

# **The Scorpio Races Study Guide**

**The Scorpio Races by Maggie Stiefvater**

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# Contents

<a href="#">The Scorpio Races Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Section 13: Chapters 51-54.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Section 1: Prologue-Chapter 3.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Section 2: Chapters 4-8.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Section 3: Chapters 9-12.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Section 4: Chapters 13-16.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Section 5: Chapters 17-23.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Section 6: Chapters 24-28.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">Section 7: Chapters 29-31.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Section 8: Chapters 32-34.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Section 9: Chapters 35-38.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Section 10: Chapters 39-42.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Section 11: Chapters 43-46.....</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">Section 12: Chapters 47-50.....</a>	<a href="#">38</a>
<a href="#">Section 14: Chapters 55-60.....</a>	<a href="#">41</a>
<a href="#">Section 15: Chapters 61-66.....</a>	<a href="#">44</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">49</a>
<a href="#">Symbols and Symbolism.....</a>	<a href="#">51</a>
<a href="#">Settings.....</a>	<a href="#">53</a>
<a href="#">Themes and Motifs.....</a>	<a href="#">55</a>
<a href="#">Styles.....</a>	<a href="#">58</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">60</a>



## Plot Summary

"The Scorpio Races" by Maggie Stiefvater is a compelling narrative about two participants in the dangerous races that take place on the island of Thisby each fall. Sean and Puck have their own reasons for riding in the Scorpio Races, but as their friendship develops, both are forced to reexamine their priorities. "The Scorpio Races" is a charming novel about two young people who, together, overcome the odds against them to get what they need out of life.

After seeing his father die in the Scorpio Races at the age of ten, Sean decides never to be afraid like his father. Nine years later, he eagerly anticipates the approach of the races. When Puck's older brother, Gabe, announces his decision to leave Thisby and move to the mainland, Puck decides to ride in the upcoming Scorpio Races against her brothers' wishes. Mutt Malvern, the son of Sean's boss, torments Sean incessantly. Though Sean tries to ignore Mutt, he dreams of independence. After riding a recently captured piebald mare named Skata, Sean warns that she will kill someone. Uncomfortable with the idea of riding a capaill uisce, Puck decides to ride her island pony, Dove, and she registers for the races, despite objections from the other riders who see a girl on the beach as bad luck.

When Sean first sees Puck on the beach where she is knocked from her mount, he tells her to keep her pony off his beach, and though Puck considers withdrawing from embarrassment, her determination is reinforced after Benjamin Malvern visits to warn her that she and her brothers are about to be evicted since no one has paid on the house since her parents' deaths.

Malvern's son, Mutt, shows his ongoing contempt for Sean at the expense of the brutal loss of a colt. While on a boat, Mutt allows a capaill uisce to attack Fundamental. Fundamental is a colt that is one of Sean's charges. Although Sean tries to save Fundamental, he fails.

Sean wants to quit his job, but he cannot stand the thought of losing Corr, his beloved capaill stallion. When Sean and Puck catch a ride to town with Thomas Gratton, they talk about the race. After Puck admits how much she loves the island, Sean offers to let her ride a capaill. Since Puck wants to be sure that a capaill is more likely to win than Dove, she and Sean race. Though Sean's mare is faster, the horse jumps from the cliffs, leaving Puck as the victor. Puck insists on riding Dove in the race.

Sean objects when he learns Mutt plans to ride Skata in the race, but Mutt is indifferent to his employee's fear that Skata will kill someone. At the bonfire where riders declare their intent to participate in the Scorpio Races, the men object to Puck's involvement, but Sean defends her courage, forcing the others to concede. Inspired by her courage, he confronts Malvern about buying Corr and resigns when his employer refuses.

During a fierce storm, Gabe rescues his siblings from a capaill's attack and takes them to stay with the Grattons until the storm passes. The storm also causes the horses at



Malvern Yard to act up. Though Sean wants to prove how invaluable he is, he helps anyway. He cannot bring himself to let a horse be injured because of his games with Malvern. Malvern insists that Sean's actions change nothing. Puck is furious when she learns about Sean's situation, assuring him that Corr belongs to him no matter what the law says. After Sean rescues Corr from Mutt's cruel training techniques, Malvern agrees to sell Corr to Sean if they win the race.

Puck visits Sean at Malvern Yard and helps him tend Corr as they discuss why each of them needs to win the race. Wanting Puck to love Corr, they both ride Corr on the beach. Puck feels like she knows the island better than ever. As Puck and Sean continue practicing together, she and Dove improve, making victory feasible. Yet, Puck laments the fact that she and Sean cannot both win the race. When Sean comes to dinner at the Connolly house, he promises to wait to make his move in the race until Puck makes her move.

At Malvern's young stock auction, Mutt is furious when he overhears his father's disparaging remarks about him. That night, Sean wakes to a horse crying. He rushes to the stables to find that Edana has been mutilated. Realizing Mutt's treachery, Sean saves Corr before Mutt can harm him by offering to let Mutt win the race. After Tommy Falk's funeral, Sean and Puck kiss and discuss their wish to reign as king and queen of the race and achieve all of their collective dreams.

The day of the Scorpio Races finally arrives. As the race begins, Sean keeps his promise to wait for Puck to make her move first; however, Mutt corners Puck and Dove, forcing Sean to intervene as he urges Puck forward. Mutt cuts Skata who attacks Corr, knocking Sean from his back. Puck is shocked to win the race, but frightened by Sean's absence at the finish line. She turns back to find his prone body being guarded by Corr. Sean awakes and laments that Mutt was taken by Skata. He is amazed at Corr's loyalty, even as he mourns Corr's substantial injuries that will prevent him from ever running again.

Unable to enjoy her victory when Sean suffers, Puck convinces Malvern to sell Corr to Sean despite his loss. Since Corr can no longer run, Sean decides to release him to the sea, Corr's other love, so his horse can find happiness. However, as Sean walks away, Corr goes to him, walking away from the sea and slowly returning to his owner.



## Section 13: Chapters 51-54

### Summary

#### Chapter 51

While waiting on the cliffs for Puck in Chapter 51, Sean does not know what they expect from each other after last night. When Puck arrives, she worries about Dove's timidity around the capaill uisce, and Sean suggests Dove will release her speed as long as Puck is not afraid. After they work the horses, Puck asks if she will see Sean on the cliffs tomorrow. Puck and Sean work the horse together for days, and she thinks "about the way he looks at me - with respect - and I think that's probably worth more than anything" (page 328). Watching Sean with Corr, Puck realizes the thought of Sean losing his horse is unbearable, yet both of them cannot win. Sean enjoys Puck's company, though they rarely speak, and he notices that Dove and Puck have both improved; Dove keeps pace even when Corr tries, so Sean tells Puck she might really pull this off and suggests she practice on the beach tomorrow so Dove can get used to the others. Both are uncomfortable with the idea of competing for first place, but Puck says second or third place prize would still help her. She invites Sean to dinner, hiding her disappointment when he hesitates, but he says he will think about it.

#### Chapter 52

In Chapter 52, Gabe brings Tommy and a chicken home for dinner, and the house feels full for the first time in months. Finn and Puck try to ignore the conversation when Gabe and Tommy talk about going to the mainland. Hearing a knock at the door, Puck is surprised to see Sean, and she is grateful when he smiles at her since it is a rare gift to see him smile. While Sean helps Puck prepare dinner, they talk about the race, and he promises that he and Corr will stay next to Puck and Dove so they can make their move together. Puck objects to being Sean's weakness, but he says it is too late for that. As they eat, Puck avoids looking at Sean because she is certain her brothers will notice how she looks at him and how he looks back.

#### Chapter 53

When Sean wakes to the sound of crying in Chapter 53, he rushes to the stables and finds the sound comes from Edana's stall. He has a bad feeling as he notices she is standing oddly, and finding wounds on her legs that will prevent her from ever walking again, he cannot understand who or why anyone would mutilate her. Hearing noise inside the stable, Sean suspects that Mutt was looking for Corr and is relieved that he moved Corr earlier, but when he hears a commotion from near Corr's new stall, he runs back, yelling that Mutt has gone too far. Sean increases his pace when he hears Corr scream, threatening to kill Mutt if he hurts Corr. Mutt stands in Corr's stall with a blade, so Sean retrieves his switchblade and swears he will cut Mutt's heart out if he cuts Sean's horse. When Sean asks what Mutt hopes to prove, Mutt points out that Corr is



the only thing Sean cares about. Realizing there is something Mutt would prefer over crippling Corr, Sean says that Mutt needs to win the race to prove something to his father. This causes Mutt to hesitate as the siren's song wins him over. As Mutt exits the stall, Sean presses the knife to his throat, wanting to cut him, but Malvern's arrival allows Mutt to flee. When Malvern asks if Sean has anything to say, Sean says he would not be sorry.

#### Chapter 54

It is a bitter, windy day in Chapter 54 as Sean meets Puck on the cliffs. Since Dove is afraid, he insists on Puck going home as it is too risky on the beach in this weather. Puck wants to look for Tommy. While she ties Dove to the Fathom & Sons stall, Dory Maud tells Sean that he and Puck are a poor match since neither of them is a housewife. He says she assumes too much, but she insists that Puck needs someone to hold her down, accusing Sean of loving the races which he claims is not true. When Puck returns, she and Sean go to the beach which is as bad as Sean imagined. They stop at a huddle of spectators and learn that the horses were fighting. Looking around, Sean loses Puck, but he finds Tommy's mare. He locates Puck next to four bodies and stands next to her as they look down at Tommy's battered face.

## Analysis

Sean's nervousness around Puck in Chapter 51 again foreshadows the romantic relationship developing between the two of them, but Puck receives the respect she craves through Sean's eyes, though none of the other riders on the beach treat her with any respect. Sean's thoughts about Puck and Dove's improvement as they practice foreshadow Puck's victory during the Scorpio Races. The thought of competing against each other makes both uncomfortable, again demonstrating the feelings that they are starting to have for one another. Also, it foreshadows Puck's decision to ensure that both of them get what they want. Puck's romantic interest in Sean makes a more prominent appearance when she invites him to dinner.

Puck is surprised when Sean actually arrives for dinner in the next chapter, noting that it is a rare gift to see him smile. Her romantic interest in him is again apparent as she fears allowing her brothers to see them looking at each other. Sean's promise to wait for Puck to be ready to make her move during the race foreshadows his loyalty during the event.

Mutt's animosity against Sean reaches a climax in Chapter 53 as he injures Edana by mistake when he finds her in Corr's old stall. Luckily, Sean is awakened by the sound of Edana's screams so he reaches the stables in time to stop Mutt from stabbing Corr. Mutt shows his hatred for Sean as he insists that Corr is the only thing Sean cares about, but Sean distracts him by bribing him with the offer of letting him win the race. Sean threatens Mutt as he exits Corr's stall, but Malvern arrives in time to save his son. Mutt's behavior in his own stables foreshadows his treachery during the Scorpio Races; he obviously does not care who he hurts as long as he gets what he wants.



In Chapter 54, Sean dissuades Puck from running Dove on the beach because it is too windy. While Puck is tying Dove so they can look for Tommy Falk, Dory Maud's comment about Puck and Sean making a poor match indicates that others have noticed the budding romance between the two young riders while paralleling the advice George Holly gave Puck. On the beach, Sean panics when he loses Puck, again revealing the depth of his feelings for her. When he finally locates her, she is standing over Tommy Falk's dead body.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does the thought of competing against each other for first place bother both Sean and Puck?

## Discussion Question 2

Describe Mutt's actions in the stable in Chapter 53 and Sean's reaction.

## Discussion Question 3

In Chapter 54, what does Dory Maud tell Sean about his relationship with Puck?

## Vocabulary

Searing, flinch, ferocious, skirmish, concertina, opposed, persuade, malice, imminent, keening.



# Section 1: Prologue-Chapter 3

## Summary

### Prologue

In the Prologue, nine years earlier, Sean knows someone will die today because it is the first of November. It is always dangerous when they run the horses on the beach, between the water and the cliffs, but race day is even worse. Sean lives and breathes the beach at this time of year because it makes him feel so alive, but an official stops him on his way down the cliffs, warning Sean's father that it will be his fault if the ten-year-old dies. As his father prepares his horse for the race, Sean wishes he was the one riding because he is sure of himself and knows his father is scared of the red stallion. Despite his father's chiding, Sean whispers in the beast's ear, asking it not to eat his father. As Sean watches from the cliffs, his father eases into second place, but a gray horse tears the man from his seat, and he is trampled by hooves. Sean does not often think of his father's corpse on the beach; instead, he recalls his father's fear before the race and assures himself, "I won't make the same mistake" (page 5).

### Chapter 1

In Chapter 1, Puck admits she would be lost without her brothers as she prepares her mare, Dove, for a ride in the middle of October. Thisby is a small island, but it is big enough for those who know no different. It is still enough for Puck, though she knows different. Finn, her younger brother, tinkers with his car; normally, he would race her with his car against Dove, but he has not done so since their parents died on a boat a year ago. Now, he challenges her to a race, so Puck takes a shortcut, risking Gabe, their older brother, seeing her. Of course, Gabe sees her and gives a fake smile when she yells for him not to be mad. Still, Finn beats Puck to the beach, but his face is worried, so Puck follows his eyes to see a water horse, a capall uisce, emerge from the sea. Puck and Finn stay still as they were taught because the capaill uisce only chase moving targets. The capaill uisce have returned for the Scorpio Races as they do every fall. Finn and Puck know how dangerous the beasts are, and she feels the urge to protect her brother.

