

Shadow & Claw Study Guide

Shadow & Claw by Gene Wolfe

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



Contents

Shadow & Claw Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Part 1: Chapter 1-6.....	4
Part 1: Chapter 7-15.....	6
Part 1: Chapter 16-24.....	9
Part 1: Chapter 25-35.....	11
Part 2: Chapter 1-6.....	15
Part 2: Chapter 7-15.....	18
Part 2: Chapter 16-23.....	21
Part 2: Chapter 24-31.....	23
Characters.....	25
Objects/Places.....	28
Themes.....	30
Style.....	32
Quotes.....	35
Topics for Discussion.....	37



Plot Summary

"Shadow and Claw" is the combination of the first two books in "The Book of the New Sun" series. The story is about Severian, a torturer, and his journey toward the city of Thrax to become an executioner. Severian has a larger destiny, although it is unknown to him.

The story is being told by Severian looking back on his life. He remembers everything in great detail. He began life as an apprentice in the torturer's guild where he happened to encounter the leader of the freedom fighters named Vodalus. Severian saves him from being killed, and Vodalus gives him a single coin. From this point on Severian tries to learn everything he can about Vodalus feeling that their destinies are intertwined.

Vodalus is a fugitive and his lover, Thea, has a sister who is taken captive and put in the torturer's guild. Severian falls in love with Thea's sister, Thecla, and takes pity on her and helps her to commit suicide. He is expelled from the guild and sent to Thrax to be the executioner. He starts his journey but is challenged to a duel along the way.

The duel is a trap that has been set up by a woman named Agia and her twin brother Agilus. Severian falls in love with Agia and wins the duel and kills her brother. Severian befriends a girl named Dorcas and they continue their journey with Severian holding a holy gem called the Claw of the Conciliator, which Agia had hidden in his bag. Dorcas and Severian get caught in a fight and are separated. Agia will try to kill Severian in the story but Severian will continue to care for her.

Severian continues to travel and soon meets up with Vodalus. Severian swears loyalty to Vodalus and journeys to the House of Absolute to carry a message for Vodalus and find Dorcas and his other friends. Once at the House of Absolute he delivers the message and Severian and Dorcas head on toward Thrax with the intent to return the Claw of the Conciliator to the holy priestesses that it belongs to. Severian encounters strange creatures along the way revealing his future and the truth that he will in fact become a ruler some day. The story ends with Dorcas, Severian and several others being in a trance trying to find information for Vodalus regarding the old earth. At this point Severian warns the reader that they may not want to read any further traveling with him since the road will be very difficult.



Part 1: Chapter 1-6

Part 1: Chapter 1-6 Summary

"Shadow and Claw" is the combination of the first two books in "The Book of the New Sun" series. The story is about Severian, a torturer and his journey toward the city of Thrax to become an executioner. Severian has a larger destiny, although it is unknown to him.

The story begins with Severian, the man recalling the story of a night that happened in his youth. Severian is at a gate at a grave yard with several other boys that he lives with in his guild. They are torturer apprentices. They are breaking several house rules by being at the gate. When they manage to sneak in there is a commotion and the boys disperse to hide among the tombstones. While Severian is hiding he sees two men and a lovely woman named Thea digging a body out of a grave. One man tells the others to take the body and leave while he stays to slow down the guards that are attacking. Severian is forbidden to help but he sees that the man is going to die and he stops the axe, in the hands of one of the guards, that would have killed the man. The man is Vodalus, leader of the resistance that fights the system that has taken over the world. Severian is given a single gold coin by Vodalus and they both depart the cemetery.

On Severian's way back to the guild of the torturers with the other boys they begin to swim across the river. When Severian is part way through the muddy water he is caught by weeds and begins to drown. There is a woman that comes to him in the water and thrusts him towards the surface where one of his friends is able to catch his hair and save him. Severian doesn't know what creature saved him in the water and tells no one of it or the encounter with Vodalus.

The people that are brought to the guild to be tortured and killed as commanded by the courts. The guild passes no judgment of their own and are forbidden to have mercy or to hand down more judgment than what has already been given. The people that are tortured are referred to as the clients. The boy's in the guild never know a mother or a father.

Severian takes the coin given him by Vodalus and hides it because it is not allowed for the apprentices younger than 18 to have money. Severian soon after finds a dog that had been tortured and left for dead by a different guild. Severian found a place to hide the dog and tended his wounds. Torturers are taught how to stop bleeding so that they can keep the clients alive long enough to carry out their orders. Severian names the dog Triskele but has to keep him hidden in the tower. Severian finds several days later that the dog has managed to escape. He hunts for the dog but is unable to find him. A week later Severian sees the dog in the street and knows that he has found a good home. Severian is a senior apprentice and is sent on many errands. He is told to go and fetch books from the library in the city.



Part 1: Chapter 1-6 Analysis

The reader will see that the torturer's guild is feared by most of the people with whom Severian comes in contact. Even though he is an apprentice it is apparent that they believe him to be the same as the others. Severian has not yet had to take part in the torturing of clients yet, but the reader will see that Severian, as well as the other boys in the guild, have been instilled with a sense that being a torturer is nothing of which to be ashamed. Later on when Severian becomes a torturer and is able to carry out executions he will not be without compassion but will have a sense of duty to the trade he has learned. It appears to be about the same as a soldier carrying out orders.

The reader isn't told in the text exactly what time or place this is, but later on in the story the reader will find that this story is supposedly taking place in the far distant future on earth. This will come into play later on in the story as the reader will see.

Throughout the story there will be continual references to other things that have happened or will happen, since the character is telling this story in past tense. There are mentions of the fact that the character now has his own throne but it is not explained how that has happened. It is also not made clear at this point that the sun is dying and has caused much of the turmoil that is taking place. Vodalus will be seen again before the book is over, as well as the woman in the water that saved Severian.

Severian has a future that is tied to Vodalus, as he explains in the first chapter of the book. Later on it will become evident that no matter how Severian feels about Vodalus, Severian will desire to abandon his duties to Vodalus if he can. The reader will also find that by the end of the book, since it is only the first and second in the series, that there will be many questions left unanswered as this book ends.

Severian has a love for the torturer's trade, but the reader will see this doesn't make him a murderous monster. He rationalizes to the reader, and perhaps himself as well, that if the people being put to death didn't have a properly trained torturer to do the task, it would be more dishonorable and painful for the person. While Severian holds his home dear the reader will soon see him betray it. The body that Vodalus and the others took in the grave yard will be explained later on as well.



Part 1: Chapter 7-15

Part 1: Chapter 7-15 Summary

Severian returns with the books and is told by Drotte to take the books to the end cell, which is forbidden since Severian is still only an apprentice. There Severian finds a tall, lovely woman named Thecla. She has not yet been tortured and is imprisoned because her sister is the lover of Vodalus, and the Autarch wants her sister to give Vodalus up to them. Thecla knows her sister won't betray her lover but is hopeful that the Autarch will realize there is no point in killing her and will let her go free. She is treated with special consideration and is able to ask the head of the guild for a person to sit and talk with her. She asks for Severian, and he is permitted to visit her and sit and discuss the books that he had brought to her. He falls in love with her and realizes that it was her sister that he saw in the cemetery that night that he saved Vodalus.

Thecla shares a lot of information with Severian. Thecla has been there long enough by this point in time that she believes she will be released. Soon Severian is old enough that he can become a journeyman torturer. He is called to the office of the head of the guild, Master Gurloes. Master Gurloes wants to know if Severian wants to be a torturer, because even if he was raised there he isn't a true torturer until he chooses it for his own. He is free to leave and make his own way in the world. Severian is scared at the thought of going out into the world on his own and says that he wants to be a torturer.

