

King of the Wind Study Guide

King of the Wind by Marguerite Henry

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Overview

King of the Wind is a well-researched historical novel that tells the story of the Godolphin Arabian, whose qualities of beauty, swiftness, and stamina are present in most modern-day thoroughbred racehorses. The book is beautifully illustrated by Wesley Dennis, with whom the author collaborated closely.

While there is an obvious appeal to the horse lover, even the reader not particularly interested in horses will be drawn to the tale of the Moroccan slave boy Agba, who experiences several adventures—some life-threatening—with the horse he tends, until the two finally reach the Earl of Godolphin's spacious estate.

More than a standard horse tale, this is an exciting story with a fast-paced plot and vivid descriptions. Agba, a seemingly powerless character because of his slave status, muteness, and small physical stature, overcomes his limitations and is able to operate within the realm of his powerful masters, such as when he establishes Sham's lost pedigree.

Agba's world, a precarious place where adults, especially powerful adults, may not always be trustworthy, is also a place of wonder and mystery. The birth of the foal and Agba's reaction to it are beautifully communicated, as are the scenes when Agba becomes the foal's surrogate mother after the mare dies.

Agba's qualities of sensitivity, devotion, careful nurturing, and stoicism, along with persistence and toughness, enable him to surmount most obstacles in life.

About the Author

Marguerite Henry, born Marguerite Breithaupt on April 13, 1902, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was the youngest of five children. Her father was a printer and publisher, and by age eleven, Henry was not only proofreading for him but had also published a story of her own in the *Delineator*, a woman's magazine. After graduating with a teaching degree from Milwaukee State Teachers College, she married Sidney Crocker Henry, who shared her strong interest in animals. They first lived in Chicago, where Henry wrote articles for furniture trade magazines and then for periodicals with a wider readership, such as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Forum*. In 1939 they moved to the outskirts of Wayne, Illinois, where the country setting enabled Henry to observe animals and birds at close hand, inspiring her to write animal books.

Her first children's book, *Auno and Tauno*, was published in 1940. Written for preschoolers, this story was followed by two series of geographies for third and fourth graders. During these years, she also wrote several children's story books. *The Little Fellow*, a story about a colt, was her first animal story to attract critical acclaim; it was a Junior Literary Guild selection. Its more famous successor, *Justin Morgan Had a Horse*, won the Junior Scholastic Gold Seal Award and the Award of the Friends of Literature for 1948.

Other awards soon followed, notably the important Newbery Medal in 1949, given by the American Library Association for the best American children's book of the year, for *King of the Wind*. In her acceptance speech for this award, Henry reveals the deep reverence for living things that inspires her to write about the struggles of humans and animals.

Henry's most successful books are her horse stories. Her careful historical research, vivid scenes, characterizations, and ability to evoke emotions in an honest, unsentimental way in these books have won her lasting critical and popular acclaim. Her award-winning horse books include *Misty of Chincoteague*; *Brighty of the Grand Canyon*; *Black Gold*; *Mustang, Wild Spirit of the West*; *Gaudenzia, Pride of the Palio*; and *San Domingo, the Medicine Hat Stallion*.

In each of these, Henry builds her stories around an authentic breed of horse, usually taking some of her plot from historical fact. Over a dozen of her books have been translated into foreign languages.



Plot Summary

King of the Wind tells the story of the beautiful horse, Sham, and his devoted stable boy, Agba. The horse was named Sham for the sun. Upon his heel was a small white spot, the symbol of speed. Although he was as swift as the desert winds, Sham's proud pedigree would be scorned all his life by cruel masters and abusive owners. The symbol of the wheat ear on his chest foretells of this misfortune that Sham must endure. Agba's love for Sham causes him to stay by Sham's side through the good times and the bad. The pair set off, and many adventures take them from Morocco to France and finally to England. There, Sham is finally acknowledged as the Godolphin Arabian and chosen to father a noble breed of horses.

Agba, a stable boy at the Sultan's palace in Morocco, falls in love with the horse, Sham, from the moment Sham is born. Agba dedicates his life to caring for Sham and helping him fulfill his potential as a race horse. Agba knows that Sham will be a great race horse one day because of the small white spot on Sham's heel, which symbolizes speed. Yet another symbol, the wheat ear on Sham's chest, foretells of misfortune. Sham indeed grows to be a strong and magnificent horse, as swift as the wind, yet his life is still filled with one misfortune after another.

Accompanied by his faithful friend, Agba, Sham travels from the deserts of Morocco to the royal stables of France, when the Sultan of Morocco decides to send a group of horses as a gift to the King of France. In France, bad luck leads Sham and Agba from one cruel owner to another. When the King of France's Chief Cook decides to sell Sham, the only buyer he finds is a mean brute. The brute man buys Sham for a very small price and then goes on to become an abusive owner. Agba is petrified to find out that Sham has been sold and sets off to find his beloved horse. When Agba finds Sham, he barely recognizes him due to the abuse Sham has suffered. Agba gets a job with the brute man in order to be close to Sham.

A bit of good luck comes Sham and Agba's way, when a kind old man, named Mr. Jethro Coke, feels sorry for Sham and buys him from his abusive owner. Unfortunately, Sham and Agba do not last long with Mr. Coke and end up being sold to an Inn Keeper, named Mr. Williams. Mr. Williams is a kind man, but his wife, Mrs. Williams, can not stand Agba. She accuses Agba of stealing, and Agba ends up in jail, separated from Sham.

One day, Agba is rescued from prison, and the Earl of Godolphin agrees to take him and Sham into his stately home. Life in England brings yet more challenges for Sham and Agba. Sham arrives in England in bad shape, and nobody can see his potential for greatness except for Agba. Sham and Agba prove resilient throughout their tribulations in England. In the end, Sham finally gets the recognition he deserves. Sham is renowned as the Godolphin Arabian and chosen to create a new breed of swift and noble horses. Agba is thrilled and finally feels like he has accomplished his life's task. After Sham dies, Agba returns to his homeland, Morocco. He feels there is no longer a need for him to stay in England.



Prologue

Prologue Summary

King of the Wind tells the story of the beautiful horse, Sham, and his devoted stable boy, Agba. The horse was named Sham for the sun. Upon his heel was a small white spot, the symbol of speed. Although he was as swift as the desert winds, Sham's proud pedigree would be scorned all his life by cruel masters and abusive owners. The symbol of the wheat ear on his chest foretells of this misfortune that Sham must endure. Agba's love for Sham causes him to stay by Sham's side through the good times and the bad. The pair set off, and many adventures take them from Morocco to France and finally to England. There, Sham is finally acknowledged as the Godolphin Arabian and chosen to father a noble breed of horses.

In Windsor Ontario, thousands of people pour into Kenilworth Park to watch the anticipated race between Man o' War, the great American horse, and Sir Barton, the pride of Canada. Man o' War is also known as Big Red. As Big Red's trainer prepares the horse for the race, he turns to the horse jockey and tells him, "Let Red run his own race. Don't hold him in." (pg. 12) The jockey nods. Ten minutes before the race, the jockey starts to walk Red around the saddling ring, calming him down. It's a necessary routine for Red. Sir Barton is a Triple Crown champion and a horse to be reckoned with. The plan for Sir Barton is for him to start off with a wild spurt and run Man o' War off his feet, because everyone knows there is no greater sprinter than Sir Barton.

The race begins and Sir Barton sprints to a head start as planned. Man o' War's jockey holds him back, saving speed for the finish, but Big Red wants to go forward, and the jockey remembers what the trainer told him and allows Man o' War to guide his own way. Man o' War quickly catches up to Sir Barton, flies past him and wins the race. The crowd jumps with excitement. They have never seen such an explosive race. Man o' War's trainer, Mr. Riddle, accepts the trophy and Sir Barton's owner congratulates him and admits that Big Red cannot be beaten, even with his handicap of weighing significantly more than all of his competitors.

Friends urge Mr. Riddle to send Man o' War to England for the famous Newmarket races, where his great ancestors ran. Winning a race in England would mean a lot to Big Red's fans, because Big Red was excluded from the British Stud Book, because he was not a thoroughbred, and this would ease the hurt of that disappointment. However, Big Red would never race again, for Mr. Riddle had already made the painful decision to retire the horse while he is at his peak and still in perfect condition.

When Mr. Riddle announces the sad news, everyone tries to dissuade him from retiring Big Red just yet. They try to convince him to wait until he takes Big Red to Newmarket. Mr. Riddle knows Big Red does not need Newmarket to prove his pedigree. After all, Big Red's blood is traceable in an unbroken line to the great Godolphin Arabian. Mr. Riddle thinks about the Godolphin Arabian, who had not raced in Newmarket, nor had any



pedigree, but the Godolphin Arabian wrote his own pedigree, with his own blood and that of his descendants. Mr. Riddle figures Man o' War could do the same: live on through his descendants. Mr. Riddle finds it hard to convince his friends of this. Often Mr. Riddle has to go back two hundred years and tell his friends the story of the Godolphin Arabian.

Prologue Analysis

In this section, the reader is introduced to a horse called Man o' War. Man o' War's owner wants to retire the horse while the horse is at his peak and still in perfect condition. He feels the glory of his horse can live on through the horse's descendants. The owner has trouble explaining to fans why he wants to retire the horse and resorts to having to tell the story of the horse's ancestor Godolphin Arabian, who was an amazing horse and whose glory Man o' War carries on. This chapter works as the prologue for the rest of the book which tells the story of Man o' War's ancestor, the great Godolphin Arabian.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

In Morocco, in the Sultan's palace lives a young boy named Agba. Agba works as a stable boy in the Sultan's stables. Agba is waiting for sunset like everyone else, for it is the month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast from dawn to sunset. Agba, the stable boy, does not mind the fast. What does anger him though is, when Signor Achmet, Chief of the Grooms, tells him that the Sultan has decided that the horses must fast as well. Agba is in charge of ten of the twelve thousand horses in the Sultan's stables, and there is one of the ten, to whom he loses his heart. For this special mare, he fetches water from a pure spring beyond the palace gates. Agba can see the love in the mare's eyes, when he cares for her.

Agba is worried about the mare, for she is pregnant and ready to give birth, and the signs of weariness from the pregnancy and fast are clear to Agba. Soon after sun set, the still palace comes alive. The other stable boys break their fasts with dates, nuts and grapes, but Agba hurries to his mare and takes out the bucket of water he has hidden for her. Agba holds the bucket as the mare drinks. The mare looks up at Agba as if to say to him that he is the source of all that is good. Agba's heart fills with joy, and he continues to hold the bucket of water for her, for he knows that she will want more to drink.

Agba then rushes to fetch the mare's corn ration, while the other stable boys are still leading their horses to the common trough to drink. Agba sees Signor Achmet and Signor Achmet asks Agba why he does not eat like the other boys. Agba does not answer. Signor Achmet asks him if it is the mare he worries about and if it is her hour tonight? Agba nods. Signor Achmet tells Agba that he must stay with his mare tonight, watch her all night and call him at the first sign of labor. Agba is overjoyed. He takes a portion of corn for his mare and rushes back to her.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Agba has a very special relationship with the mare. They seem to understand each other and speak to each other without words, but with only the looks in each others' eyes. Agba has been fasting all day, but when sunset arrives, and it is time for him to break his fast, he does not stuff his mouth with dates and nuts like the other boys. Instead, the first thing he does is give his mare water to drink, water from a fresh spring from outside the palace wall, that he has secretly fetches and hides for his mare. Agba waits patiently for the mare to drink and does not rush her. He gets more pleasure out of doing this than he would out of breaking his own fast. When the mare is done, Agba rushes off to get the mare's ration of corn and still he has not had a bite to eat or a drink. This shows Agba's dedication to the mare and his virtues of patience and selflessness.



