

The Ruins of Gorlan Study Guide

The Ruins of Gorlan by John Flanagan (author)

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Plot Summary

Ranger's Apprentice, Book 1, "The Ruins of Gorlan"

John Flanagan

Book 1 of the Ranger's Apprentice, "The Ruins of Gorlan" by John Flanagan is about a boy who starts his journey into manhood in the fantasy world of the Kingdom of Araluen. Will is an orphan who learns about his past and his parents, while coming of age in a kingdom on the verge of war. He learns about himself and his friends as he finds his place within the kingdom.

Lord Morgarath, Lord of the Mountains of Rain and Night, tried to overtake the Kingdom of Araluen fifteen years ago. He is now plotting his revenge against the men who thwarted his plan so that he can attempt another takeover. He is using vicious creatures he found in the Mountains to exact his plans.

Fifteen years before, Will was left on the doorstep of Redmont Castle with a note that said that his mother died in childbirth and his father died a hero. Will does not know who his parents are and is bullied and feels ashamed for not knowing. Will has remained in the castle under the care of Baron Arald and now at fifteen he is asked to choose the profession he wishes to pursue. The Baron calls this Choosing Day and the wards choose what Craftsperson to whom they choose to be apprenticed.

Will wishes to be apprenticed to the Battleschool, but he is a small boy who is of slight build. Sir Rodney, head of the Battleschool, rejects Will's apprenticeship. Will is devastated because he believes his father was a knight who died heroically in battle and Will wishes to honor him by going to Battleschool.

Horace, the ward mate who bullies Will, is accepted into Battleschool. Will is jealous of him and wishes it was him. The two have never gotten along, and Will is happy to get away from him.

Will believes that he will be relegated to work in the fields, but Halt, a Ranger, asks Will to be his apprentice. The Ranger Corp is a group of fifty men who watch over the Kingdom of Araluen. They keep it safe from enemies and act as spies for the kingdom. Halt has watched over Will because Will's father saved his life during the war with Lord Morgarath.

Halt helps Will realize that being a Ranger is his calling and that he has great skill at it. Will proves this when he saves Halt's life from the Kalkara that Lord Morgarath has sent to kill him. This encounter makes Will realize that being a Ranger is what he is meant to be and he passes up the opportunity to join the Battleschool when asked by Baron Arald and Sir Rodney.



Will and Horace become formidable allies. Horace is a genius with a sword and overcomes bullying by his classmates and sees how he treated Will. Will saves his life from a boar attack and Horace sees what kind of person Will is. Horace returns the favor when he saves Will from the bullies who had been assaulting him. Halt helps Horace have the opportunity to take the three boys on one by one and Horace gets his revenge on the three boys who have made his life miserable.

Will and Horace have pains following their paths into manhood, but they overcome them. Some pains they overcome together and some on their own. There is also more adventure for them on the horizon as the onslaught of Lord Morgarath will hardly end once the Kalkara have been defeated. The Kingdom of Araluen prepares for war.



Prologue, Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4

Prologue, Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4 Summary

"The Ruins of Gorlan" is a fantasy novel of a coming of age tale of two orphans who are attempting to find their way in the Kingdom of Araluen. The novel begins with a prologue, which tells the readers of a war that happened fifteen years before. Lord Morgarath attempted a takeover of the Kingdom of Araluen upon the King's death. The attack was thwarted by the King's trusted advisers who drove Lord Morgarath to the Mountains of Rain and Night for his traitorous attack. There he has been planning his revenge. He has found creatures who he has trained to exact the perfect revenge.

Chapter 1 introduces Will and his ward mates, Alyss, George, Jenny and Horace. They are all orphans who have been taken in by Baron Arald. He takes in and cares for all the orphans of his fiefdom. Unlike the other ward mates, Will does not know who his parents are. He was left on the castle doorstep with a note saying that his mother died in childbirth and his father died a hero. He is bullied by Horace who calls him Will No Name. The wards are preparing for the next day, which is Choosing Day. Choosing Day is where the wards choose where they would like to become apprentices. The other wards know where they wish to be apprenticed and that they will more than likely be accepted. Will wants to be apprenticed to the Battleschool because he believes his father was a knight and he wants to honor his memory. Because he is small in build, he knows that he will not be accepted. He resents Horace because he knows the boy has the build and athletic skill to be chosen as an apprentice to Battleschool.

Chapter 2 tells of Choosing Day. The ward mates are summoned to Baron Arald's study. His secretary, Martin, likes to be in charge of these days and boss the boys and girls around. The craftspeople are introduced to them. Sir Rodney is the head of the Battleschool, Ulf, the horsemaster, Lady Pauline is head of the Diplomatic Service, Nigel, the Scribemaster, and Master Chubb, the castle chef. Martin has the ward mates line up by height so that Horace will be the first to make his choice and Will will be last. Horace chooses Battleschool and is accepted by Sir Rodney.

Chapter 3 continues with the Choosing Day selections. Alyss is next and chooses the Diplomatic Service and is readily accepted by Lady Pauline who has already spoken to Alyss about joining the service. George is an intelligent boy and asks to join the Scribeschool and is accepted. Jenny is next. She has a bubbling personality and asks to be apprenticed to Master Chubb. He quizzes her on cooking before agreeing to accept her as an apprentice.

In Chapter 4, Will is the last to have his choice. Will asks to join Battleschool, but is denied. Sir Rodney feels that he is too small and will not be safe in battle. Will then asks about Horseschool, but is again rejected this time by Ulf. Will becomes upset, but refuses to breakdown in front of the Baron. The Baron tries to find out what skills Will has so that he can decide where he should be placed. The craftspeople talk about the



mischievous things that Will has gotten up to over the years. These include climbing into third story windows and stealing pies without being seen.

The Baron tries to find somewhere where Will will fit. Halt, a Ranger, hands the Baron a sheet of paper, which the Baron reads and then says he will have to think about it overnight. Will is horrified. He does not know anything about Rangers except that people try to avoid them. Will feels that Halt knows something about him that he has told the Baron and wants to know what is on the paper lying face down on the Baron's desk.

Prologue, Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4 Analysis

Lord Morgarath has waited for fifteen years and has decided that it is time for him to seek revenge against those who destroyed his attempt to take over the Kingdom of Araluen. This comes at a time when the castle wards are coming of age and preparing to enter into their apprenticeships. All of the wards get their choice of apprenticeships except for Will. He wants so much to be a knight. He has made up a dream life for his father and wants to honor this memory he has made for him. When he is rejected he is devastated and feels he has let his father down.

The thought of a Ranger knowing something about him that he feels compelled to tell the Baron makes Will nervous. The craftspeople telling the Baron all of his wrongdoings also makes Will feel that he will not be wanted by any of the craftspeople as an apprentice. He feels unwanted and a disgrace to his father.



Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 Summary

In Chapter 5, Will is upset about not receiving an apprenticeship. He decides to sneak into the Baron's study to see the paper that Halt gave the Baron. He believes that he will be relegated to working in the fields anyway so he has nothing to lose if he is caught. He uses his abilities of being invisible in the dark and climbing to sneak into the Baron's office. Halt catches him and takes him to see the Baron. Will is scared. He believes that the Baron will be angry with him and send him to work in the fields.

The Baron questions why Will tried to steal the paper. Will confesses that he just wanted to see what it said. The Baron asks Halt what they should do with Will. Will is confused by the conspiratorial air. The Baron shows Will the paper that says "The boy Will has the potential to be trained as a Ranger. I will accept him as my apprentice."

In Chapter 6, Will is confused by what is happening. He does not know what the Rangers do and this leads to fear of them. The Baron tries to explain that the Rangers protect the kingdom. It is a privilege for very few are chosen to apprentice Rangers. The Baron tells Will that he is not a warrior, but that his talents lie elsewhere. Will is uncertain about the Rangers, but agrees to the apprenticeship.

In Chapter 7, Will leaves the castle grounds to stay with Halt to begin his apprenticeship. Halt makes him clean his cottage and tells him that apprentices are to do the housework. Halt sits and reads his correspondence and remarks on the unusualness of what he has read. Will questions what is wrong. Halt comments that curiosity is good for a Ranger and tells him that he and the Baron tested him with the paper on the desk. Halt tells him about his correspondence that says that Lord Northolt is dead from an apparent bear attack. He was the former supreme commander of the King's army. Halt finds it odd because the Lord's fiefdom is not known as bear country and Northolt was an experienced hunter. Will can tell that this news is bothering the Ranger.

In Chapter 8, Halt tells Will about the Rangers. They were created as an intelligent force to keep the Kingdom of Araluen informed. They are to act as the eyes and ears of the kingdom. They patrol the kingdom and beyond and listen, observe and report back to the King. They are also law keepers. Halt feels that Will will make a good Ranger because he is good at concealing himself in the shadows. This is an important trait for a Ranger. In the time of war, Rangers act as scouts for the troops. Halt tells him about Morgarath and his Wargals who are enemies of the kingdom. It was a Ranger who warned the kingdom of Morgarath's impending attack years before and who lead the army across a secret ford to flank the enemy army and win the battle. Halt tells Will that he has the abilities to be a Ranger and should be proud of it.



In Chapter 9, Horace starts his training at the Battleschool. It is not what he expected. It is physically grueling. When he applied, he liked the pomp and circumstance of the cadets and the envy that they receive. He did not understand the preparation that goes with that or the discipline. Horace is singled out by three second year cadets, Bryn, Alda and Jerome, to harass. They do not like that he is a ward of the Baron and feel he got special treatment in his selection for Battleschool. They call him Baby and taunt him for being an orphan.

Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 Analysis

Will feels like a failure because he was not chosen by any of the Craftspeople as their apprentice. He feels that the paper that Halt gave the Baron will give him the answers he needs to why he was not chosen. This leads him to risk being caught sneaking into the Baron's study. He uses his natural skill for being invisible to help him gain access to the study.

Will is confused by his being offered an apprenticeship to the Rangers. He does not know what the Rangers are or what skills he could have that they would want. The Baron tries to explain to him, but knows that the people fear the Ranger because they do not know much about the Ranger Corp.

Will begins to learn more as he begins his apprenticeship and sees that Rangers are an important part of protecting the kingdom. He still wants to be warrior for he feels he will be closer to his father if he is one. Halt tries to make him see that being a Ranger is just as important.

Horace finds Battleschool to be difficult. He had not expected this and is surprised by the rigors of the physical training and the school work involved with being a soldier. Being bullied by the second year cadets makes his life even more difficult. He is not used to being bullied and believes it is just part of being a cadet.



Chapter 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

Chapter 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 Summary

In Chapter 10, Halt begins Will's trainings. Will is eager to learn about the weapons used, but does not like to learn about map reading or chart drawing. He is surprised by the weapons. There are no swords or battle axes, but a longbow and knives. Halt tells him that the principal weapons of a Ranger are stealth and silence and the ability to avoid being seen. Weapons are only used as a last resort. Will struggles to learn how to use the weapons and is advised that he needs lots of practice.

In Chapter 11, Sir Rodney is amazed by Horace's sword fighting skills. He watches him during a drill and sees the speed with which he executes the required moves and adds an extra stroke, while still keeping in time with the others. Sir Rodney calls this to the attention of the drillmaster, Sir Karel. He asks the drillmaster to come see him when class is dismissed. Karel knows that Sir Rodney wishes to discuss the superior skills of the new cadet.

In Chapter 12, Halt takes Will to meet the Ranger's horse breeder, Old Bob. He lives deep in the forest in a small shack and does not smell pleasant. Old Bob introduces Will to his pony, Tug. Tug is to be Will's horse. Will is surprised by the horse that he is shown. He is used to seeing the huge horses of the warriors and is disappointed when he sees the small shaggy horse in front of him. Old Bob explains that Tug is not a battle horse. It was breed for speed and can run on long after any other horse can. Will is to be taught how to ride and care for Tug. Will worries that he will embarrass himself in front of Halt and Old Bob. The men's opinions mean a lot to him and he does not want to disappoint them.

In Chapter 13, Sir Rodney talks with Sir Karel about Horace's sword fighting abilities. They believe that the boy is a natural. "Naturals were possessed of unique skills in timing and balance and rhythm" (pg. 92). These students need to be nurtured so as to develop the potential for genius. Sir Rodney does not want Horace to know that they think he has such skill so that he will not get cocky.

Bryn, Jerome and Alda harass Horace because they believe that Sir Rodney found fault in his sword fighting and make him stand in the river holding a large stone over his head. Horace does this because he believes that this is the way things are supposed to be. He vows however to get revenge for all of his humiliation.

In Chapter 14, Will is taught how to ride. He is eager to jump on the horse's back so does not heed Halt's caution to wait. This eagerness leads to the horse sending him sailing through the air over the horse's head. Halt explains to him that Ranger horses have to be asked before a rider can mount him for the first time. This way they cannot be stolen. Will does not believe this at first. He thinks the man is making a joke at his



expense. Old Bob informs him that Tug needs to be asked "Do you mind?" before he will let a rider on his back. Once Will asks permission, he is able to ride Tug.

Will is allowed to ride Tug out of the paddock and finds that he runs as fast as the wind. He is amazed at the speed of the horse. Old Bob teaches him how to care for the horse's saddle and harness and gives him riding tips. That evening, Halt and Will ride back to Halt's cottage. On the way Will asks Halt about the Ranger who was responsible for Morgarath's defeat. Halt tells him that he cannot remember the man's name, and that names are not important.

