

Stardust Study Guide

Stardust by Neil Gaiman

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Contents

Stardust Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapter 1, In Which We Learn of the Village of Wall, and of the Curious Thing That Occurs There Every Nine Years.....	5
Chapter 2, In Which Tristran Thorn Grows to Manhood and Makes a Rash Promise.....	8
Chapter 3, In Which We Encounter Several Other Persons, Many of Them Still Alive, With an Interest in the Fate of the Fallen Star.....	10
Chapter 4, Can I Get There by Candlelight?.....	12
Chapter 5, In Which There is Much Fighting for the Crown.....	14
Chapter 6, What the Tree Said.....	17
Chapter 7, At the Sign of the Chariot.....	19
Chapter 8, Which Treats of Castles in the Air, and Other Matters.....	21
Chapter 9, Which Deals Chiefly With the Events at Diggory's Dyke.....	23
Chapter 10, Stardust.....	25
Epilogue, In Which Several Endings May Be Discerned.....	28
Characters.....	29
Objects/Places.....	34
Themes.....	36
Style.....	38
Quotes.....	40
Topics for Discussion.....	43

Plot Summary

Tristran Thorn begins a wondrous journey into the land of Faerie, looking for a fallen star to win the hand of his love, Victoria Forrester. Though no one is allowed outside the wall that borders Wall, Tristran is granted passage due to his unusual circumstances of his birth. The product of a chance meeting between his father and the slave of a witch, Tristran had been delivered to Wall in a basket eighteen years ago. In love with Victoria Forester, Tristran promises to retrieve a fallen star in order to win her hand. Tristran travels to Faerie, meeting many magical characters and creatures on his quest.

In Faerie, Tristran first meets a small hairy man named Charmed, evidently because the word is written on the case he carries. Charmed had met Tristran's father Dunstan many years ago, the same year Dunstan had made love to Tristran's mother at the Faerie Market. Charmed helps Tristran in learning the ways of Faerie and provides him with a candle that allows him to travel through the land quickly. The candle brings Tristran to the glade where the star had fallen, and Tristran is startled to discover that the star is a woman. The star is not at all pleased to find that Tristran has come to bring her back through the Wall as a gift for the young woman he loves.

Elsewhere in Faerie, The eighty-first Lord of Stormhold lays dying and must decide which of his three living sons will take command. Four of his sons are dead, at the hands of their brothers, and their ghosts are present, discussing which of the brothers will finally succeed their father. The Lord throws the topaz that is the Power of Stormhold from the window, and tells his three living sons that whoever claims it will be the eighty-second Lord. The topaz is what knocked the star from the sky, causing her to fall and break her leg, and the star is required to carry the topaz with her until the rightful owner claims it.

Three witches also have an interest in the star, seeking her heart in order to regain their youth and strength. The Lilam, or witch-queen, sends their oldest sister to find the star, giving her the remaining youth they have from a star's heart they had taken many years ago. The oldest travels Faerie, seeking the star, but each time she uses magic, her youth wanes, until she is finally older and weaker than she has ever been.

Tristran and the star travel through Faerie on the way to the Wall, meeting with danger along the way, as well as very helpful citizens of Faerie. Their relationship changes when Tristran releases the chain that binds the star to him, and then he saves her life during a meeting with the witch queen. The star is now bound to him, though it is doubtful that she would have left him anyway.

Arriving at the Faerie Market outside of Wall, Tristran returns to his village to find that Victoria Forester has given her heart to another. Though she has promised her hand to Robert Monday, Victoria tells Tristran that she will honor her promise to him if he wishes. Tristran is pleased to allow her to marry Monday and returns to his star happily.



The slave of the witch witch has been released from her bonds after sixty years of service. The slave is in reality the Lady Una, firstborn child of the eighty-first Lord of Stormhold. Tristran retrieves the topaz from the star and claims his rightful place as the eighty-second lord. Lady Una returns to Stormhold as regent until Tristran and the star return to rule eight years later, after wandering Faerie happily for many years.

Tristran dies many years later, and the star continues to rule Stormhold, climbing the tallest tower late at night to be as close as possible to her mother the moon and her sister stars.



Chapter 1, In Which We Learn of the Village of Wall, and of the Curious Thing That Occurs There Every Nine Years

Chapter 1, In Which We Learn of the Village of Wall, and of the Curious Thing That Occurs There Every Nine Years Summary

The novel *Stardust* by Neil Gaiman is a fanciful tale involving a young man and his heart's desire. Tristran Thorn travels through the wall outside of the village Wall in search of a star to win the hand of his love. Along the way Tristran discovers many things, most importantly that sometimes a person might not know what his true heart's desire really is.

Stardust opens in the village of Wall in the month of April, in the mid 1800's. To the east of Wall is a long rock wall, from which the village had taken its name. Outside the wall is a meadow and a forest, and strange things can sometimes be seen in the woods, but no one from the village goes through the wall except every ninth year on May Day when a fair comes to the meadow.

Dunstan Thorn is a practical young man of eighteen when the ninth year comes again. On the afternoon of April 29th, Dunstan and Tommy Forester take their turns guarding the opening of the wall to the meadow, turning away the curious. Daisy Hempstock, who Dunstan has been courting for six months, brings them lunch, and Bridget Comfrey brings them ale from The Seventh Magpie. The Magpie is the inn owned by Mr. Bromios where Bridget is employed. A few days earlier Tommy Forester had fought with another man, Alum Bey, over Bridget, and though Bey had won the fight, it seems that Forester had won Bridget.

That evening at the inn, Dunstan stares at a man who had traveled from London for the fair. The man's companion leaves the table and he invites Dunstan to share his pudding. Dunstan joins the man who asks about lodgings in the area. Most available rooms have already been let, and Dunstan winds up taking the man to his own small cottage. The man offers a reasonable sum to rent the cottage for three days, but Dunstan asks what type of miracles he will be trading at the fair. The man nonchalantly tells Dunstan that Dunstan will attain his heart's desire at the fair. Dunstan retires to the barn to sleep, interrupted once by a small hairy man looking for a dry place to sleep.

The following day Dunstan goes through the opening in the wall to the fair to see the wonders for sale, such as new eyes, bottled dreams and Coats of twilight. He runs into his boarder who reminds him of his oath. Dunstan, as well as his firstborn offspring, and theirs, will receive their heart's desire as long as the man lives.



Dunstan looks for a small gift for Daisy and follows a twinkling sound to a stand selling glass flowers. A beautiful girl works the stand and as Dunstan examines the wares his boarder walks by and declares his debt settled. Dunstan talks with the girl and discovers that she is bound to the stall by a silver chain. The girl had been taken by a witch and is now her slave, until the week when two Mondays come together and the moon loses her daughter. Dunstan takes a white snowdrop for the price of a kiss on the cheek. The girl tells him to come back that night and Dunstan agrees. At Mr. Bromios' tent Dunstan gives Daisy the snowdrop and kisses her on the cheek causing an uproar. Daisy's father realizes that Dunstan has been bespelled and has him taken to the village.

That night Dunstan again goes through the wall and meets the slave of the witch. They make love in the meadow and she then sends him back to the village, where he is distracted from life and barely acknowledges Daisy. Two weeks after the fair Tommy Forester proposes to Bridget, and Mrs. Hempstock visits with Mrs. Thorn. The two discuss their children and the benefits of a marriage, and in June Dunstan and Daisy are married. They live happily enough in the cottage while their fathers build a house and time passes. That winter a basket is pushed through the wall from the meadow side and inside is a crying baby with a note pinned to the blanket says simply, "Tristan Thorn."

Chapter 1, In Which We Learn of the Village of Wall, and of the Curious Thing That Occurs There Every Nine Years Analysis

In the first chapter the reader is introduced to several important characters. The novel begins in the village of Wall, so named for the wall that borders it to the east. Dunstan Thorn is a practical young man of eighteen who has been courting Daisy Hempstock for six months or so and has no use for the many people that have traveled from all over the world for the fair that will take place in the meadow outside the wall. The excitement in the village builds as the day of the fair grows closer, causing some to act in ways they normally would not. Bridget Comfrey believed by many to be one of the most beautiful girls in the area has been dating Tommy Forester, but flirting with a foreigner named Alum Bey. Forester and Bey fight over Bridget outside The Seventh Magpie, and though Bey wins the fight, Forester is rewarded with the heart of the girl. The match is an important one, as Tommy and Bridget will marry and their daughter will play an important role in the life of the main character.

