

The Lantern Bearers Study Guide

The Lantern Bearers by Rosemary Sutcliff

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

The Lantern Bearers Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1 - 3.....	4
Chapters 4 - 6.....	7
Chapters 7 - 9.....	10
Chapters 10 - 12.....	13
Chapters 13 - 15.....	16
Chapters 16 - 18.....	19
Chapters 19 - 22.....	22
Characters.....	25
Symbols and Symbolism.....	30
Settings.....	32
Themes and Motifs.....	34
Styles.....	38
Quotes.....	40



Plot Summary

“The Lantern Bearers” by Rosemary Sutcliff is the story of Aquila who is a Roman soldier assigned to the British Isles. He has adopted Britain as his home; his father and sister live nearby on a large farmstead. Aquila is proud to be a Roman soldier and is the commander of a cavalry division of the garrison assigned in the British Isles. He has close relationships with both his father and sister. Everything is perfect until things begin to change. The Roman army is being called back to Rome to defend the city. Aquila can't bring himself to leave his family and he feels he belongs to Britain. Aquila decides to desert the army and stay in Britain. It is the beginning of a long odyssey for Aquila to find where he belongs.

One dark night the family is attacked by barbarian Saxons. Although Aquila, Flavian and Flavia and their stewards and farmhands do their best to defend the homestead and stave off the Saxons, their defeat is a quick one. Flavian and his steward are slain, the house is set on fire and Flavia is kidnapped. Just as a huge Saxon is about to bring down a gleaming axe on Aquila's head, he hears the howling of wolves and has a better idea. Aquila is taken to the woods, stripped naked and tied to a tree. The Saxons will allow the wolves to take Aquila to a bloody and tortuous end. However, Aquila is saved when a group of Jutes find him in the forest. They decided to take him with them. He will become a slave and serve as an oarsmen on one of their large galleys.

Aquila returns with his captors to Juteland and lives there as a thrall for the next three years. In order to ensure that he does not escape, he is fitted with an iron collar that identifies him as a slave. He has the surprise of his life when he encounters his sister when the Jutes migrate to Britain for a better life. She has married the Saxon who kidnapped her and has a young child by him. Flavia gives him food and clothing and a rasp to be used to remove his collar so he can escape. He wants her to go with him but she cannot. She belongs to the Saxon. Aquila is hurt and disappointed but leaves her and her child behind.

In the woods, he encounters a kindly monk who helps remove his collar and gives food and shelter for a few nights. He tells the monk his dream is to find the true British king, Ambrosius, and help him reclaim the British crown from the murderous Vortigern who murdered King Constantine, Ambrosius's father, and seized the crown. The monk knows where Ambrosius is and encourages Aquila to seek him out and help the king return to power.

Aquila is able to find Ambrosius and vows his loyalty and support to him. Aquila feels he has found where he belongs. He becomes one of the king's most trusted followers and is made a member of his inner circle. During the years with Ambrosia, Aquila marries and has a son who he names Flavian in honor of his father and who Ness, Aquila's wife, calls Minnow. Aquila proves to be a valorous and fearless warrior and though there are defeats along the way, Ambrosius with Aquila at his side is able to defeat Vortigern and his forces, return to his rightful place on the throne and unite Britain as one country and one power.



Chapters 1 - 3

Summary

After a year, Aquila has returned to the family farm. He's on leave from Rutupiae where he is a commander of a Rhenus Horse-Auxiliary Cavalry. The Pict War had changed everything. The countryside has never been the same since Theodosius swept through Britain – houses were burned, slaves revolted and large estates were destroyed. It was the bad time, the Killing Time. Aquila is aware how easily his family estate could have been obliterated.

Aquila's sister, Flavia, runs to him scolding him for not waiting for her. Her pique passes quickly; she is happy to have him home again. She looks at the dolphin tattoo on his shoulder which is depiction of the family symbol. He tells her that it isn't the best in craftsmanship but it will identify him if he's away for many years, twenty years like Odysseus. Flavian, their father, is wearing an emerald ring engraved with a dolphin. He is so independent that it is difficult to remember that he is blind. His sight was lost when a Saxon arrow struck his temple. He fears that the farm will one day fall as others have. Aquila reminds him that there has been much speculation over the years about the end of Britain but it has never come to pass.

Aquila spots a man carrying a lantern on a pole and a basket on his back. The man is selling quails caught that morning. Flavian tells the man to take the quails to the kitchen where his steward will pay him. Flavian gives the man a tablet and tells him to take it to the "usual place." Sensing that Aquila is curious, Flavian explains why he gave the birdman a message to deliver. When Theodosius drove out the Picts and went south, his lieutenant Magnus Maximum, a Spaniard, took temporary command. Maximum married a British princess and was proclaimed Emperor. He was later killed leaving behind his son, Constantine of Arfon, who saved the region and drove back the Sea Wolves after the Legions were withdrawn.

Constantine kept Britain safe from the Saxons for more than thirty years. In the end, Constantine was murdered in his own castle. Since Vortigern took control after Constantine's death, many believed Vortigern was behind the assassination plot. He never realized full power because of Utha and Ambrosius, Constantine's young sons, who were not much older than Aquila. Utha died but Ambrosius is now a man and by birth the natural leader. Flavian asked General Aetius for reinforcements but has yet to receive a reply. The birdman takes messages to the General reminding him about the request. It is urgent that help is sent soon. A courier arrives with a message for Aquila. It is the call for Aquila to return to duty.

Aquila arrives at Rutupiae, the fortress off the Saxon Shore. The fortress designed to house a half a Legion is now desolate and nearly empty. He reports in to Titus Fulvius Callistus who had recalled Aquila for embarkation; they are being withdrawn from Britain to return to Rome. Aquila now understands why his father received no response to his



pleas for help. Aquila suffers from inner conflicts. He always felt he belonged to Britain even though he speaks of himself as Roman.

Aquila considers asking Callistus to release him but knows that he would be refused. He decides to steal away and hides in a dark stairway of the fortress. Knowing that his garrison was pushing off to sea, he clutches himself and cries. He lights the beacon in the fortress one last night then returns to the farm. He tells his father that he deserted the Eagles. It had not been an easy choice but he belongs to Britain. Flavian says there is no excuse for deserting the Eagles but he understands. Flavia is overjoyed that Aquila returned. Flavian has no idea what the future holds for Britain but he is glad that Aquila is there to share it with them.

Several nights later, Demetrius is reading "The Odyssey" to Flavian when there is a sudden commotion outside. It is the Saxons! Everyone grabs weapons including the cooks and farmhands. Fires flare up around the farmyard. The intruders are herding off the cattle. Aquila places Flavian's sword in his hand. No one will know he's blind. Aquila rushes out with his sword drawn. Aquila sees his father struck and fall. He throws himself in front of Flavia who is fighting furiously. Aquila plunges his sword into the man who killed his father.

Aquila is struck and falls to the ground unconscious. Later, Flavia and Aquila are captured and taken off by the fair-haired giants. Aquila prepares to die as Wiermund of the White Horse raises his axe over him. The wolves howl again making Wiermund decide to tie Aquila up to a tree and let the wolves have at him. He is stripped naked with his hands tied behind the tree. He worries about Flavia being taken by the barbarians. Aquila passes out and awakens later when a young boy is cutting his binds. It is Thormod the son of Thrand and a group of men. They are all focused on his dolphin tattoo. They decide to make him their slave and use him as an oarsman on their galley.

Analysis

An immediate connection is made between the protagonist Aquila and Homer's fictional traveler Odysseus. The author uses foreshadowing to hint at a further connection between these two characters from different stories with similar scenarios. There is the hint that perhaps Aquila will soon be embarking on his own odyssey. He mentions that his sister will be able to recognize him by his dolphin tattoo just as Odysseus was recognized by a scar. This could be hinting Aquila's long absence since Odysseus was gone twenty years.

Flavian's emerald ring impressed with a dolphin and the dolphin tattoo makes a strong bond between father and son and is a symbol of their family unity. Flavia is Aquila's younger sister and their close relationship is underscored.

Flavian is blind which sometimes symbolizes the inability to see the truth. There may be something in Flavian's life that he has avoided looking at or something that he cannot see.



The presence of the birdman who doubles as a courier colors the story a shade darker. Aquila feels a discomfort in his presence. He doesn't trust him but he doesn't know why. There is something ominous about his toting around dead birds around. Dead birds are sometimes used as harbingers of change, perhaps another hint of things to come.

It is not long after the birdman visits, that big change does occur. Aquila is told that the Roman Legion in which he is a commander is transferring permanent to Rome. Although Aquila is Roman, he has adopted his new country, Britain, as his own. He feels he belongs to Britain. After deserting from the Legion, he lights the beacon in the Legion's abandoned fortress. The beacon is a symbol of the future as its bright light shines into the unknown dark.

Discussion Question 1

How did Aquila compare himself to Odysseus? Describe ways in which the character Aquila compares with Odysseus. What is the implication of the connection between these characters as crafted by the author?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Ambrosius considered the true King of Britain? How did Vortigern rise in power and claim the throne?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Aquila desert the Roman legion? How does she justify his action? As the protagonist of this story and its hero, how does this character flaw detract from the character or enhance him?

Vocabulary

heather, piercingly, countenance, scabious, signet, vehemence, auxiliaries, lineage, embarkation, garrison, plinth, flotsam, parapet, stoic, steward, guttural, cockerel



Chapters 4 - 6

Summary

The two longships, the Sea Snake and the Storm Wind make their way along the sandbanks. Aquila is one of the rowers. He worries about Flavia's fate. The men cheer as a settlement comes into view. People dot the beach welcoming the ship home. Aquila stands beside the Sea Snake in waist-deep water. Thormod whistles to him like a dog. Aquila doesn't want to go to him but he has no choice. Thormod presents Aquila to Bruni, his grandfather. Seeing his tattoo, Bruni pronounces that Aquila will henceforth be called Dolphin and become his thrall.

