shows her a hoose and tells her that she saw the newcomer, Ivan, wearing it. This is very scandalous and Nadya agrees to ask her son, Sergei, about it. Sergei is a scribe for the local priest, Father Lukas.

The next morning, Brother Sergei wakes Ivan and asks him about the hoose. Ivan explains that in his world wearing something like that is acceptable and Sergei agrees to keep the information about the hoose quiet. Sergei also tells Ivan that he works as a scribe for Father Lukas and shows Ivan some of the letters he knows. Ivan is shocked to see that Cyrillic is already in use years before historians believed it was used. Later, Ivan meets Father Lukas and is shown a book of Gospels and is shocked to learn that it was copied in Cyrillic by Saint Kirill himself. Father Lukas dislikes Ivan, however, and believes he is not serious about being baptized as a Christian. Back in New York, Esther uses the water bowl and sees Ivan, alive and well, calling out for his father.

In Chapter 7, King Matfei is not pleased with Ivan's lack of skill with the sword and his attempts to use his own fighting methods to fight Dimitri. King Matfei tells Dimitri that it would be fulfilling the curse if Ivan were to die after Katerina became pregnant with a male heir. Dimitri takes this statement to heart. King Matfei feels bad at first and feels he should prevent Ivan's death, but then realizes it would be best for everyone if Ivan were to die.

Sergei becomes Ivan's primary teacher. Ivan asks Sergei to tell him some of the fairy tales common in the area and is surprised to hear more pure versions than the ones known in the modern world. Ivan knows that this kingdom ceases to exist at some point and that no written history of it ever survives. For this reason, Ivan asks Sergei to begin writing down the stories, knowing how important the discovery of such stories would be in the modern world. Sergei does not have access to sheepskin, however.

Katerina has been avoiding Ivan since his arrival. Ivan seeks her out one morning and asks her to help him get sheepskin, but she refuses. They argue and Ivan asks Katerina to take him back to his own bridge. Katerina refuses to do so until he marries her and breaks the curse. Ivan claims she is treating him like a slave and Katerina is forced to agree. Later, Ivan tells King Matfei he is ready to be baptized and that he wants Sergei to teach him in the king's house day and night so he can spend more time practicing with the sword. King Matfei agrees, unaware that Ivan wants this so that Sergei can copy his stories onto the blank places of Saint Kirill's parchments.



Baba Yaga. Baba Yaga is worried that Ivan might be more of a threat than she first assumed. For this reason, Baba Yaga asks her husband to kill him, but he refuses to do it in front of all of Tania. Baba Yaga then casts a spell on Dimitri, convincing him that all he has to do is kill Ivan on his wedding night and then claim the kingdom by marrying Katerina and claiming widow-rights.

In Chapter 8, Dimitri always thought he would be king, elected by popular vote, until the laws were changed by the Rus. Then Dimitri just assumed he would be king by marrying Katerina, until he failed to find her while she slept in the forest and then she returned with Ivan. Therefore, he is more than willing to kill Ivan and claim the kingdom by widows-right.

Ivan is baptized on Thursday and learns they will be married on Sunday. Ivan does not like the idea, feeling he is still committed to Ruth even though she will not be born for more than one thousand years. Ivan is also concerned about how he will bury the stories Sergei is writing in order to have them found in his modern world. On his wedding day, Ivan finds himself forced to go swimming with the king where he is subjected to humiliating jokes by the male members of the community. At the same time, Sergei overhears two men plotting to kill Ivan after the marriage is consummated. Sergei tells this to Father Lukas. Father Lukas in turn tells the story to Katerina because he likes her and he wishes to warn her. As they talk, a fire is started on the roof of the church and they barely escape before they are killed. Ivan wants to postpone the wedding due to the catastrophe, but the king insists they go through with it. The ceremony is simple.

## Chapters 6-8 Analysis

Ivan finds himself in a situation where he has to give up his home, his family, and his religion, all for a girl he barely knows. Ivan, though, shows his character when he goes along with everything in an attempt to help Katerina even though he gets the feeling she does not even like him let alone trust him. Katerina does not dislike Ivan, but she finds him somewhat wimpy and infeminate, things that are shameful in her world. For this reason, Katerina worries that Ivan is a trick by Baba Yaga to keep Katerina from breaking her curse. On the contrary, however, Ivan is a threat to Baba Yaga to such a degree that she begins to plot his death. Baba Yaga is not the only one. King Matfei also begins to plot Ivan's murder.

