

For Love of Evil Study Guide

For Love of Evil by Piers Anthony

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Plot Summary

For Love of Evil is a novel by Anthony Piers that details the descent of a wizard named Parry into evil. When the novel begins, Parry is the adopted son of a white Sorcerer, living in southern thirteenth century France. The Sorcerer raises Parry to use white magic to advance the goodness of God. Parry, at fifteen, marries a simple but pretty fourteen-year-old girl named Jolie, and the two fall in love. Two years later, the south of France is embroiled in heresy, and the king sends his soldiers to slaughter heretics. Parry, Jolie, and the Sorcerer are caught up in the maelstrom, and the Sorcerer and Jolie are killed.

Parry travels around, ultimately joining the Franciscans and later the Dominicans. As a monk and a member of the Church, he travels around to rule on cases needing Church input, such as wealthy landowners consorting with demons. Eventually, Lucifer becomes aware of Parry, and sends the exotic demoness Lilah to corrupt Parry, which she does. The two fall in love with each other, and Parry uses his magic to force Lucifer from his throne. Parry then becomes the Incarnation of Evil and the master of Hell. But Parry doesn't think all of the souls entering Hell should do so. Some are in Hell for stealing, though they stole only for the sake of feeding their hungry family.

When widespread war breaks out on the surface of the Earth in the 1900s, resulting in pointless killing, Parry goes to the Incarnation of War, Mars, to attempt to get him to stop the bloodshed. Mars refuses, so Parry goes to Chronos, the Incarnation of Time, to make sure the wars never happened. Parry then sends Lilah to corrupt the alternate Mars, but Mars turns Lilah against Parry. Parry also learns of a prophecy foretelling his downfall through an Irish girl named Niobe, whose daughter Orb, will become the Incarnation of Nature, Gaea. Parry then uses deceit to marry Gaea in order to combine their power, making his downfall impossible. Gaea then confesses that, despite the deceit, she does love Parry. Parry, though, cannot give up his throne, or else a brutal, bloodthirsty child rapist will assume power, so Gaea and Parry can never consummate their love.



Chapter 1-3

Chapter 1-3 Summary

Chapter 1 - A pretty but disheveled peasant girl named Jolie comes to the house of Parry, a white wizard, at the behest of Parry's father, the Sorcerer. Jolie is terrified she might be harmed, but Parry swears on the Virgin Mary he will not harm her. Parry explains that fifteen years ago, as a baby, he was to be a sacrifice for a spell, but the local Abbot intervened to stop the bloodletting. The Abbot made sure the Sorcerer would adopt Parry and made sure the Sorcerer raised Parry well. Parry goes on to explain that when the Abbot died, the Sorcerer continued raising him as his own son, educating him in white magic. Parry has chosen Jolie, fourteen years old, to be his wife, because she is the best woman in the village.

Jolie worries that all Parry wants is to have sex with her and then kick her out. But Parry demonstrates his power to Jolie by giving her a vision as though she was flying, hoping to convince her that he is sincere. He then sings to her in order to further demonstrate his intentions, after which time Jolie returns home for the night. She then comes back to Parry, and embraces him.

Chapter 2 - Parry explains to Jolie that he wants her to love him. Jolie begins visiting Parry regularly, and bathing regularly at Parry's request. When Jolie turns fifteen, she confesses she has fallen in love with Parry, and the two marry. Over the next two years, Parry becomes a full-fledged Sorcerer, and their time together is happy. Parry's father travels around and explains to Parry that the Devil has bad intentions for the south of France. Parry's father explains that the town and countryside in which they live has remained faithful to the Church, whereas other areas have become much more liberal and do not so much care for the Church. Because of this, the Devil sees an opening to exploit. A monk has been murdered, and the Church and the Crown will react. The Sorcerer explains that he, Parry and Jolie must flee to the north, leaving no trace behind.

The arrival of soldiers proves disastrous for Parry and the Sorcerer. While Jolie flees on foot with her family, for she has not yet mastered form-changing, Parry and the Sorcerer transform themselves into hawks. But the soldiers shoot and kill the Sorcerer. Jolie is also severely injured, being stabbed by a sword. Parry goes to her, to discover her already dying. When she does die, Thanatos, death incarnate, comes for her soul. Thanatos explains that until the evil circumstances that brought about Jolie's death are vanquished, Jolie must remain in the mortal realm as a ghost. Parry then flees.

Chapter 3 - Far enough away from the murder and violence, Parry breaks down and weeps, and then continues on. He takes refuge with an old woman, telling her that he is Christian with heretical leanings, but is not a Christian of the current crusade. The old woman respects the Sorcerer, Parry and Jolie immensely, and is happy to help Parry. Parry in turn helps the old woman, gathering firewood for her. But eventually, the



soldiers come across the peasant house and burn it, killing the old woman. Parry continues fleeing north, soldiers and dogs hot on his trail. Without money, food or extra clothing, Parry wonders how he will survive. He comes across a singing friar from an order called the Brotherhood and is taken in. Parry plans to use his singing voice for sustenance.

