

Phantastes Study Guide

Phantastes by George MacDonald

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



Contents

Phantastes Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	4
Chapter 1.....	6
Chapter 2.....	7
Chapter 3.....	8
Chapter 4.....	10
Chapter 5.....	11
Chapter 6.....	12
Chapter 7.....	13
Chapter 8.....	14
Chapter 9.....	15
Chapter 10.....	17
Chapter 11.....	18
Chapter 12.....	19
Chapter 13.....	21
Chapter 14.....	23
Chapter 15.....	25
Chapter 16.....	26
Chapter 17.....	27
Chapter 18.....	28
Chapter 19.....	29
Chapter 20.....	31
Chapter 21.....	32
Chapter 22.....	33



[Chapter 23..... 34](#)

[Chapter 24..... 35](#)

[Chapter 25..... 36](#)

[Characters..... 37](#)

[Objects/Places..... 41](#)

[Themes..... 44](#)

[Style..... 46](#)

[Quotes..... 48](#)

[Topics for Discussion..... 49](#)



Plot Summary

Anodos is a twenty-one-year old man who embarks on a journey through Fairy Land. His journey takes him through a fantastic world where he meets a variety of people and creatures that teach him lessons about growing up. Anodos learns to throw off the whims of childhood, humble himself for the sake of others, and exert self-control. Anodos' tale is one of rebirth and growth as he reaches adulthood and takes control of his late father's estate.

Anodos receives a set of keys which open up his deceased father's secretary desk. Inside the desk is a hidden compartment that reveals a small woman claiming to be his grandmother. The woman tells Anodos that she will grant his subconscious wish to visit Fairy Land. His reason for entering the fantastic world is unknown until the very end of the book. He went hoping to find his Ideal. Instead he loses his Shadow and overcomes the childish ways of his past in order to move forward into his new future as head of his father's estate.

During his journey Anodos is immersed in a world of imaginative places and unbelievable people. He is guided along the way by various people. An old woman and her daughter introduce Anodos to the forest and give him an initial set of warnings. Once he leaves their protection, Anodos soon forgets all their admonitions and travels through the forest guided by his own whims. Anodos must make restitution for the wrongs he commits before he is able to learn the path back to his own world.

Anodos falls hopelessly in love with a woman imprisoned in stone. He sets about freeing her through song, but when she quickly disappears from sight, he searches furtively for her. His pursuit of the woman and lack of discernment between real and contrived appearances lead him into the clutches of an evil Ash tree. He is rescued by an unseen hand, which he later learns belongs to a Knight. Anodos encounters the Knight several other times during his travels. The Knight has had his own share of hard times and is now working to remedy the wrongs he committed.

Anodos continues to pursue the White Lady from the stone. He visits numerous people along the way. At the home of an ogre he manages to set free his Shadow. The Shadow is the embodiment of his childish ways. Now Anodos must seek to triumph over his dark side and locate the White Lady. He finally frees the White Lady from her imprisonment only to find that her lover is the Knight. However, by the time Anodos realizes this, he has come to love each of them separately and is overjoyed at their union.

Anodos joins forces with two brothers in order to save their kingdom from three giants. He appears to have found a home among the brothers, but it is short-lived. He survives the battle with the giant, but the brothers do not. Anodos cannot stay at this spot in Fairy Land. His journey must continue until he finds the way back out of Fairy Land.

Anodos faces two other battles on his quest. The first has already been hinted at: the conquering of his Shadow. This event is anti-climatic in scope but important to Anodos'



maturity. The other battle is one of self-sacrifice. Anodos saves the Knight from temptation by evil forces. In the process he loses his life but gains re-entry to his own world. Anodos returns to the real world not because he dies, but because he learns the principles necessary for being a successful adult.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Anodos is a twenty-one-year-old man who embarks on a journey through Fairy Land. His journey takes him through a fantastic world where he meets a variety of people and creatures that teach him lessons about growing up. Anodos learns to throw off the whims of childhood, humble himself for the sake of others, and exert self-control. Anodos' tale is one of rebirth and growth as he reaches adulthood and takes control of his late father's estate.

The narrator, Anodos, awakens a little disoriented the day after his twenty-first birthday. He remembers the events of the previous day. Among his gifts were a set of keys to the secretary desk of his deceased father. When the narrator examined the desk, he discovered a secret compartment from which a small woman appeared. The woman called him Anodos and told him that she was his grandmother. She has come to grant him a wish. The woman tells him that the following morning he will discover the entrance to Fairy Land. It is now the morning of the day on which he is to learn the truth of the woman's wish granting to find the door to Fairy Land.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Anodos' discovery of the hidden chamber and the small woman are typical fairy tale motifs. The small woman is a fairy godmother figure for Anodos, and the secret compartment is a portal to a fantasy world. The room that contains the secretary has been kept closed for so long that the darkness refuses to loosen its grip on the chamber even when light is brought into it. This detail further adds an air of mystery and intrigue to the desk and its contents—an air that transcends the real world and may come directly from Fantasy Land.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Anodos begins to look around him as he continues to wake up. He soon realizes that his room has been transformed into a woodland scene. Water overflows from his wash basin making a stream across his floor where daisies from his carpeting sway in a slight breeze. The canopy of his bed is now the branches of a large tree. Anodos sees a slightly-used footpath along the stream's right bank and decides this must be the way into Fairy Land.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Fairy Land has indeed opened a path for Anodos to follow. The outer limits of this fantastic world have grown to overlap the real world in order to create a near seamless bridge. The magic kept silent in Anodos' father's desk is now released to play wherever it desires.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Anodos follows the path from his room into a dense wood that imitates the dark of midnight, even though it is daytime. A small bit of light reveals a young woman walking towards him and repeating a series of warnings to avoid certain trees while trusting others. The woman alters her course away from Anodos, and he does not follow her. Anodos does not hear the sounds of birds or insects as he walks through the woods and soon realizes that fairies sleep during the day.

As Anodos continues his exploration, he comes upon a small cottage made from the stems and branches of four great trees. A woman sits outside chopping vegetables. She inquires about her daughter, whom Anodos surmises to be the young girl he encountered earlier; the woman invites Anodos inside for some food. The woman tells Anodos that he has fairy blood in him and that she, too, is part fairy. After covering the window with a large book, the woman tells Anodos that he must beware of the Ash tree, especially after nightfall. When the woman refuses to elaborate on her warning, Anodos asks to read the book blocking the window. He reads a passage describing a meeting between Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale.

Before Anodos can finish the passage, the woman's young daughter cries out that the Ash is awakening. Anodos asks questions about the Ash and the fairies of the forest. He gathers a good bit of information regarding the creatures and inhabitants of the forest before setting off again through the woods. The young girl tells him that the Ash has moved off to the south and should not cross the eastward path Anodos is taking. As Anodos departs the cottage, he comes across a group of flower fairies discussing the death of one of their friends. Anodos watches the fairies until they flutter off in a funeral procession.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Anodos may be a young man of twenty-one, but his childlike fascination with the fantastic allows him to enter Fairy Land. Although he feels some apprehension about the lack of noise and food, Anodos quickly comforts himself with the thought that his needs will be provided for when the land sees fit. His naivety seems to work to his advantage as he moves through the dark forest unharmed. The reader's suspicions are confirmed when the old woman in the cottage tells Anodos that he is part fairy. This relationship to the fantastic world was apparently kept from Anodos and was the real secret contained in his father's desk.

Almost all fairy tales have characters that appear to guide the innocent newcomer through their world. The old woman and her daughter live on the fringes of the fairy wood because they are only part fairy and need to maintain some connection with both



worlds. This distinction makes them the perfect people for Anodos to meet first on his travels. Their advice prepares Anodos for things he may encounter along the way without directing him on a certain course. Anodos' time in Fairy Land will continue to be dictated by his own whims and wishes.

The book about King Arthur and his knights seems slightly out of congruence with the story, except that it, too, is a fairy tale. The reader may wonder over the passage Anodos reads aloud but fails to finish. Quite possibly in this magical land King Arthur's knights will be brought to life simply by Anodos' words. However, just as Anodos does not complete the passage, no more is mentioned of Galahad or Percivale at this time.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

As Anodos sets off from the cottage, he observes figures ducking in and out of the surrounding flowers. He also realizes that although no light shines from above, the flowers themselves seem to give off just enough light to sustain themselves. Anodos continues to move through the forest watching the happenings around him, but he has the increasing sensation that something larger looms nearby.

