

# **Jinx (Blackwood) Study Guide**

## **Jinx (Blackwood) by Sage Blackwood**

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# Plot Summary

Jinx is an orphan who lives with his stepmother and her new husband. After the couple has a new child, the man takes Jinx off the path in the Urwald to abandon him. However, the man gets lost. As he struggles to find his way back to the path, a wizard, Simon, comes along and offers to buy Jinx. Before the transaction can be completed, trolls come and steal Jinx's stepfather away.

Jinx goes to live in Simon's home. Simon is not an affectionate man, but he does not hit Jinx, so Jinx decides that this is better than his previous situation. Some years pass as Jinx works as a servant for Simon. One day Jinx meets Sophie, Simon's wife. Sophie is a kind woman who comes from a mysterious place called Samara. Sophie often argues with Simon about Jinx, forcing Simon to teach Jinx to read and encouraging him to teach Jinx magic.

Jinx is not good at the magic spells Simon tries to teach him, but he has a natural ability to read people's emotions in colors around their heads and to speak to the trees in the Urwald. One day Simon has Jinx help him with a difficult spell. When it is over, Jinx realizes that Simon has stolen something from him. Jinx can no longer see emotion clouds. Jinx becomes angry with Simon and searches for a way to fix his magic.

One day Jinx figures out how to go into a secret part of Simon's home that is hidden with a spell. This section of the house has a door into Samara. Jinx goes in search of Sophie, but when Simon comes after him, Simon is nearly killed. Still angry and in search of answers, Jinx decides to leave Simon's house.

Jinx begins his journey by attempting to find the house of the witch, Dame Glammer. On the first day, Jinx is robbed by a young man from one of the kingdoms on either edge of the Urwald. This young man appears repentant afterward and asks to travel with Jinx. Jinx reluctantly agrees. Later, Jinx and the boy, Reven, meet a girl in a red cloak called Elfwyn who is on her way to her grandmother's house, who just happens to be Dame Glammer.

The journey to Dame Glammer's is long and confusing because the children cannot figure out how to get there. When they finally arrive, Dame Glammer tells the children that only the wizard, Bonemaster, could possibly be powerful enough to take away their curses. For this reason, the trio heads out to the Bonemaster's even though they have heard rumors of the horrible things the Bonemaster does to unwanted visitors.

The Bonemaster takes the trio prisoner nearly as soon as they arrive. It is clear the Bonemaster is only keeping them alive, particularly Jinx, to lure Simon to his home. The Bonemaster believes Simon has stolen something from him. However, Jinx and his friends are unwilling to sit around and wait. They decide to find a way to escape. Jinx finds the source of the Bonemaster's power and decides to take that with them as well. Unfortunately, as the trio are making their escape, the Bonemaster catches them. In the struggle, Jinx falls from the cliff.



Simon arrives and traps the Bonemaster on the cliff around his island. Simon then takes Jinx back to his house where he performs a spell to return his life to him. Jinx survives and gets his ability to see emotions back. Jinx also gains a better understanding of Simon. In the end, however, Jinx decides to help Reven solve the conflict that led to his curse by traveling to one of the nearby kingdoms.



# Chapter 1-5

## Summary

Chapter 1. Jinx's parents have both died and he lives with his stepmother and her new husband. When the couple has a child of their own, they decide that Jinx is too much of a burden. The stepfather takes Jinx out into the Urwald to abandon him but gets lost on the way back to the path. As they struggle to find their way, a wizard comes along and guesses what has happened. The wizard, Simon, offers to buy Jinx from the stepfather. As they negotiate, a couple of trolls come along and steal away the stepfather. Left with no choice, Jinx goes home with Simon.

Chapter 2. Simon takes Jinx to his home. Jinx is given a room of his own and warned to stay out of Simon's section of the house and not to go through a door that opens onto nothing. Jinx does not like the lonely bedroom so he sleeps under the kitchen table. Dame Glammer, a local witch, stops by the house soon after Jinx arrives. Jinx finds her odd because she does not have the same emotion clouds that Jinx can see around everyone else's heads.

Winter comes and Jinx tries to make himself useful. Jinx is surprised that Simon does not beat him, even when Jinx does something wrong. This sets Simon apart from Jinx's prior experiences. It is also that winter when Jinx discovers a window in the house that allows Jinx to see far into the Urwald. Simon calls it the Farseeing Window, but warns him that it needs a spell to control it properly.

Chapter 3. Time passes. One night Jinx wakes in the night to the sound of voices. One of the voices is Simon's, the other a woman. Jinx is surprised to learn the woman is Simon's wife, Sophie. Sophie is a scholar who lives in a different place, a concept that surprises Jinx because he always thought the Urwald was the only place where people live. Sophie is very kind, but she becomes angry when she learns how Simon bought Jinx.

Chapter 4. Sophie comes and goes through Simon's part of the house, leaving Jinx to wonder if there is a secret door there. One day, Jinx is walking with Sophie and Simon and overhears them discussing how trees might talk. Jinx instinctively knows they speak through their roots even though Simon laughs at the idea. Jinx stops on the path and buries his bare feet in the soil and he can hear the faint sound of talking trees. He is interrupted when a couple of werewolves come into the area. Jinx runs, but he falls. Just as the werewolves should have attacked, Jinx discovers that Simon has conjured a dragon to scare the werewolves away. Simon yells at Jinx, but Sophie consoles him.

