

The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making Study Guide

**The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of
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Plot Summary

This adventure and fantasy novel for young people is the story of a twelve-year-old girl named September, whose visit to Fairyland takes her on a perilous and life-changing quest. Similar to many tales that follow the pattern of the archetypal "Hero's Journey," September makes both new friends and new enemies, acquires powerful tools and weapons, and learns important lessons - in this case, about the power of choice and the value of self-sacrifice.

September is taken from her home in Nebraska by the playful Green Wind. As they ride through the air to where September will gain admittance to Fairyland, September reveals that she's cold. The Green Wind gives her his Jacket, the first of several powerful tools and weapons she receives.

Once she is allowed into Fairyland, September is plunged right into her adventures. After navigating the Perverse and Perilous Sea, and choosing a path from a four-item signpost, she encounters three witches who, as part of their offer to teach September how to see the future, ask her to retrieve a magical Spoon from The Marquess, the evil ruler of Fairyland. September agrees, and sets off on her quest. Along the way she has several important and challenging encounters - with Ell (a learned wyvern), Lye (a woman made entirely of soap), and the vicious Glashtyn (a race of humans with the heads of horses). She also learns the story of Good Queen Mallow and of how The Marquess has changed Mallow's happy, prosperous kingdom into a land of rules and prohibitions. Eventually, September makes her way to Pandemonium, the capital city of Fairyland. There, she encounters The Marquess, who gives her the Spoon in exchange for September's agreement to search out a magical weapon hidden in the distant Worsted Woods. After leaving The Marquess, September discovers a blue-skinned boy kept in a cage. He reveals that he is a water spirit with the power to grant wishes, that he is being kept prisoner by The Marquess, and that his name is Saturday. Using the power of the Spoon, September frees him, and they, along with Ell, set off for the Worsted Woods.

With the help of fairy Calpurnia and changeling Penny, September and her friends make their way to Autumn, a land of eternal fall. There, they encounter the Spriggans, a race of three fingered fairy spirits who offer September guidance on how to navigate the Worsted Woods - which, they add, she must do alone. September makes her way into the heart of the Woods where she has an encounter with Death, who in turn conceals within her mouth a casket containing the weapon September seeks. After singing Death to sleep, September retrieves both the casket (which describes the item within as manifesting the power of the seeker's mother) and the weapon (which for September manifests a Wrench, a symbol of her mother's work and skills). September returns to Autumn with the Wrench, but before she can set out on her return journey to Pandemonium, Ell and Saturday are kidnapped by lions in the service of The Marquess.

September sets out to rescue her friends who are being kept prisoner in the Lonely Gaol, creating creates a boat out of debris she finds on the beach. After a series of



adventures, she navigates her little boat through the storms surrounding the Lonely Gaol and lands. There, September again encounters The Marquess who reveals her master plan - for September to use her Wrench to uncouple the links between Fairyland and the Human World. September refuses to do so, using the Wrench to perform a feat of magic that would end The Marquess's tyranny. The Marquess, in the manner of other fairy tale maidens, puts herself into a deep sleep. This, in turn, causes the Lonely Gaol to start falling apart. With the help of one of Saturday's wishes, September manages to rescue herself and her friends, returning them to Fairyland. There, she discovers that in the future, she will be able to spend half her time in Fairyland and half in the human world. She then returns to the human world, her time in Fairyland over...for the time being.



Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

This adventure and fantasy novel for young people is the story of a twelve-year-old girl named September, whose visit to Fairyland takes her on a perilous, life-changing quest. Similar to many tales that follow the pattern of the archetypal "Hero's Journey," September makes both new friends and new enemies, acquires powerful tools and weapons, and learns important lessons - in this case, about the power of choice and the value of self-sacrifice.

Twelve-year-old September, described as "ill tempered and irascible", is willingly taken from her home in Omaha, Nebraska by the restless Green Wind, who puts her on the back of the Leopard of Little Breezes and carries her into the sky, accidentally leaving one shoe behind. As they make their way to Fairyland, September recalls the life she's leaving behind, but doesn't wave farewell - she's too young, according to narration, to have much of a heart. Meanwhile the Green Wind tells September the many rules of Fairyland imposed by The Marquess, about September's age and the ruler of Fairyland. When September tells him she's cold, the Green Wind gives her his Green Jacket, which grows, on its lapel, a small, jeweled key. Eventually, the Green Wind and September arrive at the gateway to Fairyland. There, they encounter the very tall and very slender Latitude and Longitude, who require September to perform a ritual involving, among other things, having her blood spilled, leaving something behind (the key), and telling a lie (saying she wants to return home). The ritual complete, Latitude and Longitude allow September, accompanied by the Green Wind, to enter the passageway to Fairyland in the company of the Green Wind. Without anyone noticing, the jeweled key follows them in.

"The Closet between Worlds" The Green Wind, the Leopard and September travel through a long narrow corridor cluttered with long-unused objects and memories. September asks the Green Wind why he came for her, as she believes she's not special enough. After several tricky answers from the Wind, the Leopard puts it simply - they came for her, and just for her. The trio winds in front of what looks like a giant gargoyle, but which is in fact a disguise worn by tiny, but fierce, Betsy Basilstock, a customs agent who interrogates the Green Wind and September about their purpose for crossing into Fairyland. In a last ditch effort to convince the reluctant Betsy that, at the very least, September should go in, the Green Wind comments that September is one of the Ravished, and that the Ravished are always allowed in. Betsy then agrees that September can pass, but not the Wind - he's on a list of beings barred by The Marquess. The Green Wind gives September a kiss, the Leopard licks her hand, and Betsy takes her to the gateway to Fairyland, where she (Betsy) sprays a magical goo in her eyes that, she says, will enable her to see what's really there. She also gives September a book rather like a passport that describes her as "Ravished". The Green Wind reminds her to never tell anyone her full, true name, while his very last words



("check your pockets, my chimney-child") echo in September's ears as she passes through "the soft, leafy wall of the closet ... and through to the other side."

Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

The narrative begins in the way most traditional fairy tales begin - with the words "once upon a time." Several other narrative elements introduced here might also seem familiar to experienced readers of fairy tales - the central character's relatively unhappy home life, an unexpected opportunity to leave, arrival at a new and magical place, challenges to be overcome before the visitor can officially enter the new place, and the accumulation of allies and gifts. All are examples and/or manifestations of elements of a type of narrative identified by noted mythologist and narrative analyst Joseph Campbell as "The Hero's Journey." The book not only clearly follows the narrative and spiritual pattern researched and mapped out by Campbell and his work. It just as clearly references other stories that have also followed that pattern and uses ideas and material from such sources to establish and define not only its own narrative identity but also the rules and ways of this particular version of Fairyland.

This book has a particularly strong resemblance to "The Wizard of Oz," in which a young girl (Dorothy) disillusioned and unhappy with life at home (in much the same way as September), is taken up by a strong wind (a tornado, or in September's case The Green Wind) and left in a strange new land (Oz/Fairyland). As both narratives progress, both heroines are given a series of gifts (including a pair of shoes), both gather friends, allies and enemies, and both encounter evil and secondary quests along the way. As the narrative unfolds, detailed resemblances between these two stories becomes clear. One appears right off the top, in Chapter 1. Nebraska, the American state from which September is taken, is geographically close, climatically similar, and socially as constrictive as Kansas, from which Dorothy, the heroine of "The Wizard of Oz", originally comes. There is an additional irony here, in that the Wizard (who is, in fact, another human magically transported to Fairyland) is himself from Omaha, Nebraska.

All that said, there is another important element of this section that also appears in many other narratives of this sort - and not just fairy tale or quest narratives, but in narrative in general. This is the practice of introducing ideas, situations and objects that play important roles later - in other words, extensive foreshadowing. In this section, important elements that fall into that category include the shoe left behind, the list of rules, the Key, September's comment that she doesn't feel special, the notion of her being "Ravished", and the Green Wind's parting gift, all aspects of the narrative that come into play, albeit with differing degrees of importance, later in the narrative. The point must also be made that these are the main foreshadowings. Like most successful narratives in this genre/style of writing, almost everything that happens or is said, almost everything that receives particular narrative attention, is bound to be important later.

Finally, what's most important to note about this book is that like other works that use "The Hero's Journey" as a narrative template, The book explores and comments on a fundamental aspect of human existence - coming of age.



Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

"Hello, Goodbye, and Manythanks" September finds herself swimming for her life in Perverse and Perilous Sea. She eventually makes it to shore, which she first believes is made up of thick layers of rubbish but which, thanks to the goo thrown in her eyes, she can see is fairy gold. She encounters a signpost which points in four different directions, offering her four choices - to lose her way, her life, her mind, or her heart. She eventually decides on the way indicating she will lose her heart and continues on her way, picking up jeweled scepter and thinking it might come in useful. After a short while, she encounters a trio of eccentric Witches - two women, Hello and Goodbye, and their shared husband, Manythanks, who offer her some cake (which she accepts) and reveal that they have the unique power to see, and in some cases determine, the future. September asks to see hers. Goodbye casts a spell, and September's future is pulled from a cauldron, but is undefined, being buried in a lumpy pile of gunk. Goodbye offers to tell September's future if September will agree to retrieve her magic Spoon from the Marquess, who stole it a long time ago in revenge for the Witches not giving her control of the day of her death. September considers her options, and finally agrees to search out the Spoon. Manythanks gives her a kiss and, after getting directions to the Marquess' Palace, September again goes on her way. She remembers the reminder of the Green Wind to look in her pocket and does so, pulling out a small crystal globe within which is suspended a perfect green leaf.

"The Wyverary" After a quiet night's sleep, September is woken up by a wyvern, a monster who looks a lot like a dragon but has chained wings. When September confesses her fear of him, the wyvern reveals that he is peaceful and not dragon-like at all. He adds that he is one of several children of a wyvern and a library, that he memorized everything in the encyclopedia from A to L, and that he is chained because flying, except under specific circumstances. As they talk, September starts thinking of him as Ell (short for A to L), and reveals that her mother works in a factory repairing engines, her father has gone off to work in the war, and that she's beginning to feel badly about leaving no word with her mother about where and when she went. She tells Ell that she is going to Pandemonium in search of Goodbye's Spoon, and he asks to go with her - he wants to visit his grandfather, the great Municipal Library of Fairyland. They continue towards Pandemonium with September riding on Ell's back, Ell keeping quiet about the Marquess's rule that "Marvelous Creatures of a Certain Size" were not to be ridden.

Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

Among the most significant elements in this section is the signpost on the beach, more particularly the choice made by September of which direction she intends to take. Her choice to go in the direction of losing her heart foreshadows events in the book's final



chapters in which, having come to love Fairyland and the friends she made there, September is devastated to learn that she can only live there half the year. In other words, she loses her heart. Other important elements include September's eating of the offered cake. In doing so, she thinks she is obeying the order of the Green Wind to not eat fairy food (she thinks that, technically speaking, she is eating witch food) but is, in fact, doing just what he said not to. In other words, her eating of the cake here puts the seal on her identity - as the narrative eventually reveals, any time she eats while in Fairyland, she is further defined as one of the Ravished. Still other important elements include the reference to September's family life, which is important for two reasons. First, it defines the novel's setting in time, and second, it provides a key point of identity for September's mother, which in turn plays an important role in defining September's relationship to the Marquess and the reason both she and September are in Fairyland.