Aquila learns he is in Western Juteland in the hands of the Jutes. Bruni's farmstead consists of a long barn with stables for the horses and oxen. There is a houseplace at the far end of the barn where the family lives. Aquila sleeps in the hayloft with two other farm-thralls. Thormod had taken a bronze box that contained a book in one of their raids. Bruni doesn't know what it is. Is it magic? Aquila explains what a book is and Bruni asks him to read the book aloud. It is the ninth book of The Odyssey. Bruni and Thormod are captivated by the story.

One evening Thormod brings Brand Erikson to the house. He had returned from a trade mission on the Sea Witch. Brand tells them that Guthrum had ordered that they make Hengest's port their last trade of the season. But Hengest was on a run for the Red Fox. Aquila listens closely. Red Fox is what his people called Vortigern. Could it be the same man?! Brand tells Bruni that a birdman with a lantern carried a message for the Romans to send help. Aquila now knows that his father died because he'd been betrayed by the little old birdman. The routine in Ullasfjord held onto the old ways – raiding in the summer and returning home at summer's end.

During the second year of Aquila's thralldom, the Storm Wind suffers damage, loses several men and returns with little booty. Aquila helps harvest the fields. Bruni is worried; he has only seen two or three harvests as lean as this one. Aquila recalls the thick corn that was raised on his farm that was burned by the likes of Bruni and his men. After the harvest, the land is prepared for winter. Food becomes scarce in the winter. There is hope when spring is just around the corner. But the cold lasts longer than expected. The planting is late which will once again produce a poor yield.

Men are tempted to take Hengest up on his call for settlers in Tanatus and for the shores of the Romans' Island off the coast of Britain. Hunfirth, the Chieftain of Ullasfjord calls a council meeting which Bruni and Thormod attend. Aquila fears that Britain's fate is being discussed. Bruni reports that when spring comes, Ullasfjord will answer the call to resettle and be led by Edric, Hunfrith's eldest son. Bruni will take Thormod and Aquila with him. Aquila is stirred by the prospect of returning home.



Bruni falls very ill. Although he recovers, he remains weak and unable to stand. As Aquila reads to him about Odysseus, Bruni vows that his strength will return in the Spring. But he does not recover. Bruni's wife, Aude, tells Aquila that the people of the coast only die at low tide. One day, Bruni sits up and tells Aquila and Thormod to bring his shield and bearskin to him. It is near low tide, he says. The two young men help him walk out into the wind. He takes a few steps unsupported. After a flock of wild geese flies over, he seems to lose his strength and crashes to the ground.

Thormod announces that he will take Aquila with him to be his thrall and carry his shield. As summer approaches, Ullasfjord prepares for permanent departure. The warriors swear their loyalty to Edric. At Thormod's orders, an iron ring has been placed around Aquila's neck. He hopes for the chance to escape once he returns to Britain. He feels the wind of God that he'd been awaiting and prays that he can find Flavia. Once everything is loaded onto the Sea Witch and Sea Snake, Aquila takes his place at the oar. After two years as a slave, he returns to his land on an enemy ship.

The voyage is a rugged one; no wind, murky water and heavy mist. Many of the women and children become ill. One child is lost overboard. Finally, the words, "Land ho" are heard. Aquila sees that they are heading straight for Rutupiae. They go ashore at Tanatus across from the fortress and take the land as their own. Edric tells a local man that they are there to settle at the invitation of Hengest. The man tells Edric to speak to Hengest about where exactly they are to go. That night Aquila sleeps chained to the other thralls under the stern of the boat. He can see Rutupiae in the distance. He feels more desolate than ever.

Analysis

Aquila is taken by the Jutes and becomes an oarsman and slave for them. They are impressed with his dolphin tattoo and Bruni begins to call him Dolphin. Bruni comments that Dolphins are omens of good luck which indicates that Bruni feels that Aquila will mean good luck for him and the Jutes. But perhaps it will be Aquila who will be the benefactor of good fortune and someday have the good fortune to escape his current fate.

Aquila learns that it was the birdman who betrayed his father and alerted Vortigern that Flavian was seeking Roman aid which brought on the Saxon attack in which his father was killed. It was not just an unsubstantiated ill-will that Aquila felt in the presence of the birdman. His instincts had been right.

Bruni and Thormod like having Aquila around. He is more sophisticated and educated than they are. He has read the Odyssey to them. He is almost magical. He has made the words of a dead man live again. They are inferior to him in many ways and can only feel superior to him because they captured him and made him a slave. But that does not negate his natural superiority over them. The thought of Aquila escaping from them compels Thormod to have a metal collar or thrall-ring around Aquila's neck. It is symbolic of his control over the more erudite Aquila but it does not negate the reality



that it is Aquila who is far more advanced. A metal collar only changes that on the surface.

Bruni's death is connected with the sea. Aude, his wife, tells Aquila that the seamen only die during low tide. The "low tide" symbolizes the end of Bruni's life. When the dying old man insists on having his sword and shield it is low tide. He knows that he is meeting his end and is prepared to fight on the other side.

Discussion Question 1

Who is the "Red Fox" and what is his relationship with Hengest? How does Aquila figure out that his father was betrayed? Who is the betrayer?

Discussion Question 2

Why are Bruni and Thormod in awe of the contents of the bronze box that Thormod stole? What does their reaction show about them and their culture? Why does Bruni believe that the object is magical even after Avila provides the simple explanation of what it is?

Discussion Question 3

What compelled the Jutes to leave Juteland? Why does Aude feel it's risky to take Aquila back to his homeland? What precaution does Thormod take to keep Aquila from escaping?

Vocabulary

wantonly, papyrus, moor, disconsolately, contemptuous, gable, ramparts



Chapters 7 - 9

Summary

Hengest's burg is a half day away from the new Ullasfjord settlement. In the burg, he sees a dark haired woman sitting in front of a cabin watching over a young toddler. He is stunned when he sees she is wearing an emerald ring – it is his father's ring! Flavia stands and calls his name. They had told her he was dead. He tells her about being taken by the Jutes. The child is hers; his father is the yellow-haired man who carried her off.

Flavia cautions him not to be seen talking to her. He must plan his escape. He killed Wiermund's brother and they will seek vengeance. There will be a great feast in two nights at Hengest's Mead Hall. Vortigern will be there. Everyone will drink too much and it will give him a chance to flee. Flavia will take care of the guards on the shore-gate. She will bring him a file to remove the ring around his neck. He is to wait for her that night at the woodwright's shop.

On the night of the feast, Aquila observes the guests at the mead. Hengest, a huge man, sits next to Vortigern, the Red Fox and King of Britain. Aquila wonders what they are discussing – possibly splitting up his country between them? Rowena, Hengest's daughter, a tall blonde girl, pours wine for them. Vortigern drinks to their blessing that the menace of Rome has passed. But Ambrosius lives in the mountains and could always rally. Hengest suggests they dispatch a leader with war bands to keep Ambrosius in check.

Hengest orders the harpist to begin playing and Rowena to sing for the king. Even from afar, Aquila is taken with her beauty. She is the most beautiful girl he'd ever seen; he hates her so. He can see that Vortigern desires her. Vortimer, Vortigern's son, is seated nearby. The peregrine perched on his arm suddenly screams loudly and flaps its wings.

Aquila slips away to the woodwright's shop to meet Flavia. She had given the guards a sleeping potion in their mead. They did not see her face. She brought some food, a dagger and a file for Aquila. He can hide out for a few days until he works his metal ring off. He asks her to come with him and bring her baby boy. She cannot leave the boy's father; he is her man. Just before he departs, she hands him the emerald ring. They say their goodbyes and Aquila takes off in the dark. He swims across the narrow channel from Tanatus to Rutupiae and heads for the woods. He finds a clearing in the Forest of Anderida to eat and rest. He tries to use the file to remove his thrall-ring but it was impossible to do by himself. Once he is clear of the Saxon legions, he will have a smith remove it.

Aquila has only one thing to live for – find the birdman who betrayed Flavian. Aquila trudges through the forest all the next day. He is weary but cannot rest until he has a lead on the birdman. In the dark he comes upon a planted field. He spots a Christian



bell hanging from a small tree which means he's out of Saxon territory. A monk sitting before a hearth in a small hut greets him warmly. The monk offers him food and shelter and will remove his thrall-ring. The monk is willing to sacrifice his supper so that Aquila can have it. He will sleep with a good heart. The monk uses the file on the ring and by midnight it is off Aquila's neck. Aquila sleeps on a bed of clean fern.

The next morning Aquila thanks the monk for his hospitality and tells him he must move on. The monk, Brother Ninnias, convinces him to stay and rest and eat one more night. The monk's community had been destroyed and burned by the Saxons while he was searching for bees in the forest. There have been no raids in the last three years since Hengest and his war bands settled in Tanatus. Brother Ninnias tells him that he saw the Rutupiae Light a on clear night after the Romans had departed. Some thought it was a ghost or an omen. The monk thought it could have been a deserter left behind.

Aquila confesses that he is that deserter; he realized he belonged to Britain and not to Rome. He tells the monk of the attack by the Saxons, his capture by the Jutes, his escape from Hengest and how the birdman betrayed his father. Aquila senses that the monk knows where the birdman is. Brother Ninnias shows Aquila the birdman's grave. He had come to him for shelter after being tortured by the Saxons. He was very ill and raved about betraying his own fellows. He died on the third day there. The monk suggests that Aquila thank God and find a way to serve Him. But Aquila is not one for the holy life. The monk suggests that if he believes in Ambrosius and the House of Constantine that he should seek him out.

