

Queens' Play Study Guide

Queens' Play by Dorothy Dunnett

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Plot Summary

This book leads the reader on an adventurous journey through sixteenth century France as Sir Francis Crawford of Lymond and others protect the young Mary Queen of Scots from her would-be assassins while simultaneously trying to capture these killers. The story blends history with fiction in a way that makes it nearly impossible to tell the difference between the real and the fictitious.

The book begins with a list of characters and their connections to each other. This, along with the map of France and part of England, gives the reader a sense of what to expect from this novel. It may be a work of fiction, but it is filled with historically accurate information.

The story begins as O'LiamRoe, an Irish prince, is on a ship bound for France. He wants to learn all he can about being a royal while living this fine life at the expense of the French court. He brings along his ollave Thady Boy Ballagh. Before the chapter ends, the ship is almost sunk by another ship, paid to destroy them. Thus begins this exciting and action-packed historical fiction novel.

Within a few chapters, the reader learns that Thady Boy is actually Sir Francis Crawford of Lymond and has come to France to protect the young Queen of Scots and the future wife of the French Dauphin. Mary of Guise, the Queen Mother, knows that her child's life most likely is in danger due to the tension and hatred connecting members of the Scottish and French courts, as well as others. Her instincts are quite correct.

Lymond spends the rest of the book protecting Mary, while trying to apprehend and convict her would-be assassins. He, along with other characters in this book, risk their lives for the sake of Mary's, while several others risk their lives to end Mary's.

As the author tells the tale of the saving of Queen Mary, she also gives much insight into what life in the sixteenth century might have been like, filled with beautiful French towns, spoiled royalty, and deception and intrigue around every corner. She spends a significant amount of time describing the weary towns as the French court parades through, as well as the many other disturbances caused by the spoiled aristocracy. Dunnett, like a skilled sports announcer, also gives detailed descriptions of all the action that takes place in this story, most notably the fights and sporting events in which Lymond participates.

The book comes to a close as a treaty is signed between France and England, Mary's would-be killers are removed of their power to kill her, and Lymond's job has finally come to an end. Mary's life is safe, but the book leads the reader to wonder what lays in store for Mary, Lymond, and the other people of sixteenth century Europe.



Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: The Fork is Chosen, I: Silent in the Boat, II: Dieppe: The Pitfalls and the Deer

Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: The Fork is Chosen, I: Silent in the Boat, II: Dieppe: The Pitfalls and the Deer Summary

The book begins with a list of characters and a map of France and England. This prepares the reader for the characters he or she is about to meet, as well as the setting of the story. This is the first step the author uses to guide the reader into Europe of the sixteenth century.

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: The Fork is Chosen, a riddle begins the chapter. The regal and humorless Dowager Queen, Mary de Guise, wants Crawford of Lymond. She will soon sail for France and needs a good spy in France prior to her arrival and during her stay; this shall be the role of Crawford of Lymond. She had been brought to Scotland as King James V's bride and had now been left a widow with a war, a baby queen, and several rebellious nobles.

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: I: Silent in the Boat, a riddle begins the chapter. La Sauvee is headed to Dieppe with a boatload of Irish guests headed to the French court. Problems aboard ship are foreshadowed with comments about the no longer able seamen, who have now become drunk and high. Robin Stewart, a Scottish Archer, leads this royal entourage; he is in search of fame and fortune. The most important aboard the ship is the Prince of Barrow, Phelim O'LiamRoe, who has annoyed much of the crew with his incessant talking and know-it-all attitude. The ship is caught in a squall and crashes into another ship, the Gouden Roos. Leaderless and untrained, the crew does not know what to do. The men begin fighting to get to the lifeboat. The captain gets his wits together and gives the command to get the sail taut, so they may get the injured side of the ship out of the water. Master Thady Boy Ballagh, the Prince of Barrow's poet and singer, bravely climbs the mast and cuts the sail loose. The ship is saved.

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: II: Dieppe: The Pitfalls and the Deer, a riddle begins the chapter. Dieppe is asleep after entertaining Queen Mary of Guise. The Irish have arrived safely. Thomas Erskine and Crawford of Lymond meet; neither man seems to care much for the other. Crawford of Lymond is a free agent and is not completely tied to the Queen Mother. It is learned that Erskine is headed to make a treaty between Scotland and Emperor Charles; under French pressure, Scotland agreed to make this peace treaty and the Queen Mother would receive a reward soon from France. Much conflict exists in Europe at this time as the Queen Mother visits France to see her young



daughter, Mary Queen of Scots, who is betrothed to the French heir. Lymond admits to Erskine that he knows all the gossip and news; he tells Erskine that the true reason the ships ran into each other was because the Gouden Roos had been paid to sink La Sauvee. It is also learned that Lymond is hoping for an alliance with France to rid Ireland of English control.

In the night, O'LiamRoe's bed catches on fire; luckily, he is in the warm bed of his servant. The arsonist is not caught, but O'LiamRoe enjoys the drama. He believes whoever did it was only trying to scare him. Ballagh does not seem to agree. It is known that one of the men that had been chased from the scene of the fire was without a heel on his shoe, for heelless footprint was left in the mud.

John Stewart escorts O'LiamRoe to Rouen. John Stewart had been imprisoned and then released, by the King of France for the actions of his brother, so his life, for all its finery, had not turned out as he had planned. John Stewart, the Lord d'Aubigny, meets O'LiamRoe in an awkward moment; Lord d'Aubigny is not one for humor and jokes. He gives the positive details of the French royal family to the Prince of Barrow. O'LiamRoe meets the boisterous Mistress Boyle; he and Thady show her they can match her quick tongue and wit. Talk soon turns to politics. The stop talks with the arrival of beautiful Oonagh. The prince leaves with the lord, and Thady tells Mistress Boyle how he really feels about the prince; it is learned the prince is in France to see what it is like to live like the rich on the money of the rich. Oonagh is very serious.

Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: The Fork is Chosen, I: Silent in the Boat, II: Dieppe: The Pitfalls and the Deer Analysis

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: The Fork is Chosen, the riddle is about the various intriguing relationships between the people of Europe at this time, especially those who are part of the royal courts. This riddle says that the actions and lies of each person to another is fine as long as each person knows the actions are false and they are being lied to. The fork is represented by Crawford of Lymond, whose part in the story is to meddle and spy in the lives of all involved in this story. This riddle prepares the reader for what is to come in the chapter, intrigue, lies, and a load of drama; the details of the riddle are explained through the meeting of the Dowager Queen and her entourage, as well as her desire for Crawford of Lymond.

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: I: Silent in the Boat, a riddle is given prior to the chapter. The riddle has to do with those who are aboard the ship, the crew and the royal Irish court. Surprisingly, as the ship begins to sink, the members of the court are the ones who save the ship while the crew, who are mostly high and drunk, do not know what to do. Many aboard the ship do nothing or die in the accident. This chapter tells the story of the traveling of the Irish royal court to France. The Irish court's characters are described; these vivid personalities will most likely be important later in the story. The

true characters of those aboard the ship are revealed when the ship is involved in a crash and almost sinks.

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: II: Dieppe: The Pitfalls and the Deer, the riddle refers to a hunter getting more than what he asked for. This could be referring to several characters in this story. Erskine is worried about Crawford of Lymond's actions; Lymond seems to have his own agenda. O'LiamRoe has come to France to be with the rich and seems to be hunted, and Lord d'Aubigy is looking for fame and fortune and ends up having to escort the unusual Prince of Barrow. It seems that many countries have bitten off more than they can chew.



Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: III: Rouen: The Nut Without Fruit and IV: Rouen: Fine, Scientific Workings Without Warning

Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: III: Rouen: The Nut Without Fruit and IV: Rouen: Fine, Scientific Workings Without Warning Summary

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: III: Rouen: The Nut Without Fruit, the Rouennois are worn out from preparing for the arrival of the king and do not notice the entrance of the Irish. The men are distracted by Jenny Fleming's arrival; she is the governess to Queen Mary but is more accurately her mischief companion. A plaster whale had been made, and Jenny had come to see it. Margaret Erskine, Jenny's daughter, is one of Jenny's companions. This plain, controlled woman tries to keep her mother out of trouble. This scene ends with one of the men with the whale being without a heel. Robin Stewart's job is to look after the Irish party; he is not too thrilled to have this duty.

Soon all members of court will travel to the French court's winter dwellings. O'LiamRoe is to meet the king for tennis. As he is preparing to leave, O'LiamRoe receives a surprise visit from Oonagh. She has come with a message from her aunt, Mistress Boyle, that the French court is planning to make a fool out of O'LiamRoe by trying to convince him that the king's double is actually the king. An hour later, Phelim O'LiamRoe walks into the royal residence in his everyday clothes. O'LiamRoe is brought to the location of the tennis match to meet the king; O'LiamRoe is a smooth talker and convinces the bearded king and the court to play tennis without him as he watched. O'LiamRoe is soon insulting the king; the courtiers are shocked. O'LiamRoe realizes that this man truly is the king and not an impostor; he begins to regret his insulting words. King Henri reprimanded O'LiamRoe for his poor behavior at his country's hospitality; he admits to thinking the king a look-alike. The king becomes upset and tells him the Irish court may stay for the festivities but will take the next boat home to Ireland. O'LiamRoe agrees and leaves his first meeting with the French. O'LiamRoe seems disappointed that everything ended the way it did with the French, with nothing exciting happening and no one trying to kill him.

