# The Trumpeter of Krakow Study Guide

## The Trumpeter of Krakow by Eric P. Kelly

BOOKRAGS

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# Overview

The Trumpeter of Krakow plunges the reader directly into the exciting, turbulent, and darkly mysterious world of central Europe in the Middle Ages.

Poland was at the center of that world, and the Polish capital, Krakow, was at the center of Poland. The Trumpeter of Krakow is a fast-moving, adventurepacked story and, at the same time, a window into a world about which most people know relatively little.

# About the Author

Eric P. Kelly was bom on March 16, 1884, in Amesbury, Massachusetts, attended his hometown high school and then Dartmouth College, from which he graduated in 1906. He then spent what he later described as "ten colorless, uneventful, and discouraging years" working for various Massachusetts newspapers. He also wrote short stories, two of which were finally published in 1916, ten years after his graduation from college.

By the end of World War I, in 1918, Kelly was in charge of the Foyer de Soldat (the French YMCA) at Quentin, France, where his duties included working with Polish soldiers in nearby regimental schools and supplying them with entertainment, athletics, and a canteen—a place they could relax, play cards, talk, and eat. Two years later, during the war between the Poles and Russian-backed Bolshevik forces determined to carry Russia's recent Communist Revolution into Poland (a war the Poles eventually won), Kelly was in Poland, serving in a traveling canteen near the front lines along the Bug River east of Warsaw. While there, he convinced the head chaplain of the Polish Army that the YMCA could do much good, and Kelly is credited with the organization's subsequent success in Poland.

In 1921, after the war, Kelly returned to Dartmouth College as an English instructor. He became a professor of journalism in 1929; and continue to teach until his retirement at age seventy, in 1954. During the 1920s, his interest in Poland continued to grow. In 19251926, he worked as a lecturer in American literature and institutions at the ancient University at Krakow in Poland. From that time on, as Kelly himself said, he exercised himself in every way he knew "to aid the cause of Poland in the modern world." He lectured on Poland in schools, colleges, and libraries from Maine to California. He wrote innumerable articles and books about the Poles and their history— many of them for young readers. The most famous of these, The Trumpeter of Krakow, won the Newbery Medal in 1929.

During World War II, Kelly again contributed to the Polish cause by working through the U.S. State Department in Leon, Mexico, where he helped care for fifteen hundred Polish refugees. He was much honored for his work on Poland's behalf, receiving an honorary degree from the University of Krakow, the Polish Gold Cross of Merit, and the Pilsudski Medal. Kelly died on January 3, 1960.

# Plot Summary

*The Trumpeter of Krakow*, published in 1928, is homage to Poland and its history. It's written by a twentieth-century American professor, who came to love the historic University of Krakow during his five-year tenure teaching in Poland. In the novel, author Eric P. Kelly explores some of the colorful legends and historic events which helped shape the nation. Through the author's appreciation of Poland, young readers are taught the value of courage, and more importantly, the importance of balancing knowledge of old with an open mind for new ideas.

Set in fifteenth-century Poland, the action centers on young Joseph Charnetski, a boy born into a noble family in the Ukraine. As the story begins, political strife along the border has cost the Charnetski family their home. They embark on a journey to the great city of Krakow to find shelter and to deliver a priceless treasure to the king of Poland. The treasure is the Great Tarnov Crystal, long-sought by alchemists, magicians, and powerful leaders due to its reputed magical properties. The crystal has been guarded for generations by Charnetski men. Joseph's father, Pan Andrew, has sworn an oath to guard the treasure so long as he can keep it safe, but if the crystal's location is revealed, Pan Andrew is sworn to deliver it personally to the king of Poland. Now that time has come, for a notorious Tartar warrior, named Peter of the Button Face, is after the crystal.

Unable to receive an immediate audience with the king, the Charnetski family hides under an assumed name in the university district of Krakow. The esteemed scholar-priest, Jan Kanty, befriends the family and secures employment for Pan Andrew as a trumpeter in the Church of Our Lady Mary. The legendary trumpeters of Our Lady Mary have maintained a solemn oath for hundreds of years to play a hymn, called the Heynal, at every hour of every day from the highest tower of the church. This vow has gone unbroken for centuries. Young Joseph is inspired by the legend of a thirteenth-century trumpeter, who defied invading Tartars by playing the Heynal during the attack. This trumpeter of old was shot down by an arrow through the heart in mid-note, and even to this day the trumpeters of Our Lady honor him by ending the Heynal on that broken note.

As the novel progresses, the Charnetski family must risk everything to keep the crystal from the hands of warrior Tartars and father and son take turns fulfilling the trumpeter's vow. The crystal is finally stolen, not by Peter of the Button Face, but by a family friend, the alchemist Kreutz. The Great Tarnov Crystal seemingly has the power to turn friends against one another and honest men into thieves. Kreutz ultimately defies the power of the crystal and throws it into the Vistula River so it can never again plague mankind with its dark secrets. Joseph and his father are rewarded by the king for keeping the crystal out of enemy hands, and the Charnetskis' lands in the Ukraine are restored to them.

# Prologue: The Broken Note

## Prologue: The Broken Note Summary

In 1241, rumors reach the Polish people that the Tartars are on the march. The warlike Tartars set fire to the Ukraine before attacking the great cities of Poland. As Kiev and Lvov fall, the people of Krakow tremble in the knowledge that their city is next. The villagers and peasants in the path of the Tartars pack up their few possessions and seek protection within the city walls of Krakow. The refugees and citizens of Krakow repair behind the additional protection of the fortress walls of the Wawel, the king's palace in Krakow. The decision is made to allow the attackers to pillage the city, as too many lives may be lost in its defense. Better to save the people inside the Wawel and rebuild later.

Still, a few hardy citizens remain outside the palace walls as the Tartars arrive. One of these is a young boy, the trumpeter at the Church of Our Lady Mary. This young man has taken an oath to sound the trumpet every hour from the tower of church, even under peril of death, and the young man feels compelled to fulfill his oath. As the sun rises over the burning city, the youth appears on the tower balcony and begins to play the Heynal, a hymn to the Virgin Mary. Knowing full well that this act of defiance may be his last, he plays beautifully. Alas, his hymn is cut short a few notes before the end, when a Tartar arrow pierces his breast, killing him instantly.

## Prologue: The Broken Note Analysis

This vivid Prologue, set two hundred and twenty years before the events of the main story, establishes the importance of honor within the Polish culture. The youth's defiant and brave act lives on in Polish history and serves to inspire the main character of *The Trumpeter of Krakow* to acts of bravery beyond his wildest dreams. In this way, the author establishes the rich culture of the Poles and communicates their colorful history to the reader.

# Chapters 1 - 3

## Chapters 1 - 3 Summary

*Chapter 1*: In late July of 1461, a string of crude, one-horse peasant wagons makes its way along the road to Krakow. Each wagon is piled high with goods for the Krakow marketplace, ranging from vegetables to livestock to rich earth for city gardens. The peasants wear crude, rough cloth. The wealthier country gentlemen in the caravan wear leather. All of the women wear colorful scarves and all of the men carry a weapon. Thieves are a big concern at market time, because the wagons contain the results of months of labor. On the return trip, the farmers will have gold or silver to show for their efforts, and thus must worry even more about thieves.

In this caravan, one wagon stands out, for it is led by two horses, not one, and it contains nothing except a very large pumpkin. A man and wife ride up front, dressed better than any of the other travelers. Their son rides in the back of the empty wagon, his feet dangling in the dust. The boy, fifteen-year-old Joseph Charnetski, watches a lone rider barge rudely through the caravan, nearly sending one poor man's wagon into a ditch. The stranger approaches the cart in, which Joseph rides and calls out for the boy to take the reigns of his horse. "The boy obeyed, but as he leaped from the wagon and grasped at the horse's bit thong, he came to the conclusion that the stranger was no friend." (pg. 11) In this era, life is often cruel, and the ability to sum up a man's character instantly is a necessary survival skill. The man's face betrays cruelty. His cheek bears a button-shaped scar, which is a common result of disease found in the land of the Tartars.

The Tartar leaps onto the wagon. Joseph's father, sizing up the situation, orders the man to keep his distance. The man asks if the father is Andrew Charnetski. Joseph's father replies that strangers should address him as Pan Andrew Charnetski, Pan being the Polish term for Sir or Mister. The stranger introduces himself as Stefan Ostrovski of Chelm. He tells Pan Andrew that he has been searching for him, having heard that the Charnetski home in the Ukraine was recently pillaged and burned. Pan Andrew is increasingly wary of the stranger, who insists that he has important news for Pan Andrew but will not share his news until they can meet privately, behind closed doors, in Krakow. Pan Andrew can tell by the man's foreign features that his name is not Ostrovski, for he does not look Polish. Pan Andrew insists the man leave the cart and return to his horse. The man insists on riding in the wagon the rest of the way to Krakow.

Angrily, Pan Andrew tells the man to state his business and be gone. The man eyes the pumpkin in the front of the wagon and offers to buy it for its weight in gold. Pan Andrew refuses and the stranger draws his sword. Pan Andrew leaps upon the stranger, grabbing his sword arm and forcing him to drop the weapon. He hoists the man high and tosses him out of the cart. In that same moment, young Joseph turns the man's horse to face the opposite direction and smacks the horse's flank, sending it running

back down the road. Andrew Charnetski throws the man's sword out of the cart and hurries his horses along the road to Krakow. The stranger lies in the dusty road, unsure whether to pursue Pan Andrew or head in the opposite direction to reclaim his fleeing horse. The Charnetski family proceeds to the gates of Krakow, where they are challenged by the gatekeeper.

*Chapter 2*: Pan Andrew gives the gatekeeper his name and states that he and his family are Christians. The gatekeeper charges them only a small toll for there are no goods in the cart to tax. The family wagon proceeds to the old Cloth Hall in the center of the city. This is Joseph's first visit to a large city, and he is astounded by the sights. He sees a man dressed in such finery that he assumes he must be the king, Kazimir Jagiello, but Pan Andrew informs him the man is merely a soldier in the king's guard. The city as it appears in this era of history is composed of Gothic architecture, churches, towers, and battlements. It has not yet been influenced by the Italian Renaissance and thus the buildings are plainer in nature than they will one day become, but nevertheless, to young Joseph, the city is a wondrous thing of beauty. Merchants from many countries hawk their wares and honor their varied religions. Joseph takes note of the Tartars, who gather in the market to sell exotic stolen goods, as they chant their morning prayers to Allah.

Joseph sees the bell of a trumpet protrude from the tower of the Church of Our Lady Mary and listens as the trumpeter plays the Heynal. Joseph is surprised, when the trumpeter breaks off the hymn in mid-note. His father smiles at his question and tells him that the reason for the broken note is a long story for another time. Pan Charnetski, who has studied music at the University of Krakow, is an excellent trumpeter and mentions that the church trumpeter plays the Heynal poorly. The family's wagon proceeds through the marketplace and Joseph marvels at the variety of goods and clothing styles. He sees red signs for barbers and bloodletters, and green-blue signs over the storefronts of the apothecaries. Occasionally a prisoner is led in chains to the church for a final prayer. In this era, petty crimes are often punished by death or life in prison. Joseph also sees pilgrims from far-away villages on their way to even more distant churches.

At the palace gates, Pan Andrew tells the guard he has come to see Pan Andrew Tenczynski. Upon these words, the guards surround the wagon. When the captain of the guard arrives, an indignant Pan Andrew explains that he is the cousin of Pan Tenczynski and the head of a large estate in the Ukraine. Pan Andrew's estate has lately been destroyed by raiders, and he and his family seek shelter with their cousin. The captain sadly informs him that Pan Tenczynski has been killed by a local guild over a dispute about a piece of armor, which Pan Tenczynski had commissioned. Queen Elizabeth has persuaded her husband, the king, to send guards to the Tenczynski estate until the mob's anger dissipates. The guard, addressing Pan Andrew respectfully as befitting a nobleman, suggests that Pan Andrew either leave the city or live quietly under an assumed name so as not to attract the anger of the mob. Pan Andrew explains that he cannot leave, as he no longer has a home to which he might return. The guard informs him the king is away on business and he has no way of helping Pan Andrew at this time.

Pan Andrew leaves this interview in a state of despair, his plan to shelter his family in ruins. He takes his family back to the market to eat, then seeks the counsel of his wife. Worried herself, she nonetheless advises him to have faith and wait to see what God provides for them. Joseph, too young to be long-worried over any problem, sets out enthusiastically to explore the marketplace. A few streets away, he sees a Tartar boy beating a wolf dog. Joseph, who is very familiar with dogs, is amazed at this cruel handling. Before he can intervene, the dog, frenzied by pain, leaps at his owner. The Tartar boy ducks aside. Behind him, immediately in the path of the dog's attack, is a beautiful young girl, accompanied by an older man. Joseph instinctively springs for the dog's collar, and, catching hold of it, tumbles to the grass with the wolfhound. Joseph clasps the dog tightly, and speaks gently to the dog, trying to calm the mistreated wretch. When Joseph lets the dog go it runs away in fear and shame.