### Chapter 2

In Chapter 2, Sean is settling accounts at the butcher's shop when he hears that the capaill uisce are out, but he can feel them climbing from the sea in his blood which is why he and Corr are so restless. Thomas Gratton, the butcher, asks if Sean will be riding in the race again, and Sean confirms. He has worked in Malvern Yard since he was ten years old, but though he needs to focus on work, part of him is already on the beach as his blood sings with the feeling of being alive.

### Chapter 3





When Gabe returns home for dinner in Chapter 3, he tells Puck and Finn that he is leaving the island in two weeks without them. They object, but his face is impassive until Puck announces that she is riding in the Scorpio Races. After overcoming his speechless reaction, Gabe announces he will stay until after the races, though he believes it is a stupid thing for Puck to do. Puck does not care about his anger, pointing out that they will need the money since he is abandoning them. She cries into her pillow over Gabe's selfishness.

## Analysis

"The Scorpio Races" begins with a Prologue which occurs nine years before the main narrative begins. Sean Kendrick, one of the novel's protagonists, is introduced as a young boy watching his father participate in a horse race. Sean's fear for his father foreshadows his father's death, and this foreshadowing is quickly fulfilled. When Sean whispers to the horse, his affinity for the creatures is apparent. This affinity will grow even more as he grows older. He is determined to not make the mistake of fearing his mount as his father had done. Without a doubt, Sean will race.

Chapter 1 introduces Kate Connolly, the other protagonist in the novel. Kate, known as Puck, is an orphan. The chapter moves ahead nine years and introduces Puck's two brothers, Gabe and Finn. The small island of Thisby is established as the setting. Puck's joy in riding her horse foreshadows her decision to race, especially as the concept of the Scorpio Races and the *capaill uisce* are actually named here, but little is said about either, other than Puck's fear and need to protect her brother indicating the danger posed by the *capaill*.

Chapter 2 returns to Sean whose perspective allows an expansion on the *capaill uisce* as his thoughts inform the reader that these are horses that live in the sea and emerge on Thisby every fall where they are captured to participate in the life-threatening races. Sean's love for the sea and the race is apparent in his feelings of being alive. His life as an employee of Malvern Yard since his father's death is also described.

In Chapter 3, when Gabe informs Puck that he is leaving Thisby, Puck decides to participate in the Scorpio Races. Gabe objects, which foreshadows the opposition Puck will meet regarding her decision to race. However, she insists they will need the money once he leaves.

## Discussion Question 1

How does Sean know someone will die in the Prologue?

## Discussion Question 2

Describe Puck's living situation.



## Discussion Question 3

Compare and contrast Sean and Puck's feelings about the Scorpio Races in Chapters 2 and 3.

## Vocabulary

Frigid, friction, diminutive, serpentine, inexplicably, pedestrian, docile, amplified, diffuse, humanitarian.



## Section 2: Chapters 4-8

### Summary

#### Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, Sean dreams of the night he caught Corr. He is awakened from his dream by Brian and Jonathan Carroll who announce that Mutt Malvern is in trouble. He and his friends nearly caught a capaill uisce, but they can neither release it nor bring it in. Unable to leave the horse trapped, Sean rushes to the beach where he assists, despite Mutt's objections. Mutt insists on Sean bringing the horse to Malvern Yard. Though getting the boys out alive is a feat of its own, everyone knows Sean can do both. However, he looks at Mutt as he whispers in the capall's ear and lets it go.

#### Chapter 5

In Chapter 5, Puck goes downstairs to find Gabe has already left for work. When she informs Finn that she will be gone most of the day, Finn insists on accompanying her to the first day of training for the races.

#### Chapter 6

In Chapter 6, Gorry asks Sean to come to the beach early to try a piebald mare he dragged from the sea which he insists is the fastest capaill ever, even faster than Corr. Sean tests her, but he can barely refrain from the urge to enter the sea. Dismounting, he warns Gorry that the mare will kill someone and suggests giving her back to the sea, but he knows Gorry will not.

#### Chapter 7

In Chapter 7, the beach is filled with men when Puck and Finn arrive. Puck does not know how to answer Finn when he asks how she will acquire a horse without money. Listening to the capaill's unnatural screams, she must get to the beach before she loses her nerve. She makes her way to a dealer holding a piebald mare. The dealer is complaining about Sean Kendrick, a name Puck finds vaguely familiar. Gorry refuses her request to do fifths, meaning he would win 80% of the race earnings if she wins. Puck wants to cry in frustration as no one else agrees, but Gorry offers to sell the mare to Puck. So, she suppresses her fear and tells herself she can do this.

#### Chapter 8

In Chapter 8, Puck hesitates before she mounts, fearing how disappointed her parents would be. Trying to think of a way to avoid mounting the mare, Puck notes that she cannot race without a capaill, but she decides this is not who she is. As Puck informs Gorry that she has changed her mind, the mare bites a man near her, and Finn begs



Puck not to ride a water horse. She agrees by saying, "I'm not. I'm riding Dove" (page 54).

## Analysis

Mutt Malvern's ineptitude with horses and his animosity toward Sean are apparent in Chapter 4. Sean is forced to save Mutt and his friends as they endanger their own lives by attempting to catch a capaill uisce. Sean releases the beast, despite the fact that doing so enrages Mutt. The fact that the son of Sean's employer is established as the main antagonist of the novel foreshadows the ongoing jeopardy of Sean's job

Finn shows his concern and devotion for Puck by insisting on accompanying her to the first day of training for the races in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 6, Sean is asked to test a recently captured piebald mare, indicating his reputation as a horseman and the respect granted him for his skills. Sean's inability to control the mare and his prediction that she will kill someone foreshadows the danger she poses during the race.

In Chapters 7 and 8, Puck is uncomfortable on the beach as she tries to obtain a capaill uisce to ride in the races. The dealer with the piebald mare tries to sell to Puck, though he refuses her request to do fifths which would allow him to earn 80% of her earnings by loaning her the horse. She agrees to try the mare, but she decides that she is not being true to herself if she follows through. Finn begs her not to ride a capaill. Puck decides to ride Dove, foreshadowing the handicap with which she will enter the race. During her conversation with the dealer, she hears Sean's name which sounds vaguely familiar. It's apparent that a future relationship will probably develop between the novel's two protagonists.

## Discussion Question 1

How does Sean antagonize Mutt in Chapter 4?

## Discussion Question 2

What happens when Puck searches for a capaill uisce to ride in Chapter 7?

## Discussion Question 3

In Chapter 8, who does Puck decide to ride, and why?

## Vocabulary

Dilated, briny, illuminated, gingerly, equine, improbable, grandiose, indeterminate, silhouettes, amphibian, predator.



## Section 3: Chapters 9-12

### Summary

#### Chapter 9

In Chapter 9, Sean takes Corr to the beach after it empties in the evening. Registration begins tonight at the Gratton's, but Sean cannot wait for the first week of negotiations to end, which is when life really begins. Corr looks to the sea, but Sean gains his attention. He trusts Corr more than the others, though he knows he should not trust him at all. Sean and Corr play in the sea. As they climb the cliffs, Mutt and his friends are laughing because Mutt urinated in Sean's boots. Sean empties his boots and carries them inland.

#### Chapter 10

In Chapter 10, Skarmouth seems strange after dark. Puck feels lost, but she hurries to the Grattons' butcher shop because she needs to register today for the race. Inside, Puck notices the dark-haired boy who rode the red stallion on the beach, but an old man tells her to steer clear of Sean Kendrick; Sean knows horses better than anyone, but he has one foot on the land and one in the sea. Peg Gratton tries to stop Puck from signing up at Gabe's request. Unable to dissuade Puck, Peg adds Puck's name to the list of riders, assuring her that the rules do not prevent Puck from riding Dove in the race. Puck is official now. Outside, Puck sees Mutt mocking Sean and threatening to have Sean fired for theft because he let Mutt's capail go. Sean reminds Mutt that Mr. Malvern always asks Sean to pick Mutt's horse for the race, and Mutt will ride the horse Sean picks. After Sean walks away, Puck leaves too, reminding herself that Sean is just another rider on the beach. There is no reason to make his concerns her own.

#### Chapter 11

As Puck dreams of her mother teaching her to ride in Chapter 11, she wakes to a door closing and sees Gabe standing at her door. She wants him to sit with her, but he bangs his fist against the door jamb as if she has disappointed him and leaves. Meanwhile, Sean tends to the horses at Malvern Yard before going to bed. He does not envy the Malverns' stable, but he yearns for his own roof and home, especially as he thinks of Mutt and the piebald mare. When he finally sleeps, he dreams of the day he can turn his back on Mutt and keep walking.

#### Chapter 12

In Chapter 12, Puck tends Dove in the morning and explains to Finn that she has to work Dove on the beach according to the rule sheet. She cannot ask for an exception because she prefers not to be noticed at all. A car arrives with Peg Gratton and Father Mooneyham, reminding Puck how long it has been since she went to confession. Peg visits to try to dissuade Puck from racing Dove on the beach, warning that Puck does



not know what she is getting into and could even die! Puck insists she has to do it, so Peg and Father Mooneyham leave.

## Analysis

In Chapter 9, Sean is excited as the island prepares for the Scorpio Races, beginning with registration. His love for Corr, his mount that is owned by his employer Malvern, is apparent and foreshadows his desire to claim Corr as his own. Mutt's continued taunts, in the form of urinating in Sean's boots in this instance, foreshadow the heightened animosity between them as well as Mutt's future devious acts of sabotage.

When Puck goes to register in Chapter 10, she is warned about Sean again. However, Puck has a tendency to ignore advice. This tendency is immediately demonstrated as Puck disregards Peg Gratton's attempts to dissuade her from registering for the race. She also determines that there is no rule against riding Dove, cementing her plan. Outside, she sees Mutt tormenting Sean, and her concern foreshadows their future friendship, even as she reminds herself that there is no reason to get involved in the concerns of other riders. Sean's retaliatory taunts to Mutt regarding Malvern's decision to let Sean pick Mutt's mount for the races every year further foreshadows Mutt's continued malevolence.

Gabe's appearance in Puck's room in Chapter 11 demonstrates his disapproval of her decision to race. Sean's dreams of having his own roof and turning his back on Mutt indicate that he will one day leave Malvern Yard.

Before Puck leaves to work Dove in Chapter 12, she receives a visit from Peg Gratton who again reminds her of the danger of the races. Peg cannot dissuade Puck from participating. Peg's visit to remind Puck of the danger is just the beginning of the negativity Puck faces. Many of the other riders will have an objection to a girl racing.

## Discussion Question 1

Who is Corr, and how does Sean feel about him?

## Discussion Question 2

What does Puck dream of in Chapter 10, and what does Sean dream of in Chapter 11? What do these dreams say about each of them?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Peg Gratton try to dissuade Puck from riding in the Scorpio Races?

## Vocabulary

Maiming, formality, negotiation, bartered, potent, submerged, lingering, canny, muffled, condescending.





## Section 4: Chapters 13-16

### Summary

#### Chapter 13

In Chapter 13, Sean stands in a pen at Malvern Yard and watches Corr trot with one of Malvern's American customers. The American asks about the capaill uisce, introducing himself as George Holly, a name Sean recognizes as Malvern's American equivalent. Holly admits that he came to Thisby because of Sean and his renown as a rider. Holly expresses interest in buying Corr and hiring Sean, but Sean knows Malvern will not sell Corr. At Holly's request, Sean allows him to hold Corr's lunge line as Holly notes Malvern could not have taught Sean about horses, and though Corr uses the distraction to pull on the lead, Sean maintains control, and Holly is not phased.

#### Chapter 14

Since the car will not start in Chapter 14, Puck loads a cart with teapots and hitches Dove up. In town, they head toward Fathom & Sons, a shop owned by Dory Maud who sells Puck's teapots. Dory shows Puck her new catalog, insisting that Puck sign and number her creations because it makes them more valuable. As Puck heads to the beach, she thinks that Dove does not look much like a racehorse, but Puck probably does not look much like a rider either.

#### Chapter 15

The beach looks ordinary at first in Chapter 15, but then Sean notices a fearless girl on the beach! Watching, he realizes her mount is just an island pony, but he still wonders why she is on his beach and why no one confronts her. The pony is beautiful, yet she is nothing compared to the capaill uisce, and the girl is nothing special either, though she is a skilled rider. Gorry approaches with the piebald mare and tells Sean that the girl has entered the races, so Sean is certain she will be dead within a week. When Jimmy Blackwell's horse starts and the girl is thrown from her pony into the water, Sean rushes to the scene, killing a capall that tries to drown the girl. The girl rises, bleeding but with fierce eyes, and Sean tells her to keep her pony off his beach.

#### Chapter 16

In Chapter 16, Puck is ashamed that she could not make it one day without being rescued. She tries to stop thinking about her embarrassing encounter with Sean, but while the idea of giving up is a relief, she has too much pride to tell Gabe she has changed her mind. Ben Malvern knocks on the door and asks to talk to Puck about unpleasant business. Noting her parents are dead, he questions how the Connollys support themselves before explaining he is here to evict them because he has not received payment on the house in a year. Puck is struck by the betrayal when Malvern tells her that Gabe knew. When Malvern asks what Puck is willing to do to save the



house, she asks for three weeks, causing him to note she does not stand a chance on Dove, but he leaves a document for Gabe, claiming he will return to collect it after Puck is dead.