The Brotherhood travels around, preaching about the glory of God, though Parry has doubts. To conceal himself, Parry practices no magic, and over time, comes to understand that God works in mysterious ways. Over time, Parry decides that the injustice done to him was not done by God but by Lucifer, and so Parry joins the Dominican order, because they focus on the issue of evil. Parry wants to understand evil so he can extract revenge against Lucifer. Jolie's soul has also been visiting Parry, bringing him news and information of far-flung people and places.

Chapter 1-3 Analysis

Piers Anthony begins his novel "For Love of Evil" by focusing on a singular event that will prove to be the catalyst for the duration of the book. It comes in the form of a pretty peasant girl named Jolie, who marries and falls in love with Parry. For two years they live a quiet and happy existence, until heresy spreads across the region. Parry is presented as a penultimate example of good. Though magic is not in line with Church thought, Parry uses his magic as a white wizard to further the good on behalf of God. But Parry gets caught up in the cleansing of heretics, and Parry's adoptive father, the Sorcerer, and Jolie are both killed.

The death of those he loves forces Parry out of his home, and he becomes the downtrodden hero cast out into the wild. Without his loved ones, Parry is listless and searching, questioning God's goodness and seeking Truth. Parry eventually joins the Franciscan Brotherhood of monks and becomes renowned in the group for his singing voice, a natural talent. Parry hides his magical roots in order to fit in and find acceptance. Nevertheless, Parry's search for Truth continues, and he joins the Dominican order because they seem to be more focused on rooting out evil. Parry knows that it is evil that has befallen him and Jolie.



Chapter 4-6

Chapter 4-6 Summary

Chapter 4 - Father Service and Parry, now in his thirties, set out to handle a case wherein the local magistrate has charged a wealthy lord with heresy, under the penalty of having all of his wealth stripped and given away to interested parties. But such a thing cannot be done without Church approval. Jolie's ghost accompanies Father Service and Parry, and she is incensed at the case. Reviewing papers, Parry discovers that Lord Bofort stands to gain much from the accused lord's misfortunes, such as land. Parry and Father Service question the seventeen-year-old girl, Fabiola, who has accused the suspected lord of communion with demons. But Parry, at Jolie's insistence, compels the girl to tell the truth. Lord Bofort's men, Fabiola explains, captured her and threatened her. Parry knows that to obtain the girl's safety, he must deliver Lord Bofort to justice. Jolie believes Fabiola can be used to help. Parry explains to Fabiola that he is a white magician, using magic in support of God, while Bofort uses his magic to do the Devil's work.

Parry heads to Bofort's castle with Fabiola and Jolie, who speaks through Fabiola to Bofort. Parry wants Bofort to go and speak to the town's magistrate, but Bofort believes the town is now against him. Bofort attempts to use a spell against Parry, but Parry blocks it with a cross, sending it back at Bofort. Bofort shrieks that there is no cure for the curse, and so Parry and Jolie/Fabiola leave. Parry sees Fabiola back to her home, gives her the cross, and leaves with Jolie's spirit. Because of his greatness, Parry is able to meet the Pope, Gregory IX. Two years later, the Dominicans are granted the right to preside over an Inquisition, to stamp out evil. Parry intends to use this to study evil more thoroughly.

Chapter 5 - In the autumn of 1239, Parry travels to Germany alone, but with Jolie's spirit, who urges him to guide a group of orphans to a nunnery, because the overseeing nun is too afraid to travel alone. Parry has, by this time, become a feared but respected Inquisitor. Lucifer, however, has his demons possess wolves to kill Parry. Parry fights them off, and then sings to them to free them, ultimately transforming himself into a wolf and a bat in order to drive the animals away and free them. The trip to the nunnery is then safely completed. Parry believes that Lucifer is underestimating him, or not paying enough attention to him. Parry, meanwhile, goes to handle the case of an elderly man accused of heresy.

Parry discovers the man had at one time dealt with Lucifer but now regrets it. The old man, an historian, has discovered a scourge heading their way. But without means to publish his findings, he struck a deal with the Devil. Parry gets the man to safety by transforming him into a mouse. The scourge spoken of by the man comes a year later, in the form of a Mongolian invasion. Parry knows that evil will flourish under the Mongols, and that he himself must save Europe.



Chapter 6 - By late 1241, the Mongolians are descending on the Holy Roman Empire, the Germanic states. Parry contemplates how to stop the Mongols, and Jolie suggests either assassinating Batu, the Mongolian leader, or attempting to use divination. Yet the supreme leader, the Khan, dies, and Batu must return to help elect a new Khan. Jolie possesses the body of a girl, who guides a Mongolian messenger bearing the news to Batu, and switches the packages being carried by the messenger. Jolie, possessing the girl still, makes love to Parry. Parry realizes he is now with sin, has betrayed his oath of celibacy, and can no longer remain a monk. But Jolie presses him to tolerate his own sin in order to avert even greater evil still coming.

