

A Feast of Dragons Study Guide

A Feast of Dragons by Morgan Rice

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Plot Summary

The book *A Feast of Dragons* by Morgan Rice is the third book in the *Sorcerer's Ring* series. It covers the period of time from the beginning of King McCloud's attack on villages in the MacGil territory up to Gareth's threat to Gwen that he has sold her in an arranged marriage. Themes in the book include loyalty, and the discovery and fulfillment of one's prophesy. The book sets sibling against sibling as Gwen tries to confront her brother, Gareth, whom she believes has killed their father.

Several plots wind together in this story keeping interest and excitement high. Thor and his friends are completing their hundred day training, an experience that pits them against nature, strange animals and even a dragon. During this time, another recruit named Malic tries to kill Thor but fails and sets him up as a murderer instead. Thor's name is cleared when both boys fight Cyclops. Cyclops is a mythical figure who kills the guilty but lets the innocent live. In this story, Thor comes out alive while Malic is killed.

Meanwhile, Gwen and her brother Godfrey are working to prove that their brother, Gareth killed their father, the king. Their half-brother, Kendrick has been framed for the murder and is slated to be killed. Gwen and Godfrey find the murder weapon along with a witness willing to testify against Gareth but Gareth gets wind of Gwen's plan and has her witness killed. He also threatens to have Gwen sent away to an arranged marriage and tells her that he has set Thor, her boyfriend, up to be killed.

Also in the novel Erec fight for the hand of Alistair, the woman who has caught his eye. He is angered when the man for whom Alistair had been working as an indentured servant sells her as a sex slave. He kills the man who broke his promise to give Alistair to him then goes off to find her and bring her back.

Finally, the MacGil kingdom is threatened as the ruthless King McCloud begins to terrorize villages in the MacGil property. Although Gareth is warned of McCloud's invasion he shrugs off the threat. In addition to McCloud, Andronicus is trying to find a way to break the protection of the Ring and make both the McCloud and MacGill territories part of his Empire.



Chapters One and Two Summary

Summary

The book *A Feast of Dragons* by Morgan Rice is the third book in the Sorcerer's Ring series. It covers the period of time from the beginning of King McCloud's attack on villages in the MacGil territory up to Gareth's threat to Gwen that he has sold her in an arranged marriage. Themes in the book include loyalty, and the discovery and fulfillment of one's prophesy. The book sets sibling against sibling as Gwen tries to confront her brother, Gareth, whom she believes has killed their father.

In Chapter One, King McCloud begins his advance into the MacGil side of the Ring. Although the village that he attacks is not fortified and is not prepared for a fight, McCloud brings a full contingent of soldiers with him to terrorize the villagers. He takes one woman as his prisoner. As he attacks and hurts the people, he feels as if he is alive again.

In Chapter Two, Gareth sends members of his army to arrest Kendrick. Kendrick has been framed for the murder of the king. Although The Silver, Kendrick's brothers in arms draw their weapons to fight for Kendrick's honor, Kendrick has them hold their fighting because he does not want to be the cause of any bloodshed. Kendrick believes that it was Gareth, one of his brothers, who was responsible for the king's death.

Analysis

One of the major story lines of the novel is addressed in these first two chapters. Kendrick is arrested by Gareth's forces for the murder of their father, the king. Although Kendrick could have let The Silver, his brothers-in-arms, attack and kill Gareth's knights, he holds them back and allows himself to be arrested because he does not want to be responsible for the death of fellow soldiers or the cause of a civil war. Kendrick believes that his brother Gareth is actually the one who killed their father and is having him framed.

Also in this section of the novel the ruthless King McCloud is introduced as he attacks a village in the MacGill territory. He does not attack a major village, but his violent and cruel nature is characterized by the way he terrorizes the people and victimizes all with whom he comes in contact.

Discussion Question 1

Why is King McCloud attacking the small village that lies in MacGil territory?



Discussion Question 2

Why does Kendrick keep his friends from attacking Gareth's soldiers?

Discussion Question 3

Who does Kendrick believe killed the king? Why does he believe this?

Vocabulary

Salivated, idyllic, clime, erupted, maim, relished, legitimate, vengeance, impetus.



Chapters Three and Four Summary

Summary

In Chapter Three, Gwendolyn and Godfrey question Steffen. He had told them that he could tell them what had happened to their father but has now gone back on his word. He tells them that he heard something fall down the chute but that it was disposed of in the river with the rest of the contents of the chamber pot. Gwen decides to give Steffen time to see if he will come clean and tell them what he knows.

In Chapter Four, Thor and his friends are on their way to the Isle of Mist to go through their hundred days of training to become Legion soldiers. As they approach the island where they are to train, the boys realize there is nowhere for their boat to dock. Their drill sergeant, Kolk, tells them they must swim to the shore through waters infested with strange, deadly animals. One of the boys refuses to jump, saying he can't swim but Kolk pushes him over. When Thor realizes the boy is drowning, he jumps over to save the boy.

Analysis

In this section of the novel, the story line involving the murder of the king continues as Gwen and her brother Godfrey, try to get information from one of the workers in the castle. Although this strange man had told them that he had information about the murder, he refuses to tell them anything when they come to question him. Gwen feels like he is lying when he will only tell them that he believes whatever was dropped down the waste chute was disposed of in the river. She is afraid that if they push him by imprisoning him or questioning him any further, he will shut down entirely. Instead, she and Godfrey decide to give Steffen some space to decide to do the right thing and tell them what he knows.

Also in this section of chapters, another story line is introduced. In this story, Thor and several other recruits are traveling to the Isle of Mist to complete their Hundred days training. The island is near the territory inhabited by a dragon. As the boys realize how difficult their time will be, Kolk informs the boys that their lives will be put in danger every day that they are in training. Their first trial is to swim through water infested with dangerous animals to the island. Thor's real nature shines through as he risks his own life to save a boy who believes he is drowning.

Discussion Question 1

Why are Gwen and Godfrey questioning Steffen?



Discussion Question 2

What does Steffen claim happen to the item he believes was thrown down the chute?
What does he believe it was?

Discussion Question 3

What is the purpose of Thor and his friend's trip to the island? What are they hoping to achieve?

Vocabulary

Scrutinized, decipher, impervious, subside, realm, ominous, plummeted, teeming, treacherous.



Chapters Five and Six Summary

Summary

In Chapter Five, Gareth is preparing to see if he is capable of lifting the Dynasty Sword. He has invited the public to witness the ceremony. When he tries to lift the blade, Gareth is unable to do so. Gareth is embarrassed and humiliated at his failure.

In Chapter Six, Gareth is completely devastated by his inability to wield the Dynasty Sword. He feels that everything he had ever thought about himself and his destiny has been wrong. He can still see the image of his father's scowling face, as it came to him as he failed to lift the weapon. It is at this point that his wife, Helena, mocks him and asks him for a divorce. Though he briefly considers giving her the divorce, he decides against it when she tells him that she is in love with one of his knights. He tells her that if he ever discovers who the man is, he will have him tortured and killed.

The next person whom Gareth encounters is Firth, the man who put him up to trying to lift the Dynasty Sword as well as the one who had actually killed Gareth's father. He sees Firth as the person who got him into all of the trouble he feels he is in. Firth tells Gareth that Gwen and Godfrey have been digging into their father's death. Gareth tells Firth to go away and never step inside the castle again.

Gareth runs to the parapets of the castle. He wants to remind himself that he is still king. He still feels the scorn of his father and yells out that he hates him. On the roof, he encounters Argon whom Gareth accuses of not telling him what would happen when he tried to lift the Dynasty Sword. Argon indicates to Gareth that Gareth is not worthy of the same counsel as his father. He also delivers a prophecy to Gareth that Gareth believes indicates that his reign will end badly. Although Gareth yells for him, Argon will not come back and explain himself.

Analysis

Gareth is the focus of these two chapters of the novel. These are the only back-to-back chapters of this novel that address the same topic. Gareth has been so sure that he was the one chosen to follow his father as king that he decided to have the public invited in to see him lift the Dynasty Sword. The Dynasty Sword is an extremely heavy weapon that should be able to be lifted only by the person who has been chosen as the next chosen heir to the throne. To his humiliation, Gareth is unable to lift the sword. His confidence in himself and his belief of his destiny is shaken. He has begun seeing the scowling, disappointed face of his father, a man whom he had killed so that he could have his chance at being the king.

To make matters worse for Gareth, his wife asks for a divorce telling him that she is in love with a knight from Gareth's army. Suddenly feeling angry with his wife, Gareth will not allow the divorce. He tells her that if he discovers the identity of her lover, he will



have the man tortured and killed. Gareth also encounters Argon who basically tells him that he has no respect for Gareth and does not believe he is worthy of good counsel. Argon also tells Gareth that a reign begun by blood will end in blood. Gareth believes the man is trying to tell him that his reign will be short though he cannot get the man to respond to him. It also appears that Argon is indicating that Gareth, as well, might be killed in a violent manner.

