

Parzival Study Guide

Parzival by Wolfram von Eschenbach

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Plot Summary

Parzival by Wolfram von Eschenbach is the reworking and completion of Chretien de Troyes' tale of Perceval and the Holy Grail. Wanting to become a knight, Parzival leaves home and seeks adventure, gaining renown for his exploits, but after he fails to ask the Question of Anfortas, he begins his search for the Grail, which leads to many sorrows and misfortunes. "Parzival" is one of the first tales in Arthurian legend that introduces the legend of the Holy Grail, and the story is very entertaining and exciting.

After leaving his homeland following his father's death, Gahmuret rescues Queen Belacane of Zazamanc from her enemies and marries her, but he abandons her to seek adventure when she is pregnant with their son, Feirefiz. Gahmuret wins a tournament in Waleis and marries Queen Herzeloide; however, he is killed while fighting for the Baruc in Baghdad, leaving Herzeloide alone to raise their son Parzival, which she does in the woods in order to prevent him from obtaining knowledge of knights. After encountering knights, Parzival decides to become a knight and leaves, and his mother dies of grief as he departs. On his journey, Parzival steals Lady Jeschute's ring, causing Orilus, her husband, to punish her for being unfaithful. At King Arthur's court, Lady Cunneware laughs when she sees Parzival and, as this indicates that Parzival is destined to win, Keie beats her, causing Parzival to swear that he will avenge her. After killing Ither and obtaining his red armor, Parzival leaves King Arthur's court and is trained by Gurnemanz, an old knight, in the ways of knighthood and chivalry.

When Parzival travels to the city of Belrepeire, he frees Queen Condwiramurs from the armies of King Clamide and marries her, but he soon leaves to seek adventure and renown. Parzival finds lodging at Munsalvaesche one night, where he sees the mysteries surrounding the Grail, but he fails to free Anfortas by asking the Question; when he leaves the next day, he encounters Sigune, who chides him for failing to ask the Question. Next, Parzival encounters Jeschute and jousts with Orilus, after which he professes Jeschute's fidelity to her husband. When Segramors and Keie challenge Parzival without recognizing him, he unhorses each of them. Afterwards, Gawan invites Parzival to King Arthur's court, where he is made a Companion of the Round Table; unfortunately, the celebrations are cut short when Cundrie arrives to chide Parzival for failing to ask the Question of Anfortas, causing him to leave, swearing to find the Grail. Then, Kingrimursel arrives to challenge Gawan to judicial combat in Schanpfunz for the charge of killing his lord, and Gawan leaves King Arthur's court to accept the challenge. Gawan's duel is postponed after King Vergulaht breaches the codes of hospitality by offering violence where safe passage was promised. Meanwhile, Parzival spends some time with Trevrizent the hermit, learning about God, sin and the Grail.

After being cleared of the murder charge, Gawan meets Duchess Orgeluse de Logrois, who scorns and mocks him, even after he succeeds at the adventure at Schastel merveille, freeing the ladies within. When Gawan picks a garland from a tree in Orgeluse's service, King Gramoflanz challenges him to a duel. Gawan sends for King Arthur, who arrives shortly thereafter, and Gawan sneaks out to duel with Gramoflanz, but the knight he battles is actually Parzival, who surrenders when he realizes he is



fighting Gawan. King Arthur resolves the conflict between Gramoflanz and Gawan, allowing Gramoflanz to marry Itonje, his beloved and Gawan's sister, and Gawan marries Orgeluse. Missing his wife, Parzival leaves and fights an unknown knight who finally reveals himself to be Feirefiz, Parzival's half-brother. They celebrate at Schastel merveille until Cundrie arrives to announce that Parzival has been chosen to become the Gral King. Feirefiz accompanies Parzival to Munsalvaesche, where Parzival frees Anfortas from his suffering by asking the Question. Parzival is reunited with Condwiramurs and their twin sons, while Feirefiz converts to Christianity in order to marry Repanse de Schoye.



Foreword and Chapter 1

Foreword and Chapter 1 Summary

In the Foreword, the editor explains that Parzival is Wolfram von Eschenbach's retelling and conclusion of Chretien de Troyes' "Perceval", which is the earliest extant narrative of the Holy Grail. Wolfram was an unfree knight, bound to the service of a lord, but able to change his patron. Some topical references allow his "Parzival" to be dated to the early 1200s. Wolfram's dense, sententious style makes heavy demands on his audience. In chapter one, Wolfram introduces his retelling of a tale "of great fidelity, of inborn womanhood and manly virtue so straight as never was bent in any test of hardness" (p. 16). Custom dictates that the eldest brother inherits the entirety of his father's estate, so when Gahmuret's father, the King of Anjou, dies, an assembly of princes petition the new king to show his love for Gahmuret as a brother who wants to explore the world as a knight. Though sad to see his brother go, the king grants all Gahmuret asks and more, and Gahmuret takes his leave, never to see his mother, brother or his brother's lands again.

Gahmuret's prowess is praised as he rides through many lands, finally making his way to the kingdom of Zazamanc, where people lament the death of Isenhart, who lost his life in service to Queen Belacane. Queen Belacane is making a stout defense against Isenhart's kinsmen when Gahmuret arrives and offers his services. As the Queen and her princes explain their predicament, Gahmuret believes the Queen has a most affectionate spirit of womanliness. A steadfast longing is born between them as they gaze at one another, and Queen Belacane insists on making sure he is well taken care of, causing Gahmuret to blush at the honor she shows him. The next morning, Gahmuret saves Zazamanc and the Queen from her enemies, and Queen Belacane leads him through the town and to her bed as the champion. After Gahmuret marries Queen Belacane, he sojourns there happily for some time as King, but he begins to fret and pine for lack of deeds of arms to perform. He secretly sets sail at night, leaving a note that Queen Belacane can win him still if she is baptized. The Queen is pregnant when her husband abandons her, and she gives birth to a son, Feirefiz, who grows to be a fine warrior. Gahmuret travels to Seville.

Foreword and Chapter 1 Analysis

The Foreword provides some background information about Wolfram von Eschenbach as well as about the story of Parzival, which is a retelling of Chretien de Troyes' "Perceval". The Foreword also provides a little analytical commentary about Eschenbach's work and his writing style. When the narrative begins, Eschenbach briefly introduces his work as a tale "of great fidelity, of inborn womanhood and manly virtue so straight as was never bent in any test of hardness" (p. 16). Parzival begins with the story of Gahmuret, Parzival's father, after the death of his father, the King of Anjou. As the younger brother, Gahmuret, is not entitled to the throne or the lands, but his elder



brother offers to provide for him; however, Gahmuret longs for adventure, so he leaves his homeland and travels to Baghdad to serve the Baruc. He eventually makes his way to Zazamanc, where he saves Queen Belacane from her enemies, winning her heart and her hand in marriage. Thus, Gahmuret acquires a throne, but his longing for adventure causes him to abandon his wife and return to Europe. The letter that he leaves for Queen Belacane also insinuates that he has left because his desire for her fills him with guilt since she is not a Christian. Queen Belacane is pregnant when Gahmuret leaves, and she gives birth to Feirefiz, foreshadowing his future involvement in the narrative.



Chapter 2 and Wolfram's Apology

Chapter 2 and Wolfram's Apology Summary

Gahmuret sets out for Toledo to find his cousin, Kaylet, but since Kaylet has gone in search of tournaments, Gahmuret follows until he comes upon a tournament in Kanvoleis, where the Queen of Wales offers two lands and her person to whoever most distinguishes himself in the tournament. Queen Herzeloide hears much about Gahmuret and watches the warriors' feats with disappointment when he does not participate. Meanwhile, the French King has died, and Ampflise, the Queen of France, who Gahmuret has a passion for, is impelled by great longing to send to Kanvoleis to learn whether he has returned to his native land. She sends a letter by messenger to Gahmuret, offering her crown in exchange for love required.

Complying with Ampflise's request that he be her knight, Gahmuret now eagerly exerts himself until he learns that his brother has died, and Gahmuret is plagued with deep sorrow. Though he retires from the field to mourn, his feats cause Queen Herzeloide to announce that his deeds deserve the most praise, and eager for his love, she asks him to satisfy the claims she has on him. Gahmuret objects because he has a wife in Zazamanc and he owes his love to Queen Ampflise, but Queen Herzeloide insists that he marry her, and so they are married. When Gahmuret hears the Baruc has been overrun by Babylonians, he leaves to fight in Baghdad where he meets his death. Queen Herzeloide is stricken with grief and fights death only because she is eighteen weeks pregnant. She delivers a strong son whom she names Parzival, and though she fawns over the little fruit of Gahmuret, her gaiety is tempered by sorrow over losing her husband. In Wolfram's Apology, he does not resent any who speak better of women than he does. He withholds his service from only one woman who he found unfaithful, and thus his anger towards her does not change. He must be her enemy because she mishandled him so, but Wolfram will champion any woman of modest character.

Chapter 2 and Wolfram's Apology Analysis

When Gahmuret learns Kaylet, his cousin, has gone in search of tournaments and follows him, this foreshadows Gahmuret's involvement with a tournament, and this foreshadowing is soon fulfilled when he comes upon the tournament at Kanvoleis in Wales. Queen Herzeloide's interest when she hears about Gahmuret's feats foreshadows their romantic relationship; however, Gahmuret is infatuated with Queen Ampflise of France and fights in the tournament as Queen Ampflise's knight, achieving much renown for his efforts. Gahmuret withdraws from the field to mourn when he learns that his brother has died, but Queen Herzeloide still announces that his deeds deserve the most praise and offers him the reward for the tournament, her hand in marriage.



Gahmuret objects to marrying Queen Herzeloide because he already has a wife and he is in love with the French Queen, but a justice decrees that Gahmuret must take possession of his prize so he marries the Queen of Wales, obtaining the crown of Wales in addition to Zazamanc. Furthermore, Gahmuret's marriage to Queen Belacane is disregarded as being legitimate, indicating the Europeans' disregard for non-Christian unions and customs. Gahmuret's loyalty to his first wife is non-existent, yet he demonstrates loyalty to the Baruc by going to Baghdad to fight when he learns the Baruc has been overrun by Babylonians. Unfortunately, Gahmuret dies during this fight, and Queen Herzeloide is stricken with grief. She does not succumb to this grief, though, because she is pregnant, and she gives birth to Parzival, thus initiating the true narrative of this story. In Wolfram's *Apology*, Eschenbach explains that he will defend any modest woman but must nurse his anger toward one particular woman who he found unfaithful.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Queen Herzeloide estranges herself from her three kingdoms and lives in isolation in the woods with Parzival. She forbids her people to teach him about knights and anything to do with knighthood, but one day as Parzival is hunting down a long slope, he sees three armed men and learns they are knights given knighthood by King Arthur. Overwhelmed by the knights' glory, Parzival causes his mother much grief when he insists on leaving her to become a knight. Herzeloide dresses her son in fool's clothing with the hope that the people at court will laugh at him and he will not be made a knight. Then she gives him parting advice: it is good fortune to take the ring and greeting of a chaste lady, and always adhere if a wise man offers to teach him good manners. As Parzival rides away, his mother dies of grief. When Parzival comes upon Lady Jeschute, the wife of Duke Orilus de Lalander, he recalls his mother's advice and grapples with Jeschute, taking her ring. When Orilus returns, he believes his wife has been unfaithful and punishes her severely.