Chapter 4-6 Analysis

Parry, his magical roots hidden, becomes a respected investigator on behalf of the Church, looking into cases of heresy, and providing the word of the Church either for or against those accused. It is a position of considerable power. Parry, seeking the truth, and with Jolie's spirit's assistance, is able to get to the truth on case after case. As evil spreads, Parry must head out on his own without his fellow monks to combat evil firsthand. He learns of the coming Mongol invasion and realizes that he alone can save Europe.

Here is Parry at the summit of goodness: he is selflessly traveling around, rooting out evil, defeating it, helping those in need, and still searching for Truth. He even goes so far as to work in concert with Jolie to foil the Mongolian plot against Western Europe. Yet it is also at the height of his goodness that Parry is tempted, not by Lucifer, but by the spirit of Jolie. Even the most good will be tempted, even more so than those with few morals or values. And indeed, Parry's temptation is severe, and he fails in the test.

Jolie, possessing the body of a peasant girl, has sex with Parry. Parry has instantly betrayed his oath of celibacy as a monk, and realizes that he can no longer effectively function in his position. But Jolie pleads with him to remain, tolerating his own sin to avert greater coming evil. Yet this persuasion serves as the second catalyst to greater evil, rather than good.



Chapter 7-9

Chapter 7-9 Summary

Chapter 7 - In the spring of 1242, a woman suddenly appears to Parry. She is Lilah, sent by Lucifer to corrupt Parry. When Lilah is present, Jolie vanishes. Parry discovers that utilizing his cross, he can banish Lilah, who reappears again and again. Lilah insists that if Parry confesses his sins, the Dominican order will lose respect and standing. Parry grudgingly knows it is the truth. Lilah says she can only ever fully be banished by doing away with the evil in his heart, not merely making a show of doing away with evil. Lilah explains that his wife's ghost reminded him of the pleasures of the flesh, a memory now well-fixed in his mind. Lilah says she can make him an agent of Lucifer. When she goes for the day, Jolie returns and tells Parry he must oppose her. Lilah returns again the next day, offering her naked body to tempt Parry. Lilah continues visiting Parry, ultimately winning him over in his soul, and sending Jolie to Hell.

Chapter 8 - Parry attempts to use his cross to banish Lilah, but it is now no use because he has lost his faith. Lilah asks how else Parry would like to be corrupted, but Parry says he doesn't want to be. Lilah makes love to him, and then urges him on to do more evil if he wants more sex. Five years pass, and Parry becomes more powerful within the Inquisition, shuffling around money and property. Lilah brings Parry to meet Lucifer, who condemns Parry for still holding to some doubt in him. Parry refuses to apologize to Lucifer, and he and Lilah are then condemned to eternal Hell. Parry apologizes to Lilah, for he discovers Lilah has no freedom. Parry has also come to care for Lilah, and he suspects, some way, somehow, there is some human sentiment in her.

As Lilah is about to be raped by another demon, Parry sings, warning the demon that foul favors can be returned. The demon is stunned, and Parry leads Lilah away. Lilah then leads them back up to the surface of the earth, escaping, realizing they are free from Hell. Three years later, Parry is slated to die. As he does so, Lilah says he should sing and use his magic to his advantage, but then Lucifer shows up. Lucifer discovers that Lilah has fallen in love with Parry, as he has her, and her punishment will be horrendous: once the object of a demon's love is gone, the demon ceases to exist. As Lucifer prepares to banish them, Parry uses his magic shield spell against Lucifer, sending him back to Hell.

As Parry dies, Lilah tells him to assume the Office, which Parry does. Parry chooses his twenty-five-year-old self as his form, and Lilah as his consort. Lilah, whose entire existence depends upon Parry's existence, is now utterly devoted to him in all ways. Parry is now the Lord of Evil, the master of Hell.

Chapter 9 - Parry now has thirty days to prove he is fit for the Office of the Damned. Lilah guides him through the entrance to Hell, and they see damned souls along the way. In order to command respect, Parry must learn the spell to destroy demons. He cannot learn it from God, but he could learn it from Gaea. For the time being, he is able



to make demons react to his will through his song. Parry meets a woman who is condemned to Hell because she lied, cheated, and stole, but it was done in order to feed her family. Parry discovers that many of the damned souls are poor, and of the same problems. Far too many souls are being claimed by damnation for Parry's liking, so he is determined to reform things. But before he can do that, he must prove himself master. For the time being, Parry's sorcery still works, and he will use that to his advantage.

