

The Elfstones of Shannara Study Guide

The Elfstones of Shannara by Terry Brooks

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Plot Summary

The Elfstones of Shannara by Terry Brooks is the story of an Elven people which have long been protected from banished Demons by an enchanted tree called the Ellcrys. The Ellcrys is dying and chooses the one that must carry the seed to the Bloodfire that the Ellcrys might be reborn. Demons are already escaping from the Ellcrys boundaries in her weakened state and begin killing all those that would reinstate the Ellcrys. Those chosen must work together and learn to believe in themselves in order to save their lands from the Demon hordes.

The Ellcrys, the enchanted tree that keeps the Demons banished from earth, is beginning to die. The tree is able to communicate what must be done in order to restore the boundaries and stop the Demons from killing all human races and entrusts her seed to the Elven King's granddaughter, Amberle. Amberle does not believe she has it within herself to take on this task but is left with little choice as the Demons are already looking for her and killing others. A Druid named Allanon mysteriously shows up and picks the one who will be Amberle's protector on the journey. The protector is a young man named Wil Ohmsford. Wil has an ancient Elven magic called the Elfstones. Wil is not sure that he can even use them but finds himself willing to take on the task of protecting the girl.

As these two begin their journey there are Demons that have been able to break through the boundaries as the Ellcrys dies. One of the Demons, the Reaper, is after Wil and Amberle as the other Demons are in battle with the Elven armies. Time is running short as Wil and Amberle begin the journey with the Ellcrys seed to Safehold. Along the way they are helped by a band of Rovers and one of them, a beautiful woman named Eretria, joins their quest. Wil is unable to control the magic of the Elfstones for a time and believes that he is unable to protect Amberle but when the Reaper catches up with them at Safehold Wil is finally able to wield their magic and destroy the Reaper. Amberle is able to renew the life in the Ellcrys seed but in order to do so she has to sacrifice her own will. When they return to the garden where the Ellcrys is kept they find the Demons are already there and the Elven army almost defeated. Amberle takes the place of the Ellcrys and the boundaries are put back in place banishing all the Demons back to the darkness.

Wil refuses to ever use the Elfstones again and he and the Rover girl, Eretria, leave for Wil's home. Allanon leaves to sleep again until the next time he is needed and in this way giving himself an unnaturally long life. The kingdoms of Shannara are safe once again.



Chapter 1-7

Chapter 1-7 Summary

The Elfstones of Shannara by Terry Brooks is the story of an Elven people that have long been protected from banished Demons by an enchanted tree called the Ellcrys. The Ellcrys is dying and chooses the one who must carry the seed to the Bloodfire that the Ellcrys might be reborn. Demons are already escaping from the Ellcrys boundaries in her weakened state and begin killing all those who would reinstate the Ellcrys. Those chosen must work together and learn to believe in themselves in order to save their lands from the Demon hordes.

Chapter one begins with the Chosen entering the Garden of life. The Chosen are the ones that are picked by the enchanted tree, the Ellcrys, to care for her for one year of their youth. The honor of taking care of the Ellcrys is great since it is the Ellcrys and the magic created by her life that keeps the Demons banished from the earth. As the young chosen gather around her she speaks to them through a series of images relaying the fact that she is dying and that when that happened the Demons would be loosed on the earth.

In chapter two Dagda Mor, the strongest of the Demons, has broken through the weakening Forbidding that is created by the Ellcrys. Dagda Mor knows that if someone carries the seed of the Ellcrys to the magical Bloodfire then the magic will be invoked again. The Dagda Mor has brought with him two Demons to help him stop the renewal of the Ellcrys seed. One of these Demons is the Changeling. This creature can be anything, able to take on any form that is in its current world. The Changeling is hateful and selfish and respects nothing other than power greater than his own. The other Demon brought is the Reaper. The Reaper does not allow anyone to see his face other than those it is about to kill. The Reaper has never hunted anything that was able to escape it. The Reaper enjoys killing, but killing is just as much instinct as a choice for this creature. Dagda Mor uses his staff of power to call forth a winged beast from the mountain that will take them to the city of Arborlon where the Ellcrys is kept.

Chapter three begins in the city of Arborlon with Ander Elessedil and his brother Arion Elessedil, the sons of the King, Eventine Elessedil. Arion is the elder brother and there are harsh feelings between the two although Ander does not have any desire to become King. Arion is leaving the city to conduct business. After Arion is gone, one of the Chosen come up to Ander and tell him they must see the king. Once in the king's chambers the young man tells them that the tree has spoken with the Chosen that morning and told them she is dying and the Forbidding is already beginning to break. The young man goes on to tell them about the Ellcrys telling them about the hope of a rebirth for the Ellcrys and that she must pick one of the Chosen to take her seed to the Bloodfire at a place called Safehold. The images are so old that the tree remembers that it is unknown where Safehold is. The king has ancient scrolls brought up to read



and sends Ander to speak to the other Chosen to see if anything else can be gathered from them.

Chapter four has Ander studying the Ellcrys when one of the Chosen comes to talk to him. The young man tells him that the other member of the Chosen, Amberle, who has abandoned her job, had a much stronger bond with the Ellcrys. Amberle is the King's granddaughter and turned to Ander when her father died. The King and all of her family were ashamed when Amberle turned from her duties as a Chosen and left her home without an explanation to anyone. Bringing up her name to the King is not an option to Ander and, regardless, no one knows where Amberle is.

Back in the castle the King has found nothing more in the scrolls. They soon go to bed. The next morning Ander goes to the Chosens' house and finds that the bodies of all the Chosen have been shredded and broken. Ander knows a Demon is responsible. Ander runs to the castle and passes an old man named Went as he goes. Ander does not look at the old man, not knowing that the Changeling has taken on the form of Went.

Chapter five finds that Ander is walking, thinking of what could possibly be done now that the Chosen are all dead, leaving no one to carry the seed. Suddenly a figure appears. The character introduces himself as Allanon. Prince Ander says that Allanon must be dead but finally takes him to see his father. When the two enter the king's chambers; Eventine is shocked to see Allanon and gasps at the fact that he has not changed in the fifty years since he was last seen. Allanon explains that he is there because he knows the Forbidding is breaking. The King's wolfhound, Manx, walks in while the three men talk. Allanon tells Eventine that not all of the Chosen are dead. Eventine realizes that it is Amberle he is speaking of and refuses to even consider allowing her back. Allanon reminds him that it is the Ellcrys' choice and no one else's, not even Amberle's. The King is angry but allows Allanon to leave to fetch her after Allanon says he knows where Amberle has gone. Allanon warns them not to say anything to anyone about his arrival at Arborlon since there are Demons that have already breached the Forbidding.

Elsewhere the Dagda Mor opens his eyes and smiles with knowledge of the Druid. Dagda Mor plans on bringing a few of the Demons through the weakened Forbidding to take care of Allanon.

Chapter six has Allanon ridding to an ancient Druid city to look over the Druid scrolls. Allanon is able to read the scrolls but after finding what he came to see, he is trapped in the ancient castle by Dagda Mor and Furies. The Furies attack along with Dagda Mor. Allanon is able to escape but is badly hurt.

In chapter seven Wil Ohmsford is working in the Village of the Healers. Wil's uncle Flick is there with him visiting. While they talk, a figure rides up on a horse. Flick is shocked to see the robed figure and calls him Allanon. Allanon quickly sends Wil to find the elder Healers and Wil sees Allanon is soaked with blood through his cloak.



Chapter 1-7 Analysis

It is obvious that the dog Manx, belonging to the king, is actually the Changeling. The Changeling will be able to cause much trouble for Eventine and those he commands. It will not be until much later in the story that the truth of Manx is discovered.

There has been much speaking of Amberle and her actions that caused her to be ostracized from her family. When Allanon finds her she will continue to be reluctant to have anything to do with the Ellcrys. Amberle will keep much of this a secret to herself. Allanon knows the truth of it but will not reveal it until the end of the story. When Allanon rides up he calls Wil by name although he and Wil had never met before. In the next chapter the fact that Allanon is looking for Wil will be made clear. Wil's uncle Flick, much like Eventine, have had past dealings with Allanon. Flick will be very distrustful of Allanon and warn Wil against this.