*Chapter 3*: In gratitude, the girl kisses Joseph's cheek. The uncle asks about Joseph and is moved by the plight in which the Charnetski family finds itself. He bids Joseph return with him and his niece to their lodgings so he may hear the whole story and perhaps find a way to help. At the behest of the girl, he agrees to accompany them. Together, they walk to the Street of the Pigeons, "famed throughout all Europe as the dwelling place of scholars, astrologers, magicians, students, and likewise doctors, brothers of the Church, and masters of the seven arts." (Pg. 35) One end of the street contains squalid domiciles which house thieves, murderers, and practitioners of the black arts. The other end of the street, closer to the University of Krakow, houses more respectable tenants, both students and masters from the University. The students, masters, and clerics along the street dress in dark robes, as does the uncle of the beautiful girl.

The trio approaches a stone building, set back from the street by a fenced in courtyard. Here the man stops and produces a key to the outer gate. Past the courtyard, they ascend an outdoor wooden staircase leading up to the apartments on the second and third floors. Joseph clutches at the banister in fear that the wobbly spiral staircase will collapse under his feet, but the uncle assures him it is secure. As they enter the third floor apartment, Joseph notices a loft above them on the fourth and final floor. The third floor apartment is small but nicely appointed. The girl brings wine and food for them to share. Joseph fully explains his family's problem, and the old man is inspired by an idea. He leaves to see to it while Joseph gets to know the girl, Elzbietka. He tells her of the night he and his family fled their home through a secret earthen passageway. The only possession they took with them was a large pumpkin, the same pumpkin, which Pan Andrew had refused to sell for its weight in gold. Joseph asks her to keep his story a secret for now.

Elzbietka is fascinated by his story and shares her own. She was orphaned by a plague as a young child, and her uncle, Nicholas Kreutz, took her in. Kreutz is a renowned alchemist and much-respected at the University. Just then, the scholar-alchemist returns and informs Joseph that the landlady will be glad to rent the second-floor apartment to Joseph's family. The lodgings are not as grand as the Charnetskis are accustomed to, but the price is right, and the family can have decent lodgings by nightfall. Kreutz suggests Joseph's father might sell his horses, which are of no use to

him in the city, and thus maintain the family until such time as Pan Andrew locates suitable employment. Joseph is thrilled by this news, as is Elzbietka. The girl has never known a mother's love and looks forward to having Joseph's mother as a neighbor.

Joseph runs swiftly back to the Cloth Hall to inform his parents of this good news. When he arrives, he finds his family's cart surrounded by a mob of angry peasants. The angry mob is led by the stranger who accosted them in the caravan. Joseph leaps onto the cart to join his parents as the stranger accuses Pan Andrew of being a sorcerer. The stranger tells the mob that Pan Andrew cut off his brother's head and turned it into a pumpkin. In the fifteenth century, fears of the occult are rampant, and the mob readily believes this egregious lie. They begin to attack the Charnetskis, seeking to steal the pumpkin. Fortunately, a priest arrives on the scene. He takes one look at the Charnetskis and admonishes the crowd to cease. When the mob realizes that the priest is none other than the great Jan Kanty, they disperse immediately, ashamed of their behavior.

## Chapters 1 - 3 Analysis

The author's central purpose in writing *The Trumpeter of Krakow* is to communicate his love and respect for medieval Poland and the long-standing traditions of Polish culture. As such, he has chosen characters from a broad spectrum of social classes and in this first section he uses his characters and settings to provide an overview of Polish society in the fifteenth century. Joseph, the protagonist, represents the elite nobility. The alchemist, Kreutz, represents the triumph of science over superstition, which will be explored in depth through the storyline. The peasant caravan in Chapter 1 and the Street of Pigeons introduced in Chapter 3 present views of the lower socio-economic classes. The hard-working peasants represent the honest poor, while the miscreants on the Street of Pigeons show the depths to which desperate people will sink to survive. Yet the good and the bad are all presented with an appreciative eye. Joseph's fascination with the endless diversity within the city mirrors the author's own fascination with the history of Krakow.

# Chapters 4 - 6

## Chapters 4 - 6 Summary

*Chapter 4*: The scholar-priest, Jan Kanty, has gone down in history as a man of great knowledge, compassion, and innovation. Educated at the University of Krakow, Jan Kanty has continued to study on his own and constantly seeks to challenge old ways of thinking with new ideas. Unlike many other scholars and priests, Kanty does not cloister himself away from the world. He is as comfortable conversing with peasants as he is with nobles, and his practical wisdom and advice is sought by men and women of all socio-economic classes.

Upon breaking up the unruly mob, Kanty turns his attention to the Charnetski family. Pan Andrew explains that the strange man, who accused him of sorcery, has followed him all the way from the Ukraine. Pan Andrew tells Kanty that he is in some trouble despite having done no wrong and only seeks shelter for his family. Joseph announces that he has found shelter for the family, but Jan Kanty insists they accompany him to his home to discuss the situation first, believing he may be of some help to the Charnetskis.

The Charnetskis follow Kanty home. Kanty provides them food while Pan Andrew requests a private audience in Kanty's comfortable cell. Joseph overhears them talking about the pumpkin. Unable to hear more, he tells his mother about their new potential lodgings. Joseph's mother is thrilled by the tale and believes God has brought her together with the motherless Elzbietka. Meanwhile in the cell, Jan Kanty responds to Pan Andrew's story by advising the Charnetskis to use a fake name for their own protection. He offers to send one of his men to sell Pan Andrew's horses, and offers Pan Andrew employment besides. Kanty tells Pan Andrew to keep his story secret until an audience with the king may be arranged. Kanty offers to guard Pan Andrew's treasure, but Pan Andrew insists he has sworn to guard it and give it to no man besides the king of Poland.

Kanty agrees and asks the family to stay while the horses are sold and the room is arranged. He calls Joseph and his mother in to hear Joseph's story. Kanty knows the scholar Kreutz and tells the Charnetskis they are in good hands. While they wait, Kanty receives several visitors. Peasants appear at his door with tales of mysterious pains and gardens infested by insects. Rather than blessing away their pains or bugs, Kanty discerns the scientific reasons behind the problems and advises the peasants on common sense measures they may take to rectify these issues. As the day wears on, Joseph falls asleep and dreams strange dreams in which the strange Tartar wears a pumpkin head. He wakes in the darkness to see his parents busy at the table, scraping away the pumpkin rind. Pan Andrew explains to Kanty that for years he has kept hollow pumpkin shells in his home ready to disguise his treasure in case of emergency. Pan Andrew pulls something brilliant and bright from inside the pumpkin and secretes it in a cloth bag. Joseph asks what the strange object might be, but his father tells him that for now Joseph should not carry the burden of such a great secret.

*Chapter 5*: The Charnetskis and Kanty emerge from Kanty's home onto a darkened street called St. Ann's. Kanty accompanies them for safety's sake. The wolfhound Joseph met earlier in the day gives him a friendly greeting. "Perhaps it was the boy's touch, perhaps it was some quality in the tone of his voice, but the animal knew that Joseph was used to dogs and knew as well that he was just in his treatment of them. Therefore he had searched all day throughout the city streets, and when he came upon this little group of people in the dark street his sense of smell told him that here was a dog lover, and marvel of marvels, it was the same dog lover that had sprung upon him earlier that day!" (pp. 60-61) Pan Andrew tells Joseph he may keep the dog and the party proceeds down the dark streets.

A crowd of students gives them pause. Kanty demands to know what they are up to and learns two students are engaged in a duel with naked swords. He disperses the crowd and orders the two students to see him tomorrow. He recognizes one of the students as Johann Tring and admonishes Tring for insulting the other student and thus causing the duel. Tring is unrepentant. Kanty orders Tring to accompany them as Tring lives in the same building where the Charnetskis will be living. Joseph sizes up Tring and takes an immediate dislike to the young man.

The landlady greets the group at the courtyard gate as Jan Kanty takes his leave of the Charnetski family, now known as the Kovalskis. Tring bids them goodnight and heads to his room while Joseph makes the dog comfortable in the courtyard. Pan Andrew and his wife find the rickety staircase as frightening as Joseph had earlier, but they make it to their second-floor room without incident. The family is pleased with the apartment, which consists of one large room and one small. The landlady has provided them furniture and all the comforts of home. Joseph takes food and water down to the dog. When he returns, he notices that his father has hidden the cloth bag containing the mysterious treasure. Joseph determines that his parents' bed is the only reasonable hiding place in the apartment. Joseph falls asleep before he can give it any more thought.

In the morning, Pan Andrew examines the staircase and decides it does not need immediate repair. Meanwhile Joseph and his dog, which he has named Wolf, explore their new neighborhood. When they return, a stranger is in the apartment with Pan Andrew. A trumpet lies on the table between them. The stranger gives Pan Andrew a copy of the trumpeter's oath and a copy of the music to the Heynal. After the man leaves, Pan Andrew explains that Jan Kanty has found him a job as trumpeter at the Church of Our Lady Mary. He has vowed to play the Heynal every hour of the night from the church tower. The trumpeter's job also includes night watch duties.

Pan Andrew has taken the job under the name Andrew Kovalski. Pan Andrew explains that the night schedule is for his own safety so he will not be seen in public during the day. Pan Andrew informs Joseph that Joseph will be attending the Collegium Minus to complete his studies. He asks Joseph to be careful to keep the family's true identity a secret. Elzbietka, meanwhile, has already befriended Joseph's mother, who feels certain that her family will be happy in this new home. Elzbietka tells Pan Andrew that she will feel safer at night, when she hears the Heynal and knows he is the one playing.

*Chapter 6*: The Church of Our Lady Mary is second in prominence only to the great Wawel Cathedral. The Church of Our Lady lacks the architectural grace of the cathedral but has a sturdy build to weather storms and attacks. The inside is gorgeous and people come from miles around to visit the church. Joseph accompanies his father to the church the following evening for Pan Andrew's first night of work. The day watchman welcomes Pan Andrew and explains the details of his duties. He hands Pan Andrew the key to the tower room and Andrew and Joseph ascend the stairs. At the top, they find an octagonal room divided into two sections. One is for the trumpeter's comfort and warmth. The other leads directly to the four open balconies on all sides of the square tower.

In the open room are extra trumpets, the bell rope to the great church bell in the lower tower, and lanterns and flags to be hung as a warning in case of fire. Fires are a serious threat in a town composed of wooden buildings built close together. If the trumpeter sees a fire during the day, he hangs a red flag from the tower and sounds the bell. If the fire is seen at night, a special red glass lantern is hung. The trumpeter/watchman must also sound the church bell in case of attack. Joseph and his father enter the enclosed room and find it comfortably appointed with a bed, table, three chairs, a lighted lantern, and small stove. On the table sits a huge, twelve-hour hourglass. Unable to see the sundial on the face of the tower from inside, the trumpeters must use the hourglass to tell time. At the tenth hour, Pan Andrew pulls the bell tower ten times then plays the Heynal four times, once from each side of the tower balcony. Each time, he stops short on the broken note made famous by the long ago youthful trumpeter.

Joseph's heart fills with love and pride upon hearing his father's beautiful playing. Afterwards, Pan Andrew gives Joseph the music and instructs him to learn the piece. Eventually, Pan Andrew will teach Joseph to play it on the trumpet so that Joseph may stand in his father's stead if the need ever arises. With that, Pan Andrew sends Joseph back home. At the courtyard to his building, Joseph meets the landlady's son. He is middle aged and has the appearance of a man, who skulks in the shadows. The man gives his name as Stas and begs Joseph for a tip. As they part, Joseph's eye is taken by a sudden light in the alchemist's loft. Stas calls Kreutz a servant of the devil but says the real devil in the household is the student, Tring.

## Chapters 4 - 6 Analysis

Within the space of three short chapters, the Charnetskis' luck has completely turned around. No longer are they homeless, friendless refugees, but an established family with a powerful friend (Jan Kanty), and a place in the community. Yet the mystery of the treasure remains and the author foreshadows trouble lurking on the horizon. Chapter 6 ends with a foreboding note as the landlady's son, Stas, is introduced. Joseph's instincts about people, already proven accurate in Chapter 1, tell him that Stas is a dodgy character. He's slippery and sneaky, a creature of the night. Stas' comments about Tring indicate that there are darker creatures than Stas lurking in the household. Thus, the author injects a fearful mood into an otherwise happy household.

