

# **Melusine Study Guide**

## **Melusine by Sarah Monette**

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## Plot Summary

Mélusine is a fantastical city full of old magic, legends, thieves, and corruption. Felix Harrowgate is a powerful wizard of the Mirador, a citadel of political and magical power in Mélusine. The child of a prostitute and sold to a keeper by his mother for reasons not explained in the book, Felix was used as a prostitute until the evil wizard Malkar bought him from his pimp/keeper. Malkar is cruel and seductive. He controls Felix for six years, until Felix enters the Mirador as an apprentice wizard. Felix is naturally gifted and with the education he received from Malkar, quickly rises to prominence. He becomes lovers with Shannon, the protectorate's brother. When the truth about his past as a prostitute comes out, Felix loses his position and finds himself under the control of Malkar once again. Malkar's power over Felix is a result of years of abuse and manipulation. Knowing that his own magic is not strong enough, Malkar performs a spell that makes Felix a conduit of power under Malkar's control. Malkar binds Felix in madness and silence, and then uses him to break the Virtu, the magical center of power in the Mirador. Accused of the destruction of the Virtu, Felix is caught and imprisoned in an insane asylum. Eventually rescued by other wizards who realize what Malkar had done to Felix, Felix is still trapped in the spell of madness cast on him by Malkar. He sees strange visions and is overwhelmed by a black insanity whenever he is in the proximity of magic. Acting through Felix, Malkar manages to set the Mirador on fire, breaking its ancient enchantments, which bind the city together under a deep spell.

Meanwhile, the cat burglar Mildmay the Fox has a similar upbringing to Felix. His mother was also a prostitute and he was raised as a kept thief, a child that thieves for a Keeper. Felix falls in love with a young woman while doing a burglary job for her. The two of them get involved in some dark magic, but manage to escape. When the Mirador burns, Mildmay's lover leaves him and is murdered. Fate brings Mildmay to a foreign wizard from a different order, Mavortian Von Heber, who believes that Mildmay is the secret to finding Felix Harrowgate.

The increasingly disturbed Felix and Mildmay cross paths in the town of Hermione, where an ancient fantom is controlling a disused wizarding tower. Recognizing each other's strange features, red hair, and golden eyes, and realizing that their mothers have the same name, Felix and Mildmay realize that they are brothers. Felix saves Mildmay from a curse that would have killed him. Mildmay realizes that Felix is crazy and frightened and feels bound to protect him. In a dream Felix meets a Sunling, one of the people of Troia, who are wise in healing. Felix and Mildmay set out to find the Sunlings in hopes that they will be able to cure Felix of the damage that Malkar did to his mind. They begin their journey along with Von Heber, Heber's bodyguard and the wizard Gideon. However, Mildmay and Felix end up on their own, travelling across the empire to reach the land of Troia. The wizards manage to cure Felix. Restored to his magical power and sanity, Felix's gratitude towards Mildmay makes him realize that there is finally someone in his life that he can trust.



# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary

The book opens with Mildmay telling a story of a hocus, a wizard, long ago who bound herself to a man. It was called binding-by-forms or the obligation d'ame, and it involved a hocus and an annemer binding their fates together by magic. It was an oath that the hocus promised to keep the annemer safe. In return the annemer, the normal human being, had to do exactly as the hocus commanded in all but suicide. Silas Altamont asked the hocus Porphyria Levant to perform the obligation d'ame. Altamont had gotten on the wrong side of the Lord Creon's wife. She had hocuses of her own and was given to jealousy of Altamont who was in love with Creon. Altamont was gay, and Porphyria, in her cruelty asked only that Altamont have sex with her in return for her protection. When Altamont told Porphyria that he would kill himself rather than continue with her, Porphyria forbid him the ability to take his own life.

Felix Harrowgate is the lover of Shannon, the Lord Stephen Teverius's brother. In the middle of a court party, Robert of Hermione and Agnes Bellarmyn tell Shannon that Felix was a prostitute in the Pharaohlight district. Felix can't deny it. He had hidden his past for six years, making a name for himself in court. Shannon is flabbergasted, and Lord Stephen intervenes in the argument. Felix runs out humiliated.

Mildmay, the Fox, is a lower class thief. He is approached by a young woman, Ginevra Thompson, who wants Mildmay to steal jewels that her ex-lover kept from her. Mildmay finds himself liking Ginevra for her courage. They haggle over price, and Mildmay agrees to the job. They plan to meet in a few days' time.

Felix returns to Shannon's apartment later that night. Shannon confronts him. He asks why Felix never told him his history. Felix, filled with embarrassment and hatred, hits Shannon hard across the face. Felix runs out and goes down to the Arcane. The Arcane is a place of drugs and prostitution. Felix is so overcome with his past that he pays for a young boy to take his anger out on. The young prostitute is used by tarquins, people who only get sexually satisfaction from someone else's pain. Looking at the young boy, Felix is filled with disgust for himself. He leaves the boy without touching him and goes to his old master, Malkar. Malkar taught Felix his magic. Malkar also abused and raped Felix for many years. When Felix gets to Malkar's chambers, Malkar is waiting for him. Felix drinks phoenix, a highly addictive drug that dulls the mind. Malkar rapes Felix, and then kicks him out. Still overwhelmed by the drug, Felix wanders through the Mirador, getting lost in its maze of passages, hallucinating his childhood.

Mildmay find the thieving job ridiculously simple. He is escaping across the rooftops, when he runs into a gang. There are four gangs that control the rooftops, the only one that Mildmay is on bad terms with is Rindleshins. When Mildmay was young he humiliated Rindleshin in a knife fight. Mildmay runs from Rindleshin across the rooftops. He is faster than they are, but he knows his only chance is to cross into another gang's



territory. Mildmay makes it into Badger's territory by scaling a cathedral. All Rindleshin can do is curse Mildmay from afar.

It is almost dawn, and the phoenix drug is wearing off enough that Felix can think. He knows that his position at court is an impossible one to keep. He must escape Malkar and get away from his shame. Felix has no shoes and no money. He makes for the Arcane, the one place he knows he can hide among the drug dealers and prostitutes, but Malkar finds him, and brings him back to court. The members of court are surprised to see Felix with Malkar. The gossip of Felix's past has spread throughout the court quickly. Everyone watches, some jealous that Felix is under the wing of the powerful Malkar. Others, Felix's friends are afraid for him. Felix manages to insult his friends enough that they will stay away from him. He is trying to protect them from Malkar.

Mildmay brings the jewels to a hotel where he and Ginevra Thompson had planned to meet. He finds out that Ginevra is a shop girl. And that she plans to sell them at Corundum Gate. Mildmay warns Ginevra that the buyer is probably Vey Coruscant, a blood witch who people in the Lower City call Queen Blood. Ginevra offers Mildmay double profits if he will act as her body guard in the transaction. Mildmay agrees and asks that Ginevra wears a pendant for the god she follows, Phi-Kethetin. They plan to meet in Min-Terris's courtyard the following day.

Malkar continues to dominate Felix into submission. He gives him more phoenix, and takes him to chambers that Malkar uses for magic. There is a pentagram on the floor, with manacles for hands and feet. Malkar casts a spell of control over Felix. Felix tries to fight it, but he is so terrified of Malkar that he cannot. Malkar performs a spell while raping Felix that will make Felix a conduit for Malkar's magic. He then uses Felix to break into the power of the Virtu. Felix feels as if his soul has been destroyed afterwards. Malkar has gained an incredible amount of power, even the way he looks has changed. He has grown more evil.

## Chapter 1 Analysis

Mildmay tells the story of the hocus Levant to demonstrate the manipulative nature of some hocuses. Mildmay's story sets the scene for what is to come in the interaction between wizards and men.

The beginning also sets up the position of the two narrators, Felix and Mildmay. Felix is shown to have a position of prominence, but a dark and secret history. Felix falls quickly into the shame of his background. Malkar's power over Felix is demented. Meanwhile the narrator Mildmay shows his prowess as a thief. He is street smart and capable. The plot is immediately set on its course. With one of the main characters being brutalized and manipulated. The setting of Mélusine is immediately set in a precarious position because the Virtu, the magical center of power has been destroyed. The reader also sees the birth of a disturbing villain in Malkar.



# Melusine

## Summary

Felix jumps in and out of consciousness. The damage that Malkar's spell did to Felix's brain is overpowering. Felix's magic is gone. Felix is aware that they are escaping Melusine. Malkar plans to go to the Bastion, the political enemy of Mélusine. The fear that Felix has of Malkar takes over, and he is obedient to everything Malkar tells him to do.

