

High Wizardry Study Guide

High Wizardry by Diane Duane

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Plot Summary

High Wizardry by Diane Duane is a fantasy that is the third book in the Young Wizards series, preceded by *Wizards Abroad* and *Deep Wizardry*. In this third of the continuing series, Nita's younger sister Dairine discovers her sister's wizard's manual and looks through it, reading the Oath that her sister and Kit took. It is not long afterward that she discovers she also possesses the power of Wizardry. Nita has even informed her parents of the truth and though they took the news relatively well, now every time Nita leaves the house to spend time with Kit, they worry that she is on an assignment and will be in danger.

On the morning that the family's brand new Apple computer arrives, Dairine is beyond excited. She has looked forward to this for some time, and can hardly stand how slowly her parents are assembling the few items required to set it up. As they sit on the floor with the various manuals and debate the steps involved, Dairine quietly assembles it behind them and boots it up. The first thing she notices is that the Apple logo does not have the traditional bite taken out of it. The DOS prompt is below it, and she manages to find her way into the directory after being asked for, and creating a password. All the while, she is terrified that her parents will turn around and see what she is doing. The computer displays a list and she types 'copy' to see if it will run. She hardly understands what is being asked, and after simply pressing enter, the computer creates an exact duplicate of itself. She types 'hide' and names the copy only to have another menu ask her where. She selects 'otherspace' from the list and gives it a password for retrieval, adding verbal to its command input options. It vanishes as her father turns to see what she is doing and promptly decides that she is in the way. He sends her to the Planetarium with her sister and Kit. Dairine's life will never be the same.

After managing to get five minutes alone just as the Planetarium is closing, having told Kit and Nita she had to use the washroom, she quietly retrieves her copy of the computer from otherspace, and decides to try the Transit function. When it asks her 'inside solar system or outside solar system' she almost drops it. Moments later, she has transitioned to Mars. Once she has an idea of how to travel, she doesn't want to stop. It is everything she ever dreamed of. She makes a copy of herself, and sends it home, hoping to buy herself some time to play, and begins jumping from one stop to another. Though seemingly random, the powers she is accessing would not be given to her unless it was time, and she was needed. Both situations apply, although Dairine is unaware of the importance of her travels. While fleeing from one unsatisfactory experience, she finds herself on a silicon based planet where she is able to stop and get her bearings. The computer helps, and when its power runs down, it accesses the planet itself to recharge. This begins an entirely new situation. Dairine becomes active in the development of the planet after discovering a consciousness, giving the planet a form of life able to access the space around them. Her constructions are intelligent and curious, and she soon finds herself modifying even them to create a wider variety of entities more capable of looking after themselves when she is gone. All of this activity attracts the 'Lone Power' - a Power cast out from the rest after creating entropy and the concept of death. The abundance of new life is like a lure, and he cannot resist



spreading his brand of entropy even here. Thus begins the confrontation that Dairine sought from the beginning, hoping to make a difference with her life, and even offering her life to defeat him if necessary. Kit and Nita follow her trail and, together, they not only subdue but manage to convince the Lone Power that his reign of unhappiness is over. Aided by his sister, represented to them as a Macchu Picchu until she reveals herself as the Winged Defender, the Lone Power transitions back to the 'Beautiful One' he once was, and rejoins the other Powers while, exhausted, the others return home until the next time they are needed.



Chapter 1: Initialization; Chapter 2: Passwords; and Chapter 3: Up and Running

Chapter 1: Initialization; Chapter 2: Passwords; and Chapter 3: Up and Running Summary

Nita wakes to the arrival of the new family computer, and Dairine can hardly wait to get it set up. She realizes there is no point trying to go back to sleep. A catbird hops onto the elm outside the window and Nita, speaking in the language that all living things understand, asks it to take a message to her best friend Kit for her in return for half a muffin. It repeats the message back to her before leaving, and Nita gets dressed. Christopher Rodriguez and his dog, Ponch, arrive soon after, the bird having done its job. Nita's parents, Harry and Betty Callahan sit on the floor with the manuals, trying to sort out how to set the computer up. Nita asks and gets permission to attend the planetarium with Kit, and before she leaves, she see that her wizard's manual is open and realizes that Dairine has been checking it out. They are just leaving when Harry opens the door and insists they take Dairine with them. Nita and Kit used their combined skill to provide instant transportation for all of them, arriving in the last aisle of a book store.

Dairine suspects that Nita knows something important that she isn't sharing, and begins to watch her closely. She witnesses her sister and Kit return to the beach as forty foot humpback whales and then return to their normal form as she watches.

Dairine stays with Nita and Kit as they make their way to the Hayden Planetarium. They leave Dairine shopping for Star Wars items and head down the hall past the Ahnighito asteroid. Kit senses the time and space from which it came with a wizard's intuition similar to the one that allows Nita to converse with everything. He tells her about it, almost becoming it for a time, sharing its memory of wild freedom when only the sun held it back. Later, Dairine has an opportunity to tease Nita on a sensitive subject, and inwardly, her anger is enough to be heard by Kit so that he would be compelled to comment. She reveals Dairine's peek at her wizard book and the closing announcement is heard over the PA. They go downstairs to look for Dairine who disappeared to use the ladies' room. When Nita opens the door to go in after her, she is stunned to find herself looking at the landscape of Mars instead of the interior of the bathroom.



Chapter 1: Initialization; Chapter 2: Passwords; and Chapter 3: Up and Running Analysis

Nita's sister Dairine shrieks when the truck pulls in the driveway, bringing their new computer. Nita had been hoping to sleep in, and tries a simple silence spell to block out the noise, but complete silence isn't right either. She asks a catbird to take a message to her friend, Kit, and gets herself going. Dairine is so anxious to get on the computer that she drives her parents to distraction. Finally, her father insists that Kit and Nita take her along to get her out of their hair. Nita is smugly aware that the mode of transportation - teleportation - makes her sister much less sure of herself. She recovers quickly however, and when they land in the aisle of the bookstore, she is the only one with the presence of mind to answer the owner's questions intelligently.

Nita is already allowed to go to New York City by herself, and Dairine envies her ability to go to the New York Public Library whenever she wants. Dairine can hardly wait until she has that privilege. When Dairine first notices that there is something different about Nita and Kit, she watches them closely to discover what their secret is. They had played as children, but when schoolwork and learning had come easier to Dairine than to Nita, she had stopped sharing so much with her little sister. Dairine has never really understood why. Things have improved as they have gotten older, right up until the day that Dairine saw her sister block an attack without a movement.

She almost changes her mind when she see the Museum of Natural History, but Nita convinces her that the space stuff, including the store with books from the Star Wars movies, is enough to sway her. They leave her to shop. Kit uses his wizard's insight to tell Nita about the Ahnighito asteroid, telling her that it came from close to the beginning of time, starting out its life as a comet. Nita is amazed that he is as in tune with the rock as she is with the language of all things. When it is time to leave, Dairine disappears to use the bathroom, and when she hasn't returned despite announcements that it is closing time, Nita goes after her. She opens the bathroom door and is shocked and terrified to find herself staring at the surface of Mars, and realizing that Dairine has transported herself there.



Chapter 4: Escape Key

Chapter 4: Escape Key Summary

That morning, Dairine had no trouble setting up the new computer while her parents discussed and debated. Before they knew what was happening, she was up and running, but surprised to see that the infamous Apple logo had no bite out of it, usually designating it as pirated software. She types in a command to reveal the directory and is immediately asked for a password. Confused, but determined, she types in a password created on the spot, 'Red Five', which is immediately accepted, and a directory listing is displayed. She begins by copying the directory and is given a free space amount that is many times what it should have been. It tells her to press enter to begin and when she does, a second computer appears on the desktop beside the first. Both monitors tell her that the copy is successfully completed. Worried that her parents would see, she quickly types 'hide', hoping for the best. Several options present themselves. The third option is to 'hide in otherspace (retrievable pocket)', and Dairine selects that one, adding the same Red Five password with a verbal instead of keyboard option. The second computer obediently vanishes. Her father turns around at that moment, and frustrated with her apparent lack of patience, sends her with Kit and Nita to New York to the Hayden Planetarium. It is some time before she is alone again, and as soon as she is, she whispers 'Red Five' and a computer appears in her lap. She then types 'help', looking for assistance, and is asked for passive or active mode. Selecting active, and then verbal, the computer asks her if she wants to be inside or outside of the solar system. She nervously whispers inside, and then Mars when asked which planet. After answering just a few more verbal questions, Dairine suddenly finds herself midway through a transit from Earth to Mars. Just as she is convinced that she is going to die, the transition stops and she stands, finding gravel under her feet. High in the sky she can see Deimos or perhaps Phobos. As it quickly sets behind the horizon, Dairine notices the mountain and, querying the computer, is told that she is looking at Olympus Mons. She transits to it, following the instructions given by the verbal help commands, and is soon standing twelve miles high on top of Olympus Mons. She can see Jupiter and as she turns to see Earth, a light below catches her eye. The computer identifies the light as a marker beacon, and Dairine goes down to it. The light is on a dark blue metal pole with a plate containing red markings that bear the names of people and their ascent of this climbing expedition. Dairine wants to follow but realizes that this may cause trouble at home so she patiently goes through the copy and hide utility menus. Finally, happy with the outcome, she sends a copy home, and gets back into the Transit utility. Soon, Olympus Mons is empty again.

Chapter 4: Escape Key Analysis

Dairine wakes with the oath running through her mind, disappointed to discover she is in her own bed instead of in a distant galaxy, but the arrival of the computer has cheered her up considerably. Computers are something Dairine is good at. Like all other forms of



knowledge, it comes easily to her. Just a few months with access to an Apple at school had transformed her into a rather accomplished hacker. As such, while her parents quietly argue as to what to hook up first, Dairine just does it. To her surprise, the computer loads but the traditional bitten apple that is the company's logo is replaced by a whole and unblemished apple. A quick look at the directory reveals a much larger hard drive than she expected. Prompted for a password, she creates one, and the directory is opened to her, and just continues following menus deeper and deeper into the computer. A copy command creates a second computer, placing it on the desk. Dairine is grateful that she manages to keep its arrival from her parents' notice, using a convenient 'hide' command to get rid of it. She also tells the computer to accept verbal commands and just as she has things looking normal again, her father turns around to see that she is already up and running. Frustrated, he sends Dairine with Kit and Nita to the Hayden Planetarium, and all Dairine can think about is getting enough time by herself to explore a little further. The opportunity is created at closing time when she manages to slip away to the bathroom by herself. Then the true exploration begins as Dairine goes through the menus, discovering a transit utility and entering the information that takes her to the planet Mars. She is so surprised that she has no fear, exploring her surroundings with some confidence, and controlling her experience with verbal commands to the copy of the computer she had created from home. To her surprise, she discovers an anomaly below Olympus Mons. A pole of some kind of metal with a light on the top identifies the site as one that was scaled by unidentified humanoids. Interested in following the unknown climbing expedition home, she spends some time in the computer's command module, creating a copy that she sends home, giving her the freedom to continue on. Moments later, Mars is again uninhabited.