Chapter 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 Analysis

Will is learning what it is to be a Ranger. He is at first disappointed that there are no swords involved like proper warriors, but the use of the bow intrigues him and he enjoys practicing. Will is also introduced to a Ranger's horse. Tug is to be his horse and he learns how to bond with him and take of him. He does not like the look of Tug at first because he is not a proper warrior's horse, but Tug proves that he is better than any battle horse. The two become fast friends and Will learns that Ranger horses have special bonds with their riders. Will begins to understand that being a Ranger may be different than being a warrior, but it can be just as rewarding.

Will is confused about Halt's unwillingness to tell him about the Ranger who was responsible for Morgarath's defeat. He wants to learn all he can about the Rangers, but this subject is one Halt will not discuss. Halt tells him that names are not important, but Will knows that this is not true. If it were, he would not have been taunted so much about not having a last name.

Horace has the natural skill of a warrior, but Sir Rodney believes if he tells him this he will become cocky. By not telling him, it leaves Horace believing he is not a good warrior and opens him to the taunting of his bullies. Horace believes that the bullying is a rite of passage and will not say anything to anyone about it, but that does not mean that he likes it. He is ashamed of the humiliation that these boys put him through and vows to get his revenge on them at his first opportunity. The fact that there are three of them leaves him at a disadvantage in fighting back. He has to bide his time and wait for the proper moment to exact his revenge.



Chapter 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

Chapter 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 Summary

In Chapter 15, it is Harvest Day and everyone gets the day off to celebrate. There is a traveling fair at the castle and the Baron pays for it all. Will is on his way to the castle to see his ward mates. Will has been with Halt for three months learning to ride and practicing with weapons and how to move without being seen. He is ready for a holiday, but does not relish seeing Horace. It is Jenny's idea for all the ward mates to get together. She is baking them pies to entice them to the gathering. Jenny is Master Chubb's prize pupil and her pies are legendary within the castle.

Will has arrived early for the meeting and takes the opportunity to pick apples for Tug to eat. The Baron rides past on his way to the fairgrounds and greets the young boy. He tells Will that he looks like a Ranger and asks if he is enjoying learning to be a Ranger. Will has been too busy to think about it, but tells that Baron that he supposes. He just thinks Halt is too serious. Baron says being a Ranger is important and he should listen to what Halt says.

Will asks the Baron who the Ranger was who defeated Morgarath. Will believes it was Halt and wonders why he has not been honored. The Baron admits that yes it was Halt and that Halt would not let him honor him. It isn't the Rangers' way. He tells Will not to tell Halt that he told him that he led the cavalry because he will be angry with him.

In Chapter 16, George, Jenny, Alyss and Will are gathered for their meeting and waiting on Horace. They are hungry and decide to eat before Horace arrives. Jenny is against not waiting for Horace, but concedes and puts two pies back for him. The four are laughing and having fun when Horace arrives. Horace is the only one who is miserable in his apprenticeship and this is because of the bullies who are harassing him. This makes him irritable and he takes it out on his friends. A fight breaks out between Will and Horace after Horace tries to ride Tug and is thrown. The two use their training to try and gain the upper hand on one another. Sir Rodney stops the fight. He is very upset with the apprentices and makes them shake hands. The two boys do as they are told, but their feud is obviously far from over.

In Chapter 17, the strife between Will and Horace remains unresolved. The boys only see each other from a distance so have not been able to resolve their differences and Will knows that it will come to a head eventually. Halt and Will are in the woods practicing Will's tracking skills. They come upon tracks of a wild boar and a man hiding in the bushes.

In Chapter 18, The man says that a wild boar has been menacing the fiefdom. The man seems surprised that Halt is such a small built man. He believed Halt the Ranger was a much larger man. Halt sends the man to Castle Redmont to tell the Baron and Sir



Rodney that their help is needed on a boar hunt. Will and Halt will track the boar, while the knights prepare their hunt.

In Chapter 19, Will and Halt track the boar. Will asks why they do not just kill the boar with their bows, but Halt tells him that the boar is too big and would take too many arrows to kill it. He explains a boar hunt to him and tells him that Baron and Sir Rodney enjoy boar hunts.

Sir Rodney recruits Horace to go on the boar hunt with him. The knights form a circle around the boar's hiding place with spears so that the boar will run upon the spear and be killed. Halt and Will are behind the knights at strategic points so that they can shoot the boar with arrows if it escapes the circle. The Baron and Sir Rodney are excited and hope that the boar charges toward their side of the circle. Will and Horace, who are on their side of the circle, hope that the boar charges the other side of the circle. The boar rushes out of its lair and charges toward a young knight who places his spear on the ground and the boar runs upon it killing itself.

Chapter 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 Analysis

Will believes that it was Halt who defeated Morgarath and asks the Baron as a way to confirm his suspicions. He is confused about why Halt has not been honored for his heroism. Will does not understand why Halt does not want accolades on his behalf. He has not quite comprehended the Ranger way just yet. Halt believes in being invisible to his enemies and receiving accolades is not a way of staying invisible.

Will and his ward mates are excited about seeing one another. Horace is the only one who is unhappy with his choice of apprenticeship and so is jealous of the others for their happiness. He had thought that the Battleschool was the best choice where he would be revered by his friends, but instead he finds them happy and enjoying themselves without him. He feels left out and becomes defensive. The bullied cadet becomes a bully to his friends who he knows he can intimidate. Horace and Will have never gotten along and an ultimate fight was always where they were headed. They are both headstrong and will not let the other think that he is better than him at anything. It is a rivalry that will eventually have to be settled.



Chapter 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

Chapter 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 Summary

In Chapter 20, the Baron and the knights gather around the young knight who killed the boar and congratulate him. The Baron is upset that he did not get to make the kill, but is happy to congratulate the knight. Will and Horace are both excited from the thrill of the fear of watching the boar charge. This makes their squabbles seem petty. It makes Horace feel bad about his behavior toward Will. As he is about to go and offer his congratulations to the knight, a boar bigger than the previous one, comes running from the shelter of the bushes. The hunters have broken up their circle and Horace and Will are the only ones standing in the boar's way. Horace attempts to stop the boar with his spear, but it slips from his hand. Will shoots arrows at the boar to draw its attention away from Horace. The boar turns its attention to Will and he must run to keep away from it. Halt kills the boar with an arrow straight in its heart and saves his young apprentice. Horace thanks Will for saving his life and vows that if Will ever needs help to call on him. The Baron is delighted at the two boys and happy that they have resolved their differences.