## Analysis

In Chapter 13, Sean meets George Holly, one of Malvern's rich American clients. Holly's knowledge of and interest in Sean demonstrates Sean's fame as a horseman. Though Corr acts up around Holly, Holly is unafraid of the capaill.

Dory Maud is introduced in Chapter 14 as Puck visits her to sell teapots, Puck's main source of income. On the beach, Puck realizes that she and Dove do not look much like a rider and racehorse, indicating her insecurity.

Chapter 15 features the first interaction between Sean and Puck. Sean notices her on the beach and is astounded to learn she is planning to race; furthermore, he is certain she will be dead in a week. When a capaill knocks Puck from her horse and tries to drown her, Sean rushes to her rescue but harshly tells her to stay off his beach. This first encounter serves as a contrast with their relationship later in the book.

Chapter 16 shows Puck lamenting the fact that she had to be rescued on her first day of practice, and her pride comes into play as she refuses to tell Gabe she has changed her mind. Cementing her decision to persevere, Malvern visits to inform Puck that they are being evicted from the house due to lack of payment, and though he agrees to wait until after the races, Malvern's belief that Puck will die in the races parallels Sean's fear in the previous chapter.

## Discussion Question 1

Why is George Holly interested in Sean in Chapter 13?

## Discussion Question 2

Describe the first encounter between Sean and Puck.

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Benjamin Malvern visit the Connolly house, and what does Puck convince him to do?

## Vocabulary

Pronunciation, devised, humidity, lathered, benevolent, conciliatory, eccentric, transport, aligning, dismissively.



## Section 5: Chapters 17-23

### Summary

#### Chapter 17

In Chapter 17, Sean sits half-turned in the boat while watching Fundamental, the colt Malvern wants to sell to Holly. He thinks about the girl as he watches for hunting capail, and he also knows Malvern will want him to assign a horse to Mutt, leading to the fear that Mutt will ride Corr, a thought Sean cannot bear. Daly calls to Sean and points to a spot in the water that Mutt watches, but Sean knows there is no time to reach shore as Fundamental is dragged under. Mutt remains motionless, but Sean dives into the water.

#### Chapter 18

In Chapter 18, Sean swims through the blood. Seeing Fundamental's wound, he knows he cannot save the colt, so he has to leave him behind.

#### Chapter 19

As Finn and Puck angrily wait for Gabe to get home in Chapter 19, Puck asks if Finn is willing to sell his car to buy better food for Dove, and he agrees to sell the car if that is what it takes. Puck promises they will have the money to buy two cars if she wins. Gabe is unusually late, and Puck notes "it's like he's already gone" (page 118).

#### Chapter 20

In Chapter 20, Sean cannot sleep as he thinks of Fundamental and his inability to save his charge. Unable to stay in bed, he dresses and goes to the stables to see Corr, wondering how Malvern will feel about Mutt's willingness to sacrifice Fundamental for the chance to hurt Sean. Though Sean thinks how satisfying it would be to quit his job, he cannot tolerate the idea of Mutt riding Corr, so he cannot leave his horse.

#### Chapter 21

In Chapter 21, Puck forms a new plan based on yesterday's experiences on the beach. Saddling Dove and heading to the beach at 5 AM, Puck does not feel brave, and she knows they are vulnerable, but she has to trust Dove. As she works Dove, Puck thinks she sees someone on the cliffs, but there is no one there when she looks again. Before the other riders arrive, Puck is finished with her workout.

#### Chapter 22

In Chapter 22, Sean meets Malvern at the tearoom, and Malvern informs him that Mutt reported Sean killed one of his horses, yet Daly said Sean seemed distracted. Malvern asks for Sean's side of the story, but Sean declines to speak against Malvern's son.



Malvern asks what Sean wants out of life, so Sean tells an abridged version of the truth, that he wants his own roof and to ride, since he cannot admit his desire to be free of Malvern. They discuss the horses, and Malvern asks why Sean swam after Fundamental since the colt belonged to Mutt. Malvern decides that Mutt will ride Edana, the mare Sean believes is safest, and Sean will ride Corr. Every year, Sean waits for the announcement which always eases his heart, but this year, he feels like he is still waiting.

### Chapter 23

In Chapter 23, Puck goes to the hotel to see Gabe, but he is out on a boat, fishing. After her afternoon ride on the beach, she returns to an empty house where she takes the little bit of money they have left and rides her bike toward town. Luckily, she runs into Thomas Gratton who offers her a ride, but she is displeased when Gratton also picks up Sean when they see him on the road. As Sean opens the car door, Puck thinks he looks unfriendly, like a wild animal. Gratton notes that Mutt is unhappy with the horse that Sean chose for him and Mutt claims that Sean is just afraid of the competition. Gratton jokes that Sean already has his hands full with Puck, causing Sean to frown. As they talk about Gabe and the other boys leaving Thisby, Puck is adamant that "I'd never leave. It's- it's like my heart, or something" (page 139). She feels stupid for admitting that, but Sean tells her that he has another horse if she wants to ride a capaill uisce.

## Analysis

In Chapter 17, Sean is distracted from his duties by thoughts of Puck and fear of Mutt riding Corr. Daly, the groom, gains his attention just before Fundamental, a colt under Sean's charge, is attacked by a capall. Though Mutt should be in charge, he remains motionless, yet Sean dives in after Fundamental, showing his love for and devotion to the horses he tends as he risks his life.

In Chapter 18, Sean is distraught as he realizes Fundamental is beyond saving, and he is forced to leave his charge behind.

In Chapter 19, Puck and Finn are angry at Gabe for not telling them about their imminent eviction, and his absence makes them feel like he has already left them. Still, they work together to survive with Finn agreeing to sell his car to buy better food for Dove so that she will have a better chance in the races.

In Chapter 20, Sean is appalled at the realization that Mutt was willing to sacrifice Fundamental for the chance to harm Sean, foreshadowing Mutt's later attempts against Sean. Sean's desire to quit his job foreshadows that decision while his refusal to leave Corr foreshadows his negotiations with Malvern to buy his horse.

In Chapter 21, reacting to the other riders' derision, Puck practices early in the morning. She forces herself to trust Dove, though she feels vulnerable.



In Chapter 22, Malvern questions Sean about the loss of Fundamental, but Sean refuses to speak against Mutt. In response to Malvern's question, Sean admits that he wants his own home and to ride, leaving out his desire to be free of Malvern Yard. He shares his review of the horses, and Malvern assigns Mutt to Edana, the safest mare, showing his concern for his boy's life as well as his lack of faith in Mutt's skills. Sean's lack of relief when Malvern says he will ride Corr foreshadows Sean's increasing discontent with his lot in life.

In Chapter 23, Sean and Puck meet again when they both catch a ride with Thomas Gratton. Thought Sean seems wild and unfriendly at first, Puck finds his voice pleasing. Her admission to loving Thisby catches Sean's attention, causing him to offer a capail for her to ride if she is interested. It seems that Puck will be continuing her training with Sean.

## Discussion Question 1

Compare and contrast Sean and Mutt's reactions to Fundamental being attacked.

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Malvern decide that Mutt will ride Edana?

## Discussion Question 3

What admission does Puck make during the ride with Thomas Gratton, and how does Sean react?

## Vocabulary

Populated, agonizingly, confirmation, loiter, menacing, illicitly, cautionary, retreating, transformed, empathy.



## Section 6: Chapters 24-28

### Summary

#### Chapter 24

In Chapter 24, as Puck signs her teapots in the back room of Fathom & Sons, she explains to Finn that Sean did not agree to sell her a water horse and she did not agree to buy one. When Puck admits to being nervous about riding in the parade for the Scorpio Festival, Dory Maud does not understand why Puck would risk death and look like an idiot. She notes that though Puck's father would be displeased, his wife was a hellion who tried everything other than the races. Dory Maud agrees to give Puck an advance on the teapots if Puck helps set up the festival booth. Finn still does not understand why Puck is not riding Dove, reminding her that she decided against riding a capaill on principle because of their parents. However, when Puck points out "principle won't pay the bills," he objects to Puck changing her principles for money and storms out.

#### Chapter 25

In Chapter 25, Sean is tired as he works Malvern Small Miracle that evening, and he does not have time to consider whether meeting Puck is a good idea because he needs to show Malvern's horses to two buyers. He is surprised to see Mutt showing a filly. When the buyers ask who Mutt is riding in the race, Sean knows he should help Mutt save face, yet he tells them the horse he has chosen for Mutt, causing Mutt to look furious. As Mutt and Sean show the horses, Sean wants to let Mutt win to prevent him from beating his mount; but, he loosens the reins to win, knowing he is playing a deadly game.

#### Chapter 26

In Chapter 26, Puck reaches Fell Cove and admires the sight of Sean riding bareback against her will. She wonders what it would be like to ride a horse like that, but she feels guilty for abandoning her principles. By the time she reaches the road, she knows what to ask Sean. Since Puck is not on the beach when Sean arrives, he works Corr for a bit, finding Puck on her pony when he returns to the cliffs. He feels odd as she looks at his belongings, but Puck's face lights up with an epiphany as she asks about training on the beach and Sean clarifies that the rules state she has to train within 150 yards of the shore. Sean tells Puck about the moody capaill mare who is in love with the sea, but Puck does not want to consider riding the mare unless she is certain the mare is faster than Dove. Sean mounts the mare, and they race. The mare easily outruns Dove, but she gets free and rushes toward the edge of the cliff. Sean quickly decides to jump off as the mare sails over the cliff into the surf. Puck joins Sean, and he tells her that she won.



## Chapter 27

In Chapter 27, Sean feels disoriented when he returns to Malvern Yard with only one horse since he left with two. He runs into Holly and tells him about the mare jumping from the cliff. When Holly asks if that is normal, Sean thinks about this year's races with Mutt and Puck and confides that nothing about this month is turning out to be normal.

## Chapter 28

On the night of the Scorpio Festival in Chapter 28, Puck recalls the one time Mom took her to the festival. Finn insists on accompanying Puck who must complete her registration, and they hope to see Gabe who has been avoiding them. On the way to town, Finn offers a ride to the Carroll brothers who discuss Puck's decision to ride and talk about how Sean always wins because he knows the capaill uisce better than anyone. They say they would bet on Puck if they weren't betting on Sean. When they ask if she is a good bet, Puck looks out the window, knowing she should be terrified. However, she is being filled with excitement.

## Analysis

Finn is furious at the thought of Finn riding a capaill instead of Dove, reminding her that her initial decision was based on principles because of their parents' beliefs. When Puck insists that principles will not pay the bills, Finn storms off.

Sean has no time to think about Puck in Chapter 25 as he shows horses to Malvern's buyers. Though he knows he should protect Mutt's pride, he tells the buyers that he chooses Mutt's mount and he beats Mutt in a race. His knowledge that he is playing a deadly game foreshadows Mutt's continued attacks against Sean.

When Puck and Sean meet in Chapter 26, Puck is still hesitant about riding a capaill, so she decides to be sure that the capaill is faster than Dove before making a decision. Sean agrees, and he races the capaill mare against Puck on Dove. While the mare is much faster, Sean loses control of her and is forced to jump from her back before she dives from the cliff, so he announces that Puck has won. This fiasco foreshadows Puck's decision to ride Dove in the race.

Feeling guilty in Chapter 27 about losing a horse, Sean notes that nothing about this month is normal, foreshadowing the imminent changes to his life.

As Puck heads to the registration in Chapter 28, the Carroll brothers catch a ride with Puck and Finn, and their praise of Sean further indicates his expertise in his field. Puck's unasked questions about Sean indicates her interest in him. She fears registration and the opposition of the other riders.



## Discussion Question 1

Why do Puck and Finn argue at Fathom & Sons in Chapter 24?

## Discussion Question 2

Describe Puck and Sean's race in Chapter 26.

## Discussion Question 3

What do the Carroll brothers tell Puck about their plans for betting on the Scorpio Races?

## Vocabulary

Rend, infuriates, hellion, gratitude, paternal, filly, humble, employ, repugnant, furlongs, displeasure.





## Section 7: Chapters 29-31

### Summary

#### Chapter 29

After Finn and Jon vanish into the crowd as Chapter 29 begins, Brian helps Puck search for Gabe in vain. Puck notices a commotion by the bonfire, so Brian explains people are making sea wishes which they write using charcoal from the fire and toss over the cliff. They finally find Gabe in the pub, and when Puck informs him of Malvern's visit and asks why he did not tell them, Gabe admits he was afraid they would get hysterical and insists he did his best, leading Puck to the conclusion that it is up to her. Puck leaves and is joined by Finn who informs her that he sold his car to a tourist.

#### Chapter 30

In Chapter 30, Sean ignores his name being called and watches for Mutt as he navigates the crowds of Skarmouth. He sees the horse-headed woman who represents Epona drop a shell to grant a wish. This causes him to recall retrieving such a shell as a child. Epona approaches him and asks if his wish brought him happiness. When he says well enough, she says "the ocean knows your name, Sean Kendrick. Make another wish" (page 181). For the first time, winning does not feel like enough. At the Grattons' shop, Sean looks at the board with riders' and horses' names and notices that Edana's name is not next to Mutt's. Instead, the piebald mare's name Skata is next to Mutt's name.