The city of Melusine is in an uproar. Mildmay is woken by his landlady, who breaks the news that the Virtu has been broken. Mildmay goes down to the Arcane, the seedy underground of Melusine, to get news of what has happened. Mildmay is well connected. He lives in the Midwinter district of Melusine, where there are three separate entrances to the Arcane. He chooses the safest, a trapdoor in a bar. He has a connection, Elvire. Elvire is the madam of a brothel. Her clientele are all connected people from Mirador, so she always has news. Mildmay learns that the wizard Felix Harrowgate has broken the Virtu. Mildmay is not a fan of wizards, but the Virtu keeps the wizards united. Without it, protective spells throughout the city are broken. Elvire tells Mildmay that Felix is the child of a Colaxan king who lost his throne and that Felix was raised by an upperclassman from Arabel, before being brought to Mirador as a young man.

Lord Stephen Teverius, some of the Mirador's top wizards and a group of soldiers catch up to Malkar and Felix on the road. Malkar tells them that he is innocent, but that Felix joined him in hopes of escaping. Malkar convinces Stephen to take Felix into custody and let Malkar go free. Malkar tells them that Felix's strange behavior is a result of an overdose of the phoenix drug. Stephen agrees to let Malkar leave. As Malkar goes, he kisses Felix, casting a silencing spell so strong that Felix can't tell them the truth of what happened. In Felix's eyes, each of his captors has the body of a man and the head of an animal. Stephen is a lion, the wizard Vida is a statue carved from obsidian. Their voices are confusing noise; only sometimes does Felix come to consciousness enough that he can understand what they are saying. They beat Felix and demand answers, but Felix cannot break the spell that binds him.

Mildmay meets Ginevra in Min-Terris's courtyard. They plan to get to Boneprince, the graveyard where they are to meet Vey Coruscant. Ginevra gossips out of nervousness. Mildmay is falling for her. He tells her the history of Boneprince graveyard. Two brothers, Adrian and Richard, were competing for their father, the king's, affection. Richard could see visions, and was filling their father's ear with lies about Adrian. Adrian attempted to kill Richard but failed. Adrian was arrested and sentenced to death. Richard brought his brother poison. The graveyard, Adrian's park, has been called Boneprince ever since, and was made a graveyard for murderers and heretics. During Lady Jane's reign, she decided to clean up the city by arresting all the kept-thieves and putting them to death. They were only children, but she arrested them in great numbers



and chopped off their heads. The kept-thieves haunt the graveyard. Mildmay warns Ginevra not to let Vey Coruscant know her name. They wait until dark, when out of the darkness, Vey Coruscant appears. She has men in the bushes behind them. Ginevra acts brave. They trade the rubies for cash. Mildmay sees a storm coming. He knows that Vey Coruscant is about to do some dark magic, but he can't warn Ginevra. All at once, someone grabs Mildmay from behind. He hears Ginevra scream, but he can't see anything. Vey begins screaming too. Her magic spells went wrong. A voice comes from the graveyard itself telling her that whatever dead spirit she was trying to raise is not there. Mildmay and Ginevra make a run for it. They escape over the fence, and run back to Mildmay's apartment. Mildmay dreams of his first time in the graveyard, when he was a kept-thief. The ghosts of the children tried to keep him there. In the morning, Mildmay leaves while Ginevra is still sleeping. Felix is being dragged through the streets by Stephen. People are throwing stones at him. Mildmay is in the crowd, but doesn't get a glimpse of Felix. When Mildmay comes back, Ginevra and Mildmay have sex. She managed to hold on to the money she got from Vey Coruscant, which makes them both very wealthy.

Felix is brought to court to speak for his crimes. When he enters the Mirador he can feel the broken Virtu and hear its pain. He goes in and out of consciousness. Stephen demands answers. Felix admits to breaking the Virtu, but he can't tell them how. In order to mend the Virtu, the other wizards need to understand what Felix did. Instead of sentencing him to death, Stephen keeps him alive so that he can be interrogated further. The bind his powers to the will of the Mirador, but he cannot feel a change. Malkar has already taken his magic.

## Analysis

The second chapter focuses more on what is happening with Mildmay. As Felix is not fully conscious or aware of what is happening around him, Mildmay serves to explain the situation as it is effecting the city. The reader also sees the beginning of a romantic side to the plot, with the unlikely pairing of Ginevra and Mildmay. Mildmay's disbelief is a foreshadowing of the inequality of the relationship. The reader is not sure if Ginevra is perfect for Mildmay or his complete opposite. On top of the breaking of the Virtu, some other mysterious magic is set loose in Boneprince.



# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

Felix is imprisoned in the dark. He can feel the broken Virtu, and its pain drives him mad. Meanwhile, Mildmay goes to visit his close friend Cardenio. They were kept thieves together. Cardenio is a shy and good man. He has recently become a journeyman for the cade-skiffs. Cardenio has heard about Mildmay and Ginevra and chides Mildmay about it. Mildmay has bought Cardenio a gift to celebrate Cardenio's rise to journeyman. Mildmay asks Cardenio what he knows about Brinvillier Strych. Strych was an evil wizard, supposedly buried in Boneprince. Mildmay thinks that Vey Coruscant was trying to raise Strych from the dead. Cardenio knows that some black magic happened in the Boneprince. Everyone knows something bad happened there, but Cardenio doesn't have any information for Mildmay. Mildmay leaves Cardenio and meets Ginevra in a bar. Ginevra is there with her friend Estella. Mildmay and Ginevra use the code name Gilroi, since Mildmay's real name is kept secret for his work. They are joined by the wizard Faith. Faith is a healer, a nature-witch, and neither Mildmay nor Faith is enjoying themselves. Mildmay doesn't like Ginevra's friends. On the walk home, Ginevra brings up love and Mildmay doesn't know what to say.

As Mildmay falls for Ginevra, the city is falling apart. The broken Virtu has everyone scared, and different factions are rising up. Lord Stephen has brought in a Witchfinder Extraordinary to sort out the broken Virtu. The Obscurantists are a group that has been long dormant, but rumors of their return are making everyone in the Lower City nervous. Mildmay spends more time with Ginevra's friends, including a poet name Austin. Austin and Ginevra used to be together, and Mildmay feels jealous whenever Austin comes around.

Erasmus Spalding, the new Witchfinder Extraordinary, comes to see Felix. Erasmus tries to find out if Malkar had anything to do with the magic that happened in Boneprince, but Felix doesn't know. Felix can only keep sane for a little while. By the end of the conversation, Felix can only see monsters and hear chaos.

Mildmay is a part of the underside of the city, and accordingly, gets a lot of information. What he sees in the streets is fear. The Lord Protector has given the mayor extra money for extra police, who Mildmay calls dogs. Erasmus Spalding is going about things better than the last Witchfinder extraordinary, but people are growing restless, not knowing what is happening. Ginevra tries to get Mildmay to go to the Mirador for a portrait. He refuses. Mildmay has some kind of deep fear of the Mirador; he won't go near it.

Felix is brought out of the prison in the Mirador. When he gets outside, his madness goes away slightly. He can think better and understand people when they talk to him. He is being taken to an insane asylum, St Crellifer's. Brother Orphelin takes Felix in and makes him disrobe. Felix can tell the Orphelin enjoys other people's misery. Felix's back





is covered in scars, which he is ashamed of. He got them from his keeper, when he was a boy, and from the men who raped him, when he was a prostitute. Orphelin shaves Felix's hair.

Mildmay gets into an argument with Austin over witches. Austin is talking about the last time there was a Witchfinder Extraordinary. Mildmay, who is from the lower class, tells stories about the cruelty of the last round up. Ginevra is embarrassed and chastises Mildmay. Mildmay asks her if she likes Austin. Mildmay is self-conscious because he has a deep scar across his face that paralyzed part of his mouth and cheek. They are interrupted by a would-be thief, but Mildmay fights the thief off. It was just a kid.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

Chapter three shows some of the background for the upheaval in *Mélusine*. Things like this have happened before, as Mildmay remembers it. The foreshadowing is that the instability will lead to further chaos. Felix continues to be unable to hold on to reality. Mildmay reveals that he has some secret and dark history to do with the Mirador. He is terrified of being anywhere near it. He doesn't want to share this with Ginevra, which leads the reader to think it is something bad or shameful.



# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

As Mildmay had predicted, the dogs start raiding the lower class areas of the city. The Mirador and the mayor don't know what the dogs are up to. The upper class is so blind to what happens in the lower-class areas. Mildmay realizes that Vey Coruscant must still be alive, because her neighborhoods are not raided by the dogs. Estella shows up at Mildmay's house looking for Ginevra. Faith, the healer, was taken into custody by the dogs. Estella warns Mildmay that if he can't keep Ginevra happy, Ginevra will walk out on him. Ginevra refuses to believe that bad things are happening in the city. It creates tension between her and Mildmay. Mildmay refuses to lie to her and make her feel like everything is fine.

Felix is given a job scrubbing floors in the insane asylum. He has hallucinations that the floors are covered in blood. When one of the Brothers come up and hit Felix, the visions go away temporarily, but they return. Felix also starts to see ghosts, mainly the ghosts of crazy people who had died in the asylum. Once he sees the ghost of Joline, one of the girls that he grew up with as a kept-thief.

It is St. Vivien's day, a day of the dead. Mildmay buys trumps, a flower that grows in the swamps. He goes to the unmarked graves of the kept thieves in Boneprince and makes a crown of flowers to leave on the path that covers their graves. When he was a boy, his Keeper had put a crown of trumps on his head and made him feel special. As Mildmay heads home, his landlady's son Scabior runs up and warns him that there are dogs waiting for him. He sends Scabior to warn Ginevra not to come home. He has few friends that he can trust. He goes to Margot, a girl he grew up with, who has become the leader of a gang on the rooftops called the Badgers.

Brother Orphelin takes Felix down to a room in the basement and forces him to disrobe. Felix knows that it is not lust that drives Orphelin but power. Orphelin forces Felix to tell him where Felix's scars came from. It is Felix's shame. Orphelin threatens to bring Brother Lilburn down. Lilburn enjoys punishing the prisoners, and everyone is afraid of him. Felix has a visitor from the palace, Robert. To Felix, Robert has the head of a snake. Felix is terrified. When Robert tries to connect with Felix's mind, Felix runs out. Felix escapes to the only place in the asylum where he can hide, the attic. He falls asleep and has a dream about a garden. He sees a Sunling, a tall redheaded man with yellow eyes.

Margot takes Mildmay in. He sleeps with the numerous children that Margot raises and protects. He tells the little kids a story. IN the middle of the night, dogs raid the rooftops. Everyone runs, but many of the children are murdered and arrested. Mildmay hides in a water tower and waits for the dogs to leave. Margot's lieutenant, Carmody, a young boy, tipped off the dogs that Mildmay was staying there. Carmody didn't realize that the dogs would kill and arrest so many. Margot tells him to run away. As soon as people in the



neighborhood find out, Carmody will be killed. Mildmay finds Margo crying over the corpses of her children. She promises to tell the dogs that Mildmay was killed, to buy him time to escape. Margot sends Mildmay away, telling him that if she ever sees him again, she will kill him.

Felix tries to find the dream again, where he saw the Sunling. He was taught how to control his dreams. He uses his knowledge to find the garden again. The Sunling asks who Felix is and who hurt him. Felix tells the Sunling about his madness. The Sunling wants to help him, but Felix is woken by Lilburn hitting him. Robert visits Felix again. This time Lilburn and Orphelin subdue Felix. They tie him to a table and Robert searches Felix's mind for information. It is painful and disturbing for Felix.

Mildmay goes back to his apartment and finds Ginevra. She tells him that she is leaving him to be with Austin. Ginevra thinks that she will be safe. Mildmay knows that she is danger too, but he gives her everything and leaves. A few days later, Mildmay's friend Cardenio finds the bodies of Ginevra and Austin in the river. Mildmay goes and identifies the bodies, grieving that he never told Ginevra that he loved her.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

Felix is treated to humiliation. Because the reader is in Felix's head, it is clear that Felix is not completely insane. The spell that Malkar cast on him is having some strange effect on his mind. Brother Orphelin shows himself to be another version of Malkar and it seems that Felix is doomed to sink deeper and deeper into madness. Everyone who interacts with Felix is cruel and damaging. Mildmay is struggling to keep his life with Ginevra even as he feels that it is not right. Mildmay is being isolated from everything that gives him security. His life is not damaged to the degree that Felix's was, but it is unraveling. When the dogs raid the Badgers, the reader sees that the little protection Mildmay had is gone. There is nowhere that Mildmay can hide. He is a danger to anyone who helps him.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

Mildmay has to keep a low profile, so he takes a cheap job as a bouncer and bartender. The weather has turned wet, and winter fever is ravaging the Lower City. Robert continues to visit Felix in St. Crellifer's. Felix tries to remember what happens when Robert comes, but he can't. Robert takes Felix out of the Insane Asylum, back to the Mirador. Felix can feel the magic of the Mirador overwhelm him. He goes into hallucinations. Mildmay is broke and loses his job. He doesn't like to rob hotels. It's too dangerous, but he feels like he needs too. Mildmay is sick with fever. He breaks into a rich hotel in a nice neighborhood. The first door he tries is unlocked. When he enters there is a man sitting by the window. The man does not react to Mildmay's interest, except with curiosity. Mildmay doesn't run away, though he doesn't know why. The man is obviously a wizard. His name is Mavortian von Heber. Mavortian had used a summoning charm, and believes that Mildmay is meant to help him with his task. Mavortian hires Mildmay to break into St. Crellifer's and get Felix Harrowgate. Mildmay agrees to the job, but can't help until his sickness passes. Mildmay faints with fever.

Felix wakes up in the Mirador. He is alone in the dark. He tries to run away, but the Mirador is a maze of corridors and rooms. A ghost, a young boy, sees Felix. The ghost takes Felix down deep into the crypts of the Mirador. Down there, where no one has been in years, Felix's madness lifts. He can think clearly again. The ghost asks for Felix's help. He wants to be laid to rest. Felix is a Cabaline wizard. They do not work with the dead. The boy leads Felix back upstairs. As they go closer to the part of the Mirador where magic is still used, Felix begins to see rivers of blood. The madness takes over Felix's mind again and he sends the ghost away. Robert and Brother Orphelin find Felix and drag him to the broken Virtu. Felix screams out in pain and his visions become grotesque. They try to search his mind. Then, they bring Felix back to St. Crellifer's.

Mildmay is sick with fever for weeks. He overhears Mavortian arguing with a man named Bernard. Bernard is Mavortian's bodyguard and half-brother. They don't realize that Mildmay can hear them. Bernard doesn't trust Mildmay, nor does he believe that Mildmay is the one that Mavortian is looking for. Mavortian is convinced that Mildmay is the key to finding Felix. Mavortian has performed various spells of divination to lead him to Felix, all of them pointing him to Mildmay.

Felix dreams of the Sunling again. The Sunling tries to find out more about where Felix is so he can help him. Felix tells him that he was a wizard for the Mirador. The Sunling begins to understand, but then Felix wakes from the dream. A dove headed figure and a raven headed figure come to Felix. He cannot understand what they are saying. The raven leaves in anger, the dove is gentle. Felix cannot tell what they want. He only hopes that they do not punish him anymore. Felix is lost in madness. The raven headed figure and the dove headed figure return with a third figure. To Felix this new person is a



statue carved from black rock. Felix understands some of their words this time. They reach out to Felix's mind and find the spell that Malkar put on Felix. They realize that Felix is not crazy, but damaged by a spell. The three figures take Felix out of the asylum and back to the Mirador. As before, Felix has trouble staying sane in the Mirador. It is painful to him. Felix is interrogated by more humans with animal heads. They wash Felix and give him clean clothes. A figure named Gideon helps Felix wash, gently. The next thing that Felix is aware of is being surrounded by the entire Curia, the association of the wizards of the Mirador. Felix recognizes the faces of the court. Lord Stephen interrogates Felix. Felix tells them that Malkar put the compulsion spell on him and used him to break the Virtu. After a long, exhausting talk with the Curia, in which Felix told them as much as he could about how the Virtu was broken; Felix is taken back to Thaddeus' chambers. He has been forbidden to contact Shannon, but Shannon shows up and embraces him. Shannon apologizes for not trying to get Felix out. Shannon had believed that Felix was a traitor and had gone mad.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

Felix's relationship to the Sunling is interesting because the Sunling resembles Felix. The reader can't be sure if the Sunling is a real person, or a figment of the dream. But the Sunling makes it seem possible that eventually Felix will escape his prison. The intervention of other wizards finally gives Felix a reprieve from the hell he has been living, but the damage done is extreme. Felix is still not the man he was. Gideon promises to be an ally for Felix in the future. Mildmay has stumbled into Felix's story, though it is not clear why.



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

The news that Felix is back at the Mirador changes Mavortian's plans. To Mildmay, he sees no reason to keep working with Mavortian now that Felix is in the Mirador. But, Mavortian convinces Mildmay to stay.