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: IV: Rouen: Fine, Scientific Works Without Warning, a riddle begins the chapter. Soon the story of the rise and fall of Ireland in the eyes of the French court is known throughout Rouen. The story then turns to the Queen Mother and her distressing stay in France, up to this point. It is her first visit to her native France in twelve years, and she has many troubles to worry about, one of which being that the French had helped the Scottish oust the English, to little success. She must act as



though she has no troubles and has only come to visit her daughter. She asks Erskine about Lymond and is angered to learn that he is working for himself. To check Erskine's reliability, the Queen Mother had already invited Lymond; he reveals himself to be Thady Boy Ballagh. Lymond agreed that he was working for himself. He did not seem to believe he should play any role in they young queen's protection. He then leaves and runs into Robin Stewart; they head off for one of Stewart's friend's homes, a sculptor named Michel Herrison. Thady observes that Robin Stewart and his sculptor friend have a secret printing press; he says as much, which surprises Stewart. Thady asks to see the press. Thady/Lymond observes all that is taking place in this cellar. Thady returns to his room with O'LiamRoe. It is Lymond that O'LiamRoe knows and they discuss his moments with the Queen Dowager. The men decide to stay indoors until the festivities begin on Wednesday; until then, they collect their own court of sorts.

Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: III: Rouen: The Nut Without Fruit and IV: Rouen: Fine, Scientific Workings Without Warning Analysis

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: III: Rouen: The Nut Without Fruit, the chapter begins with a riddle. This riddle says that one should not be forced to give of oneself in a way that one is unable; the person who forces the other to give in this way is considered a nut without fruit. This could mean one who is senseless or unintelligent. The Irish arrive in France but are soon to be on their way out. O'LiamRoe is warned that he is to be meeting the king but is told this man is an impostor. He attends this meeting and proceeds to insult King Henri, his court, and all of France. He too late realizes that he has met the real King Henri; King Henri reprimands him for his behavior, for the French have been kind and generous to the Irish guests and are shocked at how they are repaid. It is not known yet if the messenger, Oonagh, knew that this information regarding a body double was false. If so, the reader wonders what her plans are and why she is trying to sabotage the relationship between the Irish and the French. If the message were given to her by another and she thought it to be true, who is the deceiving individual, and why does he or she want to ruin the reputation of O'LiamRoe? Whoever this person may be, he or she is most likely involved in the earlier attempts of scaring the Prince of Barrow back to Ireland, and it is foreshadowed that the man with the missing heel must play a role in this.

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: IV: Fine, Scientific Workings Without Warning, the riddle refers to the secret printing press being run most likely to print heretic information. This chapter reveals much about what is happening behind the scenes of this story. First, it is revealed that Thady Boy Ballagh is actually Lymond. Then, a secret printing press is revealed in the cellar of a sculptor's home; this printing press is most likely printing heretic religious information and information against the King of France. At the end of the chapter, it is learned that Oonagh knows that Thady is not who he says he is, and she knows about the printing press. Her serious expression and stern demeanor continues in this chapter. The reader wonders what role she will play in this story and

whose side she is on. The chapter ends quite solemnly as Wednesday arrives. The reader wonders what this day will bring.



Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: V: Rouen: Fast Drivings for the Purpose of Killing and VI: Rouen: The Difficult and the Impossible

Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: V: Rouen: Fast Drivings for the Purpose of Killing and VI: Rouen: The Difficult and the Impossible Summary

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: V: Rouen: Fast Drivings for the Purpose of Killing, there is a riddle before the chapter begins. The chapter begins with the young queen and her aunt and guardian Jenny looking out the window; they prepare for the entry of the king, and it seems much mischief has taken place and will continue to take place between these two redheads. Rouen was filled to the brim with people coming to see the entry of the king; O'LiamRoe and Stewart arrive just in time for the beginning of the ceremony with Thady missing. A parade including decorated carts and elephants files by. Then, the horses pulling one of the decorated carriages are spooked by a firecracker; soon after a plaster whale spooks the elephants as well. There soon is a herd of stampeding, scared elephants running toward the bridge where the king and his entourage are entering the city. Suddenly, Thady jumps from a pediment onto the back of the elephant and stabs it with a knife. The elephant stops and then changes course, making for the river.

Thady Boy Ballagh is asked to have dinner with the king as a way of saying thanks. When O'LiamRoe hears the news of Thady's actions, he is mildly amused, but Robin Stewart is red-faced and upset. Lymond goes to see Abernaci, the keeper of the king's elephants. It is discovered that Abernaci is not from the east as he pretends to be. He is from Scotland and had fought, along with his brother, with Lymond. Lymond explains to him that the excitement during the parade was an assassination attempt of Queen Mary, who was in the decorated carriage. He asks who Pierre Destaiz's employer is: Pierre is the man with one heel. Lymond also wants to know if it is he or O'LiamRoe who Pierre is trying to kill. Destaiz has been killed, so Lymond worries someone will come and take his place. Lymond plans on using his dinner with the king to allow him and O'LiamRoe a long-term stay in France.

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: VI: Rouen: The Difficult and the Impossible, the chapter begins with a riddle. Lord d'Aubigney and most of the other members of the French court are disgusted by the acceptance of a poor Irish prince's servant to dine with the king. Clothes are brought to Thady, but he leaves them untouched and heads off to dinner in his own, filthy clothes. Thady sits among the wealthy and well-dressed. The dinner ends with Thady being the center of attention and entertainment, even bringing



the king to laugh at him and his antics. The king then asks him to perform; Thady asks that the reward of an exceptional performance be a chance to enjoy more time in France. Thady does not disappoint, but when a comment is made about any injuries he had incurred during the elephant debacle, he almost breaks character. Learning of his injury makes the king even more sympathetic to Thady. Lymond has won.

That night, Margaret Erskine comes to find out Lymond's plans. Her plans are to convince him to stay to protect Queen Mary, and he agrees. It is discovered that Jenny's lover is the king. This romantic attachment must be stopped since Queen Catherine could oust her and the entirety of the de Guise's, including Queen Mary. Lymond comes to the conclusion that someone has mistaken O'LiamRoe for him. Lymond will stay to solve this mystery.

Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: V: Rouen: Fast Drivings for the Purpose of Killing and VI: Rouen: The Difficult and the Impossible Analysis

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: V: Rouen: Fast Drivings for the Purpose of Killing, the riddle relates to the days' events and the assassination attempt of the young queen. Fortunately, she is saved by Thady, who is then rewarded for his bravery with a dinner with the king. He plans to use this to his advantage to keep himself and O'LiamRoe in the country for as long as they wish. Based on Thady/Lymond's abilities at persuasion and his many connections, this should be quite easy for him to acquire. This chapter continues to reveal more about Lymond and his connection with other characters. As in the previous chapters, much is not as it seems. What is known for sure is that Queen Mary's life is in danger, and Lymond plans on protecting it.

In Part One: The Vulgar Lyre: VI: Rouen: The Difficult and the Impossible, the riddle states that the difference between the difficult and impossible is that what is difficult can be attained, while what is impossible can never be attained. This riddle was quite simple to solve, but the question is to what these difficulties and impossibilities pertain in this story. Finding those who are organizing assassination attempts on both him and Queen Mary will most likely prove to be difficult. Will solving this mystery prove to be impossible? Only time will tell.

Secondary to this mystery that is to be solved is the information learned about the relationships between various characters. This information adds to the drama and intrigue of the overall tale.



Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: I: Rouen to St. Germain: The Inexpugnable Drone and I: Blois: Red Tracks in the Wood

Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: I: Rouen to St. Germain: The Inexpugnable Drone and I: Blois: Red Tracks in the Wood Summary

In Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: I: Rouen to St. Germain, the second part of the book begins with a riddle about juggling. O'LiamRoe hears about Thady Boy's evening with the king. Robin Stewart tries to argue that O'LiamRoe should be embarrassed by the outcome of this evening; Stewart finally gives up. Jenny visits O'LiamRoe to ask about "our darling" Thady Boy, who had visited her earlier. O'LiamRoe gives her no information, and soon everyone knows that Thady had visited Jenny, which seems to be somewhat scandalous. Tom Erskine also visits Thady to discuss Thady's behavior and to what he had agreed. It is learned from Tom that the Queen Mother wants King Henri's help in ousting the Earl of Arran from the Governorship of Scotland so that she can have it. Tom regrets letting this information slip.

During the rest of their stay in Rouen, Thady and O'LiamRoe learned all they needed to know about court routine. Thady is kept busy entertaining the court as they travel to their winter quarters. They are headed to Loire for Christmas. The court seems to be out to get Thady Boy; he is made a competitor in a dangerous game. His aim at the target seemed inaccurate, but he knew the ruse each time to avoid being doused with the water that would hit him if he had hit the target. Later on the voyage, O'LiamRoe, Robin Stewart, and a groom get caught in a cage; Abernaci and Lymond talk while others try to release the men caught. During their meeting, Lymond learns about the poisons Abernaci has for the elephants. He is hoping to catch someone stealing it to poison Queen Mary. The men come across Queen Mary and her entourage. Thady continues to entertain the court. The court continues its journey.

In Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: II: Blois: Red Tracks in the Wood, the chapter begins with a riddle. The court reaches Blois. Lady Fleming comes to see O'LiamRoe's quarters and comes across Thady. He does not want her there. She finally leaves when Thady refuses to give her attention. O'LiamRoe is with the dogs; Thady then joins O'LiamRoe. O'LiamRoe has bought a dog for Oonagh. He and Thady discuss the lives of the royalty. Robin Stewart tells Mistress Boyle about O'LiamRoe's purchase. Oonagh is silent as Mistress Boyle made plans for the two of them to be at the royal hunt the next day. The court prepares for the hunt. The hunt begins, and O'LiamRoe is watching Oonagh, who is watching him, while Robin Stewart is closely watching both of them. During the hunt, O'LiamRoe's dog Luadhas is outdone by a domesticated cheetah. Suddenly it is realized that Queen Mary's pet leveret has somehow ended up part of the



hunt, and the cheetah spots it. Mary and the cheetah both go for the hare; the Duke de Guise saves both Mary and the hare, tossing the hare to Robin Stewart. Luadhas attacks the cheetah and is seriously injured. The cat then goes for Robin, who has the hare in his arms. Thady saves him and the cat is captured, muzzled, and caged. The hare dies from fear, the party laughs off the event, and O'LiamRoe sadly puts Luadhas out of her misery.

Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: I: Rouen to St. Germain: The Inexpugnable Drone and I: Blois: Red Tracks in the Wood Analysis

In Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: I: Rouen to St. Germain, the riddle about juggling mentions dangerous juggles, which are juggles with sharp objects; those who injure someone with a dangerous juggle is penalized. This riddle has to do with the various dangerous tools used by the individuals in this book to acquire what they want. The riddle at the start of the chapter is in regard to bees living in the trees of royalty. This may relate to this chapter because there are dangerous people surrounding Queen Mary and her family, and these individuals must be found out and stopped. What is not known is how to go about this investigation without letting the French royalty find out or without letting anyone, especially Queen Mary, get injured in the process.

Thady Boy continues to please the court and look more favorable in their eyes; his behavior also continues to reveal about intelligent he is. He also continues to try to protect Queen Mary as the court proceeds to Loire.

In Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: II: Blois: Red Tracks in the Woods, the riddle is in regard to various types of lawful hunting dogs. This is most likely in reference to the hunt that is the main action of this chapter. It is learned that O'LiamRoe seems to be interested in the silent and serious Oonagh, but Robin Stewart has some interest as well. The main event during this chapter is the attempted suicide of Queen Mary. It is quite obvious that her prized rabbit was let loose so the cheetah could attack it and her. Once again, Thady Boy saves the day. This cheetah, although let loose to kill Mary, is not seen as anything too unusual by the rest of the court; no one other than a select few seem to see this as an attack on Mary. Like the riddle at the beginning of the chapter says, various types of hunting dogs are all lawful dogs, and in this case, cats.



Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: III: Aubigny: Boldness of Denial and IV: Blois: All the Mean Arts

Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: III: Aubigny: Boldness of Denial and IV: Blois: All the Mean Arts Summary

In Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: III: Aubigny: Boldness of Denial, the chapter begins with a riddle. Tom Erskine is in Germany with the and the French court arrives in Blois. Clues had been found by Lymond that led him to believe that Queen Mary's assassination had been the purpose of the cheetah attack. Thady had become an expected presence at court; they had finally accepted him, so his plans may begin. Robin Stewart gets into an argument with Thady over O'LiamRoe, saying he, Stewart, only stayed for Thady. The court arrives in Orleans.

During a tour of the castle, Sir George Douglas approaches the group and slams his hand down on Thady's. Stewart shows his annoyance at this behavior and Stewart removes his hand. The incident is forgotten by most of those present. Sir George and Lymond meet, since Sir George had easily recognized him. Sir George tells Thady that not all in France like the Queen Mother's plans to give more power to herself, her child, and the de Guise family as a whole. It is strongly suggested by Sir George that the assassin is a member of the court, possibly even Queen Catherine. Sir George uses this information to try to convince Lymond to help him acquire the position of Scots Ambassador. Lymond calls his bluff and replies with a negative.

The next day, Douglas is still wanting revenge for Lymond's response the day before. He attempts to give hints regarding Lymond to those who might be interested in his whereabouts; disappointingly for him, no one seems interested in what information he has to give. Thady, O'LiamRoe, Robin Stewart, and the servant Piedar Dooley end their time in Blois and head for Neuvy; Sir George lets him go without another word. The groups stay for an evening in Neuve in the chateau of Mistress Boyle.

In Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: IV: Blois: All the Mean Arts, the chapter begins with a riddle. Upon arrival, Thady and the other men find that the court men are out boar hunting, leaving the women behind. The women swarm around Thady like bees to honey, and O'LiamRoe finds Oonagh. O'LiamRoe's acceptance by the court is almost complete; he and Thady meet with the Queen Mother, and she thanks Lymond for his services. At the end of the meeting, O'LiamRoe seems upset by the sight of an abandoned rag doll on a shelf.

Upon the returning of the king, his courtiers went running for Thady, who had suggested they plan a race that would begin late at night over the rooftops of the town. By midnight, a party comes to a close and O'LiamRoe and Oonagh are the last two left who



are still awake. Their conversation begins with one of politics and ends with O'LiamRoe asking Oonagh if she loves him. At this moment, Lymond begins a serenade to Oonagh. Both she and O'LiamRoe are displeased. Robin Stewart is coaxed into joining Thady in the rooftop race. For all, it is an unforgettable night.

Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: III: Aubigny: Boldness of Denial and IV: Blois: All the Mean Arts Analysis

In Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: III: Aubigny: Boldness of Denial, the riddle talks about the four ways to sustain crime, with the title of this chapter being one of them. It is found out by Lymond that the cheetah was definitely to be involved in an attempt on Queen Mary's life. It is also learned that many at court do not care for the Queen Mother's plans to make herself the Governorship of Scotland, marry her child off to the Dauphin, and make her relatives and friends even more powerful. Not only is Mary's life at stake, but all are suspect. So, it is even more important that Lymond and others who are protecting Queen Mary be careful about how they go about protecting her. The French court must never know that they are not trusted.

Besides having to deal with protecting Mary, Lymond must put up with Sir George Douglas' threats and attempts to unveil him. Fortunately, his attempts are, at this time, unsuccessful, and Lymond remains as Thady as they travel to Blois.

In Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: IV: Blois: All the Mean Arts, the riddle at the beginning of the chapter pertains to the raucous and wild activities that take place in this chapter. While the men are out boar hunting, the women are enjoying Thady's company. Wild parties, a loud serenade, and a dangerous rooftop race take up most of this chapter. These events show the frivolous actions of the court and their followers. Why Thady/Lymond encourages both a serenade and a rooftop race is unknown; surely it is part of his plans. The chapter ends with many reliving the details of this wild evening and a sense of foreboding. The reader wonders what the purpose of these events was and to what they will lead.



Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: V: Blois: Wickedness is the Rule and VI: Blois: The Forfeited Feast

Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: V: Blois: Wickedness is the Rule and VI: Blois: The Forfeited Feast Summary

Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: V: Blois: Wickedness is the Rule, begins with a riddle. Few of the twenty men finish the steeple chase. The race is described with Thady and Robin saving each other at different times. As the race gets closer to its finish, the men's behavior becomes more rough, leading to more danger. Thady and Robin Stewart win; Stewart asks Thady to leave O'LiamRoe for a better master and ends up telling Thady he would be joining them in Ireland. They go their separate ways, with Thady off to see Jenny.

Lymond has come to ask why Queen Mary's room is not guarded; he soon learns that her room is never guarded when the king comes to visit Jenny. It is learned that Jenny is pregnant with the king's child. Jenny believes she can take Diane's place as the king's main mistress, but Lymond explains how this is not possible. Lymond asks about various poisons that are in the room that could be used to kill Queen Mary. Some candy given to Mary could have been poisoned; the candy is locked away, and Lymond's plan is to see if the poison that exists in the room is stolen the next day. When Lymond returns to his room, he learns that O'LiamRoe was attacked in the street by a wrestler known as the Cornishman. It is learned at the end of this chapter that a dog that had eaten the poison meant for Mary has died. Lymond decides he must be his own bait.

In Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: VI: Blois: The Forfeited Feast, many people have become frightened by the behavior of those at court since the steeple chase. Sir George Douglas writes an anonymous letter to Queen Catherine that Richard, Lord Culter, should be invited to court. The king burns this letter with the assistance of a torch from Thady. Robin Stewart stands up to John Stewart when John, who has the power to give Robin the wealth and prestige he desires, decides he is no longer in need of Robin's services. Robin sees this as the crisis of his life. Robin decides he will return to Ireland with Thady; this upsets John.

O'LiamRoe and Oonagh go riding together and end up kissing. Oonagh agrees to start a relationship with him, but O'LiamRoe realizes that she has ulterior motives and does not love him. Lymond quickly understands that Oonagh had promised a relationship with O'LiamRoe to convince him to leave France. O'LiamRoe leaves angry.

Thady continues to be a favorite court entertainer. During a performance of several slaves, Thady joins in; the court finds this to be hilarious. O'LiamRoe finds this performance to be absurd, but it has brought Thady into the king's inner circle.



O'LiamRoe is annoyed and angered by Thady's behavior, so he leaves. When O'LiamRoe and Thady are back in their rooms together, O'LiamRoe becomes enraged and begins throwing wine and water on him and then attacking him. He does not believe Lymond is doing the job he should be doing and storms out.

Margaret Erskine carefully enters the room, looking for Lymond. He has been made to drink poison; Lymond says that the Erskines have always been saving him from himself. Throughout the night's events, Lymond, knowing he is poisoned, tries to preserve his life while making it seem as if he did not realize he had been poisoned.

Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: V: Blois: Wickedness is the Rule and VI: Blois: The Forfeited Feast Analysis

In Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: V: Blois: Wickedness is the Rule, it seems the riddle refers to the obstacles created or left by others in this book to trip up then enemy. Most of this chapter describes the steeple chase in detail. As the race grows closer to a finish, those involved grow more rough. This is an obvious reflection of the riddle at the start of the chapter. Although most of the chapter pertains to this race, much danger still lurks about after the race. Someone is attempting to poison Mary, but fortunately Lymond catches on to this. Along with this new attempt to kill Queen Mary, other court intrigues continue; Jenny is pregnant with the king's child, O'LiamRoe has been attacked, and O'LiamRoe seems to have feelings for the silent and serious Oonagh. These details add depth to the story, and add to the sense of drama, danger, and deception that surrounds much of this book. The chapter ends as dramatic as it begins; Lymond has made the decision to use himself as the bait for Mary's killer.