Allanon reads much while in the Druid castle. The truth of what he reads is never fully revealed to the reader. Later in the story Allanon will simply say that he knows everything. It is clear watching Allanon that he has much information that he does not give to people because of the way Allanon knows things must unfold. It appears Allanon is guiding the paths of those around him but at the same time it seems Allanon is working to keep things going in the direction they should. The truth about Allanon will not be explained fully in the story. Later on in the story Wil will remember the words that Allanon says to him and realizes that Allanon says just the right thing to get people to do what he wants them to do. Despite this Allanon will appear to constantly be working in the best interest of the races of men.

Dagda Mor calls a beast from the ground. The reader is not given a description of the creature and it is not revealed what he calls from the ground until much later in the story when the battle between the Elves and the Demons begins. Dagda Mor is the leader of the Demons but is actually seen very little in the story. Later in the story it becomes clear that although they fear Dagda Mor, the other demons do not care if they have him as a leader or not.



Chapter 8-13

Chapter 8-13 Summary

In chapter eight Wil is summoned to come and talk to Allanon after he has healed and rested. Wil is surprised that he is called since he has never met Allanon before but goes. Flick warns Wil to not trust Allanon. Wil and Flick sit down to talk and Allanon asks Wil to go with him to the Westlands. Allanon explains that Wil's grandfather gave Wil three stones called the Elfstones. The Elfstones only can work by one with Elf blood, although Wil is only an eighth elf, and can only work by one they are freely given to. Flick demands to go in his stead but Allanon says that Flick is now too old to go. Wil is unsure about going since he has never tried to use the stones before. Allanon says that he is forced to stay behind and help in the battle that will happen since some of the Demons are through the Forbidding already and someone will have to travel with Amberle, the young girl who will carry the Ellcrys seed. Wil is still reluctant but has been training to be a healer and feels he needs to help if he can.

Chapter nine has Wil and Allanon leaving to find Amberle. Wil cannot explain why he agreed to go and remembers that Allanon is able to know the minds of those he is speaking to. Wil makes a vow to think before he speaks where the Druid is concerned from here on out. Allanon answers all the questions that Wil presents him with. The Elfstones pull together three aspects of a person. One stone for the mind, one for the body and one for the spirit. The strength they have depends on the person and so Allanon cannot tell Wil how much power the stones will have.

In chapter ten Wil and Allanon reach the small town where Amberle lives. Allanon explains that all the Chosen are dead except her. Amberle tells him that she is no longer a Chosen but Allanon tells her that is not her choice to make. Amberle tells them to sleep in the barn while she thinks about it. Allanon tells her that it is too dangerous but cannot persuade her otherwise.

Chapter eleven finds Wil and Allanon asleep. They are awakened by Demons that have tracked them to the village. They grab Amberle quickly and begin fleeing from the Demons. Wil and Amberle are separated from Allanon. They are beside Silver Lake when suddenly they are taken into a white light and the Demons disappear.

Chapter twelve has Wil and Amberle in a dreamlike state. They are saved by an eternal being called the King of Silver Lake. The king tells Amberle that they are joined in their purpose and that no harm will come to her while in his land. Wil is in a beautiful garden that is so peaceful and wonderful he weeps. When Wil turns to Amberle he finds that she is gone.

Chapter thirteen has Wil and Amberle awake a short time later miles from Silver Lake. Neither can remember what it was that the King of the Silver Lake said to them. Wil asks about the garden but Amberle says she was somewhere else where it was dark



and she was alone. They continue on their journey and Wil tells Amberle of his grandfather, the Elfstones, and how he came to be on the quest with her. Amberle admits that she is scared but does not tell Wil what of. They camp that night and find that they are near a band of Rovers, people that travel from place to place and steal whatever they can find. They fall asleep.

Chapter 8-13 Analysis

Wil and Amberle have started out not liking each other much. This is attributed to the fact that Amberle is frightened at the thought of going back to her home. She does not tell Wil why she is afraid at this point but will reveal little pieces of it as the story continues. Wil does not keep much from her although he begins to have strong doubts about his own abilities to protect her, or anyone else.

The Rovers that camp near them are barely mentioned in this chapter. In the next few chapters they will have a larger role in the story. Later on it will become apparent that they have a crucial role in the events that happen to both Wil and Amberle although most of the Rovers will never truly know what quest Amberle and Wil are on.

What has happened to Allanon will not be known for the next few chapters. It seems as though the King of Silver Lake did not help him as he helped Amberle and Wil. They will catch up with him later on and most of what occurred will be explained at that point.

The Elfstones have not been used yet. Although Allanon explained that they have to be used together, mind, body, and spirit, the full extent of this will not be understood until much later in the story. Allanon tries very hard to make sure that no one knows where he is going or that he is coming to fetch Amberle. When he returns to talk to Eventine, Allanon will warn him that there is a spy. Despite this warning and their attempts to keep their actions hidden, the Changeling, in the form of Manx, will never be discovered.



Chapter 14-19

Chapter 14-19 Summary

Chapter fourteen begins with Wil and Amberle waking and finding their horse is gone. Wil knows the Rovers have taken the horse and they go after the band of travelers. They catch up with the Rovers and Wil performs some healing for the members of the Rover caravan as payment for rest and food. The Rovers pretend they found the horse and cannot give it to Wil in case the real owner comes along and wants to claim it, but they could sell it so that they have something to give the actual owner of the horse if he arrives. Wil tells them that Amberle is his sister. The head of the Rovers, Cephelo, refuses to deal with Wil for the horse since Wil has nothing of value but does let them stay the night with his family. Cephelo's beautiful daughter, Eretria, dances with Wil before he falls fast asleep.

Chapter fifteen has Wil and Amberle still traveling with the Rovers. There are rumors of a land that has Devils in it but Cephelo announces he is not scared and they travel in that direction regardless. Wil hopes they are traveling faster with the caravan than on their own but still is trying to find a way to get the horse. Eretria tells Will that she can help him if he will take her with him. Eretria is at the age when Cephelo, who is not actually her father, will pick a husband to sell her to. Eretria has been sold to Cephelo once and does not want to be sold again. Eretria is angry that Wil refuses to take her but tells him she is meant for him before she walks away from Wil.

In chapter sixteen the Rovers are attacked by a monstrous Demon. It kills several of Cephelo's men and wounds Cephelo. Wil begins to leave but does not want to leave the Rovers to face this monster alone. Wil has trouble using the stones and finds he has a block within himself. When the monster attacks Eretria and Amberle he is able to call upon the power of the stones and destroys the monster. Cephelo is angry that Wil did not tell him about the stones but Wil explains the monsters will come after them again and they need to be gone from Cephelo's family. Cephelo gives them back their horse and sends them on their way. Wil hesitates when he looks at Eretria. She smiles at him and announces they will meet again.

Chapter seventeen has Wil and Amberle traveling much more quickly now that they are on the horse. They stop to sleep, believing they are ahead of the Demons, when they are awakened by the howls deep in the forest. They quickly get on the horse and begin to ride. Soon the Demons realize how close they are to Wil and Amberle and quicken their pursuit. Wil is not sure he can use the Elfstones again after the block he felt at the Rover site. They ride into a black figure in the woods and find it is Allanon. The Demons feel Allanon's presence and leave, as they are without one strong enough to defeat him. Amberle is angry and tells them to hurry to Arborlon to finished this.

As chapter eighteen begins, Allanon, Amberle, and Wil enter the city of Arborlon. Allanon has Eventine summon his trusted advisers. In front of this council of six men



Allanon explains he believes Amberle is their only choice. Allanon asks for someone willing to stand with Amberle. Ander is the first to stand next to the girl. His brother Arion is the only member of the council who refuses to side with the girl. Allanon says she will rest for several days before going to the tree. After the members of the council are gone, Allanon has Amberle go to the tree right that moment.

Chapter nineteen has Amberle going to the tree. While she is there Allanon confides in Wil that there is a traitor in the castle and the reason for the deception at the council. Wil is frightened by these words but agrees not to tell Amberle. As the Ellcrys touches Amberle, she begins to cry. When she returns to Wil and Allanon, she is holding the Ellcrys seed.