A feast occurs to celebrate the entrance of Severian as a journeyman torturer. Severian drinks until he is very drunk and doesn't remember anything until he wakes up sick. He hears someone outside his door and realizes it is his old Master Malrubius come to make sure that he is alright. It isn't until later that Severian remembers that Master Malrubius has been dead for many years.

The day after the celebration Severian begins his duties as a journeyman torturer. When an apprentice becomes a journeyman he wears a mask made of bone and leather so none will see his true face. They also wear cloaks that are darker than night. Severian presides over the cells where the clients are kept and takes food into Thecla. A woman is brought in to be killed, and Severian takes her to a cell next to Thecla's so that the two may talk. Thecla tells the woman that she has been there a long time and knows she will soon be released. Severian suddenly knows something is wrong and makes his way to Master Gurloes office. On his table Severian finds an order for Thecla's torture and death.

Severian knows there is no way for her to escape but he tries to think of one regardless, even taking a small knife from the kitchen. The next day Master Gurloes asks Severian to assist in Thecla's punishment. They go to Thecla's cell door and for a moment she believes she will be freed but soon realizes what is happening. She masters her fear and walks bravely to the room where she is to be subjected to the devices of the guild. Master Gurloes ties her to a machine that flashes white and Thecla's scream fill the



room. Thecla is dragged back to her cell where she lies on the bed, and it is some time before she can speak or move. The machine causes a change in a person that makes them want to kill themselves but are unable, so they are trapped in a nightmare. She tells Severian she should hate him but can't because his friendship is the last good thing she has. He tells her that he wanted to save her and even stole a knife from the kitchen. Thecla knows she is to lie blind and tormented for a month or more before she dies, and she asks Severian for the knife he stole. Severian puts the knife in her hand and leaves the room. He waits deciding if he should take the knife from her quickly but as he stands there a pool of blood flows out from under her door. Severian has just broken a rule of the guild with this action and goes to Master Gurloes to tell him what he has done.

Severian is put in a room with no locks but is guarded with the understanding that he will be killed if he tries to leave. Severian now only wonders about what method will be used in killing him. He is brought to the room of Master Palaemon, a master of the guild equal to Master Gurloes. He explains that many want him tortured for what he had done, and Severian agrees. Master Palaemon then tells him that he has several friends that have asked that Severian be put to death with no pain. Master Palaemon tells him that he cannot be put to death because they are the ones that are to carry out sentences and are not allowed to pass judgment. They could give Severian to a higher court to pass sentence, but Master Palaemon explains that this will only bring ridicule and shame to the guild and they are hated already, and there is fear over what will happen if such a black mark should occur on the brotherhood of the torturers. For his punishment and to save the guild, Master Palaemon tells Severian that he will travel north to a city named Thrax where he will become an executioner. Master Palaemon tells Severian that while the torturers are feared and looked at as outsiders, in Thrax he will be utterly alone and hated by all in the city for what he does. Severian swears that this is too much an honor for him but agrees that it is best for the guild and that he will not dishonor them again. Master Palaemon gives Severian a gift before he goes. A sword called Terminus Est.

Severian readies to leave the guild taking a few small possessions as well as the sword given him by Master Palaemon and a book that Thecla had read out of with Severian. Severian doesn't travel far before night overtakes him. He has made it far past the guild he knows, but the people still recognize the dark cloak that he wears. He is stopped and a political figure in the town explains to him that it would be best for him and for the population if he would stop and get some clothing to cover the fact that he is a torturer to which Severian agrees may be for the best.

He finds a place to sleep that night at an inn and shares a bed with a giant of a man named Baldanders. The next morning a man shows up and introduces himself as Dr. Talos and they go to find a place to eat breakfast.

Part 1: Chapter 7-15 Analysis

The reader will see at this point in the story that Severian didn't want to leave the torturer's guild because he didn't know where else to go. It has been seen that he lied



when he said that he loved the guild and wanted to stay there, but the fear of the unknown kept him there. After he broke a very solemn rule at the guild he had no choice but to leave, and the reader sees that Severian wanted very badly at that point to stay and felt at that point when he had no choices that he honestly did love it.

Thecla is dead by this point in the story, but the reader will see that she and Severian had a very close bond that will affect everything that happens to Severian as the story continues. Even when he meets other women he compares them to Thecla and how much he loved her. Thecla's memories will guide Severian later on in the story but the reader will see that it almost seems to madden him to some degree to have her in his head that much.

There hasn't been much talk of the outside world at this point, but as Severian travels the reader will get a picture of how divided the land is and that Severian will be forced to choose a side. The reader has seen that Severian has seen an old master of his that died long ago. This won't be the last time that he sees the man, and later in the story Severian will actually get to talk to him. He will also see his lost dog Triskele.

The sword that Master Palaemon gave him before he left isn't said to be magic and the reader won't see that the sword holds any powers itself, but Severian will risk his own life more than once to save the sword. It will become important in the story if for no other reason than because Severian refuses to let the one thing left to him by his disappointed Master Palaemon be lost.

Severian wanted to save Thecla but knew it to be impossible and so gave her the knife to cut her own throat. It is for his mercy that he has been thrown out of the guild. Since the reader is getting the account of the story from the main character long after it has happened and the character now sits on a throne and that in fact he will again show mercy to a captive that is to be executed—Vodalus. The release of Vodalus will not happen in this book but the reader is told that it will take place and be the final act that drives Severian out of the guild in which he has been raised.

Dr. Talos and Baldanders are interesting characters, though in "Shadow and Claw" the reader never will get many answers about who they are but they will appear several times in the story.



Part 1: Chapter 16-24

Part 1: Chapter 16-24 Summary

Baldanders, Dr. Talos, and Severian go to a place to have breakfast and convince the waitress to sit down with them. She isn't very pretty, but Dr. Talos convinces her that she can be, and she quits her job and the four of them start into the streets. Dr. Talos explains that they are going to put on a play and arrange a place to meet later. Severian has no intention of meeting up with them again and goes to find suitable clothes to put on over his cloak as he had promised the politician in the city he would do.

He comes to a shop where a beautiful woman outside has caught his attention. He talks to her for a moment and goes in to talk to her brother about getting something to wear. Once inside the brother, Agilus, begins to try and purchase the sword that Severian carries. Severian is firm on the fact that the sword is not for sale. Suddenly a masked man comes in and without saying a word gives Severian a small piece of metal and then exits without saying a word. Agilus explains that it is a challenge and that the man must have been insulted in some way and Severian will have to duel to the death with the man. Agilus gets his sister, Agia, to take Severian to a place where he can pick an avern. An avern is a poisonous plant with which the duel will be done. One prick of its leaves and a man will fall dead. Severian has never heard of this and is confused about how to fight with a plant but goes with Agia to pick the plant, even though she warns him it would be better to leave his things behind and run away. Severian refuses to run and shame his guild any further.

Before heading to get the avern Severian buys a cloak from Agilus to cover his guild color. He is told by Agia that it would be best if he would beg for alms and say he is a pilgrim heading for a northern shrine. Agia explains that the fight won't occur until late afternoon when the avern opens its flower. She tells him that he will most definitely be killed but takes him to retrieve the plant. They get in a carriage and Agia convinces him that it is important to be quick, and they frighten the driver with Severian's sword to the point that he is going so fast that the carriage wrecks. It slams into a holy building with an altar for the Claw of the Conciliator. Severian held onto his sword and as he is getting up sees a gem but realizes the building is on fire and goes to find Agia. Several priestesses come out and look for the Claw but can't find it and some wish to kill Severian believing he stole it. One of the priestesses takes Severian's hand and announces that he has no guilt but takes Agia and rips her clothing away looking for their stolen artifact. They don't find it and the two quickly hurry on their way.