Chapter 7-9 Analysis

The seeds of doubt, sown in Parry's heart by Jolie herself, are further exploited by the seductive demoness, Lilah. Lilah has been personally sent by Lucifer to corrupt Parry. At first, Parry's faith, though fragmented by the breaking of his oath, is nevertheless able to resist Lilah, who is herself, relentless. She visits Parry again and again, determined to seduce him. Eventually, she succeeds.

Not only has Parry fallen from the height of his goodness, Parry has fallen to the consummate source of evil: a temptress working on Lucifer's behalf. Yet something unexpected also happens. While Parry has clearly fallen from grace, his sincerity and the goodness he possesses at heart have not abated: Lilah falls in love with Parry, and Parry with Lilah. As Parry dies, and as Lucifer attempts to banish Parry's soul, Parry casts a shielding spell, causing the curse to rebound on Lucifer. Parry then assumes the Office that Lucifer once occupied. Parry in effect becomes the Master of Hell, or the Incarnation of Evil.

Ironically, it is love that compels Lilah to fight for and defend Parry, who she was originally sent to corrupt and claim for Hell. Parry, corrupted, does not become subjugated to Hell, but rather becomes the ruler. Ironically, rather than simply being evil, the goodness that still echoes in Parry's heart compels him to feel for some of the condemned souls, who have ended up in Hell without truly being evil: one woman, for example, is in Hell for stealing to feed her family. Parry realizes that Hell, ironically, needs reform.



Chapter 10-12

Chapter 10-12 Summary

Chapter 10 - Lilah is bringing Parry to see Nox, the Incarnation of Night. Nox does not have the spell that they are seeking, and Nox suggests seeking out Chronos. Thanatos, Death Incarnate will not even speak to Parry, and Lilah reveals that all the Incarnations side with God. The Incarnation of War and Gaea refuse Parry, who vows revenge on them.

Lilah brings Parry to Chronos's mansion, where she warns him that time goes backwards. They then see themselves leaving the mansion and heading down another path. Lilah and Parry enter the mansion, where they are warmly greeted by Chronos. Chronos recommends meeting with Ozymandias, formerly a king. In exchange for the restoration of his reputation, Ozymandias agrees and explains there is no spell, but an illusion of power. Parry then manages to secure his leadership over Hell, intending to revamp it.

Chapter 11 - Parry becomes impatient with trying to revamp Hell. It is taking too long for his own liking. He is also slowly becoming tired of Lilah, though he does not say this. Parry then instructs Lilah to seduce Ozymandias to serving to reorganize Hell, while Parry takes on Nefertiti as a consort. Though progress is good, it still isn't fast enough. Parry also learns that Gaea is retiring and returning to the mortal realm. Parry intends to humiliate her successor out of spite to her. Parry sees to it that a plague spreads, causing a deluge of prematurely-deceased victims and ravages on nature. Chronos asks that Milan, Italy, be spared because it will be invaluable during the Renaissance, and Parry is happy to comply.

A young woman requests an audience with Parry, which he grants. She resembles Jolie. She explains to Parry that the Plague is killing good and evil alike, and the suffering is tremendous. Parry goes with the girl to see the suffering. He does not take her soul, because he says she is good. He then leaves her on earth, and the plague bypasses Poland and Prague, as she wishes it to do. Eventually, the plague runs its course. Parry and Chronos talk, thinking perhaps good and evil are working toward the same goal. Parry wants to meet with God.

Chapter 12 - Parry releases some misallocated souls, following them through Purgatory and toward Heaven. There he goes to meet with God, the embodiment of light, but God is not paying attention to him. Parry also meets Jehovah, God of the Jews, who says that any being that is believed to exist does exist, and the strength of that being depends upon the numbers and tenacity of believers. Parry relates his desire for an improved mechanism to determine Good and Evil in souls to Jehovah. Parry then goes to meet with the angel Gabriel. Gabriel confirms that God is busy, but Gabriel will concede to a contest beforehand. If Parry cannot corrupt a single mortal, the mortal's



child, or the mortal's grandchild, then Parry will forever cease his efforts for power. Parry agrees. The name of the person, Niobe Kaftan, will be born in six centuries.

Chapter 10-12 Analysis

Parry continues his search for Truth, knowing that reform requires absolute control. To gain absolute control of Hell, Parry must learn the spell that destroys demons. The irony is clear: To do good, Parry must learn more evil. The search for the right spell leads Parry around to the various Incarnations, discovering that all of them side with God in the end.

Yet, the third catalyst appears to Parry in the form of a simple peasant girl, who pleads with Parry to abate evil in the world. Parry releases souls that have gone to Hell by mistake and follows them to Heaven, attempting to meet with God but speaking with the Angel Gabriel instead. Gabriel suggests a contest while God is preoccupied, that over whether or not Parry can corrupt the soul of Niobe, her child, or her grandchild.

Gabriel presents Parry a serious challenge. Parry must do evil in order to do further good once more, and if Parry cannot be evil enough to do more good, Parry must therefore abdicate his attempts to do any evil whatsoever, forever.