Chapter 14-19 Analysis

Wil and Amberle tell Allanon about their meeting with King of the Silver Lake. It is at this moment that, just for a moment, Allanon shows something in his eyes. It is described as "understanding" but he quickly is able to control himself before the others see it. Allanon tells Wil at the end of the story that he knew everything since he is a Druid. This moment is a shadow of that knowledge. It is unclear if Allanon felt any other emotions at this time or if this reinforced any doubts he had.

The Rovers have been shown in greater detail in this section of the book. Eretria tells Wil that she is for him. Later in the story it will be shown that she may have been right about this. While Eretria is obviously proud and capable, she is frightened of what will become of her life if she is sold by Cephelo, who seems to care for money above all else. Cephelo knows that there are monsters chasing Wil and Amberle and thus becomes willing to let them go. Later in the story, Cephelo will run into the two again. It will be the second meeting in which Cephelo makes a grave mistake.

Amberle begins crying when she is talking to the tree. Amberle seems angry and strong when she is talking to Allanon and Wil. It will not be until much later that she shows how frightened and weak she really feels. Despite her fears, she will keep Wil strong and be there for him just as he is there for her. They will be forced to depend on each other. This will be what pulls them closer together. Amberle has said she has no use for Wil and has said she has doubts as to how capable he is. All of this appears to be anger but later in the story other information will be given that explain these words as the result of fear.

Allanon knows that there is a spy within the castle. They are taking measures to try and stay a step ahead of the spy but they still do not realize where the spy is. They continue to speak in front of the the King's wolfhound and give away their tactics. Regardless of the fact that the spy is working against them, they still largely succeed. Amberle has been chosen by the Ellcrys. Amberle will call the choosing a mistake but soon will realize that this is not true.



Chapter 20-27

Chapter 20-27 Summary

Chapter twenty has Allanon, Amberle, and Wil entering the King's room to give him the news that Amberle is leaving the next morning to begin the trip with the Ellcrys seed. No one is with the king except Manx. The Bloodfire at Safehold lies within an area called Wilderun. It has few towns and the people are thieves, outlaws, and dangerous animals. Wil steps out of the King's chambers as Manx growls at him.

In chapter twenty-one Wil and Allanon discuss him using the Elfstones at the Rovers' camp site. Allanon explains that since Wil is only an eighth elf, the block Wil felt while trying to use them came from the other part of him that is human. Allanon admits he cannot say for certain that Wil will be able to use the stones at all the next time it is required of him. Allanon gives Wil his hand and swears to him that Wil has the ability to make the journey and tells Wil he is counting on him. In the King's chambers, the Changeling watches him. The Dagda Mor beckons the Reaper for the girl who carries the Ellcrys seed.

In chapter twenty-two Amberle, Wil and seven Elven Hunters begin the journey to find the Bloodfire at Safehold. They soon are on a ship going toward Drey Wood, a small town, before they begin the harder part of the trip to Wilderun. Once there, Wil realizes something is wrong. The Reaper has gotten there before them and slain all the guards. Before they can reach the boat, the Reaper is able to kill two of the Elven Hunters.

Chapter twenty-three has the Elven Hunters again stepping off the boat. This time the Reaper is not waiting and they let the boat slip back into the water in the hopes that it will not show the place they chose to land. Wil knows that if the Demon knew they were going to Drey Wood then it would know their next stop and would simply be there waiting for them at Wilderun. Amberle is able to guess there is a spy at the castle and makes Wil promise her there will be no more secrets. The group travels for days through swamp waters and deadly passes. They come upon a lake and try to make their way across only to find an animal in the middle of the lake that eats two more of the Elven Hunters. There are only five members of the group left as they continue to travel.

In chapter twenty-four the travelers make their way to an Elven fortress that has been abandoned for centuries. Once there, the Elven Hunters begin to search the castle grounds while Wil and Amberle try to sleep. While sleeping, Wil begins to have bad dreams and realizes something within him is warning him of the Reaper. Wil forces himself awake and leaves Amberle in the room to go find the hunters. Wil soon finds two of their bodies and rushes back to get Amberle. All that is left is the Elven captain who has gone deep into the fortress to find an alternative route out. Wil and Amberle follow his tracks in the dust on the floor with the Reaper following somewhere behind. They reach the captain and tell him of what has happened. Once they find a way out, the



Reaper manages to overtake them and the battle begins. Wil tries to use the Elfstones but the block within him refuses to break a second time. Wil is able to destroy the bridge the Reaper is standing on just as the Reaper kills the Elven captain. The Reaper is gone into the canyon below but Amberle and Wil are alone on their journey.

In chapter twenty-five Amberle and Wil find their way out of the castle. They are able to find a small fishing boat at a small river and choose to take it. Amberle tells Wil that perhaps he could not use the Elfstones because he blocked himself with his doubt. Wil is unsure but knows he cannot leave Amberle. After both have slept in the boat they land and begin their journey again. They make camp and when they wake they find there is a boy looking at them. His name is Perk and he is a young Elf. Perk tells them he is a Roc flier and offers them a ride to the edge of the Wilderun. They accept and climb onto Perk's giant bird. Once at the edge of the Wilderun Perk gives Wil a small whistle. Perk will wait for five days before returning home. If they blow the whistle the bird will hear it and they will come and fly them home.

In chapter twenty-six Eventine Elessedil is in his room with Manx. The King has sent word to the neighboring kingdoms that an attack is imminent and to send help. The messengers have been gone for days but no word has been sent back. Ander and Eventine are talking when Allanon walks in holding a piece of the Ellcrys. The tree gave it to Allanon and it flows warm with her blood and her magic. Eventine assures Allanon that the Elven armies are ready to march at dawn. The Ellcrys tells Allanon that the break will happen at a place called Hoare Flats.

Chapter twenty-seven begins with Ander receiving word that help is beginning to arrive. Ander is quickly disheartened to find it is the Free Corps. They are men who are allowed to join the army to make up for their past transgressions. The men are not given a very long life expectancy and it is understood that you will die but it is important that you die well. There are only six hundred men sent. Stee Jans is the Commander of the men. Ander gives the men a place to sleep and word that they will march at dawn. As they walk away Ander wonders how much help only six hundred men would be against the thousands of Demons they will face.

Chapter 20-27 Analysis

Ander is a good man and is very good with much of the diplomacy that must be done as people begin to gather to fight the expected Demons. It becomes obvious that Allanon is trying to include Ander in decisions that his father does not believe his son is suited for. All of this behavior will soon be explained in the next few chapters. Allanon's actions continually seem to show a glimpse of the future and things that are to come.

As the story continues there will be two different stories told. One will be of the struggle Wil and Amberle face while trying to reach the Bloodfire and to return to Arborlon. The other will be the story of what takes place in the battle to keep the Demons from reaching the garden where the Ellcrys is kept. While these two stories are miles apart and have different immediate concerns, it is clear that they are fully connected. One



aspect of the stories that is a constant reminder of how much they are connected is Allanon. He will be able to track Wil and Amberle to some small extent although it is not often spoken of in the story. Wil's thoughts will often turn to Allanon and what is happening there as well. There are those fighting with Ander and Eventine that believe it possible to hold off the Demons with nothing more than the Elven army. It will not be very long in the story before it becomes apparent this is not true. The truth of the matter is that Amberle and Wil have the power to save the world from the Demons and no one else. Allanon and the others can do little other than hold the monsters off as long as they can.

There is much in the Wilderun that will cause Amberle and Wil trouble and give them cause to worry. Despite this, much of the help they need will come from this area. Perk will prove to be useful also. Without his help it is doubtful they could have made it.

Wil has tried to use the Elfstones and found it impossible. Wil is certain that it is simply not something he can do. Both Wil and Amberle have doubts about their abilities throughout the story. What keeps these two focused and determined is the bond that they have for each other. It seems Amberle gives Wil the strength he needs and Wil gives her strength as well.



Chapter 28-34

Chapter 28-34 Summary

In chapter twenty-eight the Elves begin their march to meet the Demons. Allanon notices the Demons do not seem to care where they are and Allanon thinks the place they are heading may be a trap since they obviously have a spy in the castle. Ander goes to speak with Stee Jans and finds he is out scouting. One of the men explains to Ander that Stee Jans is called the Iron Man and tells Ander about battles with harrowing odds in which Stee Jans was the last standing survivor and still fighting when found. This gives Ander a lot to think about.