Felix is back with Shannon and trying to make a life for himself. He attends a play and accompanies Shannon back to his apartments after. Shannon tries to kiss Felix, but Felix can't bear to be touched. He tries to have sex with Shannon, but runs out terrified. Shannon is furious. Shannon doesn't understand what Felix has been through. Shannon grew up with a sheltered life in high society. Felix is ashamed to share his history with Shannon, though he loves him deeply.

Returning to Thaddeus's apartment, Felix tries to hide his emotions from Thaddeus and Vida. They pry him for information. In his disabled state, Felix is vulnerable to any intrusion. Seeing Felix's discomfort, Gideon takes Felix out on a walk around the Mirador. Gideon asks Felix what part of the Mirador is his favorite. Felix remembers the ramparts. He brings Gideon to the towers above the Mirador. Looking out at the stars, Felix feels relieved for the first time since being back at the Mirador. Gideon talks about his past and education. Felix's education only came through Malkar. Felix wonders why Gideon left the Bastion, and why he and Thaddeus seem to hate each other.

Mildmay watches Mavortian use his divination cards. Mavortian tries to explain how the cards help him see the future. He explains that the cards don't give a clear picture and the images are left up to interpretation. Mavortian sees in the cards that Mildmay is necessary, but he can't see what they should do next. Mavortian shows Mildmay the card that keeps showing up, a young man surrounded by swords. It is called the knight of swords and according to Mavortian's interpretation; Mildmay is the knight of swords. The death card also keeps appearing, but Mavortian doesn't know why.

In Felix's dream, the Sunling returns. Felix feels wary, as the Sunling has said that he couldn't come to Felix while Felix was in the Mirador. The Sunling asks Felix to give him his hands. Felix tries to pull away, as he realizes that it is not the Sunling, it is Malkar. Malkar's grip on Felix's hands is strong. Felix feels Malkar probing the magic of the Mirador. He is using Felix, just as he used Felix to break the Virtu. Malkar sets fire to the rooftop of the Mirador. Felix fights to regain control of his dream. He turns his dream to a different location. Malkar struggles to keep control. Someone is slapping Felix to wake him. Felix wrenches his hands free of Malkar's grip. He feels his fingers breaking as he wakes up.

Mildmay wakes to the news that the city is burning. Knowing that all wizards are in danger if the Mirador has fallen, Mildmay convinces Mavortian that they must escape the city. Mildmay knows a way, through St Kirban's. Phoskis is the man who controls St.



Kirban's, and he has a bad history with Mildmay, but he won't refuse money. Mildmay brings Mavortian and Bernard to St. Kirban's. Mildmay haggles with Phoskis, but they still spend most of the money Mavortian claims to have had. Down underneath St. Kirban's is a flooded chamber that leads to the river. Phoskis charges for people to escape through St. Kirban's, but he controls a beast that lives in the water called a Kalliphorne. As Mildmay wades out into the water to get a boat, the Kalliphorne grabs hold of Mildmay's leg. The Kalliphorne can smell Mavortian's magic. He promises not to eat them if Mavortian can cure its husband of a sickness. They have no choice but to do as the Kalliphorne asks. Kalliphorne's husband is doubled up in pain and fever. When the Mirador was broken, the warding spells of the Mirador went haywire. Mildmay thinks that the Kalliphorne's husband may have been damaged by those spells. The light goes out, and Mildmay holds down the Kalliphorne's husband while Mavortian tries to draw out the sickness by magic. While they wait, Mildmay tells the story of why Phoskis hates him. When Mildmay was still a kept-thief, he was used to murder Lord Stephen's cousin Cornell, who was making claims to the throne. It was a conspiracy involving the Mirador. Mildmay was given the Phoskis as a novice. He hated Phoskis, but he stayed with him, until as planned, Cornell came to escape the Mirador. Phoskis sent Mildmay down with Cornell and Cornell's bodyguard to the underground chamber. Phoskis boats are the only black boats in the city. Mildmay attacked Cornell from behind, and put his dead body in a boat and sent it into the river. Phoskis was then blamed for the murder. Later, Phoskis found out that Mildmay had set him up. After Mildmay tells the story, he realizes that he has just made Mavortian and Bernard reason to distrust him. The Kalliphorne is grateful that Mavortian managed to cure her husband. She leads them to the river. AS they are leaving Mildmay calls back to her that if she wants to escape Phoskis, there is a man named Cardenio of the cade-skiffs that will help her. Bernard question why Mildmay would kill royalty. Mildmay asks Bernard if he was a kept thief when he was young. In the land where Mavortian and Bernard come from, there are no kept-thieves. Mildmay says that they can't understand the perversion of being a kept thief. They are humbled into silence. They guide the boat into the middle of the wide river to avoid being caught, and enter the swamps that surround the city.

Felix wakes to Thaddeus hitting him. Thaddeus thinks that Felix is guilty of burning the Mirador. He doesn't at first believe Felix's excuse that Malkar is to blame. Gideon reasons that Felix had an interdict on him in the Mirador, which would keep him from using magic himself. Thaddeus realizes that it must have been Malkar. Felix's fingers are permanently damaged by the grip Malkar had on them in the dream.

## Chapter 6 Analysis

Just when it seems that Felix is on the way to healing, two forces work against him. His love for Shannon causes him damage, because Felix cannot open up to Shannon about his past. Shannon is humiliated. As a younger man who has never known hardship, it is impossible for Shannon to understand why Felix is different. Losing Shannon for the second time is a blow to Felix's rising hope. Even worse than losing Shannon is Malkar's intrusion on Felix's dream. The Sunling represented peace and hope, and Malkar is perverting Felix's dream to his own ends. It makes Felix incredibly vulnerable



that Malkar can reach him even in dreams. Once again Felix is blamed for Malkar's crimes. Mildmay shows his resourcefulness again in escaping the city. Mavortian proves himself to be a very useful wizard with healing powers. The reader learns that Mildmay has murdered multiple times.





# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

The Mirador is now broken. Magic cannot be worked within the city of Mélusine. Many were killed in the fire and the attack of the spirits that followed the fall of the Mirador. The spells that had kept the Mirador together had protected the city for many years. No one knows necromancy anymore, the magic that deals with the afterlife. Felix cannot remember everything that has passed, but now they are a government in exile, escaping the city through the underground tunnels and catacombs of the city. Thaddeus will not let Felix be. He keeps interrogating him for more information on what happened in his dream with Malkar. Felix's fingers throb with pain. Not being able to perform magic, Gideon could only partially repair Felix's hand.

Phoskis hatred for Mildmay promises some kind of scheme. Normally Mildmay would return Phoskis boat to Phoskis's thugs down river. The thugs are probably under orders to kill if Mildmay reaches them. So, Mildmay, Mavortian and Bernard set out on foot into the swamps. Mildmay growing up in the Lower City has heard many ghost and ghoulish stories of the swamps, not to mention crocodiles. Not long into their journey, a fast moving ghoulish attacks. Mildmay manages to get a hold on it, and Bernard slices off its head. The danger of the ordeal brings Mildmay and Bernard together momentarily. They head for the town of Alchemic, where Mildmay has contacts. The city is full of refugees from Mélusine, but Mildmay and Bernard work in the tavern of one of the hotels, and Mavortian does divination with his cards in return for room and board.

Felix is isolated. After Malkar used him to destroy the Mirador, everyone doubts the truth of his story, and they fear what he is capable of. Felix tells them of his visions, in which everyone has the head of beasts, not men, but they do not take him seriously. Felix despairs. He has no will and no strength. Malkar's spells have affected every part of his mind and soul.

Mildmay has an argument with Mavortian. He doesn't want to continue with him, and since Mavortian is broke, Mildmay is a drain on their limited resources. Mildmay demands to know more of why Mavortian needs him, threatening to leave. Mavortian give in, and tells Mildmay of his desire to avenge the death of his lover. A bad wizard killed her and cursed Mavortian's legs, making him a cripple. The cards told him that in order to find the wizard, he must find Felix Harrowgate. Further, to find Felix, he was led to Mildmay. Mavortian promises Mildmay a third of his earnings, when he kills the magician. Mildmay agrees to stay with Mavortian. Mavortian demands that Mildmay strip the dye from his hair. Mildmay is naturally a red head, but because red heads are considered bad luck in Mélusine, he has always kept it dyed black.