Also, from this chapter, the reader knows that the Sultan of the town is a mean and unreasonable man, who decides to make animals fast in accordance to human rituals that are not supposed to apply to animals. The chief of the grooms, Signor Achmet is not a particularly nice man either, although he does allow Agba to stay with the mare overnight to keep an eye on her as she gets ready to give birth. The birth to come provides a source of suspense for the reader, for the reader knows the mare is worn out from the fasting and the pregnancy, and who knows how she will fare through the long and painful process of labor.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

The mare is too weary to eat the corn Agba brings her. Agba takes care of his other horses, eats his own meal and then goes to the brood mare stable. Agba sees a new moon and figures it is a favorable sign for the new foal. Agba pours buckets of sand on the stable floor and covers the sand with hay to make a good bed for the mare. Signor Achmet shows up and tells Agba he does not need to lay out so much sand and hay. He reminds Agba to call on him, when the mare is close to delivery.

Agba leads the mare to the bed of sand and hay and she lays in the bed wearily. Agba watches the mare and remembers how once she outran a gazelle. That day he rode the mare passed an old man who called to him and whispered: "When Allah created the horse, he said to the wind, 'I will that a creature proceed from thee. Condense thyself!' And the wind condensed itself, and the result was the horse." Those words echo in Agba's head as he daydreams about riding the mare and slumps down into the straw.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The mare is getting more and more weary, so much so that she refuses to eat. This likely means she is getting closer to delivery time. Agba lovingly prepares the bed on which she will have her foal. According to Signor Achmet, Agba overdoes the bed and puts more sand and hay than necessary, which shows how over concerned Agba is about the well being and comfort of the horse. Agba's day dreams and memories as he sits on watch give the reader insight as to why this horse is so special. Agba remembers the words of the old wise man who told him that this horse was created from wind, and this likely only confirmed Agba's faith in the uniqueness of this mare. The old man's words also give Agba's belief in the horse's special nature credibility since it is not only him who sees the special qualities of the horse.

When Agba sees the new moon, he thinks of it as a sign of good luck for the foal that will soon be born. This is the first hint at an important theme throughout the book, the theme of signs and superstitions. Agba comes from a culture where superstitions are firmly rooted and where there are different signs that are viewed as omens for many different things.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Agba sleeps for a long time and, when he awakens, he finds the mare drying off her newborn foal. The wild boar, kept in a hole behind the stables, grunts and coughs. The boar's job is to keep evil spirits away from the horses. The mare nudges the foal, and the foal tries to get up but collapses. Agba examines the foal. He sees that the foal is all one color except for a white spot on one heel. Agba is overjoyed. The white spot is an emblem of swiftness. He names the foal, Sham, Arabic for sun. The foal begins to nurse from the mare. Agba realizes that he should go and report to signor Achmet, but he does not want to end these moments of excitement and joy.

Chapter 3 Analysis

The foal is born and is not only healthy, but bears the emblem of swiftness. This foreshadows a great future for the foal, and Agba is overjoyed at the discovery. Agba is so entranced that he puts off reporting to Signor Achmet, a mistake he may get in trouble for later. Agba's discovery further emphasizes the kind of society he lives in, a society that believes in all sorts of superstitions. Another superstition mentioned in this chapter is the one about the wild boar kept behind the stables in a hole, to ward off evil spirits. The reader will have to wait and see whether the boar has done his job or not.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Signor Achmet walks into the stables. Agba jumps up expecting to be in trouble for not reporting about the foal's birth but Signor Achmet is busy examining the foal. He shouts out, "the wheat ear" (pg. 34). Agba looks closely and sees what the chief grooming is talking about. Agba sees the cross-graining of hairs that closely resemble a ripened beard of wheat, on the foal's chest. Signor Achmet exclaims the wheat ear foretells of evil. He claims that he should have known this would happen, because he was forewarned by the droning of the bittern last night and the yellow-eyed owl. Signor Achmet proclaims that ill luck will come to the foal and to the royal stables.

Agba rushes to point out the white spot on the foal's heel. Signor Achmet acknowledges the sign of swiftness and realizes that the bad sign and the good sign together simply tip the scales even. The wild boar lets out a squeal of anger. Signor Achmet remembers the purpose of the boar and prays that the boar absorb any evil spirits. Signor Achmet announces to Agba that the mare's milk will be of no use to the foal, because the mare is weak and will die soon.

A few days later, the chief groom's prediction comes true. The mare dies. Signor Achmet makes another prophecy that the foal will die too and that they can not do anything to prevent the inevitable. Agba runs out of the palace and the guards at the gate let him pass, because he is the first slave boy of Signor Achmet. He runs and runs as fast as he can, dodging any obstacles until he finds a camel. He remembers Signor Achmet saying that a camel's milk is better even than a mare's, because it is richer and stronger. The camel driver recognizes Agba as the first slave boy of Signor Achmet who works for the Sultan, and he gets greedy. He figures if he is nice to the boy, he can get privileges from the Sultan.

Agba collapses beside the camel. He is panting and worn out. An Arab man sees him and worries about him. He offers Agba a cup of camel milk sweetened with a few drops of honey. Agba takes one sip and smiles at the Arab. The Arab man urges Agba to drink the whole cup, and Agba does. The Arab man gives Agba a goat skin sack of milk to take along and little jug of wild honey. He tells the boy to go back to the palace and come back later for what he wants, because he does not seem to be in good shape now. Agba returns to the palace overjoyed. He got exactly what he set out to get.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Agba is so upset about Signor Achmet's prophecy that he runs out of the palace and does not stop until he finds a camel and is able to get some camel's milk for the foal, because Signor Achmet told him that camel's milk is even better than a mare's milk. When the Arab men see Agba so distressed and out of breath, they offer him milk and



some to take home as well, and he ends up with what he came for without even asking for it. He is very happy and goes back to the palace to feed the foal. Working at the royal stables proves to be a useful thing for Agba, because it is simply that fact that leads the Arab man to be kind to Agba and give him the milk. The Arab man hopes to win favors from the Sultan by being kind to the boy who works for the king.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

By the time Agba returns with the milk, he is afraid that the foal is dead, but the foal is still alive, although very weak. Agba dips his finger into the milk and allows the foal to suck on it. The foal sucks the milk enthusiastically, and Agba's heart fills with joy. Agba makes silent promises to the foal to be his father and care for him. Signor Achmet, despite his prophecy about the foal's death, is not surprised that the foal is growing stronger every day. He makes a new prophecy claiming that it is God's will that the foal shall live.

Sham, the foal, thrives on camel milk and wild honey. Agba spends as much time as he can by Sham's side and prays for Sham's welfare. Agba takes Sham out to graze with the spring colts, but the colts reject Sham. They disregard him as if he is too small to bother with, but Sham is not bothered. Sham is fascinated by the world, and he has much to learn and discover. When the other horses ran to their mothers for food and comfort, Sham would run to Agba.

Chapter 5 Analysis

With Agba's love, Sham is growing up to be a great horse. Agba loves and nurtures Sham like a mother loves and nurtures her baby. Agba feels that the Sham is special and even the other horses sense that and so they reject Sham and treat him like an outcast. Signor Achmet watches Sham gain strength and makes a new prophecy claiming that Sham will live. This shows that Signor Achmet's prophecies are not reliable and are simply based on observations. Signor Achmet makes this prophecy based on the evidence in front of him and not from any knowledge of the future.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Sham continues to grow into a strong and fast horse. He would outrun all the other horses and no one wanted to race with him anymore. One spring morning, Signor Achmet told Agba that the Sultan has commanded Signor Achmet to appear before him along with six horse boys. He tells Agba he is one of those boys, and he must prepare to appear in front of the Sultan. Agba must shave his head at the barber and then bathe very well before he can appear before the Sultan.

Agba is terrified, because he knows that the Sultan is a ruthless man and that no horse boy summoned to the palace even returned. The Sultan commonly orders the heads of a thousand people cut off just to test his new saber. Agba is worried about who will care for Sham if he does not return, but he knows he has no choice but to obey the Sultan. He goes to the barber to have his head shaved. It is a painful procedure, because the barber is aggressive. Then Agba bathes himself along with the other horse boys. Signor Achmet leads the way to the Sultan's garden, and Agba's heart beats furiously.

Chapter 6 Analysis

When Agba finds out that he must appear in front of the Sultan his first worry is about Sham. He worried about who will care for Sham if he does not return. This emphasizes how selfless Agba is and how much he loves Sham. Agba and Sham seem to be developing a parent, child relationship.

This chapter sheds light about the Sultan and his ruthless ways. The Sultan has no regard for the lives of his subjects. He is prepared to murder thousands of people on a whim or simply to test a new weapon. The author creates suspense here, because the reader wonders if Agba will ever return to the stables and what will happen to Sham if Agba does not return.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

In the palace, the Sultan sits dressed in elegant robes surrounded by men playing music. Agba stares at the Sultan and thinks that the Sultan looks just like a camel. This relaxes Agba, because camels are not scary. The Sultan speaks. He orders Signor Achmet to select six of the most perfect steed from the stables along with six horse boys to be presented to the new King of France, the young Louis XV, as a gift. The Sultan gives specific instructions about how to select the horses, and about when the journey is to take place. The Sultan orders that each of the horses should be of a different color.

The Sultan calls his scribe to write a letter that Signor Achmet will give to the King. The letter includes that the horse boys are to return to Morocco, when their horses die. The Sultan is excited about giving this gift, because he hopes it will bring him many favors from the new King and most importantly it will make the new King turn a blind eye to the Sultan's bloody rule.

The horse boys sigh, as they are relieved to learn that they will not be beheaded. Agba begins to daydream about traveling to France with Sham. The Sultan calls Agba. Agba is terrified. The Sultan asks for his name. Agba does not reply. The Sultan continues to ask until he is angry, but Agba does not answer. Signor Achmet intercedes and explains that Agba is mute. The other horse boys are shocked. They never heard Agba speak, but they did not realize he was mute, because he was so good at communicating in other ways, with his hands and eyes. The Sultan tells Signor Achmet to choose Agba as one of the horse boys, because a mute will not be able to spill any tales.

Chapter 7 Analysis

In this chapter the reader discovers why the Sultan has summoned Signor Achmet and his horse boys. The reader finds out that Agba will be chosen to go on this trip to France and what adventures such a trip will bring. The reader also finds out that the Sultan's reasons for giving the King of France such a generous gift are purely selfish. Therefore he is not unlike the Arab man who gave Agba milk in hopes of winning favors from the Sultan.

Another important discovery in this chapter is that Agba is mute. The Sultan chooses Agba to go on this trip, because he is mute and cannot spill any tales. This means the Sultan has things to hide and knows well that he commits wrongful actions. The reader wonders how Agba's handicap will affect him on this journey, and what kind of roadblocks it may create for Agba.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Agba nervously measures Sham and compares him to the other horses he has measured. Agba prays that Signor Achmet will choose Sham as one of the horses that are fit to be presented to the King of France. As Agba is measuring Sham, Signor Achmet walks in and announces that Sham has been chosen, because he measures well and has a long neck that stretches while running.