Chapter twenty-nine has the Elven armies marching forward. They begin to set up where they hope to hold the Demon army. Eventine is thinking of Amberle and Wil. Allanon tells the king Amberle is still alive. When he is asked how he knows Allanon admits it is what he thinks, not what he knows. Allanon has not sensed the Stones and if Amberle was in trouble, Wil would have used the Stones. Allanon begins to speak with Ander and tells him much that has been kept from others. When Ander asks Allanon why he has chosen to give him this information Allanon says it is for many reasons. Ander feels his question is not answered.

In chapter thirty day breaks at Hoare Flats. Allanon knows the Forbidding is broken. A scream of Demons twists up through the air and the Elves see the massive numbers they are to stand against. The battle begins and the Elves are soon losing. The staff of the Ellcrys helps but there are too many Demons. Eventine is hit by an arrow and knocked unconscious. Ander is able to get to his father's side and he gives the command to withdraw into the canyon. Ander follows Allanon's advice as the battle continues. Soon the group sees a great dragon. The Elven army is forced back again as they try to flee. Allanon says for them to leave the Dragon to him. Allanon is able to fight the Dragon and kill it. The battle with the Dragon makes a pile of rubble that the Demons cannot pass, leaving the Elves safe for the moment.

Chapter thirty-one has Ander leading the army when he is approached and told that his brother has died in battle. With his father unconscious and his brother dead, Ander has no choice but to assume responsibility for the army. Ander gives orders to fall back and regroup. Not all of his father's men are happy with Ander's choices. When Ander is confronted, Allanon appears with Stee Jans. Stee Jans gives Ander a defense that will allow them to slow the army as much as they can hope to. Ander realizes that it was most likely not luck that Stee Jans was there to give his input but the foresight of Allanon.

In chapter thirty-two Arion is buried less than an hour before the Demons attack again. Allanon watches the onslaught of the Demons and looks for the leader called Dagda Mor but can see no sight of him. Suddenly the Demons are gone and the battle is over. Ander is worried that the Demons do not come and it is near midnight when they attack



again, giving the men little time to put up lines and be prepared. Finally the Demons waver and flee for the moment and the Elves are again left to themselves. Ander makes Stee Jans his new field commander. Ander decides they need to leave at once for Arborlon.

Chapter thirty-three finds Wil Ohmsford in the Wilderun. They reach the small town of Grimpen Ward and try to find a place to sleep for the night despite its unwelcoming atmosphere. They find an Inn and Wil trades the woman of the Inn a healing session in exchange for food and lodging. Wil hopes to keep it a secret but the woman is so grateful she begins to give loud praise to Wil and free drinks to all at the Inn. Wil and Amberle go to bed quickly hoping for rest.

In chapter thirty-four Wil and Amberle wake when drunken men enter the room with hopes of finding gold. They are chased through the small town when Wil is injured and begins to pass out. When he wakes he and Amberle are safe and in a small room where Eretria is smiling at Wil.

Chapter 28-34 Analysis

Eretria tells Wil that they would meet again and they do. The Rovers are once again back in the story. When Wil meets Cephelo the first time he is wary of him, knowing that Cephelo cannot fully be trusted. In the next several chapters it will become clear Cephelo is not anymore trustworthy now than when first introduced. Eretria is also unchanged to a large extent. She is still trying to find a way to be free of Cephelo so she is not sold to the highest bidder. Eretria and Amberle are much alike despite their dislike of each other. Amberle appears angry earlier in the story when Allanon and Wil appear to take her back to her home. Her reason for this anger is her own fear. Eretria has a fear of being sold into slavery. As the story continues it becomes apparent that the two have more in common than either of them realizes.

Wil and Amberle manages to get ahead of the Reaper thanks to the help of Perk. Despite the lead they have on the Demon, he will catch up to them again. The Reaper's determination and, to small extent, his physical form have been described. The Demons have been long banished from the earth and no one is completely sure of what they are capable of. It is not explained how the Reaper tracks them. It is told that he gets lost at times but he obviously quickly finds his way again. In the next chapters it will be seen that the Reaper loses Amberle and Wil for a short period of time showing that he does have inadequacies in his tracking abilities. Despite this Amberle and Wil will not be able to stay ahead of him.

Dagda Mor has not been seen at the battle. It will not be until later when he appears and then does battle with Allanon. Allanon seems to be a structure that never changes, much like the Ellcrys, Allanon will explain that everyone has an allotted amount of time on earth. It is possible that part of the reason the Ellcrys' passing is so hard on Allanon is because he knows he is the last of his kind and also quite mortal. Allanon will be

forced to look at his own mortality and what he is going to have to do. Although this is an important part of the story, it will not be fully treated in this book.



Chapter 35-42

Chapter 35-42 Summary

As chapter thirty-five begins, the Elven army is still retreating and when they at last reach the shores of Rill Song they find they have lost a third of their elves and one of every three of the Free Corps is dead and the Demons are still advancing. It is when they are back at Arborlon that Ander finds Dwarves have arrived to help as well as Wing Riders with giant Rocs to help. There are only five Wing Riders but their help is welcome. Ander is told that his father is awake and he rushes to the king's side. It is left to Ander to tell his father of Arion's death and what happened during the battle. The king is disheartened and asks Ander to take Manx with him when he leaves. The King lies in his bed and cries thinking that he is responsible for everything that has happened to his people as well as the death of his oldest son.

In chapter thirty-six Wil and Eretria talk. Eretria tells him once again that he is meant for her. Amberle and Wil sleep in the Rover wagon that night and are welcomed by Cephelo the next day. Cephelo wants the Elfstones Wil carries in exchange for the information Wil and Amberle need in order to find the exact location of the Bloodfire. Wil lies to Cephelo and tells him that he and Amberle are on a mission to recover a root from Safehold that will cure the Elf King's granddaughter and they will receive a reward. Cephelo says he wants half of the reward after they have gotten it although he will not go with them when they go to the king. Wil is not trusting of Cephelo and tells him that half is too much and they will give him a third. Cephelo refuses at first but then calmly agrees. Wil knows that the ease with which Cephelo agreed indicates that they cannot trust him and Cephelo does not intend to wait on any reward although Wil is not sure what Cephelo is planning. Cephelo agrees to take them to one who will know the location of the Safehold.

In chapter thirty-seven Cephelo takes Wil and Amberle to the cabin of an old man named Hebel. Hebel and his dog Drifter live there alone. Hebel does not like Cephelo but agrees to give the tale that Wil and Amberle want to hear about Safehold. He explains there is a Hollow where two witches live. They are sisters named Morage and Mallenroh and they have been feuding for years. Hebel warns Wil and Amberle not to go but Wil says they must. That night, before they fall asleep, Eretria asks Wil to take her again. He refuses and she warns him that he will need her help but she is too proud to beg. Wil falls asleep feeling groggy.

In chapter thirty-eight Wil and the Rovers are on their way to the Hollows where Safehold lies. When they come to a fork in the road, Cephelo puts them out of the wagon. He refuses to give them any assistance past that which he has given and quickly sends them on their way. When Wil mentions something of the reward before they are gone, Cephelo momentarily has forgotten what Wil is talking about but tells Wil he will retrieve it later.



Back at Hebel's cabin, Hebel and his dog Drifter feel the presence of something evil. It passes quickly without Hebel ever seeing it. Hebel knows he came closer to dying at that moment than ever before in the Wilderun. Wil and Amberle are walking when they fall and Amberle twists her ankle. Amberle and Wil discuss using the Elfstones and Wil pulls them out only to find that he has nothing more than three ordinary pebbles in his hands. Wil leaves Amberle hidden under a bush and begins back tracking to find Cephelo and try to retrieve the stones. As he leaves, Amberle tells him how much she cares for him. She kisses him before he leaves.

Chapter thirty-nine shows the Demons attacking Arborlon. Eventine rides out to join his men and try to give them comfort. The only one who realizes the defeat in his eyes is Ander. The Demons attack for a long period of time and many Elves die. Suddenly, and without warning, the Demon army retreats. For one more day Arborlon is safe. Two hours after the retreat of the Demons, Trolls arrive to help. Ander and Eventine have some small amount of hope restored for it was thought the Trolls would refuse to get involved.