The story is set during the period of change, when medieval life began to give birth to a flourishing period of artistic and intellectual enlightenment. The author is careful to communicate both the dark and light aspects of life in this era. The duel interrupted by Jan Kanty shows the darker side of life in fifteenth-century Poland and builds on the groundwork the author has laid in the previous section. Earlier, in Chapter 3, the author indicates the importance of addressing others with respect, when young Joseph nearly insults Pan Kreutz by refusing his hospitality. At that point in the story, the verbal interchange between Joseph and Kreutz appears gratuitously polite to the modern reader, yet one is led to understand the practical importance of such overdone courtesy by the subsequent duel between students in Chapter 5. Why are Tring and his fellow student prepared to fight to the death over a mere exchange of verbal insults? The answer to this question lies in the groundwork previously provided by the author. In Chapter 4, the Charnetskis are nearly stoned by an angry mob. This incident is provoked by a verbal accusation of sorcery. At this time and place in history, there is no presumption of innocence. A verbal attack against one's reputation is a serious threat to one's life, freedom, and possessions.

# Chapters 7 - 9

## Chapters 7 - 9 Summary

*Chapter 7*: With school starting the next day, Joseph gives no further thought to his encounter with Stas. However, a week or so later, the odd encounter and the strange light from the alchemist's loft returns to mind. Joseph is in the habit of accompanying his father to work each night then returning home to his mother. On one such occasion, he lingers in the dark courtyard upon returning home and considers his family's new life. What treasure does his father guard and why was the mysterious stranger so intent on finding it? A bright flash from the alchemist's loft interrupts his musings. Joseph hears someone cry out and sees Elzbietka emerge from her lodgings and descend the stairs.

Elzbietka tells Joseph that her uncle and Tring are in the loft. She fears something bad is going on between them and she is afraid for her uncle. Her uncle never used to work at night, but lately he and Tring have been meeting in the alchemist's loft every night. She doesn't trust Tring and has noticed a change in her uncle's behavior since he began associating with Tring. Joseph shares her distrust of Tring and, at her behest, agrees to sneak up to the loft and peer through the window to check on her uncle.

Through the window, Joseph sees the loft blazing with light from four braziers hung near the ceiling. The ceiling is lined with metal to prevent the braziers from setting it afire. He sees a large cabinet, chained shut. In the middle of the room, a tripod supports an iron cauldron. A pungent substance burns in the cauldron, spouting colorful flames. Tring and Kreutz stare into the cauldron. Kreutz tells Tring that their experiments are sapping his strength. Kreutz reminds Tring that as an alchemist, his field is chemical experimentation. The experiments with Tring have exceeded Kreutz' field of expertise.

Seeking to keep Kreutz cooperative, Tring reminds him that they seek the elixir of life. Kreutz responds that he is interested in the possibility of reversing the aging process, but "'not as interested as are those who have lived vain lives and hope to do better if life may be relived.'" (pg. 87) They discuss the Philosophers' Stone. Kreutz explains that some people believe it can turn any substance to gold. Tring insists they keep trying to find the secret to making the Philosophers' Stone, but Kreutz maintains that there are more important things in life besides gold. Yet Kreutz admits to Tring that their experiments with trance-like states have shown him new truths. Tring's ability to place Kreutz in a trance gives him power over Kreutz. Kreutz worries that they are tampering with evil knowledge. Angry, Tring again tries to persuade him with the idea of gold. Tring tempts Kreutz with the equipment and supplies gold could buy for the alchemist. With gold, Kreutz could make the university the greatest institution of learning in the world.

Listening at the window, Joseph sees Kreutz yield to this argument and realizes that the alchemist is now completely under Tring's control. He listens as Tring tells Kreutz what Kreutz said while in a trance state. Kreutz had spoken of demons nearby. He also indicated that some marvel, long sought by alchemists and magicians alike, lies within a

few yards of them. Then Tring tells Kreutz how Elzbietka's cry brought him out of the trance, to Tring's great annoyance. Kreutz is upset to discover that he ignored his niece's frightened cry while in his trance state.

*Chapter 8*: By fall, Joseph has learned to play the Heynal on his father's trumpet. One night he is allowed to play it in the tower, although only in one of the four directions. On this occasion, Elzbietka is able to discern the difference between Joseph's playing and Pan Andrew's. Elzbietka spends more time with Joseph's mother in the Kovalskis' apartment as a result of her uncle's continued experiments. During one such visit, Elzbietka confesses to Joseph her fear that her uncle is in some way possessed by Tring. Joseph admits that he told his father about the conversation between Tring and Kreutz in the loft, but Pan Andrew had admonished Joseph for spying.

Elzbietka becomes a regular part of family life at the Kovalskis'. She, Joseph and Wolf often stroll the streets together in the afternoons. One day, they visit the trumpeter's tower. The day watchman regales them with stories from the time, when the church was first built. Joseph bets Elzbietka that he will not play a single wrong note, when he is finally allowed to play all four Heynals from the tower. She promises to listen, when that time comes. With boyish imagination, Joseph tells her that if he is ever attacked in the tower, he will play the Heynal all the way through, without stopping at the broken note. She swears if she ever hears him do so, she will arise from her bed and summon Jan Kanty to send rescuers to the tower. Joseph is surprised by her solemn promise. In his mind this pre-arranged signal is but a childish fancy. He imagines himself as heroic as the boy trumpeter, who was long ago shot down in the middle of the Heynal.

From the tower, they see a great commotion of students near the university. They descend and join the throng. At the foot of a statue of Kazimir the Great, founder of the university, they find an Italian scholar teaching in Latin to any who will hear him. Elzbietka is impressed by Joseph's knowledge of Latin, and also by the scholar's belief that '"the barbarism which fell upon the world after the downfall of Rome will be done away with only when men write in their native tongues and think for themselves."' (pg. 100) Joseph explains that the Italian scholar is not allowed to speak in the university, because he teaches the New Learning. The masters at the university are not eager to change their ways. Elzbietka asks him why women are not allowed to study at the university. She would love to read the writings of such learned scholars. Joseph admits he does not know why there are no women at the university.

As the pair turns onto the Street of Pigeons, they are spotted by Stas. Stas points out Joseph to his companion, the very same stranger, who accosted Pan Andrew's family the day they arrived in Krakow. From Stas, the stranger learns that the Charnetskis are using the name Kovalski to disguise their presence, and that Pan Andrew is the night trumpeter in the tower. Stas shows him the Charnetskis' home and the stranger offers him gold to spy on the family. The man leaves Stas on the street and heads to the Inn of the Golden Elephant to celebrate his good fortune. He has been searching for the Charnetskis ever since they got away from him in the marketplace.

The man's name is Bogdan Grozny - Bogdan the Terrible. A Russian ruler, named Ivan, has promised Bogdan gold and a castle in the Ukraine in exchange for the Charnetskis' treasure. Now that he has relocated the family, Bogdan sends a servant to assemble his men for an attack on Pan Andrew. Bogdan laughs to think of Pan Andrew's fear, when he realizes who has come for his treasure. The Polish people know Bogdan by another name, Peter of the Button Face. Nicknamed thus for the button-shaped scar on his face, Peter of the Button Face is greatly feared by the Polish people. Peter leads an infamous band of thugs, who have lain waste to many houses and innocent civilians along the Polish border. In this era, there is much violence along the border for Poland has been embroiled in an on-going battle for sovereignty with Muscovy. Ivan of Moscow hopes to take over Poland, because Poland was once a part of the Byzantine empire of Russia. Unaware of the great forces plotting against them, the Charnetskis sit down for a peaceful supper in their home.

*Chapter 9*: In late November, Pan Andrew walks contentedly to work, reflecting on his family's fortune. Although the king has been away for most of the preceding months, making an audience with him impossible to date, Pan Andrew is pleased with the life he has made for his family. Joseph excels at the collegium, his wife is happy, and he earns enough as trumpeter to support his family comfortably. The king has promised Jan Kanty an audience as soon as his schedule allows.

A few hours after Pan Andrew's departure from his home, Stas is summoned to the entryway by a loud ringing of the bell. Peter of the Button Face demands to know if everything is ready. Stas assures him it is and tells him how many people are in the apartment building. Peter Button Face tells Stas he will bring twelve men, four to break into Pan Andrew's home, four to quiet the other tenants, and four to stand at the gate ready to silence the night watchman should he appear. Peter gives Stas a few coins but threatens him, when Stas asks for more. Peter tells Stas he and his men will arrive at two. Stas' only task is to let them in.

Kreutz, in his loft, hears Wolf barking. Peering out into the courtyard, he hears the tail end of Peter's instructions to Stas. He wonders if he could have heard correctly. Why would anyone bother Pan Andrew's family? He does not imagine they possess any treasure for he recalls that Pan Andrew had to sell his horses for rent money, when he first arrived. Yet the family is living under an assumed name. Kreutz decides he better prepare for intruders just in case. He looks around his loft and realizes he has the means to scare off any potential intruder. Wasting no time, he sets to work melting gum with a liquid from his stores. With a brush, he smears the mixture over his student robes and on the mask he uses for protection when mixing poisonous substances. The gum causes the liquid to cling to his mask and clothing. Kreutz plans to sprinkle the mixture with aqua phosphorata in order to produce a glowing effect. Thus prepared, he sits down to wait.

Kreutz hears the church bell strike twice, followed by the four Heynals. He hears a stealthy motion in the courtyard below as Stas opens the door to the intruders. Kreutz opens his door silently and lies flat on the landing, watching the courtyard as a dozen men enter. He realizes he should have notified the night watchman after hearing Stas'

conversation earlier. Now, it is too late. Wolf barks and a man orders someone to silence the dog. Stas locks the courtyard door behind the intruders. The man sent to silence Wolf cries out in pain. Kreutz mentally cheers on the dog. Three more men are sent to silence Wolf, and the barking stops suddenly.

Joseph appears on the landing and calls to his dog. Suddenly Joseph, too, is silenced. The leader of the attackers sends four men to guard the door against the night watchman and four others to wait at the foot of the stairs to make sure no tenants escape. The other three men are ordered to accompany the leader into Pan Andrew's apartment. In the lamplight, Kreutz recognizes the leader as Peter of the Button Face by his characteristic scar. Seconds later, a woman's scream is heard, abruptly silenced. Kreutz hears the breaking of furniture as the Charnetski home is searched. He hears Peter order the men to look inside the bed, and a cry of triumph follows this command.

Peter of the Button Face takes the treasure, wrapped securely in its cloth bag, and goes to leave the Charnetski apartment. Stas appears at the doorway insisting on payment. Furious, Peter orders his men to throw Stas off the landing. Stas struggles and Peter is forced to set his treasure down and tackle Stas himself. Stas kicks over Peter's lantern and darkness falls over them. As Peter grabs Stas and prepares to pitch him over the railing, a young girl screams. Cursing, Peter drops Stas and orders his men to leave before the night watchman hears the commotion. He re-enters the Charnetski apartment and feels around in the dark for his treasure. Before his hands close on the treasure, a terrible red light appears suddenly on the third floor landing.

## Chapters 7 - 9 Analysis

In Chapter 7, the author explores his theme of science versus superstition. Professor Eric P. Kelly's take on this theme represents the most enlightened views, which the early twentieth century had to offer, yet some of these views prove charmingly quaint in the twenty-first century. The author's condescending tone regards any natural mystery unproven by science as dark, vile superstition. Ironically, from the comfort of the twentieth century, Professor Kelly states that in the unenlightened fifteenth century, the world was still trying to sort out the difference between science and magical superstition. Kelly implies, as many scientists of his age believed, that all earlier mystical schools of thought had been thoroughly disproven by science. This early twentieth-century hubris dates the novel, as many of the supposed scientific facts, which Kelly cites to combat the superstitions of the fifteenth century, have long since been proven inaccurate.

Nonetheless, in Kelly's world view, Tring represents the dark age of superstition. Kelly refutes the power of superstitious occult beliefs even, as he unwittingly lends power to such beliefs by ascribing to Tring dark powers which enable him to captivate the alchemist's mind. Kreutz' character represents the hopeful triumph of science, yet, paradoxically, Kreutz' scientific mind is powerless against Tring. Superstition is simultaneously presented as foolish and powerful, leaving the reader to wonder how

such useless nonsense as magical superstition could possibly compel the mind of an enlightened scientist like Kreutz.

# Chapters 10 - 12

## Chapters 10 - 12 Summary

*Chapter 10*: Peter rushes to the door and stares in bewilderment as balls of red fire rain down from above. Stas escapes because Peter's men are frozen by fear. Peter, terrified himself, realizes he must muster the courage of his men. Pretending no fear, he orders his men to ascend to the third floor. His men believe Satan is upstairs but their fear of Peter is stronger, so grudgingly they ascend the stairs. The first man inside reports that the door to the loft is open and the room is dark within. Peter assures them there is a man in there causing all this trouble and orders his men to slice open the troublemaker's throat. Hearing no reply from his men, Peter climbs the stairs and enters the dark loft.