In Part Two: Dangerous Juggles: VI: Blois: The Forfeited Feast, the riddle describes three types of feasts: godly, human, and devil feasts. The devil feasts pertains to the events in this chapter and Lymond's drinking of the poison. This chapter first begins with shifts in relationships among several characters. Thady/Lymond seems to be losing the respect of the men who seemed to care for him: O'LiamRoe and Robin Stewart. Knowing Lymond's character and the fact that he had ended the last chapter by saying he would be his own bait, this is part of his plan to protect the queen. Much of the chapter describes the events of an evening of courtly entertainment in which Thady dances with several slaves as they entertain the court. It is also said he drinks oil from oil lamps. This information makes sense once it is learned that he has been poisoned; he has been trying to save his own life while keeping the fact he has been a poisoned and knows it from everyone else. Lymond has successfully made himself the bait for the killer, but who is the killer? Will Lymond live long enough to find out? These are some of the intriguing questions asked by the reader as this chapter and part of the book comes to an end.



Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: I: Blois: The Mill in Motion and II: Amboise: An Accident Happens

Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: I: Blois: The Mill in Motion and II: Amboise: An Accident Happens Summary

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: I: Blois: The Mill in Motion, there is a riddle that begins the new section. There is also a riddle at the beginning of the chapter. The chapter begins from Margaret's perspective; she watches Robin leave for Ireland, Thady returns to entertaining the court, and Jenny grows larger with the king's child. Richard Crawford finally arrives, which had been Margaret's silent prayer.

Upon Richard's arrival, the Erskine's prepare him about Lymond. Richard goes out to find out what trouble exists. A the wrestling match is to take place between Lymond and the Cornishman. Lymond is surprisingly able to kill the Cornishman. This ending to the evening satisfies the court. Later, the brothers meet to discuss various events and the current situation.

Lymond is still very ill from the poison. Lymond knows that Robin is the killer. He had become distracted at the time he had been given the nightshade. When Richard asks how Lymond knows it was Robin, Lymond says Robin was the one person who could have arranged all of the assassination attempts. Richard is upset that Lymond has made himself the bait and asks him to return home to Ireland; Lymond agrees.

Lymond goes to see Mistress Boyle and Oonagh. He finds Oonagh, and they discuss O'LiamRoe and other topics as Lymond plays the bellows. After he leaves, Mistress Boyle enters, angry with Oonagh. It is learned that she and Oonagh are conspiring against Lymond and Queen Mary. Oonagh had tried to save Lymond but is told that their cause and Oonagh will be lost if Lymond leaves; he must die. Oonagh seems discontent with and unsure about their cause.

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: II: Amboise: An Accident Happens, a riddle begins the chapter. The chapter then starts with a statement saying that no one could see the expensive plan laid out to get rid of Lymond, not even Lymond himself. Richard did not know everything that Lymond knew, but had put a watch out on him and a safeguard on Mary. The behavior of the French court was frivolous, almost blind to important affairs and other dealings. Richard knew that when Lymond left for Ireland, he would be taking his place as Mary's protector.



Lymond receives the sign he has been waiting for while out carousing with several men of the court. George Paris' messenger is attacked by men hired by Richard to protect Lymond. Lymond recognizes them and asks the messenger about his message. He learns that Robin Stewart and O'LiamRoe are bound for London. The court gentlemen organize another race; Lymond realizes that the crises he feels is coming will be on him.

The race begins but is not completed due to a horrible tragedy. A trip rope is put across the road, knocking Laurens de Gestan off his horse and killing him. Many others behind him fall and either die or are injured. When help arrives, Thady's body has disappeared. A few days later, Tosh finds the mask Thady had been wearing in Blois outside the Hotel Moutier, which was on fire. It is assumed that Thady died in the fire.

Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: I: Blois: The Mill in Motion and II: Amboise: An Accident Happens Analysis

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: Blois: The Mill in Motion, this new section begins with a riddle about how one is affected by excitement. It says that half is taken off when one is excited about being hunted; this could mean that one is not as in tune to what is taking place when one is excited. This may have been how Lymond was poisoned with nightshade. It may also be why he does not seem to realize that Oonagh and Mistress Boyle are in the plot to assassinate both him and Queen Mary.

The chapter begins with a riddle regarding a mill; it says that the person who sets a mill in motion must take responsibility for the actions and consequences of this mill. This could be in reference to Lymond's decision to make himself the bait; he must be prepared to deal with the possible deadly consequences of this decision. It can also pertain to the Cornishman, who dies at the hands of Lymond, for he was the one who wanted to wrestle and kill Lymond. It may also deal with the decision made by Mistress Boyle and Oonagh to support their cause by killing both Mary and Lymond and the outcome of this decision.

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: Amboise: An Accident Happens, the riddle pertains to the responsibility of one who puts a horse in a dangerous situation. This can also pertain to the deadly situation the court is put into; they can be blamed for their own recklessness. Like the owner of the horse that is put in a dangerous situation, these men are fined with their lives for the danger they put themselves into. This chapter is a very tragic one that ends with Lymond disappearing. This injury and disappearance had been foreshadowed, which has added to the suspense and tension that exists throughout much of this book.



Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: III: Blois: Distress is Not Released and IV: London: Wolves All Around Him

Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: III: Blois: Distress is Not Released and IV: London: Wolves All Around Him Summary

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: III: Blois: Distress is Not Released, Lymond has been injured and captured by Oonagh. She has saved him from certain death. Lymond knocks over candles and sets the Hotel Moutier on fire. Oonagh and her servants leave him outside a doorway. He pays brave plunderers to put him in their cart and take him to Doubtance. He is then purchased, mainly for the cart, by Master Gaultier; Dame de Doubtance finds him and brings him into her home. She cares for him and protects him, and then has him taken to Sevigny.

Everyone in the court had thought Lymond dead; a letter is received by Richard stating that his brother was alive and at Abernaci's house at Sevigny but was not to be approached by anyone. Richard and the Erskines try to gain more news. They also try to find out who, besides Robin Stewart, was set on killing Lymond and the young queen. A large change occurs in the court's behavior. No longer are they as frivolous and indulgent. Even if Thady were to return and be absolved of his treachery, they would have not wanted his entertainment.

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: IV: London: Wolves All Around Him, O'LiamRoe agrees to go to England and finds he likes this court much more than the French court. Along with with the French court, O'LiamRoe has abandoned both Thady and France. One aspect about his time in France that is still important to him is the life of Queen Mary; he is interested in the Earl of Lennox, John Stewart's older brother, because he might have news about Mary.

O'LiamRoe is disappointed that no one in the English court seems to have time for him, so he goes to see Brice Herisson, the brother of the sculptor Michel Herisson, to find out if Brice could introduce him into the inner circles of the English court. Like the others, Brice seems to have no time for O'LiamRoe. As O'LiamRoe goes to leave Brice's home, he notices that Robin Stewart's horse is in the stable. He goes, as if to leave, and then sneaks into the garden and eavesdrops at a window. He learns that Mary alive is a threat to both England and Scotland; they plot to kill her. During this conversation, Robin admits to poisoning Thady. O'LiamRoe feels awful about his behavior toward Lymond prior to leaving him.



When O'LiamRoe returns to the Lennox home that night, his personality is quite altered. the Countess of Lennox is suspicious and has one of her men follow O'LiamRoe. O'LiamRoe meets with the French Ambassador and gives him the information he learned. O'LiamRoe learns from the Ambassador that Herisson had already met with him and plans to betray Robin Stewart.

Upon Piedar Dooly's return from France, O'LiamRoe learns of Thady's supposed death in the hotel fire and is clearly upset. Brice Harisson agrees to give the French Ambassador information, but for a fee. Tom Erskine and Lymond listen in on this conversation. Lymond is no longer pretending to be Thady Boy and plans on returning to France to find Robin's master. As the men wait for Brice's arrival and betrayal of Robin, Brice is arrested by Lord Warwick; his letters to the Queen Dowager are confiscated by one of the Earl of Lennox's men.

Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: III: Blois: Distress is Not Released and IV: London: Wolves All Around Him Analysis

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: Blois: Distress is Not Released, the riddle pertains to distress that cannot be released until the truth is found. This foreshadows the hiding of Thady until the killer can be found. At this point, Oonagh is both connected to both the killer and to protecting Lymond. She has saved him, but little more. His escape proves successful, as well as the protection of Dame de Doubtance. The actions of Richard and those in the court continue to be strained; many believe Thady to be dead, and those that do know Lymond is alive are not able to get in contact with him. The chapter ends with a warning that the court has changed and is no longer interested in entertainers such as Thady, even if he is absolved of treason. The reader wonders what will come of Lymond, as well as the young queen.

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: London: Wolves All Around Him, the riddle pertains to one who grazes cows on green grass is surrounded by wolves. This riddle is connected to Brice Herisson and the events surrounding him in this chapter. He is surrounded by those who all want information from him. For one of the first times in this story, Lymond is not the center of attention and, in this case, neither the cow nor the cow-grazer surrounded by wolves. This chapter reveals how truly connected all these characters are to each other and to the plot to kill Queen Mary. Many characters have taken sides regarding the power desired by various countries and groups of people. The arrival of Lymond asks the question of how he was able to reach England unscathed and what he will do now as Lymond, rather than Thady Boy and how Lymond and the others will handle the arrest of Brice Herisson.



Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: V: London: The Intentional Betrayal, VI: The Nettle and the Venom, and VII: Pledge to Fasting

Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: V: London: The Intentional Betrayal, VI: The Nettle and the Venom, and VII: Pledge to Fasting Summary

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: V: London: The Intentional Betrayal, Brice is shocked that he has been caught and that the Lennox's were to the ones to do it. Lymond was able to get the herald Vervassal a chance to meet with Brice. Vervassal fills him in on what has taken place. Lymond tells Harisson that de Chemault, the French Ambassador, must know where Robin Stewart is and that Harisson will be freed. Harisson argues that Robin will have him killed if he gives this information and is set free; Vervassal says that Robin will be captured before he can get to Harisson. After a couple of days, Brice confesses to all. Robin Stewart is not where Brice says he is.