Analysis

The peregrine falcon on Vortimer's arm suddenly screams and flaps his wings at a gathering of Vortigern and his followers. The falcon's outburst denotes an unease that looms over the gathering. Although the men have pledged allegiance to Vortigern there is an underlying unrest which the falcon represents.

Although Aquila is disappointed and hurt by Flavia's refusal to escape with him, she represents his freedom and reconnection to his family roots. She gives him the emerald ring which is a direct link to his father and the good times they shared. Flavia supplies him with a rasp which ultimately removes the thrall-ring from his neck.

Aquila cautiously roams the British countryside ever vigilant for an encounter with the enemy. When he comes across a small neat farm, he is immediately assured of its safety when he spots a Christian bell hanging from a tree. This book was originally published in 1950 in England. The target audience of the book was probably a largely Christian audience. The appearance of the Christian bell is a signal to Aquila and to the audience that Aquila is entering into safe territory. This certainty is underscored when the proprietor of the farm is revealed to be a monk.

It is not by accident that after spending time with a Christian monk that Aquila is on firmer ground and has more direction. Aquila telling his story to a monk can be likened



to a parishioner making a confessional to a priest. Aquila confesses to Brother Ninnias that he is a deserter, ergo a liar and disloyal. He also removes his quest for revenge when he shows Aquila the birdman's grave. Brother Ninnias forgives him by deed. He directs him to the future that awaits him with Ambrosius.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Flavia choose to stay with her Saxon captor? Why is Aquila disappointed by her decision, and why does he feel it's a betrayal?

Discussion Question 2

What important characters are introduced at the feast hall? Why are Hengest and Vortigern pleased that the Roman legion returned to Rome? Why does Ambrosius remain a threat to Vortigern?

Discussion Question 3

How does the knowledge that the birdman is dead impact Aquila? Does it sate his need for revenge? How does Aquila's discussion with Brother Ninnias clarify his goals and send him off in the right direction?

Vocabulary

horde, convulsive, wizened, contentment, jovial, tumult, conjuring, peregrine, luminous, skein, sanctuary, hummock



Chapters 10 - 12

Summary

Aquila is in Uroconium looking for work. He had been traveling throughout Britain during the past several months. There are things to steal in the shops yet the town has avoided a Saxon raid. Eugenius the Physician overhears Aquila talking to himself about the Saxons. He offers Aquila money for dinner. He will take it only if he can earn it. He has Aquila pick up a mended mule-harness at the saddler's for him. He finds Aquila interesting because he has a thrall mark on his neck, an emerald ring and he is dusty and hungry yet he rejects his charity. Aquila tells Eugenius the story of the Saxon raid, his capture by the Jutes, his escape and his quest to find Ambrosius. Eugenius was a personal physician to Constantine when he ruled Venta Belgarum. Now he is physician to Ambrosius, his son. He will soon be returning to Ambrosius and invites Aquila to come with him.

The trip into the Arfon Mountains takes more than a week. Eugenius is elated to see Dynas Ffaraon, Ambrosius's stronghold, the Fortress of the High Powers. It was from this fortress that Constantine came down and drove the Saxons to the sea. Aquila quietly wonders if Ambrosius is just another Vortigern.

At the fortress, Aquila sees large Roman Cavalry swords hanging on the wall of a large hut. A dark young man spots Aquila and greets him. Aquila tells the man that he is seeking Ambrosius, Prince of Britain. If he had a sword, he would lay it at his feet. The young man asks Aquila how he lost his sword. Aquila fills him in on his last several years. He has come seeking Ambrosius to take on his father's service. The young man takes a sword from the wall and presents it to Aquila then announces that he is Ambrosius.

After a time, Aquila has come to know the fortress and its people including the close circle of young men who surround Ambrosius called the Companions. A messenger delivers a message from Canovium that Hengest has rejected his wife and married Rowena.

With Spring coming, Ambrosius leaves the mount for the coast to the abandoned fortress of Segontium. He must defend the coast from the Scots. Ambrosius leaves the fortress for a few days with Aquila and a small group of his Companions to Aber of the White Shells to try their horses. Aquila is amazed that he had been embraced as one of Ambrosius's Companions. They meet a horseman who rides furiously toward them. The breathless young rider tells Ambrosius that a band of men are heading his way. They all wear red fox pelts – they are the Young Foxes. The others warn Ambrosius that it may be an assassination attempt. Ambrosius is not fearful and speeds away on his horse with Aquila and Valarius right behind.



Ambrosius encounters the strangers. One of the riders is Vortimer who speaks for the other two men. They are sons of Vortigern the High King and they seek Ambrosius, Lord of Arfon. They have come to lay their swords at their feet and desert their father. They are angry that their father has put aside their mother, Severa, and taken a young bride. They will summon seven Chieftains and their clans for the sake of their mother and for the sake of British lands. They will stand with him against the Saxons. Ambrosius will call on them when he needs them. Vortimer and the others immediately dismount their horses and take an oath of allegiance to Ambrosius. At the dinner, Ambrosius announces that their first fight will be with the Scots who are heading for the bay.

At the shore, the Scots are taken by surprise. In the battle, the Chieftain Cradoc is injured and falls to the ground. Aquila takes a blow that was meant to kill Cradoc. He fights off the enemy then tends to Cradoc's wound. The Red Fox fling themselves upon the men who guard the stranded ships and set the ships on fire. Ambrosius is victorious.

It has been a year since Aquila arrived at the stronghold. He has made a name for himself and has an identity. Word comes that Vortigern has been deserted by most of his followers and fled north. Ambrosius rides south to meet with his new allies. Aquila rides ahead to alert Chieftain Cradoc that Ambrosius will be heading his way. He encounters Cradoc's two daughters, Rhyanidd and Ness. Cradoc is hunting so he leaves word that Ambrosius will be there by nightfall. Ness tends to Aquila's horse.

Ambrosius tells Aquila that he plans to attack the Saxons in the Spring. He hopes he can continue to rely on the Young Foxes. Ambrosius suggests that Aquila take one of Cradoc's daughters for his wife. Cradoc is indebted to Aquila for saving him in the battle with the Scots. Aquila is reluctant but he will do anything that Ambrosius requests. He'll take the younger daughter, Ness.

Analysis

The betrayal by Vortigern of his wife has backfired on him. Rowena, the young woman he discarded his wife over, symbolizes youth and beauty to the old false king. To Vortigern, her youth symbolizes renewal and longevity something that he is very short on. To his sons, she represents the destruction of their family. His actions have caused his sons to turn on him and place their allegiance with his rival Ambrosius.

Aquila's show of valor may be a foreshadowing of a reward or elevation of his status. He takes a blow meant for Cradoc, one of the Chieftains, a blow that would have ended the old soldier's life. The support of Vortigern's sons has help to topple the stronghold that the old king had on the region. He has lost followers and is in a much-weakened condition.

Ambrosius shows his wisdom by questioning whether he can continue to count on Vortigern's son for support. He is savvy enough to know that the connection of blood is stronger than any other. The reward that Aquila earns for saving Cradoc's life. Ambrosius wants him to marry one of Cradoc's daughters. His motivation is not pure.



He hopes that such a union between different factions will help heal the country and lead to a united Britain. Aquila does not choose the obvious choice – the nice, pretty daughter. He chooses the young girl, Ness, who has a more fiery personality and, therefore, symbolizes independence and freedom.

Discussion Question 1

How does Eugenius demonstrate his intelligence and that he is very observant? What relationship did Eugenius have with Constantine and Ambrosius?

Discussion Question 2

Why do Vortimer and his brothers seek Ambrosius out and “lay their swords at his feet?” Why would Ambrosius be skeptical of their claims? Why does Vortimer's new allegiance have the potential for shifting the balance of power in Ambrosius's favor?

Discussion Question 3

What is the motivation behind Ambrosius's suggestion that Aquila marry one of Cradoc's daughters? Why does Ambrosius believe that Cradoc “owes” something to Aquila?

Vocabulary

wayfarer, envoy, homespun, broodingly, curlews, catkins, haunches, lithe, melee, firebrand, covenant, contemptuous



Chapters 13 - 15

Summary

As everyone prepares for departure, Aquila seeks Cradoc and asks for Ness. Cradoc readily agrees. Aquila will take her with him as they travel north. Ness wants to know why he wants to marry her. The Prince hopes a bond forms between Aquila's people and hers. Back at Dynas Ffaraon, Aquila is made lord of his own hut. He is busy with preparation and hardly gives Ness a thought. Valarius seeks revenge against the Saxons. He has dealt with anger and shame for sixteen years. He was Constantine's bodyguard when he was murdered.

Aquila looks for Ness who is in the woods. He scolds her for being in the woods when a storm is expected and for not being in the Hall for dinner. He reminds her why they he took her. She reminds him that she didn't want him any more than he wanted her. He is taking her away from the son she loves. He tries to talk her into coming to the hut out of the weather. He grabs her wrist and pulls her. She seems defeated but he does not feel victorious.

Aquila and his champions stand guard on the river bank while another group works at destroying the bridge at end of the town. At Deva Ambrosius had split the garrison in two. The Young Foxes took on the barbarians while Ambrosius and the foot soldiers moved southward to Glevum through his father's old territory. They had not seen Ambrosius for days. Aware of the advancing enemy, the Saxons prepare to finish the British cavalry or at least reach the river before they do. As the bridge begins to collapse, a scout warns them that the Saxons are approaching.

Soon Hengest's advance guards are racing toward them. Aquila draws his sword. This is the first battle with Saxons since his father was slain. Twice men beside him are struck down. He wields his powerful sword and kills and kills. It was for his father and all the farmhands and stewards who were murdered that day. It was not for Flavia. Aquila and his companions are called to stand back. They rush across the bridge that is collapsing. Aquila is struck by a beam as he falls into the river. He comes to in the grass throwing up a good deal of water. Brychan helps him stand. He sees that the Saxons had set Durobrivae afire. They lost five companions in the conflict but killed a good number of Saxons. It was the first battle for Britain and their first victory.