As Ivan finds himself in a strange world about to give up all that matters to him for a girl he does not know, he also discovers truths about history that even the best historians in his world are not aware of. Ivan knows that he will be famous if he can take some of the stories and writing of Katerina's world to his own, but it has to be buried and remained buried for a thousand years or no one will believe it is real. For this reason, Ivan works with Sergei, a scribe with the church, to write the stories down and try to find a way to preserve them for a thousand years. Therefore, Ivan is not completely selfless in his actions in Katerina's world, despite his amazing commitment to breaking a curse that has nothing to do with him.



# Chapters 9-12

## Chapters 9-12 Summary

In Chapter 9, Ivan finds himself alone with Katerina in the bridal suite where she tells him about the conspiracy to kill him. Katerina believes Dimitri is behind the conspiracy, implying that her father is also in on it. As they talk, Sergei shows up with the scrolls that he has written his story on that Father Lukas now believes have been burned in the church. Katerina tells Sergei to go to Father Lukas and tell him a lie to get him to come to the bridal suite. When Father Lukas comes, they plot to sneak Ivan out in Sergei's clothing so that Katerina can take him back across the bridge to his own world. Ivan is found out, however, when a child tells everyone that Ivan is trying to escape the village. Dimitri and other soldiers begin to chase him as Ivan makes his way into the forest, once again naked. Katerina follows along another path. When she and Ivan meet in the forest near the chasm, they are surprised to find that Sergei has also found his way there. Sergei gives Ivan some clothes. Katerina takes Ivan across the bridge and then insists she is going with him to his world. Sergei vows to wait for them to return.

Baba Yaga tells Bear all that has happened and vows to follow Katerina and Ivan into Ivan's world.

In Chapter 10, when Katerina and Ivan arrive in Ivan's world, Katerina finds herself naked. Ivan insists she take his shirt. Katerina argues and is shamed when Ivan forces her to wear the shirt. Ivan then leads Katerina through the woods toward Cousin Marek's house. Ivan is worried about how much time has passed between the day he left and now. As they walk, a truck begins to pass on the road. Katerina is frightened by it. Ivan has to explain how the truck works. Later, when they come upon Cousin Marek's farm, Katerina recognizes it as Taina. When they arrive at the door, Ivan is shocked to discover Sophia can speak Katerina's Slavonic. Ivan is even more shocked when Katerina recognizes Cousin Marek as the god, Mikola Mozhaiski, the god of sailors. Katerina argues all night with Mikola Mozhaiski while Ivan sleeps. The next day, Katerina and Ivan argue and Katerina agrees to give Ivan an annulment, which only makes him angrier. Later, Marek comes in and tells them that Baba Yaga followed them. When Marek announces he can do nothing to stop Baba Yaga, Ivan agrees to take Katerina to his parents in New York. Ivan even agrees to tell them they are married.

Baba Yaga uses a spell similar to the one Esther uses to see Ivan to travel to Ivan's world. Baba Yaga's magic is weakened in this new world and she is surprised by modern machinery. However, nothing deters her from trying to find Ivan and kill him.

In Chapter 11, Marek arranges for Katerina to have the appropriate paperwork to fly and they are ready to go in a matter of days. Katerina is still surprised by modern machines, but has no trouble riding in Marek's truck to the train station. Katerina also has no trouble with the train after Marek assures them Baba Yaga is not anywhere nearby. Katerina is frightened in the airport and vomits on the plane, but soon settles down



thanks to Ivan's support. When they finally arrive in New York, Ivan is unhappy to see that Ruth has come to the airport with his parents. Esther had tried to get Ruth to bring her own car, but she refused. Now Ivan finds himself forced to tell Ruth in the middle of the airport, in front of his parents, that he and Katerina are married. Ruth is humiliated and walks off, but Esther is beyond happy.

Baba Yaga follows Ivan and Katerina's trail by their smell. Marek follows behind, cleaning up the mess Yaga leaves behind. Marek believes Baba Yaga will give up when she discovers that Katerina and Ivan have taken a chair. However, Baba Yaga does not give up but uses a Shadow spell to hang out in the airport unnoticed until she figures out how to find Ivan and Katerina.

In Chapter 12, Ivan's parents are filled with questions and Ivan tries to fill them in as best as he can. At the house, Ivan notices that Katerina and Esther seem to be able to speak to one another without the need of words. At the same time, Katerina realizes that Esther is a witch because she immediately recognized the spells around the house that Esther has used to protect the house and the family inside. Ivan notices the same thing for the first time. At dinner that night, Ivan and his father get into a discussion about the things Ivan has discovered. Later, Esther shows Katerina to her room, explaining that Ivan does not feel comfortable sharing a room with her yet. Across town, Ruth struggles to deal with hers and Ivan's break up. While having her hair done a day or two later, a woman suggests to Ruth that she win Ivan back or get revenge. Ruth then runs into an old gypsy from whom she buys two potions, one to win Ivan's love and one to torture him.