Though Dunstan has no interest in the people that have arrived in Wall, he meets a man in the inn who needs a place to stay, and who ends up renting Dunstan's cottage for three days. The fact that Dunstan asks the man what he will be trading at the fair is significant. The man who is not named tells Dunstan that Dunstan will obtain his heart's desire. Dunstan does not appear to have given much thought to such a thing before.

The day of the fair gives the reader more insight into what type of story lies ahead. It is a Faerie Market, with all types of magical items on display for sale or trade. Dunstan

shops for a gift for Daisy and finds a stall stocked with glass flowers. The girl at the stall is beautiful and Dunstan is deeply attracted to her. When his lodger walks by and declares his debt paid, Dunstan barely notices. He takes the glass snowdrop for the price of a kiss on the cheek and promises to return that evening.

Kissing Daisy while presenting her with the glass flower makes everyone aware that Dunstan is under the influence of some type of magic. The young man is transported to the village to sleep off his enchantment but does not. That evening he returns to the meadow and meets the nameless young woman. The girl professes to want nothing but her freedom and to return to the land of her father. The two make love, and Dunstan would have been content to lay with her forever had she not sent him on his way back to Wall.

The events that follow take place over a few months. Mrs. Hempstock and Mrs. Thorn meet and discuss their children, which results in the arranged marriage of Daisy and Dunstan. The two are happy in their new life until a basket containing a baby is pushed through the wall from Faerie, and in the basket is a baby named Tristran Thorn. The reader is led to believe that the tryst that Dunstan had during the Faerie Market resulted in the son delivered through the wall.

Chapter 2, In Which Tristran Thorn Grows to Manhood and Makes a Rash Promise

Chapter 2, In Which Tristran Thorn Grows to Manhood and Makes a Rash Promise Summary

Years pass and Tristran Thorn grows up. Not allowed to attend the Faerie Market when he is eight, Tristran is shipped off to distant relatives where he returns with nothing but the measles. His sister Louisa, younger by six months had been allowed to attend and had returned with fanciful things. As Tristran grows older he learns as boys do of sex and females and becomes infatuated with Victoria Forester, the daughter of Tommy and Bridget Forester. Victoria is the most beautiful girl in Wall and turns the head of all the young men, as well as the married men and the widowers. While sitting with a group of friends, Victoria discusses Mr. Monday, who is 45 years old. The young women can not decide if marrying a widower is a plus because he has experience or if it is a detraction. The discussion seems frivolous, and all the women laugh, none more so than Victoria.

Meanwhile Tristran works on his father's farm evenings and weekends while working at Monday and Brown's during the week. As a clerk, it is Tristran's job to compile lists of things people need. What is not available in the shop is fetched from out of town by Mr. Monday. One day while working in the shop, Tristran is pleasantly surprised when Victoria arrives with a list from her mother. As they discuss the list and when items will arrive, the wind blows from the east, from Faerie, and Tristran bravely asks permission to walk Victoria home. The girl agrees, and as they walk, Tristran asks for permission to kiss her. Victoria denies him, but is distracted by the sight of a falling star. Tristran makes promise after promise of what he will provide to Victoria for the pleasure of one kiss, and finally she relents, telling Tristran that if he retrieves the fallen star she will kiss him, indeed will marry him.

Leaving Victoria at her home, Tristran races home and tells his parents that he will be leaving that evening. His mother is agitated, but his father, Dunstan seems to have expected the announcement. Daisy packs Tristran a bag of spare clothing items and some nourishment, and he and his father head to the wall. Tristran does not know how he will pass through to the meadow past the guards, and is surprised when his father simply reminds the guards where Tristran had come from, and tells them it is time for him to return. Dunstan tucks something in Tristran's hand, and sends him through the wall. Walking into Faerie, Tristan sees that his father had given him a snowbell made of glass. Walking along, Tristran knows that if he were to return to Wall, no one would think any less of him, but thinking of Victoria and the promise of her kiss, he walks onward.

Chapter 2, In Which Tristran Thorn Grows to Manhood and Makes a Rash Promise Analysis

Tristran has grown into a pleasant young man, despite feeling a bit different from everyone else. Tristran daydreams of traveling to London and beyond, even to the Americas as he father did when he was younger, but when the wind blows from the east, the direction of Faerie, his dreams become more tangled. Images of princesses and witches, ogres and dragons fill his head. His younger sister Louisa often teases him about his daydreams and his imagination. Tristran's relationship with his mother is a bit stiff, though he does not know why. There are times when he catches her staring at him as if to see through him.

Tristran has grown to admire Victoria Forester, the daughter of Tommy and Bridget Forester. He believes she is the most beautiful girl in all the British Isles. There are not many people that would disagree with him, and Victoria is aware of it. The discussion that takes place between Victoria and her friends regarding Mr. Monday is significant and will be an important factor in the novel for several reasons.

Tristran is almost painfully shy and tongue-tied when he is near Victoria, and when she comes to the shop, that it is not something he seems to be able to overcome. However, when the wind blows in from Faerie, he gathers courage he was not aware he had and asks for permission to walk her home. Along the way Tristan's courage stays with him, and he promises treasures from around the world for the pleasure of a single kiss. Victoria teases, telling Tristran if he will fetch the star she had seen fall she will not only kiss him, she will marry him.

The excitement Tristran feels is overwhelming and he rushes home to tell his parents that he is leaving. Daisy is startled but Dunstan seems resigned, as if he knew this day would come. He walks with Tristran to the wall and speaks with the guards. Tristran is shocked when he hears his father ask Mr. Bromios if he knows from where Tristran came. His entire life, Tristran has felt different, and he is just beginning to understand who he really is. As Tristran leaves Wall, his father gives him the glass snowbell Dunstan had gotten at the Faerie Market so many years ago, the night he had made love to the slave of the witch.



Chapter 3, In Which We Encounter Several Other Persons, Many of Them Still Alive, With an Interest in the Fate of the Fallen Star

Chapter 3, In Which We Encounter Several Other Persons, Many of Them Still Alive, With an Interest in the Fate of the Fallen Star Summary

The eighty-first Lord of Stormhold lay dying and has summoned his sons, living and dead to his bedside to decide who will succeed him. The Lord had hoped that all his sons would be dead except one, to make the situation easier. Secundus, Quintas, Quartus and Sextus are dead, killed by their living brothers, Primus, Tertius and Septimus. The Lord had sired eight children by three wives, and had killed his own brothers in order to become the eighty-first Lord. The Lord asks each of his sons to go to the window and tell him what they see. The first two see nothing, but Septimus reports that he sees a star. The Lord is carried to the window where he removes a Topaz from around his neck and throws it out the window. The stone rises as the Lord states that whoever retrieves it will be the eighty-second Lord of Stormhold. A star falls from the sky and the old man dies, leaving his sons to take his body to the Hall of Ancestors.

Elsewhere in Faerie a cottage holds three very old women. There is also a mirror where three beautiful young women can be seen. The old women are the Lilam, the witch queen. The women discover that a star has fallen and one is sent to retrieve it. The star will make them all young and beautiful again. Using the last bit of a star they found 200 years ago, the oldest becomes young again and sets off on her mission.

In a distant part of the forest the wildlife goes about its business, some of it magical, most of it not, when a bright light fills the grove. A crack like a shot sounds; then all is silent except for a voice that says "ow," the "fuck."

Chapter 3, In Which We Encounter Several Other Persons, Many of Them Still Alive, With an Interest in the Fate of the Fallen Star Analysis

Though the third chapter is shorter than the first two, more significant characters are introduced that will play an important role in the life of Tristran Thorn. The eighty-first Lord of Stormhold is dying and must decide who will succeed him. The Lord had killed

his own four brothers in order to obtain the title and was privately disappointed in his sons for not having made the decision an easy one. The Lord creates a challenge for his three living sons, requiring that one of them retrieve the topaz that is worn by the Lord. He states that whoever retrieves the topaz, which is the Power of Stormhold, will rule Stormhold and all its dominions. It is significant that the Lord has fathered eight children, yet there are only seven present.

The Lilam, or witch queen of Faerie are old women living in a cottage in the woods. The discovery of a fallen star causes great excitement, as a captured star can be used to make them young and beautiful once more. In a mirror in the cottage there are three beautiful women, who are apparently the reflection of the Lilam in their youth. The three use the remains of the last fallen star they had captured 200 years ago to make one of them young and strong once again. If the witch fails in retrieving the star they need, they will lose any chance they have to be young and strong again.