Agba counts down the final week before their departure and is busy getting everything ready for the long journey. Agba trains Sham to run longer to prepare him for the journey. Sham gets fitted for horseshoes. On the last day in the palace, Agba packs all of the things he will need to care for Sham on the journey such as the rub-rag made of camel hair and the leather vessel for water. Agba barely sleeps that night.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Agba is nervous that Sham will not be chosen to go to France, because he knows that he must go to France, and he worries that who ever will replace him as Sham's caretaker will not do a good job. Agba's concern for Sham's wellbeing is like a mother's concern for her child. Agba accepts only the best of everything for his favorite horse. Agba is very relieved, when Signor Achmet announces that Sham has been chosen to be sent to France and now Agba worries about making sure he does not forget anything that Sham will need on the journey.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Early in the morning, as specified by the Sultan, Signor Achmet leads the horses and horse boys out of the stables, past the palace and the crowds that have gathered to watch and celebrate. The Sultan leads the procession all the way to the city limits, at which point, he dismounts, and presents six bags, one for each horse. The bags contain the pedigree of each stallion and amulets that will protect the horses. The Sultan bids them farewell and tells them to arrive safely so that the King of France will bear witness to the Sultan's greatness.

The Sultan feels satisfied that his plans are going well. He does not know that the captain of the vessel that is to take the horses and stable boys across the Mediterranean, has pocketed the money the Sultan gave him to buy corn and barely for the horses. The captain stuffed the food sacks with straw instead. Also the stable boys would be made to man the heavy sails on stormy seas and be fed only bread and water and they would reach France looking like skin and bones.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Once again, the Sultan's intentions are clarified by his pompous statements. This whole mission is to assert his greatness and gain favors from the King of France. The Sultan is not as cunning as he thinks. He can be fooled. The captain of the vessel that he assigned to take the horses and the stable boys across the sea to France has betrayed the Sultan's trust and misused the money the Sultan gave him for the trip.

The hardships for Agba and Sham begin as soon they get on the vessel. They are given little food, and Agba and the other horse boys are forced to man the sail on the vessel, when they probably have no experience doing such chores. These troubles are likely just the beginning of the hardships Agba and Sham will face on the journey and in their new lives.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

After four weeks of travel, Signor Achmet and his horse boys arrive in France. Monsieur le duc, the King's advisor, was in the beauty salon at the time, when the King's groom walked in with the news. Monsieur le duc says why should he care about six horses, when they have a hundred in the royal stables? The groom explains that the man and group of horse boys are in the royal stables and refuse to move until the King or Duke read the letter they brought from the Sultan. The Duke agrees to go read the letter.

The Duke arrives at the stables with the groom behind him. King Louis XV arrives a few moments later and stares at the group pitifully. They all look well groomed, but so weak and thin that their ribs show. The King is the same age as most of the stable boys, but age is all they have in common. The Duke presents the letter to the King. The King asks the Duke to read it to him. The Duke says that the letter bears the seal of Mulai Ismael. The Duke read the letter announcing that these horses are a gift to the King, and that they are the strongest and fastest horse of pure breed.

The Duke laughs and mocks the Sultan's letter. The horses are thin and weak, and the Duke finds it hilarious that the Sultan claims that theses horses will strengthen and improve the breed of the King Louis' horses. Agba does not understand a word of French, but knows that the Duke is mocking them, and he feels very angry. He wishes he could explain that the horses look weak from the journey, and that soon they will regain their strength and vigor.

The King sends for Bishop Fleury. Agba likes the bishop, because he has kind eyes. The Duke reads the letter to the Bishop, and then the King asks the bishop for his advice. The Duke hints that the horses should be sent back, because the harvest was poor this year, and they do not have enough food to feed all the horses. He suggests that they keep only one horse, because the chief of the kitchen needs a horse to take to the market with him every day. The Bishop suggests to the King that they keep all the horses, because they are small and will not need much to eat. He suggests they assign the horses to transport goods for the army, and that way they will need less food than if they were assigned to the chase. The young King agrees with the Bishop.

Chapter 10 Analysis

The Duke is a mean man with little compassion. He makes fun of the horses and mocks the Sultan for his gift. The bishop is a nice man, and Agba can tell this about him from the first look, because he sees kindness in his eyes. This shows that Agba can read people well. The Bishop does not agree with the Duke's recommendations and this shows that the Duke does not have power over him. The King accepts the Bishop's advice. The King is but a young boy and does not realistically hold any power. He

simply goes through the motions of being King, but the real power lies in the hands of his advisors. The author creates suspense here, because the reader must wait to find out which horse will be chosen to stay at the royal stables for the use of the Cook.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Sham is chosen as the horse who will remain in the royal stables for the use of the Cook and of course Agba stays as well to care for Sham. Signor Achmet does not dare return to Morocco and face the wrath of the Sultan. He accepts a humble position as groom in the French army. Signor Achmet also takes the bag with the pedigree and amulets from Sham's neck, ties it around Agba's neck and tells Agba that the pedigree and amulets will be safer with him.

Slowly Sham regains his vigor and with it comes an intense distrust of everyone but Agba. Whenever the Chief Cook takes Sham to the market, Sham only allows Agba to pull the reins. If the Chief Cook so much as touches the reins, Sham becomes uncontrollable and no amount of whipping can control him. Everyone in the market admires Sham.

One day, the Chief Cook insists he go to the market alone with Sham. He figures if Agba is not around, he will be able to force Sham into obedience. However, the Chief Cook is very wrong. Sham goes out of control and throws the Chief Cook off the carriage. Everybody sees the humiliating scene, and the Cook is so angry that he goes to go the Thieves' Kitchen, where men go to sell horses, and decides to sell Sham to the first bidder.

A big brute man arrives at the market, and the Chief Cook can tell he is in need of a horse. The Chief Cook tries to sell Sham to him, but the man teases the Cook about the humiliating incident that just occurred and puts Sham down as well. The Cook feels desperate and offers Sham for a terribly small amount of money. The brute man cracks his whip and tells the Cook that he will teach Sham a thing or two. The Cook does not care about Sham's feelings or what will happen to him. He is just happy to be rid of the wild horse.

Chapter 11 Analysis

When the Chief Cook decides to test Sham, the reader knows it will be bad news. Sham has grown very distrustful of everyone but Agba, and he does not take well to discipline. Of course, the cook ends up in big trouble and is so upset that he decides to sell Sham. It is upsetting that Sham gets sold to a brute man that will obviously abuse Sham and not appreciate his special qualities. Of course, even worse than that, is the fact that Sham will be separated from Agba. Agba will be distraught, when the Cook returns to the palace without Sham. The reader is in suspense to find out what Agba will do about this predicament and if the two of them will ever reunite.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

The Cook returns to the palace without Sham, and Agba knows that Sham must be in trouble. Agba follows the Cook around, hoping to find out where Sham is, but the Cook only tells him that Sham is in Paris and that, if he wants him so badly, he should go look for him. Agba flees to Paris. He hangs out in the market place searching for Sham and trying to survive on whatever he can scrounge. The owner of a chocolate shop offers him a job. Agba accepts. Agba's new job as the awakener is to wait until the market stalls are ready and then to wake up the customers who arrive in the middle of the night and falls asleep.

One summer evening as Agba wanders the streets, he hears the clomping of the hooves of a horse. He sees a small dusty horse, harnessed to an empty cart and pulling the reins is a big mean man. Agba waives to the man to stop, but the man yells at Agba and continues. Agba follows the horse even though he thinks it cannot be Sham, because the horse does not seem to have a wheat ear on his chest or a white spot on his heel. Agba follows the horse all the way into a narrow alley and into a rickety shed. After the driver leaves the shed, Agba enters. He sees a cat, and then he sees the horse. The horse's ears twitch and his nostrils quiver. The horse rubs his head against Agba's shoulder. Agba knows it is Sham.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Agba tries his best to find out what he can about Sham's whereabouts but being a mute puts him at a great disadvantage. He cannot shout out questions or demand answers. He does manage to find out that Sham is in Paris. Agba's proven dedication and love for Sham leads him to set out to find Sham no matter what the price.

When Agba does set eyes on Sham, he does not recognize him, because Sham is in such bad shape, but as soon as he feels Sham nuzzle against him, he knows it is him. Agba's efforts are rewarded, and he is reunited with his horse. Now he has to figure out how to save Sham from the mean brute man who owns him.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

The carter allows Agba to live in the shed not from kindness, but because he could use the boy's help, and Agba does not demand money or food. Agba gives up his job as an awakener and instead helps the fishmongers and farmers in the market place during the day, so that he could return with little gifts for the horse and cat at night. Agba, the horse and the cat form a strange threesome, suffering the carter's abuse together.

One day Sham bites the carter, and the carter becomes increasingly mean and no longer allows Agba to take Sham's harness off at night. He wants Sham to get a few harness sores to teach him a lesson. Although the carter is outraged, he becomes somewhat scared of Sham and stays away from the shed. Agba spends his time caring for Sham's needs. Agba remembers how Signor Achmet said that the wheat ear and the white spot on the heel would balance out each other, that Sham would bring good and bad. As hard as Agba tries to care for Sham, Sham is not the horse he used to be in Morocco; the carter's overuse and abuse of Sham is more than Sham can bear.

One cold day, the carter takes Sham out to pull wood to the market so he can sell it. The carter asks Agba to fill the cart with so much wood that Agba is worried Sham will not be able to pull the cart. The carter shows no mercy for the horse and forces Sham to pull the heavy cart around town as he sells wood to various customers. Sham cannot continue as there is an incline in the road, but the carter whips him and shouts to go on. People stop to watch. Sham falls to his knees. The carter threatens to burn Sham and steps off the cart to light some wood.

An Englishman makes his way to the carter. He tells the carter that he has been looking for such a horse for a while now, and he makes the carter an offer of fifteen louis for the horse. The carter becomes excited. He cannot refuse such an amazing offer. As the carter turns to unfasten Sham, he realizes that Agba has beaten him to it. At that point the cat appears as well and begins licking the horse's face, and the crowd is pleased at the amusing sight of the strange threesome.

Chapter 13 Analysis

The carter's abuse takes a new level as he forces Sham to pull more weight than he can handle on a cold and brutal night. The carter threatens to burn Sham, when Sham falls on his knees from fatigue, but the Englishman steps in just in time to save Sham. Agba would not have been able to save Sham from the carter and so he is grateful for the Englishman's interceding. Agba does not know who the Englishman is or what he wants to do with Sham, but Agba probably can not imagine anything worse than the carter and is relieved to find a way to save Sham from the mean man. The reader wonders and



hopes now that the Englishman will decide to take Agba as well and that he turns out to be a kind man.

Agba's memories of what Signor Achmet said about the wheat ear and white spot and how the good and bad signs will balance each other out foreshadow a change in luck for Sham. Possibly his bout of bad luck will end and some good will come out of changing owners. Maybe Sham will finally be treated right and given a chance to fulfill his potential.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

The Quaker, Jethro Coke is a retired merchant who owned land on the outskirts of London. He feels sorry for the horse and decides to buy him, and it seems to him the boy needs help as well and so within a week, Sham, Agba and the cat, Grimalkin, are on their way to England. When they arrive at Mr. Coke's home, Agba is sure that the power of the wheat ear has faded. Mr. Coke's wife is dead and Mistress Cockburn, a plump motherly lady, runs the house. Mistress Cockburn likes Mr. Coke and his daughter, but dislikes Mr. Coke's son in law, Benjamin Biggle.