Baba Yaga is exhausted from using her magic without the help of Bear's powers. However, she has had some success and hopes using Ruth will help her.

## Chapters 9-12 Analysis

Ivan and Katerina are forced to run away to avoid Ivan being killed by Dimitri or Baba Yaga declaring the curse in effect and stealing Taina. Katerina insists on going with Ivan, which surprises Ivan. From the beginning, Katerina struggles in Ivan's world, but handles it better than he handled her world. This helps Katerina get some insight into Ivan and his behaviors and allow her to get to know him a little better.

Katerina is surprised to discover that Ivan's Cousin Marek is really the god to sailors and good friend of her father, Mikola Mozhaiski. Ivan is also surprised by this news, but it seems to explain a few things to the reader. Perhaps this relationship is part of the reason Ivan was able to see the chasm when so few others could. However, it is helpful because Marek has some skills that will help protect Ivan and Katerina from Baba Yaga.

In the weeks that he has spent in Katerina's world, Ivan has managed to put thoughts of Ruth out of his mind. To the reader, this suggests that Ivan did not love Ruth very much. At the same time, Ivan begins to confess to feelings of love for Katerina, suggesting that he never loved Ruth, but has always on some level loved Katerina. Now Ivan finds



himself testing Katerina to see if she will confess her love for him, but his hopes are dashed at every turn. Katerina is a proud woman and has difficulties admitting her true feelings, but the reader believes that a declaration of love will more than likely take place at some point in this relationship.

Breaking up with Ruth could have been handled more smoothly on Ivan's part, but he had no way of stopping Ruth from showing up at the airport. For this reason, Ruth was humiliated and the witch is able to use these feelings against her. However, now that the reader knows that Esther is an equally strong witch, the reader hopes that Ivan continues to be well protected.



# Chapters 13-17

## Chapters 13-17 Summary

In Chapter 13, Ivan finds the note that he took from Baba Tila's house and takes it to his mother. Ivan's mother and Katerina do not know what the purpose of the note is and advice Ivan to keep the note with him so that when the opportunity comes to give it to the intended recipient, it will be nearby. At the same time, Esther suggests to Ivan that he learn all he can to help conquer Baba Yaga's army. Ivan begins doing research on making gunpowder and distilling alcohol for Molotov cocktails. A few days later, Ruth calls and asks Ivan for him and Katerina to go with her on a picnic. Ivan wants to make amends so he agrees, but because of the threat of Baba Yaga, he refuses to leave the house so the picnic is planned for the backyard.

One night, Esther takes Katerina into the backyard where they can use the black bowl together. Katerina sees her father has been taken prisoner and she learns that it is Dimitri who has done this. Katerina makes threats to the guards watching over her father and promises to return soon. A few days later, Ivan watches a neighbor boy flying a kite while waiting for Ruth. The boy's mother yells at him when he accidentally steps on her dog and Ivan intervenes on the boy's behalf. Ruth arrives and Ivan takes her into the backyard where she tries to convince him to eat a large chicken breast. However, the dog arrives and steals the chicken. The boy follows to ask if Ivan wants to fly the kite the following day and they discover the chicken has killed the dog. Ruth is wracked with guilt and destroys a pan of brownies that have also been laced with a potion. Esther sees a wasp purposely cover itself in the mashed brownie and then try to sting Ivan. Piotr saves Ivan by spraying the wasp with insect killer. That night, Baba Yaga wreaks havoc all over the city.

In Chapter 14, at dinner Katerina refuses to acknowledge Ivan's attempt to offer her his full support, causing him to feel shame in front of his parents. That night, Ivan has trouble sleeping and ends up outside on the back lawn. Ivan sees Katerina in the shed, but he does not say anything to her. Katerina follows Ivan upstairs and climbs into his bed. They consummate their marriage. The next morning, Katerina admits her love for Ivan. Later that day, they test out the weapons they have researched and chosen to use in Taina against Baba Yaga. At the same time, Baba Yaga has used a spell to listen to Ivan and Katerina and knows they are planning on returning to Taina.

In Chapter 15, Esther gives Katerina and Ivan a large number of charms to protect them on their return trip to Ukraine and taught Katerina several new spells that will help in the fight against Baba Yaga. On the first flight out of Rochester, Ivan and Katerina sense nothing of the witch and believe that they managed to deceive her. However, on the plane at Kennedy Airport, Ivan sense that Baba Yaga is using a spell to hide her in one of the bathrooms. Ivan insists on getting off the plane. Later, when the plane disappears over the ocean, Ivan and Katerina are interrogated by airport security, but later released. They spend the next two days on Long Island. Only after all the confusion and



they are preparing to catch their next flight does Ivan realize that they left a bag on the plane that included the note Ivan took from Baba Tila's.