Chapter 5: Search and Retrieval

Chapter 5: Search and Retrieval Summary

Nita sits on the steps of the planetarium, convinced that her mother will kill her for sure. Kit isn't as concerned, reminding her that portals such as the World Trade Center portal are open all the time. He can't help but admire the firepower Dairine controls, however. Nita looks in her wizard's manual and notices a new entry. Now Dairine's name is listed as well and her novice rating is almost twice that of Nita's and while Nita's lists her as on summer vacation, Dairine's lists her as being 'On Ordeal: no calls'. Nita can't understand how Dairine managed to open a Mars portal without a manual of her own. Kit steps back into the planetarium through the bricks of the outer wall to close the portal while Nita heads for the phone to call Carl and Tom. She calls home, anxiety at its peak and is stunned to find the phone answered by Dairine herself. Then anxiety gives way to anger as she chastises her for leaving the gate open for an unsuspecting janitor to become flash frozen accidentally. Dairine tells her she is babbling and suggests she just go home - not 'come home' Nita thinks after she hangs up. At that moment, she knows something is wrong. She tells Kit, suggesting they go to see Carl and Tom. They arrive and show Tom and Carl Nita's wizard's manual, showing Dairine's new status and Ordeal. They explain what happened, and Carl goes to get his supervisory manual. Carl can hardly believe that she did a tertiary gating all alone. When Nita tells them Dairine doesn't have a manual, Tom immediately asks if they recently got a computer. When Nita admits they had, Carl and Tom tell them about the beta software version of the wizard's manual that is still in the testing stages. It isn't supposed to be available yet, but it appears Dairine accessed this software. Carl suggests that he and Tom go back to Nita's with her to explain things to her parents, and to look at what version of the software Dairine is running. Nita is relieved. Peach climbs up Carl's shirt, announcing that she is going because she is needed, and after a brief warning about her behavior there, they head out.

Nita watches as Tom and her father search through the manuals on the floor. Carl resets the computer and again the full Apple logo, without the bite, comes up on the screen. Carl boots the system and gives the computer his authorization and whispers his password. Then he calls Harry over to show him the screen. There is no easy way to tell Harry that both his children are wizards, so Carl just tells him. He tells the computer to translate the text on the screen and asks Harry to call Dairine in so that he can ensure she doesn't do anything so careless again. Tom looks at the screen and notices a program that used eighty eight terabytes of memory, and immediately figures out what Dairine did. Carl circles her slowly, despite Harry's objection that he is scaring her. Using only his mind, he creates a spell that will only allow things that are original to exist in the room. When he softly says 'run', the version of Dairine disappears as does the computer behind them. Carl and Tom announce that someone will have to go after Dairine to help her if they can and Tom wants Nita to go. Kit announces that he will as well, but the length of time they might be gone requires him to go home and reveal the truth to his parents first. Tom asks about Dairine's interests, and Nita mentions Star



Wars and Darth Vader. Tom groans, knowing that Dairine will find darkness if she goes looking for it. Tom and Carl are unable to leave the solar system, but they promise to support and watch for them. As for a guide, Peaches is quick to announce that she will be going as well. Nita's mother and father are shocked, but the bird is adamant that she is needed. Tom asks Peaches what the Powers need Dairine for and Peaches tells them 'reconfiguration'. Kit and Nita make arrangements to meet and he disappears to talk to his parents. Nita goes upstairs, gets her manual and vanishes.

Chapter 5: Search and Retrieval Analysis

Nita understands from her experiences that under normal circumstances, wizards are not called up by the Powers until they have had the chance to experience a normal childhood. There are exceptions, mostly because the younger children seem to have greater access to wizardry. Nita remembers only too well the Ordeal that Nita and Kit had been thrown into, and the idea that Dairine might be sent somewhere similar makes her feel ill. She and Kit had come face to face with the rogue, Lone Power, cast out of the universe after inventing death, and only luck and the intervention of others had saved them. Nita can't imagine what she is going to tell her mother or father, neither of whom is pleased with the prospect of her being a wizard. Not many worlds have more than thirty or forty Senior wizards. Most die young, or specialize in one field or another. Earth has twenty-four, spread over the planet and serving as protection for everything from the whales to the Antarctic.

Once Nita and Kit reach Carl and Tom's house, and have had a chance to explain the situation, Carl immediately takes the situation in hand. They decide to go together back to Nita's to help her explain it to her parents, and to have a look at the new computer so they can see what software version is being run. When they arrive, they reset the computer and Carl tells Harry as gently as he can that he has two wizards in the family, not one. Harry pales. They call Dairine downstairs, despite her reluctance. Carl tries to prepare Harry for another shock, but Harry says he is beyond surprise. Having walked on the moon without a spacesuit, and watched Nita turn into a whale, he feels he has a fairly good grasp of things. Harry surprises both Carl and Nita when he announces that the tendency to produce wizards as offspring comes from his side of the family. Harry's grandfather had been one of the youngest and finest Senior wizards in Earth's history. Tom tells Nita's parents about the Lone Power, cast out in the beginning as a result of creating the death of the universe. New wizards always meet the Lone Power in one form or another while on Ordeals. Some survive, some don't.



Chapter 6: Randomization: Pages 48 - 55

Chapter 6: Randomization: Pages 48 - 55 Summary

Dairine does a little sightseeing before leaving the galaxy. She starts with Jupiter's outermost satellite, Ananke. When her stomach settles, Dairine replenishes her air supply and plans her trip. Next, she deals with the issue of food, opening a storage pocket in otherspace and using a Transit utility to take bread, bologna and mustard from the fridge at home and putting them into otherspace where she can access the food. She makes a quick stop in Io, and then jumped into Saturn's orbit. She spends a little time on Titan, looking down on the methane oceans and occasionally thinking she sees something down there, but it is too hard to be sure. Next stop for Dairine is Uranus and its grooved moon, Miranda. She can hear the whistling of Voyagers 1 and 2 as they head for the border of the Solar System, and even the echo of the Big Bang is louder, although she isn't sure why she is able to hear it. From Uranus, Dairine jumps to Neptune and then a brief jump to Pluto where the darkness is so complete that she can hardly see the Sun. She pulls out the computer and asks it for an extrasystemic jump, and the computer responds to her request for flagged planets by listing them. She quickly selects the closest, Rirhath B, which according to the computer has an atmosphere similar to Earth. This trip is longer and after a while, she is conscious that she is trying to scream, but making no sound. Something or someone is laughing in the background. She finally lands, aware of the complete silence around her. Forty to fifty foot high racks surround her with large objects made of blue metal. After a few moments, she concludes she is in a warehouse of sorts, watching as blocks randomly stuck together are moved and racked. Then one of the cubes opens and four very different things exit. She is convinced they must be people, and using the computer as a translator, she attempts to strike up a conversation. The being ignores her and looking around, she realizes that what she thought was a ceiling at first is actually the sky. Her stomach lurches and she is so preoccupied with her surroundings that she walks into the largest of the beings that first exited. She looks up at the seven foot high and four foot wide being with tentacles and metallic claws, stammering her apologies. It bleats at her and the computer translates, using an oddly British sounding voice, asking her why she is talking to his luggage. She admits that their mobility had fooled her into thinking they were sentient beings, and the alien surmises that she must have come from some distance. He tells her that he is headed for the departures hall, offering to take her there if she is leaving. She tells him she is traveling, and asks what planet she is on. The alien tells her she is on Earth. She tries to get a handle on her surroundings, watching large pyramids detach themselves and soar off (the physical transport shuttle, the alien reveals) and trying to stay upright on the conveyance that she steps on which the alien tells her is a slidefield. Rapidly, they head for a silvery wall so fast that Dairine tries to block the impending collision with her arms, but there is none. Instead, she finds herself in the Crossings - a Hypergate Facility renowned throughout the billion homeworlds.



Chapter 6: Randomization: Pages 48 - 55 Analysis

Dairine travels to Ananke, the outermost satellite of Jupiter first, and wonders if there is some way she can rewrite the basic code to rid herself of the awful hangover that accompanies travel. While she understands most of the code, she decides against altering the complicated programming hoping that the transits get easier instead. She addresses the issue of food using the computer to transfer items from her fridge at home to an otherspace so she can access it, and then continues her sightseeing through the Solar System, taking small jumps at a time to minimize the physical effects. When she arrives on Pluto, and is barely able to tolerate the inhospitable conditions so far from the sun, she quickly jumps again, instructing the computer to take her to the closest planet, Rirhath B. The trip is further, and Dairine would have screamed at one point had she been able. Finally, the journey is over, and Dairine is suddenly aware of how quiet it is. All around her are tall, blue metal racks, some empty, some not. She sees cubes of varying descriptions being shelved and concludes she is in a warehouse of some odd description and chastises herself for her lack of forethought and planning before traveling to unknown destinations, but determined to make the most of it, she approaches one of the 'people' who came out of the cube. Her attempts at conversation are unanswered by the spidery looking people and her preoccupation with her surroundings causes her to walk right into the larger of the beings that exited the cube. Fearful at first, because of its size and strange appearance, she backs away apologizing, and the bleated response is translated by the computer into a question - why was she talking to his luggage? Embarrassed, Dairine admits that she thought they were sentient beings because they were walking. The alien continues to talk to her, and she continues to try to get her bearings, but everything she sees is so strange, and so unusual, that she can't help but feel foolishly unprepared, especially as they approach the Crossings at a speed that can only end in collision.



