

The Last of the Sky Pirates Study Guide

The Last of the Sky Pirates by Paul Stewart (writer)

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Plot Summary

"The Last of the Sky Pirates" by Paul Stewart is the first book in the Rook trilogy which is part of the Edge Chronicles series. When Rook is chosen to continue his studies at Lake Landing, he sets out on the dangerous journey, facing many perils as he gains knowledge of many things in his world as well as his past. "The Last of the Sky Pirates" is an entertaining adventure that shows how this foundling becomes a hero.

While living in the Undertown sewers with the Librarian Academics, Rook dreams of becoming a librarian knight, chosen to continue his education at Lake Landing and search for the cure to stone-sickness, a mysterious ailment that ruins rocks' buoyancy and makes skysailing impossible. Rook is shocked when he is chosen, along with Stob and Magda. Disguised as merchants, Rook, Stob and Magda travel along the Great Mire Road where Rook helps free an imprisoned sky pirate, Deadbolt Vulpoon. They continue on through the Twilight Woods to the Eastern Roost where Hekkle disguises them as shrykes and leads them through the perilous Deepwoods to Lake Landing where they are joined by Xanth, a Guardian of Night disguised as an apprentice in order to spy on the Librarian Academics.

At Lake Landing, Rook, Stob, Magda and Xanth learn to build and control skycrafts, but Xanth breaks his leg during his first flight, preventing his continued studies. After completing his training, Rook accompanies Varis Lodd and Knuckle to the Foundry Glade where they free enslaved banderbears; however, Rook grows feverish after being struck by a poisoned arrow. During Rook's convalescence, Magda and Stob leave for their treatise-journeys, and Xanth visits Rook to apologize for setting Varis Lodd up to be captured at the Foundry Glade before he disappears since he has caused enough damage already. Healed, Rook leaves for his treatise-journey with the goal of finding the Great Convocation of Banderbears. He befriends Wumeru, a young banderbear, but she is upset when he follows her to the Great Convocation. The banderbears are ready to kill Rook until Wuralo, the banderbear he saved at the Foundry Glade, speaks up in his defense. Rook also meets Twig, a sky pirate captain, and when Twig mentions his friend, Cowlquape, Rook tells him that Cowlquape is being held prisoner at the Tower of Night.

Twig, Rook and a crew of banderbears retrieve the Skyraider, Twig's ship, from the Edgelands and sail to the Tower of Night. While Twig and the banderbears create a distraction by attacking the tower, Rook sneaks into the dungeons and rescues Cowlquape; however, his tether-rope gets snagged as he tries to flee. Xanth appears and orders Rook to stop, but recognizing his friend, he aims his arrow at the rope, freeing Rook. Rook rushes to the banderbears who have abandoned ship, but Twig has been mortally wounded and decides to die with his ship. At the last moment, a caterbird rescues Twig and flies away with him, presumably to take him to the restorative waters of Riverrise. While discussing how Varis Lodd found him, Rook realizes that a banderbear saved him when his parents were captured by slave-traders.



Section 1: Introduction & Chapter 1

Section 1: Introduction & Chapter 1 Summary

"The Last of the Sky Pirates" by Paul Stewart is the first book in the Rook trilogy which is part of the Edge Chronicles series. When Rook is chosen to continue his studies at Lake Landing, he sets out on the dangerous journey, facing many perils as he gains knowledge of many things in his world as well as his past. "The Last of the Sky Pirates" is an entertaining adventure that shows how this foundling becomes a hero.

The Introduction explains how the Edge was plagued with stone-sickness which ended the sky-trade. Because the Guardians of Night and Librarian Academics dispute the cure, the Librarian Academics are driven to the sewers where an adventurous 13-year-old orphan is about to embark on an unexpected journey.

In Chapter 1: The Great Storm Chamber Library, Rook Barkwater wakes in the dark sewers, and with a couple hours before the hilderhorns sound and wake everyone else, he slips out of the chamber through the dark sewers, recalling his recurring nightmare of slave traders taking his parents when he was four years old. He always wakes as something huge nears him. Expert at navigating the sewers, Rook continues to the library where water never enters since nothing is permitted to harm the library that so many earth scholars died to protect. Creeping onto Blackwood Bridge, Rook goes to the seventeenth lecture to find the treatise "A Study of Banderbears' Behaviour in Their Natural Habitat". The treatise is special to Rook since he owes his life to this treatise and can never forget it. Excitedly opening the volume, Rook feels like he is in the Deepwoods and can hear the banderbear yodel as he reads. Wishing he could explore the Deepwoods himself, Rook realizes today is the Announcement Ceremony when three apprentice librarians will be chosen to complete their education at Lake Landing in the Deepwoods. He wants to be chosen, but he knows he won't be because he is a foundling. He was discovered wandering in the Deepwoods by Varis Lodd, daughter of the High Librarian and also the author of this treatise which is why Rook owes his life to this treatise. Still, Varis' younger brother, Felix, can go. Felix is Rook's best friend and a favorite to be chosen for the journey. Ledmus Squinx catches Rook on the lectern, but his chiding is interrupted by Alquix Venvax who understands Rook's thirst for knowledge and simply tells him not to be caught in the future. When Alquix reminds Rook that today is the Announcement Ceremony, Rook rushes off to help Felix prepare for the big event.

Section 1: Introduction & Chapter 1 Analysis

In the Introduction, far away exists the Edge where the river Edgewater poured down overhanging rock until 50 years ago when a preordained event heralds the arrival of the Mother Storm which seeds the Edge with new life every five or six millennia. The Mother Storm rejuvenates the river, but a pestilence called stone-sickness spreads from the Stone Gardens, halting new growth of the floating rocks. No one knows why the



pestilence spread, but they know life on the Edge will never be the same. With the end of the sky-trade, permanent settlements spring up in the Deepwoods. Meanwhile, the Guardians of Night and the Librarian Academics dispute the cure to the stone-sickness until the Guardians of Night impose their will and drive the Librarian Academics into the sewers where an adventurous 13-year-old orphaned under-librarian lives. He likes to read the treatise-scrolls when no one is watching, but his disobedience has been noticed and will have unpredicted repercussions. The Introduction serves to tell the reader about the novel's world a bit and to foreshadow the adventures Rook is soon going to experience.

Chapter 1: The Great Storm Chamber Library introduces the protagonist of this novel, Rook Barkwater. It alludes to the recurring nightmare he has of something large approaching him after his parents were enslaved, foreshadowing the importance of this dream in his life and in the novel. On his way to the library, Rook recalls Alquix Venvax, the aging librarian, telling him that the library contains only a small fraction of the knowledge in the Deepwoods. Many mistrust the librarians, yet still the Librarian Knights elect travel to the Deepwoods to gather information and increase knowledge of the Edge; someday, it will be Rook's turn. Rook's fascination with "A Study of Banderbears' Behaviour in Their Natural Habitat" foreshadows the discovery of why this treatise is so important to him. This foreshadowing is quickly fulfilled when the narrator explains that the author of the treatise, Varis Lodd, is the one who found Rook and brought him to the sewers. Though Rook wishes that he would be chosen at the Announcement Ceremony, he knows that he will not because he is a foundling; however, he anticipates his best friend, Felix Lodd, being chosen. When someone calls to Rook, he realizes that he is trapped because the lectern unwound and is floating high. Of course, it is Ledmus Squinx who caught him, and after lowering the lectern, Squinx yells at Rook for breaking the rules since an under-librarian has no reason to board a buoyant lectern. Alquix Venvax interjects, claiming he will deal with Rook. Rook is afraid because Alquix seems genuinely angry, but his eyes twinkle when he faces Rook again. Alquix knows the thirst for knowledge is a powerful force, but he tells Rook not to get caught in the future. He also reminds Rook that the buoyant lecterns are closed today for the Announcement Ceremony, and remembering that he promised to help Felix prepare for his big day, Rook rushes off, his mood darkening as he realizes he will be left alone once Felix is chosen. He guiltily thinks that Felix will not be chosen if he oversleeps, but he chides himself for such a thought because Felix is his friend.



Section 2: Chapter 2

Section 2: Chapter 2 Summary

In Chapter 2: The Sewers, Rook returns to the sleeping chamber and wakes Felix who jumps up eagerly when he is reminded of the Announcement Ceremony, because he cannot wait to leave the sewers. As they leave the sleeping chamber, Rook shushes Felix because he thought he heard a muglump, but Felix insists that the Announcement Ceremony can wait since none of them are safe if a muglump has broken into the sewers. They chase the creature, but it manages to escape. Hearing a crowd cheering, Rook realizes that the Announcement Ceremony has started, so they must hurry. He leads Felix through the tunnels, and Felix tells Rook he will miss him. As they hear Fenbrus Lodd welcoming the audience to the Announcement Ceremony, Rook leads Felix into the packed Great Storm Chamber, and Felix tells the crowd to make way for an apprentice with an appointment at Lake Landing.

Section 2: Chapter 2 Analysis

Chapter 2: The Sewers show Rook dealing with feelings of abandonment as he anticipates Felix leaving him. Rook sadly helps Felix get ready for the last time before Felix leaves, knowing Felix will no longer have Rook to look after him; still, Rook knows that Felix will make friends because he cannot help being popular while Rook will be left alone. When Rook thinks he hears a muglump, Felix insists they must hunt the creature since no one in the sewers will be safe. Usually, muglumps keep to themselves, but sometimes one's appetite for blood leads it to the main sewers where it can wreak havoc among the scholars. Felix edges forward with his sword in front of him, and Rook warns him when he sees the muglump above Felix. Rook guards the exit as Felix chases the retreating muglump, but it crosses the ceiling and lands in front of Rook, knocking him to the ground and barreling into another tunnel. Rook throws his dagger into the creature's hind-leg, but after turning to glare at Rook, the creature runs away as Felix yells after it that it will not be so lucky next time. Rook wonders when the next time will be since Felix is leaving. At the sound of a cheering crowd, Rook leads Felix through the tunnels to the ceremony where Felix tells the crowd to make room for an apprentice who has an appointment at Lake Landing; this declaration is ironic since Felix is alluding to himself when, in actuality, Rook is the one about to embark on the journey to Lake Landing.



Section 3: Chapter 3

Section 3: Chapter 3 Summary

In Chapter 3: The Announcement Ceremony, Rook and Felix push to the front of the crowded chamber as Fenbrus Lodd discusses the difficulty of choosing those to go to the Deepwoods since there were so many wonderful candidates. The first Librarian Knight elect, Stob Lummus, is announced, followed by the second, Magda Burlix. Felix fears he will not be chosen because he is bad at studying, but Rook assures him that he does not need books since he fights so well and they have not called him yet because they are saving the best for last. As Fenbrus pauses to announce the third chosen apprentice, Rook is sad that he will soon be separated from Felix, likely forever, and he tells Felix he will miss him as Fenbrus announces Rook Barkwater is the third Librarian Knight elect. Silence falls because Rook is not even an apprentice which is unheard of. Alquix nods enthusiastically amidst murmurs of disapproval as Rook heads to the stage. The elders congratulate Rook separately and give him gifts to help during the journey, but when Rook reaches Fenbrus and insists Felix should be going, Fenbrus says that Felix has no natural aptitude for study. The vote was unanimous which is no surprise given the powerful arguments put forward by the proposer who surprisingly is not Alquix; the Professor of Darkness put Rook's name forward because he is impressed with Rook's studiousness. Stob, Magda and Rook take the oath to serve the Edge Scholarship, both Earth and Sky, for the good of all.

Meanwhile, Orbix Xaxis, Most High Guardian of Night, examines the sky through his telescopes, warning a storm must come soon to heal and restore the Sanctaphrax rock. Xanth Filatine arrives with information about a recently captured prisoner who revealed that the librarian knights are sending three more apprentice treatise scholars to the Deepwoods tomorrow morning, but when Orbix says they must capture and execute the traitors, Xanth suggests that he can follow the apprentices and perhaps uncover the entire network of traitors. Orbix likes the idea of capturing all of the traitors, deciding he will forgive them all before having them executed, so he gives Xanth permission to go, promising Xanth will regret his decision if he fails. Xanth heads to the dungeons in the Tower of Night, telling a prisoner that it worked. The next morning, Rook packs his belongings and hopes Felix will come to say goodbye since he has not seen his friend since the Announcement Ceremony. Figures appear, and Stob and Magda rush Rook who grabs his backpack and notices Felix's ceremonial sword lying beneath it. He whispers his thanks to Felix and hopes he fares well wherever he might be.

