

# The Iron Daughter Study Guide

## The Iron Daughter by Julie Kagawa

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## Plot Summary

The Iron Daughter is the second novel in the Iron Fey series. In the first novel, The Iron King, Meghan Chase of Louisiana learns that she is half faery, the daughter of Oberon, the Summer King. Meghan has to kill Machina, the Iron King, in order to rescue her younger brother, Ethan. Along the way she meets and falls in love with Ash, a Winter Prince. In exchange for Ash's help, Meghan promises to return with him to the Winter Court.

As The Iron Daughter begins, Meghan is being held by Mab, the Winter Queen. Mab is the mother of Ash. Unbeknownst to Meghan, Mab has locked away Meghan's glamour, or magic. Meghan is upset because Ash seems indifferent to her now. She does not understand that love between Summer and Winter fey is forbidden in the world of Faery. Mab accuses Meghan of nearly killing Ash, by binding him to a contract in the Iron realm. Iron is poison to fey. Meghan apologizes and explains that she killed Machina, but Mab is not impressed. Later Prince Rowan, Ash's brother, tricks Meghan into confessing her love for Ash by giving her a spill-your-guts apple. Ash rescues Meghan from Rowan, but he says he would never touch the half-breed daughter of Oberon. Meghan collapses from cold, nausea, and heartbreak.

Oberon arrives in the Winter Court to deliver the Scepter of the Seasons. The scepter is exchanged between Summer and Winter twice a year, at equinox, to keep the seasons in balance. Oberon tries to take Meghan back with him to the Summer Court, but he cannot because Meghan is bound by the promise she had made to Ash.

Iron fey sneak into the Winter palace to steal the Scepter of the Seasons. Ash's older brother, Prince Sage, is killed. Meghan witnesses the crimes. No one believes Meghan when she incriminates the Iron fey, and Mab freezes her as a statue. Ash rescues her. He explains that he still loves Meghan, but their love is forbidden because they are from different kingdoms. Ash and Meghan escape from the Winter Kingdom.

A goblin agrees to help Ash and Meghan escape, but then he betrays them to Rowan's Thornguards. Rowan has aligned himself with the Iron kingdom, dazzled by their promise of power. The Thornguards wear iron rings, believing those rings will help them learn to live with and control iron, but in reality the rings are slowly killing them. Meghan and Ash escape, with help from Meghan's new-found Iron glamour, only to be chased by other spiderlike Iron fey to a lodge. Ash fights the spidery creatures as best he can, then Meghan's old friend, Puck, arrives to help. Puck is from the Summer Court, and he also loves Meghan. After Ash and Puck defeat the Iron fey, the two agree that Meghan should go back to Oberon's kingdom. Meghan disagrees. She wants to stay with Ash, and she wants to help find the scepter. The next morning, however, Ash is gone.

The Iron fey has stolen the scepter from Winter, creating the impression that Summer had taken it, in order to make Winter and Summer go to war. After the kingdoms are weakened, the Iron King plans to invade and take over the Nevernever.



Puck tries to convince Meghan that the world of Faery will survive, with or without her help, and that she should return to her family in the mortal realm. Meghan is suddenly caused to move, against her will, dragged through the woods and scratched by brambles. Puck realizes it is a Summoning. Grimalkin the cat is calling in a promise Meghan had made long ago, to help Ironhorse. Ironhorse had been Meghan's enemy in the past, because Meghan killed his king, Machina, but Ironhorse thinks the new Iron King is a fraud. Ironhorse knows that the scepter has been hidden in the mortal realm, in Silicon Valley.

Meghan, Puck, Grimalkin, and Ironhorse enter the Briars to find a trod to Silicon Valley, but they find themselves in the Between, the kingdom ruled by Leanansidhe, the Dark Muse. Leanansidhe wants to help Meghan find the scepter, because she knows that if Summer and Winter are destroyed, her kingdom will also be lost. Leanansidhe's informants learn that the scepter is being held at SciCorp, a software corporation in San Jose.

Meghan, Puck, Ironhorse, and Grimalkin make their way to SciCorp, where Virus, a former lieutenant of Machina, has the Scepter of the Seasons. Ash had tried to take the scepter from Virus earlier, and now he is under her control, with a bug implanted at the base of his skull. Virus orders Ash to kill Meghan and the others. They run, only to encounter Thornguards in the hallway. Grimalkin helps them find another exit. Ironhorse bulldozes the way through cubicles filled with drones. Ash slashes at Meghan's arm, but Meghan sees torment in his eyes. Ironhorse is wounded while trying to protect Meghan.

Back at Leanansidhe's mansion, Puck explains that Ash is dying from the bug implanted in him. Virus sends a message that the scepter has been moved to a new location and Ash has been ordered to kill Meghan's mortal family in Louisiana. Meghan and Puck agree that they will try to help Ash, but they will kill him if necessary in order to save Meghan's family. Meghan and Puck use a trod to reach Meghan's house quickly, arriving in her brother's bedroom closet. Ash is already in the house, having frozen the interior. Meghan finds her little brother shivering under his bed. Meghan and Puck head downstairs to find her parents frozen on their sofa. Ash is there. He asks them to kill him. Puck and Ash battle. Meghan sees something glitter on the back of Ash's neck. Puck wounds Ash, but not fatally, and Meghan uses her Iron glamour to make the bug release its hold on Ash.

Meghan, Ash, and Puck travel to find a healer, to save Ash from extreme iron poisoning. The gnome healer turns out to be the school nurse from Meghan's old high school. She, along with Puck, had been assigned by Oberon to look out for Meghan in the mortal realm, back in the days when Meghan had no knowledge of the Faery world. The healer says Ash should return to the Winter Court to heal with the help of Winter glamour. However, that is not possible. As an alternative, they decide to go to the Winter Formal at Meghan's old high school, because the abundance of teenage angst there might create enough glamour to help Ash.

After the dance, it is snowing in Louisiana. This is proof that the scepter must be found and returned, to restore the balance of the seasons.



Virus has taken the scepter to another SciCorp building, a factory. Meghan, Ash, Puck, Grimalkin, and Ironhorse take a window cleaner's platform to the roof of the factory and look through the skylights, to see Virus giving a speech below. Ironhorse dives through the skylight and begins battle. Virus is shocked to see Meghan using Iron glamour to wave away some arrows. Virus and Meghan have a battle of wills, fighting to control a swarm of bugs. Ash attacks Virus, slicing her in two. The bugs she controlled rain to the floor. Ash retrieves the scepter. Ironhorse dies in the battle, having protected Meghan until the end.

Ash uses the scepter to create a trod to the Reaping Fields, where the battle between Winter and Summer is being fought. Rowan is there, and he tries to take the scepter. Meghan rides away with the scepter on a unicorn, but the unicorn is killed in the middle of the battlefield. Meghan raises the scepter. Suddenly the glamour locked within her releases. It ripples across the battlefield. Meghan asks for Mab, then tries to explain everything that has happened. Ash and Puck confirm Meghan's story, but Mab refuses to believe the plot concocted by the Iron fey until she sees the iron ring on the withered hand of one of Rowan's Thornguards. Meghan gives the scepter to Mab.

Mab forces Ash to choose between his old life in the Winter Court or Meghan. He chooses Meghan and is banned from the Nevernever forever. Ash steps through a gateway into the mortal realm. Oberon forces Meghan to choose as well, and she follows Ash through the gateway. The two embrace in the rain, not sure what they will do next, but ready to face the future together.



# Part One - Chapter One: The Winter Court

## Part One - Chapter One: The Winter Court Summary

The Iron Daughter is the second novel in the Iron Fey series. The book chronicles the adventures of Meghan Chase, a half mortal and half faery, the daughter of Oberon, King of the Summer Court. She is in love with Ash, a Prince of the Winter Court, even though love between Summer and Winter is forbidden. The Summer and Winter Courts share the Scepter of the Seasons, trading it back and forth every six months to keep the seasons in balance. The new Iron King sends fey to steal the scepter from the Winter Court, while creating the impression that the Summer Court stole it. The Iron King hopes that Summer and Winter will go to war over the missing scepter, after which the Iron King can invade and take over the entire Nevernever. Meghan and Ash, along with the famous Puck, also known as Robin Goodfellow, must find and return the scepter while struggling with their feelings of love, their loyalties, and the dangerous situations into which they are thrust.

Chapter One: Meghan Chase, the main character and protagonist of the novel, is dreaming of an encounter with Machina, the Iron King, whom she killed in the first novel in the Iron Fey series. Machina has silver hair, glowing blue-green veins, and metal tentacles that run the length of his spine. He embraces Meghan with his tentacles and asks her why she has come. At first she can't remember, but then says she has come for her brother, Ethan. Machina says she came neither for Ethan nor for the Unseelie prince she loves, but rather for power. Meghan objects that this isn't how it is supposed to go, then stabs Machina with a Witchwood arrow. As he dies, he changes from Machina into the Unseelie prince, Ash, with dark hair and silver eyes. At first Meghan is shocked at what she has done, then she wonders how she could have loved such a weakling. She suddenly has iron tentacles of her own. She uses them to smash Ash to the ground, shattering him like crystal.

Awake, Meghan remembers she is in the Nevernever, a world outside of the mortal realm, in the palace of the Winter fey. She cannot tell how long she has been away from her family in the mortal world. She is always cold in the underground world of the Winter Court. Tiaothin the phouka tricks her way into Meghan's room, changing from a cat to her human form with furry ears, dreadlocks, ripped jeans, and combat boots. Tiaothin tells Meghan that Mab, Queen of the Winter fey, wishes to see her. Mab is the mother of Ash, the Unseelie prince whom Meghan loves.

Meghan hasn't seen Ash since the two arrived at the Winter Court together, after killing the Iron King and rescuing Meghan's brother, Ethan. Meghan had entered Faery to find Ethan, and Mab had sent Ash to kill Meghan, because Meghan is the daughter of Oberon, the Summer King. Ash agreed to help Meghan rescue Ethan instead, in exchange for Meghan's promise to return with Ash to the Winter Court. Despite the fact



that Meghan and Ash are from rival kingdoms, they have fallen in love. Ash is surprised that Meghan didn't try to escape when she had the chance, and Meghan is angry that Ash thinks humans are inclined to break their promises. Ash explains that Meghan must be tougher, because a Winter fey would have taken any opportunity to escape. Ash hadn't wanted to bring Meghan to the Winter Court, but he could not break his vow. He has warned her of the dangers she would face. (These events are chronicled in detail in *The Iron King*.)

Meghan remembers her sixteenth birthday, when she first learned that her best friend Robbie is actually Puck, as in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, otherwise known as Robin Goodfellow. That is when she learned that she is the half-human daughter of Oberon and that Ethan had been kidnapped. She had found the glamour or magic of the fey hard to use at the time, but now, in the Winter Court, with her glamour locked away, she feels as if part of her is missing.

Tiaothin escorts Meghan to see Mab in the icy underground palace. Mab is beautiful and cold. Mab accuses Meghan of nearly killing her son, Ash, by binding him to a contract in the Iron Realm. Mab uses glamour to help Meghan imagine the terrible tortures that might await her. Meghan wonders if Ash had manipulated her emotions for his own purposes, as his mother is doing now. Meghan asks for forgiveness, explaining that she needed Ash's help to rescue her brother from the Iron King. The faeries in the court become uneasy, because iron is poison to them. Mab responds that Ash and his brothers are scouring the kingdom for Iron fey. Meghan is secretly relieved, because that explains Ash's absence. Mab wonders if the Summer Court has an alliance with the Iron King, and Meghan explains that she killed Machina. Mab does not believe her, but Ash enters and confirms Meghan's story. Meghan smiles and turns toward him, but he is cold and dismissive, speaking only to Mab. Meghan is heartbroken. Ash's brothers, Rowan and Sage, enter the room. They say that they found no Iron fey in the kingdom, Tir Na Nog, and Rowan suggests that Ash may have exaggerated. Meghan objects, and Rowan wonders why the half-blood daughter of Oberon would care what happens to the Winter Court. Mab asks to speak with her sons alone, but Meghan stays. Ash orders her to leave. Meghan struggles not to cry as she excuses herself and exits.

## **Part One - Chapter One: The Winter Court Analysis**

This chapter contains mostly back story, to orient readers who have not read the first novel in the Iron Fey series. Meghan Chase, the half-blood daughter of Oberon, kills the Iron King in the first novel, with help from Prince Ash of the Winter kingdom. Meghan and Ash fall in love along the way, against all rules that say Summer and Winter must never be together. Thus the issue of prejudice, and perhaps racism, is introduced in the novel. Meghan is heartbroken that Ash will not acknowledge their love in front of his family or his kingdom. She does not realize that Ash is only trying to protect her. Also introduced is the concept of political corruption and greed for power, as Queen Mab and the new Iron King wield their authority with little mercy.



# Part One - Chapter Two: A Declaration, Chapter Three: The Scepter of the Seasons

## Part One - Chapter Two: A Declaration, Chapter Three: The Scepter of the Seasons Summary

Chapter Two: Alone in her room, Meghan sobs into her pillow. She feels betrayed by Ash, who clearly does not love her. She misses her friend, Puck, famously of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. He had been sent to the mortal world by Oberon to look after Meghan, and she knew him then as Robbie Goodfell. Puck defied Oberon by helping Meghan find Ethan and fight the Iron King. He had been injured, and Meghan was forced to leave him behind to heal. She feels guilty about abandoning him, and she hopes Puck is not dead. Tiaothin arrives and teases Meghan about being in love with Ash. She tells Meghan that Ash is in love with someone else. Meghan already knows about Ariella, Ash's first love, who is dead. Tiaothin tells Meghan that it is against the law for her and Ash to have a relationship, because Summer and Winter are not meant to be together. Meghan runs out of her room, devastated. She tries to find the way outside, which Tiaothin had once shown her, but sometimes doors hide or change themselves. She hides from a group of redcaps, then sees the double doors that lead out of the palace. She struggles with a door and it laughs. A butler comes to her aid and warns her to be careful. She is only safe because of the Queen's orders not to harm her.