Anodos considers that the Ash may be searching for him and that he does not know how to defend himself from the creature. He then remembers that the young woman said the Ash had taken another course away from his own. Anodos' comfort is short-lived when he sees the shape of a large hand reaching out of the mist before him. A face then appears and Anodos runs off through the woods while the rain pours down. A bolt of lightning strikes, illuminating the face again. This time the ghostly figure speaks as arms enfold Anodos from behind. The voice of a woman tells him not to be afraid: she is a beech-tree that will offer him protection from the Ash. Anodos cuts some of the tree's "hair" to make a protective garland for himself before he falls asleep. When he wakes, he says farewell to the beech-tree woman and continues on his way.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Anodos leaves the old woman's cottage armed with information about the woods he will travel through, but he lacks the knowledge on how to defend himself from those who may bear him ill will. His innocence is becoming less and less as he realizes that not everything in Fairy Land is friendly. However, his efforts are difficult because the old woman refuses to answer all of Anodos' questions in a straightforward manner. She knows the truth of the woods and yet is afraid to speak it aloud. There seems to be something larger at work in the fairy forest that frightens the old woman.

Anodos' imagination starts to get the best of him as the shadows dance through the trees. Before visiting the old woman, Anodos had no knowledge of anything to fear in the woods. He may have continued on his travels without ever knowing about the Ash which could have been a good or bad thing. Once Anodos knows that there is something evil at loose in the forest, he allows his mind to terrorize himself instead of remaining calm and practical. He now needs the protective garland bestowed on him by the beech tree in order to advance further into Fairy Land when before he did not feel the need for such charms.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Anodos continues his journey through the forest as the sun shines around him. He finds the animals to be almost friendly and notices human figures moving through the trees. He also begins to eat some of the fruits offered up by the forest, and as he does so, he begins to understand the speech of the forest creatures.

The forest gives way to a rocky hill that Anodos must climb. On the opposite side he finds a large rock covered with beautiful plants that almost obscure an opening in the rock through which the path continues. Inside Anodos finds a couch-like structure and lays down in the cool shade. As he examines the structure around him, he notices an image underneath the moss and begins to pry away the vegetation with his knife. He continues to work until all the moss is removed, and the figure of a woman lying on her side is revealed.

Anodos begins to recall methods used to awaken slumbering women in fairy tales and decides that he will try to arouse her with song. As Anodos sings the rock trembles and then breaks open. The woman inside rises and glides away towards the forest. Anodos quickly follows her.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Anodos' senses are become acclimatized to Fairly Land. His own personal link to the fantastic seems to be awakened when he ingests the fruits of the wood. Whatever mysterious qualities they possess become transferred to him, and he is able to understand the animals' speech. Anodos is becoming absorbed into the landscape as an appropriate inhabitant of the wood.

His inexperience as a youth from outside, though, is evident when he fails to consider the consequences for awakening the stone maiden. The woman had cast a spell over Anodos through her rock prison in order to gain her freedom. She offers no thanks and does not even acknowledge that Anodos is there. Her bewitching causes Anodos to forget the terrible Ash tree as he rushes after her.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Anodos is transfixed in his pursuit of the pale woman by the sight of a man riding towards him wearing red armor. The man reminds Anodos of Sir Percivale from the old woman's book because his armor is covered in rust. The knight apologizes for his appearance and warns Anodos to take heed of the tale of Sir Percivale and the Maiden of the Alder-tree. The knight cannot lift his head in pride again until every speck of rust has been removed from his armor by blows from combat. The knight finishes his speech and rides away before Anodos can speak.

Anodos resolves to heed the knight's fair warning as he returns to his pursuit of the white lady. As night falls, Anodos decides to try locating the woman through song. The marble lady appears, and Anodos feels a chill at her touch but convinces himself it is merely the marble. The woman leads Anodos through the woods to a cave where she reveals herself to him in the light of a rose-hued lamp. She lulls Anodos to sleep with a strange tale, and he awakes in the morning to find the damsel gone. At the mouth of the cave now stands an object that appears to be an open coffin set on end. When the object turns around, Anodos sees that it is the marble lady in her true evil form; she is the Maid of the Alder Tree. She has taken Anodos' protective garland that he received from the beech-tree and caged him for the Ash tree. As the Ash approaches Anodos, the blow of an axe rings out, forcing the Ash to retreat and the maiden to vanish.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Anodos receives two warnings to beware of beautiful women he may encounter in the wood. The first came from the book he read in the cottage and the second from a knight, who appeared as an exact replica of Sir Percivale. The good forces, possibly aided by his fairy grandmother, are conspiring to protect Anodos, but he is reluctant to heed their advice. Immediately after his encounter with the bedraggled knight, Anodos continues his search for the marble lady and almost meets his death.

It is possible that Anodos has been sent to Fairy Land in order to learn lessons which will help him become a man in the real world. After all, the events begin to take place just after his twenty-first birthday, and he has been given keys that once belonged to his father. The gift is a right of passage as Anodos assumes the role as head of household. However, he has much to learn during his stay in Fairy Land, and he is succumbing to the wiles of beautiful women rather than attending to his lessons.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Anodos finally decides to leave the cave, but when he exits there is no sign of his savior. As he walks along, Anodos tries to understand why, despite the ugliness of the woman, he still finds her beautiful. Unable to reach any satisfying conclusions, Anodos turns to considering the person who saved him. He wonders if it was the errant knight.

Late in the afternoon Anodos comes upon a farm-house at the forest's edge and a matronly woman. The woman has met other men emerging from the woods who are shook up after an evening spent with the Maiden of the Alder. The woman is a believer in the fantastic nature of the forest, but her husband is a practical man who makes Anodos almost forget there is a Fairy Land. Anodos spends the evening listening to the family discuss the truth of various fairy tales before retiring to a room that looks upon an open field instead of the forest. In the morning Anodos wakes refreshed and certain that Fairy Land was only a dream. However, when he comes close to the woman and her daughter, he feels just as certain that there is a Fairy Land. The woman tells him that most people who enter Fairy Land cannot return to their own world until they have journeyed through Fairy Land and chanced upon a new way out. Anodos agrees with the woman and happily takes leave of the family.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Anodos is slowly beginning to pay attention to his surroundings. The experience with the Maiden of the Alder has shown him that not everything is as it seems in Fairy Land. He must be careful if he is to survive and return to his own world.

The evening spent with the farmer's family refreshes and renews Anodos' belief in Fairy Land. He vacillates between the father and the mother and daughter as if they have been placed at the edge of the wood as a test for travelers beset upon by the Ash and the Maiden. By sleeping in a room away from the enchanted forest, Anodos is given the opportunity to clear his mind. His reaction to seeing the view from the little girl's bedroom window fills his heart with hope again and renews him for his next set of adventures.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Anodos leaves the farmer's family and continues on his journey until he comes upon a small windowless hut in a clearing. Inside a woman is reading from a small book and she begins to read aloud as Anodos ignores a sense of foreboding and steps inside. Anodos advances into the room, but the woman pays little attention to him. He is focused on a door that he assumes leads to another room. As he reaches for the latch, the woman stops reading and warns him not to open the door.

Anodos ignores the woman's advice and opens the door on a dark room. As he watches, a figure comes running from the outer reaches of the darkness. Anodos steps back unable to shut the door because he feels the need to watch the figure as it speeds through the darkness and rushes past him. Looking around the room, he sees a black shadow the size of a man lying in the floor behind him. The woman tells him that it is his own shadow that has found him, and as she lifts her face for the first time, Anodos realizes he has entered the house of the ogre the farmer warned him about. Unable to shake the shadow from his person, Anodos leaves the house with the dark splotch in tow.

Chapter 8 Analysis

The resolve that seemed to fill Anodos following his stay with the farmer is quickly forgotten when he sees the small hut. He refuses to listen to his gut instinct that warns him to stay away from the cottage and is rewarded with a new companion. The shadow appears to be something more than just a dark spot made by Anodos' blocking the light. The ogre woman comments that the shadow is called something else in his world. The reader wonders if the shadow is a type of uncontrollable subconscious. Anodos' reaction to the arrival of his shadow is not positive, and it remains to be seen what will befall him while in the company of such a dark creature.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

From the time Anodos first meets his shadow until he arrives at the palace of Fairy Land, the shadow seems to dictate their course of action. The shadow influences everything that Anodos comes in contact with, even to the point of killing flowers when he lies down to rest. As their time together increases, the shadow becomes more mobile and is able to move around in front of Anodos. Furthermore, the shadow begins to send out tendrils of shadow, one of which extends so far that it smites the sun so that it darkens.