Section 3: Chapter 3 Analysis

Chapter 3: The Announcement Ceremony depicts the Announcement Ceremony. Felix looks expectant as Fenbrus warns that the outside world is dangerous, and Alquix nods at Rook who has heard that Alquix intends to take him on as a permanent personal assistant when he comes of age; Rook knows he should be grateful, but he dreads



spending his entire life in the sewers. The first two students chosen to go to Lake Landing are announced as Stob Lummus and Magda Burlix. Felix begins to get nervous that he will not be chosen; he has to be twice as good as the other apprentices because of his father and sister, and his tutors are often disappointed in him while "only Rook continued to have absolute faith in his friend" (page 37). When Rook is announced as the third chosen apprentice, he is sure there must be a mistake, but when he mentions this to Fenbrus Lodd, Fenbrus insists Rook was chosen unanimously. Rook is further surprised to learn that Alquix is not the one who proposed him as a librarian knight elect because he has been watching Rook for some time and is impressed though Rook's willingness to bend the rules is alarming and he warns Rook that such behavior is unacceptable from a Librarian Knight elect. He also warns Rook that this is a dangerous journey and he must travel in secret and trust no one if he wants to return safely. The setting changes after the three chosen apprentices give their oath to serve the Edge Scholarship. The novel now changes perspective to focus on the Guardians of Night and Orbix Xaxis, Most High Guardian of Night, in particular. Xanth's suggestion to follow the apprentices and try to uncover the entire network of traitors foreshadows the fact that he does exactly that. Orbix's threat makes it obvious that he is an unpleasant sort of person. Xanth visits an old prisoner in the Tower of Night, foreshadowing the importance of this prisoner much later in the novel. The old prisoner is interested in Xanth's journey, but he is jealous since he has been in the cell for longer than Xanth has been alive. He is sure that Xanth will enjoy the Deepwoods, though the prisoner is too important to ever be released. Xanth assures him that something will turn up, but the prisoner warns that such words are treason. The scene then reverts to the sewers where Rook prepares for his journey, hoping Felix will visit him to say goodbye. Though Felix is too ashamed to present himself to Rook, he leaves his sword under Rook's belongings, showing his unfailing friendship and devotion, despite being unwilling to say goodbye properly.



Section 4: Chapter 4

Section 4: Chapter 4 Summary

In Chapter 4: The Great Mire Road, the Librarian Knights elect are fitted with the respective outfits by late afternoon. The Professor of Darkness provides papers identifying Stob as a timber merchant, Magda as a silk trader and Rook as a tool mender and knife sharpener, telling them that their first contact will make himself known at the tollgate to the Great Mire Road. He instructs Rook to lead the way since Rook knows the tunnels better than anyone, and when Rook leads the others aboveground, he is amazed to see the sun again, but indifferently, Stob insists they need to get going and marches off with Rook and Magda following. As they near the Great Mire Road, many merchants surround them, but no one pays them any attention. Though Rook and Magda have nearly reached the entrance to the Great Mire Road, they do not see Stob anywhere. Then, Rook notices Stob talking to someone who he assumes must be their contact, but Magda is not so sure; a voice behind them announces she is their contact and introduces herself as the gnokgoblin, Tegan. Rook and Magda retrieve Stob who insists the woodtroll he was talking to is their contact because he was wearing a bloodoak tooth, but Magda mocks him since it was a whitecollar woodwolf fang. They return to Tegan who shows her talisman which matches those given to the librarian knights elect and their supporters. Leading them to the gate, Tegan presents their papers to a shryke who examines the papers before permitting Stob and Magda to pass. Rook is nervous during his turn, but Tegan tells the shryke it is his first time and he is overcome by the shryke's beauty, so he is permitted to pass and rejoin Magda and Stob. Rook is pale because he has never seen a shryke before, but Tegan warns that they will see plenty more on the road. Tegan's place is here so she bids them farewell and disappears. Feeling very alone, Rook, Magda and Stob attach themselves to the back of a group of merchants since there is safety in numbers. Rook has felt like he is dreaming since his name was first called, and now, he tells himself that there is no turning back; the greatest adventure of his life has already begun. At the tally-hut, the clawstile allows a hooded figure with close cropped hair to slip through.

Section 4: Chapter 4 Analysis

As the three apprentices prepare for their journey, several things become apparent about their personalities. Stob is not amused by Magda's jokes, and he yells at Rook for encouraging her, but Rook does not rise to the bait as Felix taught him. He will miss having Felix to defend him. This foreshadows the interactions between these three apprentices during their journey to Lake Landing. Since Rook knows the tunnels best, he leads Magda and Stob aboveground, but Stob does not feel the same wonder that Rook and Magda experience when they see the sun for the first time in so long, showing the difference between Stob and the other two apprentices. Still, Magda warns Stob to be careful when he comments on the madness of the Guardians of Night. Rook worries that the Guardians know about their expedition, but Magda insists knowing is



not the same thing as finding before launching into a lecture about how Vox Verlix is responsible for the tall towers of Mire Road to allow the merchants to trade with the people of the Deepwoods. He lost control to Mother Scab-beak and the Shryke Sisterhood, and now, Vox is held ransom by goblins who have an alliance with the shrykes to control the trade between Undertown and the Deepwoods. The Guardians of Night are dangerous. Vox Verlix also designed the Tower of Night for the Guardians, and it is supposed to tap the power of a passing storm and heal the floating rock. Additionally, the Guardians forced Vox to shore up the rock with timbers when it started to sink because the rock will never be healed if it touches the ground, thus the forest will always be built to support the rock. When Rook stumbles into a goblin causing the goblin to spill his fruit, Magda pays the goblin for his ruined fruit, explaining to Rook that she has to be able to handle her own because she has three older brothers. Rook likes Magda but finds Stob to be cold and aloof. Near the entrance to the Great Mire Road, Stob separates from the group and begins talking to a woodtroll that he believes to be their contact; however, their real contact, a gnokgoblin named Tegan, approaches Rook and Magda, so Magda and Rook retrieve Stob and tell him of his mistake as the woodtroll was not wearing a bloodoak tooth pendant which is how the apprentices identify themselves and their supporters. Rook realizes he could have made the same mistake and decides that Stob's error was in approaching rather than waiting to be approached. Tegan proves that she is their guide by producing her pendant. Tegan explains that she does her best to be useful to all scholars "rather than allow the Edge to slide into the dark oblivion those cohorts of the Tower of Night would foist upon us all" (page 71). She warns them that their journey will be difficult, but they will succeed with a little luck and a lot of perseverance. Tegan leads the three children through the gate to the Great Mire Road, leaving them after making sure they are on their way. Rook cannot believe his excitement as he realizes that the greatest adventure of his life has begun. Meanwhile, another figure follows Rook, Stob and Magda through the clawstile, foreshadowing the fact that this figure belongs to Xanth who has already begun following the three apprentices with the goal of uncovering the entire organization of Librarian Academics.



Section 5: Chapter 5

Section 5: Chapter 5 Summary

In Chapter 5: Deadbolt Vulpoon, Rook, Stob and Magda walk quietly with the others for several hours, knowing it is dangerous to attract attention on the Great Mire Road. As they near the toll-tower, Rook practices saying he is a knife sharpener from the Goblin Nations, but the shryke at the desk stamps his papers without looking at them, causing Rook to realize that presenting papers is a formality that only becomes important when it is not done. A nightwaif, Partifule, appears and leads them to hammock shelters after showing his bloodoak tooth as proof that he is not a spy but one assigned with the task of guarding Rook, Magda and Stob while they sleep tonight so they will be fully rested for the Twilight Woods which lie ahead. As Rook dozes off, he hears a voice crying for water and leaves his bed to offer water to the creature in the cage. He is excited when he learns that the creature is a sky pirate captain named Captain Deadbolt Vulpoon. Rook offers to help, but Deadbolt claims he can only help if he has a key; still, Deadbolt would appreciate the company for a while since he has been left alone for three days and nights. Deadbolt tells Rook about his adventures, specifically those that occurred after the stone-sickness struck. Rook recognizes Deadbolt's last name because of Thunderbolt Vulpoon who he learns was Deadbolt's father who was executed by shrykes in order to save Captain Twig who the shrykes were after. Rook has heard of Captain Twig who sailed off into the Deepwoods, and though there have been rumors of sightings, Deadbolt does not know if the stories are true. When he hears shrykes, Deadbolt warns Rook to make himself scarce, so Rook hides in the shadows while the shrykes mock Deadbolt. When they leave and he returns, Deadbolt tells him to leave, wishing him luck, and Rook returns to his sleeping pallet where he gratefully falls asleep next to Stob and Magda.

Section 5: Chapter 5 Analysis

As the three apprentices continue along Great Mire Road, Magda reminds Rook to keep his eyes down since looking directly into a shryke guard's eyes is punishable by death, as evidenced by the goblin who is killed by a shryke for looking in her eyes. Rook notes that this is a terrible place, and though he wants to stop to eat, Stob refuses to stop until they reach the toll-tower. Still, Rook freezes at the sight of a cage containing a corpse hanging from a beacon pole. After passing through the toll-tower and presenting their papers, Rook follows Stob and Magda to a wide landing with stalls containing goods for sale, and though the sight of the prisoner stole his appetite, Magda insists he must eat and buys food for him to eat later though he decides to sleep now. Though Rook tries to sleep, his slumber is interrupted by the cries for water from the cage containing Captain Deadbolt Vulpoon, a notorious sky pirate captain. When Deadbolt agrees that Rook can help by keeping him company for a bit, Vulpoon tells Rook about his many adventures as a sky pirate captain. Rook asks what it is like to sky sail, and Deadbolt tells him it was the most incredible experience in the world until the stone-sickness struck. At that



terrible time, sky pirates first raided the Great Mire Road, thinking they could avoid the sickness by staying away from new Sanctaphrax, but the stone-sickness finally caught up with them so they sailed to gether from the Edgelands to the desolation of the Mire 35 years ago where their fleet of ships proved a good basis for a settlement. The mention of Captain Twig foreshadows his appearance later in the novel. Rook hides when the shrykes arrive to torment Deadbolt, and after they leave, Deadbolt insists Rook leave as well, for his own safety. Rook's camaraderie with Deadbolt Vulpoon foreshadows his role in freeing the sky pirate captain.



Section 6: Chapter 6 & Chapter 7

Section 6: Chapter 6 & Chapter 7 Summary

In Chapter 6: The Sky Pirate Raid, Rook dreams of sailing on a sky ship and is reluctant to wake, but Partifule insists they must all wake up because of the sky-pirate raid taking place. Rook rushes to help, watching the sky-pirates free Deadbolt and smashing a shryke's head when she tries to recapture Deadbolt which allows Deadbolt to behead the shryke. Magda ushers Rook back to Stob and Partifule who have acquired a cart that carries them away from this place. Rook cannot believe how much has happened to him in only one day, and he wonders if the worst is behind them, but Partifule warns that they are approaching the Twilight Woods, "the most treacherous and perilous place in all the Edge" (page 108).

In Chapter 7: The Twilight Woods, Partifule stops the cart and disembarks; he must leave them now because he is closer than he prefers to the Twilight Woods, but he is convinced they will reach Lake Landing because he is impressed with their determination, bravery and compassion. Their guide awaits them in the Eastern Roost. Rook, Magda and Stob approach the tally-hut where their papers are examined and they are instructed to loop ropes to hooks and swing into the Twilight Woods. As Rook keeps moving and tries to clear his mind from the hypnotic hold of the Twilight Woods, he sees a spectral figure emerge from the gloom and recognizes a Knight Academic which soon vanishes, causing Rook to wonder if anything is real in the Twilight Woods. When a goblins' handcart crashes and stops traffic, the Knight reappears with more figures, and the goblins fall silent when they see the ghostly crowd they have attracted. The apparitions vanish when the shrykes appear to cut the goblins loose and chase them into the woods, telling the others to hurry on.

Section 6: Chapter 6 & Chapter 7 Analysis

Chapter 6: The Sky Pirate Raid shows Rook being woken forcefully as Partifule insists they are all in great danger, because a sky-pirate raid is taking place. Rook is excited that the sky-pirates have come to rescue Deadbolt Vulpoon, but Partifule warns him that it will not be great for the rest of them if the shrykes go into a rage. Rook rushes off to help, and as Partifule and Stob prepare to flee, Magda goes to retrieve Rook who she finds watching from the shadows as the sky-pirates pick the lock. The spectators scatter when the shrykes appear, but Deadbolt has already been freed. With their escape route cut off, the sky-pirates have no choice but to fight, and a shryke taunts Deadbolt, saying he was bait and she will now be rewarded for capturing his crew. Yelling "wrong!" (page 105), Rook smashes the shryke's head, allowing Deadbolt to grab a sword and behead the creature. He urges Rook to leave with Magda, and Rook and Deadbolt say goodbye as they are dragged apart by their respective crews. Magda and Rook return to the sleeping stalls as Stob and Partifule drive up on a hammelhorn-drawn cart they found abandoned, and the four of them drive off. Partifule's warning about the perils of the



Twilight Woods foreshadows the dangers Rook and his companions will face in the Twilight Woods.

In Chapter 7: The Twilight Woods, Partifule leaves the librarian knight elects as they near the Twilight Woods, advising them that their next guide awaits them in the Eastern Roost, foreshadowing their acquaintance with their next guide, Hekkle. Once Rook, Magda and Stob board the rope which is their means of transportation through the Twilight Woods, Rook struggles after Stob and Magda as the shrykes order them all to keep moving or everyone will stop and they will be cut loose. Rook sees several spectral figures, indicating the dangers of the Twilight Woods and making him question whether anything within the woods is real. The goblins in front of the children are released into the Twilight Woods when they hold up progress. Rook, Stob and Magda set off quickly, and as Magda notes that the Eastern Roost cannot be worse than this, Rook looks back to see the elderly goblin waving his arms and protesting to the air.



