

Graceling Study Guide

Graceling by Kristin Cashore

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Contents

Graceling Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chaps. 1-3.....	4
Chaps. 4-6.....	6
Chaps. 7-9.....	8
Chaps. 10-12.....	10
Chaps. 13-15.....	12
Chaps. 16-18.....	14
Chaps. 19-21.....	16
Chaps. 22-24.....	18
Chaps. 25-27.....	20
Chaps. 28-30.....	22
Chaps. 31-33.....	24
Chaps. 34-35.....	26
Chaps. 36-37.....	28
Chaps. 38-39, Epilogue.....	29
Characters.....	31
Objects/Places.....	35
Themes.....	38
Style.....	40
Quotes.....	43
Topics for Discussion.....	45



Plot Summary

The book opens with Katsa sneaking into a dungeon and preparing to overpower a group of guards. Katsa has overpowering force due to her Graced power and knocks out a series of guards, then gives them sleeping pills. Katsa arrives at the old Lienid man Tealiff in a jail cell and leaves as her secret Council accomplice Giddon begins to pick the lock on the Lienid man's cell. Katsa is about to leave the area when she meets a Graced Lienid fighter. She knocks him out, but decides to not kill him though he knows her identity. Outside of her secret Council organization, Katsa must obey the will of King Randa of the Middluns, and kills and maims people that King Randa dislikes. When Katsa returns to the Middluns court, she again meets the Lienid fighter. She ends up fighting him, and then decides to bring the Lienid fighter, Prince Po, to see his Grandfather Tealiff. Katsa becomes friends with Prince Po and becomes his fighting and sparring partner. After Katsa is able to openly defy King Randa, she agrees to go with Prince Po to find the true authors of the kidnapping of Tealiff. This is despite Katsa's resentment at finding out that Po is really a Graced mindreader.

Katsa journeys through the woods of Sunder on the trail of the kidnapers of Tealiff. Po has mindreading powers and finds out that merchants at an inn know that King Leck of Monsea has committed crimes, though they swear that Leck is innocent of crimes against Tealiff. Po decides that King Leck, who is one-eyed, must be secretly Graced with the power to make others believe his lying stories. Katsa and Po want to rescue Po's aunt Ashen and her daughter Bitterblue from King Leck. Katsa and Po find Leck as he kills Ashen, but are overwhelmed by his Graced power and forced to flee, though they are able to find Bitterblue. Po is able to confront Leck, but is wounded and has to hide in the woods in Monsea, while Katsa and Bitterblue flee Monsea through a dangerous and inaccessible route and mountain pass. Katsa and Bitterblue make their escape from Monsea and get to a ship at the port of Suncliff. After a fight, they convince the ship's captain that they are acting for Prince Po, and make for Po's castle. At Po's castle, Katsa is shocked to find King Leck has taken over, but is nearly overwhelmed by his Graced power. Only Katsa's love for Po enables her to kill Leck when he is about to blurt out that Po is a Graced mindreader. With Leck dead, his stories are exposed as lies and Katsa and Bitterblue return to Monsea with Bitterblue to become the new queen. They find Po in the woods alive, but Katsa discovers that Po is actually blind due to his wounds. Nevertheless, with his Graced mindreader and sensing powers, Po has the ability to convince others that he can see. Katsa and Po renew their relationship, though Katsa now has taken on the new mission to teach the girls and women of the seven kingdoms to defend themselves. The lovers promise to reunite in a few months at Po's castle.



Chaps. 1-3

Chaps. 1-3 Summary

Chap. 1. The book opens with Katsa sneaking into a dungeon and preparing to overpower a group of guards. Katsa has overpowering force due to her Graced power and knocks out a series of guards, then gives them sleeping pills. Katsa arrives at the old Lienid man Tealiff in a jail cell and leaves as her accomplice Giddon begins to pick the lock on the Lienid man's cell. Katsa must overpower all the other guards. Katsa knocks out the guards, but deliberately does not kill them, as had been decided at a meeting of the secret Council. Katsa is a killer for King Randa since it was discovered that she has the Graced power to kill. As a young girl she had killed a cousin with her bare hands by accident when she feared a sexual assault. After that, the Graceling Katsa, who has one green and one blue eye, is feared in the court.

As Katsa walks out, a young Graced fighter surprises her and puts a knife to her throat. She pushes off his arm, but is cautious. The young man realizes that she is Katsa the famous lady killer, while Katsa assumes that he is a Lienid from his appearance. Katsa decides she does not want to kill him. When his guard is down she knocks him out. Katsa reunites with Oll and Giddon who have rescued the Lienid man who was jailed. The man is in bad condition as they ride back on horses towards their other ally Raffin.

Chap. 2. The story takes place in a land of seven kingdoms. Katsa could not imagine why the father of the Lienid king, also known as Grandfather Tealiff was kidnapped. King Murgon of Sunder must have arranged the kidnapping for money from someone else. Katsa's king is Randa of the Middluns and she did not suspect the kings of Lienid and of Monsea, so it must be the work of the kings of Wester, Nander or of Estil. By dawn Katsa and her friends reach Randa City and Katsa brings Tealiff to a secret hideout of Prince Raffin. Katsa is tired but still must carry Tealiff up to the hideout. Katsa has not slept for two days, but still has the strength to meet her co-conspirators at a hideout.

Chap. 3. Katsa goes out of the city and meets her two friends at the hideout. She criticizes Oll and Gideon for sleeping, but they insist that they do not have her well-known endurance. Katsa reflects that she committed her own security breach by letting the Lienid Graced fighter live. Katsa and her two companions ride off and by nightfall reach the Estill borderlands.

As they make camp and rest, Katsa thinks back to when she started to kill and maim Randa's enemies. Randa was angry when she killed an enemy quickly without torturing him, and afterward he lays out the exact punishment each enemy will receive. Katsa hears of many crimes done in the seven kingdoms, and then conspires with Prince Raffin and Oll to form a secret council to restrain the wanton crimes of the kings. Giddon and other underlords join, and soon the Council is a wide-ranging network. Katsa realizes that the Council network has grown large, and worries that it could be exposed, and she that will again be turned into a full-time tool of King Randa.



Chaps. 1-3 Analysis

Chap. 1. The book has an eye opening start as the young woman Katsa displays her superhuman powers. Through action, the reader quickly finds out what it means to be Graced in the imaginary world of the seven kingdoms. The kingdoms are a medieval type setting where soldiers use arrows and have extensive fortified structures, but no firearms.

Katsa is shown to want to be moral in that she will not kill the guards if it is not necessary. Katsa is a conflicted character who kills for her uncle King Randa but has been organizing a secret Council to right wrongs in all of the seven kingdoms. Katsa meets the Lienid Graced fighter and decides to not kill him mainly because he is a Lienid, though he recognizes her. This is a difficult decision for Katsa to make because she knows that she is in grave danger if her leadership of the Council is exposed to King Randa. Nevertheless, she suspects that the young Lienid is also there to save the Lienid Tealiff who is in a dungeon.

Chap. 2. Though King Murgon of Sunder is the one who has kidnapped Tealiff, it is known with near certainty that Murgon has done this crime for money on behalf of another party. Until Katsa and her Council colleagues Oll, Giddon and Randa can determine who kidnapped Grandfather Tealiff they want to keep his whereabouts a secret. Katsa again shows her superhuman powers in that she is able to spend long periods of time without sleep.

Chap. 3. The secret Council is a large network that was originally begun by Katsa. It has heavily infiltrated the kingdom of the Middluns, where Council members include King Randa's son Raffin, and the king's spy chief Oll. The seven kings of the seven kingdoms are presented as being problematic men who abuse their royal power. King Randa of the Middluns uses Katsa to exact revenge for all sorts of petty offenses against him. Katsa is tired of being Randa's instrument of death and torture against Randa's so-called enemies.



Chaps. 4-6

Chaps. 4-6 Summary

Chap. 4. Katsa and her companions put on their official dress and go to the home of an Estillan borderlord who had cut down too many trees from Randa's land without paying for it. Katsa is somewhat upset that the underlord's daughter is a Graced mindreader, but is assured that it is not important. Giddon states that a mindreader could be very dangerous if controlled by an aggressive person. At the sight of Katsa, all attempts to stop her group cease and Katsa, Oll and Giddon walk into the Estillan lord's dining room. The borderlord is startled that Katsa is here, and soon admits that he owes King Randa for the felled timber, and is willing to pay double. Then he is left with Katsa, and fears she will kill him. Katsa ends up only knocking him out, not breaking his arm or cutting off a finger. She knows that King Randa would be enraged if he knew that she had softened his desired punishment.

Chap. 5. Katsa's group rides to an inn just when it rains. As royalty, Katsa's group is given the best rooms, even moving a merchant out of a room. Giddon urges the innkeeper's daughter named Lanie to approach Katsa and shake hands with her. At dinner, Giddon and Oll have news of the so-called robbery of King Murgon, where they rescued Tealiff. There is also a report that a Graced fighter was accused of the crime but then released, obviously referring to the Graced fighter that Katsa encountered when leaving the area of King Murgon's dungeon.

A bit of news is that the Queen of Monsea, the daughter of Tealiff, has locked herself up in her rooms. The Council intends to keep Grandfather Tealiff hidden until they find out why he was kidnapped. They would like to leave a word to the Queen of Monsea and her daughter to not worry about Tealiff, the Queen's father.

Chap. 6. Katsa returns to King Randa's courtyard where she is met by her friend Prince Raffin. Katsa is surprised to hear that the Lienid Graced fighter is at the court, searching for his Grandfather Tealiff. Katsa is upset that she has to dress up and go to a dinner where King Randa will be. Katsa is horsing around with Prince Raffin when she sees the Lienid Graced fighter, who is also the Lienid Prince Greening Grandemalion. She stares at him, and he stared back in an arrogant fashion. Katsa feels attraction to the Prince, but also is angry that he is challenging her power.