In terms of the relationship between the narrative here and the archetypal narrative as defined in the work of Joseph Campbell, an important element in both this work and the pattern/model/archetype on which it's based is the hero's accumulation of both allies/traveling companions and magical tools. This section sees September continue her acquisition and/or awareness of both. She already has the Green Jacket (see Chapter 1), which throughout the narrative morphs into whatever form of clothing she needs it to, and the Scepter (see Chapter 2, which provides her with what amounts to cash). Now she discovers what it was the Green Wind placed in her pocket - the leaf crystal, which she will make use of in Chapter 17. Also in this section, she is set in search of the Spoon, destined to become a similarly important tool, an occurrence that marks the beginning of an essential aspect of The Hero's Journey - the quest. Up to now, September has been, for lack of a better term, a traveler. Now she has a purpose and in the form of Ell the learned wyvern, she also has the first of several new allies.



Chapters 5 and 6, Interlude

Chapters 5 and 6, Interlude Summary

"The House Without Warning" September asks Ell about Pandemonium, discovering that he doesn't know much because he didn't get as far as "p" in the encyclopedia, but thinks that, considering how the magic of Fairyland works, their destination will find THEM. After a long day of travel, the friends suddenly come upon The House without Warning, home to the golem Lye, an artificial but intelligent being made entirely of soap with the word "TRUTH" carved into her forehead. Lye reveals that she is the creation and former best friend of the long-missing Good Queen Mallow whose rule, conversation reveals, was overthrown by The Marquess. September reveals her quest and promises to look for Good Queen Mallow when she gets to Pandemonium. Lye tells her that travelers must pass through the House before they get to Pandemonium, adding that all travelers must be washed so they don't bring dirt into the city. She sends Ell off for a bath and then puts September through three, washing her courage, her wishes, and her luck. September and Lye also have a conversation about true names, in which Lye reveals that she knows Mallow's true name, and in which Lye, like the Green Wind, urges September to never reveal her full, true name. After her baths, September reunites with the also bathed Ell, and the two say farewell to Lye, once again setting on their way.

"Shadows in the Water" September and Ell arrive at the shore of the Barleybroom River, across which they must cross to reach Pandemonium. September looks in amazement at the variety of animals, magical creatures, and people waiting to cross, including a little girl who transforms back and forth into a jackal. As she and Ell join the lineup and pay their fare with stones from the scepter, she asks the ferryman if he is an actual fairy. Gruffly, he acknowledges that he is, noting that she's a child and warning her about the tithe taken by the Glashtyn. Before she can ask what he means, the Glashtyn themselves (men with horse's heads) emerge from beneath the surface of the river and demand to see the children on board, one of whom (the fairy reveals) will be taken as a tithe, or payment, for the ferry being allowed to cross. September is forced into the group of children being considered by the Glashtyn, as is the jackal girl, who is the child chosen. September fears for its life, and offers to exchange one of her possessions for its safety. The Glashtyn aren't interested the scepter, but offer to take either her voice or her shadow. September chooses to give them her shadow, prevents herself from screaming in pain as its cut from her, and is surprised to see how happy it seems when it disappears over the side of the ferry with the Glashtyn.

Interlude - Narration reminds readers of the Key that followed September into Fairyland, and describes its adventures that after some time, see it arriving in Pandemonium after September had left, determined to fulfill its purpose.



Chapters 5 and 6, Interlude Analysis

This section sees the introduction of two very important narrative elements. The first is the story of Good Queen Mallow, a character held up throughout the narrative as an ideal and a heroine, a benevolent ruler who balanced her own sense of power with an equally clear sense of the well being of her subjects. The contrast between her and the Marquess is clear - Mallow clearly believed in and advocated freedom, while the Marquess, just as clearly, believes in and advocates the rule of law. This aspect of the book is significantly ironic when the revelations in the book's final chapters (specifically, that the Marquess and Mallow are one and the same) are taken into account.

The reference to Mallow is also important in that it comes from the character of Lye. Here, there are two points to note. First, Lye is an essential component in the making of soap, which is probably why Lye has the name in the first place. The second, and more important point, to note about Lye's name is that it is a pun on what she is doing in her conversation with September. As conversation between September and the Marquess in Chapter 19 reveals, it was Lye who enabled the Marquess's entry to Fairyland, and in doing so must have known that the Marquess was her beloved Mallow brought back to life. While the narrative doesn't explicitly says so, it's possible, in the context of this set of circumstances, to see that in this section, Lye is doing what the Marquess/Mallow ordered her to do - lie to September about who the Marquess really is. If that's the case, then, why does Lye also empower September with the baths as she does? Again, the narrative isn't expressly clear, but given that golems (artificial life forms) are created to perform pre-programmed functions automatically, it could be that in bathing September, Lye is doing what she was created to do, while in lying to September Lye is doing what she was TOLD to do. A fine point of distinction, but one that, it seems, is important to consider in terms of understanding the logic of the character and her role in the story.

Another important element in this section is the introduction of September's first fairy, the ticket taker on the ferry. The most notable element here is the passing, easily missable reference to his wings being bound with iron. Later in the narrative, September encounters another fairy with bound wings and when she recalls the Green Wind mentioning that there is no iron allowed in Fairyland, realizes that fairies are allergic to iron, a realization important for two reasons. First, it triggers another realization - that the Marquess used this allergy to gain control over the fairies and dominate the governing of Fairyland completely. Second, it foreshadows the confrontation between September and Saturday, in that utilizing iron to gain victory over the wish-giving Saturday enables her and her friends to escape the death planned for them by the Marquess.

Other important elements include the commentary on the nature and power of true names and the confrontation with the Glashtyn, itself notable for two reasons. The first is the introduction of the jackal/girl, who reappears again in Chapter 16, while the second is the loss of September's shadow. Here, there are two points to note. The first has to do with how several elements of the narrative appear to have clear, deliberate echoes of other famous fairy tales. As previously discussed, there are several



resemblances between this story and other fairy tales that follow the model of Joseph Campbell's "The Hero's Journey." The reference to September's shadow, on the other hand, can be seen as a kind of mirror-echo of a situation in another famous fairy tale, "Peter Pan", which utilizes the return of a missing shadow as a catalyst for narrative action. The second important point to note about the loss of September's shadow is that it foreshadows two key encounters - September's encounter with the Shark in Chapter 16, and the novel's very final moments, in which narration comments that once September returned home, her mother never notices her shadow is missing.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

"Fairy Reels" September and Ell arrive at the gateway to Pandemonium and ask the guardian, called a Switchpoint, for directions to a place to rest near the Briary, the home of the Marquess. The Switchpoint manifests a carpet of red cloth and September and Ell follow it through the city which, according to Ell, was made by Queen Mallow sewing together various sorts of cloth into buildings, roads, and sidewalks. Eventually, the carpet path leads them to a Nickelodeon, similar to the movie theatres September enjoys going to at home. Another couple of gems from the scepter gains them admittance, and they settle down to watch the film. First, though, they and the rest of the audience are shown a newsreel of important events in Fairyland, one of which is a wedding between "Ghiyath the Jann and Rabab the Marid", and another of which is a concert in which the musicians were attacked for playing a tribute to Queen Mallow. The newsreel ends with a story about the Marquess, a girl no older than September who suddenly looks out from the film and talks directly TO September, ordering her to come to meet her right away. As September wonders how the Marquess could possibly have found her, the Marquess calls her "a wicked little thief," melts the film, and disappears.

"An Audience with the Marquess" September and Ell make their way through the thorny gardens surrounding The Briary, September passing through a door opened by the briars that close behind her before Ell can get through. September finds herself in a grand hall, which contains a portrait of a beautiful queen. Her contemplation of the painting is interrupted by the arrival of the Marquess and her Panther. The Marquess comments on how difficult it must have been for September to travel with only one shoe and offers her beautiful new ones. When September rejects them, the Marquess offers her food which September, still fearful of eating fairy food, also rejects. The Marquess confirms September's suspicion that the woman in the portrait is indeed Queen Mallow, and explains why she (the Marquess) is a much better ruler than Queen Mallow ever was. The Marquess then asks September why she has come to steal the Spoon. September says it's not really stealing if what's being taken was itself stolen. The Marquess offers to simply give the Spoon to September, in exchange for giving September a chance to have what she came to Fairyland for - an adventure. That adventure, the Marquess says, would take September into the land of eternal Autumn and then into the Worsted Wood, in search of a magical item in a casket. September says she'll consider it only if the Marquess vows to not harm anyone with the item. The Marquess commends September for her courage and explains that the item is a powerful sword, with which she will cut the remaining "sourness" out of the heart of Fairyland. At that point, September refuses, leading the Marquess to say that if September doesn't do as she asks, she will kill Ell. September finally agrees, accepts the new shoes offered by the Marquess, and realizes that she has been "handled - and with ease." The Marquess hands over the Spoon and, as September goes, warns her that if she's not back in a week, she'll have both the Spoon and September's head.



Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

There are several important elements in Chapter 7. Among them are the chapter's title, a pun relating the film watched by September with the traditional term for fairy dances, or reels. A second important point is the image of September and Ell being welcomed into Pandemonium on what amounts to a red carpet, and the reference to Queen Mallow having sewn the city together. This foreshadows the reference in Chapter 14 to how the magical sword sought by the Marquess (Chapter 8) manifested its power to Mallow in the form of a needle. Then there are the short films, or newsreels, shown in the movie theatre. The one showing to the Marids foreshadows the appearance of a very important Marid, Saturday, in the following section, while the one showing the conflict over the memory of Queen Mallow indicates just how thoroughly the much more selfish Marquess is controlling Fairyland.

Chapter 8, meanwhile, marks a key turning point in the narrative - the first meeting between September and the Marquess. There are several important points here, the first being the narrative's very clear commentary on how similar the two girls are a subject to which the Marquess herself refers in Chapter 19. Other important points include the completion of one of September's quests and the setting of another. There is also the clear portrayal of the Marquess's ruthlessness and determination (manifest in what the Marquess threatens to do to Ell), and the reference to the Marquess' plans for the sword the casket contains. This is a clear foreshadowing of the revelation in Chapter 18 that the Marquess intends to use the sword to separate Fairyland and the human world forever. Here it's important to note the extent of the Marquess's planning. She knows that the weapon manifests according to the will and ways of the user, and knows that September, because of who her mother is and what she has learned from her, will manifest the sort of tool the Marquess needs. The Marquess also knows what she later reveals to September - that she, the Marquess, has to make September believe that the quest is difficult so that she (September) won't realize just how thoroughly enmeshed with the Marquess she is becoming.

Finally, September receives a pair of shoes from the Marquess.



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

"Saturday's Story" After leaving the Briary, the shaken September (accompanied by Iago, the Marquess's panther), finds that Ell has gone, but is relieved when she hears him calling. She follows his voice and discovers him next to a large lobster cage, in which is imprisoned a young boy with blue skin and black hair. He tells her that he is a Marid or water spirit, that he can grant wishes and that he, like all Marids, has a multi-leveled awareness of time. He also reveals that he has been imprisoned by the Marquess so she can make use of his power. September decides he must be freed. She uses the Spoon to break open the cage and the boy (Saturday) comes out, September telling him she will help him find his mother. Iago says he would be willing to break the lock on Ell's wings and enable him to fly, at least temporarily, in order to speed their quest. Ell refuses, saying he couldn't be happy flying when his brother, sister, and so many other winged creatures remain grounded. Iago then returns to the Briary, and September, Saturday and Ell leave, with Ell finally able to ask where September got her new shoes.