Mr. Coke takes Benjamin to see the new horse he has bought for him, and they find Agba cleaning and caring for sham. Mr. Coke assures Benjamin that this is the right horse for him, because he is small and calm. Benjamin says that he has indeed needed a horse for a long time, but he also needed a carriage. Mr. Coke is appalled at his son in law's greed. Benjamin expresses his fear about riding the horse since he has never been on a horse before. Mr. Coke says Benjamin may wait until the weather is nicer, maybe on the fourth day of the third month. Benjamin is relieved and agrees to the suggestion.

By spring both Sham and Agba are thriving. Sham is strong and beautiful once again and Mistress Cockburn keeps Agba well fed and cared for. On the fourth day of the third month, Mr. Coke prepares Benjamin for the horse ride. Sham looks scared of Benjamin, but Benjamin seems twice as fearful of Sham. Mr. Coke coaches Benjamin onto the horse. As Benjamin tries to mount Sham he accidentally jabs Sham with his foot, and Sham turns around, knocks Benjamin's hat off, bites down on his wig and tears it off his head.

Benjamin grows furious and asserts that he will ride the horse if it kills him. Benjamin climbs back onto Sham and grabs the reins. Sham soars into the stables, his place of safety, scraping Benjamin off his back and onto the ground.

Later in the evening, as Agba cleans Sham, Mr. Coke comes in and tells Agba that Benjamin is in bed nursing injuries from the afternoon fall, and he wants Sham gone and even Mr. Coke's daughter, Hannah, is asking for the same thing. Mr. Coke says he will sell Agba to Roger Williams, the keeper of the Red Lion Inn. He loans out horses to travelers. Mr. Coke assures Agba that Mr. Williams will use Sham well and will take care of Agba and the cat, as well.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Mr. Coke seems like a nice enough man, but his son in law is a foolish and cowardly man who probably would not have made a kind owner for Sham. Agba does not seem too worried about this though, because he is just relieved to be away from the carter.



Life on Mr. Coke's land is good for Sham and Agba. Both of them thrive and grow stronger.

Unfortunately, Mr. Coke seems to have overestimated his son-in-law, because Benjamin proves that he cannot handle the gift of a horse. Benjamin's first ride of the horse turns into a disaster and Benjamin decides he no longer even wants the horse. Just when Agba thought some good luck has finally come their way, something bad happens.

Once again, Agba and Sham will have new homes. Mr. Coke assures Agba that his Mr. Williams is a nice man, but the reader is in suspense to find out just how true that is and what adventures await Agba and Sham in their new home. Will Sham and Agba face more mistreatment or will they finally be happy in their new home?



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Mr. Williams is a mild mannered nice man, but Mrs. Williams is a coarse and mean woman who causes trouble for Agba shortly after his arrival. Mrs. Williams is so upset by Agba's presence for no clear reason, just a clash of personalities, that she insists Mr. William get rid of him and his cat, who also irks her. Mr. William has no choice but to send Agba away. He tells him that he is sure that Mr. Coke will take him back.

When Mr. Williams tries to take care of Sham and prepare him for his customers, he does so many things wrong that Sham behaves very badly for the customers. Mr. Williams simply does not all the little things that Sham likes, the things that Agba knows and used to do so well. Mr. Williams hires the best horse-breaker in all of London, but that does not work either. The horse-breaker ends up on the ground and hurt just like most of the customers. As the horse-breaker recovers, he insists that he will try again with Sham. He tells Mr. Williams to tie up the horse and give him no food to teach him a lesson before his second try.

Meanwhile, Agba has not left the Inn's vicinity. He and the cat roam around and scrounge for food. One day, Agba can no longer bear it, and he sneaks back into the stables to see Sham. Coincidentally, Mrs. Williams walks into the stables and sees the cat, and Agba and screams so loud that several people quickly show up. She hollers at the police to take Agba away and calls him a thief. Mr. Williams tries to intercede, but fails to do so. The police handcuff Agba and take him to jail.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Mr. Williams is a very kind man and makes a good owner for Sham, but once again there are other people in the family that make life hard for Agba and Sham. Mrs. Williams is a coarse and mean woman who seems to feel much friction from Agba's gentle character. Before Agba has a chance to settle into his new home, Mrs. Williams insists that he and his cat leave. Mr. Williams is so kind that he does his best to explain to Agba how important his wife is to the business and why he must listen to her. This shows just what a strong character Mrs. Williams is. She seems to have the final word in the relationship and she takes advantage of Mr. William's kindness and easy going nature. Once again Agba and Sham's happiness is very short lived.

Being separated from Sham is the worst thing that Agba can imagine. He cannot bear to be far from sham, and so he remains in the vicinity. When he returns and is caught by Mrs. Williams, it brings him more trouble than he ever bargained for. The police believe Mrs. Williams' ludicrous accusations that Agba is a thief, and the police take Agba to prison. Agba seems to continue spiraling down into more and more trouble. With Agba in jail, who will look after Sham or be able to tame him? The best horse-breaker in

London was not able to do it so far and this means that Agba just may be the only person who knows how to tame Sham's wild spirit. With Agba in jail, Sham's fate looks very grim.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

The constable takes Agba to a large stone building which is the prison. The warden comes in, and the constable explains that Agba is a horse thief and that Mr. Willaims claims that Agba is from Morocco and is a mute. The warden orders for Agba to be locked up. He also orders the cat to be taken away. The constable makes an argument for Agba to keep the cat, and the warden agrees, but refuses to provide any food for the cat. In addition he decides to reduce Agba's ration of 8 ounces of bread a day to only 6. The warden orders for Agba to be shackled and taken to the dungeon.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Agba is in a terrible situation, because he is being accused and punished of a crime he did not commit, and he cannot even speak to defend himself. The constable and warden are obviously bad people who do not care about justice. The warden is particularly mean and unjust. Agba seems to be in the biggest trouble of his life, and he is tormented further by his worries about Sham and about whether he will ever see him again. When the warden orders for the cat to be thrown out, Agba is terrified at the thought of not having anyone at all to care for. This portrays his giving and nurturing nature. Agba is a natural caretaker. He is relieved, when the warden decides to allow the cat to stay and does not seem to care much about the food rations.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Agba spends weeks and weeks in jail with only Grimalkin, the cat, for company. Agba shares what little food he receives with Grimalkin and Grimalkin makes sure that the cell is clear of mice and rats. On visiting days, no one comes to visit Agba.

One day, Mistress Cockburn, who had been missing Agba's quiet ways, went to the Red Lion Inn with treats for Agba. She meets Mr. William and asks about Agba. Mr. William is shocked and before he can speak, Mrs. Williams says, "you'll find the thief in Newgate Jail" (p. 117). Mrs. Cockburn finds a coach on its way to the part of town where the jail is and rides with them. It turns out that the people she is riding with are the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough and her son in law, the Earl of Godolphin.

In his cell, Agba was dreaming of Sham, when the cell door opened, and the smell of lavender and cakes wafted into the room. When Agba saw Mrs. Cockburn and the warmth in her eyes, he felt like he would cry. Behind Mrs. Cockburn stand the Duchess and Earl. The Duchess asks what Agba's offence was, and the warder tells of the theft. Mrs. Cockburn objects and explains that Agba was simply trying to see his horse that he brought along with him all the way from Morocco. She tells them to look at the bag Agba always wears around his neck which tells the pedigree of the horse. Agba motions to his neck and shakes his head. The warder explains how the constable ripped the papers in the bag, but he returns the rest of the things in the bag to Agba.

Mrs. Cockburn gives Agba a tart to eat. He eats it, as tears stream down his face. The Duchess and Earl are doers of good and promise to look into Agba's case. If it is worthy, they promise to take him, his cat and his horse into their stables at the Gog Magog.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Poor Agba suffers in prison forgotten to everyone in the world, except to Mrs. Cockburn, who he seems to have left a great impression on. Mrs. Cockburn does not believe that Agba is guilty for a second and does her best to help him out. Luck and fate come into play here, as Mrs. Cockburn happens to ride with the Duchess and her son-in-law the Earl, who also happen to be good doers. When the Earl promises to take Agba, Sham and Grimalkin to his home, it seems that Agba's luck will soon turn from horrible to great. The author creates suspense, because the reader waits to see what obstacles will come in the way of this apparent happy ending.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

At the Red Lion Inn, Sham withers away once again into a small weak creature that no one fears any longer. Mr. Williams knows that Sham misses the young boy who used to care for him so skillfully. One day, there is a commotion and people arrive at the inn. Sham's stall door opens, and he sees Agba. They greet with love and warmth. The Earl of Godolphin arranged to buy Sham and soon they were off to the Earl's home.

When they arrive, Agba is shocked to see that the stables are large and beautiful. There is a stream, where the mares and foals drink. Agba feels that here at last, Sham can fulfill the promise he holds. Soon, Agba gets to meet the head groom, Mister Titus Twickerham, who is the breeder and trainer for the Gog Magog stables. The Earl says that he read a story set in Morocco once, and it had a character named Agba. Therefore, he decides to name him the same. Agba is pleased that the Earl has coincidentally chosen his own name.

The Earl asks the groom what he thinks of Sham. The groom examines Sham and declares that Sham will never amount to much. The earl tells the groom to feed Sham well, and then they will see what he will amount to. The groom suggests that Sham should just be used as a work horse. Agba is terribly disappointed. He is craving to give Sham an opportunity to prove himself, and he cannot prove anything by simply being a work horse.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Agba and Sham's reunion is an emotional one. Sham immediately responds to Agba and finds the strength to get up and move surprising everyone around him who thought he was too weak to do a thing. The Earl's stables seem like a dream come true for Agba and Sham until Agba meets the head groom, who is not particularly cruel, but simply does not see the potential in Sham. The reader is in suspense now to see whether Sham will ever have a chance to prove himself and fulfill the prophecy of his greatness, or if he will be doomed to being a work horse for the rest of his life.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

Sham takes care of Sham and performs all his duties, but does everything under a cloud of worry that Sham will never have the opportunity to fulfill his potential. The duchess sometimes visits the stables and brings gifts for Agba, Sham and even Grimalkin. Agba repays her by doing extra chores for her.

There is only one chore Agba despise, and it is cleaning Hobgoblin's stall. Hobgoblin is a big and coarse stallion, and is seen as the King of Gog Magog and his stall, a palace. His stall walls are padded and his floor is laid with chalk and an abundance of straw and his sheets are emblazoned with the Earl of Godolphin's own crest. Agba had to change Hobgoblin's straw three times a day.

The groom explains to Agba that Hobgoblin has the "purplest blood in the kingdom," and that the Earl hopes to breed the next line of horses in the world through this stallion (Chapter 19, pg. 134). The groom also explains that, right now, the Earl is searching for a mare worthy of Hobgoblin. Agba craves to give Hobgoblin's stall and place to Sham.