The magic in Faerie becomes more evident to the reader, as the existence of witches and ghosts seem to be commonplace. Magical creatures co-exist with normal ones in a glade deep in the forest. A noise disturbs the quiet as the star falls, and more magic is revealed as the star speaks.

Chapter 4, Can I Get There by Candlelight?

Chapter 4, Can I Get There by Candlelight? Summary

Tristan travels farther into Faerie and through the seasons as well. Leaving fall behind for summer then spring, he tires and sleeps. Tristan's dreams are disturbed by a man asking him to dream more quietly. The next morning Tristan finds a small hairy man who offers him breakfast. Introducing himself as Charmed, the man welcomes Tristan to travel with him. Tristan tells Charmed his mission to retrieve the fallen star. Charmed warns Tristan that he should be careful who he tells his task to, but never to lie.

The two walk on and discuss the distance to the star and wind up in a serewood. The serewood captures creatures that wander into it. Charmed is distraught as the only way out of the wood is on a path and the serewood will intentionally block a path from those that travel in it. Tristan however can find the path and thus discovers his talent for knowing where things are in Faerie. Charmed discovers that he had met Tristan's father years before; he is the hairy man that had slept in Dunstan's barn. Charmed tells Tristan that he will help him reach his star, as he does not let a good turn go unpaid.

The three living sons of the Lord of Stormhold travel by coach in search of the topaz. Stopping at an inn in Nottaway, they eat and take rooms for the evening. Tertius invites Letitia the chambermaid to his room where they have sex. Letitia offers Tertius some wine, and he discovers he has been duped by his brother Septimus, who has poisoned the wine. Tertius dies, joining the ghosts of his dead brothers in agreement that the youngest of them is the cleverest.

A young boy, Brevis, is on the way to market to sell his goat. He meets a beautiful woman with a cart who offers to buy the goat for more than his mother. Brevis agrees and is stunned when the woman touches his forehead and turns him into a goat as well. The woman is the Lilam, and she is on the way to find the fallen star.

Charmed gives Tristan a magical candle which allows him to travel to the location of the fallen star in minutes rather than days. Arriving at the meadow where he believes the star to be, Tristan is stunned to find that the star is actually a woman. Her leg broken in the fall, the star is angry and annoyed, especially when Tristan tells her that he has come to retrieve her and take her to Wall.

Chapter 4, Can I Get There by Candlelight? Analysis

Tristan meets Charmed, a small hairy man, the same man that had shared the barn with Dunstan many years ago on the eve of the Faerie Market. The two share breakfast and travel together, discussing the reason that Tristan is in Faerie. Upon hearing that Tristan is on a mission to find a star for Victoria Forester, the small man advises him to

forget anyone that would send him on such a foolish quest. Charmed also warns Tristran to keep his business to himself, but not to lie when asked a question. The two have a good relationship which is strengthened when they find themselves in a serewood. Charmed gives up, stating that the only way through the wood is to be on a path. Tristran points out the path immediately and drags the small man to it. Once through the serewood, the man questions Tristran about his ability to know where things are in Faerie. Though he is asked about places he has never heard of, Tristran instinctively knows where to find them. This seems to mean that Tristran has some sort of tie to Faerie.

The three living sons of the eighty-first Lord of Stormhold travel by coach in search of the topaz their father had made their quest. Arriving at an inn in Nottaway, the three men leave the ghosts of their dead brothers and the coachmen to sleep in the barn. That night, Tertius is killed, poisoned by wine his youngest brother Septimus had given to the chambermaid.

The Lilam, now a beautiful young woman, waits at a crossroad with her cart. A young man named Brevis arrives and wonders how the woman had gotten there, as she has nothing to draw her cart. Inquiring about Brevis's plans for the goat, the witch offers him twice the price his mother had told him to fetch for the goat. Pleased at the bargain, Brevis reaches for the coins and instead is turned into a matching goat. The two goats are hitched to the cart and the witch moves on her way to find the star.

Because Tristran had saved him, the hairy man gives him a magical candle. The candle allows Tristran to travel across Faerie by ways of caverns and across clouds until he reaches the glade where the star had fallen. Arriving at the glade Tristan hears noises from one of the bushes and calls out, only to be hit by a clump of mud. He continues to be pelted, until he realizes that the beautiful woman throwing the mud is in fact the star he had come to collect. Tristran is apologetic but wraps a fine chain around the wrist of the star, telling her that he must bring her back to Wall for his true love. The star, having broken her leg falling from the sky is angry and uncooperative, promising that she will do nothing to assist him in his travels.



Chapter 5, In Which There is Much Fighting for the Crown

Chapter 5, In Which There is Much Fighting for the Crown Summary

Tristan wakes the next day and fashions a crutch for the fallen star. The star is still unable to walk, and Tristan makes her a splint as well. Finally able to walk a bit, the pair leaves the glade, and Tristan tries to make conversation. The star remains stubbornly silent until Tristan asks her if she had tripped and therefore fallen from the sky. The star holds up a yellow stone on a chain and tells Tristan indignantly that she had been struck with the stone and was now obliged to carry it with her. The pair continues to struggle and travel along and come to a clearing. A crown is visible and Tristan is about to fetch it when the star holds him back. A unicorn and a lion charge into the clearing, and the lion fights the unicorn. The star begs Tristan to stop them and he walks toward them, repeating a nursery rhyme from his youth. Tristan crowns the lion who leaves happily, and he and the star settle down to sleep beside the wounded unicorn.

The witch queen comes upon an old woman and her colorful bird on the edge of the road. The women recognize each other as witches and the older woman extracts an oath from the witch queen that she will not harm her. The old woman introduces herself as Mistress Semele, though the Lilam knows she has been Ditchwater Sal in the past. The witch queen introduces herself as Morwanneg. The pair shares a meal and Morwanneg discovers that the old woman has given her Limbus grass to force her to tell the truth. Morwanneg reluctantly tells Semele that she is after the heart of a star but also tells Semele because Semele deceived Morwanneg, Semele will never recognize the star for what it is. The witch queen leaves and with her takes all memory of the meeting.

In Scatthe's Ebb, a small seaport, Lord Primus takes a room at the Seaman's Rest. He waits in town, plying the locals with grog, waiting for news of another stranger. When news arrives that there is a new man in town, a new rumor spreads that Primus will sail on the Heart of the Dream that afternoon. Primus sells his coach and horses and boards the ship. A new sailor boards as well, replacing a seaman who was injured. As the ship sails, Primus, freshly shaved, buys back his coach and horses and rides away.

Tristan and the star travel slowly until Tristan suggests the star ride the unicorn. They travel this way until Tristan began to tire and the star suggests he ride the unicorn as well. Tristan needs food and they ride to a nearby village. The star is crying, saying she is alone and frightened. Tristan tells her to wait with the unicorn, the problem of the chain binding them solved when Tristan says "please." The young man eats but upon his return the unicorn and the star are gone.



Meanwhile, the witch queen senses the star growing closer to her, and Primus cast runes that show "it" moving faster and further away. The star rides the unicorn as quickly as possible through the forest, away from Tristran.

Chapter 5, In Which There is Much Fighting for the Crown Analysis

After making a crutch for the star and splinting her leg, Tristan and the star leave the glade and travel toward Wall. Without the magical candle, the trip may take months. The pair struggles along until the star asks if there is a path nearby. Once the question is asked, Tristran knows there is a clearing nearby. In the clearing the pair sees a crown and almost immediately a white horse charges into the field followed by a lion. Tristran realizes that the horse is really a unicorn as the lion attacks. The star begs Tristran to do something, and though he plans to refuse, he instead finds himself in the clearing. A nursery rhyme from his youth comes to mind and reciting it, Tristran places the crown on the lion's head and the beast leaves, appeased. The star will not leave the unicorn, and the pair sleeps on either side of the beast, with the star singing beautiful melodies to the injured unicorn.

The witch queen stumbles upon the old witch and her colorful bird along the roadside. The old woman is frightened of the Lilam, and extracts a promise that she means no harm. The old woman introduces herself to the young witch, not realizing that she has known her for many years. The young witch states her name is Morwannege and shares a meal with the old woman, Mistress Semele. When Semele reveals that she has added herbs that would require Morwannege to tell the truth, the witch queen is angry. Morwannege is forced to reveal that she seeks a fallen star in order to take her heart and gain youth. The witch Semele is pleased with the news and plans to find the star and take the heart herself, but Morwannege tells Semele that because of her deceit she will not remember hearing of the star; indeed, will not be able to see her at all. The colorful bird that belongs to the old witch listens, but remains a bird, as the old witch is angry with her for having given away one of her treasured flowers almost twenty years ago. The bird is the slave girl of the witch who had given Dunstan the snowbell the evening of the Faerie Market.