Next, Parzival comes upon Sigune lamenting the death of Schionatulander, and recognizing her cousin, Sigune tells him a little about his ancestry. Parzival finally arrives at King Arthur's court just as Ither, the Red Knight, visits court with unreasonable demands. Lady Cunneware laughs when she sees Parzival ride past, but since she only laughs when she sees the man destined to win, Keie strikes her for laughing, and he also strikes Antanor the mute when Antanor warns that Parzival will avenge Lady Cunneware someday. Parzival watches in anger. Parzival admires the armor of the Red Knight and begs to be given the armor, so Keie convinces King Arthur to agree if Parzival defeats Ither. Parzival challenges and kills Ither, an act he regrets later when he reaches the years of discretion. After Ither is buried, Parzival leaves King Arthur's court to seek his fame, and he comes upon an old knight, Gurnemanz, who offers to be his host and train him in the ways of knight-errantry. When Parzival finally takes his leave, Gurnemanz is sad and feels that he is losing his fourth son as Parzival does not like his daughter, Liaze; however, Parzival says that he will ask for Liaze if he ever wins fame as a knight such as would entitle him to sue for her love.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Because of her experiences with Gahmuret and her grief caused by his death, Queen Herzeloide withdraws to the woods where she raises Parzival in ignorance of the ways of knights, but he sees knights one day and becomes enamored with the idea of becoming a knight, causing his mother much lamentation. Since Parzival insists on going to King Arthur's court to become a knight, Herzeloide dresses her son as a fool with the hope that his aspirations will be thwarted, but she also gives him useful parting advice, showing that she loves her son dearly. Herzeloide dies of grief when Parzival leaves, indicating that he was all she had to live for after Gahmuret's death. When



Parzival comes upon Lady Jeschute, he follows his mother's advice to accept the ring of a noble lady; however, this ring is not freely offered and causes many problems for Jeschute with her husband, Orilus. This encounter foreshadows the reemergence of these characters in Parzival's narrative. Parzival also meets Sigune in this chapter, which introduces a character who sporadically appears throughout his journey.

When Parzival finally arrives at King Arthur's court, he covets the armor of Ither, and with Keie's mocking encouragement, Parzival kills Ither and acquires his red armor. At the court, Lady Cunneware does not laugh, and it is prophesied that she will only laugh when she sees the one destined to win. She laughs when she sees Parzival, indicating he is destined to win, and thus soliciting Keie's rage in the form of a beating. Parzival's oath to avenge her foreshadows his fight with Keie much later in the novel, as well as his respect for Lady Cunneware which is seen throughout the novel as he sends those he defeats to offer their surrender to the lady. After leaving King Arthur's court, Parzival meets Gurnemanz, who trains him to be a knight, foreshadowing the renown that Parzival will receive one day.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Pained by thoughts of Liaze, Parzival rides away with the marks and bearing of a well-bred knight, through the kingdom of Brobarz into the city of Belrepeire, which King Tampenteire had bequeathed to his daughter, Condwiramurs. Parzival crosses the bridge to the city and knocks at the castle's door, despite the warnings of sixty knights on the other side, to offer his aid to the charming, attractive Queen. Queen Condwiramurs, who exceeds all other women in beauty, receives Parzival graciously and provides him with a bed after he is fed and entertained. That night, Queen Condwiramurs sneaks into Parzival's bedroom to tell him that King Clamide and his Seneschal have laid waste to her lands because Clamide wants to marry her, but she would rather commit suicide than become Clamide's wife; Parzival, of course, offers his aid, and he rises early in the morning as Clamide's army approaches. After defeating Kingrun, Clamide's Seneschal, Parzival tells him to submit his surrender to Lady Cunneware and King Arthur, and Kingrun leaves to do so.

Condwiramurs insists on marrying Parzival due to his victory, and this news greatly upsets King Clamide, who commands his army to attack the city of Belrepeire again. As his army assaults the fortress walls, Clamide finds himself in peril when Parzival joins the fray, so he calls off the attack and challenges Parzival to a duel. Parzival defeats Clamide and sends him to Lady Cunneware and King Arthur to offer his submission as well, and when he arrives at King Arthur's court, Clamide's wrongs are pardoned by the good-natured King of Briton. Parzival's lands are made happy, and rejoicing is seen again in the lands. Condwiramurs is happy in her strong love for her husband. One day, Parzival asks his wife's permission to visit his mother and search for adventure, and Condwiramurs agrees because her love allows her to deny him nothing.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Parzival enters the city of Belrepeire, where he finds the beautiful Queen Condwiramurs besieged by the armies of King Clamide, who wants to marry her. This situation parallels Gahmuret's adventure in Zazamanc. When Queen Condwiramurs tells Parzival the details of her problems, he offers his services, gladdening her heart. Though this is Parzival's first knightly actions, he fights well and wins much acclaim. Parzival defeats King Clamide's Seneschal, Kingrun, and shows his adherence to Gurnemanz's teachings by sending Kingrun to King Arthur's court to offer his surrender rather than to Gurnemanz, who hates Kingrun for killing his son. In doing so, Parzival also shows his allegiance to King Arthur and his remembrance of his pledge to Lady Cunneware as he instructs Kingrun to offer his surrender to the lady as well as the King.

Clamide's pride is obvious as he refuses to accept Parzival's marriage to Condwiramurs and continues to attack Belrepeire. He challenges Parzival to a duel, and when Parzival



defeats him, Parzival again shows his mercy, loyalty to King Arthur and intent to avenge Lady Cunneware by treating Clamide with the same conditions as he had given Kingrun. Parzival and Condwiramurs are married by this point, and they greatly love one another; however, Parzival asks leave to visit his mother and seek adventure, and Condwiramurs' love prevents her from denying his request. This foreshadows Parzival's many adventures as well as his extended absence from his wife. This also parallels Gahmuret leaving Belacane, but in contrast, Parzival remains faithful to his wife throughout his exploits.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

When Parzival comes to a lake in the evening and asks an Angler where he can seek shelter for the night, the Angler directs him to Munsalvaesche, a nearby castle, where Parzival is welcomed by the knights whose heartfelt grief he is unaware of. At Munsalvaesche, Parzival is treated with honor and esteem before being led to an extravagant room as the Angler's noble guest. A page walks through the room, carrying a lance which bleeds, then eight maidens with candles and table settings precede Repanse de Schoye, who carries "the consummation of heart's desire, its root and its blossoming- a thing called 'The Gral', paradisaal, transcending all earthly perfection" (p. 125). Miraculously, the Gral provides food and drink for the hundreds gathered there. Gurnemanz's teachings prevent Parzival from asking questions, but he thinks he will learn how matters stand with this household unasked if he resides there for a while. When a page brings a sword with a ruby hilt and a magnificent sheath into the room, the Angler bestows the sword upon Parzival; it will stand in good stead whenever it is tested in battle. The Angler, Anfortas, suffers from a mysterious ailment and expects Parzival to free him by asking a Question, but Parzival remains silent in adherence to Gurnemanz's advice.

The next morning, Parzival awakes to find the castle empty, and when he exits the gate in pursuit of the household, a page closes the drawbridge and yells at Parzival for failing to ask his lord the Question and thus letting a marvelous prize slip. Parzival's subsequent questions go unanswered, so he follows tracks until he encounters Sigune, who tells him about Anfortas and chides him for failing to ask the Question before she departs, leaving Parzival in great remorse for his failure. Coming upon a lady on a nag, Parzival is accused as the reason for her current shabby appearance. Jeschute warns him that her husband will kill him if he finds them together. Orilus finds them and jousts with Parzival, who wins and insists that Orilus restore Jeschute to favor. Parzival clears Jeschute's name, swearing she did not betray Orilus, and Orilus is reconciled to his wife with regret for the way he has treated her. Parzival also sends Orilus to submit to King Arthur and Lady Cunneware, and everyone in King Arthur's court praises Parzival whose "courage had taken glory for companion" (p. 146).

Chapter 5 Analysis

Chapter five details Parzival's time spent at Munsalvaesche, the Castle of the Gral. Here he meets Anfortas, who suffers from a mysterious ailment, and this is also when he first beholds the Gral and the mystical ceremonies surrounding it. The Gral is treated with reverence and is obviously a mystical object as it manages to feed hundreds of knights and ladies at the castle. Parzival also sees the bleeding lance and receives a magnificent sword during his stay at Munsalvaesche. Although Anfortas expects Parzival to ask the Question, thus freeing Anfortas from his suffering, Parzival fails to do



so in adherence to Gurnemanz's advice to never ask questions. Unfortunately, Parzival never gets a chance to ask the Question as he wakes to find the household missing, and when he leaves the castle, a squire rebukes him for this failure, as does Sigune when he encounters her shortly thereafter. When Parzival runs into Jeschute, he learns that she has suffered much punishment as a result of his former actions, so when he fights and defeats Orilus, he rectifies the situation as best as possible by assuring Orilus that Jeschute was never unfaithful. He sends Orilus to Lady Cunneware and King Arthur to offer surrender, again showing his fealty, and those in King Arthur's court praise Parzival's courage and glory.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

When King Arthur rides in search of Parzival with the intention of inviting him to become a Companion of the Round Table, his falconers lose his best falcon, who sleeps in the cold beside Parzival. When the falcon attacks a flock of geese, the blood that falls on the snow reminds Parzival of Condwiramurs, so he sits motionless in his saddle while thinking of his wife. Lady Cunneware's servant sees Parzival and raises an alarm with King Arthur's knights. When Segramors rides out and challenges him, Parzival is too engrossed with thoughts of love to notice until his charger turns and he loses sight of the blood; then Parzival knocks Segramors from his saddle before resuming his fascination with the blood and thoughts of his wife. Hearing that Segramors was unhorsed, Keie obtains permission to joust with the unknown knight, but Parzival avenges Lady Cunneware by unseating Keie as well.

Now, Gawan rides out to learn who had given battle, and Parzival ignores him until the snow covers the blood. Learning Gawan is of King Arthur's court, which is camped nearby, Parzival accompanies Gawan back to the camp where Lady Cunneware joyfully recognizes her avenger, and King Arthur and his nobles welcome Parzival amiably, praising his feats. They entreat Parzival to pledge chivalric companionship to the Round Table and wish him well as he enjoys their esteem until Cundrie arrives and chides Parzival for his failure to free Anfortas from his sorrows by asking the Question. She also tells him of Feirefiz, his half-brother, before abandoning herself to grief. Cundrie tells the other knights of four queens and four hundred ladies at Schastel marveille, challenging them to undertake the adventure before she leaves Parzival in mortification.