Outside, Meghan sees a world of snow, with trees and flowers encased in ice. Huge ice crystals jut out of the ground. Somehow it snows underground. A group of girls, Winter fey, confront Meghan about Ash. They say she has committed an act of war just by looking at their prince. Prince Rowan, brother of Ash, arrives to save Meghan from the fey, but he has his own plans for her. He leads her to a large group of statues, seemingly human figures encased in ice. Meghan realizes, to her horror, that humans are indeed encased in the ice, to suffer for eternity. Rowan explains that they are alive. Their brains and hearts function but they cannot breathe, and their lungs burn for the oxygen they will never inhale. They are being punished by Mab. Rowan gives Meghan an apple and asks her about Ash. Meghan realizes she cannot control herself, because of a spell from the apple, and she tells Rowan about their adventures. She feels nauseous. She covers her mouth with her hands to stop herself from speaking, and Rowan causes ice to travel up her legs, encasing her in ice. Ash arrives and causes the ice to shatter. He sees the apple Meghan had bitten, only now it is a spill-your-guts toadstool. Rowan comments that Mab hadn't specifically forbidden anyone from using that on Meghan. Ash is cold and distant, but under the spell of the apple Meghan tells him she loves him. Rowan grins. Ash says he would never touch the half-breed daughter of Oberon. Meghan collapses from cold, nausea, and heartbreak.





Chapter Three: Meghan is not awake and not asleep. She dreams of her mother, her stepfather, and Ethan. She dreams of Rowan defending his actions to Queen Mab, of Tiaothin trying to wake her, and of Ash saying he is sorry. She hears voices mumbling about an exchange. She dreams of the dead Iron King, who says he will always be with her. She hears Ash asking her to wake up. She hears him sob. Meghan wakes to find an empty room, angry to be pulled out of her sweet darkness. She gets dressed, and Tiaothin is surprised to find her walking around. Mab will be relieved, says the phouka, because Oberon is on his way for the Exchange, to give the Scepter of the Seasons to Queen Mab for the coming winter season. The scepter is exchanged between the two kingdoms twice a year, at equinox. Tir Na Nog will throw a huge party to celebrate winter.

As Meghan watches the Summer Court approach, Rowan whispers to her from behind. He is surprised at her recovery. Rowan offers to help Meghan get over Ash by kissing him. Ash is nearby, watching, and Meghan is tempted. Then she realizes that Rowan is manipulating her with glamour. King Oberon himself arrives with his entourage, even though the Winter Court had been expecting someone of lesser importance to deliver the scepter. Oberon announces that he has come for his daughter. Mab smiles and explains that Meghan is not a prisoner. She is a willing visitor, bound by a promise she made to Prince Ash. To Meghan's dismay, Oberon says he cannot help her in that case. He calls her a foolish girl. A faery of limbs, grass, and flowers delivers the scepter to Mab, then the faery shrivels into rotting vegetation. As Oberon leaves, he tells Mab he will find a way to get his daughter back. The Unseelie rejoice loudly and violently at the coming of winter. Prince Sage, another brother of Ash, asks Meghan if they can speak in private, while he guards the scepter in the throne room. Sage uses no glamour and shows no malice, so Meghan agrees to go with him. Sage's wolf follows them. Sage warns Meghan of the enmity between Ash and Rowan, and advises her to trust neither brother. The wolf growls, and the two turn to see four wiry forms and Ash, wearing armor with a barbed-wire crown.

## **Part One - Chapter Two: A Declaration, Chapter Three: The Scepter of the Seasons Analysis**

Meghan still does not understand that Ash is distancing himself from her for her own protection. Meghan has been through a lot, but she is in fact an inexperienced teenager. The danger becomes clear when Ash's brother, Rowan, tricks Meghan into revealing her true feelings and tries to encase her in ice. Ash comes to her rescue, but he still denies their love.

In torment and confusion, Meghan has wild dreams after eating the spill-your-guts apple. She does not realize that her dreams of Ash's visits are actually real.

Meghan learns about the tradition of the Scepter of the Seasons, central to the plot of *The Iron Daughter*. The scepter is exchanged between the Summer and Winter Courts twice a year, at equinox, to keep the seasons in balance. Meghan is the daughter of the Winter king, while Ash is the son of the Summer king. That is why their love is forbidden,



because their kingdoms are opposite sides of a coin. Oberon tries to rescue Meghan from the Winter Court, but he is helpless after he learns that Meghan is bound by a promise she made to Prince Ash. In Faery, a promise can never be broken. This fact will hold great importance as the plot develops.

Meghan is caught up in the rivalries between Ash, Rowan, and Sage, but she and Sage are caught off guard when Ash shows up to steal the Scepter of the Seasons.



# Part One - Chapter Four: The Theft, Chapter Five: Brothers

## Part One - Chapter Four: The Theft, Chapter Five: Brothers Summary

Chapter Four: The knight in the throne room is not Ash after all, but a doppelganger created by Tertius, an Iron knight. Meghan had last seen Tertius when she was battling Machina in The Iron King. Tertius and the Iron faeries attack. Sage yanks Meghan away, hiding her behind Mab's throne. Sage is wounded, unable to fend off so many attackers, and Meghan grabs the scepter. She aims it at an attacker, then she is slashed across the face. She drops the scepter and Tertius retrieves it. He explains that he is following the orders of Machina's successor, the new Iron King, then he stabs Sage and departs with the Scepter of the Seasons, along with the other Iron faeries. Sage's wolf is dead, and soon Sage dies and turns to ice. Tiaothin enters the throne room to see the carnage, then flees to tell the court. As the Winter fey rush in, Meghan realizes they are upset at the idea of an attack within their territory, and not so much saddened at the loss of their prince. Even Rowan shows no sorrow. Mab enters and utters the single word, "Oberon" (p. 66). She screams and icicles fly. She declares war on Summer. Meghan tries to tell everyone that Iron fey are responsible, not the Summer Court, but no one will listen. Rowan will not confirm her story and Ash is nowhere to be seen. Mab shoots a flare of blue-white at Meghan, and she turns to ice starting from her feet and traveling up her body. Her mouth and nose fill with ice and her lungs scream for air. She is drowning yet alive, in agony, an icy statue. Rowan laughs and everyone leaves Meghan alone in the throne room. After an unknown amount of time, Meghan sees someone enter the room. It is Ash, devastated to see what has happened to her. He causes the ice to melt. Meghan falls, vomiting water and shards of ice. Ash grabs her hand and drags her away, but Meghan demands to know where he is taking her, remembering Ash's recent disinterest. Ash explains that he wants to take her back to Seelie territory and safety, so he can be done with the situation. Ash explains that he had to make Rowan and Mab think he didn't care about her, because emotions are a weakness in the Winter Court. Meghan willingly takes Ash's hand, but just then Rowan arrives. It is too late for Ash and Meghan to escape.

Chapter Five: Rowan comments that Mab will be disappointed in Ash, because he is helping the half-breed Meghan to escape. Rowan laughs, realizing that Ash loves Meghan. He thinks maybe Mab will freeze the two of them together, for eternity. Rowan tells Ash to hand over Meghan or die. Ash offers a third choice, pointing his blade at Rowan. He does not want to fight Rowan, but he will, for Meghan. Both princes are wounded, then Ash has his sword at Rowan's throat. Rowan taunts Ash about Ariella, the woman he loved who is now dead. Rowan charges at Ash, right into his blade. Ash is agonized, thinking he killed his brother, but he and Meghan run when others approach. They run down hallways until Ash pulls Meghan into a simple bedroom. Ash



is going into shock from his wounds. Meghan asks where she can find bandages, rags, or towels. Ash says there is a jar of salve in the dresser that "she" kept for emergencies. When Meghan sees an assortment of dead flowers, ribbons, rings, and other mementos, she realizes that these trinkets once belonged to Ariella. Meghan tends to Ash's bleeding shoulder. She tears up, realizing that in the past Ariella had tended to Ash's wounds. Ash apologizes for hurting her. He had thought that if he could make Meghan hate him, things would be easier for her. He explains that he belongs in Mab's world and Meghan does not. They can never be together. Meghan tells Ash that the Summer Court does not have the scepter, but that the Iron fey Tertius killed Sage and took it. Ash wants to tell Mab, but Meghan reminds him that Mab won't believe him now that he has saved Meghan and killed Rowan. Ash is torn, not sure what to do. Ash cracks the door to look out and the catlike Tiaothin streaks in. She tells them that everyone is looking for them. Ash realizes they must run. Tiaothin creates a diversion and the two run to a staircase that leads out of the palace.

## **Part One - Chapter Four: The Theft, Chapter Five: Brothers Analysis**

Meghan learns that Ash still loves her, but they cannot be together. Ash chooses his loyalty.

Meghan and Sage realize that it is not Ash who has come to take the scepter, but rather a doppelganger. Identity is a slippery thing in the world of Faery, as is loyalty. Meghan is sad to see Sage and his wolf die, but the other Winter fey don't seem to care much about his death. They are more upset about the notion of being invaded.

Ash is devastated when he thinks he accidentally killed his brother. He is loyal, even though Rowan had shown himself to be cruel.

Mab shows her full wrath and cruelty when she turns Meghan into an icy statue, alive yet unable to breathe. Ash shows his compassion when he rescues her, despite the danger to himself. He makes Meghan realize that he had to pretend not to care for her, for both of their sakes. His actions confirm the fact, when he risks everything to help Meghan escape from Mab.



# **Part One - Chapter Six: The Goblin Market, Chapter Seven: The Ring, Chapter Eight: Partings and Memories**

## **Part One - Chapter Six: The Goblin Market, Chapter Seven: The Ring, Chapter Eight: Partings and Memories Summary**

Chapter Six: Meghan and Ash descend a glittering staircase out of the castle and into the surrounding city. Ash warns Meghan not to make eye contact with anyone. Many Unseelie fey are dancing in celebration of the arrival of winter, but those celebrations frequently turn violent. Meghan and Ash hide when two of Rowan's Thornguards arrive. The knights announce that Winter is at war with Summer, and everyone cheers. They add that Ash is a traitor, and that he and Meghan are dangerous. The two are to be captured, but not harmed. To Ash's relief, the knights mention that Rowan is merely wounded. Now that they are fugitives, Ash realizes that the Goblin Market is their only possible escape. They enter it through the trunk of a tree. Ash warns Meghan to look at nothing and make no deals in the Market. Goblins offer Meghan trades for a lock of her hair, a memory, her first-born, and more, all of which she refuses. Ash tells a certain dwarf that he is looking for a goblin called Sweetfinger. They are sent to a room to wait and an awkward silence hangs between them. Finally, Ash is called away to speak with Sweetfinger. Meghan falls asleep until she is shaken awake by Ash. In the darkness, Ash admits that he loves Meghan. At first she had reminded him of Ariella, but then he came to love Meghan for herself. He repeats that they can never be together, can never violate centuries of rules and traditions. Meghan asks for one last kiss, promising she will never ask again. When their lips part, Ash tells her never to make such a request again. They leave the room to meet Sweetfinger.

Chapter Seven: Sweetfinger leads Meghan and Ash to a boat by the water's edge, then blindfolds them, because they are not allowed to see the location of the goblin tunnels. They travel in the boat and eventually arrive at the secret location. Ash pays Sweetfinger and asks him to keep their activity a secret, but it is too late. Four of Rowan's Thornguards arrive to capture Ash and Meghan. Sweetfinger floats away in his boat, apologizing, explaining that Ash's offer was good but the other prince's offer was better. One of the Thornguards, Edgebriar, says that Rowan wants Ash dead and Meghan alive, on orders from the new king, the Iron King. Edgebriar explains that Rowan has joined with the Iron kingdom because the old ways are becoming obsolete. Rowan wants to lead them into a new era, with no fear of iron or the fading of human imagination. He shows them an iron ring on his finger, which is shriveled and black. The iron burns Edgebriar, but he believes that soon he will be able to use iron freely, like humans. Ash tells Edgebriar that he isn't gaining power, he is dying. Meghan realizes that it was Rowan who let the Iron fey into the Winter kingdom to steal the scepter. She



tries to summon some glamour to fight the Thornguards, but her power is locked away. Ash quickly kills one Thornguard, which turns into a thornbush with a ring on one branch. Meghan throws rocks as Ash battles the remaining knights. Edgebriar traps Meghan in a stranglehold, then holds the point of a knife to her face. Ash stops fighting. Meghan feels iron glamour from Edgebriar's ring, unlike anything she has felt before. Meghan wills Edgebriar's ring to tighten, and he jerks his arm away in pain. Ash lunges and kills Edgebriar, who transforms into a thornbush. Ash tends to the wound on Meghan's face. They mount two of the Thornguards' horses. Suddenly the horses panic and a metallic smell fills the air. Meghan and Ash flee from a lone figure on horseback, who is leading an army of spindly metallic creatures. Meghan and Ash come to a dropoff. Ash suggests they jump and make their way to a lodge he and Ariella had used in the past. They leap into the air on horseback and, miraculously, land lightly. Meghan and Ash dismount and run for the lodge; their horses run into the woods. Inside the lodge everything is icy and covered in a layer of white flowers. The wire fey break down the door as Meghan hides. Ash fights them off as best he can, but more fey climb into the lodge through holes in the roof. Meghan tries to find glamour like she had used before, but she has no success. Suddenly a giant black raven with emerald eyes crashes into the lodge, then transforms into Meghan's friend, Puck. Puck takes a furry ball from his pocket and throws it. The ball transforms into a large black boar which attacks the fey. Together, Ash and Puck kill most of the wire fey. The rest of them flee. Meghan runs to Puck and hugs him, relieved that he is not dead. She had felt guilty for leaving him behind in *The Iron King*. Puck tends to avoid emotional encounters by grinning and joking. Puck jokes that he and Ash might as well kill each other now, since their kingdoms are at war. Ash responds that Puck should take Meghan back to the Summer Court and safety.