Chaps. 4-6 Analysis

Chap. 4. Raffin has turned his hair blue in one of his frequent experiments in medicine and remedies. Raffin is King Randa's son, but he is a funny character who is an important friend of Katsa. Katsa hates going to the Estillan borderlord and confronting him for a petty theft against King Randa. She refuses to cut off his finger or break his collarbone as she has obviously done many times in the past for Randa. Katsa defies



Randa by merely knocking out the offending borderlord. She realizes that her time as Randa's loyal tool is nearing its end and worries what will happen to her. Katsa encounters the Estillan lord's daughter, who is a mindreader and is repulsed. This foreshadows Katsa's reaction when she finds out that Prince Po is a mindreader.

Chap. 5. At the inn, Katsa, the Graced killer, makes a point of introducing herself to a serving girl. Though Katsa has superhuman powers, she still has to deal with the ever-present attentions of her colleague Giddon. Katsa is not yet aware that Giddon is in love with her and wants to marry her. The Queen of Monsea is Tealiff's daughter, and this is the first mention that the kidnapping of Tealiff the Lienid has an effect in the kingdom of Monsea. It will be a long time before Katsa solves the riddle of why the Queen of Monsea is so in grief because of the kidnapping of her father.

Chap. 6. Katsa is surprised to find the Graced Lienid fighter at the court of King Randa. His name is Prince Greening, and Katsa feels his challenge of her. Katsa feels a flash of excitement in looking at the arrogant Prince and has a hard time in dealing with this. With her role in politics, and power, Katsa is used to suppressing her personal feelings. She knows that the Prince Greening is looking for his grandfather Tealiff.



Chaps. 7-9

Chaps. 7-9 Summary

Chap. 7. Soon after Katsa began to train as a killer for King Randa, a woman named Helda comes to Katsa's training sessions. For some reason Helda is not afraid of Katsa and begins to talk to her, partially because Helda's son is a Graced swimmer. Helda works in the King's nursery and offers herself as a woman servant to Katsa. Helda explains that Katsa needs a woman servant to tell her about things like menstruation and the relationship of men to women. Katsa has no mother or sister, so soon realizes that it would be a great idea to have Helda as a servant.

Now, Helda works out the knots from Katsa's hair and comments that Katsa may be beautiful to Giddon and other young men in the court. At the dinner, Katsa is seated next to Giddon and a man named Davit. Lord Davit mentions something about the Council and the elderly, and Katsa realizes that he has information about the kidnapping of Grandfather Tealiff. Giddon arranges a meeting of the Council that night in Katsa's rooms. Katsa resents the stuffy dinner and stands up to leave. Giddon takes her arm, but she shakes him off and goes to do her physical exercises.

Chap. 8. Katsa goes to the nearly dark archery range and sends arrow after arrow into the dummies until she senses the Lienid Prince Greening behind her. Katsa continues to take shots as she talks to the Prince about his Grace and his abilities. Finally the subject of the Lienid Grandfather Tealiff comes up, and the Prince demands that Katsa tell her what happened to Tealiff. The Prince blocks her path and the two begin to fight. Katsa is much faster than the Prince, but he seems to be able to perceive her every move before she does something. After a challenging but exhilarating fight, Katsa has the Prince pinned down. He agrees to surrender if she will tell him where his grandfather Tealiff is. She agrees to do it, and he tells her that she can call him Prince Po.

Chap. 9. Katsa and Po go to Raffin's workroom, and it is obvious that they have just fought each other. Katsa explains to Raffin that it is safe to show Po his grandfather Tealiff. The three of them go through some concealed passages and Po gets to exchange a few words with Tealiff, who is thankful that Katsa helped rescue him. Katsa has a scratch on her face from the fight. She takes time out to wash and then meets with her secret Council in her rooms. Giddon is at the meeting and immediately takes offense because Po has fought with Katsa and scratched her face. Only Po's emphatic apology calms Giddon down. Lord Davit tells the Council that his information from the borderlands shows neither the kingdoms of Nander or Estil are responsible for the kidnapping of Tealiff. Katsa is given the task of seeing Po out of the court compound without arousing suspicion. Po wants to stay at the Middluns court, so he proposes that Katsa do fight training with him, while he takes time out to explore other leads on the guilty party who had his grandfather Tealiff kidnapped. Po tells Katsa that his ring was



what scratched her face. Katsa is confused about her sudden new friendship and is glad to see Po out and be by herself.

Chaps. 7-9 Analysis

Chap. 7. Katsa has a servant named Helda, who is Katsa's main connection to her feminine side. Katsa has no intention to marry, and reluctantly agrees to Helda's suggestion that she wear a green silk dress. It is apparent that Katsa fears her femininity and being sexually attractive to young men. At the dinner, Katsa resents having another suitor named Davit sit next to her and is somewhat relieved when Council business is raised. Katsa and Davit converse about Davit's home village and Katsa remarks that she has no intention of ever marrying. Katsa discounts her other suitor, Giddon, who is sitting next to her on the other side.

Chap. 8. Katsa is confronted by Prince Greening who demands to know where his grandfather Tealiff is. Katsa is forced to fight Greening and is surprised at what a capable opponent he is. In a way, the physical confrontation between the Prince and Katsa is also the beginning of their strong attraction for each other. They become friends after the fight as the Prince gives Katsa his nickname, Po.

Chap. 9. Po is brought in to see his grandfather Tealiff. There is a barely concealed confrontation of suitors between Giddon and Po, as Giddon protests that Po has scratched Katsa's face in their fight. Katsa tells them both that she is the Graced power Katsa, not some woman to argue over, and the two men make their peace. Since Po's ring plays an important role later in the story and symbolizes Po's identity, it is highly symbolic that now Po has scratched the near invulnerable Katsa. Po gets Katsa to agree to train with him, which is his way to get close to her. It is an offer that Katsa cannot refuse, since she has never before had an opponent worthy of her power.



Chaps. 10-12

Chaps. 10-12 Summary

Chap. 10. Katsa is impressed by the ability of her fight training partner Po. Po is stronger than her in some ways and is able to figure out what she is going to do in advance. Despite Po going on several missions to nearby kingdoms, he learns nothing else about the kidnapping of Grandfather Tealiff. Katsa asks Po questions about his six brothers, and his father Ror who is king of Lienid. Katsa is intrigued about the mountainous cities and castles of Lienid, and tries to envision what it means for Po to climb up a rope into his castle. Po's castle is the smallest castle among the seven sons of King Ror. At this point, Grandfather Tealiff wakes up and talks to Katsa and Po about the beautiful island kingdom of Lienid.

Chap. 11. Po talks to Katsa about Giddon, who had been at their practice that day. He asks her if she intends to marry Giddon. Katsa protests that she is not interested in Giddon and that as far as she knows, Giddon has no interest in marrying her. Po reminds her of how Giddon wanted to fight him after Katsa had a cut on her forehead from Po. Katsa runs to Raffin and asks if Giddon is in love with her. Raffin replies that it is apparent that Giddon loves her because he always goes on missions with her and he tries to always sit next to her at royal dinners. Katsa cannot believe how thick-headed she is to not have realized Giddon is in love with her. At a Council meeting, Po assures Giddon that neither his father King Ror of Lienid nor his mother or brothers is involved in the kidnapping of Tealiff. During the meeting, Katsa thinks about how handsome Po is and suddenly she sees Po smile.

Chap. 12. King Randa comes out for the first time to see Po and Katsa fight. Randa tells Katsa to come see him about a mission. Katsa is quiet but inwardly enraged because she knows that Randa will again ask her to maim or kill in order to reaffirm King Randa's power. Po reminds Katsa that she has the power to break from Randa, and she must control her rage and her fear that she will end up killing the king. Katsa becomes so incensed at this comment that she hits Po and nearly breaks his jaw. Po is kind and reminds her that friends should not try to hurt each other. Katsa feels the strange kindness of Po and other Lienids. Katsa is reminded of the story of the Queen of Monsea, Po's aunt Ashen, who locked herself up in her rooms upon hearing that Grandfather Tealiff had been kidnapped. Po thinks this is out of character for Ashen, and wonders what is going on with King Leck of Monsea.

Chaps. 10-12 Analysis

Chap. 10. As Katsa and Po train, their friendship also develops. They develop a certain amount of trust that especially Katsa will not unnecessarily injure Po. Usually they practice in front of an audience, from the spymaster Oll to the sulking Giddon, who sees his rival growing in power over Katsa. Katsa talks to Po about his castle in Lienid. She



gets an urge to go there, and her attachment to Po deepens, foreshadowing their future relationship. Katsa is startled to realize, by looking at Po's smile, that Po is aware that she is also attracted to him.

Chap. 11. Po asks Katsa if she intends to marry Giddon. Katsa is forced to wake up to the fact that Giddon wants her and end her suppression of all thoughts of men that are attracted to her. The Council discuss if there is any progress in finding out who paid for King Murgon to kidnapp Tealiff. There is a suggestion that Katsa go to King Murgon and force him to tell her who commissioned the kidnapping. Katsa rejects this idea because she would end up killing King Murgon of Sunder or other people. Oll and Giddon agree that excess killing is not the purpose or the correct method for the Council.

Chap. 12. Katsa is learning how to overcome Po in a hold from the back that has been a difficult thing for her to do, when the dreaded visit by King Randa to her fighting match occurs. Katsa knows that it will be to punish some petty offense and feels horrible that she cannot break from serving Randa. She is angered by Po's reminder that she can control her relationship to King Randa, and she hits Po. The reader is reminded that Katsa still has the power to maim or kill Po. Katsa realizes that she must plan ahead on how to deal with Randa and control her anger. Po gets a sudden idea that something very wrong is going on in the kingdom of Monsea, where King Leck rules. Katsa is astounded by Po's clear thinking and also gets another example where Po answers something in her head that she had not spoken to him.



Chaps. 13-15

Chaps. 13-15 Summary

Chap. 13. Katsa rides off with Giddon and Oll to Gideon's large country estate. The three companions are deployed by King Randa to punish the nearby Lord Ellis for refusing a proposed marriage for one of Ellis's daughters to a Nander underlord in an area of fighting and danger. Katsa remembers Po telling her that she has the power to refuse to do King Randa's will.

