

The Wind Singer Study Guide

The Wind Singer by William Nicholson

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Contents

The Wind Singer Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Prologue - Chapter 8.....	4
Chapter 9 - Chapter 16.....	8
Chapter 17 - 24.....	12
Characters.....	16
Objects/Places.....	19
Themes.....	21
Style.....	23
Quotes.....	25
Topics for Discussion.....	26



Plot Summary

"The Wind Singer" is a young adult novel by William Nicholson which details the adventures of siblings Bowman and Kestrel Hath, and their friend Mumpo, to save the city of Aramanth from the evil Morah and the Zars.

Aramanth is a wealthy and powerful city that grew on the salt trade. It is a city constructed around a central arena, which surrounds a giant statue known as the wind singer. Built by mysterious strangers, the wind singer once kept away the evil Morah and her Zar army, but now no longer sings. The city measures the lives of its citizens based on their intelligence and knowledge, and gives them ratings based on that. The higher the rating, the better and wealthier the district the citizens and their families can live in.

In a middle district live the Hath family, and siblings Bowman and Kestrel. Kestrel is tired of the caste system in the city, and not having much freedom, so she rebels by climbing the wind singer. Her disobedience lands her family in trouble, and they are demoted. Rather than be forced into remedial school, Kestrel flees, and accidentally meets the Emperor, Creoth. Creoth charges Kestrel with the task of making the wind singer sing again by going to retrieve a silver talisman from the Hall of Morah down the Great Way. Kestrel agrees, and with her brother and their new found friend Mumpo, escape the city by way of the Underlake, with help from its mud people.

Out beyond the city walls, the children are caught up by the Ombaraka people, who believe them to be spies. When the children help the Baraka people defeat their Chaka enemies, the Baraka bring them to the Great Way and drop them off. From there, Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo journey toward the mountain that spews fire in the distance, where they enter the Hall of the Morah. They recover the wind singer talisman, but accidentally awaken the Morah and her Zar army, which then march on Aramanth. The three children race back ahead of them, scramble through the city, and place the talisman into the singer, causing the tower to sing. The song cripples the Zar army, turning them all into skeletons and killing them.



Prologue - Chapter 8

Prologue - Chapter 8 Summary

Prologue - When the Manth people are still living in a primitive village around a salt mine that will one day make them wealthy, a band of strangers arrive and live alongside them. The strangers build a giant tower that catches the wind and rotates, and the tower then makes strange sounds. As soon as the tower is finished being constructed, the leader of the silent strangers places a small silver object into the structure, and then the strangers leave. When they do, the sounds of the tower make sense and sound beautiful, and the Manth people are happy.

Chapter 1 - Bowman Hath and his twin sister, Kestrel, awake at six in the morning. Bowman is feeling sad because his younger, two year-old sister, Pinpin, will be given her first test, which will in turn give her a rating. The city of Aramanth measures lives in tests. Bowman's family is poor and live in the Orange District of the city. Bowman's mother, Ira Hath, a distant descendent of the prophet Ira Manth, is in the bathroom chanting. Bowman is a sensitive boy, who has the ability to tell what people are feeling. Hanno Hath, Bowman's father, instructs his family to get ready.

As they walk to the Community Hall with other families, the Bleshes reveal that if their son does well on the test, they'll be moved up to the Scarlet District. Maslo Inch, the head examiner and in a position of power in the kingdom, addresses the audience at the Hall. He reminds people that a person's personal rating can improve his or her family's rating, and that a rating is a reason to always do better. It is revealed that Maslo and Hanno were school friends, but that such friendship was long ago. Pinpin's test goes horribly wrong, with Pinpin going to the bathroom on the examiner at the coaxing of Bowman and Kestrel. Pinpin receives a zero rating, meaning the family will probably have to move down to even more humble quarters.