Felix and the wizards have reached the town of Hermione, where there is an abandoned wizard's tower that they intend to renew to regroup the power of the Mirador. Thaddeus and Gideon are rooming with Felix. They argue in their own language,



Kekropian about Felix. Felix is not educated in languages, but he warns them that whatever Malkar is planning, it is probably not what they think.

Felix feels spooked by his red hair. Mavortian's divination cards keep showing him a tower. The bartender tells them that there is an abandoned wizard's tower in Hermione. They learn that they can take a boat there in a few days.

Felix dreams that there is evil in the tower, but Thaddeus doesn't believe him. He laughs Felix off. Gideon takes Felix out to a maze in the city to get away from Thaddeus. Gideon starts talking about where Felix is from, Troia. Felix is surprised; he doesn't know about his background. Gideon assures him that he must be from Troia, because Troians have yellow eyes and red hair. The Troians live far away on the coast, but used to rule have the empire. As they pass the tower, Felix gets the same feeling he had in his dream, that the tower is evil and reaching out for him. Once in the maze, Felix finds he can talk almost normally with Gideon. They talk about the dogma of the wizards of Mirador, Cabaline. Felix asks if in Gideon's magic they believe in dreams. Cabaline wizards do not believe in many of the other branches of magic, such as dreams. Felix tries to tell Gideon about the tower, but Gideon believes is Felix's madness. Felix knows that it is not, but he agrees with Gideon.

The next day, Felix tries to warn Thaddeus again about the tower. Thaddeus mocks Felix's fear and takes Felix to the tower. Felix can see that Thaddeus's magic is not spectacular and that he is hungry for glory and power. AT the top of the tower, Felix sees the mark of a circle on the floor. When he steps inside he has a vision of what happened there many years ago. A young witch was being trained by an old wizard. She was more powerful than her teacher and spurned him. The teacher then called on a fantome, which overpowered him. It forced him to butcher the student in the circle. With no other way to throw off the fantome, the wizard then killed himself by jumping out the window, but the fantome survived trapped in the tower, waiting for someone weak enough to over power. Felix screams when he feels the fantome trying to get to him. He runs out of the tower. Thaddeus is exasperated with Felix and accuses him of sabotage. Thaddeus takes Felix back to the others. They all agree that Felix is trying to sabotage their mission. Felix is desperate. He goes to the river to commit suicide, but Gideon finds him. Gideon apologizes for not listening to Felix. He says he believes him. Felix has never heard of a fantome, but when he tells Gideon what he saw in the circle, Gideon recognizes the name. He is horrified, and promises to help Felix.

Mavortian does more divination to try and figure out what is drawing them to the tower in Hermione. He takes a pen and paper and performs a spell that forces his hand to write. Mavortians sees he word fantome written and gasps. Mavortian knows what a fantome is. His magic is different than the Cabaline magic of the Mirador.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

After the fall of the Mirador, Mildmay's resourcefulness and knowledge of the city becomes indispensable. As Felix becomes more and more helpless, Mildmay is



showing his strengths. Mildmay is good with languages. He also thinks ahead. His years as a thief have prepared him for difficult times. As Mildmay's hair grows out, the reader learns that he, like Felix, have the same red colored hair. The trait is rare in Mélusine, which makes Felix and Mildmay linked by some unknown history. Felix's desperation is growing, as the people who saved him from the insane asylum lose patience with his madness. To some, Felix is faking his madness. To Gideon, Felix is just damaged. Gideon believes that Felix has a chance at getting better. But, Felix's weakness is also his strength. He has a greater sensitivity to magic than the others. Felix has become intuitive. The reader also begins to see how other branches of magic exist besides the Mirador. The Mirador was strong, but in some ways blind to other forms of power. Mavortian and Gideon represent some of the alternatives to the Mirador's brand of magic.



# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

Mavortian explains what a fantome is to Mildmay. It is a spirit that takes over the body of a mortal. They reached Hermione and go looking for Felix. When they finally find the hotel where the wizards are staying, the Chimera Among the Roses, the desk clerk offers to bring them Lord Shannon or Lady Vicky. They play along, surprised by their luck. When Vicky and Shannon arrive, Mavortian introduces himself as a wizard of the Fresandran practice of wizardry. Vicky is condescending. Mavortian tries to warn her about the tower, but when they see Mildmay that think Mavortian, Bernard and Mildmay are in a conspiracy against them. Confused, Mavortian protests, but then they bring in Felix. Immediately Mildmay recognizes that Felix is his twin. Mildmay also notices how weak and terrified Felix is. It reminds him of the children he grew up with always terrified of being hurt and beaten. He takes to Felix right away.

Thaddeus and Gideon argue with Mavortian about the fantome. They have performed tests to see if there is a fantome there and Mavortian offers to do some spells to assist them.

Thaddeus attacks Felix in their room. He accuses Felix of lying about his background, but Felix cannot tell the truth, having been bound to secrecy by Malkar. Gideon interrupts them and kicks Thaddeus out. Gideon offers his help to Felix. He tells him that his madness is not real. To Felix it doesn't matter; he is hopeless. Gideon leaves Felix, angry that Felix has given up hope.

Mildmay and Bernard accompany the wizards to the tower the next day. The wizards perform a spell to cast the fantome out. Suddenly Mildmay feels a need to escape. Up into the tower walks the Lord Protector, Stephen Teverius. Felix, whose sensitivity to magic makes him better understand what is happening, sees Mildmay flee. Felix whispers to Gideon for help. Mavortian and Bernard follow. They find Mildmay curled up in a ball. Felix sees barbed wire surrounding Mildmay and recognizes a curse. It is then that Felix realizes that Mildmay must have been the murderer of the last Witchfinder Extraordinary. The curse was meant to kill anyone who tried to kill the Witchfinder, but Mildmay explains that he was given a box that warded off the spell. Now, the spell is closing in on him and killing him. Mildmay is suffering. Felix can't use magic, but Gideon can. Gideon enters Felix's mind, in the same way Malkar did, and uses Felix to save Mildmay. They use a piece of glass to soak up the curse. Felix tells Mildmay to keep the glass on him at all times, otherwise the curse will come back and kill him.

Stephen is planning war, and Gideon warns Felix that they must escape. Mildmay, Mavortian, Bernard, Gideon and Felix run away, knowing that they are all in danger. IN the night, Felix has a dream of the Sunlings. The Sunling tells him to come to the Gardens of Nephele, where they can heal him. Felix tries to go right away, but Mildmay stops him. Mildmay promises to help him get to the gardens if he waits until morning.



## Chapter 8 Analysis

The reason for the parallel narration between Mildmay and Felix becomes clear when the reader finds out the two men are brothers. They both have the same distinct features that are uncommon in Mélusine. The brothers recognize each other immediately. For Mildmay, finding out he has a brother is a revelation. He feels immediately bound to Felix. Felix does not have quite the same reaction. Felix is so mentally distraught that he can't really process the idea that Mildmay is his brother. Felix is unable to trust anyone, or anything he sees. However, Felix's subconscious feelings towards Mildmay reveal themselves when Mildmay is threatened by the curse. Felix doesn't have to save Mildmay, but he does. Felix risks his own life to save his brother's. The intuitive power that Felix has, once again, becomes valuable. Only a few can appreciate Felix's abilities, mainly Gideon. The outsiders from Mélusine band together to escape. They are an unlikely party. Gideon goes out of friendship to Felix. Mildmay now feels honor bound to protect Felix. Mavortian is still trying to get revenge and is sure that Felix and Mildmay are the key. Felix dreams again of the Sunlings and finds out the name of the place in his dreams, the Gardens of Nephele.



# Chapters 9/10

## Chapters 9/10 Summary

Mildmay tells the others that he and Felix are going to the coast to find the Garden of Nephele for Felix. Mavortian doesn't want to lose Felix so he agrees to go, and Bernard goes wherever Mavortian goes. They plan to sneak through the northern part of the empire, keeping as far away from the Bastion as possible. Felix would be traceable by the Bastion and Gideon can cast a charm to hide him, but Gideon didn't want to go into the empire. Mavortian threatened to turn Gideon in as a spy, forcing Gideon, unhappily, to accompany them. Mildmay notices the way that Gideon watches Felix and realizes that Gideon is in love with Felix. IN the town of Yehergod, Mildmay can't sleep. He spots soldiers closing in on the inn where they are staying. He wakes the others and they separate and plan to meet down the road later. Mildmay takes Felix up on the roof and drags him away from town. Felix is in one of his insane states and doesn't know what is going on. Mildmay and Felix wait outside of town until they realize it is hopeless. They continue on their own. Felix's tattoos are a giveaway that he is a wizard of the Mirador. Mildmay convinces him to hide his hands just in case. The two of them have bright red hair, which is unusual. They know they will be noticed wherever they go. They walk to the next town and Mildmay picks a few pockets for money, but he knows that he will have to make money by playing cards. He is too conspicuous to pick pockets.

