

Thunderhead Study Guide

Thunderhead by Douglas Preston

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Plot Summary

Thunderhead is a novel by bestselling writers Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child. In this novel, Nora Kelly is an archeologist who finds a letter from her father to her mother, sixteen years after her father disappeared and six months after her mother died. The letter describes her father's journey to a system of canyons where he believes the fabled city of Quivira is hidden. In a bid to prove her father was more than just the pothunter many people, including her own mother, accuses him of being, Nora follows the road he describes. For Nora, however, finding Quivira is only the beginning. This novel will take the reader on a ride that both excites and frightens, bringing history to life in a way that no reader could ever forget.

Nora Kelly goes to her family's old ranch where a neighbor has called to let her know vandals have been at work. Nora walks through the old rooms searching for the vandals, when she is attacked by a person dressed like an animal. Nora fights the person off, denying knowledge of a letter about which the person keeps asking her. A neighbor comes over and chases the attacker off with a shotgun, insisting it was wild dogs. Nora would agree, except for the questions with which they kept plying her. When Nora leaves, one of these creatures appears to be keeping pace with her truck, upsetting Nora so much that she accidentally knocks over the old mailboxes. Nora stops to pick up the boxes and finds a letter in the sand. The letter is to her mother, who has been dead six months, from her father, who has been missing for sixteen years.

The following day, Nora goes to the map archives at the Santa Fe Archeological Institute where she works. Nora wants to check out the directions to the fabled city Quivira that her father wrote about in the letter. Nora studies several maps and feels as though the directions are plausible, but a discussion with her boss at the Institute informs her that the letter is not enough. Nora turns to her brother, to discuss selling the ranch to fund an expedition, and he tells her about a radar the Jet Propulsion Lab at Cal Tech uses. Nora reaches out to a subordinate at the lab to help her. This man, Peter Holroyd, agrees to help as long as Nora allows him on the expedition. Using computers, Peter is able to establish that there was an ancient Anasazi Indian road that ran along the same path Pdraic Kelly claimed to have used to find Quivira. With this information, Nora is able to convince the chairman of the board at the Santa Fe Archeological Institute, Dr. Goddard, to fund her expedition.

Nora takes three scientists, including Goddard's daughter, Peter, a cook, and a horse wrangler into the canyons on the Utah side of Lake Powell. From the beginning, Dr. Goddard's daughter, Sloane, tests Nora's authority as the expedition leader, often going off on her own without deferring to Nora. To add to this, the members of the expedition begin to doubt Nora's ability to find Quivira when it takes longer to reach specific landmarks her father spoke of in his letters than Nora initially believed it would. When an ancient path leads to the death of three horses, Nora also loses the support of her only friend on the expedition, Roscoe Swire. However, Nora's confidence soars again when she finds her father's initial cut into the rock of a slot canyon.



Nora and Sloane go through the slot canyon first and begin to explore the valley on the other side where Nora's father claimed Quivira could be found. They see nothing. The following morning they are about to return to the rest of their companions in the other valley when Nora spots the remnants of a ladder built into the side of the canyon. Sloane digs out her rock climbing gear and together they ascend to a bench above the valley. When Nora stands on the bench, she is again disappointed to discover nothing; however, as she turns to leave, she spots an alcove within the bench that is large enough to hide the entire city. The city is invisible from below and above, thanks to the natural alcove. Nora and Sloane quickly explore the city, making note of the complete kiva in the center, the towers at each corner, and the roomblocks still filled with weapons, pottery, and other artifacts. It is the archeological find of the century.

Nora and Sloane inform the others of their discovery and begin their evaluations. Nora contacts the Institute via the radio and tells Dr. Goddard of the discovery. As the days pass, the excitement of the expedition continues to grow except for Aragon. Aragon is disturbed by some of the things he has found, most especially a crawlspace filled with bones, many of which look like they have been boiled. Aragon suggests that the Anasazi Indians were not the only Indians living at this site. At the same time, they open the kiva and find drawings inside that suggest this kiva is a Rain Kiva and that the site once contained the opposite kiva, a Sun Kiva.

One night, as the expedition sleeps, someone kills two of the horses. Nora decides that she and Smithback, the writer, should go after the killers, leaving the others to continue their work. Nora and Smithback ride horses out of the first valley, removing their shoes to prevent them from falling like the others, and follow the tracks of strange horse. Nora is able to track this other horse to the camp site of John Beiyoodzin, an Indian from the nearby Indian village of Nankoweap. Beiyoodzin did not kill the horses but warns of evil in those valleys. When Nora mentions her father, Beiyoodzin becomes distant and bids them goodnight.

Nora and Smithback return to Quivira the following day to discover Peter Holroyd is sick. Within minutes of their return, Peter dies. Aragon, a medical doctor, runs tests on Peter with his limited equipment and suggests to the rest of the group that they should consider returning to civilization. Nora agrees and orders everyone to pack up. As he is packing up, Black finds the entrance to a hidden cave. Inside the cave is the Sun Kiva. Everyone is excited by this find, half of them expecting to find gold inside. Nora orders it left unopened, causing more friction between herself and Sloane. Sloane demands that they open the Sun Kiva rather than leave it to be looted. Nora disagrees and urges everyone to continue packing their things to leave the following morning.

In the morning, Nora sends Sloane and Black to check the weather report. The weather report is clear, but Sloane and Black can clearly see a thunderhead over the Kaiparowits Plateau. Rain over the plateau almost guarantees a flash flood for the valley where Nora plans to spend the day packing the horses. Sloane chooses not to tell Nora about the thunderhead and Black follows her lead. Nora, Aragon, and Smithback enter the slot canyon carrying packages to the horses to be packed. On the way, Aragon tests Holroyd's body for a fungus he suspects of having killed him. When it



proves to be positive, Aragon tells Nora that this fungus is probably all over Quivira and is most likely what caused the Indians to abandon the city so quickly they left their most precious belongings behind. Aragon tells Nora they have all been exposed and must get back to civilization to be treated. Before they can, however, a flashflood fills the slot canyon, trapping them inside.

Aragon, Nora, and Smithback attempt to climb the sides of the slot canyon, but Aragon is swept away. Nora and Smithback make it to a tiny ledge where Smithback protects Nora from flying debris with his own back. As they fight for their lives, Sloane decides they are dead and orders the remaining members of the expedition to open the Sun Kiva. Black and the cook do most of the digging, taking in most of the fungus laden dust. When the Sun Kiva is opened, Sloane discovers hundreds of pots, bowls, and jewelry decorated with the rare micaceous process. Sloane knows that no complete pieces of pottery of this style have ever been recovered, making this the most important find of Quivira.

Nora and Smithback make their way back to the camp after dark and find it abandoned. Unknown to them, the skinwalkers have arrived and killed Roscoe. Nora puts Smithback in the medical tent and goes to search for the others. Nora runs into Sloane and they argue, with Nora accusing Sloane of murder. Sloane pulls a gun and Nora runs for her life. Sloane finds Smithback in the medical tent and sets up a trap for Nora. However, instead of killing Nora, Sloane has injured one of the skinwalkers. Sloane returns to Quivira, where both Black and the cook have been killed by the skinwalkers and finds herself running for her life.

Nora joins Sloane and discovers the skinwalker chasing her. Together they climb into one of the towers where they manage to knock the skinwalker down with a lucky shot from Sloane's pistol, the final shot. As Nora and Sloane argue about the Sun Kiva, the skinwalker returns and attacks Sloane. Nora watches as they fall off the side of the tower to their deaths below. Nora climbs down from the tower and remembers there were two skinwalkers. Nora begins to run when a shadow appears behind her so hides in the roomblocks, arming herself with an ancient spear. Nora stumbles on the cook's body and finds he had a gun. Nora uses the gun, killing the skinwalker with multiple shots.

Nora returns to the camp and finds Beiyoodzin waiting for her and together, Nora and Beiyoodzin join Smithback on the Priest's Trail and begin to make their way out of Quivira valley. They run into the skinwalker Nora had thought died with Sloane. Beiyoodzin tricks the skinwalker into trusting him and then pushes him off the canyon wall. Beiyoodzin then promises to tell Nora about her father someday. Nora and Smithback are rescued from the canyons and spend a month recovering from the fungal infection. Nora, Smithback, and Skip return to the area and are taken to the place where their father died. They are able to piece together his final days from his journal, learning that Padraic Kelly found Quivira and took one artifact before repairing the damage he had done to the city. Padraic became infected with the fungus and headed north in search of help. With no help in sight, Padraic stopped in a small alcove overlooking a valley and died.



Beiyoudzin's cousin found Padraic's body, but the village of Nankoweap decided to leave him as he was. One of three brothers from Nankoweap mailed Padraic's letter, feeling as though his family deserved to know where he had died. The other two brothers killed the first and completed their transformation into skinwalkers, Indian witches. The skinwalkers valued Quivira as a piece of their heritage and wanted to protect it. The skinwalkers killed in order to stop the looting of Quivira.



Chapters 1-8

Chapters 1-8 Summary

Padraic Kelly disappeared sixteen years ago as he explored the canyons of Arizona and Utah for treasure. Padraic's children spent what was left of their childhoods and their early adulthood listening to their mother run Padraic down for his dreams.

In chapter 1, Nora Kelly arrives at the old family ranch to check out stories of vandalism her neighbor had mentioned to her. As Nora checks out the house, she begins to smell morning glories. Nora is then attacked by someone dressed as an animal, demanding to know where a letter is. Nora does not know about what this person is talking. The neighbor, Teresa Gonzalez, comes into the house and scares off the two attackers with her shotgun. As Nora leaves, she sees one of the creatures keeping up with her truck despite her speed. Nora is so frightened, she knocks over the mailboxes. Nora finds a letter in the sand when she stops to move the mailboxes out of the street. In chapter 2, Nora inspects a group of maps that cover the maze of canyons in southern Utah, looking to see if directions given in her father's letter could be real. The letter was written by her father to her mother sixteen years ago as he sat in a canyon below what he believed to be the fabled city of Quivira. Nora realizes that the directions and descriptions her father gives in the letter could be real. In chapter 3, Nora goes to Dr. Blakewood, the President of the Santa Fe Archaeological Institute and tells him about her father's letter and asks that the Institute fund an expedition for her to find Quivira. Blakewood laughs her out of his office, warning her if she does not finish the lab work for previous expeditions, she might find herself out of a job in six months.

In chapter 4, Nora goes to her brother to ask his permission to sell the family ranch to fund the expedition. Skip is skeptical, especially since Nora has refused to sell the ranch in the past and this agreement would leave him with nothing from the sale. Instead, Skip suggests Nora contact an old college friend of his at the Jet Propulsion Lab at Cal Tech and ask him to use a new radar technology to find the Anasazi road their father claims he followed in the letter. In chapter 5, Nora calls Cal Tech and speaks to Skip's old college friend but gets nowhere. Nora then decides to call the unkind professor's subordinate. In chapter 6, Peter Holroyd goes to a local pizza parlor to meet with Nora Kelly, a crazy woman who called him and offered to drive all the way to California just to have dinner with him. When Nora arrives, Peter is immediately drawn to her beauty and her story of Quivira. Nora explains about her father's letter and the myths surrounding Quivira. Nora then asks Peter if it would be possible for him to use the radar to help her find the ancient road. Peter agrees, but only if Nora will allow him to go on the expedition with her. In chapter 7, Nora watches as Peter takes the satellite images and attempts to use the computer to find her road. Peter manipulates the information in many ways, having no luck until he learns that the Asaszi used brush to destroy their roads. Peter searches for charcoal and is finally able to find the road. In chapter 8, Nora returns home to find her dog and her hairbrush both missing.