Chapter 5. A year later, Jinx slips into Simon's rooms after Simon goes chasing after a cat who has stolen a frog from Simon's lab. Jinx is fascinated with what he finds. When Simon returns with Sophie, Jinx hides under a table. Simon and Sophie go to another room, one hidden by an apparently impenetrable brick wall. Jinx continues to investigate



and accidentally opens a jar of wasps. Simon and Sophie find him struggling with the insects. Simon is angry, but Sophie admonishes Simon because he has not taught Jinx to read, therefore he could not read the warning on the jar's label. Goaded by both Sophie and Jinx, Simon not only agrees to teach Jinx to read, but to perform magic as well.

## Analysis

These early chapters introduce the main characters and the conflict that will move the plot along. Jinx is a small boy who lives in a vast forest known as the Urwald. Many of the villages in the Urwald are poor, the people desperate. Therefore, when Jinx becomes too much of a burden to his stepparents, they attempt to leave Jinx in the Urwald to sure death. The stepfather becomes lost, however, and uses Jinx to help him find the path. Instead they run into a wizard who adopts Jinx after the stepfather is taken away by trolls.

Jinx's life with the wizard, Simon, is a good one. Simon feeds Jinx, provides him a place to sleep and work to do. It is a life vastly different from the one Jinx knew before. Although Simon is not overly affectionate toward Jinx, he does not hit Jinx and that in itself is a sign of affection to the neglected and abused child.

Jinx has magical powers that he does not understand. Jinx can see emotions around people's heads in the form of colored clouds. Jinx thinks this is normal and that everyone can do it. This gift helps Jinx understand people and know how to react to their words and actions. It is due to this gift that Jinx understands that Simon means him no harm despite his often crass behavior.

Simon is a surly man, but he has a wife who is very kind and tries to bring out the best in Simon. It is clear to the reader that Simon has a good heart despite his behavior. However, his work causes him to do things that are not always considered kind, giving him a dark reputation that Jinx will find it difficult to ignore as the plot develops.

## Discussion Question 1

Who is Jinx? Where are his parents? Why does his stepfather try to abandon him in the Urwald?

## Discussion Question 2

What does Jinx see around the heads of people? Why does he not see it on Dame Glammer? How does this gift help Jinx interact with people?



## Discussion Question 3

What is the Urwald? Is it a dangerous place? For what reason?

## Vocabulary

peaceful, annoyance, surprise, private, abandon, magic, knowledge, power, updraft, complicated, nature, covered, opened, position, expression, stalking, perhaps, stiffened, involving, explanation, reasonable, inflexible, frozen, upper, dangerous, instant, workbench, crawling, freedom, invisible, solid, frustration



# Chapters 6-10

## Summary

Chapter 6. Jinx learns to read quickly, and in several different languages. However, when Simon begins teaching Jinx magic, he has trouble finding his personal source of power. At one point Simon gives Jinx a tiny gold bird on which he has placed a spell that he tells Jinx will keep him safe.

Jinx is often left alone and becomes lonely. For this reason, Jinx spends a lot of time looking out the Farseeing Window. Each time Jinx looks through this window, he sees a young girl in a red cape. Jinx speaks to her and imagines what she might say back to him. Other times, Jinx goes out into the Urwald and listens to the trees talk through the ground. The trees tell amazing stories. One day the trees tell Jinx someone is hurting them and Jinx finds a group of wanderers cutting down saplings. Jinx speaks to them for a time and learns about the two kingdoms that exist on either side of the Urwald.

One winter day, Simon finally takes Jinx on one of his many journeys. The first night in the Urwald, they stay the night in a tree house. Simon explains that the trees once made an agreement that if the people remain on the paths, they will be protected. The trees have also allowed for the building of these tree houses to protect people from the creatures of the Urwald during the night. However, if people hurt the trees then revenge will be taken by the trees.

Chapter 7. Simon and Jinx visit Dame Glammer. Dame Glammer teases Jinx about his inability to read her mind and calls what he can do old Urwald magic. Jinx is then sent to get firewood, but he overhears Simon negotiating with Dame Glammer for some kind of root. Later, as Simon and Jinx are on their way home, they run into the Bonemaster, another wizard who lives in the Urwald. The two clearly do not like each other and accuse one another of having stolen something from the other.

Chapter 8. Back at Simon's house, Simon makes Jinx help him clean his workshop. This is unusual since Simon rarely cleans the workshop. Afterward, Simon carefully draws many symbols on the floor that Jinx does not understand and Simon does not explain. Simon then asks Jinx to help with a spell. Jinx can see that Simon is worried about this spell, so he helps without complaining. However, Jinx soon finds himself passed out on the floor and somehow floating up above his body. Jinx sees Simon take something golden from Jinx's body and place it in a bottle.

Chapter 9. When Jinx wakes later he is bewildered and sick. The first thing Jinx notices is that his ability to see emotions in clouds around people's heads is gone. In its place is a large blank spot that leaves him feeling disoriented. Jinx becomes angry with Simon, convinced Simon stole his magic.





Chapter 10. Jinx continues to feel the disorientation of his missing magic and his anger at Simon only grows. Jinx decides to figure out how to get it back himself. At first Jinx searches for the bottle, but he cannot find it. Then Jinx begins to search Simon's large library of books to find a spell that might help him.

Jinx discovers that he has not lost his ability to hear the trees. One day while listening to the trees, a werewolf comes near Jinx. Jinx decides to try the concealment spell he saw Simon use the first day they met. Somehow being near the trees helps Jinx, it seems to allow him to draw from the Urwald's power. Jinx is successful in hiding himself from the werewolf. This success gives Jinx the courage and the understanding to find the door in the stone wall he has seen Simon and Sophie pass through. Although he has tried multiple times to find the door, this time it works. Jinx passes through the door and finds himself in a set of rooms filled with even more books.