In the inn, Mildmay orders money for a bath. Felix hesitates. He is ashamed of the scars on him back that show he was beaten. When Mildmay sees them, he asks what happened. Felix doesn't want to admit that he was a kept-thief and a prostitute. He blames the beating on Malkar. Mildmay shares his own history of abuse with Felix. Felix is ashamed that he lied and Mildmay tells him the truth.

Felix has a mad spell. When he is trapped in his madness, he believes that Mildmay is his old Keeper. Felix is convinced that Keeper has killed Mildmay, but he is too terrified to defy him. Mildmay doesn't understand what Felix is thinking when he gets one of his spells, but he tries to be patient. Mildmay goes out to play cards to make them money. When he returns, Felix has run away. Mildmay goes out into the streets to find Felix. When he finally does, Felix tells him that he had a vision that someone was being raped in the hotel room. Mildmay tells him that next time he has a bad vision to come find Mildmay. They agree that they will have a safe place wherever they go that Felix can escape to if he panics. That way Mildmay can find Felix when he needs too.

One day as Felix and Mildmay are hiding from soldiers on the road, Felix gets up and begins walking. He hears crying. Mildmay tackles him. He knows that if Felix has it in his head to go somewhere, they have to go. Mildmay promises they will go find the crying, but in the daytime. They are in the middle of nowhere without food. Mildmay sees a farm. He makes Felix promise that he won't go anywhere, while Mildmay tries to steal some food. Hours later, Mildmay has not returned. Felix goes to look for him. He finds Felix in the cellar of the house, beaten up. They escape together.



The next day, Felix stops suddenly. He has reached the crying voices. An ancient city once stood there, called Nera. The people were attacked and the city destroyed. In their belief they need a maze to reach the underworld. Felix and Mildmay create a simple maze by pulling up wheat and making paths. They sit back and wait as the ghosts go through the maze. Felix tries to follow them, but Mildmay stops him. Felix has a fit of madness. He thinks that Mildmay is his Keeper again. Felix is obedient to Mildmay because he believes it is Keeper, but he is haunted by the voices of the dead who called for him to enter the maze. Felix saw his childhood friend Joline who was killed. He can hear her crying. Felix sees shadows coming up behind him. His yellow eye can ward them off, but not the blue. He tells Mildmay. Mildmay walks on the vulnerable side, promising Felix to protect him from the shadows.

## Chapters 9/10 Analysis

Felix's madness puts Mildmay's patience to the test. They two brother's barely escape. Mavortian, Gideon and Bernard may have been caught and killed. Felix spends great periods of time unaware of himself and his surroundings. Sometimes he trusts Mildmay and remembers that it is his brother. At other times, Felix believes Mildmay is out to get him. Mildmay may not understand the extent of Felix's insanity, but he is patient. Mildmay tries to make a way for both of them, stealing and gambling for money. Felix's sensitivity towards things unseen continues. At one point he can see a rape taking place in the hotel room, though it may have happened many years before. Felix also begins to hear voices. Mildmay is unlike all the other people who have tried to deal with Felix. He trusts Felix's instincts. They detour from the path so that Felix can find the crying voices. This is symbolic, as the voices try to get Felix to join them in death. Felix is looking for peace. Death for Felix would be a way to escape his madness. Mildmay doesn't know what is going on inside Felix's head, but he tries to reason with him, protect him and comfort him.



# Chapters 11-12

## Chapters 11-12 Summary

Felix and Mildmay finally reach the ocean. They have never seen it before. There are seamen there who have red hair and yellow eyes, like Felix and Mildmay. They get passage on a ship bound for Troia. Mildmay has to fight to get Felix on the boat. Felix goes into madness. They lock him in his room on the ship. Mildmay works on the ship to pay for their passage. Mildmay is embarrassed to be rough with Felix in front of these men. Felix believes that Mildmay is his keeper again. He plots for a way to kill him. Eventually, the madness passes. Felix is still not sure what is real and what is hallucination. Mildmay tries to reassure him, but Mildmay is exasperated. He can't wait to get to the Garden of Nephele, where hopefully, Felix can be cured. The captain pulls Mildmay aside one day and tells him that a vicious storm is coming. They don't have room in the lifeboat for two. The captain says he won't judge Mildmay if he takes the seat. Mildmay knows that Felix won't survive without him. He also knows that he can't leave his brother behind to die on the ship. When the storm comes, Mildmay stays with Felix, and the crew leaves them. The storm comes and destroys the ship. Mildmay manages to get himself and Felix onto a floating piece of wood. The glass that Felix gave Mildmay in Hermione to keep the curse away fell out of Mildmay's pocket. As they are floating closer to the shores of Troia, Mildmay feels the curse starting to take over. Mildmay yells at Felix to swim. He calls him names and threatens him. Felix gives in, and swims to shore. Mildmay falls unconscious.

When Mildmay wakes up, he is in a hospital. A young man is watching him. His name is Khrysogonos. The boy says that he is an apprentice, and that he doesn't want to help Mildmay, because Mildmay is a murderer. Mildmay asks to see Felix, but Khrysogonos says that Felix is too sick. Mildmay is severely injured. Mildmay begins to visit the garden to get away. Mildmay meets another patient there. Mildmay tells him that he was cursed and it crippled his leg. The man is from Troia, named Thamuris, and he is surprised because there are no more curses in Troia. He calls Mélusine the blind city. Thamuris examines Mildmay and feels the curse in his leg. Thamuris is angry. He asks who is in charge of Mildmay. Mildmay doesn't know, so Thamuris goes to find out. Mildmay cannot get up, so he waits in the garden for his apprentice to come find him. He overhears his apprentice talking to other apprentices. They make fun of him for having to take care of Mildmay. One of them, Astyanax sees Mildmay. They think he doesn't understand their language. Khrysogonos is angry and embarrassed. He takes Mildmay back to his room. Later Astyanax casts a spell on Mildmay to force him to tell him about the Virtu and Mirador. Khrysogonos tries to stop him, but he is not a wizard.

With the information that Astyanax got out of Mildmay, the Celebrants are able to cure Felix. Felix is afraid to see Mildmay, so he studies with the Celebrants, happy to be sane. He doesn't know that Mildmay is suffering. Khrysogonos approaches Felix and asks why he hasn't seen Mildmay. He tells Felix that Mildmay had been asking for him since he first woke up. Felix is ashamed. When he goes to see Mildmay, he realizes that





they haven't been trying to help him. They thought that Mildmay had beaten and tortured Felix when he was mad. With Felix's help the Celebrants heal Mildmay. Felix tells Mildmay the truth about his past as a kept-thief and a prostitute. He is relieved to finally tell the truth, and Mildmay had no judgment for him.

## Chapters 11-12 Analysis

It appears that Mildmay's fate is unfair. Mildmay sacrifices everything to get Felix to the Garden's of Nephele. Once they have arrived, the doctors separate the brothers. The healers believe that Mildmay is a murderer and has abused Felix. As the healers do everything they can to help Felix, they ignore Mildmay's suffering. Mildmay's symptoms get work. He is in constant pain from the curse. When Felix comes out of his madness, he avoids Mildmay. Felix is unsure of how to relate to Mildmay, after all that has happened. When Felix finds out that Mildmay has been asking for him, he is ashamed. Felix puts everything right. His gratitude to Mildmay is clear. The brothers are both healed and Felix finds a future in the Gardens of Nephele.



# Characters

## Felix Harrowgate

Felix is a wizard of the Mirador and the lover of Lord Shannon. He was sold by his mother, a prostitute with bright red hair, to a thief. Felix was raised to steal and prostitute himself in the Lower City of Mélusine. When an evil wizard, Malkar, took a liking to Felix, Felix found himself bound to a different kind of master. Brutalized and raped for years, Felix was finally released from Malkar to begin training as a wizard for the Mirador. Felix rose to prominence, but when the truth about his background came out in court, Felix found himself back under the control of Malkar. Felix is raped and deranged by Malkar, who casts a spell to damage and control Felix's mind. Felix is Mildmay's half-brother, though he doesn't know this until much later in the book.