"The Great Velocipede Migration" As the allies set off on their way, September worries that Ell thinks badly of her for not standing up to the Marquess. He reassures her and insists he will accompany her on her mission into the Worsted Woods, saying he would like to experience an adventure so he can present himself proudly to his grandfather. Meanwhile, Saturday suggests they could travel more quickly if they catch one or two velocipedes while they're migrating, explaining to September that velocipede is another word for bicycle. This leads Ell (who, after all, knows everything about words beginning with 'b') to reveal that it's the right time of year for the wild bicycles to be making their mating run to the forest. They fuel up on what food they can, September still refusing to eat fairy food, and then travel to an open plain where they use the sash from the Green Jacket to lasso a large "velo." Saturday has difficulty holding on but is rescued by Ell, who is complimented by a passing "velo" cowboy, the fairy Calpurnia Farthing, who introduces herself and her ward Penny, a rescued changeling. Later, after riding for a day, the travelers set up camp, the velos nearby. Conversation reveals that Calpurnia wasn't the fairy that stole Penny from her human life, but that she stole Penny from the prison-like fairy life that she had been forced into, leading them to being on the run from the Marquess ever since. Conversation also reveals that the trip to the Forest would, in Calpurnia's experience, take a couple of weeks, triggering concern in September, who remembers they were told by the Marquess that the mission had to be complete within a week. Meanwhile, Saturday talks with a couple of the velos and learns that they have no greater wish than to return as fast as they can to their mating grounds near the Worsted Woods and will carry the humans there - but only if they're not whipped. Calpurnia offers to accompany them to the edge of the equinox (i.e. the edge of Autumn), and soon they're off. As they travel swiftly beneath the moonlight, September asks where all the fairies have gone. Calpurnia doesn't answer, but turns away, weeping silently and



revealing the iron chains binding her wings. This makes September realize the meaning of another of the Green Wind's rules: fairies are allergic.

Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

There are several points to note in this section, a number of which have to do with names. Iago, for example, is the name of one the most evil characters in the work of William Shakespeare, making it an appropriate name for someone aligned with the evil Marquess. Then, while the reasons for Saturday having the name he does are never actually named, and given how much the narrative borrows from other, well known titles, it seems inevitable that Saturday's name is a deliberate echo of that of Friday, a famous character from the well known novel "Robinson Crusoe". In that work, Friday becomes the friend and companion of a hero abandoned in a strange, isolated land in the same way as September is abandoned in Fairyland. Then there is the name Calpurnia which, in history but also in Shakespeare, was the name of the wife of Julius Caesar who had a dream that foretold of his assassination. Finally, there is the name Penny Farthing, which was the nickname given to an early British bicycle (i.e. velocipede) in which the front wheel was several times as large as the back wheel. There is, therefore, an amusing irony in a character named Penny Farthing involved in the chase and capture of wild velocipedes.

Penny is also important because she is a Changeling, a human child kidnapped into Fairyland for whom a fairy has been substituted in the human world. First, because the concept of changelings appears in a number of mythic and/or storytelling traditions, the appearance can be seen as another of those aspects of cross-cultural narrative and/or folklore, which the author has adapted to define and shape the rules and ways of Fairyland. Second, and more specifically to THIS novel, changelings are mentioned in Chapter 15, when September encounters a race of people responsible for making the special shoes all changelings are required to wear, according to the Marquess' rules. Third, and perhaps most importantly, both the concept and the practice of the changeling come into play in the climactic Chapter 19. There, the Marquess says that if September does as she asks and uses her powerful Wrench to sever Fairyland and the human world forever, there will be no more changelings, and therefore no more suffering for either the changelings or their parents.

Chapter 9, meanwhile, contains the introduction of one of the narrative's important secondary themes, the idea of self-sacrifice. This motif, or repeated aspect of narrative, appears in several of what might be described as the parent narratives described and defined by Joseph Campbell - specifically, those that fall under the heading of The Hero's Journey. A fundamental element of The Hero's Journey is the acquiring of wisdom at a significant cost to the traveling Hero. Many times, that cost involves a degree of self sacrifice, or at the very least significant physical and/or emotional and/or moral discomfort. Ell makes just such a sacrifice here, foreshadowing the sacrifices September makes later in the narrative, as she moves further towards the acquiring of wisdom that is the objective, as yet unrecognized, of her REAL quest.



Other important elements include September's glimpse of the iron chains around Calpurnia's wings, which has echoes of September's first encounter with a fairy (Chapter 5) and the chaining of Ell's wings (first revealed in Chapter 4). Piece by piece (or perhaps link by link would be a better image), September is putting together an understanding of what is really happening in Fairyland, and to the fairies in particular - they, for whatever reason, have been chained and prohibited from manifesting their true identity by the Marquess. Reasons why become clear in the book's climactic Chapter 19.



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

"The Satrap of Autumn" September and her companions travel through the beautiful land of Autumn en route to the Worsted Wood. Before they get too far, Calpurnia and Penny depart, Calpurnia whispering a secret about September into Saturday's ear. Soon afterwards, September and her friends arrive in Mercurio, a town constructed entirely of baked goods (bread, cake, muffins, cookies) in the center of Autumn where they are greeted by the chatty Dr. Fallow. When he sees that September is being careful about not eating what she thinks is fairy food, he reveals that all the food she has eaten is, in fact, fairy food. September worries about what will happen to her, but Ell says he doesn't know - none of them are Ravished as she is. Meanwhile, more citizens of Mercurio arrive, tentatively identified by the unsure Ell as spriggans, whom September remembers as being exempt from Fairyland's many rules. Persuaded by Dr. Fallow, September and her companions take part in the feast (described in great narrative detail), and are then invited to visit Dr. Fallow in his office. There, he and two of his students discuss the nature of Autumn refer to the mysterious Casket that September has been sent to open and empty, which Dr. Fallow says he made, and discuss the dangers of the Worsted Wood, which Fallow says hasn't been visited since Queen Mallow claimed her sword. This reminds September of the sword referred to by the Marquess but at that moment Saturday interrupts the conversation to say that September's hair is turning red. As they watch, a lock of hair breaks off and flies away, just like an autumn leaf.

"Thy Mother's Sword" September believes her hair is transforming because she ate the fairy food, but Fallow and the spriggans assure her that it's just the transformational effects of Autumn. They urge her to hurry and complete her quest before her transformation is complete, telling both Ell and Saturday that they have to let her travel alone. As they reluctantly say farewell to her, September sets off, becoming more and more like a tree with every step. As she goes further into the Wood, she realizes that it is made of raw wool, and must be the source of the materials that all the cloth making up Pandemonium is woven from. Eventually she reaches a clearing, where she sees a silent woman made entirely of mushrooms, a woman who, September learns, is a mask of Death, who manifests as a small brown creature like a mouse. September confesses that she doesn't know what to do, and Death says that makes her wise, adding that most people who come to the Worsted Wood try to bluster and cut their way through it. Conversation turns to Death's bad dreams (of souls that wish they'd have lived their lives differently) and September's happy ones (of her father returning home and of her mother). When Death says that she believes she has bad dreams because no-one sings her to sleep, September sings Death to sleep with a lullaby her mother used to sing to her, remembering her mother fondly as she does so. As September sings, Death grows larger and her mouth opens, revealing "something bright and hard". As Death dreams, September pulls the something out, and just as she is realizing it's the casket,



Death disappears. September reads the writing on the casket, manages to open it with her woody fingers, and pulls out "a long, sturdy Wrench."

Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

Narrative momentum begins to accelerate in this section, as September begins to close in on the object of her second quest (i.e. the casket and its contents). Events happen a bit more quickly, although it could be argued that the detailed narrative diversion into the contents of the Mercurio feast slow the momentum down to a significant degree. In any case, the stakes are certainly rising for September, as she has more challenging obstacles (i.e. aging into a tree) to overcome, disappointments (i.e. the truth about fairy food) to get over, and allies (i.e. Ell, Saturday) to leave behind. All these aspects of her journey are fundamental components of the archetypal pattern upon which her journey is based and all serve to heighten and intensify the experience at the core of that journey - coming of age, maturation, and the emergence of identity and purpose. All these, by the way, are metaphorically manifested and/or foreshadowed in the physical transformation September undergoes in the land of Autumn - just as she is maturing and transforming physically, she is maturing and transforming psychologically, spiritually, and emotionally.

The appearance of Death in Chapter 12 is a particularly intriguing aspect of the book, in that traditionally, mythologically and spiritually, Death is perceived and/or presented as much more threatening than its portrayal here. The explanation Death offers for this is quite thought provoking, and may well trigger, in the reader, an imagining of how death might look to him/her self and to others. In any case, the concept of Death, as defined here, seems to be related to a more broadly based experience than simply the end of physical life. In many spiritual philosophies and practices, including (for example) tarot cards, death is viewed as a symbolic representation of transformation, of moving from one phase of existence into another. As such, death is often encountered, albeit in a variety of forms, on The Hero's Journey, a narrative that, in a very fundamental way, is all about transformation, about leaving an old world and old ways behind. In short, September's encounter with Death here is not about an actual physical death, but a death of a younger, more naïve, less courageous version of herself.

The drawing of the Wrench from the casket might very well come as a surprise to more than a few readers. But it's also possible that, if the reader has kept in mind what has been revealed about the identity and work of September's mother, the withdrawal of "her mother's sword" would not be much of a surprise at all. In other words "sword", as defined by the Casket and the magic it contains, is more of a metaphorical concept than a literal identity. In any case, the drawing of the Wrench is one of several foreshadowings of both what the Marquess wants September to accomplish - use the Wrench to separate Fairyland and the human world) and the emotional outcome of September's journey.

Finally, there is the secret whispered by Calpurnia, notable for its reference back to the identity and function of the character from whom this Calpurnia takes her name - the



future seeing wife of Caesar in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar." In other words, the way the original Calpurnia sees Caesar's future, the Calpurnia here sees September's future.



Chapters 13 and 14, Interlude

Chapters 13 and 14, Interlude Summary

"Autumn is the Kingdom where Everything Grows" September races out of the Worsted Wood, unaware that, as narration reveals, Death has revived and is blowing a kiss at her. When she reaches Mercurio, September is almost entirely tree-like, and tells the shocked Ell and Saturday (and the not terribly shocked Fallow) that she has realized the Marquess needs her mother for some reason, otherwise why would the only sword used by her (September's) mother, a Wrench, have come out of the casket? Suddenly they are all attacked by a pair of the Marquess's lions, who chase away Fallow and the other spriggans and then kidnap Ell and Saturday. Left all alone, September falls asleep, and dreams she is at a tea party where the food is made up of gears from an engine, where Ell is in human form, and where Saturday is dressed in a smart suit. Both speak in apparent riddles as a third person appears, a familiar looking but very plain blond girl who taunts Saturday while eating a crumbly iron bolt. Just as she's waking up, September has a vision of all three of the other guests at the party violently dead.