Chapter Eight: Puck agrees with Ash's request, saying that he had already planned to take Meghan back to Oberon's kingdom. Meghan feels hurt and betrayed. She wants to help find the stolen scepter. Ash explains that Mab had sealed Meghan's magic away, so she is of no use in pursuing the thieves. Meghan is angry because Ash had not told her before why her glamour wouldn't work. Puck says that only Mab or someone of equal power, such as Oberon, can remove such a binding. Ash goes to a stream to bathe his wounds, Puck gathers firewood, and Meghan unpacks blankets for the night. Meghan reminisces about a simpler time when she and Puck, whom she then knew as Robbie Goodfell, would watch horror movies together and share popcorn, in the days when she lived with her human family and knew nothing of Oberon or Faery. To make Meghan feel better, Puck uses glamour to make the piles of dead wire fey look like branches. Meghan is relieved. She avoids telling Puck that she is in love with Ash, but she describes how she had killed the Iron King and rescued her brother. Puck offers to take her back to her home in the human world, rather than to the Summer Court. She could simply go back to her old life. Meghan asks if that would get Puck in trouble with Oberon, but Puck responds that he is already in trouble for allowing Meghan to go after the Iron King. Puck admits that he is in love with Meghan, and a part of her is thrilled. After all, she and Puck are both part of the Summer Court, so their love wouldn't be forbidden. Ash returns and grows cold, because he sees that he interrupted a moment between Meghan and Puck. Ash tells Puck that he and Meghan should be gone by morning. Meghan falls asleep, tortured, torn between Ash and Puck, torn between the



mortal world and the faery one. She wakes to see Ash with a vision of Ariella, a visible memory that fades away. Meghan senses that Ash is saying goodbye to both her and Ariella. Ash says he is leaving. He apologizes for letting things get out of control between them, when he always knew they could never be together. He warns that they are enemies now, at war, and in the future he might even have to kill her. He leaves, and when Meghan awakens in the morning the flowers have faded and the area is carpeted in snow.

## **Part One - Chapter Six: The Goblin Market, Chapter Seven: The Ring, Chapter Eight: Partings and Memories Analysis**

In the Goblin Market, Meghan sees some of the wonders of Faery, even though Ash warned her to make no deals.

When she asks for one last kiss, Meghan feels the passion Ash still feels for her.

Goblins can be shifty, they learn, when Sweetfinger betrays Ash and Meghan to Rowan and his Thornguards. Ash is surprised to learn that Rowan is a traitor, seeking greater power by joining the Iron fey. Rowan's Thornguards are so dazzled by the notion of power that they do not realize their iron rings are slowly killing them. Iron is a poison to both Winter and Summer fey, but not to the half-human Meghan. Meghan's Summer glamour is somehow locked away, but she discovers a new power, an Iron glamour, that she uses to fight the Thornguards. This foreshadows future events when she will again need to use that power. She tells no one, not even Ash, about her mysterious ability.

Puck is introduced, and he demonstrates his own unique powers involving animals. Puck is the opposite of Ash, full of humor while Ash is serious.

Meghan does not like it when Ash and Puck make decisions about her, without her. She does not want to return to the mortal realm; she wants to help find the scepter, even if her Summer glamour is locked away. She is furious to learn that Mab had locked away her power and that Ash knew about it all along. She still keeps silent about her new power, involving iron.

A love triangle is established when Puck reveals his feelings for Meghan. Because Puck, like Meghan, is from Summer, their love would be acceptable in the faery world. Meghan is conflicted. She has certain feelings for Puck despite her heated passion for Ash.

Ash departs, warning that in the future he might even have to kill Meghan, but it seems likely they will have to cooperate in the future, along with Puck, to find the scepter and bring peace to Faery.

Thus ends Part One, in which Ash and Meghan find their love tested in the world of Faery.



# Part Two - Chapter Nine: The Summoning, Chapter Ten: Truth and Lies, Chapter Eleven: The Briars

## Part Two - Chapter Nine: The Summoning, Chapter Ten: Truth and Lies, Chapter Eleven: The Briars Summary

Chapter Nine: Meghan and Puck make their way from the lodge to the edge of the wyldwood, where the snow and ice abruptly stop. Meghan hopes Ash will come after her, but he does not. A tree woman, a dryad, collapses near them and asks for help. She is thin, with moss-green skin and hair like vines. She explains that her tree has been poisoned, then she dies. Her body turns into brittle branches. Puck places her body near the base of a tree and its roots pull her underground. Soon Meghan and Puck see that part of the wyldwood is dying, overrun by living metal lampposts and wires growing amongst the other trees. The smells of copper and decay fill the air. Meghan realizes she cannot leave the Nevernever now, but she must help to save it. Puck tells her that the Nevernever will go on, with or without her, and that Summer and Winter will periodically be at war. Meghan might as well go home and be safe. After all, she already did her duty by killing one Iron King. Meghan responds that the mortal world's climate will be messed up if the scepter isn't returned to Winter soon. Puck grows angry, because he wants Meghan to stay safe. He says she does not fully understand the danger, because she is new to this world. He confesses that he knew Meghan and Ash were in love, but he didn't say anything because Ash did the right thing by leaving her behind. Meghan cries about losing Ash, even though she knows this isn't fair to Puck, since he loves her too. Meghan eventually composes herself, then Puck asks if she has a plan. Just then Meghan feels a strange sensation in her legs. She is tugged away against her will. She travels toward the woods, and Puck realizes it is a Summoning. He asks if Meghan has made any bargains or given anything away lately, such as hair or blood. She says no. Meghan must go, and Puck will follow. Her legs burn and she is scratched by brambles, but at last she stops abruptly. Grimalkin the cat, large and gray with golden eyes, appears. He is the summoner. Meghan remembers that she had made a bargain with Grimalkin long ago, that he could call on her once, in exchange for his help in rescuing her brother from the Iron King. Grimalkin explains that he summoned Meghan as a favor for someone else. The someone appears, a giant iron horse with burning eyes and flames in its belly.

Chapter Ten: Puck raises a weapon against Ironhorse. In a booming voice, the Iron fey explains that he means Meghan no harm. Meghan knew Ironhorse as one of Machina's lieutenants, and he had tried to capture her in the past. Puck calls Ironhorse derogatory names, including Rusty and tin can. Ironhorse tells Meghan that he knows the location of the scepter. Meghan does not trust Ironhorse, because she knows the scepter was





stolen by Iron fey. Ironhorse explains that the new Iron King is a fraud, and he will not obey a fraudulent king. He wants to join forces with Meghan in order to stop the Iron King from gaining more power. Ironhorse reminds them that he cannot lie. He says the scepter is in the mortal realm, in Silicon Valley. Machina was born there. Many of his lieutenants, including Virus and Glitch, are from there as well. Ironhorse swears on Machina that he will take Meghan to the scepter and protect her. Such an oath cannot be broken by a fey. The quickest route to Silicon Valley is a trod, which they can reach by crossing through the Briars. Grimalkin and Ironhorse lead the way; Meghan and Puck follow.

Chapter Eleven: Puck tells Meghan that the Briars are a giant, dangerous maze. The Briars are alive and filled with hungry creatures, but within are trods leading to every doorway in the mortal realm. Rain and fog limit visibility in the Briars, and some thorns are longer than Meghan. Grimalkin promises he knows the way. Puck tells Ironhorse to come last, so if they are jumped from behind they won't lose anyone important. Here and there they see piles of bones. Grim stops and warns everyone that they must stay silent, they must not get separated, and they must not go through any doors. They must simply follow. Meghan notices one open door that leads to a bedroom with a crib. Later, they all freeze as a massive spider crosses overhead. A three-inch barb unfurls to reveal a small faery, which flies at Meghan's face. Ironhorse kills the faery with flame from his nostrils, and Meghan says he should not have killed it. Grimalkin explains that the faery was small, but there are thousands. Just then, they swarm. Grimalkin tells everyone to run. Meghan runs into a small Asian girl with furry ears poking through her hair. The girl is stung by a faery, and she tells her friend, Nelson, to run. Nelson is built like a gorilla, with blond hair. Everyone is stung until a loud roar makes the tiny faeries pause. Soon the swarm scatters and a dragon appears. The dragon shouts for the thieves to stop and give back what is hers. They decide to go through a door, but Meghan worries that Ironhorse won't fit. To her surprise, Ironhorse transforms into a large black man with a square jaw and fists the size of hams. He has dreadlocks, but his eyes still glow red. They travel down a tunnel to a door with Saint-John's-wort hanging on it. Fey cannot pass through a door with such flowers. Grimalkin instructs Meghan to remove the flowers, then everyone passes through the door, shutting out the dragon's flames.

## **Part Two - Chapter Nine: The Summoning, Chapter Ten: Truth and Lies, Chapter Eleven: The Briars Analysis**

Meghan and Puck see that the wyldwood is being choked and poisoned by iron. This environmental theme runs throughout the novel, as Meghan and her friends battle the Iron fey and their love of technology in order to restore the natural balance of the seasons.

Puck summarizes the ebb and flow of history, in which current events that once seemed so important fade into a general pattern of well-being. He tells Meghan that Summer



and Winter will sometimes be at war, sometimes at peace, with or without her help. The scepter will somehow be found with or without her help. The reader is left to decide whether to align with Puck, who prefers to go with the flow and enjoy life, or to align with Meghan, who wants to take an active role in preserving the future.

Meghan is reminded of the force of a promise in Faery when she is dragged against her will in a Summoning, as the result of a forgotten promise made long ago.

Loyalties are complicated once again when Meghan and Puck meet Ironhorse. Ironhorse is an Iron fey who had once been the enemy of Meghan, back when Machina was the Iron King. But now that a new Iron King is in power, a king that Ironhorse thinks is a fraud, he wants to join with his old enemies for the greater good. Ironhorse uses the power of a promise to convince Meghan and Puck that he can be trusted.

Puck is portrayed as good, but he uses derogatory names such as rusty, tin can, and toaster oven to address Ironhorse. This indicates a subtle form of racism, which Ironhorse ignores. Ironhorse simply wants to get along, for the greater good.

Not only is iron poisonous to Winter and Summer fey, but technology is anathema as well. That is why the stolen Scepter of the Seasons has been hidden in Silicon Valley, the mecca of technology.



# Part Two - Chapter Twelve: Leanansidhe

## Part Two - Chapter Twelve: Leanansidhe Summary

Chapter Twelve: Laying on bare concrete, everyone tries to recover from their recent brush with a dragon. Then a goat boy named Warren shines a flashlight in their eyes. He is tall and skinny, with a goatee and goat horns. Standing beside him are the two streetrats from the tunnel, Kimi and Nelson, who had stolen something from the dragon. Warren is confrontational until Kimi recognizes Meghan as Oberon's daughter. Kimi explains that the boss of this place has been looking for the Summer princess. Next they recognize Puck as Robin Goodfellow and they remark that Ironhorse stinks. Leanansidhe, the Dark Muse, is the Queen of the Exiles, and she controls the Between, the area in between the mortal realm and Nevernever. Leanansidhe inspires artists, notably James Dean, Jimi Hendrix, and Kurt Cobain. Those she helps generally shine brilliantly, then die young. Leanansidhe lived in the Nevernever until the jealous Queen Titania banished her to the mortal world. Leanansidhe has since created a new kingdom for herself, in between the mortal and faery worlds. Meghan and the others agree to see Leanansidhe, since Grimalkin has disappeared and they don't want to retrace their steps and confront the dragon.