In Chapter 21, Will does not like all the attention he is getting after saving Horace from the attack. He feels that Halt was the one who saved the situation. He also feels that Horace is not getting any recognition for putting himself in front of the boar to save Will. Halt tells him that Sir Rodney is a smart, observant man who more than likely knows what happened during the boar hunt. Will would like to talk to Horace about what happened, but never sees him.

Sir Rodney is confused by Horace. He shows extraordinary skills in weapons training, but his school work is handed in late or sloppily finished. Sir Rodney believes that he has a predilection for fighting because he always has bruises and seems to have no friends. He is thinking of expelling Horace from Battleschool.

Bryn, Jerome and Alda believe that Horace made the cadets look bad when the Ranger apprentice saved him. They pull a bag over his head and beat him with sticks. After beating Horace, they leave to go find Will to teach him the same lesson.

In Chapter 22, Will is practicing his weapons training when he is set upon by Bryn, Jerome and Alda. The boy cannot take on the three boys all at once and is overpowered. Horace stops the attack. He is holding a wooden drilling sword. Halt also shows up and levels out the odds. He makes the boys take on Horace one by one. This scares the boys because they know that Horace is a better soldier than any of them. He gets his revenge on the boys who have been making his life miserable for months. Horace thanks Halt for giving him the opportunity to exact his revenge. Halt thanks him for helping Will.



In Chapter 23, Horace's life at the Battleschool has improved. Sir Rodney expelled Byrn, Jerome and Alda not only from the school, but from the castle and the neighboring village. He wants to thank Halt properly for improving his life, but Halt and Will have left for a Rangers' Gathering.

Halt and Will are on their way to the Rangers' Gathering. It is an annual gathering where the Rangers talk business and Will will be tested to see if he has what it takes to be a Ranger. Halt's previous apprentice, Gilan, always tries to sneak up on Halt to catch his former master out. Halt has Will hide in the trees as he moves on with Tug so that Gilan will still hear two horses moving ahead of him. Gilan is a good tracker and Will does not see him until he is near Halt. Halt has told Will to choose a point near the other Ranger and fire an arrow to surprise him. Gilan is amazed by Will's skills and the two become fast friends. Gilan is surprised that Gilan wears a sword, but Halt explains that Gilan's father is a knight and that Gilan had received sword training before becoming a Ranger so is allowed to carry it. Will is surprised that Gilan would choose joining the Rangers over Battleschool.

In Chapter 24, Halt can tell that something is wrong when they enter the campground. Riders are heading out of the camp and the senior Rangers are having a meeting in the Corps Commandants tent. Halt goes to join this meeting and leaves Gilan and Will to set up camp. Merron, a fellow Ranger, comes to greet them and gives them what news he has. He tells them that Morgarath is up to something. A force of Wargals broke out of the Mountains of Rain and Night and headed south. The Rangers keep sentries to keep the creatures in their territory and also to keep an eye on Lord Morgarath. There is also news that Lord Lorriac is dead. He died without a mark on him. It is believed it was his heart. Lorriac was the leader of the King's heavy cavalry.

Halt returns from the meeting with news that they are to break camp. The Wargal party was a diversion so that two Kalkara could slip off the mountain without being seen. It is believed that they are holed up on the Solitary Plain. Kalkara are creatures somewhere between an ape and a bear that walks upright. They are intelligent and obsessed with silver. Morgarath pays them in silver to do his bidding. The creatures are assassins and once they are given a specific victim they do anything in their power to kill them. They are difficult to kill and if you look into their eyes you become frozen and helpless. The only thing they seem to be vulnerable to is fire.

It is believed that Morgarath has used the Kalkara to kill Lord Northolt and Lord Lorriac. The full affect of the creatures' stare is not known and they believe that is how they killed Lorriac without leaving a mark. Halt informs Will and Gilan that the three of them are going after the Kalkara.

Chapter 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 Analysis

Will and Horace realize what is important when they are attacked by the boar. Their differences mean nothing after their life threatening situation. Horace sees what kind of person Will is and Will sees that Horace is willing to save him. Will is embarrassed by



the praises he receives for his actions and hopes that Horace is also getting his due for attempting to save Will's life.

Byrn, Jerome and Alda do not think that it was heroics on Will's part. They see it as shame on the Battleschool. They see Rangers as less than soldiers so they want to teach both Horace and Will a lesson. The tables get turned on them and Halt helps Horace teach them a lesson. Horace gets to pay them back for all the humiliation that they have caused him. Horace and Will's relationship becomes a true friendship. Horace proves that he is there for Will even when he has been severely beaten and in obvious pain. It shows that he values Will's friendship.

Will has considerable skills as a Ranger. He proves this when he is able to hide from Gilan and being asked to help track the Kalkara. Will is being treated like a proper Ranger and feels respected by Halt.



Chapter 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

Chapter 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 Summary

In Chapter 25, Gilan is not happy with taking Will along to hunt the Kalkara. Halt says that he is a Ranger and has his part to do for the Corp. Halt is taking Gilan along because his sword could come in handy against the Kalkara. The three ride into the Solitary Plain on the track of the Kalkara. They believe that the Kalkara are on the Solitary Plain near the Stone Flutes. This is a horrible place where the wind flows through the stones making a keening sound that irritates a person.

They are hoping to not be seen and come upon the Kalkara unawares. There are people who live on the plains. It is a hard existence and the people do not like strangers. Halt is worried that some of the people may be in league with the Kalkara. He wants to try and stay unseen.

In Chapter 26, Halt, Gilan and Will stop to make camp. They cannot track the Kalkara in the dark. The sound of the Stone Flutes makes them feel on edge. Will is frightened. The next morning they see a Plainsperson. He runs away from the men and they must assume that he is going to tell the Kalkara of their presence.

Will asks Halt why Morgarath has enlisted the Kalkara. He and the senior Rangers think that there is a war coming. Morgarath has been contacting the kingdom's enemies trying to recruit allies. Morgarath is using the Kalkara to kill off the kingdom's leaders who will help lead the attack against him. Gilan thinks he is not only destroying their command structure, but getting revenge on the men who thwarted his first attack. They discuss who the Kalkara could go after next. Will privately thinks that Halt is the Kalkara's next target. During the night, they hear the howling of the Kalkara that signals that they are on the hunt for their next victim.

In Chapter 27, the next morning they find the Kalkaras' tracks. The two are traveling apart, but on parallel courses. Halt and Will follow one set of tracks and Gilan follows the second. The three Rangers follow the Kalkara trying to determine their destination. Halt surmises that it could be the Ruins of Gorlan, which are the ruins of the ancestral home of Lord Morgarath or to Castle Araluen. They question whether he is going after King Duncan.