Chapter 2 - At school, Dr. Batch publicly berates Bowman and Kestrel for forgetting their homework. This causes their ranking in class to decrease. When Kestrel refuses to go to her new place in class, Dr. Batch confronts her. Kestrel doesn't want to sit beside Mad Mumpo, a smelly, poor student. who has a crush on Kestrel. Dr. Batch seizes on this fact, declaring loudly that perhaps Kestrel and Mumpo will marry and have children -an attack which Dr. Batch keeps up all day. Kestrel decides to leave school at lunch, against Bowman's warnings. Mumpo follows her.

Chapter 3 - Kestrel heads toward the arena where the wind singer tower is located. The city of Aramanth is walled, powerful, and has not been attacked in generations. Few people leave the city, for there is little in the outside world that is known of, such as a rocky seashore to the south, and deserts stretching to the mountains. The city is laid out in concentric circles, with each circle heading toward the center being more wealthy and powerful than the one before it. At the center is the White District, where the most wealthy and powerful live, including the Emperor, Creoth the Sixth. It is rumored that



Creoth vetoes the Board of Examiners' annual proposals to tear down the old wind tower for replacing, believing that one day, the tower will sing again.

Bowman eventually catches up with Kestrel. The three reach the arena. Kestrel, upset at the suffocating order of Aramanth, wants to do something to cause chaos. She decides to climb the wind singer tower. A scarlet-robed official at once orders Kestrel to come down, but Kestrel keeps climbing. Up on the tower, Kestrel discovers a slot in the neck of the tower with a letter S near it. The official threatens to report her if she doesn't come back down. Kestrel, meanwhile, begins shouting through the pipes of the tower, saying how much she hates school, Aramanth, the Emperor, and life in Amanranth. The loudness of the projections brings Examiners out, as well as the marshals. Bowman watches in disbelief, thinking that perhaps Kestrel has gone wild. Mumpo is hungry, and he asks the Chief Examiner for food, but the Chief Examiner hatefully tells Mumpo to get away from him.

Meanwhile, Maslo Inch orders the marshals to come down from the tower and stop their attempts to capture Kestrel. He orders all of those watching to return to work. The people scatter, and Maslo realizes that Kestrel must not just be punished, but broken.

Chapter 4 - Bowman brings his father to the arena. Kestrel comes to the ground at her father's insistence, and begins crying. Hanno holds his daughter close. Neither Hanno nor Ira blame their daughter, or are angry with her, but know that there will be a price to pay. That night, they talk about the wind singer, and Kestrel believes it will one day sing again.

Chapter 5 - The next morning, Hanno and Kestrel go to see the Head Examiner, Maslo Inch. Maslo happily recalls his childhood with Hanno. Maslo dwells on the fact that Hanno is only a librarian, yet both of them have the same roots. Maslo tells Kestrel to pay attention to everything she will be shown that day, and to remember it. Maslo brings Hanno and Kestrel to the salt caves. With all of the salt gone, the caves have become a cesspool with islands, upon which thousands of people live, who survive on trash from the world above. When Kestrel slips, and falls into the sludge, Maslo seizes Hanno and won't let him go to his daughter, telling him that he, too, needs to do better. Maslo calls Hanno a maggot and a failure. Fortunately, Kestrel only sinks to her knees, and is able to climb back up. She then charges Maslo and jumps on his back, muddying his clothes. Maslo throws Kestrel to the ground, who then runs away.

Chapter 6 - Kestrel is caught by several wardens, and ordered into Special Teaching. Kestrel decides to pretend to be good, and impresses the examiner. The examiner feels there may have been a mistake with Kestrel. The examiner speaks to a warden, during which time, Kestrel makes her escape. She climbs up a large tower, going this way and that, until she at last comes to a small landing and a locked door. Just as the wardens close in, the door opens, and an old man urges her to come in.

Chapter 7 - Outside the door, the wardens discuss how Kestrel could not be up on the landing, and then leave. The old man is wearing blue robes, a color which no one else wears. From the tower, Kestrel can see all of Aramanth. The old man reveals himself to



be Creoth, Emperor of Aramanth. Creoth reveals he has been waiting for someone to find him, for he is kept shut away. Creoth explains that Kestrel must go to the Halls of Morah to fetch back the voice, so the wind singer sings once more. When that happens, the Aramanth will be free of the Morah, the true, secret, and evil ruler of Aramanth. The Emperor gives Kestrel a map to get to the Hall. The Emperor explains that the tower sent away the evil Zars long ago, but that when they were gone, the people surrendered their freedoms bit by bit and the Morah came in.