Next, Kingrimursel, a high-spirited knight, rides forth, accuses Gawan of murdering his lord, and challenges Gawan to judicial combat in Schanpfanzen which Gawan accepts because it would dishonor him to refuse the challenge. When Clamide laments of his love for Lady Cunneware, King Arthur and Parzival effect a marriage between them. Parzival rides away in search of the Grail as he shall never own himself happy until he sees the Grail again, despite being plagued by memories of Condwiramurs. As Gawan heads toward Schanpfanzen to answer Kingrimursel's challenge, many of King Arthur's other knights head toward the adventure at Schastel marveille.

Chapter 6 Analysis

When King Arthur's court decides to search for Parzival, they camp near him unknowingly. While Parzival is lost in thoughts of Condwiramurs, he fails to notice the challenge of Segramors and Keie, but he still manages to defeat both of them in the joust. By unseating Keie, Parzival is finally able to avenge Lady Cunneware of the beating she received because of him. Gawan also rides out to investigate this ferocious knight, but he shows courtesy by waiting to obtain Parzival's attention, thus preventing a



battle between them. When Parzival learns Gawan's identity, he accompanies him back to King Arthur's court where he receives a gracious welcome. These celebrations end when Cundrie arrives and chides Parzival for failing to ask the Question of Anfortas, thus Parzival swears to search for the Gral and departs the company of King Arthur's court, shamed by his failure. Kingrimursel also visits the court to challenge Gawan to a duel for killing his uncle, and although Gawan is innocent, he accepts the challenge rather than forfeit his honor. These events foreshadow the following adventures of Gawan and Parzival's search for the Gral, and this chapter is also the first time that the adventure at Schastel merveille is mentioned.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

After leaving King Arthur, Gawain emerges from a forest and is crossing a valley with his retinue when he sees an army marching in a grand style. Riding out to meet them, Gawain learns from a squire that the army belongs to King Meljanz who is spurred on by pride and anger caused by misconceived love. When King Meljanz's father died, he asked Duke Lyppaut to rear his son, but when Meljanz asked Lyppaut's daughter, Obie, to reward his attentions, she denied her affection because he had not yet proved himself on the battlefield, though she admitted that he is dear to her. Since King Meljanz and his army plan to besiege Bearosche, Gawain decides to take a closer look at these events lest his renown be extinguished, so he rides toward Bearosche where he sees the Duchess and her two daughters, Obie and Obilot. Obie claims Gawain is a merchant, but Obilot defends him, claiming she will have him for her knight. When Meljanz excels in battle, Obie mocks her sister since Gawain does not yet fight, and Obie sends Scherules to Gawain who she accuses of being a merchant arrived to swindle them, but finding Gawain to be a respectable knight, Scherules offers him lodging. Obie then sends Lyppaut after the "swindler", but Scherules assures Lyppaut that Gawain is respectable, so Lyppaut meets Gawain and offers to supply him with arms for the fight; however, Gawain must forgo fighting until he settles the matter of the duel, despite Lyppaut's pleading.

Obilot visits Gawain and convinces him to be her knight, promising to provide him with love-tokens, though she does not know how to go about it and asks her father for advice. Lyppaut has a dress made for Obilot, but a sleeve is removed to be given to Gawain. When the battle resumes the next day, Gawain wears Obilot's sleeve as he rides out against Meljanz's army, and Obie is angered when her beloved finds himself in trouble at Gawain's hand. The Red Knight also appears to fight and excels in battle, sending those who surrender to the Queen of Belrepeire with his love. After capturing Meljanz, Gawain returns Obilot's sleeve, and Obie is angered by the success of her sister's knight. Gawain insists peace will be made in Bearosche and sends a message to Obilot that he would like to see her and assure her that he will be her life-long Servitor before taking his leave. Gawain commits Meljanz to Obilot as her prisoner, and she commands Meljanz to transfer his homage to Obie to be her lover and lord always. Thus, Obie kisses Meljanz, and they are wed. Obilot cries, and Lyppaut assures Gawain of his humble devotions as Gawain takes his leave to "be delivered up to sorrow" (page 204).

Chapter 7 Analysis

On his way to answer the challenge presented by Kingrimursel, Gawain encounters a group of knights and learns from a squire about the events occurring at Bearosche due to King Meljanz's pride and anger at Obie's rejection. Gawain decides to further



investigate and rides into Bearosche where Obie mocks him, but Obilot, Obie's younger sister, defends Gawan. Obie accuses Gawan of being a merchant, the idea itself being disgraceful to such a proud knight, and sends Scherules and Lippaut to investigate, but both men find Gawan to be an honorable knight. Despite Lippaut's pleading, Gawan refuses to participate in the battle because he must fight Kingrimursel and would be dishonored if he was unable to do so, but Obilot's request results in Gawan's acquiescence. Gawan joins the battle as Obilot's knight, wearing her sleeve as a love-token, and he excels in battle, angering Obie when he captures Meljanz. Insisting upon making peace, Gawan offers Meljanz to Obilot as her prisoner, and in a show of sisterly love, Obilot commends Meljanz to her sister. Meljanz and Obie are happily married, and Gawan's ingenuity in the affair is highly praised; however, the narrator foreshadows sorrow in Gawan's future as he takes his leave of Bearosche.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

After outshining the other knights at Bearosche, Gawan must now fight a duel to which he was challenged, though he is innocent of the charges. As he rides across a plain toward the castle at Schanpfunzun, King Vergulaht and five hundred knights approach Gawan, and the King directs him to the castle where his younger sister resides until King Vergulaht returns. At the castle, Gawan sets eyes on the modest and beautiful Antikione, the King's sister, who welcomes him with a kiss. They are hard-pressed by desire when left alone until an old knight enters, recognizes Gawan and raises the alarm, asking if it is not enough for Gawan to kill his lord without ravishing his lord's daughter as well. As Gawan laments his lack of weapons, Antikione suggests taking refuge in the turret outside her room and defending themselves from there. She provides Gawan with chess pieces to use as weapons, and as she fights beside him, the sight inspires Gawan with manly courage.

King Vergulaht returns and arms himself, but Kingrimursel arrives and offers to help Gawan, chiding the King for disgracing himself by offering Gawan violence after he was assured of safe passage so they can duel. Kingrimursel postpones the duel for a year to take place at Barbigoel in the presence of King Meljanz, and Gawan agrees. Meanwhile, King Vergulaht has promised to help the Red Knight find the Grail as a condition of his surrender, and he offers to allow Gawan to undertake this challenge in his stead in order to effect a reconciliation. After devoting his knight-errantry and chivalric aspirations to Antikione, Gawan asks her leave to depart which she sorrowfully grants, assuring him that her heart will always be with him. Distressed to part with Antikione, Gawan departs to search for the Grail.

Chapter 8 Analysis

In the eighth chapter, the narrator begins the chapter by asking the readers to join him in sympathy for Gawan, and this foreshadows Gawan's pending misfortunes. Gawan arrives in Schanpfunzun where he is to meet Kingrimursel for their duel, and King Vergulaht directs him to the castle. At the castle, Gawan meets and becomes enamored with Antikione, the King's younger sister. Unfortunately, an older knight recognizes Gawan and raises the alarm, chiding Gawan for ravishing his lord's daughter after killing his lord. Antikione assists Gawan in their defense, and the sight of her fighting beside him inspires Gawan with manly courage. When King Vergulaht returns to his castle, he offers to dishonor himself by threatening violence, but Kingrimursel arrives and offers to defend Gawan, chiding his cousin by offering violence where he promised safe passage in order to avenge the former king in a duel. As a result of this breach of hospitality, Kingrimursel postpones the duel for a year. King Vergulaht agrees to this upon the condition that Gawan undertakes his mission to search for the Grail which was a condition of the King's surrender to the Red Knight. This allusion to Parzival shows his

continuing influence in this narrative despite the viewpoint currently focusing on Gawan. Gawan accepts these challenges and sorrowfully takes his leave of Antikione who promised undying love. Gawan now joins Parzival's search for the Grail.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

After Cundrie's harsh words, Parzival leaves King Arthur and ranges over many lands and seas in search of the Gral for four and a half years. When he finds Sigune inside a newly built cell beside a stream, he learns that she receives nourishment from the Gral which Cundrie brings her every Sunday evening. Recognizing her cousin, Sigune asks how he fares with the Gral, and when he claims he has forfeited much happiness in that endeavor and asks her advice, she informs him that Cundrie rode out recently so he may be able to catch up. Parzival rides out for many weeks until he encounters the Grey Knight who informs him that it is Good Friday and advises him to seek Trevrizent, the hermit, for information about the Gral. Parzival finds Trevrizent who teaches him about the Gral, God and sin. Trevrizent is Parzival's maternal uncle and Anfortas' brother. He informs Parzival that Ither was his cousin and that Herzeloide died of grief when her son left her. Repanse de Schoye, the woman who carried the Gral, is Parzival's aunt and lent him her cloak with the hope that he would be lord of Munsalvaesche. Parzival stays with Trevrizent for a fortnight and learns that the Gral was first commended to Titurel, his great-grandfather. Before Parzival leaves, Trevrizent tells him to give him his sins, and Trevrizent shall vouch for Parzival's penitence before God. Parzival must do as Trevrizent has instructed him and let nothing daunt him in his endeavor. They part ways.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Parzival searches for the Gral for four and a half years before the narrative returns to his actions. Finally, Parzival comes upon a cell by a stream where he finds Sigune. Sigune recognizes the hardships that Parzival has suffered as a result of his search for the Gral and so forgives him for failing to ask the Question of Anfortas. In an effort to assist him, she sends him after Cundrie who has recently departed after bring Sigune food. Parzival travels for several more weeks before being directed to the hermit Trevrizent with whom he resides for some time. Trevrizent teaches Parzival about the Gral, God and sin. From Trevrizent, Parzival learns of his familial relationship to those involved with the Gral, including Trevrizent who is Parzival's uncle, and this foreshadows Parzival being called to become the Gral King. He also learns that his mother died of grief when he left her and that Ither was his cousin which causes him to regret slaying Ither. Trevrizent offers much advice to Parzival before they finally part ways.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

After a year passes, Gawan meets King Vergulaht at Barbigoel, but he is cleared of the charges, and both search for the Gral separately. In a meadow one day, Gawan finds a lady grieving over an injured knight who has been run through and is bleeding internally. After Gawan performs medical aid, the knight tells him that he was wounded at Logroys by Lischois Gwelljus, so Gawan follows the bloody tracks to Logroys to confront the man who injured this knight. As he rides up a path toward a splendid castle, Gawan rejoices to see a fair lady sitting beside a rock, the Duchess Orgeluse de Logroys. He greets her and offers his services, but Orgeluse warns he will only earn dishonor through her; still, Gawan insists upon serving her, so she sends him to the castle to retrieve her palfrey, and Gawan does so, ignoring the warnings of the knights that Orgeluse "with her deceitful ways... plans to entice [Gawan] into great toil" (page 261).