As Jinx explores these new rooms, he finds a door that leads into what could only be Samara. Jinx decides to go find Sophie in this place. Jinx wanders through the desert town, eventually finding a place marked Knowledge is Power, making him believe it must be the place where Sophie teaches. Jinx goes inside and is confronted by a woman who wants to know who Jinx is. As they talk, Simon comes inside. Simon's presence causes an uproar and Jinx quickly finds himself running through the streets of Samara with Simon, fleeing from armed guards.

## Analysis

Jinx proves that he is incredibly intelligent when he not only learns to read, but learns to read in multiple languages. Jinx has learned other languages before and it is clear to the reader that his ability to see emotion clouds around peoples' heads is part of a magic that also allows him to understand language, books, and other things with a natural intuition. To the reader, this appears to suggest a very powerful magic that Jinx has only begun to understand.

Simon begins to show some concern for Jinx that Jinx does not fully understand. When Simon conducts an odd spell over Jinx and Jinx wakes without his ability to see emotion clouds, the reader wonders if Simon did this to protect Jinx from other wizards, such as the Bonemaster, or if he did it out of some kind of greed. It is unclear at this point what Simon did, let alone what his motive was, but Jinx only sees what he lost and is deeply angered by Simon's actions. For this reason, Jinx becomes openly disobedient for the first time.

Jinx finally discovers how Sophie comes and goes from Simon's home through the stone wall. This leads to Jinx trying to find Sophie, but instead he manages to get himself and Simon in a troubling situation when Simon comes after him. The reader receives hints at this point that Simon did something he should not have in Sophie's world that caused him to be unwelcome there. Jinx does not understand right now that Samara is a very different place from the Urwald, but this first adventure there will begin to initiate him to these ideas.



## Discussion Question 1

Why does Jinx have trouble learning how to perform spells? Why does this cause angst between him and Simon?

## Discussion Question 2

How does Jinx draw up the power to help him hide himself from the werewolf? Where does the power come from? What does this suggest about Jinx's magical abilities?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Simon take something from Jinx? Has Simon stolen Jinx's magic? For what possible purpose?

## Vocabulary

familiar, illusion, immobilized, gourds, unblinking, amid, armored, surrounded, unthinkable, vanishing, claiming, courtyard, marketplace, preceptress, definitely, intense, annoyance, intake, century, figure, humanity, magus, fascinating, usually, frightening, deserved, temple, innocence, charming, disturb, scratching, scholars



# Chapters 11-15

## Summary

Chapter 11. Jinx discovers that Simon has been injured soon after they arrive back at the house. As Jinx struggles to figure out what to do, Sophie arrives. Sophie is angry and yelling at Simon until she realizes how bad his injury is. Sophie quickly takes charge. Later, Jinx explains to Sophie what happened. In turn, Sophie tells Jinx that magic is studied in Samara, but it is illegal to practice it there.

Chapter 12. Jinx and Simon argue over the fact that Simon took Jinx's magic. During the fight, Jinx reveals to Sophie the truth about the night Simon found him. Sophie and Simon then argue. In the middle of it all, Jinx announces that he is leaving.

Chapter 13. Jinx leaves the following day with six pennies that Simon has paid him for his years of service. Almost immediately Jinx is attacked by a thief. Jinx fights the thief. Afterward they talk for a few minutes and somehow Jinx finds himself joined on his adventure by the young thief, who tells him his name is Reven.

Chapter 14. Reven and Jinx are arguing about where they are going to shelter for the night. Reven wants to cut some limbs off the trees, but Jinx quickly sets him right about that. As they argue, they hear a scream. Reven runs toward the sound. Jinx reluctantly follows and finds a young girl in a red cape trapped by multiple wolves. Reven has also managed to get himself trapped as well. As the boys try to figure out what to do, the girl releases furies from her basket that scare away the wolves. The girl introduces herself as Elfwyn. The trio shares a meal and Elfwyn tells how she was tricked into leaving the path by a werebear. The trio then returns to the path and settles down for the night. After a short time they are joined by a witch. The witch remarks on how all three are cursed in some way. The woman then gives them directions to Dame Glammer's, who happens to be Elfwyn's grandmother.

Chapter 15. Jinx tells Elfwyn he was going to Dame Glammer's as well, so the trio decides to remain together. Unfortunately, they quickly lose their way. At one point they find themselves on Troll-way, a path used by the trolls. As a troll approaches them, Jinx tries to conceal them with a spell, but Reven pulls away and breaks it. Jinx ends up cutting off the troll's arm with an ax. When he does, Jinx recognizes the troll as his stepfather. A short time later, they find themselves in a small clearing in a rain storm. They knock on the nearest door. Jinx is shocked to find the owner of the tiny cottage is his stepmother. The woman does not even recognize Jinx. In the morning, Jinx and his friends meet others in the clearing Jinx can remember from his time there. Jinx sees how poor and mean they are and realizes how lucky he was Simon took him in.



## Analysis

Jinx tells Sophie everything Simon has done to him, or to his stepfather. Sophie becomes very angry. Sophie has never really had a very high tolerance for Simon's magic, therefore it does not take much for her to become annoyed with the thought that Simon has used deathforce magic on Jinx. In the end, however, it is Jinx who decides to leave Simon.

Jinx feels that he would have a better chance of finding out how to recover his magic if he leaves Simon. For this reason, Jinx goes in search of Dame Glammer, whom he believes can help him. On the road, Simon meets two other people, one a strange young man who seems connected with a deep fear the trees have spoken of, and a girl in a red cloak who appears to be the same girl Jinx has been watching from the Farseeing Window for years. These meetings feel like destiny to the reader.