Chapters 1-8 Analysis

Nora Kelly is introduced in these first few chapters. Nora is an archeologist who happens to be the daughter of a pothunter. Nora's father disappeared sixteen years ago, but Nora finds a letter from him that outlines the path he took to discover the fabled city of Quivira. At this point, it is important that the reader understand what Quivira is. More than five hundred years ago, Coronado was told by a slave that there exists a city where everything is made of gold. Coronado searched for this city but never found it. Many historians suggest the story was true because it is repeated by other sources, while others insist it is not true. Nora's father suggests he has found it in the canyons of Utah despite the fact that thousands of people have searched for it and failed. This sets up a situation for Nora, as an archeologist, where if she were to find the fabled city, she would be more famous than the man who found King Tut's tomb.

Ambition would seem like a huge motivation for someone such as Nora to search for Quivira. However, Nora's main concern is proving her father was not the pothunter others believe him to be. For sixteen years Nora and her brother were forced to listen to their mother say horrible things about their father, as well as the professionals Nora has met in her career. As a result, Nora wants to find Quivira and prove to everyone that her father was not just a pothunter, but that he made one of the biggest discoveries of the twentieth century. It is this desire that motivates Nora and it is this that compels her to continue fighting for an expedition even when her boss threatens to fire her.

Nora manages to find someone to give her the information she needs to prove her father's information is accurate. Nora uses her feminine wiles and her excitement for the expedition to convince Peter Holroyd, a nerdy physicist, into stealing information from his place of employment to find evidence of the Anasazi road Nora's father followed. Peter finds the road, again affirming that Padraic's information was accurate, giving Nora the power she needs to fund the expedition. Nora does not really consider going back to the Institute, however, preferring to look elsewhere.

Nora returns home to find that someone has been in her house. The only things missing are a hairbrush and her dog. Nora assumes the dog is with her brother; therefore, the only thing really missing is the hairbrush. The reader has no idea why someone would want to take a hairbrush, but the idea brings to mind witchcraft and other types of suspicions. Nora seems to be thinking along the same lines as she recalls the animal-like things that attacked her at the ranch. Nora is frightened, injecting the plot with some tension as the reader shares her fear.



Chapters 9-12

Chapters 9-12 Summary

In chapter 9, Dr. Goddard, the chairman of the board of the Santa Fe Archaeological Institute, has asked to see Nora who thinks she is about to be fired. However, Nora learns that Goddard has heard of her expedition to Quivira. After viewing the radar images, Dr. Goddard offers to fund the expedition on the condition that he pick the people who will go, including his own daughter. Nora agrees with the understanding that she remain the expedition leader and the expedition be kept secret. In chapter 10, Nora informs Skip of the upcoming expedition and of the job she secured for him at the Institute. Nora asks Skip to be careful. In chapter 11, someone breaks into abandoned Anasazi caves in the Calaveras Mesa, stuffing hair into the mouth of skull while speaking Nora's last name.

In chapter 12, Nora arrives at the meeting place for the beginning of the expedition. Nora introduces herself to Roscoe Swire, the cowboy who will provide the horses for the journey through the canyons. Nora meets the other members of the expedition. They include Aaron Black, geochronologist, Enrique Aragon, the physical anthropologist who is also a medical doctor, and Luigi Bonarotti, the cook. Bill Smithback, the writer, and Sloane Goddard, an archaeologist and the daughter of Dr. Goddard, will be meeting them in Page, Arizona where they begin their trip.

Chapters 9-12 Analysis

Dr. Goddard, the chairman of the board for the Institute has heard Nora's story and wants to fund the expedition. Dr. Goddard is not only a Quivira enthusiast, but he is aware of what a find like this could do for his career and the Institute. While Goddard shows that he is moral when it comes to the Institute by refusing the funeral bowls, he also proves himself to be deeply ambitious. At least, the implication is once again there. Nora could care less who funds her expedition as long as she can give all the credit to her dad, as well as herself, and she can fulfill her promise to Peter Holroyd to go along. Nora gets all this but must promise to take Dr. Goddard's daughter along. Nora finds this stipulation difficult to swallow, afraid that Sloane Goddard will be a spoiled, sorority girl who will not work hard. Nora shows her deep desire to go on this expedition, however, when she agrees to everything Goddard asks of her.

As Nora plans her expedition and arranges for her brother, a highly educated alcoholic, to get a job, someone is defiling ancient gravesites for some unknown reason. It is clearly the people stalking Nora as they speak her name during some sort of ceremony, but the reader has no idea what this ceremony is or how it might impact Nora. The use of the hair explains the missing hairbrush from Nora's house, but again the reader has no idea what the ceremony is except that it does not appear to be something good. Finally, Nora prepares to go on her expedition and meets all the people going with her.

Dr. Goddard has spared no expense in getting the best and Nora finds herself overwhelmed with the imminence and importance of the people on her team, beginning to question her ability to lead them. This is an attack of self-doubt that could cause Nora big problems as the expedition begins.



Chapters 13-18

Chapters 13-18 Summary

In chapter 13, the expedition reaches the marina in Page and Nora sees a limo pull up. At first Nora is concerned this might be Sloane Goddard, but it turns out to be Bill Smithback. Smithback is a celebrity writer and recognized by the tourists. Nora grabs him just as he begins to talk about the expedition. After dealing with Smithback, Nora helps load the barge with the horse trailers and their gear. As soon as they are loaded, Nora orders the captain to push off even though Sloane Goddard has not arrived. In chapter 14, the members of the expedition begin to get to know one another as they motor down the lake. As they arrive at their destination a short time later, they discover the beach is clogged with debris so they can't land the boat. Nora insists they swim across, including the horses. Roscoe agrees, though hesitantly. Once settled on the beach, the group settles in for the night.

In chapter 15, Teresa Gonzalez is brutally attacked as she searches the Kelly house for the source of something that frightened her dog. In chapter 16, the members of the expedition wake and are greeted by an amazingly gourmet meal. As they eat, a plane approaches the beach. The pilot steps out and Nora realizes it is Sloane Goddard. Sloane vaguely apologizes for missing the barge the day before and is introduced to the other members of the expedition. The expedition heads out, each member riding a horse and leading a pack horse. In chapter 17, Nora stops mid-day and asks Peter to check his GPS to verify their location. Unfortunately, the GPS will not work in the canyon. Nora must rely on maps to verify their location. That night, Nora sits with Roscoe and they become friends. Later, Nora speaks with Sloane about the Devil's Ridge. Sloane expresses concern about getting the horses over the steep incline, but Nora believes they can.

In chapter 18, the expedition heads out again. Peter shows everyone some plants indigenous to the area that are poisonous, including the datura flower that some Indians use to induce vision. Peter says it can also cause brain damage. At that moment, Sloane spots a cliff dwelling above them. Nora agrees they should check it out, so she goes up with Sloane, Peter, and Smithback. Sloane takes a core sample of a viga. Nora takes her aside and tells her not to do something so invasive again without discussing it with her and Sloane reluctantly agrees. Behind the cave they find a skull. Again Nora is annoyed that Sloane has disturbed something without asking first, but decides to take the skull to Aragon for examination. They also see some pictographs that have been covered with reverse spirals which Nora explains means a reversal of nature, indicating a witch possibly lived in the cave. Finally, they notice one of the rooms in the cave has been painted black, something uncharacteristic of Anasazi Indians. Sloane takes samples of the paint.



Chapters 13-18 Analysis

The expedition gets underway and Nora is forced to make her first difficult decisions as leader. First, Nora must put a stop to Bill Smithback's desire for publicity. As Smithback arrives via limo and begins signing autographs, the reader gets the impression of a pompous, fame-seeking writer. Nora gets the same impression; however, Smithback is quiet and observant as the barge makes its way down the lake, suggesting Smithback's behavior was just an act. The second decision Nora must make is to leave without waiting for Sloane Goddard. This decision was a simple one for Nora because she was never happy with the idea of taking Sloane on the trip in the first place. However, Sloane manages to catch up, arriving in a plane she has piloted herself. This arrival expresses Sloane's desire to be the center of attention. Sloane is most definitely the center of attention as she is introduced around, as all the men of the expedition notice her exceptional beauty. Nora is impressed with Sloane's skills but is threatened by Sloane's confidence and skills. The reader senses tension the moment Sloane steps off the plane.

Back in Santa Fe, Teresa Gonzalez, Nora's tough childhood neighbor, is killed when she goes to investigate noises in Nora's old house. Teresa's death is violent and horrifying, suggesting to the reader that the creatures stalking Nora are vicious. Now the reader feels as though Nora, as well as the other members of the expedition, could be in a great deal of danger. Nora does not believe the danger will follow her, but if that is the case, the reader wonders what might lay in the brother's future who has been left behind in Santa Fe.

Nora and Peter cannot use the GPS to make sure they are on the right course because of the height of the canyon walls, leaving them without the accurateness of modern technology. This situation introduces the possibility that they could get lost if they must rely only on maps and occasional signs of charcoal, which would suggest they are still on the Anasazi road. Although Nora is convinced they are on the right path at this point, the reader is concerned that getting lost is a very real possibility.

Tensions between Nora and Sloane increase when, first they discuss the possibility of getting horses over Devil's Backbone, then later when they discover an unexplored Anasazi cliff dwelling. Sloane takes samples and disturbs the site in ways that irritates Nora. Nora is in charge and any samples taken should be cleared through her. Nora admits to herself that her irritation lies more in the fact that Sloane appears to be a confident archeologist rather than the act itself, but a test of her leadership has been committed just the same. Nora seems to have won this round, but Sloane's grudging acceptance suggests that this will not be the last test of Nora's leadership, nor will these two women become best friends.

The group finds many interesting things in Pete's Ruin. First is the black painted room, which is uncharacteristic of Anasazi Indians. Sloane takes a sample of this suggesting perhaps that the contents of the paint might be significant later. Second is the skull found behind the cave, suggesting someone young died there. Finally, they see reverse

spirals on the pictographs suggesting that someone felt witches resided there. This appears to be simply a superstition on the part of these ancient people, but the sight of it still upsets Nora, adding a sense of danger to the plot.



Chapters 19-22

Chapters 19-22 Summary

In chapter 19, the expedition cannot find water and the GPS continues to be useless as well. The members of the expedition are becoming concerned. Some of the people believe Nora is lost. Dr. Black is the most vocal, announcing his fear that they are all going to die in these canyons. Nora insists that they are close and should continue on. Later, Aragon tells Nora and Sloane that the black paint in Pete's Ruin was made of blood and that the skull showed evidence of having been scalped. In chapter 20, Skip Kelly begins his first day of work at the Santa Fe Archaeology Institute with a hangover. Only a few short hours after beginning his job, Skip is escorted out by a detective with the Santa Fe Police Department. In chapter 21, Skip is taken to the police department where he is questioned about his whereabouts two nights ago. Skip is flippant, attempting to joke with the detective, until he learns that Teresa Gonzalez has been found murdered in his childhood home.