When they reach Ellis's estate they confront Ellis, but Katsa merely has Ellis remove his servants. She says that she will not force Ellis to marry off one of his daughters to this Nander underlord. She makes threats to Ellis to conceal her actions, and an agreement is made for Katsa to wound Giddon and Oll, and for Katsa to take sole responsibility for not assaulting and torturing Ellis. After they leave, there is an atmosphere crisis and Giddon proposes marriage, saying it will help Katsa avoid the king by staying with Giddon at his country estate. Katsa is angered but replies that she has no intention of ever getting married or having babies. Giddon accuses her of wanting Po and exclaims that Po is an opportunist or a thug. Katsa is shocked that Po had said that Giddon thought this, and figures out that Po's Grace gives him the power to read minds.

Chap. 14. Katsa bursts into Raffin's workshop and finds Po. She confronts Po with her knowledge that he is a Graced mindreader. Po answers that he can sense people and what they are thinking about him, but does not have total mindreading powers. Raffin is sympathetic to Po, and agrees with Po that he was protecting himself from losing the ability to have friends. Po continues his explanation, saying that he did not want to be only a tool of a king using his Grace power. Raffin later comes to talk to Katsa about her coming confrontation with King Randa for disobeying the king's will. Raffin sends for Po and this time Po gets Katsa to become interested in working with him again. Po senses problems with King Leck of Monsea. Katsa considers going with Po to Sunder and Monsea in order to find out who paid to kidnap Grandfather Tealiff. At this point, a messenger from King Randa bursts in and demands Katsa's immediate presence before the king.

Chap. 15. Katsa enters a large room and approaches King Randa, who is seated on the throne. The room is filled with archers and armed men. Randa demands to know why Katsa has brought no woman or dowry from her mission. He tells Katsa he wants to imprison her. Katsa announces that she could easily grab a soldier's dagger and kill the king. She is enraged and ready to do it, but recalls Po's warning to her. Instead, Katsa announces that she will leave the court and that no one ought to stop her. She then quickly runs out of the room.



Chaps. 13-15 Analysis

Chap. 13. Ellis has been ordered by King Randa to marry off one of his daughters to a Nander underlord, who is having difficulty marrying due to the exposed location of his estate, frequently the target of raiding parties from nearby kingdoms. Oll, Giddon and Katsa agree that the task of threatening and torturing Ellis is a wretched and awful task. Katsa makes the decision to defy King Randa and to not torture Ellis, despite the consequences. Meanwhile, Katsa feels the tension of being with Giddon, who she plans to refuse as a husband. Back at Giddon's estate, Katsa tries to avoid Giddon by practicing her archery skills, but he approaches her anyway, asking to marry her. Katsa refuses Giddon since she is not particularly attracted to him, but then realizes that Po had told her what Giddon thought about Po. She knows that Po is a Graced mindreader.

Chap. 14. Po explains that he is a natural fighter like his brothers, and used his ability to perceive the next move of an opponent to appear to be a Graced fighter. Po warns Katsa to control herself in her coming confrontation with King Randa. He tells her that she has the power to avoid killing the king or being hurt or imprisoned. Katsa is not just a killer, Po sees that she has the power to survive and help others to survive and grow.

Chap. 15. Though Katsa has superhuman power, she is also mortal. She knows that she can avoid being hurt, but can still be killed by an attack or by poison. If she goes to the dungeon, her food could be easily poisoned. Katsa threatens to kill King Randa, but leaves before Randa has his soldiers attack Katsa. Thus, she is able to follow Po's advice and avoid killing the King and his soldiers or being captured by them. She leaves and prepares to go with Po in his quest to Sunder and Monsea to find out what was the reason for the kidnapping of Tealiff.



Chaps. 16-18

Chaps. 16-18 Summary

Chapter 16. Katsa feels strange riding off with Po before dawn, and Katsa has an emotional goodbye moment with Raffin. Katsa and Po are traveling without disguises south through the kingdom of Sunder towards the kingdom of Monsea. Po admits that he wonders why Katsa refused to marry Giddon and if she really wants to marry Raffin. Po also admits that there is a foolish but persistent attraction between him and Katsa. Katsa and Po camp out at night, and Katsa is able to quickly find a rabbit and kill it with her knife for their dinner. Katsa states her admiration for Po's being clear-headed. In turn, Po admires Katsa for rescuing his Grandfather Tealiff merely because she and the Council thought it wrong for him to be kidnapped.

Chap. 17. Katsa shows her unique fighting abilities by sneaking up on a goose, strangling it with her bare hands, and then not being disturbed by a plunge into icy water. Their fighting practice is different, since Katsa knows that Po perceives her next move, so instead Katsa relies on her speed and brute force. The fight is more evenly matched at night because Po is able to perceive Katsa with his Grace, though it is pitch black in the woods. Katsa is attracted by Po's shirtless body as he dries his shirt. She studies the intimate tattoos on his arms meant for his future wife. Po tells the story of King Leck of Monsea. The former King and Queen of Monsea were childless and adopted a thirteen-year-old orphan named Leck, who had lost one eye. The boy was educated in the royal court, and at the age of sixteen, the orphan Leck was declared the heir to the throne. Then oddly, the King and Queen fell dead of illness and their advisors committed suicide. Po has a feeling that there is something wrong with this King Leck, despite his reputation for kindness.

Chap. 18. Katsa and Po stop at a large inn that was constructed from the stout trees of the Sunderland forest. Po tells the innkeeper that they seek information on the kidnapping of Grandfather Tealiff. As Katsa and Po sit in the inn dining room, they get quite a bit of attention. Katsa is upset that several merchants are harassing their sixteen-year-old waitress, and finally Katsa gets up. Po has to hold her arm to restrain her from attacking the merchants. Later at night Katsa and Po have adjoining rooms. Po informs her that the six merchants from earlier will come up with some information for money. Po expects the information to be false, but that he will learn more by using his mind reading Grace power. The men come up to Po's room and lie about who may have kidnapped Tealiff. One man denies that King Leck of Monsea has anything to do with the kidnapping, but Po can tell he is lying. Po and Katsa end up throwing the men out for making offensive remarks. Later Po reveals that one merchant's remark of his cousins' dying at the animal shelter of King Leck may show that Leck is harming both people and animals. Po tells of the strange thoughts of the men on Leck and begins to suspect that Leck has the Graced power to make people think well of him even if he is a criminal and murderer. Katsa is scared because she sees that she is vulnerable to the false stories about Leck portraying him as a good man.



Chaps. 16-18 Analysis

Chap. 17. As they ride on, Po warns Katsa not to be too hard on her horse, so he insists on riding first. He knows that her power is overwhelming for the horses as well. Katsa wants to practice fighting with Po, which they have avoided since she socked him in the jaw at the court, and they fight. At the end of the fight, Po falls into a pond and the fight stops. This foreshadows how Po will be injured after his attempt to kill King Leck. Po admits their mutual attraction, but seems to wish to avoid confronting Katsa with his love and desire for her. Po notes that Katsa never gets sick and starts to wonder the true nature of Katsa's Graced power. This is a premonition of Po's vulnerability and how he can be harmed. Katsa is obviously excited looking at Po's tattoos and bare upper body. When they rest at the fire, Katsa and Po are again confronted with their strong desires for each other, but both refuse to act on their desires. The subject comes up in an indirect way of Katsa's option of having sex but avoiding having children through eating the herb seabane, a natural birth control preparation.

Chap. 18. The stop at the inn leads to Katsa's near fight with men who lust after their serving girl. Katsa has a strong desire to teach regular women and girls to defend themselves, a mission that she adopts at the end of the story. When the men come to Katsa and Po at night, Po does get the useful information that the men want to believe that King Leck has nothing to do with the kidnapping, though they suspect the opposite, as they say the usual stories of Leck being kind to animals. Another man refers to Po as the controller and man of the wild Katsa. Both Po and Katsa get enraged and throw the men out, warning them that they are lucky that Po and Katsa do not harm them. Some of the rage is that it is apparent that they will become lovers, and neither Katsa nor Po know yet how to deal with this.



Chaps. 19-21

Chaps. 19-21 Summary

Chap. 19. Po and Katsa decide to get to Monsea by going up the hills towards a mountain pass that leads to Monsea. Katsa begins to wonder if she can quickly kill King Leck or immobilize him. Katsa goes to sleep, but wakes up in the middle of the night fearing that Po is not there. He is peacefully sleeping nearby, and Katsa feels vulnerable that she needs him so much. In the morning Katsa is even more upset as she feels a growing love for Po. Katsa calms down as they travel, but later in the day has an overpowering sense of her attraction to Po. Katsa is emphatic that she does not want to marry. In the next day, Katsa has her thoughts broadcast to Po that she does not want a husband. In the evening, Katsa tells Po that she will never marry him, though he loves her. Po gives her the option of their becoming lovers, which excites Katsa, though she does not act on this right away.

Chap. 20. For several days, Po and Katsa continue to travel deeper towards the mountain pass. One evening Katsa asks Po if he would be able to bear it if she had to leave him, or to be away for a long time. The next evening Katsa is edgy and Po has her hunt for game. When she returns, she is still frightened. Katsa suggests that they do fight training to calm her down. They fight until Katsa realizes that there is a small wound on Po's hand from her boot. They stop fighting and Katsa feels warm towards Po. They embrace and soon the two of them finally make love. This is Katsa's first sex act and she feels some pain but soon feels pleasure. Katsa takes the herb sea bane as birth control. Po and Katsa are happy, though Katsa is slightly terrified over what she has done.

Chap. 21. Katsa learns to trust Po and have conversations with him reading her mind. She learns the symbolism of the rings of Po's fingers, with each ring representing himself or a family member who is alive and who Po knows. Po theorizes that King Leck cut up the animals himself, and then created the stories that Leck was protecting the animals and helping them. Po is almost certain that Leck is Graced with the power to make people believe his stories, even if they are absurd. Po sees that Katsa has the power to make herself go to sleep at will and wake up at a precise time. Her Grace is not killing, it is the power to survive dire situations and help other people survive. Po realizes that since Katsa set up the Council, she has saved the lives of many people.