Conveniently, their escape landed them in the basement of Leanansidhe's mansion. Kimi explains that Leanansidhe has many clients. Kimi, Nelson, and Warren stole a dragon egg for one such client, on Leanansidhe's orders. In exchange for their efforts, Kimi, Nelson, and Warren receive free room and board, along with enhanced reputations. Meghan realizes that the three are half-breeds, much like herself, and that is why they cannot easily live in either the mortal or the faery world. Kimi is half-phouka, Nelson is half-troll, and Warren is half-satyr. Kimi warns that Leanansidhe may not take kindly to Ironhorse, since he is an Iron fey. The group ascends from the basement and Meghan hears familiar music. She had heard it as a child, when her mother took her to see "Phantom of the Opera." Her mother had cried, uncharacteristically. The mansion is decorated beautifully and opulently, in red and black, with many works of art and musical instruments. A skinny man with uncombed hair is playing a piano, intent on nothing else. Grimalkin is in the room, as is Leanansidhe. The Queen's waist-length hair is copper-colored and bright, floating about her face. She praises the pianist, Charles, and dismisses him. Charles stares blankly at Meghan, asking if he knows her. He is confused. He says that rats whisper to him in the dark. Leanansidhe asks the three half-breeds for a pair of dragon eggs, but they have only one. With stiff politeness, Leanansidhe explains that her client needs two eggs, and they must go back for another. The three hurriedly depart. Then Leanansidhe greets Meghan and her friends. Leanansidhe asks Puck how Oberon is doing, if he is still henpecked by his wife, Titania. Leanansidhe asks Puck not to tell Titania of her whereabouts, then assures him that she means Meghan no harm. Ironhorse, however, she might dismantle and send to Asia. Meghan explains that Ironhorse is with her and poses no threat. As the group walks to the dining hall, Meghan is mesmerized by Leanansidhe's voice. In the dining hall they find an abundance of food, which Leanansidhe assures the group is not



glamoured or enchanted. Her minions are redcaps. One of the redcaps spies Ironhorse and threatens to kill him. Puck pulls his dagger and Meghan grabs a knife from the table. Leanansidhe tells everyone to stop, then commands the redcaps to pull out chairs for her and her guests. The minions obey, reluctantly. Leanansidhe explains that the redcaps came to her for asylum after they had cheated the goblin tribes, and anyone who seeks asylum in her realm must work. Leanansidhe tells the group that informants keep her up to date on events in the faery realm, she knows the group is looking for the scepter, and she can help them find it. Meghan is suspicious. Leanansidhe explains that the Iron faeries are getting too powerful. If they destroy Summer and Winter, the Between will no longer be safe. Even now, many exiles dwell under Leanansidhe's roof because of the Iron fey. Leanansidhe says that Silicon Valley is the gremlins' spawning ground. The scepter was in a certain building, but it has been moved because someone tried to take it. Meghan is sure Ash is the one, and she asks about him. Leanansidhe reminds Meghan that Ash is not important, given the urgency of finding the scepter. Leanansidhe promises to have her scouts look for the scepter. Meanwhile, Meghan and her friends must wait at the mansion, per Leanansidhe's orders.

## Part Two - Chapter Twelve: Leanansidhe Analysis

The theme of racism is expanded with the introduction of the Between. Leanansidhe, the Dark Muse, takes in exiles who can no longer live in the other realms. Exiles include half-breeds, along with others who merely broke promises. Leanansidhe herself lives in exile, creating a new realm because a jealous queen had banished her from Nevernever. But even Leanansidhe is prejudiced against Ironhorse, the ever-patient Iron fey who acts in defiance of his own kingdom, in the name of honor and what is right.

Leanansidhe is devoted to the arts. She uses her glamour to spark creativity. On the dark side, she takes in mortals with talent and saps their memories, so that they can fill her mansion with music and art. One mortal, named Charles, seems to recognize Meghan, but he and Meghan have no idea why.

Leanansidhe makes her motives clear, as to why she wants to help Meghan and the others find the scepter in Silicon Valley. She fears that if the Iron fey destroy Summer and Winter, her realm will be destroyed as well. Common interests can unite those who normally live separately.



# Part Two - Chapter Thirteen: Charles and the Redcaps, Chapter Fourteen: Royal Treatment

## Part Two - Chapter Thirteen: Charles and the Redcaps, Chapter Fourteen: Royal Treatment Summary

Chapter Thirteen: Meghan is restless, waiting in Leanansidhe's mansion, because there are no clocks and no technology. Only music and books break the monotony. Ironhorse is equally impatient. Charles the pianist enters a room where Meghan is reading. He seems more clear-headed. He does not remember playing the piano for Meghan, however. Grimalkin explains that the mortals in the mansion do not remember their lives before, but their creative energy keeps the Between alive. Leanansidhe enters and tells Charles to shoo. Leanansidhe is leaving for Nashville, she says, to help a musician who is blocked. She will return in a day or two. She vanishes in a swirl of glitter. Ironhorse proposes they should escape. He reminds Meghan that they could be looking for Ash. Meghan is upset, reminding everyone that she cannot look for Ash because he doesn't want to be found, and also because finding the scepter is more urgent. She storms out of the room, tired of feeling responsible. She finds Charles in a room, playing the piano while other instruments play along as if they are alive. Meghan knows the song, but she cannot remember from where. She feels a sense of loss. When Charles stops playing, Meghan asks him about the song, but Charles does not know the title. Warren enters the room with a gun. He points the gun at Meghan and tells some redcaps that they will be handsomely rewarded by the Iron King for finding her. Other redcaps are capturing Puck and Ironhorse, so they will not be coming to Meghan's rescue. Next Warren points his gun at Charles, apologizing, saying Charles just got in the way. Meghan silently asks the gun barrel to tighten. On command, the gun explodes in Warren's hand. The redcaps try to capture Meghan and Charles, but Puck and Ironhorse burst into the room and send the redcaps flying. Suddenly Leanansidhe appears. She hadn't gone to Nashville, she explains. She knew there was a traitor in the mansion, and she had set up a trap. Now the traitor has been caught. Leanansidhe will not punish the redcaps, she says, for they are too dull to organize such a plot. Warren, on the other hand, will feel her wrath. Charles' only comment is that the pretty lady is sparkly.

Chapter Fourteen: Leanansidhe tells Meghan and Puck that the scepter is being held within SciCorp, a software corporation in San Jose, California. The Iron fey love technology, as do cold, calculating mortals. Meghan had already decided not to tell Leanansidhe about her ability with iron glamour. The mortal Meghan misses her long-lost iPod. The scepter is being held on floor twenty-nine point five, according to Leanansidhe's informants. How to get to that floor is a mystery, the answer to which lies in the following code:



3

13

1113

3113

132113

1...

Everyone discusses how to get Meghan into the building, using a disguise and a fake employee ID. Leanansidhe sends for Kimi and Nelson. Meghan asks if the two were involved in Warren's plot, and Leanansidhe says no. But, she muses, the girl would make a lovely violin or lyre, and the troll might make a fine bass. Meghan hopes Leanansidhe is kidding. When Kimi and Nelson arrive, they are instructed to obtain a SciCorp ID for Meghan. They show little surprise or sorrow about what happened to Warren. Leanansidhe takes Meghan shopping for suitable corporate attire, because the glamour needed to conjure an outfit might unravel when surrounded by steel and iron. In the mortal realm, Meghan notices the date on a newspaper. She is relieved to find that only five months have passed, so her parents and baby brother would not have aged much. They find a nice black suit for Meghan. Meghan asks if shopping is unnatural for faeries, and Leanansidhe responds that shopping is like hunting. All faeries enjoy hunting, after all. They find shoes and other accessories, then Meghan has her hair and nails done at a salon run by faeries. Leanansidhe pays for everything with a credit card that looks suspiciously like a piece of bark. Everyone in the salon stiffens when an Iron fey enters. The Iron fey tells Leanansidhe that she will be allowed to return to the Nevernever if she turns Meghan over to the Iron King. Back at the mansion, everyone pours over SciCorp blueprints. Kimi and Nelson have obtained an ID. Leanansidhe reminds Meghan that she must solve the number code by morning, so that Operation Scepter may begin. Later, Puck visits Meghan in her room, bringing a snack and words of encouragement. Meghan is frustrated, unable to solve the code. Puck kisses her. He leaves, and Meghan feels guilty because she still loves Ash. Grimalkin suggests that Meghan look at the code as a riddle, rather than as a formula. Meghan reads it out loud, then realizes that each line of numbers is a description of the line prior. For example, the line "1 3" can be read out loud as "One-one, one-three. She has broken the code.

## **Part Two - Chapter Thirteen: Charles and the Redcaps, Chapter Fourteen: Royal Treatment Analysis**

Leanansidhe uses the power of mortals' creativity to keep the Between alive, and yet she spurns other mortal creations, such as technology. Although Charles plays a piano, some instruments in the mansion seem to play themselves. A suspicion is raised that perhaps Leanansidhe turns mortals or fey into musical instruments at times.



Leanansidhe shows her savvy by pretending to go to Nashville, in order to tempt the untrustworthy Warren into trying to kidnap Meghan. No one knows that Meghan uses her special Iron glamour to sabotage Warren's gun, but Leanansidhe shows up to punish Warren and force him to give up his secrets. Leanansidhe is understanding enough to waive punishment for the redcaps, because she realizes they are too dull to mutiny on their own.

No one is sure how to get to the magical floor of the SciCorp building, twenty-nine point five, where the scepter is hidden, but the mortal Meghan is given an equation to solve. Presumably Summer and Winter fey lack the talent or inclination to solve number puzzles. Meghan gives a nod to technology, lamenting the long-ago loss of her iPod.

The love triangle re-emerges as a problem when Puck kisses Meghan. She feels guilty, because she still loves Ash.



## Part Two - Chapter Fifteen: Operation Scepter, Chapter Sixteen: Traitor

### Part Two - Chapter Fifteen: Operation Scepter, Chapter Sixteen: Traitor Summary

Chapter Fifteen: Back at Leanansidhe's mansion, Meghan sees a woman in a sleek black business suit, perfectly groomed, looking at her with disdain. The woman is the new Meghan, as reflected in a mirror. Her shoes hurt her feet. Puck and the others are studying blueprints of the SciCorp building. Meghan asks again how there can be a floor twenty-nine point five, between floors, and Leanansidhe responds that it is the same thing as having her mansion between the mortal realm and the Nevernever. Kimi shows Meghan the front entrance on the blueprint, where she will enter with Puck and Ironhorse. The two fey will be invisible to mortals. Only Meghan will have to clear security. Kimi assures them that there are no Iron fey on the main floor, who could spot them. Grimalkin says he will accompany them as well, to make sure they go through the right doors. Leanansidhe remarks that she and the cat have made some sort of a deal. Charles bursts into the room, anguished that Meghan is leaving. She promises him that she will return, and somehow he seems familiar to her. Leanansidhe tells him to go and find the other Charles. Meghan questions that, and Leanansidhe explains that she calls all of the mortals Charles, for simplicity's sake. The group departs, led by Kimi and Nelson. They ascend a spiral staircase in the mansion and stop at a trapdoor in the ceiling. It is the underside of a manhole cover. Above is a street in the mortal world. Kimi and Nelson say goodbye, and Kimi tells them the location of the trod to return to the mansion. Meghan, Puck, Ironhorse, and Grimalkin climb up and into the street. Someone honks at Meghan, but her friends remain unseen by mortals. They decide to take a taxi, even though Puck is uneasy about riding around in a big metal box. By the time they arrive at SciCorp, Puck is ill from metal poisoning and the cab driver's cigar smoke. Inside the impressive lobby of SciCorp, Meghan sees designer suits and cameras everywhere. The security guard runs Meghan's ID through the scanner, and the machine beeps. The guard studies the ID, then explains that the card expired yesterday. "Ms. Smith" must get a new one before tomorrow. Meghan promises to take care of it, and the security guard allows her to enter SciCorp. Puck jokes that they are halfway there, that all they have to do is find the half floor, grab the scepter, and leave. Then they notice Grimalkin is missing. Ironhorse thinks the cat is a coward, but Meghan and Puck disagree. Inside the elevator, there is no button for floor twenty-nine point five. Puck tries to look nonchalant, disturbed by being in a big metal box in a big metal tube. Meghan takes a paper from her pocket and enters the code she had solved. A large white button appears, marked 29.5. When they reach the half floor, Meghan and the others feel a tingle. They are at the right place. They can even sense which door to approach. Inside, the room is freezing. A group of mortals sit around a conference table, holding a meeting. Meghan apologizes, but the person leading the meeting asks her to stay. Her suit is neon green, her lipstick is radioactive-blue, and her hair is made of





computer cables done up in a bun. She holds the scepter. Meghan and the others recognize her as Virus, one of Machina's lieutenants. The scepter glows a sickly green. Virus says she was expecting Meghan and her clown, but she is disappointed to see that Ironhorse is a traitor. Ironhorse responds angrily that Virus is the traitor, not he, because she is following a false king. Virus explains that she only followed the King's orders long enough to get the scepter from Tertius. Now, the King will have to get it from her by force. She admits that Rowan and the others fell for the lie that they will become immune to iron and technology. The Winter and Summer fey will die, and Virus will rule. She adjourns the meeting and the humans around the table turn into Thornguards in spiky black armor. Virus snaps her fingers for one last surprise, and Ash enters the room. Virus says it took six Thornguards and nearly two dozen drones to bring him down.

Chapter Sixteen: Ironhorse does not believe the figure is really Ash, but Meghan knows it is him. Virus explains that Ash has been reprogrammed with a bug, to obey only her. Ash says that all of them will die. Ash's face is tight and gray, splitting in places. He is slowly dying from iron poisoning. Meghan begs Virus to make some sort of a bargain and take the bug out of Ash. She can't bear the thought of him disappearing into nothing, since faeries have no afterlife. Virus explains that her new and improved bug is implanted at the base of Ash's skull. It takes over the cervical nervous system. Carving it out would be fatal. Only Virus can order the bug to release its host. Virus orders Ash to kill the group, and Ash swings his sword at Meghan's face. Puck deflects the blade. Ironhorse charges the Thornguards and Puck conjures a grizzly. Puck yanks Meghan out of the room. Ash pursues them with an eerie calm expression. As they approach the elevator, it opens to reveal a new squadron of Thornguards. Meghan and Puck are trapped, until Grimalkin opens a side door. He remarks that he is the only one who ever considers finding a second way out. The door leads to a massive array of cubicles. Every human rises and says in unison, "We see you, Meghan Chase. You will not escape" (p. 238). Only Meghan's despair keeps her from being terrified. Ironhorse charges straight through the cubicles and drones, clearing a path for Meghan and the others. Meghan loses one high heel and kicks off the other. They almost make it to an emergency stairway when Ash appears. He slashes Meghan's arm and raises his sword for a killing blow. Meghan sees torment in his eyes. As Ash brings down his sword, Ironhorse jumps in to protect Meghan. His side is torn open and black liquid oozes out. As Meghan and the others escape, she sees a frozen tear on Ash's face.