Primus stays at a small seaport and pays the youth of the village to report to him if a strange man dressed in black arrives. Upon hearing that such a man is in town, Primus allows rumor to spread that he will be traveling by sea that afternoon. A sailor that was to have sailed on the same ship is injured and another man takes his place. Primus watches the ship sail from port, confident that the new sailor is in fact Septimus, and that Septimus has been fooled.

The star travels with Tristran, though not happily, and is shocked when he suggests she wait for him outside the village where he plans to get something to eat. Taking advantage of her freedom, the star flees on the unicorn, toward the witch queen. Primus reads in his runes that "it" is traveling faster. It is apparent to the reader that Primus is

referring to the star. The star is carrying the topaz that had been cast by the eighty-first Lord of Stormhold, and it is the topaz that had knocked her from the sky.

Chapter 6, What the Tree Said

Chapter 6, What the Tree Said Summary

Tristan has a dream where the moon tells him to protect her daughter. Waking to a voice, Tristan discovers that he is being spoken to by a tree. The tree tells him that Pan, the Lord of the Forest, has told her to protect and help Tristan and the star. The tree, formerly a wood nymph tells Tristan that if he had kept the star chained there would be nothing she could do, but as he had freed her he will be given help. The tree reveals three true things. The star is in great danger. The second is that a carriage will be traveling on a near path and Tristan should meet it. The tree then tells Tristan to hold out his hands and a leaf lands in them. The tree tells Tristan to keep the leaf safe and listen to it when he needs it most.

Tristan runs for the coach which passes, but down the path he encounters it again with a large branch blocking its path. Tristan helps clear the path, and though the driver tells him he does not take passengers, Thorn argues for a ride. The man has Tristan draw runes from a bag and upon reading them decides that Tristan should travel with him after all.

The witch queen waits at a crossroad in the path. The Lilam transforms her goats into an old man and a dull witted girl, and her chariot into a small inn. The work is more difficult than she would like it to be, and there are streaks of gray in her hair. The witch-queen's youth and power are fading. Morwanneg waits for the star, pretending to be married to the innkeeper and the mother of the poor girl.

Tristan and the man ride through the night into a storm. As they ride they talk and Tristan tells his companion of seeing a unicorn. The man tells Tristan that unicorns are creatures of the moon and do her bidding. They ride further with the storm getting worse, and Tristan invites the man to visit in Wall one day. The pair finally introduces themselves, and the reader learns that he rides with Primus. Primus tells him Tristan that if he were to see his brother Septimus he should run and hide, as he is a very dangerous man. Tristan spots a light in the distance and the pair draws the carriage up to an inn.

Chapter 6, What the Tree Said Analysis

Waking from a dream Tristan finds himself under a tree that is speaking to him. The tree had been a wood nymph until she had been bespelled. The tree had dreamed that Pan, the Lord of the Forest had instructed her to help Tristan. Though he appreciates the gesture, Thorn can not understand how a tree could help a person. After telling the tree his story to date, the tree tells Tristan that because he had freed the star, she would be able to help him. If the star had escaped him she would not assist him. Three truths are revealed, the most important to Tristan being that the star is in grave danger.

Thorn feels responsible for the star, despite her unwillingness to go with him to Wall. With news that he must meet an approaching coach, Tristran hurries away with the leaf the tree had given him to use when needed.

Unable to meet the coach, Tristran hurries after it, but finds there was no need to do so. A large branch had fallen in front of the carriage despite the fact that there was no wind. The tree had obviously called on her friends in the forest to stop the coach from leaving Tristran behind. Though the man does not take riders, he agrees with Tristran's argument and after consulting his runes agrees to allow him to ride with him. As they travel the weather grows bad and the two huddle together in the rain. Tristran learns that the man he travels with is Lord Primus, who warns Thorn of his younger brother Septimus. The men are about to give up for the night due to the bad weather, but come across an inn, presumably the inn the witch queen had created.

Chapter 7, At the Sign of the Chariot

Chapter 7, At the Sign of the Chariot Summary

The star traveled through a rainy day and comes upon the inn gratefully, though the unicorn will not approach the inn. A woman greets them cheerfully from the doorway and leads the unicorn to the barn, then has her husband carry the star inside by the fire. A bath is prepared and the woman promises to return with food before the star can tell her she does not eat. The woman and her daughter help the star from her bath and lead her to the table where a knife sits. The woman comments on the strength of the star's heart and seems set to do something, when voices outside the inn call for service. The innkeeper seems angry but allows that things can wait.

Tristan and Primus arrive at the inn, and Thorn takes the horses to the barn to groom them. Primus goes into the inn and sends the pot girl out with some ale. As Tristan works on the horses he senses the star is nearby and plans how he will apologize to her. A large clatter from the end of the barn startles him as the unicorn breaks free from its stall and charges past Tristan to dip its horn in the ale. The ale sizzles and Tristan remembers a tale from his youth that a unicorn's horn can detect poison. Before rushing to the inn, Tristan pulls the leaf from his pocket and listens to it.

Primus enters the inn and after instructing the pot girl to deliver ale to Tristan speaks to the innkeeper. Noticing the star sitting at the table, Primus begins to speak to her and realizes that she has the topaz his father had thrown from the window. The star tells him to ask for it so she can be rid of it. A commotion takes place and Tristan bursts into the room shouting to Primus that they had tried to poison him. Primus notices the knives on the table and moves for them at the same time as the witch who slashes Primus' throat. Tristan crawls to the star and the two huddle on the floor as the unicorn bursts in and impales the witch. The witch strikes out at the unicorn stabbing it through the eye, killing it. Tristan struggles with the lump of candle that remains and wraps part of his shirt around it, begging the star to stand with him. The witch moves toward them, commenting that the heart of a content star is worth more than that of a frightened star, but a heart is a heart. She advances as Tristan thrusts his hand into the fire and the pair walks away from the witch. Within three steps they travel through a cave and a desert, and their third step takes them to the clouds where the candle sputters out.

Chapter 7, At the Sign of the Chariot Analysis

The witch's inn fools all but the unicorn on their arrival. The star is relieved to be out of the rain and have a warm place to rest. The witch is very good at her deception, acting the part of a concerned and conscientious innkeeper, helping the star, though the star is unaware that she has ulterior motives. The heart of a happy star is worth more to the witch, providing more youth and strength.

The arrival of Tristran and Primus thwart the witch's immediate plans, but she must keep up appearances. Tristran does not enter the inn at first, so the star is unaware that he is near. Primus sends ale to him and luckily Tristran is too busy to drink it at once. The unicorn tests the drink with its horn and shows Thorn that the ale is poison. Events take place quickly, as Tristran notices the star inside the inn and realizes she has the Stormhold topaz. It is important to note that the star tells Primus to ask for the topaz, a fact that will come up again later in the novel. As he prepares to ask her for it Primus sees the knives on the table and recognizes them for the magical implements they are. At the same time Tristran bursts in with the news that they had tried to poison him. The witch reaches the knives before Primus and kills him and then advances on Tristran and the star. Tristran is busy making a false wick for the bit of candle left, having received directions to do so from the leaf of the magical tree. Barely escaping the witch, the pair travel quickly, arriving on a cloud before the candle is extinguished for good.



Chapter 8, Which Treats of Castles in the Air, and Other Matters

Chapter 8, Which Treats of Castles in the Air, and Other Matters Summary

Septimus finds the remains of the broken chariot that had been the witch's inn as well as the bodies of the boy Brevis and his brother Primus. Septimus knows that now he must avenge the murder of his brother. The ghosts of his six dead brothers are there as well, and they agree.

Tristran and the star sit on the cloud and discuss their predicament. Tristran has burned his hand badly and the star seems to feel bad about it, yet she is also angry. The star explains to Tristran that because he has saved her life she is now bound to him. In a huff, the star finally reveals her name to Tristran. She is called Yvaine, as she is an evening star.

Tristran yells from the cloud, though the star thinks that it will do no good. To the surprise of both of them, a cloud ship arrives and offers them assistance. Captain Johannes Alberic of the Free Ship Perdita hauls them aboard. Meggot takes care of the star's leg and Tristran's hand. The pair sails on the Perdita, helping the crew fish for lightning bolts from storm clouds as they sail closer to Wall.

Below, the witch cuts the unicorn's head from its body and uses the blood to see her sisters. The other two witches are angry, seeing for themselves how the oldest witch has aged in her time chasing the star. The witches confer, and the oldest decides to go to Diggory's Dyke to wait. Anyone that is on their way to Wall and the Faerie Market must pass that way.