Chapter 6: Randomization: Pages 55 - 68

Chapter 6: Randomization: Pages 55 - 68 Summary

The Crossings is a Hypergate Facility that is well known throughout the billion homeworlds for its sheer size and elegant architecture. All around them are kiosks, signs and stalls that she can't understand, and beings of all descriptions are hopping, leaping, walking, crawling, oozing or sliding towards unknown destinations. There are very few hominids and Dairine can see none that are actually humanoid. The alien gives her a quickly pointed rundown of where things are, wishes her a good trip and a good death, and then stepping forward, it simply disappears. She stands still, too fearful to move at first, but finally overcomes the feeling and begins to move again. Finally, she asks the computer whether it is safe to sit against the wall, and it replies affirmative, so she makes her way there. On the way, she sees what looks like an iridescent pterodactyl, and a bowl of what appears to be living jello. She sits and opens the Help utility in the computer. Discovering that she can simply talk in this menu, she asks the computer to plot a course to somewhere more in keeping with the world she knows, listing a series of specific criteria for the next jump. The computer advises her that her parameters define a huge number of sample destinations, and that chances for interference in transit are ninety-six percent, but Dairine insists. Listing it as Trip 1, she instructs the computer to 'run'. Instead of just leaving, the computer begins asking for personal information it insists should have already been acquired, so Dairine complies impatiently. The questions go on and on, many of them seemingly irrelevant, and Dairine's situation deteriorates. She has caught the attention of a group of armed, bug-eyed monsters (BEM's) who head in her direction. With what appears to be a skinny dinosaur on a leash, they approach her. The BEM lets the creature go and it runs toward her. She swings the computer just as the creature leaps at her, and hits it in the face, breaking its jaw. Finding her feet, Dairine runs. With no idea where to go, she looks for a corridor - somewhere to hide. She can hear the sound of blasterbolts being shot behind her, and leaving scorch marks in their wake. When Dairine asks what they are, the computer tells her they are Emissaries, and then continues with the questions that will complete Dairine's profile as she runs for her life. She cries out when the three fingered hand grabs her by the arm and spins her around for her first intimate look at the BEM. The high pitched song it sings is the same as the laughter she heard during her last transition, and the computer offers her an intervention. She tells it to kill it, and is thrown back almost twenty feet while the BEM is blown into tiny pieces that smell like coffee. Hooting noises are everywhere, and again she runs. She asks the computer to run the program's subroutines as soon as it can, and runs into what looks like a bar. She stumbles and when someone catches her, she almost screams. A voice tells her to be careful - in English! He gives her a handful of strangely shaped coins, and directs her to a transfer disk that will take her out to the service corridor. From there, he directs her to the pay toilets, telling her to select anything but the human one. He assures her they won't look for her anytime soon if she does. Then he distracts them by acting like a drunkard. Sitting in a stall that looks like a lawnmower, she answers the remaining questions, and waits as the computer evaluates. The BEM's find her, melting the lock on



the door and as it swings open, the computer finally finishes. The BEM's fire at her just as she begins her transit. She never crosses paths with the man who helped her again, but he follows her to the door of the pay toilet and is pleased to telepathically sense that she escaped. Meanwhile, Dairine sits on a stone, paused in her flight, and cries.

Chapter 6: Randomization: Pages 55 - 68 Analysis

The alien asks her what she thinks when they enter The Crossings, but Dairine is lost for words. Overwhelmed by the sheer size and complexity of the site, and the myriad of beings traveling to or from their destinations, Dairine is beginning to regret having come at all. The slidefield finally stops and the alien uses its tentacles to gesture where departures, arrivals, preservation and stasis are. Telling her to enjoy her trip and have a nice death, it steps forward a few feet and vanishes. Feeling like an imbecile, she stands in the same spot, suddenly aware that she could hit one of the invisible squares by accident and vanish as well. She finds her way to a wall and sits, opening the Help utility in the computer. She gives it a series of parameters for the next jump including that she arrive somewhere she is expected; somewhere she can use magic; somewhere she can sit down for up to forty-eight hours to figure things out; and somewhere that she can do something big - something that matters. The computer tells her that she is leaving herself open to 'interference in transit by other instrumentalities'. In fact, it gives the odds of such interference to be about ninety-six percent. Dairine digs her heels in, insisting that the parameters stand and the computer complies. Before the computer can execute the new instructions, it tells Dairine that it requires her profile information and begins to ask for a series of responses to what Dairine thinks are inane questions for the most part. She answers the questions, just wanting to proceed - especially when it appears that a confrontation with several bug-eyed monsters seems imminent. In fact, as they approach, Dairine can feel the aggression coming off them, and intuitively knows that they mean her harm. She tries to hurry the program, but is unsuccessful. She has no alternative but to run for her life. The BEM's give chase after Dairine incapacitates the creature they release on her, and they would have likely caught her had it not been for the generosity of a humanoid that Dairine runs into as she flees. He tells her where she can hide, and following his instructions, she barely escapes with her life. When he goes in that direction soon after to check if she made it, he can still see the energy left behind by her escape, and the damage made by the Emissaries chasing her. Dairine sits on a rock millions of light years later and cries as she considers that such evil can exist side by side with such unexpected kindness.



Chapter 7: Variables

Chapter 7: Variables Summary

Nita assembles the things she will need to follow Dairine. She has no idea how long she'll be gone, but says goodbye to her parents and after three more words she is gone. Dairine leaves the Milky Way the first chance she gets. The computer works while Dairine tries to recuperate from her bathroom escape. A tree nearby uproots itself and walks toward her. She tells the computer to run another routine, and leaves quickly. Still the BEM's follow. The computer advises stealth and Dairine agrees eagerly. The next jump takes her to the middle of a city populated with a form of humanoids with many legs. She leaves, jumping again and again, seeing each destination only briefly and staying longer than a few seconds only once to give the computer a chance to finish. Then she grits her teeth and tells the computer to go. This jump is the longest and hardest yet. She lies still after her arrival, trying to gather herself. The vista is much larger than Earth's and she turns to pick up the computer stopping in her tracks as a galaxy rises on the horizon. A barred spiral, it is almost face on with two bars emerging from the oval center. The BEM's are halted in their pursuit forty trillion light years away. Dairine asks the computer for details of the star system, and searches for information on the Lone One, hoping to find something - a weakness, or a weapon, that can be used against it. She finds Nita's last mission where she displayed bravery beyond anything Dairine would have believed. Hungry, she decides to eat while she waits for the computer to finish its survey of the region. The computer finally begins to cite the details but the screen suddenly goes blank. Dairine asks, and it reveals that it is reaching critical power levels. She asks it if it can use geothermal, and the computer replies affirmative, asking her permission to do so. The computer establishes a link, as she continues to read about the planet. On page two of sixteen, the characters revert to a series of number ones across the page. Dairine tries not to panic, and hits return hoping for the best.

Chapter 7: Variables Analysis

Nita's mother comes up and chastises her for not cleaning her room later as she'd promised, trying to sound normal and still convey the concerns she has. Her mother comes up and hugs her, voicing what they both already know. Dairine won't be the same when she comes back. Nita reminds her mother that Dairine is smart, and if she keeps her head, they'll find her. Her father joins them, and Nita has to reassure him that Dairine is leaving a trail. She just has no idea when they'll be back. Dairine makes yet another jump, and the BEM's continue their pursuit. Asking the computer for help, she learns that stealth can be applied and eagerly agrees despite the warning that processing speed will be sacrificed. She jumps again and again, finally finding a place where she can sit while the computer finishes her profile and travel parameters. After it announces completion, she braces herself, and gives the command to run. This jump is the longest yet, and Dairine needs a few minutes after her arrival to pull herself



together. When she finally has, she gets up and turns around to pick up the computer. A barred spiral is just rising on the horizon, and Dairine sinks to her knees, watching it with wonder and appreciation. Amazed at the sight, she asks for more details about the system, and while the computer assembles it, she reads about the Lone One, searching for any usable weakness. The computer finishes its analysis, and as she begins reading, the screen changes. The computer informs her that it requires a power supply to recharge, and Dairine suggests geothermal. It assures her that it can use that kind of power, and then asks her permission to do so. After giving it, she wonders if perhaps she's made a mistake. That thought is amplified when the screen she sees next is filled with number one's instead of characters. Hoping for the best, and fearing the worst, she hits the return key.



Chapter 8: Pattern Recognition

Chapter 8: Pattern Recognition Summary

Nita arrives on the moon, and waits in the usual place for Kit. She rechecks the contents of her pack, and then pages through her manual for the tracking spell they'll need. She begins by drawing the basic wizards circle, knotted and containing her data and Kit's in the shorthand version of the Speech. Then she adds the data Tom gave her for Picchu, adding the intent, desired result, time and life support issues as well. A dust cloud kicks up and Tom arrives, bouncing gracefully to her in the low gravity. He tells her Kit is coming shortly, and he indeed arrives just moments later. Tom gives them some final information, telling them that the Lone One himself is after Dairine, and that something big is going on. He instructs them to find Dairine, and be very careful to examine the situation. He asks them if they are sure they can handle this, and if not, that they should stay out of it. They both tell him they are fine. He and Carl have sent word ahead so that people will be expecting them. He tells them that they can usually rely on law enforcement for help. In fact, Earth is one of the few places where Wizards are secretive. In most worlds, they practice openly and in conjunction with law enforcement. They say their goodbyes and Tom says goodbye to Picchu, telling her to be careful. Then he passes Peach back to Kit and backs away. Kit and Nita begin to read in unison, standing in the circle together.

Chapter 8: Pattern Recognition Analysis

Nita arrives on the moon where she usually meets Kit and begins to get ready for the first jump. The tracker spell makes good use of string manipulation, and Nita thinks about finding Dairine. Part of her wants to punish her younger sister for being so careless, but Nita knows that those kinds of thoughts can be detrimental to a wizard, so she pulls herself together and concentrates. The never ending hissing in the background is beginning to get on her nerves, and she remembers how at one time the moon seemed quiet to her. Now, her ability to listen has grown and the background radiation is obvious. She is even able to discern the sound of life, consciousness - the sound as familiar as Kit's voice in her head once was. Now, she no longer hears Kit's voice, but is increasingly aware of the powers and intelligences that exist. The hissing increases her surliness, so she puts on her Walkman to drown them out. Then, able to concentrate, she pages through the manual looking for anything that might help. She stumbles across a passage that explains her inability to hear Kit's thoughts anymore as a result of their relationship and its development. The idea horrifies her, and as she thinks about it, she realizes she doesn't really know what she wants. She thinks about the fact that there is a job out there that only Dairine can do, and the idea that it bothers her is followed by shame. Not so long ago, she had been just as green. She decides that if Dairine has the courage to face all of this alone, she can summon the courage to talk to Kit about this issue. Tom arrives to see them off and warns them that there are issues at work that he is unable to see clearly. It appears that Dairine is going to be



confronted by the Lone One himself, and not his Lackeys as usual. He can tell that something big is happening, but can't see what. Warning them to be careful, he steps back, having said goodbye to Peach and returning her to Kit. Now, Kit and Nita step into the circle and begin to recite the spell together. The spell tosses them from the Solar System, and Nita finds herself wondering if she'll ever come back to it again.