Section 7: Chapter 8

Section 7: Chapter 8 Summary

In Chapter 8: The Eastern Roost, Rook, Magda and Stob reach the Eastern Roost which contains the Central Market, but when they try to claim their cart and are given the wrong cart, a shryke-mate appears to insist the incorrect cart will be fine, telling them to follow him as he flashes his bloodoak-tooth pendant. Hekkle, the shryke-mate and their guide, tells them they must leave the Eastern Roost as soon as possible since the shrykes constantly search for spies in the market. Since only shrykes can enter the Deepwoods from the Eastern Roost, he dresses the young librarian knights elect as shrykes and leads them to the Deepwoods Gate, informing the real shrykes that these three are going to the Deepwoods to acquire materials for their nest. Hekkle acquires prowlgrins for each of them to ride and leads them into the Deepwoods. Back at the guard tower, the shryke guard receives a second visitor, a callow youth who presents a seal from the Most High Guardian of Night, Vox Verlix. The youth asks if any passed this way recently, and when he learns that three sooth-sisters and an accompanying shryke-mate left for a nesting expedition, Xanth snorts and says they left for the Free Glades, tugging at the reins and causing his prowlgrin to rush forward as Xanth holds on tight and does not look back.

Section 7: Chapter 8 Analysis

In Chapter 8: The Eastern Roost, Stob, Magda and Rook are ordered to untie their ropes as they reach the giant tree straddling the road that separates the Twilight Woods from the Eastern Road. Rook's head clears from the Woods as they are sent to the Central Market, though he finds the sights confusing after the sensory deprivation of the Woods. Holding hands to stay together, they make their way through the market, finally reaching the Central Market which is built on a platform supported by trees. Magda announces that they must first find their cart, but when she presents their papers, the shryke gives them the wrong cart. A shryke-mate appears and insists they will take it since they must not take up any more of the shryke's time and pulls Magda, Stob and Rook away, telling them it is too dangerous to talk here and flashing a glimpse of his bloodoak-tooth pendant before hurrying away. They lose him, but a slaughterer directs them to the back of the tent where the shryke-mate introduces himself as Hekkle, their guide, and tells them they must hurry because their lives are in danger every moment they spend in the Eastern Roost since they are surrounded by shryke guards who constantly raid the market for spies. He informs them that Undertown merchants, such as they pretend to be, sell their goods and return to the Great Mire Road, while only shrykes can enter and exit the Eastern Roost on the Deepwoods side of the closed city, allowing the Shryke Sisterhood to control the trade between Undertown and the Deepwoods. Therefore, Stob, Magda and Rook must become shrykes in order to enter the Deepwoods, so Hekkle dresses them as shrykes, including spectacles that prevent them from seeing, and he warns that they must not remove the spectacles or speak



because, if they are caught, the penalty for impersonating a shryke is being roasted alive. Later, Rook cannot believe he survived the terrifying journey to the Deepwoods Gate. Hekkle leads them through the shrykes, assuring them that they have nearly reached their destination even as he tells the other shrykes that they are going to the Deepwoods to gather nesting materials. A shryke offers them blessings on their nest-building. Hekkle leads them to a stable where he provides each of them with a prowlgrin to ride, and at the guard tower, they are permitted to pass after Hekkle explains they seek nesting materials for the Golden Nest. As they leave the Eastern Roost and enter the Deepwoods, Hekkle tells them they did well, causing Stob to praise himself for making such a convincing sooth-sister. As they travel, a young man presents himself as a messenger from Vox Verlix, indicating that this youth is Xanth who has managed to spy on Rook, Magda and Stob thus far in their journey. After mocking the shryke guard that those who preceded him were not truly shrykes, without actually saying as much, Xanth continues on his journey after the others, foreshadowing their eventual encounter at Lake Landing.



Section 8: Chapter 9

Section 8: Chapter 9 Summary

In Chapter 9: The Deepwoods, Hekkle leads Stob, Magda and Rook into the Deepwoods, warning it is not safe to leave the trees until late afternoon. Rook, Stob and Magda settle into hammocks, covering themselves with the Covers of Darkness given to them by the Professor of Darkness which keep them safe from prying eyes by allowing them to disappear from view. They travel for six long, hard days, with no choice but to continue as their destination is still far away. Hekkle tries to encourage them, but the journey takes its toll. Hekkle assures them they are nearing the Silver Pastures, cautioning that this area attracts the most dangerous creatures. As they travel quickly one tense morning, Magda senses something watching them, and near nightfall, a hover worm emerges from the undergrowth and causes the prowlgrins to panic. Shortly afterward, they hear a stick crack, but Hekkle assures them that they are fine, deciding to travel silently as a precaution; however, a spear whistles over Magda's head causing her to scream, and Hekkle orders Rook, Stob and Magda to the trees. As they head toward the trees, Magda loses control of her frightened prowlgrin, but when Rook tries to help her, he is tossed to the ground and left alone. He is terrified as a group of trogs with multiple skulls tied around their necks surround him. Rook tries to evade their spears, but he is sure this is the end until a whirring noise reveals a swarm of small angular creatures, obviously related to ratbirds, which surround and engulf the trog, leaving only bone. The other trogs run into the forest, followed by the flock. Now lost and alone, Rook sets off, too scared to call out for his companions, but Hekkle soon emerges from the foliage to treat Rook's knee, injured during his fall. Hekkle loads Rook onto his prowlgrin, and as they set off, Rook begins to feel optimistic, especially when he sees Magda and Stob, but Hekkle cries out a warning. Rook joins his panicked cries for Magda and Stob to run, though he does not see the danger they are in. Suddenly, a rumble and hiss sounds as the log where Stob and Magda sit moves and opens on one end to reveal fangs and a gigantic throat that howls with bloodthirsty rage.

Section 8: Chapter 9 Analysis

Chapter 9: The Deepwoods details Rook, Stob and Magda's journey through the Deepwoods as they are led by Hekkle. Rook finds the Deepwoods more wonderful than he imagined, but Hekkle warns that it is also more treacherous than it seems and it is unwise to draw attention to themselves; they must travel discreetly and silently, remaining vigilant and never separating. The Librarian Knights elect are disgusted when Hekkle forages grubs and other insects, but they are surprised to find that their meal is delicious when they stop for the night. The use of the Covers of Darkness to hide from prying eyes foreshadows the use of this cover later in the book when Rook is trying to rescue Cowlquape from the Tower of Night. As they near the end of their trek, Hekkle warns Rook, Magda and Stob that this is the most dangerous part of their journey; his claim is proven by the many dangers they face during this last portion of the



Deepwoods. First, they encounter a hover worm which causes their mounts to panic, and then they are pursued by trogs. Rook is sure he is a goner, but he is saved when a flock of creatures which he calls snickets attack the trogs, saving Rook. Examining one felled member of the flock with four razor-sharp teeth, Rook decides that one day he will write a treatise about these creatures and call them snickets; this seems to be out of respect for the creatures that saved his life, showing that Rook is a very thoughtful and devoted young man. Hekkle returns to lead Rook to the others, but as they approach the Silver Pastures, Hekkle begins to panic as he notices that Magda and Stob are in danger. Rook yells out a warning at his companions, trusting Hekkle's instinct though he does not see the danger. The log worm's appearance as it growls angrily foreshadows the attack in the following chapter.



Section 9: Chapter 10

Section 9: Chapter 10 Summary

In Chapter 10: The Silver Pastures, Rook is horrified as the creature rises up while Hekkle yells for Stob and Magda to save themselves from the logworm. Stob falls, motionless, and Magda is thrown beside the tethered prowlgrins who she tries to free as the logworm advances. Hekkle races to Magda, pulling her away before the logworm swallows the prowlgrins, and they urge Stob to get up while Rook rushes toward them on Hekkle's prowlgrin. Unfortunately, the logworm begins sucking air into its lungs, creating a whirlwind that pulls Rook and the prowlgrin toward its mouth, but Hekkle distracts the creature which allows Rook and the prowlgrin to rush off into the amazingly beautiful Silver Pastures. Rook hears the logworm right behind him, and when his prowlgrin stumbles, he falls off. Luckily, he is plucked from the ground on a skycraft which flops in the wind as the slaughter-pilot tries to regain control on a craft made for one person. The pilot, Knuckle, is exuberant as he regains control and lands on a plank gantry of a tall tower. Rook worries about his companions, and he is relieved when he hears their voices below and is able to reunite with Hekkle, Stob and Magda. Hekkle declines the offer of hospitality, insisting they will reach the Free Glades tonight. As the sun sets, Hekkle assures Rook, Magda and Stob that they will soon reach the Free Glades, but they swiftly climb a tree when they hear a logworm's hiss. Rook watches as a swarm of snickets head toward the logworm which turns and swallows them. Hekkle warns that things are seldom as they seem in the Deepwoods just before the logworm cries out in pain and seems to disappear while the snickets reappear, having consumed the logworm from the inside. The swarm flies off, and Hekkle explains their feeding frenzy is over, leaving Rook amazed by the delicate balance of life in the Deepwoods where no single creature gets the upper hand. Hekkle encourages Rook, Stob and Magda that they have nearly reached their destination, and when they finally reach the top of the hill and see the Free Glades below, Rook points to the tall building in the center of the largest of three lakes, recognizing Lake Landing, "our new home" (page 186).

Section 9: Chapter 10 Analysis

Chapter 10: The Silver Pastures fulfills the foreshadowing the culminates the previous chapter as the log worm attacks Stob and Magda. Hekkle shows his devotion and dedication to the cause as he races into danger in his attempt to protect Stob and Magda. As his companions are still in danger, Rook demonstrates bravery as he tries to help his friends, but his heroism is nearly a fatal flaw when the log worm turns on him. Luckily, Hekkle distracts the creature, allowing Rook to get a headstart in his attempt to flee, but unfortunately, the log worm gains on him, causing his prowlgrin to stumble and Rook to fall off. Just when things seem hopeless, a young slaughterer in a skycraft swoops in to save Rook and the day. He introduces himself as Knuckle, a herder who knows the Professor of Darkness and taught himself to fly on his skycraft, the



Woodwasp, which he created himself. As a group of pilots at the tower begin to praise Knuckle, Rook agrees with their praise before asking about his travelling companions. Knuckle leads Rook to the west gantry to get a better view, and when Knuckle notes a sky-storm is brewing and learns Rook has never seen one, he envies Rook for being old enough to appreciate his experiences with such things. Pointing toward the Eastern Roost and the Free Glades, Knuckle warns Rook against going to the Foundry Glade, and Rook is so happy that he has nearly reached his destination that he nearly forgets his companions are not with him. Then he hears Magda's voice and rushes downstairs to reunite with Magda, Stob and Hekkle. Hekkle announces it is time to leave, refusing the offered hospitality since they will sup, dine and sleep in the Free Glades tonight. At sunset, as they near the Free Glades, another adventure seems imminent when a logworm appears, but a swarm of snickets disappear down the logworm's throat in order to eat the creature from the inside out, saving the children yet again. When the group finally climbs to the top of a large hill, they look down to see the Free Glades spread out beneath them, and Rook is ecstatic at this first sight of his new home.



Section 10: Chapter 11

Section 10: Chapter 11 Summary

Chapter 11: Stormhornet begins with "Lake Landing" in which Rook, Magda and Stob race up the include with Hekkle trailing behind them before he shows them the different areas such as Waif Glen, New Undertown and Lufwood Tower. A gnokgoblin approaches, introducing himself as Parsimmon, High Master of Lake Landing, but he is surprised to see a fourth figure crossing the walkway since he was only expecting three. Xanth arrives and produces his bloodoak-tooth pendant, claiming he is the sole survivor of the latest group of apprentices sent because they heard Rook, Stob and Magda were captured in a shryke raid. In "The Woodtroll Workshop", Rook is irritated that he is not getting the hang of this. Magda and Stob are doing well, but Xanth excels the most. Rook finds it hard to dislike Xanth, though he distrusted him at first, since Xanth keeps to himself. As Rook insists he will never get this, Oakley Gruffbark, the woodtroll master, tells Rook to let the wood speak to him before dismissing class. At dinner, Rook has little appetite because he will never learn to fly if he cannot carve his prow. He goes to the platform where the skycraft lessons take place and watches the storm approach. Rook laughs as he notes a perfect little red and yellow creature flying over the lake. The next morning, Rook hurries to the timber yards and begins to form his skycraft, and when Oakley notes that his craft is formed in the shape of a skyhornet, Rook whispers the word as he caresses the wood. In "The Gardens of Light", Rook looks up at his tutor, an ancient spindlebug named Tweezel who coaches the students on varnish which allows the skycrafts to gain buoyancy. Xanth's varnish is perfect, but the others' need work. While Stob goes to acquire more materials to start over, the others hear a scream and go to rescue Stob who is stuck to the wall after trying to acquire mole-glue from the wrong end of the slime-mole again.

In "The Slaughterers Camp", Magda becomes entangled in her sails, but Rook controls his. Brisket, the slaughterer assigned to teach the four apprentices about sail-setting and ropecraft, tells Magda that she must feel what the sail tells her through the cord before untying her. During lunch, Xanth practices with his ropecraft, but when Stob calls him a show-off, Rook defends Xanth who he pities because of his haunted expression and lonely manner though Xanth has gained a headstart on the others. Stob is more playful around the slaughterers than he has ever been before. Hearing a cry from above, Rook looks up to see Knuckle on the Woodwasp, and Rook tells Knuckle that the Stormhornet is waiting to be flown if his masters ever let him. Knuckle says he has heard that Rook and Xanth are both naturals. In "The Naming Rite", Parsimmon holds an assembly to welcome Rook, Stob, Magda and Xanth to the Academy's long list of brave librarian knights. Flanked by tutors, Parsimmon praises the apprentices before announcing it is time to name their skycrafts which they will fly for the first time tomorrow. Each apprentice steps forward to name their skycrafts and describe their intended treatise-journey. Magda names her skycraft Woodmoth, Stob names his Hammelhorn, Xanth's is Ratbird, and Rook's skycraft is called Stormhornet. Rook intends to create a treatise entitled "An Eyewitness Account of the Mythical Great



Convocation of Banderbears". Touching their pendants, the apprentices swear "this we pledge to do, or perish in the attempt" (page 218).