Peter yells for the troublemaker to show himself. The room is illuminated by the fiery red figure of a demon. This devil wears fiery garments which smell of fire and brimstone and give off green smoke. In its right hand, the figure holds a flaming red scepter which drips balls of fire. Peter's men rush for the stairs. Peter holds his ground, intending to verify if this creature is a man or a demon. He rushes the fiery figure with his sword. The demon steps aside and waves its hands. Peter chokes as some strange powder fills his eyes and throat. Peter feels his way blindly to the stairs and descends quickly, terrified. The devil follows slowly down the steps, throwing off little bombs of colored fire.

The light from the fireballs adds to the noise of the dog, which has worked its way loose from the bag, which the attackers put over its head. Peter's men scream in their terror, Elzbietka shrieks for help, and Joseph, still bound and gagged, kicks loudly against the wooden walls. Outside in the street, someone hears the pandemonium and calls the watchman. Seven of Peter's men congregate on the stairs. Their combined weight causes the stairway to collapse. Peter leaps off the falling stairs and achieves the landing in front of Pan Andrew's home. The fiery devil leaps from the lowest stair of the remaining staircase onto Peter's back. Together they tumble into the apartment.

The alchemist, with Peter pinned to the floor beneath him, demands to know what Peter seeks in Pan Andrew's apartment. Peter, now aware that his fiery attacker is indeed a man and not a demon, refuses to answer. Kreutz lights a fire ball to get a better look at Peter, but as light fills the room, Kreutz' eyes are drawn to the magnificent round object which has rolled out of the cloth bag. While the alchemist is distracted, Peter takes the opportunity to slip away from his grip. Peter grabs Kreutz in a vice-like grip. He slams Kreutz' head against the floor, hard enough to knock any man unconscious. Peter picks himself up and grabs the treasure. Yet Kreutz' mask has protected him from the blow to the head and Kreutz has one final surprise for Peter.

As Peter runs for the door, Kreutz throws a packet of explosive powder, designed to discharge upon impact. His aim is true and the package explodes against the back of Peter's head, instantly setting Peter's hair on fire. The people in the courtyard watch as a man with a blazing head climbs to the roof and leaps across the adjoining roofs to

safety. The night watchman arranges to have temporary stairs placed alongside the landing and climbs up to free Joseph and his mother from their bindings. He brings Elzbietka down to safety as well, but Pan Kreutz, tired from his ordeal, retires to his loft and goes to bed.

The following morning, Pan Andrew returns home and discovers his loss. Witnesses to Peter's flight believe he left empty-handed, but Pan Andrew can only conclude that the thief got away with the treasure. Kreutz provides a description of the assailant and Pan Andrew realizes that the man who has been pursuing him is Peter of the Button Face.

*Chapter 11*: In the Ukraine, it becomes widely known that a change has come over Peter of the Button Face. Not only has his hair been burned off, but his attitude has become despondent. Even after the hair grows back and the scar fades, Peter continues to behave as if he has lost or failed at something important. Rumors hint that Peter traveled to Muscovy to see Ivan the Great, but no one dares to ask Peter about this. In the spring, Peter gathers a large band of cutthroats and thieves. Peter does his best to prevent them from pillaging and looting, not out of distaste for such activities, but because Peter has a greater purpose in mind. He finally succeeds in organizing the men and marching them, with their stolen goods, to the Krakow marketplace to pose as Armenian merchants.

In Krakow, a great change has come over Pan Andrew as well. He is inconsolable after losing the treasure he so long guarded. Joseph spends extra time with his father, hoping to allay his depression, and whenever possible, Joseph spends the entire night in the church tower with Pan Andrew. Joseph's rendition of the Heynal is now nearly as good as his father's, although Elzbietka can still tell the difference between the two trumpeters.

On the night Peter of the Button Face attacks the church tower with his men, Joseph is at Pan Andrew's side. Peter and his cohort, Michael the Snake, stake out the tower and surprise the night watchman. The Snake gags the watchman and steals his key, which Peter's men use to enter the tower. Before Joseph and his father can react, the men are upon them. Joseph and Pan Andrew cannot understand why Peter is back, when he has already obtained the treasure. Peter does not believe that Pan Andrew no longer has the Great Tarnov Crystal. Joseph is enthralled to hear the mysterious treasure named at last, but Peter threatens to kill Joseph if Pan Andrew refuses to hand over the crystal.

Peter orders the Snake to take Joseph back to the Charnetski family lodgings and return with the crystal. Peter tells Joseph he will kill his father if Joseph does not return with the crystal. Peter sees the hourglass reach the second hour. He orders Joseph to play the Heynal before leaving the tower, so all will seem well. Joseph recalls his secret pact with Elzbietka. If she hears him play the Heynal all the way through without stopping at the broken note, she will know he is in trouble. Courageously, Joseph plays the song completely, hoping Peter will not become suspicious by the unusual rendition.

*Chapter 12*: Earlier in the evening, Elzbietka had again become alarmed by her uncle's doings with Tring and had sought refuge in the Charnetski apartment with Joseph's mother. When the second hour arrives and Joseph plays the Heynal in its entirety, Elzbietka lies awake on the couch in the second floor apartment. She doubts herself, when she first hears the song, thinking her groggy mind plays tricks on her, but when she hears Joseph repeat the hymn from the other sides of the tower, Elzbietka knows he is in trouble. She considers going to his mother or her uncle for help, but she knows they would both dismiss her fears. Elzbietka decides to summon Jan Kanty.

She slips out into the dangerous night alone. Almost immediately, a group of beggars approaches, seeking to steal any valuables she might possess. Despite their friendly words, Elzbietka recognizes their intentions and flees with all speed to Jan Kanty's home. The men pursue her even to the door, and she knows that if Kanty does not answer his bell quickly, she will be lost. Thankfully, Kanty is awake and working at his desk, only two steps from his front door. He answers her desperate summons and Elzbietka gains the safety of his lodgings. Inside, she explains her errand. To her relief, Jan Kanty takes her seriously. He immediately summons the watch, and thirty watchmen head for the church.

The watchmen ascend the stairs and surprise Peter and his men, who had expected no trouble. As they free Pan Andrew and bind the thieves, Joseph returns to the tower. Joseph has seen Jan Kanty at the foot of the tower stairs and learned of Elzbietka's bravery. Pan Andrew is impressed with the plan concocted by the two young people and asks how his son freed himself from the Snake. Joseph explains that, when the Snake saw thirty watchmen marching to the tower, the thief knew the plot had been discovered. The Snake fled into the night to save himself, leaving Joseph alone and free on the streets. Pan Andrew is greatly relieved, but his thoughts return to the Great Tarnov Crystal. If Peter did not steal it, where is it now?

## Chapters 10 - 12 Analysis

The three chapters in this section are all action-oriented, adding excitement to an otherwise historically introspective plotline. Chapter 10 combines the excitement of armed robbery with Pan Kreutz' clever use of science to triumph over the robbers. Kreutz is science in action, as he uses chemical reactions to frighten the superstitious attackers. The action sequence continues in Chapter 11 as the young protagonist, Joseph, is given the opportunity to live out the brave legend of the young trumpeter. Joseph's courageous action, inspired by the ancient legend, proves that one boy's bravery can live on and motivate subsequent generations to further noble acts. Chapter 12 provides equal opportunity for the feminine gender as young Elzbietka proves that girls can be as courageous as their male counterparts. In this thoughtful fashion, the author seeks to teach valuable life lessons through entertainment.

# Chapters 13 - 14

## Chapters 13 - 14 Summary

*Chapter 13:* A few weeks later, Kreutz tells Tring he no longer wishes to continue their experiments. He claims he is mentally exhausted from being in a trance state so frequently. Tring insists he is careful not to put Kreutz into consecutive trances without giving him a chance to recover in between. However, Kreutz admits he is often in a trance, when Tring is not around. Tring demands to know who else has been putting Kreutz into trances. Tring is furious to think that Kreutz has shared their secret with someone else because such magical dealings are viewed with suspicion by the law and may be punishable by death. Kreutz assures him he has shared their secret with no one.

Kreutz sets up a tripod in the middle of the room and places the Great Tarnov Crystal upon it. Tring is stunned that Kreutz possesses this marvelous crystal, which alchemists and magicians have sought for hundreds of years. Tring now understands why Kreutz is so frequently in a trance state. The crystal is capable of sending a man into a trance. Tring believes the crystal makes it possible for a man to learn hidden truths. The alchemist insists he is done with the stone. "'I have perjured my soul to obtain this stone, and I am ready to return it to its rightful owners. This stone is a thing of wickedness and blood and it has a woeful history, as old perhaps as the world itself.'" (pg. 162) Kreutz explains he stole the stone from the Kovalskis the night their apartment was robbed. He also tells Tring that the Kovalski family is actually the Charnetski family from the Ukraine, and that the Charnetskis have long been the guardians of the stone.

Tring humors Kreutz by telling him they can return the stone after they have finished their experiments. Tring orders Kreutz to gaze into the crystal. Kreutz falls into a trance. Tring speaks to the entranced Kreutz, asking him what he sees. Kreutz reports that he is in a large alchemist's room with every imaginable supply. Kreutz sees a parchment on the wall. Tring orders him to take it down and read it. Kreutz says the parchment burns his hands, and indeed his hands turn red at these words. Nonetheless, Tring orders him to read the parchment. It contains the formula for creating the Philosopher's Stone.

Kreutz reads off the ingredients and directions for compounding the stone. Tring asks if Kreutz has those ingredients here in the loft. When Kreutz indicates that he does, Tring orders him to compound the stone. In a trance state, Kreutz does not hesitate to mix chemicals, which he knows will explode if mixed. Some instinct of self-preservation remains active despite the trance, for when Kreutz adds the last and most combustible ingredient, he covers his head and throws Tring to the ground as the cauldron explodes. The room catches fire instantly. As the fire rapidly spreads, Tring rushes out to notify the watchman. Kreutz takes the opportunity to flee into the night with the crystal.

*Chapter 14*: The fire spreads quickly amongst the closely set wooden houses. In all four parts of the city, the quartermaster in charge organizes his watchmen and calls for the

water master to bring water trucks. Fire being an equal opportunity threat, every citizen of Krakow is by law compelled to keep hooks, axes, and pails in their homes to help combat fires. Now every able-bodied man descends on the Street of Pigeons to fight the fire. The men try to draw a line around the fire by tearing down the adjoining buildings to prevent its spread, but the fire rages out of control. Men, women, and children flee their burning homes with whatever possessions they can quickly rescue, but the fire spreads so fast that most of these possessions burn on the street as the people flee.

Joseph, his mother, Elzbietka, and Wolf get out of their home safely but are trapped in the crowd on the Street of Pigeons. With burning timbers falling all around, they must fight their way through the crowd to safety. They reach a secure distance just as soldiers arrive from the castle to preserve order amidst the panic. The soldiers bring siege machinery to help tear down buildings in the fire's path. Joseph is amazed to see Peter of the Button Face in the custody of the king's guard. He watches, as the guard escorts Peter toward the castle on Wawel Hill. The family proceeds to the church tower, where Pan Andrew is immensely relieved to see them safe and well. He asks Peter to watch over the family and sound the Heynals, while Pan Andrew joins the men fighting the fire. When Pan Andrew learns that Kreutz is missing, he determines to find him.

Pan Andrew joins the firefighters and helps their brave efforts. Some, but not all, of the university buildings are saved. The last building to fall before the conflagration comes to a halt is the Collegium Minus. Nearly one third of the city is destroyed by fire. Pan Andrew returns to the tower and reports that the danger is over, although many people are left homeless. Pan Andrew has found no trace of Kreutz in the melee, but Jan Kanty arrives in the tower with Kreutz. Kanty warns Pan Andrew that Kreutz has taken leave of his senses. Indeed the alchemist looks like a shadow of his former self. To Pan Andrew's shock, Kreutz pulls the Great Tarnov Crystal from the folds of his robe. Kreutz' treachery becomes apparent as Pan Andrew realizes how the man must have come into possession of the crystal. Yet Kreutz now hands over the crystal with evident relief. Pan Andrew expresses his own relief and strong desire to get present the king with the crystal right away. Kanty advises him that the king has recently returned to Krakow and that they might see him this very morning.