#### Chapter 31

In Chapter 31, Sean confronts Mutt near the bonfire and asks if he has a death wish because Skata will certainly kill him. Mutt demands to know when Sean started caring about his safety, to which Sean points out that Skata may kill someone else and no one deserves to die because of Mutt. Mutt insists Sean is just upset because Skata is faster than Corr. Sean has tried to keep Mutt safe for years, but now Mutt has put himself outside Sean's ability to protect him. Sean tells him to do what he wants because Sean is done, and Mutt agrees.

### Analysis

The conversation about sea wishes in Chapter 29 foreshadows Sean being told to make a sea wish in the next chapter. This chapter also shows Puck confronting Gabe about their imminent eviction, and his indifferent attitude convinces her that it is up to her to save their home. Meanwhile, Finn joins her battle as he sells his car so they can buy better food for Dove.



In Chapter 30, Sean encounters Epona, the horse-headed goddess. She tells him to make a wish because the sea knows his name, confirming that the affinity Sean feels for the sea is returned to him. Sean's discovery that Mutt is planning to ride Skata, the piebald mare, foreshadows the dangers that take place in the race by having an unskilled rider on a wild capaill.

A confrontation occurs in Chapter 31 between Mutt and Sean as their rivalry continues. Though Sean cannot dispute the fact that he is indifferent to Mutt's safety, he does not believe anyone else should die because of Mutt. Sean's announcement that he is done, combined with Mutt's agreement, foreshadows Sean's decision to quit his job at Malvern Yard.

## **Discussion Question 1**

What is a sea wish, and how are they made?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Who is Edana, and what does she tell Sean?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Why does Sean confront Mutt in Chapter 31?

## **Vocabulary**

Piebald, quay, distinguished, impeccably, hysterical, jovial, rivulets, retreated, tunic, flourish, precaution.



## Section 8: Chapters 32-34

### Summary

#### Chapter 32

As Puck follows the other riders in the disorganized parade in Chapter 32, Elizabeth joins her and guides her to the cliffs where the riders gather, objecting that the race is dangerous enough when she sees Puck looking at Sean. At the third bonfire, Frank Eaton speaks for the man who will not ride, Each rider steps up to declare their intent to ride and cuts their hand to drip blood on the rock. Peg Gratton explains, "if you feed the island blood before the race, maybe she won't take as much during it" (page 190), and she warns Puck not to expect the men to be friendly since they view a girl on the beach as bad luck. When Puck's turn to declare her intent to ride, Eaton objects that no woman has ever ridden in the races and that will not change this year, insisting that some rules are too obvious to write down. Puck claims that she has her own reasons for riding and "just because I'm a girl doesn't make those reasons any less" (page 197). As the men start to ascend the rock, obviously planning to forcibly remove Puck, Sean speaks out for her: "this island runs on courage, not blood" (page 198). Unable to ignore Sean, the men permit Puck to cut her hand and declare herself, and Sean holds her gaze until Peg announces that they have the riders so let the races begin. With two weeks until the races, Puck can feel in her heart that everything begins tonight.

#### Chapter 33

In Chapter 33, Sean is busy tending to the horses the next morning when Holly joins him and notes he is not a churchgoer. Sean insists that he believes in God, but he does not believe God is found in buildings. Holly joins him as he works, and Sean explains the coming storm will drive the capaill uisce inland, warning it is not something Holly wants to see because they emerge hungry and uncertain. Holly ponders why Sean does not try to catch another capaill since he lost Fundamental the other day, but Sean has Corr and does not need to know if a faster horse exists. Pointing out that Malvern owns Corr, Holly asks why Sean does not buy Corr, but Sean cannot explain. When Holly asks about Sean's relationship with Puck, Sean cannot answer; he is both fascinated and repelled by her. Holly notes he can feel God out here, and when he asks if Sean will try Malvern for Corr, Sean thinks of Puck and answers affirmatively.

#### Chapter 34

Instead of tacking Dove after church in Chapter 34, Puck decides it is a good time to learn about her competition, so she watches from the cliffs where Sean joins her and contributes to her notes on the other riders, noting that "racing is about more than riding" (page 211). They hear the piebald mare scream, and Sean warns Puck to watch out for her. When Sean asks why Puck is not going to the mainland with Gabe, she asks why he stays, and his response that he loves the sand, sea and Corr surprises her, so



she admits she loves being on Thisby. Sean warns Puck that it is not over; some people will try to keep her off the beach because, to them who try to prove something about themselves, the people they beat are just as important as the horses they ride. Sean says people have never before been important to him, evading Puck's question about how he feels now. After he leaves, Puck feels she has learned something important about the races, but she has no idea about how to write it down.

## Analysis

Once again, in Chapter 32, Puck is warned against her involvement with Sean. The declaration of intent to ride ceremony begins with each man stepping forward to announce himself as a rider. Then he cuts his hand to bleed on an ancient rock, a ritual begun with the thought that "if you feed the island blood before the race, maybe she won't take as much during it" (page 190). When Puck steps forward, the men object to a girl riding, claiming it is bad luck. Puck defends her decision, insisting that her reasons for racing are just as valid as any man's, but the dissent only ceases when Sean steps forward in her defense, praising her courage. Because of Sean's fame as a rider, no one can dismiss him, so Puck is permitted to pledge her role as a rider. Her feeling that everything begins tonight foreshadows the development of her relationship with Sean as well as her experiences in the Scorpio Races.

Sean's conversation with Holly in Chapter 33 shows Sean's love for the sea, the *capaill uisce*, and especially for Corr. Holly's questions make it obvious that he sees Sean's love for Corr and his interest in Puck. When Holly asks if Sean will try to convince Malvern to sell him Corr, thoughts of Puck inspire him to say he will have a conversation with Malvern.

In Chapter 34, Puck demonstrates her devotion to the races as she watches her competition and takes notes. Sean's appearance and assistance with the notes foreshadows an ongoing relationship between them. Puck does not know how to write down all that she has learned about Sean and the races.

## Discussion Question 1

Describe the ritual for riders in the Scorpio Races declaring their intent.

## Discussion Question 2

In Chapter 33, what questions does Holly pose that Sean cannot answer?

## Discussion Question 3

In Chapter 34, Sean warns Puck that some of the others still object to her riding; what is the reason he gives for the others' objections?



## Vocabulary

Disintegrate, swaggering, congregated, sequestered, intention, comradely, incredulous, superstition.



## Section 9: Chapters 35-38

### Summary

#### Chapter 35

When Sean returns to Malvern Yard in Chapter 35, he finds Malvern and expresses his desire to buy Corr, but Malvern reiterates his stance that Corr is not for sale. Sean suggests Malvern has forgotten what it is like to ride for someone else, so Malvern tells him to choose another horse. Thinking of Puck's refusal to back down and Holly's belief that Malvern must want something more than Corr, Sean realizes he has never risked the one thing he is afraid to lose; he quits his job, offering to race one more year and to continue training Malvern's horses if he is permitted to buy Corr. Advising Sean not to overestimate his importance, Malvern orders him to move out by the end of the week. Sean is stricken: "I might never ride Corr again. I don't know who I am without him" (page 219).

#### Chapter 36

In Chapter 36, Dove acts less trustworthy than usual on the beach because of the weather, and though Puck also wants to leave, she knows they should stay because she needs Dove to be solid for the race. Several riders arrive and mock Puck as the third Connolly brother, but she refuses to race against them today. When a capaill bites Dove and Puck demands room, she hates that she sounds frightened. The men hear it and pull away, looking ashamed. Left alone, Puck is mad at Dove and herself for their fear, realizing it does not matter how brave she has been or will be since "it only took a casual handful of minutes to convince everyone here that I don't belong on the beach" (page 225).

#### Chapter 37

As Puck and Finn enjoy a picnic in Dove's lean-to in Chapter 37, they ponder what will happen with the race. Puck spins a happy story, but Finn wants the truth, so she admits that if she loses the race, they will be evicted and she will be forced to sell Dove. Hearing the knock of hooves, Finn and Puck know it is a capaill, and a long black face with hungry eyes gazes into the lean-to and pushes against the boards. They are saved by a wail from the pasture, and the capall rushes after Puffin, their barn cat, who soon screams. Finn cries for Puffin, but Puck's concern is protecting her brother. Luckily, Gabe arrives and loads Puck and Finn into his friend's car, with Dove trotting alongside on her lead rope which Puck holds out the window. Finn informs the group that the storm will last through the night and tomorrow which is not long, but it is long enough.

#### Chapter 38

In Chapter 38, the Connollys arrive at the Grattons' house, and Finn and Puck quickly realize this is where Gabe has been staying. After dinner, Gabe and Puck share Beech



Gratton's room. When Puck asks Gabe why he returned for her and Finn since he is about to abandon us, he explains that he does not want to leave them behind, yet he cannot bear the island anymore. He announces that he is ready to sleep, but Puck falls asleep before Gabe.

## Analysis

Fulfilling foreshadowing in Chapter 35, Sean expresses his desire to buy Corr during a conversation with Malvern, but Malvern insists that Corr is not for sale, though he offers to sell a different horse to Sean. Using Puck's stubborn decision to ride as inspiration, Sean risks his job, which is the one thing he is terrified of losing. He offers to continue training Malvern's horses if Malvern sells Corr. Malvern pridefully insists that Sean is not as important as he thinks and tells him to be gone by the end of the week, terrifying Sean at the thought of losing his horse as he does not know who he is without Corr.

In Chapter 36, riders on the beach taunt Puck, mocking her femininity. But, the men back off when Puck is frightened, embarrassing her as she sees her fear as proof that she does not belong on the beach.

While Finn and Puck picnic in Dove's lean-to in Chapter 37, the danger of the capall uisce is evident as a huge black monster attacks the shanty building. However, they are rescued by Puffin, the barn cat, who is attacked by the capall. Gabe shows his brotherly devotion, despite his imminent abandonment, by arriving to take his siblings away from their home to safety.

Reaching the safety of the Grattons' house in Chapter 38, Puck expresses her amazement that Gabe came back for her and Finn when he was about to leave them. He insists that he does not want to leave them, but he cannot stand the island anymore. Unlike Puck, Gabe is not devoted to the island of Thisby.

## Discussion Question 1

How does Malvern react when Sean quits his job in Chapter 35?

## Discussion Question 2

In Chapter 36, how do the men react to Puck's fear, and how does she feel about it?

## Discussion Question 3

What saves Puck and Finn from the capall's attack during the storm?

## Vocabulary

Capable, pivoting, overestimate, cowardice, dappled, intimidating, vantage, pensive, intermittent.





## Section 10: Chapters 39-42

### Summary

#### Chapter 39

In Chapter 39, the storm wakes Sean early in the morning because of the sound of horses screaming. He wants to allow Malvern to survey the damage and realize how valuable Sean is, but he cannot permit a single horse to die because he wants to play games with Malvern. As he dresses, a groom arrives and says that Malvern told them to do it without Sean, but they cannot calm the horses. Sean ignores Mutt's presence as he retrieves Corr and calms him, whispering in his ear when Corr starts to scream. Malvern asks if Sean has changed his mind, agreeing "this changes nothing" (page 250), but Sean is not sure he believes his employer.

#### Chapter 40

At the end of the next day, in Chapter 40, the storm passes as Finn predicted, so the Connollys return home. Before Puck rides away on Dove, Peg warns her that some of the men still do not want her on the beach, advising her not to let anyone help with Dove. Peg also suggests that Puck is asking the other riders to treat her like a man which may not be what either wants, but Puck insists she just wants to be left alone. Puck's spirits lift as she rides home. With no sign of the capaill, Thisby feels peaceful. When she finds Finn holding Puffin when she reaches their home, Puck notes, "this island is a cunning and secretive thing. I can't say what it has planned for me" (page 254).

#### Chapter 41

In Chapter 41, Sean heads to the west-facing beach that evening as his father used to do. The water is dark and cold as he floats, perfectly still, in the surroundings that have not changed in five centuries. He whispers three times to the sea, once for Corr to be good so they do not use the bells and magic he despises and twice for Corr to be despicable "so that they'll beg for me to come back" (page 256).

#### Chapter 42

In Chapter 42, Puck gives Dove the morning off and goes to take notes on the other riders. Thisby is completely changed since the festival with tents and tables set up, causing Puck to realize the races are very close; she feels completely unprepared. Ignoring derogatory remarks about her gender, Puck thought being a rider would earn her some respect, but some things never change. Dory Maud offers to tell Puck about the riders if she watches the booth during lunch. When Puck asks about the current commotion, Dory Maud tells Puck about Sean quitting because Malvern would not sell Corr. Now Mutt is taking Corr out to the beach. Puck thinks it is unfair since Sean owns Corr in everything but name, and she joins him as he watches, frozen, while Mutt and



his friends tie Corr's legs with bells. Sean notes it is wise for Puck to ride her own horse "even if she's just an island pony. Better that your heart's your own" (page 262).

Puck cannot think of a way to comfort Sean as Mutt mounts Corr, but she admits that she will lose her home if she does not win the race, and Sean admits that is a good reason to gamble. Puck insists that Corr belongs to Sean, despite what the law says, and she believes Mutt is just jealous. Mutt taunts Sean from Corr's back, but when Corr bites Mutt's friend, Mutt cannot keep his hold, so Sean calms Corr, cutting the bells from his leg. Puck is distraught to realize Mutt's friend is dead. Sean's jacket is filthy, so Puck offers to wash it for him. When he asks Mutt to take Corr back to the yard, Mutt just stares, so Sean leads his horse away. Puck cannot believe she held a dead man's hand and that she will be putting herself on the beach with the capaill in just a few days. Daly says the whole island is bollocks and no game is worth this.