They ride to the British camp where Aquila tends to a large gash in his arm. They hold the river for nine days when Ambrosius finally returns. With the Saxons' retreat back into their territory, Ambrosius's forces take a break during the winter months. The troops are separated into several different camps. Ambrosius leads his group that includes Aquila to Venta Belgarum which had been Constantine's old capital and is now Ambrosius's. He is greeted enthusiastically by the people.



In the spring, Aquila and an escort travel to the mountains to bring the women and children down. Aquila has been chosen to be second in command. It has been a year since he has seen Ness. The women gather around when Aquila and his escort arrive at the stronghold. He does not see Ness among the crowd. He finally finds her in front of their hut. She has a baby swaddled in a deerskin. She has not named the boy yet. That is for Aquila to decide. Aquila names him Flavian after his father. The next morning Aquila settles Ness and little Flavian who she nicknames “Minnow” into an oxcart for the journey. Something stirs within Aquila. He has a son and feels the future holds something for him.

Over the next two years, the British attempt to drive the Sea Wolves back into the sea but are not strong enough. They push them back again and again only to have them reemerge each time. They remain a menace. Ambrosius hopes for one great victory and a united Britain that could drive the Saxons into the sea. There is worry that the Red Foxes are not fully committed. As Aquila and Eugenius discuss the loyalty of the Red Foxes, Aquila notices Rowena bending over at the hearth in a hut working on something in her hands.

Rowena plies an attractive hawking glove with a poison potion. She does so without word to Vortigern. Once the deed is done, perhaps she'll tell him what she did. A slave delivers the hawking glove to Vortimer telling him that it's from Ambrosius. He slips his hand in and is pricked by a sharp object inside. He is a dead man by midnight. Ambrosius orders a search for the slave who delivered the glove. The slave is never found. Aquila is certain that it was Rowena who murdered Vortimer.

Pascent, Vortigern's other son, came to Ambrosia telling him that his troops are deserting. They suspect that Ambrosius poisoned Vortimer because he considered him a threat to his power. Ambrosius will meet with all the chieftains the next morning.

Analysis

Aquila finds it difficult to express his feelings – softer emotions of love and caring. However, those feelings come out in a different way. His love for Ness – because his feelings have grown into real caring for her – is disguised by anger. Ness doesn't show up for dinner. He initially can't find her and looks all about for her. He finds her in the woods when there is a storm is looming. He scolds her for being out in the bad weather. He can't say, “I was worried about you, Ness,” or “I love you. I was concerned about you,” but he can show his displeasure with her behavior.

Aquila's repressed feelings lead to his becoming physical with her, grabbing her to come with him. When she gives up and comes with him, it doesn't make him feel good. The sadness on her face hurts him. He feels badly because he has not been open with her. There are so many emotions within him that are nearly bursting to get out. Yet he restrains himself. It has been his behavior for so long that it's difficult to change.



Aquila is not necessarily in a “comfort” zone; rather, he is in a “familiar” zone which he is afraid to leave. He was hurt by betrayal in the past. He loved his family then lost them. The prospect of exposing himself to hurt and pain again terrifies him. Another sign of Aquila's emotional repression is during the conflict when Aquila is defeating one opponent after the other. He consciously thinks to himself that each killing is in revenge for his father's murder. He purposefully tells himself that it is not for Flavia. She abandoned and betrayed him and he cannot forgive her.

Ambrosius's strategy is to defeat the enemy and regain the crown. One of the tactics to achieve this goal is to collapse the bridge toward Glevum. The bridge symbolizes Ambrosius's attempt to have control over the conflict, to take the reins and turn the balance of power in his favor. The collapsing bridge represents the “collapse” of the enemy.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Aquila choose Ness to marry? Why does Cradoc put up on resistance when Aquila tells him he wants to marry Ness and take her away?

Discussion Question 2

What is Aquila's reaction to learning that Ness has a baby boy? Describe the relationship between Aquila and Ness and how the addition of a baby may impact it.

Discussion Question 3

What are the motivations behind Rowena's murder of Vortimer? Why doesn't she tell Vortigern about her actions? Why does blame for the crime come down on Ambrosius?

Vocabulary

pompous, impenetrable, copse, cavalcade, colonnade, writhe



Chapters 16 - 18

Summary

Pascent will keep his vow to stay with Ambrosius. Pascent blames the Chieftain Guitolinus for turning the others against Ambrosius. Cradoc gets Aquila aside to assure him that he will not try to convince Ness to return with him to their people. Aquila does not want Ness to go but he will not stop her. Aquila tells Ness that it is her decision to go or stay. If she goes she can take little Flavian. She decides to stay with Aquila although she is betraying her own people.

Aquila senses that the desertion of Vortimer's troops is a turning point in their struggle. The summer was quiet without incident while the weakened British troops could only guard their borders. Vortigern has gained strength with the return of his followers. He will have more influence with the Saxons. A gathering of Saxon and Celtic leaders is held at Durnovaria to negotiate a treaty. It is custom that no one come armed to such a meeting. Saxons and Celts sit alternately around the table. The Saxons draw secreted daggers and stab the men to their left. More than one hundred Celtic leaders die that day. Vortigern is spared for ransom which he pays. Vortigern and his followers are defeated and humiliated and, nearly obliterated, fade into obscurity back in their own mountains. Ambrosius is able to hold his father's old territory.

One day Aquila is riding in the woods and encounters a band of refugees. Brother Ninnias is walking among them. He offers to let the monk ride his horse but Brother Ninnias is not a horseman and prefers to walk. The monk can see that Aquila has changed for the good. He has lost his bitterness and his desire for vengeance. But the wound is not completely healed. Brother Ninnias feels that they will meet again.

The camp receives word of Vortigern's death and news that Guitolinus has taken over as leader of the Celtic party. It is bad news for the British because Guitolinus is young and full of fire. Ambrosius has his hands full for the next few years with threats from both the Celts and Saxons. By the seventh winter, the Saxons have split Britain in two. Aquila has been named captain of an Aela, a large cavalry wing. Artos has become a gallant young warrior. Aquila keeps busy with his duties with the council and in training the cavalry.

Minnow is nine years old and attends a Christian school. Aquila overhears him asking Artos to let him ride with him when he is fourteen. He had hoped that he and Flavian would have been closer but it had not worked out that way. To win the boy over, Aquila allows him to ride his steed, Inganiad, home. An owl soars at Inganiad and spooks him. The horse rears back sending Flavian flying. He lands hitting his head sharply on a large tree root. He is unconscious and barely breathing. Aquila scoops him up and carries him home.



After Aquila lays Minnow in his cot, Ness sinks to the floor by his lifeless body. Eugenius tends to him saying that it was a bad blow to the head but he thinks Flavian will make it. Ness keeps vigil by him for the next three days. Aquila can barely concentrate on his work. On the fourth night, Minnow moves and begins to mutter. He comes to and recalls that he fell off the horse. As Flavian drifts off again, Aquila prays for him. Minnow begins a quick recovery. Brychan tells Aquila that they will march at noon toward Pontes where Hengest is encamped. It's been so long between battles Aquila questions whether they still have it. Artos will ride with them. Aquila looks at his son. He wishes they would have more time together now that they are growing closer.

A few days later, the British and Saxons are in battle. Just five days later, the leaders meet in the Basilica Calleva to discuss a peace agreement. They are in a gray place between victory and defeat. Ambrosius and Hengest agree to a stalemate and to establish a frontier between them. Hengest brings up the matter of hostages. Each side should give a revered person to the other to ensure a lasting peace. Ambrosius asks Valarius to be Hengest's hostage. Ambrosius asks for no hostage in return.

It is six summers later. Aquila had spent much of the five past years in the frontier. Ambrosius with Artos at his side had worked to maintain his troops in case of attack while still making peace with his neighbors. One day when Aquila was in the frontier, an old man emerged through the thicket. Suddenly the sounds of arrows streaking through the air are heard. Aquila prepares for battle. The old man tumbles toward him. He has an arrow in his back. It is Valarius. The hostage is being returned. Valarius tells Aquila that Hengest has made a pact with Guitolinus and the Scots. They plan to invade within the month but he doesn't know where. The dying Valarius asks Aquila to tell Ambrosius that he rejoices in the repayment of his debt.

Analysis

Once again, Aquila is suppressing his feelings. When her people are returning to their homeland Aquila tells Ness that she can go or stay. The decision was her's. He wants her to stay but he cannot say that. He wants his family with him but in a sense he is the martyr or playing one and has learned to do without. Perhaps deep-down it would be easier for him emotionally if Ness and little Flavian weren't there. He could go back to concentrating on his duties to Ambrosius.

It is telling that he can tell Ambrosius that he would "lay down his sword for him" yet he cannot express a similar loyalty or emotion to Ness. It's a woman "thing" for Aquila. His mother's death long ago was a form of abandonment especially for a young child. His sister's abandonment of him by choosing to stay with the enemy was more than he could bear. Women symbolize disappointment and anguish to Aquila.

Valarius agreed to be a hostage to convince Hengest that Ambrosius would keep his end of the negotiated peace. It was Valarius' opportunity to finally have resolution. Death represented the only satisfactory outcome for him. He had lived with guilt and shame for the sixteen years since King Constantine was assassinated. Valarius, as the



King's chief bodyguard, blamed himself for the King's death because he should have protected the king and prevented his death. Valarius heads home from Hengest's camp when his hostage period is over but he is killed by Hengest's soldiers. Taking the arrow of death symbolized his taking the arrow for his King. Death was the only answer for Valarius. He was then able to rest in peace.