Robin is then set up to meet Harisson; he is to be arrested. Robin learns how wrong he was about Lymond. In a rage, he stabs Harisson, killing him. At the same time, Lymond returns from his fruitless search for Robin and heads straight for the Ambassador's home. Lymond gives the news that Stewart has been captured and put in the tower but had also killed Herisson. Lymond says that Warwick must make sure Stewart returns to France unharmed, for his own sake and so that the French may get the man who has been working with Stewart. Lymond would deal with Stewart in France; he also would remove O'LiamRoe from the Lennox home.

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: VI: London: The Nettle and the Venom, Margaret Lennox and O'LiamRoe have been playing each other for weeks. This play continues throughout this chapter. The herald Vervassal arrives at the Lennox home; he surprises both Margaret and O'LiamRoe. Lymond says he has come for O'LiamRoe. After some more discussion with the Lennox's, O'LiamRoe and Lymond leave. Lymond fills O'LiamRoe in on details of the Robin's actions; he then asks Lymond to convince Robin to talk to him or to Lymond; O'LiamRoe does not want to help. He is then told that Oonagh must be convinced to talk if Robin will not; it is learned that Oonagh is the mistress of Cormac O'Connor. O'LiamRoe leaves, fed up with Lymond and his sense of duty, no matter who it hurts.

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: VII: London: Pledge to Fasting, O'LiamRoe comes to see Robin; he asks for Robin's help in getting back at Lymond. Robin sees this as a trick, but as he listens to O'LiamRoe, he sees in him a man who,



like him, is a victim. Robin agrees to denounce his partner in the planned killing of Queen Mary if O'LiamRoe would back him in revealing Lymond as Thady Boy Ballagh.

Upon returning to the inn, O'LiamRoe sends a letter to Lymond telling him that Robin has agreed to denounce his partner and wants both Lymond and O'LiamRoe present when he gives his confession to the French king. There are plans to continue protecting Queen Mary. John Stewart is revealed as Robin's partner.

Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: V: London: The Intentional Betrayal, VI: The Nettle and the Venom, and VII: Pledge to Fasting Analysis

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: V: London: The Intentional Betrayal, the riddle discusses betrayal and focuses on the intentional betrayal in which one should be fined. There are several intentional betrayals in this chapter. Brice Herisson betrays both Robin and Lymond. These betrayals lead to his fine and death. Several other characters also participate in intentional betrayals, some to protect themselves and others to protect countries and other people. The most revealing intentional betrayal is that of Robin Stewart. He has been betraying many people and nations throughout this entire story; this supports his desire and obsession with obtaining fame and wealth. He cares only for himself, thereby creating many enemies.

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: VI: London: The Nettle and the Venom, the riddle pertains to nettles and their venom. The nettle in this chapter could be Margaret Lennox, who uses her venom of beauty and wit to try to get information out of O'LiamRoe. She had previously been Lymond's lover, tricking him nearly to his death. Like the poem says, it is not age that gives the nettle its venom. In her case, it is her femininity and intelligence that gives her her conniving abilities.

Lymond, in his own way, is also a nettle full of venom. His sense of duty to the protection of Queen Mary's life makes him believe he can do all that is in his power to make sure she survives. This includes the entrapment and deceiving of others. The chapter ends with O'LiamRoe being fed up with how he has been treated because of Lymond's duty and walks out.

In Part Three: London: The Excitement of Being Hunted: VII: Pledge to Fasting, the riddle pertains to one who is unwilling to fast; the author of this comment on fasting believes that one who is unwilling to fast is an "evader of all...and shall not be paid by God or man". The man the author refers to using this statement on fasting is Robin Stewart. He had decided to fast himself to death, but gives in to temptation; he chooses to live and see Lymond's reputation, and possibly his life, destroyed upon returning to France. What he does not seem to realize is that this was part of Lymond's plan. As the statement at the beginning of the chapter says, it is foreshadowed that Robin will not be rewarded for his actions. He would have been better off continuing his pledge to fasting and starving himself to death.



Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: I: Dieppe: Illegal After Screaming and II: Angers: Boarshead and Apple

Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: I: Dieppe: Illegal After Screaming and II: Angers: Boarshead and Apple Summary

In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: I: Dieppe: Illegal After Screaming, O'LiamRoe and Lymond board a ship for France; upon arriving, they go their separate ways, as Lymond has other business to attend to. Lymond visits a woman who had once been in charge of a distinguished group of prostitutes. She had met with the captain of the boat that had purposely run into the La Sauvee. The owner of the ship was a man from Rouen by the name of Antonius Beck. Not finding Beck at home, he goes to the sculptor Michel Herisson's home to discuss his keeping an eye on Beck and coaxing a confession out of him. As Richard awaits the arrival of his brother, O'LiamRoe and Oonagh's lover Cormac O'Connor meet. They almost come to blows, with only Richard stopping them. Lymond arrives and meets with his brother. He gives him news of his travels and the headway he had made in the plot of the Stewarts. He then gives Richard a gift for his son, Kevin. They soon part, with Richard planning to return home.

In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: II: Angers: Boarshead and Apple, as the Prince of Conde and his brother d'Enghien play a game, Lymond is speaking to the constable outside the door. It is learned that Robin has confessed to John Stewart's involvement. Lord d'Aubigny denies it, and the French king believes him. They need proof of d'Aubigny's guilt. Lymond hears the voices of the two brothers and that of another, Cormac O'Connor. He asks the Constable to open the door. He meets O'Connor face to face; he also hints at the relationship between O'Connor and Oonagh.

As Lymond travels to Angers with the court to deal with Robin, he worries about how he will be treated, since he has been previously known as Thady Boy Ballagh. After again confessing his guilt and the guilt of John Stewart, Robin turned to O'LiamRoe; he had done his part, he now looked to O'LiamRoe to do his. O'LiamRoe says nothing.

It is decided that Robin will be exposed during the moat festivities and entertainment. The crowd soon gathered to watching the baiting games at the moat. Robin is put in the arena to fight a wild boar; the Queen Mother lets her scarf fall into the arena and asks Lymond to go after it, and, since it is a royal order, he does. Lymond is the one who kills the boar; he then graciously offers the sword back to Robin, who is angry that Lymond had come into his one moment of fame and glory. As the games come to a close, Robin gets an audience with the king and plans to out Lymond with the help of O'LiamRoe; O'LiamRoe does not out Lymond, although he wants to, but not for another man's



crimes. Robin soon is to be put to death but vows to make Thady Boy Ballagh suffer. Lymond meets with Abernethy and O'LiamRoe. He believes Lord d'Aubigny will still attempt to kill Queen Mary. The next day news spreads that Robin has escaped; now those who plot against Queen Mary may very well kill her.

Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: I: Dieppe: Illegal After Screaming and II: Angers: Boarshead and Apple Analysis

In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: I: Dieppe: Illegal After Screaming, the section is started with a statement regarding loans and the limit to which this loan extends. The chapter then begins with a statement about how a man assigned or not assigned by a woman is treated before, during, or after her screaming. This is an odd statement, with the reader wondering to what this screaming pertains. In this story, the screaming may be related to the giving of information. There is much planning involved in this chapter regarding the getting and giving of information. It is known who plots against Queen Mary, but the king of France needs proof that these men, the Stewarts, are guilty. Lymond spends much of this chapter trying to gain this evidence against the Stewarts. The difficulty in acquiring this proof is due to the possible consequences of giving evidence against the Stewarts; many involved are only interested in looking out for their own interests and saving their own hides.

In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: II: Angers: Boarshead and Apple, the riddle at the beginning of the chapter discusses the periods when the world dies: war, plague, and the dissolving of verbal contracts. The last is connected to this chapter. Throughout this chapter, Robin has faith that before he dies he will out both the Lord d'Aubigny and Lymond; he realizes at the end of the baiting games that this is not to be. O'LiamRoe does not stick to his verbal contract with Robin, and it seems Robin has a history of verbal contracts or assumptions that are not fulfilled as he expects. He vows to get revenge on Lymond, and his escape from the authorities prior to his execution makes this revenge very possible.



Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: III: Chateaubriant: A Bed-Tick Full of Harpstrings and IV: The Price of Satire

Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: III: Chateaubriant: A Bed-Tick Full of Harpstrings and IV: The Price of Satire Summary

In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: III: Chateaubriant: A Bed-Tick Full of Harpstrings, the English Ambassage Extraordinary arrives in France to make a treaty between France and England and to demand the Queen of Scots marry the King of England, but if this cannot be agreed upon, then the king's daughter, Elizabeth in her stead. France and the Queen Mother will not like this demand, but others do not care for the relationship between the Scots and France.

The French court, minus Queen Mary and the Queen Mother, is in Candes, enjoying the evening out of doors. Robin hides, watching Lymond. Robin launches two arrows that narrowly miss Lymond. Lymond turns and runs toward the source of the arrows; when a third arrow strikes him, it does not penetrate his skin because he is wearing chain mail. Robin realizes Lymond had expected this; they fight with their swords. A member of court arrives on the scene and Lymond sends him away, along with Lymond's sword. Lymond asks to talk to Robin before Robin kills him. Robin collapses and begins to weep. When Robin makes a comment about Lymond's family and Margaret Erskines, Lymond punches him unconscious.

Later, Lymond and O'LiamRoe meet to discuss the situation at the time concerning Oonagh, Queen Mary, and Robin. During a festive evening, Lymond attaches himself to John Stewart. Later, he finds Oonagh and convinces her to come with him. Oonagh tries to seduce Lymond, but he seduces her instead. The next morning, she agrees to give Lymond information for five thousand Frenchmen out of Scotland; he refuses. Lymond gains very little information from his evening with Oonagh. The next day, Lymond takes her to see Queen Mary. She and the Queen have a very adult conversation. It ends with Mary asking her to try to kill her and Oonagh runs out of the room. Margaret comes in at this moment, has a few words with Lymond, and, after he leaves, breaks a vase on the ground.