Anodos meets the knight again, only this time the man appears prouder, and there is less rust covering his armor. The two men travel together for a few days, and Anodos begins to enjoy the knight's company. Just as he decides to discuss the Maiden of the Alder and the ogre with the knight, his shadow reaches out and envelops the man. As a result of his association with the shadow, the knight becomes cold and sad again, and parts company with Anodos.

Anodos begins to be entranced by his dark companion, the shadow. One day Anodos meets a young girl skipping through the woods and playing with a crystal globe. Anodos desires to hold the globe but the little girl is reluctant. She cautions him that he must exhibit extreme care with the precious object. For three days the little girl walks with Anodos during the day but leaves him at night. On the third day his desire to hold the crystal globe becomes so intense that his shadow immobilizes the little girl while Anodos seizes the ball. He struggles with the maiden for possession of the object until finally the ball explodes releasing a black cloud that surrounds the child. The child runs off and Anodos continues his journey.

Chapter 9 Analysis

The lure of interesting objects is irresistible for Anodos. He is unable to exert self-control over himself; a circumstance which continues to end disastrously. The shadow feeds off of these irrepressible desires until it kills or destroys whatever is sought after. As Anodos' wishes increase, so, too, does the size and abilities of his shadow. Anodos fails to control his rampant shadow and his own unconscious wants.

Anodos encounters two positive companions along his route. First, he is reunited with the knight, who is an excellent example of self-control. The knight's armor is returning to its previous luster because the knight has undertaken to right his wrong of trusting in the Maiden of the Alder. Anodos senses that he could learn a lot from the knight and desires to accompany him. However, the shadow prevents this desire from coming to fruition because the association would be a positive one and present a threat to the shadow's existence.



The second encounter is with the innocent little girl who disappears when night falls. The reader may notice this distinct quality of the child and realize that the girl has a natural aversion to darkness. Her little crystal ball offers her some measure of protection since the Shadow is unable to destroy her, but it does succeed in robbing her of her plaything. Anodos' desire to hold the globe is rooted in the darkest recesses of his soul, and it is this type of greed upon which the Shadow feeds. The breaking of the crystal ball appears to break the spell that had enveloped Anodos, and he notes that even to this day he feels remorse for his actions.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Anodos' journey takes him to a desert region inhabited by goblin-fairies. Each time Anodos encounters a group of goblins, they mock him and perform for him. However, when they see the Shadow, they look on Anodos with pity and contempt but allow him to pass without further ridicule.

Anodos finds a stream to refresh himself at and then decides to follow its course. After pursuing this course for sometime, Anodos comes upon an unattended boat. He clambers into the vessel and allows it to take him where it will. Anodos awakens to find that the boat has brought him to a glimmering palace. Using a board that was part of a seat to paddle, Anodos propels the boat to shore and disembarks.

He climbs a slight slope to arrive at the entrance to the palace. Anodos mounts a series of steps until he is standing on a platform from which he can view the forest. He continues through passageways until he comes to a large fountain with a stream flowing from it. The stream leads him to a great hall where Anodos senses the presence of fairies belonging to a higher order but cannot see them. Further exploration of the palace yields the discovery of a room identical to Anodos' own bedroom. Anodos takes comfort in the familiar surroundings and falls asleep feeling sure that he will awaken in his own bed knowing that Fairy Land was only an apparition of the night.

Chapter 10 Analysis

When Anodos finds the stream, he gives himself over to the control of nature. He is content to let the stream carry the boat where it wishes and is rewarded by being brought to the Fairy Palace. The Shadow cannot enter or cause harm at the Palace. Anodos is able to recuperate, although the discovery of a room that mirrors his own makes him certain that Fairy Land is nothing more than a dream.

Anodos mentions the presence of a higher order of fairies. He also says that since his time in the Church of Darkness, he is no longer able to see such beings. The reader can only assume that Anodos refers to the ogre's cottage where he met the Shadow. Very few proper names are given in the story, which leads to several areas of confusion for the reader.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

The following morning Anodos continues his exploration of the vast palace hoping to discover the means for permanently banishing his unwanted Shadow. In the heat of the afternoon, Anodos seeks a cool refuge and discovers a huge basin filled with the purest water he has ever seen. Anodos swims in the basin enjoying the odd contrast that above the water he is in the basin, but below the water's surface he appears to be in a sea.

After his swim, Anodos returns to wandering the halls of the palace. He becomes aware of faint figures walking and conversing through the passageways. Anodos never has the pleasure of seeing any of these figures face to face, but several of them wait upon him unseen for the duration of his stay. On the third day of exploration, Anodos discovers the library. He throws himself into the books with zeal and finds that every book he reads transports him into the world described in its pages.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Anodos spends time becoming acclimated to his new surroundings. The magnificence of the palace makes him almost forget the presence of his Shadow. The Shadow has been greatly diminished upon its arrival in the palace, but it is still present. The magic of the building makes Anodos certain that he will find a cure for the dark presence plaguing him. The palace has restored Anodos' spirit and given him hope of redemption.

The mention of the library and the power of its books correlates with the spirit of the fairy tale. *Phantastes* seems to be the type of book which should draw readers into it, transporting them to another world in which they are the main character. Anodos experiences this phenomenon himself in the palace library, while the reader is hopefully experiencing it while reading Anodos' tale.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

This chapter recounts the story contained in one of the books Anodos read. He is unsure whether the story was written entirely in prose or partly in verse, and so Anodos reproduces it in a mixture of both styles. The book describes a world very much like Earth, except that only the men have arms, while the women have wings. Babies are found by wandering maidens rather than born.

The color of the wings of the women and of the babies is determined by the season in which they are born. Anodos is fascinated by the changing colors of this world. The rate with which colors change is determined by time of day, a person's mood, or the weather. Anodos writes of a conversation he had with several men and women regarding the difference in birthing methods between this planet and his own. The story causes several of the women to wander away, only to be found dead the following morning.

Anodos notes that he has not, in truth, visited this foreign planet, but the nature of the text makes him believe that he has. He writes as if he is familiar with the people and their customs. He relates the story of a woman who was born in winter but desired to experience spring. The woman travels for a long time before finally finding a single snowdrop flower growing on the border between spring and winter. Having thus accomplished her goal, the woman lies down next to the flower and dies. Anodos believes that the moment the woman died, a baby was born on Earth.

Chapter 12 Analysis

The reader must re-read the last paragraph of the previous chapter several times before comprehending that the present chapter is from one of Anodos' books. The inclusion of the retelling of this particular story mimics the reader's experience of reading *Phantastes*. The reader waits excitedly on the fringes of the story ready to jump in and participate at any time. Here Anodos has been able to do just that.

However, the mention of the women who are found dead following Anodos' revelation of how babies are born on Earth illustrates what can go wrong when two nearly identical, but incongruent, worlds meet. Anodos introduces a new concept to the people. One that they are not prepared for and some are unable to handle. The revelation of other worlds that differ from their own leads the winter woman to search out something different before she is ready to experience it. The results of her endeavor end tragically for her but Anodos tries to mediate it by assuring himself that a corresponding child was born at the same moment on Earth.

Anodos must be careful in Fairy Land. He has entered their world to experience new things, not vice versa. It is probably easier for him to incorporate the strangeness of

Fairy Land into his own life than for the people of Fairy Land to adopt the customs of Earth.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Anodos proposes to retell, as best as he can, one of the stories that he read. The story is of Cosmo von Wehrstahl, who is a university student. Cosmo happens upon a mirror one day in an antique shop and strikes a bargain for it with the shopkeeper. The shopkeeper knows there is something special about the mirror but does not reveal any information to Cosmo.

Cosmo hangs the mirror on the wall above his hearth. He studies it for sometime before realizing that the mirror has the ability to turn his stark room into a familiar and almost comfortable space. He feels as if the mirror is a known character in a favorite book. All the objects in his room appear to come to life as Cosmo gazes at them in the mirror. Cosmo wishes that he could find a way to live in the room he sees in the mirror.

As Cosmo continues to watch his room through the mirror, a woman glides into the reflected room and lies down on the couch. Cosmo turns away from the mirror to check his own room, but there is no one in it save for himself. The woman returns the following night and when she appears relieved at the removal of the skeleton, Cosmo undertakes to furnish the room as befits a lady.

The lady continues to come each night around six o'clock. One evening she does not appear, and Cosmo, who has fallen in love with the lady, is overwrought. He worries that a rival has won her heart. He begins to pour over his magic books in the hopes of finding some incantation that will break the barrier between his world and hers. One night the woman returns and Cosmo is ready for her. He performs the ritual spell and the woman walks out the door of the reflected room and into the door of Cosmo's own room. The two exchange furtive words of love and sadness. The woman asks Cosmo to free her from her mirrored prison and he attempts to break the mirror with his sword.