Discussion Question 1

Describe the events that lead up to Ambrosius gaining strength in regaining the British crown.

Discussion Question 2

Why is the death of Ambrosius's number one rival, Vortigern, seen as a possible barrier for Ambrosius's reclaim of the throne? Who is Guitolinus and why is he a threat to British unity?

Discussion Question 3

Describe Aquila's complicated relationship with his son, Flavian, also known as Minnow. How does the accident in which Flavian is seriously injured impact it?

Vocabulary

brandished, restive, forlorn, insolence, ferocious, inexorably, chivalry



Chapters 19 - 22

Summary

The next war is a battle for life or death. The entire frontier had gone up in flames. The Scots had broken through and sent the British back. There is a fear that Ambrosius's kingdom will be cut in two. Ambrosius has summoned all the forces that he could. Flavian wants to fight the Saxons; he will be fifteen – fighting age – next month and wants to ride in Artos's wing. But Aquila refuses to grant him permission. He will march in Aquila's squadron instead.

Just before dawn, there is movement in the Saxon camp. Aquila observes the gathering enemy. He turns to look at Flavian who avoids eye contact. A Saxon warhorn blast is followed by the bright notes of Roman trumpets. Though they are outnumbered, the enemy consists mainly of foot soldiers as opposed to their great cavalry. Arrows are launched at the advancing Saxons causing some to fall. The rest continue to charge and are met head-on by Ambrosius's forces. A savage battle ensues. The battle cry of the British is, "Constantine! Constantine!" During the battle, Aquila sees a young enemy soldier who has the face of his sister. But he soon loses sight of him.

A storm breaks out over the battlefield that is dotted with dead men and horses. Although they suffer losses, the British have emerged as victors. Guitolinus is among the dead. Artos and the British Cavalry are pursuing the remnants of Hengest's troops. Aquila has lost sight of Minnow. Owain had seen him take off behind Artos. Aquila is angry at Minnow's disobedience and haunted by the face of the young warrior who so closely resembles his sister.

Hengest's forces had set fire to a villa in Cunetio; however, the fire had not destroyed all the buildings. Artos spots Flavian there. Flavian apologizes to Aquila for disobeying him. Aquila recalls the young enemy warrior. Artos is not sure of his losses. Several of those who rode with him are wounded. Hengest has retreated for now. Artos recalls when he was a child hearing Ambrosius beg for just "one great victory to sound like a blast of trumpets through the land." (202) Aquila responds that Ambrosius now has that. Britain will be united under one king. Although Artos is like a son to Ambrosius, he can never be king but he will lead Britain in war. Artos understands the underlying meaning when Aquila says that just being father and son does not assure nearness.

At the compound, Aquila encounters Brother Ninnias who he had not seen in more than a decade. They are walking through the woods when Brother Ninnias stumbles over a man's body. Aquila is shocked when they turn the body over and sees that it is the young man who he'd been looking for. The boy is still alive although brutally wounded. Aquila picks the Saxon up and follows Brother Ninnias to his hut. Aquila and the monk treat his wounds and a while later the boy comes to. Aquila leans closely and asks his name. His name is Mull. He is a half-breed. His mother was British and his father was



first son of Wiermund of the White Horse. He boasts how the Sea Wolves will defeat Aquila's kind one day.

Just as Aquila had guessed, the boy is Flavia's son. Mull insists that Aquila does not have his welfare at heart. Aquila tells Mull that his mother is his sister. The boy is stunned. Mull will not be able to travel for two or three weeks. The monk can safely set him on his way through the northern forest. Aquila gives Mull the emerald ring. Once he returns safely, he is to send the ring back to Ninnias. That way they will know that he returned safely. Aquila shows the boy the dolphin on his shoulder. His mother will understand.

Ambrosius Aurelianus is crowned High King of Britain. Aquila prepares to attend a feast to celebrate the new King. He wears his best tunic and cloak. Ness hands him an ivory ball. Someone had just delivered it for him. It is a ball of honeywax. He breaks it open and his emerald ring falls out. Mull is safe at home. As he leaves for the banquet, he is joyful. He tells Ness that now his people and her people are all one. She asks him if he regretted his life with her. He has nothing to regret he tells her as he takes her hands in his.

Aquila confesses to Ambrosius that he had helped save a Saxon warrior who was his sister's son. He tells the king the story of his sister and her Saxon connection. Ambrosius understands and tells Aquila to take his place at the head table with the other Companions. Aquila walks home with Eugenius who feels that a united Britain may be able to push the barbarians into the sea for a while – but not forever. He referred to the beacon light of Rutupiae that blazed after the Romans departed. He felt the light was a symbol. The British are the Lantern Bearers who carry the light forward into the darkness. As he left Eugenius and walked home alone, he saw that Ness had placed a bright lantern in the colonnade so he could find his way.

Analysis

Aquila was haunted by the face of the young Saxon he encountered on the battlefield. He saw his sister's face in the boy's. Was he imagining things? He initially couldn't find the boy again. The boy symbolized a connection to his family, to the past when he and his sister were close. He frantically looked for the boy, turning over dead body after dead body but to no avail. Still the face was at the forefront of his mind. Perhaps at a subconscious level, he was thinking that were he to find the boy it would perhaps provide a pathway to mend old fences and heal old wounds. Ultimately, the boy symbolized a way to reunite with his sister and the memory and honor of his father. The image of the young boy caused a stirring within him. The emotions that he held check for so many years were fighting to get out. In the end, Aquila is able to savor the joy of returning Flavia's son to her. Being a father himself, he understands the relief and jubilation she will feel.

Although young Flavian disobeyed Aquila and rode with Artos, he is not angry. He is just relieved to find him alive. The other boy, his sister's son, might very well be dead. How



fortunate he is to have Flavian. He does not have anger for his disobedience only relief that he is alive and well.

Ambrosius at last has his victory – the one victory he prayed for that would reunite Britain as one country and return him to his rightful place on the throne. The country is mending, just as Aquila's relationship with his son is mending. And there's the potential that his relationships with his sister and possibly his nephew could be revived and reconciled.

The emerald ring is a symbol of family unity. It has survived many battles and, in the end, reconnected a family that had been devastated by loss and isolation and misery.

Discussion Question 1

Why is Flavian determined to be part of Artos's cavalry? Aquila takes Flavian's preference to ride the Artos personally. Why is he right or wrong to think that way?

Discussion Question 2

Who is Artos? Why has he earned a place in Ambrosius's inner circle? Why can he not eventually ascend to the throne?

Discussion Question 3

Why has Aquila been haunted by the face of the young Saxon he encountered in battle? Why does Aquila feel the need to confess to Ambrosius about helping his wounded young nephew?

Vocabulary

withering, makeshift, sanctuary, hemlock, disdain, brazier



Characters

Aquila

Aquila is the protagonist of "The Lantern Bearers." He is a Roman soldier who is assigned to a garrison in the British Isles. He has adopted Britain as his home and spends a lot of time with his father, Flavian, and sister, Flavia, on the family farmstead on the British coast. Aquila is a valorous soldier and commands a Roman cavalry unit. Life is perfect until things begin to change. After this change, Aquila begins an odyssey to find his place and purpose in life.

Aquila is jarred by the news that the Roman army is pulling out of the British Isles. They are being called back to Rome to protect that city which is in peril with the threat of an invasion being launched at any time. In the end, Aquila cannot leave his family and cannot leave Britain. He realizes that he belongs to Britain. Totally against his nature, Aquila makes the difficult decision of deserting the Roman army. He is able to return to the family farmstead but the joy he feels is not long-lasting.

One dark night, the Saxons wage an assault on Flavian's farm. Although Aquila, Flavian and Flavia along with the farmhands and stewards put up a valiant resistance, they are soon overwhelmed by the power and savagery of the Saxons. Flavian is murdered, Flavia is kidnapped and the farm is set on fire. Aquila is tied to a tree and left for the wolves. A group of Jutes find Aquila and free him from his binds only to make him their slave. He is a thrall for the Jutes for three years until he is able to escape.

Aquila swears his loyalty to the true British King Ambrosius to help him reclaim the British crown and unite Britain as one nation and one power, a power that is able to defeat the false king Vortigern and keep the Saxon Sea Wolves at bay... at least for a while.

Ambrosius

Ambrosius was the son of King Constantine of Britain. Constantine ruled for thirty years keeping Britain safe from the enemy, especially the Saxons, for thirty years. In a power grab, Constantine was assassinated and one of his bitter rivals, Vortigern, seized the reigns of power and declared himself King of Britain. It was strongly suspected that it was Vortigern who was behind the assassination plot.

Ambrosius, who was just a young boy at the time, and his brother Utha were taken to the mountains for their safety. They represented the biggest threat to Vortigern's reign because they were the natural heirs to the throne. Utha died young leaving Ambrosius as the rightful heir to the throne and the true King of Britain.

As time passed, Ambrosius gained a large following and developed a formidable fighting force. He was sad how the nation was suffering under the rule of the false king,



Vortigern. The country was divided and the Saxon presence was bringing misery, fear and death to the people. Aquila was a devotee of Ambrosius and joined his forces in Ambrosius's mountain stronghold which was called Dynas Ffaraon or the Fortress of Power. Ambrosius admired Aquila and made him one of his inner circle and promoted him to commander.

Ambrosius believed that one solid victory over the enemy would reestablish Britain as one nation and himself as the true king. He likened such a victory as the blare of trumpets throughout the nation. He was finally able to defeat the enemy with that one victory he prayed for. He reclaimed his rightful place on the throne and was greeted with great enthusiasm when he rode into his father's former capital, Venta Belgarum.