Chapter forty has Wil racing back to find Cephelo. Wil encounters Eretria along the way. She convinces Wil that if she helps him then she is allowed to go with him and Amberle. When they reach Cephelo's caravan they find everyone dead from an attack of the Reaper. It followed the wrong path after Cephelo dropped off Wil and Amberle. Wil realizes it will go back for Amberle but he is able to get the stones from Cephelo's wagon. Amberle suddenly knows she is being tracked. Despite the pain in her leg she stumbles into the Hollows, wanting to take her chances with the witches rather than the Reaper. She is suddenly picked up by large wooden fingers.

Chapter forty-one finds Wil and Eretria traveling as fast as they can to find Amberle. When they reach the spot where she was left they find her gone and Hebel soon walks up to them having tracked the thing that killed Cephelo with Drifter's help. The three of them decide to go into the Hollows after Amberle. It is not long before Drifter no longer has to track and Mallenroh finds them.

In chapter forty-two the battle continues at Arborlon. Eventine is injured again and dragged from the battle barely alive. Allanon uses his magic and the Demons are stunned and defeated for the day. The King, recovering from his injuries, awakens to Manx making noise. Eventine rises to see that it has killed the guards and attacks him. Eventine sees it in a Demon form and the two begin to battle. Eventine is struck but able to slice off the beast's head as Ander and others run into the room. Eventine falls asleep in Ander's arms.

Chapter 35-42 Analysis

Eventine is able to tell the others what has happened. They realize it was Manx, or the Changeling in Manx form, who was the spy that was giving away their information. Despite the fact that the spy is found and killed, it is little comfort since the King has been badly wounded. The full extent of his wounds are not explained in this chapter but



later on it will be explained how badly he is hurt. Stee Jans will tell Ander they have the same amount of chance of holding off the Demon army as the King has of making the night. Both situations are bleak.

Even though Eventine is hurt and lies dying, some of his last thoughts will be of his granddaughter and his people. Ander has finally been able to take on the roles allowed him by the death of his brother and now his father. He has begun to lead the men left in his care. In the next several chapters Allanon will explain to Ander that this is the reason he was including Ander in many of the decisions and actions that were taking place.

Cephelo was willing to risk his family's safety in order to get the Elfstones. It is unclear if he thought about the danger or if he understood that there was danger associated with Wil and Amberle. It is possible that part of what the Reaper was tracking was the Elfstones and this is the reason that the Demon was put off the trail when the caravan split up from Wil and Amberle. It is known that if Wil uses the Elfstones they give away his position and Allanon can feel them and trace him. The reason the Reaper was lead off course is not, however, explained.

Hebel and Drifter come to help. Wil has been reluctant to accept any outside help from anyone since so many have died. Despite this it seems that both he and Amberle could benefit from the help of others. In the next few chapters it will be clear that Wil would fail in his attempt to save Amberle if not for Hebel, Drifter, and Eretria.



Chapter 43-46

Chapter 43-46 Summary

Chapter forty-three introduces Mallenroh. She is beautiful but cold-looking. She explains she gives either life or death to anyone who enters her Hollows. Hebel hands her a statue he made of her from when he encountered her years earlier. She takes it and says it is pretty, then turns Hebel and Drifter into wooden statues. Mallenroh says that she wants the Elfstones and will give Wil, Amberle and Eretria their freedom if he willingly gives over the Elfstones so she can use their magic to destroy her sister. She disappears to find the Demon that tracks him but tells him to choose wisely and has her servant, a hairy creature named Wisp, take the Elfstones.

In chapter forty-four Wil, Amberle and Eretria are in a prison at Mallenroh's home. Wisp brings them some food and asks to talk to Eretria calling her "pretty thing." When Wil asks if Wisp knows about Spires Reach, a peak not far from Mallenroh's castle, Wisp immediately says "Safehold." Wisp refuses to let them out saying he serves the Lady. Desperate Wil asks if the Lady will let them go if he gives her the Elfstones but Wisp only laughs and says that no one may ever leave. Eretria begins to pick the lock but Wil says he needs Wisp's help. Wil and Amberle tell Eretria the whole story quickly and Eretria swears to help them find the Bloodfire. Eretria picks the lock while Amberle tells Wil that she is afraid of the Ellcrys because of the bond they had and the feeling of loosing herself she felt when contacted by the tree. Wil kisses her and promises to be there to help her. The door is open and they leave to find Wisp.

Chapter forty-five has them finding Wisp right around the corner. Eretria pulls a knife from her boot and uses it to keep Wisp under control while they go to where the Elfstones are kept. They go to the room to find Morag and Mallenroh fighting over the Elfstones. The two manage to kill each other and Hebel and Drifter are set free from their spell when the sisters die. Wil gets the Elfstones and they flee the castle as it begins to collapse. Before they are gone, the Reaper appears. Wisp shows them a way out to the forest.

In chapter forty-six they begin to run to Safehold with Wisp leading the way. Wil knows this is the last day that Perk will be circling before heading home. Wil has to carry Amberle, her ankle still weak. They find the chamber deep within the caverns and the Bloodfire which appears for Amberle scares Wisp out of the cavern, then Amberle is gone from sight inside the Bloodfire.

Chapter 43-46 Analysis

The Bloodfire has not been fully explained since no one knows anything about it. In the next few chapters it will be explained that the Bloodfire does not actually burn. The Reaper is still following the group. The Demon has been knocked off a bridge, evaded



the witch and followed them through horrid swamps. He is able to quickly follow them down into the Safehold where the Bloodfire is kept.

Mallenroh seems to have some kind of power over Hebel. He remembers her from his youth and says that he would have thought it all a dream if it had not been for what she had taken from him. Even when they see her again Hebel seems certain that she will not hurt them. It is possible that she let Hebel pass by her the first time because he was a young man and reminded her some of the man that she cared for; the book does not explain her leniency. It appears the Reaper kept its distance while Mallenroh and Morag were alive. This indicates they had the power to defeat the Demon although this is never shown.

Amberle and Wil seem to be falling in love with each other. Eretria seems so self-assured earlier in the story but as she sees the feelings that they have for each other she will distance herself from Wil. In the next few chapters it becomes obvious how much the bond between Wil and Amberle is effecting her.



Chapter 47-54

Chapter 47-54 Summary

Chapter forty-seven begins with Wil realizing he can no longer see Amberle. He is looking at the Bloodfire when the Reaper enters the cavern behind them holding Wisp's lifeless body. Wil grabs the Elfstones but still cannot call upon their power. He tries and tries again to use them as the Reaper comes towards them. Wil suddenly realizes what is keeping the Stones from working is his own doubt. Wil is able to remove his own doubt through the words that Amberle and Allanon spoke to him, and begins fighting the Reaper. Wil thought that when he was able to call upon their power then the Reaper would be defeated, but he finds the Reaper is able to fight back and the battle between the two begins. Eretria and Drifter help Wil by distracting the Reaper while Wil calls forth the Stones' power. Drifter is hurt but Wil is finally able to kill the Reaper.

As chapter forty-eight begins Amberle is inside the Bloodfire's flame. She suddenly realizes she is going to have to sacrifice herself willingly in order to give life to the Ellcrys seed. Thinking of all those who have died she lets herself go and draws the Bloodfire inside of herself.

Chapter forty-nine shows Wil watching Amberle emerge from the Bloodfire's flame. Hebel carrying Drifter, Wil badly wounded, and Eretria caring for Amberle, they all make their way out of the Safehold. Wil gives over Perk's whistle with instructions to blow it as he begins to drift into unconsciousness. Soon Perk arrives and takes them out with Hebel and Drifter opting to stay in Wilderun, where they feel they belong. Amberle tries to tell Wil that she made a choice and that it was her choice to make but Wil does not understand what she is telling him.

Chapter fifty has Allanon with the Ellcrys as she slowly dies. Ander is talking with Stee Jans and they know they have little chance of holding out until Amberle returns now that the tree is finally dead.

Chapter fifty-one has the Demon army poised to strike again as Stee Jans and his men face the Demons at the front. Allanon has a plan although it is not revealed what the plan might be. Allanon does battle with Dagda Mor and is able to defeat the Demon although the magic used takes a great toll on Allanon. The Demon army does not care that their leader is dead and they stand ready to attack with nothing more than fear keeping them at bay. Allanon is weak but able to make it back to his side of the battlefield. Suddenly they see Perk's giant bird flying toward them carrying riders.