One day, the head groom asks Agba to clean out Hobgoblin's stall and prepare everything for the arrival of the mare, lady Roxana. Soon, a small company of people arrive at the stables and present Roxana. She is a beautiful white mare. Sham responds to Roxana's presence although everyone mistakes the neighing to be Hobgoblin's. The only one who hears Sham is Agba and although Agba had intended to hate the new mare, he falls in love with her.

The men go to bring Hobgoblin out to meet his new mate. Agba could not stand the unfairness anymore. He runs to Sham's stall and throws the doors open. Sham leaps out and overtakes Hobgoblin who is being led out. The two horses begin to fight. Sham brings Hobgoblin down on his back, and Agba is thrilled. Sham makes his way to Roxanna and two of them affectionately take off together. Agba craves to speak, to scream, laugh, but the sound of Roxanna's pleasant neighing as she trots away with Sham says enough for him.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Agab hates Hobgoblin, because Hobgoblin holds the place Agba knows should be for Sham. When Agba hears about the Earl's plans for Hobgoblin, he is furious. Agba decides to hate the mare that the Earl decides to bring for Hobgoblin, but when Agba meets Roxanna he falls in love with her. This may be, because Agba senses that Sham and Roxanna are responding to each other and that Hobgoblin is out of the picture. When Agba opens Sham's stall doors, he knows he is doing something he may get in trouble for, but he cannot stand what he perceives as unfairness any longer. He longs to give Sham a chance to prove himself.



The two horses, Sham and Hobgoblin, fight over Roxanna like two men might fight over a lady in medieval times. Sham finally proves his strengths and shows his spirit that only Agba knows about. Sham brings down a horse much larger than he is and takes off with Roxanna. Finally, Agba feels some satisfaction, but will he have to pay a price for his actions?



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Agba knows that he has acted without orders and has caused chaos, and he is ready to pay the price. At night, Mister Twickerham approaches Agba and tells him that the Earl has ordered that he and his horse leave the royal stables and go to Wicken Fen in the swamp lands. He tells Agba to follow the North Star, and he will not miss Wicken Fen. He also tells Agba that the Earl is too kind, because he ordered Mister Twickerham to give Agba two lanterns and to send him barley and oats every fortnight. Mister Twickerham seems to think that Agba deserves much worse.

Agba listens with no reaction as Mister Twickerham describes to Agba what a terrible place Wicker Fen is. He tells Agba that in Wicker Fen, he will find a ghost like hovel waiting for him. Agba grabs Sham's supplies and sets off with Grimalkin by his side. Agba feels the power of the wheat ear begin to take over once again.

Wicken Fen proves as dismal as Mister Twickerham described. It's a hard life for Agba, his horse and his cat. Mister Twickerman send barely and oats as he is ordered by the Earl, and Agba tries to fish but is not very skillful at it. Agba tries to remain optimistic, as he looks at his horse and sees that Sham is still strong and special.

Winter passes and spring arrives. One day, Mister Twickerham shows up at Agba's hovel. Agba is terrified, more for Sham than for himself. Mister Twickerham explains to Agba that Roxana has given birth to a colt that is the spitting image of Sham. Of course the Earl was not happy about this and told Mister Twickerham not to bother training the colt. However, one day, the colt sees the other colts racing around, jumps out and joins them on the track and out runs them all.

Agba's heart soars, and he longs to know whether the Earl saw the whole thing or not. Mister Twickerham, as if he knew that Agba wanted to ask just that, explains that the Earl saw the whole thing and decided that Sham just might be the horse to create a new and noble breed of horses. Mister Twickerham takes Agba, Sham and Grimalkin back to Gog Magog. Agba is overjoyed that finally Sham will be recognized for the special horse that he is.

Chapter 20 Analysis

Agba faces hard times in Wicken Fen but does his best to survive and seems to find happiness in the grimmest of situations as long as he has Sham by his side. Agba remains optimistic that the power of the wheat ear, which he believes brought on this bad luck, will eventually wear off. Agba's enthusiasm foreshadows that the bad times may end soon and surely they do on the day Mister Twickerham arrives with the good news.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

At Gog Magog, the Earl himself is awaiting them. He leads Sham to Hobgoblin's old stall. Hobgoblin is gone. On top of the stall it reads "The Godolphin Arabian". The Earl has given Sham his own name. Agba is overjoyed. The Earl tells Agba that Godolphin means, God's downs and that here on God's downs, Sham will live out his days. Sham enters his new stall with confidence.

Sham sees Roxana, and they run to each other and greet each other with loud neighing. Sham colt Lath goes out for races and becomes the pride of Newmarket. Soon Roxana gives Sham a second son, Cade. One year later, a third son is born, Regulus. He has his father's high crest and finely drawn legs, just like his brothers.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Agba's dreams finally come true. Sham is recognized for the special horse that he is and is being treated with the respect he deserves. Sham fathers three colts, and Agba knows that they will be as great as their father. Roxana and Sham recognize each other, when they see each other after a long time and run to each other like lovers. It's as if they know that they are meant to be together and meant to parent a new breed of noble horses.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

One day, about two years after Sham and Agba's return to Gog Magog, the Earl calls Agba into his home. It is the first time Agba enters the Earl's home, and he feels nervous. The Earl looks anxious and preoccupied. He explains to Agba that he is not a rich man and that he is drowning in a pile of debt. The Earl may have to give up his stables and turn it into farm lands. Agba is shocked at the bad news and begins to see images of the wheat ear. He fears that Sham's good luck may run out.

The Earl explains to Agba that there is one way that the stables can be saved. There is a big race coming up. The prize is the Queen's Plate, which is worth one thousand guineas. That kind of money would be enough to help the Earl out of his hard times. The Earl tells Agba that he thinks Lath, Cade and Regulus should participate in this race and that Sham should be present to watch. Agba is thrilled. He beams widely to let the Earl know that he thinks this is a great idea.

Chapter 22 Analysis

When Agba is called into the Earl's home, he feels worried. His worries prove true, when the Earl announces that he is in a lot of debt and that he cannot afford to keep the stables. It seems that Agba and Sham will fall into another cycle of bad luck. Agba sees images of the wheat ear in his mind and worries about what will happen. Just then the Earl presents a way out. Agba has complete faith in Sham's colts just as he has in Sham, and so he is sure they can win the race. This makes his worries melt away, and he is happy and excited once again. The reader is suspense now to find out whether the colts will win the race and save Agba and Sham from a terrible fate.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

Agba now spends his days preparing for the great event, the race in Newmarket. Agba could not wait for the glorious day to come. He felt full of confidence and excitement. However, when they arrive at Newmarket, Agba feels sad. He feels sad that Sham is being forgotten and cast off as too old to race. He longs for Sham to race with the other horses, so he could prove to everyone that Sham is King of the Wind.

The Earl finds Agba and tells him that a great honor has befallen them. The King and Queen of England have decided to attend the races, and Sham has been invited to watch at the end line. As Agba watches the King and Queen arrive, and the festivities begin, he realizes that it may be best if Sham does not compete in the race, because, after all, his own sons would be running against him. Agba also knew that if Sham was defeated, it would break his heart and maybe it was better this way, for Sham to remain undefeated in the memories of all.

The race begins and Lath gets off to a bad start, but soon begins to catch up. Moments later, Lath, son of the Godolphin Arabian, is announced as the winner of the race. The Queen presents the Earl with the Queen's Plate. Then, the queen asks what is the pedigree of the horse that fathered three winning horses? The Earl is silent for a moment, and then explains that Sham's pedigree has been lost, but that it is written in his sons. Everyone cheers.

Agba feels a tear stream down his face and as he wipes it away, he feels that he is growing a beard. He is becoming a man. His thoughts fly back to Morocco, to the day he introduced himself to Sham and promised him that he would be King of the Wind.

Chapter 23 Analysis

When Agba first arrives at Newmarket, he feels sad, because Sham is cast aside and all of the attention is focused on the race horses. Agba wants Sham to race. He knows that Sham is still strong, but later, he realizes that as long as Sham and he know that Sham is King of the Wind, he does not need to prove it to anyone else. Sham has never been defeated, and it is better for him to remain this way in the memories of all.

Sham's son, Lath wins the race, and the Earl is presented with the Queen's Plate. When the Queen asks about Sham's pedigree, and the Earl explains that Sham's pedigree was lost long ago but is written in his sons, the crowd cheers. This shows that they are willing to over look the superficiality of the pedigree and focus on what they see in front of them.

Lath's winning of the race is also important, because it means the Earl's stables will be saved, and Agba will not have to worry about another cycle of bad luck or new owners



for Sham. Agba is brought to tears by his joy. As he wipes his tears away he realizes that he is growing a beard, and that he and Sham have grown older together. Agba remembers when he first met Sham and promised him that he would be King of the Wind. He feels happy, because he feels like he has kept his promise. Indeed Sham is King of the Wind.



Epilogue

Epilogue Summary

Sham fathered many more colts before he died at the ripe old age of twenty nine. He was buried at Gog Magog in a passage leading to his stable. Over his grave was a tablet of solid granite, but it was not inscribed with anything. The Earl decided that Sham did not need words to remind him of Sham's glory. He had all of Sham's sons to remind him. Sham was father of the turf. Sham's sons and grandsons became the pride of the kingdom.

The day that Sham died, Agba set off to return to Morocco. His mission in life was complete, and he no longer felt a duty or need to stay in England. After the Earl's death, someone inscribed Sham's name and date of death on his tombstone, but time is slowly erasing away the letters as if in respect to the Earl's wishes.

Epilogue Analysis

In accordance to the Sultan of Morocco's wishes, Agba returns to his homeland after Sham dies. Agba feels satisfied that his mission in life is fulfilled, and he no longer feels a need to remain in England or to prove anything. The Earl has grown to understand Agba and Sham and their relationship deeply. He knows that Agba never needed words to express his love for Sham or to explain his ambitions for the horse and so he feels Sham does not need words on his tombstone to remind people of his glory.



Characters

Agba

Agba is a Moroccan slave boy who works in the Sultan's palace as a stable boy. Agba loves his job and is very good at it. Agba loves one of the horses in particular, a mare who is pregnant and ready to give birth. Agba cares for the mare as the mare gives birth to a foal. The foal is named Sham, and Agba immediately loves the foal. Agba's love and dedication to Sham takes him on many journeys and adventures, many which are life threatening and far too dangerous for a young boy.

Agba's character shows up in his dealings with Sham. Agba cares for Sham like a parent cares for a child, showing just how selfless and devoted Agba can be. Many times, Agba puts Sham's needs before his own and worries about Sham more than he worries about his own troubles. For example, when Agba is in jail his primary concern is who will take care of Sham? By the end of the book, it is obvious that Agba's life mission is to care for Sham and help Sham fulfill his potential. When Sham dies, and Agba knows that he has done all he can for Sham, Agba feels goes back to his home country for his feels his main duty in life has been fulfilled.

Agba is mute, a matter that is mentioned in the story, but it does not have a huge effect on Agba's life. Agba learns to express himself so well with his eyes and hands that the other stable boys don't even know that he is mute until Signor Achmet tells them so. There are times in the story, when Agba has a hard time expressing himself due to his being mute, but most of the time, he manages just fine. Agba's muteness and his ability to communicate so well in nonverbal ways may be one of the reasons that he can communicate with Sham so well.