Agia takes him to a magical garden spot and they find a man to ferry them across a river to where the avern grow. The river holds dead people and Severian falls in and is grabbed by a young woman. The woman is dragged out of the water with no idea where she came from and can't remember anything. Before they leave Severian realizes that the man that had ferried them across the river was the man that had been with Vodalus the night that Severian had watched them rob the grave. He whispers to the man, who



is named Hildegrin, but the man tells him that there is a mistake even though Severian knows there is not.

Severian is able to get the avern, and they decide to find a place to eat before the battle is to occur. The young woman that had been in the bottom of the water is named Dorcas, but she can remember nothing else about how she came to be at the river or where she is from.

Part 1: Chapter 16-24 Analysis

The reader will see that several things of interest happen in this part of the book. Severian is challenged, and as he will see later on it has been nothing more than an elaborate scheme by Agilus and Agia. Severian has explained at this point in the story that when he first saw her that he loved her madly, and he tells the reader that after they have read about everything that Agia has done that it will seem odd that he still loves her. The reader will see later in the story when Severian spares her life.

The relationship between Dr. Talos and Baldanders isn't shown yet in the book, but the reader will soon see they appear again. The waitress that they took with them will be in the continuing story as well, but Severian won't recognize her because of the magic Dr. Talos performs on her.

When the carriage wrecked into the altar and the stone was found to be missing, Severian does not know what happened to it, but Agia is found guilty of something by the holy men and women at the altar. They couldn't find anything, but the reader will learn later that Severian has slipped the gem without knowing it. This will be one of the reasons Agia continues to hunt him after the duel is over. Agia only wanted the money that the claw would have brought, but it is possible that it is the thing that caused her brother's death and the end of the life she had.

Dorcas won't regain her memories, but she remains a part of the story, and she and Severian will begin a strong relationship. Later in the story the reader will find that Hildegrin realized that Severian may have been a person of interest. Because Severian speaks to him about Vodalus, Hildegrin will have spies keep an eye on Severian. This will be the thing that allows Severian to find Dorcas later on when they are separated.



Part 1: Chapter 25-35

Part 1: Chapter 25-35 Summary

Severian, Dorcas, and Agia are traveling back from gathering the avern and Agia tells them where to find a place to eat. When they get to the Inn, the man has them pay up front for their meal for the evening so that when Severian is killed the meal will be covered. They get a room and Dorcas and Agia wash up and ready themselves for the evening. A bottle of wine is brought in and Agia takes off her dress and tries to make love to Severian but is interrupted by Dorcas. Dorcas is embarrassed and leaves the room and Severian finds a note. Agia begins to cry and scream begging him not to read it. He holds her off him and opens the letter to find a warning stating that the woman can't be trusted and the man is a torturer and she is his mother. Agia continues to cry and to beg him to believe that she loves him. Severian is confused as to why the letter would be talking about one of the girls being a mother when Dorcas can't be much more than sixteen or seventeen and Agia is only twenty-three and claims to have no children. Severian knows the note wasn't meant for him and goes to talk to the staff. He finds that the person who must have written the note is named Trudo, but when Severian finds the place where Trudo works he has fled.

Severian and the girls make their way to the arena where Severian will fight. On the way there Dorcas tells him that she is sorry she interrupted him and Agia but that she loves him. When they get to the arena the man in the mask waits for Severian. The arena official asks Severian how he wishes to enter the arena, and Dorcas answers that they need to go in naked since Severian has no armor and the other man is in full armor. The other man refuses to take off his mask which allows Severian to stop the battle if he desires to do so, but he decides that he will simply put on his torturer's mask. The men enter wearing nothing but boots and their masks. The leaves from the plants are thrown and anything the leaves come in contact with browns and dies almost instantly.

After fighting for a brief moment Severian realizes he has been struck. He falls to the ground and the man that had fought him removes his mask to reveal Agilus. Agilus and his sister announce that they will collect everything that belongs to Severian as is the custom of the fight. Dorcas comes to Severian, but he finds that his wound has healed itself miraculously and he stands. Agilus becomes frightful and begins to swing his avern madly at the people in the crowd killing several before he is arrested. Severian falls into a deep sleep.

Severian wakes in a strange room. Several of the city guard took him in realizing that he is an executioner, and they have provided him with medical care. Dorcas sits in the chair next to him and sleeps holding his possessions. He is able to get his clothing on but when he tries to take his sword from her she mumbles in her sleep and holds it tighter. He leaves it with her to go eat. When he returns Dorcas is awake and he gives her food and asks what had happened. She tells him best she can of his amazing survival from the avern and that Agilus is imprisoned for killing many people. After



Dorcas relays what she knows, she asks Severian what had happened at the inn that caused him and Agia to go running out the way they did. Severian explains about the note, and Dorcas begins to weep saying that she can't remember anything that happened before she was pulled from the water, and she doesn't know if she is old enough to have a child or not, but Severian doubts she is older than eighteen at the most.

Soon Severian is fully recovered from the battle and is asked if he is well enough to preform the duties of his office. Severian says that he is and will meet the person the day before the execution as tradition demands. When he enters the prison, Severian can hear a woman crying. He enters the chamber to find Agilus and Agia. Agia is fully naked weeping for her brother's imminent death. It is at this point that they explain that when he refused to sell the sword that Agilus gave a sign to his sister outside, who went and put on the costume and then entered to give Severian the silent challenge. They had done this many times before, but always Agia would convince them to leave their possessions and flee the city. Agia throws herself on Severian grasping inside his shirt at which point he throws her off. She draws something in the dirt outside the cell as she leaves, but Severian doesn't even look to read it and wipes it away with his foot. Severian explains to Agilus what will happen the next day and tells him what to do so he won't be sick or relieve himself when he is killed. Severian goes over the way things will go saying Agilus will die before he knows the moment has come. Severian believes this is the way to give them whatever peace there is to have.

When night comes Severian is approached by people excited about the execution. They ask him to be sure and get some blood for them on their handkerchiefs and other favors for which they will pay. Severian is approached by an odd man who speaks in weird riddles and stammers when he speaks. Severian leaves the group of people and goes to his room where Dorcas waits. They sleep together and Severian steadies himself knowing that the next day would be his first time to perform the trade that he had learned from birth.

The next morning Severian watches the crowd but doesn't see Agia. Agilus is walked out and Severian beheads him smoothly and quickly but still using the ceremony in which he is trained. At the moment that Agilus is dead Severian hears Agia scream. Severian collects his money that evening, and he and Dorcas leave when it is less likely they will be seen. While they are talking they discuss the avern and why it didn't kill Severian. He decides that Agia must have lied about the leaves and reaches into his satchel to get out the note that was written when they were at the inn. Severian touches something cold and strange and pulls a gem. He realizes it is the Claw of the Conciliator that the holy women had been looking for after he and Agia had crashed the carriage. Severian then realizes that she had been trying to find it when he was in Agilus' cell. Dorcas and Severian suddenly see a flying building with towers and buttresses and crimson light from the windows. Before they could say anything the building disappeared.

It is in this moment that Severian suddenly realizes he loves Dorcas. They aren't sure if they are the only ones that saw the sight or not but know that they must try and return



the claw to the altar and the priestesses. As they travel back to the city, they find Dr. Talos, Baldanders and a beautiful woman putting on a play. Dr. Talos is just introducing the play and announces that at last death and innocence have arrived motioning to Severian and Dorcas. They take part in the play as if Dr. Talos had known that they were coming and collect the money at the end of the play; then they all fall asleep. When Severian falls asleep he dreams of Master Malrubius and Triskele.