Chapter fifty-two Wil looks down and sees the battle that has taken place and the piles of bodies of the elven people. Perk lands the bird in the Garden and Amberle walks to where the Ellcrys stands. Demons are desperate and charge them in the garden. Wil uses the Elfstones but knows there are too many Demons. Amberle reaches the Ellcrys and begins transforming and slowly takes the place of the tree. The Demons begin to



writhe and scream as they disappear back through the Forbidding. Wil sits down and weeps.

Chapter fifty-three finds Wil sleeping. When he awakens Allanon explains that he knew everything all along but could not tell Amberle or Wil of her destiny. Wil is still sleepy and Allanon tells him to tell Flick that he was right about him. Wil is too tired to keep his eyes open and falls back asleep.

Allanon goes to the King's chambers and watches his old friend pass away. Allanon tells Ander that he knew what was to come but did not have the power to stop his father's death or the war.

Chapter fifty-four has everyone going home. Stee Jans goes home with no more than twelve men, six of those badly injured; he had arrived with six hundred men. The Dwarves and the Trolls also depart with good wishes exchanged. Wil goes to visit the tree before he leaves and hears a young girl talking about the wonderful, beautiful tree that protects them. When he leaves the gardens he encounters Eretria. Eretria visited Wil everyday he was getting better and did what she could for him. Wil is attracted to her and finally asks her to go with him. Eretria grabs his hand and agrees.

Chapter 47-54 Analysis

Eretria had told Wil he was for her; it seems she was correct. Since the book is the second in a series of three, some things are left unanswered but the immediate threat to the people is gone. Flick has held a grudge against Allanon and his actions earlier in his life. It is unclear what feelings Wil has about Allanon. Wil cares deeply for Amberle and it seems that he wants someone to blame for her having to give herself to the tree. Allanon does take time to explain much of this to Wil after everything is done but there are still gaps in the history.

Ander is the last person seen when the story ends. He takes on his new responsibilities as king; he had not planned on becoming the ruler and at more than one point in the book Ander wishes that the responsibility had fallen to someone else. Despite this, Ander picks up the mantle left to him and seems to accept it willingly after his father tells him how proud he has become of him.

Many of the characters in the book do not survive till the end of the story, such as Cephelo and the Elven Hunters. Despite this it seems their deaths are not wasted. Even Cephelo's death serves to give Wil and Amberle time to get into the Hollows. While this is a dangerous place for them to be, it was very possible the only place they could have gone to momentarily escape the Reaper.

Allanon disappears much as he appeared in the story. Much about him is left unexplained in this book. There are other questions left to the other books in the series but the main points in the book have adequate closure.



Characters

Wil Ohmsford

Wil Ohmsford is a young man training to be a Healer. Wil chooses this path for himself because his parents die when he is very young. Wil has great determination to become a Healer and refuses to leave when he is told he will not be trained. After a time and much determination Wil is allowed to train. Wil is chosen as the protector of Amberle, the girl who must take the Ellcrys seed to Safehold. Wil doubts very much that he has the ability to help but finally does agree to go.

Wil is the holder of the Elfstones. These magic stones were given to him by his grandfather although Wil has never used them and does not know he can use them. The Elfstones can only be used by Elves. When Wil tries to use the stones he finds it difficult because he is only an eighth Elf. Wil tries to use the stones during his quest only to find that he is unable. Wil blames himself for much of what happens on the journey. It is not until much later that Wil realizes the inability to use the stones comes from himself and his own doubts.

Amberle Elesedil

Amberle Elesedil is the granddaughter of the King of the Elves. Amberle was once a Chosen, one of the ones picked by the Ellcrys to be her caretaker. Amberle leaves home and disgraces her family by turning down the honor of serving the Ellcrys. Amberle does not give anyone any explanation as to why she leaves home and her responsibilities. The Ellcrys had been talking with Amberle and the feelings it gave Amberle frightened her. The tree had already chosen Amberle as her seed carrier and as such treated Amberle with a type of motherly affection confusing to Amberle.

Amberle is chosen to be the one to take the seed of the Ellcrys to Safehold. Amberle does not want to be the one to go because of the connection she has with the tree but ultimately agrees. Amberle will have to sacrifice herself in order to give life to the new Ellcrys seed. Amberle willingly gives herself in order to give the seed life. She tells Wil that it is her choice to do this and that she feels it has to be done because of all that had died at the hands of the Demons. When they return to the Garden where the Ellcrys is kept, Amberle will undergo a transformation as she becomes the new tree.

Allanon

Allanon is the last of the Druids, an ancient magic race. Allanon shows up and those who remember seeing him before are shocked that Allanon has not aged in the last fifty years. Allanon knows more than he reveals to those he becomes involved with. It is not until the end of the story that Allanon says he knew everything from the beginning but



every person had the ability to make their own choice. It is Allanon who kills Dagda Mor, the leader of the Demons.

Ander Elessedil

Ander Elessedil is the younger son of King Eventine Elessedil. Ander does not think he will ever have to take over any responsibilities since he is the younger son and the relationship between him and his father is strained. It is Ander that stands beside Amberle and says he believes she should make the trip with the Ellcrys seed to Safehold. Ander's older brother dies in battle and his father becomes badly wounded, leaving Ander in charge. A Demon called a Changeling kills King Eventine and Ander is forced to become the new King.

Eventine Elessedil

Eventine Elessedil is the King of the Elves. Eventine is in his eighties but is still in good health. He is hurt by Amberle when she abandons her people but loves her very much and eventually is able to forgive her. Eventine does not think that Ander has what it takes to become king but eventually will change his mind. Eventine is injured in battle and while recuperating in his room is attacked by a Demon called a Changeling. The King is able to kill the Demon but is badly wounded. When the war is over Eventine passes away.

Eretria

Eretria is a Rover girl who tells Wil Ohmsford that she is for him. Eretria is described as having long dark hair and being very attractive. It is Eretria who saves Wil's life while Wil is in Wilderun. Eretria wants to go with Wil but he continues to refuse her advances until after Amberle is transformed into the new Ellcrys.

Arion Elessedil

Arion Elessedil is the prince, eldest son of King Eventine. Arion is easily angered and is unable to forgive Amberle for leaving her people. Arion is killed in battle with the Demons.

Cephelo

Cephelo is the leader of the band of Rovers that steals Wil and Amberle's horse upon their first meeting. Cephelo wants the Elfstones Wil carries and ultimately steals them for a short period of time. Cephelo, and all those with him, are killed by the Reaper after giving Wil and Amberle a ride.



Dagda Mor

Dagda Mor is the leader of the Demon army that has been trapped behind the Forbidding. Dagda Mor became the leader because he is more powerful than the others. Allanon is able to kill Dagda Mor but his death does not slow down the Demons. Dagda Mor is able to get through the Forbidding several days before it actually breaks. He brings two other Demons with him to help stop the rebuilding of the Ellcrys.

Stee Jans

Stee Jans is the Legion Commander of the Free Corps. Stee Jans gives Ander advice on strategy and how best to defend against the Demon hordes. The other Free Corps members refer to Stee Jans as The Iron Man.

The Reaper

The Reaper is a deadly Demon that kills the Chosen, and then goes after Wil and Amberle. It is said that no one sees the face of the Reaper unless they are about to die. The Reaper is ultimately killed by Wil with the use of the Elfstones.

The Changeling

The Changeling is a creature that can transform into any creature in its universe; it loves to kill. No one is completely sure what the Changeling looks like because it spends all of its time in another form. The Changeling takes on the form of Manx, the King's wolfhound. It is the Changeling that kills King Eventine.

Hebel

Hebel is the old man who lives in the Wilderun. Hebel comes to the aid of Wil and Amberle when they go to Safehold. Hebel and his dog are transformed for a period of time into wooden statues by an evil witch.

Mallenroh

Mallenroh is a witch that lives in the Hollows. She turns Hebel and his dog into wooden statues for a short period of time. Mallenroh wants to have the Elfstones from Wil and imprisons him and his companions. Mallenroh hates her twin sister, Morag, and the two kill each other.