Discussion Question 1

What is significant about Gareth's inability to wield the Dynasty Sword?

Discussion Question 2

What does Helena mean when she says that Gareth is not a man and that their marriage is unholy?

Discussion Question 3

Who is Argon? How does Gareth interpret his message?

Vocabulary

Hoist, cower, deciphered, contour, omen, usurped, delusion, ramifications, marred, sardonic, debacle, inopportune, wench, derisive, vengeance, relegate.



Chapters Seven and Eight Summary

Summary

In Chapter Seven, Erec, Brandt and the Duke find their way to the tavern where Alistair is working as an indentured servant. When he first saw Alistair he had believed that she was royalty. Although the owner of the inn and tavern tells Erec that he will not let Alistair go, Erec tells him that he intends to win a jousting contest, the prize of which is the freedom to marry the woman of his choice. Erec tells the man and Alistair that he intends to choose her if she will have him. Alistair runs from the room when Erec asks for her consent. He says he will stay there the night to see if Alistair will give him an answer in the morning.

In Chapter Eight, Thor tries to pull the drowning boy to safety but is attacked by several of the strange creatures. He makes it to the boat and helps get the other boy aboard but another creature grabs his leg, trying to pull him down. He lets go of the boat hoping to grab his sword but misses. He is pulled down into the water.

Analysis

A new story line is introduced as Erec goes in search of Alistair. He has seen the girl before and was completely smitten by her. He believes she is royalty even though she is working as an indentured servant. He plans to win a jousting contest in which he will be allowed to choose the woman whom he wishes to be his wife. Erec wants to joust for Alistair but she runs away when he pushes her to give him an answer. He is so determined to earn Alistair that he decides to stay overnight at the tavern to see if she will give him an answer in the morning.

Also in this section of chapters, Thor manages to save the drowning boy but finds himself being pulled under water by an extremely strong creature. Its skin is so tough Thor's weapons as well as the weapons of his friends are not able to injure it. Thor lets go of the boy's hand in an attempt to grab his own sword but misses and seems to be headed toward his death at the end of the chapter.

Discussion Question 1

What is it that attracts Erec to Alistair?

Discussion Question 2

What does it mean that Alistair is an indentured servant?



Discussion Question 3

What does Krohn's attempt to kill the creature who is pulling Thor down say about the animal's relationship with his master?

Vocabulary

Entourage, abode, detect, indentured, dilapidated, patron, indignity, recoil, brothel, contemplate, vacate, resounding, smitten, tentatively, consents, flailing.



Chapters Nine and Ten Summary

Summary

In Chapter Nine, Gwen has a dream in which she and her father are playing together in a field. Suddenly the dream changes and her father is on his back, stuck in the mud. She struggles to help him but a man in a black cloak with a scar on his face who is missing one eye tries to kill her. Her father's corpse grabs the man and throws him over the parapets of the castle. She wakes up when her father's corpse tells her that she is not safe there.

Once awake, Gwen decides to go to King's River to regain her composure. After she finishes bathing, Gwen emerges from the water to discover her towel is missing. As she tries to comprehend what has happened, a man grabs her from behind. It appears to be the same man with the same dagger that she saw in her dream. He says that he brings her a message from Gareth to stop asking questions about their father's murder. The man is about to cut her face when Estopheles screeches, swooping down to scratch the man's face. Because he is distracted, Gwen is able to defend herself against the man and get away with only a small cut on her cheek. Before she leaves the man, who is in pain from her attack, Gwen warns him that if he comes near her again, she will kill him herself.

In Chapter Ten, as Thor is pulled down into the water, he sees Gwen's face and remembers his reason for living. Reece jumps into the water with his sword and manages to decapitate the animal. Reece drags Thor into the boat. Thor and Reece help the other recruits fight off the animals as they swim across the sea. Their boat is knocked over by another animal, and they are frightened as they realize the shore is covered with sharp rocks with no safe place to land. They finally all reach shore safely and begin to try to determine how best to scale the rocky cliff. It is O'Connor who shoots an arrow, with a rope tied to it, up to the top of the cliff. O'Connor uses the rope to climb up, then secures the rope and holds it while the others climb to safety. The boys collapse on the top of the cliff.

Analysis

Gareth's evil nature continues as he sends a man to threaten her in an attempt to keep her from further investigating her father's murder. Of course, Gareth's actions only underscore his guilt. Why would he be threatening Gwen if he were not responsible? Interesting is that the man who attacks Gwen matches the description of the man who attacks her in her dream. She believes the dream was a sign sent by her father to warn her that she is in danger. Gwen also believes that Estopheles, the bird that distracts her attacker and gives her a chance to protect herself, was also sent by her father to help save her. Remember Gwen's last words to the man that if he tries to attack her again, she will kill him herself. This threat will come into play later in the novel.



Also in this section of the novel, Thor and his fellow recruits seem to have passed the first challenge in their hundred days of training. By working together they have conquered the sea monsters and climbed the cliff to reach the top of the plateau.

Discussion Question 1

Consider Gwen's interpretation of her dream, do you think her translation is correct?

Discussion Question 2

Why is it significant that Gwen believes the cut given her by Gareth's dog might leave a scar?

Discussion Question 3

Describe the way Thor and the other recruits work together to help each other during the first portion of their training. Why is their ability and willingness to work together significant?

Vocabulary

Urgency, precedes, vindictive, vigilant, detached, leeched, indents, dissipating, orient, plateau, trepidation, craggy, desolate, forlorn.



Chapters Eleven and Twelve Summary

Summary

In Chapter Eleven, Gwen tracks down Godfrey in a tavern. Seeing the cut on her face, Godfrey asks what happened. When Gwen tells him that Gareth tried to have her killed, she sees real concern on his face. She asks why he has returned to drinking and is surprised to learn that Kendrick has been arrested, one of the factors that made Godfrey feel he needed a drink. As Kendrick is set to be executed, Gwen insists they must do something. Gareth says he will go and visit the cottage of a witch from which he saw Gareth coming from a few days prior. Gwen decides to go and pay Kendrick a visit. Before she leaves Godfrey, he gives her a dagger hidden in a block of wood which he insists she keep with her to protect herself.

In Chapter Twelve, though Thor and his friends are still tired, they are ordered on their feet by Kolk. He tells them in order to train on the island, they must get permission from the locals, an ancient warrior tribe known as the Kavos. William, the boy whom Thor saved from drowning is in Thor's group of eight recruits. A boy named Malic, rumored to have killed a man to get into Legion training, is also in the group. Malic seems determined to discourage everyone else in the group with his pessimistic attitude, unwillingness to help O'Connor from getting burned and statements that he doesn't care about the others.

The group finally comes across the Kavos. The warriors are fierce and Thor realizes his group must fight for the right to earn permission to be there. Thor is unweaponed and hits one of the Kavos with a ball of golden energy, knocking him back. He aims at Kavos after Kavos, knocking the warriors off his fellow recruits. Finally, a man larger than all the others charges Thor. Thor shoots an energy ball at him but the man swipes it away. He picks Thor up and to his surprise smiles at him and tells Thor that he likes him. The warrior throws Thor down then walks away laughing. He welcomes the group to the Isle of Mist.

Analysis

Gwen and Godfrey put together a plan to try to prove that Kendrick is not guilty of their father's murder and free him from jail. Godfrey decides to go and pay a visit to a witch whom he saw Gareth visiting a few days prior to see if she can shed any light on what Gareth is up to. Gwen, meanwhile, will go and visit Kendrick.

Gwen is unhappy with her brother's alcohol habit. It is only in her scolding him for having gone back to the drink that she learns that Kendrick has been put in jail. Godfrey blames their lack of success in talking to Steffen plus learning about Kendrick that made him depressed enough that he felt he needed alcohol to soften the pain. Although Godfrey has put a black mark on the royal family with his affinity for drinking, he seems



to truly care about Gwen. This care is shown in the way that he cleans her wound and questions her about what happened to cause the cut.

Meanwhile on the Isle of Mist, Thor and his friends have passed yet another of their tests. Thor saves himself and his friends from getting badly beaten by the Kovas, the natives of the island, by beating them off by throwing balls of light from his hands. The largest warrior of all, perhaps the leader, is able to dodge these balls without being hurt. He picks Thor up roughly in a way that indicates he might plan to do harm to him for the way he has hurt the other warriors, instead, he breaks into a smile, which seems almost comical in this setting, and gives Thor and his group permission to stay.

Discussion Question 1

Describe Malic. Why do you think that he is so anti-social?

Discussion Question 2

Consider Godfrey's addiction to alcohol. Why is this addiction such a bad thing in a member of the royal family?

Discussion Question 3

What makes Godfrey think that he might be able to get some information about Gareth from the witch?

Vocabulary

Implications, indignant, slovenly, heresy, omnipresent, demarcated, belligerent, demeanor, primordial, guttural, nonchalant, morphed, mollify, parried.



Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen Summary

Summary

In Chapter Thirteen, the following morning, Erec waits in the dining room of the inn for Alistair to give him her answer. She brings out a mug of ale, accidentally spilling some when the innkeeper hurries up to her from behind. He yells at her clumsiness, telling her to clean up the mess. As she tries to leave the room, she accidentally knocks the mug from the table, spilling the rest of the ale. The innkeeper draws back his hand to slap Alistair but Erec grabs his arm, stopping him. Erec pays the man 300 pence to buy out the remainder of Alistair's contract, three times the amount that she owes to him. Erec tells the man he can keep the gold even if Alistair does not agree to marry him, just as long as she is set free. When the innkeeper finally leaves them alone, Alistair admits to Erec that she does want to marry him. She begs him to win the contest for her.

In Chapter Fourteen, Thor and his friends have been training all day when Kolk orders them into formation. He leads them on a march up a mountain to continue their training. As the march, Malic warns William that not everyone comes back from the training. Thor senses the boy wants to scare William. He and the other boys try to reassure William with the true information to counter Malic's lies. Although the boys collapse when they reach the top of the mountain, Kolk orders them back up to look over the training ground they have reached. He introduces Kibotu, the trainer on the island. Thor and his friends are sent to practice throwing spears. Kibotu seems to single out Thor, showing him how to throw a spear further than he thought possible.

Suddenly in the training a horn blows and the boys break into pandemonium. Malic crosses the training ground with a dagger, headed for Thor. Thor believes the boy means to kill him. Krohn attacks the boy, saving Thor from death but Thor is attacked from behind and thrown into the dirt. He suddenly realizes the strange warrior on top of him is trying to wrestle with him, a skill Thor has not been taught. The warrior demands Thor yield but Thor refuses. Suddenly someone kicks the warrior off Thor. He is surprised to see that it is Malic. As Thor watches, Malic kills the warrior, then stuffs the dagger into Thor's hand. Kibotu demands to know why Thor has killed the warrior. Thor tries to convince Kibotu he wasn't the murderer but Kibotu does not believe him since it was Thor's dagger used in the crime. Kibotu decides both Thor and Malic must be taken to the Cyclops to determine who is guilty and who is innocent.

Analysis

In this section of the novel, Thor finds himself in a tight spot as Malic kills a warrior and blame that murder on Thor. Just minutes before, Thor has believed Malic intended to kill him, but missed his target when Krohn attacked him. Because Thor holds the murder



weapon, which happens to be his own dagger, Kibotu believes this it is Thor who has done the killing. Malic will not admit his guilt so the two are taken to the Cyclops to determine who is actually guilty.

Also in this section of the novel, Erec gets good news as Alistair tells him that she desires to marry him as well. She asks him to win to contest and take her as his bride. In order to ensure that Alistair will be his, Erec pays the innkeeper the rest of Alistair's term of service. Even if he doesn't win the tournament and isn't able to take Alistair as his bride, he wants to ensure her freedom.

Discussion Question 1

How will the Cyclops determine if Thor or Malic is innocent? What will be the punishment for the guilty?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Erec not take Alistair away from the inn after he pays the innkeeper for her?

Discussion Question 3

If Erec is royalty, why does he have to win a jousting contest in order to win the right to marry Alistair? Since she is seen as a commoner and is not in demand by other members of the royalty, why can they just not be married right away?

Vocabulary

Fluke, disheveled, emanating, tankard, absolve, sully, sparring, disparate, vantage



Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen Summary

Summary

In Chapter Fifteen, Gwen has to convince the guards that she has the right to see Kendrick in jail. Once at his cell, she slips him a package of treats she put together for him. They discuss their shared belief that Gareth is responsible for their father's death. Kendrick tells Gwen she must prove that Gareth is guilty by finding the murder weapon. Although Gwen seems determined that she can free her brother, Kendrick reminds her that she is up against the dragon that is Gareth. Gwen gets inspiration believing that she can go to her mother for assistance.

In Chapter Sixteen, as the boys are being marched to fight the Cyclops, Thor asks Malic why he tried to kill him. Malic tells Thor that he was paid a good deal of money to kill Thor. He says that since he failed to kill Thor, he decided the next best thing would be to pin a murder on Thor as he believed the warriors would kill Thor. Malic tells Thor that he believes the Cyclops will now kill Thor. Instead, the Cyclops kills Malic and lets Thor live.

Analysis

In this section of chapters, Thor is vindicated as the Cyclops kills Malic and not Thor. A mystery remains concerning who paid Malic to kill Thor and why anyone would want to kill him. Malic will not tell Thor who was hired to kill him.

Meanwhile, Kendrick and Gwen discuss what must be done to prove that Gareth is responsible for their father's murder. Kendrick tells Gwen the only hope is in finding the murder weapon. Kendrick is afraid Gareth has already had this weapon destroyed. Although Gwen hates her mother and had sworn never to speak to her again, she decides to go to her to see if she can help Kendrick in any way.

Discussion Question 1

Who do you think paid Malic to kill Thor?

Discussion Question 2

Although Thor knows that he is innocent, why does he still fear his encounter with the Cyclops?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Kendrick believe that Gareth is like a dragon?

Vocabulary

Vacillated, lecherous, insidious, concede, ire, apathetic, façade, arsenal, vindicated.



Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen Summary

Summary

In Chapter Seventeen, Gareth enters the throne room, trying to remember why he wanted to be king. To his surprise, the throne is turned around backward with the corpse of his father sitting in it. The corpse frowns at Gareth telling him that his blood hangs on him. Gareth blinks and looks back to find the throne empty. He sits in the throne and experiences a burning pain. Thorns are growing from the chair, wrapping themselves around him. Gareth wakes from his dream expecting his father to be in the room with him. He decides to go to the witch for answers.

Once at the witch's cottage she tells him that she knows he has come for assurance that he will not die as he killed his father. She informs him that she cannot give him what she does not have. She tells him there are those who are greater than he with greater destinies than his. When he asks, the witch tells him that Thor is greater than he will ever be, greater than any of the MacGil kings had ever been. She tells Gareth that one day he will beg mercy from Thor. Gareth orders her to change his destiny. She tells him only that he will pay the price for what he has done. Gareth attempts to bodily hurt her but she disappears.

On his way to visit the witch, Godfrey meets Gareth returning from his visit. Gareth asks Godfrey why he is there, a question that Godfrey returns. Gareth indicates Godfrey should not question him since he is king. Godfrey reminds Gareth he didn't defer to their father's command and won't defer to Gareth's. Godfrey tells Gareth he'd seen him and Firth walking from the witch's cottage a few days prior. He suggests perhaps Gareth had been to the witch looking for a potion strong enough to kill their father. When Godfrey sees Gareth's eyes shifting, he knows that he has guessed right. Gareth, frustrated, leaves Godfrey. When Godfrey goes to the place he had believed the witch's cottage was located, it is not there. He wonders what sort of evil is protecting Gareth.

In Chapter Eighteen, Gwen asks her mother to step in and use whatever power that she still has to help Kendrick. Her mother indicates that Kendrick is not really her son, though she raised him as her own. She seems unconcerned what might happen to him. She also does not appear to care if it was Gareth who killed her husband or not. As Gwen leaves her mother she stares at her to memorize the characteristics of a person whom she does not want to become. She tells her mother that her father looks down at her in disgrace, then leaves.



Analysis

Gareth faces off with the witch, demanding that she change his destiny. Although his is king and has power over his earthly subjects, he appears to have no power over the witch. When he tries to bodily threaten her, she disappears. Her prophecy that Thor will be greater than her, and the repetition of the idea that blood will have blood leave Gareth shaken to the core. When Gareth encounters Godfrey in the woods, he is even more shaken when he realizes that Godfrey knows that it is he who killed the king. It is Godfrey's turn to be shaken, however, when he discovers that the witch's cottage, the place he'd hoped to come for answers, is gone. Although Gareth doesn't feel protected by the witch, Godfrey wonders what has happened to this key figure in his father's death. Who or what is protecting Gareth?

Also, in this section of the book Gwen faces her mother again hoping that she can help get Kendrick freed from jail. Gwen has already been unhappy with her mother for their argument about Thor. Now, she is again dismayed when her mother shows little love for Kendrick, the boy she raised as her own, and seems to not care that it was Gareth who performed the murder and pinned it on Kendrick.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Gareth go to the witch?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you think that the witch's cottage is missing when Godfrey approaches it?

Discussion Question 3

Why is Gwen so unhappy with her mother?

Vocabulary

Wracking, respite, pronouncement, implicate, conceding, psychological, vindictiveness, cretin, interchange, proclamation, deposed.