After discovering that Katerina and Ivan are not on the plane, Baba Yaga decides to use Bear's magic to transport the entire plane back to her world. Baba Yaga then begins systematically killing all the passengers and crew.

In Chapter 16, ever since Dimitri took over Taina, Sergei and Father Lukas have lived in a small hut near the chasm. Sergei watches each day for Katerina and Ivan's return. When they do return, Sergei tells them all that has happened and Katerina and Ivan tell him all they know. Ivan then has Sergei gather supplies so that they might begin building their weapons. Sergei is even allowed to enlist several teenagers to help, young men who will become Katerina's druzhina. When they believe they have built up a large enough supply, Ivan and Katerina return to Taina. The people cheer after Ivan encourages the teenagers to go into the crowd and cheer. Ivan and Katerina skillfully force Dimitri to submit to his king and to renew his vow of loyalty.

Baba Yaga returns to Bear, who is less than happy to see her. Baba Yaga vows to kill Ivan and encourages Bear to kill the plane passengers, but he refuses.

In Chapter 17, they hold a war council that night with Katerina mostly running it since her father's tongue has been shrunk in a spell by Baba Yaga and no one truly trusts Ivan yet. It is decided they will attack with King Matfei as the leader, speaking through Father Lukas. Ivan is given the task of leading the young children who will be responsible for throwing grenades to scare away the peasant, and Molotov cocktails at the knights. Katerina is to fly a hang glider into Baba Yaga's house to destroy her spell making powders and herbs. Everything goes well at first until Baba Yaga causes Dimitri and his loyal followers to once again turn on the king. Father Lukas jumps in front of the king and loses his head while Sergei sets off multiple grenades to save the king. A moment later, Baba Yaga leads Ivan, whom she has placed under her spell, into her airplane. They argue for a moment and then Baba Yaga disappears.

## Chapters 13-17 Analysis

Ruth nearly kills Ivan with the potions Baba Yaga has given her. Ruth is so shocked that she leaves and vows not to come back. Baba Yaga is also angry at her failure, but continues to plot against them. Baba Yaga decides to return to her own world by taking an entire airplane with her, hoping to take the same plane that Ivan and Katerina will be on. However, one of the charms that Esther gives to Ivan and Katerina makes it possible for Ivan to become aware of Baba Yaga on the plane and get off. However, Ivan has left behind a bag that contains the odd note he found at Baba Tila's, suggesting that the note is necessary for Ivan to have in Katerina's world, something he would not be able to take there himself. It is also suggested that Baba Tila is one of Katerina's aunts, perhaps one of the forces that has driven Katerina and Ivan together and made all this possible.





Ivan and Katerina return to Taina and reclaim the kingdom in King Matfei's name. However, Katerina does not allow her father to kill Dimitri because of Ivan's urging. This proves to be something of a mistake later when Dimitri again turns on the king and kills Father Lukas before falling himself to Sergei's grenades. Fortunately, the battle goes well with the help of Ivan's grenades and Molotov cocktails, causing the witch's army to run from the field or die quickly. Unfortunately, Ivan finds himself under the witch's spell and on the stolen plane while Katerina is stuck inside the witch's house.





# Chapters 18-20

## Chapters 18-20 Summary

In Chapter 18, Katerina makes it into Baba Yaga's house and finds the survivors of the plane as well as all of Baba Yaga's spell making powders and herbs. However, before she can decide what to do, Bear comes into the room. Bear tells Katerina that Baba Yaga is about to appear in the same exact place where he is standing. Katerina takes his hint and creates several spells inside a pentagram she draws around Bear. When Baba Yaga appears, she is stuck inside the pentagram. However, the pentagram stands on a trap door and Baba Yaga is able to free herself. At the same time, the Bear appears in Baba Yaga's place on the plane. Ivan remembers the note left by Baba Tila and he quickly grabs it. Ivan gives it to Bear, placing it in his mouth. The paper is a spell that unbinds Bear from Baba Yaga. With the unbinding, all the spells that Baba Yaga made using Bear's magic are undone. As all the spells reverse themselves, the prisoners are freed and the house begins to fall apart. Katerina escapes just in time.

In Chapter 19, when Katerina arrives, she begins to heal Sergei who has been hit with shrapnel in his bottom. Katerina then sends a group of men to Baba Yaga's house to burn it in case she survived the collapse. In Ivan's time, the survivors of the plane walk out of a forest in the Ukraine and the plane is found in the center of the trees in an odd arrangement.