The King of the Silver River

The King of the Silver River appears when Amberle and Wil are close to his river. He saves them, and Allanon, from Demons that are attacking them. The King is a magical being that has been alive since the beginning of time. The King reveals glimpses of what will happen to Amberle and Wil while they are with him, although neither of them realizes at the time what he is telling them.

Perk

Perk is the young Elf boy who flies Wil and Amberle to Wilderun on his Roc and then takes them back to Arborlon when they are done. Perk is one of the people who witnesses Amberle turn into the Ellcrys.



Objects/Places

The Ellcrys

The Ellcrys is an enchanted tree; it maintains a barrier called the Forbidding, which keeps the Demons banished from the world. The Ellcrys is a sentient being but only communicates with a few that serve her. The Ellcrys begins to die; this weakens the Forbidding and allows Demons to escape through.

Manx

Manx is the wolfhound that belongs to King Eventine of the Elves. Manx is constantly at the King's side but it is not until the end of the story that it is discovered that Manx was killed and replaced by a shape-shifting Demon earlier in the story.

Elfstones

The Elfstones were given to Wil by his grandfather. They are three stones that connect the mind, body, and spirit. They can only be wielded by someone with elven blood. The stones do not work unless they are given freely. It is the stones and their power that kill the Reaper.

Safehold

Safehold is the place within the Hollows that Wil and Amberle must go in order to give life to the Ellcrys seed. Safehold is so old that much of the story is about the characters simply trying to find out where Safehold is actually located.

Bloodfire

Bloodfire is the magical fire that gives life to the Ellcrys seed. When Wil and Amberle reach Safehold, Amberle can feel the Bloodfire long before she can see it. Amberle stands in the middle of the Bloodfire although it does not burn her.

Chosen

The Chosen are Elven youth that are picked by the Ellcrys to serve her for one year. The Ellcrys handpicks the Chosen and can speak to them, although it is rare for her to communicate beyond the first day when the youth are chosen. It must be one of the Chosen that takes the Ellcrys seed to the Bloodfire at Safehold.



Aborlon

Aborlon is the Elven city where the Ellcrys lives. It is Aborlon where Wil and Amberle must bring the Ellcrys seed back to after it has been brought to life in the Bloodfire.

The Staff of Power

The Staff of Power is wielded by Dagda Mor, the leader of the Demon army. The Staff of Power is used against Allanon in battle. The Staff of Power glows red when Dagda Mor uses it.

Drifter

Drifter is the giant dog that belongs to Hebel. Drifter attacks the Reaper, giving Wil time to recover from the attack. Drifter's leg is broken in the fight with the Reaper but he lives.

The Forbidding

The Forbidding is caused by the Ellcrys and is what keeps the Demons banished from the world. The Demons are able to finish breaking the Forbidding when the Ellcrys is dying. The Forbidding is restored when Amberle returns with the Ellcrys seed.



Themes

Self-Doubt

Self-doubt is seen as a theme throughout the story. Ander Elesedil is the younger son of the king and immediately it becomes clear Ander continually compares himself to both his father and his older brother. It is not that Ander does not think that he has no good qualities. When Arion leaves the city to go to a neighboring kingdom, Ander thinks to himself about how much better he is than Arion at understanding the problems and concerns of others. Despite what faith Ander has in himself, he will be very unsure about taking on the role of a king when his father is hurt and his brother is killed.

Amberle also has doubts about herself. Being near the Ellcrys and having constant conversations with the sentient being scared her. She feels certain it should have been such a large honor to be in the service of the tree that it is a fault of hers that she was frightened. It is not until much later in the story that it is found that the tree treated her differently and that she was different than the other Chosen that served the Ellcrys. Amberle asks Wil to be with her and to help her finish the task she has been given because she fears she is not strong enough to continue on the path.

Wil Ohmsford is shocked that he is chosen as the protector of Amberle. He continually asks Allanon if it was a mistake that he was picked and does not believe Allanon when he says Wil is the only one who can go with Amberle. Wil believes he cannot use the Elfstones because he is not strong enough, because he is only an eighth Elf and believes there is a block within himself. It is not until he is forced to do battle with the Reaper that Wil realizes the block is there because of his own self-doubt. Even Allanon, a character that seems to be all knowing, doubts some of the choices he makes.

Good Versus Evil

The theme of good versus evil is very easily seen in the story. The main symbol of good in the story is the Ellcrys. The Ellcrys is described in a very beautiful way and she is sentient although more than human. It is the Ellcrys that keeps all the races of the earth safe. For the Ellcrys' magic to work there must be a willing sacrifice of someone that is chosen. Even the place where the Ellcrys is kept seems to be a place of peace and is described as almosy heavenly. There are two other characters in the story that could be symbols of good as well. The first is Allanon. Allanon shows up, after not having been seen for fifty years, and has not aged a day. He is mysterious but wants the best for the earth and even doubts himself as he does what he believes is right. Another character in the story is Amberle. Amberle is the Chosen that must take the Ellcrys seed to the Bloodfire. Amberle is torn about the thought that there have been so many people killed by the Demons and it is the thought of these deaths that cause her to sacrifice herself to save everyone else.



The evil in the story is symbolized by the Demons. While there are antagonists in the story that are not evil, the Demons in the story become the real and frightening threat to the characters. The head Demon is not seen as much as the other Demons but is described as holding a staff that chars the ground. One of the Demons is called a Changeling and it is this creature that is a spy for the Demon hordes and will eventually kill the king. The Demon used as an assassin is called the Reaper. The Reaper's face is only shown to those he intends to kill. The Reaper leaves bodies broken and littering the ground everywhere he goes.

Destiny

The theme of destiny, with Allanon and the King of the Silver River as characters that can actually foresee the future. Allanon takes leave to go and read the books hidden in the old Druid castle. The reader is given a limited point of view, so the words Allanon reads are not revealed; but later in the story Allanon will say he knew everything from the beginning. Allanon also explains to Wil that he could not reveal too much to Wil or to Amberle because they had to be free to make their own choices and find out things their own way. Allanon simply says he knew everything. He never actually explains what he knew ahead of time. It appears there are things Allanon could not have known about, such as the Changeling taking on Manx's appearance.

The Elfstones were passed down from Wil's grandfather to him. Allanon does say that using the Elfstones reveals the position to the Demons that track them but Wil has not used the Elfstones at anytime prior to when Allanon comes to him. Allanon also keeps from Wil the information about what will happen to Amberle. It appears Allanon knew that Wil would develop feelings for the girl and that they did not have much choice in the matter.



Style

Point of View

The story is written in third person point of view. Much of the story takes place from the view point of Wil Ohmsford but there are other characters that the author chooses to shadow. Some will be followed only once and others will be reoccurring focal points. The view in the story is limited, shown by the fact that when Allanon is in the ancient Druid castle reading about the Bloodfire and the Ellcrys seed the reader is shown none of what he is reading or thinking despite the fact that he is the character being focused on. Often the reader is able to know a character's thoughts and feelings but not specific details.

Much of the story focuses on the journey that is made from the Ellcrys tree to Safehold and back again, as well as the fight the Elven army undertakes against the Demons. This point of view shows the reader a lot of the information needed to understand what has happened in the past and glimpses of what will happen in the future. There is dialogue as well as exposition used to explain the history of the Ellcrys, the earth, races and individuals.

Setting

The story takes place in the fictional world of Shannara. There is much included in this mythical world that is given extreme detail such as the races involved and a map of the world. The main race involved is the Elven race. There are Demons as well in the story. The Demons hate all "races of man." There is no specific historical setting given for this fictional world but it appears to mimic an old English world where there are kings and queens and quests are commonly undertaken. The setting also includes mythical creatures such as dragons and witches as well as large flying birds, called Rocs, that can carry multiple riders.

While the setting is fictional it is very entertaining and easily understood. Much of the story takes place in the Elven city where the Ellcrys lives. This is the city that is defended against the Demons while Wil and Amberle are on their quest. This will also be the city where the last few chapters take place. While the majority of the story is focused on getting back to or defending this city, there is a portion of the book devoted to describing the cities and places where Wil and Amberle travel while on their quest. The author uses long descriptions for many of the animals, places, and cultures in the book that help create a picture of the setting used.