Chapter 9: Uplink

Chapter 9: Uplink Summary

Dairine quickly realizes that the computer issues she is having began only after it linked to the planet in order to recharge its power. Thinking about it, she finally realizes that the large flat surface she is on is actually just a single large semiconductor chip or computer chip. The thought that the planet is actually alive is exciting, and she tells the computer to send it some ones in return. It is another example of evolution! Dairine has the computer run through a series of messages including geometric, arithmetic, square and even cube series, and the planet replies in kind. Next, Dairine asks the computer to teach it binary. The planet takes the information in like a sponge. She wonders about how the planet senses, if at all, and at first asks the computer to hook the planet into its sensors but the likelihood for damage to the planet is too high. Frustrated, she asks if the computer can link her senses to the planet, and the computer, after a long delay, admits it can but that triple intent verification would be required. The computer tells her to make direct contact with the surface and as soon as she does so, she gets a jolt that isn't unlike an electrical current. She can hear a long string of binary, and recognizes the simple joy radiating from the surface. Though it takes only a short time, the sensations seem to go on forever. Finally, it ends and Dairine discovers that her computer had acted as more than merely a conduit, expanding its syntax to include her during the process. The computer tells Dairine that the planet is requesting more data, but she has nothing left to give. She tells the computer to give it what it has. Unnerved, the computer asks for clarification, and Dairine tells it to give the planet everything from information to magic. When no reply is forthcoming, she asks if there are any rules against it, and the computer tells her there are, but that its version of software contains an override function. Not sure what it all means, Dairine gives it a command to override and execute. While it complies, she gets up to stretch her legs, and watches as a large red star rises on the horizon. When she turns back, the sight that greets her stops her cold. A patch of the surface of the planet is moving. Cracks appear, and the crust cracks upward. A rounded shape stands there on short, stumpy legs, shakes itself, and walks over to Dairine. It walks through her shields like a turtle without a head, and saying the word 'light' it bumps up against her and rests there. Unable to cope at the moment, she asks the computer to make her more air, and lays down on the glassy surface to sleep. She is still asleep when ninety minutes later the sun which is at its meridian, begins to twist out of shape. The new companion sees it and simply asks 'what?' The computer says 'darkness' and nothing else.

Chapter 9: Uplink Analysis

Dairine is convinced she is dead when an entire page of ones appear on the page, and the computer calmly announces an input error. Dairine asks the computer if it is broken, and the computer asks her to clarify her syntax. A diagnostic request reveals an external, but local problem. She suddenly realizes that the entire flat part that they are



on is just a large semiconductor. Excited, she begins to instruct the computer to communicate. She starts with the simplest forms she can think of and when the planet responds excitedly, she instructs the computer to give it increasingly more complicated challenges, which are all met and matched and written to its permanent memory. Dairine is running out of ideas. How can she communicate with an entity that has no experiences with which to form sentences? She compares it to trying to communicate with Helen Keller, but if Helen had no senses either. She asks the computer to hook its sensors into the planet, but it explains that damage to the corresponding computer is a high probability. Annoyed, Dairine agrees, and then has a brainstorm. She asks the computer to link her senses to it instead. She can feel its reluctance, and it is confirmed when the computer asks her for triple authorization. She puts her hands on the surface as her computer instructs and almost immediately she can hear the other computer. It is almost frantic with responses to ones and zeros, repeating the word 'light' over and over again. She can feel its boundless joy as it discovers meaning, so intense that she is flung to the ground where the planet connects again. She is like the meat in a sandwich where the bread on each side is a computer. She can feel her brain being copied and stored, images and theories, communication and sensations all flooding into the planet. Finally, when it stops, Dairine is wrung out. She has nothing left. She asks the computer how it is, realizing immediately that she used incorrect syntax, but her computer ignores the lapse and simply answers. Surprised, Dairine realizes that her computer has also grown in the transfer. It tells her that the planet is assimilating, and self programming, similar to the dream state that humans have, and Dairine has a pang of homesickness that takes her by surprise. When the planet asks for more just minutes later, Dairine is unable to comply. Exhausted, she tells her computer to give the planet all it has. It sounds more than just a bit reluctant, but after overriding the software function involved, it begins, and all at once Dairine thinks of the Oath in her sister's manual. She gets up to stretch, and watches the crimson star rising on the horizon. When she turns back, she is stopped in her tracks by the sight of the planet coming to life. While she watches, the crust cracks and a rounded shape emerges on stubby legs and walks over to her. It says 'light' and cuddles up to her. It is more than Dairine's mind can absorb, so she asks the computer to create more air for her, and falls almost instantly asleep. She never wakes when the sun begins to pucker and twist, but her new companion notices, and asks 'what?' The computer tells it simply 'darkness'.



Chapter 10: Reserved Words

Chapter 10: Reserved Words Summary

Nita and Kit arrive at Rirhath B and are at the Crossings just as the sky is clearing after sunset. They stand for a moment as the ceiling clears and the sky can be seen. Most of the travelers don't even look up. Picchu tries to hurry them, but both Kit and Nita need a minute to unscramble themselves. They begin by heading to the Stationmaster's office in the middle of the station floor. He leads them to the part of the station damaged by Dairine and her attackers, and then shows them a three dimensional video of the attack and her escape. Kit recognizes them as Satrachi, and the Master reveals that one is still in custody. Nita interrogates him, but finds out little more than that they were duped into attacking Dairine by the Lone Power. They examine the last place Dairine was - the birthing stall in the alien bathroom - and discover her next jump was long and multi-staged. They discuss their chances for success, and Kit says he'll do absolutely whatever is necessary to beat the Lone Power. Nita admits for the first time that her feelings for him play a large part in her decisions, and he promises her that they'll be friends for life. Meanwhile, Peach is bathing in a nearby water receptacle. They get into the circle Kit creates, and Kit knots it, dropping the gimbal in the circle marked for it. This jump takes them to an unlit moon in the middle of space where they discover a group of Satrachi milling about near portable shelters and equipment. Kit starts the next spell to take them away and Peach insists it isn't far enough, so Nita grabs the gimbal, tying it into her shield spell and hoping it can handle both. Peach is yelling light, light, and the intensity of it is enough to strike her mute, dumb and deaf. Heat is scorching and after a time, it begins to get dark. She opens her eyes to find the three of them suspended in empty space, with no sign of the moonlet. A blinding star to one side of them slowly grows larger and larger, but they are far enough away to be safe from its effects. Kit tells her that the Satrachi were bait, and the light and heat was the result of a nova unleashed to destroy them. When she thinks about the fact that this Power is what is after Dairine, she feels an anger that is very cold. They begin to recite the next step together.

Chapter 10: Reserved Words Analysis

When Kit and Nita arrive on Rirhath B and find their way to the Stationmaster's office, they announce that they have arrived on errantry, which is the standard wizard's greeting, and the Rirhait manning the office tells them it is about time that they got there, adding that they suffered more untidiness that afternoon than they had for more than a greatyear. Nita insists on interrogating the Satrachi that they have in custody, even though the sight of him gives her the creeps. The stationmaster, calling Nita by her formal name Emissary, leads her to the Satra who turns out to be little more than a dupe - part of a small paramilitary group that was convinced to go after Dairine by the Lone Power. Nita still has trouble imagining that her little sister could be the one responsible for defeating the Lone Power. She notices that the trail left by her computer feels alive,



and wonders if that is normal. Peach discusses the Lone One with them, and tells them that she suspects the other Powers believe that Dairine can get him to give up, and rejoin his former allegiance. Kit talks about how Nita saved him by putting herself in harms way, almost losing her life in the process, and insists that the least he can do is give as much of himself to this fight. She finally tells him that risking her life wasn't as altruistic as he might have thought, and that the sole reason she did so without thinking was to save his. She tells him that she likes him, a lot, and he tells her what she already knows. She is his best friend and as far as he is concerned, that never has to change. They'll be a team, and friends forever. They talk about the likelihood that Dairine can really defeat the Lone Power, and Nita is skeptical. Dairine is always going to be her little sister. Peach tries to explain, getting more frustrated and cranky by the minute as she finds herself having to explain that the other Powers must have something in mind beyond just defeating the Lone Power. They are hoping He will willingly give up and rejoin his previous allegiance. The effect would begin slowly, but ripple with increasing speed until entropy is no more. They step into the circle for the first of their multi-stage jumps and after a long distance filled with personal insecurities, Nita, Kit and Peach arrive on an unlit moon where a group of Satrachi wait to ambush them. Thinking quickly, Nita intensifies the spell by using the gimbal, and takes them out of the danger range. With complete disrespect for life of any kind, the Lone One detonates a nova that engulfs the unlit moon and everything around it. Nita feels cold and determined when she realizes that this is what her sister is facing. She and Kit begin to recite the spell for the next destination.



Chapter 11: Fatal Error

Chapter 11: Fatal Error Summary

Dairine wakes stiff, hungry, and still on the smooth surface of the planet. She picks it up to look at it, noticing the rest of them have wandered off. She asks the computer to call them back while she examines the one that remained a little closer. Soon, two hundred of them are gathered around her. She names the first one Gigo and it sits down, content to have an identity and Dairine realizes she will have to give them separate names to enable them to behave independently. She decides to call their creator 'Motherboard', and goes into her computer to make some changes to the original design, allowing for the kind of equipment they would need to survive. She turns several legs into arms, giving them six claws each that she programs to behave as four fingers with two thumbs. She adds another pair of arms to its back and upgrades their visual sensors to help with close and distant vision, adding infrared and ultraviolet sensors, and then using the computer to sort out the snowflake like code that acts as its DNA. She makes several different types of creatures, some with better hearing and touch, some larger and able to work. Then she has 'Motherboard' run a few off so that she can see what the changes have done. Gigo climbs into her lap again and a rumbling noise interrupts her train of thought. Dairine stands, watching the difficulty the small turtles have staying on their feet as the planet shakes. Gigo holds onto her and she stares upward, noticing that the sun is slowly twisting itself out of shape. It pinches and warps into a fluctuating oval and the computer informs her that a micro black hole is transiting across the sun and she asks the computer to plot its orbit. Gigo tells her he doesn't like it. Dairine is surprised when he tells her it hurts. One of the taller mobiles begins talking and soon voices are heard everywhere and Dairine can't help grinning as she watches some that are dancing right in front of her. They cluster around her, touching her, talking to her, and the collection of voices pleases her no end. She begins naming them and continues until hunger and thirst stop her. Gigo watches her closely, asking why food is necessary. She explains the concept of the human/food relationship and how without it she would run down. They, on the other hand, were built to use geothermic fuel and it will be a long time before they run down. When the one she names Beanpole asks why they should run down, yet another turtle-like creature she calls Logo comments that there is something wrong with the energy in the universe, citing the equation for entropy and makes Dairine uneasy. Beanpole insists that the design of the universe is poor and the conversation become increasingly complex. They discuss the situation amongst themselves, talking about restructuring but Dairine interrupts, telling them they can't make the changes they are talking about. She tells them that other sentient beings wouldn't survive and Logo argues that they are only 'slowlife' - hardly qualifying as life at all. Dairine reminds them that she is slowlife. The argument develops, and Dairine realizes that she has indeed created the weapon she needs to fight the Lone Power, but by giving it a mind of its own, she has rendered it useless to help her. Her fear is intensified when the Lone Power uses Logo to tell her how entertained he is by the prospect of the coming debate.