## Analysis

Though Sean wants to be petty when he wakes to the sound of horses screaming in Chapter 39, proving to Malvern just how valuable he is, he shows his love for his charges by his refusal to allow even one horse to die because of his contest of wills with Malvern. Proving how valuable Sean is, a groomer disobeys Malvern's orders to summon Sean to assist. Though Sean tends the horses successfully, Malvern insists nothing has changed; however, Sean is not certain that he believes Malvern, foreshadowing Malvern's concession regarding Corr and Sean.

Before Puck leaves the Grattons' home in Chapter 40, Peg warns her yet again that some men are still unhappy with her presence on the beach. On the way home, the island feels peaceful. When Puck learns that Puffin survived the capaill's attack, it gives her hope for the races because "this island is a cunning and secretive thing. I can't say what it has planned for me" (page 254).

In Chapter 41, Sean dreams of what he would do with his independence. He makes wishes to the sea, once for Corr to be good and twice for Corr to be bad so Malvern will beg Sean to come back. The wishes are a prelude to the events in the next chapter as well as Malvern's deal with Sean.

On the beach in Chapter 42, Puck is continuously harangued about participating in the race. There is a commotion, and Puck's discovery of Sean's current situation with Malvern foreshadows Mutt's involvement with Corr.- Puck's outrage as she notes that Sean owns Corr no matter what the law says foreshadows her insistence on giving him his horse. As Puck joins Sean who watches Mutt working Corr harshly, Puck explains why it is so important for her to win the race. Soon, Mutt starts taunting Sean instead of paying attention to Corr, granting Corr a distraction to bite one of Mutt's friends. Luckily, Sean is there to calm Corr. This entire scene can be seen as a demonstration of Corr's loyalty to Sean, but the boy that Corr bites dies quickly, reinforcing Puck's fear of the capaill uisce while proving Mutt's inability to control his horses. Sean's success in calming Corr foreshadows Malvern's offer.



## Discussion Question 1

What advice does Peg give Puck in Chapter 40?

## Discussion Question 2

What three things does Sean whisper to the sea while visiting the west-facing beach in Chapter 41?

## Discussion Question 3

What does Mutt do to Corr in Chapter 42, and how does Sean react?

## Vocabulary

Invaluable, helpless, desperate, senseless, rhythmic, entreating, territorial, dismissive, ventures, nefarious.



## Section 11: Chapters 43-46

### Summary

#### Chapter 43

In Chapter 43, Sean's mind is dangerous as he thinks of Mutt riding Corr while waiting for Malvern at the hotel in Skarmouth. Holly talks to Sean about the capaill until Malvern arrives. Sean wants Corr but cannot say anything; however, Malvern offers to sell Corr to Sean if he wins the race, but he never wants to hear about it again if Sean loses. They discuss the prices, negotiating down to 200. Sean knows he can do this. He must win!

#### Chapter 44

In Chapter 44, Father Mooneyham sounds tired as he assures Puck that the death of Mutt's friend was not her fault. She admits she is also very angry about Gabe going to the mainland. The priest tells her that Gabe also has a problem, and this is his solution. He gives Puck a penance because she insists, and it makes her feel absolved. Now, she needs to return a jacket.

#### Chapter 45

In Chapter 45, Puck goes to Malvern Yard, wondering if it would be worth being Malvern to live in such a place. She finds Sean tending to Corr, and he asks her to help since it will go faster, his eyes asking if she is brave enough to enter the stall after Corr killed a man yesterday; she knows "the question is not if I trust Corr. The question is if I trust Sean" (page 290). Puck holds Corr while Sean wraps his legs with seaweed. Insisting Corr wasn't himself yesterday because Sean was not riding him, Sean tells Puck about his deal with Malvern, admitting he will move to his father's house on the western rock if he wins. Puck snaps that she does not share secrets with just anyone when Sean asks what she will do if she wins, feeling guilty immediately. Sean asks if Puck is afraid of Corr, but she does not have a firm answer so she reminds Sean that he told her not to trust Corr to which he responds that distrust is not the same thing as fear. Puck notes that Sean loves the capaill, especially Corr, and he asks what the difference is between his love and her love for the island, leading to a moment of silence. Finally, Sean asks if Puck wants to ride Corr, offering to ride with her. Fear crosses her mind. Though Sean says she can refuse, he knows she will not.

#### Chapter 46

In Chapter 46, Sean recalls his father taking him to the beach during an October storm when he was eight and telling him to be still as they watched the capaill uisce come in with the tide. Watching the deadly, savage yet beautiful creatures that are simultaneously ocean and island, Sean loved them at once. As he and Puck walk to the



cliffs now with his stallion, her face is brave as she looks up at Corr, and Sean realizes "I want her to love him" (page 299).

## Analysis

In Chapter 43, Malvern agrees to sell Corr to Sean if they win the race. Sean's realizes that he must win. The fact that Sean is now riding for something other than his employer foreshadows the tension between Puck and him since they are both trying to win something important to them. Before returning Sean's blood-stained jacket, Puck goes to confession where she is given a small penance, though the priest insists Mutt's friend did not die because of her,. He dismisses her anger at Gabe, explaining that leaving is Gabe's solution to his problems.

Puck visits Malvern Yard in Chapter 45 where she joins Sean as he tends to Corr. Though she is a bit hesitant when Sean asks her to help, she knows the question is whether she trusts Sean, not Corr. Her help with the horse shows that she trusts Sean. When discussing his love of the capaill, Sean equates it to Puck's love of the island, causing the reader to recollect how Puck's admission of how much she loves Thisby was what led Sean to take an interest in her to begin with. Now, Sean offers to let Puck ride Corr, and though she is afraid, she agrees in an instance of irony as she was afraid to ride a capaill for the races, even to try, but now that it is too late to ride a horse other than Dove, she agrees to ride Corr, again showing her trust of Sean.

In Chapter 46, as Sean and Puck prepare to mount Corr, Sean's realizes that he wants Puck to love Corr. Romance is more than likely in the future for Sean and Puck.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Sean decide he has to win the Scorpio Races in Chapter 43?

## Discussion Question 2

How does Puck demonstrate how much she trusts Sean in Chapter 45?

## Discussion Question 3

How did Sean feel about the capaill uisce when his father took him to the beach during an October storm when he was eight years old?

## Vocabulary

How did Sean feel about the capaill uisce when his father took him to the beach during an October storm when he was eight years old?



## Section 12: Chapters 47-50

### Summary

#### Chapter 47

In Chapter 47, Puck is nervous about riding a capaill, especially this one, but she mounts and holds the reins while Sean climbs up behind her. Sean admits that Puck is the only person he has allowed to hold Corr. As Corr moves, Puck feels amazing, and when Sean asks if she is afraid, she denies it, though she is not sure what emotion she feels. Corr moves into a gallop which seems like a new gait has been invented because he is so fast, and when he runs, Puck realizes Sean cannot lose. Magic surrounds them as they ride, and while Puck's body warns her of the danger, it also screams with life. As they return, Puck admires the beauty of Thisby, and "I suddenly feel I know everything about the island and everything about me all at the same time, only I know that it will go away as soon as we stop" (page 304). After they dismount, Puck does not have words for the wild feeling inside her, and she is pinned when Sean takes her wrist, her pulse racing. Sean releases her wrist and says he will see her on the cliffs tomorrow.

#### Chapter 48

Puck returns to a clean house in Chapter 48, but Finn is furious because she was gone so long, leaving him no way to know if she was even alive. He cannot bare not knowing what will happen, but Puck assures him it is almost over and they will be okay even if she loses. Later, Finn moves his mattress into Puck's room and announces he will sleep there until after the races. Thinking of Finn's fear for her safety, Puck cannot recall who told her about her parents' deaths, but she can remember riding Corr with Sean; "I think that's the mercy of this island, actually, that it won't give us our terrible memories for long, but lets us keep the good ones for as long as we want them" (page 308).

#### Chapter 49

On the morning of the Malvern young stock auction in Chapter 49, Sean appears as a novelty, and Holly joins him, noting that Puck should see him in his suit, and asks what horses to buy. Sean suggests a broodmare, but Holly would rather Sean breed her with Corr so Holly can buy the offspring next year. When Malvern joins them, Sean notices Mutt standing nearby, and Malvern looks at his son with an expression that is difficult to discern but is definitely not pride. Holly praises Sean to Malvern, noting that Sean is like a son to Malvern and is the logical heir to Malvern Yard; Malvern agrees it is true in most ways, looking sadly at Mutt as he notes the blood does not always come through. Mutt looks furiously dejected as he returns to the house. When Sean admits this does not sit easy with him, Holly suggests that he lock his door tonight.

#### Chapter 50



When Puck goes to Fathom & Sons in Chapter 50, she meets George Holly, a rich American that Dory Maud tells her to treat nicely. Mentioning that Sean has spoken of her, Holly invites Puck to breakfast where he says Dove has quite a set of legs on her and may get somewhere if she goes straight while the capaill goes right, quoting Sean. Puck asks how well Holly knows Sean, blushing when he redirects the question to her. At risk of crossing the line, Holly warns Puck that many people do not want her on the beach. When she agrees that she knows not to trust anyone except Sean, Holly notes that she fancies him. Wishing her luck in the races, Holly advises Puck not to wait for Sean to realize he is lonely.

## Analysis

Although Puck is nervous as she mounts Corr in Chapter 47, she shows her trust of Sean by joining him, and his admission that she is the only other person he has allowed to even hold Corr again indicates the direction that their relationship is taking. Puck is amazed as Corr flies through the beach, and though she knows it is dangerous, she is filled with the magic of the ride and, like Sean, feels so alive. Of course, because Puck's affinity is for the island rather than the capaill, her magical ride causes her to feel connected to the island, and her wild feeling parallels that of Sean when he rides. As they finish, Sean holds Puck's race, again foreshadowing their romantic relationship.

Puck feels guilty when she returns to a clean house in Chapter 48 because Finn did not know if she was alright, and Finn's fear for her safety causes him to move his mattress into her room until the races are over.

Sean attends Malvern's horse auction in Chapter 49 where he converses with Holly again; Holly takes a strange but kind interest in the boy, even when talking to Malvern to whom he suggests Sean is the logical heir to Malvern Yard, and Malvern's subsequent comments that insinuate Sean is a better horseman than Mutt will ever be are overheard by Mutt, foreshadowing Mutt's continued torments and attacks against Sean.

Puck encounters Holly for the first time in Chapter 50 when she goes to Fathom & Sons, and his immediate interest in her is obviously related to Sean. Holly can see the romantic connection between Sean and Holly as he asks pointed questions which cause Puck some discomfort, even noting that she fancies Sean, and he ends their conversation by advising her not to wait for Sean to realize he is lonely, foreshadowing the necessity of Puck making the first move if there is to be any progress in her relationship with Sean.

## Discussion Question 1

How does Puck feel while riding Corr with Sean?



## Discussion Question 2

What does Puck believe is the mercy of the island of Thisby?

## Discussion Question 3

What do Holly and Puck discuss in Chapter 50?

## Vocabulary

Maneuvers, outcropping, proximity, withdraws, winces, dismount, bemusement, frazzled, fretting, whinny.





## Section 14: Chapters 55-60

### Summary

#### Chapter 55

In Chapter 55, Tommy's funeral is held the day before the races. Gabe is saddened by the loss of his best friend. While Puck stands before the pyre, thinking of Tommy, Norman Falk, Tommy's father, joins her. He tells her that he has asked Sean to give Tommy's mare back to the sea out of respect for the dead and the *capaill uisce*, and he continues that Puck's father would not approve of her racing. Though Puck feels ashamed, after two weeks in the races, she "can see the allure of having one foot on the land and one foot in the sea. I've never known Thisby so well as I have these last few weeks" (page 355). She watches with pride as Sean releases Tommy's mare into the sea, but as Sean looks like he wants to join the mare, Puck realizes Sean is the sea. He is no more civilized than the *capaill uisce* he loves. Puck's heart feels simultaneously full and empty because tomorrow is the race and then Gabe will leave the island.

#### Chapter 56

In Chapter 56, Sean asks for Puck after he releases the mare. Learning no one has seen her, he is filled with a disquieting need to find her. He finally locates her on the cliffs, wearing a less ferocious, less guarded expression than normal. She asks what the race is, causing Sean to recall his anticipation in past years "but that was when all I had to lose was my life" (page 359). He assures her than no one on the beach is braver than she and the island favors the brave. They kiss. Sean asks Puck to instruct him on what to ask the sea for, and she responds happiness, expanding to say they will rule the races tomorrow as king and queen, she will save her house, and Sean will get Corr. Now, Sean knows what he should wish for, "to get what I need" (page 361), and though he has no stone to throw, he knows the sea still hears him.

#### Chapter 57

In Chapter 57, Puck is nervous as she prepares for the race, but when Gabe begs her not to do this, she insists she cannot bear losing Dove and the home that reminds her of their parents. She refuses Gabe's offer to accompany to the mainland, but when she offers to refrain from racing if he stays, Gabe declines, so she grabs Dove. Gabe apologizes for not trusting Puck and Finn more and promises to wait where they hand out race colors.

#### Chapter 58

In Chapter 58, it is the first day of November, so someone will die today. Holly visits Sean, noting that he looks grim, and after Sean insists he has never been afraid, Holly asks if it is because he is racing for Corr, pointing out that Sean has won four of the six years he has raced. Sean reminds him that he has also lost, and now, he could lose it



all. Holly questions if "all" includes Puck. When Sean says he will live in his father's house if he wins, Holly says that is where Sean will keep the broodmare he purchased until she has Corr's offspring; he predicts Sean's future will include a yard, Puck and Holly's future business as he promises to buy from Sean instead of Malvern. Sean heads to the beach, stating Holly will never get his colt if he does not win Corr first.