Chapter 13-15

Chapter 13-15 Summary

Chapter 13 - Ozymandias and Parry continue reorganizing Hell. Parry visits Lucifer several times, finally urging Lucifer to give up his previous claims and serve him. Lucifer is assigned to watch for Niobe. Lucifer, however, attempts to have a demon kill Niobe after she is born in Ireland, but fails, killing the wrong person. It turns out that Niobe's husband took her place, for he was a magician, and gave his life for hers. Lucifer is promptly fired and Parry himself goes to see about Niobe and her infant baby. Other than her being incredibly beautiful, he sees no reason why she should mean his defeat. He assigns Mephistopheles to watch her and find out more about her.

While on a funeral boat, Niobe sets it on fire, and though not dead, Thanatos brings her to his mansion to tend to her wounds. She then arranges to meet with Chronos, who brings her to Fate. Parry goes to see why Chronos has betrayed him, but Chronos says he knows that Parry has always used him for his own ends. Chronos reveals that Niobe was his lover. A few months pass, and Niobe is taken to America, having become an Aspect of Fate. She is in league with the Incarnations and blames Parry for the death of her husband. Parry then goes to meet Niobe. He lies, saying the Incarnations are to blame, but Niobe knows the truth. Her hatred of Parry doubles. Niobe begins foiling Parry's plots, intervening to save a Senator, among others.

Niobe quits her job and marries her husband's cousin, and is expecting a girl, Orb. Niobe's son is also expecting a baby girl, Luna, having married the most beautiful woman of his generation. Magic runs in the family, and the family uses spells to protect themselves from Parry and from Evil. Yet Parry interferes, making sure the magical spells remain with Niobe's son, who then comes seeking her son in Purgatory. Niobe finds him and is able to leave with the spells.

Chapter 14 - Though the Incarnation of War, Mars, sides with God, Mars does evil just as good because of all of the destruction and suffering that come from war. World War I gives rise to World War II, concentration camps, and the Holocaust. The pointless suffering strikes a nerve with Jehovah, and with Parry. Parry agrees to speak with the Incarnations, including Chronos. He shows Chronos the damage and horrors of the war, causing Chronos to go back in time and change the path of history. A new Incarnation of War is assigned, and Parry assigns Lilah the task of corrupting him. Meanwhile, Parry sets to work on earth, forcing many countries, such as the United States, to become police states. This, Parry believes, will deprive Luna of her role in government. Mars, meanwhile, incites Hell to rebellion, forcing Parry to return to handle things.

Mars, meanwhile, seduces and manipulates Lilah against Parry, causing Parry to confront Mars. Mars and Parry both back down, and Parry becomes displeased. He no longer wants his job of ruling Hell. He goes to see Nox, who says Parry has one more mortal woman to deal with.



Chapter 15 - Parry realizes that Orb will become Gaea. He must win her to his side, against God. Orb is a musician, traveling around the United States on tour with her band. Parry discovers that Orb has the same magic in her that he has in himself. Orb, like Parry, was searching for the Llano—the perfect song and music. Parry asks Niobe for permission to marry Orb if Orb consents, but Niobe does not trust Parry, knowing he is the master of deceit. Parry explains he will court Orb, lying to her every step of the way, then tell her the truth, then propose, and if Orb agrees to marry him, none of the other Incarnations can interfere.

Parry sends actors to lie to Orb, and sings to her. Orb agrees to be courted. Orb becomes Gaea. Parry knows Orb, as Gaea now, must be married to join power. She doesn't have to love him, only marry him. Parry reveals the truth of things to Orb, who confesses she is in love with him and will marry him. Parry realizes he himself is in love with Orb and cannot marry her unless he gives up his throne.

Chapter 13-15 Analysis

While waiting for Niobe to come into the world, Parry and Ozymandias seek to reorganize Hell, making things clearer and better systemically. Parry even attempts to send Lucifer out on an assignment, but Lucifer fails, and is returned to his exile in prison. Parry himself studies Niobe as she grows and gets older, finding nothing about her that could spell his defeat. Niobe, who falls in league with Chronos, becomes an Aspect of Fate and works to do good in the world, foiling Parry every which way.

Meanwhile, the blood and destruction on earth, orchestrated by Mars, the Incarnation of War, is bringing about needless suffering and bloodshed. Parry works with Chronos, compelling him to alter the history of time and change the present. The alternate Mars seduces and uses Lilah against Parry, who becomes disillusioned and no longer wants to run Hell. But the Incarnation of Night, Nox, lets Parry know he only has one more mortal woman to deal with in order to triumph against Gabriel. Parry then seeks out to deceive and marry Gaea, making his power complete.