Chaps. 19-21 Analysis

Chap. 19. In the first night of the journey it rains, but Katsa still is able to start a fire in a corner under a tree. Po has the new ability to sense a rabbit nearby and quickly kills it with his knife, for dinner. The reader is presented with a powerful and beautiful pair of young people who are gradually being drawn to each other. Katsa realizes that she may



have to have sex with Po, and as long as she can avoid marriage and childbirth, she wants to do it.

Chap. 20. Katsa wants to make love to Po, but still has reservations of becoming involved with a Graced mindreader. She goes away for a few minutes to reassure herself that this is her own decision, and she is not being manipulated by Po. When the time comes to make love, as usual Po and Katsa relax with each other by fighting. Katsa feels weird about the sex act because already she has been fighting Po and grappling with his body for so long. She gets used to the fact that now she is a sexual woman.

Chap. 21. The discussion of Po's rings and their representation of the members of his family is an interesting touch. It gives a cultural glimpse of what it means to be in the royal family of the kingdom of Lienid. Po is now certain that King Leck has the Graced power to subvert the minds of people, even those who hear his lies and stories secondhand. Po reminds Katsa that her power is not that of a Graced killer, but of enabling herself and other people to fight, defend themselves and survive.



Chaps. 22-24

Chaps. 22-24 Summary

Chap. 22. Katsa and Po climb up into the mountains and stop at the inn on the way to the mountain pass into Monsea. The climate is cold, but there are small vacant huts for shelter along the way. Po remembers hiding in such a hut with his brother Silvern that saved them from a blizzard. Po remembers his mother telling him to hide his mindreading Grace and instead present himself as a Graced fighter, using his mindreading to master stronger opponents. Po's mother was afraid that her husband the king would use Po as a tool to aid his royal power. As Po and Katsa approach Monsea, Po becomes more anxious about the fate of Ashen his aunt and her daughter, Bitterblue.

Chap. 23. That night Po is too worried and cannot sleep much. He awakens Katsa and they proceed downhill in the forest. They reach the edge of the forest and they see King Leck leading a party of men, and then shooting his wife Ashen to death with an arrow. Katsa is ready to shoot Leck, when Leck screams that it was a terrible accident and that he mourns his wife. Katsa cannot think clearly, cannot shoot and refuses to give Po the bow and arrows. Instead, Po is able to get her to flee and cover her ears. After a while, they run away from Leck and his men. Katsa and Po hide in a tree hollow, and Katsa realizes that Leck used his Grace power to make her believe that Ashen died by accident, though Katsa saw Leck kill Ashen. Po, in his brief encounter with Ashen, sensed that Ashen was trying to protect her daughter Bitterblue. Now Katsa and Po try to find Bitterblue. Luckily, Po has some hints that he sensed from Ashen about where Bitterblue is.

Chap. 24. From the vision that Po got when he approached the late Ashen, Po has an idea of where Bitterblue is hiding. It is a spot that both Ashen and Bitterblue knew from the past. Leck's soldiers chase after Po and Katsa, but Po has the power to sense where the soldiers are and to avoid them. Finally, Po and Katsa cross a stream and find a large hollowed out tree trunk, where Bitterblue is hiding. Bitterblue has a knife and they have to carefully coax her out. Hearing Katsa's female voice calms Bitterblue, especially after Katsa tells Bitterblue that she knows about Leck's Grace power. The three of them go off to escape, but Po senses fifteen of Leck's soldiers approaching. When the soldiers come near, Katsa and Po immediately attack and quickly kill all of them. Bitterblue watches the fight and admires Katsa and Po's Graced powers, agreeing that her father King Leck must be killed.

Chaps. 22-24 Analysis

Chap. 22. This is a quiet part of the book that is focused on the developing relationship between Po and Katsa as they travel through the countryside and woods. At the same time, Po's grace is developing and he is able to sense the presence of animals, fish and



berries from a distance. Po guesses that Ashen, his aunt and the wife of King Leck is running away with her daughter Bitterblue to escape Leck. Po becomes very worried as they reach the top of the pass and can view down at Leck City in Monsea from the distance.

Chap. 2. Katsa thinks that once she and Po get out of the forest they will gradually infiltrate the court of King Leck of Monsea. Instead, King Leck is seen chasing Ashen and killing her. Despite being warned in advance, Katsa cannot obey Po's orders for her to shoot Leck. Still, she retains enough caution about Leck to be able to follow Po and flee. Only when she is out of the range of Leck and his soldiers can Katsa see what a total failure she had been in her confrontation with Leck. Katsa and Po know that Leck wants to kill Po and capture and brainwash Katsa into his monstrous tool. This is ironic in that Katsa has escaped being a tool of King Randa of the Middluns and now is threatened with becoming the tool of King Leck.

Chap. 24. Po's powers are remarkable in enabling him and Katsa to trace Ashen's daughter Bitterblue. Bitterblue is terrified of men, but Katsa is able to coax Bitterblue to come out of her hiding place. This foreshadows Katsa's role in instructing Bitterblue on how to defend herself. Later, Katsa will go on to become a defense coach for women and girls throughout the seven kingdoms. Bitterblue views Katsa and Po's mass destruction of Leck's soldiers in a realistic way. Bitterblue realizes that such a massacre is horrible but necessary.



Chaps. 25-27

Chaps. 25-27 Summary

Chap. 25. Katsa, Po and Bitterblue leave the battle site on two of the dead soldiers' horses. After a few hours, they find a place to hide and plan that Po will go off to try to surprise and kill King Leck. Bitterblue tells the story of what happened to her and her mother Ashen. King Leck had wanted to torture Bitterblue, but he wanted her to be fooled by his Grace powers and surrender to him voluntarily. When Leck maims Ashen's serving girl, Ashen decides that she and Bitterblue must flee. When they saw how Leck had hurt people, his Grace did not deceive them. Ashen and Bitterblue ran off towards the mountains but were spotted by King Leck and his soldiers. Ashen hurt her leg and lagged behind, so King Leck shot her, while Bitterblue escaped.

Now that Po and Katsa know what happened, Po must go off and kill Leck. Before Prince Po goes, he leaves Katsa his personal ring so that when she contacts members of his Lienid kingdom they will know that Katsa is acting for Po.

Chap. 26. Po leaves in the morning on a horse, and Katsa and Bitterblue have to wait. By nightfall, Po has not returned and Katsa and Bitterblue begin to move, but Katsa wants to make sure if Po has come back. She sees Po on his horse and wounded by an arrow. The horse is also wounded and is on a cliff over a pond when it falls into the water. Po's face slams into the water and he is dragged underwater, but Katsa is able to jump in and rescue him. Po is now wounded by the arrow, which Katsa pulls out, and by the hard fall into the water. Though Po is in a stupor, Katsa gets him to tell her that his assault on King Leck failed.

Chap. 27. Katsa can only move slowly because the wounded Po is seated on their one horse along with Bitterblue, while Katsa runs alongside. They must stop to rest because Katsa has been without sleep for two days. Po tells Katsa that he tried to get near King Leck by killing a member of the king's inner guard, but Leck was able to duck and receive only a grazing arrow wound. Po kills a dozen men but is chased by a Graced bowman. Only Po's power to sense oncoming arrows makes him avoid all but one of the arrows, and Po's horse is riddled with arrows.

The next day Katsa sees a flash of fear and wildness in Po's eyes as he clings to the horse. When they rest, Po announces that Katsa must leave him in a hiding place and that she must go with Bitterblue to escape the king. Katsa refuses until she is reminded that their mission is to rescue Bitterblue.

Chaps. 25-27 Analysis

Chap. 25. Only Po has the power to resist Leck's powers totally. This is upsetting to them, because Katsa is by far the better fighter, and would have easily been able to kill King Leck. Still, Leck would have been able to speak and then would have brainwashed



Katsa into obeying him. Bitterblue eats the first food she has had in a day. She is a tough eleven-year-old to have been able to survive her experience. Bitterblue tells Po and Katsa how King Leck had been torturing animals and then young girls. Bitterblue and her mother Ashen knew it was only a matter of time before Leck would do the same things to Bitterblue. Po gives Katsa his ring, but only later does Katsa find out the true significance of Po's ring in that it signifies his castle, his princely title and his identity.

Chap. 26. Po finally comes back, but he is wounded. Only by using his Graced powers was Po able to avoid being killed. It seems that Po will escape and recover, but then he gets the additional wound of falling into a pond with a horse on top of him in front of Katsa. Katsa is able to save him, but now Po is gravely wounded. Katsa finds out that Leck is still alive, so the main question is how will the three of them escape Leck.

Chap. 27. As Po and Katsa had feared, Po's Graced powers are not strong enough to kill King Leck, and Po barely escapes death in his confrontation with Leck and his bodyguards. Katsa does not know the true extent of Po's wounds, and Po deliberately conceals his condition. He does not tell her that he becomes blind. Po reminds Katsa that her duty is to rescue Bitterblue, and he must be left behind.



Chaps. 28-30

Chaps. 28-30 Summary

Chap. 28. The three of them go forward a while until Po senses a hiding place on the other side of a waterfall by a lake. To put on an act for Bitterblue, who is watching, Katsa jumps into the lake and finds the underwater passage that Po had sensed that leads to a dry cave behind the waterfall, and the three of them are assured that it is possible for Po to hide. Katsa is afraid that Po will starve to death, so she hunts some game for him and traps some live fish in a wooden trap she creates. Katsa and Bitterblue prepare to leave, and Po prepares to hide. Katsa uses rabbit skins from the animals she killed to create a sort of coat for Bitterblue. Katsa is extremely sad as they gather firewood and other supplies for Po to survive in his hideout. Then Katsa and Bitterblue flee on a horse.