When Severian awakens he finds Dr. Talos hasn't slept. They gather their things and begin to travel towards the city with Severian and Dorcas meaning to give the Claw back to the priestesses. As they are traveling, a man comes up to Severian and begins to talk and stammer badly calling him master. The man is named Hethor and is the same man that had been outside the cell where Agilus had been held.

Hethor joins them, and they find a man that tells them that the priestesses have left the city to travel north because their holy artifact, the claw, has disappeared. Dr. Talos, Baldanders, Hethor, Severian, Dorcas, and the beautiful maid named Jolenta travel out of the city. They encounter a man named Jonas who begins to travel with them. When they reach a gate, there is a sudden attack and the group is separated in the attack.

Part 1: Chapter 25-35 Analysis

The reader will learn that Severian has been wronged by Agia but he still continues to care for her. Also the reader sees how determined Severian can be and that he takes his trade so seriously that even after Agilus has been found guilty and is going to die, he offers him what words of comfort he can to calm him instead of trying to make him more afraid of what will happen. Severian and Dorcas talk at some length, and she confesses that she knows she cannot be a virgin but has no memory beyond that.

The person that wrote the note while Severian and Dorcas were at the inn won't be identified in this book. This is another piece of the puzzle that the writer has left to continue in the next book. Severian notices that the beautiful maid with Dr. Talos is familiar but doesn't realize who she is. It isn't until the last of the book that he realizes she is the plain-looking waitress. The reader doesn't see it at this point in the book, but Jolenta is in love with Dr. Talos.

Hethor calls Severian master and will appear again throughout the story, but we don't understand his role in this series. He will simply prove to be a hindrance to Severian. Jonas has a very brief introduction in this chapter. The end of part one is where "The Shadow of the Torturer" ends. Although Jonah was only in the book for a moment he will prove to have a very significant role as "The Claw of the Conciliator" begins. It will not give Severian so much understanding as it will the reader, but the two will become friends.

It appears that Severian will have very little good to say about Jolenta as the story continues, but the reader will learn that Severian sleeps with her which hurts Dorcas. The relationships are very differently based as the culture dictates. As the story



continues Vodalus will come into the story in the next part. This will be a trying time for Severian and it will be found that he is finding out as much about himself as he is the situations around him.

The reader will find an appendix at the end of the first book. This will help in many of the explanations of the words used since the characters don't give a clear picture of what the titles mean in the story. It also gives an explanation of some of the terms that will show up in the following book.



Part 2: Chapter 1-6

Part 2: Chapter 1-6 Summary

Severian and Jonas make their way to the village of Saltus where Severian makes money by being the town's executioner. Jonas has become his friend and assists him with the executions. The town is having a festival, and Severian has three people he has to behead. One is a woman that supposedly killed her son and husband, and one of the men is being put to death for his affiliation with Vodalus. Upon hearing the mention of Vodalus' name Severian remembers the night he saved Vodalus' life and feels a loyalty to him.

The servant of Vodalus had been locked away in his home for many days with the windows and doors boarded up and no food. The man's name is Barnoch and he is dragged out of the house looking part dead and screaming that Vodalus will come and save him. Severian knows Vodalus won't come, but as he stands in the crowd watching Barnoch, he notices Agia standing in the crowd. Severian quickly runs to where Agia had been standing, but she is gone and no one noticed which way she went. Severian travels through the streets filled with booths for the fair, but no one has seen a woman that fits Agia's description or else they have seen very many woman who could match that description.

While Severian is asking about her, he comes to a tent where a man is calling to the people passing by to come and talk to the green man who can see the future. Severian pays his money and goes into the tent. The man is green from head to toe and chained to the floor. Severian has pity on the man and tells him that he will help him escape if he answers his questions about Agia and why he is green. The man tells him that he is from the future where there is a lot of sun and humans have learned to integrate the blood with pond scum that allows their cells to feed off the algae from the inside. Severian asks him why he doesn't go back to the future, and the man says that he is chained to the floor and can't. He tells Severian that Agia is above ground but doesn't know where. Severian breaks the man's chains and slips out of the tent. He is confused about the man's message but feels sure he will see Agia again.

After the execution of the woman, Jonas and Severian sit in their room and a piece of paper is slid under the door. The letter is from Thecla stating that she wasn't dead because someone had bribed some people on her behalf, but she couldn't be set free so they had to fake her death. She only pretended to be dead until those who were to carry her body away came. Thecla tells Severian that he must come and meet her immediately and gives him directions to where she is.

Severian is so excited he tells Jonas nothing but that he needs to borrow his horse. Severian rides to the place where the letter said to go but forgot to bring a lantern in all the excitement and can't see anything once he gets inside the cave. He walks for many steps when suddenly he realizes he is being surrounded by beasts that look part man



and part ape with glowing fur. They attack but Severian is able to hold them off for a time. Soon he is overpowered and loses his sword. With no weapon and the likelihood that he will die at hand, Severian reaches in his boot and takes out the Claw of the Conciliator that he keeps hidden. The gem begins to glow and the animals bow down in front of Severian and quit attacking. Severian knows he should leave but decides to look for his sword because it is precious to him. His sword is in the water, but suddenly there is a groaning from underground and thudding. The ape men begin to run and scream and Severian, unsure of what the sounds are, realizes that if it makes that many of the creatures run in fear, he should do the same.

Part 2: Chapter 1-6 Analysis

Severian is telling the story in past tense and explains to the reader that there is no reason for telling the story of Morewenna other than it was odd. The reader also sees that it may have been important to see that Severian seemed to feel pity for the woman and tried to help her the best he could by giving her as much comfort as he could while he conducted the execution. The reader will also note that Severian doesn't seem to think much about the punishment he is giving in terms of "deserving." He had said in the first part of the book that the guild is required to give out the punishments that have been given with no more added and nothing taken away. When the woman tells him that she knew Morewenna to be innocent, he doesn't seem surprised and isn't concerned with that fact. It may be that the guild has drilled this response into him. While it does make the reader wonder about his conscience it appears that Severian is a kind individual that has found himself in the most fearful of professions.

Severian is so excited to learn about Thecla. He is so surprised to find that she is alive and happy, that he never thought to look at the fact that it might have been a trap. The reader will find later that it is was for the best that he was in a hurry to get to Thecla. Had he thought to bring a lantern he would have been seen by the archers that were placed in the woods. This also gives him the chance to see Agia. Severian has been wronged by her more than once, but the reader will see that he continues to care deeply for her although we are not told why.

The ape men in the cave will be a subject of discussion later on for Severian and Jonas as they travel. Jonas proves to be a good friend and will show up just to keep an eye on Severian. There is a lot about Jonas that the reader doesn't know yet. He is a character that will prove to leave many more questions than answers before he leaves the story.

At this point in the story Severian has told us a lot about Dorcas. The reader does get the impression that she will reappear in the story although it is unclear when and where. "Shadow and Claw" are the first two books in the series that consists of four books. While Severian will give the reader hints about what happens later on it is clear as the reader nears the end of the book that much of the foreshadowing will occur later in the series..

The green man gave some hints to Severian about what Severian's future holds although it was mystical and unclear. The reader will find later on in the book that there are other times that Severian will be given hints about what his future holds although the hints will not be much more clear than the previous ones.



Part 2: Chapter 7-15

Part 2: Chapter 7-15 Summary

Severian exits the cave and once outside finds he is being fired upon by archers. He manages to dodge and sees Agia among the two men that are shooting. He is saddened and outraged because he knows that this means for a fact that Thecla is dead. Severian makes his way to Agia and one of the archers and is able to kill the man. He throws her to the ground and puts his boot on her chest to hold her there.