Halt sends Will to Castle Redmont to get Baron Arald and Sir Rodney to help them deal with the Kalkara. Will rides Tug and Gilan's horse, Blaze, alternately so that he can reach the castle faster. Gilan is left to walk after Halt.

In Chapter 28, Will rides through the night alternating horses to reach Castle Redmont. Will takes his message to Baron Arald and Sir Rodney. Will tells them that Halt believes the Kalkara are going after the King, but that he believes that it is going after Halt. He believes that the Kalkara are leading Halt into an ambush. The Baron agrees that the



Ruins of Gorlan would be a perfect place for an ambush. The Baron orders Will to get some rest, while he and Sir Rodney ready themselves to ride after the Kalkara.

In Chapter 29, Will rides with the Baron and Sir Rodney to the Ruins of Gorlan. The Baron has given orders that if they find the Kalkara at the ruins Will is to hold back and let him and Sir Rodney charge the creatures. They are hoping to have the element of surprise. Will does not want to get anywhere near the creatures. More knights are following behind them, but they do not know how far behind them they are. Will is to take these knights after the Kalkara if they get the better of the Baron and Sir Rodney. Will realizes that the odds are against them. The three hear the howls of the Kalkara and see a fire in the distance. They know it is Halt. They rush on to his aide.

At the ruins of Castle Gorlan, they find one of the Kalkara mortally wounded. The Baron and Sir Rodney run it through and set it on the bonfire that they believe that Halt has made. The creature is quickly consumed by the flames. They begin to search the ruins for signs of Halt. Will finds Halt's longbow smashed and splintered into two pieces. They question where Halt and the second Kalkara are.

Chapter 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 Analysis

Will is terrified about tracking the Kalkara and thinking of the war that is most likely on the horizon. He is also worried that Halt is the target of the Kalkara. He knows that Halt was an essential part of Morgarath's defeat. He wants to be able to protect his master if the need arises.

Will voices his concerns about Halt to the Baron and is surprised that he listens to him. The Baron respects the boy and his instincts. He also realizes the soundness of Will's reasoning.



Chapter 30, 31, 32, Epilogue

Chapter 30, 31, 32, Epilogue Summary

In Chapter 30, Halt is in the ruins of the castle. He has found a place of concealment from the remaining Kalkara. It is searching the ruins for him. He is wounded and unarmed. He was caught in the freezing gaze of the creature for a moment, but was able to escape. Halt realized that the creatures were hunting him in the late afternoon and decided to make his stand at the ruins. He built the bonfire knowing they would wait until dark to attack.

Halt hears the arrival of the Baron, Sir Rodney and Will. The creature has stopped stalking him and is preparing to position itself to attack his friends. Halt jumps from his hiding place and throws his knife hitting the Kalkara in the eye. Halt runs from the Kalkara toward his friends. They rush to save him. The Baron and Sir Rodney attack the Kalkara without success. Will sits horrified watching. He sees the torch that the Baron has discarded and thinks of how the Kalkara fear fire. He sets an arrow on fire and shoots it at the Kalkara. The arrow smacks into the creature's chest. The arrow does not penetrate its hide, but the fire catches and spreads with incredible speed over the creature. The creature screams in agony before dying.

In Chapter 31, Will meets up with Alyss, Horace and Jenny for dinner at an inn. It is Horace's idea to celebrate Will's return with a feast. The tale of his defeat of the Kalkara has spread throughout the village and Will is embarrassed by all of the attention.

Following the battle with the Kalkara, Rodney and Will made camp by the ruins and tended to the wounds of Baron Arald and Halt. Gilian arrived the next morning riding a plow horse. After making sure Halt is okay, he claims his horse and rides for his own fief. The rest of them return to Castle Redmont and begin preparing the men for war.

Will admits to his friends that he was petrified when fighting the Kalkara. He does not like thinking of the dreadful creatures. He is happy that his relationship with Horace has evolved into a firm friendship. They see each other as equals. As the evening wears on, Jenny asks who would like to dance with her. Horace jumps at the chance. Watching Horace and Jenny dance and being left alone with Alyss makes Will look at her for the first time. She tells him that she is very proud of him and kisses him. Will thinks of the kiss as he falls asleep.

In Chapter 32, Will is honored for his killing of the Kalkara. The Baron wants to honor the boy for proving his fidelity and courage to the fief and the Kingdom of Araluen. Horace leads the cheering of the people. The Baron also wants to honor him for saving his life. For that he wants to give Will something he has always wanted. He offers him a chance to transfer to the Battleschool as an apprentice to Sir Rodney. Sir Rodney assures Will that the knights and apprentices all agree that there could be no worthier member for the Battleschool than Will.



The Baron gives Will a sword and a shield painted with a representation of a fierce boar's head saying that it will be his coat of arms when he graduates. The Baron says that all Will has to do is say the word and the sword and shield are his. This is what Will has always wanted. He thinks of Halt and his time training as a Ranger. He thanks the Baron, but tells him that he is a Ranger. The Baron is happy to see Will's loyalty to the Rangers.

In the Epilogue, Halt gives Will a small bronze amulet shaped like an oak leaf, which is a symbol of the Rangers. Will is not supposed to receive it until he passes his first Assessment, but Halt feels he deserves it now. Will thinks of what he has given up by turning down an apprenticeship to the Battleschool. Will talks to Halt about his father. Halt tells Will that he knew his father. Will's father, Daniel, was a sergeant in the king's army. He was a loyal and brave soldier who saved Halt's life from the Wargals when Morgarath and the Wargals were fighting their way back to the Mountains of Rain and Night. Halt tells Will that he had never seen Wargals afraid, but that Daniel's attack left the Wargals scared and running away. As he was dying, he asked Halt to see that his wife and baby were looked after. Halt found that Daniel's wife and died in childbirth leaving behind a baby boy. Halt brought him to the castle and the Baron agreed to look after him. Halt kept his distance because he felt that having an attachment to the Rangers would make people view the boy differently. Will feels that his father would think he made the right choice in choosing the Rangers over Battleschool. This makes him feel at peace.

Chapter 30, 31, 32, Epilogue Analysis

Will is able to save Halt, the Baron and Sir Rodney from the Kalkara because of his resourceful thinking. He takes the one thing that the creature fears and uses it to kill it. He looks past his fears and is able to help save their lives. Will is embarrassed by the peoples' reaction to what they see as heroic actions. To him, he only did what needed to be done. Will does not like the accolades. He is seeing why Halt did not want any honors when he helped defeat Morgarath.

Will has found out what it is to be a Ranger and does not want to leave the corp when offered a position at the Battleschool. He has found a place where he belongs and does not wish to leave Halt. Finding out that his father saved Halt's life makes him realize that he has made the right choice. Being a Ranger and working with Halt, is now a connection with the father he never knew. Knowing that his father would be happy with his apprenticeship to the Rangers, Will is at peace with his place in the kingdom even as a war is beginning to brew around him.