Chap. 29. Katsa decides that it is impossible to flee Monsea by riding down to Monport on the coast and fleeing in a ship. Katsa still has a map of Monsea that Raffin gave her and looks at the mountains that separate Monsea from the kingdom of Sunder. On the map, Grella's pass is marked. Grella was a mountaineer and explorer who died near this pass. The two climb higher and finally the route is too rough and they have to let their horse run free. Katsa takes off the horse's saddle, and by soaking it and other treatment, turns the saddle into a sort of leggings to protect Bitterblue's legs. Katsa is able to hunt animals for food. Her greatest achievement is to get into a fight with a mountain lion. The mountain lion is able to scratch Katsa across the breast, but finally Katsa stabs it to death. Now, Katsa and Bitterblue have much food to cook on their fire, and Katsa uses the lion's fur to make a very warm coat for Bitterblue. Snow begins to fall, but Bitterblue is astonished how quickly Katsa is able to recover from her wounds. Katsa also takes wood and string and fashions a bow and arrows.

Chap. 30. Bitterblue is exhausted and only is able to continue as Katsa pushes her up the steep slope. Katsa's bow and arrows serves her well in killing attacking animals and getting her and Bitterblue food. Going through an ice storm, they reach the treeless top of Grella's pass. Katsa covers Bitterblue and puts her in a sling, then carries her over the pass while wearing the snowshoes that she had prepared. Bitterblue is told by Katsa to remain awake and carry the water flask as Katsa runs through the pass, amid the wind. Katsa checks that Bitterblue is still alive and lucid. Suddenly, at sunset, Katsa sees that the road is now going downhill. Finally that night, they reach the tree line and Katsa is able to make a fire. Katsa and Bitterblue warm up and eat, knowing they have survived the horrors of Grella's pass and have escaped Monsea and are in the kingdom of Sunder.



Chaps. 28-30 Analysis

Chap. 28. There is a small cabin nearby for shelter and the hiding place can be safe if Po senses that Leck's soldiers are coming and hides there on time. The two lovers Po and Katsa are extremely sad that they must part, though Po seems to immediately accept this as necessary. Oddly, Po and Katsa do not make plans for Katsa to escape Monsea with Bitterblue. Perhaps, Po trusts in Katsa's Graced powers to find a solution to the seemingly insoluble problem of escape.

Chap. 29. Katsa now gets a chance to show her Graced power as a survivor, and the one who also saves Bitterblue. Katsa is sure that King Leck will have his men stop them at the pass that travelers usually use to travel from Monsea overland. Katsa tells Bitterblue that she is seeking a way through the mountains, to Bitterblue's astonishment. Bitterblue is afraid of the cold, and of savage beasts, but Katsa reassures her that they will manage to escape. In the fight with the mountain lion, Katsa is confronted with a real possibility of death in battle for the first time. Katsa survives and is strengthened to see that her true Grace is the power of survival.

Chap. 30. In a test even more difficult than the fight with the mountain lion, Katsa takes Bitterblue across the treeless and windswept Grella's pass. Katsa is able to survive due to her thorough preparation. Katsa's power includes that of mental preparation—it is not merely speed and force. She has been able to build snowshoes for herself, carries Bitterblue in a sling, and makes sure that Bitterblue keeps awake and alert.



Chaps. 31-33

Chaps. 31-33 Summary

Chap. 31. Katsa and Bitterblue are hiding behind thick trees by an inn in Sunder, in a heavily wooded region. Katsa steals a few eggs, and she and Bitterblue have a nice meal and then head towards a man on the contact list of the Council and on Katsa's map. Katsa and Bitterblue knock at the door of this man, a well-to-do shopkeeper, and he quickly recognizes her as Lady Katsa of the Middluns. Katsa and Bitterblue get food and new clothes and a chance to take a bath, but they have to leave before dawn so as not to be seen by all the shopkeeper's children. Katsa finds out that there is no news here from Monsea and that they are safe from the mental poisoning and lies that radiate from King Leck. Katsa tells the shopkeeper the story of their finding out that Leck is a monster with the Graced power to make people believe anything, and that Katsa was able to save Princess Bitterblue. Katsa lies and says that Prince Po of Lienid is dead. Katsa and Bitterblue get a short time to sleep as they prepare to get a ship to Lienid from one of the ports of Sunder.

Chap. 32. Katsa and Bitterblue make it to the port of Suncliff and are prowling around the docks at night, disguised as boys. Katsa has a patch over one of her eyes so people cannot tell that she is Graced. They find a Lienid ship and get the boy Jem, who is on watch, to let them on board. As the boy brings Katsa and Bitterblue on the ship, they are joined by a large seaman by the name of Bear. The ship's captain is a woman named Captain Faun, who has the Grace to foresee the weather. In the captain's room, Katsa reveals she is a woman and shows Prince Po's ring. There is shock at seeing the ring, and Bear, Jem and another seaman Patch immediately attack Katsa. Katsa knocks out Bear and easily disarms the other men, and the Captain sees that this is the famous Graced killer Lady Katsa. With difficulty, Katsa explains that she has been on a mission to rescue Princess Bitterblue. Bitterblue explains that when Po gave the ring to Katsa he also gave her his royal title and his castle, but that Katsa did not know this. Katsa continues that Po is injured but recovering from his wounds. Captain Faun decides to believe Katsa and begins to refer to Katsa as a Lienid Princess and puts herself at Katsa's service.

Chap. 33. Katsa enjoys her time onship during the four week voyage to the island kingdom of Lienid. Patch and another sailor let Katsa climb up the mast to the masthead. Katsa tells the horrible story of King Leck's Graced power to confuse people. Katsa explains that for Princess Bitterblue's safety, it will be necessary for the ship to remain offshore and isolated after they drop Katsa and Bitterblue off at Prince Po's castle. This is a difficult thing to accomplish, but Captain Faun agrees to keep the ship isolated if Katsa will make sure that she will be monetarily compensated for this situation. On the ship, Katsa reflects on how defenseless Bitterblue is, like most women. Katsa slowly teaches Bitterblue how to handle the knife that Bitterblue has been carrying and how to fight. Bitterblue learns to fight dirty, with kicking, biting, and going



for a man's most vulnerable body points. The crew understands this and helps to encourage Bitterblue's lessons in self-defense.

Chaps. 31-33 Analysis

Chap. 31. Katsa and Bitterblue arrive in Sunder, and again Katsa's advanced planning helps them in their journey. The advanced planning of Katsa and her friends in the Council help Katsa and Bitterblue to go through Sunder without major difficulties. This foresight and planning of Katsa shows that her Graced power of survival is more than fighting and killing. Otherwise, the book would degrade into merely the story of a wonder woman type of superhero.

Chap. 32. As they walk by the guards of various ships, they pass one where the Katsa and Bitterblue can tell that the crew members are Lienids. They come back when only one man is on guard, who turns out to be the boy Jem. Jem is nervous as Katsa asks to be allowed on board the ship. Katsa shows him some Lienid gold and Jem fears that they are thieves and decides he must bring them to the ship's captain, who is Graced with the power to foresee the weather. An interesting factor in the book is that people with Graced powers have two eyes of different colors. To conceal the fact that an individual is Graced they must cover one eye, or in the case of King Leck, they must actually physically lose one eye. Bear and Jem attack Katsa when she shows Po's ring, because it seems to them that she has killed Prince Po and seized the ring. After Bitterblue tells the story of how Po gave Katsa the ring, Captain Faun and the crew obey Katsa as a Princess of Lienid and the heir of Prince Po.

Chap. 33. Katsa teaches Bitterblue how to use the knife that Bitterblue carries around. This seems to be a foolish pastime but soon becomes important. Bitterblue's ability to act in a dangerous situation is improved by Katsa giving her this training. The theme is developed that girls and women need to have self-defense training. Ironically, Katsa makes elaborate plans for the ship to avoid contact with other people to protect her and Bitterblue from King Leck. They are soon to be surprised and confronted with King Leck in a place they least suspect.



Chaps. 34-35

Chaps. 34-35 Summary

Chap. 34. Katsa and Bitterblue relax on board the ship with the now friendly sailors. The ship approaches Po's castle, which is now supposed to be under Katsa's control due to her possession of Po's ring. Po's castle seems to only be a very large house with a tower on the top of a cliff. There is a nearby place to dock and Katsa and Bitterblue make their way up a hilly road to the castle. There they are quickly let in by a servant who seems to have been expecting them. Katsa and Bitterblue are led into a large room with a group of people, and then to Katsa's shock, they are welcomed in by none other than King Leck of Monsea.

Chap. 35. Katsa knows that she is supposed to dislike King Leck, but cannot get her mind to focus. Only Bitterblue's obvious fear of Leck keeps Katsa from doing anything that Leck says. Then, at the point that Leck is about to reveal the truth about Po's mindreading Grace, Katsa throws a knife at Leck's mouth and kills him. The other people are ready to attack Katsa, but Bitterblue jumps up, brandishing her knife, telling the others that Katsa has defended her, and she is the Queen of Monsea. A fog of confusion is slowly lifted as King Ror and his wife discuss that Leck has really deceived them. Katsa next move is to get Captain Faun's ship to take her back to Monsea to find Prince Po.

Chaps. 34-35 Analysis

Chap. 34. The ship makes it to the island of Lienid, and from the sea Katsa is able to see the towering castle and city of King Ror of Lienid. The fact that Katsa is taking Bitterblue to Po's castle is a bit of an anomaly. They forget how clever King Leck can be. The reader is surprised that Katsa and Bitterblue stop hiding and openly go to this castle. Katsa discusses with Seaman Patch about the evil King Leck of Monsea, and Patch asks why Leck would want to torture animals and people. Katsa explains that this is because Leck has the power to do it and that actually many of the kings of the seven kingdoms tend to abuse their powers. This discussion develops the theme that the seven kings of the seven kingdoms are causing unnecessary war and mischief.