From the top of the cave a voice calls down to Severian. Jonas has followed him, and the beast runs back into the cave. Jonas and Severian are able to keep Agia under control, and she tells him of how she had plotted his death using his dear, dead Thecla as bait. Jonas goes back to the horses and leaves Severian so he can kill Agia. Agia turns away from him and tells him to strike, that she is ready, but Severian is unable and leaves her standing waiting for his sword. Jonas asks Severian if Agia will try again to kill him, and Severian answers that it is most certain.

Severian and Jonas make their way back to the village and bed down while Severian tells him about Agia, her brother, and how she managed to get the claw into his pocket without his knowledge. While they talk Severian tells Jonas that he knows Jonas is a traveler, although Severian won't tell anyone where he is from. Severian asks him information and after Jonas has answered what questions he can, Severian knows that he (Severian) is to take part in the final war of their world.

The next day Severian and Jonas are captured by three men, and the five of them climb upon a great beast to ride to Vodalus' camp. The men claim to be Vodalus' men that were sent to fetch him to stop the execution of Barnoch. Vodalus had been sent to get Severian the day before but found them nowhere in the village. Severian knows that he was with Jonas at that time in the cave. One of the captors has taken Severian's sword and is flailing it around when he suddenly hurts himself and is killed. In this immediate confusion, Severian is able to loose his ropes and kill one of the other men while Jonas takes the life of the third. Severian and Jonas have no sooner killed the men than they enter the camp of Vodalus. Severian thinks of running away but knows they will be killed. He stands on the large animal, which walks them right to the chair where Vodalus is sitting. Vodalus offers to kill Severian, but Severian reminds him that it was Severian who stopped the axe that would have taken Vodalus' life so many years ago.

Vodalus remembers Severian and makes Severian and Jonas swear loyalty to him above all other oaths. They go to eat at a great feast and Vodalus' lover, Thea, is there. Vodalus and Severian talk about the war and Severian finds it is important to tell Vodalus about the Claw of the Conciliator that he carries. Vodalus tells him to throw it away because there will be many people who refuse to support them if they find that he holds the object. They are asked to go to the woods and stay for a time until that



evening when they will be called back for a ceremony. Before Thea leaves Severian tells her that he knew her sister and that he must talk to her later.

Severian and Jonas wait in the spot where they were told that if they decide to leave, soldiers that wait in the woods will kill them. That evening Thea comes to them to learn of what happened to her sister. She is grateful for the information and in return gives them a warning of what will happen at the supper. There will be a bottle that consists of a liquid gathered from the brain of an animal that eats dead humans and for a short period of time can talk like humans because of the eating of the flesh. Severian realizes what is supposed to happen and immediately becomes sick. He also thinks back to the night at the grave and realizes that the body they were taking must have been for this purpose. They decide they must run before the feast occurs, but will have to wait until dark to avoid being seen. Before they can leave they are summoned to the camp for the feast.

Once at the feast Vodalus tells Severian to take a mouthful of the animal elixir because more than a mouthful wastes it and less will make him unaffected. The drug has a dizzying effect on Severian. Soon their meat is brought, and Severian is warned by Vodalus that when he goes to the House of Absolute, as Vodalus has commanded him, that he will find others will know he has taken part in this ceremony if he isn't careful. He tells Severian that at the House of Absolute he will also find Dorcas and the others. The man at the river, Hildegrin, had them followed after Severian made his comments but lost them in the battle that separated the group and so followed Dorcas and the others with the hope that they would lead them back to Severian. The body that is in his drink is Thecla's body. Severian eats knowing that to refuse would be to lose his life to Vodalus' sword. He begs forgiveness from Thecla as he eats and then he is filled with her and gains her memories and her thoughts. Severian knows that he had meant a lot to Thecla. Severian falls into a deep sleep and dreams of Thecla. When Severian wakes they are given two horses, and he and Jonas leave the camp and head to the House of Absolute to look for Dorcas and the others. Severian asks Jonas how much he remembers about the woman, but Jonas says that he was able to look like he had ate without eating, which he admits he does at almost every meal.

As they travel towards the House of Absolute, they stop to rest and make money where they can. After they have been traveling for several days something bat like swoops close to Severian's head. They run from the beast and it kills a soldier. While it is feeding Jonas is able to capture it. Severian has realized at this point that the Claw of the Conciliator has powers of some type and takes it out and puts it on the man's head. The soldier wakes up with no memory of what has happened.

Severian and Jonas ride on and find a giant stone statue that attacks them. They are captured by several guards and taken to the prison in the House of Absolute. There is one room with all of the prisoners in it. The older ones in the prison explain that once in prison you don't get out; some of the families have been there for more than seven generations without seeing the light of day. Jonas and Severian are sitting in a corner when they are attacked by guards. Jonas begins to curse in a speech that Severian doesn't recognize. The guards leave when they have inflicted pain on them.



Part 2: Chapter 7-15 Analysis

The reader will find at this point in time that Jonas has hidden more than previously thought. In the coming chapters the reader will see that Jonas isn't human at all. Jonas loves Jolenta, the beautiful woman that travels with Dr. Talos, even though he is only a machine. Jonas and Severian will continue to be friends, but Jonas will have to leave to try and find repair parts for himself. There have been many hints to the reader that something was out of place with Jonas, but there was no way for the reader to realize the truth. He told Severian earlier on that he was much older than Severian realized and he also told him that he didn't really eat, only pretended to do so.

When Severian is talking to those in the cell he realizes some of them have been there for long periods of time. The reader will learn that when Severian becomes the leader, he will have to force some of them to leave their cell. Although we don't see him become their ruler since he is telling things in past tense, we get a preview of what will happen.

Severian ran into Hethor and the other strange man on the road. While they don't have a significant role in the story, it will not be the last time they meet. Severian is told by Vodalus to go to the House of Absolute to deliver a message for Vodalus. This is another place in the story where the lies that Severian has told become truth. He said he was going there to deliver a message and the reader will see that he does deliver it, although it is more or less on accident.

The flesh of Thecla that Severian ate will be what gets him freed from the jail cell and helps him find his way through the House of Absolute. The reader will see that it appears to nearly drive Severian insane at times to have her thoughts in his head. At times it seems that Thecla is in charge of Severian's body.

Severian had hoped that Thecla was alive and Agia had used his love for her to try and kill him. He had already told the reader that it is odd that he should still care for Agia. The reader has seen at this point in the story one of the reasons he would have cause to hate her. While there are hints that he may see her again later on in his life this will be the last time that she is seen in "Shadow and Claw."



Part 2: Chapter 16-23

Part 2: Chapter 16-23 Summary

Severian tries to help Jonas by using the claw but is unable. He looks over Jonas' wounds and realize that metal stretches over a large part of his body. When Jonas wakes he tells Severian he is worried he is going insane and asks Severian to talk to him. Severian reads to him out of the book that he took from Thecla's cell.

When Severian is done reading Jonas just sits. They sleep and Severian is overtaken by Thecla's thoughts and realizes there is a secret passage out of the prison. He takes Jonas and they leave out the door. They go up a stairwell and find a room with mirrors that are portals to other dimensions. Jonas takes one of the passages in the hopes of finding a way to fix himself. He tells Severian to tell Jolenta that he loves her and will return for her.

Severian knows he has to find his sword and Dorcas. He makes his way through the castle and manages to find his sword. While looking for the Garden where Dorcas is, he finds the man he to whom Severian is supposed to give a message. The man gives a message back to Severian and sends him to where Dorcas and the others are. On the way to Dorcas, Severian stops at a magic fountain and throws in a coin. The fountain will tell futures. The symbols that are revealed for Severian are a sword, a rose with a river beneath it, then angry waves becoming a swell, a rod with a chair and a multitude of towers, and the last symbol was a shining star.