#### Chapter 59

The men seem like giants to Puck in Chapter 59, but the weather is not as bad as she expected. A reporter plagues her with questions about her attempts to change the establishment, but Puck insists she is just trying to change her own situation. Sean joins her and slides a bracelet of red ribbons on her arm for luck, and the reporter takes a photograph as Puck kisses Sean for luck. Sean holds Dove while Puck goes to retrieve her colors, and looking back at Sean and Dove, she wonders if luck will be on their side today.

#### Chapter 60

In Chapter 60, Puck nervously asks for her colors, but the official states none are left, so she tells herself she does not need to look like she belongs. Shouts resound for entrants for the final race to report; this means Puck and Sean!

## Analysis

At Tommy's funeral in Chapter 55, Tommy's father chides Puck for her decision to race, making her feel guilty as he insists her parents would disapprove. Still, her time with Sean and her experiences so far have shown her the appeal of the sea as it makes her feel she has gotten to know her beloved Thisby better than ever. In honor of Tommy's death and at his father's request, Sean releases Tommy's mare into the sea, and his expression shows Puck how uncivilized he is, causing her to worry about the imminent race and Gabe's subsequent departure for the mainland.

Sean's disquieting need to find Puck in Chapter 56 indicates their feelings for each other, especially when he thinks about how much more he has to lose than in past years. His compliments to Puck lead to her kissing him, fulfilling repeated instances of foreshadowing throughout the narrative which indicated that their friendship would progress into a romantic relationship. As they talk about sea wishes, Puck describes her image of happiness which involves her and Sean both getting what they want, which again indicates his importance to her which is required when Sean understands that this is what he needs.

In Chapter 57, Gabe tries in vain to dissuade Puck from racing once again, but when he refuses to stay on Thisby, she refuses. Meanwhile, Holly approaches Sean who sees his fear of losing it all and notes that Sean's anxiety this year is because he has more to lose than ever before; Corr is up for grabs, and Puck's life is on the line. Holly's predicts a happy future for Sean, though the race does not turn out quite as expected. Sean and Puck are the main attraction for the reporters and photographers, but Puck insists she is



not making a statement about female rights; she just wants to change her own situation! Sean rescues her and gives her a red ribbon bracelet for luck, again fulfilling foreshadowing concerning their romantic relationship. Puck goes to retrieve her colors, but the official will not give her any, so she decides that she does not fit in. The notification that the race is about to begin foreshadows the events of the final chapters as the narrative finally comes to a climax with the much anticipated Scorpio Races.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why does Norman Falk lecture Puck during his son's funeral?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Recount Sean and Puck's conversation about sea wishes in Chapter 56.

## **Discussion Question 3**

What is the future Holly predicts for Sean in Chapter 58?

## **Vocabulary**

Distraction, disservice, debris, transformed, reflects, immortal, extinguishes, allure, pyre, forelock.



## Section 15: Chapters 61-66

### Summary

#### Chapter 61

In Chapter 61, it is time for the Scorpio Races finally, and Sean feels so alive as Corr moves restlessly beneath him. He has never been aware of how many riders are on the beach until he met Puck, and now he looks through the crowd until he sees her on Dove. Mutt approaches, promising the race will be hell for Sean, and he follows Sean's gaze, claiming he now knows what Sean cares about. Puck tries to pretend this is just another spring, and though she needs to win, she feels guilty that she and Sean cannot both win. Gabe tells Peg Gratton about Puck's lack of colors, so Peg places the cape from Epona's costume under Dove's saddle, noting "now you wear Thisby's colors... show them who you are" (page 378). As she lines up, Puck tries to keep Dove from the predators surrounding her. The countdown begins, and the poles are lifted.

#### Chapter 62

In Chapter 62, Puck pulls Dove to the inside, urging her not to be afraid as a capall bumps against her. Recalling that she is supposed to conserve Dove's energy, Puck checks her mount's speed, but she cannot see Sean and Corr. Unable to see Puck and Dove in the crush of bodies, Sean steadies Corr who knows what he wants and moves forward. Sean could jump to the lead now, but he waits instead of making his move. Within a minute of the race's start, Dove is bitten, and Puck's leg gets cut. Eager to escape the pack, Puck moves Dove through a narrow path, and seeing Sean ahead, among the leaders, she focuses on holding Dove steady; "the secret is to remember the race while the others forget everything but the ocean. I can be steady" (page 384). When Dove draws up next to Corr, Sean cannot allow himself to focus on Puck's knife wound because that means being furious and he cannot afford to lose focus on the race. The path ahead is clear so Sean could win in three minutes and have all he has ever wanted, but he promised to wait for Puck to make her move. As Dove moves, Mutt intentionally pulls Skata back, causing Sean to realize "he never meant to win" (page 386). As Skata bites Dove who staggers, Puck is surprised by the attack, but when Mutt grins, Sean appears, telling Mutt it is between them and ordering Puck to move out of the way. Sean edges Corr between Dove and Skata, and though Puck wants to wait for him, he orders her to go, so she releases Dove's reins. Sean cannot get clear because Mutt grabs Corr's reins, but he sees the knife too late to protect himself or Corr; however, Mutt stabs Skata and releases the reins, telling Sean to manage this as Skata slams into Corr. As they pull ahead, Puck asks Dove for more with only three furlongs left. She knows Corr should have caught up by now, but she cannot see him when she looks back. Hearing Sean say she can do this in her mind, Puck asks Dove for one last burst of speed. Sean tries to hold Corr, but he falls when he hears a scream. Thinking of the horses behind him and his father's death, he knows his only chance is to get clear of the horses when he falls, and for a moment, he sees everything clearly, but Skata's



knee lurches up to meet Sean's head, causing his vision to break as he hits the sand so that all he sees above him is red.

### Chapter 63

As Puck and Dove pass the final two horses in Chapter 63, she can see the riders do not believe it, but the race is over. Though she crossed the finish line first, Puck still does not believe it! The audience roars as she pulls Dove to a halt, but Puck has a terrible feeling when she cannot see Sean. She ignores the congratulations to turn back the way she came. She feels sick as she sees blood stains on the sand, but there is still no sight of Sean. Finally, Puck sees Corr trembling at the edge of the sea with a still form beneath him, and she knows she cannot bare it if Sean is dead after all they have been through; it is bad enough that Corr's leg appears to be broken, but Sean cannot be dead! Puck calls to Sean and is relieved when he stands. He asks if she did it, but she does not want to say since only half of what she wanted happened, yet he sees it in her face. Puck asks what happened, and Sean explains Mutt allowed the piebald to take him and she would have killed him if Corr had not protected him; he also notes that Mutt is dead and gone, taken by Skata. It is obvious that Sean does not care about the loss because "the fact of Corr's loyalty is a bigger thing than the ownership of him" (page 392). Recalling that Sean wished for what he needs, Puck cannot believe in the island or God when faced with so much cruelty. As Sean hugs Corr, Puck does not need him to say aloud that Corr will never run again.

### Chapter 64

In Chapter 64, Puck cannot wait for the day to end so she can focus on the important stuff. After sundown, she leaves Sean and Corr in a makeshift shelter on the beach. At home, Finn questions her frown, and she admits there is enough to save the house but not enough to buy Corr for Sean, even if Malvern agrees. She cannot celebrate when Sean is with a broken horse he cannot afford to buy because of her. Finn pulls a wad of cash from his wallet, laughing as he explains that Puck was a 45 to 1 gamble and obviously a good bet.

### Chapter 65

In Chapter 65, Puck dons her best clothing because she wants to be terrifying and her mother always said to wear her best when angry because it frightens people. She bikes to Malvern Yard and asks for Malvern. When Malvern asks why she is here, she says there are three reasons: to pay the money she owes on the house, to ask for a job in his stables and to ask that he sell Corr to Sean even though Sean didn't win. Malvern agrees to the first two, but he objects that Sean did not hold up his end of their deal. Puck points out that Corr is useless so there is no reason not to sell the horse unless Malvern simply wants to torment Sean. After Puck assures him that Sean does not know she is here, Malvern notes they are a strange pair, agreeing to sell Corr but refusing to change the price. Having achieved all she came for, Puck leaves, and the breeze smells of the sea, horses and hay, the best smell in the world.



## Chapter 66

In Chapter 66, Sean leads Corr to the water and pulls the wrap from his leg since it will not heal him. Holly says it is foolish to buy Corr only to turn him back to the sea, but Corr loves the sea and to run and has been happy as long as he had one of those. Walking to the surf while Puck and Holly wait on the cliffs, Sean does not want to say goodbye. Not long ago, they rode on the beach, but now, Corr can barely walk. Caressing his stallion, Sean whispers “find happiness” (page 403) and removes the halter, knowing Corr loves the sea and finding solace in the fact that he will finally be reunited with it. Sean turns and walks back to the cliff, unable to watch Corr disappear into the sea for fear it will break his heart. He tries to console himself with thoughts that he will move to his father’s house, be free and find another capaill to ride someday, but there is no comfort in the thoughts. Hearing a wail, Sean turns to see Corr looking after him, and though he wants to go to his horse, Sean cannot follow where Corr needs to go. Corr puts one hoof in the sea before keening to Sean again, and then he steps out of the sea and slowly labors away from it, toward Sean. “He is slow. And the sea sings to us both, but he returns to me” (page 404).

## Analysis

As the riders prepare for the race in Chapter 61, Sean’s feelings about the difference between this year’s race compared to past years’ races again indicates the importance of Puck in his life. Mutt’s threats foreshadow his treachery during the race, especially as he catches Sean looking at Puck and notes that he now knows what Sean cares about besides Corr. Puck’s feelings of guilt that she and Sean cannot both win indicate that he is equally important to her. Despite Peg Gratton’s objections to Puck racing, when she learns that the officials would not give Puck riding colors, Peg brings Epona’s costume to Puck to use as riding colors, stating that Puck represents the island now. Puck is nervous as predators surround her and Dove, but the countdown culminates in the poles being lifted.

The race proceeds in Chapter 62 with Puck and Sean being separated, and unlike most chapters which had a sole narrator, either Puck or Sean, this chapter alternates perspectives several times as each races. Puck and Dove are quickly targeted and injured, but Puck remembers Sean’s advice to be steady and knows she can do that. Sean’s fury when he sees Puck’s injury again emphasizes her importance to his future happiness, and though he sees an opening to win, he abides by his promise to wait for Puck to make her move. As Dove begins to edge forward, Mutt maliciously pulls Skata back to crowd Dove, obviously intending to injure Puck because he knows what that would do to Sean. Sean comes to the rescue, urging Puck forward, as he insists that Mutt’s problem is with him. Though Puck wants to wait for Sean, she obeys his orders to keep going, leaving Sean behind to combat Mutt. Rather than harm Corr directly, Mutt stabs his own mount, Skata, the piebald mare, allowing her to slam into Corr as she is driven mad by pain. Mutt’s actions, combined with Sean’s warning to Gorry when he first rode the piebald, foreshadow Mutt’s imminent death. At the front of the pack, Puck is fearful as she realizes Corr still has not caught up, but recounting Sean’s lessons in her



head, she urges Dove forward. Further back, Sean falls from Corr's back, knowing his only chance to survive is to get clear of the horses' hooves as those are what killed his father so many years ago. As he hits the ground, Skata's knee connects with Sean's head, knocking him unconscious.

Puck is astounded in Chapter 63 as she and Dove cross the finish line first. Despite her amazed joy, she is terrified when she cannot locate Sean. Ignoring her victory celebration, she rushes back down the beach, her fear mounting as she sees blood stains on the sand. She finally sees Corr standing at the edge of the surf with Sean's still form beneath him, and her realization that she cannot stand the thought of Sean's death reiterates his importance to her. Her concern for Corr's injuries foreshadows the extent of Mutt's damage and Corr's inability to run again. Luckily, Sean wakes, expressing his amazement that Corr protected him even as he laments the apparent death of Mutt who was taken by Skata.. Sean's love for Corr is apparent as he does not care about his loss because he is comforted by his stallion's loyalty which, to him, is more important than ownership. This loyalty also foreshadows Corr's reaction in the final chapter when Sean tries to release him to the sea. Puck is devastated by the cruelty of God and the island as she realizes that Corr will never run again which means Sean's wish to get what he needs seems out of reach now. Regardless of her victory, Puck cannot be happy because her winnings do not provide enough money to help Sean buy Corr, assuming she can convince Malvern to sell the horse. Finn pleasantly surprises her when he pulls out a thick pile of cash that he won by betting on his sister. Puck does her best to appear terrifying before she goes to Malvern Yard to see Malvern. She makes three requests; Malvern quickly accepts her money for the house and agrees to give her a job, but he objects to selling Corr since Sean did not hold up his end of their bargain. Puck is persistent as she points out that Malvern now has no use for Corr other than to torment Sean, so Malvern reluctantly agrees to sell Corr. As Puck leaves, she feels amazing as she achieved all that she desired.