## **Part Two - Chapter Fifteen: Operation Scepter, Chapter Sixteen: Traitor Analysis**

Leanansidhe's prejudice or feeling of superiority is shown when she admits that she calls all of the mortal men in her mansion Charles. She can't be bothered to learn their names.

Puck supplies some comic relief via his troubles with the speeding metal box that we know as a taxi, and also the metal box inside a metal tube that we know as an elevator.



We think nothing of using such technology, but the Summer and Winter fey have no use for it.

Virus is an intriguing embodiment of technology, with cables for hair. She is a traitor to the new Iron King as well, having used him and Tertius to get her hands on the scepter. She has her own plans to dominate the Nevernever, with help from Rowan and his Thornguards. In Virus' hand, the Scepter of the Seasons glows a sickly green.

Meghan is devastated to see Ash, looking ill and vacant, in the control of Virus. He has a literal bug, much like those we think of as damaging our computers, implanted at the base of his skull. The iron within the bug is slowly killing him. Ash has no control over his actions. He even tries to kill Meghan, while his eyes are full of anguish.

Ironhorse repeatedly shows his heroism, plowing his way through the cubicle drones who move and speak in unison, and also jumping in the path of Ash's sword swinging at Meghan.

Thus ends Part Two, in which Meghan and Ash make separate attempts to retrieve the Scepter of the Seasons.



## Part Three - Chapter Seventeen: Choices, Chapter Eighteen: Close to Ice

### Part Three - Chapter Seventeen: Choices, Chapter Eighteen: Close to Ice Summary

Chapter Seventeen: Meghan has a nightmare, in which Ash has been implanted with wires along his spine and shoulders. He mouths the words, "Kill me" (p. 244). Meghan wakes to find herself back in Leanansidhe's mansion, with her shoulder and arm wrapped in gauze. Puck, Grimalkin, and Ironhorse are safe as well, but Ironhorse is injured from Ash's sword. Meghan tells Leanansidhe that Virus has Ash and the scepter. Puck explains that Ash is different now, dangerous because he doesn't care if he lives or dies. Meghan says they must go back for the scepter and save Ash, but Puck and Ironhorse explain that Ash is dying from the implanted bug and he must be killed. Meghan does not want to hear their words. As Meghan drifts off toward sleep, with help from an herbal drink, she and Puck agree that they will try to save Ash and only kill him as a last resort. Kimi and Nelson enter the room, standing oddly straight, speaking mechanically. They have a message from Virus: The scepter has been moved to a new location and Ash is on his way to kill Meghan's family in Louisiana. Kimi and Nelson both have bugs implanted at the base of their skulls. They arch and twitch, then drop to the floor. They aren't dead, but they are vacant. Leanansidhe enters and says she will try to find help for the two streetrats. She will not try to stop Meghan from leaving to rescue her family, and she promises that her door will be open for Meghan to return. Ironhorse wants to get the scepter before going to Louisiana, catching Virus off guard, but Meghan refuses. Ironhorse agrees to help her rescue her family from Ash. Grimalkin remarks that Virus would love for everyone to accompany Meghan, then everyone ultimately agrees that Ironhorse and Grim should stay behind to pursue the scepter. Leanansidhe agrees to let Meghan and Puck use a trod that leads directly to Meghan's home in the mortal realm.

Chapter Eighteen: Meghan and Puck make their way back through the Briars with no mishaps. Meghan thinks to herself that she will kill Ash if he kills her family, even though she will always love him. At last Meghan and Puck reach the trod where Meghan had first entered the world of faery, five long months ago. Puck asks if she is ready to face what they might find. They enter Ethan's bedroom, which is encased in ice. Meghan is horrified that Ethan might be encased in ice, suffering as she once did, but her four-year-old brother is not in his bed. She hears a whimper and finds Ethan hiding under his bed, shivering but alive. He says Meghan must save their parents. Meghan finds a quilt to wrap him in. Ethan says Spider had warned him that the dark person was coming, so he hid. Spider is a bogey who lives under Ethan's bed, protecting him. Meghan hates to leave her brother, but she and Puck must check on her parents. Meghan instructs Ethan to stay in his room to wait for her, no matter what. Meghan and Puck make their way down an icy staircase. Everything in the house is frozen. On the living room couch,



Meghan's mother and stepfather are encased in ice. Ash appears. His eyes are sunken and his flesh is dying. Meghan begs him to give her some sign that he is still in there, or Puck will have to kill him to save her family. Ash responds, "Kill me" (p. 259). He cannot fight the bug inside him. Puck and Ash battle, and Meghan is too numb to root for either side. She sees something glitter on the back of Ash's neck. Puck drives his dagger into Ash's chest. Ash gives Meghan a weary smile, then collapses.

## **Part Three - Chapter Seventeen: Choices, Chapter Eighteen: Close to Ice Analysis**

Puck sees a difference in fighting Ash now, with the implanted bug, even though his skills are still the same. In the past, a part of Ash held back when fighting Puck, because the two had a certain unspoken agreement not to kill each other. The new Ash is much more dangerous.

The effects of implanted bugs are seen once again in Kimi and Nelson. Standing stiffly, they deliver an ominous message from Virus, then they arch and collapse to the floor. Clearly, the bugs take over all control of the body and the mind. This is technology at its worst, at its most evil.

Meghan's two worlds collide when Virus sends Ash to kill her mortal family in Louisiana. Meghan must choose her priority, whether to save her family first or fight to save the Nevernever. She chooses her family, of course, and even agrees with Puck that they must kill Ash if they can't stop him from hurting her parents and her brother.

Meghan's brother is brave like she is, worrying more about his parents than about himself. He takes the guardianship of Spider and other fey in stride. He is merely a little boy who misses his big sister and wants her to come home.

Ash is almost completely possessed by the bug Virus planted at the base of his skull. It is slowly killing him, causing his flesh to split and decay. More than once Ash musters the strength and will to say, "kill me," but Meghan and Puck do their best to ignore his request. The glimmer at the base of Ash's neck is glamour, Iron glamour. Its presence foreshadows a possible solution to the problem of how to save Ash.



# Part Three - Chapter Nineteen: Sickness, Chapter Twenty: The Healer

## Part Three - Chapter Nineteen: Sickness, Chapter Twenty: The Healer Summary

Chapter Nineteen: Meghan rushes to help Ash, but he warns her to stay back. The bug in him is in shock but regaining power. Meghan touches him anyway, and she feels the metallic glamour within him. She feels the opposite of normal glamour, which is made of emotion and passion. This glamour is logical, calculating, and impassive. Ash tells Meghan to run, just as his hands close around her neck. She fights to stay calm. In her mind, she can see the bug within Ash. Ash tells Puck to kill him, but Meghan tells him not to. She sends a command to the bug, telling it to let go. The bug clamps down harder. Meghan repeats her mental command and the bug lets go. Meghan nearly passes out as the bug flies out of Ash toward the ceiling, then it charges at her. Puck reaches out and catches the bug, then hurls it to the floor and smashes it beneath his boot. Puck comes to Meghan, making sure she is okay. Her voice comes out harsh and raspy. Then they notice that the ceiling is starting to melt and drip. Meghan goes to Ash, wanting him to be okay but worried that she can't forgive him if he has killed her parents. Ash tells her that they are merely asleep and will remember nothing of the incident. Puck pulls Meghan away and tells her to quickly say goodbye to Ethan, because they must get Ash to a healer soon, to deal with the iron poisoning and injuries. Puck tells Meghan that it will be better if her parents don't know she was ever there. Meghan goes upstairs to find Ethan peering through the railings, and she carries him back to his room. She tells Ethan that their parents will be fine. Ethan realizes that Meghan is leaving him again, and he begs her to stay. Spider grabs Meghan's ankle from under the bed. Angry, she tells Spider to get out, but then Spider explains that he is under orders from Prince Ash to protect Ethan. Ethan says Spider tells him stories every night, and sometimes he sees a pony in the yard or a man in the basement. They are all there to protect Ethan and his family. Meghan wonders if her parents still think of her or if they have forgotten her. She goes to her old room to see if it has been redecorated. She is relieved to see that everything is just the same, except for being frozen in ice. Then she notices an unfamiliar photo of herself as a young child, being held by a man with brown hair and a lopsided smile. The man is Charles, the pianist who lives in Leanansidhe's mansion. Meghan remembers visiting an Oracle, back when she was searching for Machina the Iron King, and she had agreed to exchange one of her memories for help. Puck tells her that Charles was the man Meghan knew as her father, long ago. Angry, Meghan asks why Puck hadn't told her before. Puck asks what Meghan would have done. She couldn't have brought Charles back home, because Meghan's mother has a new husband now. Meghan is confused. Puck reminds her that they must get Ash to a healer quickly. Puck uses glamour to send Ethan to sleep, and they put him in his warm closet, the only place in the house that isn't frozen. They head downstairs to discover that Ash is gone. Outside, Ash is stumbling toward a horse at the



edge of the woods. Ash says he must go after the scepter alone, because he can't face Meghan after what he did. Meghan tells him that he did nothing wrong, because he had no control. Ash makes Meghan an unbreakable promise that he will stay with her until they retrieve the scepter. Meghan objects, not wanting everything to be reduced to a contract, but Ash feels this is the only way he can atone. Ash goes to the tatter-colt, which kneels down so Ash can mount. The horse is less cooperative when Meghan climbs up behind Ash. Puck turns into a raven, leading the way to the healer.

Chapter Twenty: Meghan and Ash ride for a couple of hours through swamps and bogs to reach the healer. Ash finds it harder and harder to remain upright. At last the raven lands on the roof of a rustic shack, covered with mushrooms and mosses. Puck tells Meghan to go and wake the healer while he helps Ash. The healer complains loudly as she comes to answer the door, because no one seems to understand that healers need sleep too. An ancient gnome, two feet tall, opens the door. Meghan is shocked to recognize her old school nurse, Ms. Stacy. The gnome explains that Oberon had assigned her, along with Puck, to look out for Meghan. Oberon allowed her to stay on as the school nurse even after Meghan left, just in case she ever came back. Meghan explains that her friend is iron-sick. The healer is aghast when she realizes the friend is Prince Ash, a Winter fey. She normally only treats Summer fey. She refuses to do anything until Meghan orders her to help, using her authority as a princess. The gnome reluctantly agrees, but vows she will speak to Oberon about the matter in the future. Ash is very weak. The healer is shocked to learn that he had iron inside of him, and she isn't sure she will be able to help. The healer wonders why Meghan and Puck want her to heal Ash, when clearly they had been fighting, but she agrees to wait until later to hear the story. She says that Ash will heal best back in Tir Na Nog. Meghan says that won't be possible, and the nurse says in that case it will take him a very long time to heal. She shoos Meghan and Ash out of the room. After a long time the healer comes out of the room, saying Meghan can visit Ash briefly. She asks for a word with Puck, whom she calls Robin. Ash seems asleep and weak, but he puts his hand over Meghan's. He tells her that she was right, that he shouldn't have tried to do things alone. He still doesn't think they can ever be together, and he knows that Puck loves her too. Meghan objects, but doesn't quite know what to say about her feelings for Puck. In a way, she loves him. Puck enters, his expression cold, and says the healer wants to speak with Meghan. The healer explains that Ash cannot go on whatever mission Meghan and Ash have planned, because he is too weak. He needs the glamour of his own kingdom to heal. The only other option might be a great influx of human emotion. They discuss ideas, then the nurse mentions the Winter Formal, which is to be held that very night at Meghan's old high school. The dance would be full of hormonal teenagers. Meghan tries to find excuses not to attend the dance, but every objection is met with a solution. Desperate, Meghan says she knows Ash won't agree, but he enters the room and says he will go. The nurse orders Ash back to bed. Meghan rests as well. Later, the nurse remarks that she can't tell whether Ash and Puck are best friends or mortal enemies. They have even been sparring. Meghan is stunned to see a blue satin dress with silvery details that two gnomes have fashioned for her. When Meghan models the dress she notices that her hair is styled and she looks human again. Gone are the pointed ears and large eyes she has had since entering the faery world. The illusion has been created by glamour. Puck looks handsome and fit in a black tuxedo, and Ash looks



dazzling in white. The healer is in her disguise as a human school nurse, complete with lab coat. Puck interrupts the obvious attraction between Meghan and Ash. The healer reminds Puck that he is going to the dance for a purpose, and that he should not spike the punch, seduce the humans, glamour the food, or do anything else mischievous.

## **Part Three - Chapter Nineteen: Sickness, Chapter Twenty: The Healer Analysis**

Ash fights the bug's command to kill Meghan, even as his hands close around Meghan's neck. Meghan uses all of her strength and will to take control of the bug. She orders it to leave, and eventually it has no choice. Meghan has thwarted Virus at last. Ash feels guilty about what he has done to Meghan's family, even though he did nothing to Ethan and he managed to freeze Meghan's parents in such a way that they will survive with no memory of the event. How they will rationalize the fact that their house is sopping wet, no one knows, but that is unimportant in the scheme of things. Everyone agrees that it is best that they have no knowledge of Meghan's visit. Meghan is relieved to discover that her mother has not dismantled her room, that she has not forgotten about her daughter.