Chapters Nineteen and Twenty Summary

Summary

In Chapter Nineteen, Kolk tells a story illustrating to the Legion recruits that they are not to expect their enemies to fight fairly. Even so, he warns that the boys are not to sink to the level of their enemies. When Kolk finishes, the boys hear a strange noise. Thor is one of them who goes to the edge of the cliff to investigate. He is surprised to see Argon standing there. Argon warns Thor the sound is that of the dragon, who is not happy they are there. Thor voices his concern but Argon tells him that his time to die has not come yet. He tells Thor that his mother is still alive. He also informs him that he will become a Legion member and much more. The Ring is at unrest, he warns Thor, telling him that its fate rests on him. As Argon challenges Thor to concentrate he can see destruction and warring in the Ring. He also sees Gareth's darkness. He also senses something dark threatening Gwen but can't put his finger on it. Argon is unclear about what might happen to her.

In Chapter Twenty, Gareth has become more and more unhappy in his rule. Now, he is weary of settling differences between the people who come to him. He tells the two landowners who are quibbling over property that he has decided to confiscate the land from both of the families. Aberthol, advisor to Gareth's father, tells Gareth that he cannot confiscate land but Gareth will not listen to him.

Next, several lords ask protection for their lands, fearing that King McCloud is preparing to attack them. Gareth denies the request. The lords also remind Gareth of taxes that were supposed to be lowered for their people but never were. Instead of lowering the taxes, however, Gareth orders the taxes be raised on the council of his new, young council members. At this decision, some of the older council members speak up. Gareth refuses to listen to them and tells them to leave if that is what they want. Two resign and try to leave but Gareth has them arrested for treason. Gareth is pleased with the distressed looks on the faces of the other council members as it is proof he is tearing apart his father's rule. Believing his is finished for the day, Gareth asks if anything is left. Aberthol reminds him they need to deal with the investigation into the king's death. He says the Silver has called for a new investigation. Gareth demands the investigation be closed. He fumes because he has been unable to execute Kendrick. He believes Gwen got to their mother who had used what power she had left to stop the execution. He decides to try again to kill Gwen.

Analysis

In this section it is learned that Gwen's visit to her mother must have had some affect as her mother has used her power to put into place a stay of execution for Kendrick. Gareth is angry and paranoid because Kendrick has been allowed to stay alive. He becomes more unpredictable and out of control as time goes by. He has added new,



young council members to his father's council. These new people advise him badly. Lords from one area in the kingdom request protection against McCloud's forces. Gareth not only refuses the request, he also decides to raise taxes in the area. The lords seem to have some idea that they might try to depose Gareth and remove him from power. Gareth turns his fear on his family members and decides that he must get rid of Gwen as she seems to be one of the ones leading the movement to discover her father's real murder. He cannot go against the forces of the Silver, but he can kill his younger sister.

Meanwhile, Thor has received a visit from Argon. While Argon concedes that Thor has a great destiny ahead of him, he is not clear in Gwen's destiny. Though Thor questions him more closely, the advisor will not give him any more information, saying only that Thor will and won't save Gwen.

Notice also that between Chapters Nineteen and Twenty a time period of 100 days passes. In this period of time, Thor has almost completed his training and Erec is almost finished with the contest to win Alistair's hand in marriage.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Gareth decide that Gwen must be killed?

Discussion Question 2

What does Gareth's paranoia indicate?

Discussion Question 3

Who is Argon? What message does he have for Thor?

Vocabulary

Precarious, mentors, cynical, raze, mundane, encroached, confiscate, appease, ratified, perpetually, biased, resentment, treason, depose



Chapters Twenty-one and Twenty-two Summary

Summary

In Chapter Twenty-one, in a dream, Thor rides on a ghost ship toward his mother. He hears her calling to him but the boat is headed toward the rocks. He wakes just before it crashes. When he gets his bearings, he realizes it is the last day of the Hundred. Kolk gives the boys their final mission. They are to bring back a golden scepter that a dragon has hidden in his lair. Unfortunately, William, who has made it thus far despite his timid nature, refuses to face the dragon. The others in Thor's group board a boat and go to find the dragon. On the shore, the boys collect Orethist, a jewel believed to save the life if given to a loved one. Thor takes one of the jewels for Gwen. Reece almost falls into what the boys at first believe is a canyon, as they study it, they realize it is the footprint of the dragon.

In Chapter Twenty-two, Erec competes in the jousting competition beating warriors who are more and more fierce. When the field is narrowed to just a few knights, the fighting changes from jousting to hand to hand combat. Erec defeats knight after knight until he is the last warrior standing.

Analysis

In these chapters both Thor and Erec are close to achieving their goals. Erec wins the jousting contest meaning that Alistair is his. Thor and his team, meanwhile, are about to come face to face with the dragon, the final challenge in their hundred days of training.

Discussion Question 1

Trace the theme of the dragon as it has been presented in the book. What does the dragon represent?

Discussion Question 2

With what weapon does Erec win the final fighting competition? Why does he choose this particular weapon?

Discussion Question 3

There is a mistake in the book's reporting of the requirements for a member of the Legion. What is it? (Hint: check Chapter Twelve)

Vocabulary

Contemplated, tribulations, adverse, impervious, formidable, primordial, stigma, ensued, exhortation.



Chapters Twenty-three and Twenty-four Summary

Summary

In Chapter Twenty-three, Thor and his friends locate the scepter and manage to grab it, but the dragon returns to its lair before they are able to get away. The huge dragon threatens them. Each of its scales are as big as a person. Thor does the only thing he can think of to save himself and his friends by climbing onto the dragon's back and steering it away from the boys with the power of his mind. His idea works, and the other boys are able to get away. Still using the power of his thoughts, Thor has the dragon drop him near the beach, then fly away again. He has held the scepter the entire time.

In Chapter Twenty-four, Andronicus is in the middle of watching games and enjoying a day of tributes. He is surrounded by young, naked girls. He sucks the blood from one, enjoying the feel of her dead body in his lap. An attendant comes to Andronicus, telling him that McCloud is attacking the MacGil portion of the Ring. Andronicus throws the messenger into the ring where two animals are fighting. The news has put Andronicus into a bad mood because McCloud has defied him. He wants to personally overcome the Ring and bring it into his power. Having his fun interrupted, Andronicus goes to question two prisoners that he took from the McCloud territory several years earlier about the secret to the Ring's power. One of the prisoners claims to know nothing of the Ring, Andronicus has him killed. The next man promises to tell Andronicus all that he knows.

Analysis

In Chapter Twenty-three, Andronicus' strange power again comes in handy as he is able to take charge of the dragon's mind, directing it away from his brothers-in-arms. As he is also able to keep the scepter in hand as he is fighting the dragon, Thor realizes that he and his friends have succeeded in their last challenge.

Also in this section of chapters, a new enemy to the Ring surfaces. Andronicus is angry because King McCloud has defiled him and is now attempting to take the MacGill territory as his own. Andronicus knows that the only way that he can attack either the MacGil or McCloud territory is to break the protection that the Ring holds over these territories. He questions two prisoners he has been hanging onto for such a time. One of them promises to tell him the secret of the protection of the Ring.

Discussion Question 1

For what reason is Andronicus angry that McCloud is attacking MacGil territory?



Discussion Question 2

How does Thor overcome the dragon?

Discussion Question 3

What is it that the stone Orethist can do?

Vocabulary

Valiant, implanted, homage, cadavers.



Chapters Twenty-five and Twenty-six Summary

Summary

In Chapter Twenty-five, as Gwen stands on the parapets of the castle looking for Thor and the others to return, she is confronted by Alton. Alton tries to convince her to marry him, telling her that Thor has been killed. Gwen refuses. Trying to convince her, Alton tells her that she risks being married off by her brother, the new king. Shaken, she heads for the gardens but is pushed down the stairs on her way there. It is Gareth's dog, back to try to kill her. She tries to hit him with the dagger that Godfrey gave her but he is too quick. Just as he is about to hit her with spiked metal knuckles, Steffen steps in to stop him. Steffen tries to kill the man but is overpowered by him. As the man leans over Steffen, Gwen hits him from behind with Steffens iron staff.

Steffen tells her that he has come to apologize to her. He tells her that he was lying the day that she and Godfrey came to question him. He tells her that he kept the dagger that had fallen down the chute the night of the king's death. He hands it to her now. When she looks at the dagger, she sees the initials, GAM, it is Gareth's dagger.

In Chapter Twenty-six, Godfrey and Gwen confront Firth about the dagger. As they walk toward the stables, Godfrey tells Gwen that she must rule once Gareth has been dethroned. Gwen wants Kendrick to take that spot but Godfrey insists that she is the one their father wanted. When they find Firth, Gwen and Godfrey openly ask him about their father's murder. When the two tell Firth that Steffen saw Firth's face as he threw the dagger down the trash chute, he is obviously nervous. They promise him full pardon and he tells them that Gareth put him up to the murder. Godfrey is angry with Firth for his role in the murder but he and Gwen keep their promise that they will not harm him if he promises to testify in front of the council.

Analysis

Gwen and Godfrey get much information about their father's murder as Steffen finally comes clean and brings Gwen the murder weapon. Firth also admits to them that it was he who killed the former king but that Gareth had put him up to the crime.