## Mildmay

Mildmay the Fox is a thief and cat burglar. He is infamous for his work. Growing up as a kept-thief in the Lower City, Mildmay has street smarts. He is good with languages and reading people. But his uncouth manners make most think he is a thug. Mildmay falls in love with a young woman named Ginevra and is devastated by her murder. As a child Mildmay was made to murder for his Keeper, because of that he has a curse that threatens to take his life. Mildmay's mother was also Felix Harrowgate's mother. Although Mildmay grew up in the slums, he had a better life than Felix, suffering less abuse at the hands of his Keeper. Mildmay saves Felix's life many times. Despite his outward behavior, Mildmay is a gentle and sensitive person. HE is the only one who takes pity on Felix enough to help him.

## Malkar

Malkar is an evil wizard. He is manipulative and powerful, though his power is not as strong as his protégé Felix Harrowgate. Malkar delights in other's destruction. He torments Felix for many years, and then casts a curse that makes Felix think he is going insane. Malkar uses Felix to break the magic of the Virtu and destroy the Mirador. Malkar escapes to the Bastion, the political rival of the Mirador.

## Ginevra

Ginevra is a middle class girl. She is looking for a wealthy man to take care of her. When she hires Mildmay the Fox to steal her ex-boyfriend's jewels, she doesn't expect to fall for him. Ginevra is only really happy when things are easy and light. Mildmay's lower class pragmatism upsets her. When an old boyfriend comes back into her life, Ginevra leaves Mildmay. Both Ginevra and her boyfriend are murdered.



## Mavortian von Heber

Mavortian von Heber is a foreign wizard who works with divination, telling the future. He is on a mission to avenge the woman he loved. He is especially gifted at telling the future through cards. The cards point him to Mildmay and Felix Harrowgate, though he does not know why. Mavortian is a relatively good wizard. He helps the wizards of the Mirador defeat the fantome in the tower at Hermione. He is a cripple and gets around on the back of his half-brother and bodyguard, Bernard.

## Lord Stephen Teveria

Stephen Teveria is the Lord Protector of Mélusine. He is the most powerful man in Mélusine. When Felix is thought to have broken the Virtu, Stephen wants to punish Felix by death. Stephen is persuaded to keep Felix alive in hopes that he will be able to help fix the Virtu in time. Stephen hates Felix because Felix is the lover of his younger brother Shannon Teveria.

## Shannon Teveria

Shannon is Felix Harrowgate's lover and the younger brother of the Lord Protectorate, Stephen Teveria. Shannon is younger than Felix and has led a comfortable life of education and position. Because of Shannon's youth and lack of experience, Shannon can't relate to the horrors that Felix has been through. When he hears that Felix was a prostitute, he lashes out in anger. Felix slaps Shannon, and for this reason, Shannon does not visit or try to intervene when Felix is accused of destroying the Virtu and sent to St. Crellifer's. When it is discovered that Malkar had used Felix, Shannon tries to restart their relationship, but Felix is too damaged. Shannon is embarrassed and hurt. His rejection makes him bitter and angry towards Felix.

## Robert of Hermione

Robert of Hermione is the man who let the court know that Felix was once a prostitute. He probably was told by Malkar. Robert hates Felix and enjoys humiliating him at court. Robert goes to St. Crellifers and forces Felix to submit his mind for examining, a process that is excruciating for the half-mad Felix. Though he must have seen Malkar's curse in Felix's mind, Robert does not tell the Curia what he has found, nor help Felix get out of St. Crellifer's. When Felix looks at Robert, he sees the head of a snake.

## Thaddeus

Thaddeus is a foreign wizard who escaped the Bastion and joined the Mirador. At the beginning of the story Thaddeus has been gone from Mélusine for years. When the Virtu is broken, Thaddeus is called back to Mélusine to help. Thaddeus is one of the



wizards who goes to Felix in St. Crellifer's and discovers how Malkar forced Felix to break the Virtu. Thaddeus's loyalty to Felix wanes as Thaddeus seeks power and prestige. Thaddeus tires of Felix's madness, and begins to think it is all a show.

## Gideon

Gideon grew up with Thaddeus in the Bastion. It is never explained in the book, but Gideon and Thaddeus have a history that has made Thaddeus hate Gideon. They both had humble beginnings, but Gideon is the better wizard and a kinder person. Gideon reaches out to Felix. Gideon knows that Felix's madness is curable, but Felix rejects his help. Gideon falls in love with Felix. He saves Felix's life when Felix tries to commit suicide. He also protects Felix from Thaddeus.

## Brother Orphelin

Brother Orphelin is the head of the brothers who run St. Crellifer's insane asylum. Orphelin enjoys knowing other people's secrets and using them to manipulate. When Felix comes to the asylum, Orphelin forces Felix to admit how Felix got his scars. He enjoys dominating Felix. Felix is terrified of him.

## Brother Lilburn

Lilburn is another of the brothers of St. Crellifer's. Lilburn is in charge of punishment. He forces the patients to go through excruciating rituals to do penance for their sins. Lilburn thinks that Felix is guilty of sin and singles him out for punishment. When Felix hallucinates, he sees Lilburn as a walking corpse filled with malice.

## Cardenio

Cardenio was a kept-thief with Mildmay. They grew up together. Cardenio is a cade-skiff, one of the order that pulls dead bodies out of the river. Cardenio is a gentle, kind young man. He and Mildmay meet often to discuss news. They are very much like brothers. When Ginevra is murdered, Cardenio gives Mildmay the news and tries to comfort him. Mildmay's last words to Cardenio are hateful. Mildmay was grieving for Ginevra and rejected Cardenio. When Mildmay encounters the Kalliphorne he tells the beast that if he needs to escape Cardenio will help him.

## Sunlings

The Sunlings are a folk-people, who have golden eyes and red hair. They are thought not to exist in Mélusine. Both Felix and Mildmay originally come from Troia where the Sunlings still live. They are more enlightened beings, concerned with healing and peace. When Felix is going mad he encounters a Sunling in his dream. The Sunling



turns out to be a real person. He guides Felix to Troia, to the Gardens of Nephele, where he heals the damage done to Felix by Malkar's spells. Felix and Mildmay's mother came from Troia and the Sunlings.

## **Kalliphorne**

The Kalliphorne and her husband live beneath St. Kirban's. They are controlled by Phoskis. They are similar to merpeople. They have fish like scales and fins, but faces and arms as well. They usually attack the passengers underneath St. Kirban's, if Phoskis commands it. But when Mildmay, Mavortian and Bernard pass through, Mavortian heals the Kalliphorne's husband from a magical fever. She lets them pass, grateful for their help.



# Objects/Places

## The Virtu

The Virtu is a magic globe. It is the center of power for the Mirador. It is very ancient and originated from the Mélusine and the Cabaline tradition of magic. Malkar raises Felix in order to use him to break the magic of the Virtu, making the Mirador and its wizards vulnerable to an attack by the Bastion.

## The Arcane

The city of Mélusine has an underground of caves and catacombs. Parts of these are home to prostitutes and brothels, bars and drug dealers. It is the seedy underworld of Mélusine. Mildmay knows many people in the Arcane. It is a good place to hide out if the police or the Mirador is after you. Mildmay goes to the Arcane after the dogs raid the Badgers. He works at a bar there until he runs out of money. The best place to get information about what is happening in the Mirador is in the Arcane, because the brothels cater to wizards and upper class. All manner of degradation is available in the Arcane.

## Mélusine

Mélusine is called the blind city by the people of Troia. It is a vibrant city, but full of old vices. The lower classes are filled with children used as sex slaves or kept-thieves. Many of the lower class are addicted to the drug phoenix. Mélusine has many different neighborhoods according to class. Most importantly is the citadel of Mélusine, the Mirador. Felix and Mildmay are both sold as kept-thieves when they are very young. They grow up in Mélusine, never knowing that they are from the Troian people.

## Mirador

The Mirador is the citadel of Mélusine. The Mirador is the political and magical center of the city. It is an ancient fortress of Cabaline wizards. In its depths are the crypts of ancient wizards, some dangerous other good. The Mirador controls the city of Mélusine, but is separate from it as well. The magic in the Mirador is old and keeps the city bound together and safe. When the Mirador falls, the city goes into chaos. Spells that had kept the city unified break when the Mirador breaks. Likewise, the underworld gains power without the Mirador, because Cabaline wizards do not understand or practice necromancy.



## Malkar's workshop

Deep in the Mirador is Malkar's workshop. Malkar is an evil wizard, but his cunning and manipulation make him powerful in the Mirador. Malkar is not a Cabaline wizard. He is loyal to the Bastion. In Malkar's workshop he has fashioned a chamber with a circle and a pentagram on the floor. Handcuffs in four corners are used to trap Felix on the circle, where Malkar weaves dark magic that makes Felix a conduit of power. Felix is viciously raped in Malkar's workshop as part of the spell that Malkar casts to break the magic of the Virtu.