As Jinx and his new friends continue their travels, they come across people from Jinx's past. As Jinx sees these people, and the desperation of their lives, he begins to have a better appreciation for what Simon did for him all these years. Jinx's feelings for Simon become a little more apparent at this point in the novel. They are not highly affectionate feelings, and are still tainted by anger, but it is clear that Jinx looks to Simon as a parental figure he should have appreciated a little more.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Jinx tell Sophie about the spell Simon cast on him? How does Sophie respond? What does this suggest about the spell?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Jinx decide to leave Simon's home? How does Simon respond? What does this suggest about their relationship?

## Discussion Question 3

Who is Reven? How does Jinx meet him? What is different about Reven? Why does Jinx think the trees are afraid of Reven?

## Vocabulary

cheerful, porridge, unthinkable, subsisting, stronger, believe, pigsty, recognize, remember, companions, mentioned, understand, expression, complain, outcome, troll, werewolf, remembered, married, clearings, abandoned, grown, apologetic, recoiled horror, dominating, audience, conscious



# Chapters 16-20

## Summary

Chapter 16. The trio reach Dame Glammer's where they are welcomed into her home. Dame Glammer tells the children that each of them are cursed in some way, but that her magic cannot heal them. Dame Glammer suggests that the only person whose magic is strong enough to possibly end their curses is the Bonemaster. Jinx does not want to even think about this possibility because he has heard all the rumors about the Bonemaster and Simon has warned him away from the wizard. However, Reven is determined to go to the Bonemaster, so Jinx reluctantly agrees to go along. Elfwyn surprises them by joining them as they leave Dame Glammer's.

Chapter 17. As the trio make their way through the Urwald, Jinx becomes more convinced that Reven is the terror the trees have talked about. However, when Jinx asks Reven about it, he has no idea what it might mean.

That night, the trio hear a noise behind them. Jinx thinks it is a werebear and suggests they find a tree house to spend the night. Jinx and Reven find a tree house. Jinx tells Elfwyn about the terror and that he thinks it is Reven. Elfwyn disagrees. As they talk, Reven's tree is attacked by a werebear. Jinx tries to protect Elfwyn with a concealment spell, but she breaks it when Reven cries out. Jinx and Elfwyn rush back to the tree to find that Reven has butchered the creature with the ax. They decide to stay on the path that night. As they walk, tree limbs begin flying out of the trees and landing near Reven. Eventually they arrive at a ravine. They carefully cross it and find themselves at the bottom of a large canyon that leads up to an island-like structure where sits a single stone house. As the children debate what to do next, the Bonemaster appears.

Chapter 18. The Bonemaster invites them to his home and makes it clear it is not an invitation they should refuse. The Bonemaster takes them into his home where he serves them a generous dinner. Over dinner, the Bonemaster learns of their curses. The Bonemaster tells Jinx that Simon has taken his life, but does not explain further. The Bonemaster does inform Jinx, however, that only Simon can restore his life.

Chapter 19. Jinx offers the Bonemaster his remaining five pennies for him to reverse the curses on Reven and Elfwyn. When Jinx empties his pocket, the Bonemaster finds the gold bird that Simon gave Jinx. The Bonemaster begins talking to it as though Simon can see through it and hear him. The Bonemaster then sends the children to bed. The children talk and decide to leave. However, when they attempt to leave, Reven becomes stuck to the door, then Elfwyn and Jinx get stuck to Reven as they try to help him. The Bonemaster tells them that they are not to leave, that they are to stay until Simon brings back something he stole.

Chapter 20. The following day, Jinx and his friends explore the demesnes, but cannot find a way off of it. Reven and Elfwyn express hope in Simon's arrival, but Jinx tells



them Simon is injured. Jinx also does not think Simon would care enough to come and save him.

The Bonemaster makes Jinx something of a servant, while Elfwyn becomes his assistant and Reven is given free access to the entire demesnes. Jinx is mortified that Elfwyn sees the way in which the Bonemaster treats him, often hitting and humiliating him.

One day after spilling some liquid on the floor, Jinx finds a trapdoor that he thinks leads to the source of the Bonemaster's power. While the Bonemaster is napping, Jinx and Elfwyn go down the trapdoor and discover hundreds of bottles filled with tiny, dead people. There is also a locked door that Jinx believes houses more power, but he becomes afraid of the Bonemaster catching them, so he urges Elwyn back upstairs. Another week passes. Reven finds a way to climb down the demesnes, but Jinx could not do it, so Reven keeps searching. Elfwyn decides they must find what is behind the locked door in the basement, so she brings Jinx a bunch of spell books so that they can search for a way to open it.

## Analysis

Dame Glammer tells the children that the best way for them to be free from the curses is to go to the Bonemaster. Jinx has been told since he was a small child that the Bonemaster is a cruel man and he saw knives in the Bonemaster's emotions the one time he met him, so he is convinced it is a bad idea. Reven, however, is desperate to lose his curse. The reader does not know yet what Reven's curse is, except that it has something to do with his inability to reveal his true identity. For this reason, Reven insists that they go to the Bonemaster. Jinx only agrees because he does not want Reven, and Elfwyn, to go alone.

As the trio makes their way to the Bonemaster, Jinx becomes aware that the Terror the trees have been telling him about is traveling in the same direction as him. This convinces Jinx that the Terror is Reven. Jinx is confused by this because, except for a certain indifference toward the trees, Reven does not seem to be a danger to the trees. Perhaps the trees understand who Reven is and his true identity has something to do with this fear.