The ship Perdita sets Tristran and Yvaine down and the two continue to travel west toward Wall. They run into little trouble, visiting small towns, with Tristran working along the way for food if necessary. One morning, Tristran awakes looking for breakfast and sees a multi-colored bird that is stuck in a bush because of a chain around its foot. Tristran frees the bird and an old woman rushes forward accusing him of trying to steal it. Tristran professes his innocence and after seeming to confer with the bird, the old woman apologizes. Though Tristran asks if he and Yvaine might ride with the woman, it appears that she can not even see the star, and does not ever acknowledge her. The woman agrees to transport Tristran, and the two strike the bargain, after Tristran reveals the glass snowbell that he carries. The old woman wants the flower and compares it to one that she had lost almost twenty years ago. The old woman promises Tristran that he will arrive in Wall unchanged and proceeds to touch the flower to his forehead, turning him into a dormouse. The witch places Tristan in a cage in the caravan and sets off toward Wall. During the weeks that follow, Yvaine tries to stay hidden, but even if



they meet people along the way, and they point her out to the witch, the old woman seems not to see the star at all.

Chapter 8, Which Treats of Castles in the Air, and Other Matters Analysis

Septimus appears to be the last of the surviving heirs of the eighty-first Lord of Stormhold; however, a cryptic remark by one of his deceased brothers leads the reader to believe that there might be more to the story than meets the eye. Because Primus was murdered, Septimus is obligated to seek revenge against the murderer.

The witch is quickly losing her strength and her youth due to the amount of magic she has been forced to use to catch the star. The sister's discuss the situation and agree that Diggory's Dyke is the best place to wait for the star and Tristran, as anyone who wants to go to the Faerie Market in Wall must pass that way.

Far above the earth, Tristran and the star sit on a cloud, discussing their problem. The star sees no way out. Spotting the burns on Tristran's hand, the star is a bit uncomfortable, knowing that his hand was injured while he was saving her life. The fact that Tristran had saved her life means the star is now obligated to stay with him whether she likes it or not. When Tristran reminds her that she would likely be dead if it were not for him, the star seems remorseful. She finally reveals her name to Tristran. Yvaine is her name, called so by her sister stars because she is an evening star.

Surprisingly the two are rescued from the cloud by a cloud ship, and the captain and crew take care of them well. Tristran finds out that the captain had heard of Tristran from the hairy, small man named Charmed, and they had been keeping an eye out for him. The two spend several enjoyable weeks aboard the *Perdita*, growing closer as the time passes.

After landing, Tristran meets the old woman who had been selling glass flowers at the market almost twenty years earlier. Tristran rescues the old woman's colorful bird when its chain becomes entangled. Tristran is drawn to the bird, though he is not sure why. The old woman agrees to provide Tristran with a ride to Wall in exchange for the flower. Tristran tries to make sure the old woman will not trick him; however, she manages to entrap him with his own words, turning him into a dormouse. The old woman has not broken her promise, as she intends to restore him to his rightful shape once they arrive in Wall.

The star, Yvaine, is not noticed by the old woman, Madame Semele, because the witch queen, Morrwaneg, had made it impossible for her to see her. Even the people they meet along the way that point out the star to the old woman, can not convince her that Yvaine is there. Yvaine traveled the distance to Wall keeping company with the colorful bird, though even the bird pretended the star was not there when the old woman was around.



Chapter 9, Which Deals Chiefly With the Events at Diggory's Dyke

Chapter 9, Which Deals Chiefly With the Events at Diggory's Dyke Summary

Septimus finds a small hut made of sticks at the side of the road in Diggory's Dyke and watches carefully for several days. The only inhabitant is a very old woman who passes her time stopping anyone that travels along the road and making conversation. Septimus is convinced that this old woman is the person that murdered his brother Primus and plans his revenge. He must use his wits, as he has no magic, other than a small bit of talent that runs in the family to know where things and places are.

At night, Septimus creeps up to the hut and sets it on fire, then waits outside its door for the old woman in case she escapes the blaze. The fire roars out of control and Septimus smiles, believing it impossible for the woman to escape. A snake bites the heel of his boot, and Septimus is still not worried, until the old woman speaks behind him. Even older than she had been that day, the woman tells him he should be ashamed, attacking the defenseless in their homes. The woman picks up her snake and returns to her now restored hut, and Septimus dies slowly. The following morning he looks down one more time on his body, and discussing matters with his dead brothers, the seven leave, as none of them will ever be the eighty-second Lord of Stormhold.

Madame Semele's caravan approaches the old woman's hut and the crone comes out to greet them. Semele does not recognize Morwanneg, as the witch queen has used too much magic, and she is older than she has ever been. The witch queen does recognize Semele and questions who is in her caravan. Semele answers that she has her bird and her dormouse and travels with no one else. Morwanneg is satisfied and sends them on their way, the star sleeping peacefully, unaware how close she had come to capture.

At the meadow outside Wall, Semele transforms Tristan back into his human form, and though he is angry, he knows that the old woman did not break her word. The bird is also transformed to a human, and Tristan recognizes something in her eyes, though he doesn't know why. Excited to be so close to home, Tristan talks to the star of his family and Victoria Forester and heads toward Wall, the star reluctantly accompanying him.

Chapter 9, Which Deals Chiefly With the Events at Diggory's Dyke Analysis

Septimus is the last brother in line for the position of the eighty-second lord. Though he feels that he will indeed rule Stormhold, he must first get revenge for the murder of his brother, Primus. An important clue is revealed while Septimus is trying to decide how to

kill the old woman. Septimus has no magic to speak of, except for a slight ability to know where things are. This talent runs through the family, and it is the same skill that Tristran possesses, though he had never known of it until he had left Wall for Faerie.

The old woman outwits Septimus, sending a snake to bite him, poison pouring through his bloodstream. The fact that Septimus is poisoned is ironic, as it is how he killed his brother Tertius earlier in the novel. The witch queen's curse upon Madame Semele comes back to haunt her when the old woman's caravan stops in Diggory's Dyke. Morwanneg had cast a spell making it impossible for Semele to find the star and take her heart earlier. Because of this, Semele has no idea that the star, Yvaine, is even traveling with her and can answer the witch queen honestly when questioned about her traveling companions. The witch queen, now even older than before she had set out on her quest for the star had used her own magic unwittingly against herself.

Tristran is angry about being a mouse, but can not fault the old woman any more than himself. Happy to be back with Yvaine and excited to be so close to Wall, Tristran can not wait to see his family. He also wishes to see Victoria, but it seems that he has to convince himself that he loves her, almost feeling obligated to do so. Upon seeing the bird in woman form, Tristran is drawn to her, not realizing he is seeing his true mother for the first time.

Chapter 10, Stardust

Chapter 10, Stardust Summary

Tristan approaches the gap in the wall that leads to Wall and greets the two men that are standing guard. The two men do not recognize Tristan and refuse him entry. Tristan is angry, but is forced to wait in the meadow until the following day. He and Yvaine return to the people that are setting up their stalls and Tristan helps some, accepting food and wine in return, after which he falls asleep quite drunk.

The woman who was the bird approaches Yvaine, who is watching over the sleeping Tristan. The two women speak of Tristan and his nature, then the dark haired woman warns Yvaine that if she were to pass into Wall, she would cease to be a woman, and become stone. Yvaine questions the silver chain that binds the slave of the witch and tells her how Tristan had chained her once but then set her free. The slave then reminds Yvaine of her other obligation, to return the topaz she carries to its rightful owner.

The following morning, a badger delivers a message to Tristan that someone wishes to see him in the village. He rushes off, expecting to see Victoria and is surprised to find his sister Louisa instead. The girl tells him how the family has missed him, never sure if he lived or had died once leaving Wall. Tristan goes with his sister to the Seventh Pie, as someone wishes to speak with him and that person is waiting in Mr. Bromios' office to speak with him.

Tristan arrives at the inn and finds Victoria Forester waiting in the office. The young woman is distraught, asking Tristan to let her speak without interruption. Victoria had felt nothing but guilt since Tristan had left, believing herself responsible for his life. There had been no reason for Tristan to fetch a star to win her heart, as Victoria had already given herself to another. Robert Monday, the owner of the shop where Tristan had worked, had already proposed to Victoria. Though she loves Monday, Victoria will keep her promise to Tristan, as she feels obligated to do so. Both parties are relieved when Tristan tells Victoria he wishes her a happy marriage, and releases her from her vow. Tristan meets with his father, who tells him his mother has breakfast waiting. The two men head to the farmhouse and along the way, Dunstan tells Tristan the truth of his birth.