In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: IV: Chateaubriant: The Price of Satire, O'LiamRoe learns of Lymond's evening with Oonagh and confronts him; he then takes Lymond's advice and gets drunk. While O'LiamRoe is passed out drunk, Piedar Dooly meets with Robin, who wants Piedar to give the information he has about the next assassination attempt to Lymond. Robin wants Lymond to come get him prior to the assassination



attempt, so he seems innocent. After leaving Robin, Piedar tears up the note for Lymond.

Later, the English and French courts gather for a sporting event. Many want the queen's herald, Lymond, to participate. Once she does not allow it, but she cannot deny them a second time. He must wrestle; the wrestling match is not completed, but enough takes place for many to wonder if Lymond is Thady Boy. He is then asked to meet with the king and the Dowager Queen; he is asked to play the lute and sing. This is how he is found out to be Thady. Lymond meets in private with the king and the Dowager Queen, who denies that she has played any role in this deception; his punishment is due to the embarrassment he has caused the courts. O'LiamRoe heads off to see Cormac O'Connor.

Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: III: Chateaubriant: A Bed-Tick Full of Harpstrings and IV: The Price of Satire Analysis

In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: III: Chateaubriant: A Bed-Tick Full of Harpstrings, begins with a riddle regarding a woman who gives herself up to a man because of what he has to offer her. This is tied to this story in several ways. First, the relationships between the various nations in this story are often decided through marriage; a marriage between royalty can often make or break the relationship between two countries. The connection to this statement is also reflected in the relationships of the various people in this story. Many use one another to get ahead, for what that other person has to offer. Lymond, of all the characters is notorious for using others for his own purpose, although his purpose seem to be the most noble of all: protecting the young queen.

In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: IV: Chateaubriant: The Price of Satire, a statement regarding the price of satire as God's reward of heaven is made. This pertains to the chapter, because several use satire to express their feelings regarding others. Satire is frequently used throughout this book, especially by O'LiamRoe and Lymond, to express political and economic beliefs by making a joke of themselves, others, and various beliefs. The price of satire that comes to Lymond is imprisonment and some sort of sentence, possibly death. The courts are beyond offended for the embarrassment his trickery has caused. There seems to be no reason he can give to remedy this use of satire and a false name.



Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: V: Chateaubriant: Proof, Without Love or Hatred and VI: Satin and Scarlet

Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: V: Chateaubriant: Proof, Without Love or Hatred and VI: Satin and Scarlet Summary

In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: V: Chateaubriant: Proof, Without Love or Hatred, O'LiamRoe goes to find Cormac; he is not let in the front door of the home, so he sneaks in through a window, over the body of Cormac, and into the room of the sleeping Oonagh. Oonagh wakes; only Oonagh and O'LiamRoe can save the young Queen, and they must prove that Lymond pretended to be Thady to protect the Queen. This must be done to save both the Queen and Lymond. Oonagh wants no part in O'LiamRoe's plans. Cormac wakes and a fight ensues. Mistress Boyle dies, and Cormac is either severely injured or dead. Oonagh helps O'LiamRoe throughout this fight; at its end they decide to meet again that night. She gives the name of Artus Cholet as the other henchman involved in the murder plot, and O'LiamRoe goes looking for him. Lymond is imprisoned during all of this, spending time with his guards. The court prepares for a ceremony; the young Queen is to die during the Investiture. Robin waits in his hideout for Lymond to come for him. The Duke de Montmorency learns of the plot to kill the young Queen and feels that what must take place for the King to believe all of this and release Lymond is beyond the Constable's capabilities. He agrees to double protection of the young Queen and more attention to this plot after the ceremonies. Mary and her entourage get into one of the boats as Tosh and Abernaci watch; these two men noticed Piedar Dooly's odd behavior and grabbed him. O'LiamRoe receives news of the assassination attempt that is to take place on the lake from Tosh and Abernaci, illegally frees Lymond, and heads to the lake. Cholet fires a flaming arrow at a boat near Mary's which soon catches on fire. As Lymond and others attempted to come to Mary's rescue, the fireworks in the boats that were now on fire began to go off; as Mary's boat was moved away from those on fire, the boats filled with gunpowder exploded. The royals learned of the explosion when their ceremony was interrupted by the implosion of the castle's windows. The Duke de Montmorency encourages the King to proceed with the ceremony, acting as if the accident is not serious. Those who prevented the death of the young Queen are all headed to the menagerie where Michel Herisson has ahold of Cholet.

In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: VI: Chateaubriant: Satin and Scarlet, Michel Herisson chased Cholet through the menagerie until he came upon the lion. Just as the men were to grab Cholet, he was shot by an arrow and killed; Lord d'Aubigny had arrived with the Archers. Lymond's hands were bound again; Lord d'Aubigny was waiting for a chance to kill him. O'LiamRoe came looking for Robin, but Robin had committed suicide when he heard the explosion. Sir Lennox, Lord d'Aubigny's brother,



was sent for; he comes to free Lymond and disown his brother. Lymond goes to see Robin; Lymond feel guilt for the destruction he feels he causes, including the death of Robin Stewart. O'LiamRoe does not agree with him; he tells him he did what was right. They buried Robin. Back at court it was decided that Mary would still marry the Dauphin and King Henri's daughter, Elizabeth, would marry England's King Edward. King Henri is having a difficult time accepting that Lord d'Aubigny was guilty of attempted murder. The King decided the two men, d'Aubigny and Lymond, must duel. D'Aubigny gives an extremely long list of weapons he required for the duel, thinking Lymond would forfeit; Lymond did no such thing, so d'Aubigny forfeited instead. Lymond and Queen Mary exchange words and he leaves as she sings a song Thady had sung to the court.

Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: V: Chateaubriant: Proof, Without Love or Hatred and VI: Satin and Scarlet Analysis

In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: V: Chateaubriant: Proof, Without Love or Hatred, the riddle pertains to the importance of proof. This is connected to the story, because proof is thought to be needed to free Lymond and to save the Queen. Many want nothing to do with this evidence due to their feelings of love or hatred for various individuals, courts, and countries. Throughout much of this story, the emotions of many of the characters and their feelings regarding various allegiances direct their actions; for many, the life of the young queen is either meaningless, bothersome, and an outright threat.

O'LiamRoe, realizing that this proof will not come soon enough, frees Lymond so that the queen may be saved. The proof that O'LiamRoe and others have regarding the plot to kill the queen is given to the constable, but he acts as if there is nothing he can do at the moment and will deal with it after the ceremonies. During these ceremonies and the blast from the assassination attempt, it is assumed by the reader that the constable did not desire to stop the assassination of the young queen; he had proof that this attempt would occur, but due to his feelings regarding the relationships between the various countries, he ignored this proof. His feelings regarding the young queen's life only reflect and reiterate the sentiments of other characters in this book; his lack of love for her life is not surprising, since many seem to lack any feeling emotion for her at all. Fortunately for the young queen, there are several individuals who are willing to give up their lives to save her, because they care about the life of a child more than they care about what allegiances her life enforces.

The second portion of the riddle contains several questions pertaining to the Irish being more fortunate as foreign slaves than as Irish slaves. This is a debate that takes place throughout this story. Some characters in the book would like to be ruled by their own people, even if these rulers are people like Cormac O'Connor, while others would prefer a foreign ruler if it means that they will be protected and ruled judiciously. The citizens of these various nations disagree on who should rule over them; should they be slaves to a foreign government or slaves of their own people?



In Part Four: The Loan and the Limit: VI: Chateaubriant: Satin and Scarlet, the statement prior to the chapter is in regard to a dog not being fed, and if it is fed, it is being fed by one who trespasses. This is tied to the story in many ways; several times throughout the story, the characters use each other as bait. In this chapter the capturing of those involved in the murder plot will save the young queen, as well as Lymond's life. The capture of the henchman Cholet leads to his death which in turn leads to the proof of d'Aubigny's role in the assassination attempts.

The next section of the statement prior to the chapter has to do with a poet giving up his power until justice is done regarding his behavior toward another. This is similar to Lymond's imprisonment due to his trickery; once he, with the help of others, is able to prove that his actions were indeed noble he is set free, his power and freedom is returned. This giving and taking of power takes place throughout the entire story and, as history has shown, will continue throughout Europe's history.

The last part of the statement refers to all the wealth that the son of the chief must have. This wealth, this satin and scarlet, is finally decided upon at the end of this story. The various countries have come to decisions regarding who will marry whom and how these marriages will affect the relationships between these countries. Although much has been decided upon regarding the connections between these countries, much is still left up to chance and the future. This, essentially, is how the story ends. The young queen is saved, so Lymond's job is complete, and the various courts have come to amiable decisions regarding their power over each other. But, the author does leave the reader wondering how long this peace and safety will last. Will Lymond's wit, skill, and fearlessness be needed again?



Characters

Francis Crawford of Lymond

Francis Crawford of Lymond, the Master of Culter, is the main character and protagonist in the story. He spends the majority of the story protecting the young Queen Mary from would-be assassins. He arrives in France as the ollave of Phelim O'LiamRoe, the Prince of Barrow from Ireland to spy on those who seem to have it out for Queen Mary.

Although his main purpose is to protect Mary, it is not because he works for her mother; he does it purely to protect this young child from a sure death. As the ollave, he becomes intimate with the French court as a favorite entertainer; through this connection, he is able to spend more time around those nearest to Mary. After he is assumed dead and the cause of the death of one member of court, he returns to France as himself and as the herald to the Queen Mother. He continues as himself to find ways to protect Mary. At this point in the story, he is certain of who has arranged the assassination attempts, he must now find a way of proving it.