Section 10: Chapter 11 Analysis

Chapter 11: Stormhornet is divided into several sections as follows: "Lake Landing", "The Woodtroll Workshop", "The Gardens of Light", "The Slaughterers Camp" and "The Naming Rite". This chapter encompasses the majority of the time Rook, Stob and Magda spend at Lake Landing to further their education, summarizing a period of at least several months. "Lake Landing" describes the children's initial reaction to Lake Landing and their introduction to the High Master, Parsimmon. Rook is stunned as they reach a vast, still lake with a tall tower in the center, and Hekkle welcomes them to Lake Landing Academy, "the jewel of the Free Glades, and beacon of hope to all who love and value freedom" (page 191). Awed by four apprentices in sky crafts, Rook laments that he will never fly so well, but Hekkle assures Rook that he knew he was special from first sight, and though Rook will learn a lot at Lake Landing, he already has something that no amount of teaching can give. During this point of the novel, the librarian knight elects also meet Xanth who arrives in Lake Landing right behind them, claiming he was part of a second group of apprentices sent because they heard Rook, Stob and Magda were captured by shrykes. Xanth also claims that the rest of his group was killed. Rook feels uneasy with Xanth, showing his keen intuition. Parsimmon is sad to lose apprentices, but those lucky enough to reach the Free Glades are very precious and will be taught all that he knows. "The Woodtroll Workshop" depicts the apprentices learning to work with wood. Xanth excels while Rook and the others encounter some difficulty. Rook overcomes his troubles when he sees a skyhornet and realizes the form he has chosen for his skycraft. They learn how to create the varnish which will allow their skycrafts to gain buoyancy and fly in "The Gardens of Light". The group learns how to control their ropes and sails in "The Slaughterers Camp", and by "The Naming Rite", their crafts are created, so they name their skycrafts and announce their chosen treatise-journeys. This chapter gives a brief synopsis of the education on skycrafts that Rook, Magda, Stob and Xanth receive at Lake Landing, and these lessons will follow them into their treatise-journeys, saving their lives many times and helping them learn new things.



Section 11: Chapter 12 & Chapter 13

Section 11: Chapter 12 & Chapter 13 Summary

In Chapter 12: Flight, Magda, Stob and Xanth are already dressed in their green flight suits when Rook wakes the next morning. Excited for his first flight, Rook dresses hurriedly and joins the others. Because their flight instructor is late, Stob suggests a flight around the lake, and the others readily agree; however, the event proves disastrous as Stob crashes, and Magda and Rook fall into the lake. The most successful pilot is Xanth until he crashes on his landing and breaks his leg as their flight instructor, Varis Lodd, appears. Six months later, Rook soars above Lake Landing during his final flight, saying his goodbyes to each of his tutors. He has also become very close to Varis in the prior months, but as she and Parsimmon wish Rook, Magda and Stob success on their treatise-journeys, two guards arrive with a wounded apprentice who was attacked by shrykes. Rook is bothered because Xanth looks away guiltily.

In Chapter 13: The Foundry Glade, Varis summons Rook and Knuckle to tell them that Xanth has been spying on the Guardians of Night since his injury and has reported that banderbears are being enslaved in the Foundry Glade. Rook and Knuckle immediately agree to help free the banderbears. The three of them fly to the Foundry Glade where they spy on the goblins beating banderbears, and when the foundries fall idle with only one sleeping guard keeping watch, Knuckle retrieves the keys while Rook holds Varis's skycraft steady so she can drop to the ground and free the banderbears. As the banderbears move towards the tree line, a group of goblins leap into battle while Hemuel Spume orders them to capture Varis. Rook helps Varis back onto her skycraft while Knuckle defends them. Rook sees the last banderbear turn as a goblin aims its arrow at the creature's heart, so Rook flies in front of the banderbear, the arrow embedding itself into his shoulder. Varis pulls Rook to safety in the tree line, telling him he will be okay as his vision blurs. She tells Knuckle that the arrow is likely poisoned so they need to get Rook back to Lake Landing immediately or he will die.

Section 11: Chapter 12 & Chapter 13 Analysis

In Chapter 12: Flight, Rook, Magda, Stob and Xanth prepare to begin their flight lessons. The skycrafts look good, but their flight instructor is late. Saying he will not stand for it, Stob suggests that once around the lake will not do any harm, and the others agree. Unable to wait to be in the sky, Rook rushes to the Stormhornet and releases the sails, but he is unprepared for the thrill of flight as the Stormhornet responds to his movements. The four of them race around, but when Stob crashes into a tree, Rook grows distracted and allows the Stormhornet to dip into the water. Magda also falls into the lake, and Xanth mocks them as he flies back to the landing. Rook worries Xanth is approaching the landing too fast, and when a figure steps out onto the dock, Xanth crashes. Rook, Stob and Magda rush back to the landing and learn that



Xanth's leg is broken. Stob blames himself, claiming they should have waited for their stupid flight instructor. Unamused, Varis Lodd introduces herself as their flight instructor and says they have just learned their first lesson. Six months later, Rook soars into the sky above Parsimmon and Varis, feeling bad for Xanth who still walks with a stick and knowing that tonight is especially tough for Xanth since it is the final flight before Rook, Stob and Magda become fully-fledge librarian knights, ready to embark on their treatise-journeys. It seems like a long time since Rook first arrived in the Free Glades, and he cannot believe he is finally in his own skycraft after years of listening to the tales. Rook thanks and bids farewell to each of his tutors as he flies over their buildings before returning to Central Lake where Magda and Stob wait for him to join them for their final descent. As they land, Varis praises them for a job well done. Rook recalls how haughty Varis seemed at first, but he has felt close to her ever since telling her who he is and that she was the one who rescued him. Varis informs Rook, Magda and Stob that it is time for them to embark on their treatise-journeys, and Parsimmon wishes them good luck. Suddenly, two guards bring forth a young apprentice, saying the others were ambushed by shrykes. Parsimmon sends the boy to Tweezel to have his wounds tended, and Varis is nervous because that is the third group that has been ambushed; she suspects the Guardians of Night are responsible, and though Parsimmon agrees, he insists it is a matter for the Free Glades Council. Now is time to celebrate Stob, Magda and Rook's success. Rook notices Xanth in the shadows and calls to him, but Xanth looks away. Magda claims Xanth must be sad because he cannot accompany them on their journeys, but though her words make sense, Rook does not believe them because Xanth's eyes do not show sadness, regret or envy. They show guilt, indicating that Xanth is responsible.

In Chapter 13: The Foundry Glade, Rook is excited to feel like a real librarian knight as he flies through the Deepwoods on a raid with Varis Lodd and Knuckle. The prior evening before he turned in, Varis summoned Rook and Knuckle to tell them that Xanth, who has been spying on the Guardians of Night since his injury, reported that slavery has returned to the Foundry Glade where banderbears are being enslaved. Varis wants to rescue them, and she knew Rook would want to help since he loves banderbears as much as she does. Rook and Knuckle immediately agree to help. Varis leads Rook and Knuckle to land on a large tree where Rook studies the glade through a telescope. Hearing the laboring groans, Rook and Varis want to kill Hemuel Spume, the Foundry Master. At first, there is no sight of the banderbears, but Rook is shocked to see a shackled, half-starved banderbear being beaten by two goblins with sticks. Five more appear in worse condition, their spirits obviously crushed. Rook watches as the banderbears are chained inside the slave-hut and the foundries fall idle with only one sleeping guard at his post. When Varis signals, she, Rook and Knuckle take to the sky. Using a lasso, Knuckle retrieves the keys from the sleeping guard while Rook tethers Varis's skycraft to the Stormhornet, holding them both steady as Varis drops to the ground and unlocks the slave-hut, freeing the banderbears. The banderbears slowly make their way toward the tree line, but a sound from the wagons lets Rook know that something is wrong just before a group of goblins spring out to battle the banderbears; however, Hemuel Spume appears and orders the goblins to capture Varis Lodd. Varis races to her skycraft, but she is thrown to the ground when Rook loses grip of the tether rope. Knuckle shoots goblins with his crossbow as Rook helps Varis board her skycraft.



Rook is relieved to see the banderbears escaping into the woods, but Spume orders the goblins to shoot down Varis, Rook and Knuckle so Varis orders them to scatter. Rook sees the last banderbear turn, and Varis shouts a warning as a goblin aims his arrow at the banderbear's heart. Rook flies in front of the banderbear, and the arrow embeds in his shoulder as Knuckle shoots the goblin. Varis tells Knuckle that Rook is in grave danger, foreshadowing his following fever.



Section 12: Chapter 14 & Chapter 15

Section 12: Chapter 14 & Chapter 15 Summary

In Chapter 14: Fever, Rook alternates between wakefulness and sleep while Tweezel tends his injury. Magda and Stob tell him goodbye before leaving for their treatise-journeys, and before returning to the Tower of Night, Xanth visits Rook to admit that he is a traitor and that he set up the attack at the Foundry Glade. He also mentions returning to his friend Cowlquape. Several weeks later, Rook is healed, so he prepares to leave for his treatise-journey, unable to believe it has finally begun.

In Chapter 15: Wumeru, Rook hopes that "perhaps today will be the day" (page 265) as he sets out again for three months while searching for banderbears. He keeps records of everything he sees in his treatise-log, but he has yet to encounter an elusive banderbear. When he comes upon a stream with banderbear footprints, he waits for the banderbear to appear, watching it for several days before acquiring fruit for it. After several days of leaving fruit by the stream, Rook appears in front of the banderbear to offer it fruit personally. Over the next weeks, Rook gains the banderbear's trust, and they become friends, foraging, eating and sleeping together, all of which Rook records in his treatise-log. Rook also begins to understand the banderbears' language and learns his friend's name is Wumeru. One night, Rook wakes to find Wumeru's nest empty, so he takes to the sky and sees her. He also hears the yodel of another banderbear calling her and hurrying to her to the Valley of a Thousand Echoes. Wumeru ignores Rook's questions, and after he scribes the words he heard from the other banderbear, he looks up to see that Wumeru has abandoned him.

Section 12: Chapter 14 & Chapter 15 Analysis

During Rook's illness in Chapter 14: Fever, Rook tosses as he dreams of being surrounded by woodwolves, crying because he is left alone and cold just like when he was four years old. As something menacing looms in the old nightmare, Rook wakes to Tweezel soothing him and promising the fever will soon break. Alternating between sleep and wakefulness, Rook loses sense of time until Magda and Stob come to say goodbye before leaving for their treatise-journeys. After several more days of Tweezel's ministrations, Rook is visited by Xanth who comes to say goodbye before returning to New Sanctaphrax. Xanth tells Rook that he has repaid Rook's friendship with lies and treachery; he serves Orbix Xaxis and betrayed the new apprentices which is why the goblins at the Foundry Glade were ready for Varis Lodd. Xanth insists that he would have warned Rook if he knew Rook was going because Rook is one of only two people he has ever considered a friend. Xanth belongs to the Guardians of Night and cannot escape them, and now he must leave because he has already caused too much damage. "I am as much a prisoner of the Tower of Night as my friend Cowlquape to whom I must now return" (page 257). Xanth explains that Cowlquape first told him of his adventures in the Deepwoods, and Xanth had to see it for himself, even if it meant



becoming a spy, but now he has betrayed both of his friends: Cowlquape and Rook. The mention of Cowlquape foreshadows the importance of this character though he plays a very small role in the book. Rook cannot believe Xanth is a traitor as Xanth leaves after expressing the doubt that their paths will ever cross again. Rook is excited as he dons his flight-suit. Two weeks after Magda and Stob set off, it is finally his turn to leave for his treatise-journey. Parsimmon approaches with a second figure, the Professor of Darkness, who arrived with news of Xanth's treachery. Rook tells Parsimmon and the Professor of Darkness that Xanth came to visit him before disappearing, trying to push away the sadness caused by Xanth's betrayal. Varis tells Rook it is time to go, and they all wish him luck as he takes to the sky. The mysterious Deepwoods lie ahead, and imagining his completed treatise, Rook realizes it has finally began.

In Chapter 15: Wumeru, Rook wakes in the rain, checking on the Stormhornet. He cooks and eats though the loafsap is unpalatable. Then, he untethers the Stormhornet and makes sure he does not leave anything behind, thinking "perhaps today will be the day" (page 265) as he takes to the air. Rook has been journeying for three long months as he searches for banderbears. He has heard them three times and is eager to see them healthy in their own habitat, but they prove elusive. Still, he keeps records in his treatise-log of the flora and fauna he encounters daily as he becomes acquainted with the Deepwoods. He often wonders how Stob and Magda fare, wondering if they are finishing their treatises while his has yet to begin. When Rook searches for water, he comes upon a stream where he finds recent banderbear footprints. Rook decides to wait for the banderbear to appear, and shortly before dawn, he is amazed by the banderbear's magnificence. He watches the banderbear return over the next several days, taking notes and drawing pictures before deciding to track the creature. Rook follows the banderbear and sees it eat a blue-black fruit which he collects and deposits by the stream for several days. On the fourth night, the banderbear appears disappointed when no fruit awaits her, but Rook steps forward and offers the fruit, allowing the banderbear to make the connection between the two before she takes the fruit. From this point, Rook begins to develop a close friendship with the banderbear, Wumeru, and they eat and forage together. She even teaches him her language. She touches Rook's chest with her paw and says "fr-uh-nz", causing Rook to wonder where she learned a word from his language. Rook is distraught when he wakes one night to realize that Wumeru has abandoned him. He hears another banderbear mention the Valley of a Thousand Echoes, foreshadowing Rook's decision to follow Wumeru to the aforementioned location in hopes of finding the Great Convocation of the Banderbears, the topic he intends to discuss in his treatise.