Interesting in this section is the different ways that Gwen and Godfrey remember their childhoods. Gwen was her father's pet. She was given everything that she wanted. Godfrey, on the other hand, remembers his father as a cruel man who didn't like him. Gwen suggests to Godfrey that his affection for alcohol might be the result of the way his father treated him as a child. She also finally understands why Godfrey acted as he did toward their father. Though he tried, he had never been able to please the man. Eventually, he had quit trying.



Discussion Question 1

Why did Steffen not tell Gwen and Godfrey about the dagger when they first asked?

Discussion Question 2

What was Firth's role in the king's murder?

Discussion Question 3

What do Gwen and Godfrey ask Firth to do in exchange for a full pardon?

Vocabulary

Myriad, vista, duplicity, audacity, incredulous, delusion, enunciated, epitome, laceration, nonchalant



Chapters Twenty-seven and Twenty-eight Summary

Summary

In Chapter Twenty-seven, Thor and his friends are greeted as heroes. He wonders if Gwen is still waiting for him. He has been given a sword as a gift. He receives his Legion pin from Kolk because Kendrick and Erec are not at the ceremony. He is disappointed, but thrilled when Kolk smiles at him, telling him he is not half bad. It is not until during the night's dancing that Thor finally sees Gwen as she sneaks up behind him and taps him on the shoulder.

Thor gives her the Orethist that he has had fixed as a necklace. Gwen tells him they can be together now that her mother is not in her right mind. She also points out the scar on her face, telling Thor that her brother tried to have her killed. She explains that big changes have been taking place in the kingdom and that Kendrick has been imprisoned. She tells him that though Kendrick is accused of the king's murder, it was Gareth who had him killed. She tells him that she and Godfrey have a plan to uncover Gareth's guilt.

In Chapter Twenty-eight, King McCloud is pleased with the progress he is making into MacGil territory. He hopes to be able to cut straight through to King's Court where he can take over Gareth's rule, make him surrender and take the Ring as his own. He is now approaching the last major city before King's Court. The city is not guarded by soldiers, only boys. He attacks before the people have a chance to surrender.

As they enter the town, Luanda weeps as she watches the cruelty being done to her own people. She usually stays quiet, but cannot control herself in this town that she recognizes from her childhood. Her husband does not take part in the savagery but also doesn't do anything to put an end to it. Finally, Luanda asks him to take a stand. She tells him that if she will kill his father. Bronson tells her that there are other ways, a statement that Luanda takes as Bronson's promise to help.

Analysis

These two chapters are direct opposites as Thor and Gwen have a happy reunion in the first while Luanda returns to her childhood to with people intent upon terrorizing it and killing the people. In Chapter Twenty-seven, Thor had been afraid that Gwen had found another or forgotten him. He quickly learns that she has not. He is, however, shocked to learn that Kendrick has been arrested in Gwen's father's death. In Chapter Twenty-eight, Luanda decides she has finally had enough of McCloud's cruelty when he turns it on Luanda's people. Fearing that she will try to attack his father on her own and be



killed, Bronson, who is Luanda's husband and McCloud's son, agrees to help her put an end to McCloud's reign of terror.

Discussion Question 1

Why is Bronson's unwillingness to stand up to his father the same as if he were actually agreeing with his tactics?

Discussion Question 2

What is King McCloud's intention in attacking an unprotected village?

Discussion Question 3

How does Thor react when Gwen tells him about what has been happening in King's Court while he has been away?

Vocabulary

Helm, pillage, entourage, devoid, rate, impaled, invincible.



Chapters Twenty-nine, Thirty and Thirty-one Summary

Summary

In Chapter Twenty-nine, Gwen, Thor and Krohn walk toward the council chamber, preparing to confront Gareth. Although they are supposed to meet Firth and Godfrey outside the room, they are not there. Instead, Brom and a contingent of soldiers march up to the door. Brom looks grave and concerned. He orders the guard to let them in the meeting. Gwen follows, wondering what is happening. Brom warns Gareth that McCloud has launched a full-scale invasion. Gareth is speechless at the news but finally manages to tell Brom that he intends to wait and see what happens. He indicates that he doesn't want preparations for a coming party disturbed. Brom tells Gareth he is a disgrace. Gareth orders him arrested, but the other soldiers are afraid to touch him. Gwen follows Brom asking what he intends to do. He says that he will lead a defense on his own. He does not feel right standing aside and letting the people be attacked. Gwen also tells Brom that she believes it was not Kendrick but Gareth who killed the king. Brom agrees to free Kendrick, saying that he can lead them in their battle against the McClouds. He tells Gwen they will take care of Gareth when they return. When Kendrick is freed, he is pleased to have Thor serve him as squire. Before Thor leaves, he indicates to her that he intends to ask her a question that will change their lives when he returns.

In Chapter Thirty, Erec learns that despite his deal with the innkeeper, Alistair has been sold to a man who uses women as sex slaves. Erec kills the other men in the inn, then threatens the innkeeper until he tells which direction the man headed. Erec then kills the innkeeper and heads out to find his bride.

In Chapter Thirty-one, Gwen goes back to the council chamber to see if Firth and Godfrey are there. They are not there. Gareth sits in the room alone, and Gwen decides to confront him. Gwen is both angry with Gareth for what he did to their father and afraid of him. He accuses her of being fanciful and manipulative. He is stunned when she shows him the dagger but says that no one will believe her because Firth, her witness, has been executed. He adds that Godfrey had a poisoned drink the night before and is deathly ill.

Gareth goes on to tell Gwen that the McCloud raid is actually a trap for Thor. He says he's paid men to kill him. He adds that he has arranged to marry Gwen off to a savage in the southern reaches of the Ring. Gwen runs away to the top of the castle, hoping Thor can hear her screams. However, the wind takes them away.



Analysis

In these final chapters of the book, the author sets up the next book in the series as she leaves many of the main characters in cliffhanging situations. Kendrick is freed from jail by Brom to lead the forces against McCloud, but Kendrick has not yet been acquitted. When Gwen tries to confront Gareth about his crime, she learns that he has had Firth put to death and has poisoned Godfrey. Gareth also tells Gwen that he's paid soldiers to kill Thor, who has left to battle the McClouds with Brom and Kendrick. Finally, Gareth tells Gwen that he has arranged a marriage in order to get rid of her.

Although Erec has won the competitions and has returned for Alistair, he learns that the innkeeper did not keep his word to him and has sold Alistair to a man involved in the sex trade. Erec kills all of the men in the inn, including the innkeeper, then sets out to try to find and retrieve his rightful bride.

Discussion Question 1

Do you believe that Gareth has really set Thor up to be killed or is he just telling Gwen he has to get a rise out of her?

Discussion Question 2

Consider Brom's reaction to Gareth's nonchalance about the McCloud invasion. How does Gareth's reaction to the threat characterize him as a leader?

Discussion Question 3

Do you think Erec was justified in killing the innkeeper?

Vocabulary

Reverted, dire, breach, absolving, vacillating, miscreants, vengeance, fanciful, pathological, ominous, ambushed, maniacal, savage, chattel.



Characters

Gwendolyn

Gwendolyn is the heroine of this novel as she leads an investigation, along with the help of her brother, Godfrey, in freeing their half-brother, Kendrick from jail. Kendrick has been framed by their other brother, Gareth, for the murder of their father, the king. Gwen and Godfrey question Steffen about the murder weapon but he refuses to give them any information. Steffen later saves Gwen when she is attacked by Gareth's dog. He also hands over the murder weapon and apologizes for not answering her questions earlier. Gwen is attacked earlier by the same man but she is able to fend him off with the help of Estopheles, a bird whom she believes that her father sent to help her. Although she does not want to, Gwen goes to her mother for help in getting Kendrick out of jail. Gwen believes that her words have no effect on her mother but her mother uses what power that she has left to keep Kendrick from being executed. Gwen waits for Thor, who is training to become part of the Legion, to come back home. He returns, but leaves just a few days later with a promise to ask her a question that will change their lives when he returns. Because he is cruel, Gareth tells Gwen that he has set up a trap for Thor to get killed. He also tells her that he plans for her to marry a man whom he describes as a savage.

Gareth

Gareth is Gwen and Godfrey's brother and Kendrick's half-brother. Gareth has had his father killed so that he can take over the throne, a place of power that he had always believed was his destiny. When Gareth is unable to wield the Dynasty Sword, which would have proved he was the chosen one, he begins to lose faith in his own destiny. Meanwhile, he has been having hallucinations of his father's scowling, unhappy corpse haunting him. Gareth also has dreams where his father tells him that his reign will end in blood. Gareth has his brother, Kendrick, set up for the murder of the king. Gareth's goal is to tear apart his father's kingdom. He starts by bringing in new counselors that give him bad advice. During one of his sessions with the people, he takes land away from two families that have been feuding over the land for years. He also raises taxes instead of lowering them as his father had promised the people. At the conclusion of the novel, Gareth had executed Firth, the only witness to the king's murder; poisoned Godfrey, who is trying to help Gwen find who the murderer is and tells Gwen that he has sold her in marriage to a man whom Gareth describes as a savage.