When Gawan returns to Orgeluse, she continues to mock him and treat him with scorn. When he tells her about the injured knight, they ride to see him, but the knight warns Gawan against Orgeluse because she is the reason he was injured. The knight steals Gawan's horse, claiming Gawan took him to King Arthur as a prisoner in times past and is now repaid for his troubles. Gawan mounts Malcreatiure's nag, and Orgeluse sends Malcreatiure to her castle. Gawan and Orgeluse ride through the forest to a causeway that leads to a broad river where Orgeluse tells Gawan to defend himself if he can as a knight approaches before boarding a ferry on the river and expressing the doubt that Gawan will see her again very soon. Lischois Gwelljus rides up and is defeated by Gawan but refuses to surrender because he would rather die. Gawan spares his life for Orgeluse's sake, and when the ferryman returns and demands his due, Gawan offers Lischois Gwelljus as payment. The ferryman offers Gawan lodging and orders his daughter, Lady Bene, to see to Gawan's comfort. Lady Bene treats Gawan courteously, demonstrating her excellent breeding, but Gawan must now sleep if he can, and may God preserve him when the new day dawns.

Chapter 10 Analysis

The narrative now returns to Gawan who meets King Vergulaht a year later but avoids dueling with Kingrimursel when he is cleared of the charge of murder. In his continued search for the Gral, Gawan comes upon an injured knight, showing his chivalry by nursing the knight and seeking Lischois Gwelljus who injured the knight. While searching for Lischois Gwelljus, Gawan encounters a beautiful woman, Duchess Orgeluse de Logroys, to whom he offers his love and services, but she scorns and mocks him, revealing her malicious nature. When Gawan retrieves her horse from her castle, the knights at the castle warn him of her malice which can only bring him dishonor, but Gawan ignores their warnings and returns to Orgeluse. When they ride to check on the injured knight, the knight also warns Gawan about Orgeluse, claiming she



is the reason for his wounds. The injured knight then steals Gawan's horse as retribution for Gawan imprisoning him some time earlier, an action that Gawan justifies in outrage. Orgeluse's mockery increases as they ride onward for Gawan to encounter Lichois Gwelljus. As Gawan rides to battle, Orgeluse expresses her belief that he will be killed by claiming she doubts he will see her again very soon. Although Gawan defeats Lichois Gwelljus, he spares the knight's life for Orgeluse's sake but offers him as payment to the ferryman who is so pleased with the payment that he extends an invitation for lodging to Gawan. Gawan lodges at the ferryman's house that night where he is treated courteously by Lady Bene, the daughter of the ferryman. The narrator's wish that God preserve Gawan for the next day's adventures foreshadows Gawan's upcoming trials.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

When Gawan wakes, he notices the castle he had seen the night before where many beautiful ladies reside and asks Lady Bene about the women in the castle, but she is sword to silence regarding the castle and begs him to ask anything else of her. His host joins them and also refuses to answer Gawan's questions as it will bring sorrow to Gawan's heart and sadden his host and all of his children. Since Gawan persists in his questions, his host advises him to arm himself for the perils at Schastel merveille which have never been attempted and can result only in calamity and death. Ignoring his host's fears, Gawan insists on exerting himself to help the ladies. His host directs him on how to comport himself when faced with the deadly perils at Schastel merveille, and Gawan sets out.

According to his host's instructions, Gawan rides to the castle, offers to buy a product from the huckster at the gate, and leaves his charger with the huckster, proceeding on foot. He enters the luxurious palace and sees the bed he has heard about, but it continually dodges away from him. Gawan charges the bed and manages to finally get on top of it, but then pebbles are thrown at the bed, followed by five hundred crossbows, from which Gawan must defend himself. Gawan hopes his troubles are over, but he must still win fame by fighting. A brawny rustic enters the room with a club in his hand and releases a lion which attacks Gawan, but Gawan slays the lion, though he is wounded.

A young lady timidly peeps through the window and is appalled at the sight. Queen Arnive weeps when she hears the news and sends two young ladies to determine whether Gawan is dead, claiming she shall be mortified if Gawan's "loyal courage has lost [him his] noble life" (page 289). The two young ladies detect breathing, and Queen Arnive orders a bed to be made ready for Gawan. He is unarmed, and his wounds are tended. Queen Arnive promises to soon bring Gawan relief because Cundrie la surziere often visits and has become efficacious in medicine ever since Anfortas was afflicted with his mysterious ailment. The Queen applies herbs which cause Gawan to sleep, and no one disturbs his rest.

Chapter 11 Analysis

When Gawan wakes the next day, he expresses interest in the castle seen from his window, but Lady Bene refuses to satisfy his curiosity. Since he persists with his questions, his host informs him that the castle is Schastel merveille, which was alluded to earlier by Cundrie when she visited King Arthur's court to chide Parzival, and the host's fears evidence the dangers presented at the castle; however, Gawan refuses to balk from the challenge, demonstrating his chivalry by his desire to help the ladies imprisoned at Schastel merveille. His host provides Gawan with some vague



information in preparation for the challenges he will face at Schastel merveille, and after arming himself, Gawan rides to the castle and follows his host's advice. At Schastel merveille, Gawan struggles to get atop an ornate bed upon which he is bombarded with pebbles and arrows. Having survived these challenges, Gawan is attacked by a lion which he kills though he is injured in the process. The ladies of the castle see that Gawan is injured and fear he has been killed, especially Queen Arnive who fears for the safety of the one who saved those at Schastel merveille. When the ladies realize Gawan is alive, they nurse him back to health, with Queen Arnive alluding to the fact that Cundrie's medical abilities result from trying to find relief for Anfortas' sufferings, again providing a link between the adventures of Gawan and Parzival.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

As Gawan rests, Orgeluse enters his inmost thoughts as she has come into his heart by a narrow path and his waking thoughts are devoted to her in unfailing constancy. Gawan is burdened by love and other troubles. When day breaks, he gets out of bed, dresses and walks through the palace to a splendid Pillar, where he is joined by Arnive, her daughter Sangive, and two of Sangive's daughters. Gawan pledges himself as Queen Arnive's servant since she restored his mind and body with her medicines, and she instructs him to kiss the three ladies, Sangive, Itonje and Cundrie. Although the ladies are attractive, Gawan notices that they do not compare to Orgeluse. Arnive explains to Gawan that the Pillar shows everything that is happening for miles around, and when Gawan sees Orgeluse with Turkoyt, Arnive warns him against battling this formidable man, but Gawan insists because he is affronted by Turkoyt's arrival. Gawan arms himself, leaves the castle and confronts Turkoyt, subsequently defeating him, and the ferryman claims Turkoyt's charger as his due. Again vexing and scorning Gawan, Orgeluse mocks "now you imagine you have distinguished yourself because these ladies have seen the outcome of this joust" (p. 301), but she claims that Gawan cannot contemplate the battle she will provide if his heart still wishes to serve her for love. When Gawan again swears himself to her service, Orgeluse allows him to ride with her to fight further battles in pursuit of her honor, so Gawan sends Turkoyt to the castle with a message for the ladies to treat the knight with respect. The ladies weep to see Gawan leave with Orgeluse.

Orgeluse informs Gawan that he can win her love if he gets a garland from the twig of a certain tree, so he agrees. They ride through a meadow toward an escarpment from which Orgeluse points to the tree of the Garland on the other side of the river which is tended by the man who has robbed Orgeluse of her happiness; Gawan will earn her love if he fetches her a garland from that tree, but she will go no further. Gawan jumps the river on his charger and breaks a twig from the tree, setting the Garland on his helmet, but the tree of the Garland is well-guarded by King Gramoflanz, who appears and denies Gawan permission to take the garland. Gramoflanz also tells Gawan about his love for Itonje at Schastel merveille and asks Gawan to deliver a ring to Itonje, the daughter of King Lot. When King Gramoflanz states he will only fight Gawan, the son of King Lot, Gawan reveals his identity, and they arrange to meet for single combat in sixteen days at Schastel merveille. When Gawan returns to Orgeluse, she tells him that she hates King Gramoflanz for killing her first husband, and then she pledges her love to Gawan who makes her promise not to reveal his identity to the ladies at the castle before they return to Schastel merveille. Gawan charges a messenger with secretly riding to King Arthur to inform his kinsman of his upcoming duel, and Queen Arnive is irritated when the squire adheres to his oath of secrecy and refuses to tell her the nature of his errand.



Chapter 12 Analysis

As Gawan rests, he is plagued by thoughts of love for Orgeluse. When he awakes in the morning, he investigates the castle and is joined at the Pillar by the four queens of Schastel marveille who tells him of the Pillar's mystical properties; it reveals everything that occurs within several miles, and Gawan views Orgeluse in the Pillar. He is affronted that she is accompanied by another knight, Turkoyt, and he rides out to challenge and defeat Turkoyt. Orgeluse's malicious nature is evidenced by the queens' concern that Gawan is infatuated with such a deceitful woman. Continuing to mock and scorn the renowned knight, Orgeluse offers to present him with further challenges if he still wants to win her love, and Gawan accepts the offer. In order to win her love, Orgeluse instructs Gawan to obtain a garland from a certain tree which is guarded by King Gramoflanz, and it is obvious that Orgeluse desires Gawan to battle Gramoflanz.

When Gramoflanz confronts Gawan for taking a garland from the tree, Gawan learns that the four queens at Schastel marveille are his grandmother, mother and two sisters. Gramoflanz also reveals his love for Itonje, foreshadowing their marriage, and his animosity toward Gawan, foreshadowing their duel. After agreeing to promote Gramoflanz's love for Itonje, Gawan reveals his identity, and a duel is scheduled. When Gawan returns to Orgeluse, she explains her hatred for Gramoflanz is due to the fact that he killed her first husband, but she pledges her love for Gawan, foreshadowing their union. Gawan convinces Orgeluse to refrain from revealing his identity to the ladies at Schastel marveille as they return to the castle, and he sends a messenger to summon King Arthur to witness his duel with Gramoflanz, demonstrating his fealty and instigating the reunion between the four queens and the rest of their family.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Queen Arnive is vexed that the squire will not reveal his errand nor will Orgeluse tell her the name or lineage of the knight who won the adventure at Schastel merveille. After waking, Gawan frees Lischois and Turkoyt for Orgeluse's sake, then sits next to Itonje and tells her that King Gramoflanz is in love with her and is coming to offer his services to her. He also bestows the ring from King Gramoflanz upon her, and when Itonje admits that she loves King Gramoflanz in return, Gawan offers his assistance in the romance, though he does not tell her they were born of the same mother. After a fine feast at Schastel merveille, the company dances as Sangive and Arnive sit quietly with Gawan, and they, along with Orgeluse, ensure that Gawan is comfortable during the night. Meanwhile, the dispatched squire reaches King Arthur's court and delivers the letter from Gawan. Everyone is overjoyed to learn that Gawan is alive and well.

The squire returns to Schastel merveille where he still refuses to tell Queen Arnive about his errand; instead, he delivers King Arthur's compliments and agreement to come to Schastel merveille to Gawan, who forgets his former cares and continues happily at the palace until King Arthur comes riding to his aid. Queen Arnive tells Gawan about the sorcerer, Clinschor, who bespelled the castle, but it now belongs rightfully to Gawan, because Clinschor declared that whoever passed through the adventure would be free of his molestation. Gawan weeps for joy when King Arthur's court arrives, and he introduces Queen Arnive to her son, revealing his relation to the ladies at Schastel merveille. The next day, King Arthur sends envoys to King Gramoflanz with the request that he meet them soon if he still refuses to waive the duel with Gawan. Gawan secretly arms himself and rides out over the plain where he finds a motionless knight beside the River Sabins.