Cosmo awakens to find both the mirror and the lady gone. He searches the city for a sign of the mirror, but it is nowhere to be found. One night at a party he overhears some women talking about the poor Princess von Hohenweiss, who suffers from a terrible malady. Cosmo realizes that the woman in the mirror and the Princess are the same lady. He then learns that one of his classmates has gone missing for the last three weeks: the same amount of time as passed since Cosmo first obtained the mirror. The princess suddenly awakens screaming Cosmo's name. She calls for her cloak to be brought and hurries from the house. On a bridge over the river she meets Cosmo, who is bleeding from his side. The princess tells Cosmo that he has freed her and he dies in her arms.

Anodos chooses to not retell anymore stories from the library.



Chapter 13 Analysis

Anodos begins his retelling of Cosmo's story with the note that while reading the tale he felt a certain sense that the story had a double meaning. When he concludes his version of the story, Anodos states that he still remembers the story and the way he felt while reading it. The story does indeed contain a double meaning, possibly more than that. Just like the story of Sir Percivale that Anodos read in the oak cottage upon his arrival in Fairy Land, the tale of Cosmo and the woman in the mirror serves as a foreshadowing of what is to come. Anodos, like Cosmo, has been chasing a woman through the forest because he thinks he is in love with her. However, if Anodos were to take the time to carefully consider the story, he might realize that the woman in the mirror was loved by another man: the man Cosmo had to fight in order to break the mirror. The battle has cost Cosmo his life and the reader cannot be certain that the woman is truly better off being freed.

Cosmo wishes to enter a world where he does not belong. He becomes obsessed with the woman in the mirror, even though he does not know who she is or whether she comes from good or evil. Cosmo resorts to dark methods in order to free the woman from her prison. If Anodos' story so far has followed similar patterns, what will become of him and the white lady he chases? The reader must also consider what role the knight may play in the situation, especially given Anodos' love for both the lady and the knight.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Anodos wonders at the lack of music in the Fairy Palace. He feels certain that some of the figures he detects moving through the palace are dancing to music emanating from somewhere. He thinks that maybe his audio acuity has not yet been fine tuned to hear the fairy music.

One evening Anodos arrives in a hall full of crimson light and black pillars built near white marble walls. The pillars create archways that divide the wall into sections. Each section of wall is covered by a crimson curtain behind which a light radiates. At the end of the hall is a chair, which Anodos sits in and imagines fantastic images of beauty. The hall recalls the feeling of the stone cave where he found the sleeping woman encased in marble. Anodos returns to the crimson hall each morning to investigate the hall further.

After several visits to the hall, Anodos works up the courage to lift one of the silk curtains. Behind it he sees another hall similar to the one in which he stands. Gathered around a large lamp are white marble statues on pedestals of black. The lamp is inscribed with the words, "TOUCH NOT!" For the following two nights Anodos continues to lift curtains searching for the source of music he seems to hear. On one occasion he passes through a hallway to the opposite end only to find a corridor that runs the circumference of the halls. He walks the corridor and discovers that there are twelve hallways and each is filled with marble statues.

That evening Anodos dreams that he is able to surprise the marble dancers and catch them in their merriment. He also dreams that on one of the pedestals stands the white lady from the marble cave. In the tenth hall Anodos does recognize some of the statues from his dream. He hopes that he will soon surprise the figures in their play. Anodos realizes that in order to see the dancers in motion, he must free his mind of all desire to do so. Finally he is able to move among the statues as they move in their dance. However, when he finds the pedestal of the white lady, it is vacant.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Anodos has spent enough time in the Fairy Palace to begin to sense things outside his usual field of perception. He feels that somewhere in the vast hallways are people dancing and singing. He desires to find them and begins to search in earnest.

Unlike his desires to hold the crystal ball or befriend the knight, this wish seems to be motivated out of pureness and love. Anodos rationalizes the steps he needs to take in order to find what he is looking for. He understands that he must step outside himself and become part of the magical quality of the palace if he is to find what he seeks. Anodos is learning to listen to his environment and his intuition. He is also learning to be

patient for the things he wants instead of rushing headlong after them and risking their destruction. He is maturing within the walls of the Fairy Palace.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

For the next couple of nights Anodos is perplexed on how to call forth the white lady. He feels that a song would once again awaken her as it had in the stone cave. As he stands before the empty pedestal, he senses the desire of something unseen bidding him to call it into being. Anodos begins to sing and the dancers arrest their movement and hurry back to their resting places. One brushes against him in their rush causing the harp in her hands to remain living. Anodos leaves off his song long enough to remove the instrument from the statue's hands. Anodos is now accompanied by music and begins to sing again. Slowly his song calls the white lady into existence as he describes her from her feet to her hair.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Anodos continues to use his intellect and intuition to learn the secret to releasing the white lady. He waits until his heart has heard the song that will rescue the woman from her bonds. Anodos is still operating with pure intentions. His love for the white lady has not ceased even after his encounter with the Maiden of the Alder-tree. It appears that the farmer's wife was correct in assuming that the white lady and the Alder woman were two different people. The Alder maiden assumed the form of the white lady to entice Anodos into her trap, but her true nature could not be hidden for long. Now Anodos has found his marble woman and is once again working to rescue her from whatever enchantment has hold of her.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Anodos sings his song and watches as the figure of his white lady appears on the pedestal before him. He finishes the tune completely, but the woman seems to waver between being fully alive and returning to stone form. The light fades from her eyes and she remains solid. Anodos is frustrated that his work has come to nothing and reaches out to embrace the white lady. When her feet are removed from the black pedestal, she cries out that Anodos should not have touched her. She breaks free from his hold and runs through a door. Anodos pauses at the door but chooses not to heed the inscribed warning and plunges through. On the other side he discovers a hole in the ground of a windswept hill. He sits down beside the hole to wait for morning, so he can see how best to enter the abyss.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Yet again Anodos has failed to exert self-control. He has allowed his desires to overwhelm his commonsense and now must suffer the consequences. The reader began to feel hope that Anodos was finally learning his lesson, that he was understanding the advantages of exhibiting patience instead of child-like tantrums of impatience.

Like the tale of Sir Percivale, the story of Cosmos and Princess Von Hohenweiss served to warn Anodos of what was to befall him. Anodos chooses to believe that he is part of the stories from the books in the library but refuses to consider himself a character in the tales that most closely resemble his own actions. Anodos seems afraid of accepting the truth of his own story, and that is why he continues to push stubbornly ahead when he should not.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

With the rising of the sun Anodos is able to see that a natural staircase circles down into the abyss. He follows this for some time until he finds an opening in the side of the basin wall. The farther down Anodos travels, the darker his mood becomes until he loses hope of finding the white lady.

Anodos meets a group of goblin-like creatures who taunt him as he walks. The goblins tell him that the white lady is meant to love another. When Anodos replies that if there is another better for her, then she should be with him, they scatter and let him pass. Anodos begins to sing a song that gives the white lady permission to love whomever she chooses. Anodos meets an old woman, who transforms herself into a beautiful maiden and offers to accompany him. He turns away from her offer and continues alone.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Anodos' downward descent mirrors his personal state of mind. He has reached the lowest point in his journey. He does not know where to go and the further he goes he feels certain that the white lady already has a lover. He seems to have lost the motivation to continue his journey and is now walking forward only because he cannot go back.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

All sense of time has escaped Anodos. He does not know how long he has been walking or how much longer he has to go. He does not have any food, but somehow he has been sustained. A mist gathers behind him obscuring the way he has come. At length he feels the rock walls begin to close in around him until they are so close that he is forced to crawl on hands and knees. The tunnel leads him to an opening, which deposits him on the shore of a wintry sea. The landscape is dismal and hopeless. Anodos refuses to let Death overtake him and in one last burst of energy flings himself off a rock promontory into the sea.

The water refuses to let Anodos sink and buoys him to the surface. He floats along until he bumps into a boat. He climbs into the vessel, wraps himself in a purple blanket, and allows himself to be carried along. The water becomes , and the sky turns from the harsh gray of winter to the warm violet of summer. As Anodos leans over the side of the boat, he sees images of his past streaming below him. The scenes fill him with delight, but he is still worn out from his underground journey and falls asleep.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Although Anodos seems to have lost all hope during his long journey underground, the act of crawling through the rock tunnel is one of rebirth. He has been pushed out of the depths of the Earth to alight on a desolate beach, but he has still not lost all hope. By throwing himself off the promontory rather than allowing Death to seek him on the shore, Anodos shows that there is still a spark of life left in him. The waters receive him and recognize this bit of life fighting to break free.