The Emperor explains that he has lived his life in solitude in the room. The Emperor then becomes tired, and goes to sleep. Kestrel takes the map and leaves.

Chapter 8 - Kestrel makes her escape from the palace, and goes home by way of side streets and back alleys. Kestrel finds her house guarded by marshals, and Rufy Blesh meets up with her, telling her that her father has been taken to Residential Study, a kind of prison. Hanno goes into the bathroom at Bowman's insistence to collect wash things before Hanno leaves, and there, finds Kestrel waiting. Kestrel reveals everything that has happened. Hanno reveals the map is written in old Manth, which he can read. Old Manth is the language of the Singer people, who built the singer. The S letter seen on the tower also appears on the map, and is the sign of the Singer people. Hanno tells his daughter to wait until he comes home again. Dr. Minish, a senior examiner, and Dr. Batch are waiting for Hanno impatiently, and Hanno leaves. Bowman and the Bleshes know they will never see Hanno again. Bowman vows to destroy Aramanth if it means bringing his father back.

Prologue - Chapter 8 Analysis

The prologue and first eight chapters of William Nicholson's "The Wind Singer" serve as a catalyst for the rest of the novel. The reader is introduced to the caste-like system of Aramanth, which while powerful and wealthy, is nevertheless governed by quasi-fascistic means. Its citizens are not happy, but they get along. Each given a rating, they are locked in an eternal Darwinesque struggle to make it to the top, to always do better. Failure is humiliating, and those in the wealthiest and most powerful districts of the city look down with disdain upon those beneath them. Into a middle district are born the characters of Bowman and Kestrel, twin siblings who dislike the rigidity of Aramanth. Kestrel is especially forthcoming in her misanthropy toward the city and its Examiners.

The Head Examiner attempts to force the Hath family into submission by trying to impress upon Kestrel the seriousness of her situation, but Maslo Inch is a wolf in sheep's clothing. He just as quickly resorts to physical intimidation and violence as is needed to make his points. While citizens are free to cross district boundaries in the novel, it is clear from particular instances that the lower classes are abjectly reviled by the upper classes. Maslo Inch provides the main exhibition of cruelty that dwells beneath the surface of the city. This is in turn contrasted with the genuine goodness of the Hath family, especially Bowman and Kestrel.



It is Kestrel's genuine nature that is seized upon by the Emperor when he meets her. He implores her to seek out the talisman that will make the wind singer sing once more, and Kestrel, who is already wanted, has no other choice. The promise of happiness with the return of the wind singer's song also seems to encourage Kestrel to go, as if her hatred of the city was not already enough.

Taken from a metaphysical perspective, the city itself flows nicely into the dystopian "1984" universe of cities designed for perfection, but full of cracks and unhappy citizens. Indeed, much of actual history is now given to be legend in Aramant, having been whittled away by revisionists and politicking. Indeed, what was once a small, free camp of people around a salt mine has grown into an oppressive and villainous powerhouse without sight of tradition and history. The transition of Aramant into its current form belies the concerns of George Orwell and Edmund Burke; indeed, a takeover of freedom need not be bloody as in Russia in 1917, or with the Jacobins in France in the eighteenth century.



Chapter 9 - Chapter 16

Chapter 9 - Chapter 16 Summary

Chapter 9 - After Hanno is gone, Ira tells herself over and over that he will one day come back. Kestrel tells Ira everything that has happened to her, including the map and the verse, "The song of the wind singer will set you free. Then seek the homeland". Ira reveals that Aramant was never meant to be the homeland. Ira knows she must hide her daughter, because they won't be able to keep their house very longer. The next morning, they are thrown out by a squad of wardens. As the family discusses what to do, Bowman sees Mumpo in the crowd. Bowman fills Mumpo in on the plan, then returns to the house and helps pack trunks at the very top back room. Meanwhile, Mumpo, disguised as Kestrel, runs down the street, drawing away the wardens. Kestrel, meanwhile, makes her escape with Bowman. They go down into the sewers where they meet a white-haired boy, who leads them through the sewer system. Many other children also join in around Bowman and Kestrel. But the children draw away the energy of Bowman and Kestrel, but a large sound and running footsteps save them, and an unknown person throws them into cold water, which then leads to an area of soft mud.