Baba Yaga escapes the wreckage of her house and begins moving East, hoping to build a house that will fly there.

In Chapter 20, Katerina and Ivan's children, Matt, Steven, Luke, and Esther, look forward to summer break each year because it means leaving their home in New York to go to Kiev and then Uncle Marek's before visiting the world where mother is a queen and father is a king and they are Matfei, Sergei, Lukas, and Tila. When they arrive this year, Katerina and Ivan worry what might happen if one of them dies since the children cannot see the bridges and they can only see one each. Katerina refuses to force a decision on the children before they are old enough and insists on continuing to live in two worlds.

## Chapters 18-20 Analysis

The war is won and the spells are undone by the note left for Ivan by Baba Tila. Katerina and Ivan have saved Taina and all its subjects are free. King Matfei gets his tongue back and Sergei is made a hero by his actions in saving the king. All is well. In fact, Ivan and Katerina go on to have four children whom they raise in both worlds. At the same time, Baba Yaga has disappeared, but remains living in the east in some capacity similar to the Wicked Witch of the East in the Wizard of Oz stories.



# Characters

## Ivan Smetski

Ivan Smetski is a star athlete and a scholar who is following in his father's footsteps to become a professor. Ivan is particularly interested in Russian history because he grew up there, as well as the languages that his father also teaches. As part of Ivan's dissertation, Ivan travels to Kiev, where he grew up, to study the fairy tales that have survived the generations. Ivan is ready to return home to New York, write his dissertation and marry his girlfriend, Ruth, but he decides to take a side trip to visit Cousin Marek, a family member who took him and his parents in while they were awaiting their visas to travel out of Ukraine.

Ivan has recurring dreams about a chasm he found once in the woods near Cousin Marek's farm that held some kind of creature and the sleeping form of a beautiful girl. Ivan decides to try to find the place again to prove to himself that it was all a figment of his imagination. However, Ivan discovers it is real. Ivan manages to save the girl from a bear that has been watching over her for thousands of years and wake her from her sleep. Ivan finds himself forced to ask the girl to marry him in order to make the bear disappear. Afterward, Ivan has no intention of going through with his promise because of his engagement to Ruth, but Katerina insists that he must go through with it to break a curse on her and her kingdom.

Ivan marries Katerina after humiliating himself in her kingdom attempting to become a warrior. Ivan is a scholarly man and will never be the swordsman that her father and she believe he must become. Ivan and Katerina return to Ivan's time where he discovers Cousin Marek is actually a god and his mother is a witch. Together they come up with a strategy to defeat Baba Yaga, falling in love along the way.

## Katerina

Katerina is a princess of Taina who has been placed under a curse by the evil witch, Baba Yaga. Baba Yaga wants Taina and believes she can have it if she keeps Katerina from marrying and producing an heir. To this end, Baba Yaga causes Katerina to fall asleep in a magical place where she cannot be awakened until a man comes along and promises to marry her. Baba Yaga believes this will never happen, therefore she is angry when it does.

Katerina is frightened for her people and her land, therefore she commits herself to marry Ivan even though she does not believe he will be a good king or husband. However, as Katerina finds herself in Ivan's world and forced to live by his customs, she soon finds herself understanding him better and falling in love with him. With this love that seems to have been brought to Katerina by her beloved aunts, Katerina defeats Baba Yaga.



## King Matfei

King Matfei is Katerina's father. King Matfei does not like the rule that forces the king's heirs to take over his kingdom. This is how Matfei inherited his kingdom when he would have preferred the freedom of being a knight. Matfei is worried that his sons did not survive childhood and that his daughter has been cursed. Matfei does not think that he and Katerina can overcome the curse of Baba Yaga and save Taina. When Ivan comes along, Matfei worries that he is a trick of Baba Yaga's and tells his head knight that he can kill him after the marriage has produced a male heir. Matfei later comes to regret these words when Dimitri turns on him and shrivels his tongue with one of Baba Yaga's spells.

## Dimitri

Dimitri is a knight in King Matfei druzhina. Dimitri believes that he would have been king after King Matfei if it was still legal to pick a king by popular vote. Since it is no longer legal to elect a king, Dimitri has plotted to marry Katerina since she was a small child. However, when Katerina was placed under the curse by Baba Yaga, Dimitri failed to find her in the woods. When Katerina comes back with Ivan, Dimitri is jealous and quickly falls under a spell by Baba Yaga that convinces him that all Katerina has to do is marry Ivan and then with Ivan's death can inherit the kingdom by widows-rights. Dimitri attempts to kill Ivan on his wedding night and later takes the king prisoner in an attempt to win the kingdom in a fight with Baba Yaga.