The boat carries him out of winter - traditionally a time of death - into the warmth of new growth and abundance. The images of his past serve to remind him of the trials he has overcome and show him that he has more to accomplish. Anodos seeks and finds forgiveness for past sins from the people he sees in the water. Their ready pardons warm his soul as he regains strength through sleep.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

The island Anodos finds himself on is new and childlike. It is still growing since there are no tall trees, only tall grasses. There is one cottage, and it is inhabited by an old woman whose features belie her age. The woman cares for Anodos as a mother for a child. The woman sings Anodos a song of unrequited love between a knight and a lady. He falls asleep to the sound of her voice and awakens to observe her turning to face three doors, each set in the center of the other three walls of the cottage. At one door she cries, at one she sighs, and at the third she cries out in fear.

When Anodos learns that it is always day on the island, he desires to go out at once and explore. Before he leaves, the old woman tells him that whenever he desires to come back to her he must look for a particular red mark. Anodos walks out the cottage door and finds himself transported to his past. He spends a brief time reveling in the company of his brothers and father before looking at a curious red mark that transports him back to the old woman's cottage.

Anodos chooses the door of Sighs and steps into a large hall. A woman sits waiting by a hearth; it is the white lady. As he watches, the Knight rides into the hall and the woman flies to his side. The two embrace and then fall to discussing a strange man they both happened to encounter in Fairy Land. The Knight declares that the man is indeed a man of valor in thought but not in deed, and the knight worries about the man's fate. The woman then inquires about the Knight's encounter with the Ash tree, and Anodos learns that it was the Knight who saved him from the Ash. Anodos tries to speak out, but the couple does not appear to hear him and so he departs through a door with the red mark. Anodos crashes through it and finds himself back in the cottage.

After a restorative sleep Anodos chooses the door of Dismay. On the other side he steps out into a crowded street. He sees a woman dressed in white, who he knows well and follows her. Inside a church he finds her lying in a tomb near a knight whose sword has been broken. Anodos recognizes the knight as well. He stumbles towards the entrance of the vault and sees the red mark glowing on the stone. Once again Anodos returns to the woman's cottage.

The woman places herself between him and the fourth door, but Anodos pushes past her. He awakens to find himself lying on the cottage floor with his head in the woman's lap. She tells him that because she had to enter the door herself to find him, the waters around her cottage are rising. He must leave her now, but she will be alright as long as she keeps her fire burning. She directs him to a narrow neck of land that joins her island to the mainland. She leads him through the correct door and points him in the proper direction before returning to her cottage.



Chapter 19 Analysis

Anodos goes through a process of remembrance and forgetting during his stay at the cottage. The woman is there to guide him and comfort him each time he returns from beyond the doors. She is the mother allowing her son to step forth into the world for the first time without her but always willing to take him back when the world becomes too much.

Behind each door Anodos finds a piece of himself. The first is a past experience. It is a happy time when his father still lived, and he was a young boy playing with his brothers.

The second door reveals the present. Anodos learns of the connection between the Knight and his White Lady. He is able to reconcile himself to their love because he loves them both. The third door leads to his ancestral past where he learns he is descended from the knight and white lady, and that is why he cannot be the man who wins the White Lady's heart. The fourth door washes Anodos clean. The woman must haul him back from beyond this door because he forgets his purpose in Fairy Land. The rising water around the cottage symbolizes the washing clean of Anodos' experience and prepares the cottage for the next traveler.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Anodos crosses the isthmus and arrives in a rocky country. He comes across a tower from which he hears the sound of an anvil clanging. Inside the tower he finds two young men working at the forging of a sword. The two refer to themselves as brothers and include Anodos in this designation. When they finish with their work, they tell Anodos that their father is the king of the country. Three giant brothers have taken possession of a castle and now threaten the state of the kingdom.

The two brothers sought the advice of a wise woman who told them that a third would one day join them to battle the three giants. They invite Anodos to join them in their quest, and he readily accepts. The three men set about their work, and soon all three are finely outfitted with splendid suits of armor and weaponry. When the work is completed Anodos sings the brothers songs that speak of the love of a son for his father and the lost love of a woman.

Chapter 20 Analysis

Anodos is rejuvenated by his experience with the woman and her mysterious cottage. He is ready to face what lies before him and, as the woman advised him, "do something worth doing." The two brothers serve to remind him of the close bond he had with his own brothers. While little is known about Anodos' family, the reader can speculate that something tragic happened to his siblings and his father. The battle against the three giants is an opportunity to atone for that tragedy. If Anodos proves successful, he will also set to right the wrongs he has committed since entering Fairy Land.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

The morning appointed for combat arrives. The three brothers leisurely prepare themselves for the encounter with the giants, but their lack of haste leaves them unprepared when the giants approach the tower. The brothers take up their weapons but leave their beautiful armor behind as they hurry out to the battlefield.

Anodos takes stock of his opponent and quickly assesses the best means of defeating the giant. When he has successfully slain his giant, he turns to find the other two giants lying on the grass beside his brothers. Anodos feels that he is the least worthy of the three men, and yet he is the one who is spared. As he stands on the silent plain, he sees his Shadow lying behind him.

Anodos hurries to the town below to rouse peasants to bear the bodies back to the king. He retrieves the keys to the giants' castle and speeds off to free their prisoners. The king is overjoyed at the defeat of the giants. He is filled with pride for his slain sons and heaps mountains of praise on Anodos. After being knighted by the king, Anodos begins to feel troubled by the renewed presence of his Shadow. He puts on a splendid suit of armor and rides off in search of the elder brother lady love.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Anodos proves himself a worthy combatant in the battle against the giants. His skill in swordsmanship is an invaluable advantage. The reader may wonder, though, if the two brothers would have survived if Anodos had not taken the time to sing them one final song. Blame should not be placed on Anodos for the two deaths, but his decision to perform one more song seems like a faint reminder of previous rash actions that led to disaster. Perhaps Anodos himself feels this way and that is why he feels the least worthy of the three men.

Anodos' Shadow has lain almost dormant for a long time. Its resurfacing at this moment seems to be an indication that Anodos will soon face a larger battle than the one he just finished. The Shadow is a part of Anodos, and he will have to choose whether to side with the Shadow or send it back to its dark hole for eternity.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Anodos has been traveling for three days when he reaches the edge of a forest. A young boy appears and warns Anodos to beware of the forest because it is enchanted. Anodos acknowledges the notice but quickly forgets it upon entering the wood. His spirits are buoyed as his Shadow seems to disappear. He fancies himself a great knight in the tradition of Sir Galahad. Just as the thought crosses his mind, a knight clad in shining armor approaches Anodos. The knight appears to be almost a mirror image of Anodos. Anodos trembles at the thought of fighting the mighty warrior and instead follows behind him, stupefied.

The knight leads Anodos to a tower devoid of any adornment and barely accessible among the tree trunks. Anodos is ordered inside with his Shadow while his horse is sent away. For several days Anodos remains in the tower finding solace in the moonlit nights and discomfort in the sunlit days. One night he dreams that he has returned home after a long absence, and his sisters crowd around him with happy shouts. The dream fades and Anodos hears a woman singing. He listens to her song for awhile and then tries the door, which opens at his touch.

The voice belongs to the young girl who once possessed the crystal globe. Her broken globe has been replaced by the gift of song, which does good for all who hear it. The child leaves, and Anodos decides that he must travel far away from the tower. He leaves off his armor, takes only a short axe for protection and begins a new journey. At first Anodos feels that he has failed, but shortly he realizes that he has succeeded in throwing off his Shadow.

Chapter 22 Analysis

Anodos is finally required to confront his Shadow. The knight that appears to lead Anodos to the tower represents his own desire to face the darkness that has been plaguing him. He is unable to battle the shining knight because this is not the facet of himself that needs to be overcome. The Shadow represents all that is evil in Anodos' soul: greed, pride, envy and lust.

The dream of his return home signifies his wish to end his journey through Fairy Land and take up his familial duties. When Anodos meets the young girl and sees that she has not been crushed by the loss of his globe, he realizes that although many of his earlier actions caused grief in that moment, the eventual outcome has been positive. Anodos has learned much during his time in Fairy Land, and he recounts it as he leaves his Shadow behind and forges a new path through the wood.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

As Anodos walks through the forest, he hears a voice echoing through the trees. He soon sees a knight riding an unusual looking horse, which upon further inspection proves to be a horse pulling a slain dragon. The knight reins his horse in beside Anodos, who recognizes that it is none other than the Knight of the soiled armor and the lover of the white lady. Anodos becomes the Knight's squire and the two continue on together.