Chapter 10 - Kestrel realizes they are in part of the sewer underworld, the Underlake. Bowman and Kestrel both realize suddenly their savior is Mumpo. Kestrel thanks him, but tells him to go home. Mumpo refuses. Mumpo begins shouting for help, and is overheard by Willum, a tixa leaf collector. Tixa leaves, when chewed, make people feel dreamy and slow. Willum rushes to the screaming, and rescues Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo, in exchange for their help with tixa leaf collecting. They follow Willum home, and his wife is unhappy Willum has been chewing tixa. All of Willum's family are mud-covered, and they offer Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo dinner, which they eat. They are then given a place to stay and sleep.

Chapter 11 - The next day, the mud people harvest a crop of mudnuts. Kestrel and Bowman realize they will have to escape Aramant somehow, by the path called The Great Way on the map. The siblings agree to watch out for one another. Pollum, the daughter of Willum, invites the three children to help in the harvest, which they do. The day passes, and it is time for dinner. The mud people gather around bonfires. Kestrel and Bowman ask Willum's wife, Jum, about a way out of the Underlake, and a way to the mountains. Jum directs them to the Old Queen. Along the way, they find Mumpo diving into the mud, having chewed some tixy leaves. Mumpo then follows them to the palace.

Chapter 12 - Kestrel, Bowman, and Mumpo seek out the Old Queen. The palace is full of old women, all too old to work, all of whom are queens, and who look after the young while parents are harvesting. Queen Num leads the three children to the Old Queen. Bowman uses his ability to sense feelings to discover all of the sad and angry thoughts and memories in the queen's mind. The Old Queen tells them the Zars will come again, and it is only a matter of time. The Old Queen longs to hear the song of the wind singer



once more. The Old Queen soon after falls into a sleep, and the children leave. They say wishes as they go to sleep.

Chapter 13 - Ira Hath is questioned about the disappearance of her children, and discovers people of the Grey District are hostile to people of better districts. Hanno, meanwhile, is in Residential Study. Hanno will be preparing for his High Examination, which could potentially save his family. The examination consists of calculation, grammar, general science, and general art. Miko Mimilith, of the Maroon District, confesses to Hanno that he doesn't do very well when it comes to calculations. But fabrics he can do. Some of the other men also speak about their talents and skills, and believe that they should be tested on those sorts of things. Hanno says that perhaps they should be, but is then called to Principal Phillish's office, where Maslo Inch is waiting. Maslo informs Hanno of his children's descent into the Underlake. While secretly hopeful, Hanno displays sadness outwardly. When Ira comes to visit Hanno, they both decide they are going to fight back.

Chapter 14 - The next morning, Willum and an escort of mudmen arrive to bring Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo out of the Underlake. The mudmen sing for the children as they leave the cave that leads out of the mud world. Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo head for the mountains in the distance. The desert plain is hot, dry, and windy. They take shelter from the increasing winds behind an old wagon, and study the map. They know they must find the Great Way, or what is left of it. Bowman realizes the wagon they are taking refuge in is actually a land-sailer of some sort. But out of the dusty wind come the old children with white hair, and begin surrounding them. They quickly climb onto the wagon, and unloose the sails, and race across the desert., ultimately crashing. Far enough away from the old children, they sleep. They decide to continue on, but hear something big coming their way.