## Sergei

Sergei has a leg that was malformed at birth and further damaged in a fall from a tree. For this reason, Sergei cannot be successful at any profession other than a priest or scribe. For this reason, Sergei becomes a scribe for Father Lukas, but feels as though Father Lukas uses him more as a slave than a scribe. Sergei befriends Ivan when he comes to Taina and writes down the many fairy tales of his people at Ivan's urging. Later, Sergei helps Ivan and Katerina create weapons to beat Baba Yaga and even saves the king's life.

## Father Lukas

Father Lukas is a Greek priest who has come to what will later be known as Ukraine in order to bring Christianity to the people. Father Lukas was once a student to Saint Kirill who created the beginnings of the Cyrillic alphabet that is still used in Russia. Father Lukas becomes an unwitting ally to Ivan and Katerina and will later give his life to protect the king.



## Baba Yaga

Baba Yaga is a witch who is well known in many Russian fairy tales. In this novel, Baba Yaga is the widow of King Brat who was pushed out of Kiev and forced to rule a smaller kingdom. After his death, Baba Yaga made claim to his lands by the widows-right, something that does not exist but many are too afraid to protest. Baba Yaga then married Winter Bear, the god of winter. Bear has great powers and Baba Yaga has bound him to her so that she can use those powers. However, when the bond between them is broken, all the spells Baba Yaga has created with his powers are undone.

## Esther Smetski

Esther Smetski is Ivan's mother. As a young woman, Esther learned magic from her mother and later from Baba Tila, a woman in Kiev. Esther did this with the idea that she was protecting her family from the government in Russia. However, Esther discovers later that these powers are strong and protects Ivan and Katerina from Baba Yaga when she comes to America to kill Ivan.

## Piotr Smetski

Piotr Smetski is Ivan's father. Piotr is a good man who gave up his home and his teaching position in order to take his son out of the growing upheaval in Ukraine and give him a good life in America. Piotr is a professor of languages and he teaches his son to speak Old Church Slavonic. By doing this, Piotr has given Ivan the means by which to speak to Katerina when he awakens her in the meadow outside of Marek's farm.

## Ruth

Ruth is a young Jewish girl to whom Ivan is engaged before he travels to Kiev to do research for his dissertation. Ivan feels disloyal to Ruth when he wakes Katerina, but he overcomes his guilt by telling himself that Ruth is not even born on the day he becomes engaged and marries Katerina. Later, however, Ivan humiliates Ruth by telling her of his marriage to Katerina in an airport. Ruth is later used by Baba Yaga in a murder attempt against Ivan.



# Objects/Places

## Baba Tila's Note

Ivan finds a note in Baba Tila's former home that says to deliver a message, but does not say what message or to whom. Ivan later discovers the paper itself is a spell that breaks the bond between Baba Yaga and Winter Bear.

## Charms

Esther creates many charms to protect Ivan and Katerina while they are in her home and on their travels back to Taina. Esther also teaches Katerina how to make the charms since they cannot take anything into Taina with them.

## Ivan's Modern Clothing

Ivan's modern clothing disappears when he walks across Katerina's bridge into her time.

## 747

Baba Yaga takes an entire 747 with her back to her world, passengers and all.

## Molotov Cocktails

Molotov Cocktails are fire bombs that Ivan and Katerina learn to use with materials available in the ninth century to use against Baba Yaga's army.

## Grenades

Katerina and Ivan learn to make grenades with materials in existence in the ninth century to use against Baba Yaga's army.

## Bridges

Two bridges appear over the chasm in the meadow when Ivan awakens Katerina, one that goes to her world and one that goes into his.



## **Round Meadow**

As a ten year old boy, Ivan finds a perfectly round meadow where there appears to be a sleeping girl and a chasm with a creature in it. Ivan returns as a twenty-five year old man and finds this chasm really exists.

## **Cousin Marek's Farm**

Ivan lives on Cousin Marek's farm for a time when he is a boy and his family is suddenly homeless. It is near the farm that Ivan finds Katerina and rescues her from Baba Yaga's spell.

## **Kiev**

Kiev is a large city in Ukraine where Ivan was born and lived until he was ten.

## **Taina**

Taina is Katerina's kingdom.

## **Ukraine**

Ukraine is a country in the old Soviet Union. This is where Ivan was born and where he returns to do research for his dissertation.



# Themes

## Fairy Tales

This novel is something of a modern fairy tale that takes heavily from the classic Russian stories. This story has elements of many fairy tales, including Sleeping Beauty. Ivan finds himself playing the modern role of prince in Katerina's story. Katerina has been cursed by a witch who wants to keep Katerina from marrying and producing an heir so that her kingdom will be left without a king, leaving it open for Baba Yaga to steal. However, this curse backfires when Katerina is awoken by Ivan.