Throughout this story, Lymond is frequently injured and insulted but takes these blows with an almost superhuman grace. His actions seem to be always purely for the protection of Mary, although they hurt his relationships with others and cause pain to many. Fortunately for Lymond, many individuals who counted him as a friend understand why he had behaved the way he did and continued their friendships with him. Lymond rarely seems emotionally affected by the events that take place and the actions and feelings of others; that is, until Robin Stewart committed suicide. Lymond is finally emotionally affected by the death of a man who had loved him with a form of hero-worship and saw no point in life if Lymond would not assist him. This is the one event in the entire book that truly revealed Lymond's human qualities, much to O'LiamRoe's satisfaction.

Mary Queen of Scots

Mary of Guise's daughter is seven. She is betrothed to the French Dauphin and lives in France, away from her mother. The entire story revolves around the protection of her life. Lymond comes to France to protect her and to find and capture the men responsible for trying to kill her. Her young life is very important to the balance of power between France, England, Scotland, and Ireland. Currently, with her betrothal to the French Dauphin, she is the key to power for the de Guise family in both France and Scotland and gives France power over the Scots. Many of the Scots, on the other hand, would like to rule themselves and look to the English for assistance. Although the relationship between these countries seems cordial, it is only a facade. All involved want power over themselves, their own countries, and others.

At the end of the story Mary's life is safe and a treaty has been signed between France and England, giving the French king's daughter to the young English king as fiancée,



leaving Mary still betrothed to the French Dauphin. Only time will tell if Mary is to rule both France and Scotland as her mother hopes. This power given to Mary as the wife of a future French king would give Mary of Guise royal power in Scotland, power she has been lacking since her husband, the King of Scotland, died.

As a character, Mary is a precocious and mischievous little girl. She is quite intelligent but also innocent as a child of only seven. Often she seems to understand more of what is going on around her than would first suspect, but she continues to play and act as the royal child she is. It is only at moments that the reader is given glimpses of her understanding.

Mary of Guise

As the Queen Mother of Scotland, and the widow of King James the V, Mary of Guise uses her daughter to gain power for herself in her adopted home of Ireland. Many do not approve of the de Guise's having power, so Mary of Guise hires Lymond to protect her daughter.

Phelim O'LiamRoe

Phelim O'LiamRoe is the Prince of Barrow and a feudal lord of the Slieve Bloom. He becomes a close companion of Lymond and plays a large role in the protection of Queen Mary.

Richard Crawford

Richard Crawford is the third baron Culter and the brother of Francis Crawford of Lymond. He assists Lymond in protecting Mary.

Margaret Erskine

Margaret Erskine is Thomas Erskine's wife and a close friend of Lymond.

Jenny, Lady Fleming

Jenny is the mother of Margaret Erskine and the illegitimate daughter of King James IV of Scotland. She is the governess of Queen Mary and in many ways her playmate and fellow mischief maker. She becomes pregnant with the king's child and is sent back to Scotland.

Mary and Agnes Fleming

Mary and Agnes Fleming are maids of honor to Queen Mary.



Arthur Erskine

Arthur Erskine is one of Thomas' brothers.

Sir George Douglas

Sir George Douglas is the brother to the Earl of Angus and the uncle to Lady Lennox.

Sir James Douglas of Drumlanrig

Sir James Douglas is Sir George Douglas' brother-in-law

Michel Herisson

Michel Herisson is a Scots sculptor who lives in Rouen and assists Lymond in protecting Mary.

Brice Harisson

Brice Harisson is Michel Herisson's brother who is in the service of the Protector Somerset in London. He is killed by Robin Stewart for revealing his plans to kill Mary.

Thomas Erskine

Thomas Erskine is the Master of Erskine, the Chief Privy Councillor, and Special Ambassador.

Thady Boy Ballagh

Thady Boy Ballagh is O'LiamRoe's ollave, or poet, and the disguise of Lymond. This charade lasts for quite some time and assists Lymond in getting close to the French court. By the end of the book it is realized that Thady Boy Ballagh is actually Sir Francis Crawford of Lymond.

Piedar Dooly

Piedar Dooly is O'LiamRoe's servant and is partly responsible for Robin Stewart's suicide.



Theresa Boyle

Theresa Boyle is an Irish widow living in Neuvy. She assists in the plot to kill Queen Mary and to put Cormac O'Connor on the Irish throne.

Oonagh O'Dwyer

Oonagh O'Dwyer is O'LiamRoe's niece. She assists with the plot to kill Queen Mary but later changes sides and assists Lymond.

Helie and Anne Moutier

Helie and Anne Moutier are relatives of Oonagh and live in Blois.

Cormac O'Connor

Cormac O'Connor is the heir to Brian Faly O'Connor, captain of Offaly. He is in on the plot to kill Mary; he hopes that through her death he may gain power and the Irish throne.

George Paris

George Paris is an agent.

Henri II

Henri II is the King of France.

Catherine de Medicis

Catherine de Medicis is the Henri II's Queen.

Diane de Poitiers

Diane de Poitiers is Henri II's mistress and the Duchess de Valentinois.

Francis

Francis is the Dauphin of France and heir to the French throne. He is affianced to Mary Queen of Scots.



Elizabeth and Claude

Elizabeth and Claude are Henri II's two young daughters.

Marguerite of France

Marguerite of France is Henri II's sister.

Anne de Montmorency

He is the marshal, Grand Master, and Constable of France.

Francois

Francois is the second Duke de Guise and the brother of the Queen Mother of Scotland.

Charles de Guise

Charles de Guise is the second Cardinal of Lorraine and Francois' brother.

Claude de Guise

Claude de Guise is the Duke d'Aumale and Francois' brother.

Duke de Longueville

The Duke de Longueville is the French-born son of Mary de Guise from her first marriage.

John Stewart

John Stewart is the Lord d'Aubigny, former captain of the Royal Guard of Scottish Archers in France, and brother to the Earl of Lennox. He is the man responsible for the plot to kill Queen Mary.

Robin Stewart and Laurens de Genstan

Robin Stewart and Laurens de Genstan are both members of the Royal Guard of Scottish Archers. Robin Stewart has assisted in the assassination attempts on both Mary and Lymond. He commits suicide after his plans to expose d'Aubigny are foiled. De Genstan is killed during one of assassination attempts of Lymond.



Jacques d'Albon, Louis de Bourbon, Jean de Bourbon, Francois

These men are are courtiers.

Archembault Abernaci and Pierre Destaiz

These men are the keepers of the royal menageries of France. Abernaci assists Lymond in saving the Queen. Destaiz is killed after he is discovered to be part of the assassination plot.

Thomas Ouchart (Tosh)

Thomas Ouchart is a funambulist. He assists Lymond in saving Mary.

Maitre Georges Gaultier

Maitre Georges Gaultier is a usurer of Blois.

The Dame de Doubtance

The Dame de Doubtance is an astrologer of Blois. She cares for and protects Lymond when he is injured. She also aids Lymond and his men in saving the Queen.

Raoul de Chemault

Raoul de Chemault is the the French Ambassador in London.

John Dudley

John Dudley is the Earl of Warwick and the Earl of Marshall of England.

Matthew Stewart

Matthew Stewart is the Earl of Lennox and the brother of Lord d'Abigny. He comes to France and, to protect himself, outs his brother regarding the murder plot.



Margaret Lennox

Margaret Lennox is the wife of Matthew Stewart and the niece to the late King Henry VIII and to Sir George Douglas.

William Parr of Kendall

William Parr of Kendall is the Marquis do Northampton, Lord Great Chamberlain of England, and the leader of the English Mission to France.

Thomas Butler

Thomas Butler is the Earl of Ormond, an Irishman resident in England, and is also part of the English Mission to France.

Sir Gilbert Dethick

Sir Gilbert Dethick is the Garter King of Arms.

Sir John Perrot

Sir John Perrot is the illegitimate son of the late King Henry VIII.

Sir James Mason

Sir James Mason is the retiring English Ambassador in France.



Objects/Places

Scotland

This country has close ties to France, with its current Queen Mother being from France and her daughter being engaged to the French Dauphin.

England

This country has had a long and often dramatic relationship with France. Many who dislike being ruled by the French go to this country for support.

Ireland

Many characters from this country wish harm to have the French removed, so they may rule themselves.

France

This is the powerful country in which this story takes place.

La Sauvee

This is boat on which Thady Boy Ballagh first shows his fearlessness, intelligence, and physical abilities.

Hotel Moutiere

This is where it is thought that Thady Boy Ballagh died.

The Lake

This is where the final attempt on young Mary's life took place.

Germany

This is another European nation with ties with the French and English.



The Royal French and English Courts

These groups of individuals are very powerful in Europe at this time. Thady Boy and later Lymond spend much time becoming intimately involved with these people.

Sporting Events

Many of these take place throughout the story. They are a fond pastime of the wealthy, although they are often very dangerous.



Themes

Power

A theme found in this story is power. Each country involved wants power over itself and others. France currently has power over herself and Scotland, hoping to use young Queen Mary's betrothal to the French Dauphin as a way of keeping the power in the hands of the French.

This is where the problem in this story begins. Many do not like Mary de Guise, Queen Mary's mother, or the de Guise family as a whole; so, several individuals plot to kill Mary and make alliances with England to ensure either Scottish independence or more power for themselves. Throughout this story, the reader meets many characters whose sole goal is to gain power.

The one character who does not seem interested in power is Lymond. By his reaction regarding any pain he causes, such as the death of Robin Stewart, it seems that Lymond fears the power he has over others. Of all the characters in the book, he has some of the most power; his power does not necessarily come from his birthright, but from his wit, skill, and fearlessness.

This theme of power is relevant in our own world today. Many politicians and businessmen today and throughout time have had one important goal in mind: power, power over others, power over other groups of people, and the power to do as they please. The theme of power is a universal theme and is found throughout the literary world as well as the history of the world.

Deception

Another theme found in this story is deception. Many characters in this chapter use deception to achieve the power and control they want; therefore, the theme of deception is closely tied to the theme of power. The majority of the characters in this book are willing to use any means necessary to claim the power they believe should be there's.