Section 13: Chapter 16 & Chapter 17

Section 13: Chapter 16 & Chapter 17 Summary

In Chapter 16: The Great Convocation, Rook quickly stores his belongings on the Stormhornet and sets sail because he cannot lose Wumeru now since he suspects she is heading for the banderbear convocation. He sails west, following Wumeru without being seen as she walks in a straight line as if hypnotized. He wonders if the Valley of a Thousand Echoes is where the banderbears gather for the Great Convocation. Following Wumeru, Rook hears seven or eight banderbears yodelling from different directions and becomes hopeful that this is the convocation as he can think of no other reason for so many solitary creatures to gather. When Rook lands and accuses Wumeru of abandoning him, she growls at him in rage, telling him it is forbidden for him to follow her path. Rook apologizes, but unwilling to give up now, he tethers the Stormhornet and carefully follows Wumeru to the field where thousands of banderbears chant. Unable to believe he has found the Great Convocation of the Banderbears, Rook describes the scene in his treatise-log, but transfixed as he listens to them sing of their homes, he drops the treatise-log, falling from the tree as he reaches for it and losing consciousness. When Rook awakes, he is surrounded by glaring banderbears who want to kill him for daring "to steal the echoes of our valley and trespass on our sacred convocation" (pages 291-292). Rook claims he is a friend of the banderbears, but Wumeru says he has brought shame on their companionship, and a large male banderbear says Rook must die for the sacrilege of stealing their songs. Luckily, Wuralo, a female banderbear, stops the execution, claiming Rook saved her at the Foundry Glade. Showing his scar, Rook explains he has always loved banderbears and will protect them to his last breath. Gala, the oldest and wisest, proclaims Rook to be truthful, so he is renamed Uralowa, he who took the poison-stick. Rook is allowed to witness the Great Convocation as only one other has ever been permitted. Sensing movement behind him, Rook turns to see an old man, Twig, who hands Rook his dropped treatise-log. Twig used to be a sky pirate captain and a defender of Old Sanctaphrax, but now he is friend to the banderbears.

In Chapter 17: The Captain's Tale, Twig tells Rook about the glorious morning after the storm fifty years ago. The waters of the Edge were rejuvenated, so Twig prepared to return to Riverrise on the Skyraider to collect his crew who await his return. He acquires a crew for the journey, but after several months, only four of his crew remained and they had still not found Riverrise. Their 16-year search led them to Parsimmon in the Free Glades where they learned about the stone-sickness before continuing their search. The rest of Twig's crew died of blackwater fever contracted from water in a still pool. Twig woke in the accursed Edgelands where he deserted the Skyraider, tethering her to a rock, before returning to the Deepwoods where he has since wandered. Still, Twig searches for Riverrise and thinks of the friends he failed, including the Most High Academe of Sanctaphrax, Cowlquape who was murdered long ago by Vox Verlix. Recognizing the name, Rook tells Twig that Cowlquape is still alive, causing Twig to gasp in shock.



Section 13: Chapter 16 & Chapter 17 Analysis

In Chapter 16: The Great Convocation, Rook's goal for his treatise-journey seems to be reached when he follows Wumeru to the Valley of a Thousand Echoes where he suspects the Great Convocation of the Banderbears is held. His assumption seems correct as he reaches the location where thousands of banderbears are gathered; however, Wumeru turns on Rook, angry that he followed her to this sacred place. Rook pretends he will leave but secretly follows Wumeru, intent on continuing his treatise-journey. While listening to the banderbears' song, Rook becomes so mesmerized that he drops his treatise-log and falls from a tree, revealing himself to the banderbears who are angry that he has trespassed on their sacred ceremony. Luckily, the banderbear that Rook took the arrow for back at the Foundry Glade, Wuralo, steps forward to defend Rook, and the banderbears agree that he is a friend since he risked his life to save one of them. Rook also meets Twig, an old sky pirate captain, as this chapter ends, foreshadowing his interactions with Twig which occur in the next chapter. Chapter 17: The Captain's Tale consists of Twig tells Rook about his adventures as a sky pirate captain, particularly about his search for the crew he left in Riverrise shortly before the stone-sickness struck. Twig has been searching for his crew ever since, and he feels guilty that he has not found them. He is particularly upset that he failed Cowlquape, the Most High Academe of Sanctaphrax, and the mention of Cowlquape brings to mind that this is who Xanth mentioned as a friend imprisoned in the Tower of Night, foreshadowing Rook sharing this information with Twig. This foreshadowing is quickly fulfilled when Rook informs Twig that Cowlquape is imprisoned when Twig incorrectly mentions that Cowlquape is dead.



Section 14: Chapter 18

Section 14: Chapter 18 Summary

In Chapter 18: Skyraider, Twig is astonished as Rook tells him how he learned from Xanth that Cowlquape is imprisoned in the Tower of Night. He also tells Twig about how the Guardians of Night enslaved the Undertowners, forcing the Librarian Academics into the sewers. Twig asks about the place where Cowlquape is imprisoned, and Rook explains the impenetrable tower can only be attacked by air, but a skycraft is too small. Twig suggests a sky ship is large enough; they can save Cowlquape in the Skyraider! When Rook points out that they have no crew, several banderbears offer to accompany them: Wuralo, Weeg, Rummel, Meeru, Loom and Molleen. Wumeru begs to join them, and Twig agrees when Rook explains she is his friend. Saying there is no time to delay as the Skyraider awaits in the Edgelands, Twig promises Cowlquape he will not fail this quest as he leads his crew past the cheering banderbears. Twig and the banderbears head north toward the Edgelands with Rook sailing above in the Stormhornet. Impressed by how well the solitary creatures work together, Rook asks Wumeru why they do not dwell together, learning they attract less attention and live longer on their own. When Wuralo finally announces that they have reached the Edgelands, Rook joins her, agreeing that this is a dreadful place. As the rest of the crew catches up, Twig instructs them to look for a great black demon crag, but it is impossible to see through the thick mist. Rook finally sees the crag when the mist clears, but when the wind blows, Rook fears they are lost until Twig tells him to look and he sees the largest sky vessel he has ever see chained to the crag. Unable to believe how much has been lost since the First Age of Flight, Rook flies to the Skyraider and throws down the ladders allowing Twig and the banderbears to board. As the banderbears prepare to set off, Twig notes that he sees no sign of stone-sickness but they need to hurry because he fears the banderbears may be infected. He warns Rook that the Skyraider will not make it back, so this is a one-way journey to the Tower of Night. As Twig gets the ship in the air, Rook cannot believe he is flying aboard a sky pirate ship. Twig never thought he would feel like a sky pirate again, and when Rook points out that he is a sky pirate, Twig agrees "aye, Rook, I suppose I am. The last of the sky pirates" (page 328).

Section 14: Chapter 18 Analysis

Chapter 18: Skyraider begins with Rook telling Twig what he knows of Cowlquape's imprisonment, including all he knows about the Tower of Night. Since the Tower of Night can only be breached from the air, Twig suggests rescuing Cowlquape in the Skyraider, his skyship which still has not succumbed to the stone-sickness, foreshadowing Cowlquape's rescue. Since Twig and Rook do not have a crew, several banderbears offer to join their crew to rescue Cowlquape, demonstrating the fierce loyalty of the banderbears to those they consider friends. Twig eagerly leads the banderbears and Rook toward the Edgelands where he left the Skyraider, promising that he will not fail Cowlquape again. Twig's eagerness to go on this mission shows the depth of his guilt



for his failure to return to his crew in Riverrise. After a difficult journey through the Deepwoods, the group reaches the Edgelands and finds the Skyraider. Twig flies in the Stormhornet onto the ship and lowers the ropes so Twig and the crew can board. While preparing for their journey to the Tower of Night, Twig warns Rook that the Skyraider will not make it back from the Tower of Night; his only hope is that it holds out long enough to rescue Cowlquape. Twig's comment about being the last of the sky pirates shows that this novel was named after him, "The Last of the Sky Pirates".



Section 15: Chapter 19, Chapter 20 & Epilogue

Section 15: Chapter 19, Chapter 20 & Epilogue Summary

In Chapter 19: The Tower of Night, a goblin, Slab, is irritated with Gobrat who did not show up for guard duty, leaving Slab at his post for eighteen hours. When Bragnot joins Slab, he notices something in the sky, and Slab is awed to see a great ghostly vessel. Before falling under the ship's arrows, Bragnot orders Slab to sound the alarms, so Slab rushes to the tower to announce they are under attack by a sky ship. Soon, the whole Tower of Night answers the call to arms, and the Guardians of Night hasten to the west side of the tower to repel the sky ship, none noticing a small skycraft swooping down on the far side of the tower. Chaos ensues as the Guardians of Night fire harpoons and boulders at the sky ship which barely flinches with the impact. The banderbears respond with a bombardment of flaming ironwood balls, causing the tower to suffer much more than the ship. The battle continues with many Guardians of Night falling to their deaths, and several banderbears are killed as well. On the other side of the tower, Rook lands the Stormhornet on a small deserted gantry, tethering the skycraft and disappearing inside the small, dark entrance. Rook is distraught that anyone would create such a place as he wraps his nightspider-silk cloak around him and reads the names on each prisoner's door. He must find Cowlquape and escape this terrible place because the Skyraider cannot occupy the Guardians of Night forever. When a goblin approaches from the shadows, Rook thrusts his knife in the goblin's throat and demands to be taken to Cowlquape. The goblin leads Rook to a door engraved with the name Cowlquape Pentephraxis. Rook opens the door and tells Cowlquape he has come to rescue him. Cowlquape gathers his papers and smiles; he is ready to leave. Meanwhile, the battle rages on up at Midnight Spike. The crew of the Skyraider has been reduced to five; Rummel, Meeru and Loom are all dead. Molleen alerts Twig to a scar in the flight-rock from where the Guardians' rocks struck. Noting that the ship has been contaminated, Twig knows there is not much time, but he refuses to abandon Rook now though he is fighting a losing battle. Twig orders Weeg to cut the weights, hoping it will give them the lift they need, and the ship rises a bit as the first weight it cut. Luckily, Twig sees Rook's signal and tells Cowlquape they are coming to get him. On the platform at the base of Midnight Spike, Orbix Xaxis sees a purple light and realizes it must be a signal. Watching the Skyraider pull away from Midnight's Spike and head in a large circle, Orbix orders the Guardians to check the dungeons. Twig begins his descent on the east side of the tower, excited when he sees Cowlquape. As the Skyraider drops below the ledge, Rook pushes Cowlquape and Wumeru catches him. Twig greets Cowlquape happily, but Molleen warns that the flight rock is breaking up, so Weeg cuts the weights, allowing the Skyraider to leap up, around the tower and into the open sky as Orbix Xaxis aims his crossbow at the helm. Back on the gantry, Rook untethers the Stormhornet, but the tether-rope is stuck. His heart stops when a figure emerges at the



end of the gantry and orders him to stop. Recognizing Xanth, Rook pleads for their friendship's sake, but Xanth aims his crossbow. Rook closes his eyes, but Xanth's bolt slices through the tether-rope, sending the Stormhornet into the air. Looking back at Xanth, Rook wants to believe his friend set him free deliberately. Rook notices the Skyraider is in front of him, but it is gaining speed instead of waiting for him, and it will soon sail over the Edge and be lost in the Open Sky if it does not change its course.

In Chapter 20: Return, Rook realizes how bad the situation has become as he speeds forward; the flight-rock is crumbling and the ship is out of control. He notices the banderbears abandoning the ship, carrying Cowlquape, but when he lands next to them and asks where Twig is, Cowlquape points to the ship. Wumeru explains that Twig is mortally wounded and has chosen to die with his sky ship. Rook praises Twig's bravery as he cries at the loss of the brave captain. He tells Cowlquape, Weeg and Molleen that they will be welcome in the sewers, and he will lead the way, but when he looks back at the Edge, he sees a great bird with something in its talons. Cowlquape laughs because it is the caterbird whose hatching Twig was present at when he was a lad, and as Rook wonders where it is taking Rook, his heart soars as he realizes the only place the caterbird would take Twig is Riverrise.

In the Epilogue, the old nightmare returns, but Rook does not wake as the massive creature approaches. He reaches out and touches fur as he is enfolded into gentle arms. He has never known such safety and comfort. Rook wakes to the voice of Varis Lodd who praises his brave deeds. Telling her about his dream, Rook asks where she found him, and Varis says she has no clue how he escaped the slave-traders who took his parents, but she found him in a banderbear's nest. She has no clue how he got there, but Rook, remembering the feeling of safety, smiles and tells her that he knows how he got there.