Jinx and his friends arrive at the Bonemaster's and find a man who is cruel and selfish. The Bonemaster takes the children in, but he is clearly only using them until Simon comes with whatever it is the Bonemaster believes Simon stole from him. Jinx has little faith that Simon cares enough about him to come to his rescue and is afraid that the Bonemaster will eventually grow bored and kill him. His friends seem to feel the same way, so they all work together to find a way to escape. This includes finding the source of the Bonemaster's power in hopes of making him weak enough that he cannot hurt them when they escape. The source of a magician's powers is very important, as Jinx has already learned, and it could play an important role in their fight against the wizard.



## Discussion Question 1

Why do Jinx and his friends go to the Bonemaster? Do they find what they expected to find?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does the Bonemaster want Simon to come rescue Jinx? Why does Jinx think this will not happen?

## Discussion Question 3

What is the source of the Bonemaster's power? What does this power suggest about what Simon did to Jinx with his spell?

## Vocabulary

power, explain, locked, hassling, permitted, royal, levee, stepmother, nasty, magicians, definitely, perfectly, fond, replaced, captured, infected, reminded, ghoul, patrolling, problem, affronted, hang, climbing, cliff, easily, horizon, footholds, island, compared, learned, comfort



# Chapters 21-24

## Summary

Chapter 21. The Bonemaster becomes weary of waiting for Simon, so he sets a three day deadline. Jinx finds a spell he thinks will open the door in the basement. The trio go down the trapdoor long after the Bonemaster has gone to bed. Jinx opens the door and they find two jars in the room behind, one wrapped in some blue magic, and one that appears to contain a tiny Simon. Jinx takes the bottle with Simon in it. The following night, Jinx and Elfwyn make a sleeping potion that Elfwyn plans to slip the Bonemaster at his regular nap time. The plan is then for Jinx to steal the bottles that contain the Bonemaster's power and then for the three of them to escape on the bridge Reven found.

Jinx and his friends manage to get out of the house, with Jinx carrying multiple backpacks with the bottles inside. However, before Jinx can get to the bridge, the Bonemaster comes out. Jinx tries to protect Elfwyn by moving between her and the Bonemaster. The Bonemaster realizes Jinx has his power and they begin to struggle over it. Jinx fall over the edge of the cliff in the struggle.

Chapter 22. Jinx separates from his body and watches Elfwyn quickly descend the bridge as the Bonemaster follows. When Elfwyn is safe at the bottom, Reven cuts the ties of the bridge, stranding the Bonemaster against the cliff wall. Simon and Dame Glammer arrive. Simon carefully arranges a pallet for Jinx and then levitates him so that the others can safely transport him to the Urwald. Simon then traps the Bonemaster against the cliff wall, amused to discover that most of the Bonemaster's power has been destroyed. As his friends take him to Simon's, Jinx flies over the Urwald and watches.

Chapter 23. Once again Simon carefully cleans his workshop and draws symbols on the floor. Simon then retrieves Jinx's life from a secret compartment in the stairs. As Jinx watches, Simon performs another ceremony with the help of Dame Glammer, Reven, and Elfwyn to return Jinx's life to his body. It is extremely painful for Jinx when he is back in his body, but his ability to see emotion clouds returns. Jinx learns then that Simon was the Bonemaster's apprentice and that the Bonemaster took his life as payment for his apprenticeship. Simon also admits to spreading rumors about the Bonemaster because he suspected how he got his power, but did not know for sure. Finally, Simon explains that the hundreds of bottles contained the moment of death for hundreds of people and by breaking them, Jinx set them free.

Chapter 24. Jinx has figured out Reven's curse. Jinx believes that Reven was the son of a king, but that the king's brother killed the king and banished Reven and his stepmother as long as they had a curse that could keep them from revealing their identities. However, the stepmother found a way to tell the truth and was killed for it. Now Reven wants to return to his kingdom to claim his throne. Jinx and Elfwyn decide to go with him. Simon is not happy with the idea now that Jinx's life has been returned





to him, but agrees to let him. Simon promises, however, that when he returns that he will send Jinx to Samara to learn about magic.

## Analysis

Jinx and his friends escape with most of the source of the Bonemaster's magic. They believe the Bonemaster is under a sleeping potion, but the Bonemaster surprises them by appearing at the bridge just as Jinx is about to cross. The Bonemaster and Jinx fight. Jinx dies, but Simon arrives just in time to take his body back to the Urwald and save him with the life he took from him earlier.

The reader, and Jinx, learn that Simon never really intended to hurt Jinx. Simon thought he was protecting Jinx by taking his life from him. In the end, it seems that Simon was correct. The relationship between Jinx and Simon changes from this point on. Simon does not change in his behavior toward Jinx, but Jinx sees Simon differently. There is a lot of affection there, it is just hidden under pride and perhaps fear.

Jinx has learned what the curses are that his friends are suffering under. Jinx decides to help Reven break his curse by taking back what is his. This decision seems to foreshadow another book about Jinx and his new friends.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Jinx take the bottles filled with what appear to be dead people? What happens to these bottles? What is the result?

## Discussion Question 2

How does Jinx die? How does Simon save him? What happens when he does?

## Discussion Question 3

What is Reven's curse? Why does Jinx decide to help Reven? What dangers might lie in the future for Jinx and his friends?

## Vocabulary

exclusive, wizards, lighten, promise, disastrous, thoughts, potion, forest, surprised, narrowed, apprenticeship, permission, nonsense, protection, remembered, banished, courtier, armload, deposed, identity, evil, desperate, secret, happened, regained, curse, somewhere, ludicrous, answer, clearing, forest, fuzzily



# Characters

## Jinx

Jinx is a small child when his stepparents attempt to abandon him in the Urwald. Simon, a wizard, comes along and takes Jinx home with him. For six years, Jinx works as a servant in Simon's home, doing whatever chores Simon asks of him. In exchange, Simon teaches Jinx to read and to do some simple magic spells.