Sham

Sham's life begins harshly for his mother dies soon after she gives birth to him, and Signor Achmet predicts that Sham will not last long either. From those first few days, Sham proves that he is strong, and that he is a survivor. With the love and care of his devoted stable boy Agba, Sham thrives and grows to be a swift and strong horse.

Sham is born with two signs on his body. The first sign is the white spot on his heel, a sign of speed, and the second is the wheat ear on his chest, a sign of evil and misfortune. Sham's life turns out to be a journey of ups and downs, as Sham tries to prove himself and fulfill his potential but is plagued by one misfortune after another.

Although the bag containing Sham's pedigree is lost, by the end of his life, Sham does indeed fulfill his potential and gain the title of the Godolphin Arabian. Sham is recognized for the special horse that he is and is chosen to start a new breed of strong and noble horses. Sham lives on through his descendants, one of whom is the Man o' War described in the prologue of the story.



The Sultan of Morocco

The Sultan of Morocco is a mean and unreasonable man. He is the kind of man who will order the murder of hundreds of men for the sake of testing a new weapon. During the month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast, the Sultan orders that all the animals in the palace must fast as well. This ludicrous command shows that the Sultan is an irrational man. When the Sultan decides to send a generous gift to the King of France, he comments that this gift will win him favors with the French courts and will speak of his glory and power. His comment shows that he is manipulative, vain and in need of showing off to others. The Sultan seems to know that he does bad things, because he chooses Agba as one of the stable boys to send to France, because Agba is mute, and the Sultan likes that, because a mute boy cannot spill any secrets about the Sultan and his rule. Therefore, the Sultan knows that his actions are shameful, and he tries to hide them from the public.

Signor Achmet

Signor Achmet is the stable keeper at the Sultan's palace in Morocco. Signor Achmet believes deeply in the superstitions of his time. He also has faith in the idea of prophecies and makes several prophecies in the novel, some that prove true and some that do not. The Sultan asks Signor Achmet to accompany the gift of six horses and the stable boys to France. Signor Achmet follows the Sultan's command, but after facing a humiliating welcome in France, Signor Achmet is too ashamed and scared to return to Morocco and so he accepts a humble position in the King of France's royal stables.

Jethro Coke

Jethro Coke is a retired merchant who owns land on the outskirts of London. He feels sorry for Sham, when he sees him being abused by his owner and decides to buy him for a generous price. He also sees that Agba is in need of help and decides to take him in as well. Mr. Coke figures he will give Sham as a gift to his son in law Benjamin. Agba and Sham think they will be very happy in England, living with the kind Mr. Coke, until an unfortunate accident with Mr. Coke's son in law occurs, and their luck changes once again.

Mr. Williams

Mr. Williams is the owner of the Red Lion Inn. He is a mild-mannered man, with red bushy eyebrows that go up and down, when he speaks. He hides his eyes, when he smiles. He buys Sham from Mr. Coke, when Mr. Coke decides he must sell Sham. Mr. Williams plans to rent Sham to the travelers who stay at his hotel and need transportation to get around town. Sham does not take well to being ridden by anyone other than Agba and, therefore, Mr. Williams hires a man to train Sham. This man treats Sham badly. Mr. Williams does not like to treat Sham or Agba badly, but he has a very



weak personality and never seems able to stop any of the bad that happens around him.

Mrs. Williams

Mrs. Williams is Mr. Williams wife. She is a big and mean woman. For some reason, Agba creeps her out. It could be that his gentle manner and soft searching eyes create too strong a juxtaposition to her course nature. She wrongfully accuses Agba of theft and causes him to end up in jail and to be separated from Sham. Mr. Williams tries to stop her acts of injustice, but seems unable to. She is the boss in the relationship, and Mr. Coke seems to be powerless to change that.

Brute man

The brute man buys Sham from the Chief Cook at the Thieves Kitchen. The brute man teases the Chief Cook, until the Cook sells Sham for a very cheap price. The brute man is cruel, and it is clear that he intends to abuse Sham and force him into submission. The brute man forces Sham to complete tasks that are too difficult for a horse his size, and Sham suffers greatly under the brute man's hands. Sham is rescued from the brute man's abuse, when Mr. Coke observes the abuse and decides to save Sham by offering to buy him for a very good price.

Earl of Godolphin

The Earl of Godolphin is a kind man, who is fond of doing random good deeds. Lucky for Agba, he ends up being one of the recipients of the Earl's kind acts. The Earl rescues Agba from jail and then also saves Sham from the Red Lion Inn. Agba and Sham are treated well at Gog Magog, where they live in the stables of the Earl of Godolphin, until misfortune strikes again. At the end of the story, the Earl of Godolphin is the one who finally recognizes Sham for the special horse that he is and gives him the opportunity to shine. The Earl chooses Sham to create a new breed of noble and swift horses and gives him the title of the Godolphin Arabian.

Titus Twickerham

Mr. Titus Twickerham is the head groom at Earl of Godolphin's stables. He is in charge of breeding and training the horses. Mr. Twickerham does not see the potential in Sham and tells the Earl not to expect much from this horse. Agba dislikes Mr. Twickerham for this reason. Mr. Twickerham is the one who tells Agba that he and Sham must leave Gog Magog and go to Wicken Fen. Mr. Twickerham seems to enjoy punishing Agba and thinks the Earl is too kind for asking Mr. Twickerham to provide Agba with lamps and food.



Objects/Places

Thieves' Kitchen

The Thieves' Kitchen is a big open shed where horses are sold. It is called the Thieves' Kitchen, because no one asks where the horses sold there come from or who is buying them. Many of the horses are stolen and are therefore sold for very cheap prices. The fact that the Cook went to the Thieves' Kitchen to sell Sham shows how desperate he was to get rid of Sham. He knew he would not get much money at the Thieves' Kitchen, but it is the fastest way to get the horse sold.

The Sultan's Stables

The Sultan's stables in Morocco is where Agba works at the beginning of the story. The Sultan's stables are grand with many horses, and Agba is assigned to care for a several of the horses at the stables. One of those horses is the mare that gives birth to Sham, Agba's beloved horse. The stable keeper at the Sultan's stables is Signor Achmet.

The White Spot on Sham's Heel

When Sham is born, Agba notices the white spot on Sham's heel, and he jumps for joy, because the white spot is an emblem of speed. It is a clear sign that Sham will grow to be a strong and fast horse. The white spot proves to be true, and Sham surely turns out to be a strong and fast horse, the kind of horse that never loses a race.

Wheat Ear on Sham's Chest

After Agba notices the white spot on Sham's heel which is a good sign that represents speed, he also notices another spot on Sham's chest. Agba notices the sign on Sham's chest that looks like a wheat ear. This emblem tells of misfortune and bad luck. Just like the white spot on the heel proves true, the wheat ear also does bring Sham several cycles of bad luck and misfortune.

The Bag with Sham's Pedigree

Signor Achmet ties a bag around Sham's neck. The bag contains information on Sham's pedigree and amulets to protect the stallion. Signor Achmet later decides that the bag with the pedigree and amulets will be safer with Agba, and he takes it off of Sham and puts it around Agba's neck. Many months later, a cruel man takes the bag away from Agba and, when Agba gets it back the pedigree is gone, and Sham has nothing prove the high pedigree he comes from.



Wicken Fen

After Agba breaks the rules at Gog Magog, he and Sham are punished by being sent to the dismal swamp land called Wicken Fen. They live there alone, struggling to survive everyday, although the Earl does have some sympathy for them and sends them food regularly. The time Sham, and Agba spend in Wicken Fen is one of their lowest points in their lives.

New Gate Jail

New Gate Jail is where Agba ends up after Mrs. Williams wrongfully accuses him of theft. The worst part of being in jail for Agba is being separated from Sham. The jail stay is made more tolerable for Agba by the presence of his cat Grimalkin. The guards allow Agba to keep the cat, but they refuse to provide any food for the cat. Agba stays in New Gate jail for many weeks before Mistress Cockburn and the Earl of Godolphin rescue him.

Red Lion Inn

After Sham knocks Benjamin Biggle off of him and leaves him injured, Sham and Agba are sent off to the Red Lion Inn, where Mr. William buys Sham so he can lend him to the travelers who stay at his inn. Mr. Williams is a nice man, but Mrs. Williams is a mean and cruel woman. She cannot stand Agba and sends him away very shortly after his arrival. Sham is mistreated at the inn because of his bad behavior. Sham is behaving badly, because he refuses to allow anyone to ride him or care for him except for Agba. With Agba gone, Sham become uncontrollable. Agab and Sham are freed from living at the Red Lion Inn, when the Earl of Godolphin decides to take both of them in.

Gog Magog

The green hills of Gog Magog is where the Earl of Godolphin takes Agba and Sham, after he rescues Agba from New Gate Jail and Sham from The Red Lion Inn. Agba is thrilled to be there but, soon, the power of the wheat ear takes over again and several misfortunes take place. These misfortunes cause Agba and Sham to be cast away from Gog Magog, but only to be called back soon after. At the end of the story, it is at Gog Magog that Sham is finally recognized as the special horse that he is and given the treatment he deserves. Agba leaves Gog Magog only when Sham dies, and he feels like his mission in life is fulfilled.

Newmarket

New market is where the horse races take place. Sham's colts become popular in Newmarket as they win one race after another. A very important race takes place at the



end of the story at Newmarket. Agba and Sham attend that race so that they can watch Sham's colts race. The King and Queen of England decide to go to Newmarket to watch that race, as well, and the winner of the race wins the prize called the Queen's Plate. When Sham's colts win the races and win the Queen's Plate, the Earl earns a large sum of money and is able to get out of his financial hardships. This is good news for Sham and Agba, because it means that he will be able to afford to keep them at his stables.

Themes

Superstitions

The themes of signs and superstitions that is carried out throughout the story is a reflection of the culture in which Agba lives in. Having grown up in Morocco, Agba embraces this aspect of the culture and seems to strongly believe in the many superstitions of the Moroccan people. The first mention of signs and superstitions in the story is when Agba is in the Sultan's stables, and his favorite mare is about to give birth. Agba notices a new moon and perceives it a favorable sign for the new foal. Of course moments later, the new foal is born with the white spot on his heel, the symbol of speed and so it would seem like the omen of the new moon proves true. The good news of the white spot on the heel is soon overshadowed, when Signor Achmet discovers another sign on the foal's body, the wheat ear on his chest, a sign of misfortune and evil. Therefore the new moon does not particularly prove to be an accurate predictor of the future. When Agba leaves Morocco, he encounters people who do not believe in the superstitions of the Moroccan people and are oblivious to Sham's wheat ear and white spot.

Another superstition mentioned in the beginning of the story, is the one about the wild boar kept behind the stables in a hole, to ward off evil spirits. The wild boar lets out a squeal of anger. Signor Achmet remembers the purpose of the boar and prays that the boar absorb any evil spirits. The boar does not seem to do his job very well, because the foal is born with the wheat ear, the sign of misfortune. This shows that the superstitions do not always prove true.

When Sham, the foal, is born with the bad sign of the wheat ear on his chest, Signor Achmet exclaims that he should have known this would happen, because he was forewarned by the droning of the bittern last night and the yellow eyed owl. There seem to be many sign and predictors of the future for the Moroccan people. However, he warnings Signor Achmet gets are only half true, because the foal is born with one bad sign, but also one good one.