Characters

Will

Will is a ward of Baron Arald. He was left on the doorstep of Castle Redmont when he was a baby with a note saying that his mother died in childbirth and father died a hero. Will is a slight built young man who is not as tall as his fellow wards. This makes him a target of bullying by his fellow ward, Horace.

At the age of fifteen, Will has his Choosing Day. Will requests to be an apprentice to the Battleschool because he believes his father was a great knight. When he is rejected, he is devastated. Will is chosen to become an apprentice to Halt, a member of the Rangers Corp. He is taught how to acquire information without being seen.

Will learns to track and hunt and how to fight. These skills help him track a boar that is terrorizing the fiefdom and save his former ward mate Horace from being attacked by the boar. This makes Horace respect Will and offer him his friendship. Will's true test of courage comes when he faces the Kalkara with Halt. The Kalkara are deadly creatures that are difficult to kill. Will must save his master from one of these deadly creatures. He uses his intelligence to shoot the creature with an arrow dipped in fire. He receives accolades from the Baron and an offer to join the Battleschool. Will refuses saying that he is a Ranger. He has learned that being a Ranger is who he is and an important aspect of his life.

Horace Altman

Horace Altman is a ward mate of Will's. He bullies Will because he is bigger and stronger than the boy. Horace dreams of being a knight and has the physical build and athletic ability to be accepted. He does not like Will because of his wit, and how the other ward mates seem to like Will better than him.

On choosing day, Horace chooses to join the Battleschool. Sir Rodney sees him as a prime candidate and accepts him. During training, Sir Rodney admires Horace's sword fighting ability and believes he is a natural. This kind of genius is rare and he believes should be nurtured.

Horace is bullied by three second year cadets who target Horace because he is an orphan. They feel he should not have been accepted to the school. They make him do humiliating tasks to make him feel worthless. Horace takes this because he believes that it is part of Battleschool.

Horace's relationship with Will changes when Will saves his life during a boar attack. He pays back his debt to Will when the three bullies go after Will because they feel he sullied the name of the Battleschool by saving Horace. Horace, having been severely beaten by the boys, still goes to Will's defense. Halt impressed by the boy allows him to



take his revenge on the boys by allowing him to fight them one at a time. This gives Horace the advantage and he repays the boys for all the misery that they caused him.

Horace enjoys Battleschool after the three boys are expelled from the school and soon learns that he has the ability to become a good knight. The bullying had made him doubt this. Horace respects Will and Halt for their support of him.

Halt

Halt is a member of the Ranger Corp. He takes Will on as an apprentice. He believes the boy has the necessary qualities to be a Ranger. Will's father saved Halt's life in the battle with Morgarath. Halt promised the dying man that he would take care of his wife and their unborn child. He could not save the woman from dying in childbirth, but he was able to find a home for his son.

Halt is a silent man who sees everything around him. He watches over the kingdom to keep it safe. He is a spy for the kingdom with abilities to be unseen so that he can obtain information covertly. The people fear him because they believe him to use magic because it is the only way to explain his seeming invisibility.

Halt helped defeat Lord Morgarath in his attempt to take over the Kingdom of Araluen. This leads Lord Morgarath to send the Kalkara's after him to exact revenge on him before he attempts another takeover of the kingdom. Halt kills one of the Kalkara, but is at the mercy of the second. Baron Arald and Sir Rodney come to his rescue, but it is Will who saves Halt's life with an arrow of fire.

Jenny Dalby

Jenny is a ward mate of Will's. She is fond of cooking and is taken as an apprentice to the Castle chef, Master Chubb. She is a pretty girl and is admired by everyone. The boys and men admire her looks and listen when she speaks. The girls and women respect her. Horace likes her most of his ward mates.

George Carter

George is a ward mate of Will's. He is an intelligent and is chosen as an apprentice to the Scribeschool. He is an eloquent speaker and makes long speeches that annoy his ward mates.

Alyss Mainwaring

Alyss Mainwaring is a ward mate of Will's. Her father was a cavalry lieutenant who died in battle and her mother succumbed to fever. She is the only ward mate who has been



with him from the beginning. This gives them a special bond and she is the person he is closest to in the castle. She is chosen as an apprentice to the Diplomatic Service.

Baron Arald

Baron Arald is the Lord of Redmont Fief. He takes in children of the kingdom who have become orphaned. He takes very good care of his wards and loves them. It is his responsibility to make his Castle and the inhabitants of his fief safe.

Sir Rodney

Sir Rodney is a knight in charge of the Battleschool. He is an entrusted adviser to Baron Arald, and goes with the Baron to fight the Kalkara.

Gilan

Gilan is a ranger in the Ranger Corp. He was once an apprentice to Halt and has great respect for his former master. He goes with Halt and Will to track the Kalkara.

Jerome, Alda, Bryn

Jerome, Alda and Bryn are second-year students at the Battleschool. They bully Horace and make his life miserable.

Sir Karel

Sir Karel is a knight who helps train the apprentices at the Battleschool.

Old Bob

Old Bob breeds the horses for the Ranger Corp. They respect him for his knowledge of horses.

Master Chubb

Master Chubb is the castle cook. He chooses Jenny as his apprentice.

Lady Pauline

Lady Pauline is head of the Diplomatic Service of Redmont. She chooses Alyss to be part of the diplomatic service.



Martin

Martin is the secretary of Baron Arald. He takes great pleasure in his post and enjoys being part of Choosing Day.

Lord Morgarath

Lord Morgarath is the Lord of the Mountains of Rain and Night. He is the former Baron of Gorlan in the Kingdom of Araluen. He was driven from Araluen when he attempted to take over the kingdom after the death of the king. He considered the new king too young and inexperienced. Lord Morgarath takes the opportunity at the funeral of the king to attack the kingdom. Only the experienced men who advised his father save the Kingdom of Araluen from the clutches of Lord Morgarath.



Objects/Places

Wargals

Wargals are stocky, misshapen beings with features that were halfway human, but with a long, brutish muzzle and fangs like a bear or a large dog. Mongarath uses them as soldiers to attempt to gain control of the kingdom from King Duncan.

Kalkara

Kalkara is a creature that looks like a cross between an ape and a bear. Kalkara walk upright and are obsessed with silver. Mongarath uses this obsession to get them to do his bidding. Once they are given a task, they will do anything to accomplish it. They can be incredibly cunning and stalk their prey. Mongarath uses them to exact revenge on the men who thwarted his first attempt to take the kingdom.

Ruins of Gorlan

The Ruins of Gorlan are the ruins of Lord Mongarath's castle, which was destroyed during the battle for control of the kingdom. Mongarath was driven into the Mountains of Rain and Night and his castle destroyed.