Chapter 15 - A massive land-sailer approaches Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo. The land-sailer has a massive city built onto it. As it passes, a jaw-like machine picks up the tiny land-sailer and the children. They are accused of being Chaka spies, and are taken away and put in the brig. They converse with their guard, is perplexed at their size. The children insist they aren't spies. The guard finds Mumpo intelligent, and Mumpo compliments the guard's braided hair and the guard agrees to braid Mumpo's hair. The guard is named Salimba, and the moving town is Ombaraka. Kemba, the counsellor to Raka the Ninth, leader of the Baraka people, comes in to see the prisoners. He says they must die, but then they cannot be killed, because of a treaty. Kemba must bring the prisoners to Raka, because only Raka can pronounce death sentences.

Raka is a short but ferocious man. It turns out the small land-sailer that was commandeered by Bowman and the others is a corvette, a damage which Raka insists will be paid back tenfold. They set a course for Omchaka, home of the Chaka. Kemba is to interrogate them before hanging. Kemba explains that the Baraka and the Chaka have been at war with one another forever, but a treaty was drafted, stating that no Chaka blood would ever be spilled by the Baraka, if no Baraka blood would ever be spilled by the Chaka first, and vice versa. Kemba therefore reveals that only their fleets now fight -corvettes, cruisers, and so on. No warrior has died in a generation. Kemba



resolves that the three children will be sent out in a corvette when the battle fleets attack each other, and the Chaka will kill the children, causing the treaty to remain in effect.

Chapter 16 - Bowman believes that when they go out to battle, they could commandeer the corvette they are in, and reach safety. The children are tied up in the boat and the battle begins. The tide quickly turns against the Baraka, as the Chaka fleet breaks through. The Baraka release their corvettes and regain the upper hand, believing the Chaka to have run out of craft to launch. But then a concealed door opens up in the Chaka city, revealing a whole new fleet. Raka knows he has lost the battle. The Baraka people see that the children have gained control of their craft and are alongside the lead reserve Chaka cruiser. They catch the cruiser and pull it over onto its side. They do it to four more cruisers, and Raka realizes that the children are not spies. They win the battle.

For the victory, Raka puts himself and his people at the service of the children. They are given hair treatments and braiding, and a dinner. The children ask for the Great Way north, but Kemba and Raka are afraid the children might accidentally wake the Zars, and decide to head south back to Aramanth instead. Bowman requests a private audience with Raka, which is granted. Bowman uses his gift of feeling to understand that Raka grew up unloved by his father because of his height. Raka agrees to head north. They arrive the next morning, near forests and mountains. The people sing and cheer as the children depart.

Chapter 9 - Chapter 16 Analysis

The departure of Hanno creates a noticeable rift of absence in the Hath family. Ira doesn't mind so much that her family has been condemned to the Grey District, but rather is largely concerned about the safety of her husband and her children. The Hath family indeed proves to be the rare sort of family the turns up in such places as Aramanth, with a rarity of the ten just men God sought in Sodom. The Haths will not hurt or harm their children for their behavior, but in according fashion, shoulder the blame as well.

Bowman and Kestrel, meanwhile, along with their new found friend Mumpo, embark upon an Arthurian quest for the source of power to return the wind singer's voice. Bowman and Kestrel form a pair of heroes in the traditional sense. They are both genuine and good people, and so are not utilitarian antiheroes, tragic heroes, or anything of the sort. Their hearts are pure and their intents true, and their goodness as human beings can be seen in their care for Mumpo along the way. It is a care that comes naturally from Bowman, who is very sensitive; but from Kestrel, the action-oriented twin, the feeling is less than forthcoming at first.

The territory around Aramanth serves as something of a physical reminder to the people that there is nothing worth leaving the city for. Beyond the city to the south is rocky shoreline and ocean, and to the north is desert. In such bleak circumstances, the Manth



people believe their world begins and ends with the city of Aramanth itself. This makes the leaving of the city by Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo that much more poignant.

The adventure they have set out upon begins almost at once, with their capture by the Baraka people. The Baraka and Chaka people, whom have been engaged in war with one another (the causes, in typical Hatfield/McCoy fashion, are never quite explained and are eventually forgotten) inexorably draw the three heroes into their feud. The three heroes ultimately save the Baraka people from disaster, and in so doing change the course of events for an entire city of people.