Signor Achmet proclaims that ill luck will come to the foal and to the royal stables because of the wheat ear on Sham's chest, but Signor Achmet also acknowledges the white spot on Sham's heel, the sign of swiftness, and realizes that the bad sign and the good sign together simply tip the scales even. The story ends up proving Signor Achmet's final prediction true. Indeed Sham does grow to fulfill the sign of the white spot on his heel. He becomes a strong and fast horse who cannot be beaten in a race. At the



same time, the wheat ear also proves true in that it does indeed bring much misfortune and bad luck to Sham.

Love for Horses

Agba and Sham have a very special relationship that exemplifies how strong the bond between a stable boy and a horse can be. Agba's love for the horse is as strong and faithful as any parent's love for their child. Often times, Agba seems to take on a parental role to Sham. When Sham is born Agba, like a proud father, wants to run to the roof tops and shout out to everyone that a foal is born and that he will be swift as the wind for on his heel is a white spot. Soon after, Agba promised the Sham to be his father. "My name is Agba. Ba means father. I will be a father to you, Sham, and when you are grown the multitudes will bow before you. And you will be King of the Wind. I promise it," Agba tells Sham soon after Sham is born (Chapter 5, pg. 41). Agba sees so much potential and has so much hope for Sham just like a father has for his son.

Agba sees only the best in Sham. Throughout their journeys together, Sham gets put down and scorned many times, but Agba's pride in Sham and his faith in him never sways. Agba knows that Sham will be great one day, and he will do whatever he can to help Sham fulfill that potential. Even at their lowest point, when Sham and Agba wither away in Wicken Fen, Agba looks at Sham and sees him as strong and special and continues to have faith in Sham.

Another aspect of Agba and Sham's relationship is sacrifice. Just like a parent sacrifices much for his/her child, Agba sacrifices many things for Sham. For example, during their stay in Gog Magog, Agba gets so fed up with everybody's discounting of Sham that he opens the gates for Sham to get out, and Sham gallops away, pushing down the Earl's favorite horse, Hobgoblin, and making his way over to the lovely mare, Roxanna. Agba knows very well that there will be severe consequences for his actions, but he does not care about himself. He wants to see justice done to Sham. Also, at the Red Lion Inn, Agba risks being seen again by Mrs. Williams and goes back to check on Sham. Agba does get caught and ends up in jail. His love for Sham and his willingness to sacrifice for him get him in trouble many times in the story.

At the end of the story, when Sham dies, Agba feels like his mission in life has been accomplished, and there is nothing left for him to do in England. He goes back to his homeland. This shows that Agba has dedicated his whole life to helping Sham fulfill his potential and when Sham does so, Agba is overjoyed and wants nothing more from life. Agba's ambitions for Sham overshadow his ambitions for his own self. Agba's love for Sham is no less powerful than a parent's love for their child.

Pedigree

In *King of the Wind* pedigree is shown to be symbol of superficiality, something that a strong horse does not need to establish his value. At the beginning of the story, it is clear that in Moroccan culture pedigree is important. Before the Sultan sends off the



group of horses and the stable boys off to France as gifts for King Louis, he makes sure that each horse has around his neck a bag containing his pedigree. When Sham and Agba travel abroad, they also see that the rest of the world seems to agree that pedigree is important. Before Sham and Agba leave Morocco, Signor Achmet, takes the bag of pedigree from Sham's neck and puts it around Agba's neck and tells Agba that the bag will be safer with him. This emphasizes how important Signor Achmet perceives the pedigree to be.

When Agba ends up in jail, one of the cruel guards working at the jail take the bag with Sham's pedigree from Agba, and when they return it, Agba finds the pedigree missing. And so, Sham is destined to live the rest of his life without his pedigree to prove his nobility and strength. Sham must now set out to prove to people for himself that he is King of the Wind. And indeed Sham does just that, but only after long struggles and many hardships. Sham's ability to prove himself in the end shows that pedigree is a symbol of superficiality that a truly strong and noble horse does not need to prove himself. At the end of the story, after Sham's colts win the races at Newmarket, the Queen asks for Sham's pedigree, and the Earl explains that Sham pedigree was lost long ago but that Sham does not need it to prove his worth, because it can be seen in his sons. The crowd cheers at that point, agreeing with the earl that Sham does not need his pedigree to prove anything.



Setting

Although introduced by a brief scene at a Canadian horse race during the early 1900s, in which the famous horse Man o' War is set against a Canadian horse, Sir Barton, the action of this novel begins in the early 1700s in Morocco, an Arab country across the Mediterranean Sea from Spain. A boy king, Louis XV, controls France, while in England the Quaker religious sect, founded in 1648, is becoming more popular. The action moves from Morocco to France to England, and at the end, Agba returns to his country. Agba and the horse Sham, ancestor of Man o' War, are sent as part of a carefully chosen group of horses and grooms as a present to the king of France. The corrupt ship's captain pockets the feed money for the horses, and both horses and boys, arriving in starved condition, are rejected by the powerful lords who control King Louis XV. Until this terrible sequence of events, Agba's life, though hard, has been full of hope and optimism, but his arrival in France marks only the first intrusion of harsh realities. Rescued by a Quaker gentleman, Agba and Sham go to England, where more hardships await them. At one point they are separated, and Agba is thrown into Newgate Jail.

After the two do finally arrive at the Earl's estate, they find it is not the haven it first appears to be. While the transitions between scenes often seem abrupt, Henry's settings are convincing and vivid, as are Dennis's sketches.

Social Sensitivity

Henry portrays different religions with sensitivity. She treats the religious beliefs of both Moslems and Christians with respect but also shows that individuals sometimes misconstrue religious tenets. For example, the Sultan orders that his horses must observe the fast of Ramadan, where for a month Moslems neither eat nor drink from sunrise to sunset. Sham's mother dies after giving birth to him, probably because of the fast imposed on her. Parents and teachers will want to make sure that readers unfamiliar with Islam are aware that the Sultan's orders result from a misunderstanding of the religion and that they actually violate the religion's injunctions against cruelty to animals.

Henry's portrayal of various social classes develops her theme concerning the arbitrary nature of class distinctions based on who an individual's ancestors are. Kings, dukes, sultans, and other titled power holders are seen to be only as good as their actions. The horseboy Agba succeeds where the Earl of Godolphin and his groom fail. Henry reinforces this theme when Sham's pedigree gets lost and when she notes that Man o' War's ancestors include a cart horse.

Literary Qualities

The book demonstrates Henry's ability to use symbols and allusions in an unobtrusive way to add depth to the narrative line. Symbols such as Sham's wheat ear and white spot create suspense, encouraging the reader to wonder, for example, if Signor Achmet will actually go so far as to kill Sham because of the bad luck and evil associated with the wheat ear. Later, the reader wants to know if these old Arab superstitions will be borne out by the story. Pedigrees become a symbol of superficiality—something that good horses, and boys, do not need to establish their value. The horse himself symbolizes the triumph of moral courage and life over evil and death.

Other stylistic qualities that make Henry's book so engaging are her use of strong verbs and vigorous sentences; her tendency not to dwell on character descriptions, exciting scenes, or emotional moments for too long, making the narrative fast-paced; precise attention to historical detail; vivid characterizations that give equal importance to both human and animal characters; the use of characters as foils for one another; and development of themes through comparisons of animals to people.

Themes/Characters

In each of the very different locales where the story is set, Henry creates colorful characters who realistically possess a mixture of virtues and faults.

Even Agba, who seldom makes a moral false step in the first part of the story, grows impatient toward the end and even becomes rebellious, as when he lets Sham out of the stall to fight Hobgoblin, the Earl's favorite horse, and to mate with the beautiful mare, Lady Roxanna.

The various characters whom Agba encounters along the way range from very evil and foolish to kind and intelligent. Mr. Williams, who at one point shelters Agba and Sham, is a kind person but not a good rider; his manner, more than any intended evil, irritates Sham. The Sultan, a "fierce and bloodthirsty ruler" from whose presence no horseboy had ever returned, loses stature in the reader's mind when Agba visits him; he looks and sounds like a camel to the boy, and his vanity and imperiousness also make him appear wholly undignified. Yet he values his horses. Other rulers are portrayed according to their merits rather than their apparent status in the world.

The Earl of Godolphin is a particularly successful character. He at first seems to be a savior, and his estate a kind of heaven, but he has definite faults. He trusts too much in the opinions of his head groom, Titus Twickerham, and devalues Sham in relation to his larger horse, Hobgoblin. The Earl waits until Sham's colt begins racing and beating colts sired by Hobgoblin before granting Sham and Agba their rightful place on his estate. His ineptness also shows in his poor management of money.

Several other characters are also skillfully drawn: the chief cook who sells Sham to the evil and selfish Carter; the Quaker, Jethro Coke, a retired merchant who is genuinely concerned about the boy and the horse; the very kind tart-baking Mrs. Cockburn; Coke's son-in-law, the bungling and spiteful Benjamin Biggie; and even the guards in Newgate Jail have distinct personalities that make them memorable.

The horses, too, have personalities.

Sham is a thriving and playful colt, a stoic survivor of hardships, a young stallion fighting for his mate, and a faithful and affectionate companion to Agba. In contrast is the pampered, overfed Hobgoblin, doted on by Titus Twickerham, the know-it-all groom.

These plausibly drawn characters convey Henry's concern with values. Sensitivity, the ability to observe life accurately, and faithfulness are moral standards upheld by Agba and Sham's progress through the story, which is also the story of Agba's growth to adulthood.

Agba never forgets the Sultan's charge— however personally repulsive the Sultan is— to see Sham through life; he sticks to his purpose. By contrasting Agba and Sham's success with Titus Twickerham and Hobgoblin's failure, Henry shows that perseverance

is more important than pedigree, that an individual's determination to succeed is more important than the circumstances of his or her birth.



Style

Point of View

King of the Wind is told in the style of third person narration. The narrator is non intrusive and remains unnoticed throughout the story. The story line generally follows Agba's actions and whereabouts. Sometimes, the story line gets into Sham's whereabouts and actions during the times, when Agba and Sham are separated.

Setting

The prologue take place at a Canadian horse race where the famous horse, Man o' War, races against a Canadian horse, Sir Barton. The main story line begins much early in time and tells the story of Sham, one of Man o' War's ancestors. Sham is born in Morocco, an Arab country. The action soon moves to France, where a boy King, Louis XV, sits on the throne. Later, the story line moves once again, this time to England, where Agba and Sham move from one owner to the next, until they end up living with the Earl of Godolphin in the stables of Gog Magog. At the end of the story, after Sham dies, Agba returns to his homeland, Morocco.

Language and Meaning

King of the Wind is written in a formal tone of voice yet with simple vocabulary since it is meant for children ages 8-12, around the same age as the main character Agba. The book is not particularly fast paced, but it does rotate frequently in its cycles of ups and down, as Sham's luck changes from good bad and bad to good. The author uses a lot of symbolism in the story. Most of the symbols come from Moroccan culture such as the two main symbols of the wheat ear and the white spot on Sham's heel.

The fluctuations between good and bad times as Sham's white spot and wheat ear pull his luck back and forth, creates suspense throughout the novel. The reader learns quickly that Sham's good luck never last long and new problems continue to arise and drag him back into misfortune. The symbols are also used as tool for foreshadowing. For example, each time Agba thinks of the wheat ear, the reader knows that some misfortune will likely be Sham and Agba's near future.