"In a Ship of her Own Making" September wakes up, fully human again and in a much colder place - the Winter Treaty, where she has been taken by one of the spriggans, who tells September that Ell and Saturday have probably been taken to the far-away Lonely Gaol. Eager to rescue her friends, September hurries off in the direction of the only visible building - "The Marvelous Ministry of Mr. Map". There, she meets an eccentric elderly man (Mr. Map) who is himself a living map and who reveals that he has been banished to this wintry place by the Marquess for helping, and loving, Queen Mallow. He tells September that the only way to reach the Lonely Gaol is to follow the current of the sea to the other end of Fairyland, adding that the seven day deadline imposed by the Marquess was a lie and that the Marquess probably has something she wants September to accomplish. He also recognizes the Wrench, saying that although it has changed form (i.e. from what it was when Queen Mallow had it), he can still recognize its power, adding that for Queen Mallow, the "sword" took the shape of a needle. When September leaves Mr. Map's office, she is surprised to discover the landscape has changed - it is now a beach covered with silver artifacts in the same way as the first beach she landed on was made of gold. As she wonders what she can use to make a raft to sail to the Lonely Gaol, she realizes that the silver is probably fairy silver, its richness only an illusion, and that it's probably in fact driftwood. When she tests the silver and finds it floats, she realizes that she was correct and quickly constructs a raft, using her hair to bind it together, the Spoon as a mast, the sash of the Green Jacket to bind the mast to the raft, her dress as a sail, and the Wrench as a rudder. As she sails through the night, she realizes that for a while, she's happy.

"Interlude" The narrative returns its attention briefly to the Jeweled Key, describing how it tracked September through Pandemonium, through the dust kicked up by the Velocipedes, past Calpurnia (who recognized it for what it was, a possibility of hope) and through the Worsted Wood, where it too met Death and survived. Narration also



reveals how the Key tracked September even to the home of Mr. Map, who "gave it a cup of fortifying tea" and kissed it gently as he set it pursuing September across the sea.

Chapters 13 and 14, Interlude Analysis

The first key point to note about this section is September's escape from Death who, after all, is not really chasing her at all, unless one counts the Kiss, which seems more affectionate and respectful than anything else. Also, the escape here clearly foreshadows September's escape from death in Chapter 20, an escape that only makes sense, given that Death has clearly stated that she was so small because September was ultimately far away from the time of their final meeting. If that meeting had been as close as the end of the story, surely Death would have been much bigger.

In any case, there is another substantial piece of foreshadowing in Chapter 13. This is the appearance, in September's dream, of the little blond girl, who in Chapter 19 is revealed to be the original Marquess or Mallow. In the context of that information, it becomes clear that the little girl eating the gear is also a foreshadowing - specifically, of what the Marquess wants to do to the iron gears uniting Fairyland and the human world. One further point about the tea party - in the same way as the narrative, its structure and its ideas, seem to echo similar quest narratives (i.e. "The Wizard of Oz") and incorporates elements of other fairy tales (i.e. "Peter Pan"), the tea party dream can be seen as integrating a well-known element from yet another fairy tale. This is the surreal tea party in "Alice in Wonderland."

And one final foreshadowing - the end of September's journey in Chapter 14 is also foreshadowed in Mr. Map's comments that the Marquess probably has something she wants September to do foreshadows the revelation in Chapter 19 of exactly that - again, a foreshadowing of the Marquess wanting September to dismantle the Fairyland/human world link.



Chapters 15, 16 and 17

Chapters 15, 16 and 17 Summary

September is jolted awake when her raft collides with a thick net of water plants ringing a small island. As she's exploring, she encounters a woman cut exactly in half, following her into a town where, much to September's surprise, the woman joins up with a half a man. The woman half, named Nor, explains that everyone on the island is made as half a person, commenting that September is like them, her other half being her shadow. She also comments on the nature of travel between Fairyland and September's home world and then also explains that she and everyone on the island works for the Marquess, making special shoes for changelings. Nor adds that that she might be able to make a pair of shoes that could get September (who has begun to want to go home) back to Nebraska, but September says she has to rescue her friends first. Nor then goes off to work and September.

Desperate for food, September manufactures a fishing hook from a shard of her raft, baits it with her blood and after a long patient wait, catches a fish. She apologizes for ending its life, and weeps as she cuts it up and eats it raw. A short time later, she notices that a shark is circling the raft, and becomes fearful that she is going to be eaten. She tells the shark she is sorry for eating the fish, but the shark tells her that that's what fish are for. September confesses that she feels frightened that the shark will eat her, and dizzy because the shark keeps circling her. The shark says she keeps moving because she'll die if she doesn't. September wonders if that makes her a kind of shark because she has to keep moving or else she will die. The shark assures her that eating is not all she does, adding that "she has a daughter. Who might have died, but for a girl in an orange dress who traded away her shadow. A shadow who might have known not to mourn over fish." As September realizes what the shark means, the shark says "We all just keep moving, September. We keep moving until we stop." The shark swims away.

September arrives at yet another island, where she is challenged by a large collection of various household items, all cast off from their homes and all over a hundred years old. The objects, called the Tsukumogami, recognize her black shoes, capture her, and throw her down a well, revealing they were warned of September's arrival by the Marquess, who told them September was to be killed. September, knocked unconscious by her fall, wakes up to discover that her leg is broken. Sad and frightened, cold and lonely, she whispers that she wants to go home and that she misses her mother. One of the Tsukumogami, a large orange lantern, floats down, offers her food, and stays with her as she falls asleep. When September again wakes up, the lantern is gone. She screams in frustration, shoving her hands in the pockets of the Green Jacket to keep them warm. There she finds the crystal that the Green Wind had given her. She pulls it out and hurls it at the walls of the well, where it shatters. In that instant, the Green Wind and the Leopard of Little Breezes return, explaining that they're not actually in Fairyland, but underneath it. "It's these little loopholes," the Wind explains, says, "that make cheating so pleasurable." He offers to take September home, but she says as much as



she wants to go, she has to save her friends. When she wonders whether she's been chosen to save Fairyland, like other heroes in other stories are chosen to save the lands where they're taken, the Wind tells her that where she is is the result of her choices, not the choices of others. He then heals her wounds, lifts her out of the top of the well, and when she confesses that she killed a fish, says he forgives her. He then disappears, leaving her to make her way back to her raft, where she finds the lantern, which (in words that write themselves across its shade) asks to come along. "I am worth something," she says, adding that she's brave and can help when September feels lost. September puts her dress and the jacket back into their places, throws her shoes from the Marquess into the sea, and climbs aboard the raft, the lantern (who has revealed her name is Gleam) floating behind her.

Chapters 15, 16 and 17 Analysis

As has been previously discussed, at several points and in several ways, the narrative of the book incorporates and refers to elements of other fairy tale and quest narratives. Some of these are structural, while others are thematic. Still others are specific things, actions or characters. One of the most predominant, and evident, incorporations is the idea of shoes, which appear in several fairy tales but perhaps most famously in "The Wizard of Oz". The silver shoes in the novel and the ruby slippers in the film serve as both a focus of conflict (in that the Wicked Witch wants them and the power they represent) and, ultimately, as a means of resolution (in that the power they contain eventually sends Dorothy home to Kansas). In this section, shoes play a particularly important role - they are a potential means for September to return home and, as such, when she rejects the opportunity, the shoes can be seen as a means and/or a trigger for the revelation of September's deepening loyalty and commitment to the well being of her friends. In short, the opportunity presented by Nor is, in turn, an opportunity for the narrative to explore, through September's decision, the central thematic issues of choice and self-sacrifice. Later, at the end of Chapter 17, the casting away of the Marquess's shoes reinforces and manifests something that has been growing in September for quite some time - the determination to walk her own path, as opposed to that determined for her by the Marquess. While September continues to follow the path laid down for her by the Marquess, at least for a couple more chapters, this section marks the clear sense that she is doing it in her own way, on her own terms, and for her own reasons.

Other important elements to note include the slightly surprising perspective taken by the narrative on the killing of the fish, and the associated arrival of the Shark, who never makes it explicitly clear whether she knows September is the girl who saved her daughter's life, but creates the very strong impression that she does. Meanwhile, the Shark's comment about keeping moving until she stops can be seen not only as a literal comment on how sharks stay alive and a metaphorical comment on the kind of journey September is on, but also as an evocation of a fundamental philosophy of life. This is the idea that to live means to keep going, to keep learning and discovering, until there is simply no way to move forward any more.



Then there are September's adventures on the island of the Tsukomogami, with the intriguing images of angry, living, household objects, of the word-spinning Gleam, and of September at the bottom of the well. Here again, there is a reference to The Hero's Journey in which the hero often finds him/herself confined in a place of frightening darkness, either literal, moral, or spiritual. At the same time, the appearance of both Gleam and the Green Wind can be seen as manifestations of yet another narrative archetype associated with "The Hero's Journey." This is the unexpected aid and return of an outside ally. This moment in the story, both archetype and manifestation here, can be seen as a metaphoric representation of courage - specifically, an externalization of the sort of desperate courage that can and does emerge at a point where trouble seems at its most intense and there will be no light in the darkness ever again.

Finally, there is the intriguing perspective on September's situation offered by the Green Wind - specifically, his contention that where she is in her life, and in this particular circumstance, is the result more of her own choices than those of others. It's important to note that he attaches no blame or praise, no condemnation or reward to his statement - he is merely presenting a statement of fact, a defining of September's situation in terms of personal responsibility. This, in turn, can be seen as an important component of this and any, archetypal so-called "coming of age" story..



Chapters 18 and 19

Chapters 18 and 19 Summary

"The Lonely Gaol" Narration describes how violent, angry storms circle the Lonely Gaol, formed by when the monster beneath the surface of the world breathes in crystal and breathes it out in giant bubbles that layer together to form the gaol. Gleam helps September navigate the waves, and eventually the raft runs aground at the base of a castle studded with towers. September sends Gleam to search for Ell and Saturday while she tries to figure out a way in. She remembers the power of the Spoon, finds a pool of water, and uses the Spoon to create the sort of soup that the witches used to tell the future. The pool/soup reveals that September can get in by showing the Wrench to the lions guarding the main door - the Wrench, she realizes, still has the power of Queen Mallow, to which the lions still have loyalty. Gleam returns, with word that Ell and Saturday are imprisoned at the top of the highest tower, and that Ell is ill. September and Gleam then go into the castle, getting past the guardian lions in exactly the way September saw. Once inside the brightly lit, warm castle, they are met by the excited Marquess. September confronts her with all the things she believes the Marquess has done wrong, but the Marquess says she had to make it seem as though September was fighting her, "otherwise, [September] might have suspected that [she] was doing [the Marquess's] work all along." September says she would have done whatever the Marquess would have asked to save her friends, but the Marquess disagrees, and then reveals exactly what she wants September to do. She commands the storms to subside and the waters to separate, revealing how Fairyland and the human world are linked, beneath the Lonely Gaol, by a set of iron gears. Those gears, the Marquess says, keep an invasion of Fairies from passing into the human world, but at the same time permit occasional travel back and forth (such as, for example, changeling travel). She asks September to use the Wrench and uncouple the two worlds "so that no-one can ever again drag a poor, lost child across the boundaries and abandon them here without a friend in the world."