As the old woman sets up her glass flower stand, her slave makes her aware that the rules of her slavery are about to be met. The silver chain that binds her is growing thinner. Yvaine meets with Victoria Forester, and upon hearing talk of a wedding is broken hearted. The star decides that she will enter the village of Wall and turn to stone, as her love for Tristan is now evident even to herself and she can not bear life without him. As she is about to make her way, Victoria introduces her to Robert Monday, and Yvaine realizes her error in judgment. Relieved that she had not gone through the wall, she sits down again to wait for Tristan.

Tristran finally returns, and though there is no great emotional scene, the couple realizes they are meant to be together and each has found their heart's desire. The star tells Tristran that she can not enter Wall and reminds him of her obligation to find the owner of the topaz. As she speaks the slave of the witch returns, no longer bound to the old witch. A week has arrived where two Monday's meet and the moon loses her daughter, and the woman is free after sixty years of service. The woman tells Tristran to ask for what Yvaine carries and he does so. The woman introduces herself as the Lady Una of Stormhold, Tristran's mother. As the firstborn of the eighty-first lord, Una's son is the last male heir to the kingdom. Tristran does not want to rule anything and convinces his mother that he and Yvaine will return to Stormhold in time, but that she should go on ahead of them.

Yvaine encounters the witch queen, who is now so old that she could not possibly hurt the star. The witch queen is confused because she can no longer sense where the star is. Yvaine's heart had once been a clear signal and now it is not. Yvaine explains that because she has given her heart to another, she does not possess it any longer. The witch queen is disgusted at the thought of love, telling Yvaine that she should have given her heart to someone that would have used it rather than risk having it broken.

Tristran and Yvaine stand in the meadow outside Wall, and Tristran knows he will not return. Having found his heart's desire, he and Yvaine, hand in hand, walk east, toward Faerie.

Chapter 10, Stardust Analysis

Finally returning to Wall, Tristan is happy to be so near home and a bit saddened at his end of the journey. Though he intends to present the star Yvaine to Victoria, he also wishes to help her return to the sky, though Yvaine knows this is not possible.

Meeting with Victoria, Tristran feels nothing but relief when he realizes that the young woman loves another, for he now realizes that the star has his heart, and he does not love Victoria after all. Victoria will marry Robert Monday, and then they will be two Mondays...breaking the curse the old woman Semele had put upon the slave she captured so long ago.

Meeting with the slave in the meadow while Tristran sleeps, the woman brings to Yvaine's attention not only the topaz she still carries, but the fact that she will cease to be a woman if she were to cross into Wall. Upon Tristran's return the now freed slave tells Tristran to ask the star for what is rightfully his, and the topaz, the Power of Stormhold, is restored to the rightful heir.

Yvaine meets with the witch queen at last, though the woman is too old to do any damage to the star. Yvaine is kind to her, understanding that the woman was simply acting as a witch should. The witch does not understand why she can no longer sense Yvaine's presence, and Yvaine explains that the signal her heart had given off to the the witch had grown weaker because the star had lost her heart to Tristran.

Tristran now knows the truth of his birth and why he has felt different from the others in Wall. Knowing that Yvaine can never leave Faerie, Tristran is not as upset as one would think. His adventures have led him home to Faerie and to his rightful place in the world. He will eventually take his role as the eighty-second Lord of Stormhold but is in no rush to do so. He and Yvaine decide to spend their time traveling at their own pace and simply be happy. His mother, the Lady Una, will return to Stormhold and rule in his stead.



Epologue, In Which Several Endings May Be Discerned

Epologue, In Which Several Endings May Be Discerned Summary

Tristan and Yvaine spend three years traveling through Faerie, pleased to have each other and deeply in love. The Lady Una has returned to Stormhold and rules as regent waiting for their return. The people of Stormhold are ecstatic to have the Lady Una returned to them and even more pleased when she informs them of the future return of her son.

Tristan and Yvaine arrive in Stormhold and Tristan remarks that his mother is doing a fine job of running things, and that the couple still have so many places to visit, and wrongs to right. Yvaine agrees, and they leave a note for the Lady Una, telling her that they have been detained by the world.

Five years later the couple returns to Stormhold once more, and Tristan finally takes his place as the eighty-second Lord of Stormhold. He rules fairly and is much loved by his people, as is his beautiful wife. Though they live happily, they do not do so forever, as Tristan eventually dies a very old man, and his body is entombed in the Hall of Ancestors, as his grandfather was before him. Yvaine continues to rule Stormhold to this day and can be seen most nights at the highest point of the castle, staring at the moon and stars.

Epologue, In Which Several Endings May Be Discerned Analysis

Stardust ends happily with Yvaine and Tristan traveling the large world of Faerie for eight years. Lady Una is pleased to tell the people of Stormhold that her son will someday rule, but can not tell them when he will return.

Tristan and Yvaine do return, and Tristan is a wise lord, fairly ruling his people and loving his wife. Their life continues happily until his death, at which point the Lady Yvaine rules Stormhold. As the star does not age, she rules the kingdom to this day and spends her evenings as close to the sky as she can get, looking at her mother moon and her sister stars. It was impossible for Tristan to return her to the sky, but her happiness with him throughout the years more than made up for it.

Characters

Tristran Thorn

Tristran Thorn is a young man from the village of Wall. Though he believes his parents to be Dunstan and Daisy Thorn, he comes to find that while Dunstan is his biological father, Daisy is not his biological mother. Tristran has always felt different in some ways from the other people in Wall, but never understood why. Tristran will find out in time that he is the son of his father Dunstan, a mortal, and a woman from the land of Faerie.

Tristran's adventures begin when he promises to fetch a fallen star for the young woman he loves, Victoria Forester. Victoria promises Tristran whatever he wishes if he returns with the star. Tristran sets off at once for Faerie to retrieve that star, meeting many interesting characters along the way. Once Tristran finds the star, he is startled to find that the star is a beautiful woman. The two travel through Faerie on the way to Wall, and Tristran discovers along the way that he is having trouble remembering the young woman he has left behind.

Tristran released the star from the chain that binds her and then saves her from the witch that wishes to take her heart. The star is now bound to him, and though she is not happy about it, as the two travel they grow closer. Upon their return to Wall, Tristran discovers that Victoria's heart belongs to another and relief floods him. Tristran realizes he loves the star and happily returns to her in the meadow outside Wall. There he meets his true mother and finds he is the last heir to the eighty-first Lord of Stormhold. Tristran and the star travel Faerie for many years before returning to Stormhold to rule. Tristran lives happily to a ripe old age, and the star rules upon his death, visiting the highest point of the castle at night in order to be closer to her mother moon and sister stars.

Yvaine/the Star

Yvaine is the name of the star that has fallen from the sky into Faerie. Tristran Thorn seeks the star in order to impress Victoria Forester, the young woman in Wall he believes he loves. Yvaine does not reveal her name to Tristran until near the end of the novel.

A beautiful young woman with hair so light it is almost white, Yvaine was knocked from the sky when the eighty-first Lord of Stormhold threw his topaz, the Power of Stormhold, into the sky as a test to his heirs. Yvaine is required to carry the topaz with her until the rightful owner claims it.

Three witches seek Yvaine, sending the oldest sister to find her and take her heart from her to regain their youth and strength. Traveling with Tristran as an unwilling partner, Yvaine is in danger. Meeting up with the witch that seeks to kill her, Tristran rescues her, and Yvaine is obligated to stay with him from that point on.



Though the star is often sarcastic and rude to Tristran, her feelings for him grow, and her jealousy over Victoria Forester grows. Upon the pair's return to Wall, Yvaine is tempted to enter Wall, which would destroy the form that she has, turning her into a stone. Meeting Victoria in the meadow, Yvaine is relieved to find that Tristran will not be marrying her. The star loves Tristran, and the two of them realize that they have found their heart's desire. Yvaine lives happily with Tristran until his death, at which point she becomes the Lady of Stormhold and rules the land fairly. Late at night Yvaine climbs to the highest point in the castle to be closer to her mother, the moon, and her sisters the stars.

Dunstan Thorn

The father of Tristran Thorn, Dunstan Thorn is at the root of all things that happen during the novel. Though Dunstan had always been a level-headed, practical young man, the Faerie Market of his eighteenth year gives him more than he dreamed.