King McCloud

King McCloud is a tyrannical king who rules the opposite side of the ring from the MacGil kingdom. McCloud has decided to invade MacGil villages until he reaches King's Court where he will dethrone Gareth and take the entire Ring as his own territory.



McCloud is cruel and enjoys inflicting pain on animals and people alike. He attacks villages even if they are unprepared for war because he doesn't want to give them a chance to surrender. He has belittled Luanda enough for voicing her opinions of his actions that she has learned to not question him openly. However, when McCloud leads a raid on a village near the place she grew up, she and Bronson, McCloud's son, decide to try to come up with a plan to kill him. Luanda and Bronson are not McCloud's only enemies. McCloud has also defied Andronicus. Now, Andronicus plans to find a way to overcome the security of the Ring, get his revenge on McCloud and take control of all of that territory.

Queen MacGil

Queen MacGil is mother to Gwen, Godfrey and Gareth. Although she is not Kendrick's birth mother, she raised him as her own. Although Gwen and her mother had a terrible argument about Gwen's desire to marry Thor and Gwen had sworn never to speak to her mother again, Gwen goes to her to beg her to intervene on behalf of Kendrick. Since her husband's murder, the queen has been affected by a condition that the people believe is the result of a stroke. She spends much of her time in a catatonic state. When Gwen speaks to her, she acknowledges that Gareth is evil and believes that he must have paid the price for all of her sins. She doesn't appear to care if Gareth is responsible for the king's murder or if Kendrick is suffering in jail. She simply tells Gwen that Kendrick is not her son and not her concern.

Godfrey

Godfrey is a brother to Gwen and Gareth, and a half-brother to Kendrick. Godfrey has a drinking problem and retreats to the town taverns in times of stress and depression. When Gwen goes to him to tell him that Gareth has tried to kill her, Godfrey is in the taverns drinking. She begs him to stop as it is unbecoming for royalty. Godfrey tries but in the end of the novel some stress returns him to the pub as Gareth is able to pay someone to poison his drink. Gareth poisons Godfrey because Godfrey had been helping Gwen prove that it was not Kendrick who killed their father. Gareth is also aware that Godfrey knows that it was Gareth who had their father, the king, killed. Even though Godfrey does not have any solid proof of Gareth's treason, he still wants his brother out of the way.

Kendrick

Kendrick is Gwen, Gareth and Godfrey's half-brother. He has the same father but not the same mother. With Firth's help, Gareth sets Kendrick up as the one responsible for their father's murder. A vial of poison is planted in Kendrick's room. When Gareth sends his soldiers to arrest Kendrick, Kendrick goes willingly even though he knows that he is innocent because he doesn't want to start a civil war. Kendrick is in jail through most of the novel. His step-mother manages to keep him from being executed. When Brom leads



the troops to fight against McCloud's forces, Brom orders Kendrick released from jail so that he can help in the fight.

Malic

Malic is a recruit assigned to the same group as Thor. Thor has heard rumors that Malic has been included in the class of recruits only because he killed a man twice his size. Malic is unconcerned about his fellow recruits, not even helping O'Conner when he gets badly burned through Malic could have put the fire out before the injury occurred. Malic appears to be trying to discourage the others. Malic tells Thor that he has been paid to kill Thor. Malic is killed by the Cyclops after he sets Thor up as a murderer. Both boys are sent to battle the mythical beast because it has been said the Cyclops will kill the guilty and let the innocent live. True to his nature, the Cyclops kills Malic.

Argon

Argon is some sort of supernatural advisor who appears to both Gareth and Thor. Gareth accuses Argon for not warning him that he could not wield the sword. Argon counters by inferring that Gareth is not worthy of Argon's counsel as his father was. He also gives Gareth a warning that Gareth interprets as meaning that he will not rule long. When Argon appears to Thor, he tells the Legion recruit that his time to die has not come yet. Argon tells Thor that his mother, whom Thor had thought had died in childbirth, is still alive and that he has a great destiny to fulfill. He also warns Thor that the greatest battle he will face lies within himself.

Aberthol

Gareth orders Aberthol, the ancient advisor to the king, to leave when Aberthol tells him that he cannot confiscate the land involved in a property dispute when Gareth decides to do so just to end a dispute that has been lingering for years. It is also Aberthol who questions Gareth's desire to listen to new, young councilmen who advise him badly. Although Gareth wants the investigation into the murder of his father dropped, it is Aberthol who tells him that The Silver don't believe Kendrick is guilty and intend to have the matter investigated further.

Steffen

Steffen is a deformed man who works in the lowest levels of the castle. Although he had told Gwen and Godfrey that he knew about a weapon that had been dropped down the waste receptacle, he won't speak to them when they come to question him. He tells them the weapon fell into the river when they emptied the chamber pot. Later, Steffen goes to Gwen to apologize for lying and give her the weapon that was thrown away. He happens to catch her being attacked by Gareth's dog and saves her life by helping her fight him off.



Thor

Thor is a Legion recruit and the boyfriend of Gwen. During the novel, he successfully completes his hundred-day training on the Isle of Mist, training required for him to become a member of the Legion. He helps his friends overcome a dragon by using the power of his mind to make it fly away. During his time on the Isle of Mist, Thor gets a visit from Argon telling him that he has a great destiny to fulfill. Argon also indicates that Thor's mother, whom Thor thought had died in childbirth, is still alive. Thor also helps Gwen get Firth to confess that Gareth ordered him to kill Gwen's father.

Erec

Erec is royalty from Savaria who sets his eye on marrying Alistair, an indentured servant working in a tavern in that town. He wins a jousting competition in order to win the right to make her his bride. When Erec returns to the tavern to collect Alistair, he finds that the innkeeper has sold her to a man who uses women as sex slaves. Because he had already paid the man for the remainder of Alistair's term of service, Erec is angry at the man's actions. He kills the man in an attempt to get revenge for Alistair, then rides out to find the man who has taken her.

Alistair

Alistair is the indentured servant who catches Erec's eye. He cannot believe that she is not royalty of some sort because of the way she carries herself. After Erec asks for Alistair's hand in marriage, then keeps the innkeeper from hitting her when she accidentally breaks a tankard, Alistair asks Erec to win a jousting tournament for her. If he wins the tournament, he can have his choice of brides. Although Erec has already paid the tavern keeper for the remainder of Alistair's term of service, when Erec comes to get her, the innkeeper has sold her to a man who keeps women as sex slaves.

Gareth's Dog

This hit man hired by Gareth tries to kill Gwen twice on Gareth's command. The first time is after she finishes bathing at King's River. The second time is in the castle. The first attempt fails because Estopheles, whom Gwen believes her father sent, stuns the man giving Gwen a chance to fend off the man and get away. The second attack is interrupted by Steffen who intends to kill the man but is not successful. Gwen hits the man with Steffen's iron staff, killing him, as he holds a knife to Steffen's throat.

Kolk

Kolk appears to be the drill sergeant for the boys who have signed up as recruits for legion training. Kolk is merciless and pushes the boys to the end of their mental and



physical strength. Because Erec and Kendrick, the knights for whom Thor was squire, are not present when the recruits return from training, Kolk offers to pin Thor with the emblem of the Legion. Thor is surprised when Kolk smiles at him during the ceremony, telling him that he is not half bad.

Helena

Helena is Gareth's wife. After his failed attempt at wielding the Dynasty Sword, she asks for a divorce after mocking her. Gareth is about to let her go until she learns she wants to leave because she is in love with one of Gareth's knights. When he learns this, Gareth refuses her request and wants to find the identity of the knight so he can kill him. During their argument Helena accuses Gareth of not being a man and their union being unholy. This accusation raises questions about Gareth's physical makeup.

Firth

Gareth takes out his anger on Firth because he believes that it was Firth who encouraged him to try to wield the Dynasty Sword, an attempt that failed. Gareth is also angry with Firth because it was he who actually committed the murder of his father. At the end of the novel, however, Firth has admitted to Gwen that it was Gareth who put him up to murder the king. Firth agrees to act as a witness against Gareth but Gareth gets wind of Gwen's intention and has Firth put to death.

Estopheles

Estopheles is a bird that appears in times of need to help both Gwen and Thor. Estopheles appears when Gwen is attacked the first time by Gareth's dog. The bird distracts the man so that Gwen can defend herself and get away. Gwen believes that her father sent the bird. Estopheles appears to Thor as he and his Legion group is about to enter the dragon's cave. He believes the bird is trying to warn him about something. Estopheles again visits Thor as he is sailing home on the ship, having complete his training on the Isle of Mist.

Andronicus

Andronicus is a vicious man/werewolf who intends to make the lands protected by the Ring. He enjoys tormenting his subjects and sucking the blood from young girls. He is angry because King McCloud he defied him. He attempts to gain the secret of overcoming the Ring from two prisoners he had taken from McCloud territory several years prior.