Structure

King of the Wind consists of 22 very short chapters, a prologue and an epilogue. Each chapter title describes the location or main event that takes place in that chapter. The story is told in chronological order, except for the prologue, The Great Son, which actually occurred many years after the main story is over. The prologue tells the story of a race that takes place where one of Sham's descendants participates. The epilogue

describes how after Sham's death, his name and legend lives on through his children and grandchildren.



Quotes

"When Allah created the horse, he said to the wind, 'I will that a creature proceed from thee. Condense thyself!' And the wind condensed itself, and the result was the horse."

Chapter 2, pg. 29

"Agba leaped to his feet. He wanted to climb the tower of the mosque. He wanted to blow on the trumpet. He wanted to cry to the four winds of heaven: 'A foal is born. And he will be swift as the wind of the desert, for on his hind heel is a white spot. A white spot. A white...'" Chapter 3, pg. 32

"And he named the young thing Sham, which is the Arabic word for sun." Chapter 3 pg. 32

"Six horse boys,' he said, letting each word fall sharply, 'will accompany the six stallions. And each boy will care for the horse in his charge as long as that horse shall live. Upon the death of the horse, the boy shall return at once to Morocco.'" Chapter 7 pg. 55

"This beaten creature could not be Sham. It was only the size that brought up his memory. There was no wheat ear on his chest. Or... could it be hidden by the collar of his harness? There was no white spot on his off hind heel. Or ... could it be crusted with mud?" Chapter 11, pg. 85

"Perhaps if he slept he would be lost in a dream, and the prison walls would fall away and he and Sham would be together again. Perhaps in his dream he would be grooming Sham, going over the wheat ear quickly, then lingering long on the white spot." Chapter 17, pg. 120

"There was only one duty that Agba disliked, and he disliked it with such an intensity that the blood pounded hotly through him all the while he did it. It was the cleaning of Hobgoblin's stall." Chapter 19, pg. 133

"Suddenly they were together, touching each other with their noses, talking in excited little knickers. Then, manes and tails in flowing motion, they streaked to the far end of the paddock." Chapter 19 pg. 141

"The boy swallowed hard. He had hurt the kindest friend he had ever had. He was ready to take whatever punishment might come" Chapter 20 pg. 143

"At last Sham was being honored according to his merits! At last things were as they ought to be! Chapter 20 pg. 151

"Godolphin means God's Downs,' he said, swallowing strangely. 'And here on God's Downs, your Arabian will live out his days.'" Chapter 21 pg. 153



"How he wanted Sham to run! To prove that he was King of the Wind Chapter 22, pg. 160

"Agba swallowed. He felt a tear begin to trickle down his cheek. His hand stopped. Why, he was growing a beard! He was a man!" Chapter 22, pg. 169

"My name is Agba. Ba means father. I will be a father to you, Sham, and when I am grown I will ride you before the multitudes. And they will bow before you, and you will be King of the Wind. I promise it." Chapter 22, pg. 169

"The golden bay was tended all his life by a boy who could not speak. He left for Morocco the night that his horse died. Without any words at all he made me understand that his mission in life was fulfilled. So I have kept the tablet clean. It is for you and for me to write here our thoughts and tributes to the King of the Wind and the slim brown horse boy who loved him." Father of the Turf, pg. 173

Adaptations

Justin Morgan Had a Horse, about the establishment of the Morgan draft horse, is a forerunner of King of the Wind and follows a similar plot structure, yet it is considered by critics to be a less ambitious book. Following King of the Wind were Misty of Chincoteague and its sequels appearing in later years, Sea Star, Orphan of Chincoteague, and Stormy, Misty's Foal. These historical books are based on the existence of wild ponies—the descendants of shipwrecked Spanish ponies—that live on the islands of Chincoteague and Assateague off the Virginia coast. Reflecting much research, Misty begins with the wreck of the Spanish galleon and its cargo of ponies swimming to shore, then shifts to the involvement of modern-day children with two descendants of these ponies, Phantom and Misty. Born to Trot connects the recovery of a boy's health to his raising and training the filly Rosalind. Brighty of the Grand Canyon tells the story of an often hard-pressed burro in a fast-paced adventure and mystery story. Black Gold recounts the story of a real horse who won the Kentucky Derby. The Italian setting of Gaudenzia, Pride of the Palio is also based on fact, but Henry has been faulted for unconvincing Italian dialect.

White Stallion of Lippizza relates much about the famous Austrian Lippizzan horses, but this novel has been criticized for its melodrama and poor integration of German into the text. Henry's last two horse novels are set in the American West: Mustang, Wild Spirit of the West centers on a Nevada woman's effort to save mustang horses from slaughter, and San Domingo, the Medicine Hat Stallion, set in Nebraska territory in the mid-nineteenth century, recounts a boy's efforts to find his colt, which has been traded away by his father. Critics fault Henry for repeating best-selling formulas and for shallow characterizations in many of these books written after King of the Wind and Misty.

Several of these famous horse novels were made into films, notably Misty of Chincoteague in 1961, Brighty of the Grand Canyon in 1966, and Justin Morgan Had a Horse in 1972.



Topics for Discussion

1. What are some similarities and differences between this horse story and others you have read? Do you have to be interested in horses to enjoy this story?
2. The Sultan looks like a camel to Agba. Does this view make Agba more or less fearful of him? Why?
3. Why is the ship's captain a bad man? How does he hurt Agba and Sham, and what later hardships does his cruelty cause for them?
4. Compare Signor Achmet to Titus Twickerham, both heads of stables.

Which one do you think is a better judge of horses? How does each treat Agba and horses, especially Sham?

5. What opposite ideas or values do the wheat ear and the white spot, both markings on Sham's coat, suggest?

Which symbol do you think dominates his life? Why?

6. A superstition is an assumption not based on fact but on an unproven belief.

What are some important superstitions in this book? How are Agba and Sham affected by them?

7. At the end of the book, Agba returns to Morocco. Why does he go back? Have you been given any hints earlier in the book that this will happen? Do you think he should go back?

8. Marguerite Henry could have made Agba into a talking character. Do you think this would have been a good idea?

Why or why not? Does the book mention any advantages to his muteness?

9. Critics have said that Henry's books are sentimental, a term that suggests that they overemphasize emotion at the expense of thematic depth. Do you think this is a just criticism? When the story does express sad feelings, is it true "sentiment" or emotional fluff?

10. What is Agba's religion? Do you think it is as strict as your own? Is Agba serious about his religion?

11. At the end of this book, when Sham's sons win at Newmarket, Agba feels his chin and notices he has a beard.

Has Agba grown up in other ways since the beginning of the story?



12. In Newgate Jail, Sham's pedigree is torn from Agba's neck and destroyed.

What does this loss mean to Agba and Sham?



Essay Topics

Describe Agba and Sham's relationship. How is it similar and different to a father-son relationship?

What does the book say about superstitions and their power? Describe the cycles of good and bad luck that Agba and Sham go through, and how they relate to the superstitions of the time.

Agba is a completely selfless and kind boy. He is always thinking about Sham and Sham's wellbeing and never worried about himself. Is Agba's character realistic? Does Agba have any flaws that make him feel like a well-rounded character?

Describe how the author gives animals human characteristics. What is the effect of this technique?

Agba and Sham's lives are made up of cycles of good and bad luck. How does the author foreshadow these constantly changing cycles?

What effect does the prologue, The Great Son, have on the reader's reading of the rest of the story?

Sham moves from one owner to the other throughout the story. How do Sham's various owners treat him, and how are they different or the same?

What effect on the story does Agba's muteness have? How would the story be different or the plot be effected, if Agba was a character who can speak? Why does the author choose to make Agba a mute character?

What creates the strong bond between Agba and Sham? What do they have in common? What makes them so devoted to each other?

Describe how Agba's character develops, as the story unfolds? How is the Agba at the start of the story different from the Agba at the end?

Compare Titus Twickerham and Signor Achmet, who are both stable masters. Which of the two is better at his job? Which of the two treats Agba and Sham better?



Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. Marguerite Henry has been criticized for shifting too abruptly from one scene, location, or part of the story to another. Are there any shifts that seem especially sudden to you? Take several transitions in the book and show why they work or do not work well.
2. Henry has been praised for her vivid scenes. Take at least two scenes and show how language, narration, and descriptions of characters and their actions make them come alive. What do the illustrations add to her descriptions?
3. Compare two ruling or powerful characters in the book. Is either of them all good or all bad, or are their moral qualities mixed? What limitations are there on their power?
4. The kindly characters in the book who want to help Sham and Agba often cannot. Why? Are there any points where you think such characters—Coke, Mr. Williams, and Mrs. Cockburn—could do more but do not? To what extent are the good actions of these characters limited by things beyond their control?
5. Compare this book to another horse novel by Marguerite Henry, such as *Justin Morgan Had a Horse* or *Misty of Chincoteague*. Do human characters in these books learn from their experience with horses? What do they learn? Is the author in these other books interested in values other than producing a good line of horses or ponies?



Further Study

Evory, Ann, ed. *Contemporary Authors, New Revision Series*. Vol. 9. Detroit: Gale Research, 1983. Contains a biographical information on Henry and an overview of her writing.

Henry, Marguerite. "Acceptance Paper."

In *Newbery Medal Books: 1922-1955*, edited by Bertha M. Miller and Elinor W. Field. Boston: Horn Book, 1955.

Henry's acceptance paper for *King of the Wind* is interesting for her comments on how she wrote the book. This entry includes a brief plot summary, an excerpt from the novel, and a biographical note by Henry's sister, Gertrude B. Jupp.

Huck, Charlotte S. "Contemporary Realistic Fiction." In *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*. 3d ed.

New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1979. This critical account compares Henry favorably to other writers of children's horse stories, notably Walter Farley, with comments upon *Misty of Chincoteague*, *King of the Wind*, and *Mustang, Wild Spirit of the West*. Kirkpatrick, D. L., and Naomi Lewis, eds. *Twentieth-Century Children's Writers*. 2d ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983. Places Henry in the tradition of Robert Louis Stevenson, and compares her horse books to Will James's *Smoky* for their depth of characterization. Also contains a good assessment of Henry's use of history.

Kunitz, Stanley J., and Howard Haycraft, eds. *The Junior Book of Authors*. Rev. ed. New York: H. W. Wilson, 1951. Contains an autobiographical sketch in which Henry comments on her childhood and her decision to become a writer of animal books.

Mainiero, Lina, ed. *American Women Writers: A Critical Reference from Colonial Times to the Present*. Vol. 2.

New York: Frederick Ungar, 1980.

Contains a brief overview of Henry's life and work and argues that *Misty of Chincoteague* is Henry's best book.

Rothe, Anna, and Constance Ellis, eds.

Current Biography. New York: H. W. Wilson, 1947. A brief biography containing facts unavailable elsewhere, including the existence of the original manuscript of *Justin Morgan Had a Horse* in the University of Vermont Archives.

Smaridge, Norah. "Marguerite Henry."



In *Famous Modern Storytellers for Young People*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1969. A very brief but highly informative account of Henry's life and work with interesting comments on her relationship to the illustrator Wesley Dennis.

Wilt, Miriam E. "In Marguerite Henry— The Thread That Runs So True."

Elementary English (November 1954): 387-395. Comments on Henry's realism and lack of sentimentality.



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