In Chapter 66, the final chapter, Sean shows the extent of his love for Corr as he prepares to release his beloved stallion back to the sea since Corr can no longer run. The sea is the only other thing that the capaill loves. Sean releases Corr and tells him to find happiness, turning his back to walk away for fear that watching Corr leave him will break his heart. Sean's fears prove unfounded as Corr laboriously returns to his true owner, demonstrating his loyalty to Sean over even the sea. Thus, foreshadowing is fulfilled as Sean and Puck are both able to get everything they wanted from the Scorpio Races.

## Discussion Question 1

Describe Mutt's attack during the races.





## Discussion Question 2

In Chapter 65, Puck visits Malvern with three requests. What are they, and how does he respond?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Sean release Corr to the sea in the final chapter, and how does Corr show his loyalty to his owner?

## Vocabulary

Baubles, discordant, intimidate, incorporate, quarrel, intentionally, grating, ceaseless, precise, pragmatic.





# Characters

## Sean Kendrick

Sean Kendrick is one of the main characters and protagonists in this novel, as well as being one of the narrators. He is a nineteen-year-old orphan whose father died in the Scorpio Races when Sean was ten years old. A quiet and reserved young man, Sean is the returning champion for this year's races. After seeing his father die in the Scorpio Races at the age of ten, Sean decides never to be afraid like his father. Nine years later, he eagerly anticipates the approach of the races.

## Puck Connolly

Though her given name is Kate Connolly, this main character, protagonist, and narrator goes by Puck. She is a young woman, presumably slightly younger than Sean, who lives with her older brother, Gabe, and their younger brother, Finn, after their parents were killed in a boating incident a year ago. When Puck's older brother, Gabe, announces his decision to leave Thisby and move to the mainland, Puck decides to ride in the upcoming Scorpio Races against her brothers' wishes. Uncomfortable with the idea of riding a capaill uisce, Puck decides to ride her island pony, Dove, and she registers for the races, despite objections from the other riders who see a girl on the beach as bad luck.

## Mutt Malvern

Mutt Malvern is Benjamin Malvern's jealous, treacherous son who torments Sean incessantly throughout the novel. His pride is injured because his father allows Sean, the better horseman, to pick his son's mount every year for the Scorpio Races. Mutt allows Fundamental to be attacked and killed by the capaill uisce in hopes of Sean being injured during the attack. After overhearing his father's derogatory remarks about him, Mutt sneaks into the stables and mutilates Edana who was recently given Corr's old stall. He plans to destroy Corr also, but Sean dissuades him with the promise of letting him win the race.

## Benjamin Malvern

Benjamin Malvern is the owner of Malvern Yard, Sean's boss and Mutt's father. He visits the Connolly house and tells Puck that she and her brothers are going to be evicted since no one has paid on the house since her parents died a year ago. He also refuses to sell Corr to Sean, but after Sean rescues Malvern's horses during the storm and rescues Corr from Mutt's cruel training techniques on the beach, Malvern agrees to sell Corr to Sean if Sean wins the Scorpio Races. After the races, Puck visits Malvern with three requests, and though he eagerly accepts her money for the house and even gives



her a job, he refuses to sell Corr since Sean lost. Puck points out that Corr is useless other than as a way to torment Sean, so Malvern reluctantly sells Corr to Sean.

## **Finn Connolly**

Finn Connolly is Puck's younger brother who supports her decision to ride, even though he fears for her safety. He even sells his car in order to buy better food for Dove. During the races, Finn bets on Puck to win at 45: 1 odds, winning a lot of money a part of which he allows Puck to use to buy Corr for Sean.

## **Gabe Connolly**

Gabe Connolly is Puck's older brother whose announcement that he is moving to the mainland fuels Puck's decision to ride in the Scorpio Races. He rescues Puck and Finn from a capall uisce during the storm, taking them to safety at the Grattons' house. Though he claims to love his siblings, he cannot stand the island anymore and insists he did his best for them.

## **Peg Gratton**

Peg Gratton is the butcher's daughter who tries to dissuade Puck from racing several times in vain. After learning that the officials denied Puck racing colors, Peg gives Puck the Epona costume to use, stating that Puck will ride with Thisby's colors.

## **George Holly**

George Holly is a rich American horse buyer who visits Thisby to buy horses from Malvern, but while there, he befriends Sean who he advises. Before the races, Holly predicts a happy future for Sean, promising to buy from Sean in the future instead of Malvern.

## **Dory Maud**

Dory Maud is the owner of Fathom & Sons, the store where Puck sells her teapots. A friend to Puck, she warns Puck against Sean and tells Sean that Puck needs someone to ground her.

## **Tommy Falk**

Tommy Falk is Gabe's best. Tommy and Gabe plan on going to the mainland, but Tommy dies while practicing for the Scorpio Races.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## Scorpio Races

The Scorpio Races are a yearly race for the capaill uisce, dangerous water horses that emerge on Thisby each fall. The races symbolize the bravery and courage of the riders.

## The Morris

The Morris is Finn's beloved car which he sells to buy better food for Dove, symbolizing his loyalty to and faith in his sister.

## Scorpio Festival

When the men object to Puck declaring her intention to ride during the Scorpio Festival, this symbolizes the tradition and misogyny surrounding the Scorpio Races.

## Corr

Corr is Sean's capaill uisce who protects Sean from others in the race, even though he becomes lame in the process. When Sean tries to release Corr to the sea, Corr returns to his owner. Corr's interactions with Sean symbolize his loyalty.

## Dove

Dove is Puck's island pony who miraculously wins the Scorpio Races, even though she competes against the much faster capaill uisce. Her victory symbolizes the fact that anything is possible.

## Epona

The representation of the horse goddess, Epona tells Sean to make another sea wish at the Scorpio Festival, symbolizing Sean's affinity to the sea and with horses.

## Western Rock

Sean's father's home was located on the western rock where Sean yearns to return. This symbolizes Sean's desire for independence.



## Connolly House

Malvern's threats to evict the Connollys from their home since no one has paid on it since their parents died cements Puck's determination to race, symbolizing her determination and courage.

## Racing Colors

When the officials refuse to give Puck racing colors, Peg Gratton allows her to use the cloak from Epona's costume to represent Thisby, and this symbolizes Puck's love for the island she calls home.

## Prize Money

The prize money that goes to the winner of the Scorpio Races is what entices Puck to participate since she needs the money to save her house. Sean also needs the money and the victory to buy Corr from Malvern. Puck wins, and after combining the prize money with Finn's winnings from betting on her, she is able to fund both her home and Corr. This symbolizes Puck's concern for Sean as she cannot enjoy her victory until she is able to help him achieve his dreams.



# Settings

## Thisby

Thisby is the main setting of “The Scorpio Races”. It is the island where the narrative takes place, plus it is the only location where the capaill uisce emerge from the sea each fall and are ridden in the races. Puck loves the island she calls home.

## Malvern Yard

Owned by Benjamin Malvern, Malvern Yard has horse stables where Sean works even as he dreams of being independent.

## Skarmouth

Skarmouth is the town on Thisby where Fathom & Sons and other stores are located. Both Puck and Sean frequently visit Skarmouth to run errands.

## Beaches

The races are held on the beaches, and riders who practice must do so within 150 yards of the shore, a dangerous act since this is where the capaill uisce emerge.

## Fathom & Sons

Fathom & Sons is a store in Skarmouth that is owned by Dory Maud. This is where Puck earns money by selling her teapots.

## Fell Cove

Puck and Sean meet on the cliffs at Fell Cove every day to practice for the races.

## Connolly Home

Puck Connolly and her brothers live in the home where they grew up. When Puck learns that they are in danger of being evicted, it cements her determination to win the Scorpio Races so she can save her home.



## **Mainland**

Puck is distraught when she learns Gabe is leaving for the mainland and abandoning Finn and her.

## **West-Facing Beach**

The west-facing beach is where Sean's father lived, and Sean dreams of returning to his home and achieving independence from Benjamin Malvern.



# Themes and Motifs

## Relationship Between Sean and Puck

The relationship that develops between Sean and Puck encompasses a major theme in "The Scorpio Races." It all begins when Puck notices Sean on the beach and recognizes his name. Later, she is concerned for Sean when she sees Mutt taunting him outside Gratton's butchery. Sean is drawn to Puck when he first sees her riding Dove on the beach, but when he has to rescue her when a capall uisce knocks her from Dove's back, he warns her to keep her pony off his beach. Later, he is haunted by thoughts of Puck, leading to the distraction that provides an opportunity for Fundamental to be attacked. As they both catch a ride to town with Thomas Gratton, Puck confesses her love for the island of Thisby, so Sean offers to let her ride a capall. To determine whether Puck wants to ride a capall instead of Dove, she races Sean, winning when his mount jumps from the cliffs. At the declaration ceremony, Sean defends Puck to the other riders who object to a girl participating in the Scorpio Races. He teaches her about the race and the other riders as they practice together over the next couple weeks. When Puck visits Sean at Malvern Yard, she demonstrates her trust by holding Corr while Sean tends his wounds, and later, she feels so alive as she rides Corr with Sean. After Puck meets George Holly at Fathom & Sons, he advises her not to wait for Sean to realize he is lonely.

As Sean and Puck continue practicing together, she feels guilty at the thought that they cannot both win the race. While it is important for her to win to keep her home, it is just as important that Sean win so Malvern will sell Corr to him. Puck invites Sean to dinner, and as he helps her cook, he promises to wait for her and Dove to make their move before he does in the race. When she refuses to be his weakness, he notes it is too late for that. During the meal, Puck refrains from looking at Sean for fear her brothers will see how they look at one another. After Tommy Falk's funeral, Puck kisses Sean, and then he makes a sea wish for what he needs which includes Puck's desires also, showing how much she means to him. When Holly predicts Sean's happy future, it includes Puck in his bed. As the race nears, Puck continues to wish she and Sean could both win. Before the race, Sean gives Puck a bracelet for luck, and she kisses him in return. During the race, Sean does not make his move as he waits for Dove to catch up, but when Mutt corners Dove, Sean rescues Puck, urging her to finish the race before he is thrown from Corr's back. Puck cannot believe it when she crosses the finish line first, but her joy is tempered when she cannot find Sean. She rushes back to him, frightful to learn his fate, and she is relieved when he moves. Still, she cannot enjoy her victory knowing that Sean lost Corr as a result. So, she convinces Malvern to sell Corr to Sean despite the fact that he lost the race.



## Loyalty

Loyalty is a key element of “The Scorpio Races,” but evidence of this attribute is sparse. Some examples include Puck’s loyalty to Sean when she convinces Malvern to sell Corr to him even though he loses the race and Finn’s loyalty to Puck, as demonstrated by his willingness to sell his car to buy better food for Dove. The character who demonstrates the theme of loyalty most frequently is Sean Kendrick. From his youth, Sean is devoted to the sea and the *capaill uisce*, though they killed his father when he was ten years old. When Mutt tries to set him up by allowing the *capaill uisce* to take Fundamental, Sean shows his loyalty by diving into the sea after his charge. Though he hates Mutt, Sean will not quit his job because he cannot bear the thought of leaving Corr, but despite his animosity toward his boss’ son, Sean still tries to dissuade Mutt from riding Skata in the races, again demonstrating his loyalty. He also defends Puck against the other riders at the bonfire when they object to her participation in the races. After Malvern refuses to sell Corr to Sean, Sean shows his loyalty to Corr by quitting his job.

Despite his conflict with Malvern, Sean cannot stop himself from saving the horses during the storm. He cannot allow them to be hurt because he is playing games with his employer. He also protects Corr from Mutt’s cruel training techniques on the beach while simultaneously protecting Mutt and his friends after Corr kills one of them. When Mutt attacks Corr in the stables, Sean demonstrates his loyalty by threatening to cut Mutt’s heart out if he harms Corr, and during the races, Sean protects Puck and Dove from Mutt’s malice. In return, Corr protects Sean from Skata as she drags Mutt into the sea, but Corr is lamed in the ensuing fight. After Puck convinces Malvern to sell his champion racehorse, Sean decides to release Corr to the sea where he will be happy. For Sean, Corr’s loyalty is more important than owning him. Sean’s loyalty is required as Corr turns his back on the sea and returns to his owner.

## Mutt’s Treachery

Standing in direct contrast to Sean’s loyal, trustworthy nature is Mutt’s malicious, treacherous attitude. It is obvious that Mutt is jealous of Sean’s abilities with horses as he torments his father’s employee persistently. The first time Mutt appears, Sean is forced to rescue him and his friends from a *capaill uisce* they captured, but Mutt is furious when Sean releases the beast. While Sean is riding Corr on the beach a few days later, Mutt retaliates for his humiliation of not being able to control the horse by urinating in Sean’s boots. He taunts Sean again later that night outside the Grattons’ after they register for the races. Though Mutt notices the *capaill uisce* nearing Fundamental, he does not say anything in hopes that Sean will be hurt, but Sean is not injured, despite the fact that he courageously dives into the water in an attempt to save his charge. Mutt even tattles on Sean to his father, blaming Sean for killing Fundamental.

Mutt mocks Sean publicly, to his face and behind his back as evidenced by Thomas Gratton’s report that Mutt is claiming Sean assigned him Edana because he is afraid of





the competition. Mutt's cruelty is seen when he trains Corr on the beach, leading to the death of one of his friends. Sean is again forced to come to the rescue, though he does so more out of loyalty to Corr than concern for Mutt. After Mutt overhears his father making remarks indicating his pride in Sean but not in his own son, Mutt sneaks into the stables and mutilates Edana, thinking her to be Corr since their stalls had just been switched earlier that day. Sean runs at the sound of a horse crying. Luckily, he catches Mutt in Corr's stall, preventing him from injuring his stallion by offering to let him win the race.