The Innkeeper

This innkeeper is the man who “owns” Alistair as an indentured servant. Although he agrees to give Alistair to Erec if Erec wins a jousting tournament, he instead sells her to a man who keeps women as sex slaves. As Erec had already paid for the remainder of Alistair’s term of servitude with the innkeeper, he is angry with the innkeeper for what he has done. Erec kills the man, an action that he does in Alistair’s name.

Kibotu

Kibotu is the resident trainer for Legion recruits on the Isle of Mist. At one point, Kibotu seems to take an interest in Thor, singling him out for individual instruction. Kibotu is also the one who demands Thor admit that he killed Malic as he is holding the murder weapon. It is also he who commands Thor and Malic to fight the Cyclops to determine who is lying about the man’s murder.

Duwayne and Kelvin

Duwayne and Kelvin are two of the king’s councilmen who choose to leave their positions when Gareth brings in new councilmen whom they fear will tear the kingdom apart. Although Gareth tells these men to leave their positions if they wish, he also threatens to have them arrested for treason.

Luanda

Luanda is Bronson’s wife and Gwen’s sister. Although she has learned to keep her mouth shut about her opinions that differ from that of McCloud, her cruel father-in-law, she is unable to stay silent when he begins ravaging the people of her father’s kingdom. She warns her husband that she will try to kill McCloud alone if he will not help her.

Bronson

Bronson is Luanda’s husband and King McCloud’s son. He does not agree with what his father is doing but does not openly take a stand against him. When McCloud begins terrorizing the people in the MacGil kingdom, Luanda convinces Bronson to take a stand with her against his father.

Brom

Brom is the lead general of the king’s armed forces. He is the one who welcomes Thor and the other Legion recruits home as men. Later in the novel, Brom quits his position on the king’s council, but returns in an attempt to warn Gareth that he needs to order his men to take action against McCloud, who is attacking neighboring villages.



Alton

Alton is the man who comes to Gwen the day that Thor and the other Legion recruits are to return from training. He offers to marry Gwen, telling her that Thor was killed during the training.

William

William is the timid Legion recruit whom Thor rescues from drowning on one of their first days of training. William leaves the legion when he refuses to go with the others to take a scepter from a dragon, their final challenge.

Cyclops

A Cyclops is used to determine who is innocent of the murder that takes place during Legion training. This mythical beast is said to kill the guilty and let the innocent live. True to myth, the Cyclops kills Malic and lets Thor live, proving Thor's innocence.

Amrold

Amrold is Gareth's new councilmember who advises him to raise taxes, sparking off a tiff with the older councilmembers which results in the resignation of two of the old members.

Orsefain

Orsefain is one of Gareth's new advisors who says that the man who warns Gareth that King McCloud is attacking villages to the north is talking nonsense.

Hafold

Hafold is the attendant to the queen. In an attempt to protect her mistress, Hafold tries to keep Gwen from seeing the queen. Gwen insists and Hafold leaves as instructed.

Elden, O'Connor, and Reece

Elden, O'Connor, and Reece are three of the Legion recruits in Thor's team who successfully complete the hundred days training.



The Kavos

The Kavos are a tribe of warriors who inhabit the Isle of Mist. As one of their challenges, the Legion recruits must find these people, and get their permission to be on the island.

Krohn

Krohn is Thor's animal companion who is allowed to accompany him during his one hundred days of legion training.

Brandt and The Duke

Brandt and the Duke are among Erec's friends who go with him to search for Alistair.

Darloc

Darloc is the knight who leads Gareth's forces to arrest Kendrick.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Hundred

The Hundred is a period of intense training undertaken by Legion recruits.

The Ring

The Ring is a magical thing that protects the land of the McClouds and MacGils from attack by outside forces, including Andronicus.

Dynasty Sword

The Dynasty Sword is an extremely heavy sword that can only be lifted by the man intended to be ruler. Although Gareth was certain he could lift it, he is humiliated when he is unable to do so.

Gareth's Dagger

Steffen brings Gwen a dagger thrown down a waste receptacle the night of the king's death. As she had suspected, the dagger has Gareth's initials on it, indicating that Gareth is the real killer.

Small Piece of Wood with a Dagger Inside

Godfrey gives this piece of wood with a dagger hidden inside to use to protect herself in the case that Gareth tries to have her killed again.

Broken Chess Pieces

Gwen notices broken chess pieces still lying in her mother's room from their last fight. She wonders if this is a sign that their argument got to her mother more than she thought it did.

Vial of Poison

A vial of poison is planted in Kendrick's room, making it appear that he was the one who killed his father.



An Ancient, Golden Scepter

It is an ancient golden scepter that Thor and his fellow recruits have been sent to retrieve from the dragon.

Orethist

Orethist is a precious stone the boys in training for the Legion find on the dragon's island. They believe that if they give the stones to people they love, the stones will save their lives. Thor takes only one of these stones to give to Gwen.

A Footprint

The boys believe they are walking on the edge of a canyon as they search for the dragon. Instead, they learn that it is actually the imprint left by one of the dragon's feet.

A Spiked Flail

A spiked flail is Erec's weapon of choice.

Iron Staff

Gwen uses an iron staff to kill the dog sent the second time by Gareth to kill her.

Five Hundred Pence

Five hundred pence is the amount of money that the tavern keeper takes from a sex trader for Alistair.



Settings

Isle of Mist

It is to the Isle of Mist that Thor and the other Legion recruits are sent to complete their Hundred Days training.

Grand Hall

The Grand Hall is where Gareth's throne, which once belonged to his father, is located. It is in this hall that he is publicly humiliated when he is unable to lift the Dynasty Sword.

Savaria

Savaria is the town where Erec, who fights in this novel for Alistair's hand in marriage, lives.

A Tavern

It is to a tavern that Erec goes to find the woman named Alistair who has caught his attention.

King's River

King's River is where Gwen has gone to bathe when she is attacked by Gareth's dog.

A Witch's Cottage

It is to this witch's cottage that Gareth goes for prophecy about the future. Gareth also goes to this cottage in hopes that the witch can tell him who killed his father but the cottage has disappeared.

King's Court

King's Court is the name given to the castle where Gwen lives with her mother and brother, Gareth, who has become the newest king.



Themes and Motifs

Loyalty

Loyalty is a major theme in this novel as not only family loyalty but also military loyalty is addressed. As members of the same family, Godfrey and Gwen try to solve the mystery of their father's murder because they believe their half-brother, Kendrick, has been falsely accused. Even though Gwen believes that it was Gareth, another brother, who was responsible for killing their father, she cannot believe that he is as evil as he appears to be. It is not until he has tried to kill her a second time that Gwen really begins to understand that her brother might be unredeemable. Although she doesn't show her loyalty to her family to Gwen, Gwen's mother also shares with her daughter a loyalty to Kendrick even though he is not her son by blood. Gwen goes to beg her mother to help free Kendrick but does not seem to get a positive response from her mother. Later, though Gwen's mother uses her influence to keep Kendrick from being executed even though she is not powerful enough to have him released from jail.

Loyalty among members of the military is another important theme in the novel. This loyalty is most clearly evidenced when the members of the Silver are willing to start a civil war rather than let Gareth's forces arrest Kendrick. The Silver again proves their loyalty when they insist that Kendrick's case be reconsidered and more investigation put into the king's murder.

While Thor and his fellow recruits are training on the island, one of the main lessons that they learn is loyalty to one another. Working alone, they could not survive the trials that are put in front of them. As a team, Thor and his friends are able to complete their training successfully. Malic is one of the recruits who was not a team player from the beginning of training. He was paid to kill Thor but was unsuccessful in the attempt so instead he sets him up for a murder. Malic is killed by the Cyclops in a test to determine if Malic or Thor is innocent. Because Malic was not willing to be a team player, and decided to follow a path that would benefit himself and hurt the rest of his teammates, he does not make the cut.

Destiny

The idea of finding and following one's destiny is an important theme in this novel. Throughout his life, Gareth had thought it was his destiny to take over his father's rule when he died. Gareth was so sure this was his destiny that he even arranged to have his father killed so that his destiny could be fulfilled more quickly. However, Gareth's inability to lift the Dynasty Sword as well as his continually decreasing satisfaction with the actual mundane duties of the king make him wonder if he has properly interpreted his destiny.



Meanwhile, Thor is another character to whom destiny becomes important. Argon visits Thor during his training with the encouraging news that he will not only be successful in completing his training for the Legion, but will also go on to fulfill a great destiny. Though Argon does not give Thor any hints as to what his destiny might be, Gareth is told by a witch that one day, Thor will be greater than Gareth or all of the other MacGil kings. She indicates there will be a time when Gareth will beg for mercy from Thor.