When Simon takes Jinx's life and places it in a bottle, he also takes Jinx's ability to see people's emotions in colored clouds around their heads. This makes Jinx think that Simon is cruel and he did it to hurt Jinx. Jinx goes to the home of the most evil wizard to have his life restored, but only becomes a pawn in a fight between the two wizards. Jinx ends up destroying the Bonemaster's magic while Simon returns his life to Jinx after a fall kills him. In the end, Jinx gets his magic back as well as a deeper understanding of the man who raised him.

## Simon

Simon is a wizard who lives alone in the Urwald. Simon comes across Jinx and his stepfather as the stepfather is attempting to abandon Jinx in the Urwald. Simon offers to pay for Jinx, but does not have to when trolls come to steal the stepfather. Simon takes Jinx home with him and puts him to work as a servant. For several years, Jinx cleans the house and does various other chores. After a time, however, Simon's wife pressures Simon into teaching Jinx to read. Simon also attempts to teach Jinx magic, but has little success until Jinx discovers he can draw power from the Urwald.

Simon is a gentle man who is not cruel to Jinx. However, Simon finds it difficult to show affection to both Jinx and Sophie. For this reason, there is often a great deal of misunderstanding when it comes to Simon's affections toward these two people in his life. Things get worse when Simon takes Jinx's life and Jinx misunderstands his intentions. Simon only wanted to protect Jinx, but Jinx becomes angry and leaves. In the end, Simon saves Jinx by returning his life to his body after he dies in a fall.

## Sophie

Sophie is Simon's wife. Sophie is a professor in Samara, a desert country that is accessible through a magical door in Simon's house. Sophie does not approve of magic and refuses to do it, but she is fascinated with it and both studies and teaches it. In Samara, magic is illegal, which explains in part Sophie's problems with it. This also causes discord in Sophie's relationship with Simon.



## Reven

Reven is a strange young man Jinx meets on the path in the Urwald when Reven tries to rob Jinx. Reven speaks oddly and acts strangely, implying that he did not grow up in the Urwald. In the end, Jinx learns that Reven is a prince who was exiled when his uncle killed his father to take over his kingdom. Reven is determined to return to his kingdom and take back what is rightfully his. Jinx agrees to go with him, mostly because the trees believe Reven is a danger to the Urwald and Jinx wants to remove the threat. Jinx also wants to help Reven because Elfwyn cares for him.

## Elfwyn

Elfwyn is a young girl about Jinx's age. Jinx often sees Elfwyn in the Farseeing Window and imagines long conversations between them. When Jinx meets Elfwyn in person it is while he is traveling to see Dame Glammer in hopes she can help him get his magic back. Jinx is surprised to learn that Dame Glammer is Elfwyn's grandmother. They travel there together. Jinx is fascinated by Elfwyn, but is convinced that Elfwyn loves Reven. It is in part because of this that Jinx tries to help Reven as much as he can.

## Dame Glammer

Dame Glammer is a witch who lives in the Urwald. Dame Glammer is a frequent visitor at Simon's house, but she is not a kind woman. Dame Glammer often does what benefits her, never what benefits those around her. It is Dame Glammer who sends Jinx and his friends to the Bonemaster. It is also later revealed that Dame Glammer is the one who placed a curse on Elfwyn.

## The Bonemaster

The Bonemaster is a wizard who lives in the Urwald. There are rumors throughout the Urwald and its many clearings that the Bonemaster sucks the souls from people with a straw. It later is revealed that Simon spread this rumor because he knew that the Bonemaster killed people so that he could bottle their moment of death to give him more power.

Simon was once the Bonemaster's apprentice. For this reason, Simon allowed the Bonemaster to take his life and place it in a bottle. However, Simon later realized that the Bonemaster was cruel and evil, so he ran away. Unfortunately, Simon's life continues to be linked to the Bonemaster, so he cannot kill him. For this reason, when Jinx and his friends manage to trap the Bonemaster on a cliff wall, Simon simply sets a spell that will force him to remain there.

Toward the end of the novel, Jinx and his friends learn they are all three cursed. The friends learn that the Bonemaster is the only one strong enough to reverse these



curses. For this reason, the friends go willingly to the Bonemaster, but soon find themselves trapped there. The friends find a way to escape, but Jinx falls to his death in the process.

## **Bergthold**

Bergthold is Jinx's stepfather. After he and Jinx's stepmother, Cottawilda, have a child of their own, they decide it is too expensive to feed Jinx. For this reason, Bergthold takes Jinx into the Urwald to abandon him. Unfortunately for Bergthold, he becomes lost and asks Jinx to help him find the way back to the path. As they wonder, they meet Simon. Simon offers to pay a penny for Jinx, but before he can some trolls come and take Bergthold away. Jinx later sees Bergthold, who has become a troll himself, while lost on the Troll-way. Jinx cuts off Bergthold's arm to protect his friends.

## **Cottawilda**

Cottawilda is Jinx's stepmother. Cottawilda was married to Jinx's father, but when his father died she married another man. Cottawilda and her husband had the cottage that Jinx's father left to Jinx, but the cottage burned down. When Cottawilda and her husband had a daughter of their own, they decide that Jinx is too expensive to feed. They decide to abandon Jinx in the Urwald. Years later, Jinx will meet Cottawilda again when he and his friends stop in the clearing to seek shelter in a storm. Cottawilda does not even remember Jinx.