The best example of Mutt's treachery is seen during the races. Before it begins, he warns Sean that the race will be hellish for him, even following Sean's eyes to Puck and claiming he now knows what Sean cares about. He proves this when he corners Dove and Puck during the race, but again, Sean protects them, reminding Mutt that his problem is with Sean, not Puck. Mutt grabs Corr's reins and brandishes a knife, but instead of Corr, he cuts his mount, Skata, who was already wild and who attacks Corr. Sean is thrown from his horse as Puck wins the race, but when he revives, he realizes that Corr will never run again due to the injuries Mutt caused. Regardless, Sean still laments the fact that Skata took Mutt into the sea with her, showing more decency in that one sentiment than Mutt shows throughout the book's entirety.



# Styles

## Point of View

In "The Scorpio Races," there are two narrators, Sean Kendrick and Puck Connolly, who alternate sharing their perspectives. Both are limited first-person narrators who are reliable. As each narrator tells the story from their own point of view, their knowledge is limited to what they see, hear or experience without being privy to the thoughts and emotions of other characters. This is important since it also allows the narrative to maintain its focus on these two protagonists. Simultaneously, this style of alternating narrators shows how each views things with their viewpoints starting out very different and gradually becoming more similar as they spend more time together.

The distribution of exposition and dialogue is fairly equal in this novel, though there is slightly more exposition as Sean and Puck's inner monologues are included in this classification. This distribution is useful as it allows the reader to compare and contrast the main characters' viewpoints while still focusing on their internal conflicts and developing relationship more than the superfluous content surrounding these. The viewpoint alternates between Puck and Sean, generally changing from chapter to chapter, but in a few cases, Puck narrates one portion of the chapter, while Sean narrates the remainder.

## Language and Meaning

The language used in this novel is fairly casual and informal, yet the sentences are constructed properly and proper grammar is used for the most part. The characters speak modern English so this common language is easy for modern readers to understand, and the little bit of equine jargon that is utilized is explained. The language used aids comprehension as it is the familiar vernacular that most readers use daily themselves.

The language utilized tends to characterize both the style of life on Thisby as well as the individual characters who play a role in the narrative. The distribution of exposition and dialogue is fairly equal in this novel, though there is slightly more exposition as Sean and Puck's inner monologues are included in this classification. This distribution is useful as it allows the reader to compare and contrast the main characters' viewpoints while still focusing on their internal conflicts and developing relationship more than the superfluous content surrounding these. The language benefits the writing style by aiding comprehension and creating readers' empathy for the two protagonists. Overall, the novel is easy to understand, especially since all unfamiliar jargon is explained.

## Structure

This novel is comprised of 404 pages, broken into a Prologue and 66 chapters which range from two to fifteen pages in length, averaging six pages each. The chapters are numbered instead of titled, and each begins by indicating whether Puck or Sean is the narrator. The chapters are short and fairly detailed, though a few, especially in the beginning of the novel, are more vague. The entire novel occurs in approximately three weeks with very short amounts of time transpiring in each chapter. The exception to this is the Prologue which occurs nine years before the narrative actually takes place.

"The Scorpio Races" by Maggie Stiefvater is a compelling narrative about two participants in the dangerous races that take place on the island of Thisby each fall. Sean and Puck both have their own reasons for riding in the Scorpio Races, but as their friendship develops, both are forced to reexamine their priorities. "The Scorpio Races" is a charming novel about two young people who, together, overcome the odds against them to get what they need out of life. The novel is quick-paced and quite easy to read. The story is fairly linear and chronological with the exception of the Prologue and very few references to the past which serve to provide background information through Sean and Puck's memories. Overall, the novel is very enjoyable, leaving the reader in suspense to discover what's around the next turn.



## Quotes

This mare is going to kill someone... I want no part of her.  
-- Sean (Chapter 6 paragraph 24 & 26)

**Importance:** Sean's warning about the piebald mare, Skata, foreshadows her dangerous actions during the Scorpio Races and the death of her rider.

You're why I came. They said it wasn't a race unless you were in it.  
-- George Holly (Chapter 13 paragraph 14)

**Importance:** This quote serves as further evidence of Sean's fame as a horseman.

My heart is jerking in my chest as I hand the cloth to my father. He seems unsettled as well, and I wish I was riding, not him. Myself I am sure of.  
-- Sean as narrator (Prologue paragraph 17 & 18)

**Importance:** This quote foreshadows the death of Sean's father and simultaneously demonstrates Sean's faith in his own abilities, foreshadowing his success as a rider.

I'm riding in the races.  
-- Puck (Chapter 3 paragraph 46)

**Importance:** This quote shows Puck's intent to ride in the Scorpio Races, foreshadowing her participation.

You're the one for the horses, Kendrick. I reckon someone's going to get killed unless we fetch you back there.  
-- Brian Carroll (Chapter 4 paragraph 22)

**Importance:** This quote demonstrates Sean's expertise with the capaill uisce is unparalleled.

Lord, that's Sean Kendrick. No one better than him for knowing the horses. He rides every year and I reckon he's the one to beat. Always is. But he's got one foot on the land and one foot in the sea. You steer clear of him.  
-- Reilly (Chapter 10 paragraph 23)

**Importance:** This quote expresses Sean's notoriety as a horseman and his affinity for the sea.

I'm not a generous person, Kate Connolly. Show that to your older brother. I'll be back to collect it when you're dead.  
-- Benjamin Malvern (Chapter 16 paragraph 68 & 70)

**Importance:** After telling Puck that she and her brothers are about to be evicted from



their home, Malvern expresses his disbelief that Puck will win the race as he expects her to die, an ironic idea since his son dies in the race.

I'd never leave. It's - it's like my heart, or something.  
-- Puck (Chapter 23 paragraph 73)

**Importance:** Puck gains Sean's attention when she expresses her love for the island of Thisby which parallels his own love for the capaill uisce.

You said that you weren't riding one of them on principle. Because of Mum and Dad... It's not much of a principle when you can just change it like - like that. Overnight.  
-- Finn Connolly (Chapter 24 paragraph 38 & 41)

**Importance:** This quote shows Finn's objection to Puck endangering herself by riding a capaill instead of Dove in the races. His objections likely contribute to her decision to ride her pony.

Mr. Holly, nothing about this month is turning out to be normal.  
-- Sean (Chapter 27 paragraph 27)

**Importance:** As Sean recognizes the difference between this year's race and past years, it foreshadows the traumatic events that will transpire during the race.

What good would it do? You two weren't going to make any more money. What do you think I've been doing all these nights? I'm doing my best... A person can only try so hard. I did my best.  
-- Gabe Connolly (Chapter 29 paragraph 29)

**Importance:** In this quote, Gabe defends his decision to leave Thisby, insisting he has done his best for his younger siblings.

If you feed the island blood before the race, maybe she won't take as much during it.  
-- Peg Gratton (Chapter 32 paragraph 32)

**Importance:** This quote demonstrates the danger inherent in the Scorpio Races.

I can see her clearly, standing on the rock beside Peg Gratton, unflinching before Eaton and the rest of the race committee. I can't remember when I've been that brave, and it shames me. The truth is, I feel myself being fascinated and repelled by her: She's both a mirror of myself and a door to part of this island that I'm not. It is like when the mare goddess looked into my eye; I felt that there was a part of myself that I didn't know.  
-- Sean as narrator (Chapter 33 paragraph 58)

**Importance:** Here, Sean's thoughts about Puck foreshadow their friendship and their future romantic involvement.



I want to know why you care about us now, when next year you'll be gone and we could both be eaten in October and you'll be off on the mainland and never know.

-- Puck (Chapter 38 paragraph 58)

**Importance:** This quote demonstrates Puck's anger at Gabe for leaving Thisby.

I sit up to act without considering, and after I do, I hesitate. Those are my horses down there in this beleaguered stable, out there in that fearful night. But at the same time, they are not mine, too, and I've quit, making them less mine than they were before. I should stay here, doing nothing, letting the night do what it will. Let Malvern survey the havoc in the morning light and decide that I'm invaluable... I can't let a single horse die because I am playing games with Malvern.

-- Sean as narrator (Chapter 39 paragraph 4 & 8)

**Importance:** Though Sean debates not helping to calm the horses to spite Malvern and prove how vital he is to Malvern Yard, his ultimate decision to protect the horses demonstrates that he loves the capaill uisce more than his pride or dreams.

It's easy to convince men to love you, Puck. All you have to do is be a mountain they have to climb or a poem they don't understand. Something that makes them feel strong or clever. It's why they love the ocean. When you're too much like them, the mystery's gone. No point seeking the grail if it looks like your teacup... All I'm saying is that you're asking them to treat you like a man. And I'm not sure either of you want that.

-- Peg Gratton (Chapter 40 paragraph 16 & 18)

**Importance:** In this quote, Peg gives Puck advice on men, explaining in part the reason they object to Puck's presence during the race.

You're a poor conversationalist and I'm a poor loser, so let's put it at this. If you win, I'll sell him to you. If you don't win, I never want to hear about this again.

-- Benjamin Malvern (Chapter 43 paragraph 44)

**Importance:** Malvern's concession to sell Corr to Sean if he wins the race foreshadows the importance of Sean winning the race so he can buy his beloved stallion.

I want her to love him.

-- Sean as narrator (Chapter 46 paragraph 46)

**Importance:** Sean's desire for Puck to love Corr indicates that Puck has become important to Sean.

There are no others. You're the only one.

-- Sean (Chapter 47 paragraph 6)

**Importance:** The fact that Sean only allows Puck to hold Corr indicates her importance to him and how much he trusts her.



Mr. Kendrick was born on a horse and he'll die on one, and maybe that's not something you can breed for. He's one of those rare men who can make a horse work for him but never asks for more than they have. If he's told you to put your money on Mettle and Finndebar, then you'd be a fool not to. Good day, Mr. Holly.

-- Benjamin Malvern (Chapter 49 paragraph 47)

**Importance:** Malvern's begrudging praise demonstrates how important Sean is to his operation at Malvern Yard.

The only thing is, the more I see him and Corr together, the more I think of how unbearable it would be for Sean to lose him. But we can't both win.

-- Puck as narrator (Chapter 51 paragraph 17 & 18)

**Importance:** Puck's desire to win is tempered by the necessity of Sean owning Corr which shows that Sean is as important to Puck as she is to him.

I don't think I'll stop you. I think that you will cut my horse and then when you come out of that stall, I will use this to cut your heart out and hand it to you.

-- Sean (Chapter 53 paragraph 38)

**Importance:** Sean's willingness to defend Mutt shows his love for Corr while Mutt's devious behavior foreshadows his treachery during the race.

Give the dead some respect, like we used to. Give the capaill some respect. It's not about the tourists coming in and lining pockets. It's about the capaill uisce and us, and anything less than that makes it a dirty sport. There's no place for you on the beach, now, Puck Connolly. You and your mare. Shouldn't be. I knew your father and I liked him, but I think what you're doing's wrong, if you'll hear me.

-- Norman Falk (Chapter 55 paragraph 17)

**Importance:** In this quote, Norman Falk tries in vain to dissuade Puck from the race by claiming that her participation is disrespectful to her parents' memory.

That tomorrow we'll rule the Scorpio Races as king and queen of Skarmouth and I'll save the house and you'll have your stallion. Dove will eat golden oats for the rest of her days and you will terrorize the races each year and people will come from every island in the world to find out how it is you get horses to listen to you. The piebald will carry Mutt Malvern into the sea and Gabriel will decide to stay on the island. I will have a farm and you will bring me bread for dinner... Do you know what to wish for now?

-- Puck (Chapter 56 paragraph 24)

**Importance:** Here, Puck tells Sean what he needs to here, foreshadowing both of them getting what they want from the race.

You didn't have to. I'll come back next year and you'll have a nest of horses outside your window and Puck Connolly in your bed and I'll buy from you instead of Malvern. That's your future for you.



-- George Holly (Chapter 58 paragraph 29)

**Importance:** Holly expresses faith in Sean and a hopeful vision of Sean's future, foreshadowing the conclusion of the race.

Mutt. Did you see him? No, I didn't think so. She took him. The piebald took him.  
-- Sean (Chapter 63 paragraph 24)

**Importance:** This quote fulfills foreshadowing as Mutt's treacherous actions causes his death at the hooves of Skata, the piebald mare that Sean warned would kill someone.

Corr stood there. I would've died. He didn't have to stay.  
-- Sean (Chapter 63 paragraph 25)

**Importance:** This quote shows Sean's amazement at Corr's loyalty, which parallels his own, as Corr protected Sean from Mutt and Skata.

I would like you to sell Corr to Sean Kendrick even though Sean didn't win... That horse is useless to you, and both of you know it. What is it you think to do with him? So you might as well sell him. Unless you just fancy tormenting Sean Kendrick.  
-- Puck (Chapter 65 paragraph 35 & 37)

**Importance:** Puck convincing Malvern to sell Corr to Sean shows her devotion to Sean and the importance of Sean owning Corr.

The Corr turns, stepping out of the ocean. His head jerks up when his injured leg touches the ground, but he takes another labored step before keening to me again. Corr takes another step away from the November sea. And another. He is slow, and the sea sings to us both, but he returns to me.  
-- Sean as narrator (Chapter 66 paragraph 18 & 19)

**Importance:** As the book ends, Sean tries to release Corr to the sea since he can no longer run, but Corr demonstrates his loyalty to his new owner by returning to Sean.