Yet the irony is that in order to be with Gaea, who is really Orb, the daughter of Niobe, Parry must give up his throne to consummate the love between the two, because pure love is inconsistent with pure evil.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Chapter 16 - At his wedding, Parry releases innumerable souls to Heaven that have served their time. Parry even sings a hymn to God. Parry also knows he will be in limbo, forever linked to Hell. The new replacement to Parry comes to him, seeking the spell to destroy demons. Parry refuses because the new Evil Incarnate is a child rapist and has more interest in torture and destruction than in running Hell. Niobe and the other Incarnations plead with Parry to resume his post following his successor's failed trial period. Parry outsmarts the trial Satan and returns to his post as the Incarnation of Evil.

Jolie's spirit comes back to Parry in the end, using Gaea's body to make love with him, though Gaea herself can never consummate the marriage to Parry.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Irony is replete through the novel, and is not absent from the ending. If Parry steps down from his throne, allowing the new Incarnation of Evil, pointless destruction and horrors will befall the world. Though Parry cannot be physically joined with Gaea, he can still marry her, making their love of an incorporeal nature. Though Parry can never be totally evil, he can never be totally good, either, if he is to keep evil itself in balance.



Characters

Parry

Parry is the main character, principle protagonist, and later principle antagonist of the novel *For Love of Evil*, by Piers Anthony. He was born in the thirteen century and intended for use as a sacrifice by a Sorcerer, but the local Abbot intervenes on Parry's behalf, making the Sorcerer adopt and raise him. When he is fifteen, Parry marries and falls in love with Jolie, a pretty fourteen-year-old peasant girl. They are happy for two years, and Parry becomes a powerful wizard. Parry is a white magician and uses his magic to further the good of God. Parry is also an excellent singer and artist and is very intelligent.

When the King of France sends his troops out after heretics, Jolie and the Sorcerer are killed. Parry, heartbroken, flees and heads north. There, Parry falls in league with the Franciscan monks, seeking truth and seeking to do good. Parry then joins the Dominican order, the monks of which focus on the cause, consequences, and problem of evil. Parry becomes a respected individual, helped and aided by the ghost of Jolie. They help avert a Mongolian invasion of Western Europe, and Jolie possesses the body of a peasant girl to make love to Parry. Parry has betrayed his Oath as a monk, and Lucifer takes note, sending Lilah to further corrupt Parry.

Parry, corrupted, becomes an agent of the Devil on earth, helping to fuel the Inquisition. When Lilah and Parry fall in love with each other and Parry refuses to submit to Lucifer, still having good in his heart, Lucifer attempts to do away with them. But Parry topples Lucifer from power with a magic defense spell. Parry then becomes Master of Hell, seeking to reorganize and reform the realm of evil. Later, when Parry attempts to use Lilah to manipulate the Incarnation of War, Mars instead corrupts Lilah.

Parry, meanwhile, learns of a prophecy that could lead to his downfall: an Irish woman named Niobe. Niobe's daughter, Orb, becomes the Incarnation of Nature, Gaea, who falls in love with and marries Parry. To consummate their love, Parry must give up his throne, but in the end, cannot do so. If he does, an even worse ruler will assume control of Hell. Jolie's spirit then returns to possess other willing bodies, to make love to Parry.

Jolie

Jolie is a simple, pretty peasant girl who, at fourteen, marries Parry. She becomes his wife and lives with him happily until she is killed by French troops. Jolie's spirit then continues to work with Parry to root out and destroy evil. After thwarting a Mongolian invasion, Jolie possesses the body of a peasant girl, making love to Parry, then causing his downfall. At the end of the novel, Jolie's spirit returns to possess willing bodies to make love to Parry.



The Sorcerer

The Sorcerer is a white wizard living in Southern France. He intends to use the infant Parry as a sacrifice, but the local Abbot intervenes to stop him. The Sorcerer then raises Parry as his own son, training him in the art of white magic. During a clampdown on heresy, French troops kill the Sorcerer.

Lucifer

Lucifer is the existing Incarnation of Evil at the beginning of Piers Anthony's novel *For Love of Evil*. Lucifer is overthrown through overreach and the love between Lilah and Parry. Lucifer spends centuries banished in prison, until Parry recruits Lucifer to learn more about Niobe, and kill her. When Lucifer fails in this task, he is fired and returned to his prison.

Lilah

Lilah is the exotic, seductive demoness consort of Lucifer, who corrupts Parry. When she falls in love with Parry, Lucifer is enraged and tries to destroy them both. But Lilah urges Parry to use his magic to deflect Lucifer's curses, causing them to rebound on Lucifer. Lilah then convinces Parry to assume the Office of the Realm of Evil, which he does. For centuries, Lilah and Parry rule together, until Parry begins sending her out on errands to manipulate others. Mars, the Incarnation of War, turns Lilah against Parry in the end.

Thanatos

Thanatos is the Incarnation of Death. Thanatos comes to claim Jolie's soul, meeting Parry in the beginning. Thanatos sides with God. He also tends to Niobe's injuries after a funeral ship fire and saves her life.