## **Trees of the Urwald**

The trees of the Urwald appear to be ordinary trees. However, Jinx learns that when he buries his bare toes in the soil of the Urwald, he can hear the trees talking. The trees talk mostly about water, soil quality, and growing saplings, but there comes a time when Jinx can hear them talking about what they call the Terror, a danger coming into the Urwald. Jinx eventually figures out that the Terror is his friend, Reven. The trees fear that Reven will cut them all down. To prevent this, the trees try to hurt Reven by sending tree branches crashing down onto the path near him. In the end, however, Reven survives unhurt and Jinx decides to escort him out of the Urwald.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## Knowledge is Power

Knowledge is Power is the name of a book on magic that Jinx finds in Simon's workshop. This book helps Jinx figure out not only how to find his power, but to find other power as well. It also helps Jinx find a hidden door in Simon's house.

## Gold Bird

Simon gives Jinx a gold bird, called an aviox that has been enchanted with a spell. Simon tells Jinx this bird is to help keep him safe, but later learns it is a way for Simon to use the Farseeing Window to watch over Jinx.

## Farseeing Window

The Farseeing Window is a magical window in Simon's house that can allow the viewer to see almost anything he wants. However, the window needs a spell to guide it or it will show the viewer whatever it wants.

## Bottle

Jinx is given a bottle and told to clean it very well. Later, Jinx sees Simon take a gold ball of light from his body and place it in the bottle. Jinx learns later that the bottle holds his life.

## Simon's Bottle

While investigating the source of the Bonemaster's power, Jinx finds a bottle that appears to have a tiny version of Simon inside. Jinx knows that this is Simon's life, so he steals it and Simon takes it back.

## Death Bottles

While investigating the source of the Bonemaster's power, Jinx, Elfwyn, and Reven find hundreds of bottles that appear to hold dead people. When Jinx steals them from the Bonemaster and accidentally breaks them, the moment of death for hundreds of people are released, taking the greatest source of the Bonemaster's power with them.



## Roots

Simon trades with Dame Glammer for some roots that he uses in the spell to take Jinx's life. Jinx later learns that Simon used the roots so that he would not have to use a human sacrifice.

## Butter Churns

The witches of the Urwald travel in butter churns.

## Pennies

Simon gives Jinx six pennies when he leaves on his adventure, one for each year he lived with Simon. Reven steals one of these pennies the first day Jinx is on the path and never gives it back.

## Bridge

Access to the Bonemaster's house is via a bridge that goes almost directly up a cliff face. The children find the bridge missing the next day. Reven eventually finds the bridge shrunken and hidden in a small box in a kitchen drawer.



# Settings

## Urwald

The Urwald is a dense forest filled with magical creatures, from trolls to werewolves to vampires. The Urwald contains multiple clearings where the people make their homes. It also has a path that runs throughout it. The trees entered into a truce with the people promising that as long as they remain on the path and do not hurt the trees that no harm will come to them. However, when someone leaves the path, they are open to attack by the Urwald's many creatures. Jinx has a connection to the Urwald that allows him to draw magic from it. This connection also allows Jinx to hear the trees of the Urwald talk, but he has not yet learned how to make the trees hear him.

## Samara

Samara is a desert city where Sophie lives. In Samara, magic is illegal, but the people continue to study magic in theory. Sophie is a professor at the university there. Simon, however, has been banned from Samara because he did something illegal that has yet to be revealed.

## The Bonemaster's Demesnes

The Bonemaster has a home on a demesnes in the middle of a barren section of the Urwald. Jinx and his friends go to this place to find out if the Bonemaster can remove their curses, but instead find themselves prisoners on the demesnes. The children work together to find a way off, but the Bonemaster tries to stop them. Jinx is killed in the resulting struggle and the Bonemaster is trapped on the cliff wall by Simon and Dame Glammer.

## Keyland and Bragwood

Keyland and Bragwood are kingdoms on either side of the Urwald. Both kingdoms claim possession of the Urwald. Reven is from Keyland, where his father was killed by the current king, King Bluetooth. King Bluetooth sent Reven and his stepmother to Bragwood where they were prisoners of King Rufus. However, Reven's stepmother found a way to tell someone who Reven was, so she was killed. Reven escaped and now wants to return to Keyland to take back his kingdom.



# Themes and Motifs

## Fairy Tales

This novel is a unique one that puts a new spin on classic fairy tales. This novel is set in a magical forest, as are most classic fairy tales. It revolves around an orphan who was treated poorly despite the fact that he has some kind of special talent that will make him important later in life. The young orphan, Jinx, becomes fascinated with a young girl in a red riding hood, or cloak, and meets a prince who has been banished from his own kingdom and doomed to watch it fall apart under the control of an evil uncle.

The writer of this novel has taken many of the classic fairy tales and turned them on their heads, creating all new stories with the familiar characters and situations. In this way, he has taken what might be a predictable story and made it into something unique. It is because of this that fairy tales is a theme of the novel.

## Father/Son Relationships

Jinx lost his biological parents when he was a very small child. This left him with his stepmother and her new husband. As this couple had no real connection to Jinx, they had little reason to want to keep paying to feed him and to keep raising him when they had a child of their own. For this reason, they chose to abandon him in the Urwald. Fortunately for Jinx, he was found by Simon and taken to Simon's home to be something like a servant.

As the years pass, Simon, a distracted wizard, often forgets about Jinx. Simon gives Jinx a place to sleep and food to eat, but he never shows him affection and does not teach him to read until his wife, Sophie, reminds him that a growing child needs to learn such things. As time passes and Simon becomes aware of how old Jinx is getting and how vulnerable he is, he decides to remove his life to keep him safe. Jinx does not understand this and becomes angry, but Simon no longer feels he has to worry about Jinx's safety.