Flavian, the Father

Flavian was the father of Aquila and Flavia. He had been a warrior in his day and had suffered a debilitating injury during his last battle. A Saxon arrow plunged into his temple and blinded him. Flavian did not let his handicap completely limit him. He rode his horse, ran his large farmstead and even wielded a sword when necessary. One of his favorite things in the evening was to have his steward read passages of "The Odyssey" to him. Flavian wore an emerald ring that was engraved with a dolphin which was the family badge.

Flavia

Flavia is Aquila's younger sister. She adored her brother and was elated when he deserted the Roman legion and returned to the farmstead. On the night of the Saxon ambush, Flavia fought valiantly but she was taken away by the Saxons. For years Aquila worried about Flavia in the day and had nightmares about her fate at night. He prayed that she was dead rather than face a life with barbarians. Flavia and Aquila were reunited years after the attack. He was shocked to learned that she had married her captor and had a child with him. Flavia helped Aquila escape from his thralldom but she refused to go with him. She belonged with the Saxons now.

Demetrius

Demetrius had been Flavian's slave. Flavian had bought Demetrius to tutor the children. After Flavian gave Demetrius his freedom, he stayed on as his steward. Demetrius would read aloud from the Odyssey each even for Flavian who was blind. When the Saxons attack Flavian's farmstead, wielding a dagger Demetrius helps defend Flavian and his family. Demetrius dies during the conflict.



The Birdman

A birdman who collects and sells quails also serves as a courier for Flavian. The birdman took several messages to the Romans to seek help against the forces of Vortigern. The birdman betrays Flavian which results in the assault on Flavian's farm and the murder of Flavian by the Saxons.

Wiermund of the White Horse

Wiermund of the White Horse was a Saxon who ambushed Flavian's farmstead one dark night. After killing Flavian and overpowering the farmhands and stewards who were attempting to fight the Saxons off, Wiermund prepares to bring his axe down on Aquila. At the last second he hears a wolf howl and decides to tie Aquila to a tree and let the wolves do the job. Wiermund's men strip Aquila naked and tie his hands behind a tree leaving him to be devoured by the wolves.

Thormod

Thormod the son of Thrand is a Jute. He discovers Aquila naked and tied to a tree in the woods outside Flavian's farmstead. Thormod decides to free Aquila and make him his slave. Aquila is forced to become a rower on the Jute longship and remains Thormod's thrall and lives in Juteland for the next three years.

Bruni

Bruni is a Jute and the grandfather of Thormod, son of Thrand. He is the patriarch of the family and a leader in the Jute community. He is impressed with Aquila's spirit even though he's a slave. He is fascinated that the "thing" in a stolen box is a book. He is astute enough to realize that books are magical because they allow the dead to speak again. He loves hearing the story of Odysseus which he makes Aquila read to him every night. When he grows ill, he is determined to fight one more battle. Aquila and Thormod give him his sword and help him outside where he takes a few steps then collapses and dies.

Vortigern

Vortigern was the false King of Britain. It was strongly suspected that he was behind the assassination plot in which King Constantine was murdered. With Constantine out of the way, Vortigern seized the crown and declared himself king. The rightful heir to the throne, Ambrosius, was determined to reclaim the throne and remained a threat to Vortigern's reign. Vortigern enraged his grown sons when he cast their mother aside and took on a young wife, Rowena. Vortimer and his brothers turned on Vortigern and placed their allegiance with his enemy, Ambrosius.



Vortimer

Vortimer was the eldest son of the High King Vortigern. He was known to bring his pet falcon with him wherever he went. He and his brother supported their father against Ambrosius who was trying to reclaim the throne. When Vortigern cast aside his wife for a younger woman, Vortimer and his brothers were hurt and disappointed how their mother was treated and switched their allegiance to Ambrosius. Vortimer was killed when Rowena, Vortigern's young wife, poisoned him.

Ness

Aquila had saved the life of a local Chieftain named Cradoc. Ambrosius suggested that Aquila take one of Cradoc's daughters as his wife. Cradoc would not object because he owed him for saving his life. Aquila decided to take Ness, the younger sister, instead of Rhyandd the older prettier sister. He was attracted to Ness's independent spirit and fiery personality.

Flavian, the Son

Aquila named his son Flavian in honor of his father. Young Flavian was not interested in school or learning to read. He wanted to be a warrior. He was taken with the young commander Artos who commanded the cavalry and wanted to ride with him. He was thrown from a horse and seriously injured. His father and mother saw him through his injury and helped him recover. He was almost fifteen when he participated in his first battle.

Hengest

Hengest was a Saxon warlord who had allied himself with the false king Vortigern. Hengest had a powerful force and took ownership of some of the richest lands in Britain. Hengest's daughter, Rowena, was Vortigern's second wife.

Brother Ninnias

Brother Ninnias was a monk who lived in the forest and tended to a small farm of kale and beans. He had been the bee master at a religious community that was ravaged by the Saxons. He was away when the barbarians came through and torched the community. He was in the forest pursuing a swarm of bees that had escaped. He proved to be a good counselor and friend to Aquila.

Eugenus

Eugenus the Physician befriended Aquila when he was down and out. He was the physician to both Constantine and Ambrosius. Aquila told Eugenus that he was attempting to find Ambrosius. Eugenus lead him to the king's stronghold. Eugenus tended to Aquila's son, Flavian, when he was seriously injured and helped him recover.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Dolphin Tattoo

Aquila had a dolphin tattoo on his shoulder. The dolphin was a family symbol. Aquila tells Flavia that the dolphin will be his identifying mark if he is away for many years like Odysseus. When Odysseus returned home after twenty years his slave identified him by the scar from a boar's tusk on his thigh. Bruni was impressed with his dolphin tattoo because whenever he saw a dolphin at school he would always know he would have good luck.

The Emerald Ring

Flavia, the father, wore an emerald ring with a dolphin engraved in it. When Flavia was killed in the Saxon raid, his ring was stolen from him. Later it was given to Flavia as a bride gift when she married her Saxon captor. When she encountered Aquila years later, she gave him the ring because it was rightfully his. He used the ring later to ensure that Flavia's son, Mull, was safely returned to her after he was badly injured on the battlefield.

The Odyssey

There are multiple references to the book, *The Odyssey*. Flavian's steward, Demetrius, reads the book nightly to Flavian who is blind. Aquila relates to the story of Odysseus who was away from his homeland for twenty years and identified by a unique scar which parallels Aquila's dolphin tattoo. When Bruni and Thormod discover a book among their stolen booty, they don't know what it is. They think it's magic or evil. Aquila tells them it's a book and it's the words of a man who lived long ago. Bruni and Thormod are enthralled by the story of Odysseus as Aquila reads it aloud to them. "The Odyssey" parallels the long journey home that Aquila undertook in "The Lantern Bearers."

The Falcon Glove

Vortimer always had his pet falcon with him. He wore a protective glove so that the falcon's talons didn't dig into his skin when he handled him. Seeking revenge for Vortimer's betrayal of Vortigern, Rowena plied a fancy falcon glove with deadly poison and had it delivered to Vortimer. When he stuck his hand in the glove to try it out, he was pricked by something sharp inside. He was dead within minutes.



The White Owl

A rare white owl flew at Inganiad, Aquila's horse, when young Flavian was riding it. It spooked the horse and sent Flavian flying. He hit his head and was unconscious for several days before he came to. It was a pivotal point in Aquila's relationship with Flavian. He realized how much his son meant to him. While he was unconscious, he prayed for his son. It was the first time he prayed in decades.

The Lantern Bearers

After Aquila deserted the Roman Legion, he lit the beacon of the abandoned Rutupiae fortress one last time. It was a metaphor – it had shown a way out of the darkness into the future. Eugenius commented that Ambrosius and his follows were the Lantern Bearers. Like the last light in the fortress, it was up to the Lantern Bearers to keep a light burning and carry the light into the darkness and wind.

The Sea Wolves

The Saxons were referred to as the Sea Wolves. They were marauding savage barbarians who attacked from the sea like savage packs of wolves. They were the enemies of the British, especially Ambrosius and his followers. They were in league with Vortigern, the false king, and his kind. Ambrosius hoped and prayed for one victory that would give them the strength to drive the Sea Wolves back into the sea where they belonged.

Low Tide

It was Jute tradition that a warrior only died at low tide. Bruni who was the patriarch of the Jutes was dying but hung on until it was low tide when he demanded his sword and shield. After being helped outside, he collapsed and died after just a few steps.

Thrall-Ring

In order to maintain control over their erudite slave, the Jutes placed a metal thrall-ring around Aquila's neck to immediately identify him as a Jute slave. His sister stealthily supplied him with a rasp so that he could remove the collar and leave his thralldom behind him.

One Victory

Ambrosius believed that one solid victory over his enemy would establish Britain as one united nation and allow him to reclaim the crown. He likened such a victory to the sound of a blast of trumpets throughout the land.



Settings

Rutupiae

The Roman fortress of Rutupiae was the post where Aquila commanded a troop of Rhenu Horse-Auxiliary Cavalry. It was located on Tanatus Island in the British Isles. It was also known as the fortress of the Saxon Shore the turf of so many battles in the past. Entrance to the fortress was through a doubled-gated arch. Rutupiae was huge and designed to house at least a half a Legion of soldiers. When Aquila returned to the fortress after his leave, he was astonished that the enormous stronghold was nearly empty. He found it horribly desolate and a harbinger of things to come.

After Aquila learned that the Legion was returning to Rome, he found that he could not bear to leave Britain which had become his home. He hid in a dark stairwell of Rutupiae until the Legion was gone. Before leaving the fortress for the last time in his life, he lit the beacon that shined into the night offering safe passage to those who follow it.