Chapter 11: Fatal Error Analysis

Dairine is touched from behind, and turns fearfully to find the little turtle-like looking creature that the planet had created. 'With', it tells her. The remaining 'turtles' have wandered off, but the one that remains is content to just sit with her. It is the first one that receives a name from her and 'Gigo' is pleased. Since the others are all connected and the same, they share his joy for a name, and Dairine realizes that to enable individuality, she will have to make some changes. She uses the same program on her laptop as 'Motherboard' used to create the turtles, and designs several variations of body structures. Each is to be given a separate identity. When she tries to run the program, Gigo interrupts, insisting that it is an 'illegal function', but Dairine promises him it will be okay. She tells him that he will have others to talk to, share experiences with, and exchange ideas with. They won't all be the same. He quietly asks her if it will hurt, like when 'the Dark that Pulls' comes. She pulls him into her lap to comfort him, and promises to hold onto him, telling him everything will be okay. When the program is executed, including the extra information that will enable them all to be wizards as well, Gigo begins to jerk and thrash. She holds him tightly, doing her best to quell the terror she feels radiating from him. Part of her fears the results as much as Gigo does, but all they can do now is wait for it to be over. When it finally subsides, Gigo tells her it hurt, and one of the labor type mobiles that are taller adds that the pain was worth it. Voices begin to speak, each different, each communicating separately for the first time. Dairine is pleased with the results. Her initial pleasure graduates to concern when discussions with them turn to more complicated matters. They are, for instance, acutely aware of the flaw in the universe that causes living things to age, slow down, and eventually die. Seeing it as a problem, they collectively set their minds to coming up with a solution, unmindful of the fact that their solution would wipe out what they describe as 'slowlife' - Dairine and the rest of the human race included. Dairine tells them that they can't, reminding them that she is slowlife, but can't articulate the myriad of issues that would come as a result of their possible solution. All she can do is insist that they simply cannot interfere with life throughout the universe indiscriminately. She reminds them that they all had to take the Oath first, to preserve life, just as she did, but that point is in debate as well. Some insist that the one who took the Oath didn't understand it, and since they weren't separate beings at that time, they weren't given a choice. Logo insists that if Dairine can interfere with their evolution, they should have the same right. She tries to explain the difference, but they insist that they will do the same for the 'dumb' machines that her laptop showed them. Until then, they promise to hold the universe in stasis, preserving the 'slowlife' like herself until they can free them from the entropy. Gigo takes Dairine's side and tries to argue her case with her, but they have little success. When Logo insists that this will be an interesting argument, Dairine's blood runs cold. She realizes that she was successful. She managed to create a weapon to use against the Lone Power and attract him to her, but the weapon has been given a mind of its own, and has become useless in her defense. The Lone Power, speaking again through Logo, tells her that the argument will decide whether she dies or is worse than dead - and tells her how amusing he finds the situation. She sits up straight, hiding her fear, and tells the Lone Power they should get started because she doesn't have all day.



Chapter 12: Save and Exit - Pages 125 - 135

Chapter 12: Save and Exit - Pages 125 - 135 Summary

Nita, Kit and Peach continue in Dairine's path and Peach urges them mercilessly forward. Dairine, knowing this encounter with the Lone One is pivotal, keeps her cool. She has to defeat the Lone Power. Talking to Gigo, she asks him to tap into the others and find out how many are on her side. He tells her six-hundred and twelve. Seven-hundred and eighty-three are against her and there are still five-hundred and six that are undecided. The Lone One is listening as she plots and discards strategy after strategy. Gigo sits on Dairine's knee and senses her indecision. When Dairine realizes that her feelings transmit to him, she asks him to tap her into the motherboard like the mobiles are. Motherboard reaches in and begins to read Dairine like a manual. The experience has Dairine reliving her entire life - one experience at a time. Then the experience reverses. Dairine is filled with their experiences. She lays there, unable to move, listening to the mobiles talk. In short order, their decision is reversed. They decide not to stop time - not even for a moment. Another voice asserts itself. The Lone Power is so busy with Dairine that he doesn't notice Kit and Nita arrive and they actually have a minute or two to compose themselves. Then Nita greets him using the wizards' oldest courtesy.

Chapter 12: Save and Exit - Pages 125 - 135 Analysis

Nita and Kit suffer the side effects of nausea and disorientation but it is important that they don't waste time. He uses Logo to communicate but talks directly to her mind so that when Dairine responds, the mobiles think she has read errors and wonder if she is giving incorrect data. Gigo continues to support her. Dairine listens to them debate her loyalty, and when the opportunity presents, she tells them that they should read the manual that their mother got, including the oath she took. She tells them there are many stories, including a recurring story about a Power that invented entropy. Logo tries to rally against trusting Dairine, certain she has her own agenda, and forcing her to admit the truth to the mobiles. She does need their help. She can't think of how to put her terror into words. The world as the Lone One describes would be frozen - even light unable to move. The thought terrifies her, and through her, Gigo begins to tremble. She realizes that they are interconnected in such a way that Gigo feels the terror she feels. The answer comes to her in a flash and she asks Gigo to help tie her into Motherboard the way they all are. Theoretically, she should be able to transmit her feelings to all of them. Gigo worries about the ability of her mind to absorb the amount of memory they have, but Dairine sees no other way. The mobiles are done, but it takes only a fraction of a second for Gigo to hook Dairine in. She begs the motherboard to take the information needed to help the mobiles make an informed decision. Dairine is unable to do anything but ride out the experience, captive to the show of her life. She watches



every moment play out like a movie from her birth forward, and begins to understand the reasons for the selective memory humans have, and their ability to forget pain, helplessness, and hopelessness. She relives her short lifetime of feelings including all the pain, frustration, rage, fear and insecurity. She fears the information will distribute too slowly to be of any help. Then suddenly the flow of data changes direction. Unable to do anything, she absorbs the information much as Motherboard had passed it on to the mobiles in the beginning. She absorbs the entire history of the planet, along with the wizard's manual that she allowed them to learn earlier, and all of the information contained in the Apple as well. The pain is beyond description. When it finally stops, she can't even move, and just lies there listening to the conversation around her. The tide soon shifts as the mobiles begin to understand the sanctity and uniqueness of what they call 'slowlife' like Dairine. The Lone Power makes himself known to them and threatens to bring harm to Dairine, but at that moment, Kit and Nita intervene. He had been so busy that he hadn't even realized they'd arrived. Nita greets him in the manner of wizard's courtesy.



Chapter 12: Save and Exit - Pages 136 - 143

Chapter 12: Save and Exit - Pages 136 - 143 Summary

The Lone One sarcastically refers to Peach as their pet and she laughs at him, asking him if he thinks he is the only one who can create a future. He makes a sweeping gesture and prepared for that eventuality, Nita clenches her gimbal and thinks the last part of the spell she'd had ready. Their shields are hit by a bolt as strong as lightning, meant to disrupt their shields causing decompression. Nita warns the Lone Power, giving him just one chance to leave, before letting loose the gimbal and the remainder of the second spell she held in reserve. He writhes and then suddenly is gone. Kit shakes Peach off and demands to know what Nita has done. She sent it back home, she says and something hits them from behind. They fall forward, shields breaking and the cold of space comes in. Nita shuts her eyes, reciting the spell in her mind carefully. Her ears roar, and she feels the warmth coming back. Kit feels awful, and makes an offhand comment that the Lone One hears. He promises not to let them off as easy as he had their mouthy friend. Looking around, they see a mass of scarlet feathers. Kit tries to snap her out of the sorrow she feels, reminding her of other things, and triggers a series of pain, fear, rage, and thoughts of death in her mind. Another voice warns him that if he touches them, he's dead.

Dairine gets to her feet and when he sees her standing, he tells her she is becoming a nuisance. Dairine can feel him working, getting ready to unleash the same kind of bolt on them as the one that had damaged Nita's shields, but even stronger. Now that she is one with Motherboard, accessing the manual is like accessing herself, only faster. She finds the spell to stop the bolt he is throwing and effortlessly sends it back to him, making him even angrier. She laughs at him. He tries to turn her mobiles into magma, but she stops him, insisting he let her friends be. He grows even larger, more shadowed, and tells her that she might be strong enough to stop him here, but she can't guard her planet and those she loves forever. One night, he will bring a mushroom cloud to bear on Earth and nothing will grow there again. He brags about how little it will take. Dairine is calm and collected as she informs him that he will never leave the planet they are on. He disagrees, reminding her that much of the planet's power is from solar energy and it will take very little to change the orbit of the black hole enough to permanently place it in front of the sun. Gravity, one of the easiest laws to work with, is the power she draws on, using it to counteract his damage. She finally realizes that as long as entropy lives in her, he will have a hold on her and them. In that moment, she comes to know her enemy - a part of herself. She realizes that the only way to get rid of the Lone Power is to pen him up within her. It is the one great thing that she had come here to do. She would pen it inside herself and then die, taking him with her. Connected as she is to the others, she can't do it without their approval. She silently asks for a vote, and they stand with her, asking only what she needs them to do. Their love brings tears to her eyes, and she warns him one last time. He laughs at her and she strikes. Their



collected valor, lacking despair of any kind is a committed and concentrated attack. Two thousand wizards found him within, and held him there. She knows they can't hold him for long, and searches for the answer. It comes to her, and she throws up her arms, feeling for the power she needs. While the mobiles hold him, she knots the spell and tells it to run. The universe stops and she hears it shriek. It heads in the only direction it can - into Kit, Nita and Dairine. The light comes soon after.