Meghan has known of two fathers: first, her stepfather, Luke; second, her biological father, King Oberon. Now she is confronted with the existence of a third, Charles or whatever his name might have been, who had once been married to Meghan's mother. Meghan realizes she must have bargained away her memory of him long ago, while desperate to save her brother, Ethan. At some point Meghan will need to do something about rescuing Charles from the mansion of Leanansidhe. However, as Puck points out, Charles no longer has a home to return to, since Meghan's mother is happily remarried. Plus, Charles has no real memory of Meghan or her mother. This problem foreshadows possible plot development in a future Iron Fey novel.

Although promises have caused problems for Ash and Meghan in the past, Ash promises to stay with her to retrieve the scepter. Meghan is unhappy that he turned their relationship into yet another contract, but there is nothing she can do about it.

Meghan is shocked to learn that the nurse at her old high school is actually a gnome and a Summer fey. Given the rivalry between Summer and Winter, the healer refuses to treat Ash at all, until Meghan presses her authority as a Summer princess. Meghan is gaining confidence in her position and in her own sense of what is right.

There is a conundrum involving Ash. He could heal faster from iron poisoning by going home, to be exposed to the healing power of Winter glamour, but he is considered to be a traitor. The ludicrous alternative is to attend a dance at Meghan's old high school, where Ash can be exposed to the healing power of heightened teenage angst.

Some of Meghan's girlish fantasies come true when she is given a gown, reminiscent of the Cinderella fairy tale, which was created just for her by gnomes. Her handsome prince is waiting, dazzling in a white tuxedo. And for extra dramatic tension, the rival for

her affections is there as well, looking fit in a black tux. This love triangle will generate additional angst, which may help or hinder Ash's healing process.

The nurse warns the always-mischievous Puck to stay out of trouble, providing a touch of comic relief.





# Part Three - Chapter Twenty-One: The Winter Formal, Chapter Twenty-Two: Ironhorse's Choice

## Part Three - Chapter Twenty-One: The Winter Formal, Chapter Twenty-Two: Ironhorse's Choice Summary

Chapter Twenty-One: Meghan feels strange, being back in her old school. She remembers her crush, varsity quarterback Scott Waldron. She remembers time spent crying in the bathroom. She remembers eating lunch with Puck, then known to her as Robbie. The school nurse sees couples making out in the hallway and wonders what happened to the chaperones. Meghan, Puck, and Ash enter the gym, decorated with foam snowflakes, even though real snow never falls in Louisiana. Meghan reflects that if she had never left school, she would probably be at home tonight with a movie and some ice cream. A teacher recognizes Meghan and asks what she is doing here, since he thought she was away at boarding school. She says she is home for Christmas. The teacher seems confused for a moment, but then he seems satisfied. Ash remarks that human emotions are easy to manipulate. Puck leads Meghan onto the dance floor, while Ash leans against a wall. Three girls join him and Meghan is jealous. Scott Waldron approaches Meghan, clearly not recognizing her from the days when she was known as Swamp Girl and he had pulled a terrible prank on her. He asks her to dance. Meghan agrees, then realizes Scott no longer gives her that fluttery feeling. He goes on and on about football, then invites Meghan to a party after the dance. She refuses. He asks for her name, and she considers telling him to see the shock, horror, and/or regret on his face. She reconsiders and says she wants to keep it a mystery. Ash approaches and Scott wanders off into the crowd. Meghan and Ash share a magical dance. Meghan spoils the moment by asking him about the three girls. Ash says they were trying to convince him to ditch his date and join them for a party later. Meghan shows her jealousy. Ash reminds her that he is here to get glamour from heightened emotions, to help him heal. Meghan is relieved and embarrassed. Ash tells her that he has met many mortal girls from all over the world, and they saw only the outer shell. Meghan is the only one who sees him for what he is on the inside. He asks once again if Meghan loves Puck. She can only say that she doesn't know. Grimalkin shows up, invisible to everyone but Meghan, Ash, and Puck, and the air feels colder. Grimalkin says they need to see something outside. Meghan takes one last look at her old classmates and exits. Outside, it is snowing. The seasonal balance is clearly off, due to the missing scepter. Grimalkin says he and Ironhorse found a factory in San Jose where Virus might be gathering an army of Iron fey. Ironhorse is there now, standing watch, but his patience might run out soon. Ash and Puck shed their glamour, suddenly appearing in their usual clothes. Meghan, however, cannot change from her formal gown. Grimalkin has called the Host, a massive group of flying creatures, since no trod is nearby.



Chapter Twenty-Two: The Host carries Meghan, Puck, and Ash to the parking lot of the factory in San Jose. The lot is empty. Gremlins move along the walls of the factory, flashing lights. A sign outside the factory says SciCorp. Meghan is the only one visible to mortals, and even worse, she is wearing a conspicuous dress. She wishes she were invisible. Ironhorse tells the others there is no reason to worry about the gremlins, for Machina was the only one whose orders they ever obeyed. These gremlins have reverted to their normal, feral state. Ash says he will take care of Virus himself, once they get inside. Grimalkin scouts and discovers that Rowan has sent many Thornguards to the factory. Ash and Meghan explain that the Thornguards wear iron rings that are slowly killing them, and that they have chosen to align with the Iron kingdom against Faery. Grimalkin suggests they take a window cleaner's platform up to the roof, to study the factory through the skylights. Gremlins see them and scatter. On the roof, they see Virus speaking to a group, waving the scepter. Ash wants to approach Virus, who probably thinks she still has control of Ash, and take her by surprise. Meghan realizes that Ash really wants to get revenge by killing Virus. Ironhorse says that under other circumstances he would want to stay with Meghan and serve her until the end of time, then he jumps through a skylight, raining glass on those below and falling into their midst. Meghan learns that faeries can pass through glass, as Ash passes through a window to attack Virus. Puck holds Meghan and they too pass through the glass. Virus turns in time to see Ash about to hit her with his sword, and she raises the scepter. Sparks fly. Virus laughs when she sees Meghan. She restates her plan to dethrone the false Iron King so she can rule the kingdom. Ash attacks Virus. Crossbow men shoot as Virus screams for them to stop. By reflex Meghan raises her hand, diverting the arrows. Virus is shocked, saying Meghan can't possibly be the one. Virus releases a swarm of metallic bugs. Meghan realizes that they have a hive mind, and that if she can control one she can control them all. Virus tells the swarm to attack, but Meghan tells them to stop. Virus explains that whoever holds the scepter has increased power, and she causes the bugs to change. Meghan pushes them back, and they attack some of the Thornguards. Virus causes the bugs to inhabit and control the Thornguards, and one of them shoots an arrow at Meghan. Puck stabs the guard, but too late, and Ironhorse leaps to block the arrow. Meghan uses her anger to order the swarm back. It disperses to the far parts of the room. Virus congratulates Meghan on giving her a headache. Ash attacks, slicing Virus in two, vertically. Wires and oily goo spill out. Suddenly all of the bugs rain to the floor. Ash retrieves the scepter. Meghan goes to Ironhorse, who is dying with gears and oil scattered around him. He tells her it was an honor to serve her, calling her "my queen" (p. 333), and then he dies. Meghan cries and places her corsage next to her hero, then she leaves with Puck, Ash, and Grimalkin. Grim says they should go to the Reaping Fields, to the height of the battle between Winter and Summer. Grim says they will find a friend of his there, who will help them. Ash creates a trod with the scepter. Meghan says one last goodbye to Ironhorse, then steps through the circle.



## Part Three - Chapter Twenty-One: The Winter Formal, Chapter Twenty-Two: Ironhorse's Choice Analysis

Sparks fly between Meghan and Ash at the dance, both sparks of jealousy and sparks of romance. Meghan is so focused on her feelings for Ash that she forgets he is supposed to surround himself with girls, to soak in the teen angst at the event.

Meghan realizes she has finally shed her emotional baggage from high school. Her old crush, who had never been nice to her, no longer holds the same fascination. Even when Scott makes advances on the new, more glamorous and confident Meghan, she has eyes only for Ash.

Snow does not normally fall in Louisiana, so clearly the missing Scepter of the Seasons must be found and returned to the Winter Court. Events are progressing quickly toward the climax of the novel, regarding both the romance between Meghan and Ash and the impending destruction of the faery and mortal worlds.

The mysterious Host carries Meghan, Ash, and Puck away, as yet another example of the faery world that is new to Meghan. She is handicapped by her lack of glamour, since she is unable to shed her formal wear as easily as her two male partners.

At SciCorp in San Jose, Ironhorse makes the ultimate sacrifice. He throws himself through a skylight to attack Virus and her conspirators below. Even then, he makes a noble statement about wishing he could serve Meghan until the end of time.

Meghan and Virus engage in an ultimate battle of wills, after Virus sees that Meghan has the power of Iron glamour. Virus mutters that Meghan can't be the one, implying that Meghan might be the rightful heir to the Iron throne, but Meghan does not realize that. Virus' realization is perhaps foreshadowing for the next novel in the Iron Fey series, as is the conundrum regarding Meghan's stepfather, Charles.

Meghan diverts arrows and controls a swarm of metallic bugs, much to the dismay of Virus. Ash and Puck are astounded. Ash manages to get his longed-for revenge on Virus by cleaving her in two. She oozes wires and oil rather than blood, and the bugs she had been controlling rain dramatically to the floor. At last, Ash has the sought-after scepter in his hand.

Meghan says a tender goodbye to the noble and strong Ironhorse, who has died in battle. He always stood by Meghan and fought for what was right. Meghan leaves her corsage with him, a sweet touch of humanity and natural beauty in a room full of needless destruction.



## Part Three - Chapter Twenty-Three: Reaping Fields, Epilogue: Second Homecoming

### Part Three - Chapter Twenty-Three: Reaping Fields, Epilogue: Second Homecoming Summary

Chapter Twenty-Three: Meghan, Ash, and Puck endure wind, hail, and green lightning in the wyldwood. Eventually the three come to an area overlooking a valley. They can see the battle between Winter and Summer below. Ash says they should stay out of the fight and just look for Oberon or Mab. Puck responds that no one is likely to ignore the three of them, given their reputations. Ash shoves Meghan aside just before a huge winged wyvern lands where she had been standing. Rowan is riding on the wyvern's back. Rowan warns Ash that if he makes any moves, Thraxa the wyvern will take Meghan. Thornguards appear from behind, to further trap Meghan, Ash, and Puck. Rowan explains that the Iron fey are waiting for Winter and Summer to tear each other apart, after which the Iron fey will attack and take over the Nevernever. Rowan commands Ash to hand over the scepter. Puck steps forward and Rowan orders Thraxa to kill him. The wyvern snaps its jaws around Puck's head, but Puck explodes in a pile of leaves and changes into a raven. The raven sinks its beak into Thraxa's eye. The wyvern panics. Meghan runs to Ash during the confusion. Puck changes back into his usual form and Rowan orders the Thornguards to kill all of them, just as his wyvern carries him off. Meghan wonders if she could take the scepter from Ash and run down into the valley, then she rejects the idea. Suddenly a unicorn appears nearby. It calls silently to Meghan, in her head, saying it was sent by Grimalkin. Meghan whispers to Ash that he should give her the scepter. Rowan is returning on his wyvern and the Thornguards are advancing. Ash reluctantly gives Meghan the scepter and she runs for the unicorn. Meghan jumps onto its back. The unicorn leaps into the air, with Rowan and the wyvern in pursuit. Meghan tells the unicorn to go straight through the battle and find Mab. Meghan and the unicorn travel speedily past Seelie and Unseelie warriors, as they battle gracefully to the death. The unicorn zigzags to avoid Thraxa. A monster rises up and clips the unicorn's front legs. Meghan flies off of her mount, losing her grip on the scepter. The unicorn struggles and rears, but then it is gone. Meghan grabs the scepter as Rowan's wyvern lands nearby. The scepter glows white in her hand. It sends a bolt of lightning at the wyvern, and then something inside Meghan breaks. She feels a flood of glamour release. It ripples over the battlefield. Everyone pauses. Meghan holds the scepter high and asks for Queen Mab. She announces that she is Meghan Chase, daughter of Oberon. Queen Mab approaches on a huge white warhorse, asking if the Summer Court is admitting its mistake. Meghan says no, as Oberon arrives. Meghan returns the scepter to Mab and tries her best to explain that the Iron fey are the ones at fault, not the Summer Court. Mab listens, then asks how the Iron fey managed to sneak in and out of her palace. Meghan replies that Rowan helped them. Mab will not believe



this without proof. Oberon looks uneasy. Ash and Puck make their way through the crowd, dragging one of Rowan's Thornguards. He is the proof, wearing an Iron ring that is decaying his hand. The Thornguard pleads with Mab for his life, explaining Rowan had been their commander. Mab encases the Thornguard in ice. Mab asks for Rowan, but he has fled. His wyvern is dead. Oberon proposes a temporary truce, so the two kingdoms can better defend against the Iron fey. Mab objects, saying the law must apply to Meghan, and she must answer for tricking Ash into helping her escape Tir Na Nog. Ash says he acted of his own free will. Ash admits he loves Meghan, destroying his chances of returning home. Mab asks him to swear an oath that he will never see Meghan again, so he can come home and be the heir to Mab's throne, but Ash refuses. Mab tells him that the mortal world will eat away at him over time, until there is nothing left. Meanwhile Meghan will die, being mortal, and Ash will be alone. Meghan feels a horrible guilt. Ash stands by his decision. Mab uses the scepter to create a gateway to the mortal world, then she declares Ash to be a traitor, forever exiled from the Nevernever. He steps through the gateway. Meghan starts to follow, but Oberon stops her. He warns that if she makes this decision, she will also be banished forever from the Nevernever. Meghan can't bear the thought of abandoning this world forever, having so recently learned of its existence. Puck begs her to stay in Faery, with him. Meghan makes up her mind and walks through the gateway, following Ash.