The journey to retrieve the wind singer's voice has already changed the future; what consequences will come from the defeat of the Chaka is not seen in the book, and can only be guessed at when the children are later captured by the Chaka. Because of their heroic deeds, the Baraka people treat the three children as heroes in their own right. At least one consequence from this action is that the children have unwittingly secured for Aramanth a nod of approval from the Baraka people, whom at last recognize the children as Manth people.



Chapter 17 - 24

Chapter 17 - 24 Summary

Chapter 17 - Ira Hath has created new robes for herself, of striped material. It causes a sensation in the streets. She gathers a group of followers, who go with her to the base of the wind singer, hoping to see her punished. There, she begins assuming the role of a prophetess, telling the people that the future will bring gladness. Dr. Greeth, responsible for city order, approaches with four marshals. Dr. Greeth, rather than making a scene, orders the marshals to disperse the crowd, and allows Ira to remain. Hanno finds out the next day from the serving girls at the Residential Study Center of his wife's actions.

Hanno, meanwhile, has helped convince his new friends and fellow students to write about what they know best on the tests, rather than actually attempt the test itself. Eventually, every single person joins the rebellion. They write about clouds, weaves, Old Manth, and tea breaks. Meanwhile, Ira spends the night at the base of the wind singer. The people return to listen to her, and she said that there needs to be kindness. The examiners have no idea how to handle the situation, but the Chief Examiner knows the spirit of the whole family must be broken.

Chapter 18 - Kestrel, Bowman, and Mumpo walk among the hills and scrubby trees. They come across a giant statue, one of a series which line the Great Way. As they journey, they ask Mumpo about his life. Mumpo's mother died when he was young, and he doesn't know his father -but he has a family rating because of his uncle. Mumpo hates school because he isn't bright, and because he is always alone, but now he is happy to have a friend in Kestrel. Kestrel says that she is indeed Mumpo's friend. They realize they will have to spend one night in the forest through which the Great Way leads. They press on until they reach a great ravine, over which a deteriorated bridge once stood. Debating whether or not to cross, they realize the old children have caught up. They rush across the bridge, only to discover the old children have surrounded them. Mumpo, Bowman, and Kestrel take the sacks of mudnuts they have with them, and use them to swing around at the old children, knocking them off the bridge.

They must spend the night on the bridge. A flash of orange into the sky brings down fiery explosions, and the old children rush around, trying to be hit. When they are hit, they explode, and nothing is left behind. The remaining old children flee.

Chapter 19 - The following morning, Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo are still alone, and realize the great depth of the gorge over which they slept. Mumpo, reaching for a mudnut, is grabbed by an old child, and turns old himself. Bowman smashes the old child off into the gorge, and Kestrel promises that Mumpo will be alright. As they go on, the Great Way becomes more difficult, especially on Mumpo. At the same time, large black birds begin circling. At the same time, a line of gray wolves appears. The oldest wolf, the leader, comes forward, and sits down before Bowman. Bowman, reading the



feelings of the wolf, understands the wolves have been waiting for someone to fight the Morah. The black eagles land, and they, too, are waiting to fight the Morah. The wolves and the birds join Bowman and the others on their journey.

They ride the wolves to the edge of a valley before the great, fiery mountain. But Mumpo charges down into the valley without warning, into the trees, and Bowman and Kestrel race to catch up. Mumpo charges toward the base of the mountain before them, which shoots out fire and flame, and runs into it along with other old children. Bowman and Kestrel join hands, and head for the fire themselves.

Chapter 20 - Going into the fire, Bowman and Kestrel are surprised to discover the flames are actually cool. Through the flames, they discover a dark, wooden hall with tile floors, as though from a mansion. On either side of the hall are dark rooms with dust-covered, draped furniture. There is a dining room and a bedroom, as well as a bathroom. They discover an old woman, asleep in the bed. In her hair is a silver clasp with the S shape on it. As Bowman takes the clasp, the old lady's eyes open, and he is aware he is staring into the eyes of the Morah. The Zars have awoken. Bowman, usually timid, is bewitched by the power of the old woman.