Juteland

The Jutes found Aquila tied to a tree in the forest. They untied him, took him with them, and made him an oarsman on one of their large galleys and a thrall when they returned to Juteland. The farmland in Juteland was overused and not fertile. Bruni had only seen such poor crop yield only a few times in his many years in Juteland. As a result, when Hengest urged the Jutes to resettle in the British Isles, the prospect of a richer farmland was too tempting to resist. Aquila moved from Juteland to Britain with the Jutes. It was the first time he was on British soil in three years and soon devised a way to escape from his oppressive life with the Jutes.

Brother Ninnias's Hut

After Aquila escaped from the Jutes, he wandered around Britain for several months. He was always cautious in his interactions with others because there were so many enemies. However, one day he came across a small neatly organized farm that was planted with kale and lined with bean-rows. He noticed a Christian bell that was hung from one of the small trees surrounding the plantings. He knew that it was safe to approach the owner. As it turned out, the forest sanctuary was run by a Catholic monk named Brother Ninnias.

The Fortress of Power

While Ambrosius strove to regain the British crown, he and his followers resided in a stronghold in the mountains that was known as Dynas Ffaraon or the Fortress of Power. When Brother Ninnias learned that Aquila wanted to lay his sword at the feet of



Ambrosius, he directed him to the mountains where Ambrosius's fortress was located. The stronghold was located in a beautiful setting with a mountain lake that was often covered in a faint mist. The Fortress of Power was surrounded by high rampart walls that protected Ambrosius from his many enemies. It was there that Ambrosius and his men honed their battlefield skills and plotted his return to the throne.

Venta Belgarum

Venta Belgarum had been Constantine's old capital which Ambrosius takes as his own. When Ambrosius arrives in Venta, he is greeted enthusiastically by the people. When Ambrosius returned to Venta in victory, the old palace was shabby and in decline in the starkness of daylight. However, in the glow of candlelight the banquet hall was warm and inviting.

The Great Villa of Cunetio

The former Saxon stronghold had been abandoned and set ablaze. The flames did not destroy all the buildings on the estate. After Ambrosius's forces decided to call off their hunt for the Saxons, they settled in the villa to rest, recover from battle and treat their wounded. Brother Ninnias had heeded the call and came to the complex to treat the wounded both physically and spiritually. It was at Cunetio that Aquila and Ninnias stumbled upon Mull, Flavia's son. He was severely injured and nearly dead but Aquila and Ninnias were able to save him. After he recovered Ninnias sent him on his way back to his mother in Saxon territory. Aquila gave him the emerald ring with instructions to courier back to Ninnias once he made it home so that they knew he was safe.



Themes and Motifs

Revenge

A strong theme that emerges in “The Lantern Bearers” is one of revenge. It is a theme that appears throughout the story and in a number of different storylines in this British-Saxon tale of adventure, intrigue and warfare. Aquila, the protagonist, is a Roman soldier whose post is in the British Isles. He lives with his father, Flavian, and his younger sister, Flavia, on a large farmstead on the coast of Britain. The family is attacked by Saxons one evening leaving Flavian dead, the farm destroyed, Flavia kidnapped and Aquila filled with a burning desire for revenge that cannot be sated until there is a large increase in Saxon body count. Everything had been taken from Aquila and he has a single-minded goal of avenging his losses.

Ambrosius is the true King of Britain but his rightful place on the throne has been stripped from him by a cruel and ambitious Vortigern who was behind the assassination of King Constantine, Ambrosius's father. Ambrosius lives to reclaim the crown and to avenge the murder of his father. An emotional link is made between Aquila and Ambrosius who have both lost their fathers and who have been stripped of their rightful positions in life. When Aquila figures out that his father was betrayed by the birdman he seeks revenge against the courier who sicced the Saxons on his family's homestead.

Valarius was Constantine's trusted bodyguard. He has lived with shame and guilt for the sixteen years since Constantine's death. He blamed himself for the death because of his failure to protect him. Valarius is anxious to fight Vortigern's soldiers as a way of avenging his lord's death.

Vortimer and his brothers desert their father Vortigern when he abandons their mother and marries a much younger woman named Rowena. Vortimer joins forces with Ambrosius to help the rightful king regain the throne and thereby defeat his own father. It is his goal to avenge his mother's abandonment but his move backfires on him quite tragically. Rowena has her revenge when she booby-traps a falcon glove with poison and sends it to Vortimer to use with his pet peregrine. When Vortimer pulls the glove on, he feels a prick on his finger and within mere minutes he is dead.

Betrayal

Betrayal is a theme that jumps out of this story of warring nations, false kings, anguish and isolation. Although Aquila, the story's protagonist, is a valorous soldier and a kind and honest fellow, he cannot leave Britain the country he adopted as his own. When the Roman garrison to which he is assigned is called back to Rome to protect that city, Aquila cannot find it within himself to leave the country he loves and abandon his father and sister who live on the British coast on the large family farm. He belongs to England. He betrays his oath and his soldiers by his desertion. He feels justified because of his



deep love for country and his ultimate goal to restore the true heir to the British throne to his rightful place and help unit the nation as one.

The birdman who acts as Flavian's courier, reveals to the enemy of Ambrosius that Flavian is asking for help from the Romans to fight them off. The birdman's betrayal leads to the slaying of Flavian, the kidnapping of his daughter Flavia and Aquila's capture. Aquila is forced into a life of slavery for the next several years. Vortimer and his brothers feel betrayed when their father, the false king Vortigern, casts their mother aside to make Rowena, a young beauty, his wife. Their father's betrayal of their mother is more than they can bear. They turn on him and vow their loyalty to Ambrosius in his quest to return the crown to him.

Aquila feels a great sense of betrayal when he encounters his sister years after her capture to find that she has married a Saxon and has a child with him. That sense of abandonment is intensified when she refuses to escape with him choosing to stay with her husband and child. She belongs to them now, she tells him.

Rowena exacts the ultimate punishment on Vortimer for betraying his father. She slips poison to him in a most inventive way. With a mere touch of the potion, Vortimer is dead in seconds. Vortimer's brothers feel that Ambrosius was guilty of killing their brother and betraying his trust and, in turn, betray him and return their support to their father.

Guilt/Shame

There are waves of guilt and shame, sometimes subtle and sometimes overt, that filter out across the saga of "The Torch Bearers." Although Aquila justified to himself and to his father his desertion of the Roman legion in which he was a cavalry commander, he was feeling shame and guilt over his actions. Firstly, it was so against his nature to quit, to abandon an oath and responsibility. As a soldier he was disciplined and circumspect; his goal was focused and his purview narrow. For once in his life, perhaps the first and only time, Aquila allowed his emotions to ride herd of his sense of duty.

When Aquila felt hurt and disappointment when Flavia refused to go with him and stay with her Saxon family, he was really disguising a sense of shame that he felt from his sister having a personal relationship with a barbarian. The shame was turned inward and turned to guilt that he felt over having such negative feelings about his sister. He owed it to his deceased father to watch over for her but how could he? The least he could have done, of course, was to hold her in higher esteem than he was able to demonstrate.

The birdman, who was a courier for Flavian, tipped off his enemies that he was asking for support from the Romans. This revelation led to the Saxon ambush in which Flavian was slain. When the birdman came to Brother Ninnias, the birdman was laden with guilt due to his betrayal of Flavian. He literally went to his grave beset with a guilty conscious.



Aquila wrestled with guilt again when he confessed to Ambrosius that he had saved the life of a Saxon warrior. The injured warrior was Mull, his nephew and son of Flavia. He helped the boy out of loyalty to his sister and family but he felt guilt and shame that he had betrayed his king. Ambrosius was completely understanding. The boy was a family member and perhaps Ambrosius would have acted in the same manner. He relieved Aquila of his guilt by inviting him to sit at the table with his inner circle.

Emotional Suppression

Aquila was probably not alone in his day in his inability to express himself in emotional turns. He was a soldier and a warrior and any connection to emotionalism could be interpreted as a weakness. That same sentiment still holds true in modern times. Since this story took place near the end of the Roman Empire during the days of Anglo-Saxon Britain, there is no doubt that a soldier appearing too emotional would evoke comparisons to a woman and would not be tolerated by peer or commander.

Aquila had a loving relationship with his father and sister. After their farmstead was attacked by the Saxons and his father was killed and his sister kidnapped, Aquila withdrew into himself even more. He had loved and lost and it was painful. As he matured, it became ever more difficult for him to express his feelings or to show feelings for his loved ones.

While his marriage to Ness was not initially based on love or even attraction, their feelings for each other grew over time. Yet it was next to impossible for Aquila to admit to them. He was changed forever when he had a son. He loved his son more than anything yet it was from a distance. His remoteness formed a wedge between he and his son. His inability to express simple emotions of love and caring stood in the way of the deeper relationship that he aspired to. He would often wish for more time with his son. He would regret not having talked to him more especially when his son was going off to his first battle.

There was no doubt about Aquila's love for his son when he saw him through his recovery from a serious accident that almost took his life. Deeds can definitely count more than words... but words are important, too and are often the only testament of one's love for another.

Abandonment

A theme that emerges in "The Lantern Bearers" is abandonment. There are many forms of abandonment that include actual physical abandonment as well as emotional abandonment. A person can abandon another person who is in the same room. By remaining emotionally unavailable, a person can abandon another who hopes to have a relationship with the person. There are different reasons that a person is emotionally unavailable to others and they are not all ill-intentioned. In fact, many who emotionally abandon others really doesn't want to. They want to be more connected but for a variety



of reasons sometimes reaching back to childhood they just cannot let themselves emotionally engage with others.

In this story, it is Aquila who is emotionally remote from others. This emotional distance that he maintains from others led to a dysfunctional relationship and the emotional abandonment of the person who meant the most to him bar none. He wanted to be closer to his son, Flavian. Aquila was intellectually honest enough at least in his private thoughts to recognize that in many ways he had abandoned his son. At times he thinks how he wishes he would have said more to his son, wishes he could have spent more time to him. At one point he starts to reach out to him but is interrupted by another person. Later his son asks what he was about to say. Aquila could not recapture that moment and retreated back into himself, stuffing the feelings he had been on the precipice of exploring with his son.