"Clocks" September refuses to do as the Marquess asks. When the Marquess asks for one more chance to convince her, Gleam starts to suggest that the Marquess can't be trusted. But before her (Gleam's) message is complete, the Marquess destroys her. The Marquess and September then ride, on the back of the Marquess' panther, to a room at the top of a tall tower filled with clocks, each of which, the Marquess says, defines the time that a human child stays in Fairyland. She shows September a clock which, she says, defines September's time as short, and urges her to think about how wonderful life would be if she stayed there forever. September realizes that all the clocks but hers are labeled with the true names of children, picks at the label that supposedly has her name, and reveals the true name beneath - Maud Elizabeth Smyth. The panther glances at the Marquess, and September realizes it's her clock. The Marquess then magically reveals her true identity - that of the little girl in September's dream (Chapter 13). The girl, Maud, reveals that she was the child of a drunken, brutal farmer, that she found her way into Fairyland through an armoire, that she grew to maturity and eventual



queenhood there, and that as she grew older she took the name Mallow. She also says that one day, in the middle of her prosperous happy reign, the time on her clock ran out, and she was sent back to her real world life at the moment she left. This, she says, left her angry and desperate to get back to Fairyland which she eventually did with the help of Lye, who made her way to the Lonely Gaol, set Maud's clock running backwards, and dragged her back into Fairyland. Upon her return,, the Marquess adds, she discovered that because of the inequality of how time passes in the two worlds, Good Queen Mallow had been gone for decades, and all but forgotten. At that point, Maud says, she became the Marquess and took her revenge, imprisoning all the fairies in iron chains and imposing the rules. September, still with Maud's clock in her hands, expresses her sympathy for what happened, but realizes that Maud/The Marquess has to be stopped. She takes out her Wrench, which magically becomes the right size and, calling on the knowledge given to her by her mother, adjusts Maud's clock to its proper time. Maud taunts her, saying that Fairyland will abandon her too, but September continues, narration commenting that she was not prepared to let Fairyland become as "broken" as Maud was. Suddenly the Marquess, in what she says is the tradition of other threatened princesses, puts herself to sleep so that one day, she will wake when her enemies are long dead and gone. September successfully readjusts the clock, and an alarm bell rings.

Chapters 18 and 19 Analysis

In this section of the narrative, layers of lies and mis-directions are finally peeled away, revealing the truth of the both Marquess's identity and her intention. To get to that point, however, September has to manifest, under extreme circumstances, the sort of courage and intelligence that she has throughout her adventures, but in ways she's never been called on to do before. That said, while she also displays a degree or two of self doubt, the narrative clearly portrays her as overcoming that doubt, and doing what has to be done. This is arguably one of the most important lessons of The Hero's Journey, one of the reasons that it has both endured the centuries and formed the template for so many notable narratives - that courage can overcome fear.

Other important points in this section include yet another example of how this narrative incorporates elements of other, similar narratives (i.e. hero stories and fairy tales) - in this case, two narrative elements found in "The Chronicles of Narnia." The first is the idea that time passes at a different rate in Fairyland than in the human world (a situation that arises throughout the Narnia stories). The second is the image of Maud Smyth coming into Fairyland through the back of an armoire, or free-standing closet. This is a clear, and presumably deliberate, echo of how the first children in the Narnia books came into Narnia - throughout a wardrobe holding a bunch of old winter coats. The question arises, here and throughout the book where elements clearly echo those of other stories, of whether the utilization of such elements constitutes plagiarism, or whether it is an affectionate homage, a respectful reference.

All that said, there are a few logic gaps in the Marquess's story. For example, how did Lye know what to do about the clock, and when to do it? Why did Lye and the Marquess



not remain together when the Marquess returned to Fairyland? How did the Marquess find out about the clocks in the first place? Why did she not stop it before she was stolen from her life as Queen Mallow? All those questions aside, Maud's story certainly makes for an interesting twist to the narrative, defining and shaping its climax towards a powerful, irrevocable choice by September, between what is good for Fairyland and what is good for her. It's important to note the two key narrative elements at work here. The first is the novel's thematic interest in self-sacrifice, evidenced in September's choice to give Fairyland its freedom rather than give herself what amounts to a life in Paradise. The second is a component of the first. This is the power of choice, defined by the Green Wind in the previous section as the primary reason September has the adventures she does, and defined by the book, in terms of both content and archetypal form, as a central component of the process of coming of age.



Chapters 20, 21 and 22

Chapters 20, 21 and 22 Summary

As September and the Panther look at the sleeping Marquess, wondering whether she's dead, the Lonely Gaol starts to break apart. The Panther reveals that a great deal of Fairyland was being held together by the Marquess's will, and since that will is no longer active, Fairyland is falling apart. September asks him to help rescue Saturday and Ell, and the Panther agrees, flying her to the jail at the top of the tall tower. There, with the help of the powerful Wrench, she breaks open Saturday's cell and unlocks his chains, but is unable to revive the unconscious Ell. She realizes there is a way out - to defeat Saturday in combat and use his power to grant wishes to escape. Saturday warns her that he will fight back, but she says she has no other choice. As the castle continues to fall apart, September and Saturday wrestle, fighting for their lives as they crash down through layers of disintegrating castle floor to the ground. Eventually, September maneuvers Saturday onto the iron grates connecting Fairyland with the human world. As he screams in pain from the iron, she forces him to yield. Once he surrenders, she clasps him to her and makes her wish. Just as the wish is taking effect, a small girl, a Marid like Saturday, appears briefly, shouting for him to play hide and seek.

September, Saturday, Ell and Gleam wake up in the middle of a field of healthy, glowing wheat, all alive, and all well. They are joined by the Green Wind, now freed from the Marquess' enchanted rule of no flying, and the Leopard. As the Green Wind offers a feast, the Leopard asks about her brother, the Marquess's Panther. When Saturday reveals that September didn't wish for him to be saved, the Leopard is momentarily sad, but comments that the Panther would have been honored to stay with his beloved Mallow. September worries about the Marquess returning, but the Green Wind urges her to not worry too much about the future. September then wonders about how much time she has left in Fairyland, and the Green Wind reveals the hourglass with September's true name (September Morning Bell), which is almost out of sand. He also reveals what it means to be Ravished - those who eat Fairyland food are enjoined to spend half their time (Fairyland's spring and summer) in Fairyland, and half their time (Fairyland's fall and winter) in the human world. As September realizes she's going to have to say goodbye to her friends, she also realizes that Ell's wings are still locked. She cries out for help to free him, and the Key, still loyally following her, rushes down eagerly and unlocks the chains, enabling Ell to fly free for the first time since he was a child. The Key flies into September's hands, where she recognizes it, thanks it, assures herself of its loyalty and power, and then asks it to unlock all the chains of all the fairies in Fairyland. Once he's done, when she comes back, they will be friends forever. The Key flies off, eager to do as she wishes. At that moment, September realizes what the signpost on the beach meant when it referred to her losing her heart - she has lost it to Fairyland, and her friends there. Saturday says he will keep it safe for her. September then asks the Green Wind to make sure the witch Goodbye gets her Spoon back, and he agrees. Just before September is sent back to her own world, Saturday shyly asks



whether she saw their daughter - the Marid they glimpsed in the final moments at the Lonely Gaol.

"Ravished Means You Cannot Stay" September arrives back at home the moment she left, happy to be back and full of hope for when she returns. She makes the house pleasant for her mother's return and falls asleep in her father's armchair. When September's mother comes home, she puts September to bed, without noticing that something had changed - September, narration comments, "cast no shadow at all."

Chapters 20, 21 and 22 Analysis

Following the climactic confrontation between September and the Marquess in the previous section, the narrative still has a few loose ends to tie up, and a few questions to answer. Both are accomplished in Chapters 20 and 21, which explain how September and her allies escape the destruction of the Lonely Gaol, how their lives are all going to change as the result of September's choices, what happens to the loyal Key, and what is going to happen to Fairyland once the rule of the Marquess has been ended. As well, the full importance of previously discussed situations, relationships, and/or aspects of narrative is fully revealed. Here the most important element to note is how the author makes use of Fairyland's allergy to iron - or, more specifically, how September chooses to make use of that allergy in order to save herself, others, and ultimately Fairyland itself. This, in turn, can be seen as a powerful evocation of one of the narrative's central themes - through the power of choice that she turns an often crippling negative into a positive. It might not be going too far, in fact, to suggest that in this final choice, September is also manifesting the book's thematic interest in the idea of selflessness. When her choices create an opportunity for her to have whatever she wishes, September puts her feelings of affection for Saturday, Ell, Gleam and Fairyland before her own desires. She could have anything she wants, but chooses to save her friends and their home. Yes, it also happens to be a place she has come to love, and yes, she also saves herself. But that is not her primary purpose. Keep in mind that she enters the conflict with Saturday in the first place in order to rescue both him and Ell from imprisonment. In short, this final confrontation functions not only as the climax in plot, but also in theme.

Perhaps the most important question answered in this final section is what is going to happen to September, now that her adventures have come to an end, a question itself answered by the answer to another question that neither the narrative nor September has, perhaps surprisingly, ever actually raised. What does it mean to be "Ravished?" The Green Wind's explanation is a clear reference to a famous story from Greek mythology, that of the demi-goddess Persephone. Here again, the narrative borrows from other narratives. In doing so, it gives September's story an ending which, like that of "The Wizard of Oz", might best be described as bittersweet - one in which something valuable is gained at the same time as something similarly valuable is lost. In the case of "The Wizard of Oz," Dorothy gains insight into the value of her own life, but loses the friends she gained while on her journey. In the book, September gains the opportunity to return to Fairyland, also gains appreciation for her life at home, and apparently also



gains a new family. She loses, however, the opportunity to stay in Fairyland permanently. Here, there is perhaps the suggestion of another, larger message - the idea that life is a cycle, which is the teaching of the Persephone myth, one of the secondary teachings of The Hero's Journey, and a reality-tinged ending that has at least to some degree, more realism and validity to it than happily ever after.



Characters

September

September is the novel's central character and protagonist, a twelve year old girl described as "ill-tempered and irascible", although she never really displays those characteristics over the course of the narrative, perhaps because she spends all but two or three pages of it away from the environment in which she WAS, perhaps, irascible and ill tempered. The characteristics she does display on her journey through Fairyland are determination (that sometimes verges on obstinacy), courage (that sometimes verges on foolhardiness), and compassion. This last is perhaps most important, in that it can be seen as a manifestation of at least two of the novel's main themes. The first is the power of choice (in that September's choices are often defined by her compassion for others). The second is self-sacrifice (in that September's choices are also often defined by her caring more about what others need than what she herself wants). September's physical, emotional, moral and spiritual journey through the narrative is, in many significant ways, modeled on the archetypal Hero's Journey, and as such is a manifestation and/or embodiment of the third of the narrative's primary themes. Ultimately she is, as the Marquess disparagingly calls her, a "good girl", described in narration as, at the beginning of her journey, being somewhat heartless in the way of all young children. But eventually, over the course of the narrative and after undertaking her Hero's Journey, she becomes a stronger, wiser, more worldly and more adult human being - which is, after all, the PURPOSE of such a journey (see "Themes - The Hero's Journey").

The Marquess (Good Queen Mallow, Maud)

This character, who manifests in three different personas over the course of the narrative, is the work's primary antagonist, or source of conflict for the protagonist. For most of the story, she is referred to as The Marquess, the childish, selfish, rule-imposing monarch of Fairyland. Eventually, she is revealed to have been in Fairyland once before, at which time she grew into the much loved, and much missed, Good Queen Mallow, whose life and rule the bitter and angry Marquess seems determined to eradicate. Eventually, and as the Marquess herself reveals, both aspects of her character originated in her true human identity - that of farm girl Maud, who (wandered away? escaped?) from what she says were the horrors of an abusive farm life into a life of glory, beauty and magic in Fairyland. The chain of events goes like this. As Maud embraced the wonders of Fairyland, she grew into Mallow. When Mallow was forcibly returned to the human world she resumed her life as Maud, at the very instant when Maud first left. When Maud was unexpectedly returned to Fairyland she became the Marquess, embittered by what Fairyland had done to her (i.e. sent her back) and determined to punish it. Ultimately, she sees September as a means to achieve that punishment fully, thoroughly, and completely.