In chapter 22, the expedition continues. Nora is excited when they reach the Devil's Backbone at midmorning, but no one else shares her enthusiasm. Nora suggests that she and Roscoe go in search of a path over the ridge. Eventually Nora finds a faint trail, but it is so narrow and dangerous Roscoe refuses to move the horses over it. Since it is the only trail over the ridge, Nora insists. First they take all the gear over the ridge by hand, making several trips. Then Roscoe and Nora take the horses. They make it about halfway before the lead horse balks. The horse behind the lead horse steps back and slips off the trail, taking the horse in front of Nora with it. A moment later, another horse falls as well. Roscoe urges them to keep moving, and he and Nora manage to get the rest of the horses to safety on the other side of the ridge. Down in the valley, everyone rests by the water. Peter begins to explore and finds Padraic Kelly's initials on the side of a slot canyon that appears to be the entrance to the next valley.

Chapters 19-22 Analysis

The lack of water and modern technology has caused many members of the expedition to become convinced Nora is leading them around in circles and will continue until they begin dying off. Black is the most vocal of these frightened members, expressing loudly his desire to turn around. As if this is not enough stress for Nora, she also learns that the cave dwelling they found, Pete's Ruin, is filled with blood and someone scalped a female child there. This seems to add to the sinister implications of the reverse spirals they found, leaving the reader with the impression that something dark took place in this valley many years ago. The time distance, however, lures the reader as well as the expedition members into a sense of security that may or may not be unrealistic.

Skip begins his new job and is immediately taken in to police custody to discuss the death of Teresa Gonzales. Skip is shocked and saddened at Teresa's violent death,



making him wonder if the same people who killed Teresa might be the ones who attacked Nora. If so, Skip is concerned that Nora might be in a lot more trouble than he first thought.

The expedition finally finds the Devil's Backbone, suggesting they have been on the right path all along, validating Nora's leadership. Nora feels as though they are just yards from Quivira with only a dangerous, ancient path blocking their way. Nora turns on her only real friend in this expedition and calls Roscoe a coward for worrying more about his horses than finding the most significant archaeological site in history. Nora's desire to find Quivira is never more apparent to the reader than at this moment. Roscoe finally agrees to take the horses over the ridge, more because this is the closest source of water than because he wants to find Quivira. Unfortunately, three horses die, marking the first casualties of the expedition. Moments later, Nora finally receives confirmation that her father came this way, once again validating all Nora for which has been fighting.



Chapters 23-29

Chapters 23-29 Summary

In chapter 23, Nora and Sloane decide to go into the next valley. Nora and Sloane make slow progress through the slot canyon, often forced to wade through murky water. On the other side, Nora and Sloane immediately begin exploring. At the same time she is hoping to find the steps her father described, Nora wonders if she will find her father's body somewhere among these rocks. The valley is beautiful, but there is nothing that indicates a great ruin in the cliffs above them. In chapter 24, Nora wakes to find Sloane already searching the cliff walls for some trace of the ancient city; however, Sloane has had no luck. Nora gets up and looks herself but also comes up with nothing. Nora catches sight of a moqui step. Clearly the other steps were destroyed when a landslide knocked them off the cliff wall. Sloane gets out her climbing ropes and both women climb to the top of the cliff to the bench above. Nora is once again deeply disappointed to find nothing. However, as she turns to leave, Nora spots the city in an alcove at the edge of the bench.

In chapter 25, Nora and Sloane begin to explore the city. There is a planetarium drawn on the cliff walls, four towers only slightly damaged, multiple roomblocks, and a huge kiva in the center of the city that appears to be fully intact. As they peek inside the towers and note the system of poles and stones that serve as a ladder, Sloane makes quick sketches of the city. Next they look inside a roomblock and find everything intact, including a collection of pots, weapons, and jewelry. It is unusual for the Anasazi to have left behind their most treasured possessions; therefore, this find is extraordinary. In chapter 26, the camp is set up and everyone has had a chance to walk through the ruin. Nora and the scientists discuss how to go about exploring the city. Aragon does not want anything disturbed while Sloane and Black argue that they should retrieve as many artifacts as possible to protect them from looting. Nora compromises, telling everyone not to touch anything without her express permission. Nora will decide what should be disturbed or taken and what should remain unmolested. They then discuss some theories as to why the Anasazi did not take anything when they left. Finally, Smithback wonders if they will find the gold that has been rumored to exist in this city. Nora dismisses this idea, insisting the Anasazi did not have gold.

In chapter 27, Sloane prepares a rope ladder for access to the shelf where the radio and weather equipment will be kept. Nora speaks to Dr. Goddard, informing him of their discovery. Dr. Goddard speaks to his daughter and warns her to be careful about how she conducts herself, reminding her that scientists all over the world will analyze her actions in Quivira. In chapter 28, Skip drives out to the family ranch, hoping to find and take custody of Teddy, Teresa's dog. Skip is spooked when he goes into the house and sees the blood left by Teresa's murder. Skip quickly turns to leave, discovering that Teddy has climbed into his car as he searched for him. Skip races down the hill. As Skip approaches a turn in the road he hits the brakes, but discovers they are not functioning.



Skip pulls the emergency brake and the car stops seconds before slamming into a rock face.

In chapter 29, Nora makes the rounds of the ruin, checking to see how everyone is doing. Black is examining the trash pile and has discovered that two separate classes of people lived in the city, suggesting the Anasazi had slaves, something that has thus far never been seen. Black also suggests the trash piles show evidence of a seasonal pilgrimage, supporting the idea that Quivira was a city of priests. Nora is then called by Aragon who has discovered a crawlspace behind the city that is filled with bones. Aragon says there are two layers of bones, with a top layer whose skeletons are mostly intact and a lower level that are jumbled and damaged. Aragon suggests a burial site such as this suggests famine, disease, war, or some sort of sacrifice. Minutes later, Nora is called to a roomblock where Sloane and Peter have discovered a strange burial. There are two skeletons, but both have been disassembled and arranged in an odd pattern. There are gifts around the bodies as well as mummified birds. There is also the suggestion that the room was stuffed with flowers. Nora gets the impression that this is more of an offering than a burial. Nora pulls Sloane aside and expresses unhappiness that she moved the lid to the cyst that contains the burial. Sloane argues that she had the right to move the lid and that she should be the leader, not Nora.

Chapters 23-29 Analysis

In the middle of her worrying that her father might have been wrong, Nora finds Quivira. Disappointment turns to excitement even as Nora thinks of her father, hoping he did not die before seeing the wonders of Quivira. Nora still does not know where her father died; therefore, she is concerned they might find his body in the valley. When the body is not in a visible place, the reader begins to wonder if Nora will ever know what happened to her father, the one thing that really motivated her to come to this place.

The mysteries surrounding Quivira only grow as Nora and her team begin their explorations. Nora finds roomblocks full of treasure as well as a fully intact kiva, two things that have never been found in an Anasazi ruin. This find makes everyone wonder why the city was abandoned in what appears to be a big hurry, suggesting something sinister that could cause the expedition some difficulties. Finally, everyone is excited to begin taking treasures from the city to have their names forever remembered by these treasures. However, Nora refuses to allow anyone to touch anything without her okay, setting up a situation in which Nora could once again have a fight on her hands with the expedition members, especially Sloane who has already shown a lack of respect for Nora's authority. Everyone expected to find gold at Quivira because of the stories Coronado heard, but Nora insists the Anasazi did not have access to or a need for gold, hoping to put an end to this line of thinking. However, the reader suspects this will not be the end of talk about gold.

Sloane's relationship with her father is made clearer in these chapters. Sloane feels as though her father does not trust her and that he treats her like a child, which drives Sloane to prove herself capable without her father's influence. As a result, Sloane takes



it personally when her father warns her to watch her behavior as she explores Quivira, even though this advice is meant for everyone. Sloane also feels as though she should have been put in charge of the expedition, even though she has less experience than Nora. As a result, Sloane continues to challenge Nora's authority over her actions, suggesting that Nora and Sloane will eventually come to a climatic moment in their relationship in regards to the excavation of Quivira.

The scientists find many interesting things about Quivira, most notably the fact that the city was clearly abandoned and that its residence included a superior group and an inferior group, suggesting slaves. There also appears to be evidence of sacrifices and offerings. All of this goes against everything history says about the Anasazi Indians. The evidence suggests that perhaps the ruling residents of the city were not Anasazi, but Nora and her team are finding a lot of artifacts that speak of the Anasazi. It is a confusing set of circumstances that could eventually explain why the Anasazi suddenly became cave dwellers and then mysteriously disappeared.

Skip goes to retrieve Teresa's dog to replace Thurber, Nora's dog he lost. Skip's brakes go out, causing him to be in a near fatal accident. This episode appears to be completely random until the reader recalls that the skinwalkers stole a hairbrush from Nora's house that Skip had used. The reader begins to wonder if the two events could be connected, especially when recalling that the skinwalkers took that hair and held a ceremony with it.



Chapters 30-35

Chapters 30-35 Summary

In chapter 30, Sloane apologizes to Nora as they enter the city to open the kiva. Nora allows Sloane to enter the kiva first. Nora is drawn to the mural on the walls, as well as the pottery and skulls on the floor. As Nora explores, she patiently explains to the others that this is clearly a Rain Kiva and that there was most likely a Sun Kiva in the city at some point. Smithback notices the overwhelming amount of turquoise in the kiva and Nora says that turquoise was clearly the jewel of choice to the people who worshiped at the Rain Kiva. Black suggests that gold is the jewel of choice for the Sun Kiva, causing excitement among the others even as Nora attempts to dissuade this impression. In chapter 31, Aragon tells everyone he believed the skeletons on the lower pile of the crawlspace died violently as most of the bones are broken. However, Aragon examines the bones closer and has come to believe that the bones were broken after death rather than before, perhaps to remove the marrow. Aragon also shows them evidence that the bones were boiled for unknown reasons. As everyone digests this, Roscoe suddenly rushes toward them, announcing two of the horses have been gutted.

In chapter 32, Roscoe tells how he found the horses dead. Roscoe also claims he saw a rider on a shoeless horse at the top of the ridge the night before. After some discussion, Nora decides that she and Smithback will track the killer while the others return to their work. In chapter 33, Skip learns that the reason his brakes went out is because there was no brake fluid, but no obvious leak either. Skip quickly goes home, searches for a book among the collection he inherited from his father, and begins reading. In chapter 34, Nora, Roscoe, and Smithback go through the slot canyon to the valley where the horses are. Nora stops to look at the dead horses before leaving the valley and notes missing pieces of hide on the horses' heads, chests, and bellies. Nora and Smithback quickly make it over the ridge and follow a set of tracks north, toward the Indian village of Nankoweap. A short time after they cross into Indian land, Nora smells smoke. They dismount and discover a campsite. Believing it is the camp of the person who killed their horses, Nora suggests they find a high point to watch the camp and wait. However, the Indian whose camp they have discovered saw them long before they see him. The man approaches with his gun drawn.