## Chapters 13 - 14 Analysis

The author interjects a historical narrative voice in this section to indicate that the fire of 1462 is a true historical event. Certainly the author's vivid descriptions of fire-fighting methods in the fifteenth century are appealingly accurate. Such historical lessons are wonderful subject matter for young adult fiction books, because the explication of rudimentary machinery used by former generations provides a logical link to the existence of modern machinery. It inspires young minds to think about problem-solving in the way that many inventors and writers do, by working backwards from the solution. Today, society has an infrastructure of water pipelines into, which fire fighters can plug their hoses to bring water to the source of the conflagration. Yet, in fifteenth century Poland, water had to be trucked by horse-drawn, or even people-drawn, carriages. This information thus clarifies the solution to the reader. The solution to fire-fighting is finding

a way to bring water to the burning buildings. Then, the reader can appreciate the ingenious methods, which mankind has devised over the centuries, leading ultimately to the current system. The basic solution has not changed, but it has been streamlined and improved. With such examples the author communicates why the study of history leads to a greater appreciation of human society.

# Chapters 15 - 16

## Chapters 15 - 16 Summary

*Chapter 15*: Joseph is anxious to see the palace on the Wawel, for he is familiar with the ancient legend of Krakus. Krakus became a hero in the dark ages by slaying a dragon, which made its nest in Wawel Hill. The dragon nest was afterward converted to a fortress and has been home to royalty and a grand cathedral since that time. This morning, Joseph, his father, Jan Kanty, and Kreutz arrive together at the palace. They are greeted by the king in his private meeting room. Joseph and Pan Andrew kneel before the king as Kanty announces their business. Upon hearing that the Charnetskis are nobles driven from the Ukraine, his interest is piqued.

Pan Andrew hands over the Great Tarnov Crystal and explains the solemn oath, which he and his forefathers have taken to hide and protect the crystal. If the crystal's location is discovered, the oath commands its possessor to hand it over to the king of Poland. Pan Andrew explains that the crystal possesses certain powers which, in the wrong hands, may be used for evil. In the land of the Tartars, the Great Tarnov Crystal is an oft-discussed wonder, and Tartar children hear stories of it from their parents. The location of the crystal became known to the Tartars when one of his servants sold the information to the Tartar chieftain. The notorious Tartar, Peter of the Button Face, is now intent on stealing the crystal. Pan Andrew believes it will be safe from thieves in the royal castle.

Pan Andrew explains he has lost his home, his lands, his wealth, and, nearly, his family because of the crystal. The king orders his guards to bring Peter of the Button Face into the chamber to be questioned. Peter demands his freedom in exchange for information. The king grants this request and Peter explains the depth of the conspiracy that brought him to Krakow. Ivan the Great of Moscow intends to attack the Ukraine and wrest it away from Poland's control, but he cannot do this without the Tartar warriors. The Tartar chieftain has agreed to attack the Ukrainian Poles if Ivan can deliver the crystal to him in payment. Thus Peter was hired by Ivan to obtain the crystal. The king is stunned at the great treachery that has been prevented by the safe return of the crystal. Reluctantly, he keeps his word and frees Peter, banishing him from Poland forever. The king commends Pan Andrew for his great service to Poland. He gives him a heavy gold chain as a token of his thanks and promises to replace the property Pan Andrew has lost.

*Chapter 16*: Just as the interview with the king is concluded, Pan Kreutz unexpectedly grabs the crystal from the king's hands. He runs out before the others can collect themselves. They pursue him out of the castle and down a slope to the Vistula River. Kreutz stops at the river's edge and calls out to the king. Kreutz explains that the crystal has the power to turn honest men into thieves. He explains Tring's involvement and how their experimentation led to the fire that has left a third of the city homeless. Kreutz says

that the crystal is a cursed thing and he intends to prevent it from doing any more harm. With that said, Kreutz tosses the crystal deep into the heart of the Vistula River.

Afterwards, Kreutz falls in a dead faint. Pan Andrew and Joseph carry him back to the tower while the king meets with Jan Kanty. Kanty and the king decide that the valuable crystal is dangerous, indeed, and should remain at the bottom of the river, safely behind the impregnable defenses of the Wawel. The king rewards Pan Andrew with money to rebuild his home in the Ukraine. He and his wife return to the Ukraine later that year. Elzbietka and her uncle move to the Ukraine with the Charnetskis. The alchemist eventually regains his health. Joseph finishes his studies at the University of Krakow. When he is twenty-two, he returns to the Ukraine to marry Elzbietka and manage his father's lands. To this day, the crystal remains hidden deep in the Vistula River.

## Chapters 15 - 16 Analysis

The decision to leave the crystal buried under the waters of the river symbolizes the end of the medieval era. The occult superstitions represented by the Great Tarnov Crystal lie safely submerged in the unconscious mind, as represented by the river. By removing the crystal and all it represents from human society, the author implies that the turning point from dark superstition to the light of reason and science has been reached at last, and the age of enlightenment dawns.

# Epilogue: The Broken Note

## Epilogue: The Broken Note Summary

It is now 1928. The Vistula River's course has changed over the years. It now surrounds the entire plain containing the new city of Krakow. The castle and cathedral on the Wawel remain, as does the old Cloth Hall, which was renovated during the Renaissance Period. Royalty no longer resides on Wawel Hill, but a different kind of glory can be found in Krakow, which is a center for the arts, music, crafts, and education. Centuries of war and many fires have besieged the city, but the Church of Our Lady Mary still stands, and from its tower, each hour without fail, a trumpeter sounds the Heynal, always ending on the broken note.

## Epilogue: The Broken Note Analysis

In this Epilogue, the author, an American historian specializing in the history of Poland, places the story in modern context. Written in 1928, the modernity of this context has faded some with time, but the reader is nonetheless left with the indelible impression of the value, honor, and timelessness of Polish culture. These timeless qualities have allowed academia and the arts to flourish in Poland despite centuries of political strife, thus demonstrating the ever-regenerative powers of this modern culture with roots in the ancient world.

# Characters

## Joseph Charnetski

From the very beginning, Joseph reveals himself to be a clever, self-reliant young man, who trusts his instincts. His initial impression of Peter of the Button Face tells him to be wary of the man. Indeed, the Tartar warrior proves to be an enemy of the Charnetski family and attempts to attack them on the road to Krakow. Joseph's quick thinking helps save the day, when he slaps Peter's horse on the rump, causing the horse to flee in the opposite direction as the Charnetskis. Peter is forced to choose between pursuing Joseph's family and reclaiming his horse. This common-sense defense tactic and lightning quick decision-making render Joseph an excellent young hero and role model for young readers.

A short time later, Joseph reacts with similar speed and mental agility, when he sees Elzbietka threatened by a large dog. Joseph instinctively leaps for the dog's collar and holds the dog while speaking soothingly to it. Joseph's understanding of canine nature tells him that dogs do not attack unless they are frightened or have been mistreated. Thus he does not compound the problem by threatening the dog. He merely restrains it, until it calms down. From this point on, the dog becomes Joseph's loyal companion. This self-assurance and innate knowledge of the nature of the world around him make Joseph's character likeable and shows kindness, integrity, as well as courage. These are the principle traits, which the author so greatly admires about the Polish people, and through Joseph's character, the author conveys this admiration. Joseph has no major flaws to overcome, and thus his character growth is channeled through his studies and through his growing capabilities to take on more adult roles.

## Pan Andrew Charnetski

Pan Andrew is Joseph's father and a role model, who has taught Joseph the meaning of personal integrity. Pan Andrew, like several previous generations of Charnetski men, has taken a vow to hide and protect the Great Tarnov Crystal. He is charged with keeping the crystal out of enemy hands, and if the crystal is ever discovered in his possession, he must risk everything to hand-deliver it to the king of Poland. Pan Andrew is faithful to this vow despite the harm it causes him. His home and lands are burned by Tartars, who have learned that the crystal is in his possession. He travels with the crystal to Krakow to fulfill his vow of giving it to the king. Pan Andrew refuses to allow even his most trusted friend, Jan Kanty, to safeguard the crystal although Kanty's domicile affords better protection than Pan Andrew's new apartment in Krakow.

Yet the king's schedule precludes an immediate transfer of the crystal, thus Pan Andrew must take a second vow in order to fulfill his first. To provide for his family and keep them in Krakow until such time as the king returns, Pan Andrew takes the trumpeter's oath, vowing to sound the Heynal faithfully from the tower of the Church of Our Lady

Mary each and every hour regardless of circumstance. To modern readers, this loyalty to one's employment must seem astounding. Yet the author notes in his Epilogue that this astounding tradition continues to this day. Thus Pan Andrew's character, like his son Joseph's, displays the loyalty of the Polish culture, which the author greatly admires.

## Peter of the Button Face

Peter of the Button Face's true name is Bogdan Grozny, or Bogdan the Terrible. He is a warrior, notorious for his cruelty and thievery. He leads a band of ruffians, who enjoy terrorizing the Poles, who live along the border between Poland and Russia. The Polish people have nicknamed him Peter of the Button Face in light of the button-shaped scar, which he bears on his face. This round scar is characteristic of a type of disease which is prevalent in the Tartar lands, and thus the scar indicates that he is a Tartar. Unfortunately for Peter of the Button Face, this distinctive scar makes it difficult for him to pose as a Pole, which he tries to do in order to get close to Pan Andrew. Peter's mission throughout the novel is to steal the Great Tarnov Crystal, which Pan Andrew has vowed to keep safe. Peter first tries deceit, and when that fails to work, he tricks a Polish mob into believing that Pan Andrew is a sorcerer so that they will attack Pan Andrew, giving Peter a chance to steal the pumpkin, within which the crystal is hidden.

When deceit and trickery both fail, Peter's next logical step is the use of force. He uses gold and threats to get Pan Andrew's landlord to spy on him and give up his location. Peter's first attempt to raid Pan Andrew's home is foiled by the clever tricks of the alchemist Kreutz. Frustrated, Peter regroups and later captures Pan Andrew and his son, Joseph. He threatens to kill them both if they do not turn the crystal over to him. Peter expects this threat to work and is surprised, when Pan Andrew insists he no longer has the crystal. In fact, Pan Andrew does not realize that Kreutz stole the crystal himself the night he foiled Peter's attack. Were it not for Peter's persistence, Pan Andrew would have concluded that the Tartar already had the crystal in his possession. Thus Peter's character is not only a chief antagonist in the plot, but he is also an ongoing source of information to the protagonists. In the end, it is Peter, who explains the magnitude of the conspiracy behind the attempts to steal the crystal. Thus, through Peter, the enormity of Pan Andrew's task to guard the crystal is made clear.

## Elzbietka Kreutz

Elzbietka's character is simplistic in her innocence. In some ways this simplicity results from the iconic, one-dimensional nature of her character as written by the author, but also her simplicity can be viewed as a likeable character trait. On the positive side, she does not dissemble and takes everything at face value, which may signify good emotional health and the stalwart heart of a salt of the earth Pole. Elzbietka has no ulterior motives and no internal conflicts. She is simply a good-hearted girl with straightforward intentions.

However her simplistic character may also be viewed as an example of the classical masculine hero legends in which female characters are objectified, put on pedestals, and given no role other than providing a damsel in distress for the hero to rescue. Elzbietka's character is the main female character of the novel, but she is marginalized by her supporting role. She plays Joseph's foil, and largely exists to admire this young nobleman. It is also notable that Joseph is described as not being handsome. As a noble and as a male, his other traits are deemed more important than his looks. Elzbietka, on the other hand, has no other traits to speak of besides her tremendous beauty, and it is her beauty alone which makes her a suitable companion for the noble Joseph.

To the author's credit, although his story follows the archetypical hero's quest, he does allocate an entire chapter to Elzbietka as heroine, for it is she who saves the day, when Joseph and his father are taken captive by the Tartars. The author also uses Elzbietka's character to point out the absurdity of the ancient practice of barring women from academic pursuits. Thus, Eric P. Kelly's vision of women's rights mirrors his vision of scientific enlightenment. He shows that both are indeed a work in progress. The changes in both social equality and scientific understanding in the eighty years since the novel's publication reveal some outdated ideas in the premise of the story. The author's vision of feminine equality, although enlightened by fifteenth and even twentieth century standards, falls a bit short in the twenty-first century.

## Nicholas Kreutz

Nicholas Kreutz' character is fascinating because it explores the ancient practice of alchemy. In a time when science is only beginning to distinguish itself from magic, Kreutz is easily led astray by occult pursuits. He is an educated man, however, and ultimately rejects the dark powers, which Tring has used to control him. His struggle against these dark powers is shown primarily through the worried eyes of his niece, Elzbietka. Kreutz' experiments in the loft are mysterious and kept veiled from prying eyes, including the eyes of the reader for the most part. Thus the negative change which comes over his character must be recounted by Elzbietka. She notes that her once loving uncle has grown distant. Where once he valued family life and took care never to work all night, now he stays in his loft with Tring at all hours and begins to neglect Elzbietka. Kreutz is so drawn into the powerful trances, which Tring compels him to that when, in a trance state, he ignores his niece completely, even her cries of alarm. Upon awakening he feels guilt for this neglect, but remains too entranced by Tring to change his ways.