Chap. 35. Katsa's mind is cloudy as King Leck welcomes her and Bitterblue in. Katsa has a feeling of dislike towards Leck, but feels that she must listen to him. Katsa sees that the people in the room include King Ror who is Po's father, and Po's brothers and their wives. When Po's mother is directed by Leck to comfort Bitterblue, Bitterblue uses her defense training, scratching at Po's mother and keeping next to Katsa. Katsa tells Po's mother that Po is alive, but after Bitterblue's pleading, refuses to tell Leck where Po is. Leck fingers his knife, but wants to be able to persuade Katsa to obey him. Leck insists on talking about Po, and brings up the topic of Po's Grace, and Leck's theory that Po's Grace may be different than it seems to be. Leck is overwhelmed by his desire to



destroy Po and capture Katsa as his tool. He makes the mistake of telling the truth about Po. In turn, this triggers Katsa to do anything to immediately shut Leck up, and she kills him. This is the turning point, or climax of the book, with the rest of the book a sorting out of the situation. Later, Po's mother comes to Katsa and thanks Katsa for saving her son, including by killing Leck and concealing the fact the Po has a mindreader's Grace power



Chaps. 36-37

Chaps. 36-37 Summary

Chap. 36. Captain Faun's ship takes Katsa, Bitterblue, Ror and his son Skye to Monport in Monsea. They know that the people in Monsea will be confused because of the lies of the dead King Leck, so King Ror is important in helping Bitterblue establish herself as the new Queen of Monsea. Katsa notices that King Ror of Lienid is not cruel and arbitrary like her own King Randa of the Middluns. Katsa and Bitterblue prepare to go into the mountains of Monsea to find Po, and by Ror's orders they are accompanied by four Monsean guards. This is to make clear that Leck is dead, and that his orders to kill Po and capture Katsa must not be obeyed anymore.

Chap. 37. In the woods, Katsa finds Po alive and seeming to be well. Po tells Katsa how he was able to catch fish to eat and how he used his Graced power to sense Leck's soldiers coming and hide from them. Katsa is shocked that Po tells her that he intends to stay in his hideout in the woods and does not want his personal ring back. Though Po sometimes loses his balance, he is able to walk and hunt. Katsa is discussing with Bitterblue what is wrong with Po, and Katsa suddenly remembers Po's hard fall face first into the water with a horse behind him. Katsa runs out to Po now that she has figured out that Po is now blind. Po is only able to find things and act by using his Grace power of mind reading and sensing the world around him. Po drops his attempt to conceal his blindness, and in tears, he embraces Katsa.

Chaps. 36-37 Analysis

Chap. 36. The book's scene changes into a sort of royal pageant as Katsa and Bitterblue go back to Monsea. In Monsea, Katsa is enraged that she has to have Monsean guards, but she then realizes that this is necessary to avoid chaos in Monsea. The kingdom needs help and time to recover from the evil reign of the dead King Leck. Monsea and the new Queen Bitterblue do not need Katsa running around killing people.

Chap. 37. The party goes into the mountains in deep snow, when suddenly Po steps out of the woods. The main question left is what is the condition of Po and if he will resume his love relationship with Katsa. The group congregates around Po's cabin through the winter storms. They decide to stay in the woods until Bitterblue can be crowned queen in the spring. Bitterblue tells Po proudly how Katsa was able to survive the climb over the Monsean Mountains to Grella's pass, and how Katsa was able to clear her mind and kill King Leck. Po seems to have recovered his health, but is distracted and does not look at people. Since Po has mindreading powers, it is easy for him to fool people. Even Katsa is fooled by Po for several days. When Katsa finds out the truth that Po is blind it is a sad moment, but it is also a moment of reconciliation of the relationship between Katsa and Po.



Chaps. 38-39, Epilogue

Chaps. 38-39, Epilogue Summary

Chap. 38. Po reveals that he still had his vision for several days after his fall into the pond, and only became blind just before Katsa left with Bitterblue. Po was filled with self-pity until he mobilized himself when he sensed Leck's soldiers approaching and hid in the hideout behind the waterfall as he had planned. Thus, Po avoids being captured. Meanwhile, Bitterblue and her guards are still by the cabin, though they are frequently sent supplies from King Ror. Bitterblue decides she wants to learn how to use a sword, and Katsa helps her and provides with drills. Po seems more relaxed and is eating more. Katsa runs outside and embraces Po in the woods. Po reveals that he has learned to relax with his Grace and has a much better sensing picture of the world now, though his vision is still gone. Po decides to again do fighting drills, this time with his brother Skye.

Chap. 39. Po begins to have wrestling matches with his brother Skye. Then Po begins again to wrestle Katsa, and with his enhanced sensing power sometimes is able to surprise her in fights. In the spring, Bitterblue and Skye leave, and finally Katsa and Po go to see the coronation of Queen Bitterblue of Monsea. Katsa is shocked and overjoyed to see her old friends again like Raffin, Bann and Oll at the coronation. The work of the Council to seek justice in the seven kingdoms is continuing and includes Giddon, the old admirer of Katsa.

Epilogue. Katsa and Po are back in Po's mountain hideaway. They swim under the lake to the passageway and the cave hidden behind the waterfall. They do their usual fight, and then settle down into love-making. Katsa and Po plan to soon separate, with Katsa making a tour of the kingdoms to teach women how to defend themselves. She knows she will have to confront King Randa to get the ride to be openly in the Middluns. Katsa and Po plan to meet again in Lienid in the fall.

Chaps. 38-39, Epilogue Analysis

Chap. 38. Po had been waiting to fight and kill Leck, but feels he has no purpose now that Leck is dead. Katsa calms Po and they agree to stay together at least for a long time. Katsa is still amazed when she and Po go out hunting that Po can shoot a rabbit that is a distance away and concealed. Po is helped by being back with Katsa and gradually regains strength.

Chap. 39. As usual, the thing that gets Po going is fighting and wrestling, first with his brother Skye, and then when he beats Skye, with Katsa. Katsa has Po and Skye do fighting drills and wrestling. Katsa also continues to teach Bitterblue how to use a sword. Katsa teaches Bitterblue and others and continues in the theme that she is to help others learn to defend themselves. After many days, Po finally is able to rebuild his

strength and defeat Sky in a wrestling match. He then fights Katsa and is nearly his old self again.

Epilogue. Po and Katsa go to the coronation of now Queen Bitterblue and then return to Po's mountain retreat. They talk of Skye's outrage because he thought that Po would not marry Katsa. Po and Katsa make love again, but decide to part for awhile. Katsa will run her self-defense school for women and girls all over the seven kingdoms. Po will get a chance to return to Lienid. Katsa hopes that she and the Council will continue to stop needless bloodshed caused by the ambitions of the seven kings of the seven kingdoms. There is a certain feeling that Katsa is abandoning the blind Po, but these are two people who live more for their duties to others than themselves.



Characters

Katsa of the Middluns

Katsa of the Middluns is the main character and protagonist of the story. She is a Graced killer in that she can fight and defeat anyone and can avoid arrows shot at her. At the beginning of the story Katsa is eighteen and the founder of a secret Council, dedicated to correcting abuses in the land of the seven kingdoms. At the same time, Katsa is charged by her uncle King Randa of the Middluns to assault, torture or kill his enemies when he calls her.

Katsa meets her match when she meets Prince Po, the grandson of Tealiff, the man that she helps rescue. Despite her amazing powers, Katsa is socially unaware and does not realize until she is told that Lord Giddon is in love with her. Katsa goes off with Po and becomes his lover, in the search for the kidnappers of Tealiff. Katsa proves that her Graced power is really that of survival, not killing, by escaping with Princess Bitterblue over the mountains of Monsea successfully. She is also able to kill King Leck, her enemy, in a moment of lucidity when confronted by him at Po's castle.

In the end, Katsa decides that her mission is to teach self-defense to women of the seven kingdoms, while continuing to stop the ambitions and squabbles of the seven kings.

Prince Po of Lienid, Prince Greening

Prince Po of Lienid is the friend and then lover of Katsa. He is presented as a Graced fighter, with one gold and one silver colored eye. Later, it turns out that he has been concealing that he is really a mindreader and seer. He used his mindreading power to figure out the moves of his fighting opponent and thereby was able to win his fights. Prince Po gets Katsa to do fighting drills with him and becomes her friend. After he tells Katsa that she has the ability to survive and defy King Randa, Katsa hits Po and nearly breaks his jaw. Despite this, after Katsa defies King Randa, she agrees to go with Po on his quest for the true kidnappers of his Grandfather Tealiff. Po uses his mindreading power to figure out that King Leck of Monsea is the one who ordered Grandfather Tealiff kidnapped and that Leck has the power to make most people believe anything he says. Po is able to attack Leck, but fails to kill him and is wounded. When he returns to Katsa, he falls with his horse into a lake and is severely wounded again. Po becomes blind, but uses his mindreading and sensing power to appear to continue to be able to see. Only Katsa is able to see through this facade.

Princess Bitterblue, later Queen Bitterblue of Monsea

Princess Bitterblue appears late, but is an important character in the development of Katsa and the story. Bitterblue is the eleven-year-old daughter of King Leck of Monsea



and his wife Ashen, the aunt of Prince Po of Lienid. When King Leck targets Bitterblue for abuse and torture, she flees with her mother. Bitterblue escapes and hides and is found by Katsa and Po, though her mother Ashen is killed. Bitterblue develops under the influence of Katsa, who saves her life. Bitterblue is able to disguise herself as a boy along with Katsa and get onto a ship to Lienid. There Bitterblue learns from Katsa how to handle a knife and defend herself. This becomes important when Bitterblue has to confront her relatives and explain to them that Katsa did right by killing King Leck of Monsea. After King Leck's death, Bitterblue returns to Monsea and is crowned Queen of Monsea.

Giddon, Lord Giddon

Lord Giddon is a young man who is in love with Katsa. He is a lord in the Middluns with a large estate. Giddon is a co-leader of the secret Council, which Katsa founds to right the arbitrary wrongs of the seven kings. Giddon usually sits next to Katsa at royal dinners and goes on most missions that Katsa does for the Council. He is very protective of Katsa and becomes insulted when he finds out that Po has scratched Katsa on the head during a fight. After Katsa refuses to torture a lord and make him give his daughter in an unwanted marriage, Katsa goes to Giddon's estate. Giddon proposes that Katsa marry him to get out of her troubles with King Randa, but she refuses. Giddon is left alone while Katsa goes off with Prince Po.

King Randa of Middluns

King Randa of Middluns is the uncle and one-time controller of Katsa. Randa uses Katsa as a tool to exact revenge and money from people who have offended him. He considers Katsa a brute beast that he uses like an attack dog and does not realize that she is an intelligent young woman. At last, Katsa defies Randa's orders and he summons her to him. Randa orders Katsa to go into a dungeon, but Katsa refuses and escapes before Randa can order an attack against her.