The Mountains of Rain and Night

The Mountains of Rain and Night are an ancient, undisturbed part of the world. It has remained unchanged for centuries and there are rumors that strange beasts and ancient monsters still live there. Mongarath finds the Wargals and Kalkara there and makes them part of his army. He resides in the mountains after his failed attempt to take the kingdom.

Redmont Castle

Castle Redmont is the home of Baron Arald. It is built in ironstone, which is almost indestructible. When the sun is low in the sky the stone shines with an inner red light. This is what gives Redmont its name. Redmont means Red Mountain.

Choosing Day

Choosing Day is the day when the wards of Baron Arald choose to whom they want to be apprenticed. The ward gives their choice and then the Master decides if they want the ward as their apprentice. Will is rejected by Sir Rodney for Battleschool and by the



Horseshool. Halt, the Ranger, likes his skills of climbing and slipping into places unseen and offers Will the opportunity to be his apprentice.

Ranger Corp.

Ranger Corp is a group of men who watch over the kingdom and keep it safe. They are spies who listen for dangerous against the king and help the knights when there is war. They serve as guides to help the warriors.

Stone Flutes

The stone flutes are a circle of standing stones in the middle of the windiest part of the Solitary Plains. They are said to be arranged by the ancients. They create a constant keening sound that is heard for miles. The sound is eerie and disconcerts the listener. The constant sound is irritating and puts the listener on edge.

Battleschool

Battleschool is where boys are trained to be knights and warriors. They are put through rigorous training to prepare them to protect the castle and the kingdom. They choose boys with athletic ability and strength.

Fire

Fire is the only thing that Kalkaras fear. Will uses it to kill the Kalkara attempting to kill Halt.

Kingdom of Araluen

The Kingdom of Araluen is where the story is set. It is a fantasy world that has many fiefdoms each ruled by a Lord or Baron.



Themes

Coming of Age

Coming of Age is a theme of the novel. The wards of Baron Arald have grown up in the comfort of Castle Redmont in the Baron's care. When they turn fifteen, they must decide what they would like to do with their lives. Baron Arald calls it Choosing Day. The wards lives are forever changed on this day. They no longer have each other to rely on, but must become apprentices and go out on their own.

Will is chosen as an apprentice to Halt, the Ranger. This changes his life. He learns how to fight and track and become a spy for the kingdom. Will must grow up quickly as he learns how to protect the kingdom. He is involved in the killing of a boar and must save the life of Horace. Near the end of his training, Will must help Halt track the Kalkara, a deadly creature. Will learns what it is to be a Ranger and the dangers that come with being one.

Horace is chosen to go to Battleschool. He learns that his childish fantasy of what he thought Battleschool would be like is nothing like reality. It is a rough existence where he is bullied and tested to his endurance. Horace learns how bullying can be hurtful and he and Will become friends. He matures and sees what he thought was important as a child is not what is important to him now. He learns what true friendship is and what being a man means.

Good vs Evil

Good vs Evil is a theme of "The Ruins of Gorlan". Lord Morgarath attempts to take over the Kingdom of Araluen with vicious creatures that come from the Mountains of Rain and Night. These are ancient creatures who he persuades to do his bidding. Since his thwarted attempt of taking over the kingdom, Morgarath has been plotting his revenge. He wants to make the men responsible for his defeat regret causing it. Morgarath uses the Kalkara for his next attempt to take over the kingdom. These are vicious creatures who will do anything for silver. Morgarath uses them to kill his enemies. Once they are given a task they stay with that task into it is complete. They are cunning and excellent hunters. They can mesmerize their prey with their eyes and make them helpless.

The knights and Rangers of the kingdom only fight to protect the King and his kingdom. They fight Morgarath because he attacks the kingdom and attempts to take it by force. They only attack when provoked and do not do it for personal gain. It is to defend the people and their king. They put their lives on the line for what they believe to be right and look out for one another as Will's father did when he saved Halt's life in battle. He did not think of his own life, but reacted when he saw a man in danger. This type of heroism is what distinguishes the good from evil for the creatures used by Morgarath have no loyalty to one another. They fight because they like to or for silver. They are



controlled by their master and do his bidding. The men fight for the king because they love and admire him.

Friendship

Friendship is a theme of the novel. Will and Horace start the novel as enemies. Horace bullies Will because he is jealous of how everyone likes him. When Horace joins Battleschool, he learns what it is like to be bullied. He sees how he treated Will and knows it was not fair to him. When Will saves his life from a wild boar attack Horace pledges his friendship to him. He realizes that Will is a friend to him no matter what has gone on between them.

Horace proves his friendship when the three second year students go after Will after beating Horace. They think that because Will had to save Horace it made the Battleschool look bad. They do not like that a Ranger's apprentice saved a cadet. Horace even though they beat him severely follows them to Halt's cottage to save Will. He interrupts them beating on Will and tells them to stop.

Horace keeps his promise to be there for Will when he needs him. He knows that Will would do the same for him and endures the pain to help him. He travels to Halt's cottage in extreme pain and confronts the boys knowing that he cannot take them all on at once especially since he is already hurt. Will is impressed by his coming to help him. Horace shows himself to be a true friend to Will. The boys past differences are behind them as they have grown and matured. They have learned what is important and know that they have each other's backs.

Revenge

Revenge is a theme of "The Ruins of Gorlan". Lord Morgarath attempted to take over the kingdom when the old king died. He wanted to use the confusion of the man's death and his funeral to attack, while the kingdom was vulnerable. The old king's military advisers and friends rallied to thwart his attempt. Lord Morgarath was driven from the kingdom into the Mountains of Night and Rain. There he planned his revenge waiting for the perfect time to execute his plans. The book starts with him sending out his Kalkara to slowly kill the men he believes thwarted his previous attack on the kingdom.

This plan not only rids him of the men who would lead the attack against him, it allows him to get revenge on them for his previous defeat. It is a terrible revenge for the Kalkara are vicious creatures and takes many knights to kill. They can mesmerize a man with their eyes so that he does not attempt to defend himself.

Horace also gets his revenge on the bullies who make his life at Battleschool miserable. Halt helps him to exact his revenge by making the boys take on Horace one by one. Horace has the advantage in this because he is a strong boy with great skill in fighting. By fighting them one by one rather than all at once, Horace humiliates the boys and punishes them for their bullying and for attacking Will. Halt informs Sir Rodney of the

boys' actions and this leads to their expulsion from Battleschool and from Redmont Fiefdom. After they are expelled, Battleschool becomes a much better place for Horace and he is able to excel.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of the novel is third person. It is omniscient, for the narrator knows of the actions and events of the past and present. He tells of the lives of Will and Horace. The story is told through these boys' eyes. Will is a vulnerable fifteen year old who does not know who his parents are, and Horace is a tough boy who bullies him. Their actions are seen through their eyes so that the reader can get to know them and understand their actions.