Chapter 12: Save and Exit - Pages 136 - 143 Analysis

The Lone One is surprised to see them, and belittles the presence of Peach. He tries to eliminate Nita and Kit, but Nita is ready for him, and uses the spell she'd been holding at the ready. Its failure stuns the Lone Power. Nita tells him it won't work this time. Kit is stunned to realize that they are standing in a crater. Nita tells him, almost giddy, that she used a year of her life tacked to the spell on the gimbal. Kit is incredulous. Nita tries to give him a chance to leave, but he calls her bluff, enraged by the pity she feels for him so she uses the second spell, sending him home. Kit is furious that she didn't tell him first so that they could have shared the loss of life years involved. Something hits them from behind and they crash forward, shields collapsing and the cold air of space rushing in. She holds her breath, and keeps her eyes closed, reciting the last words of the spell carefully and feeling the oxygenated air return. She can hardly move and beside her, Kit mutters about the way he feels and the Lone One, hearing his comment, promises them that they will suffer for much longer than their friend had. Nita looks around and sees a scattering of bloody, crimson feathers. Sorrow and rage overcome her, and she is paralyzed with the pain. Kit tells her to snap out of it, and helps her to get to her feet beside him, telling her that if he has to go, it will be facing Him and on his feet. She drags herself up and she and Kit face him, determined to go out on their feet and promising each other that they'll meet in Timeheart. Dairine looks at her sister. She sees the tears on her face and Kit holding her up. She can clearly see the moment that she decided to avoid pain by acquiring knowledge. The Lone One tries everything he can think of to get the upper hand on Dairine, Kit and Nita. He manages to land an occasional blow, but Dairine and Nita both have a few tricks that keep him at bay. Angrier and angrier, he finally tells Dairine that she can't protect everything forever and when she lets her guard down even once, he'll be there to finish her little planet and everyone on it. Dairine isn't worried. She has no intention of letting the Lone Power leave this planet, even if it means that she has to absorb him and take him out inside her. To Dairine, it is a small sacrifice to make for the gain it will give. Before she can make this ultimate sacrifice, she asks the mobiles if they agree. Without their approval, she won't proceed, but they hardly so much as hesitate before agreeing. She warns him again, and he laughs. Then all of the mobiles together help to snare him, and hold him. She knows her time is limited, and searches for a way to make the snare permanent. She finds a spell and knots it, telling the computer to run. The universe stops and in a panic, he goes to the only place he can - inside Kit and Nita. Then the light comes.



Chapter 13: Reconfiguration

Chapter 13: Reconfiguration Summary

Nita hangs on to Kit as the sky grows brighter. Kit tells Nita that Dairine is okay, and he wants to leave. Nita asks him what he is feeling, and he admits that he is afraid of the light. As soon as he says it, he knows something isn't right, and Nita tells him to stand his ground with her. The light gets ever brighter and Kit can't help but ask if they've died. The dark shape grows smaller and smaller until it is simply gone and Dairine falls. She can feel it seeking a toe hold in Nita and Kit, and can feel them refuse to run, and take it somewhere safe. He screams with recognition of the light, and all its brightness, but would rather die than admit that he still wants it. The cruelest irony is that death's inventor is unable to avail himself of its release. He falls down and says it is too late. He can't return, having murdered that part of himself. They wouldn't have me if I could find my way back, he adds, and Dairine isn't sure what to do. Nita voices her wish that Peach were there, and a voice announces that she isn't that easy to destroy. Peach is standing amid them, as powerful as she is beautiful, with a sword in one hand. She explains that she has been many people and Nita realizes that she is one of the Powers. She tells them that the Lone One is her brother, known as the Beautiful One, and she was known as the Winged Defender, among other names throughout history. Having helped to cast him out, she has always longed for his return. Nita's eyes fill as she looks at the transformation of the Lone Power, now the Lightbringer. Together, he and his sister look into the light. The Defender tells them to say their goodbyes, and it takes Dairine only seconds to say everything she wants to. Gigo asks if they can come and visit, but Dairine tells them that instead, she will return to them, but they won't miss her because she is with them - a part of them. She tells them she loves them and as they are leaving, he speaks to Dairine, Kit and Nita, telling them that the evil he has done will still exist for many years. They will have to stop the threads as they become evident, and they agree easily, finding themselves in the back yard at home shortly afterward. They can hear voices inside, and pandemonium breaks out when they go in through the back door. Dairine goes to her parents and uncharacteristically hugs them both before heading upstairs for a restroom break. The Apple she put on the coffee table grows legs, climbs down, and follows her up the stairs while Nita and Kit sit down to answer the myriad of questions they know are coming.

Chapter 13: Reconfiguration Analysis

The sky grows almost painfully bright, and Kit tries to convince Nita that it's time to leave. He tells her that Dairine obviously has things under control. They aren't needed. Nita realizes what is happening and asks Kit how he's feeling. He admits to being a bit anxious, and sounds uneasy. When he thinks about what he fears, he reluctantly has to admit that it's the light, and he can't figure out why that would be. Nita tells him to stand his ground, so he does, and the light continues to grow in intensity. After several moments, Kit asks Nita if they are dead, and she doesn't think they are, but they no



longer fear the possibility for some reason. Dairine can feel it trying to find a way to safety, but can feel them refusing and standing their ground. She talks to him, with a voice that is filled with pity, anger, grieving love and sorrow for him. He can hardly stand the empathy and pity in her voice and falls to the ground, part of him filled with desire for more of the light. It lay there, and Dairine bent over it, with the mobiles gathered around her as it faded. Kit and Nita join her, and the Lone One tells them that it is far too late. He can never go back. When Kit says he wishes Peach were there, she laughingly arrives, telling them she isn't that easy to get rid of. Also known as the Winged Defender, she isn't that easy to kill, she says. She explains that the Lone One, or Beautiful One as she knows him best, is her brother. Having helped to cast him out so many years ago, she has longed for his return ever since. She convinces her brother that he will be accepted once again, despite his prior actions and behavior. Then she advises Dairine, Kit and Nita to say their goodbyes. In less than a blink, they find themselves standing in their back yard at home, and can hear voices coming from inside. They go in, and Dairine, in an uncharacteristic gesture, hugs her parents before hurrying upstairs to use the washroom. The computer she put on the table quietly grows legs, and like a new puppy, follows her up the stairs.



Characters

Juanita (Nita) Callahan (aka Neets)

Juanita, or Neets as her family and friends refer to her, lives with her sister, mother and father in Hempstead, New York. A young wizard, Nita is just beginning to learn the craft along with her best friend, and fellow wizard, Kit. Nita's specialty is alien species. Nita is still getting used to the idea that she is a wizard, and takes the oath that she took before receiving her manual seriously. She has already seen things that most people would never believe, and spends a great deal of her time with Kit who is not only her best friend, but a fellow wizard as well.

Nita is just approaching adolescence, and is somewhat embarrassed by the fact that her body is changing. She wishes she could just slow the process down, afraid that if Kit notices, he will distance himself from her. How can they be equals if she has breasts? So far, Nita hasn't had the courage to tell Kit how she really feels about him, but when confronted with the reality that their very lives are at risk as they chase the trail left by Dairine, she manages to tell him that she likes him - a lot. Though Kit isn't normally given to sentimentality, he tells her that they are a team, and as far as he can see, they will be a team forever. That's as close to a commitment as Nita is likely to get at this stage. Nita and Kit manage to find and lend support to Dairine as they finally convince the Lone One to rejoin the other Powers. Nita watches her younger sister wield power that she would not have believed possible even just a week earlier, and comes away from the encounter with a new found respect for the girl she always thought of as immature and a bit of a pain. Now, as Dairine has absorbed the magic, and the knowledge that came with the computer, her ability will far surpass her sister and Kit combined.

Dairine Callahan

Dairine is eleven years of age, has red hair and the stick like frame of youth. She has a delicate face, and gray eyes. Dairine is also incredibly intelligent. At the age of three, she had witnessed her sister's first day at school, and how she had come back crying because the teachers had asked her so many questions she was unable to answer. It had been the catalyst that caused Dairine to make the first important decision in her life. She had recognized early in life that intelligence is important, so she had kept her eyes and ears open, absorbing everything she could. By the time she had reached five, Dairine could read her way through the Britannica Encyclopedia set that her parents had given Nita. At first, her parents are shocked, and Dairine realizes that information can be valuable. She begins to read in secret, not wanting to upset her parents, and sails her way easily through school. She overhears her parents explaining to the school's psychiatrist that they want her to stay with her peers and not be skipped ahead a grade or two. This makes her laugh, because their decision ensured that she would get through school with a minimum of effort. Dairine loves to read. At first she had read her



way through the children's books in the local library, reading up to six books a day, and when she had finished, she had begun reading the adult books after getting permission to do so. She can hardly wait until she is old enough to go to the New York Public Library which has eight million books she can read.

Dairine inadvertently learns that she is also gifted with a wizard's power when the family gets a new computer. Before she can become too comfortable with the idea, she finds herself visiting Mars, and then going on to the stars beyond, sending a copy of herself home to keep her family from panicking. Senior wizard, Carl Romeo, says she is needed and therefore the Power has been given to her. In her efforts to first simply explore, she finds herself in a face to face battle with the Lone One, during which she creates an entirely new species. This species is a blend of computer and compassion, taking the information available from the modified Apple computer, and from Dairine's own mind, her mobiles share her desire to rid the universe of entropy. They form an alliance with Dairine, and with the help of Kit and Nita as well, they manage to end the Lone One's rampage, sending him back to the rest of the Powers where he belongs.

Christopher Rodriguez (Kit)

At thirteen years of age, Kit is two inches taller than Nita - largely as a result of a recent growth spurt - and is a fellow wizard. He is sharp eyed, dark and quick. He has a dog named Ponch, who Nita is able to converse with in the same way as she is able to talk to anyone else. Nita is Kit's best friend, although he rarely admits it. He and Nita spend a great deal of time together - so much that Nita's parents worry that she is shutting herself off from the rest of the world. Kit is brave and loyal. A better friend would be hard to find. He is also a little bit on the shy side where his feelings are concerned. He would rather that Nita just intuitively know how he feels instead of being placed in a position where he might have to admit it out loud. When Nita finally decides to tell him how she feels, his response is to reassure her that they will be partners forever. It is said in an offhand fashion, but anyone who truly knows Kit will recognize that this comment is as close to a commitment and a promise as any girl could hope to get.

Kit never shrinks from responsibility or danger. He is a hero by anyone's description, ready to place his life on the line if necessary, and who takes his Oath to the Powers seriously. As such, when Nita is tasked with following Dairine and helping to assure her mission is successful, Kit is willing, ready and able to lend his support in any way necessary. Before he leaves on this trip however, he finally takes the time to tell his parents the truth about his status as a wizard. While they have a difficult time accepting it at first, he is sure that the end result will be that they are proud of him. Kit's love for the powers of the universe and the deep understanding that he has for them is what inspires Nita's interest and love for astronomy herself.



The Lone Power (aka Starsnuffer; Father of Lies; Beautiful O

Called many things over time, the Lone Power was cast out after inventing and creating the concept of death. The other Powers had originally planned a universe that was capable of running on a principle involving the management of energy, but the Lone Power's plans ruined it for the rest and as a result, they had cast him out. The Lone Power has seduced entire civilizations, trying to get inhabitants to accept entropy, and then leaves them to their own misery afterward. Called many things over time, the Lone Power has blown up entire planets to kill two opponents, and it is most difficult to fight because the Lone Power behaves in no predictable manner.