Kreutz' pursuit of the Philosopher's Stone and his susceptibility to Tring do not ring true to his character. For Kreutz, in the early stages of the novel, is a source of great wisdom. He states that the only men who seek eternal life are those who have vainly squandered their natural lives and regret their vanity. He also states that there are more important things in life besides gold. Yet somehow this level-headed academic falls prey to the crude manipulations of a shallow, vain man half his age. Kreutz ascribes his fall from grace to the powers of the Great Tarnov Crystal, yet in fact he had already

submitted to Tring's will long before discovering the crystal in Pan Andrew's apartment. Thus although Kreutz' character is fascinating due to his alchemical pursuits, the author fails to present a realistic portrait of Kreutz as a man.

## Jan Kanty

Jan Kanty is very much a Renaissance man, although he lives in the era immediately preceding the Renaissance Period. Thus he is an intellectual pioneer. Kanty concerns himself with finding practical solutions to problems, and in so doing he casts off the medieval conceit that humans are helpless beings, subject to the whims of a cruel God, evil spirits, or the terrible wrath of Nature. Kanty explains to the local peasants that joint pain can result from excess dampness in one's surroundings, and that garden bug infestations may be dealt with chemically as opposed to praying over the worms as is still common practice in this time. His practical suggestions for health and labor improvements win him immense popularity with the working classes in Poland. This popularity is unusual for a scholar-priest like Kanty, for in the strict, class-based society of medieval Europe, the intellectuals and churchmen are considered part of the elite and generally refrain from associating with the common man.

Kanty's associations are not limited to the common man, however. He also mixes with the nobility and is a good friend of the king's. Kanty's advice is as important to King Kazimir Jagiello as it is to the local peasants. Like the king, Kanty loves peace. He often intercedes to cool tempers and prevent conflicts on the streets of Krakow. Thus the reader can imagine the benefit his counsel might provide on a national level as the king struggles to keep peace along Poland's embattled border. Kanty's involvement with Pan Andrew's quest to guard the Great Tarnov Crystal actually helps prevent war between Poland and Russia. In the end, when the crystal (representing the old, medieval way of thought) is symbolically thrown deep into the Vistula River, Kanty advises the king to leave the crystal where it lies. In effect, Kanty is telling the king that the age of superstition and sorcery is over and a new age of reason has begun.

## Johann Tring

Tring, in the novel, represents the dark half of the battle between good and evil. Tring's character is a one-dimensional bad guy for he seems to have no redeeming qualities. Yet given the inherent conflict in the author's premise, it would be impossible to flesh out Tring's role and make the character more realistic. Tring's penchant for gold and interest in sorcery go hand in hand according to the author, who believes that magic is an evil, greedy force in the world. Paradoxically, the author insists that magic does not exist and has no power. Thus Johann Tring's character is inherently contradictory. On the one hand, he dabbles in dark magic, which the author indicates is non-existent. Thus Tring's character would have to be devoid of any true power. Yet the author paints Tring as a powerful and insidious enemy. He has the capability to convince Kreutz, a learned man with many years more life experience than Tring, to throw away his belief system and

replace it with a shallower philosophy of greed. The author explains that Tring accomplishes this mind control through hypnosis, not magic.

The author attempts to use science to explain the dark art of hypnotism. He maintains that hypnotism allows the hypnotist to control the mind of his subject, and also that the knowledge, which a subject can access under hypnosis represents only the ravings of a hypnotized mind. The author then contradicts his own premise, when Kreutz, in a trance, learns that the Great Tarnov Crystal is within a few yards of him. Kreutz has no knowledge of the crystal's whereabouts, thus by acquiring this knowledge under hypnosis he actually lends authenticity to the belief that trances give one access to greater knowledge. As regards the author's "scientific" premise that hypnosis gives the hypnotist complete control over his subject, this has since been disproven by science. Subjects of hypnosis cannot be forced to do something which goes against their natural inclination. Thus it is unrealistic and unscientific that Tring forces Kreutz to mix substances, which Kreutz knows are combustible. Due to these basic inconsistencies, Tring's character is unrealistic and difficult to define.

## Mother Kreutz

Pan Andrew's wife is not accorded the respect of a name in the novel. Her role, both in medieval society and in the book, is simply to play a contented wife and mother. Although the author does state in Chapter 2 that Pan Andrew values her counsel, even on this occasion she is referred to merely as "the woman." (pg. 28) Given the dictates of a society which does not allow their women to obtain an education, her role is, perforce, a limited one.

## Pan Andrew Tenczynski

Pan Andrew Tenczynski is a nobleman, and cousin to Pan Andrew Charnetski. When Charnetski's home is attacked and burned, he seeks refuge with Tenczynski in Krakow. Unfortunately, Charnetski arrives too late. Tenczynski has already been killed by an angry mob as a result of social and economic tensions between the nobility and the working class guildsmen.

## Kazimir Jagiello

Jagiello is a peace-loving king of fifteenth-century Poland. Taken from the pages of history, this character represents the notable Jagiello family that ruled Poland for generations. He appears only briefly and his character is not well developed, but much can be inferred by his close alliance with Jan Kanty. As Kanty represents the light of reason and the love of peace, their friendship indicates that the king, too, values such ideals.

# Objects/Places

## The Great Tarnov Crystal

Guarded by generations of Charnetski men, the Great Tarnov Crystal has long been hidden in the Charnetski family home in the Ukraine. Scholars, mystics, and kings have searched the world over for this crystal, which is reputed to possess strange and wondrous properties. However, the darker side of its legend indicates that the crystal also possesses the power to drive men mad and turn friend against friend. Because of its potential for misuse, the Charnetski family guardians swear an oath to keep the crystal hidden. If the crystal's hiding place in the Ukraine is ever discovered, the Charnetski men are sworn to turn it over to the king of Poland for safe-keeping. As the story begins, one of Pan Andrew's servants discovers the crystal in the Charnetski home and sells this information to the Tartars, thus prompting Pan Andrew to seek out the king in Krakow.

## The Pumpkin Shell

The pumpkin shell is one of the methods Pan Andrew has developed for hiding the Great Tarnov Crystal. Over the years, he has learned how to preserve empty pumpkin shells so that if the need ever arises to move the crystal, he will have a shell ready for transport.

## The Street of Pigeons

Located near the University of Krakow, the low-cost housing along the Street of Pigeons houses students and charlatans alike. The line between science and magic was blurred in fifteenth century Krakow. Thus fortunetellers, necromancers, and self-proclaimed seers lived amongst the university folk who pursued more legitimate studies of the natural world, such as philosophy and alchemy.

## The Alchemist's Loft

Located on the fourth and highest floor of an apartment building on the Street of Pigeons, this loft is Nicholas Kreutz' workspace and contains all the equipment and supplies an alchemist needs.

## Jan Kanty's Cell

The term cell in this context refers to a cloistered room such as monks used for meditation, prayer, study, and sleep in the fifteenth century. Jan Kanty's cell is cozy and

comfortably appointed. Here he receives many visitors as his advice is always in demand.

## The Church of Our Lady Mary

The Church of Our Lady Mary in Krakow is an icon for tourists and locals alike. The church has survived for hundreds of years, and throughout this time the honored church trumpeters have never forsaken their vow to play the Heynal every hour of every day.

## The Church Tower

The ancient tower of the Church of Our Lady Mary is the focal point of the novel, for it is from this tower that the trumpeters play their hymn to the Virgin Mary at the stroke of each hour. Protagonists Joseph and Pan Andrew spend many nights in this tower as they together perform the duties of the night trumpeter.

## The Heynal

The Heynal is a traditional Polish, Christian hymn in praise of the Virgin Mary.

## The Cloth Hall

The Cloth Hall, in the middle of the city, serves as the principal trading center for the Krakow market.

## The Collegium Minus

The collegium is a preparatory school, which young Joseph attends in Krakow. Upon graduation from the Collegium Minus, a young man is qualified to enter the famous University of Krakow.

## The Wawel

The Wawel is the ancient fortress-like palace of the king of Poland. It is situated on a cliff face overlooking the Vistula River. Legend has it that the Wawel was built on the site of what was once a dragon's lair. Today the Vistula's course no longer runs past this ancient castle, and no kings inhabit its walls, yet the great castle remains, as a museum.

# Setting

Poland is the center of Eastern Europe in 1461-1462, the years in which the novel is set. In 1461, under King Kazimir IV, Poland embarked upon its Golden Age. United with Lithuania, the Polish kingdom stretches from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south. The Germans along the Baltic, known as the Teutonic Knights, were defeated forty years earlier at the Battle of Tannenberg and are now sworn subjects of the Polish Crown. To the south, Polish control extends into Moldavia (the northeast portion of present-day Romania); to the east, the Poles and their Lithuanian allies control most of the Ukraine and present-day Byelorussia. The Tartars, who swept across the Ukraine and Poland a century before, have lost most of their power and are gradually retreating toward the area north of the Caspian Sea and central Asia. The Russian state, under Ivan the Great, is still limited to the small area around Moscow and has hardly begun the consolidation and expansion that will push its boundaries westward in the years to come.

As the center of this world, the Polish capital, Krakow, has become a vital crossroads for traders, bandits, scholars, German merchants, Cossack horsemen, and even renegade Tartars.

Indeed, a half-Tartar, half-Cossack, known to some as Peter of the Button and to others as Bogdan the Terrible, is the book's chief villain.

The Trumpeter of Krakow takes place precisely at that moment when the medieval way of looking at the world is fading, and the early Renaissance way of thinking is making its way northeastward from Italy. It is the moment when medieval beliefs in a strictly ordered world threatened by dark mysteries is giving way to the new "humanism" of the early Renaissance. This new movement, sometimes called "Christian humanism," is a philosophy that sees not just scholars and church officials as capable of understanding the universe, but every individual as possessed of a God-given intelligence. Humanism1 is encouraging individuals to use this intelligence to make new discoveries, to explore new realms, and to cut through the dark shroud of medieval ignorance and superstition.

# Social Sensitivity

On the surface, there is little material likely to offend anyone in The Trumpeter of Krakow. Kelly gracefully handles the unruly, potentially violent times he deals with; there are many moments of excitement and danger, but no killings or gratuitous violence. Kelly is a deeply moral writer; but for a book dealing with a highly religious people in a highly religious age, The Trumpeter of Krakow hardly mentions religion at all. Some readers might, with some justification, find fault with the novel's primary female character, Elzbietka, who has been relegated to a passive role. But Elzbietka, like most of the novel's characters, is probably less important as a person than as part of a window through which a wonderfully vital and important age can be seen.

At a much deeper level, The Trumpeter of Krakow could be interpreted as a statement on issues that some people in the 1920s found controversial. In their attempts to better understand their times, many writers consulted the writings of Sigmund Freud, who was tremendously influential at the time.

Kelly's own interest in the workings of the unconscious mind can be seen in his use of dreams (both Joseph and Elzbietka have powerful, almost surreal dreams in the course of the novel), his exploration of the unconscious mind (through Tring's manipulation of the alchemist Kreutz), and his consideration of the destructive effects hypnotic oppression can have on the human spirit (Kreutz is nearly destroyed by the end of the novel).

The 1920s also saw a renewed struggle between science and conventional religious dogma, a struggle highlighted by the Scopes trial of 1925, dealing with Charles Darwin's theories of evolution.

Like many thinkers of his day, Kelly was obviously concerned both about the dangers of science run amok and about the dangers of religious closed-mindedness. His fictional scholar, Jan Kanty, at once a scientist and a morally responsible man, clearly represents the ideal middle position between science and religion—even though Kanty never talks explicitly about religion.

Kelly also addresses the disillusionment that World War I had brought regarding the humanist tradition.

People in the 1920s wondered if there was any hope for humankind if human reason cannot control the darker human urges and the disastrous workings of progress gone awry. Kelly's answer is optimistic; he implicitly asserts that properly governed and given over to the service of others, human good will can prevail.

None of these issues—Freudian psychology, the struggle between science and religion, and humanism—is overtly dealt with in The Trumpeter of Krakow.

But anyone who looks at the novel in connection with the times that produced it can see that such issues influenced its writing.

# Literary Qualities

Kelly writes in an admirably clear, direct manner. His prose abounds with vivid physical description that provides a strong sense of the medieval world in which the novel is set. Particularly rich in this regard are some of the earlier chapters, rich panoramas filled with people and buildings as seen through Joseph's eyes. Kelly's characters speak a formal, slightly old-fashioned language, but this serves primarily as a reminder that this is a different world.