Language and Meaning

The language in the story is rather straightforward and easy to understand. While many of the words and phrases in the books have been created for this mythical setting the



author has borrowed these phrases and descriptions from the real world. The word "Rovers" is not readily understood until the description of these characters and their way of life is given. After the reader understands what they are like, it becomes clear that these people are an equivalent of gypsies.

The Demon that chases Wil and Amberle is called the Reaper. While the Reaper name has been given to one single Demon it is easy to why the author chose this name for his monster. This book is not the first in the series but the author uses the characters to explain the words and phrases unique to this writing. Often there will be symbolism and prophecies given in the story that the reader will have to discern carefully. The true meaning of many of these will not be made clear until the happenings in the story are looked at in reverse. Despite this, the book is an enjoyable read and the meaning is relatively clear. There are characters in the story that use different language to show that they speak differently. The creature Wisp, found at the Witch's castle, will speak with very bad English in order to show his intelligence level.

Structure

The Elfstones of Shannara consists of 564 pages and is split into fifty-four chapters. While many of the chapters contains several pages, there are some that span as little as four pages. The chapters are based on events rather than the amount of pages the chapter spans. The characters being shadowed change several times throughout the book. When there is a change in scene or characters, there often is a double break in the text to acknowledge the change.

In addition to the text, the author has included a map of Shannara which shows the lay of the land. This gives the reader a better idea of how far the characters travel and the places where the battles take place.

The Elfstones of Shannara is the second book in the series. While some of the characters from the first book will show up in this one the author provides enough information to the reader that the book is easily followed. There is a main plot in the book along with several other subplots. While many of the plots are concluded in this book there are some that are left open-ended for the next book in the series.



Quotes

"The Chosen were the caretakers of the Ellrys, the strange and wondrous tree that stood at the center of the Gardens—the tree, as the legends told, that served as protector against a primordial evil that had very nearly destroyed the Elves centuries ago, an evil that had been shut away from the earth since before the dawn of the old race of Men." Chapter 1, p. 1.

"The legend was not legend. The legend was life. Evil did indeed lie beyond a Forbidding that the Ellcrys maintained. Only she kept the Elven people safe. And now she was dying." Chapter 1, p. 6.

"If one of the Chosen were permitted to carry a seed of the tree to the source of her power, the Ellcrys might be reborn and the Forbidding invoked again." Chapter 2, p. 9.

"'Child, that you were mine,' he whispered. He stepped closer, reaching up to take her hand in his own. 'No harm shall come to you in this land. Be at peace. We are joined in purpose and shall be one with the earth.'" Chapter 12, p. 118.

"Driving inward, he smashed aside the barrier that stood between himself and the power of the Stones, smashed it aside through strength of will born of desperation and need, without yet understanding what it was. As he did so, he sensed something change within himself that he could not explain and did not feel was altogether good." Chapter 16, p. 161.

"I would ask you all to remember this. Only a Chosen in service may bear the seed of the Ellcrys. When the year began, there were seven. Six are dead. Amberle Elessedil is your last hope." Chapter 18, p. 185.

"The fear was unreasoning, senseless, blind. It was always there, lurking in the back of her mind like some beast of prey, slipping from its place of hiding whenever she gave thought to the Ellcrys." Chapter 19, p. 193.

"'Here is my hand and thus my bond. Here is my oath to you. You shall succeed in this quest, Wil Ohmsford. You shall find the Bloodfire and bring safely home again the last of the Chosen, she who shall restore the Ellcrys.' His voice was low and commanding. 'I believe that, and so must you.'" Chapter 21, p. 215.

"That meant that the Demons knew exactly where they were going after Drey Wood; and if the Demons knew that, then regardless of the route the little company chose to follow or the deceptions they chose to employ to elude would-be pursuers, chances were excellent that when the company arrived at the Wilderun there would be Demons waiting for them." Chapter 23, p. 233.

"Ander stared after him with mingled admiration and disbelief. Six hundred men! Thinking of the thousands of Demons that would come against them, he found himself



wondering what possible difference six hundred Southlanders would make." Chapter 27, p. 288.

"Almost without thinking, Wil reached into the Rover tunic and lifted out the pouch that held the Elfstones. He fingered it idly and was about to return it again when he noticed something odd about its feel. Frowning, he opened the drawstrings and dumped the contents into his open palm. He found himself staring at three ordinary pebbles." Chapter 38, pp. 403-404.

"The Elven King froze. Through the opening came Manx, heavy body hunched forward in a low crouch, grizzled head swinging to where his master sat upon the bed. The wolfhound's eyes glittered like a cat's, and his dark muzzle was streaked with blood. But it was his forelegs and paws that startled the King most; they seemed in the half-light to have become the corded limbs and claws of a Demon." Chapter 42, p. 448.

"Will the Lady let us leave if I give her the Elfstones?' Wisp did not seem to understand. 'Leave?' 'Go out of the Hollows?' Wil pressed. Wisp shook his head quickly. 'Never leave. Never.'" Chapter 44, p. 466.

"Things were not working out as he had expected. He had thought when the had broken through to the Elven magic that the worst was over, that at last he possessed mastery of a weapon against which the Reaper could not stand, that however powerful and dangerous the Demon, it would be no match for the Stones. Now he was no longer certain." Chapter 47, p. 506.

"Slowly she brought the Elcrys seed to her beast, feeling the life within it stir. Tears ran down her cheeks. It was she. It was she. Now at last, she understood. She held the seed close against her and drew the Bloodfire in." Chapter 48, p. 512.

"Listen to me. I made a choice back there. It is my choice and there is no one but me to answer for it. Do you understand? No one. I made it because I had to. I made it for a lot of reasons, for reasons that I cannot...' She faltered, her head shaking. 'For the Chosen, Wil. For Crispin and Dilph and the other Elven Hunters. For the soldiers at Drey Wood. For poor little Wisp. All of them are dead, Wil, and I can't let it be for nothing.'" Chapter 49, p. 518.

"Before him the wall of fire that had held back the Demons was dying. Already they massed along its perimeter, eyes fixed hungrily upon him, waiting to see what would happen next. The destruction of the Dagda Mor meant nothing to them. Their hatred of the Elves was what mattered. The Druid returned their stares, his smile slow and mocking. All that held them back now was their fear of him. The moment they lost that, they would attack." Chapter 51, p. 538.

"The Elven girl's body began to lose its shape, the human form melting, clothing shredding and falling from her; her legs fused and tendrils from her feet slipped downward into the earth; slowly, her upraised arms lengthened and split." Chapter 52, p. 542.



"I will save you the trouble of asking further questions. I knew everything. The Druid histories at Paranor revealed to me the truth of how the Ellcrys had come into being—the truth of how she must come into being again."Chapter 53, p. 550.

"Will she keep the Demons from us, Mommy?' the little girl was asking. 'Far, far away from us.' Her mother smiled. 'And protect us always?' 'Yes—and protect us always.' The little girl's eyes flitted from her mother's face to the tree. 'She is so pretty.' Her small voice was filled with wonderment. Amberle. Wil gazed upon her for an instant longer, then turned and walked slowly from the Gardens." Chapter 54, p. 561.



Topics for Discussion

Allanon tells Wil, after Amberle has become the Ellcrys, that he knew everything. Did Allanon truly know everything? Explain. Why did Allanon not tell Amberle the truth? Would she have accepted it?

The King of the Silver River shows Amberle and Wil a glimpse of the future. Does this help Wil or Amberle? Why did the King of the Silver River choose to show them this?

Before the King of the Elves dies, Allanon has a moment of bitterness. Speculate on why this would be a moment that Allanon has trouble accepting?

Speculate on what the Elfstones took from Wil. Was his decision to never use the stones again a reasonable decision? Explain.

Was it necessary that Wil and Amberle grow to care about each other? Why? Did Allanon know that these two would develop a relationship?

Why did Hebel decide to stay in the wilderness rather than leave? Would Hebel have changed his mind about helping Wil and Amberle if he had known that he would again encounter the witch? Why?

Explain why Ander decided to tell his father that Amberle was safe. Was this the right decision? Explain.

Why was Wil unable to call upon the Elfstone magic when the Elf hunters were in danger? Would he have been able to use the Stones if he or Amberle had been in the Reapers grasp? Explain.

Did Allanon use the people around him? Allanon told Wil to tell Flick that he was right about him. Was Flick right about Allanon's character? Explain.