Section 15: Chapter 19, Chapter 20 & Epilogue Analysis

Chapter 19: The Tower of Night begins with an irrelevant narrative about several of the goblins guarding the Tower of Night, but their narrative is cut short when the Skyraider begins attacking the tower. Soon, the Guardians of Night are battling Twig and the crew of the Skyraider, and the Guardians assume that the ship is trying to destroy the Midnight Spike, oblivious to Rook who directs the Stormhornet to the opposite side of the tower where he sneaks into the dungeon. Fulfilling earlier foreshadowing, Rook uses his cloak to hide as he searches the dungeons for Cowlquape. He is distraught at the horror of the place, feeling vindicated in the Librarian Academics' battle against the Guardians of Night, now certain that it is a matter of good versus evil. When a goblin comes upon Rook, Rook forces the goblin to lead him to Cowlquape's cell where he rescues the aged professor. Meanwhile, three banderbears are killed aboard the Skyraider, and the flight-rock has become contaminated, sinking under the weight of stone-sickness. Twig tries to stall for time, but luckily, Rook signals to him just in time, so Twig retrieves Cowlquape from Rook and sails away. Unfortunately, Rook gets stuck when his tether-rope snags on a rock. He is sure he is done for when a figure orders



him to stop, but he begins to plead in the name of friendship when he recognizes Xanth. Without saying anything, Xanth aims his crossbow and shoots an arrow through the rope, freeing Rook who chooses to believe that Xanth freed him intentionally. As Rook chases after the Skyraider, he realizes something is wrong, foreshadowing the demise of the ship.

In the penultimate chapter, Rook realizes the Skyraider is out of control, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing. He joins the banderbears and Cowlquape who have abandoned the dying ship, but he is saddened to learn that Twig has been mortally wounded and decided to die with his sky ship. As Rook offers to lead Cowlquape and the banderbear crew to the Undertown sewers where he knows they will be welcomed by the Librarian Academics, he glances back to see a caterbird carrying Twig in its talons, presumably to take him to the restorative waters of Riverrise, though whether they make it in time is not revealed. The final chapter, the Epilogue, consists of Rook having his recurring nightmare, only this time it continues as the massive creature he has always feared takes him into its gentle arms, allowing Rook to feel safety and comfort unlike he has ever known. When he talks to Varis Lodd about his dream, since she was the one who found him, she tells him that she found him in a banderbear's nest, and this all makes sense to Rook who realizes a banderbear rescued him when his parents were captured by slave-traders. This also explains Rook's deep love for the creatures.



Characters

Rook Barkwater

Rook Barkwater is the protagonist of "The Last of the Sky Pirates". He is a 13-year-old under-librarian who lives in the Undertown sewers with the Librarian Academics. A foundling, Rook was rescued by Varis Lodd when he was three years old after slave-traders captured his parents. While living in the Undertown sewers with the Librarian Academics, Rook dreams of becoming a librarian knight, chosen to continue his education at Lake Landing and search for the cure to stone-sickness, a mysterious ailment that ruins rocks' buoyancy and makes skysailing impossible. Rook is shocked when he is chosen, along with Stob and Magda. Disguised as merchants, Rook, Stob and Magda travel along the Great Mire Road where Rook helps free an imprisoned sky pirate, Deadbolt Vulpoon. They continue on through the Twilight Woods to the Eastern Roost where Hekkle disguises them as shrykes and leads them through the perilous Deepwoods to Lake Landing where they are joined by Xanth, a Guardian of Night disguised as an apprentice in order to spy on the Librarian Academics.

At Lake Landing, Rook, Stob, Magda and Xanth learn to build and control sky crafts, but Xanth breaks his leg during his first flight, preventing his continued studies. After completing his training, Rook accompanies Varis Lodd and Knuckle to the Foundry Glade where they free enslaved banderbears; however, Rook grows feverish after being struck by a poisoned arrow. During Rook's convalescence, Magda and Stob leave for their treatise-journeys, and Xanth visits Rook to apologize for setting Varis Lodd up to be captured at the Foundry Glade before he disappears since he has caused enough damage already. Healed, Rook leaves for his treatise-journey with the goal of finding the Great Convocation of Banderbears. He befriends Wumeru, a young banderbear, but she is upset when he follows her to the Great Convocation. The banderbears are ready to kill Rook until Wuralo, the banderbear he saved at the Foundry Glade, speaks up in his defense. Rook also meets Twig, a sky pirate captain, and when Twig mentions his friend, Cowlquape, Rook tells him that Cowlquape is being held prisoner at the Tower of Night. Twig, Rook and a crew of banderbears retrieve the Skyraider, Twig's ship, from the Edgelands and sail to the Tower of Night. While Twig and the banderbears create a distraction by attacking the tower, Rook sneaks into the dungeons and rescues Cowlquape; however, his tether-rope gets snagged as he tries to flee. Xanth appears and orders Rook to stop, but recognizing his friend, he aims his arrow at the rope, freeing Rook. Rook rushes to the banderbears who have abandoned ship, but Twig has been mortally wounded and decides to die with his ship. At the last moment, a caterbird rescues Twig and flies away with him, presumably to take him to the restorative waters of Riverrise. While discussing how Varis Lodd found him, Rook realizes that a banderbear saved him when his parents were captured by slave-traders.



Xanth Filatine

Xanth Filatine is a young Guardian of Night who convinces Orbix Xaxis, Most High Guardian of Night, to allow him to pose as a Librarian Knight elect in order to act as a spy and infiltrate the entire system of supposed traitors. Xanth secretly follows Rook, Magda and Stob along the Great Mire Road, through the Twilight Woods, the Eastern Roost and through the Deepwoods to the Free Glades. At Lake Landing, Xanth claims that he is part of a second group of apprentices sent to Lake Landing after they heard Rook, Magda and Stob were captured by shrykes; the rest of his contingent did not survive the journey, he claims. Xanth excels in his studies at Lake Landing and befriends Rook, but when he breaks his leg during his first flight on his skycraft, Xanth can no longer continue his studies. Instead, he pretends to be a spy for the Librarian Academics. Because of this, Xanth tells Varis Lodd that the banderbears are enslaved at Foundry Glade, trying to set Varis up to be captured.

When Rook is injured at the Foundry Glade, Xanth feels guilty because Rook is one of only two people he has ever considered a friend. Xanth confesses to Rook that he is a traitor and belongs to the Guardians of Night before leaving since he has already done enough damage. All along, Xanth has been informing the Guardians of Night of all of the Librarian Academics' movements, allowing the Guardians of Night to capture all of the apprentices sent to study at Lake Landing since Xanth's arrival. Xanth returns to the Tower of Night where, later, he catches Rook as Rook tries to escape after saving Cowlquape. Xanth aims his arrow and cuts the rope preventing Rook from escaping. Xanth is also friends with Cowlquape whose stories of his adventures in the Deepwoods are what inspired Xanth to act as a spy to experience some of the same wonders.

Stob Lummus

Stob Lummus is one of the other under-librarians chosen to become a Librarian Knight elect and travel to Lake Landing to continue his studies. He and Magda travel to Lake Landing with Rook, encountering many dangers along the way. At Lake Landing, Stob learns to build a skycraft, and he leaves for his treatise-journey while Rook is still fevered from the arrow he was shot with at the Foundry Glade.

Magda Burlix

Magda Burlix is one of the other under-librarians chosen to become a Librarian Knight elect and travel to Lake Landing to continue her studies. She and Stob travel to Lake Landing with Rook, encountering many dangers along the way. At Lake Landing, Magda learns to build a skycraft, and she leaves for his treatise-journey while Rook is still fevered from the arrow he was shot with at the Foundry Glade.



Varis Lodd

Varis Lodd is the librarian knight who rescued Rook when he was a child after his parents were captured by slave-traders. She is Felix's sister and the daughter of Fenbrus Lodd, High Librarian. Varis also serves as the flight instructor to Rook, Magda, Stob and Xanth. She wrote a treatise on banderbears, so when she learns that banderbears are being enslaved at the Foundry Glade, she leads Rook and Knuckle there to free the creatures, not knowing it was a trap set up to capture her. Luckily, Rook rescues Varis from being captured, though he is injured by a poisoned arrow.

Orbix Xaxis

Orbix Xaxis is the Most High Guardian of Night and therefore the antagonist of this story. He lives in the Tower of Night where he keeps Cowlquape imprisoned. Orbix allows Xanth to go to Lake Landing to spy on the Librarian Academics, his sworn enemy. Orbix Xaxis suspects a plot when he sees Rook's signal to Twig at the Tower of Night. Orbix is tall and imposing, and he wears dark glasses to repel any who try to curse him with the evil eye and a metal mask to purify the air he breathes.

Cowlquape Pentephraxis

Cowlquape Pentephraxis is a Librarian Academic who has been imprisoned by Orbix Xaxis in the Tower of Night for many years. He is friends with Xanth and tells the boys stories of his adventures in the Deepwoods which leads Xanth to go to Lake Landing as a spy so he can experience some of the wonders himself. When Twig mentions Cowlquape who he thinks is dead, Rook quickly corrects Twig's error, and they decide to rescue Cowlquape. Twig and his crew of banderbears attack the Tower of Night, distracting the Guardians of Night, while Rook sneaks into the dungeons on the other side of the tower and frees Cowlquape.

Twig

Twig is the last sky pirate captain and a friend to the banderbears. Rook meets Twig at the Great Convocation of the Banderbears in the Valley of a Thousand Echoes. Twig tells Rook about his history, specifically about his search for Riverrise where he left his crew fifty years ago. Twig is shocked but happy when he learns that Cowlquape is still alive, and he leads a crew consisting of Rook and a group of banderbears to the Edgelands where he left his sky ship, Skyraider. From the Edgelands, they fly to the Tower of Night where Twig and the banderbears distract the Guardians of Night by attacking the tower while Rook sneaks into the dungeons and frees Cowlquape. Twig is injured by Orbix Xaxis's arrow, so he decides to die with his sinking ship; however, a caterbird swoops in to rescue him at the last moment, presumably to take Twig to the restorative waters of Riverrise.



Wumeru

Wumeru is a female banderbear that Rook finds by a stream during his treatise-journey. Rook befriends Wumeru, and she teaches him the secret language of the banderbears. Wumeru is furious when Rook follows her to the Great Convocation of Banderbears at the Valley of a Thousand Echoes, but Rook is forgiven since he saved Wuralo at the Foundry Glade. Wumeru joins Twig's crew to save Cowlquape.

Felix Lodd

Felix Lodd is Rook's best friend in the sewers. He is the son of Fenbrus Lodd and the younger brother of the famous Varis Lodd. Felix is the favorite to be chosen as a Librarian Knight elect, so he is very disappointed when Rook is chosen instead. Though he does not tell his friend goodbye, Felix leaves his sword on Rook's bed for Rook to take with him on his journey to Lake Landing.

Alquix Venvax

Alquix Venvax is an aging librarian who favors Rook. He wants Rook to become his permanent assistant before Rook is chosen to continue his studies at Lake Landing.

Professor of Darkness

The Professor of Darkness dwells in the sewers with the Librarian Academics. He proposes Rook as a Librarian Knight elect because he has watched Rook for some time and is impressed with what he sees.

Tegan

Tegan is a gnokgoblin who helps Rook, Magda and Stob pass through the entrance to the Great Mire Road.

Partiful

Partiful is a nightwait guide who meets Rook, Stob and Magda at the rest platform along the Great Mire Road. He helps them flee after the sky-pirate raid to free Deadbolt Vulpoon, and he escorts them to the Twilight Woods.



Captain Deadbolt Vulpoon

Captain Deadbolt Vulpoon is a sky pirate captain who was captured by shrykes and imprisoned to lure his crew. He is caged at a rest platform along the Great Mire Road, and Rook befriends him and helps him escape during the sky-pirate raid.

Hekkle

Hekkle is the shryke-mate guide who meets Stob, Magda and Rook at the Eastern Roost. He dresses them as shrykes to enter the Deepwoods, and then he proceeds to protect them as he leads them through the Deepwoods to Lake Landing in the Free Glades.

Knuckle

Knuckle is a slaughter-pilot who saves Rook from a log worm right as Rook reaches the Silver Pastures. He becomes Rook's friend and accompanies Rook and Varis Lodd on their mission to free the enslaved banderbears at Foundry Glade.

Parsimmon

Parsimmon is a gnokgoblin and the High Master of Lake Landing.

Oakley Gruffbark

The woodtroll master, Oakley Gruffbark, tutors Rook, Stob, Magda and Xanth on woodwork to teach them how to create their skycrafts.

Tweezel

Tweezel is an ancient spindlebug and the greatest authority on varnish and its preparation in the Deepwoods. He tutors Rook, Magda, Stob and Xanth about varnish.

Brisket

A slaughterer, Brisket tutors Rook, Magda, Stob and Xanth on sail and ropes in preparation for their skycrafts.



Hemuel Spume

Hemuel Spume is the Foundry Master who enslaves the banderbears so Varis Lodd will rescue them because he hopes to capture Varis.

Gala

Gala is the oldest and wisest banderbear whose belief that Rook saved Wuralo at the Foundry Glade prevents his death.

Wuralo

Wuralo is the banderbear whose life Rook saves at the Foundry Glade when he moves in front of a poisoned arrow to save her from death. Wuralo joins Twig's crew to save Cowlquape.



Objects/Places

The Edge

The Edge is the setting of "The Last of the Sky Pirates". It is comprised of a large overhanging rock that juts out into the emptiness beyond and includes several specific regions which include the following: New Sanctaphrax, Stone Gardens, Undertown, Twilight Woods, Deepwoods and the Edgelands.