The Trumpeter of Krakow is a delightfully symmetrical book. It begins with a prologue that graphically tells the story of the famous historical Trumpeter of Krakow," the young man who played the "Heynal" hymn hourly from the tower of the Church of Our Lady Mary during the Tartar invasion of 1241 and who broke off the song a few notes short of completion when struck by a fatal Tartar arrow. This prologue is balanced by an epilogue, which refers once more to the earlier trumpeter's heroism (a symbol of bravery against great odds throughout the book). This epilogue, written in 1926, when Poland was once again a free country for the first time in centuries, praises Poland's ability to survive oppression and stand as a model of national courage.

At the very center of the novel is chapter 7, "In the Alchemist's Loft," which draws into sharp focus the novel's major theme—the struggle between the enlightened use of knowledge for the good of humankind and the evil use of knowledge for the acquisition of power.

It is in this chapter that the alchemist Kreutz finds himself caught between his basic belief in using his science for human good ("God has given me a mind that searches ever for the light, and I feel that I am doing His will when I seek the truths that lie about us on every hand") and his darker "other self" that is all too willing to listen to the diabolical Tring's hypnotic urgings ("Gold!...With this secret, you and I could become the very kings of the earth...armies would be at our disposal, and we could make every human being perform our will").

# Themes

## Science vs. Superstition

The author tries mightily to separate "good" science from the "evil" of magical exploration in *The Trumpeter of Krakow*. While the novel is an enduring, noble tribute to historic Poland, the central theme of the story betrays the scientific hubris of the early twentieth century in which the novel was written. The author writes about fifteenth century Poland from the privileged vantage point of the twentieth century, by which time, according to the historical narrator, scientists had figured out the truth of the world and dispensed with the immoral and foolish superstitions of the fifteenth century. These superstitions are enumerated in the storyline and associated with greed, violence, and sin. The author simultaneously laughs at the idea that magic exists, for science has clearly disproved its existence, and yet he warns against the evils of magic, in a sense, revealing his own superstitious dread.

The alchemist Kreutz, for example, is led astray by his desire to explore the magical properties of the Great Tarnov Crystal and compound the legendary Philosopher's Stone. Kreutz' experiment sets fire to the entire town of Krakow, causing irreparable damage and pain. This, of course, is the natural result of pursuing such foolish and evil fancies. Kreutz realizes in the end that he should have remained on the godly path of wisdom and avoided subverting nature with his magical studies. Hypnosis is also considered to be a dark art by the twentieth century author. Tring is able to gain complete control of Kreutz' mind through hypnosis. Kreutz is subjected to trances, which weaken his mind and cause him to take leave of his senses. Most damagingly, through hypnosis Tring forces Kreutz to combine chemicals, which the alchemist would never have combined otherwise, as he knows this particular mixture is highly combustible.

This supposedly scientific view of the power of hypnosis is actually a common superstition held by early twentieth century scientists, who labeled anything they did not understand as evil, magic or superstition. The author is unaware of certain facts regarding hypnotism, which scientists discovered well after the novel was written. Chief among these is the fact that men cannot be convinced to do something against their natural inclination in a hypnotic state. Thus the author's premise that Tring uses hypnotism to take over Kreutz' mind and body is a scientific impossibility. And so why write about it with such fear and loathing? As science gained prominence in the developed world, belief in magic, once common, was laughed off by scientists. The degree of animosity scientists held towards so-called dark magic and towards belief in spiritual miracles reflects, perhaps, the fear of such beliefs and a tendency towards pseudo-bravado by the scientific community.

Yet what is science if not magic? Many impossible, magical feats, such as air travel, have been attained by science. Crystals do possess strange powers as any child with a crystal radio set can attest. For many years scientists were loathe to examine certain natural mysteries, because they were more comfortable discounting the marvels of

nature and instead chose to believe that they had fully conquered and quantified the world. Anything outside of this limited view was considered magical thinking, foolishness, or outright insanity. For example, garlic's power to ward off evil was written off by scientists as an old wives' tale and no one bothered to study it to see if there might be a germ of truth in the legend. Modern science has discovered that garlic does have the power to ward off the four chief evils, which attack the human body. They are viruses, microbes, fungi, and parasites. Such diseases were once considered to be caused by demonic forces, and thus the old legend makes perfect sense in the context of the times. In fact, turn of the century advances in philosophy and science have shown that many ancient wisdoms, considered base superstition by early scientists, are in fact grounded in natural law, and are not necessarily inconsistent with either scientific or spiritual beliefs.

## Courage

This loving testament to Polish culture focuses on the legendary courage of the Polish people. The legend of the broken note is the keystone that holds the novel together. Author and historian Eric P. Kelly recounts an ancient Polish legend about a young trumpeter. By tradition, the trumpeters of Krakow take an oath to play the trumpet from the church tower of the Church of Our Lady Mary, marking each hour of each day with a rendition of the Heynal, a Christian hymn to the Virgin Mary. The oath states that the trumpeter will "*faithfully and unto the death, if there be need, sound upon the trumpet the Heynal in honor of Our Lady each hour in the tower of the church which bears Her Name."* Legend has it that a young man in the year 1241 took this oath so seriously that he risked and lost his life in the fulfillment of his duties. An army of Tartars had invaded Krakow in 1241 and the young man refused to seek the shelter of the castle fortress on Wawel Hill. Instead, he remained in the church tower and, in defiance of the Tartars, arose to sound the trumpet as dawn broke over the pillaged city. Knowing the act would likely be his last, the trumpeter showed courage and conviction by playing the Heynal in the face of the enemy. This noble act and the legend surrounding it show that the Polish spirit cannot be vanquished by any army.

Young protagonist Joseph Charnetski is given the opportunity to follow in this legendary trumpeter's footsteps. Some two hundred years after the initial trumpeter's death, the trumpeters of Krakow continue to honor the youth by ending each rendition of the Heynal on the broken note, which symbolizes the death of the legendary trumpeter. Thus, when Joseph and his father are attacked by Tartars in the tower of the Church of Our Lady Mary, Joseph risks his life to send a secret signal to his friend Elzbietka. Joseph plays the Heynal in its entirety, an act so unusual as to alarm Elzbietka and cause her to seek help for Joseph. Thirty Poles are dispatched to the tower and easily overcome the Tartar attackers. Yet had any of the Tartars in the tower been aware of the legend or the practice of ending the Heynal on the broken note, Joseph's courageous act could well have ended in death just like the trumpeter of old. The author's Epilogue indicates that even today the trumpeters continue to honor their vow to play the Heynal from the tower, and this song ends each hour on the broken note. This astounding tradition pays continual tribute to the courage and noble hearts of the people of Poland.

# Alchemy: Art, Science, or Blaspheme

By modern standards, alchemy is considered to be an exotic mixture of voodoo and science. Through Kreutz' character the author explains how alchemy, in its incipience, was actually an attempt to separate true science from magical superstition. Whether this is precisely the case is debatable, and indeed the author makes frequent mention of the gray area between alchemy, science, and magic. Alchemy was practiced for over two millennia and was actually a cross-discipline of chemistry, philosophy, biology, metallurgy, spirituality, and even what might be termed today as magic. It is a sad testament to the hubris of modern man that alchemy has been categorically discredited and forgotten by scientists despite some of the important chemical groundwork, which alchemy provided for the modern world, particularly in regards to the creation of different metals still commonly used today. Alchemists explored various chemical combinations and their resulting properties with the goal of understanding and manipulating the physical world. Perhaps a modern-day revisiting of this ancient practice could yield some new insights if current scientific practices could be applied to the thousands of years of experimental data gathered by alchemists. Regardless of its value or lack thereof, alchemy is inherently fascinating, particularly to imaginative children.

This fascinating pastime is presented quite exotically in the novel. The alchemist's loft is off limits to young Joseph and Elzbietka, which only serves to tantalize young readers more. When Joseph peeks through the window, he catches a glimpse into this mysterious world. The fact that Kreutz' supply cabinet is encased in heavy chains and sealed with lock and key indicates that there is something dark, perhaps even grotesque, about the alchemist's work. Mysterious potions bubble in heated cauldrons, creating a vivid link between magic and science. Children are frequently fascinated by this type of exploration, and thus the alchemy theme is a wonderful inclusion in a children's book. This innate curiosity to explore the properties of nature exists in children of all ages. Younger children enjoy mixing together soaps and shampoos in the bathtub and take the same delight from discovering that water and earth, when mixed, create delicious mud in which to play. Older children, for whom this book is targeted, may enjoy playing with junior chemistry sets or making craft projects which involve creating a new substance by heating the mixtures provided, just as Kreutz does when heating mixtures in his cauldron.

# Themes/Characters

The Trumpeter of Krakow's guiding spirit, a scholar named Jan (pronounced "yon") Kanty, is a Christian humanist. Kanty represents a clearheaded, essentially optimistic and scientific view of life; he fights superstition, ignorance, mindless respect for authority, and the dangerous habits and fears such attitudes breed. A Renaissance scholar in the making, Kanty is a precursor of the famous Polish thinker Copernicus, whose assertion eighty years later that the sun, not the earth, is the center of the universe will radically change the way people see their world.

The novel presents these issues largely through the eyes of its central character, Joseph Charnetski, the fifteenyear-old son of Pan ("Master") Andrew Charnetski, a Polish landowner driven from the Ukraine by Tartar raiders.

Joseph travels to Krakow, and through his eyes readers watch the broad sweep of medieval life; the crooked streets are filled with all levels of society—King's Guards, tradesmen, scholars and students, farmers, beggars, merchants, robbers, and ruffians. Through Joseph's eyes readers also see the magnificent monuments of Krakow—the Church of Our Lady Mary, the royal palace of King Kazimir Jagiello, the newly-built Clot Hall—as well as the narrow Pigeon Alley, bordered by threestory wooden buildings. Joseph's view also reveals the sinister activities of the night—the skulking cutthroats and thieves, the all-night student discussions and quarrels, the unruly mobs, the illegal duels, and, above all, the activities of the alchemists.

Most of the novel's characters are moderately conventional: the brave father Pan Andrew; Joseph's dutiful mother; the wise and universally respected scholar Jan Kanty; the pretty and often-endangered Elzbietka, whom Joseph saves from a vicious dog and whom his family befriends; and the sneaking, duplicitous villain, Peter of the Button. As a character, the most interesting is probably Elzbietka's alchemist father, Pan Kreutz.

Pan Kreutz is a kind of Doctor Faustus, a scholar who is torn between using his knowledge of chemistry and physics to better understand the world and serve his fellow humans (the course Jan Kanty would have him follow), and using this knowledge to gain wealth and power. Just as Doctor Faustus is tempted by a devil, Mephistopheles, so Pan Kreutz is first tempted and then put under a hypnotic trance by the diabolical student Tring, who encourages Pan Kreutz in an increasingly crazed quest for the Philosopher's Stone, the magic stone that can turn baser metals to gold.

# Style

## Point of View

The point of view in *The Trumpeter of Krakow* is conveyed through a third person omniscient narrator. The reader is privy to the thoughts, knowledge, and emotions of each of the major and minor characters, including the antagonists. The tone of the novel is academic in nature, supported by the occasional intrusion of the third party narrative voice to provide historical context and commentary. The narrative voice belongs to the author, who was a history professor well versed in the culture of both modern and medieval Poland. Thus the novel is presented knowledgeably and with the warm tones of a genial professor sharing a tale he is certain will fascinate his audience as it does him. Indeed, the story is presented with evident love and care and the subject matter is likely to be of interest to young adults and older children. Because of its academic nature, a younger audience would have difficulty following the story line.

The point of view on which the narrator primarily focuses is that of young Joseph Charnetski. As such, the story is a coming of age tale, for Joseph must discover for himself that which his elders already know. In this case, the main discovery is the Great Tarnov Crystal, a treasure which Joseph comes to learn is in his father's possession. Despite the narrator's omniscience, details about the treasure are withheld until such time as Joseph has occasion to learn them first hand. Thus the reader gets to experience the discovery in tandem with the main character. The narrator drops hints along the way and shares Joseph's thought process as he puzzles out the nature of the mysterious object, which his father guards so carefully. This method keeps the reader engaged in solving the mystery along with Joseph.

## Setting

The settings in *The Trumpeter of Krakow* are so interesting as to eclipse the storyline. Medieval Poland is described in simple and accurate prose so that a careful reader can mentally reconstruct a vivid portrait of life in fifteenth century Krakow. The shops and storefronts in the Krakow marketplace, all clustered around the historic Cloth Hall, depict the realities of life in this era. Commodities are so precious that corn is sold by the kernel. Needle-making is a thriving business, as is tub-making and blacksmithing. Barbers, bloodletters and apothecaries provide the only medical treatment available. One's station in life can be determined by the clothes one wears. The rich wear furs and leather, the middle class wears fine cloth, and the peasants are arrayed in rough, homespun fabrics. Yet people of every economic level take pride in their appearance and even the poorest peasant women wear colorfully dyed head scarves. Ill-gotten and exotic goods are also available in the central marketplace, and thieves posing as merchants are often the only source of prized commodities like spices from the Middle East.