The Green Wind, the Leopard of Little Breezes

The Green Wind, one of several powerful winds barred from manifesting in Fairyland by the rules of the Marquess, kidnaps September from her home and brings her to Fairyland. He is accompanied by the mostly silent, but very powerful, Leopard of Little Breezes, one of a very few beings licensed by the Marquess to fly within Fairyland's borders. The Green Wind is playful and strong, loving and compassionate, a bit of a rule breaker, and ultimately a source of wisdom and support during a very dark time in September's journey (see "Chapter 17").

Betsy Basilstalk

The grumpy gnome Betsy Basilstalk is the customs and immigration agent who formally identifies September as one of the "Ravished" (see below).

The Ravished, Persephone

Early in the narrative, and several times throughout, September is referred to as being one of "The Ravished". It's not until the second last chapter that the narrative (in the words of The Green Wind) actually explains what that means (September, it's interesting to note, never actually asks). The Ravished, according to the Green Wind, are like the demi-goddess Persephone, daughter of the earth mother/goddess Demeter. One spring day, Persephone was kidnapped by Hades, the God of the Underworld, and taken with him to live in his kingdom beneath the surface of the earth. Demeter searched and searched for her daughter, grieving and angry and abandoning the crops and fields, which eventually withered and died. Eventually, she discovered Persephone's whereabouts, and was told by an oracle (prophet) that if Persephone had not eaten anything while she was in the underworld, she could return home - but if she HAD eaten, she would be doomed to stay there forever. When Demeter finally found her daughter, she was dismayed and angered to learn that Persephone had eaten six pomegranate seeds. As a result, Persephone remained in the underworld for half a year (fall and winter), and in the world of the living for the other half (spring and summer). Because she ate while in Fairyland, September is allowed to return there half the year, but must stay in the human world for the other half. An important question, however, is this - since September hasn't actually eaten any fairy food when she is identified by The Green Wind and Betsy Basilstalk as one of the "Ravished", technically she isn't one. So how do they know?

Hello, Goodbye and Manythanks

These three characters are the first people September encounters when she arrives in fairyland. Hello and Goodbye are female witches, while Manythanks is a wairwolf, a wolf that, at a certain time of the month, turns into a human (this is the opposite of werewolf). They have the power to see the future in the soups and/or potions they create but, when



September asks about HER future, they are reluctant to tell her. Goodbye explains that her magic Spoon was stolen by the Marquess, and that she needs someone like September to retrieve it. In other words, she sends September on to the next phase of her quest.

Ell

Ell's mother was a wyvern, and his father was a library. Raised with his father, Ell studied and memorized all the books of the encyclopedia from A to L - that, in fact, is his name, A-to-L, which September shortens to Ell. When they meet, Ell has his wings bound in iron chains - like all but a very few of Fairyland's inhabitants, he has been prohibited from flying by the rules of the Marquess. Ell accompanies September on her journey, but is kidnapped by the Marquess, held prisoner in the Lonely Gaol, and has to be rescued by September. When offered the opportunity to have his chains unlocked, and therefore have the freedom to fly, Ell refuses, saying he can't justify having freedom when his siblings and so many other fairy folk are still imprisoned. In making this decision, Ell manifests two of the narrative's primary themes, the power of choice and the value of self-sacrifice (see "Themes").

Lye

Lye is a female golem, an artificial being created out of non-living material - in this case, soap. She was created as the servant and friend of Queen Mallow (see above), whom she serves even after Mallow has been taken from Fairyland and returned to her human-world life as the downtrodden Maud. Lye runs and manages The House Without Warning (see "Objects/Places"), where she washes September in special baths (see Chapter 5) and gives her important information, some of which is lies (hence the significance of her name, and the irony of her having TRUTH carved into her forehead).

The Glashtyn

The Glashtyn is a race of water dwellers that monitors and controls the passage of ships across the river surrounding Fairyland's capital, Pandemonium (see "Objects/Places"). As their unpredictably-taken fee for allowing ships to pass, the Glashtyn (who have the bodies of humans but the heads of horses) take a child to be their servant. When the boat September is on is raided by the Glashtyn, she sacrifices her shadow so that the child chosen by them to be their servant can remain free. In short, the Glashtyn are catalytic characters, their actions creating a situation in which the narrative can, through the actions of September, explore the thematic issues of self-sacrifice and choice (see "Themes").



Saturday

Blue skinned Saturday (for the implications of his name, see "Analysis - Chapters 9 and 10") is a Marid, or water fairy, who has the power to grant wishes to anyone who subdues him in battle. He is captured and imprisoned by the Marquess, but freed by September, whom he accompanies on her journey through Autumn. He is quiet and soft spoken, with a voice like the whisper of the sea. At the conclusion of a series of dangerous adventures, Saturday (who can interact with the future, like all Marids), catches a glimpse of the daughter he and September will have. It is therefore reasonable to assume that it's Saturday to whom September loses her heart, as foretold by the choice she makes when she first sets foot in Fairyland (see Chapter 3).

Calpurnia and Penny Farthing

Calpurnia Farthing might best be described as a cowgirl fairy, wild and windblown. Penny might best be described as Calpurnia's adopted daughter, having been rescued from an arduous fairy life by her. Penny is a changeling (see below) brought to Fairyland by the fairies from whom she was rescued by Calpurnia. Calpurnia, like all fairies in Fairyland is, when September meets her, bound by delicate iron chains. Together, Calpurnia and Penny accompany September and her friends as they ride the wild velocipedes towards Autumn and the Worsted Woods (see "Objects/Places")

Changelings

Changelings are human children taken from the human world by renegade fairies and brought to Fairyland, a fairy child having been substituted for them. Changelings are identified in Fairyland by the special shoes they wear, a rule imposed by the Marquess, who views them and their suffering as a key reason why the connection between Fairyland and the human world, as tenuous as it is, must be severed completely.

Spriggans, Dr. Fallow

Spriggans are a three-fingered, sharp-clawed kind of fairy who dwell in the city of Mercurio, the capital of Autumn (see "Objects/Places"). Spriggans celebrate the movement and transformations of nature, and are constantly engaged in studying its many aspects. Dr. Fallow is a Spriggan leader and elder who, with the help of a couple of his more accomplished students, explains the nature of Autumn to September and warns her about the Worsted Woods. Perhaps most importantly, at least for September, he also dispels her illusions about what she's been eating, telling her that in spite of her precautions and against the warning of The Green Wind, she has been eating fairy food all along.



Death

When September travels deep into The Worsted Woods (see "Objects/Places") to retrieve the contents of a magical casket, she encounters Death, who manifests in the form of a small mouse-like animal and, while being sung a lullaby, falls asleep in September's arms. As her mouth drops open while she sleeps, Death reveals that she carries the casket within her, perhaps a metaphoric suggestion / evocation of the idea that all ultimate truths, all quests, inevitably end in Death.

Mr. Map, The Shark, Nor

After escaping from the Worsted Woods and from an attack by the Marquess' lions, September has four important encounters en route to rescuing Saturday and Ell from the Lonely Gaol. The first is at the office of Mr. Map, a living map who gives her important information about the Wrench she now carries, and who hints that he may, at one time, been the beloved of Queen Mallow. After leaving Mr. Map, September constructs a boat from fairy wood and sails The Perverse and Perilous Sea. There she has a brief conversation with a Shark, whose comment that "We keep moving until we stop" can be seen as a literal explanation of how a shark lives and a metaphorical representation of September's quest. Later in her seafaring journey, September visits two islands. On the first, she encounters a race of half-people - literally, people cut in half who join themselves to whatever other half-person they choose. One of these half-people she encounters is Nor, who offers to make September a pair of shoes that will get her home. September's rejection of these shoes can be seen, as previously discussed, a manifestation of the narrative's thematic exploration of the power of choice and the value of self-sacrifice.

The Tsukumogami, Glean the Lantern

The last of September's four encounters en route to the Lonely Gaol is with the Tsukumogami, a community of household objects that have been discarded by their owners and have become "real" after a hundred years of existence. Most of these objects are resentful of September's youth, and are more than willing to obey the Marquess's order that she be killed. One of them, however, an orange globe lantern named Glean (who can communicate by writing words across her paper shade) becomes another of September's allies and friends, helping her to realize her goal of rescuing her friends.

Iago the Panther

Iago is the Marquess's pet, a powerful black panther with the ability to fly. He is, however, as he himself says, still a cat, and able to behave in some very contrary ways - contrary, that is, to the will of the Marquess. Early in the narrative, he offers to free Ell, while later in the narrative, he tips off September to the Marquess's true identity.



Ultimately, though, his loyalty to his beloved Queen Mallow remains, even if she has devolved into the evil Marquess, and the narrative suggests he protects her as the Lonely Gaol collapses around her.



Objects/Places

Omaha, Nebraska

This is the town where September makes her home in the human world. Given that the book is so clearly modeled on "The Wizard of Oz", it's interesting to note that Nebraska and Kansas are geographic neighbors and similar climatically. In other words, parallels between the two stories are reinforced by the fact that their respective heroines come from similar places.

Westerly

Westerly is the town on the outskirts of Fairyland where The Green Wind lives. It's in Westerly that September goes through the procedures that result in her being admitted to Fairyland.

Fairyland

Fairyland is, in this novel at least, a magical island surrounded by The Perverse and Perilous Sea, and governed by the tyrannical girl-ruler, The Marquess. It is linked to the human world by a mechanism of iron gears, which The Marquess is determined that September should destroy, in order to end all traffic between the two worlds.

The Green Wind's Jacket, the Leaf Crystal, The Scepter, the

September accumulates a significant number of magically endowed objects along her journey. Originally given to her to keep her warm, the Green Wind's Jacket (which has, according to narration, a significant degree of consciousness) is magically able to morph into whatever kind of clothing she needs. The Leaf Crystal is also given to September by The Green Wind, and serves as a key or trigger for calling him to her. The Scepter is a metal rod studded with precious stones that September picks up on the beach when she first arrives in Fairyland, and from which she takes its stones in order to pay some expenses. The Spoon originally belongs to the witch Goodbye is given to September by the Marquess (who stole the Spoon in the first place), and plays an important role at several points in the action.

The Jeweled Key

When the Green Wind gives September his jacket, it manifests a jeweled brooch in the form of a Key. After using it as part of the ritual to get into Fairyland, September discards it. But the key, already totally devoted to her, pursues her all along the way of



her journey, finally coming back to her in response for her cry for help in unlocking Ell. The Key unlocks Ell's chains, and then is sent on a mission to unlock ALL the chains of every fairy in Fairyland.

The House Without Warning

On their journey to Pandemonium to find the Marquess, September and Ell are surprised when The House without Warning, tended by Lye, shows up unexpectedly in their path. While visiting the house, September and Ell are cared for by Lye, who offers unexpected wisdom, insight ... and lies.

Pandemonium

Pandemonium is the capital city of Fairyland, named after the god Pan, a wild half-animal god of disorder. September and her companions learn that the city was sewn together out of all different kinds of fabric by the powerful and good Queen Mallow.

The Briary

Deep in the heart of Pandemonium, the Marquess has her home - a castle covered with thorns and briars. It is in The Briary that September and the Marquess first meet face to face.

The Velocipedes

"Velocipede" is another word for bicycle. In the book, there are herds of velocipedes roaming through the plains like herds of horses. September and her friends, eventually with the help of Calpurnia Farthing, ride a couple of the "velos" as they're called, to the edge of Autumn, within which waits the Worsted Wood.