Chapter 13 Analysis

The next day, Gawan fulfills his promise to promote Gramoflanz's love for Itonje by giving her a ring as a token of that king's love and telling her that Gramoflanz loves her. Itonje also admits her love for Gramoflanz, and Gawan offers to assist the romance, though he does not tell Itonje that she is his sister. The company at Schastel merveille celebrates, and Queen Arnive's concern for Gawan's well-being is obvious. Orgeluse also nurses Gawan, showing that she has truly pledged her love to him. The messenger reaches King Arthur's court and successfully imparts Gawan's message to everyone's merriment. He then returns to Schastel merveille to inform Gawan that King Arthur is coming to witness the duel, showing King Arthur's love for his nephew. Gawan also learns the mystery of Schastel merveille from Queen Arnive, who declares him lord of the castle. Gawan rejoices when his uncle arrives, and King Arthur's love for Gawan can be seen by his plea that Gramoflanz waive the duel. Gawan arms himself secretly and

rides out over the plain where he finds another knight, foreshadowing Gawain's upcoming duel.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

The knight and Gawain race toward one another for the joust, bringing each other off their respective horses. Meanwhile, King Arthur's messengers meet King Gramoflanz, who must fight the duel to win honor before Itonje. Lady Bene brings Gramoflanz a ring from Itonje as a token of her love, and this raises his spirits mightily as he arms himself. When King Arthur's messengers depart, they come upon Gawain fighting with an opponent who has nearly defeated him, but when they name Gawain, his opponent throws his sword away and reveals himself to be Parzival. Parzival returns to the castle with Gawain, and when Gramoflanz arrives and hears of Gawain's recent battle, he postpones the duel until the next day. Lady Bene curses Gramoflanz for insisting upon fighting the brother of his beloved, and after Gramoflanz leaves, Gawain, Parzival and Lady Bene join their own company. Gawain introduces Parzival to the four ladies of his lineage, and he forbids Lady Bene to tell Itonje that her brother is to duel her beloved. Parzival offers to duel Gramoflanz in Gawain's stead, but Gawain refuses.

While Gramoflanz arms his person for love of Itonje, Parzival dons his arms and sneaks into the meadow where the duel is to be fought; there he finds Gramoflanz, and a battle ensues. Gawain prepares for battle and arrives in the meadow just as Parzival is about to emerge victorious. Gramoflanz concedes the victory, and Gawain grants him a day to recover before they duel. Itonje grieves when she learns that her beloved is to duel her brother, and when she laments to her grandmother, Queen Arnive summons King Arthur and asks him to remove the cause of Itonje's grief. King Arthur invites Gramoflanz to Schastel merveille and manages to effect a reconciliation between Gawain and Gramoflanz. King Gramoflanz marries Itonje, Gawain marries Orgeluse, and there is joy and merriment among all present; however, Parzival thinks of his lovely wife and, since he refuses to be unfaithful, he sets out to pursue more hardships in his quest for the Grail. Everyone laments when they realize that Parzival has secretly departed their company.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Fulfilling the foreshadowing from chapter thirteen, Gawain engages in a duel with the unknown knight. Meanwhile, King Arthur's envoys attempt to dissuade Gramoflanz from dueling Gawain, but his insistence on winning honor before Itonje is increased by Lady Bene's assurances of Itonje's requited love, so he arms himself in preparation for the duel. As the knight is about to defeat Gawain, King Arthur's messengers arrive on the scene and name Gawain, causing the knight to disarm and identify himself as Parzival. Gawain and Parzival are joyfully reunited and return to Schastel merveille, where all present rejoice over Parzival's arrival. When Gramoflanz hears of Gawain's battle, he postpones the duel for a day, but after being denied his request to duel in Gawain's stead, Parzival meets and fights Gramoflanz, who believes he is dueling with Gawain.



When Gawain realizes what has occurred, he reciprocates in granting Gramoflanz a day of recovery before their duel. Itonje learns that her beloved is to duel with her brother, and her lamentations cause Queen Arnive to appeal to King Arthur to effect a reconciliation which he is able to do successfully. As such, Gramoflanz happily marries Itonje, and Gawain is happily united with Orgeluse; however, while everyone else celebrates, Parzival is stricken with grief over his long absence from Condwiramurs and sets out in search of the Gral again, hoping to hasten his return to his lovely wife. The party at Schastel merveille laments the loss of Parzival when they realize he has left.



Chapter 15 and Chapter 16

Chapter 15 and Chapter 16 Summary

In chapter fifteen, Parzival comes upon a courtly Infidel as he rides toward a great forest. The Infidel, a champion of many battles, is anchored in the inlet where the forest meets the seas with twenty-five armies, but he rides into the forest to search for adventure. As Parzival and the Infidel joust, the Infidel does much hurt to Parzival, but "when all is said, they were sons of one father, bedrock of purest loyalty" (p. 368). When Parzival's sword shatters, the Infidel calls a truce for them to rest and recover, and when he introduces himself as Feirefiz Angevin, Parzival says he has a brother in the heathen lands who is famed for his courage and chivalric exploits. Parzival describes Feirefiz, and the men rejoice to meet their brother in one another. Feirefiz has travelled to Europe to meet his father and is saddened to learn that Gahmuret is dead, but Parzival invites him to accompany him to King Arthur's court where he introduces his brother to their other kinsmen who are present at Schastel merveille.

During the celebratory festivities, a fine virgin arrives, kneels before Parzival and asks for a reconciliation, so Parzival puts aside his resentment toward Cundrie at his friends' request. Cundrie informs Parzival that he is to be Lord of the Gral, and his wife will join him at Munsalvaesche with his two sons. It is his good fortune that he will now be able to ask the Question of Anfortas and may travel with one companion. Crying for joy, Parzival asks Feirefiz to join him as companion, and his brother agrees. Parzival tells everyone "that no man could ever win the Gral by force 'except the one who is summoned there by God'" (p. 389), and many abandon the Quest for the Gral when they learn it cannot be won by force. After taking their leave of King Arthur's court, Parzival and Feirefiz set out happily with Cundrie.

In chapter sixteen, Anfortas suffers an agony of grief and often begs his people to let him die, but they will not allow it as they are waiting for Parzival to liberate them all by finally asking the Question. Anfortas finally finds happiness when Parzival arrives and asks where the Gral is, praying that Anfortas' affliction be taken from him, and Anfortas is made whole again. Parzival is forthwith recognized as King and Sovereign. When he learns that Condwiramurs is near, he rides out to meet her, and they are happily reunited at her camp before Parzival returns to Munsalvaesche with his wife and sons. The Gral is carried into them in jubilation, and Feirefiz is enamored by Repanse de Schoye. He asks how to win her love and is told he must receive the Baptism. Feirefiz is baptized and marries Repanse de Schoye before returning to his homeland. After his christening, writing appears on the Gral to the effect that members of the Gral company will always be averse to being questioned about themselves. Loherangrin, Parzival's son, grows to be a strong and valiant man and is sent to marry the Princess of Brabant, but he warns her that she will forfeit his love if she ever asks who he is. They marry and have children, but eventually the Princess' questions banish Loherangrin, who returns to Munsalvaesche to keep the Gral.



Chapter 15 and Chapter 16 Analysis

After leaving Schastel merveille in the penultimate chapter, Parzival comes upon an Infidel who is described as a worthy opponent for the narrative's hero, and the narrator's comments make it apparent that the Infidel is Parzival's half-brother, Feirefiz. Although winning the battle, the Infidel calls a truce when Parzival's sword shatters, demonstrating his honor. As the men rest, they talk and learn each other's identities; both rejoice to finally meet their brother. Feirefiz accompanies Parzival to Schastel merveille where he becomes acquainted with his family there, and he is proud of his lineage. During the celebrations, Cundrie arrives and begs for Parzival's forgiveness. Her announcement that he has been chosen to become the Gral King fulfills much earlier foreshadowing. Furthermore, Parzival rejoices to learn he will be reunited with his wife at Munsalvaesche, and Feirefiz accompanies Parzival on his journey. Many abandon the quest for the Gral when Parzival announces that it cannot be won by force before departing for Munsalvaesche with Feirefiz and Cundrie.

In the final chapter, Parzival frees Anfortas from his suffering and liberates the people of Munsalvaesche by asking the location of the Gral. He is also happily reunited with Condwiramurs and meets his twin sons who were conceived shortly before he departed from Belrepeire. During the celebration of Parzival becoming Lord of the Gral, Feirefiz becomes enamored with Repanse de Schoye, the lady who carries the Gral, and converts to Christianity in order to marry her. The novel ends with a brief description of the feats of the progeny of both Parzival and Feirefiz.



Characters

Parzival

Parzival is the main character of this novel. He is the son of Gahmuret and Queen Herzeloide. After Gahmuret dies, Herzeloide moves to the woods to raise Parzival in order to keep him ignorant of the ways of knights and knighthood. While hunting one day, Parzival sees a group of knights and decides to leave home to become a knight. Herzeloide is stricken with grief when her son insists upon leaving her, and she dies of grief as he rides away. Parzival steals a ring from Lady Jeschute, causing her husband to punish her because he thinks she has been unfaithful. He then proceeds to King Arthur's court where he battles Ither, the Red Knight, and acquires Ither's red armor. Parzival also witnesses Keie beat Lady Cunneware for laughing when she sees Parzival, as this indicates Parzival is destined to win, so Parzival swears he will avenge her. After leaving King Arthur's court, he is trained as a knight by Gurnemanz.

Parzival then travels to the city of Belrepeire, and after saving her from the besieging armies of King Clamide, Parzival marries Queen Condwiramurs but soon leaves to seek adventure. He spends a night at Munsalvaesche with Anfortas as his host, and he witnesses the mysterious rituals surrounding the Gral as well as its mystical properties; however, he fails to ask the Question which would free Anfortas from his suffering. After leaving Munsalvaesche the next day, Parzival encounters Sigune, who chides him for his failure. He then encounters Jeschute and jousts Orilus with whom he clears Jeschute's honor. While thinking of Condwiramurs in a field, Parzival is challenged by Segrarmors and Keie, and he unhorses them in succession. He then returns to King Arthur's camp with Gawan where his renown is praised and he is made a Companion of the Round Table. His celebrations are cut short, unfortunately, when Cundrie arrives and chides him for failing to ask the Question of Anfortas. Parzival leaves King Arthur's court, swearing to find the Gral.