Gaea

Gaea is the Incarnation of Nature. It is an office subsequently occupied by Orb, the daughter of Niobe.

Orb

Orb is the daughter of Niobe, who assumes the office of Gaea. Orb falls in love with Parry and agrees to marry him, though they can never consummate their love, a thing of goodness, while Parry is the Incarnation of Evil.

Chronos

The Incarnation of Time, Chronos sides with God, but is not overtly hostile to Parry. Chronos compels Parry to save Milan, Italy, from the Black Plague, and later accedes to Parry's demand to reverse the damages and horrors of the twentieth century.

Niobe

Niobe is the Irish peasant girl who, as the prophecy, Parry learns, can cause his downfall. Niobe becomes an Aspect of Fate, countering Parry's evil on Earth wherever she can. Parry tries to have her killed and then wagers with her, asking for permission to marry Orb if Orb falls in love with him. Niobe agrees, and Parry is ready to give up his throne to be with Orb, but ultimately does not do so.



Objects/Places

France

France is the macrocosm for much of the novel *For Love of Evil* by Piers Anthony.

South of France

The South of France is located in France, and is the setting for much of the novel *For Love of Evil* by Piers Anthony. It is where Parry is born and raised and where he marries Jolie. It is where Jolie and the Sorcerer are killed and where Parry flees.

Hell

Hell is the Realm of Evil, the antithesis to Heaven. It is ruled first by Lucifer and later by Parry, who seeks to reorganize and reform it.

Heaven

Heaven is the Realm of Good and Light, overseen by God and His angels, and is the antithesis to Hell. It is where Parry visits and strikes a wager with the angel, Gabriel.

Purgatory

Purgatory is a realm near Hell where souls, either seeking to repent or not yet committed to Heaven and Hell, must exist.

Spells

Spells are what Parry learns and uses in his time as a white wizard. Parry uses spells to further the good of God at first, and then later uses spells to further himself. Parry uses a shield spell to counter Lucifer's curse on himself.

Firewood

Firewood is what Parry is collecting when the old woman who has sheltered him is burned alive in her house by French troops.



Songs

Songs are what Parry sings and uses in order to move the hearts and minds of people, and later to influence the demons over which he exercises control.

False Package

A false package of information is given by Jolie who is possessing the body of a girl, to a Mongolian messenger, helping to thwart the Mongol invasion of Western Europe.

Bodies of Girls

Bodies of girls are seen in the novel as objects to be possessed by Jolie and other spirits when needed, or when wanted.



Themes

Relativism

A major theme in Piers Anthony's novel *For Love of Evil* is the philosophical concept of relativism, or the idea that there is no such thing as an absolute, that questions of morality are not right or wrong, but often are blended in various shades of gray. This occurs and is presented in two ways: action and irony.

Relativism in action is presented by the case of Parry's attempt to reform Hell, making things more efficient. Parry meets a woman who has been condemned to Hell for stealing. Yet upon speaking to her, Parry discovers that the woman had only stolen in order to feed her hungry family. This strikes Parry as wrong. Although the woman may have stolen, which is an evil act, the evil act was done with good intentions. The act assumes a very utilitarian philosophical view, that the ends justify the means sometimes.

Relativism in irony occurs throughout the latter half of the novel, especially. Parry, not totally evil, is still the supreme ruler of Hell. As such, he can release souls to Heaven, an act of goodness. Yet to do good, Parry must carry out evil—an ironic act. The display of relativism in irony is no more poignant than in the conclusion of the novel when Parry has two choices: to abdicate his throne and love, or remain in his throne, flourishing evil, but allowing far worse evil not to occur.

Good versus Evil

The predominant theme in Piers Anthony's novel *For Love of Evil* is an examination of the age-old battle of Good versus Evil. The presentation of Good and Evil is done in a relativistic fashion (see the theme, "Relativism"), and is presented as a struggle of the self and a struggle in the world.

The struggle of the self is presented in the person of Parry. Parry begins life seeking to advance the goodness of God through white magic and seeks to make sense out of the evil that claims the lives of his wife and his adoptive father. Parry joins first the Franciscans and later the Dominican monks, rooting out and doing away with evil. Since the death of his wife, Parry is in a struggle against evil, portraying the essential crusader against such darkness. Yet, Parry is tempted and succumbs to evil in the form of the seductress, Lilah. He ultimately becomes the very Incarnation of Evil, which is the source of the death of his beloved Jolie.

The struggle in the world of Good against Evil is portrayed in various forms, from wars to crusades to the individual choices of people. Those participating in wars are either trying to advance the causes of good, or the causes of evil. Individual choices, such as the woman in Hell who stole food in order to feed her family, present a much more



complex struggle between Good and Evil. Indeed, Parry struggles often, realizing that in order to advance good, or avoid greater evil, some evil must be done in the world.