Autumn, Mercurio

Autumn is a region of Fairyland in which it is perpetually fall - the leaves are always orange and yellow and red, the food is fall food and there is always a sense of transformation as in the transformation of young vital life into mature, near-death. Mercurio is the capital of Autumn. There September and her friends meet the friendly, if somewhat pompous and over-honest, Dr. Fallow.

The Worsted Wood

Deep within the region of Autumn lies The Worsted Wood, a dense forest through which September must journey to complete the mission imposed upon her by The Marquess.



There she encounters Death, whose mouth, gaping during sleep, reveals what September has come to find.

The Casket, The Wrench

September is sent by The Marquess to the Worsted Wood to retrieve a magical casket which contains a powerful magic weapon. Events eventually reveal that the weapon takes a form most familiar and most useful to the person who finds it. For Mallow, the weapon became a needle, with which she sewed together Pandemonium. For September, the weapon becomes a Wrench, evocative of her mother's skills and experience and providing a focus for September's newly discovered power and independence.

The Marvelous Ministry of Mr. Map, The Island of the Nasnas,

As she travels to rescue her friends imprisoned in The Lonely Gaol, September first visits The Marvelous Ministry (where she meets Mr. Map and learns important information about Queen Mallow and the magic weapon). Then, after setting sail for The Lonely Gaol, September visits two islands. The first is The Island of the Nasnas, where she encounters a race of people split cleanly in half. The second is The Island of the Tsukumogami, where she encounters a community of living household objects. The encounters on both islands powerfully challenge September's resolve, challenges she successfully and thoroughly overcomes.

The Lonely Gaol

September's friends Ell and Saturday are imprisoned in the highest tower in The Lonely Gaol, a construction of monster-exhaled crystal surrounded by powerful storms. September survives a series of trials, including the storms, and makes her way to the gaol where she rescues Ell and Saturday, has her final encounter with The Marquess, and makes her final, perhaps most important and most self-sacrificing choices.

True Names

At the beginning of the narrative, The Green Wind warns September to never reveal her true name. This is because, as Lye says a few chapters later, knowing someone's full name empowers the knower with the potential for control over the person whose name is known.

The Clocks

In another tower in The Lonely Gaol, there is a room full of clocks, each of which (according to the Marquess) indicates the amount of time that a human visitor to Fairyland (including changelings as well as other, more mature visitors) has remaining in his/her visit. The Marquess' clock, as she herself explains, ran out several years before, but she managed to have its time turned back, so she could remain in Fairyland. September's clock is an hourglass which, at the time she becomes aware of its existence, is almost empty of sand in the top section used for timing.



Themes

The Hero's Journey

Joseph Campbell was an American academic and researcher who spent decades traveling the world studying the myths, stories, and images of a wide and extensive variety of different cultures. Over the course of his studies, he discovered that in almost every culture, myths and stories had certain archetypal or common elements. Among these commonalities were stories of heroes, either male or female, who went on physical journeys through magical kingdoms and eventually returned home having achieved both a physical goal and an inner spiritual transformation. In other words, their physical journeys were in many ways an externalization, or manifestation, of an inner emotional, spiritual, or psychological journey. Campbell discovered and documented such similarly patterned stories in cultures spanning huge tracts of time and geography - from Ancient Egypt to contemporary American film (i.e. "The Wizard of Oz" and "Star Wars"), from the Bible to "The Chronicles of Narnia," from Africa to South America to the Arctic to Australia. This book clearly follows this archetypal or universal narrative pattern, with its story of a young heroine facing an escalating, intensifying series of challenges and obstacles over the course of a physical journey that transforms her inner life as much as it challenges her outer ways of life. The specific transformations that take place in *September* are similarly archetypal transformations in the archetypal "Hero's Journey". A primary transformation, in both the narrative pattern and specific story, is the idea of "coming of age."

Coming of Age

"Coming of age" is a term used, in literary and psychological contexts, to sum up the process in a young person's spiritual and moral life in which awareness of responsibility, choice and consequence begin to both take shape and take a more predominant role in defining identity. It is a process by which a young person becomes more of an adult, with a more mature perspective on how the world works, on him/her self, and on how the self interacts with the world and vice-versa. While the coming of age process involves a degree of physical (and in some cases, sexual) maturation, in most literary manifestations of this archetypal story the process is more internal - emotional, spiritual, and/or moral. On both levels, the inner and the outer, the process has been a popular subject for narrative for centuries, in that every human individual, to some degree or another and at one time or another, undergoes a process of maturation - in other words, it's a narrative theme that almost any/every reader can identify with.

In terms of this particular narrative, *September's* coming of age manifests on several levels and in several ways. She is challenged in ways that cause her to gain physical strength, to apply courage and ingenuity in ways she never has before, and learns the true meaning and value of friendship. Perhaps most importantly, she also makes



discoveries that simultaneously enact and define the book's two remaining primary themes, both manifestations of and results of The Hero's Journey.

Self-Sacrifice

The idea and value of self-sacrifice is one of the two main manifestations of the narrative's thematic interest in the coming of age process and, as such, is a sub-theme in and of itself. The idea of putting the needs of another over the needs of the self is not only a common manifestation of maturity in literature and/or mythic narrative. It is also considered in many cultures and societies to be a manifestation of maturity in everyday life. There are several examples of both the process of self-sacrifice and the principles behind it in this book. They include Ell's rejection of the opportunity to fly in the name of waiting until all of Fairyland's flying creatures can fly (Chapter 9) and September's tossing of The Marquess's shoes (Chapter 17), in which she sacrifices her personal comfort in the name of defying The Marquess's will for her and for Fairyland. These and other self-sacrificing choices are, however, foreshadowing (in the novel) and training (in September's life) for the final, climactic act of self-sacrifice undertaken by September in the novel's final moments. This is her choice to enable the ultimate freedom of all of Fairyland while, at the same time, sacrificing the possibility that she could stay there forever. Part of this choice is, unarguably, the idea that the kind of Fairyland that would exist if she made the opposite choice (i.e. to do what the Marquess asks) would not be the kind of Fairyland that she would want to live in. But the greater, more defining aspect of the choice is that September makes a choice that would benefit the most people rather than just herself. This, in turn, can be seen as a manifestation of the book's other remaining primary theme - the power of choice.

The Power of Choice

Early in the narrative, when she is en route for Fairyland, September asks Green Wind why she was chosen to make the journey. Later, when she is trapped in the bottom of a well on the island of the Tsukumogami (Chapter 17), she tells Green Wind she doesn't feel strong enough or worthy enough to complete what she believes she has been asked to accomplish. On both occasions, Green Wind reminds her that she is where she is because of the choices she has made - she chose to take the journey through Fairyland and in the way that she took it, that resulted in her being at the bottom of the well, and she chose to ride with him in the first place. The point to note here is this - the Green Wind makes these comments not in an effort to blame September, to make her feel angry with the choices she has made, but rather to remind her of the power she has to choose and, in doing so, empower her to make further courageous, selfless choices. These reminders, and the lessons they teach September, succeed, enabling her to make the difficult choices she has to make in order to save herself, her friends, and the land to which she has lost her heart - Fairyland. The power and consequences of choosing are fundamental components of The Hero's Journey. The Hero, as September does, to undertake the journey in the first place, and makes choices every step of the way, good or bad, that define the nature of that journey. Ultimately, because the Hero is

ultimately transformed in a positive way as the result of his or her journey, the narrative archetype (and therefore its individual and specific manifestations) contends that the power of choice is a fundamental, universal force in not only defining the course and outcomes of an individual life. Both archetype and manifestation suggest that all choices have at the very least, the potential for a positive and affirming outcome.



Style

Point of View

The story is told from the third-person and past tense point of view and generally from a limited perspective of September, the book's heroine and protagonist. In this form of storytelling, the narrative describes events as September sees them, feels them, and experiences them. It comments on her feelings, on her interpretations, on her actions and on her reactions almost exclusively.

There are a few exceptions. The interludes are also third-person narration, but are told from the point of view of the Key - specifically, what happens to it and how it interacts with the places and people in Fairyland with whom September has previously had contact. These interjections serve to remind the reader of activity in what might best be described as a secondary, or sub-plot. Another exception is how, in the main body of the story, narration occasionally offers a glimpse or two into the motivations and reactions of other characters - there is frequent commentary on, for example, the Green Jacket's reactions to the circumstances in which it finds itself. A third exception is how the narrator interjects commentary from her own first person perspective. These interjections remind the reader of being told a story like a child who is being read to.

All these exceptions, these occasional diversions from the primary point of view, serve to heighten and increase the reader's interest, creating a sense of intrigue and wondering not only what's going to happen next, but in what interesting way what's happening is going to be described.

Setting

There are two levels of setting worth noting in the book. The first is the location in time and place of the human world, the world September leaves behind in the first chapter and to which she returns in the last. Here also there are also two components. The first has to do with the place she comes from - Omaha, Nebraska. As previously discussed, there are clear echoes here of another novel about a young girl whisked off by a wind to a magical land - "The Wizard of Oz", in which the heroine is taken from her home in Kansas, Nebraska's geographical and environmental neighbor. The second component of the human world setting is its placement in time. While the narrative offers no explicit commentary on the subject, there are a couple of very clear hints, both having to do with September's parents. Specifically, the facts that her father has been drafted into fighting a war and her mother works in a factory clearly suggest that the narrative is set during World War II, a time when women working outside the home was, in America at least, still the exception rather than the rule.

The second noteworthy level of setting at work in the narrative is, of course, the setting of most of the action - Fairyland. Again, there are several points to note. A primary one



is how the Fairyland in this book seems to have several aspects of other lands in other works of literature that are not necessarily called "fairyland" but function in similar ways such as Oz, Narnia, Wonderland, and Neverland. Also, and perhaps more importantly, Fairyland functions here on a metaphorical, archetypal level related to The Hero's Journey. Since The Hero's Journey is a symbolic journey through the self and the soul as well as a physical journey through a strange land Fairyland, as is the case with the previously discussed other magical lands, is essentially a metaphor for the central character's inner spiritual landscape. The beauty of Autumn, the wildness of the Worsted Woods, the unpredictability of the Perverse and Perilous Sea - all can be seen as manifestations of September's essential inner identity, aspects of self that she has to integrate into the new, mature, selfless Self that is the result of all such Journeys.

Language and Meaning

There are several intriguing uses of language in this book. The first, as previously hinted at in "Point of View", defines the narrative almost as a bedtime story. The particular words chosen during first person interjections from the narrator combine with the narrative content of those interjections to create a sense of the reader being told the story by a parent, grandparent, or other older caregiver. A related point is the colorful, active quality of the language, with words chosen to create a sense of excitement and to draw the reader into what's happening and how the characters feel about it. Perhaps the most obvious noteworthy point about how language is used is the extensive vocabulary employed in the narration. That vocabulary is quite sophisticated, and might, at least to some degree, go over the head of younger, less educated readers. In this context, however, it's important to note that the language of narration is a function of the identity of the central character. September is referred to specifically as having both an affection and an aptitude for words. She tends use almost as substantial a vocabulary as the narration. In other words, it's her story, told in a way that she would like - perhaps in a way that she herself might use to tell it.

Structure

For the most part, the narrative unfolds in a strictly linear point of view, following a central character, September, from event to event, from cause to effect, from action to reaction, from beginning to end. This is, on a fundamental level, a basic, traditional, effectively engaging structural technique, each action/event/cause triggering increased interest in the reader about what's going to happen next. It's important to note, at this point, that as is the case with most successful narratives, each chapter ends at a point of crisis or heightened interest, each such point functioning as a rung on the narrative ladder towards the peak of emotional/dramatic intensity at the narrative's climax. That climax, in the case of this particular narrative, is the confrontation between September and The Marquess in Chapter 19. All that said, there are occasional diversions from this main narrative line - specifically, the Interludes, which take the reader's attention away from September for a brief time and focus on the Key, whose pursuit of September might, as previously discussed, be described as a secondary, or sub, plot.