Parzival searches for the Gral for four and a half years and spends a week with his uncle, Trevrizent the hermit, learning about God, the Gral and sin. He battles an unknown knight in a field near Schastel merveille, but though he is near victory, he surrenders when he realizes the knight is Gawan. He accompanies Gawan to Schastel merveille and attempts to duel King Gramoflanz in Gawan's stead, but his identity is discovered. After the conflicts are peacefully resolved at Schastel merveille and the household celebrates, Parzival sneaks away to resume his search for the Gral because he misses Condwiramurs and wants to return to his wife. Again, he fights an unknown knight who calls a truce when Parzival's sword breaks, and Parzival rejoices when he learns that the knight is his half-brother, Feirefiz. He returns to Schastel merveille with Feirefiz to introduce his brother to the rest of their family. However, the celebrations are again interrupted by Cundrie's arrival, but this time, she brings good news: Parzival has been chosen to become the Gral King. With Feirefiz and Cundrie accompanying him, Parzival returns to Munsalvaesche where he finally asks the Question, freeing Anfortas



from his suffering. He is happily reunited with his wife and twin sons, and Parzival rules as the Gral King at Munsalvaesche for the remainder of his life.

Gawan

Gawan, the son of King Lot and Queen Sangive, is a knight of King Arthur's court and one of the main characters in the second half of this novel. He is renowned for his chivalry and successful exploits. After learning of a stranger who has unhorsed Segramors and Keie, Gawan rides out to learn about this knight and finds Parzival, who accompanies him back to King Arthur's court. Amidst the ensuing celebrations to rejoice Parzival becoming a Companion of the Round Table, Kingrimursel arrives and accuses Gawan of murdering his lord, challenging him to a duel in Schanpfunz, and Gawan leaves King Arthur's court to accept the challenge. On his journey, Gawan comes upon a battle at Bearosche, where he acts as Obilot's knight and effects a reconciliation between King Meljanz and Obie. He is directed to the castle of Schanpfunz by King Vergulaht, and Gawan is enamored by Antikione, the King's younger sister, but a fight ensues after an old knight recognizes him. King Vergulaht returns and threatens to breach the codes of hospitality by arming himself, but Kingrimursel arrives, prevents a fight, and postpones the duel for one year. King Vergulaht allows Gawan to leave with the promise that he will spend the next year searching for the Gral.

After being cleared of the murder charge a year later, Gawan encounters Duchess Orgeluse de Logrois near Schastel merveille and offers to serve her, but she mocks him and treats him scornfully. He defeats Lischois Gwelljus in a joust and then lodges with the ferryman. The next day, Gawan undertakes the adventure at Schastel merveille, freeing the inhabitants. After he recovers from his injuries, he returns to Orgeluse, who offers her love if he retrieves a garland from a certain tree guarded by King Gramoflanz. Gramoflanz confronts Gawan, informing him of his love for Itonje and the fact that the four queens at Schastel merveille are Gawan's family, and challenges him to a duel when Gawan reveals his identity. Gawan returns to Orgeluse, who pledges her love, and he then sends a messenger to summon King Arthur to witness the duel with Gramoflanz. Gawan is happy when Parzival arrives at Schastel merveille, and after King Arthur convinces Gramoflanz to waive the duel, Gawan marries Orgeluse and lives happily with her at Schastel merveille.

Gahmuret

Gahmuret is the younger son of the King of Anjou and inherits nothing when his father dies. Seeking adventure, he travels to Zazamanc where he saves Queen Belacane from her enemies, but after he marries her, he sneaks away in the middle of the night while she is pregnant with their son, Feirefiz, because he desires adventure and because Belacane is not a Christian. After winning a tournament at Kanvoleis in Wales, Gahmuret marries Queen Herzeloide, who he also leaves while she is pregnant so that he can rush to the East to aid the Baruc in Baghdad, and this is where Gahmuret dies. His son with Herzeloide is born after he dies and is named Parzival.



Feirefiz

Feirefiz is the son of Gahmuret and Belacane. He is colored black and white like a piebald, and he is considered an Infidel because he is not a Christian; however, he is a mighty warrior. When Feirefiz travels to Europe in search of the father he has never known, he fights with an unknown knight who he is defeating until the knight's sword breaks, and Feirefiz calls a truce at this point. Feirefiz talks to the knight and learns he is his half-brother, Parzival. Feirefiz accompanies his brother to Schastel merveille to meet King Arthur, Gawain and other members of his family, and he is very proud and pleased with his father's lineage. He acts as Parzival's companion on the journey to Munsalvaesche where he becomes a Christian in order to marry Repanse de Schoye before returning to his homeland with his new wife.

Belacane

Belacane is the Queen of Zazamanc who marries Gahmuret after he rescues her from her enemies. Her husband leaves her because she is not a Christian. Belacane is Feirefiz's mother.

Herzeloide

Herzeloide is Queen of Wales, and she marries Gahmuret after he distinguishes himself at a tournament in Kanvoleis. She is greatly saddened that her husband dies in Baghdad while she is pregnant, but she gives birth to their son, Parzival, and raises him in the woods, ignorant of all knowledge of knights and knighthood. When Parzival learns about knights and decides to leave her to become one, Herzeloide gives her son some parting advice and then dies of grief as he rides away.

Duke Orilus

Duke Orilus treats his wife, Lady Jeschute, poorly after Parzival steals her ring because he believes she betrayed him. Much later, when Parzival defeats him in a joust, Orilus learns that his wife did not betray him. As terms of his surrender, Orilus reconciles with his wife and presents his surrender to King Arthur and Lady Cunneware, who is his sister.

Lady Jeschute

Lady Jeschute is Duke Orilus' wife who is treated poorly by her husband after Parzival steals her ring, causing Orilus to believe she has betrayed him. After Parzival defeats Orilus in a joust and declares her innocence, Jeschute is happily reconciled to her husband.



Sigune

Sigune is Parzival's cousin who tells him about Anfortas and the Grail, chiding him for failing to ask the Question which would free Anfortas from his suffering.

Ither

Ither is the Red Knight that Parzival kills in battle during his first visit to King Arthur's court because he covets Ither's red armor. Later, Parzival learns from Trevrizent that Ither was his cousin, and he regrets killing him.

King Arthur

King Arthur is the renowned king who is lord of the Round Table of chivalrous knights. He is also the uncle of Gawain and Parzival. He praises Parzival's prowess and invites him to become a Companion of the Round Table.

Keie

Keie is King Arthur's Seneschal. During Parzival's first visit to King Arthur's court, Keie mocks him and instigates his battle with Ither. He also strikes Lady Cunneware for laughing when she sees Parzival because this means Parzival is destined to win, and eventually, Parzival avenges Lady Cunneware by unhorsing Keie in a joust.

Lady Cunneware

Lady Cunneware is a lady in King Arthur's court who will not laugh until she sees the man destined to win. She laughs when she first beholds Parzival, causing Keie to strike her and Parzival to swear vengeance. Parzival sends the men he defeats to offer their surrender to her as a reminder of his promise until he finally defeats Keie in a joust. She eventually marries King Clamide.

Gurnemanz

Gurnemanz is an elderly knight who teaches Parzival about being a knight.

Clamide

Clamide is a king who attacks Belrepeire because he wants to marry Condwiramurs, but she refuses. When Parzival defeats him in a duel, Clamide surrenders and is sent to Lady Cunneware and King Arthur. King Clamide eventually falls in love with and marries Lady Cunneware.



Condwiramurs

Condwiramurs is the Queen of Belrepeire who is plagued by King Clamide's attacks as he attempts to force her to marry him. After Parzival defeats Clamide, Condwiramurs marries Parzival and bears twin sons. She grants her husband leave to seek adventure, and they are separated for more than five years. Thoughts of Condwiramurs plague Parzival during his Quest for the Gral, and they are finally reunited near Munsalvaesche after Parzival is called to be Gral King.

Anfortas

Anfortas is the King of Munsalvaesche who is tormented by a mysterious ailment that prevents him from walking. He is also Parzival's uncle and is finally freed from his suffering when Parzival asks the Question about the Gral's whereabouts in the final chapter. Anfortas promises to spend the rest of his life serving God and the Gral.

Kingrimursel

Kingrimursel accuses Gawan of killing his lord and challenges Gawan to a duel. He chides his cousin, King Vergulaht, for offering violence where safe passage was promised, showing that he is honorable.

Trevrizent

Trevrizent the hermit is Parzival's uncle who Parzival spends two weeks with, learning about the Gral, God and sin.

Orgeluse

Orgeluse is a beautiful duchess that Gawan meets near Schastel merveille. She mocks and scorns Gawan, leading him to several battles. She finally says he can win her love by obtaining a garland from a certain tree, which is guarded by King Gramoflanz. Orgeluse admits that she hates Gramoflanz for killing her first husband, but she eventually falls in love with and marries Gawan.

Queen Arnive

Queen Arnive is the elder Queen of Schastel merveille. She nurses Gawan after his adventures in the castle. Queen Arnive is the mother of King Arthur and the grandmother of Gawan.

Itonje

Itonje is one of the youngest queens at Schastel merveille. She is Gawan's sister. Itonje loves King Gramoflanz and marries him after he waives the duel with her brother.

King Gramoflanz

King Gramoflanz is in love with Itonje and wants to marry her. Orgeluse hates him for killing her first husband and sends Gawan to obtain a garland from the tree Gramoflanz guards, causing Gramoflanz to challenge Gawan to a duel. King Arthur is able to mediate and resolve the dispute peacefully, so Gramoflanz waives the duel and marries Itonje.



Objects/Places

Anjou

Anjou is the land where Gahmuret is from where his father was king.

Zazamanc

Zazamanc is the African kingdom where Belacane is Queen. Gahmuret becomes King of Zazamanc after rescuing Belacane from her enemies, but he leaves while she is pregnant because she is not a Christian and because he wants to search for adventure.

Waleis

Waleis is the land where Herzeloide is Queen, and Gahmuret becomes king after winning renown in a tournament.

Belrepeire

Belrepeire is where Queen Condwiramurs rules and where Parzival engages in his first knightly combat to free Condwiramurs from the armies of King Clamide, her unwanted suitor. After rescuing Condwiramurs, Parzival marries her and becomes King of Belrepeire.

Munsalvaesche

Munsalvaesche is the name of Anfortas' castle where Parzival seeks shelter one night but fails to ask the Question which would free Anfortas from suffering, despite seeing the miracle surrounding the Gral. This failure results in Parzival's Quest for the Gral, and eventually, Parzival is designated to become the King of the Gral. Thereafter, he resides at Munsalvaesche.

The Gral

The Gral is the mysterious object that Parzival sees at Munsalvaesche which provides food and drink for the hundreds of people present. It is presented with great ceremony and carried by Repanse de Schoye. It is described as carries "the consummation of heart's desire, its root and its blossoming- a thing called 'The Gral', paradisaical, transcending all earthly perfection" (p. 125) when it is first introduced, and the Gral becomes the object of Parzival's quest.



Schastel Marveille

Schastel marveille is a castle enchanted by the spells of Clinschor, a sorcerer, and this is where Arnive, Sangive, Itonje and Cundrie reside with four hundred other ladies. When Cundrie visits King Arthur's court to chide Parzival for his failure to ask Anfortas the Question, she challenges the other knights to undertake the adventure at Schastel marveille. After being cleared of murder charges, Gawan meets Duchess Orgeluse near the castle and decides to try the adventure at Schastel marveille. He succeeds and becomes the ruler of Schastel marveille.