The Lone Power has worked in the darkness for many lifetimes, always alone, and always away from the light. When Dairine manages to capture him with her mobiles, he is at his most vulnerable because his rage is clouding his judgement. Dairine's pity for him only makes matters worse, but she begins the process of convincing him that he could live in the light again. When Peach reappears in her true incarnation as the Winged Defender, and the Lone Power's sister, he is unable to keep up the facade he has always maintained. She finally encourages him to return to the light, reminding him that he is the Beautiful One, and not one moment goes by where she hasn't wanted him to return.

Peach (aka Winged Defender; Athene; Thor; Prometheus)

A Macchu Picchu in this incarnation, Peach presents herself as a well spoken bird with a great deal of attitude and a three foot tail of scarlet feathers. Peach is revealed to be one of the Powers in a final confrontation with the Lone Power. She has also had many names throughout time, but began as the Winged Defender and the Lone Power, her twin brother, was known as the Beautiful One. When the war in Heaven occurred, she led the other Powers in their efforts to cast the Lone Power out, but never stopped wanting to have him back. The other Powers shared her desire for unity, and as Prometheus she was sent again and again to put the Power into the hands of mortals so that they might undo the evils her brother spread. For billions of years, the battle rages until the arrival of Dairine.

Carl Romeo

Carl lives a few miles away from Nita in Nassau County. He is the chief of sales for the CBS flagship television station in New York. Carl is a New York native. Carl and Tom share an ordinary looking house with a lawn that like Nita's house, has few weeds nowadays. The back yard is surrounded by a high hedge and they have several pets - all of which speak English and several other languages as well.



Tom

Tom shares a house with Carl in Nassau County. He is a semi well known author who writes both movie scripts and stories. Tom originates from California. Tom and Carl share a house. They have two sheepdogs named Annie and Monty; a terrier named Dudley; and a Machu Picchu named Peach, much to her dissatisfaction.

Ponch

Christopher's dog, Ponch, is a lovable German Shephard / Border Collie cross. He is a big black mutt whose favorite place to bury bones is surrounded by yellow jacket nests.

Harry Callahan

Harry is the father to Juanita and Dairine, both wizards (Dairine only recently outed). He learns by way of a Senior wizard that his family line is the one that produced the wizards and that his grandfather had been one of the youngest and finest wizards Earth has ever seen. Harry's grandfather was also the first mayor of New York. While the power missed him entirely, he does vaguely recall a time that his grandmother simply disappeared.

GIGO

A turtle-like looking creature created by Dairine on the silicon based planet she lands on, its body is an assortment of horizontal layers. Some of the layers are no thicker than a hair, and others are as wide as half an inch apart. There are thousands of the bands that together make a complicated chip or board. It is able to talk and walks on stubby little legs that are about six inches in total length, and created from three socket style joints. It develops a fondness for Dairine, quiet only when it is on her lap. The outer shell is translucent, with little color, and is the only one to stay with Dairine while she sleeps. The others of its kind all wander off to explore instead. Gigo is the first creation on the planet to which Dairine gives a name, and it is devoted to her. He likes having a name, telling Dairine that a program must have one in order to be saved. Gigo proves to be an important part of the ordeal that Dairine is on. In fact, Gigo is the one who helps Dairine to convince the others that she is not suffering from program errors when she begins having conversations with the Lone One that only she can hear. He reminds the others that she has been honest with them from the beginning, and that she created them. As he is one of the first batch of creations, there are about two hundred of his configuration.

Rirhait

From the planet Rirhath B, a Rirhait is shaped similarly to a centipede complete with a hundred legs. It stands only about a foot from the ground and has a long, shiny body



that is silver-blue in color. It has eyes located at the end of stalks and scissor like mandibles.

Me!thai

Me!thai are a race of beings where the males give birth to the children, and can do so every two days or so. It is in their washroom that Dairine takes refuge from the BEM's that are chasing her.

Monitor

One of the alternate creations that Dairine programs 'Motherboard' to make, Monitor is the first to show definite understanding of the universe and the energy it has. Monitor tells Beanpole and yet another named Logo identifies the equation.

Beanpole

Beanpole is one of the alternate creations that Dairine programs 'Motherboard' to make. Beanpole is taller, and was created to be one of the heavy labor variations of the 'beings' that Dairine helps to define. Beanpole is the first one to ask why they would run down in time, and 'Monitor' tells him why.

Logo

Logo is the first mobile created by Dairine's programming that cites the equation that defines entropy. He is one of the original group of mobiles created, thought of as 'turtles' by Dairine.

Motherboard

On the planet where Dairine has her final confrontation with the Lone Power, Motherboard is the name that Dairine gives to the computer-like entity that exists as part of the planet itself. Dairine uses her computer to train Motherboard to create living extensions of itself to exist on the planet's surface. Motherboard is connected to Dairine's mind first, copying her mind, experiences, and feelings before being connected to her laptop as well. That connection provides it with information about the stars, galaxies, and Powers. It also is given the information and knowledge that pertains to magic, wizardry and the laws of the universe. Once downloads are complete, Motherboard is able to replicate a variety of creations, communicate, and evolve.



Senior Wizards

Most worlds have little more than forty Senior Wizards. They are seldom the white bearded representations that are expected, mostly due to the fact that they spend a great deal of time in combat with the Lone One and as such, tend to live short lives of great importance. Once a wizard reaches Senior status, they hold advisory positions, do research, and lend assistance where necessary. On Earth, there are twenty four Senior Wizards. There are six in Asia, one in Australia, one in the Atlantic (for the whales), three in Europe, nine in the Americas, four in the north, five in South and Central America and four in Africa.



Objects/Places

The Wizard's Oath

"In Life's name, and for Life's sake, I say that I will use this Art only in service of that life..." is the oath that can be found in the introductory pages of the wizards manual.

Hayden Planetarium

Hayden Planetarium is where Kit and Nita take Dairine in New York City.

American Museum of Natural History

The American Museum of Natural History is part of the four block stretch at the corners of Seventy-seventh and Eighty-first streets along with the Hayden Planetarium and the equestrian Teddy Roosevelt statue.

Ahnighito Asteroid

The Ahnighito Asteroid is an irregular lump of nickel-iron slag weighing thirty-four tons and pitted with large holes. Always cool, it came from farther away than the asteroid belt, from a time that was long, cold and dark.

Zeiss Star Projector

The Zeiss Star Projector was used to create the sky show at the planetarium.

Olympus Mons

A long extinct volcano on Mars, Olympus Mons is the highest mountain in the entire Solar System, and where Dairine discovers evidence that other life forms had visited.

Ananke

Ananke is the outermost satellite of Jupiter and Dairine's first stop after Mars.

Slidefield

An inertia-abeyant selectively frictionless environment, Slidefield acts like a rapidly moving section of sidewalk.



The Crossings Hypergate Facility

Renowned for its elegance among the Billion Homeworlds, the Crossings Hypergate Facility has classical Lilene architecture and proportions that rival the size of New Jersey. Ceilings are interpenetrating, constructed of lacy or solid material, in glass and in steel, and towering into the clouds.

Caucasus Mountain Chain

The Caucasus Mountain Chain is Kit's favorite spot on the moon, and the site where Kit and Nita often meet before starting out.

Satrachi

Mud colored, the Satrachi are warty looking beings similar to a cross between toads and lizards. They walk upright with a hunchbacked, lumpish swagger and have dark and crimson bloodshot, goggle eyes that are slitted bulges. they carry guns and their hands are knobby and three fingered.

BEM's

BEMs are bug-eyed monsters.

Deinonychus

Deinonychus is the name Dairine gives to the creature being walked by the Satrachi, it has long legs that give it an ostrich like gait and has a coloring that is like iridescent shades of red and gold. A tail that thrashes behind it is whip like in nature, and in contrast, its eyes are blue and innocent.

Olber's Paradox

Olber's Paradox is the name given to the paradox that led people to realize that our universe is expanding.



Themes

Entropy vs Perfection

In *High Wizardry*, the author describes the Lone Power as having been responsible for the creation of entropy. Entropy, which describes a system that is flawed or a measure of disorder within a system, is the gift the Lone Power gave to the universe. The idea and concept had been so disturbing to the other Powers that they exiled him to a life alone. Once known as the 'Beautiful One', he has become an adversary wandering the dark edges of the universe, creating chaos and uncertainty in his wake. He thrives on the misery that the prospect of death brings, and enjoys the fear it inspires in world after world.

As a result of his behavior, the remaining Powers are forced to extend some of their abilities to other beings in the universe, using them to fight for the universe they tried so hard to create. Lifetimes of damage control and imbalance culminate in a single standoff which occurs many light years from Earth. The youngest and newest wizard, Dairine, creates a world of mobiles that all have the insight and intelligence of the wizard's manual downloaded to them, and Dairine's own experiences as well. Together, they lure the Lone One to them, knowing that his desire to destroy would bring him to them. Understanding that the nature of his isolation gives him no peace or pleasure, he is finally convinced to rejoin the Powers and become the 'Beautiful One' once again.

Love vs Duty

Dairine, Kit and Nita are good children, although the term children applies to them less with each passing Ordeal. To their parents, they are still children - young, in school, and supposedly living the life of any normal child. They hope to see their children grow up to be reasonably normal young adults, and likely look forward to marriages, children, and the continuity of their family. Dairine and Nita's parents are already aware of the fact that wizards exist. They know that Nita is one, and that on occasion her life will be fraught with danger, and trials that no adult should have to conquer. In this novel, they learn that their second daughter is also a wizard, and in fact a more powerful one than either Nita or Kit. The love between Dairine, Nita and their parents, and Kit and his parents is strong and though they may not like the path their children are on, they have little choice in the matter. Their love for their children, though strong and unbreakable is subject to occasional testing of faith.

The young wizards are all 'good' children. They have no discipline issues, or behavioral problems, but when the call to duty comes, they will drop everything to respond. Family vacations, special occasions or even desperate pleas from their parents will not deter them from the duty with which they've been entrusted. The Oath, taken by all three, is as serious as their very lives, and each of them is acutely aware of the importance of their positions. When summoned, they will drop all, heed no pleas and waste no time



responding. They are Wizards and the path they walk is a duty they won't shirk from even when put up against the deepest love, and the strongest familial bond.

Fighting For What Is Right

The young wizards in this story have been recruited in their youth, when their abilities are likely at their peak. For a brief time during childhood and adolescence, they will be capable of incredible feats of wizardry and their youth will help to give them a false sense of security. These two facts will enable them to perform in ways their senior counterparts cannot. For hundreds of years, young wizards have been recruited to help the Powers keep the Lone Power from destroying the universe they so carefully created. The Lone One works equally hard to destroy life, to create havoc, and to spread entropy in his wake. Despite being alone in his quest to do so, his efforts are felt far and wide throughout the galaxy.