Epilogue: It is raining in the mortal world. Meghan is done with faery glamour and tricks forever. She calls out to Ash. He is there, awed that she came after him. They embrace in the rain. Meghan wants to stay there forever, but finally Ash asks what they should do now. Meghan says she should probably go home to her family. Meghan thinks with regret of those left behind, and she asks Ash to stay with her forever. Ash promises he will.

## **Part Three - Chapter Twenty-Three: Reaping Fields, Epilogue: Second Homecoming Analysis**

The anticipated battle of Summer and Winter is underway. No one in the fray realizes that Ash, the Winter prince, now has the Scepter of the Seasons. The traitorous Rowan arrives and tries to take the scepter. He threatens Ash, Puck, and Meghan, but Meghan is able to escape with help from Grimalkin's unicorn friend.

When Meghan finds herself alone in the fray, she raises the scepter over her head, unwittingly releasing all of her pent-up glamour. It ripples across the battlefield, a dramatic end to the war. But even then, even after the scepter is returned, Mab is skeptical of Meghan's story. Mab does not want to believe that Rowan is the traitorous prince, rather than Ash. Only when she is shown proof, in the form of a Thornguard's withered ring finger, does she finally believe.

Even after everything Ash and Meghan have done to save Faery, their parents forbid their union. Winter and Summer still must not be together. Mab reminds Ash that if he chooses to be with Meghan, he must be exiled to the mortal realm, where he will slowly fade away. Meghan realizes, with a pang, that faeries have no afterlife. Ash would be



giving up everything to be with her, and when she, a mere mortal, eventually dies, Ash will be totally alone. Ash realizes and accepts all of this, and he willingly steps through a gateway to the mortal realm, saying goodbye to the Nevernever forever. Meghan is stunned when Oberon makes the same request of her, that she must choose once and for all, and she steps through the gateway after Ash. The two meet in the rain under some streetlights. They share a romantic embrace. Their plans are uncertain, but they will face the future together.

Thus ends Part Three, in which Meghan and Ash come together to solve their problems.



# Characters

## Meghan Chase

Meghan Chase is the novel's protagonist. She is half human and half faery, the daughter of King Oberon of the Summer kingdom. Meghan grew up in the human realm. She did not know about the world of Faery until her sixteenth birthday, but since then her life has been a whirlwind of confusion, danger, and passion. She is in love with Ash, a Winter prince. Unfortunately, love between Summer and Winter is forbidden by centuries of law, so she and Ash cannot be together. Meghan has straight blonde hair. The use of magic or glamour was used to make her look human when she lived in that realm, but in the world of Faery she has large eyes and pointed ears, reminding her that she is only half human, half fey. In the past, Meghan killed Machina, the Iron King, in order to rescue her younger brother, Ethan, who had been kidnapped. Since then Meghan has developed a strange ability, an Iron glamour, which allows her to manipulate certain metal objects. She used to have Summer glamour as well, but that power was locked away by Queen Mab, mother of Ash. To further complicate Meghan's love life, her friend, Puck, professes his love for her. Meghan loves him too, but not with the same heated passion she feels for Ash. Meghan is strong-willed and brave, willing to do whatever is necessary to protect the ones she loves.

## Ash

Ash is an Unseelie prince, of the Winter Court, the youngest son of Queen Mab. His older brothers are Rowan and Sage. Ash is handsome, with hair the color of midnight and bright silver eyes. His sword is a luminous blue-black. He often wears a long black coat. Ash is intense and he loves Meghan. However, he struggles against that love because Winter and Summer are not meant to be together. He does not want to betray his mother or his kingdom. Although Ash is an excellent swordsman, he feels anguish whenever he is forced to take a life. He is loyal to his kingdom, even though his loyalty is unjustifiably questioned. Ultimately, he must choose between his life as a Winter prince and his desire to be with Meghan.

## Puck

Puck is Robin Goodfellow, famously depicted in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." He has crimson hair and emerald green eyes. He is a master of wisecracks and he has the ability to transform into a black raven. Puck had been sent by Oberon to watch over Meghan in the days when she lived in the mortal realm, and he remains a loyal friend to her during her adventures in Faery. Puck falls in love with Meghan, even though he realizes that Ash has her heart.



## Tiaothin

Tiaothin is a phouka, a Winter fey with catlike ears, yellow eyes, and dreadlocks. She wears a jacket decorated with gems and studs, ripped jeans, and combat boots. She transforms into a black cat when she needs to squeeze through doorways or make an escape. Tiaothin is fiercely loyal to Prince Ash, and therefore, she is a friend to Meghan. Tiaothin tries to warn Meghan that she can never be with Ash, because of the law, and she helps Meghan to escape from Queen Mab.

## Mab

Mab is the Winter Queen, Queen of the Unseelie Court. She is the mother of Ash, Rowan, and Sage. She is beautiful and icy, with dark hair and eyes. She favors freezing people as living statues, unable to breathe yet unable to die, as a method of punishment. Mab and Oberon share the Scepter of the Seasons, exchanging it twice a year at the equinox.

## Rowan

Rowan is a Winter prince, the brother of Ash and Sage, and the middle son of Queen Mab. He resembles Ash, lean and graceful. He has spiky black hair, ice-blue eyes, and a gold stud in one pointy ear. He commands a group of knights known as Thornguards and he has a wyvern called Thraxa.

## Sage

Sage is a Winter prince, the brother of Ash and Rowan, and the oldest son of Queen Mab. He is tall and willowy, with green eyes long raven hair in a ponytail that hangs to his waist. He has a gray wolf.

## Oberon

Oberon is King of the Summer Court. He is also known as the Erlking or the Seelie King. He is the father of Meghan and the husband of Queen Titania. He is slender, with eyes like pale leaves, silver hair to his waist, and a crown of antlers. Oberon and Mab share the Scepter of the Seasons, exchanging it twice a year at the equinox. Oberon is a famous character in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

## Titania

Titania is the Summer Queen, attractive in an evil socialite kind of way. She is the wife of Oberon. She does not like Oberon's daughter, Meghan. She once banished





Leanansidhe, the Dark Muse, from the Nevernever, out of jealousy. Titania is a character in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

## Tertius

Tertius is an Iron Knight, loyal to the new Iron King who took the crown after the death of Machina. Tertius disguises himself as Prince Ash in order to steal the Scepter of the Seasons, then he delivers the scepter to Virus.

## Sweetfinger

Sweetfinger is a leering goblin, with missing fangs, gold teeth, and a milky glass eye. He is fond of jewelry. He is hired to escort Ash and Meghan from the Unseelie kingdom to the secret goblin tunnels, but then he betrays them because Rowan has paid him more.

## Grimalkin

Grimalkin is a catlike creature with long gray fur and golden eyes. He summons Meghan as a favor to Ironhorse. Grimalkin is skilled at maneuvering through the Briars and finding escape routes.

## Ironhorse

Ironhorse is an Iron fey who believes that the new Iron King is a fraud. He had been loyal to the previous king, Machina, who was killed by Meghan. Ironhorse aligns himself with Meghan and her friends to stop the new king from attacking Summer and Winter. He pledges to protect Meghan with his life and exhibits unquestionable loyalty and bravery, despite the fact that he is often disrespected for being from the Iron kingdom. As a huge metal horse, Ironhorse has burning red eyes and fire in his belly, and he has gears. In his human disguise, he is dark and massive with a square jaw, dreadlocks, and the same red eyes. Because of his booming voice, his words in the novel are formatted in ALL CAPS.

## Leanansidhe

Leanansidhe is the Dark Muse. She grants creative inspiration to struggling artists. Those she helps often shine brightly but die young. Notable examples include James Dean, Jimi Hendrix, and Kurt Cobain. Leanansidhe was banished from the Nevernever by Oberon's wife, Titania, out of jealousy. Leanansidhe created a new kingdom, the Between, which exists in between the mortal realm and Faery. She takes in exiles from other worlds, as long as they are willing to do her bidding. Her kingdom is powered by creative energy. She calls all mortal artists living in her mansion by the name of Charles, for the sake of simplicity. She is pale and tall, with wavy waist-length copper hair.



Leanansidhe wants to thwart the ambitions of the Iron King, believing that the fall of Summer and Winter would signal the end of the Between.

## **Kimi**

Kimi is a half-breed, half human and half phouka, with Asian features and furry ears. She and her friend, Nelson, work for Leanansidhe in exchange for refuge and an enhanced reputation.

## **Nelson**

Nelson is a half-breed, half human and half troll. He is gorilla-like, with muddy blond hair and green skin. He and his friend, Kimi, work for Leanansidhe in exchange for refuge and an enhanced reputation.

## **Warren**

Warren is a half-breed, half human and half satyr. He is tall and skinny, with goat horns and a goatee. Warren is superstitious and ultimately betrays Leanansidhe, who had given him a place to live in exile.

## **Charles**

Charles is a mortal living in Leanansidhe's mansion. He remembers nothing of his past and thinks the rats tell him secrets. He is a talented pianist. His name is probably not really Charles, but that is the name Leanansidhe uses to address all mortal men. Charles is too thin, with hazel eyes and long, shaggy brown hair. Meghan is strangely familiar to Charles. In her bedroom in the mortal realm, Meghan finds a photograph of Charles holding her when she was a little girl.

## **Virus**

Virus is an Iron fey. She was one of Machina's lieutenants and considered herself a prime candidate to succeed him as the Iron King. She wants to depose the new Iron King, and she gains possession of the Scepter of the Seasons in order to do so. Virus has hair made of computer cables, wound on top of her head like a bun. She wears bright yellow glasses and radio-active blue lipstick. Like other Iron fey, Virus is fond of technology. She uses metallic bugs, implanted at the base of the skull, to control the minds of others.



## Ethan Chase

Ethan is the four-year-old brother of Meghan,. He had once been kidnapped by Machina, the Iron King. Safe at home in the mortal realm, Ethan is protected by Spider and two other fey, under orders from Ash.

## Spider

Spider is a fey who lives under Ethan's bed, per the orders of Ash, to protect Ethan and his family. Spider tells Ethan stories every night.

## Healer

The healer who helps Ash recover from battle wounds and iron poisoning is the school nurse from Meghan's high school in the mortal realm. In her human guise, the nurse wears a lab coat and is known as Ms. Stacy. In the faery world, she is an ancient gnome, short and stout, with brown skin, gold glasses, and white hair. The healer's shack is covered with a variety of mushrooms and mosses, and it contains a trod that leads to the nurse's office in Albany High.



## Objects/Places

### Palace of the Winter Fey

The palace of the Winter fey is where Queen Mab lives, and where she keeps the Scepter of the Seasons during the six months of the year when winter is dominant. She holds Meghan as a prisoner there, and her courtyard is decorated with ice-encased humans who are alive yet unable to breathe.

### Nevernever

Nevernever is the Faery world. It includes the kingdoms of Winter and Summer. The Iron King wants to take over the Nevernever.

### Tir Na Nog

Tir Na Nog is the land of the Winter fey. Despite the fact that it is underground, Tir Na Nog has frequent snowfalls.

### Glamour

Glamour is faery power. Meghan once had Summer glamour, until it was locked away by Queen Mab. Meghan acquires Iron glamour, following her encounter with Machina, the former Iron King.

### Scepter of the Seasons

The Scepter of the Seasons is exchanged every six months, at the equinox, between the Summer Court and the Winter Court. It signifies which season is dominant at the time. In summer the scepter glows amber, with flowers and buds. In winter it is ice, with sparkling prisms. Iron fey conspire to steal the scepter from Winter, while casting suspicion on Summer, in order to start a war and make the Nevernever vulnerable to invasion. When Virus obtains the stolen scepter, it glows a sickly green. In Meghan's hand, the scepter glows white.

### Arcadia

Arcadia is where Oberon holds court. Summer fey live in Arcadia.



## Trod

A trod is a faery portal, a shortcut for traveling from one place to another. Trods are often hidden. The Briars, a maze full of dangerous creatures and long thorns, contains many trods.

## The Between

The Between is the space between the faery world and the mortal realm, where Leanansidhe built her mansion and kingdom. Exiles and others who have trouble living in the other realms often come to the Between for sanctuary. The Between is powered by creative energy.

## SciCorp

SciCorp is a software company in Silicon Valley, where Virus hides the stolen Scepter of the Seasons. She later hides it in another SciCorp building, located in San Jose.

## Albany High

Albany High is the school in Louisiana that Meghan attended up until the age of sixteen, when she learned of the Faery world. Her friend, Robbie Goodfell, as well as the school nurse, were placed at the school by Meghan's father, Oberon, to protect her and clear her mind of any faery activity she might have witnessed.

## Winter Formal

Meghan, Ash, and Puck attend the Winter Formal at Meghan's old high school, Albany High, to help Ash heal from iron poisoning. The hormonal teens at the event give off human emotion to help him heal, since he is unable to return home and heal with the power of Winter glamour.



# Themes

## Racism

Racism, in the form of prejudice, runs through the novel, sometimes blatantly, sometimes in a subtle way. Meghan has difficulty in finding her place in Faery, due to the fact that she is a half-breed, half mortal and half Summer fey. Some fey hurl the term "half-breed" at her, meaning it as an insult. Other half-breeds are taken in by Leanansidhe in the Between, because they find it hard to exist in either the mortal realm or in Faery. Many in the Iron Kingdom harbor evil intent toward the Summer and Winter Courts, but the intelligent and freethinking Ironhorse is forced to bear constant insults because of his heritage. In the world of Faery, everyone is defined by their place in society, not by their individual thoughts or actions.