The fairy tale takes place both in the ninth century and in the modern 1990s. This causes the reader to see the more practical aspects of a happily ever after, including the difficulties of two strangers forced to marry when they are not even sure they like one another, let alone love one another. However, the story retains some of the more romantic qualities of a fairy tale, including the love story that eventually appears between Ivan and Katerina as well as the happily ever after after the witch is defeated.

The novel also includes a more practical study of Russian fairy tales. Ivan is doing his dissertation on Russian fairy tales and has read all the old copies of the stories, including some of the oldest known versions. However, Ivan quickly discovers that many of these tables go back even further and they include many true stories of magic and witches that he never thought really existed.

## Magic

This novel relies heavily on the use of magic. Magic is something that Ivan does not believe in before he wakes Katerina. However, after Ivan wakes Katerina and enters her world, he quickly becomes aware of the superstition of her people and the power of a witch's curse. Ivan begins to believe in magic when Katerina awakes, but it is learning that his own mother has practiced many of these spells herself that really makes magic real to Ivan.

The power of the bad guy in this novel, Baba Yaga, relies heavily on magic. Baba Yaga has the power to curse people and to cause others to be bound to her, forced to do her will as long as they contain some form of envy or jealousy in their own souls. This magic gives Baba Yaga power and it is also the purity of her own people that makes Katerina more powerful than Baba Yaga in the end.

## Gods

This novel introduces the idea of the god by presenting the reader with two characters who are actually gods. The idea of gods has presented itself in written stories since the Romans. In this book, the author uses two Russian gods who often appear in Russian



fairy tales. The first is Winter Bear, a bear who is supposed to usher winter in and out for the Russian people, making sure that winter does not stay forever. Bear gets his power from the belief of the people in him. Each time someone says his name, Bear grows stronger. Baba Yaga takes advantage of this by binding Bear to her and using his power to enhance her own.

The other god present in this story is Mikola Mohazski, the Russian god of sailors. Mikola can change the weather to benefit sailors and he can cause things to grow. Mikola was a good friend to King Matfei, but abandoned him way too soon. When Katerina arrives at Cousin Marek's, she is shocked to discover that Marek is Mikola Mohazski. Marek is a good man who uses his waning powers to help Ivan and Katerina escape Baba Yaga's clutches while they are in Ukraine. Gods are thus a theme of the novel.



# Style

## Point of View

The novel is written in the third-person omniscient point of view. The main characters, Ivan and Katerina, are the primary narrators. However, the author also moves into the mind of Baba Yaga as well as Esther and Piotr's minds. This allows for the reader to see what is going on in all settings of the novel as well as understand the motivations of multiple characters, not just the main characters.

The point of view of this novel works well because it allows the reader to get to know many characters and to understand the motivations and actions of many different characters all at once. This point of view also allows the reader to know what is happening in modern New York while Ivan is trapped in the ninth century. This point of view also works well because it allows the reader to understand the actions and motivations of the antagonist, Baba Yaga.

## Setting

The novel is set in two countries and two time periods. The first country that appears in the novel is Ukraine. Ivan is a child of Kiev, but his parents move him to America when he is only ten years old in order to protect him from the upheaval about to begin in the Ukraine government. Later, Ivan returns to Ukraine only to find himself transported to the ninth century to the kingdom of Taina that is actually a part of modern day Ukraine.

The settings of this novel are important because the novel takes place in two different countries and two different time periods that become as much a character in the novel as the human characters. The setting of Taina is nothing like most fairy tale kingdoms, but is true to the real world of the ninth century Russia. Modern day Ukraine is more like what the reader might recognize, but after visiting the area in the ninth century, both the reader and the main characters see it with fresh eyes. Hence, the settings of this novel are important to the overall plot of the novel as well as the characters of the novel.

## Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is English. The language is somewhat more sophisticated than the common fantasy novel, but is still a common enough language that most readers will easily understand. The novel takes place in Russia through the biggest chunk of the book, therefore the characters are often speaking different forms of Russian. However, the author does not use many foreign words, only those that are easily translated in the prose of the novel.

The language of the novel is appropriate because it is authentic to the characters in the novel. The main characters of the novel are highly educated; therefore some of the



language tends to be more sophisticated than more common language. At the same time the characters are often speaking several dialects of Russian, therefore there are many Russian words introduced into the prose. However, the author is careful that each word is easily translated; therefore these words do not cause too much confusion in the reader. Hence, the language of this novel is appropriate to the plot.