## Hermione

A neighboring town to Mélusine, Hermione is the location of an old wizarding tower. When the Mirador falls, the wizards of the Mirador travel to Hermione to take control of the tower and use it to regain some of their power. At the same time, Mavortian, Bernard and Mildmay are drawn to Hermione through Mavortian's divination. Felix is terrified of the tower in Hermione. Felix sees a vision of the tower's past in which a dark spirit was called up by a foolish wizard. The fantome still resides in the tower in Hermione, waiting for a wizard to inhabit.

## St. Kirbin's

St. Kirbin's is the location of a handful of important scenes. When Mildmay was a kept-thief, he was used in a plot originating in the Mirador to kill the Lord Protectorate's cousin. The complicated scheme involved Mildmay being apprenticed to the man that runs St. Kirban's. Mildmay lived there and worked there undercover until the night when the Lord's cousin came to escape. Mildmay followed him down to the underground chamber that connects to the river and cut his throat. St. Kirbin's has a monster called Kalliphorne, living beneath it. Whenever he wants someone killed, the owner of St. Kirbin's releases the Kalliphorne to kill them. When Ginevra was murdered, she was found near St. Kirbin's

## Gardens of Nephele

In a dream Felix discovers the Gardens of Nephele. Though plagued by madness, a Sunling finds himself in Felix's dream. The Sunling tells Felix to come to the Gardens of Nephele to be cured of his madness. Felix and Mildmay set out to find Nephele after they escape the wizards of the Mirador. The Gardens of Nephele are located far from Mélusine in the land of Troia.

## Troia

Troia is an old kingdom that used to rule half the empire. Now they are a kingdom along the coast. They are known for their brilliant healers and the Sunling people. The people of Troia have pale skin, golden eyes and red hair. Where Mélusine is burdened by vices and inequalities, Troia is a place of enlightenment. The Gardens of Nephele are located in Troia. Both Felix and Mildmay are Troian by blood.





# Themes

## Isolation

Isolation is a main theme that many of the characters have to confront. Both Felix and Mildmay are loners before they meet each other. Felix has Shannon, but he has never shared the truth of his past with him. Felix isolates himself from the rest of the world because he lives in shame of his background. Mildmay is less isolated, because he has friends that he grew up with. However, he lives alone and works alone. He doesn't realize until Ginevra's death how much of a loner he is. Isolation is combatted with the intimacy that develops between Mildmay and Felix.

## Manipulation

Because politics and power are so central to the plot, manipulation is a theme woven into each of the relationships. The most prominent and destructive relationship is that between Felix and Malkar. Malkar doesn't manipulate simply for power. He does it because he enjoys twisting reality. Malkar is able to turn almost anyone to his will, through magic and manipulation. Other characters manipulate each other in small ways to get what they want. Mavortian blackmails Gideon in order to get Gideon's help. Another example of manipulation is in the way that Brother Orphelin deals with Felix. In order to keep him in his power, Orphelin roots out the secrets most damaging to Felix. Knowing and using someone's secrets is form of manipulation.

## Dreams

Dreams are used as a foreshadowing device in the plot. Dreams also show the connection between the two narrators, before we know they are brothers. Mildmay dreams of his mother and his Keeper, as does Felix. Felix has the power to manipulate his dreams. Felix's dreams about Troia and the Sunling run through the plot, foreshadowing the ending of the story, when Felix finally finds peace. Dreams in the book can be nightmarish or a comfort to the characters.

## Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is another important theme in the book that relates to manipulation. Sexual control is symbolic of the degradation and utter submission that Malkar has over Felix. The sexual violence of Malkar's relationship is a foil for the gentle and loving sexual relationship that Felix has with Shannon. Sexual violence is a source of shame for Felix throughout the book. The theme of shame for being victimized is also a recurring theme in the story. Being a victim of sexual violence damages Felix to the core and the shame of it that he carries around continues to destroy him until he is able to tell the truth to Mildmay.



# Style

## Point of View

The story is recounted through the first-person point of view of two different narrators, Felix Harrowgate and Mildmay the Fox. The first is a point of view based on a higher class narrator's perception. However, as Felix descends into insanity as the result of a curse, his perception of the world becomes distorted. In much of Felix's narration, the reader must figure out what is happening that Felix may not understand. The second narrator, Mildmay, is a lower class individual. His point of view is more pragmatic and straightforward.

## Setting

Most of the story is set in the fictional city of Mélusine. It is an ancient city. In comparison to the kingdom of Troia, Mélusine is a backwards city. Mélusine is highly segregated by class. It is a busy cosmopolitan city inhabited by many thieves. The crime in the city is high and the police are merciless even against children. When the Mirador burns, the narrators both leave the city. For the rest of the story, the characters are traveling through the country side, staying in small towns until they reach the coast. Felix and Mildmay take a ship from there to reach Troia and the Gardens of Nephele.

## Language and Meaning

There are two styles of language, because there are two very different narrators. Felix was born into a lower class family, but he was raised by Malkar and forced to speak properly. His narration is more fluid and educated. In comparison, the language used by Mildmay is less educated. Mildmay speaks almost completely in the slang of Mélusine. The police are called dogs. People who are not street-wise are called flats. Wizards are called hocuses. Mildmay's speech is much more colorful, but is meant to be un-cultured and rough. Mildmay also curses more than Felix.

## Structure

The book is separated into twelve chapters. Within each chapter the narration switches between Felix and Mildmay. They plots that are going on in the different narrators lives are happening simultaneously. The plot is straightforward. The characters begin in their normal lives then run into obstacles and difficulties that change the setting and drive the story forward.



## Quotes

"All at once, I liked her. She was a flat, sure, and she was spoiled, for damn sure, but she'd done her best to think things through, and she was trying hard not to make the same mistake twice. Some days you got to accept that's all you can do, and it takes guts to admit that's the kind of day you're up against" (p. 12).

"I had known people, in Pharaohlight, who had insisted that phoenix was tasteless, but they were wrong. It tasted like tears" (p. 17).

"I knew we had to get onto the beach before it got me. We had to, and so I yelled terrible things at my brother, some things Keeper'd called me one time, and I'd sworn, crying to myself in the corner, that I'd never say them to nobody else, no matter what. And here I was, saying them to Felix, who didn't even deserve them, just because it was that or let u both drown" (p. 364).

"It got clearer and clearer to me, listening to them and watching Gideon's face getting pinched and gray, that what we were doing was stupid. And not just a little stupid, neither, but the kind of stupid where somebody ought to smack you upside the head for your own good, because you're too dumb to bring yourself in out of the rain" (p. 288).

"As we returned to the Chimera Among Roses, I could feel myself eroding. I had weighed the cost of saving Mildmay's life and accepted it freely, but that did not make the slow crumbling into darkness any easier to bear" (p. 282).

"That's what hocuses are like, and that's why, if you live in the Lower City of Melusine, you keep one eye on the Mirador all the time, same way you would with a swamp adder. It's just common sense" (p. 2).

"The damnation I sought had come to find me. If I closed my eyes, I could see Shannon's face, the mark of my hand on his cheek, the tears standing in his eyes like diamonds. And I could see that poor, hopeless boy, waiting to be beaten, waiting to be raped, waiting to be hurt. I went with Malka" (p. 16).

"I thought when she was going out the door, I bet Austin would have told her what she wanted to hear. Austin would have made her feel safe and like he'd take care of her. And I didn't know whether that made me or him the better person" (p. 104).

"Gideon was there, warm and green and smelling slightly of cloves but not at all of bitterness and death, and I could hear no voices in my head at all." (p. 246).



## Topics for Discussion

Why does Felix turn on Shannon when Shannon confronts him with the past?

While Felix is trapped in Malkar's spell, he observes a halo of color around each of the other characters. What do these colors reveal about the character's intentions?

The first half of the story is set in Mélusine. What new things are revealed about Mélusine and its people once they leave the city? How does this impact the story?

Why doesn't Felix want to see Mildmay after he has been healed?

What motivates Mildmay to help Felix? Why does he stick by him till the end?

Why would Mildmay and Felix's mother sell them? How does Diokletian know their mother?

Why does Felix willingly go back to Malkar?

How does the Sunling find Felix in his dreams? Does Felix find the Sunling?

How did Mavortian lose the use of his legs? How has this affected his personality? Give examples.

How does Mildmay know that Gideon is in love with Felix? Are their hints to this in the text before Mildmay says it?

Why does Shannon abandon Felix if he is in love with him? Is he angry with Felix?