Schanpfanzun

Schanpfanzun is where Gawan goes to answer the challenge of Kingrimursel and becomes enamored with Antikonie.

Bearosche

Bearosche is the land ruled by Duke Lippaut. King Meljanz attacks Bearosche because Obie refuses his affection. Gawan participates in a tournament as Obilot's knight in Bearosche, winning much renown and effecting a reconciliation between King Meljanz and Obie.

Round Table

The Round Table is the order of King Arthur's knights which includes Parzival, Gawan and Keie, among many others. They are renowned for their chivalrous feats and are frequently considered the epitome of knight-errantry.



Themes

Chivalry

One of the main themes in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* is the theme of chivalry which is appropriate since the book was written about knights who are supposed to be the epitome of chivalry and honor. Throughout the novel, the knights are constantly searching for adventure and a means of gaining renown by proving their prowess through acts of chivalry. This is first seen when Gahmuret leaves Anjou, his homeland, in search of adventure. After serving the Baruc, he rescues Queen Belacane of Zazamanc from her enemies. After abandoning his wife, he achieves renown during the tournament at Kanvoleis in Waleis, winning the hand of Queen Herzeloide, but he dies while fighting the Babylonians for the Baruc. Although Herzeloide tries to raise her son without knowledge of knighthood, he meets several knights and leaves home to travel to King Arthur's court with the hope of becoming a knight.

At first, Parzival makes a few mistakes, but once he learns how to be a knight, he tries to correct his errors. He steals Jeschute's ring, causing Orilus to punish his wife, but Parzival later vindicates Jeschute of her husband's suspicion. Parzival also kills Ither to acquire his red armor, an action he regrets once he reaches the years of discretion and learns Ither was his cousin. Gurnemanz trains Parzival, after which Parzival demonstrates a much better understanding of chivalry; he rescues Condwiramurs from King Clamide's army and sends those he defeats to King Arthur and Lady Cunneware as a sign of his respect and of his intention to avenge her injury at Keie's hands, respectively. Shortly after being made a Companion of the Round Table, Parzival leaves King Arthur's court to search for the Grail since he failed to free Anfortas from his suffering by asking the Question. He also shows chivalry by trying to duel Gramoflanz in Gawan's stead at Schastel merveille. Finally, Parzival is summoned to be the Grail King.

Feirefiz demonstrates chivalry by calling a truce when Parzival's sword breaks during a fight, even though he does not learn that Parzival is his half-brother until after the fight. Those defeated by Parzival reveal their chivalry by adhering to Parzival's condition of surrendering to Lady Cunneware and King Arthur. When Kingrimursel challenges Gawan to a duel, Gawan rides to Schanpfunz to answer the challenge, but King Vergulaht acts unchivalrously by offering violence to his guest who was promised safe passage, thus violating the codes of hospitality. Gawan's chivalrous intentions toward Orgeluse are treated with disdain and contempt, despite his success in freeing the ladies at Schastel merveille. King Arthur demonstrates chivalry by effecting peace between Gawan and Gramoflanz at Schastel merveille. Most of the characters demonstrate chivalry in this novel, revealing the importance of that character trait in the medieval era.



Religion

Another important theme in Eschenbach's *Parzival* is religion. Though it does not appear very frequently in explicit terms, religion drives much of the action in this novel. One of the reasons that Gahmuret abandons Queen Belacane of Zazamanc is because she is not a Christian, but he tells her she can still win his love if she is baptized. When he returns to Europe, he must marry Queen Herzeloide of Wales, despite his previous marriage to Belacane; this insinuates that his first marriage is not considered binding or valid because Belacane was not a Christian. This theme takes a focal point after Parzival beholds the Grail at Munsalvaesche. Both Sigune and Cundrie chide him for failing to free Anfortas of his suffering by asking the Question, and this leads to Parzival's Quest for the Grail. Although he learns a little about the Grail from Sigune, he learns much more during his time with Trevrizent the hermit. During the two weeks that Parzival stays with Trevrizent, his uncle, he learns much about God, the Grail and sin.

The scene in which Parzival battles Feirefiz reveals the importance of religion as well, since these two are referred to as the Christian and the Infidel during their encounter. Parzival is finally called to be the Grail King and is able to free Anfortas from his suffering by asking the location of the Grail. After being released from his suffering, Anfortas dedicates his life to serving God and the Grail. Feirefiz is unable to see the Grail because he is an Infidel, and he converts to Christianity in order to marry Repanse de Schoye. Without the theme of religion, Parzival would not have been born because Gahmuret would have never left his first wife or been permitted to take a second wife. Parzival's Quest for the Grail encompasses more than half of the novel, emphasizing the importance of religion in the medieval culture in which he existed.

Romantic Love

Romantic love fuels much of the action in *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach. Gahmuret marries Queen Belacane of Zazamanc after rescuing her from her enemies, and she bears a son, Feirefiz. Unfortunately, Gahmuret leaves her before their son is born because she is not a Christian. He shortly marries Queen Herzeloide of Wales, who loves him dearly and mourns his death greatly, and she raises their son, Parzival, in the woods, away from the influence of knighthood which results in some of his mistakes in his early days of wanting to become a knight. Parzival causes a rift between Orilus and Jeschute when he steals Jeschute's ring, but they are later reconciled after Parzival convinces Orilus that Jeschute did not betray her marriage vows. After freeing Queen Condwiramurs of Belrepeire from King Clamide's armies, Parzival marries Condwiramurs, and they love each other greatly. Both are tormented by their separation when Parzival leaves her in search of adventure, and they both rejoice when they are finally reunited in the final chapter. Unlike his father, Parzival remains faithful to his wife during his exploits.

King Clamide later marries Lady Cunneware of King Arthur's court. Sigune shows her love for Schionatulander by mourning for him for several years after his death. Gawan



causes a reconciliation between King Meljanz and Obie in Bearosche, but he makes problems for himself in Schanpfunzun when he becomes amorously involved with Antikione, the younger sister of King Vergulaht. Gawan pursues Duchess Orgeluse de Logroys, but she treats him with scorn until after he is challenged by Gramoflanz for retrieving a garland from a certain tree at his command. She explains that she hates Gramoflanz for killing her first husband before pledging her love to Gawan. Eventually, they marry after Gramoflanz waives the duel due to King Arthur's influence. Gawan offers to assist Gramoflanz and Itonje in their love for one another, and they are married after the conflict between Gramoflanz and Gawan is resolved. Finally, Feirefiz converts to Christianity in order to marry Repanse de Schoye. In this novel, romantic love is the cause of many conflicts, but it seems to turn out right for all of the characters involved eventually, though not necessarily in the way that the reader may initially imagine.



Style

Point of View

The point of view is third person. This point of view is omniscient and reliable, as the narrator can report not only the actions but the thoughts and feelings of all of the characters in the novel. This point of view allows the reader to anticipate much of the action that occurs due to having access to the emotions, thoughts and beliefs of the characters. The narrator's input also often alludes to the tone of pending events. For example, when the narrator asks the reader to join him in praying for Gawain, this allows the reader to infer that an adventure is approaching. This point of view provides the reader with more information than the individual characters have.

The story contains much exposition describing the landscape, the armor, the persons and people's reactions while providing comparatively little dialogue. There are many instances of dialogue that appear that are not formulated as such; the gist of the conversation is provided by the narrator without providing the actual words of the characters. This is useful since little of the novel occurs in the same place, as the characters are constantly moving about the country. This amount of exposition allows the reader to visualize the differences between certain lands which contribute to the tone and the adventures that occur in different locales. The viewpoint of this novel begins being focused on Gahmuret for the first two chapters, and then focuses on Parzival until halfway through the novel. Around the middle of Parzival, the viewpoint alternates fairly equally between that of Parzival and that of Gawain.

Setting

The setting of this novel varies from story to story and from page to page. It is set in the medieval era, during the time of the legendary King Arthur. The majority of the action takes place in England, usually at King Arthur's court, in the woods or at a tournament. There is much travel and many new places that each knight encounters. They lodge in different castles and manors, encountering various obstacles including natural objects, such as streams, fords and mountains, and man-made obstacles, such as prisons, towers and weaponry. The first chapter also includes Gahmuret's excursion to the kingdom of Zazamanc in Africa, and the second chapter conveys his death which occurs in Baghdad. Otherwise, the action of this novel occurs in Europe. The main characters in "Parzival" are knights who demonstrate their chivalry by practicing various feats, and many of the characters that they encounter are members of the nobility, such as kings and queens, duchesses, and other members of the royal court.

Anjou is the land where Gahmuret is from where his father was King. Zazamanc is the African kingdom where Belacane is Queen. Gahmuret becomes King of Zazamanc after rescuing Belacane from her enemies, but he leaves while she is pregnant because she is not a Christian and because he wants to search for adventure. Waleis is the land



where Herzeloide is Queen, and Gahmuret becomes King after winning renown in a tournament. Belrepeire is where Queen Condwiramurs rules and where Parzival engages in his first knightly combat to free Condwiramurs from the armies of King Clamide, her unwanted suitor. After rescuing Condwiramurs, Parzival marries her and becomes King of Belrepeire. Munsalvaesche is the name of Anfortas' castle where Parzival seeks shelter one night but fails to ask the Question which would free Anfortas from suffering, despite seeing the miracle surrounding the Grail. This failure results in Parzival's Quest for the Grail, and eventually, Parzival is designated to become the King of the Grail. Thereafter, he resides at Munsalvaesche. Schastel merveille is a castle enchanted by the spells of Clinschor, a sorcerer, and this is where Arnive, Sangive, Itonje and Cundrie reside with four hundred other ladies. When Cundrie visits King Arthur's court to chide Parzival for his failure to ask Anfortas the Question, she challenges the other knights to undertake the adventure at Schastel merveille. After being cleared of murder charges, Gawain meets Duchess Orgeluse near the castle and decides to try the adventure at Schastel merveille. He succeeds and becomes the ruler of Schastel merveille. Schanpanzun is where Gawain goes to answer the challenge of Kingrimursel and becomes enamored with Antikonie. Bearosche is the land ruled by Duke Lippaut. King Meljanz attacks Bearosche because Obie refuses his affection. Gawain participates in a tournament as Obilot's knight in Bearosche, winning much renown and effecting a reconciliation between King Meljanz and Obie.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is somewhat stiff and proper, but it is generally easy to read and understand. It has been translated from German which eases the understanding comparably and significantly. Nonetheless, there are some unfamiliar words that present themselves. Most of the words that are unfamiliar are so because of the time variance and the difference in living. The majority of modern society is not familiar with many words relating to armor or other aspects of chivalry, but these words are common in the book since the time period relished these activities. Once the reader grows accustomed to the language, they should have no problem understanding the narrative.