As Severian walks towards the garden, he hears Dr. Talos. Dorcas embraces Severian and they rejoice in finding each other. Dr. Talos is reading for the play that evening and has a part ready for Severian. Dorcas tells him that she has been remembering pieces of her past but nothing she can understand.

Jolenta takes Severian down to the water's edge while the others get ready for the play. There they make love, and when they return the others know what they have been doing and Dorcas goes away to cry.

Part 2: Chapter 16-23 Analysis

Severian had talked harshly about Jolenta but went with her anyway. The reader will find later that he talks about her as if he loves her where before he had talked harshly about the way she acts. Jolenta tells Severian that this will be her last play. While Jolenta feels certain that someone will find her and take her away to love her, the truth will be that Dr. Talos and Baldanders will leave the group. Jolenta cares for Dr. Talos but it may be stemming from the fact that he is the one that made her beautiful. It won't be until after she loses her lovely features and takes on her true looks that Severian will realize who she is.



Dorcas has more of her memories now, but they are just bits and pieces. There won't be an answer to her identity in this book or why she was in the river or why she was brought up with Severian. It is possible that the Claw of the Conciliator is what brought her back to life if she had been dead, since Severian already had the gem by the time he was in the water at the garden spot; however, the reader isn't told this.

Jonas describes himself and Severian as monsters. While this is meant more literal for Jonas because he is made of metal with a bio coating, the reader will see that Severian's actions, while harsh as an executioner, won't always be monstrous.

The fountain that told Severian's future may have been correct, but those things will be left for the other books and not answered here. The reader is led to believe that they came true because of the way he talks about refusing to use the fountain again in later years for fear of what it says. It seems that he wouldn't have feared what it said if it had been untrue. Severian also says that there are those that see things in the fountain that never come true, but he thinks that this is because they are scared of what the fountain says. If that is true then the reader can deduce that Severian wasn't scared of whatever future there was to come.



Part 2: Chapter 24-31

Part 2: Chapter 24-31 Summary

Dr. Talos' play claims to be about parts of the lost Book of the New Sun. Much like the play that had taken part in the woods, there came a moment when Baldanders was to scare the people, but not to frighten them away, since these people are more wealthy. When this happens Baldanders becomes suddenly mad and attacks people. Severian knows there will be a lot of trouble and runs and finds that Dorcas and the others are gone already. He walks for a while worrying about her. He soon finds them in a clearing in the woods. Baldanders is hurt but alive and able to travel. Dr. Talos tells them that they will part company and that he and Baldanders will take the money given them by some stranger that knew of Severian and build a new house.

After the money is divided, Jolenta says she wants to go with Dr. Talos. He refuses and beats her to make her stay. Severian and Dorcas take her with them but have to carry her because she is so badly beaten. They make it to a stream and build a fire for the night. In the morning light Severian hears someone calling him. He walks down stream and finds a beautiful and frightening creature in the water calling to him. She tells him that if he will come in the water he will be able to breath and will be a king with them. She also tells him she is the one that saved him when he was a boy. He is cautious and he hears Dorcas screaming for him. When he turns from the creature in the lake, she pulls herself out of the water and her skin seems to be falling off of her bones because of the weight that comes after leaving the water.

Severian runs back to Dorcas to find what is wrong and finds Jolenta lying with her wrists slit, bleeding to death. Severian works on her, since he has been taught to mend wounds. He is able to stop the bleeding but she is weak. Dorcas and Severian decide she must have been attacked by some animal. They make their way through the field and eventually find a castle with witches. They assure him that Jolenta will live even though she wants to die. While they stand talking to the witches a man shows up who is Hildegrin. They hold hands and the older witch starts a spell to find information that Vodalus wants. While in the trance they are taken to ancient times. Hildegrin is taken away by unearthly beings. Severian tries to help him but suddenly hears Dorcas screaming for him. When Severian looks down he sees that Jolenta has died and now in death looks as she did when he first met her. She is the waitress that worked in the inn where Dr. Talos, Baldanders, and Severian had been served breakfast.

Severian explains that from here he still has a long way to travel and that he will pause so that if the reader no longer wishes to travel with him, he understands because the road is a hard one.



Part 2: Chapter 24-31 Analysis

The witch had told Severian that Jolenta would live. It is not clear why she died, although there was mention of things that seemed to be stemming from her when they were in the trance. We are not told what happened to Hildegrin. It is noted that Severian explains that he no longer wanted to help Vodalus and her purpose but tried to help Hildegrin.

While in the trance Severian sees a face that he knows. It is the face that was in the mausoleum where he played as a child and hid the gold piece given him by Vodalus.

The woman in the water had appeared to Severian before. While it is unclear what she wants with Severian it appears that she is, in fact, the creature that saved him in his childhood. It is left to the reader to decide why she was so desperate for him to go with her at this point in time. She seemed to be ready to attack him if she had been able when she jumped up out of the water, but she had appeared to him once before in a dream. Her motives haven't been completely revealed to the reader.

The reader sees that Severian has thought about what woman he wants and actually wants no one woman. He mentions that he desires Dorcas as well as Jolenta and he names other women as well. Severian claims that there are a thousand women he wants. While there is no way to determine what becomes of his relationship with Dorcas at this point in the book, it appears that her willingness to stay with him is what will keep them together for a time.

Severian makes no mention of a long term relationship with Dorcas in his retelling of events or of a wife. There have been marriages mentioned in the book but it appears Severian does not desire to be married to one woman.

At the end of the book is another appendix that explains many phrases in the book. Also in the appendix the reader will find a list of definitions for money amounts and explanations of the units of measurements and time used. This will be helpful to the reader and can be read before the book.



Characters

Severian

Severian is the main character in the story. He is telling the story in past tense and is writing it down. The reader will find that he stops occasionally to explain things that have happened and things that will happen. Severian has been raised in the torturer's guild and when he turns eighteen he makes the decision to become a torturer himself, although more out of fear of what else he could do than a love of the trade. He falls in love with a woman named Thecla who is to be tortured and killed. Severian is sent away after he breaks a law of the guild and helps Thecla commit suicide.

Severian's character has been raised as a torturer and the reader will see that he spends much of the narration of his story explaining things from the view point of the guild. He becomes an executioner and takes his job very seriously. He falls in love with many women that he meets, but the one that follows him with the most loyalty is Dorcas. While he cares for Dorcas the reader will see that this doesn't keep Severian from sleeping with other women. Severian knows he has been chosen to fight in the final war of his earth and to save them from destruction but it appears that it falls on him rather than his choosing it. The reader will see that when something falls to Severian to do, he doesn't try and run from it. He is so concerned with honor and duty that he agrees to any task he feels necessary to keep his guild from embarrassment.

Dorcas

Dorcas is the young woman that is dragged from the river when Severian goes to pick his avenging to fight a duel. Dorcas is pretty and young, but there is nothing known about her, even by herself. It appears to the reader she may have been dead and brought back to life when Severian touched her body, but that is not revealed to the reader in this book.

Dorcas follows Severian and Agia to an inn where they receive a strange message. Although they can't find the person that sent the message, it seems that the person thinks Dorcas is their mother. Dorcas is too young to have older children, but there is no answer given to the reader regarding the letter. Dorcas loves Severian and stays by him even when he leaves her side to sleep with other women. She is loyal to him and does anything that he asks of her. She begins to regain some of her memories, but they are confusing images and don't give her much information. She is a character in the book that the reader will see much of but not understand.