Edgewater

Edgewater is the name of the great river that pours down from the Edge.

Stone Gardens

The Stone Gardens is the region close to the farthest tip of the Edge where the buoyant rocks grew until stone-sickness began to spread.

Undertown

Once the main city of the Edge, Undertown citizens were enslaved after the spread of stone-sickness, and the Guardians of Night drove the Librarian Academics into the sewers.

Undertown Sewers

The Librarian Academics live in the Undertown sewers. This is where Rook spends most of his life.

Stone-sickness

Stone-sickness is a mysterious disease that halts new growth in the Stone Gardens and causes the buoyant rocks to decay and lose buoyancy, ending the sky-trade.

Deepwoods

The peaceful but deadly Deepwoods are the largest area of the Edge where many creatures live. The Librarian Academics believe the Deepwoods contain the cure to stone-sickness. Hekkle guides and protects Rook, Magda and Stob as they travel through the Deepwoods on their way to Lake Landing.



Lake Landing

Lake Landing is where Rook, Magda and Stob travel to continue their studies, learn to create skycrafts and prepare for their treatise-journeys.

Tower of Night

The Tower of Night is the home of Orbix Xaxis and where Cowlquape is imprisoned until Rook rescues him.

Great Mire Road

The Great Mire Road is the road between Undertown and the Twilight Woods.

Twilight Woods

The Twilight Woods is a large forest between Undertown and the Deepwoods where many go insane.

Eastern Roost

The Eastern Roost contains the Central Market where Undertowners trade with those who dwell in the Deepwoods. It is controlled by shrykes, so Hekkle dresses Rook, Stob and Magda as shrykes to lead them into the Deepwoods.

Stormhornet

Stormhornet is the name of Rook's skycraft.

Foundry Glade

Rook, Varis Lodd and Knuckle travel to the Foundry Glade to free the enslaved banderbears, but though they are successful, Rook is struck with a poison arrow.

Bloodoak-tooth Pendants

Bloodoak-tooth Pendants are worn by the Librarian Knight elects and their supporters, allowing Rook, Magda and Stob to identify their guides.

Valley of a Thousand Echoes

The Great Convocation of the Banderbears is held in the Valley of a Thousand Echoes, and this is where Rook meets Twig after he follows Wuralo to the valley.



Themes

Friendship

A major theme in "The Last of the Sky Pirates" is friendship. Rook acquires many friendships throughout this story. As the novel begins, his best friend is Felix Lodd who is a favorite to be chosen as a Librarian Knight elect. Rook is happy and excited for his friend even as he feels sorry for himself since he will lose his friend. When Rook is chosen instead, Felix does not appear to say goodbye, but he leaves his sword with Rook's belongings, symbolically expressing his love and concern for his friend. As Rook sets out for Lake Landing with Stob and Magda, he does not get along with Stob at first, but he becomes quick friends with Magda. On the journey, Rook also befriends the many guides sent to help the apprentices, including Tegan, Partiful and Hekkle. He also befriends Captain Deadbolt Vulpoon at the rest platform on the Great Mire Road. Knuckle saves Rook from the log worm in the Silver Pastures, beginning a friendship that progresses during Rook's continued education. Upon reaching Lake Landing, Rook meets and befriends Xanth. Rook finds it hard to dislike Xanth, though he distrusted him at first, since Xanth keeps to himself. Rook also becomes friendly with his tutors at Lake Landing: Oakley Gruffbark, Tweezel and Brisket. During his flight training, Rook becomes very close to Varis Lodd, who brought him to the Librarian Academics after his parents were taken by slave-traders, so when he finishes his studies and is prepared to depart for his treatise-journey, Varis asks him to accompany her to the Foundry Glade to release the enslaved banderbears.

During Rook's illness, he is sad that Magda and Stob leave for their treatise-journeys, thinking that they have become like a brother and sister to him after all they have been through. He is completely astounded when Xanth admits that he has repaid Rook's friendship with lies and treachery; he serves Orbix Xaxis and betrayed the new apprentices which is why the goblins at the Foundry Glade were ready for Varis Lodd. Xanth insists that he would have warned Rook if he knew Rook was going because Rook is one of only two people he has ever considered a friend, listing Cowlquape as the other person he considers a friend. After three months on his treatise-journey, Rook meets and befriends a young, female banderbear named Wumeru. Over the next weeks, Rook gains the banderbear's trust, and they become friends, foraging, eating and sleeping together, all of which Rook records in his treatise-log. Rook also begins to understand the banderbears' language and learns his friend's name is Wumeru. She touches Rook's chest with her paw and says "fr-uh-nz", causing Rook to wonder where she learned a word from his language. Rook follows Wumeru to the Valley of a Thousand Echoes, hoping to find the Great Convocation of the Banderbears, but when he comes upon it, Wumeru turns her back on him, claiming he has brought shame on their companionship. Fortunately, Wuralo, the banderbear that Rook saved from being shot at the Foundry Glade, comes to his defense, so Rook is allowed to witness the Great Convocation. He also meets and befriends Twig, the only other human to witness the Great Convocation of the Banderbears. While talking to Twig, Rook learns that Twig regrets failing his friend Cowlquape, and when Rook mentions that Cowlquape is still



alive, Twig, Rook and a group of banderbears set out to the Tower of Night to rescue Cowlquape from imprisonment. Back on the gantry, Rook untethers the Stormhornet, but the tether-rope is stuck. His heart stops when a figure emerges at the end of the gantry and orders him to stop. Recognizing Xanth, Rook pleads for their friendship's sake, but Xanth aims his crossbow. Rook closes his eyes, but Xanth's bolt slices through the tether-rope, sending the Stormhornet into the air. Looking back at Xanth, Rook wants to believe his friend set him free deliberately. After the battle at the Tower of Night, Twig is planning to go down with his dying ship since he was mortally wounded by a goblin's arrow, but a caterbird rescues him from the sinking ship, presumably to take him to the restorative waters of Riverrise.

Betrayal

A major theme in "The Last of the Sky Pirates" is the theme of betrayal, the main example being Xanth's far-reaching betrayal of the Librarian Academics. Orbix Axis, Most High Guardian of Night, examines the sky through his telescopes, warning a storm must come soon to heal and restore the Sanctaphrax rock. Xanth Filatine arrives with information about a recently captured prisoner who revealed that the librarian knights are sending three more apprentice treatise scholars to the Deepwoods tomorrow morning, but when Orbix says they must capture and execute the traitors, Xanth suggests that he can follow the apprentices and perhaps uncover the entire network of traitors. Orbix likes the idea of capturing all of the traitors, deciding he will forgive them all before having them executed, so he gives Xanth permission to go, promising Xanth will regret his decision if he fails. Xanth heads to the dungeons in the Tower of Night, telling a prisoner that it worked. The old prisoner is interested but jealous since he has been in the cell for longer than Xanth has been alive. He is sure that Xanth will enjoy the Deepwoods, though the prisoner is too important to ever be released. Xanth assures him that something will turn up, but the prisoner warns that such words are treason.

Xanth follows Rook, Stob and Magda as they enter the Great Mire Road. After Hekkle leads Rook, Stob and Magda out of the Eastern Roost into the Deepwoods, the shryke guard receives a second visitor, a callow youth who presents a seal from the Most High Guardian of Night, Vox Verlix. The youth asks if any passed this way recently, and when he learns that three sooth-sisters and an accompanying shyrke-mate left for a nesting expedition, Xanth snorts and says they left for the Free Glades, tugging at the reins and causing his prowlgrin to rush forward as Xanth holds on tight and does not look back. Shortly after the apprentices reach Lake Landing, Xanth arrives and produces his bloodoak-tooth pendant, claiming he is the sole survivor of the latest group of apprentices sent because they heard Rook, Stob and Magda were captured in a shryke raid. Rook feels uneasy with Xanth at first but soon finds it hard to dislike Xanth since he keeps to himself so much. After Rook, Magda and Stob finish their last flight lesson, two guards bring forth a young apprentice, saying the others were ambushed by shrykes. Parsimmon sends the boy to Tweezel to have his wounds tended, and Varis is nervous because that is the third group that has been ambushed; she suspects the Guardians of Night are responsible, and though Parsimmon agrees, he insists it is a matter for the Free Glades Council. Now is time to celebrate Stob, Magda and Rook's



success. Rook notices Xanth in the shadows and calls to him, but Xanth looks away. Magda claims Xanth must be sad because he cannot accompany them on their journeys, but though her words make sense, Rook does not believe them because Xanth's eyes do not show sadness, regret or envy. They show guilt.

While Rook, Knuckle and Varis are rescuing the enslaved banderbears at the Foundry Glade, Hemuel Spume tries to capture Varis Lodd, and Rook becomes gravely ill when he is shot by a poisoned goblin arrow while protecting a banderbear. This is explained when Xanth visits Rook during his convalescence to say goodbye. Xanth tells Rook that he has repaid Rook's friendship with lies and treachery; he serves Orbix Xaxis and betrayed the new apprentices which is why the goblins at the Foundry Glade were ready for Varis Lodd. Xanth insists that he would have warned Rook if he knew Rook was going because Rook is one of only two people he has ever considered a friend. Xanth belongs to the Guardians of Night and cannot escape them, and now he must leave because he has already caused too much damage. "I am as much a prisoner of the Tower of Night as my friend Cowlquape to whom I must now return" (page 257). Xanth explains that Cowlquape first told him of his adventures in the Deepwoods, and Xanth had to see it for himself, even if it meant becoming a spy, but now he has betrayed both of his friends: Cowlquape and Rook. Rook cannot believe Xanth is a traitor as Xanth leaves after expressing the doubt that their paths will ever cross again. Later, after Rook rescues Cowlquape from the Tower of Night, Rook's tether-rope gets stuck as he tries to escape himself. His heart stops when a figure emerges at the end of the gantry and orders him to stop. Recognizing Xanth, Rook pleads for their friendship's sake, but Xanth aims his crossbow. Rook closes his eyes, but Xanth's bolt slices through the tether-rope, sending the Stormhornet into the air. Looking back at Xanth, Rook wants to believe his friend set him free deliberately.

Rook's Obsession with Banderbears

A very important theme that frequently recurs in "The Last of the Sky Pirates" is Rook's obsession with banderbears. This obsession shows itself in many ways throughout the narrative, and though Rook believes he knows the reason in the beginning of the novel, the real reason does not emerge until the Epilogue; however, there is much evidence of this obsession in many of his actions. At the beginning of the novel, Rook goes to the seventeenth lecture to find the treatise "A Study of Banderbears' Behaviour in Their Natural Habitat". The treatise is special to Rook since he owes his life to this treatise and can never forget it. Excitedly opening the volume, Rook feels like he is in the Deepwoods and can hear the banderbear yodel as he reads. He was discovered wandering in the Deepwoods by Varis Lodd, the author of this treatise which is why Rook owes his life to this treatise. During the naming rite when the apprentices name their skycrafts and announce what they plan to do on their treatise-journey, Rook announces that he intends to create a treatise entitled "An Eyewitness Account of the Mythical Great Convocation of Banderbears", showing his continued fascination with the creatures. When Rook learns that Hemuel Spume is enslaving banderbears at the Foundry Glade, he quickly agrees to accompany Varis Lodd and Knuckle on their mission to free the banderbears. He is furious as he sees how badly the banderbears



are treated, and he is very pleased when Varis releases them. Hemuel orders the goblins to shoot Rook, Varis and Knuckle down since he failed in his attempt to capture Varis, but when Rook sees a goblin aiming its arrow at the last banderbear's heart, he flies in front of the creature, receiving an arrow in his shoulder as a result which leads to a long feverish illness.

After he heals, Rook journeys for three long months as he searches for banderbears. When Rook searches for water, he comes upon a stream where he finds recent banderbear footprints. Rook decides to wait for the banderbear to appear, and shortly before dawn, he is amazed by the banderbear's magnificence. He watches the banderbear return over the next several days, taking notes and drawing pictures before deciding to track the creature. Rook follows the banderbear and sees it eat a blue-black fruit which he collects and deposits by the stream for several days. On the fourth night, the banderbear appears disappointed when no fruit awaits her, but Rook steps forward and offers the fruit, allowing the banderbear to make the connection between the two before she takes the fruit. Over the next weeks, Rook gains the banderbear's trust, and they become friends, foraging, eating and sleeping together, all of which Rook records in his treatise-log. Rook also begins to understand the banderbears' language and learns his friend's name is Wumeru. She touches Rook's chest with her paw and says "fr-uh-nz", causing Rook to wonder where she learned a word from his language. A few nights later, Rook wakes to find Wumeru's nest empty, so he takes to the sky and sees her. He also hears the yodel of another banderbear calling her and hurrying to her to the Valley of a Thousand Echoes. Wumeru ignores Rook's questions, and after he scribes the words he heard from the other banderbear, he looks up to see that Wumeru has abandoned him.