Truth

The quest for Truth is a major theme in the novel *For Love of Evil* by Piers Anthony. It is begun the moment that Jolie dies and Parry flees southern France, seeking answers as to why something so evil could befall Jolie. His journey for Truth takes the form of seeking to understand the nature, causes, and consequences of Evil, and to see if Evil can be stopped. Though ironically, by novel's end, Parry becomes Evil Incarnate.

Parry, alone, attempts to fathom why God could allow evil to exist. He later joins the Franciscans and then the Dominican brotherhoods, seeking to further learn about Truth and good and evil. The Dominicans, especially, have dedicated themselves to the study and combat of evil. Parry, overreaching perhaps, is determined to save Europe from the Evil of the Mongolian hordes, and works in concert with Jolie to stop the invasion.

Parry later, as the Incarnation of Evil, attempts to further learn and understand the nature of evil. He discovers, among other things, that sometimes, evil is difficult to ascertain: can a woman who stole in order to feed her family truly be considered evil? Does the presence of some evil invariably lead to the elimination of greater evil later? Are there different kinds of evil? How does Good factor into Evil itself? These are questions Parry must find answers to, and the result is a reorganization of Hell in order to improve efficiency and let go of those souls whom are truly not evil.



Style

Style

Point of View

Piers Anthony tell his novel *For Love of Evil* from the third-person perspective. This is done because of the sheer breadth of the novel, spanning centuries, dozens of minor and major characters, and the ever-widening plot. The sheer amount of information from the plot, if processed through first-person narration rather than the third, where thoughts, feelings, and other unspoken words are shared to the reader, would simply be superfluous and overwhelming.

Setting

The setting of much of the novel is Southern France, an area of conflicting loyalties, passions, and war. The majority of the setting of the novel occurs in Hell, a fitting setting for a novel entitled *For Love of Evil*. As Parry is the Ruler of Hell, there is no better setting than Hell.

Language and Meaning

Piers Anthony tells his novel *For Love of Evil* in language that is simple, unpoetic, and straightforward. Because the plot is so thick and the characters and events so numerous, Anthony cannot waste time on decorative words or thick language. Anthony instead makes his points and keeps the novel flowing, stopping here and there as appropriate to emphasize one thing or another.

Structure

For Love of Evil is divided by Piers Anthony into sixteen chronological chapters. There is no disorganized structure of the plot or chronological discontinuities, owing to the scope and expanse of the plot. The presence of so many characters and events would be incredibly difficult to comprehend if the structure varied beyond chronological consistency.



Quotes

"She knew now indeed, that she had been the best Parry could have chosen, and that she had lived up to her potential. He had been the diamond cutter; she had been the diamond."

Chap. 2, p. 25

"I think she cannot escape the mortal realm," Thanatos said. "She is not evil, but the circumstance of her death precipitates monstrous evil."

Chap. 2, p. 40

"Generosity was good, forgiveness was good, and the ways of the Lord might be strange at times, but perhaps did have merit."

Chap. 3, p. 57

"Parry wrestled with his conscience and his long training, but the battle was so uneven as to be token."

Chap. 6, p. 115

"Perhaps, if he continued his good works, he would in time recover his prior orientation and rejoin God."

Chap. 8, p. 143

"You are alive. You assumed the Office in your last moment of life, and became immortal and ageless. Only when you retire can you die..."

Chap. 9, p. 169

"In fact, all this fencing with God in the indirect medium of the mortal realm seemed increasingly pointless."

Chap. 11, p. 214

"But he wasn't here to tour Heaven; he was here to meet God. Where would God be? Surely in the center, the highest reach..."

Chap. 12, p. 222

"He could not concern himself directly with every thread in the tapestry!"

Chap. 15, p. 286

"There was emptiness, too, for he knew that his change in circumstance could never restore to him his love."

Chap. 16, p. 310



Topics for Discussion

Discuss the theme of relativism in the novel *For Love of Evil* by Piers Anthony. What is relativism? In what ways is relativism presented? Do you believe the ends always justify the means? Why or why not?

Discuss the theme of the conflict of Good and Evil in the novel *For Love of Evil* by Piers Anthony. How does relativism affect the Good versus Evil scenario? How are good and evil presented in the novel, according to the author?

The quest for truth is a major theme in the novel *For Love of Evil* by Piers Anthony. What sort of Truth is Parry seeking? In what ways does Parry search for Truth? Does Parry ever find answers? If so, how? If not, why not?

Parry falls in love with three different women throughout the course of Piers Anthony's novel, *For Love of Evil*. Describe Parry's relationships with each of these three women. Is the love they share real? Why or why not? Which relationship is the strongest? Why?

Irony is replete throughout Piers Anthony's novel *For Love of Evil*. List and detail three points of irony throughout the book. What is irony? What makes these points ironic?