With the loss of his life, Jinx loses his ability to see people's emotions, so he does not know what lies in Simon's heart. For this reason, Jinx begins to wonder about Simon's motives. Jinx allows himself to think that Simon is a cruel wizard who stole his life for selfish reasons. In the end, however, Jinx knows that Simon loves him. It is a relationship not unlike many father/son relationships.

## Magic

Magic is an important theme of this novel because Jinx spends a great deal of his childhood living with, and learning magic from, a wizard. Magic is a common thing in the Urwald, a place where werewolves and vampires live among the trees. Simon is more



of a scientist than a magician, however, learning as much about magic as he can instead of just creating spells without fully understanding them. This causes Simon to stand out among the other wizards and witches in the book and it makes him a great teacher for Jinx.

As the novel progresses, Jinx becomes aware that he has a different kind of magic. Jinx can use the power of the Urwald to draw on when doing spells. Jinx can also listen to the trees as they talk among their roots. Jinx sees people's emotions as well giving him the ability to understand what people are thinking by the color of their emotions.

If not for magic, Jinx would not have survived the Urwald with Simon, but he also would not have become angry with Simon after Simon took his life to protect him from the dangers of the Urwald. For this reason, magic is an important theme of the novel.

# Styles

## Point of View

The novel is written in the third person point of view. The narrator of this novel is Jinx, a young boy who, after being abandoned by his stepparents, is raised by a wizard. Jinx has magical abilities and these come through in the text even before Jinx fully understands what they are and that not everyone else can do them.

The point of view of this novel is a little unreliable. The author uses a character who is young and naive, a child who does not fully understand the world around him. For this reason, Jinx tells the reader things that are not always completely true. In using Jinx as his narrator, and making the reader aware of the unreliability of Jinx's narration, the author has created a complex novel that is a fascinating read for all ages of readers.

## Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is simple English. The author uses a common language that is not complicated by a lot of foreign words or phrases. However, the language does contain some words that are used uniquely in this text to fit the genre of the novel. This language is often easily defined within the text and does not cause a problem for most readers.

The language of this novel works well with the novel because it is simple enough to be understood by young readers, but complicated enough to keep even the older readers interested. The author uses language to create full rounded characters that are easy to care about and understand. However, the author also uses his language to create characters that are evil or unique, characters that contrast with the main character and create a story that is fascinating to read.

## Structure

The novel is divided into twenty-four chapters. Each chapter is given a title that describes someone or something that will happen in the chapter. The novel is written in a linear fashion that tells a straightforward story with little to no backstory or flashbacks. The novel is written in both narrative and dialogue, showing the story rather than telling.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows Jinx as he grows up and learns to deal with his magical powers and with the loss of those powers. A subplot follows the relationship between Jinx and Simon, his adoptive father. Another subplot follows the relationship between Simon and his wife Sophie. Finally, a subplot follows the story of Reven and Elfwyn, friends Jinx makes at the end of the novel. All these plots come to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



## Quotes

In the Urwald you grow up fast or not at all.  
-- Jinx (Chapter 1)

**Importance:** This quote is the first quote of the book and it sets up the tone of the book, especially the tone of Jinx's life in the years before Simon came along.

But there was a part of Simon that seemed to hide from what he'd just said, as if it wasn't the whole truth.  
-- Jinx (Chapter 2)

**Importance:** This quote shows how perceptive Jinx is, even at a very young age.

Sweeping out the loft meant Simon was tired of Jinx's questions.  
-- Jinx (Chapter 4)

**Importance:** Simon is not an affectionate man and he is often distracted. This quote shows that Jinx knows this even if he does not fully understand it.

He looked almost kindly. The things boiling in clouds around his head said he wasn't, though. The pink clouds had knives in them.  
-- Jinx (Chapter 7)

**Importance:** This is the first time Jinx meets the Bonemaster. What Jinx sees implies that some of the things said about the Bonemaster might not be wrong.

It was as if he'd lost one of his senses.  
-- Jinx (Chapter 9)

**Importance:** This is Jinx's reaction when he first wakes after the spell Simon did that took his life.

Ever since he'd lost his ability to see other people's feelings, he'd become a whole lot more interested in how he felt.  
-- Jinx (Chapter 10)

**Importance:** This illustrates how angry Jinx is with Simon after losing his gift to see emotion clouds around people's heads.

Jinx had been in the forest a lot, and he had left the path, and he had learned not to be afraid of the dark unknown. When he had had Simon's house to run back to. Now he didn't.  
-- Narrator (Chapter 13)



**Importance:** Jinx is setting out on his own adventure and he is just realizing how scary that is.

The fact was that they were lost.  
-- Jinx (Chapter 15)

**Importance:** Jinx is trying to lead Elfwyn and Reven through the forest, but it takes him a while to admit they are lost.

The Terror was right here.  
-- Jinx (Chapter 17)

**Importance:** This is the moment Jinx realizes that Reven is the Terror the trees have been warning him about.

The Bonemaster's power had escaped with the lives.  
-- Jinx (Chapter 22)

**Importance:** Jinx breaks the bottles containing the moment of death of hundreds of people. By breaking them, Jinx releases that moment, including the power that the Bonemaster was able to draw from.

He wasn't sure he wanted to be alive again. He was free up here, and he could see sunrises and sunsets forever.  
-- Jinx (Chapter 23)

**Importance:** Jinx is dead and realized that Simon is about to bring him back by returning his life to his body. Jinx is not sure this is what he wants for a moment.

He had a feeling that since his death, he no longer needed to do this to listen. He was connected to the trees in a way he hadn't been before his flight over the Urwald.  
-- Jinx (Chapter 24)

**Importance:** Jinx realizes that he does not have to bury his toes in the soil to hear the trees any longer, suggesting his power has grown stronger or his understanding of it has grown.