Soon they arrive at the house of a woman who wishes to know if the Knight has found her daughter. The Knight has indeed saved the girl from the dragon, and tells the woman where to find her ill child. Once the child is safely returned to the cottage and in the capable hands of her parents, the Knight decides to leave. As the two men travel through the wood, the Knight tells Anodos of his adventures.

At length the men encounter a wall of yew trees growing so closely together that nothing can be seen beyond them. The pair passes through a door-like opening to find a procession of white-robed men. Although the Knight feels certain that there is good happening here, Anodos watches the ceremony and begins to feel that there is evil afoot. Anodos begs the use of a girl's white cloak in order to move closer to the front of the gathering. There he finds a wooden image affixed to a great throne. When he throws the image to the ground, a great wolf bursts through the resulting hole and tackles Anodos to the ground. Anodos attempts to strangle the beast as guards rush forward and before Anodos is knocked unconscious.

Chapter 23 Analysis

Anodos meets the Knight for the final time in his journey because he is now prepared to be an equal to the Knight. Although Anodos has thrown off the outward trappings of a knight, his heart rings as true as Sir Percivale's or Sir Galahad's. He has learned to humble himself and exert self-control. These qualities are admirable in a knight and not usually noted in lowly squires. However, as servant to the Knight, Anodos is obligated to save the man from himself. The Knight has completed his own conquests, but just as he is about to return safely home, he finds himself entranced by the ceremony of the white-robed men. Anodos must save the Knight, so that the White Lady is spared an early grief. Anodos must sacrifice himself for their good.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

The Knight and White Lady mourn over Anodos' body. They comment that he died well before burying him among a stand of trees and flowers on the grounds of their castle. Anodos is content in his repose beneath the earth. He feels at home in the bosom of the ground and takes joy in the birth of each new flower. Anodos is reborn in the form of a primrose that catches the eye of the White Lady. She plucks the flower and gives Anodos his first kiss. When the flower dies, he takes up residence in a cloud, where he waxes poetic about the power of love. As he floats over a city and vows to protect its inhabitants, Anodos feels a terrible pain. He convulses until he becomes aware that he is still partly alive.

Chapter 24 Analysis

Anodos' imagination carries him away to the afterlife. He is hovering between realms and tries to convince himself that he prefers death. He imagines himself being reborn in various incarnations to look after all those he left behind. However, his time has not yet come. It does not seem reasonable for a human to die within the limits of Fairy Land. He must remain alive in order to return to his own world and "do something worth doing."



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

Anodos awakens in a field, where he is immediately filled with dread that his Shadow has found him once again. As the sun continues to rise, he realizes that the darkness he sees stretching before him is only his natural shadow. Anodos looks around him and realizes that he has returned home. Below him stands his own castle where his sisters welcome him heartily. His sisters report that he has been away from home for twenty-one days.

Anodos takes up his new position and tries to employ the lessons he learned in Fairy Land. During times of fear or anxiety, he remembers the wise woman in the cottage. He feels that he has found the door that will lead him back to Fairy Land and that is through his tomb. One day, while lying beneath a beech tree, Anodos hears a voice telling him that a great good is coming to him. For a moment he sees the friendly face of the beech tree woman. Anodos is now secure in the knowledge that good is coming for him.

Chapter 25 Analysis

Anodos has undergone a long journey of growth. He has spent twenty-one days in Fairy Land, but feels certain it was more like twenty-one years. In many ways, he is right in this thinking. He has spent the first portion of his life behaving like a child. Now that he has come of age, he must assume the role of an adult and take on the corresponding responsibilities. For many years hence, he will be unable to re-enter Fairy Land, since such fantasies have little place in the adult world. However, he knows that when his time on Earth is spent, he will be able to return to Fairy Land through his tomb. Perhaps this is where he will be reborn and spend his next life.



Characters

Anodos

Anodos is the main character of the story. He is a young man just turned twenty-one and on the verge of taking over his father's role as head of household. His father passed on several years earlier. Among the things presented to him as part of his new role is a set of keys to his father's secretary desk. When Anodos opens this desk, he is transported to a realm of fantasy and make-believe.

Anodos is an inexperienced man. Little is known about his background, but the reader can surmise that up to this point he has led a life of leisure. His naivety is both a blessing and a curse as he journeys through Fairy Land. He remains unharmed his first night in the fantastic world but soon begins to bumble about causing trouble. Anodos exhibits very little self-control. Quite possibly he was favored by his parents and allowed to do as he pleased. He also seems innocent in matters of the heart. Anodos falls quickly in love with the first woman he sees and does not stop to consider her circumstances.

All of these things gradually change as Anodos travels through Fairy Land. Through a series of encounters with the people of the world, Anodos learns self-control, self-sacrifice, and the merits of true honor. As he states in the final chapter, he went to Fairy Land searching for his ideal but succeeded in losing his Shadow. Anodos casts off his childlike ways and assumes the senses of a mature adult. His time in Fairy Land is a time of growth, and since he spends a total of twenty-one days there, it maybe a reflection of his maturation from youth to adult.

Grandmother

The small woman from Anodos' newly-inherited secretary desk also seems to be the form of one of his great-grandmothers. She may be some sort of witch or mystic, since she hints that Anodos has little knowledge of the women far back in his family. She appears to grant him a wish that he made subconsciously while talking to his younger sister. She grants him the vision to see a path into fairy land.

Maiden of the Alder

The Maiden of the Alder first appears in the alabaster/marble rock Anodos discovers in a cave. Anodos releases her with a song, and she disappears into the forest. She has a voice of sweetness tinged with something discordant to Anodos' ears. Her touch sends chills through him that Anodos is sure are caused only by the marble. Her eyes are tinged with a disconcerting pink, but the loveliness of her figure overrides any suspicious thoughts. Anodos can recall no specific features except that the woman is intensely beautiful. Later the woman appears in her true form. She resembles an open



coffin set on end and made of rotting wood. Her eyes have lost their luster and her voice is full of scorn. She is in alliance with the Ash tree.

The Knight

The knight is very much in appearance like Sir Percivale in the book *Anodos* read at the cottage. Only his golden spurs, iron greaves, and the morning star dangling from his wrist still shine; the rest of his armor is covered by rust. He appears dejected and suffering from terrible grief. Even the knight's horse reflects his rider's disposition. The knight has fallen into this disreputable state at the hands of some evil.

The knight continues to appear throughout the story. At each stage he appears in a further stage of repair. His armor slowly returns to its previous luster as he seeks to remedy his wrongs. The knight provides an example of proper behavior for *Anodos* to follow.

The White Lady

The White Lady is really the woman *Anodos* releases from the marble/alabaster stone. When he sees the disguised Maiden of the Alder-tree, he assumes that there is only one woman. However, his love for the White Lady continues even after the Alder Maiden's deception.

The White Lady is found again in the Fairy Palace. Here *Anodos* must sing another song, which recreates her beauty in order to free her from her invisible statue form. The reader learns that the White Lady is the Knight's love, and it is for her sake that the knight has set about avenging wrongs.

The Ash Tree

As soon as *Anodos* steps into the forest, he is warned by the young maiden to stay away from the Ash tree. Through the cottage window *Anodos* is able to see that the Ash is very large, and its leaves have a bluish tint compared with the dark green foliage surrounding it. The Ash awakens at night to travel about looking for victims. During the day it often plants itself at a distance from the cottage and taunts the women with its long fingers. The Maiden of the Alder brings *Anodos* to the Ash tree, who tries to kill *Anodos* but is thwarted by the knight.

Princess Von Hohenweiss

The reader is first introduced to the Princess without knowing that it is she. She enters the reflected room in *Cosmo's* mirror and lies on his couch. Her face is exquisitely beautiful but full of suffering. Even her foot or mere finger is a worthy representation of her whole figure. *Cosmo* finally arranges to speak with the woman in person. She asks



him to break the mirror and free her from her prison. When Cosmo does so, the woman and the mirror disappear. It is at a party some days later that Cosmo overhears several women discussing the strange illness that has overcome Princess von Hohenweiss. It seems the lady has been stricken by a mysterious sickness after angering a servant in her household. Cosmo realizes that the woman in the mirror and the Princess are one in the same. The Princess is set free from her imprisonment by Cosmo, and she holds him in her arms on a bridge as he dies.