On the eve of the fair, Dunstan meets a man looking for lodging and agrees to rent him his cottage. The man promises Dunstan his heart's desire in payment. At the Faerie Market, Dunstan meets a beautiful young woman who is the slave of a witch. The woman extracts a promise from Dunstan to return that evening and he does and the two make love in the meadow. Dunstan returns to Wall and marries his girlfriend Daisy, life continuing as normal until a baby in a basket is pushed through the wall between Faerie and Wall. Tristran Thorn, the son of Dunstan and the slave is then raised in Wall for his first eighteen years.

Victoria Forester

The most beautiful girl in Wall according to Tristran, Victoria is the daughter of Tommy and Bridget Forester. Tristran believes Victoria is his heart's desire and wants nothing more than to kiss her. Walking her home one evening, Tristran promises to retrieve a fallen star if Victoria will kiss him. Victoria agrees, never believing that Tristran would ever succeed in his quest.

Victoria is a self-centered girl, though never intentionally cruel. She has been raised knowing she is beautiful and believes as some conceited people tend to, that she is entitled to whatever she desires. When Tristran returns after retrieving the star, Victoria is willing to give up her love, Mr. Monday, because she has made a vow to Tristran. Victoria has spent the days that Tristan has been gone believing that her foolishness has sent him to his death in Faerie. Tristran by this point has realized that he had been traveling with his true love, rather than to her, and releases Victoria from the vow.



The Eighty-first Lord of Stormhold

The eighty-first Lord of Stormhold is the grandfather of Tristran. The lord throws the Power of Stormhold into the sky, telling his surviving sons that whoever retrieves it would be the eighty-second lord.

The Lady Una

The first child of the eighty-first lord, Una is Tristran's mother. Captured by a witch as a child, Una has served as the witch's slave for sixty years, sometimes in the form of a colorful bird.

Madame Semele

The witch that kept the Lady Una as a slave. Semele had brought Una to the Faerie Market many years ago and had been angered when the woman had given the glass snowbell to Dunstan Thorn.

Mr. Bromios

The owner of the Seventh Magpie, the inn at Wall.

Captain Johannes Alberic

The captain of the Free Ship Perdita, which rescues Tristran and Yvaine from the clouds above Faerie.

Meggot

A woman on the Perdita, who tends to the wounds of Tristran and Yvaine.

Morwanneg

The oldest of the witch queen Lilam, Morwanneg travels through Faerie trying to find the fallen star Yvaine and steal her heart.

Brevis

A young boy sent by his mother to sell their goat. Morwanneg takes the goat and turns Brevis into a goat as well.



Septimus

The youngest son of the eighty-first Lord of Stormhold, Septimus is killed by the witch queen while trying to exact revenge for his brother's murder.

Primus

The first son of the eighty-first Lord of Stormhold, Primus is killed at the witch's inn when the witch tries to kill Yvaine for her heart.

Tertius

The third son of the eighty-first Lord of Stormhold, Tertius is poisoned by Setimus, so he has no chance of retrieving the Power of Stormhold and becoming the eighty-second lord.

Charmed

The name of the small hairy man that helps Tristran when Tristran first arrives in Faerie. Charmed had spent the night in a barn with Dunstan Thorn many years ago and remembers him fondly. Tristran saves Charmed in the serewood, and Charmed returns the favor by giving him the magical candle that allows him to travel through Faerie quickly.

Tommy Forester

The father of Victoria Forester.

Bridget Comfrey

The pot maid at The Seventh Magpie, owned by Mr. Bromios. Bridget will marry Tommy Forester.

Daisy Hemstock

The young woman that Dunstan Thorn courted before he met the slave girl of the witch. Dunstan and Daisy marry, and Daisy raises Tristran as her own.

Louisa Thorn

Tristran's younger sister by six months and a good friend of Victoria Forester.

Robert Monday

The shop owner to whom Victoria Forester has pledged marriage. Robert and Victoria marry, allowing for two Mondays to come together in one week, breaking the spell of Madame Semele and freeing Lady Una.

The Man in the Top Hat

Never named, the man grants Dunstan Thorn his heart's desire, as well as the heart's desire of his first born.

Objects/Places

Wall

The village of Wall where Tristran Thorn lives. Wall is named for the wall that borders it to the east. The wall separates Wall from Faerie.

Faerie

A magical land outside of Wall and the location of the fallen star. Tristran was born in Faerie and is able to return there in order to retrieve the star.

The Seventh Magpie

Mr Bromios's inn located in Wall. The Magpie is a popular gathering place in town.

Serewood

A magical type of forest in Faerie, a serewood can capture and hold the people that stray from a path within their midst. The leaves of the serewood sting those who walk through, and the only way to escape is to find the path.

Stormhold

A kingdom in Faerie, ruled by the Lord of Stormhold. Tristran is the last remaining heir to Stormhold.

The Barrens

A part of Faerie where nothing will grow.

Scaithe's Ebb

A seaport in Faerie, where Primus tricked his brother Septimus into boarding a boat.

Hall of Ancestors

The resting place of the deceased Lord's of Stormhold.

Power of Stormhold

The topaz worn around the neck of the ruling Lord of Stormhold.

Perdita

The cloud ship that rescues Tristran and Yvaine from the clouds over Faerie.

Diggory's Dyke

The location in Faerie where the witch queen waits to trap the star Yvaine.

Themes

Heart's Desire

The first mention of someone's heart's desire takes place when Dunstan Thorn lets his cottage to a man visiting Wall for the Faerie Market. Dunstan is rewarded for his kindness when the man tells him that he will attain his heart's desire the following day at the fair. Dunstan to this point in life had been a stead-fast, practical sort, and generally did not believe in the mysteries that the fair brought with it every nine years. While searching for a gift for Daisy, the young girl he had been courting, Dunstan comes across a stall selling glass flowers. The beautiful girl at the stand entrances Dunstan and gives him a flower, extracting a promise that he will return that evening. Dunstan does and the two make love resulting in the birth of Tristran Thorn, who will be delivered through the wall months later.

Tristran Thorn sets out on a quest to retrieve a fallen star, in order to win the hand of Victoria Forester. Tristran believes that Victoria is his heart's desire and will suffer through anything in order to win her. As the novel progresses, Tristran realizes that Victoria is not what he desires at all; the star is in fact his true love and his heart's desire.

Others seek their heart's desire as well, for example the Lilam, or witch queen seeks the star as well. The witch needs the heart of the star in order to return to her beautiful youth and former strength. Primus and Septimus, the first and seventh sons of the eighty-first Lord of Stormhold also seek the star, or at least what she carries, as the Stormhold topaz is what had knocked her from the sky. The two men seek the topaz in order to obtain their rightful place as the eighty-second Lord of Stormhold.

Though the heart's desire is central to the novel, it seems that the characters that seek it always find that what they believed was their fondest wish, is not in fact what they truly wanted.

Magic

The magic that takes place in Stardust is an important key to the novel. Though Wall borders the land of Faerie, the two places only interact once every nine years. Tristran Thorn is the child of a woman from Faerie, though he is unaware of this fact until near the end of the novel. As Tristran travels through Faerie in search of a fallen star, he becomes more aware of the magical things that take place in the land.

Tristran meets a hairy man, possibly named Charmed, with whom he travels through the land. On their journeys the pair become trapped in a serewood, a forest that captures and keeps those that pass through it unless they can find the path. While in the serewood, Tristran discovers his talent for knowing where things are located within Faerie. Because Tristran's mother is from Faerie, he has some magic in him as well.

More magic is evident when the witch queen transforms herself from an old crone to a beautiful young woman with the remainder of the heart of a star. The witch travels through Faerie in search of the star in order to maintain her youth and strength, but each time she uses her magic she ages, revealing her true identity.

Love

The theme of love is woven through Stardust, beginning with the young Dunstan Thorn and the slave of the witch. Though Dunstan has been courting Daisy for months, Dunstan finds that he desires the beautiful woman more. His life moves on, and Dunstan marries Daisy, but his son Tristran is delivered to Wall several months later, a result of one night of love during the Faerie Market.

Tristran fancies himself in love with Victoria Forester, and vows to fetch her a fall star to prove it. Victoria does not love Tristran; she does not seem to love anyone but herself. However, while Thorn is on his quest to prove himself, the young girl truly falls in love with Mr. Monday. Tristran learns through his travels that his love for Victoria was not true love. The infatuation he had felt for Victoria does not compare to the love he feels eventually for the fallen star as they travel through Faerie.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of *Stardust* is third person omniscient. This is a great help to the reader as the narrator is able to report on the actions of the characters in the novel, as well as their motivations and feelings. As the novel centers on Tristran Thorn obtaining his heart's desire, it is extremely helpful, as the reader can experience the changes that Tristran experiences as he chases his dreams.