Supernatural

The supernatural is an important aspect of this novel as it is the supernatural that gives the story its uniqueness. One of the most obvious supernatural powers comes in the form of Thor's powers. First, he is able to hold off the Kavos with orbs of light energy that emit from his hands. Next, when Thor and his group of recruits fight the dragon, Thor is able to fend off the dragon by forming a protective barrier around himself. Then, he protects his friends from the dragon by boarding the beast and controlling it through the power of his mind.

In addition to Thor's superpowers, there are other forms of the supernatural included in the novel. These come in the form of the dragon itself as dragons generally exist only in fairy tales and science fiction. The idea of a blood red sea with strange creatures is another supernatural characteristic of the novel. The advisor, Argon, who comes and goes at will is another supernatural character.



Styles

Point of View

This story is told from the third person point of view of an omniscient narrator. Although the narrator focuses on the actions and thoughts of certain major characters, he knows the thoughts and actions of all characters even though each story line in the novel is happening simultaneously. For instance, the narrator tells the story of Thor and his training on the Isle of Mist while at the same time he is able to tell about Gwen's investigation into her father's death at King's Court. This point of view is probably best for this novel as the characters are so spread out it would be impossible for one character to tell the whole story thoroughly.

Language and Meaning

The novel *A Feast of Dragons* could best be described as a science fiction novel set in medieval times. It is the time of knights in shining armor who train for hand to hand combat are sworn to protect their lands and each other to the death. It is a chivalrous time as all of the men, with the exception of Gareth, Andronicus and King McCloud have a respect for women. It is the people like Gareth, Andronicus and King McCloud whom the knights fight against in this novel. It is also a fantastical twist on the struggle between good and evil with Thor and his fellow recruits fighting supernatural monsters to be accepted into the Legion, a band of highly trained, highly dedicated military men.

Fantastical sounding places like the Isle of Mist where the boys fight against a huge dragon that Thor is able to overcome with the power of his thoughts. The territory that is divided between the MacGil and McCloud families is protected by a secret strength known as the Ring. Others who want to overtake this land are not able to do so without knowing how to overcome the power of the Ring.

Structure

This book is the third installment in the *Sorcerer's Ring* series by Morgan Rice. It is comprised of thirty-one chapters. The story is told in a linear fashion beginning with King McCloud starting his reign of terror on the MacGil villages to Gareth's killing of Firth and poisoning of Godfrey. Several different story lines are dealt with at the same time, with each chapter addressing a separate story line. Storylines include McCloud's terrorization of the villages, Thor's training in the Legion, Gwen and Godfrey's investigation of their father's killer, Erec's fight for Alistair and Gareth's discovery that being king isn't all he thought it would be.



Quotes

He reached back, raised his whip, and brought it down hard on the horse's hide: his horse didn't need prodding, but he liked to whip it anyway. He enjoyed inflicting pain on animals.

-- Narrator (Chapter One paragraph 1)

Importance: This quote describes how innately cruel King McCloud is as he whips his horse, just for the pleasure that he gets in hurting it.

They were loyal for life, and loyal to the death. That was the creed of The Silver.

-- Narrator (Chapter 2 paragraph 2)

Importance: When Gareth's men come to arrest Kendrick, he realizes that he brothers in arms, The Silver would fight to the death to keep him from getting arrested if he did not stop them.

Gareth sat on his father's throne in the Grand Hall, rubbing his hands along its smooth, wooden arms and looking out at the scene before him: thousands of his subjects were packed into the room, people flocking in from all corners of The Ring to watch this once-in-a-lifetime event, to see if he could wield the Dynasty Sword.

-- Narrator (Chapter 5 paragraph 1)

Importance: This quote describes the scene as people gather to try to watch Gareth try to lift the Dynasty Sword.

Gareth felt unsure about himself. His entire life, he had seen his destiny clearly. He had been certain he was meant to take his father's place, to rule and to wield the sword. His confidence had been shaken to the core. Now, he was not sure about anything.

-- Narrator (Chapter 6 paragraph 4)

Importance: Gareth feels shaken and unsure about himself and his future after he is unable to lift the Dynasty Sword. Had he been able to lift this sword, it would have been a sure sign that he was intended to be king.

After all, Firth had been the one who killed his father. It was Firth, this stupid stable boy, who got him into this whole mess to begin with.

-- Narrator (Chapter 6 paragraph 40)

Importance: In his anger, Gareth takes his frustration out on Firth, whom he had gotten to assist him in the king's murder. Now that the deed is done and Gareth is unhappy with position as king, he blames Firth for his own bad decision.

She realized how lucky she was not to have been killed or maimed; she thought of Estopheles, and felt certain her father had saved her.

-- Narrator (Chapter 11 paragraph 2)



Importance: After Gwen is attacked by one of Gareth's dogs and almost killed, she feels as if her father sent Estopheles, a bird, to keep the man from killing her.

Gareth had him arrested. He's been charged with our father's murder.
-- Godfrey (Chapter Eleven paragraph 30)

Importance: It is in this quote that Gwen learns that her brother, who is acting as king, has had another of her brothers, Kendrick, arrested for their father's murder.

No one is truly a Legion member until they graduate. Age twenty. Six years to go. They're trying to weed us all out.
-- Malic (Chapter Twelve paragraph 56)

Importance: Malic makes this statement to Thor and the other members of his group in an attempt to discourage them. It is significant because it tells the readers the age of the boys. At age 14 these boys are already being faced with this strenuous military training.

I did not do that,' Kibotu answered harshly. 'The spear did that. That is your problem. You live with a separation between you and your weapon. You and the weapon must be one.
-- Kibotu (Chapter Fourteen paragraph 53)

Importance: During Thor's hundred days of training, he asks the trainer Kibotu, how he threw a spear so far and true. This is Kibotu's response.

Thorgrin will be greater than you. Greater than all the MacGil Kings. Greater than any King that ever lived. And one day, you will bow down to him and beg him for mercy,' she said, her voice cackling.
-- The witch (Chapter Seventeen paragraph 53)

Importance: When Gareth goes to visit the witch to find out what his future will be, she gives him this prophecy. Gareth is not pleased to hear her claim that not only will Thorgrin be greater than him, he will also beg Thor for mercy.

My firstborn son,' the queen said. 'I believe he carried all of my sins. His nature could never be corrected. Perhaps he killed your father. Perhaps not.
-- Queen MacGil (Chapter Eighteen paragraph 57)

Importance: When Gwen confronts her mother with her discovery that Gareth killed the king, her mother responds to her that Gareth had been evil since birth. Her response indicates she believe she is responsible for Gareth's wrongdoings and that she doesn't really care if he is responsible for the king's death or not.

And this is what you must remember: your enemy will never fight on your terms. He will fight on his.
-- Kolk (Chapter Nineteen paragraph 12)



Importance: Kolk tells his recruits a story of his training days when he was attacked from behind by some of his enemies. He warns that an enemy will not necessarily do what is fair or what others think he should do.

Yes,' he answered. 'She awaits you even now. You have a great destiny to fulfill.
-- Argon (Chapter Nineteen paragraph 41)

Importance: When talking with Argon, Thor learns that his mother, whom he had thought died in childbirth, is still alive. Argon also tells him that he will have much influence through his life.

Gareth sat in his father's throne room, on his father's throne, looking down at the dozens of councilmen and lords and commoners before him — all with their own problems — and was miserable.
-- Narrator (Twenty paragraph 1)

Importance: Although he has taken over his father's rule, which he had his father murdered to get, Gareth discovers that being king is not what he had thought it would be and does not like his new position.

He had conquered virtually every corner of the Empire, and his victory could not be complete without invading the Ring, making the entire land subservient to his will.
-- Narrator (Chapter Twenty-four paragraph 24)

Importance: Andronicus desires to have ultimate power in every area of his surrounding territory. For this reason, he demands to know the secret to the strength of the Ring so that he can know how to conquer the lands protected by it.

But after this latest attempt on her life, and seeing this murder weapon, she knew that was not the case — he was hopeless. Pure evil.
-- Narrator (Chapter Twenty-six paragraph 6)

Importance: Although Gwen wants desperately to believe in her brother, she resigns herself to the fact he is pure evil after he tries to have her killed twice and then she finds evidence that he was the one who murdered their father.

It seems the McClouds have found their opportunity in your reign. They are murdering our people even as we speak. War has begun.
-- Brom (Chapter Twenty-nine paragraph 27)

Importance: Brom is one of the advisors to the former king. He resigns his position as a councilman because of Gareth's maniacal rulings. When McCloud's soldiers begin attacking MacGil territory, as he had warned Gareth they would, Gareth will do nothing to protect the people.



Your sole witness is dead, I'm afraid — and your murder weapon is quite useless without him. As for our dear brother, Godfrey — well, there's a reason he couldn't meet you here today.

-- Gareth (Chapter Thirty-one paragraph 31)

Importance: When Gwen tries to confront her brother, Gareth, about his role in the murder of their father, she learns that he has killed Firth, who was a witness to Gareth's plan to kill the king, and poisoned Godfrey, who had helped Gwen investigate the murder.