## Nature vs. Technology

Nature vs. technology is an important theme in *The Iron Daughter*. The Summer and Winter Courts are defined by nature, given their affinity with the hot and cold seasons. The Iron Kingdom, on the other hand, is defined by its affinity for iron and technology. Summer and Winter work together symbiotically, understanding that one cannot exist without the other for contrast. They literally pass a Scepter of the Seasons back and forth, as a physical symbol of their interdependence. The Iron King seeks to hide the scepter, however, knowing that Summer and Winter will go to war and the Iron fey can then invade. The Iron Kingdom does not seek to coexist with the others, but rather to dominate. Summer and Winter fey are literally poisoned by contact with iron, and parts of the wyldwood in Faery are smothered by living, growing lampposts and wires.

## Loyalty

Loyalty is valued above all else in the world of Faery. The leaders of each kingdom are quick to label individuals as traitors, with or without sufficient evidence. Kingdom loyalty is so strong, in fact, that love between Summer and Winter fey is strictly forbidden. Ash and Meghan are ultimately banished from Faery because of their love, even though their heroic actions saved Summer and Winter from being invaded by the Iron Kingdom. In Faery, a promise is a special sort of loyalty, as binding as any written contract. A Faery cannot break a promise, and a faery cannot tell a lie. Subtle manipulations and evasiveness are allowed, however. In *The Iron Daughter*, Ironhorse exhibits extreme loyalty, ultimately sacrificing his life in the name of such. Ironhorse was once loyal to the Iron King, Machina, until Machina was killed by Meghan in *The Iron King*. Ironically, in *The Iron Daughter* Ironhorse pledges his loyalty to Meghan, because he wants to bring down the new Iron King, a fraud in the eyes of Ironhorse. Ash and Meghan find their loyalty is sorely tested, when they are forced to choose between their love for each other and their allegiance to their respective kingdoms.

# Style

## Point of View

The Iron Daughter is written in the first person, from the point of view of Meghan Chase, the book's main character and protagonist. Meghan is a reliable narrator, always telling the truth as she sees it, even when that truth does not show her in the best light. Meghan does not understand everything about the complex Faery world, since she has only been there for five months, so the reader is able to learn about the various inhabitants, their traditions, and their abilities along with her. At times it is possible to see truths that elude Meghan, based on her description of events. For example, when Meghan is devastated because she thinks Ash no longer loves her, the savvy reader can tell that Ash is only pretending to be indifferent. Meghan is relieved when Ash later reveals the truth, that he pretended not to care because they belong to two different kingdoms and their love is forbidden.

## Setting

The Iron Daughter takes place primarily in the world of Faery, a world unknown to most humans who live in the mortal realm. Faery includes two well-established kingdoms, Summer and Winter, who pass the Scepter of the Seasons back and forth twice every year, at the equinox, to maintain the balance of the seasons. The two kingdoms coexist, usually peacefully, sometimes grudgingly. A third kingdom, the Iron Kingdom, has evil intentions toward the Summer and Winter Courts. A fourth kingdom, the Between, was established by a powerful fey who had been banished from Faery. The Between lies between Faery and the mortal world. Part of the story takes place in the mortal realm as well, where main character Meghan grew up. The stolen Scepter of the Seasons is hidden in Silicon Valley, and Meghan is forced to rescue her family who live in Louisiana.

## Language and Meaning

The Iron Daughter features a vocabulary unique to the faery world. Magic, for example, is known as glamour. A promise has special meaning, for in the faery world a promise is an unbreakable bond. A trod is a gateway from one location to another.

Some characters are defined by their speech. The mighty Ironhorse has a booming voice, indicating his great strength, revealed in his dialogue which is written in "ALL CAPS." Fey of royal station tend to speak formally, while less lofty citizens tend to use more slang and simple language. Puck uses derogatory terms sometimes, half joking and half serious, as when he refers to Ironhorse as Rusty or a toaster oven. Leanansidhe reveals a certain disdain for mortals, calling all men Charles.

## Structure

The Iron Daughter is written in chronological order, along with the occasional flashback to provide essential information. Chapter One includes a good amount of back story, because The Iron Daughter is the second book in the Iron Fey series. Plot developments from the first book, The Iron King, are relevant to the ongoing story.

The Iron Daughter is divided into three parts, each containing eight chapters (including the Epilogue, which serves as the eighth chapter in Part Three). Part One centers on Meghan and Ash, struggling to define their relationship in a world where their love is forbidden. Part Two features Meghan and Puck working together, while Ash strikes out on his own. Part Three showcases Meghan, Ash, and Puck coming together to find the Scepter of the Seasons and make decisions regarding their love triangle.





## Quotes

"I couldn't even feel the glamour anymore, though I knew it was all around me. Glamour is fueled by emotion, and the wilder and more passionate the emotion—rage, lust, love—the easier it is to draw on. Yet I couldn't access it like I used to. It seemed I was back to being plain, nonmagical Meghan Chase. With pointy ears."

Chapter One, p. 19

"For normal faeries, iron was deadly poison, draining their magic and burning their flesh. An entire kingdom made of iron was horrible and terrifying to them; a faery ruler called the Iron King was blasphemous."

Chapter One, p. 24

"Something gripped my feet, holding them fast. I looked down to see ice creeping up my legs, moving faster than I'd seen before. In the space of a blink, it had flowed up my waist and continued over my stomach and chest. Icy needles stabbed my skin as I wrapped my arms around myself, just before they were frozen to my chest. And still, the ice came on, creeping up my neck, burning my chin. Panic gripped me as it covered my lower jaw, and I screamed as ice flooded my mouth. Before I could suck in another breath, it covered my nose, my cheekbones, my eyes, and finally reached the top of my head. My lungs burned for air, but my mouth and nose were filled with ice. I was drowning, suffocating, and my skin felt like it was being peeled away by the cold. I wanted to pass out, I longed for darkness to take me, but though I couldn't breathe and my lungs screamed for oxygen, I didn't die."

Chapter Four, p. 68

"He sighed wearily, giving me a solemn look. 'Emotions are a weakness here, Meghan. And the Winter Court preys on the weak. They would have hurt you to get to me. Now, come on.' He reached for me again, and I let him take my hand without protest. 'Let's get out of here before it's too late.'

"'I'm afraid it's already too late,' drawled a snide, familiar voice, making my heart stop. Ash jerked to a halt, yanking me behind him, as Rowan stepped out of the hallway, grinning like a cat. 'I'm afraid your time just ran out.'"

Chapter Four, p. 71

"In my mind, I saw the metal ring glowing white, pulsing with energy. I felt the glamour around it, but it was different from anything I'd felt before, —cold and colorless. Was this...iron glamour? Could I use it as the fey used the wilder magic of dreams and emotion? The ring shimmered, fluid and alive, eager to be worked upon. To be shaped into something new."

Chapter Seven, p. 107

"No matter how much I wanted a normal life, there would be a part of me that longed for this world, for the magic and wonder of it. It had seeped into my soul and shown me things I'd never thought existed. I couldn't be normal and ignorant ever again, knowing what was out there. Faery was a part of me now. As long as I lived, I would always be



watching for hidden doors and figures from the corner of my eyes. And for a certain dark prince who could never be mine."

Chapter Eight, p. 125-126

"What are we going to do?' I wondered. 'Should we wait until the dragon leaves to find our way back through the Briars? Or should we find out what Leanansidhe wants?'

"NO,' thundered Ironhorse, his voice bouncing off the walls. 'I DO NOT TRUST THIS LEANANSIDHE. IT IS TOO DANGEROUS.'

"Puck?'

"He shrugged. 'Under normal circumstances, I'd agree with the toaster oven,' he said, earning a hard glare from Ironhorse. 'Leanansidhe has always been unpredictable, and she has enough power to make that dragon look like a cranky Gila monster. But...I always say the enemy you know is better than the enemy you can't see.'"

Chapter Twelve, p. 166-167

"Now, why don't you find the other Charles and find something to play tonight? Go on, now. Shoo.' She waved her hand, and Charles, with one last look at me, stumbled from the room.

"I frowned at Leanansidhe. 'Other Charles? There's more than one?'

"I call them all Charles, darling.' Leanansidhe shrugged. 'I'm horrible with names, as you've no doubt seen, and human males look virtually the same to me. So they're all Charles, for simplicity's sake.'"

Chapter Fifteen, p. 222

"Don't be so melodramatic.' Virus sighed. 'As usual, you have no idea what is really going on. You think I want to follow the wheezings of an obsolete monarch? I want that even less than you. When he put me in charge of stealing the scepter, I knew that was the last command I would ever follow. Poor Tertius, believing I was still loyal to his false king. The gullible fool handed me the scepter without a second thought.'"

Chapter Fifteen, p. 231

"I won't be bullied by a half-human brat!'

"I straightened and towered over her, my head just touching the ceiling. 'Oberon is my father, you said so yourself. Consider this an order from your princess.' When she scowled, her eyes nearly sinking into the creases of her face, I crossed my arms and glared imperiously. 'Or, should I inform my father that you refused to help me? That I came to you for aid, and you turned me away? I don't think he'd be too pleased about that.'

"All right, all right!' She raised her hands. 'I'll get no peace otherwise, I see that now. Bring in the Winter prince. But your father will hear of this, young lady.'"

Chapter Twenty, p. 280

"We're not here to cause a riot. And human emotions have always been easy to manipulate.'

"Like mine were? I wondered as we continued across the gym floor. Did you just cast a charm spell to manipulate my emotions, like Rowan tried to do? Are my feelings for you



real, or some sort of fabricated glamour? And do I even care if they are?"  
Chapter 21, p. 300

"The Thornguards are acting on their own. Like Rowan. They want to destroy the Nevernever and give it to the Iron fey."

"Puck's eyebrows shot up. 'The hell? Why?'

"'Because they think they can become like Virus,' I replied, thinking back to what Edgebriar had said, remembering the crazed, doomed look in his eye. 'They believe it's only a matter of time before Faery fades away entirely. So the only way to survive is to become like the Iron fey. They wear a metal ring beneath their gloves to prove their loyalty, and because they think it will make them immune to the effects. But it's just killing them slowly.'"

Chapter 22, p. 318

"You know what will happen, if you refuse."

"If Ash was afraid, he didn't show it. 'I know,' he said in a weary voice.

"'Their world will eat at you,' Mab said. 'Strip you away bit by bit. Cut off from the Nevernever, you will not survive. Whether it takes one mortal year or a thousand, you will gradually fade away, until you simply cease to exist.' Mab stepped closer, pointing at me with the scepter. 'She will die, Ash. She is only human. She will grow old, wither and die, and her soul will flee to a place you cannot follow. And then, you will be left to wander the mortal world alone, until you yourself are only a memory. And after that—the queen opened her empty fist '—nothing. Forever.'"

Chapter 23, p. 353-354

"My stomach dropped. There it was. Oberon would banish me from the Nevernever, as well. For a split second, I almost laughed in his face. This wasn't my home. I hadn't asked to be half-fey. I'd never wanted to be caught up in their problems, or their world. Let him exile me; what did I care?"

"Don't kid yourself, I thought with a sudden sick feeling in my gut. You love this world. You risked everything to save it. Are you really going to walk away and forget it ever existed?"

Chapter 23, p. 355

"'You came after me,' he murmured, sounding awed, incredulous, and relieved at the same time. I walked up to him, smiling through my tears.

"'You didn't think I'd let you go off alone, did you?'

"'I was hoping.' Ash stepped forward and hugged me, pulling me close with desperate relief. I slid my arms beneath his coat and held him tight, closing my eyes. The rain pounded us, and a lone car passed us on the road, spraying us with gutter water, but I felt no urge to move. As long as Ash held me, I could stay here forever."

Epilogue, p. 358



## Topics for Discussion

How is Meghan Chase, a high school girl from Louisiana, drawn into the world of Faery? Describe Meghan's family relationships. Who are her father figures? What steps did Oberon take to keep Meghan safe, back before she knew she was a Summer princess?

What attachments tie Meghan to the mortal realm and to the faery world? To which world does she most belong? Describe the different kingdoms within Faery. How does the kingdom of Leanansidhe fit in with the others?

How do Winter fey differ from Summer fey? Why are they rivals? Why do they go to war over the Scepter of the Seasons? Why do the Iron fey want the scepter?

What is the nature of prejudice, as seen in the world of the Nevernever? Why do some groups act as if they are superior to other groups?

Who is Puck? Why is he famous? How can Meghan love both Ash and Puck, when the two are so very different?

Why is the love between Meghan and Ash forbidden? Why does Ash's mother, Mab, banish him from her kingdom? Is Ash a hero or a traitor to his kingdom, based on his actions?

What is glamour? How is glamour used by Winter fey, by Summer fey, by Iron fey, by Leanansidhe, and by Meghan? In what way is Meghan's power unique?

Why do the Iron fey wish to take over and destroy the Winter and Summer Courts? How do they convince some Winter and Summer fey to help them, even though Winter and Summer fey are susceptible to iron poisoning? Why is Prince Rowan willing to betray his family and his kingdom for the sake of the Iron fey?

In the world of Faery, what is the significance of a promise? Which characters are willing to sacrifice their own safety for the sake of others or for the sake of principles? Why are they willing to make such sacrifices?

What is the main theme of *The Iron Daughter*? What important life lessons do Meghan and other main characters learn during the course of the novel?