Following Wumeru, Rook hears seven or eight banderbears yodelling from different directions and becomes hopeful that this is the convocation as he can think of no other reason for so many solitary creatures to gather. When Rook lands and accuses Wumeru of abandoning him, she growls at him in rage, telling him it is forbidden for him to follow her path. Rook apologizes, but unwilling to give up now, he tethers the Stormhornet and carefully follows Wumeru to the field where thousands of banderbears chant. Unable to believe he has found the Great Convocation of the Banderbears, Rook describes the scene in his treatise-log, but transfixed as he listens to them sing of their homes, he drops the treatise-log, falling from the tree as he reaches for it and losing consciousness. When Rook awakes, he is surrounded by glaring banderbears who want to kill him for daring "to steal the echoes of our valley and trespass on our sacred convocation" (pages 291-292). Rook claims he is a friend of the banderbears, but Wumeru says he has brought shame on their companionship, and a large male banderbear says Rook must die for the sacrilege of stealing their songs. Luckily, Wuralo, a female banderbear, stops the execution, claiming Rook saved her at the Foundry Glade. Showing his scar, Rook explains he has always loved banderbears and will protect them to his last breath. Gala, the oldest and wisest, proclaims Rook to be truthful, so he is renamed Uralowa, he who took the poison-stick. Rook is allowed to witness the Great Convocation as only one other has ever been permitted. Sensing movement behind him, Rook turns to see an old man, Twig, who hands Rook his dropped treatise-log. Twig used to be a sky pirate captain and a defender of Old



Sanctaphrax, but now he is friend to the banderbears. Several banderbears accompany Rook and Twig on their mission to save Cowlquape from the Tower of Night. In the Epilogue, the reason for Rook's obsession with banderbears is finally explained; Rook does not wake from the old nightmare when the massive creature approaches, but when he reaches out and touches fur as he is enfolded into warm arms, he has never known such safety and comfort. Rook wakes to the voice of Varis Lodd who praises his brave deeds. Telling her about his dream, Rook asks where she found him, and Varis says she has no clue how he escaped the slave-traders who took his parents, but she found him in a banderbear's nest. She has no clue how he got there, but Rook, remembering the feeling of safety, smiles and tells her that he knows how he got there, showing that Rook's obsession stems from the fact that a banderbear is who actually saved him when his parents were captured by slave-traders.

Style

Point of View

The point of view used in "The Last of the Sky Pirates" is third person as well as limited and reliable. This is proven by the fact that the narrator has access to events but not all of the characters' thoughts. The narrator does frequently report upon Rook's thoughts and feelings, and occasionally, he shares the inner workings of other characters; however, the narrator is not omniscient as he does not know what every character is thinking at any given time. The use of this point of view is important as it allows the focus to remain on Rook and his adventures without completely ignoring the other characters and things that occur without Rook's knowledge.

The novel is written using mostly exposition with only about twenty-five percent of the narrative being dialogue. This is effective as it focuses on the things that Rook sees and experiences during his journeys and at Lake Landing. The viewpoint of this novel generally is seen through Rook's eyes, but there are several detours to show events through the perspective of other characters, such as Xanth's conversation with Orbix Xaxis which serves to foreshadow Xanth's eventual betrayal of Rook and the Librarian Academics.

Setting

This novel is set in an imaginary world called the Edge where rocks are buoyant, permitting the characters to build flying vessels. The various areas of the Edge are kept segregated by the shrykes in their attempt to maintain control, and many creatures live in the Edge; some are kind while others are malevolent. There is a great deal of animosity between the Guardians of Night and the Librarian Academics. Rook's history as a foundling whose parents were captured by slave-traders is the reason he is so surprised when he is chosen as a Librarian Knight elect.

The Edge is the setting of "The Last of the Sky Pirates". It is comprised of a large overhanging rock that juts out into the emptiness beyond and includes several specific regions which include the following: New Sanctaphrax, Stone Gardens, Undertown, Twilight Woods, Deepwoods and the Edgelands. Edgewater is the name of the great river that pours down from the Edge. The Stone Gardens is the region close to the farthest tip of the Edge where the buoyant rocks grew until stone-sickness began to spread. Once the main city of the Edge, Undertown citizens were enslaved after the spread of stone-sickness, and the Guardians of Night drove the Librarian Academics into the sewers. The Librarian Academics live in the Undertown sewers. This is where Rook spends most of his life. The peaceful but deadly Deepwoods are the largest area of the Edge where many creatures live. The Librarian Academics believe the Deepwoods contain the cure to stone-sickness. Hekkle guides and protector Rook, Magda and Stob as they travel through the Deepwoods on their way to Lake Landing.



Lake Landing is where Rook, Magda and Stob travel to continue their studies, learn to create skycrafts and prepare for their treatise-journeys. The Tower of Night is the home of Orbix Xaxis and where Cowlquape is imprisoned until Rook rescues him. The Great Mire Road is the road between Undertown and the Twilight Woods. The Twilight Woods is a large forest between Undertown and the Deepwoods where many go insane. The Eastern Roost contains the Central Market where Undertowners trade with those who dwell in the Deepwoods. It is controlled by shrykes, so Hekkle dresses Rook, Stob and Magda as shrykes to lead them into the Deepwoods. Rook, Varis Lodd and Knuckle travel to the Foundry Glade to free the enslaved banderbears, but though they are successful, Rook is struck with a poison arrow. The Great Convocation of the Banderbears is held in the Valley of a Thousand Echoes, and this is where Rook meets Twig after he follows Wuralo to the valley.

Language and Meaning

The language used in this novel tends to be fairly informal and casual. This style aids comprehension since the novel is a fantasy so the narrator tends to describe the novel's world and the odd creatures that exist therein with some detail. This aids the reader in understanding the world where the novel is set. The language used in this novel is also beneficial to comprehension as it is easy for the target audience, children and teenagers, to understand.

The language tends to characterize the fantastical world of the Edge where "The Last of the Sky Pirates" is set. It also aids in characterizing the difference between the Guardians of Night and the Librarian Academics. The novel is written using mostly exposition with only about twenty-five percent of the narrative being dialogue. This is effective as it focuses on the things that Rook sees and experiences during his journeys and at Lake Landing. The language also aids the writing style as the simplistic language helps the target audience understand and enter the world of the novel. Overall, the language is fairly easy to understand.

Structure

"The Last of the Sky Pirates" is comprised of 369 pages divided into 20 chapters in addition to the Introduction and the Epilogue. The chapters range from five to 30 pages in length and are titled according to their contents. Most of the chapters are somewhat long and very detailed. The novel takes place in the course of a year, approximately. Some chapters focus on a short period of a day or two while other chapters summarize several months, such as the account of Rook's time at Lake Landing.

"The Last of the Sky Pirates" by Paul Stewart is the first book in the Rook trilogy which is part of the Edge Chronicles series. When Rook is chosen to continue his studies at Lake Landing, he sets out on the dangerous journey, facing many perils as he gains knowledge of many things in his world as well as his past. "The Last of the Sky Pirates" is an entertaining adventure that shows how this foundling becomes a hero. The pace of

the novel is fairly quick, and it is easy to read. The events are mostly linear, but some flashbacks appear, for example Rook's nightmare about his past. Overall, this novel is very entertaining and enjoyable.



Quotes

"In short, no-one knew for sure. Only one thing was certain. Stone-sickness meant that life on the Edge would never be the same again." Introduction, page 2

"This great library of ours represents just a fraction of the knowledge that lies out there in the Deepwoods. But it is precious. Never forget, Rook, that there are those who hate librarian academics and mistrust earth-scholarship; those who betrayed us and persecuted us, who blame us for stone-sickness and have forced us to seek refuge down here, far from the light of the sun. For every treatise produced, one librarian has suffered to write it, while another has died defending it. But we shall not give up. Librarian Knights elect will continue to travel to the Deepwoods, to gather invaluable information and increase our knowledge of the Edge. One day, my lad, it will be your turn."

"There has been no mistake. Even though he is my own son, I cannot pretend that Felix is cut out for the task ahead. Certainly, he has the boldness, the courage and the strength required, but he has no natural aptitude for study- and without that, his other qualities count for nought... Enough. The decision was unanimous. Though given the powerful arguments put forward by your proposer, that was hardly a surprise." Fenbrus Lodd, Chapter 3: The Announcement Ceremony, page 43

"You're equal to any and better than most." Felix Lodd, Chapter 4: The Great Mire Road, page 56

"The three of you have got a long and difficult journey ahead of you, but with a little luck and a lot of perseverance, I just know you're going to succeed." Tegan, Chapter 4: The Great Mire Road, page 71

"This is it. There's no turning back now. The greatest adventure of my life has already begun." Rook Barkwater, Chapter 4: The Great Mire Road, page 75

"That is our curse. In wait country, reading the minds of others is essential for our survival; a gift to enable us to see through the darkness. Here, however, it is a curse- spoiling every friendship and turning so many of us into spies who sell their services to the highest bidder." Partifule, Chapter 5: Deadbolt Vulpoon, pages 83-84

"Fool. Did you truly believe we were unaware of who you are? Did you? You, great captain, were the bait to lure them here. With you dead, they'll give up, and I will have rid the Edge of you and your sky pirate scum once and for all." Shryke-sister, Chapter 6: The Sky Pirate Raid, pages 104-105

"On no account are you to remove the spectacles. Just keep silent, and trust me. For if we are caught, the penalty for impersonating a shryke- and a sooth-sister at that- is terrible indeed, brave friends... Roasting. Roasting alive, on a spit in the Central Market." Hekkle, Chapter 8: The Eastern Roost, page 133



"I can hardly believe it. All those long years spent down under the ground. You know, I must have dreamed about the Deepwoods almost every single night. And now, here I am. It's even more wonderful than I imagined." Rook Barkwater, Chapter 9: The Deepwoods, page 142

"Aye, well, that's the secret of skycraft flight in a nutshell. You treat your skycraft like a friend- with love, with tenderness, with respect- and she'll return the favour tenfold. When I saw you in trouble with that logworm, it was the Woodwasp herself who urged me to try to rescue you. 'We can do it!' she told me. 'The two of us together!' And she was right." Knuckle, Chapter 10: The Silver Pastures, page 176

"I've never seen anywhere so beautiful. Even in my dreams." Rook Barkwater, Chapter 11: Stormhornet, page 191

"They'll teach you well here at Lake Landing, but you've got something already- something that no amount of teaching can give you. Always remember that." Hekkle, Chapter 11: Stormhornet, page 194

"It's all my fault! We were waiting for the flight instructor, but he didn't show up, so I thought it wouldn't do any harm just to take a short flight round the lake and back. If I'd only known it would end like this... I'm sorry, Xanth. We should have waited for that stupid flight instructor. Now we'll have to postpone our first lesson." Stob, Chapter 12: Flight, page 226

"The fewer the better on this sort of raid. And you two are the best flyers in the Free Glades. If you're with me, we'll need to fly into the Foundry Glade under the noses of Spume's goblin guards, release the banderbears from their slave-hut and get away before we're discovered. It won't be easy." Varis Lodd, Chapter 13: The Foundry Glade, page 238

"You have been a good friend to me, Rook Barkwater. When others ignored me or made fun of me, you were there, defending me, encouraging me... And I have repaid your friendship with lies and treachery... I am a spy, Rook. I serve Orbix Xaxis, the Most High Guardian of Night. The librarian knights are my enemies. Why do you suppose no group of apprentices have reached Lake Landing since I arrived? Because I betrayed them, Rook. And how did the goblins at the Foundry Glade know that Varis Lodd was going to pay them a visit, eh? Because I set the trap, that's how. Oh, but Rook... If I'd known that you- one of only two people I have ever called friend- were going to be on that raid, I would have warned you, Rook. You've got to believe me!... Because I belong to the Guardians of Night. They own me, body and soul. Try as I might, there is nothing I can do to get away from them." Xanth, Chapter 14: Fever, page 256

"This is the place. We shall wait here for a banderbear to appear, no matter how long it takes." Rook Barkwater, Chapter 15: Wumeru, page 273

"This is it. The Great Convocation of the Banderbears. I've found it." Rook Barkwater, Chapter 16: The Great Convocation, page 289



"Friendship with a banderbear is the greatest friendship there is." Twig, Chapter 18: Skyraider, page 315

"Make no mistake, Rook, this is a one-way voyage. The Skyraider won't be coming back. We must just hope and pray that it holds out long enough for us to make it to the Tower of Night." Twig, Chapter 18: Skyraider, page 326

"The dungeons are an abomination! An affront to every living creature in the Edge- to life itself! Why, if I was ever uncertain whether the war between the librarian knights and the Guardians of Night was a just one, then here is the proof. This is truly a battle between good and evil!" Rook Barkwater, Chapter 19: The Tower of Night, page 346

"[Twig] is mortally wounded, a crossbow bolt in his back. He chooses to die with his sky ship." Wumeru, Chapter 20: Return, page 362

"There's only one place it could be taking him. To Riverrise." Rook Barkwater, Chapter 20: Return, page 364

"You mean you don't know? I had no idea. I thought they would have told you. Your parents, they were taken by slaves. You escaped. Earth and Sky know how. And then... Oh, Rook, it was miraculous! I found you, all healthy and plump, tucked up asleep in a nest of woven grass- An abandoned banderbear nest, though how you got there, I've no idea." Varis Lodd, Epilogue, pages 368-369



Topics for Discussion

What recurring nightmare does Rook have throughout his life, and why is this significant?

How does Rook feel when he is chosen to travel to Lake Landing as a librarian knight elect?

Who is Xanth, and why does he travel to Lake Landing?

Why is Rook so infatuated with banderbears?

What do Stob, Magda and Rook learn at Lake Landing?

Who is Wumeru, and how does she help Rook?

Describe the battle at the Tower of Night. Why does this battle take place, and what occurs during this battle?