From the darkness emerges a marching band dressed all in white, of girls and boys in their young teens, spotless and beautiful. Youthful soldiers follow the band. Among the Zar soldiers is Mumpo, no longer dirty and old, but bright, young, and polished. Bowman has become the leader of the Zars army, and Kestrel is beside herself with terror and grief. Kestrel makes eye contact with Bowman, and she sends thoughts into his mind, and pleads with him. He recognizes her, drops the sword, and brother and sister embrace.

Chapter 21 - Outside, the black eagles attack the marching Zars column, but fail to make a significant dent in the lines. The wolves also attack, and the Zars fight back with swords. Bowman and Kestrel see Mumpo fighting with the Zars. They grab Mumpo, and are pursued by a band of Zars. Kestrel tries to make Mumpo understand that the Zars are not his friends. Mumpo realizes Bowman and Kestrel were his first friends, and he says he will never abandon them. They climb a tree to get away from the pursuing Zars, and see the battle unfold before them. As the Zars begin climbing the tree, Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo are rescued by flying eagles.

As they fly, they know they have to destroy the bridge. They land, and the eagles return to battle. Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo work together to build a mound of stones, and push it over against the bridge, hoping to collapse it. It does not work. Bowman says he will fight off the Zars while Kestrel and Mumpo escape, but Kestrel will not hear of it. As Bowman charges, he stops, because the bridge does collapse as the Zars begin crossing. No matter how many Zars die, they realize, there are always more.

Chapter 22 - The day before the High Examination, Principal Phillish addresses all of the students, telling them they will succeed if they try. But Phillish realizes the candidates aren't nervous about the test. Phillish decides to try a few practice questions. Hanno explains to Phillish what the candidates have decided to do. Phillish realizes



there is mutiny at hand. Phillish tells Maslo Inch what has happened. Maslo is determined to make Hanno sorry.

During the night, Maslo has Ira arrested and Pinpin taken from her. Maslo gives Hanno and Ira statements which will be read to the public. Pinpin's return depends upon their cooperation.

Chapter 23 - Overnight, the Zars keep falling to their death, building a pile of bodies that will soon bridge the gorge. Bowman and Kestrel know they must get back to Aramanth before the Zars do. They imagine it would take three days time to get back. As they travel through the desert, they are captured by the people of Omchaka and are to be put to death. Their guard, Pok, brings them food, because he doesn't want them to die on his watch and be blamed for it. The Chaka are similar to the Baraka, except the Chaka shave their heads. The next morning, the three children are brought to see Haka Chaka, leader of Omchaka. They discover to their surprise that Chaka is Kemba. They appeal to the Chaka that the Zars are following them, but they are to be hanged anyway. But just as they are about to die, the Zars appear on the horizon. The Chaka commands the children be set free at once, and they are given a low-bottom craft to take to Aramanth. At last, they reach the city in the midst of a terrible storm.

Chapter 24 - It is the day of the High Examination. All heads of families are diligently at work, having been delayed by the rain. High above, the Emperor watches the examinations, which he hates. He sees three muddied children come out of a sewer manhole, to be followed by Zars. He is horrified. Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo race through the arena, and Maslo Inch is incensed. Pinpin escapes from her custodian, and rushes underneath benches after her siblings. The three of them dodge guards, and it is Mumpo who takes the silver talisman to place in the neck of the wind singer. Just as the Zars break into the arena, the wind singer begins singing. Hearing the singing, the Emperor descends the tower. Meanwhile, all the people in the city are trading clothes and mingling freely.

It is revealed that Maslo Inch is really Mumpo's father. The Emperor is delighted in the happy bustle of the people. The Hath family reunites. At the same time, the Zars age dramatically in minutes and die, until nothing is left but skeletons and swords.

Chapter 17 - 24 Analysis

Just as Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo begin their own journey of adventure and discovery, the Hath parents begin a journey of self-discovery. Ira Hath comes into her own by following her family's prophesying roots, and Hanno moves into his own by moving among the people and rallying the disaffected to a worthy cause in their rebellion against the High Examination. What had once been an act of rebellion by a single girl -Kestrel- has since become a movement, first through the parents, and then through all of the people that have been reached through their influence. Revolution is often described as a fire or a pox; from the standpoint of the Examiners, revolution must be crushed, but Maslo Inch has failed miserably in this regard.