When Dairine is called to service, it is in a manner different from the usual manner in which a wizard is brought into service. Her reading of the Oath, a sacred part of becoming a wizard, is done in secret since she takes the Oath from her sister's wizard manual and not her own. At this time, Dairine hasn't been given one. Her call to duty is so subtle that she believes her travels are conjured from her own mind and that she directs events. In reality, her fight is the fight of the ages. It is a summons to the battle that has silently raged for hundreds of years. Her destination preordained, and her mission clear, Dairine follows a path known only to the Powers and to fate itself. The one clear issue in Dairine's mind is her desire to battle and defeat the Lone Power. Despite the fact that her life is held in the balance, Dairine is willing to offer it in exchange for the peace and serenity that life can be for all life forms if she is successful. It is a choice each wizard makes at one time or another, willingly fighting for what is right.



Style

Point of View

High Wizardry by Diane Duane is a novel written in the first person perspective. The story is narrated by one character at a time, switching between sisters Nita and Dairine Callahan, who are the main characters of this story. The author switches from one narrator to the other, beginning with Nita. The chapters alternate perspective almost all the way through the novel. In the first chapter, Nita is introduced, and it is from her perspective that the reader is introduced to the Callahan family, and to Nita's best friend Kit. The second chapter is told from Dairine's perspective and reveals her discovery of Nita's wizard oath. Although she doesn't understand it all, she reads it aloud anyway. The next chapter returns the reader to Nita's perspective, and shows the reader a little more of the dynamics that exist between the two sisters, showing Dairine to be a determined, curious and independent person. The fourth chapter returns to Dairine, and describes how she came to have the computer with the entire wizard's manual at her disposal. The alternating perspectives continue until the eighth chapter where both perspectives are given, one after the other. This happens again as the story develops, but in no way confuses or interferes with the flow of the story.

Setting

High Wizardry is a novel that extends beyond Earth, beyond even our Solar System. Although the story begins on Earth, in a Nassau County. The main characters, Nita and Dairine, take a trip with Kit into New York City where they go to the Planetarium, and from there, life changes for all three. Dairine uses the Planetarium's washroom to program her laptop clone to take her into the Solar System, beginning with the planet Mars. Inexperienced, she leaves the gateway open, and Nita discovers it when she tries to hurry Dairine up as the Planetarium is closing. Kit helps her to close the gateway, and they immediately consult two senior wizards to decide what they should do. After brief conversation, they conclude that their only option is to follow her, despite knowing that she couldn't have gone unless she was on an Ordeal of her own. Kit and Nita follow Dairine to Mars and onward to Jupiter's moon, Ananke. She stops on Io and then jumps to Saturn's orbit where she stops briefly on Titan. The jump to Uranus from there is a little harder, and she recovers from her jump on its moon, Miranda. Neptune is next, and she arrives on Triton, and from there to Uranus and then on to Pluto. She asks the computer for an Extrasystemic jump, and has it read out the flagged planets. She jumps to Rirhath B which is eleven point four light years away, but her experiences there quickly sour. When she leaves Rirhath B, she is pursued, and selects a destination as far away as the computer can take her. The silicon based planet she arrives on is the last stop before returning home.



Language and Meaning

High Wizardry is written in regular and up to date English. While the bulk of this novel is easy to read and understand, it also contains a variety of computer terms with which not all readers may be familiar. These terms include at their most basic, terms such as copy, paste, manual, and change; there is also a selection of computer suffixes and menus within the computer that include logistics, intervention, preservation, and duplication. Most of these terms will be familiar to anyone who has ever had a computer. The author also takes the reader on a tour of the Solar System as Dairine and then later Kit, Nita and Peach travel through the system to its outer regions. Duane describes landings on Mars, and on moons of Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus before her traveling wizards leave the Solar System entirely. There are many references to the distances involved in their travels. The addition of a marker beacon found on Jupiter is an interesting addition to Dairine's travels. Author Duane is adept at keeping her readers interested by adding spells, magic, talking animals and wizards who can communicate with everything from asteroids to silicon mobiles.

Structure

Diane Duane's High Wizardry is three-hundred and seventy-two pages in length, and is divided into thirteen segments, or chapters. The chapters are not numbered, and are merely represented by the title each chapter is given. The thirteen segments of this novel range from six pages to twenty pages in length. Each chapter is labeled with a title that briefly describes the contents of that segment. The novel follows a logical sequence of events with few exceptions. They occur in the beginning of the book where Dairine revisits events that occurred earlier in her life (when she was three). At that time, she had seen her five year old sister cry after an incident where she had been unable to answer the teacher's questions in school. She had cried because she believed that she was supposed to know everything asked of her in school and Dairine had heard this exchange. She had never seen her sister cry and it upset her to such a degree that she promised herself that she would learn everything she needed to so that this never happened to her. She keeps that promise, learning everything she can, reading at an extraordinarily young age, and absorbing every scrap of information she can. This incident sets up the reasons that Dairine is educationally more advanced than her sister, and also reveals her deep connection to Nita, unspoken, but intense and important. The second time the author goes back in time is merely a look at the events as they unfolded on the morning that the computer arrived, revealing how Dairine came to have possession of the computer to begin with. Other than these two incidents, the story line is linear and the time lines normal.



Quotes

"You're not going into the city to, uh, do something, are you?"

Ch. 1, Pg. 10

Betty Callahan to Nita as she and Kit prepare to go to the Hayden Planetarium, still trying to get used to the idea that her daughter and her best friend are both novice wizards.

"I want to go where they came from!"

Ch. 4, Pg. 32

Dairine to computer after discovering a marker beacon on Olympus Mons.

"It's the only story.... every sentient species has it or learns it."

Ch. 5, Pg. 45

Tom's response to Nita's mother who talks about entropy and how it is an old and familiar story based on the Lone Power and his creation of the longest death - the death of the universe.

"Even saints have to start somewhere.... and it's always been the children who have saved the universe from the previous generation and remade the universe in their own image."

Ch. 5, Pg. 47

Carl responding to Harry's comment that this is the business of saints, not children.

"Excuse me, but why are you talking to our luggage?"

Ch. 6, Pg. 54

An alien on Rirhath B which is the first planet with life on it that Dairine goes to, and is still trying to adjust to the variety of alien life forms. She inadvertently tries to strike up a conversation with someone's luggage.

"She won't be normal when she gets back, will she?"

Ch. 7, Pg. 69

Nita's mother to Nita as she gets ready to follow Dairine, knowing that the experience will change her.

"If it looks like she needs to be where she is, stay with her and do what you can for her."

Ch. 8, Pg. 85

Tom to Nita and Kit as they meet on the moon to regroup and get ready to find Dairine.

"It has to get some better idea of what's going on out here or it'll go crazy!"

Ch. 9, Pg. 90

Dairine to her computer as she explains her decision to have the computer link her to the planet so that it can avail itself of her experiences.



"We are on an errantry, and we greet you."

Ch. 10, Pg. 95

Nita's greeting, in the standard introduction of a wizard on business, to the Stationmaster on Rirhaut B.

"We want them, right now - we want them off her rear end, so she can do whatever it is she needs to do without interference." Ch. 10, Pg. 99

Kit to Nita, arguing in favor of making one longer jump over several smaller ones in order to cut down the time it takes to catch up with Dairine and better help her.

"A program must be given a name to be saved."

Ch. 11, Pg. 114

Gigo to Dairine after she selects a name for him, and he explains why it gives him such joy.

"Override protocols require that I confirm with you what parts of the wizardly programming are to be passed on to each individual, and to what number of individuals."

Ch. 11, Pg. 118

Computer to Dairine when Dairine insists that it allow all data to be transferred to Motherboard.

"The slowlifers purposely build crippled quicklife - tiny retarded chips that will never grow into the sentience they deserve - and they force the poor half - alive embryos to count for them and tell them the time of day and tell the engines in their vehicles when to fire and how their food should be cooked."

Ch. 12, Pg. 128

Logo to the other mobiles in an effort to convince them that Dairine only created them to perform as her slaves in her fight against the Lone Power.

"I was sent to you again and again, to put the Power in your hands... wizardry, and other powers."

Ch. 13, Pg. 148

Peach (aka The Winged Defender) to Nita and Kit as she explained her history with her brother, the Lone Power.

"We'll come to where you live, when we're wiser in being human, and wake your quicklife up."

Ch. 13, Pg. 152

Logo, emotionally healed and responding to Dairine's goodbye.



Topics for Discussion

What power had Nita already met twice before, and feared? Why is she so worried about Dairine and the possibility that she would also come across this power?

At what ages were Kit and Nita offered their wizardry? What age is Dairine when she acquires hers? What is the usual procedure according to the manual where Powers are concerned? What exception seems to apply to Dairine and why might that be the case?

Why does Dairine seem to have an educational advantage? What event in her life brought that circumstance to bear? How did this event motivate her and why? How did this change her relationship with her sister?

Which places does Dairine visit when she leaves the Planetarium? How does she buy enough time to explore without causing a panic at home? How is her solution discovered and by whom?

What is the first inhabited planet that Dairine goes to? What mistake does she make when she gets there? Who corrects her? What is the rest of her experience on this planet like?

What delay does Dairine face when trying to leave Rirhath B? Why does this delay exist? What is the importance of the information involved?

Where do Kit and Nita usually meet when heading out on Ordeal? What items does Nita pack? What other preparations are important before leaving?

What unusual conditions are evident on the planet where Dairine makes her final stand? How are these conditions relevant? What is the first unusual use Dairine finds for the planet? What happens that alerts her to the rest?

What does Dairine do that brings the mobiles joy? At what point does she realize it is not enough? What else is necessary to give the mobiles autonomy? How does she achieve this?

What commands does Dairine give her computer that require triple authorization beforehand? What might be some of the reasons for this added security feature? Does Dairine behave recklessly, and if so, how?

What astronomical oddity does the Lone Power try to use against the mobiles and Dairine? How is Dairine able to counter this attack? What occurred that made her able to match the Lone Power's angry outbursts fast enough to avoid annihilation?

How do Dairine and Nita change as a result of Dairine's Ordeal? What do they learn about each other? In what ways might that affect the way they treat each other from this point forward? What humbling realization do Nita and Dairine arrive at where their sister is concerned?



What is Dairine willing to do to ensure that the Lone Power never leaves the planet they are on? What does she have to do before making such a decision, and why? How do the mobiles respond to her?

Who finally convinces the Lone One that it is time to let the past go? Why has this argument been ineffective to date? What changes or conditions were the Powers waiting for before risking a face to face confrontation?

What is Olber's Paradox? How does it apply in this story? What character exemplifies what Olber's Paradox is? How is this paradox represented?