The story is told through exposition and dialogue. This allows the reader to become acquainted with the two main characters, Will and Horace. The dialogue shows the emotional conflict within the two boys. They are both orphaned and have issues with acceptance. The story is told on a strict timeline so the reader follows it easily. The viewpoint switches from Will to Horace so the reader sees their unfolding lives as the story progresses. The viewpoint of Halt, Baron Arald, Sir Rodney and Lord Morgarath are also used, but very sparingly. Will and Horace's viewpoints are the most important and are given the majority of the novel.

Setting

"The Ruins of Gorlan" is set in the fictional Kingdom of Araluen. Most of the novel takes place in the Redmont Fief. It is the fief of Baron Arald. The people of the fief are protected by the Baron, his knights and the Ranger, Holt.

Will and his ward mates reside in the Castle Redmont until they are fifteen. They are then apprenticed to craftspeople in the Fief. Will goes to live with the Ranger, Halt, in his cottage. The cottage is quite a distance from the castle and its surrounding village. It is on the edge of the forest under the shelter of the trees. Halt trains Will to become a Ranger in the forest. He learns how to track, archery, and how to become invisible so that he can spy without being seen.

Horace is apprenticed to the Battleschool and goes to live in the dormitory. It is for the cadets who are training to be knights. The dormitory has sparse furnishings to get them accustomed to the lives of soldiers.

Near the end of the novel, Will and Halt travel to a meeting of the Rangers Corp. This takes them throughout the Kingdom of Arulean. When they must hunt the Kalkara, Will, Halt and Gilan travel through the Solidary Plain. It is a vast, unmapped area, with no roads. This journey leads them to the Ruins of Gorlan, the ruins of Lord Morgarath's former home.

The novel ends back in Redmont Fief. Will celebrates saving Halt's life with a ceremony at Redmont Castle. He then goes back to Halt's cottage that is his home.



Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple. The book is intended for teens, so the language is not difficult or formal. The sentences are simple and make the book quick and easy to read.

The language of the novel is simple for it is told through the eyes of two fifteen-year-old boys. They have not had formal education so how they see the world is through simplistic eyes. The reader gets to see the boys' fears and courage. This leads them to cheer for the boys' success and hope that they will become friends. The story is told through exposition and dialogue. The exposition shows the boys feelings and their thoughts giving the reader an intimate view of their lives.

The author's style is simple with short concise sentences and chapters. This makes the book easy to read and enjoyable. The book is told in a linear fashion with short descriptions of how the children came to be wards of Baron Arald. The style and language gives the reader a feel of being fifteen and the fear and expectation that comes with it. The reader becomes an intimate part of their world and enjoys the quick concise action.

Structure

'The Ruins of Gorlan' is comprised of thirty-two chapters plus a prologue and an epilogue. The chapters are short between eight to ten pages. The short chapters give the sense that the story is moving quickly. It makes for a quick, fun read.

The plot of the novel is simple. It is the coming of age of two young boys. One is an apprentice to the Ranger Corp, which is a spy organization. The other is an apprentice to the knights. Will and Horace are both exceptional at their apprenticeships and mature into strong and intelligent young men. Will's training helps him save the life of his master, who played an important part in causing the downfall of Lord Morgarath.

The subplot of the novel is the revenge of Lord Morgarath. He attempted to take the Kingdom of Araluen by force fifteen years before and is exacting his revenge on the men who thwarted his plans. He is sending Kalkaras after the men to kill them one by one so that there will be no one to stop his second attempt at seizing the kingdom.

The novel's pace is fast. With short concise chapters, the action moves quickly. The words are simple and make the book easy to read. It is a story of orphan boys who find their place in the world and excel at their apprenticeships.



Quotes

"The time was ripe to unleash them."
Pg. 4, Prologue

"Tomorrow would be the biggest day of his life, because tomorrow was the Choosing Day and it would determine how he spent the rest of his life."
Pg. 5, Chapter 1

"That's right! Run away, Will No-Name! You're a no-name and nobody will want you as an apprentice."
Pg. 9, Chapter 1

"All Right Candidates! This Way! And Look Lively!"
Pg. 13, Chapter 2

"He had to know what was on the paper. And he had to know tonight."
Pg. 33, Chapter 5

"The boy Will has the potential to be trained as a Ranger. I will accept him as my apprentice."
Pg. 41, Chapter 5

"I'd forgotten how much fun having an apprentice can be."
Pg. 51, Chapter 7

"After all, that's why we tested you with that paper in the Baron's office."
Pg. 53, Chapter 7

"Oh no, Will. If you'd lied, you never would have become my apprentice."
Pg. 63, Chapter 8

"I'll never forget that debt. If ever you need a friend, if ever you need help, you can call on me."
Pg. 145, Chapter 20

"There's a war coming."
Pg. 197, Chapter 26



"Halt is my master, sir, and he's in a danger. My place is with him."
Pg. 214, Chapter 28

"It's the Kalkara," he said. "They're hunting."
Pg. 219, Chapter 29

"And then strangely, he let the weapon fall from his grasp and stood before the monster, totally at its mercy as the power of the Kalkara's gaze, now channeled through his one good eye, robbed him of his will and his ability to think."
Pg. 229, Chapter 30

"You ?" he whispered. "You were the man he saved?"
Pg. 248, Chapter 32

"Yet strangely, for the first time in his life, he felt at peace."
Pg. 249, Chapter 32

Topics for Discussion

How does not knowing who his parents are affect Will's life? Why do you think the Baron and Halt kept this information from him?

Do you think that Horace is jealous of Will? Why or why not? Give specific answers from the book.

Why does Halt not want anyone to know that he was the one who helped save the kingdom from the attack of Lord Morgarath? Does he see it as just his job? Why or why not?

Why does Sir Rodney not tell Horace that he has exceptional skill, but let him think that he is useless? What lesson does this teach Horace?

Why does Horace not tell anyone about the bullying he receives from Jerome, Alda and Bryn? Does he believe that he deserves to be bullied?

Why do Jerome, Alda and Bryn choose Horace to bully? Is it because he is an orphan? Why does this make a difference? How does being an orphan make him different from the other cadets?

Why does Lord Morgarath choose now to exact his revenge on the men who thwarted his attack on the kingdom? Do you believe that being unsuccessful in his attempt to kill these men will affect his plans to attempt another take over of the kingdom?

Why do you think Will chose not to join the Battleschool when he was given the opportunity by Baron Arald and Sir Rodney? What has changed since he begged to be allowed to join on Choosing Day? Does knowing who his father was and how he died affect Will's decision? How and why?