Raffin, Prince Raffin

Prince Raffin is the close friend of Katsa, though also the son of King Randa. Randa defies his father secretly by being a co-leader of Katsa's secret Council. Raffin likes to experiment with different plants and chemicals. He provides Katsa with various medicines, including the sleeping pills used to keep the guards asleep after Katsa knocks them out in freeing Grandfather Tealiff. Randa also provides Katsa with the sea bane herb that Katsa uses as birth control in her love affair with Prince Po.

Helda

Helda is the servant and close confidant of Katsa. She is Katsa's servant, but also Katsa's one connection with an older female since Katsa's mother has died. Helda is



one of the few people not afraid of Katsa as a possessor of Graced powers. Helda tries to get Katsa to be pretty and for Katsa to pay attention to the young men who court her.

Leck, King Leck of Monsea

King Leck is the Graced King of Monsea and is revealed to be the one who ordered the kidnapping of Tealiff. Leck has lost one eye. This is important, since this allows him to conceal the fact that he has Graced powers. All the Graced have two eyes of different colors. Leck abuses his power of making people believe his stories. When Katsa is confronted by Leck, she is unable to attack him when he lies that he has just killed Ashen by accident. Leck wants to capture Katsa and make her his tool, but instead is killed by Katsa when he is about to reveal the truth about Prince Po's Graced powers.

Tealiff, Grandfather Tealiff

Grandfather Tealiff is the old man who is kidnapped by order of King Leck of Monsea. Tealiff is the father of the King of Lienid, and the grandfather of Prince Po. He is weak, and Katsa and the council save his life by rescuing him from a dungeon of King Murgon of Sunder.

Oll

Oll is the spymaster of King Randa, and secretly a close ally of Katsa in the Council organization. Oll is an older married man, and often accompanies Katsa and Lord Giddon on missions both for King Randa and for the secret Council.

Skye, Prince Skye of Lienid

Skye is the brother of Po. He is much like Po in being a skilled fighter, though he does not have Graced powers. When Katsa and Skye find Po hiding in the wilderness of Monsea, Skye helps Po train in fighting and recover his strength. Skye also becomes a close friend of Katsa.

Po's Mother, the Queen of Lienid

Po's Mother is the Queen of Lienid. She is the only one in Po's family who knows the true nature of Po's Graced power besides Grandfather Tealiff. Po's mother thanks Katsa for preserving Po's secret of his mindreading power by killing the treacherous King Leck.



Captain Faun

Captain Faun is the captain of the Lienid ship that takes Katsa and Bitterblue to Lienid. Captain Faun is another strong woman character like Katsa, who gets her position due to her Graced Power. Faun's Graced power is that she can foresee the weather. Faun at first doubts Katsa's story of helping Po and confronting King Leck, but soon becomes a loyal helper of Katsa.

Jem

Jem is a sailor on the Lienid ship that takes Katsa to Lienid. He is a boy of about fifteen. Jem decides to allow Katsa and Bitterblue onboard the Lienid ship when the two are disguised as Sunderean boys.



Objects/Places

Grace, Graced powers

In the land of the seven kingdoms, a certain small proportion of children are born with Graced powers. These children have eyes of different colors. Their Graced power can range from something important like fighting, killing, mindreading or foreseeing the weather, to something entertaining or trivial like power to dance, cook or swim. Anyone from the aristocracy to peasants can have the luck of having children born to them who are Graced.

The Seven Kingdoms

The story takes place in the land of the seven kingdoms. There is a map of the kingdoms in the book of these lands. They are the Middluns, Sunder, Lienid, Monsea, Estill, Wester and Nander. Katsa is from the Middluns and journeys to Sunder, Monsea and Lienid, so these are the actual scenes of action of the book.

the Middluns

The Middluns is a kingdom in the middle of the land of the story, and has no seashore or high mountains. It is a rolling country of plains with a limited amount of forested land. Katsa is from the Middluns and the king is her uncle, King Randa.

Sunder

The Kingdom of Sunder is a land south of the Middluns that has several ports of the sea. King Murgon of Sunder was paid money to kidnap Grandfather Tealiff. Sunder has thick forests and mountains that go up towards Monsea. Katsa and Bitterblue go to Suncliff to get a ship when they are fleeing Monsea.

Lienid

Lienid is an island kingdom offshore of the other six kingdoms. The king is King Ror, who is Prince Po's father. Lienid is a mountainous land, and each of the sons of King Ror have their own castle there.



Monsea

Monsea is a land isolated by mountains that has a seashore. The king, King Leck is reputed to be kind and well loved, but actually is a monster with Graced power to make people believe his stories.

The Rings of Po

Po has rings for himself, his mother, his father, and his six brothers. Each ring is different and represents that person's identity. When Po gives Katsa his ring, he is giving her his castle and his identity.

Fighting and Weapons

In the land of the seven kingdoms, many men are involved in fighting and training to fight. Katsa and Po train fighting because they both have Graced powers to fight. In Lienid, Po often wrestled with his six brothers. In the seven kingdoms, weapons include arrows and knives. There are no firearms.

The Royal Court of the Middluns, Dinners at the Royal Court

In Randa City, there is a large royal court that is the center of political activity, and this is where Katsa lives. Katsa is the niece of the king and on occasion has to wear a dress and attend royal dinners with King Randa and his guests. Katsa resents having to go to these dinners, where she is seated next to men who want to court her.

The Mountain Lion, Wolves, Bears

There are many wild animals in the mountain of Monsea that Katsa and Bitterblue must cross to get to Sunder, including mountain lions, wolves and bears. Katsa is attacked by a mountain lion and suffers numerous scratches. Luckily, Katsa is able to stab the mountain lion and kill it.

Captain Faun's Ship

Captain Faun is Graced to foresee the weather, and owns her ship. It is a Lienid ship and it brings goods between Lienid and Sunder in recent voyages. The sailors on Captain Faun's ship soon become friends with Katsa and Bitterblue and help Katsa teach Bitterblue how to fight.



Po's Hideout in the Woods

Po is injured and is unable to escape from Monsea. Po uses his Graced power to locate a perfect hideout in the woods of Monsea. There is a cabin for him to be comfortable, and nearby he can swim into a lake and surface from underneath into a hidden cave. There Po successfully hides from King Leck's soldiers.

The Dungeon of King Murgon

Grandfather Murgon is in a dungeon at the court of King Murgon of Sunder, when he is rescued by Katsa and the Council. Katsa knocks out the guards and then gives them a sleeping pill to keep them out of the way while the Council people rescue Tealiff.

The Council, the Secret Council

The Council is an organization Katsa founds to right wrongs done by the ambitious kings. Katsa finds out about injustices in the seven kingdoms from her friend Oll, the intelligence chief of King Randa. Katsa decides to stop the arbitrary power of the kings, and gets Oll and Lord Giddon to agree to organize secret missions to right such wrongs.

Graced Mindreader

People in the kingdoms are afraid of Graced mindreaders. When Katsa meets the girl who is a mindreader, when on a sordid mission for King Randa, she is immediately repulsed. Later, Katsa is very disturbed when she finds out that Prince Po is a mindreader and a seer.



Themes

Katsa's Coming of Age

In the beginning of the story, Katsa is eighteen years old and running a secret network known as the Council. Katsa is an exceptional young woman with the Graced power to fight and kill anyone. Yet in her public life, Katsa is still the violent tool of the vengeful King Randa of the Middluns. Katsa's main social relationships are with her fellow conspirators on the Council, Oll, Giddon and Prince Raffin. Yet, she has little insight into her colleagues other than they want to help her end injustices in the Middluns and among the seven kingdoms. When on a mission to rescue the old Tealiff, Katsa meets the Graced fighter later identified as Prince Po. Although Katsa is a Graced Killer and could easily kill the Lienid Graced fighter for convenience, she refuses to do it. The Graced fighter's name is Prince Po, and when he confronts Katsa back in the Middluns, he is an immediate physical and sensual provocation. Katsa is able to break with King Randa and go with Po in his quest to find out who kidnapped his Grandfather Tealiff. Katsa becomes Po's lover, though refusing to marry him and be permanently tied to him. Katsa finds out that her power is not to kill, but actually to survive and to help others survive. She is able to save Bitterblue, and later Katsa decides to help train girls and women to defend themselves.

Countering the Intrigues of Royal Power

The driving motive of Katsa from the beginning of the book is to rein in the abuses of the kings of the seven kingdoms. Katsa has formed the Council, which arranges to rescue Grandfather Tealiff from the prison of the money-hungry King Murgon of Sunder. Since it is suspected that Murgon was paid by another party to kidnap Tealiff, the question becomes which of the other six kings authored the crime. Despite Katsa's formation of the Council, she is still a tool of the vengeful and abusive King Randa of the Middluns. Katsa must herself escape King Randa before she can be effective in finding out who commissioned the kidnapping of Tealiff, and to restrain the web of royal power and intrigue. Katsa can only trace the kidnappers of Tealiff with the help of the Graced mindreader Prince Po. After Po and Katsa confront some merchants at an inn in Sunder, they realize that the guilty party must be the one-eyed king of Monsea, King Leck. After Katsa is able to kill King Leck, the heir to the throne is the eleven-year-old Princess Bitterblue. Prince Po trusts his father King Ror of Lienid to be fairly just. With just rulers in Monsea and Lienid, and with Katsa's friend Prince Raffin the heir to the throne of the Middluns, there is a chance to restore order among the seven kingdoms.