Cosmo von Wehrstahl

Cosmo is a student at the University of Prague. He comes from a noble family but is not wealthy and takes pride in his poverty-induced independence. Cosmo is well liked by his schoolmates, but there is no one who really qualifies as his friend. He has a propensity for things out of the ordinary and fills his single room with peculiarities that he finds interesting. Cosmo is also a daydreaming poet, who likes to invent stories about the people he sees moving about below his window. He is also sought after as a swordsman and one competent in matters of warfare and weaponry.

Cosmo falls in love with a woman whom he sees in a mirror. He pines for her until they are finally able to meet in person. However, when the lady asks him to smash the mirror and free her from her cage, he loses both the mirror and the lady in the attempt. Cosmo later discovers that the lady is none other than Princess von Hohenweiss, who has been overcome by a strange malady impressed upon her by an angered servant. Cosmo manages to locate the mirror and destroy it, but at the cost of his own life.

The Shadow

The Shadow appears from the depths of darkness in an ogre's cottage. It appears to be in human form but moves noiselessly on ghostly feet. Light fails to thin its darkness at all and it appears blacker in the glare of the sun.

The Shadow feeds off the greed and evil desires of Anodos. The creature is able to sense Anodos' wishes and destroy that which presents a possible threat to its own existence. It does not seem to have the power to destroy a living being, but it can ruin relationships between Anodos and other humans.

Country Maiden

This young girl is the first person Anodos sees after crossing the border of Fairy Land. She is walking through the woods with a basket of flowers, and, without looking at or coming close to Anodos, offers up a warning about the trees of the wood. The maiden turns out to be the daughter of an old woman living in a cottage at the edge of the woods.



The Old Woman

The old woman lives in a cottage made of four oak trees at the edge of the fairy woods. Her daughter is the country maiden Anodos sees gathering flowers and who warns him about the trees. The old woman also offers advice about avoiding the Ash tree because it is an ogre that will devour Anodos. The old woman feeds and shelters Anodos and tells him about the fairies and trees of the forest before he continues his journey.

The Little Girl with the Crystal Globe

The little girl meets Anodos one day in the woods. She is a happy child, singing and dancing along the path. She carries with her a crystal globe that is her plaything and her treasure. She takes up company with Anodos during the day, talking with him as they travel. At night she disappears but returns the following day around noon. Her comings and goings seem linked by the changes in the sun and moon.

The Two Brothers

The two brothers are never given proper names. They are sons of a king, and they are seeking a third man to join them as a brother in seeking the destruction of giants who threaten their kingdom. The brothers are skilled craftsmen and have practiced long at their battle strategies although they are untried in actual combat. This distinction makes them no less honorable. They fight and die bravely in honor of their father and their country.



Objects/Places

Secretary Desk

A secretary desk usually has a writing surface that flips down to reveal the inside of the desk. The inside is made up of a series of compartments and drawers; some of these can be locked for privacy. Because the cubby-holes can be of varying depths, it is possible to have a hidden cupboard behind smaller obvious compartments. This appears to be the set up of the desk Anodos inherits from his father. He must try several of the keys before unlocking the hidden compartment and then navigate a few disguised switches to open the door from which the old woman appears.

The Cottage in the Woods

Four great oaks form the corners of the structure, while the branches intertwine to form the roof covered with leaves. The walls are made from the stems of smaller trees set close together. The inside is furnished with chairs and tables made of bark-covered logs. A door is situated in one of the sides facing away from the path which brought Anodos to the cottage. A small window looks out to the deeper forest and is so small it can be covered by a large book. The old woman lives there with her daughter and a cat, a dog, and a white rabbit.

The Moss Covered Rock

Anodos is caught up in a fantasy of imagining the rock in the hands of a famous sculptor when he realizes it is white marble. Excavation of the rock reveals that the stone is more like alabaster and appears polished. The rock is transparent on the outer layers but deeper inside appears to be a large chunk of solid, white marble.

The Tale of Sir Percivale and the Maiden of the Alder-Tree

Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale are out searching for the Grail, when they happen to meet in a wood. Sir Galahad, who lacks a squire, is outfitted in armor that shines and is clean. Sir Percivale rides a red horse and their trappings are covered with muck and filth. After Sir Percivale escaped a demon woman he rode through a forest where he encountered the Alder-Tree Maiden. Her fair words and beautiful, but false appearance, entranced Percivale and he followed wherever she led. Anodos does not finish the tale because he is interrupted by the country maiden's cry to look at the movements of the Ash.



The Fairy Palace

The palace is situated on an elevated, green slope near the river's edge. It appears to be built of pure white marble and constructed without windows. There are numerous balconies and galleries, which Anodos never masters despite his extended stay. The courtyard surrounding the magnificent fountain is paved in white diamonds and red marble. A faint, glimmering light pervades the hallways as if lighting a path for Anodos to follow. There is magic associated with the palace, since Anodos is able to find a suite that exactly mimics his own room in the real world.

The Church of Darkness

The reader comes upon the name "the Church of Darkness" in Chapter Ten, although they encountered the actual structure in Chapter Eight. The ogre's windowless cottage appears to be the building that corresponds to the name. This is where Anodos opened the door to the night-darkened room from which his Shadow rushed out.

The Palace Library

Anodos finds the library on the third day of his stay. The library is housed in a large hall that is lighted by a vaulted ceiling of glass stained with mysterious pictures. The walls are lined from top to bottom with books in ancient bindings interspersed with a few newly-bound volumes. A series of galleries line the walls around the perimeter at varying heights and connected by stairways. Each gallery is constructed of massive, multi-colored stones that seem too large in themselves but which fit perfectly in the gigantic room. Some of the walls are covered by silk curtains that Anodos never feels confident enough to raise.

The Crimson Hall

The crimson hall is made up of twelve connecting rooms. Each room is similar in design. The long halls are filled with black pillars set close to white marble walls, so that the pillars appear to make compartments along the hall. The pillars extend from floor to ceiling and form arches, which support a white marble ceiling. The floor itself is black and between each set of pillars hangs a crimson silk curtain. Behind each curtain a light glows, and Anodos senses that people are dancing in the hidden compartments. Anodos is right in his assumption, but before he learns how to catch the merrymakers in their festivities, he finds each hall lined with white marble statues. If he walks to the far end of each hall, he finds a corridor, which spans the circumference of the twelve rooms.



Cosmo's Apartment

Cosmo lives in one low-ceiled room. He has very little furniture, only a few chairs, a couch for sitting and sleeping, and a great press made of black oak. He has a fireplace in his room and a closet. His room also contains a full skeleton, various weapons, and other odds and ends that strike his fancy. Cosmo removes most of the knick-knacks that clutter his room and replaces them with things that would impress any lady.

The Mirror

Cosmo finds the mirror in a back alley shop while browsing with a companion. He returns later on his own to bargain with the shop owner over the price of the mirror. Cosmo cannot explain his interest in the mirror but tries to act nonchalant towards the owner when haggling over the price. The mirror possesses some strange quality and shares a connection to Princes Von Hohenweiss. The owner is not surprised to see Cosmo return for the mirror and wonders only when the object will return to him. Despite its age the mirror shines brilliantly when Cosmo brushes the dust from its surface. The frame is carved with curious figures, which Cosmo cannot discern.



Themes

Importance of Nature

Nature is an obvious theme throughout the book. Nature is the perfect place for the imagination to run wild. In the eyes of young children the world around them can become a safe haven from imagined and real, monsters. In the next instant the landscape can change into a terrifying world of shadows and trees that chase one into caves. Nature also serves to reveal otherwise unknown wonders. Anodos discovers a beautiful woman after her rock enclosures allows itself to be broken open through song.

Nature also has restorative properties. It is a natural phenomenon and cannot help promoting rebirth in the face of death. When Anodos reaches his lowest point in the depths of the earth, he feels abandoned and hopeless. Soon the earth vomits him forth into a desolate sea, which refuses to let him drown. The waters protect him until a vessel is found that carries him to the home of the childlike woman and her cottage on the island.

Throughout the book, Nature reflects and compliments the events of Anodos' journey. As he travels farther into Fairy Land and partakes of the local foods, his senses become attuned to the creatures around him. Anodos is able to understand the speech of fairies and woodland animals. He can hear the sound of music in the Fairy Palace.