Vodalus

Vodalus is the leader of a group that fights against the Autarch that rules in the House of Absolute. His life is saved by Severian at the beginning of the book. Although he doesn't



have a large part in the book, his name is constantly mentioned, and Severian, who swears loyalty to him, will spend a lot of time looking for information about him and then later trying to avoid his servants.

Thecla

Thecla is brought to the torturer's guild because her sister is the lover of Vodalus. She is held for some time without being tortured, and Severian becomes her friend. When they begin to torture her Severian can't stand it and gives her a knife so she can end her pain.

Jonas

Jonas becomes a friend to Severian. We learn a little about Jonas, such as he is a machine covered in human flesh, but in the end he leaves without many answers into another dimension, so he can find a place to fix his metal body. Jonas is in love with Jolenta who travels with Dr. Talos.

Agia

Agia meets Severian soon after he leaves the guild. He falls in love with her but she and her brother set Severian up to be killed. Severian survives and kills her brother in his role as executioner. She will try again to kill Severian but fail. Agia will manage to hide a magic gem, the Claw of the Conciliator, on Severian.

Dr. Talos

Dr. Talos travels with his friend, Baldanders, performing plays where they can for money. They get Severian to perform with them, and although Severian leaves them, it seems he always finds them and performs with them again. The reader won't find what Dr. Talos' real purpose is in the book but it appears that there is much he doesn't tell Severian.

Jolenta

Jolenta was a waitress who looked rather common. Dr. Talos offers to put her in one of the plays and gives her some magic that makes her beautiful. She gets injured later on in the book and will die. After she is dead, her appearance will return to what it was.



Hildegryn

Hildegryn is the servant of Vodalus. Hildegryn was with Vodalus when he robbed the grave in the beginning and is the one that takes Severian across the river to get the avern. Hildegryn will have a part through most of the book but at the end it is possible that he died although the reader isn't told.

Thea

Thea is the half sister of Thecla and is also the lover of Vodalus. Thea gives a warning to Severian when they are about to eat the dead body of Thecla.

Hethor

Hethor follows Severian around and appears to be attracted by the fact that Severian kills people. He calls Severian master and continually shows up despite the fact that Severian leaves him behind throughout the story.



Objects/Places

Claw of the Conciliator

The Claw of the Conciliator is a magic gem. It was placed in Severian's pocket by Agia unknown to Severian. It has healing ability but doesn't work on everyone.

Coin

Vodalus gives Severian a coin when Severian saved his life at the grave yard. Severian explains that in taking this coin, he became Vodalus' servant without realizing it. The coin appears to be a plain coin and serves only as a symbol.

Terminus Est

Terminus Est is the sword that was given to Severian when he was asked to leave the guild home and go to Thrax. The sword holds no magic powers or abilities, but the reader will see that Severian is willing to risk his life to keep the sword more than once.

Thrax

Thrax is the city where Severian is heading to become the executioner. He doesn't make it there in this part of the story but the majority of the story takes place with his heading towards Thrax.

Triskele

Triskele is the dog that Severian finds. It has been mutilated and experimented on by animal torturers, but Severian is able to save the animal. It runs away and finds a home, but Severian will dream about the dog many times in the story.

Ape Men

These beasts are never given one name, but they are in the cave where Agia tells Severian to go. It is her hope that the creatures will kill him. They are about to kill him when he reveals the Claw of the Conciliator. The beasts then bow to him and the gem.

Analeptic Alzabo

It is an animal that was brought from the stars that feeds on dead human flesh. There is a chemical in the brain of the animal so that when it has fed on human flesh it can



speak like a human for a short while after. The chemical from the brain is harvested and taken with the flesh of those who died so that they can learn the memories of the dead. Severian will acquire Thecla's memories this way.

Nicarete

Nicarete is where Severian and Jonas are imprisoned. It is here that Jonas begins to go insane and once they escape, Jonas finds a portal to another dimension and leaves Severian.

Fortunate Cloud

Fortunate Cloud was the name of Jonas' ship. The reader isn't given much information about Jonas before he met Severian, but we do learn that his ship crashed at some point. The reader is led to believe it may have been a space ship rather than a sailing ship, but this is not explained in detail.

Vatic Fountain

The Vatic Fountain is at the House of Absolute. When a person throws a coin into it the fountain will tell their future. Severian threw a coin in but states that he has returned several times and will never do so again.



Themes

Duty and Honor

The reader will find that duty and honor is a continual theme in regard to Severian. Although these ideals are not called duty and honor, the thing that seems to cause him pain is that he harmed the name of the guild that had raised him. He loved Thecla and couldn't bear to see her hurt and so he gave her the knife to end her own life. Severian becomes ashamed of his action, although he wasn't sorry for helping Thecla. Much of the conflict that occurs in the story for the main character is because of the combination of his feeling of duty and honor and the fact that he has compassion.

Severian shows how serious his duties are once he has left the guild. He has ample reason to hate Agilus for trying to kill him but still tries to calm him and give him what consideration he can. When he is the one that is going to behead Agilus the reader will see that he takes the situation very seriously and doesn't let his own feelings hinder the procedures. He also shows this again when a woman is killed for murdering her husband and child. Severian even asks Vodalus if there is any way he can keep from embarrassing his guild again. While Severian cares for his place in the world with the torturers, Severian explains later on that he betrays this trust again for Vodalus although it is not told in this book.

Loyalty

Loyalty becomes a central theme in the story. There are many different things and people to which Severian feels he owes loyalty. He feels loyalty is deserved of the guild that raised him and his teachers there, but he also feels, he owes loyalty to Vodalus because Vodalus entered the fight the night at the grave yard and saved Vodalus' life. It won't be until Severian swears an oath to Vodalus that Severian begins to feel he doesn't want to serve Vodalus. By this point in time it will be seemingly impossible for him to not carry out the things that Vodalus has set before him.

Loyalty also shows up in the other characters. Dr. Talos and Baldanders have a loyalty to each other. While it is unclear who is following whom, the reader sees that the two depend upon each other. Agia and Agilus were twins and were loyal to each other. Their relationship was doomed due to Agia's selfishness. Had she not stolen the Claw of the Conciliator and given it to Severian before the fight with her brother, Severian may have died. In an attempt to remain loyal to her brother and avenge him she will try to kill Severian. The reader also sees the loyalty that Dorcas feels for Severian. Even after he sleeps with Jolenta, Dorcas stays beside him and wants to be his. Jolenta doesn't seem to feel loyalty to anyone and appears to be rather self serving.



The Importance of Memories

Severian explains to the reader how it is possible for him to recall all his journey in such detail. He talks about his ability to recall everything as if it were a curse. To explain how it can be a curse he recalls Thecla for the reader and explains the emotions and how they don't dim if the memories don't dim. It appears that the memories will be much of what pushes Severian forward to his destiny. He even states at one point in the book that he might not have felt anything for Vodalus as a grown man if he hadn't remembered so vividly the night at the grave where he saved the man's life.

Memories are so important that Vodalus and his followers eat the flesh of the dead so they can acquire their memories and knowledge. The memories Severian gains from drinking Thecla's flesh will be important as he continues in his journey.

The opposite side of memories is shown in Dorcas. While Severian can remember every single detail that ever happens, she can remember nothing. She explains the torture it is to know that you have a past but have no knowledge of it. While Severian's memories assist him in the telling of the story, he calls them a hindrance to an extent. It is unclear to the reader if Dorcas' memory loss has a positive side because we are unsure what she has lost and why.