The Ability to Survive and Grow

The story presents several situations that prompt the question of the ability to survive. For one thing, the technology level of the seven kingdoms is that of Europe during the



Middle Ages. There is no firearms, electricity, cars, or trains, and horses on the main means of quick transportation. People have to be more physical and careful of fatal injury than in modern times with modern medicine. The biggest difference is a small number of individuals born with eyes of two different colors, who have Graced powers. Katsa appears to have the Grace to fight and kill, while Prince Po presents himself as a Graced fighter, while actually he is a mindreader. Katsa has the superhuman power to hear an oncoming arrow and avoid its flight by quick movement. Yet Katsa has difficulty in seeing the motives of others, even ignoring the love and lustful intention towards her of her associate Lord Giddon. Katsa has always been told that she is a brutal killer, and has difficulty in developing her personality. Po gives Katsa the power to see that she is more than a stone-cold killer. Po can see that in that Katsa organized the Council that saves his Grandfather Tealiff. Only after the arduous climb over the Monsean mountains with Bitterblue can Katsa see that her true Grace is to survive, and let others survive. Her Graced powers grow as she develops this task, and finally takes on the goal of helping women and girls defend themselves. Likewise, Po's Grace grows in that he can sense people, thoughts and animals and plants. His power grows even more after an injury blinds his eyes. The moral is that people can grow and develop in the face of adversity.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of the book is that of an all-knowing observer, and all characters are referred to in the third person, except when they are speaking and thinking. At the same time, Katsa is the central character, and her thoughts and feelings are always described and made known to the reader. Katsa is also present in all scenes of the book, so for all intents and purposes the book could be written in the first person as the experiences and memoirs of the fictional character Katsa.

In the beginning of the book, Katsa is a leader of the Council, but many parts of her personality still need to be developed. Her whole life is around political and royal intrigue, and she has not developed as a woman. Katsa wants to promote and restore justice, but she has difficulty in figuring out what people around her really want.

By the end of the book, Katsa is a more mature figure who wants to continue her relationship with Prince Po while continuing to organize for justice, especially for the weak and for women in general. Prince Po has his point of view described quite clearly in his dialogues with Katsa, though sometimes his desires and motives are not clear. He is clearly attracted to Katsa, although he continues to state that he thinks that the idea of a marriage or sexual relationship between them is foolish. Yet, Po is the one who suggests to Katsa that they could be lovers and not marry. Po's thoughts are less sketched out in the book.

Setting

The setting of the book is the land of the seven kingdoms. It is an imaginary setting defined by a medieval level of European technology of horse riding, arrows and stone dwellings. The main feature that separates this magical land from reality is the existence of a fairly large number of people with Graced powers. Grace powers range from fighting, killing, and mindreading to foreseeing the weather and being a great swimmer. There is nothing described outside of the seven kingdoms and only several of these kingdoms are actual settings of the book.

Katsa is from the Middluns and is based in the court of Middluns King Randa. Katsa is also involved in some actions on behalf of the vengeful King Randa in the neighboring kingdom of Estill. Katsa and her Council colleagues go into the kingdom of Sunder to free the kidnapped Tealiff from the dungeon of King Murgon. Much of the action of the book takes place in the kingdoms of Sunder, Lienid and Monsea.

Katsa and Po journey through Sunder in their search for the trail of the kidnappers of Tealiff. The climb up a mountain pass into the kingdom of Monsea to confront the evil and Graced King Leck of Monsea. Some of the most exciting scenes are the fighting against King Leck's forces in Monsea, and Katsa's escape with Bitterblue from Monsea.



Katsa gets to visit the island kingdom of Lienid, home of Prince Po and where she unexpectedly confronts King Leck again. The book ends in the hills of Monsea where Po had hidden from the forces of King Leck.

Language and Meaning

The book is written for young adult readers. There is an obvious effort to make the vocabulary somewhat challenging but to eliminate difficult words that are not essential. Some long and complicated English words are used, but usually when their meaning can be grasped readily from the action of the book. The young adult reader may be surprised by the medieval setting of the book. There is no republic or democracy and the conditions of life are determined by the people around the kings of the seven kingdoms in their royal courts. Thus, when Giddon questions Katsa on why she will not marry him, he wonders if she prefers Prince Po, who is a Prince. This is a higher rank than Giddon, who is merely a Lord of the Middluns. Katsa herself is the niece of King Randa and is raised at the royal court after her parents die. In fact, most of the leading characters are kings, queens, princes, princesses, lords and underlords. The story of Leck is doubly shocking in that Leck was originally a one-eyed pauper who was adopted by the then King and Queen of Monsea.

In the seven kingdoms, the most dreaded thing is the small number of children who are born with eyes of two different colors and that have Graced powers. Graced persons are mortals but have superhuman powers. So, although women are subservient to men in general in this world, Katsa is still superhuman and terrifying due to her Graced power.

Structure

The book is 471 pages long as is broken up three main parts, including thirty-nine chapters and a short epilogue. The first part of 171 pages contains the first fifteen chapters and is titled the Lady Killer. It begins by describing Katsa on a secret Council mission and also on a mission for King Randa to get revenge with an offending man. This part ends with Katsa defying King Randa and leaving the Middluns.

Part Two is titled the Twisted King and contains chapters 16-30 and 185 pages. In this part, Katsa goes with Po to find the true kidnappers of Tealiff. During their trip through Sunder, Katsa and Po become lovers. They confront King Leck in Monsea, but are forced to retreat after Po is wounded. Po hides while Katsa is successful in carrying Bitterblue through an undeveloped mountain pass through the mountains of Monsea and into Sunder.

The third and final part is titled the Shifting World, with Chapters 31-39 and the epilogue and 114 pages. In this part, Katsa completes her rescue of Bitterblue and goes to Po's castle in the island kingdom of Lienid. There Katsa is surprised by King Leck, but is able to kill him at a decisive moment. Katsa organizes Bitterblue's return to Monsea as Queen, but then finds out that Po has lost his eyesight due to his wounds. Nevertheless,



Po develops his Graced powers and is able to adjust to his new situation, and Katsa goes out to help the unfortunate and defenseless women. The couple plan to later meet again.



Quotes

"Oll and Giddon, and most of the rest of the secret Council, had wanted her to kill them. But at the meeting to plan this mission, she'd argued that killing them would gain no time."

Chap. 1, p. 7

"Not much was known about the Monsean court. King Leck was well liked by his people and had a great reputation for kindness to children, animals, and all helpless creatures."

Chap. 2, p. 19

"Katsa caught the child's eyes and stared her down. The girl gasped and backed up a few steps, then turned and ran from the hall."

Chap. 4, p. 42

"She moved again to pass him, and he moved to block her, and it was almost with relief that she struck out at his face."

Chap. 8, p. 78

"'Lord Davit have us true information,' Oll said. 'Neither Nander nor Estill knows anything of the kidnapping.'"

Chap. 11, p. 110

"'We're too dangerous to each other, Katsa. And even if we weren't it's not right.'"

Chap. 12, p. 122

"'Marry me,' he said, 'and our marriage will protect you.'"

Chap. 13, p. 139

"'Forget about me once I'm gone, for I won't consent to live like a tracked animal. I'm no longer yours to command.'"

Chap. 15, p. 170

"'I wish you would remember that when we met, you were rescuing my grandfather, for no other reason than that you didn't believe he deserved to be kidnapped.'"

Chap. 16, p. 183

"'Alas for protective fathers and locked bedroom doors,' the partner said, very low to his friends, but not too low for Katsa's sensitive ears.'"

Chap. 18, p. 213

"'I'll give myself to you however you'll take me,' he said, so simply that Katsa found she wasn't embarrassed. She watched his face."

Chap. 19, p. 233



"But the ring they wear for me is different from the others. It has a tiny inlaid gold stone, and a silver.' 'For your eyes.' 'Yes.'"

Chap. 21, p. 246

"And then it began to trickle back to her, piece by piece, from some part of her mind she hadn't been able to reach before. She saw it again clearly."

Chap. 23, p. 273

"She wore a ring on a string around her neck, a ring that Po had given to her before he'd climbed onto the back of his horse and clattered across the cliff path."

Chap. 26, p. 300

"There are other animals. Wolves. Mountain lions. Animals you've not seen in the Middluns."

Chap. 29, p. 334

"When Katsa lay down that night before the roaring fire, the child curled in her arms, not even the pain in her hands and feet could have kept her awake."

Chap. 30, p. 357

"Po did give the ring to Katsa,' she said miserably. Her voice was thick, her body hunched over itself.

Chap. 32, p. 387

"The next few lessons progressed slowly. Bitterblue was persistent and ferociously determined; but her muscles were untrained, unused to the motions Katsa now expected of her."

Chap. 33, p. 399

"I've been thinking quite a lot about our dear Po, and I've developed a theory; a theory that you'll all find fascinating, if a bit upsetting." (King Leck to Po's family)

Chap. 35, p. 416

"They emptied. She saw it happen; she saw his eyes empty."

Chap. 37, p. 445

"But as he raised his fingers to touch her face, she saw that he was wearing his ring."

Chap. 38, p. 460



Topics for Discussion

Discuss Katsa's Graced power. How does this make her like a comic book superhero and how is it different?

Discuss Katsa's role as a woman with Graced power. In what ways is she still vulnerable as a woman?

Discuss the secret Council. Katsa is said to be the originator and a leader of this Council. Is this credible? Does Katsa, even in the beginning of the book, have qualities of leadership?

Prince Po is drawn to Katsa as the rescuer of his Grandfather Tealiff. At what point is it clear that there is a physical attraction between Po and Katsa? Is Po consciously trying to start a relationship with Katsa?

Discuss the attitude of Lord Giddon toward Katsa versus Prince Po's attitude towards Katsa. How is Po's courting of Katsa different than Giddon's proposal to marry Katsa?

Discuss King Leck and his Graced power. At times King Leck seems able to start rumors that are propagated over thousands of people and hundreds of miles. At other times with people who know him, King Leck must be careful and try to persuade people to do what he wants. What is the extent of King Leck's Graced power? Why does he fail to capture Katsa as his tool?

King Leck of Monsea is shown as the example of a totally wicked and out of control king. King Randa of the Middluns has some of these tendencies, though not to that degree of wickedness. Is there a model in the book of a just king? Are just kings a creditable alternative in the power politics of the seven kingdoms?

Discuss Katsa's development. In the beginning of the book she is organizing through the Council against injustice, but secretly. At the end of the book, Katsa is openly organizing women and girls to learn self-defense. Has Katsa truly advanced in her development, or has she merely changed her goals?