## Structure

The novel is written in twenty chapters, each with its own title that describes some event or character that will be important to the actions of the chapter. At the end of some chapters there is a section called Baba Yaga that alerts the reader that the following passages will be in the point of view of the villain, Baba Yaga. The novel is told in a linear fashion even though some of the action takes place in what is essentially the past.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows Ivan as he wakes Katerina and promises to marry her. One subplot follows Dimitri as he plots first with the kind and later Baba Yaga to kill Ivan. Another subplot follows Sergei's relationship with Father Lukas and his budding friendship with Ivan. Finally one important subplot follows Ivan and Katerina as they begin to fall in love. All the plots of the novel come to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



## Quotes

"I'm ten years old, my whole life you've called me Vanya. My name is on the school records, on government papers as Ivan Petrovich Smetski. Now you tell me I'm really Itzak Shlomo. What am I, a Jewish secret agent?" (Chapter 1, p. 5).

"His parents and their friends never understood his need for athletics" (Chapter 2, p. 18).

"Mother was so eager for him to get out of New York - and away from Ruth - that the last week he had to keep asking for clothes each morning because she had already packed everything" (Chapter 2, p. 23).

"But Ivan didn't love her. He didn't even know her" (Chapter 4, p. 56).

"King Matfei sat, not on a throne, but on a large chair at the head of the banquet table and Ivan was shown to a seat at his right hand - the place of honor" (Chapter 5, p. 85).

"If only he could get home again, he would never have second thoughts about marrying Ruth again. The hoops she made him jump through were nothing compared to this" (Chapter 6, p. 111).

"Numb—that's the feeling you hope for on your wedding night" (Chapter 9, p. 158).

"She didn't understand how a world could even exist where people had no respect authority, where women wore men's clothing and husbands did not command their wives" (Chapter 10, p. 183).

"And even though he would not strike the blow himself, he made him feel no less triumphant to know that Baba Yaga would never survive in a world where he had managed to preserve a niche for himself and his beloved Sophia" (Chapter 11, p. 220).

"There was a greater sense of urgency now" (Chapter 13, p. 257).

"If, in fact, we are the righteous" (Chapter 16, p. 316).

"Then they, too, lay down on mattress stuffed with straw, hearing the music of the flies to buzz them to sleep, holding each other's hands as they dozed, thinking the miracles by which love works its will in the world" (Chapter 20, p. 362).



## Topics for Discussion

Who is Ivan? Why has he become a Jew at such an advanced age? What does his father hope to accomplish by embracing their Jewish heritage? What is achieved by this? Why does Piotr want Ivan to grow up in America? What advantages are there in America that Piotr is afraid Ivan will not find in Russia or Ukraine? What does Piotr give up for this advantage for his son?

Who is Katerina? How did she come to be sleeping in the middle of the woods? Why does Ivan find himself plagued by nightmares of Katerina? Why does Ivan believe that his sighting of Katerina was a figment of imagination? How does he discover that this is not true? Why does Ivan decide to save Katerina? How does he do this? What does Ivan prove about his own character in the way he saves Katerina? What does Katerina think of Ivan when he first wakes her?

Why does Katerina refuse to allow Ivan to wear her clothing? Why does Katerina make such a fuss of wearing Ivan's clothing in his time? What has changed between Katerina's time and Ivan's that makes it okay for her to wear his shirt? Why does Katerina have such trouble with this? What does this cause Ivan to have to do when he first walks into Katerina's kingdom? Why does Katerina not understand Ivan's discomfort?

Who is Baba Yaga? Why has she cursed Katerina? Why does Baba Yaga not just take Taina by force? What does Baba Yaga use to increase her powers? How is this done? Does Bear like being married to Baba Yaga? How does the reader know how Bear feels about Baba Yaga? What happens when Baba Yaga is separated from Bear? How might Ivan and Katerina use this?

How does Ivan learn that his mother is a witch? Why did Esther originally learn magic? Why does she place her house under a protection spell? How does Esther make Katerina feel safe in America? What does Esther teach Katerina? How does Esther help Katerina and Ivan avoid flying to Ukraine with Baba Yaga on the same plane?

What modern weapons does Ivan take into Katerina's world? How does this knowledge have the power to change history? Why does no one ever tell about these weapons? Why does Ivan later refuse to allow his children to take anything modern into Katerina's world? How does he stop them? How do Ivan and Katerina beat Baba Yaga? What does this say about fate?

Who were Katerina's aunts? Why does Katerina mention them multiple times throughout the novel? What did Katerina's aunts do to make it possible for Katerina to survive Baba Yaga's curse? What is the coincidence in Katerina's aunt's name and the name of Esther's teacher? Is it possible it was the same woman? How? Could this be part of the fate that brought Katerina and Ivan together?