In the minority are those characters who use deception as a tool to benefit someone other than themselves. Such characters include Lymond, O'LiamRoe, and Abernaci. These men all risk death by deceiving others to protect Queen Mary.

The theme of deception is quite common, due to its tie with power. As the characters in this story are willing to deceive to get what they want, people in real life also deceive for this same reason. As this is a work of historical fiction, much of the deception in this story may be based on real-life events.



Fearlessness

Another theme important to this story is a theme about fearlessness. To accomplish all that takes place in this story, whether good or bad, requires fearlessness. Lymond frequently puts himself into dangerous situations and even subjects himself to being the bait for the killers. He does all of this to save the life of the young queen. He fearlessly participates in sporting events and other activities that could lead to death.

Other characters become as fearless as Lymond by the end of the story. Oonagh and O'LiamRoe both suffer for their actions and risk death for their beliefs. Abernaci and Richard, as well as other characters, risk their own lives and come to the aid of others in this story.

Even those who wish the young queen dead are so sure of their convictions that they risk their lives to see hers ended. Their causes, whether good or bad, are important enough to them to be willing to die.

Those few characters in this story who would rather live than die for their causes are seen as the weak characters in this story. Those characters who show bravery are also shown respect in one way or another in this book, by other characters and the narrator.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of this book is from both a narrator and the characters themselves. The narrator's role in this book is to give the reader a visual picture of the scene in which the characters find themselves. This narrator also acts as a commentator for the various events and actions that take place. Although not omniscient, the narrator does hint at important clues that foreshadow events to come. He or she also points out important details that the reader should keep in mind.

When the story is not from the narrator's perspective, it is from the perspective of one or more characters. Dialogue takes place between the various characters to reveal aspects of the characters' personalities, native countries, and even socioeconomic status. By changing the characters' word usage and accents, the author is able to show a great deal about each character's upbringing and beliefs in a way that a narrator could not. This use of various accents and grammar also emphasizes the differences in the cultures of the people involved in this story and reiterates the problems associated with these differences. These accents and varying forms of grammar and vocabulary also make it easier for the reader to understand and distinguish between the many diverse characters in this book and their roles in the story.

Setting

The setting of the story begins on a boat crossing to France. The rest of the story takes place in various cities and towns in France. These cities and towns include Dieppe, Rouen, St. Germain, Aubigny, Blois, Amboise, Angers, and Chateaubriant. Several of the characters do travel to London as well in this story, and Scotland and Ireland are frequently mentioned, as well as Germany. The France in which this story takes place is the France under the rule of Henri II in 1550. France is a powerful nation at this time, with power over Scotland and connections with England and Ireland. The French are attempting to hold onto this power by raising Mary Queen of Scots and betrothing her to the French Dauphin, Francis.

The setting moves from one town to the next as the French court moves from place to place. As they arrive in each city, they are cheered and celebrated by their people, although this celebrating seems to be quite taxing to the relatively poor French citizens. In nearly every city the French court participates in games and sport, such as races through the town, hunts, and festivals. These too, like the court's entrance into the town, is tiresome for the locals.

The author uses the narrator of this story to give detailed descriptions of many of the locations in this story, from the decorations hung to celebrate the court's arrival to the lavish parties and gatherings of those of the court, from the meager dwelling places



outside of the castles and chateaus to the forests and gardens used for entertaining and sport by the royals.

Language and Meaning

The tone of the book is fairly objective from the point of view of the narrator, although, with Lymond being the protagonist, there seems to be a noticeable amount of favoritism toward Lymond and those who support him and his cause. Even with this being said, Lymond's faults and deceptive treatment of others is easily realized by the reader and made noticeable by the narrator.

The tone of the book, from the perspective of each character, depends solely on the personality, beliefs, and emotions of the characters speaking and the situation in which they find themselves. Each character also has an accent and dialect that reflects their native country of England/France, Scotland, or Ireland. The accents of those from Scotland and Ireland are most pronounced, while those from France or England use the same language. French and Gaelic are also included in the story, with English translations, to give a taste of these foreign languages. This use of various dialects and languages, as well as varying tone depending on the character speaking, gives the book a very natural and realistic tone. This book varies from happy and content to nervous and anxious, to angry and hateful, and from subjective to objective.

The author has taken the lives and personalities of both real and imagined characters and blended them in a way that hints at both historical accuracy and creative, exciting fiction. The language of this book reflects the author's knowledge of history and ability to blend the real with the imagined in a natural and convincing manner.

Structure

The book begins with a list of characters, organized by their native countries, giving their connection to each other and their specific country and other characters from their country. This list prepares the reader for the story, which interweaves the lives of those who lived during this time period with the lives of those characters created by the author, creating a list of characters who all seem real, by the end of the story. The list of characters is then followed by a map of France and part of England. This can very useful as one reads this story, since the characters travel through many of these towns throughout the story.

The book itself is divided up into four parts, with each part containing six or seven chapters. At the beginning of each book and chapter is a riddle-like statement or question that foreshadows events that are about to take place. Many of these riddles do not make sense until one reads the chapter and rereads the riddle. The title of each part and chapter is also connected to the riddles and the events in the story.

Within each chapter, divisions are made using several asterisks. These guide the reader in moving from one scene to another in the book and from one group of characters to another.



Quotes

"Master Thady Boy Ballagh, ollave, poet, professor, the fifteenth and the nippiest, climbed straight to the yardarm, made his way to the peak, and sixty feet up over a listing deck, knife in hand, probed the lashings."
Silent in the Boat, p. 10

"[M]ust behave to the King and and his Court...as if she had come merely to visit her child...and as if she would not have smashed the gilded bubble of dance and laughter with a blow, so that these damned lackadaisical, self-important, rich, preening men would be hurled by circumstance round the conference table, where she would have them, to discuss with all the gifts in their power, the future policies of France and Scotland."
Rouen: Fine, Scientific Works Without Warning, pp. 44-45

"On the arch over the bridge, something moved. Plump, nimble, fluttering black, light as leaf on lind, a man dropped from the pediment and clung firm among the upset, steaming urns on the bull elephant's back."
Rouen: Fast Drivings for the Purpose of Killing, p. 67

"Each in its nest of gauze and gilt thread, of tissue and taffeta, swathed in silver and satin, in velvet and white fur sugared with diamonds, each face painted, each brow plucked, hair hidden by sparkling hair of raw silk, the well-born of France sat in waxlight and flowers like half a hundred candied sweets in a basket."
Rouen: The Difficult and the Impossible, p. 77

"Thady was expected of course. His playing had become as fashionable as a drug."
Aubigny: Boldness of Denial, p. 129

"'Friend Robin...come running with me.' He went. It was a night Robin Stewart would recall all his life."
Blois: All the Mean Arts, pp. 146-147

"'My dear, you are only a boy. You have all your life still before you.'" "Oh, yes, I know. The popular question is, For what?"
Blois: The Mill in Motion, p. 212

"Above him, misty in a grey daylight, her hair like a veil, her own eyes caught wide, was Oonagh O'Dwyer. Had he looked, he could have seen his own reflection, startlingly, in her mirrored gaze."
Blois: Distress is not Released, p. 228

"Everything they did wore a different cast...If Thady Boy had come back - a Thady Boy even absolved from the treachery imputed him - they would have had him beaten from the room by their valets."
Blois: Distress is not Released, p. 239



"Every betrayal, intentional or with concealment, is false: there are equal fines for the theft which is concealment, and the concealment with is robbery."

London: The Intentional Betrayal, p. 254

"As puppets, every plumed head jerked around. Alone, among every pinched and startled countenance, the handsome face of Lord d'Aubigny looked at ease."

Chateaubriant: Truth, Without Love or Hatred, p. 399

"Then she broke into full song, taking both parts herself, in a very good imitation of the famous voice: the voice which through a long winter had sung to the King and courtiers of France, and had played with her Queens."

Chateaubriant: Satin and Scarlet, p. 432



Topics for Discussion

Young Queen Mary's betrothal to the Dauphin of France is important to this story. Why is she betrothed to him? How does this engagement affect the Dauphin, France, Scotland, and other nations? How does this engagement and Mary's life guide the events in this story? What does this betrothal reveal about the power of the royal families at this time? Does this sort of power exist today? Explain.

Throughout this story, Lymond protects Queen Mary and finds those responsible for plotting her murder. Why is he chosen to protect her? Is he a good choice? Why or why not? How does he go about protecting her? How successful is he? Explain. Who else aids Lymond in protecting the queen? Why do these people help him? How important is their help to the queen's survival? Explain. Why is the protection of Mary so important? How would her death affect the people in this story?

This story is a work of historical fiction. How is this story based on history? What aspects of this story are true? How does the author connect the real with the imagined? What can one learn from reading historical fiction? What is your favorite work of historical fiction? How does it compare to this story?

Power is an important theme in this story. How is power important in this story? Who wants power? Why do they want power? How do they go about getting power? How does this power affect others in the story? How is power important in our world today? Who would you consider powerful in our world today? Why?

Deception is an important theme in this story. Describe the deception in this story. Why does it take place? What purpose does it serve? Who benefits from this deception? Can deception have a good outcome? Why or why not? Can deception be used for good purposes? Why or why not?

Fearlessness is an important theme in this story. Who is fearless in this story? Describe this fearlessness. How is fearlessness important in this story? How does this fearlessness change the characters? How does it change the outcome of events in this story? How can fearlessness be important in your own life?

Many characters in this book are clever. How are the characters clever? How does this benefit them? How does it help their various causes? Describe those that you would not consider clever. How do they compare to the clever ones? What conclusion can be drawn by studying the cleverness of the characters?

The title of the book is *The Queens' Play*. Why is this the title? How is it connected to the story and the characters within the story? How is Lymond connected to this title? How are the various titles within this book connected to their chapters? How are these chapters and parts connected to each other through the titles? Do you believe the title of a book to be extremely important? Why or why not?