The final point to note about the book's structure is that, in many ways, it follows the narrative pattern established by The Hero's Journey. While event follows event as discussed above, the nature and essential content/purpose of those events is defined by the archetypal encounters described as key components of that journey.



Quotes

"One of them looked a bit like her father in his long coffee-colored trench coat, gone away over the sea with a rifle and gleaming things on his hat. One of them looked a bit like her mother, bending over a stubborn airplane engine in her work overalls, her arm muscles bulging. One of them looked a bit like a squashed cabbage." (Chapter 1, p. 2).

" 'First, no iron of any kind is allowed...second, the practice of alchemy is forbidden to all except young ladies born on Tuesdays... third, aviary locomotion is permitted only by means of Leopard or licensed Ragwort Stalk...fourth, all traffic travels widdershins. Fifth, rubbish takeaway occurs on second Fridays. Sixth, all changelings are required to wear identifying footwear. Seventh, and most important, you may in no fashion cross the borders of the Worsted Wood...' " (Ibid, p. 3).

"'Obviously, the eating or drinking of Fairy foodstuffs constitutes a binding contract to return at least once a year in accordance with season myth cycles.'" (Ibid, p. 4).

"All children are heartless. They have not grown a heart yet, which is why they can climb tall trees and say shocking things and leap so very high that grownup hearts flutter in terror. Hearts weigh quite a lot. That is why it takes so long to grow one. But, as in their reading and arithmetic and drawing, different children proceed at different speeds. (It is well known that reading quickens the growth of a heart like nothing else.)" (Ibid, p. 4).

"'I have been known to spirit a child or two away, I shan't lie. It is the nature of winds to Snatch and Grasp at things, and Blow Them Away.'" (Chapter 2, p. 13).

"'We all live inside the terrible engine of authority, and it grinds and shrieks and burns so that no one will say LINES ON MAPS ARE SILLY. Where you life, the awful machinery is smaller, harder to see. Less honest, that's all.'" (Ibid, p. 17).

"A stirring that she could not name fluttered within her - something deep and strange, to do with the sea and the sky. But deeper than the stirring was her hunger and her need to find something that bore fruit or sold meat or baked bread. She folded up the stirring very carefully and put it away at the bottom of her mind. Tearing her eyes from the stormy waves, she began to walk." (Chapter 3, p. 24).

"You and I, being grown-up and having lost our hearts at least twice or thrice along the way, might shut our eyes and cry out, 'Not that way, child!' But as we have said, September was Somewhat Heartless, and felt herself reasonably safe on that road. Children always do." (Ibid, p. 26).

"The trouble was, September didn't know what sort of story she was in. Was it a merry one or a serious one? How ought she to act? If it were merry, she might dash after a Spoon, and it would all be a marvelous adventure, with funny rhymes and somersaults and a grand party with red lanterns at the end. But if it were a serious tale, she might



have to do something important, something involving ... but no one may know the shape of the tale in which they move..." (Ibid, p. 35-6).

"Stories have a way of changing faces. They are unruly things, undisciplined, given to delinquency and the throwing of erasers. This is why we must close them up into thick, solid books, so they cannot get out and cause trouble." (Ibid, p. 36).

"...September read often, and liked it best when words did not pretend to be simple, but put on their full armor and rode out with colors flying." (Chapter 5, p. 51).

"When you are born ... your courage is new and clean. You are brave enough for anything ... but as you get older, your courage attracts gunk and crusty things and dirt and fear and knowing how bad things can get and what pain feels like. By the time you're half grown, your courage barely moves at all, it's so grunged up with living. So every once in a while, you have to scrub it up and get the works going or else you'll never be brave again." (Ibid, p. 60).

"... the wishes of one's old life wither and shrivel like old leaves if they are not replaced with new wishes when the world changes. And the world always changes. Wishes get slimy, and their colors fade, and soon they are just mud, like all the rest of the mud, and not wishes at all, but regrets." (Ibid, p. 61).

"...luck withered by conservative, tired, riskless living can be plumped up again - after all, it was only a bit thirsty for something to do." (Ibid, p. 62).

"...I have tried to be a generous narrator and care for my girl as best I can. I cannot help that readers will always insist on adventures, and though you can have grief without adventures, you cannot have adventures without grief." (Chapter 6, p. 68).

"Before I came, Fairyland was a dangerous place, full of brownies spoiling milk and giants stomping on whomever they pleased and trolls telling awful punning riddles. I fixed all that, September ... I fixed it for children like you, so that you could be safe here and have lovely adventures with no one troubling you and trying to steal your soul away." (Chapter 8, p. 94).

"Oh, September. Such lonely, lost things you find on your way. It would be easier, if you were the only one lost. But lost children always find each other, in the dark, in the cold. It is as though they are magnetized and can only attract their like. How I would like to lead you to brave, stalwart friends who would protect you and play games with dice and teach you delightful songs that have no sad endings ... but you are stubborn and do not listen to your elders." (Chapter 9, p. 105).

"Autumn has a hungry heart ... as for you, September, I feel a powerful urge to tell you to be careful, but I think you've lead ears for such advice. Just remember that autumn is also called FALL, and some falling places are so deep there's no climbing out." (Chapter 10, p. 131).



"The riddle of the Ravished ... is that they must always go down into the black naked and lonesome. But they cannot come back up into the light alone." (Ibid, p. 131-2).

"Autumn is the very soul of metamorphosis, a time when the world is poised at the door of winter - which is the door of death - but has not yet fallen. It is a world of contradictions: a time of harvest and plenty but also of cold and hardship. Here we dwell in the midst of life, but we know most keenly that all things must pass away and shrivel. Autumn turns the world from one thing into another. The year is seasoned and wise but not yet decrepit or senile." (Ibid, p. 141).

"You are young and far from your Death, September, so I seem as anything would seem if you saw it from a long way off - very small, very harmless. But I am always closer than I appear. As you grow, I shall grow with you, until at the end, I shall loom huge and dark over your bed, and you will shut your eyes so as not to see me ... Autumn is the beginning of my country. And there is a small chance that you may die sooner than I anticipated, that I shall need to grow very fast very soon." (Chapter 12, p. 148-9).

"Will hilt to hand yet be restored? Take me up, thy mother's sword." (Ibid, p. 154).

"We who serve, we who make the world run. When the world changes, it stashes us away where we can't make it run the other way again ... which is to say I once stood at the side of Queen Mallow, and loved her." (Chapter 14, p. 168-9).

"...these things have their rhythms, their ways. Once the sword is taken up, none but the hand that won it can brandish it true. [The Marquess] cannot touch the sword, not for all the power in both her hands. But you can. And both your hands called it forth, gave it shape, gave it life." (Ibid, p. 171).

"That stirring, which had fluttered in her on first glimpsing the sea, that stirring landlocked children know so well - moved in her now, with the golden stars overhead and the green fireflies glinting on the wooded shore. She carefully unfolded the stirring that she had so tightly packed away. It billowed out like a sail, and she laughed, despite herself, despite hunger, and hard things ahead." (Ibid, p. 176).

"There's more than one way between your world and ours. There's the changeling road, and there's Ravishing, and there's those that Stumble through a gap in the hedgerows or a mushroom ring or a tornado or a wardrobe full of winter coats." (Chapter 15, p. 186).

"Shoes are funny beasts. You think they're just clothes, but really, they're alive. They want things. Fancy ones with gems want to go to balls, big boots want to go to work, slippers want to dance. Or sleep. Shoes make the path you're on. Change your shoes, change the path ... I wager I can make a pair who want to go to the place you come from...you'll wake up, as if it were a dream. It will have been a dream. No worries, no faults, no blame." (Ibid, p. 97).



"You could have had a lovely holiday in Fairyland and never met the Marquess, never worried yourself with local politics, had a romp with a few brownies and gone home with enough memories for a lifetime's worth of novels. But you didn't. You chose. You chose it all. Just like you chose your path on the beach: to lose your heart is not a path for the faint and fainting." (Chapter 17, p. 205-6).

"Take up thy mother's sword, September, the only girl in Fairyland who could have pulled a wrench from that casket, whose mother could have known and loved machines, engines, tools. As soon as you told me about her, I knew, I just knew that we were meant to find one another, here, at the end of everything." (Chapter 18, p. 218).

"These are all true names. Like, when your parents call you to dinner and you don't come, and they call again but you still don't come, and they call you by all your names together, and then, of course, you have to come, and right quick. Because true names have power ..." (Chapter 19, p. 223).

"I am not a toy, September! Fairyland cannot just cast me aside when it's finished playing with me! If this place could steal my life from me, well, I, too, can steal. I know how the world works - the real world...if they wanted to just drop me back in the human world, I can drop the human world into theirs, every bit of it!" (Ibid, p. 227).

"I wish that we were all of us away from here ... and Ell and Gleam and all of us were warm and safe." (Chapter 20, p. 236).

"All stories must end so, with the next tale winking out of the corners of the last pages, promising more, promising moonlight and dancing and revels, if only you will come back when spring comes again." (Chapter 22, p. 247).



Topics for Discussion

Research the work of mythologist and writer Joseph Campbell. Pay particular attention to his analysis of / commentary on "The Hero's Journey". Compare Campbell's analysis of that journey and its various components/stages/encounters with the journey undertaken by September. How do the various elements of Campbell's analysis, the various stages of the archetypal Hero's Journey, manifest in September's story?

What, do you think, the author is suggesting when he so clearly indicates that September and the Marquess are physically quite similar, a comment The Marchess also makes.

What do you think is the meaning of the secret Calpurnia whispers into Saturday's ear in Chapter 11 (see "Quotes", p. 131-2)? What circumstances and challenges eventually faced by September do you think Calpurnia's whisper is foretelling?

What is your concept of death? Do you have a visual image of what a personification of death might look like? What experiences have you had of other people's perspectives on death? Is it the elderly, the middle-aged, or the very young?

Obtain and view a copy of the 1939 film version of "The Wizard of Oz". Discuss the parallels between it and this novel. Discuss the differences. Relate your discussion to what you discovered in your research and exploration of the work of Joseph Campbell. What experiences in either film or both films, might be perceived as echoing and/or manifesting the ideas Campbell proposes about The Hero's Journey?

Some might describe the way the author clearly uses elements from other fairy tale narratives as plagiarism. Others might call it a clever means of linking those narratives into a kind of multi-faceted mythology. What is your perspective on this aspect of the book? Do you consider it plagiarism, or do you consider it cleverness?

What contemporary stories (film, television, gaming, books) that you've engaged with recently have aspects of "The Hero's Journey?" How, do you think, did following "The Hero's Journey" narrative pattern affect and define those stories?

What incidents and encounters in your life have contributed to your "coming of age?" Discuss the specifics of how such incidents affected and defined the way you viewed the world, yourself, and the relationships between the two.

On what occasions have you made a choice that falls into the category of self-sacrifice - a choice in which you chose the good of others over what was good for you? What was the outcome of that choice?

What stories of self-sacrifice have you found most moving, most powerful, or having the most effect on your life and perspective?



What choices have you made in your life that changed the course of how you live?
Discuss both choices with positive results and those with negative results.