In chapter 35, Nora goes to draw her own weapon until she realizes the stranger only intends to kill a rattlesnake. The stranger then invites them back to his camp to have some dinner. The stranger introduces himself as John Beiwoodzin, a traditional healer from Nankoweap. Beiwoodzin is not happy when he learns what they are doing in the area, warning them that the valley in which they have chosen to work is one into which his people refuse to go. Beiwoodzin asks about how the horses were killed and suggests immediately that they leave Quivira, telling them they are being targeted by skinwalkers, Indian witches, who are drawn to the valley because the city was once a place of witchcraft. Nora thinks of the animal-like creatures who attacked her at the family ranch and wonders if they were the skinwalkers. Nora asks about her father, if Beiwoodzin had



seen him or might know where he was. Beiyoudzin abruptly goes off to bed without answering. Nora and Smithback go to bed themselves, talking quietly in the dark, expressing affection for one another.

Chapters 30-35 Analysis

They open the Rain Kiva and everyone is amazed at its collection of artifacts, but some are disappointed to see there are no precious metals, such as gold or silver. The idea that the Anasazi society was often broken into two or more sections with a kiva for each excites some, especially when they see the drawing of a sun on the wall and make the assumption that there must be a Sun Kiva somewhere in the city. The sun is created using mica to create a gold effect, making some wonder if there might be gold in the Sun Kiva. All this excites some of the members of the expedition, especially Black and Sloane. Nora is more concerned with the things they can see and touch. This division in priorities once more suggests that there might be a power struggle at some point, with two groups intending to go in different directions.

The longer the expedition continues to explore Quivira, the more they learn about the people who lived there. Aragon is shocked and saddened by some of the things he has found, especially evidence that some of the remains he has found in the crawlspace are of people whose bodies were broken and boiled after death, suggesting some sort of bizarre ritual that does not fit in with all history has knows about the Anasazi. With this unpleasantness on their minds, the members of the expedition learn that the horses have been attacked. Two horses have been gutted and their bodies arranged as though in some sort of warning. While searching for the killer, Nora finds an Indian traditional healer who tells her this valley is bad and Quivira was a center of evil and witchcraft, suggesting they have been targeted by skinwalkers, Indian witches. Despite the fact that it seems like this would be a remote possibility, Nora cannot help recalling the creatures that attacked her at the ranch. Now Nora has a name for those hunting her, but does not know why they are targeting her. After all, she is a modern woman attempting to preserve history. At the same time, Skip begins investigating this same possibility in light of what happened to his car. The certainty of so many characters causes the reader to believe the possibility as well and feel the suspense building in the plot.



Chapters 36-41

Chapters 36-41 Summary

In chapter 36, the skinwalkers silently approach the expedition's camp over a hidden trail called the Priest's Trail. The skinwalkers go to the shelf where the communications equipment is kept and smash it, rendering it useless. On their way out, they stop to sprinkle corpse powder on a member of the expedition's team. In chapter 37, Peter Holroyd wakes out of a dream and feels as though he has dust on his face. Peter hears a noise, then another, and gets up to investigate. Peter finds the noise is Sloane and Aaron Black making love in the grove of cottonwood trees. In chapter 38, Nora and Smithback return through the slot canyon to the camp and learn that the communication equipment has been destroyed, but the weather radio remains. Nora sends for Holroyd to find out if he can repair the equipment. When Peter is found, he is horribly ill, unable to breathe. Aragon arrives and attempts to help him, but he is unable to tube Peter quickly enough to keep him from drowning in his own fluids. Peter dies. In chapter 39, the members of the expedition have a meeting to decide what to do next. Aragon tells them that Peter most likely died of some sort of poisoning, but he cannot be sure without more extensive testing. Aragon cannot guarantee that what happened to Peter will not happen to the rest of them, given time. Nora decides they must pack up and leave immediately. Sloane argues against leaving, so Nora puts it to a vote. The majority vote to leave.

In chapter 40, Smithback and Roscoe carry Peter's body, wrapped in an improvised body bag, into the slot canyon. They have decided to keep his body in a crevice halfway through the slot canyon in order to protect the members of the expedition from the body's natural decomposition as they prepare to leave. In chapter 41, Black is carefully cleaning up his tools when he spills a container of chromatography papers. Black chases the papers in the wind, catching all but one. The final one has lodged itself inside the crawlspace. Black goes into the crawlspace to retrieve it and he discovers a pile of rocks hiding an entrance to a cave. Black realizes he has just found the Sun Kiva.

Chapters 36-41 Analysis

Peter Holroyd wakes with dust on his face just minutes after the skinwalkers leave the camp, having destroyed the communications equipment and dusted corpse powder on one of the men's faces. Peter quickly gets sick and dies the following day. The reader realizes that Peter has been killed because he is the only one who could repair the communications equipment. However, no one, not even Aragon, has any idea why Peter died as quickly as he has. The narrator seems to imply that Peter has died of some sort of magic, but logic tells the reader there is something more scientific behind Peter's death that will eventually be revealed.

Once again, Nora's authority is tested by Sloane. Nora wants to leave Quivira in light of all that has happened, a choice that seems like the safest thing to do after Peter's death and the loss of their only connection to the outside world. Sloane, on the other hand, believes someone should stay at the city until everything has been documented and removed. When Black finds the Sun Kiva, the reader realizes this will only fuel Sloane's desire to remain, suggesting a climatic battle between her and Nora in the next few chapters.



Chapters 42-46

Chapters 42-46 Summary

In chapter 42, Black announces his discovery as everyone is packing to leave. Sloane is excited, hoping this will change Nora's mind about leaving; however, Nora remains determined to leave. Everyone enters the cave and walks around the Sun Kiva and the roomblocks behind it, studying the large, gold sun painted on the outside wall of the kiva. Talk of gold begins again. Sloane and Black want to open the kiva, but again Nora insists they cannot. Nora says they are leaving in the morning and therefore do not have the proper amount of time to catalog it. Nora insists they leave it until they can return. In chapter 43, Skip tells Dr. Goddard that he believes skinwalkers are out to kill his sister. Dr. Goddard tells Skip that they lost contact with the expedition several days before. Dr. Goddard goes to the phone. In chapter 44, Nora begins assigning chores, sending Black and Sloane to get the weather report and to close the entrance to the Sun Kiva cave. When Roscoe joins the group, he announces that someone has vandalized Peter's body. Nora insists that everyone get on with their chores while she, Aragon, and Smithback take the first loads through the slot canyon, recovering Peter's body on the way.

In chapter 45, Sloane and Black climb to the top of the cliff to get the weather report. As Black clears the top of this highest point of the canyon, he can clearly see a very large thunderhead over Kaiparowits Plateau. Even though the weather report says the weather will be clear that day, Black knows the storm over the plateau will most likely cause a flash flood in the valley below them. However, Black keeps silent when Sloane tells Nora the weather is expected to be clear all day. In chapter 46, Beiyoodzin feels an imbalance was injected into the lives of his people sixteen years before and his only way of setting it right would be to encourage Nora to leave the area. Beiyoodzin begins to quickly cross the Chilbah valley in search of the Priest's Trail.

Chapters 42-46 Analysis

Sloane is insistent that they open the Sun Kiva and see what is inside. There are many questions about the things they have found at Quivira, and Sloane insists those answers could be inside the kiva. Nora refuses, insisting that there is no time. These two women butt heads once more, and this time forgiveness is not offered or accepted. When Sloane turns around and fails to tell Nora that a flash flood is likely headed in their direction, the reader can see the danger Sloane has placed Nora in simply so that she can get credit for whatever she might find in the Sun Kiva. Sloane is so hungry for a discovery that will pull her out of her father's shadow that she is willing to place Nora in danger. At the same time, however, Sloane's father is willing to call out a rescue party in response to a crazy story about skinwalkers simply because he loves his daughter that much. It appears to the reader that a lot of the competition Sloane feels with her father is all in her head.



Nora, whose ambition is restricted to proving her father was a good man, is willing to abandon Quivira to save the lives of everyone on her team, including Sloane. However, this martyrdom comes at a price with Nora about to become locked in a slot canyon with thousands of gallons of water rushing in her direction. The reader can see how Sloane will take credit for everything once Nora is out of the way. However, Nora is a strong, brave woman; therefore, the reader hopes there is a chance of her surviving the flood. The odds seem to be adding up against her, however, as the skinwalkers have returned and violated Peter's body. One hero seems to be on her side, Beiyoudzin, giving the reader some hope that an Indian who understands and believes in skinwalkers might be capable of beating them.



Chapters 47-51

Chapters 47-51 Summary

In chapter 47, Nora, Aragon, and Smithback make their way slowly through the slot canyon. They find Peter's body floating in one of the many pools. Aragon takes some lung tissue from the body and runs a test on it. Aragon tells Nora and Smithback that he believes a fungus killed Peter. Aragon believes the fungus lives in the soil in and around Quivira and that it might be the reason the city was abandoned so abruptly. Now everyone on the expedition has more than likely been exposed. There is an easy treatment for the illness, an antibiotic, but Aragon did not bring any with him. They must return to civilization and a hospital as soon as possible. Nora then tells Aragon about the skinwalkers and her theory that they want them to leave in order to loot the city. However, Aragon suggests the skinwalkers have known where the city was all along and are trying to keep them out.

In chapter 48, Beiyoodzin is almost out of the valley and on higher ground when he hears the noise of the flood coming toward him. Beiyoodzin hopes no one is in the slot canyon as the water begins to press its way inside. In chapter 49, Nora hears the sound of the flood approaching and is halfway up the wall when the first surge of water comes. Aragon is pulled off the wall, washed away in the violent wave of water and debris. Nora and Smithback make it to a small crevice in the wall, Nora climbing inside first and Smithback pressing in behind her. Nora loses consciousness. In chapter 50, the remaining members of the team gather above the valley at the city wall and see the first surge of the water spill out of the slot canyon. Roscoe runs for the ladder but realizes there is nothing to be done. Black watches the water, at first horrified by his role in the deaths of Nora, Smithback, and Aragon. However, the thought of going down in history alongside other celebrated archaeologists soothes his guilty conscious. In chapter 51, two massive helicopters hover over the marina at Page, dropping equipment down to the far end of the lake, preparing a massive search and rescue effort.

Chapters 47-51 Analysis

Aragon tells Nora his theory as to why Peter died and why the city of Quivira was abandoned so abruptly. The theory that fungus caused such a catastrophic illness makes sense, explaining a great deal about the city, except why there were slaves and why the slaves were clearly used to take something from the dead people's bones. Beiyoodzin's description of corpse powder suggests that the Anasazi were slaves to a more advanced civilization, perhaps Aztecs, and that they used the Anasazi's own superstitions against them to force them into slavery. Aragon's theory also suggests that the fungus could have gotten into the corpse powder and caused it to actually be deadly, supporting the superstitions the Anasazi's already harbored. It all makes sense, adding science to myth, placing the expedition in more danger than anyone ever would guess.

Nora and her group are stuck in the slot canyon as Beiyoodzin watches the flood come into the valley. There is nothing to be done to save Nora's group, even if Beiyoodzin had known they were in there. Nora is smart enough to recognize what is happening, but even her quick thinking is not enough to save Aragon and might not be enough to save her and Smithback. The reader sees Nora pass out in a small crevice and begins to worry she will not survive. At the same time, a rescue effort heads their way, but it may be too little, too late.