Style

Point of View

The story is written from the point of view of the main character retelling the story of his life. Since it is told in first person past tense, the emotions and thoughts of the main character are given to the reader but not those of the other characters. This first person recitation in the past tense gives moments of foreshadowing that are helpful in understanding the tale. For example, when Severian is talking about the trouble he got into when he allowed Thecla to commit suicide the reader is then told that he also set Vodalus free later on. While the freeing of Vodalus is not explained in this book it does help the reader to understand much of what's going on.

The point of view will hinder the reader from time to time. Since the story is written as if someone already knows the time and setting it will be confusion for a time in reference to when and where the story is taking place as well as to why certain things are an issue. For instance, the sun is dying and so there is a lack of food. While the fact that the sun is an odd color and there is a lack of food these facts are not explained early on since the reader is supposed to know these facts already.

Setting

The story takes place in a distant future of earth. The earth at that point in time will be referred to as "Urth." People again live in villages and castles. However there are some things that are significant to their past such as guns. There are items with seemingly magical abilities although it is explained that some things came from space when the earth still had the knowledge necessary to travel among the stars. The ability to travel among the stars has been lost to the human race but is still remembered.

The setting will be mildly confusing for a while because the reader is unsure about the time and place. It is not exactly explained to the reader that the place is the real earth only so far in the future as to not be recognized. This lack of explanation will make the story harder to read at the beginning of the book. The story setting makes the book easy to understand once the location has been established. The setting is real and concrete, although the reader will have to "leave room" for the changes that have occurred over so many years.

Most of the story takes place while Severian, the main character, is on his way from his home at the torturer's guild to the city of Thrax to take up duties there as a executioner. There are many different towns, and other locations are described, as well as Severian's dreams. There is also a book that Severian reads out of that will describe other places that seem most likely fictional to their world.



Language and Meaning

The language in the story is very stiff and formal. The reader will find that the people seem to be in a system where each person knows their rank in society. There will be references to a person's social standing. These meanings will be explained in the appendix which will help the reader understand the titles and the significance of calling a person a certain name. For example, Thecla and her sister are both called by the title "Chatelaine," which is the title given to women in the "exultant" group. A person must be born to this class, and they are high society people. The titles give the reader a clear picture of the type of person and level of education that they possess as well as the way they are treated by others.

There are many words in the story that have been created by the author. Severian wears a cloak that is called a "fuligan cloak." While "fuligan" is not a word it may stem from the Latin word "fuligo," which means soot. The cloak is called a "fuligan cloak" to explain that it is darker than night. There is also a tale told in the story from the book that had been in Thecla's cell. The story ends with a father committing suicide because the sails on the returning ship are black and the man thinks that means the son he had on the ship is dead. One of the characters who is old enough to remember the old earth makes mention of the fact that this story is very similar to the story of Theseus, whose father committed suicide when his ship returned because they didn't put up their white sail.

There will be other words in the story that stem from words. At times these will be pointed out to the reader. Often the narrator will connect moments in the story that will be significant with the use of unique language.

Structure

The story is actually two books put together. The first is "The Shadow of the Torturer" and the second is "The Claw of the Conciliator," making them "Shadow and Claw." The first book contains thirty-five chapters and the second thirty-one chapters. The two books together consist of 415 pages. There are two appendixes in the book that provide the reader with information that will help in understanding phrasing and the meaning of words, titles, money amounts, and time and distances.

The reader will find that there are many places in the book where the narrator, Severian the main character, will pause in his narration to explain things to the reader about which they might otherwise have no information. At these intervals, there are notations to signify that the narrator has begun an explanation.

There are moments in the story where the reading can become confusing because of the references to old myths, legends, and beliefs that the people have. There is a play that takes up a chapter, written by Dr. Talos. This play consists largely of information and beliefs about The Book of the New Sun. There is nothing in this play significant to the tale of Severian, but the play explains the culture of the people. There is also a



chapter that tells a story from the book that Severian took from Thecla's cell. This story also makes the story a little slower reading, since there is nothing in this tale that explains anything about the characters in the book. It's only purpose is to explain the evolution of the culture.



Quotes

"The locked and rusted gate that stood before us, with wisps of river fog threading its spikes like the mountain paths, remains in my mind now as the symbol of my exile." Part 1: Chapter 1: Page 9

"I gathered up the books and hurried along, though I did not know it, to meet my destiny and eventually myself in the Chatelaine Thecla." Part 1: Chapter 6: Page 48

"If I had not glimpsed the woman with the heart-shaped face and earned that small gold coin, it is more than possible I would never have carried the knife to Thecla and forfeited my place in the guild. In a sense, that coin had bought my life." Part 1: Chapter 13: Page 87

"Agia enjoyed my admiration and would have been moved to ecstasy by my caresses; but even if I were to pour myself into her a hundred times, we would part strangers." Part 1: Chapter 16: Page 162

"For a moment I truly thought I was in our dormitory again, that I was captain of apprentices, that everything else, my masking, the death of Thecla, the combat of the avens, had been only a dream. This was not the last time this was to happen." Part 1: Chapter 18: Page 169

"There was no one there. I sat up. Malrubius and Triskele had vanished, yet my side felt faintly warm." Part 1: Chapter 33: Page 198

"No doubt if I had been one of you whose memories fade, I would have rejected him on that morning as I elbowed my way through the crowd, and so in some fashion would have escaped this death in life that grips me even as I write these words." Part 2: Chapter 1: Page 221

"The man-apes neither fled shrieking nor resumed their attack. Instead they retreated until the nearest were perhaps three strides off, and squatted with their faces pressed against the floor of the mine." Part 2: Chapter 6: Page 248

"I only knew that there was something far beneath us before which the man-apes, with all the terror of their appearance their numbers, scattered like sparks before a wind." Part 2: Chapter 6: Page 250

"Then very suddenly, I who had been blind before understood why it was that Abaia had sent me this dream and had sought to enlist me in the great and final war of Urth." Part 2: Chapter 8: Page 261

"I had another ally as well: it was the the knowledge growing in me, the certainty that if I were to consent now and swallow some part of Thecla's substance, the traces of her mind that must otherwise soon fade in decay would enter me and endure, however attenuated, as long as I." Part 2: Chapter 11: Page 280



"We killed him by accident, coming in. I needed his eyes and larynx, and I took some other parts." Part 2: Chapter 18: Page 323

"Certainly I no longer consciously desired to serve Vodalus and his purposes." Part 2: Chapter 31: Page 409



Topics for Discussion

Severian tells the reader that symbols control people and that people are shaped by symbols after Vodalus gives him the coin in the grave yard. For this story do you feel this is an accurate statement? Give examples from the story to support your answer.

Discuss any differences that can be found in Severian's nature after he takes part in the feast with Vodalus because of Thecla's influence over him. Explain.

Jonas describes himself and Severian as monsters. Take into consideration what you know about both of these characters. List the characteristics that they share and what they exhibit that show a difference between them.

You see that Severian doesn't attach himself to just one woman, and in the book he lists all the women he loves and desires. Speculate, given the information in the book, on why this is.

Agia and Dorcas come to Severian at about the same time in the book. They both appear to want him in their own way. Explain the difference between the two women. Given what we know of Dorcas speculate on why she seems to accept the fact that Severian slept with Jolenta.

Jonas didn't know Jolenta for more than a few moments when he decided he was in love with her. Jonas turns out to be a machine. Speculate on what would have happened if Jonas had returned and found Jolenta wasn't beautiful any longer. If Jolenta was no longer beautiful could she have accepted Jonas? Why?

Speculate on the reason that the creature in the water seemed to try and attack Severian at the river. Do you think this to be the same creature that saved him? Explain.

Explain the relationship between Dr. Talos and Baldanders. Do you think they will have a role in the continued series based on what you have seen in this part of the story? Why or why not?