Much of the novel is concerned with describing the armor that individual knights wear and the locations to which they travel. Their chivalrous actions are described. The language that the narrator uses often sets the tone of the passage, allowing the reader to suspect good or harm approaching. Also, the language that individual characters use denotes their valor and honor. Therefore, the language serves to characterize both the medieval era in which the novel is set, as well as the individual characters themselves. Overall, the language is easy to understand and contributes greatly to the effect of the novel on the reader; however, it would be much more difficult to read in its original language. Unfortunately, translations lose some of the devices of the original, so it would probably be much more artistic and stylistic in the original language.

Structure

Parzival encompasses four hundred, eleven pages which are organized into sixteen chapters, a Foreword and Wolfram's Apology which is included after the second chapter. The chapters are numbered, rather than titled, and they average approximately twenty pages in length. The chapters are fairly long and extremely descriptive, describing the characters' appearances, actions, thoughts, interactions with other characters and feelings, as well as the setting in which these events occur. The time which passes in each chapter varies greatly, ranging from a matter of minutes to a brief summary that spans several years.

Parzival by Wolfram von Eschenbach is the reworking and completion of Chretien de Troyes' tale of Perceval and the Holy Grail. Wanting to become a knight, Parzival leaves home and seeks adventure, gaining renown for his exploits, but after he fails to ask the Question of Anfortas, he begins his search for the Grail which leads to many sorrows and misfortunes. Parzival is one of the first tales in Arthurian legend that introduces the legend of the Holy Grail, and the story is very entertaining and exciting.

The pace of the novel is generally rather quick with much action compacted into each chapter. There is a lot of description, but it is done in such a way as to avoid becoming tedious. The dialogue is often entertaining and quick-witted. The novel is easy to read and amusing, especially in consideration of the popularity of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. The story is mostly linear, with a few flashbacks and digressions which provide background information. The second half is fairly linear, though it alternates between the perspectives of Parzival and Gawain, meaning that a chapter about Parzival may occur at the same time that Gawain's life was being described two chapters earlier. Overall, this novel is very entertaining and extremely enjoyable.



Quotes

"If vacillation dwell with the heart the soul will rue it. Shame and honour clash where the courage of a steadfast man is motley like the magpie. But such a man may yet make merry, for Heaven and Hell have equal part in him. Infidelity's friend is black all over and takes on a murky hue, while the man of loyal temper holds to the white."

Chap. 1, p. 15

"I shall have your kiss provided that these lords are kissed as well. If kings and princes are to be passed over I dare not ask it of you."

Gahmuret, Chap. 2, p. 52

"Sire, you are now mine. You will find that I shall try to merit your favour and make you so happy that you will rise above your grief."

Queen Herzeloyde, Chap. 2, p. 58

"It saddens me that so many bear the name of woman. They all have the same clear voices. Many are quick to deceit, some are free of it. Thus there are two sides to the question. In my heart I am embarrassed that all are named alike. Womanliness, as long as you remain true to yourself, you and fidelity shall remain inseparable!"

Chap. 3, p. 70

"My lord, I have not yet arrived at years of discretion. But if ever I win fame as a knight such as would entitle me to sue for love, I shall ask you to give me Liaze, the pretty girl your daughter. You have told me of grief past bearing. But if, when the time is ripe, I am able to free you from sorrow, I shall not leave you to bear such a load."

Parzival, Chap. 3, p. 99

"I fear that if I tell you I shall rob you of your sleep, so much will it pain you. King Clamide and his Seneschal have laid waste all my lands and castles except for Belrepeire. My father Tampenteire died leaving me a poor orphan exposed to fearful dangers. I had at my command a large and courageous army, kinsmen, princes, vassals might and humble alike. Half or more of them were killed fighting in defence. How should I poor wretch be cheerful? I have now reached the point where I shall kill myself rather than yield my maidenhead and person to become the wife of Clamide, for it was he who with his own hand slew dear Schenteflurs, whose heart harboured many knightly virtues. Blossoming sprig of manly beauty, Liaze's brother, curbed all base leanings."

Queen Condwiramurs, Chap. 4, pp. 106-107

"If it is your wish, Ma'am, I ask leave to go and see how my mother fares. I do not know at all whether she is well or ill. I should like to go there for a short while- and also in search of adventure. If I achieve much in your service your noble love requires it."

Parzival, Chap. 4, p. 119



"You are exempt from having to make amends since I am well aware that knightly honour and esteem vanished with you at Munsalvaeschye! This is the last word you shall have from me."

Sigune, Chap. 5, p. 135

"Sir, since it fell to you to insult the King, if you will be guided by me- and I fancy it is in your best interest- you will put yourself on a leash and let yourself be lead into his presence. There is nothing you can do to escape me, since I shall lead you to court by force in any event, in which case you will be roughly received."

Keie, Chap. 6, pp. 153-154

"Welcome, first to God and then to me, seeing how you have kept your manly ways. I had refrained from ever laughing till my heart told me who you were- at which Keie took my happiness away by beating me. But you have avenged it fully. I would kiss you if that were not too high an honour for me."

Lady Cunneware de Lalant, Chap. 6, pp. 159-160

"When a man loses heart and turns tail before he is attacked, it is too quick for his good name, as I see it."

Gawan, Chap. 7, p. 177

"I have promised the foreign knight some love-tokens. I must have been out of my mind. What is the use of living if I have nothing to give him, now that he has offered to be my Servitor? If I have no gift for him I shall blush for shame.- No young woman ever so doted on a man!"

Obilot, Chap. 7, p. 192

"If feminine repute is to be had in the market, Antikione had bought a great store; she had no truck with falsity and so was praised for her modest ways. Alas that the wise man of Veldeke died so soon- he could have praised her better!"

Chap. 8, p. 208

"Brother, I bring you the knight whom you yourself asked me to take care of. Treat him well for my sake. Do not let it vex you, but think of a brother's love, and do it without regret. Manly integrity will become you better than that you should endure universal hatred, and mine- given I could hate. Teach me how to quell it!"

Antikione, Chap. 8, p. 219

"Madam, if I have any discernment and God preserve me, I shall be bound to devote my knight-errantry and chivalric aspirations to the service of your womanly virtue always. A happy fate has taught you to vanquish falsity, so that your honour outweighs all other! May fortune grant you her blessings! My lady, I ask leave to depart. Give it me, and let me go. May your breeding preserve your reputation!"

Gawan, Chap. 8, p. 220

"All cause I had to censure you, cousin, shall be forgiven for you have indeed forfeited much happiness after neglecting to ask the Question that would have brought you high honour, when gentle Anfortas was your host and your good fortune. A Question would



have won you all the heart can wish for: but now perforce your happiness turns tail on you, and your high spirits limp behind. Your heart has made Care its familiar that would have remained a stranger had you asked to be told."

Sigune, Chap. 9, p. 226

"If you wish to make something fine and truly noble of your life, never vent your anger on women. Women and priests are grouped together as unarmed: but God's blessing is outstretched over the clergy alone. The latter you should serve faithfully in hope of a good ending: you must place your trust in the clergy. Nothing you see on earth is like a priest. His lips pronounce the Passion that nullifies our damnation. Into his consecrated hand he takes the highest Pledge ever given for debt. When a priest so guards his conduct that he can perform his office chastely, how could he lead a life more holy?"

Trevrizent, Chap. 9, p. 255

"Madam, you do tell me truly, my eyes are a danger to my heart! For they have dwelt on you to such effect that I must truthfully declare I am your prisoner! Treat me as a proper woman should. However much it irks you, you have locked me in your heart! Now loose or bind! You will find me so minded that if I had you where I wanted you I should gladly suffer Paradise!"

Gawan, Chap. 10, p. 259

"Rather than surrender I offer my life. Let your noble hand make an end of whatever fame I knew, for I am accurst in the eyes of God who is oblivious of my glory! For love of Orgeluse the noble Duchess many worthy men have had to yield their fame to me, so that you inherit much fame by slaying me."

Lischois Gwelljus, Chap. 10, p. 275

"I should be very sorry if I were to ride away from these ladies in comfort without exerting myself and without trying to learn more about them. I have heard of them before, and now I have come so near, for their sakes I shall not shirk the challenge!"

Gawan, Chap. 11, p. 282

"Alas that I ever saw these beds! The one wounded me severely, the other has redoubled my thoughts of love! The Duchess Orgeluse must have mercy on me if I am to stay a happy man."

Gawan, Chap. 12, p. 296

"The man on whom we have pinned our high hopes has chosen a lady who is balm to his eyes yet a thorn to his heart."

Queen Arnive, Chap. 12, p. 302

"If these two know how to steal love now, I am loth to conceal it. I can easily tell you what happened there, except that those who divulge secret matters have always been accused of impropriety, and well-bred people still deplore it, so that one who does so damns himself. Let decorum be the lock that guards Love's rites."

Chap. 13, p. 322



"You treacherous cur! Your heart is in the hand of that same man whom your heart is hating! To whom have you surrendered yourself in Love's name? She has to live by that man's favour! You have pronounced your own defeat- Love has lost her rights in you. For if you ever loved, it was in bad faith!"
Lady Bene, Chap. 14, p. 346

"I have many kinsmen and brothers here with the King of Britain. I shall let none of you fight in my stead. I rely on my good cause that, with luck, I shall gain the victory. God reward you for offering to fight: but I am not yet that far gone."
Gawan, Chap. 14, p. 350

"Where love is tinged with hatred, happiness is denied entry to the constant heart."
King Arthur, Chap. 14, p. 362

"How Love has treated me since I first knew Love? After all, I am of Love's lineage. How then have I lost love? If I am to strive for the Gral, desire for the chaste embraces of her whom I left too long ago must ever harass me. If my eyes are to show me pleasure while my heart speaks to me of sorrow, the two are at odds with one another. No one will ever grow high-spirited from such a situation. May Fortune guide me to what is best for me to do!"
Parzival, Chap. 14, p. 364

"Each of these unblemished men bore the other's heart within him- theirs was an intimate strangeness!"
Chap. 15, p. 368

"Jupiter contrived this expedition of mine to my good fortune, in that his aid has led me here where I see my noble kinsmen. I have every cause to commend the father I have lost, since he came of an illustrious line."
Feirefiz, Chap. 15, p. 379

"Now be modest and yet rejoice! O happy man, for your high gains, you coronal of man's felicity! The Inscription has been read: you are to be Lord of the Gral!"
Cundrie la surziere, Chap. 15, p. 387

"No other Election was made than of the man that Gral Inscription had named to be their lord. Parzival was recognized forthwith as King and Sovereign."
Chap. 16, p. 395

"When a man's life ends in such a way that God is not robbed of his soul because of the body's sinning and who nevertheless succeeds in keeping his fellows' good will and respect, this is useful toil."
Chap. 16, p. 410-411



Topics for Discussion

Compare and contrast Parzival and Gawain.

What role does religion play in Wolfram von Eschenbach's "Parzival"?

Why does Parzival search for the Grail?

How is chivalry affected by women and romantic love in "Parzival"?

What does Parzival do to acquire fame?

How can "Parzival" be seen as part of Arthurian legend?

Which knight do you think is the bravest in "Parzival", and why?

Why is honor important to the knights in this novel?