When Anodos dies in Fairy Land, he becomes enveloped in Nature itself. He finds comfort in his earthen grave and enjoys being reborn in the flowers and clouds. Anodos has held this connection with Nature from the beginning. He designed his own room and decorated it with carpeting that looks like a field full of daisies. It is through this unnatural landscape that Anodos enters Fairy Land. When he returns, it is not to his home; instead, he awakens in a real field of flowers with the rising sun beating down on him. His personal journey has evolved from the childish joy of pretend Nature to an appreciation of the real thing. Anodos notes that he will one day return to Fairy Land and that the path lies through his tomb. Anodos will one day be reborn through the earth to walk the forests of Fairy Land again.

Learning Self-Control

Anodos is a young man just on the verge of manhood. He has probably lead a leisurely life up to this point and had little need to understand the importance of controlling one's desires. At each stage of his journey, Anodos is tested in his ability to control himself.

Plenty of warnings pop up before Anodos embarks on a particularly challenging stretch of his travels. The old woman and her daughter warn him against the Ash. The Knight warns him against the Maiden of the Alder-tree. The farmer's wife cautions him to stay away from the ogre's hut. A small child tells Anodos that he is about to enter an enchanted forest.



However, Anodos' entire journey is one of discovery and growth. It is the journey into adulthood along which all people make numerous mistakes and fail to heed blatant warnings. Each time Anodos fails to heed someone's advice, he finds himself in a disastrous situation. The aftermath of Anodos' rash decisions follow him throughout the story and manifest itself in the form of his Shadow. In order to be free of his Shadow - the representation of his childish ways - Anodos must learn to control his desires and humble himself in the face of authority. When this lesson has been successfully learned, Anodos is able to return to his own world and resume his new life.

Light vs. Shadow

The issue of light and dark appears over and over in the book. The secretary desk is housed in a room that refuses to let light overpower it. Anodos is accompanied for much of his journey by his Shadow. Comfort can sometimes be found in the light and other times in the dark.

Light and dark are often symbols for good and evil. When the Knight first appears, his armor fails to shine because it is clouded over with rust. As the Knight gains his honor back, the rust falls away from his armor allowing it to shine once again. The Shadow represents a dark side of Anodos' personality. Light and darkness are co-dependent. One can not exist without the other. Such is the case with good and evil. Anodos must find the balance between these states. He needs to understand that evil exists, but that it does not need to be obeyed. He must also realize that light often hides evil. Evil can alter the light for its own purposes in order to enchant a lost soul.

Anodos leaves the real world for Fairy Land in the half-light of early morning. He has not yet chosen which side he will follow. When he returns it is under the blazing glare of the sun. He is still wary of shadows but has now matured enough to understand the power of the light.



Style

Point of View

The story is told in the first person. The narrator asserts that he is also the author, having chosen to chronicle his experiences in Fairy Land. The thoughts and feelings of other characters are not known unless verbalized to the narrator. In fact, very few people are identified by proper names. The use of the first-person allows the reader to become intimately associated with the story and take part in Anodos' travels through Fairy Land. The reader can easily become the "I" of the story and move into the main character's position. This quality seems to be what George MacDonald desired for his readers when he wrote *Phantastes*. The first person perspective allows the reader to experience Anodos' journey first hand. Perhaps George MacDonald intended for each reader to take a personal journey through Fairy Land in order to lose their Shadow.

Setting

The story opens and ends in a long ago land when castles were still fashionable as homes. No particular region is named, but the reader can speculate that Anodos hails from some place in Europe. Perhaps Anodos' home exists in England or in Germany, since many of the opening passages are written in German.

The majority of the story takes place in a fantasy realm referred to as Fairy Land. The world is full of fairies, goblins, dragons, giants, talking trees, ogres, shape-shifting women, damsels in distress, and valiant knights. The landscape of Fairy Land changes rapidly. Much of the terrain is covered in forests, since, as is noted in the book, the best adventures happen in forests. However, there are also raging rivers, calm seas, warm suns and cold moons, open plains, rocky fields, and chasms that lead one to the center of the earth. These beautiful landscapes are described in detail so that the reader gains a feeling of desolation on the wintry shore and calm wonder in the Fairy Palace.

The land is one that could only be found in the imagination of a child. Fanciful sights greet the main character at every step. Some trees provide comfort, while others chase down wayward travelers. Shadows have the power to overstep their bounds and torment their owner. Cottages are made of trees. They can have four doors that lead to a new place each time one is opened and still be the way out. The depths of the earth hold goblins that are frightened by a Shadow. The reader might feel that Fairy Land alters its appearance to serve the purposes of each new traveler.

Language and Meaning

The language of the book is both poetic and confusing. The artful description of the landscape of Fairy Land draws the reader in and makes the reader a part of the story. The reader is able to feel the cold wind of the wintry sea and sense the fairy music



floating through the halls of the Fairy Palace. Although the reader is able to gain a strong sense of the people and places in Fairy Land, the lack of proper names for characters and objects creates some confusion. Several times a place is named in one chapter and then a name appears several chapters later. The reader must backtrack in order to associate the name with a place. However, this lack of demarcation also lends an air of imagination to the story. The readers are free to construct names of their own and fill in detail as they see fit so that the story truly becomes their own.

The story line also takes twist and turns that may confuse the reader. In many places the reader is forced to retrace some steps in order to comprehend the next series of events. The narrator digresses into stories within stories that need to be explored at some length in order to gain comprehension. MacDonald notes at the beginning of the book that the best fairy tales rarely follow a prescribed pattern. Fairy tales flow according to the whims and desires of the main character, who is also the reader. Even though the words on the page remain the same for every reader, the story changes like the landscape of Fairy Land. Every reader approaches the story with a preconceived notion of what they will find. Those who desire to read a simple tale of knights, damsels and fairies will probably be disappointed with MacDonald's writing. Those who choose to sort through the minute details and understand the twists and turns will journey beside Anodos and learn that while they, too, were seeking an Ideal, they lost their Shadow.

Structure

The story is told in twenty-five chapters that are marked only by Roman numerals. Each chapter begins with a brief quote or passage of poetry that reflects the main idea of the events that take place in that chapter. Some of these introductory-type passages are written in German and may or may not be translated into English. At first glance these passages are simply nice quotes to alert the reader to what is to follow in the chapter. However, the reader can read the entire story just by reading these introductory quotes.



Quotes

"The whole garden as like a carnival, with tiny, gaily decorated forms, in groups, assemblies, processions, pairs or trios, moving stately on, running about wildly, or sauntering hither and thither." Chapter 3, p. 19

"The very outline of it [Anodos' shadow] could be traced in the withered lifeless grass, and the scorched and shriveled flowers which stood there, dead, and hopeless of any resurrection." Chapter 9, p. 59

"Content! - Oh, how gladly would I die of the light of her eyes! Yea, I would cease to be, if that would bring me one word of love from the one mouth." Chapter 10, p. 65

"Worlds cannot be without an intermundane relationship. The community of the centre of all creation suggests an interradiating connection and dependence of the parts." Chapter 12, p. 77

"But though I speak of sun and fog, and sea and shore, the world there is in some respects very different from the earth whereon men live." Chapter 12, p. 80

"The sign or cause of coming death is an indescribable longing for something, they know not what, which seizes them, and drives them into solitude, consuming them within, till the body fails." Chapter 12, p. 81

"A blessing, like the kiss of a mother, seemed to alight on my soul; a calm, deeper than that which accompanies a hope deferred, bathed my spirit." Chapter 18, p. 126

"Let me, then, be the moon of thy night still O woman! And when thy day is beclouded, as the fairest days will be, let some song of mine comfort thee, as an old, withered, half-forgotten thing, that belongs to an ancient mournful hour of uncompleted birth, which yet was beautiful in its time." Chapter 19, p. 139

"But how to escape from the nearness of the best beloved? I had not this time forgotten the mark; for the fact that I could not enter the sphere of these living beings kept me aware that, for me, I moved in a vision, while they moved in life." Chapter 19, p. 140

"Ere long, I learned that it was not myself, but only my shadow, that I had lost." Chapter 22, p. 166

"I knew now, that it is by loving, and not by being loved, that one can come nearest the soul of another; yea, that, where two love, it is the loving of each other, and not the being beloved by each other, that originates and perfects and assures their blessedness." Chapter 24, p. 181

"I have a strange feeling sometimes, that I am a ghost, sent into the world to minister to my fellowmen, or, rather, to repair the wrongs I have already done." Chapter 25, p. 184

Topics for Discussion

is a book whose story contains several other books and stories. Discuss the importance of books to the story.

How does the way Cosmo's room appears in the mirror reflect the way Anodos views Fairy Land?

Are Anodos' adventures the result of a visit to Fairy Land, a dream meant to prepare him for adulthood, or the result of an unseen and unheard reader reading a fairy tale in which Anodos is the main character?