The novel is mainly descriptive passages, detailing the travels of Tristran through the wall and into Faerie, as well as his experiences and feelings while there. There is dialogue interspersed which allows the reader to get a better grasp of what Tristran and others feel. The dialogue also helps one understand motivations of each of the characters as they interact with each other.

Setting

Stardust by Neil Gaiman takes place primarily in the land of Faerie, a magical land outside the village of Wall. Tristran Thorn has been raised in Wall, having been left as a baby in a basket at the wall that separates the two lands. A falling star catches the attention of his love, Victoria Forester, and Tristran vows to claim the star for Victoria in exchange for a kiss and a promise to marry him. He travels through Faerie in order to retrieve it. Along the way Tristran meets many strange and magical people and travels through wonderful places. Within Faerie are many places, one of which is Stormhold. The lord of Stormhold dies and sets a task to his heirs in order to decide succession. Tristran is the true heir to Stormhold, as the seven sons of the eighty-first lord are all dead, and his mother, the slave girl of the flower selling witch is the one daughter of the lord. The star that falls in faerie falls in the form of a woman, but if she had landed in Wall she would have been nothing but a rock. Such is the power of the forces in Faerie.

Wall is the village that borders Faerie, and the home of Tristran Thorn until he leaves on his quest to find the star. Though Wall is a seemingly normal English village, the people that live there believe in magic, indeed trading with the people of Faerie every nine years.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is somewhat formal, reminding the reader of an old fairy tale. Though formal, the language is not stiff, and one is able to follow the storyline easily. Though there is dialogue throughout, the descriptive passages provide more information to the reader than the dialogue does. The characters express themselves clearly and eloquently, adding to the experience for the reader.

The novel is at times very fast paced, and the style of narration used helps to keep the reader focused on the matter at hand, though at times there are passages that provide more detailed information. These sections tend to be a bit more formal and difficult to follow. The character's dialogue allows the reader to differentiate among those from Wall and those from Faerie. The language used by the characters from Faerie further separates those which have more education from those that do not.

Structure

Stardust, by Neil Gaiman is a novel with ten chapters followed by an epilogue. Each chapter varies in length, with some as long as thirty pages. Each chapter is titled, and the title allows the reader insight into what will follow.

The plot of the novel is simple and straight forward, with no sub plots. The novel tells the story of young Tristran Thorn who travels to the magical land of Faerie in order to retrieve a fallen star. The star is intended as a gift for the woman that Tristran believes he loves, though along the way, through many perilous adventures, the young man comes to realize that he is mistaken about what he truly wants. Because of his father's quest many years ago at the fair, the reader can be sure that Tristran will obtain his heart's desire, but it is entertaining to read about his journey, not only through the land of Faerie, but as he matures.

The novel is easy to read and enjoyable, once the reader gets used to the style of the author. The novel takes place over a period of many years, but is written in a way that does not confuse the reader. The characters and their interactions help to move things along quickly and enjoyably.

Quotes

"For every nine years, the fold from Beyond the Wall and over the hill set up their stalls, and for a day and a night the meadow played host to the Faerie market; and there was, for one day and one night in nine years, commerce between the nations."

Chapter One, pg 17

"It was then that they looked down, and saw the basket at their feet. There was a bundle in the basket, a bundle of oiled silk and woolen blankets, from the top of which protruded a red, bawling face, with screwed-up little eyes, a mouth, open and vocal, and hungry.

And there was, attached to the baby's blanket with a silver pin, a scrap of parchment, upon which was written in an elegant, if slightly archaic, handwriting the following words: Tristran Thorn."

Chapter One, Pages, 51-52

"And at those times, Tristran Thorn's daydreams were strange, guilty fantasies, muddled and odd, of journeys through forests to rescue princesses from palaces, dreams of knights and trolls and mermaids. And when these moods came upon him, he would slip out of the house, and lie upon the grass, and stare up at the stars."

Chapter 2, page 41

"The wind blew from Faerie and the East, and Tristran Thorn suddenly found inside himself a certain amount of courage he had not suspected that he had possessed. 'You know Miss Forester, I get off in a few minutes,' he said. 'Perhaps I could walk you a little way home. It's not much out of my way.' And he waited, his heart in his mouth, while Victoria Forester's grey eyes stared at him, amused. After what seemed like a hundred years she said, 'Certainly.'"

Chapter 2, pgs. 43-44

"He thought of Victoria's lips, and her eyes, and the sound of her laughter. He straightened his shoulders, placed the crystal snowdrop in the top buttonhole of his coat, now undone. And, too ignorant to be scared, too young to be awed, Tristran Thorn passed beyond the fields we know...

...and into Faerie."

Chapter 2, pg 54

"'To he who retrieves the stone, which is the Power of Stormhold, I leave my blessing, and the Mastership of Stormhold and all its dominions,' said the eighty-first lord, his voice losing power as he spoke, until once again it was the creak of an old, old man, like the wind blowing through an abandoned house."

Chapter 3, pg 61

"She was sprawled, awkwardly, beneath the hazel tree, and she gazed up at Tristran with a scowl of complete unfriendliness. She hefted another clod of mud at him, menacingly, but did not throw it.

Her eyes were red and raw. Her hair was so fair it was almost white, her dress was of blue silk which shimmered in the candlelight. She glittered as she sat there. 'Please don't throw any more mud at me,' pleaded Tristran. 'Look. I didn't mean to disturb you. It's just there's a star fallen somewhere around here, and I have to get it back before the candle burns out.'

'I broke my leg,' said the young lady.

'I'm sorry, of course,' said Tristran. 'But the star.'

'I broke my leg,' she told him sadly, 'when I fell.' And with that, she heaved her lump of mud at him. Glittering dust fell from her arm, as it moved.

The clod of mud hit Tristran in the chest.

'Go away and leave me alone.'

'You're the star,' said Tristran, comprehension dawning.

'And you're a clodpoll,' said the girl, bitterly, 'and a ninny, a numbskull, a lackwit and a coxcomb!'"

Chapter 4, pages 102-103

"So why did you fall?' he asked. 'Did you trip over something?'

She stopped moving, and turned, and stared at him, as if she were examining something quite unpleasant a very long way away.

'I did not trip,' she said at length. 'I was hit. By this.' She reached into her dress and pulled out a large yellowish stone, which dangled from two lengths of silver chain.

'There's a bruise on my side where it hit me and knocked me from the sky. And now I am obligated to carry it about with me.'"

Chapter 5, pages 111-112

"Awkwardly, Tristran got to his feet. The wine was streaming and bubbling, and it came to Tristran then-the information surfacing from some long-forgotten fairy tale or piece of children's lore-that a unicorn's horn was proof against...

'Poison?' he whispered, and the unicorn raised its head, and stared into Tristran's eyes, and Tristran knew that it was the truth. His heart was pounding hard in his chest. Around the inn the wind screamed like a witch in her madness."

Chapter 6, pg 161

'So Septimus will be the eighty-second Lord of Stormhold,' said Tertius.

'There is a proverbial saying chiefly concerned with warning against too closely calculating the numerical value of unhatched chicks,' pointed out Quintas.

Chapter 8, pg 170

"'I should warn you,' said the woman, 'that if you leave these lands for....over there....' and she gestured toward the village of Wall with one slim arm, from the wrist of which a silver chain glittered,'....then you will be, as I understand it, transformed into what you would be in that world: a cold, dead thing, sky-fallen.'"

Chapter 10, pg 216

"Tristran and Yvaine were happy together. Not forever after, for Time, the thief, eventually takes all things into his dusty storehouse, but they were happy, as these things go, for a long while. And then Death came in the night and whispered her secret



into the ear of the eighty-second Lord of Stormhold, and he nodded his grey head and he said nothing more, and his people took his remains to the Hall of Ancestors where they lie to this day."

Epilogue, pg 247

Topics for Discussion

What is the promise made to Dunstan Thorn for providing a man with lodging the eve of the Faerie Market?

Who is the slave girl at the glass flower stall?

What does Tristran want from Victoria Forester? What must he do to get what he wishes?

Why do the Lilam want the heart of the star?

How does Tristran travel so quickly to the location of the fallen star?

What will happen to the star if she were to pass through the wall into the village of Wall?

Who is the eighty-second Lord of Stormhold? How does this person become Lord?