Chapters 52-57

Chapters 52-57 Summary

In chapter 52, Sloane suggests that they assume no one survived the flood, and they begin thinking about their own situation. The flood has blocked their only way out; therefore, they must stay put for a week or more. There is no reason why they should not open the Sun Kiva and get back to work. Roscoe accuses Sloane of lying about the weather report and sending Nora and the others to their death. Roscoe then says that Sloane set them all up so that she could take credit for the contents of the Sun Kiva. In chapter 53, Sloane, Black, and Bonarotti make their way to the Sun Kiva. Sloane, who is now carrying a gun, instructs Black and Bonarotti to begin excavating the kiva's entrance. The entrance is covered in stones. When the stones are removed there is a sealed doorway that appears too fresh to be hundreds of years old. Sloane insists the doorway only looks fresh because it was so well protected by the rocks. They continue working.

In chapter 54, the skinwalkers are on the Priest's Trail. They stop for a short time to burn some datura flowers and breathe in their smoke. In chapter 55, Roscoe is alone in the camp where he has been writing in his notebook. Roscoe becomes aware of someone watching him, so he carefully makes his way to the stand of cottonwood trees where he believes he will be safer. Unfortunately, the skinwalkers are among the trees waiting for him. In chapter 56, Black works, removing the door seal of the Sun Kiva. Another seal appears below it. Sloane is the first one inside. When Black enters, all he finds is pottery and jewelry covered in micaceous paint. In chapter 57, Nora can see that Smithback's back is badly injured from the flying debris that was in the surging water. Nora knows they must get out of the slot canyon, so she encourages Smithback to jump into the water. They ride the flow of the water out into the valley where they successfully navigate, using treetops, to the shore. Nora half drags, half walks with Smithback to the camp site and helps him into the medical tent. Nora is nervous and wants to get out of the camp, but Smithback is clearly suffering from shock.

Chapters 52-57 Analysis

Nora's only supporter left with the expedition is Roscoe, but there is little he can do to stop Sloane from doing what she has always wanted, being the one to find the great treasures of Quivira. Sloane is determined, convinced that whatever is inside the Sun Kiva is treasure that will put her name out there with some of the best known archaeologists of all time. Black feels the same way, though he imagines it will be his name alongside Schliemann and Carter. Black, Bonarotti, and to a lesser extent Sloane, expose themselves to the killer fungus that lives in the soil of Quivira in order to open the kiva. Black and Bonarotti clearly believe there will be gold inside and are devastated to discover nothing but mica laced paint shined to appear to be gold. Sloane, however, reacts with joy, though the reader is unclear as to why at this point. The only important

thing now is that these three have exposed themselves to sure death in the hunt for fame, a theme of the novel.

Nora and Blacksmith make it out of the slot canyon alive, but Smithback is badly injured. Not only this, but Nora is instantly uneasy when she finds the camp abandoned after dark. No one could know that Roscoe has already come up against the skinwalkers and is most likely dead. Only Nora knows of this danger and is frightened. The reader watches as Nora begins to plan her stand in the camp, unaware that danger has already arrived and will take the shape of many things, not just Indian witches.



Chapters 58-62

Chapters 58-62 Summary

In chapter 58, Sloane is in ecstasy as she stares at the wealth of micaceous pottery around her. There have never been more than a broken piece of this pottery ever found and here she is standing among hundreds of complete samples. It is a find that will make Sloane the most well-known and envied archaeologist in modern history. Sloane focuses on Black after admiring her find and realizes he looks ill. Sloane leaves him in the kiva as she runs out to find him some medication to alleviate his discomfort. In chapter 59, Sloane is surprised to see Nora as she drops back into the camp. Nora realizes that Sloane must have seen the storm and sent Nora and her team through the slot canyon anyway. Nora accuses Sloane of murder. Determined not to have her success ruined, Sloane goes for her gun. Nora runs, hiding in the rubble of a landslide. Nora reviews her options and finds all of them less than desirable.

In chapter 60, Beiyoodzin finds the remnants of a fire and knows by the smell that the skinwalkers were burning datura flowers. Beiyoodzin knows this will make it much harder to fight the skinwalkers because the flower was mixed with other plants and funguses that will leave the skinwalkers unable to feel pain or to understand the pain of others. In chapter 61, Bonarotti is sitting on the wall under the planetarium. Bonarotti does not feel well and begins to worry he might have what Peter died of. Bonarotti makes his way to one of the roomblocks. In chapter 62, Sloane is surprised to find Smithback in the medical tent. Sloane leaves the light on and hides behind the tent, convinced Nora will return for Smithback before she does anything else.

Chapters 58-62 Analysis

Sloane is the only one who appreciates the true value of the micaceous pottery she finds in the Sun Kiva. Sloane tries to convince everyone that from an archaeological standpoint, the micaceous pottery is more valuable than gold, but Black is too sick to understand and Smithback is too frightened for Nora to care. Sloane will stop at nothing to make a name for herself in archaeological circles, a name that will overshadow her father's entire career. This includes murder. Sloane now waits for Nora to kill her and protect herself from a murder charge she clearly deserves.

Black and Bonarotti have both become sick and will more than likely die within the next few hours. The skinwalkers are in the camp, but no one is aware of this except the reader and Beiyoodzin who has yet to reach the camp. The skinwalkers have sniffed some natural drugs that have left them unable to understand right and wrong or to comprehend pain, either their own or someone else's. This makes them invincible. The only warning their victims will get is the smell of morning glories caused by the datura flower, but only Beiyoodzin, Nora, and the reader are aware of this. This is why Bonarotti is afraid when he smells this unique scent.



Chapters 63-67 and Epilogue

Chapters 63-67 and Epilogue Summary

In chapter 63, Black is killed by a skinwalker as he continues to lie, nearly unconscious, in the Sun Kiva. In chapter 64, Sloane sees a shape approach the medical tent and believes it is Nora. Sloane fires, hitting the figure. However, when she goes to inspect the body, there are bloody prints in the sand, but they look more like an animal's prints than a human. Sloane sees Nora making a run for the ladder to the city. Sloane then sees a terrifying figure, dressed in a cloak made of animal pelts, with a gunshot in its gut. Frightened, Sloane runs after Nora as the strange, animal-like thing follows her. In chapter 65, Nora runs into the city and heads for one of the towers when she hears Sloane behind her. Sloane tells Nora that something is following her. Together they make their way up the inside of one of the towers. The skinwalker is close behind and begins to climb almost the moment they reach the upper room. Nora instructs Sloane to wait until the skinwalker is almost below them before firing her final three bullets. Sloane fires on Nora's command and manages to hit the skinwalker with the second bullet.

Sloane pulls the gun and instructs Nora to jump off the side of the tower. As Nora approaches the edge, the skinwalker bursts from the tower room. The skinwalker attacks Sloane and they struggle, falling to their deaths over the side of the tower. Nora watches them fall, remembering that two skinwalkers came to her family ranch, suggesting one remains somewhere in the city. In chapter 66, Nora moves from room to room in the roomblocks, searching for a weapon. Nora finally finds a spear. Nora continues on, listening to the sounds of the skinwalker following close behind. Nora enters a new roomblock and finds Bonarotti dead on the floor. There is a gun on his belt. Nora grabs it and waits. When the skinwalker comes, Nora ambushes him, firing the weapon until the gun is empty. In chapter 67, Nora finds Beiwoodzin waiting for her at the medical tent. The skinwalker that fell with Sloane is still alive. Beiwoodzin leads Nora and Smithback to the Priest's Trail. They travel across the dangerous path as quickly as they can. When the skinwalker appears in front of them, Beiwoodzin offers him a bag, but when the skinwalker goes to take it, Beiwoodzin squeezes some kind of powder onto his face. The skinwalker panics, falling off the edge of the precipice.

In the epilogue, Nora, Smithback, and Skip return to the canyons of Utah. Beiwoodzin leads them through Indian country as he quietly tells them his story. Beiwoodzin's cousin found the body of Padraic Kelly sixteen years ago and took some of his belongings, among them a journal and a letter to Padraic's wife. The people of Nankoweap chose to ignore the body in fear of bringing white men to their lands. During this time, three brothers grew and went to school in the white man's world. These boys came back disillusioned. One brother embraced the white man's religion, while the other two began to embrace the darker side of Indian traditions. The two brothers began visiting Quivira and saw it as a sacred place. The first brother, however, felt the family of the dead man deserved to know the truth of their loved one's death and sent the letter to Nora. The other two brothers killed him, and this murder completed their transition to become



skinwalkers. It is for this reason they hunted Nora and her expedition. As Nora and her companions listen to this story, they arrive at Padraic's final resting place. Nora reads aloud a letter her father wrote to her and Skip in his final moments as he lay dying of the fungus infection, and then returns the journal to his bag. They decide to leave Padraic where he lies.

Chapters 63-67 and Epilogue Analysis

Sloane becomes aware of the skinwalkers and runs to Nora for help. They fight the skinwalker together, but true to Sloane's nature, the moment the danger passes, Sloane attempts to force Nora to commit suicide. Sloane continues to be determined to save her own name and reputation and to take credit for the Sun Kiva's contents despite everything. Ironically, Sloane places herself in danger by taking her eye off the tower door and allowing the skinwalker to return and catch her by surprise. Nora, despite having a kind heart and good intentions, allows the skinwalker to fall off the side of the tower with Sloane tight in his grips. Nora knows another skinwalker is stalking the city and concentrates on her own safety, using her sense of smell and desire to live to fight off the second skinwalker. However, the fight is not over.

Suspense continues to build as Nora goes down to the camp and sees Sloane's body, but not the skinwalker's. Her angel has come, however, and Beiwoodzin guides her and Smithback out of the camp over the Priest's Trail. They come across the other skinwalker, who by this time must be going on fumes with two bullet wounds and unknown injuries from his fall. Beiwoodzin is able to pull this skinwalker into his trust and take advantage of that trust to cause the skinwalker to fall to its death. It is only after both the skinwalkers are killed and Nora and Smithback are rescued that Nora finally learns what she set out to learn from the very beginning. Nora, Smithback, and Skip go with Beiwoodzin into the back country and see the body of their father. The story of Padraic's death proves the belief Nora had of him all along. The story of the skinwalkers is also poignant, touching on the tragedy of Indian youth, and takes away the supernatural aspects that still linger in the story.



Characters

Nora Kelly

Nora Kelly is an associate professor at The Santa Fe Archeological Institute. Nora is an archeologist who prefers to be in the field rather than cataloging her finds in the lab. Nora grew up with a father who liked to take his children hunting for artifacts on the weekends, often discovering arrow heads and various tools in their own backyard. However, Nora's father disappeared sixteen years ago while exploring somewhere in southern Utah. Nora's mother was in the middle of filing for divorce at the time, and she spent the rest of her life making sure her children knew exactly how poorly she thought of their father.

Nora and her brother, Skip, now own the abandoned ranch that was once their father's pride and joy. Nora is often called to the house to deal with vandals, but she cannot bear the idea of selling the place. Nora feels connected to her father when she goes to the ranch. One night, Nora is attacked there. Afterward, Nora finds a letter that must have fallen out of their old mailbox. The letter was written sixteen years ago and suggests that her father found the fabled city of Quivira. Nora begins attempting to verify the letter's directions and looking for a way to fund an expedition. Nora's boss, Dr. Goddard, is interested in finding Quivira, so he funds the expedition.