The architecture of medieval Poland is Gothic. The finer buildings, such as palaces, churches and the homes of the wealthy, are constructed of stone. Two thirds of the city, however, lives in wooden homes set close together. Thus fire is an ever-present threat, and, when Pan Kreutz sets his alchemist's loft afire, it quickly spreads through the university district and decimates the city of Krakow. As science is in its infancy, many charlatans abound in the city, selling the secrets of life to unsuspecting rubes. These charlatans reside near the university on the Street of Pigeons alongside honest scholars, professors, priests and alchemists. The city as described in the novel is a charming hodge-podge of people from all walks of life, each busily pursuing his business, be that plying a trade, studying at the university, stealing from the unwary, or guarding the populace. The vibrant city is sure to spark the imagination of young readers as well as teach them about civilized life prior to the advent of modern advances like indoor plumbing, electrical equipment, and motorized vehicles.

## Language and Meaning

The dialogue between the characters in this medieval tale is chivalrous. Verbal insults in medieval times could quickly provoke life-threatening situations and thus were as inadvisable as insulting a trigger-happy gunslinger in the old American West. Therefore most of the characters in *The Trumpeter of Krakow* are gracious to a fault. Additionally, the formal method of address is required when speaking to a nobleman due to the strict class distinctions in medieval Polish society. Pan Andrew insists on being addressed as a "Pan," which is the Polish term for Mister or Sir. Only noblemen are accorded this title and they insist upon its use just as modern medical doctors generally insist on being called by their titles. Noblemen had great power over the common man, so woe to the underling who neglected to use a proper title when addressing a Pan. The title was so important that even amongst equal ranking nobles, it was insisted upon, as indicated by the captain's speech to Pan Andrew in Chapter 2: "'I greet you with a hail, as is befitting between equal Pans.'" (pg. 27)

The author also provides carefully researched language in all other aspects of the text as well, occasionally providing both the Polish and English translations of a given word. Bogdan Grozny means Bogdan the Terrible, and Grodzka Street is Castle Street. The month of November is Listopad in Polish, which, appropriately, means the month of Falling Leaves. The author also refers to the legendary Philosopher's Stone by this traditional name. In recent times author J. K. Rowling has famously revived this ancient legend in her fictional children's novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. In the movie version of Rowling's book, this name was popularized as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, but the author of *The Trumpeter of Krakow* retains the original usage in his frequent references to the Philosopher's Stone.

## Structure

*The Trumpeter of Krakow* is divided into sixteen chapters and book-ended by a Prologue and Epilogue, both of which are titled *The Broken Note*. These bookends

allow the author to place the story in its greater historical context. The Prologue recounts the famous Polish legend of old about the brave young trumpeter who sounds the Heynal in defiance of an invading army of Tartars. The trumpeter is killed during this brave act in the year 1241, but his noble legend lives on even today through the efforts of historians like Eric P. Kelly. The Prologue takes place two hundred and twenty years before the opening of the novel, which is set in the years 1461 and 1462. The Epilogue then brings the reader up to date by providing a brief overview of the differences between Poland in 1462 and Poland in 1928, when the story was written. This helps the reader understand which places and events from the fictional novel actually existed or occurred in Poland.

The sixteen chapters which comprise the main storyline take place in logical, chronological order. Chapter 1 begins with the journey to Krakow, a journey which foreshadows the impending trouble with the Tartars. Chapter 2 introduces the city as it existed in medieval days. Through the eyes of young protagonist, Joseph, the reader meets an alchemist, Nicholas Kreutz, and a scholar-priest, the venerable Jan Kanty, in Chapters 3 and 4. Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to further development of the medieval setting and the introduction of the trumpeters of Krakow. Having established the history of the trumpeters in the Prologue, by the time the trumpeters are introduced into the storyline the reader is already familiar with their important tradition and feels privileged to have a window into their world. Chapters 7 through 12 contain the central action sequences and second-act conflicts. Chapter 13 initiates the climax which plays out against the backdrop of the great fire in Chapter 14. Chapter 15 resolves the disposition of the Great Tarnov Crystal and fulfills the vow taken by Pan Andrew. Chapter 16 thus provides the denouement and skips forward into the future to reveal a romantic ending for Joseph and Elzbietka. In this manner, the novel follows classic story structure and adheres to the traditional arc of the hero's quest.

# Quotes

"But, still holding to the trumpet, the youth fell back against the supporting wall and blew one last glorious note; it began strongly, trembled, and then ceased - broken like the young life that gave it birth - and at that moment those below applied the torch to the wooden church, and it, too, rose in flames to Heaven, with the soul of the youth among them." Prologue, pg. 6

"For a second the woman's heart quailed before the fresh difficulties, but she forgot self at the look in her husband's face. Her quiet reply, 'We will wait, for God is in the waiting,' filled him with courage again." Chapter 2, pg. 28

"It would be but a care to you, a matter of more worry than you suspect, if you knew what responsibility we are carrying here. If it is mere curiosity, be assured that knowledge will bring nothing but pain. If it is real interest, I will tell you plainly that in due time you shall be informed of all that has passed." Chapter 4, pg. 58

"The valuable package had been disposed of somewhere; with curious eye Joseph scanned every inch of the large room and came to the conclusion that the only hiding place in the quarters was that afforded by the bed, either in the shadowy place beneath it, or somewhere in the bedding or folded clothes beneath the headrest." Chapter 5, pg. 68

"It was quite evident even to Joseph, young and inexperienced as he was, that Tring had utterly poisoned the alchemist's mind. Indeed, now Kreutz, looking at life through the philosophy of Tring, saw that his own life was the life of a dusty plodder; it was the life not only of a poor man but of a foolish man who might be better off if he wished, who now had the opportunity to do a great deal for those whom he loved, if he would but set himself to it." Chapter 7, pg. 91

"And when I realize that it is an enemy, I must have a signal, since I myself may not leave the tower - a signal to someone in the town who will give the alarm. So I will play the Heynal, but I will not stop on the broken note." Chapter 8, pg. 98

"Clad in fiery garments which smelled of fire and brimstone and which seemed to blaze and burn and give off a greenish smoke and flame, he moved slowly forward, waving in his right hand a scepter of flaming red which was crackling with heat as a green bough crackles when it burns, while from its end little balls of fire were dripping." Chapter 10, pg. 119

"Now the saddest man in Krakow at this time was Pan Andrew Charnetski - sad because he had lost, through no fault of his own, a treasure which he had intended to present to the king of Poland, and evidently a treasure of great worth since certain men seemed to envy him its possession." Chapter 11, pg. 130

"'I tell you that I have had enough,' the alchemist repeated now. 'I have perjured my soul to obtain this stone, and I am ready to return it to its rightful owners. This stone is a thing of wickedness and blood and it has a woeful history, as old perhaps as the world itself.'" Chapter 13, pg. 162

"'It burns my hands.' '"Pay no heed to that. Your reward will be greater than your pains.' '"It is in my hands.' "Tring glanced involuntarily at the hands of the man in the trance. Curiously enough, they seemed to be turning red, as if exposed to a great heat." Chapter 13, pg. 168

"The alchemist, on his part, was but acting under the hypnotic suggestion of Tring, and had no opportunity to interpose his normal-self sense between the student's intention and its execution. Indeed, the information he had during the trance came from his own fund of learning, although the suggestion of adding niter to the heated compound was but a fancy of a mind grown either tired or weak." Chapter 13, pp. 170-171

"He had been listening attentively through all the talk; he had followed back and forth the give-and-take of conversation, the balancing of argument, the gestures, the decisions, even though his eyes had seemed but half open. Just at this final moment he sprang up from his place behind the others, like a dog leaping for a bone, and snatched the Tarnov Crystal out of the hands of the king." Chapter 16, pp. 201-202

# Topics for Discussion

1. What are the major encounters and events that influence Pan Kreutz's development, and what is the effect of each on his state of mind?

2. Compare Jan Kanty and Pan Kreutz (especially when Pan Kreutz is under Tring's influence). Does either man's philosophy prevail today?

3. Near the end of chapter 2 Joseph's mother says, "We will wait, for God is in the waiting." What does she mean by this?

4. Chapter 3 mentions that the book is set at a time "when children grew to be men and women often over a single night." What are the advantages and disadvantages of a world in which people are considered adults by the time they are fourteen or fifteen?

5. Are women given too small a role or is their limited importance justified by the times? Could you imagine a woman as a hero in this world? Describe such a character.

6. In chapter 7, both Kreutz and Tring ask a number of questions. Has modern science answered them?

7. Tring is a great tempter. Where in the modem world are there temptations like those he offers to Kreutz? Is there anything in today's world that tends to "poison the mind" as Tring does?

8. What is the novel's climax or turning point?

9. In what ways does The Trumpeter of Krakow foreshadow or suggest explanations for the rise of totalitarian government that took over Europe during the 1930s, a decade after the book's publication?

# Essay Topics

The legend of the trumpeter of Krakow proves that noble actions can live on in history and inspire future generations. Give an example from your own country's history of how one person's actions can inspire others and change the course of history.

The historical narrator presents many scientific "facts" throughout the story, based on scientific knowledge as of 1928, when the story was published. Select one such topic of interest to you and research it to see what scientists believe about it today. Report your findings and indicate if current scientific belief supports or refutes the facts presented in the story.

Research the Renaissance Era and write a brief summary of the most important dates and historical figures associated with this era.

Consult reference books or an online encyclopedia to answer the following two questions. What sort of government does Poland have today? Do the embattled Ukraine lands still belong to Poland?

The author presents the thesis that mankind's belief system underwent a major change with the advent of science. Do you believe, as the author does, that science now holds definitive answers about the nature of the universe? Is it possible that humanity's belief system could undergo another major change? If not, why not? If so, what type of change do you imagine? Might it occur in your lifetime?

In Chapter 13, the alchemist cites the following Latin quote while in a trance state, "'*Quod primum incredibile, non continuo falsum est; crebo siquidem faciem mendacii veritas retinet.*'" The author translates this quote as, "What at first [seems to be] incredible is not necessarily false since truth very often has the appearance of a lie." (pg. 169.) Can you think of an example from your own life, from current events, or from history in which something which later turned out to be true, at first appeared false?

In Chapter 8, the Italian scholar says that barbarism will disappear, only when men learn to think for themselves. How does the study of science encourage men and women to think for themselves? How might science prevent men and women from thinking for themselves?

Is it possible that even in today's modern world, scientists and educators, like the ones in the story, prefer to cling to familiar knowledge rather than opening their minds to newer ideas? Are there also visionaries in today's world, such as the historical character of Jan Kanty, who remain open-minded to new ideas and beliefs? Give an example of a modern-day visionary and explain why he or she is similar to Jan Kanty.

# Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. Research and report on the major national groups of the fifteenth century—Tartars, Poles, Cossacks, Teutonic Knights (Prussians)—that are mentioned in the novel.

2. Discounting modern medicine and conveniences made possible by modern science, compare life in Joseph's world to life in America today. Consider especially the fact that life in the crowded city forces Joseph to rub shoulders with all sorts of people. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this sort of close contact?

3. Study Copernicus, his discoveries, and his world. Is the world of the novel comparable to the world faced by Copernicus?

4. Prepare a report on the history of astrology directed at isolating and listing the major astrological beliefs likely to have been current in 1461.

5. Research and prepare a report on alchemy, on medieval firefighting, or on medieval universities.

6. Learn something about Freud's and Jung's theories of the conscious and the unconscious and the meanings of dreams. To what extent do these theories accord with the view of the mind Tring seems to hold regarding Kreutz?

There are several dreams described in the novel. How might a Freudian or Jungian explain them?

7. A struggle goes on within Pan Kreutz between two forces that might be called reason and unreason. Find examples of paintings from the 1920s— perhaps from the German expressionists and the surrealists—that reflect this same struggle between reason and unreason.

# Further Study

Miller, Bertha M., and Elinor W. Field, eds. Newbery Medal Books 19221955. Boston: Horn Book 1955. Contains a brief autobiographical comment by Kelly on his work, followed by some reflections on his retirement. Also includes a kind of poetic tribute to Krakow and its lasting effect on the author, "The City that Sings."

Serraillier, Ian. The Silver Sword. 1956.

Reprinted as Escape from Warsaw.

New York: Scholastic, 1972. A wellknown and much-praised account of young people facing the difficulties of life in Poland during World War II.

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