When Vortigern casts his wife aside for a younger woman, he not only abandoned his wife he put great emotional distance between himself and his sons. They were hurt that he could abandon their mother and the woman who had stood by him through all his travails. Vortimer and his brothers felt abandoned by the father that they had supported and fought for. Their hurt and anger drove them to join their father's rival in the fight for the throne.

Aquila feels abandoned and betrayed by his sister when he learns that she married a Saxon and had a child with him. He felt further estranged when she refused to escape with him.



Styles

Point of View

“The Lantern Bearers” by Rosemary Sutcliff is told in the third person narrative from chiefly the perspective of the protagonist Aquila. By telling the story from this point of view, the author allows the reader to be privy to the thoughts, intentions, emotions and motivations of the character. The author uses limited omniscience to provide the thoughts and motivations of a limited number of characters in addition to the protagonist.

Language and Meaning

“The Lantern Bearers” by Rosemary Sutcliff was first published in 1950. As such the writing style falls in the category of lyrical prose. While compelling and appealing, this style of writing is concerned by some in the present day as over-writing. The story is rife with detailed and flowery descriptions that create images and illusions. The author goes to great lengths to provide depictions that sparks one’s imagination in a dreamy fantasy type of manner. The reader must make a concerted effort at times to stay focused on the story line rather than the turn of phrase. It can be enjoyable to interpret this type of writing, however it can also slow the pace of the story. Here is an example:

“Dawn, when it came, was a wild one, a fiercely shining, yellow dawn that meant storm and tempest; and the wind that had been rising all night was sweeping like a winged thing down the valley; and overhead the great, double-piled clouds racing from the west were laced and fringed with fire.” (192)

In simple terms, the paragraph would read something like this: Threatening storms swirled in the morning from the windy night before. But there was a sign of relief; the sun could be seen peeking out from behind the billowy clouds.

The author also uses symbolism and the metaphor to convey some integral parts of the story. A “Christian Bell” is hanging in the woodsy hut that Aquila stumbles onto. The “Christian Bell” is a signal to both the character Aquila and to the widely Christian readership that the book was intended for to signal that the hut was safe because it belonged to a Christian. The beacon light of the fortress Rutupiae was a metaphor for the future. The light shined the way out of the darkness into light and joy.

Structure

“The Lantern Bearers” by Rosemary Sutcliff is divided into twenty-two medium-sized chapters. The story is told in a mainly chronological order with a minimum of flashbacks or references to past events. The story progresses from a sufficiently content protagonist, Aquila. He is pleased with his career as a commander of a cavalry unit in



the Roman Legion that is stationed in the British Isles. Although he is Roman, he has adopted Britain as his country of choice. His father and sister live on a coastal farmstead. He spends much time with them and has a good relationship with both. When the commander of the Legion informs Aquila that the Legion is returning to Rome permanently, Aquila's life changes forever.

Aquila's desertion from the Roman Legion and a betrayal that leads to a raid of the family farm by Saxons resulting in Aquila's father's death, sets Aquila off on a journey to find purpose in life and to try to recapture the life and bright future that he always felt would be part of his life. There are many references to Homer's "The Odyssey" which is the story of the long-suffering Greek soldier whose journey took him away from his home and country for twenty years. Aquila is on a similar trek and the connection to "The Odyssey" cannot go unnoticed. The author, Rosemary Sutcliff, was a disabled child who was wheelchair bound most of her life. When she was a small child, her mother read great English literature to her including the works of Dickens and Thackeray as well as classics from Greek and Roman literature. The influence of the stories she heard as a child is without question reflected in "The Torch Bearers."

Included in the book is a map of the region in which the story takes place and a listing of the specific locations.



Quotes

When you thought about it, you realized that you were living in a world that might fall to pieces at any moment; but Aquila seldom thought about it much. He had lived in that world all his life, and so had at least three generations of his kind before him, and it hadn't fallen to pieces yet, and it didn't seem likely that it would do so on this rich, ripening day with the powdery whiteness of July lying over the countryside.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1 paragraph Page 3)

Importance: This quote provides the premise for the story. This region of Britain had been at war for generations. Aquila is returning home after a year on the battlefield. He has known nothing but war his entire life.

Everything in him felt bruised and bleeding. He had been bred a soldier, coming of a line of soldiers, and he was breaking faith with all the gods of his kind. Going 'wilful missing.' The very words had the sorry sound of disgrace. He was failing the men of his own troop, which seemed to him in that moment a worse thing than all else. Yet he did not turn back again to the galleys.

-- Narrator (Chapter 1 paragraph Page 17)

Importance: Aquila is hurt and shamed by his own behavior. He, a soldier of a long line of warriors, has made the decision to stay in Britain and desert the Roman Calvary in which he was a commander. He is a Roman soldier, but a Brit first. He cannot turn his back on his homeland.

A sad thinking it must have been for this Odysseus. A sad thing to know that the adventuring was over and nothing left but his own fireside... As for me, glad I am that there will be one more adventuring... When the spring comes, I shall grow strong again.

-- Bruni (Chapter 5 paragraph Page 54)

Importance: Bruni, the old warrior, is dying. Although he refers to Odysseus, he is actually speaking of himself of his own last adventuring. In his own way he the proud man is recognizing his mortality and his inevitable end.

He felt like a man who had been caught away into another world, and coming back to his own world at last, had found it dead and cold, and himself alone in it.

-- Narrator (Chapter 6 paragraph Page 65)

Importance: Aquila has returned to his homeland as a slave but it brings back all the misery that he thought he left behind. The prospects for him to live a full and enjoyable life in Britain again are dashed as soon as he touches shore again. It is the nadir of his life.

He felt lost and adrift in a black tide of bitterness, and the last thing that he had to hold to was gone. No, not quite the last thing – there was still the hope of finding again the man who had betrayed his father.



-- Narrator (Chapter 8 paragraph Page 84)

Importance: Aquila was devastated that Flavia wanted to stay with her Saxon husband. He felt betrayed. It was a turning point in the story. After escaping from the Jutes, find the birdman who betrayed his father and caused his death was the only thing that kept Aquila going.

So Aquila took his father's service upon him. It wasn't as good as love; it wasn't as good as hate; but it was something to put into the emptiness within him; better than nothing at all.

-- Narrator (Chapter 10 paragraph Page 107)

Importance: Desolate without his father and sister, Aquila finds purpose when he asks to be of service to Ambrosius, the true King of England.

If we could have one great victory! One victory to sound like a blast of trumpets through the land! Then we should gather to our standard not merely a gallant handful here and there... Then we might indeed have a Britain whole and bonded together to drive the Sea Wolves into the sea!

-- Ambrosius (Chapter 15 paragraph Page 150)

Importance: Ambrosius knew that a solid victory was the best chance for him to reclaim the throne and to have a nation that was no longer divided and with sufficient strength in its union to drive the enemy away.

Better for both Hengest and for Vortigern her lord that the Young Fox should be out of the way. But she had not told Vortigern what she did. He was a dreaming fool whose purpose always broke under any strain, and he might shrink from his own good. Later, when the things was done, and maybe Ambrosius's following had fallen apart like a rotten apple, she would tell him what he owed to her, and what him writhe.

-- Narrator (Chapter 15 paragraph Page 151)

Importance: Rowena is plying a hawking glove with poison for Vortimer, Vortigern's son. Vortimer is estranged from his father because he rejected his mother and married Rowena. Vortimer joined Ambrosius, his father's bitter enemy. Rowena does not tell her husband what she is doing because she considers him too weak to let her carry it out.

It is healed well enough. Maybe the scar still aches before rain.

-- Aquila (Chapter 16 paragraph Page 167)

Importance: Brother Ninnias and Aquila meet again after seven years. The monk detects a change in Aquila. He is not as bitter as before and has lost his quest for vengeance. Aquila admits that the pain is not completely healed but that he has learned to deal with it.

News of Vortigern's death reached them in the spring; and with its news that Guitolinus the troublemaker had taken his place as leader of the Celtic party. Bad news for the



British cause, for Vortigern had been a shamed and broken man, but Guitolinus was young and fiery and something of a fanatic, one maybe to light the Celtic fires again.
-- Narrator (Chapter 17 paragraph Page 168)

Importance: After Ambrosius and his forces had driven back Vortigern and Ambrosius was on the verge of reclaiming the crown, the false king died leaving an opening for the more aggressive Celt Guitolinus who would be likely to challenge Ambrosius for control of Britain. Ambrosius thought his warring days were over but with the presence of Guitolinus there was more to come.

Aquila looked down at his son. If only they could have had a little longer, he thought, they might have begun to know each other. Now maybe there wouldn't be another chance.

-- Narrator (Chapter 17 paragraph Page 178)

Importance: Aquila is acutely aware of the emotional distance between he and his son, Flavian. The two were growing closer during Flavian's recovery from a bad fall. But with word of the enemy approaching, there is no time to allow the relationship to grow. Aquila longs for a closeness with Aquila, but he fears the chance for it is slipping away.

Aquila, watching him disappear in the dusk, thought suddenly and painfully of all the things he would have liked to say to the Minnow before his first battle.

-- Narrator (Chapter 19 paragraph Page 192)

Importance: Aquila has never bonded with his son. He "thinks" of things to say to him but it's difficult for Aquila to voice them. Just before his young son is to go into battle, Aquila is unable to talk to him. He senses that he is wasting chances to grow closer to his son and that the distance between them is ever growing. If either son or father were to be killed in the battlefield those words will be lost forever.