Nora thinks of her father all along the trail, wondering how he felt and what he was thinking at every juncture in the path. Nora wonders if it is possible that her father lies somewhere along the trail. When Nora finds a marking her father left to guide her along, she feels closer to him. The moment Nora sets eyes on Quivira, her first thought is of her father. Nora has come to Quivira with the sole purpose of proving her father right and perhaps putting some closure on his disappearance sixteen years ago. Nora could have had no idea that by coming to Quivira, she has opened to the door to the greed and the need for fame that motivates some archaeologists.

Padraic Kelly

Padraic, or Pat, Kelly is Nora's father. Padraic was a fortune hunter who often took his children on expeditions in their own backyard to find artifacts, such as arrowheads and Indian tools. The novel never says whether Padraic was an archeologist, but the implication is that he was not formally educated in any field. Padraic was simply a man who enjoyed searching for history.

When Nora and her brother, Skip, were teenagers, Padraic's marriage to their mother is falling apart. Their mother had grown tired of having a husband who was not reliable. To prove he had his family's best interest at heart, Padraic went on one last treasure hunt to find the biggest treasure anyone could hope to find—Quivira. Padraic followed an ancient Anasazi road he felt would take him to the fabled city. As Padraic was about to



climb up into the city, he wrote a letter to his wife, vaguely outlining the path he took to find the city. The letter does not say whether or not the city was there, but Nora believes in her father enough to follow the same path. Padraic did not return from his trip to Quivira, nor did he ever mail the letter. However, Nora eventually finds the letter, Quivira, and answers to all the questions she had regarding her father's disappearance.

Roscoe Swire

Roscoe Swire is a cowboy who is often hired to provide and care for horses for various dude ranch type duties. Swire is hired by Dr. Goddard to provide and care for horses to take Nora and the rest of her team to Quivira. Roscoe is a small man who has a lot of spirit, an intelligent man whose father dreamed of an intellectual life for his outdoorsy son. Roscoe and Nora immediately hit it off despite differences in their lifestyles. Nora notes from the beginning Roscoe's unique attachment to his horses and his ability to keep them calm even in the most stressful situations.

When Nora and the expedition reach the Devil's Backbone, Roscoe becomes concerned about the tiny trail Nora wants his horses to follow. Roscoe insists the horses could never make it and that the expedition should turn around. Nora suspects they are very close to the valley her father described in his letter, where Quivira will be found, so she resists. Nora suggests that Roscoe turn around with the horses, reminding him that behind them water is two days away, but over the ridge, water is only hours away. Roscoe agrees despite his concerns because the horses are in desperate need of water. Unfortunately, three horses fall from the ridge when they panic on the trail.

Roscoe and Nora never reestablish their easy friendship from early in the expedition; however, when Roscoe finds two of his horses butchered, he allows Nora to hunt for the killer. Nora is unable to find the killer, causing yet more grief between the two. Roscoe is unhappy with Nora and her expedition but is on her side when she decides to leave Quivira after Peter Holroyd dies. Roscoe also takes Nora's side when Sloane wants to open the Sun Kiva. Roscoe is a true cowboy, loyal to a fault, and therefore the reader is deeply saddened when he is attacked and murdered by the skinwalkers.

Enrique Aragon

Enrique Aragon is a medical doctor as well as an archeologist. Aragon was a part of a team of archaeologists working in the Glen Canyon in the year that the Glen Canyon Dam began blocking water from the Colorado River and flooded the canyon, creating what would eventually become Lake Powell. Aragon can recall being forced to quickly evaluate and excavate ancient sites because they were about to be covered in water, destroying many ancient artifacts. It is this event in his life that causes Aragon to adopt ZST, Zero Site Trauma. Aragon believes that artifacts discovered by scientists should be studied where they are found and then left alone.

When Peter Holroyd dies from an unknown cause, Aragon begins studying the body as best as he can with his limited equipment. Aragon comes to believe, both because of



Holroyd's sudden and swift death and some of the evidence he has found in Quivira, that Quivira contains a fungus that can cause swift death in large quantities. Aragon has come to the conclusion that the reason Quivira appears abandoned is because an earthquake caused a dust cloud that was filled with the fungus, killing many people in Quivira quickly. The Anasazi believed the city to be possessed with an evil spirit and destroyed the roads leading to the city, hoping it would be left alone for all eternity. Shortly after telling this to Nora and Smithback, Aragon is killed when a flash flood fills the slot canyon where he was in the process of taking supplies to the horse in the next valley.

Aaron Black

Aaron Black is a geochronologist who is said to be the best in his field. It is Black's job to examine the trash and human excretions found at archeological sites and determine not only the age of the site but anything else he can establish, such as their diet, the social hierarchy, and other such information. Black is a pompous man who is not comfortable without modern conveniences; therefore, he becomes very difficult as the expedition continues through the canyons of Utah, insisting that Nora does not know where she is going and that she has gotten them lost.

Black becomes involved in a sexual relationship with Sloane once the expedition settles in Quivira valley. Black begins taking Sloane's side in her struggle with Nora, even going so far as to allow Sloane to lie to Nora about the thunderhead they saw over the Kaiparowits Plateau. Black is also a greedy man who wants his name to go down in history as the man who found gold at Quivira. When Sloane suggests they open the Sun Kiva, which Black found, he immediately agrees. Black is devastated when no gold is found, only pottery. Black quickly begins to succumb to the infection caused by the fungus dust that he disrupted by opening the kiva. Before he can die, however, Black is murdered by one of the skinwalkers.

Bill Smithback

Bill Smithback is a writer who has written several successful books on top of his successful career as a journalist. Smithback is another character who is anxious for fame. Smithback arrives at Page in a limo and he begins signing books and bragging about the expedition to the tourists at the marina. As the expedition begins, Smithback struggles with the horseback riding, unused to this form of transportation.

As the expedition continues to go on, Smithback becomes a cheerleader for Nora. Nora at first dislikes Smithback, but she has grown to enjoy his unique charm and sense of fun. Nora takes Smithback with her when she goes in search of the people who killed two of their horses. Later, Smithback is with Nora when the flashflood nearly drowns them in the slot canyon. Smithback saves Nora's life by pressing his body up against hers and protecting her from the debris flowing in the water. Smithback is the only other



survivor of the expedition with Nora and he will return later to accompany Nora and her brother when they finally see their father's final resting place.

Peter Holroyd

Peter Holroyd is a physicist who works for The Jet Propulsion Laboratory at Cal Tech. Nora learns that JPL has a radar system that can see through thirty feet of sand and could possibly verify if the Anasazi road her father's letter mentions is really there. Nora calls the head of the department, an old school friend of her brother's, but he refuses to help. Nora then calls Peter, a subordinate to the department head, and finds in him a willing conspirator. Peter agrees to help Nora if she will allow him to go on the expedition with her. Peter finds the road and gives Nora the information she needs to get support from the Santa Fe Archeological Institute.

Peter goes on the expedition with Nora, making it clear that he is there because he has a crush on her and because he craves excitement in his own life. Peter is in charge of the electronics, most importantly the communications equipment. When the skinwalkers destroy the communications equipment, they correctly assumed Peter can repair it. The skinwalkers put corpse powder from Quivira on Peter's face. Peter dies the next day from a fungal infection in his lungs.

Sloane Goddard

Sloane Goddard is the daughter of Dr. Goddard, the chairman of the board at The Santa Fe Archeological Institute. Sloane is a trained archeologist who has been on few expeditions. Sloane feels as though nothing she can do is good enough to impress her father. Sloane has come on Nora's expedition to Quivira to prove that she is good enough to impress the world, if not her own father. Sloane often fights Nora over the leadership of the expedition, questioning the rules and often outright breaking them. Sloane feels that she should have been placed in charge of the expedition and that Nora is attempting to take her fame from her.

Sloane becomes sexually involved with Dr. Black. This affair gives Sloane someone in her corner to back her up when she fights with Nora. After Black finds the Sun Kiva, Sloane argues it should be opened. However, Nora has already ordered that they are to leave the valley the following morning to protect themselves from who killed the horses and what killed Peter. Sloane continues to argue and is expected to refuse to leave. However, before all of this can happen, Nora sends Sloane to check the weather report. Sloane can see a storm over the Kaiparowits Plateau but fails to tell Nora. As a result, Nora is trapped in the slot canyon when a flash flood fills it. Sloane believes Nora is dead because there is no way out of the valley; therefore, they should go ahead and open the Sun Kiva. Sloane finds exactly what she wanted to find in the Sun Kiva, but she has also exposed herself to the deadly fungus. Later, Sloane is killed by one of the skinwalkers.



Skip Kelly and Dr. Ernest Goddard

Skip Kelly is Nora's little brother. Skip is a heavy drinker who does not have regular employment. Skip is concerned for Nora when he learns she was attacked over a letter that their father wrote many years before, but he believes like Nora that the attacks were random and the moment she left town she would be out of the reach of the attackers. However, when Skip's brakes go out for no clear reason, he begins to think about the description of the attackers Nora gave him. It is then that Skip realizes Nora is being stalked by skinwalkers.

Dr. Ernest Goddard is a soft-spoken, gentle man who is intelligent and successful in his career. Goddard has always been hard on his daughter, pushing her to be the best at everything. This behavior has caused Goddard's daughter to resent him and to push herself to receive his respect. Goddard does not see what his encouragement has done to his daughter and does not realize how sending her on this expedition without putting her in charge has driven his daughter to murderous heights. When Skip comes to Goddard and tells him that skinwalkers are after the expedition, he immediately agrees to spearhead a search for the expedition. Goddard loves his daughter and he wants to help her, showing the reader that Sloane had what she wanted all along; she simply did not know it.

John Beiyoodzin

John Beiyoodzin is an Indian from Nankoweap, the small Indian village north of Quivira valley. Beiyoodzin is a medicine man who feels an imbalance has come to his village because of the death of Padraic Kelly. Beiyoodzin's cousin found Padraic, but the Indians did nothing to notify the family, to bury the body, or to return him to his people. Beiyoodzin believes this imbalance caused the rift between three brothers that would lead to two of them becoming skinwalkers. Beiyoodzin meets Nora when she and Smithback go in search of the people who killed two of their horses. Beiyoodzin speaks with them, telling them that the valley where they are working is cursed and they should leave. Beiyoodzin does not tell Nora about her father at this time, but he does come back to rescue Nora and Smithback from the skinwalkers. Eventually, when Nora recovers from the fungus infection, Beiyoodzin takes her, her brother, and Smithback to see where her father died and where he remains.

Three Nankoweap Brothers

Three brothers grew up in Nankoweap and went to school in the white man's world where they became dissatisfied with life in Nankoweap. One brother stopped believing in the Indian way of life completely and felt that what the Indians had failed to do for Padriac Kelly was a sin. This brother took the letter Padraic wrote to his wife and mailed it. The other two brothers, who had begun to adopt the darker side of Indian beliefs and spent a great deal of time in Quivira, felt this was a crime against their way of life. The two brothers killed the first, committing a crime that completed their transformation into

skinwalkers. These two brothers were the skinwalkers who attacked Nora in an attempt to protect Quivira from outsiders. It is also these two brothers who killed most of the expedition members, also in a failed attempt to protect Quivira and their way of life from outsiders.



Objects/Places

Padraic Kelly's Letter

While investigating vandalism at the family ranch, Nora Kelly finds a letter her father wrote the same year he disappeared, more than sixteen years earlier. This letter tells Nora the location of Quivira, a mythic city of gold. Nora uses this letter to lead an expedition into the Utah canyons.

Hairbrush

The skinwalkers take a hairbrush from Nora's house to cast a spell on her, hoping it will lead to her death. Unfortunately the hair in the hairbrush belongs to Nora's brother, Skip. Skip's car mysteriously loses its brakes, causing Skip to realize that the people dressed like animals who attacked his sister are skinwalkers.

Obsidian Knives

The skinwalkers carry knives made from sharpened obsidian.

Buckskin Masks and Animal Pelt Cloaks

The skinwalkers wear cloaks made of animal pelts and masks made from buckskin.

Concha Belts

The skinwalkers wear belts made from multiple conchas. These belts are often the only noise they make, the only way anyone might hear them coming.

Datura Flowers

The skinwalkers burn datura flowers so that they can inhale the smoke created. The smoke contains a narcotic that causes the skinwalkers to become intoxicated almost as if they had ingested PCP. This flower also has an enzyme that causes the skinwalkers' sweat to smell like morning glories.

Corpse Powder

Corpse powder is a powder Indian skinwalkers create out of the bones and other human artifacts in order to bring illness and death upon their enemies. One of the Nankoweap



skinwalkers uses this corpse powder, stolen from Quivira, to kill Peter Holroyd so he cannot repair the communications equipment.

Rain Kiva

The Rain Kiva is the main center of worship at Quivira and is located in the center of the city. The Kiva is intact, making it a rare find, and contains many artifacts important to the people who worshiped there. The artifacts include drawings on the wall and pottery throughout the small room within the Kiva.

Sun Kiva

The Sun Kiva is located underneath Quivira in a cave that is hidden by the city itself. It is initially believed that the Sun Kiva will contain the gold rumored to exist at Quivira. However, the Sun Kiva contains pottery and drawings made from a process known as micaceous, a process using mica to produce a yellow gold appearance. This pottery is worth more than gold because no complete sample has ever been found, but this kiva contains hundreds of intact samples.

Towers

There are four towers on the four corners of the city that are clearly designed for defense. The entrance to the tower is on the second floor of the structure and the ladder to the top of the structure is designed in such a way as to leave the climber vulnerable to attack from above. Nora and Sloane use one of these towers to attempt to escape one of the Nankoweap skinwalkers.

Crawlspace

There is a crawlspace behind the city that contains many bones. The bones on the bottom of the pile appear to be those of Anasazi slaves that were used to make corpse powder. The bones on top appear to be those of Aztec Indians who were the more dominant citizens of the city. These bones on the top also appear to have been placed in a hurry, suggesting a disease that wiped out the city quickly. This crawlspace also hides the entrance to the cave where the Sun Kiva is hidden.

Roomblocks

Roomblocks are sections of chambers that are built side by side where the people of Quivira lived. These chambers contain weapons, pottery, and other artifacts that are normally missing from architectural finds such as this because the city dwellers either took them with them when they abandoned the city or were looted by other civilizations.



who found the cities first. The fact that so much remains in Quivira suggests the Anasazi abandoned the city quickly for some unknown reason.

Rancho De Las Cabrillas

Rancho de las Cabrillas, Ranch of the Waterbugs, is the name Padriac Kelly gave to his small ranch outside Santa Fe. Padriac Kelly named the ranch this because Cabrillas can also refer to the constellation Pleiades. Padriac Kelly claims he bought the ranch for the stars he could see from it at night. This ranch is abandoned by the Kelly family when Padriac Kelly goes missing, but his children continue to own it even after their mother's death. It is here that Nora finds the letter her father wrote to her mother about Quivira.

Santa Fe Archaeological Institute

Santa Fe Archeological Institute is the exclusive university where Nora Kelly is an associate professor. It is also the chairman of the board of this institute, Dr. Goddard, who funds Nora's expedition to find Quivira.

Plane

Sloane Goddard flies herself to Serpentine Canyon to join the expedition when a student in need causes her to miss their meeting in Page.

Landlocked Laura

Landlocked Laura is the name of the barge Nora and the expedition use to travel to the mouth of the Serpentine Canyon to begin their ride through the Chaco Canyons to find Quivira.

Anasazi Roads

Archaeologists have found many miles of road apparently made by the Anazi Indians, but their purpose has never been established. Nora uses a satellite image of one such road to prove her father's letter correct and to find the city of Quivira.

Priest's Trail

Priest's Trail is an ancient path over the edge of the canyon where Quivira is located. This is a secret trail that serves as a sort of back door to Quivira. This trail is so old and narrow that it is almost impossible to see and will not allow horses across. The skinwalkers use this trail to torment the expedition while Beiyouzsin uses it to rescue Nora and Smithback.



Lake Powell

Lake Powell is a lake in southern Utah that began to form in 1963 when construction on the Glen Canyon Dam was completed enough to begin blocking the flow of water in the Colorado River. Nora and the expedition travel up Lake Powell to Serpentine Canyon where they will ride horses into the Chaco Canyon, following Padraic Kelly's directions to Quivira.

Kaiparowits Plateau

The city of Quivira that Nora's father has found is west of the Kaiparowits Plateau, an area in southern Utah.

Devil's Backbone

The Devil's Backbone is a high ridge that appears to block the Anasazi road Nora and her team is following. Nora finds a path over the ridge, but it is old and falling apart. When Nora and Roscoe take the horses over this path, they lose three when one panics due to the perilous trail.

Nankoweap

Nankoweap is an Indian village located north of the canyon in which Quivira is believed to exist. John Beiyoodzin is from Nankoweap. The villagers of Nankoweap have known about the death and the location of the body of Padraic Kelly for more than ten years, which is thought to be the reason two brothers chose to embrace the ways of Indian skinwalkers.

Page, Arizona

Page is a resort town on the Arizona side of Lake Powell. It is in Page where Nora and the expedition board the barge, Landlocked Laura.

Quivira

Quivira is the name of the mythic city of gold that Coronado searched for hundreds of years ago after hearing stories of the lost cities' riches from slaves brought to him by the Cicuye Indians. Coronado never found the city, but fortune hunters have continued to search for it ever since, including Nora's father who claims to have found it.



Themes

Finding History

Nora Kelly is an archeologist who works at a prestigious archeological institute. Nora is only an assistant professor and her chances of getting tenure with the school seem slim because she is a field archeologist and she does not enjoy the lab work. Nora is extremely behind in her lab work; therefore, the institute is unhappy with her work thus far. In light of this, Nora realizes she should begin focusing on her lab work, but the discovery of her father's letter has caused Nora to be unable to focus on anything else. Finding historically significant artifacts and intact cities has become a thing of the past in the modern world of archeology because most of the big finds have already been made.

Nora Kelly finds a letter her father wrote more than sixteen years ago to his wife before he disappeared in the canyons of Utah. Nora discovers in the letter that her father, a treasure hunter most of his life, found Quivira. Quivira is the city of gold that Coronado spent a great deal of time searching for more than four hundred years ago. Nora checks out the directions to this find her father gives in the letter and begins to believe it is possible that Quivira exists. The area in which the city is thought to exist is an area where there are many canyons and rock formations that could easily hide a city.

Nora finds backing in her boss when she is able to prove the existence of an Anasazi road that follows roughly the same path her father outlined. Nora takes an expedition up this road, losing three horses and a few friendships along the way. At the end of the trail, however, Nora finds the hidden city of Quivira cleverly built inside an alcove of rock along a ridge that separates two valleys. Quivira is filled with artifacts that previous archaeologists have only found few or broken examples of in other ancient cities. Quivira is not filled with gold, but it is so rich in history that Nora and her father are sure to be compared to the man who discovered King Tut's Tomb. To Nora, however, finding Quivira is as much about proving her father right as it is the history that this city will reveal.

Becoming Famous

While Nora is concerned with proving her father was not the loser everyone believed him to be, especially his wife, and exploring the history a place like Quivira might reveal, Sloane Goddard only wants to come out from behind her father's shadow and make a name for herself in archeology. It is because of the possible fame associated with the discovery of a place like Quivira that has encouraged Sloane to participate in this expedition. Sloane begins the expedition angry with her father for not putting her in charge; therefore, she spends a great deal of fighting with Nora over protocols and procedures.



When Quivira is discovered and the process of cataloging the find begins, Sloane wants to push Nora to the limits, to search everything and pick the artifacts that will be returned to civilization with them. When they open the Rain Kiva, Sloane recognizes the references to the Sun Kiva inside and also recognizes what they will find in the Sun Kiva. While everyone else believes the Sun Kiva will be filled with gold, Sloane knows it will be filled with rare examples of micaceous pottery, pottery painted with in a rare technique using mica that leaves the appearance of gold on the pottery. Only a few fragments of this rare pottery have been found. Sloane hopes to go down in the history books as the archeologist who found complete examples of the pottery.

Aaron Black, a scientist on the expedition, accidentally finds an entrance to a hidden cave where the Sun Kiva is hidden. Nora takes a group to look inside the cave but decides to leave the Sun Kiva untouched because the decision has already been made to leave the city after the death of an expedition member. Sloane is unhappy with this decision and demands to be allowed to remain behind. Nora refuses, but after Nora disappears during a flash flood, Sloane decides to open the Sun Kiva anyway. Sloane finds exactly what she expected, a huge store of unbroken micaceous yellow pottery and jewelry. However, Sloane has also unwittingly exposed herself and two others to a dust filled with lethal fungus.

Father-Daughter Relationship Dynamics

Nora Kelly had a close relationship with her father before he disappeared suddenly when she was a teenager. Afterward, Nora's mother spent many years extolling her husband's failings, spreading on her children the bitter resentment she felt all her married life for the disappointments her husband always heaped on the family. Nora refuses to believe the things her mother has said, continuing to believe that her father was a well-meaning fortune hunter who loved his children. Skip, Nora's brother, feels the same way. Therefore, when Nora finds a letter her father wrote to her mother, describing the location of Quivira, Nora feels she must find the city in order to prove to herself and the rest of the world that her father was not all the things her mother claimed.

Sloane Goddard has the opposite problem. Sloane's father, rather than being a loser who never finds anything of importance, is an archeologist with many important discoveries to his name. Dr. Goddard is the director of the Santa Fe Archeology Institute, a prestigious research university. It has always been Dr. Goddard's dream to find Quivira, but he has grown too sick to go on any expeditions. When Nora Kelly claims to have found Quivira, Dr. Goddard sends his daughter in order to have some connection to the expedition. Sloane feels Dr. Goddard, who will take credit for anything of significance that is found, does not trust her enough to put her in charge of the expedition. Therefore, when Sloane feels she has a chance, she gets rid of Nora and opens the Sun Kiva so that anything found inside will be her discovery and no one else's.

Sloane and Nora both had difficult relationships with their fathers. Nora lost her father when he attempted to prove he was not a loser, while Sloane feels as though she must compete harder to outshine her father. Nora's desire to show her father was a good man and Sloane's desire to show her father is not the great man he is rumored to be is what makes family relationships a motivating theme of the novel.

Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the third person omniscient point of view. The novel does not have one narrating character, but many. The author has chosen to tell the story through the eyes of multiple characters in order to allow the reader to see events and actions that are important to the overall plot of the novel, even things that take place out of the knowledge of the main character, Nora Kelly. A new chapter begins each time they make a switch between narrating characters which helps lower any chance of confusion on the part of the reader. Each character through which the writers narrate share all thoughts and emotions with the reader, even if the chapter is only a few pages long. The only exception is when the writers attempt to show something that takes place only with the knowledge of the skinwalkers. These events are then written in a second person narration similar to the authorial voice. This is done to illustrate the skinwalkers' disconnection with normal emotion and concerns.

The point of view of this novel allows the reader to see the action of the plot of the novel from many points of view, including the main characters as well as some of the minor characters. The novel would not be the same if it were told in a first person point of view or from the view of only one character because the multiple points of view allows the reader to know the motivations of the various characters without having to interpret these motives through the eyes of a single character. The downfall of this type of narration could be the confusion that results when the narration switches from one character to another, but the author of this book deals with this by only switching narrators at the beginning of a new chapter. Therefore, there is little confusion in this novel due to the point of view. Overall, the point of view utilized in this novel allows for a more well-rounded look at the overall plot, enhancing the novel for the benefit of the reader.

Setting

The novel begins in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where Nora Kelly has lived most of her life. Santa Fe is a quiet desert town that has grown in recent years, a fact that Nora and her brother both note as they travel through the city in the course of the novel. Santa Fe stands as a hub of civilization as Nora begins her expedition. Nora's expedition takes her across the Arizona border into Utah, via Lake Powell. Nora's expedition takes her along an ancient Anasazi road that winds through the historic canyons that fill this remote area of the state. Eventually Nora and her expedition reach two valleys formed in the center of several extremely remote canyons. This location is so remote that Nora cannot find a place to land helicopters, leaving Nora and her companions isolated from the modern conveniences found in Santa Fe.



The setting of this novel is important to the plot of the novel because the setting and plot depend on one another for story, tension, and motivation. The setting of the novel becomes a character within the novel as Nora and her team begins searching for Quivira. The land attempts to prevent them from the goal, first when the road causes the death of three horses and later when a flash flood kills one man and nearly kills two others. When they do find the city, a fungus that lives there begins slowly killing them all. Two people die from the fungus; others are exposed and could have died if rescue had not taken place as quickly as it did. It is for these reasons that the setting becomes almost a character in the novel, why it is appropriate to the novel, and how it proves to be essential to the overall plot.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple English. At times the characters of the novel use words that may be unfamiliar to the reader, such as the names of Indian tribes in the area within which the novel takes place, and words that refers to the artifacts and discoveries of archeology. These words are often easily deciphered by their use or are explained within the text. The language often reflects the education and experience of the authors, one of whom has experience with archaeology. This language also reflects the characters, some of which are similar in background and experience as the writers.

The language of this novel works well because it is written in a simple language that is easy for readers of all backgrounds to understand. When words that require special knowledge are used within the text, it is quickly explained either in dialogue or through the context. The language of the novel is the type of language a reader might expect a scientist on an expedition to use, as well as lay persons who also go along on this expedition and through whose eyes some of the plot is seen. The language of the novel is highly appropriate to its subject matter and friendly enough that readers of all backgrounds can read the novel and enjoy the suspense of its plot.

Structure

The novel is divided into sixty-seven chapters and an epilogue. Most of these chapters are quite short, some only a couple of pages long. Each chapter has only one narrating character, whether it is the main characters, a minor character, or the voice of the authors. The novel is told both in exposition and dialogue, with clear scenes propelling the plot. There is a linear time line in the novel, beginning with Nora's discovery of her father's letter, the expedition, and the deaths of everyone on the expedition except Nora and Bill Smithback.

The novel contains a main plot and many subplots. The main plot follows Nora Kelly as she discovers a letter her father wrote, describing the discovery of the fabled city of Quivira. Nora finds a way to prove the letter's accuracy and is then given the means to head an expedition to find the city. On the expeditions team is Sloane Goddard, the daughter of the head of the Santa Fe Archeology Institute where Nora works and the



man funding the expedition. Sloane attempts to take over the expedition, eventually coming to a point where she lies about the weather in the hopes that Nora will be killed. The subplots are numerous, including Sloane's relationship with another doctor on the expedition, Nora's relationship with her brother, and the loss of Nora's father sixteen years before the novel begins. All of the subplots come to a satisfying end when the main plot is concluded.



Quotes

"An envelope lay in the dirt, and she grabbed it. As she turned to step back into the truck, the headlights caught the front of the envelope. Nora froze for a moment, gasping in surprise."

Chapter 1, pg. 9

"A letter from her dead father to her dead mother, written and stamped sixteen years ago." Chapter 2, pg. 15

"Ever hear of Coronado, the Spanish explorer? He came into the Southwest in 1540, looking for the Seven Cities of Gold. A friar had gone north years before, looking for souls to save, and he returned with a huge, drilled emerald crystal and stories of lost cities. But when Coronado himself came northward, he found only the mud pueblos of the Indian tribes of New Mexico, none of whom had gold or wealth. But at a place called Cicuye, the Indians told him about a city of priests, called Quivira, where they ate from plates of gold and drank from golden goblets. Or course, this drove Coronado and his men into a frenzy." Chapter 6, pg. 41

"Calaveras Mesa had not always been uninhabited. In the fourteenth century, Anasazi Indians had moved into its southacing cliffs and hollowed out cave in the soft volcanic tuff. But the site had proved uncongenial, and the caves had been abandoned for half a millennium. In this distant part of El Malpais there were no roads and no trails; the caves remained undisturbed and unexcavated." Chapter 11, pg. 78

"I think my interest in ZST dates from that event. I remember shoveling out—shoveling out—a kiva, water lapping just three feet below. That was no way to treat a sacred site, but we had no choice. The water was about to destroy it." Chapter 14, pg.101

"If this is indeed an Anasazi road, it's unlike any other I've encountered. It's as if the Anasazi wanted to eradicate any trace of its existence.' He shook his head. 'I sense a darkness, a malignancy, about this road.'" Chapter 19, pg. 155

"As they moved away, Holroyd gave a shout. He had walked around to the side of the rock nearest the entrance to the slot canyon. Now he pointed to a much fresher inscription, scraped into the rock with a penknife. As Nora stared at it, she felt her cheeks begin to burn. Still staring, she knelt beside the stone, fingers slowly tracing the narrow grooves that spelled out P.K. 1983." Chapter 22, pg. 185

"In disbelief, Nora scanned the entire bench again. There was nothing. Her eyes began to sting, and she turned away.

And then she glanced across the canyon for the first time." Chapter 24, pg. 206



"She could see how the alcove itself was set back from the bench, making it invisible from below. The great sandstone cliff above billowed out in a huge convex curve that leaned at least fifty feet beyond the bottom of the alcove. It was this fortuitous artifact of geology and erosion that allowed the city to be hidden, not only from above and below, but also from the opposite canyon rim. She had a fleeting, desperate thought: I hope my father saw this."

Chapter 24, pg. 206

"In the valley of Chilbah, two forms moved slowly up a secret notch. It was less a trail than a fissure in the rock, fiendishly hidden, now worn away to the faintest of lines after centuries of erosion and disuse. It was the Priest's Trail: the back door to Quivira."

Chapter 36, pg. 304

"He scrambled to his feet and approached the kiva, touching the gold disk with a trembling hand. The effect of gold had been created with a deep yellow pigment—Black guessed it was yellow ochre of iron—mixed with crushed flakes of mica. The whole thing had then been polished, creating a shimmering surface that looked remarkably like gold. It was the same method used to make the image in the Rain Kiva, only this disk was ten feet in diameter.

He knew then that he had found the Sun Kiva." Chapter 41, pg. 332

"A mass rose above and far beyond the ridge, so enormous and fearsome it took Black a moment to comprehend its true nature. Above the lofty prow of the Kaiparowits Plateau rose a thunderhead the likes of which he had never seen. It looked, he thought distantly, more like an atomic explosion than a storm." Chapter 45, pg. 353

"He had taken very little from Quivira. In fact, far from being a pothunter, he had carefully refilled what excavations he had made in a way that would have pleased even Aragon. But in doing so, he had exposed himself to a concentration of the fungal dust, and grown sick. Riding north in hopes of finding help, his sickness had worsened to the point where he could hardly sit his horse. Nora wondered how he would have felt. Would he have been terrified? Resigned? As a child, she remembered hearing him say that he wanted to die in the saddle. And he had done just that. Or almost: eventually becoming too sick to ride, he had dismounted. Then he turned his horses free and waited to die." Epilogue, pgs. 473-474



Topics for Discussion

What is Quivira? What is the history surrounding this city? Who first suggested there was gold there? What do modern scientists think of the stories of Quivira? Is it possible a real city of gold exists? What conclusions do Nora and her team make about Quivira when they find it? What causes them to come to these conclusions?

Discuss Nora Kelly. Who is Nora? What is her profession? What is significant about the letter Nora finds? Why does Nora want to search for Quivira before all else? Is Nora looking for fame or something else? What does the reputation of Nora's father have to do with her desire to find Quivira? Is Nora hoping to find her father's body on her expedition? Why? What will Nora get out of finding her father's body? Out of finding Quivira?

Discuss Sloane Goddard. Who is Sloane? What is her profession? Why did Sloane get into this profession? Is Sloane attempting make a name for herself? Is Sloane attempting to prove herself to a person? What person? Why? Why does Sloane continuously test Nora's leadership on the expedition? Who does Sloane think should be in charge of the expedition? Why? Why is Nora the leader? Does Nora have more experience than Sloane? Why does Sloane want to open the Sun Kiva? Does she find what she expected?

Discuss the skinwalkers. What are skinwalkers? What is the significance of these people to the expedition? Why does Nora not recognize the skinwalkers when they first attempt to kill her? Does Nora know what skinwalkers are? Does she believe they still exist? What do these skinwalkers want? What does Nora believe they want? Why do the skinwalkers attempt to kill every member of the expedition? How does Beiyoodzin know about the skinwalkers? Why does he not stop them sooner?

Discuss ZST. What is ZST? Why does Aragon believe in this philosophy? How do the ultimate results at Quivira support this idea? How do the results detract from this idea? Why did the creation of Lake Powell cause Aragon to embrace the ZST philosophy? Is Nora a believer in this philosophy? Why or why not? What do the actions of Nora's father, Pat, say about his belief in this philosophy? Should all scientists adopt this philosophy? Why or why not?

Discuss the technology in this novel. How does Nora use technology to prove the Anasazi road exists? Is this technology available in reality? Could a scientist use this technology to really find Quivira? How does using this type of technology give the novel a sense of reality? How does this advance technology compare to the horses used to move the expedition down the same road? Why do you think the authors chose to make this contrast? What does the use of horses say about modern people and their reliance on technology?

Discuss setting. How important is the setting to the overall plot in this novel? How would the novel be different if it had taken place on a California beach or a New England



fishing town? How does the setting of the novel make the discovery of Quivira more realistic? How does the setting add danger to the expedition members? How does Sloane use the setting in her attempt to get rid of Nora so she can open the Sun Kiva? Does it work? Is this murder?