The strange creatures and challenges encountered by the children on their own journey reflect the Arthurian quest, as well as reflect other such momentous tales, from the Voyage of Saint Brendan to Tolkein's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy. The journey of Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo proves to be world-altering. The black eagles and gray wolves, without leaders or courage, find inspiration in the children, and fight to the death in the vain attempt to defeat the Zars. Such news will be widespread, and could potentially one day precede the comings and goings of the three. The pirate-like people of the land-sailing cities have also forever been impacted by the adventures of the three.

The return of the children therefore completes a great many unfinished circles, but also leaves a large number of questions. These questions are brought about with a sequence of important events.

Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo return to the city on a day when nearly the entire population has turned out for the High Exams. Their return is even seen by the Emperor, who is joyous. Indeed, the singing of the tower not only saves the city from destruction, but proves to be the source of freedom for the Emperor, who has himself been held against his will in his tower room for unexplained reasons. Mumpo is reunited with his father, but what the initial reason for Mumpo's abandonment is not clearly shown, though perhaps it has to do with his slowness. Bowman and Kestrel are reunited with their parents and baby sister, but the price for Hanno's rebellion is not clearly known beyond the reading of the letter. Why prophesying fell from the functions of the Ira's ancestors is not clearly illustrated either, though he return to prophesying has completed that circle. What will become the fate of the three adventurers is also not shown, but the reader anticipates that they will be rewarded by a begrudged city government.



Characters

Bowman Hath

Bowman Hath is the son of Hanno and Ira Hath, and brother of Kestrel and Pinpin Hath. Kestrel is Bowman's twin sister, and each of the twins have a distinct personality, but are devoted to the other. Bowman is sensitive and quiet, and has the ability to read people's feelings. He is cautionary and kind, and urges his sister not to set things off-balance, though he despises Aramanth. When Kestrel is branded an outlaw, and his father is taken away by the wardens, Bowman resolves that he will do whatever it takes to reunite his family, even if it means destroying Aramanth itself.

Bowman uses his ability to feel and understand several times throughout the book, including to read the sad and angry memories of the Old Queen of the mud people. This encourages the Queen to gather an escort to guide Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo out of the Underlake region and to the desert above and beyond the city walls. Bowman also uses his ability to read the feelings of King Raka, compelling the king to bring the three adventurers to the edge of the desert and the Great Way.

Bowman is also normally timid and hesitant, and so often follows the lead of Kestrel. Yet he also serves as a check against her headstrong nature and impulsiveness. In the Hall of Morah, Bowman is temporarily bewitched by the call of the Morah, almost becoming a Zar himself. He is saved by Kestrel at the last moment, and he, Kestrel, and Mumpo race back to the city to restore the voice of the wind singer. At the end of the book, Bowman reunites with his entire family.

Kestrel Hath

Kestrel Hath is the daughter of Hanno and Ira Hath, and sister of Bowman and Pinpin Hath. Kestrel is Bowman's twin sister, and each of the twins have a distinct personality, yet they are devoted to one another. Kestrel is headstrong, impulsive, and very much action-oriented, while her brother is quieter, sensitive, and thoughtful. She is also devoted to her family, and absolutely hates the city of Aramanth and its caste-like system of culture and society.

Kestrel, railing against school, ascends the wind singer and uses it to project her hatred of the city. She is sent to reeducation for her actions, but flees and meets Emperor Creoth, who tasks her with restoring the wind singer's voice. When her family is punished for her actions, and punishment looms, Kestrel has no choice but to leave the city, which she does with Bowman and Mumpo. Kestrel is a pretty girl, and Mumpo is very much attracted to her, declaring love to her throughout the journey -which Kestrel brushes aside. Ultimately, Kestrel and Mumpo do become friends.

Where Kestrel often leaps without looking, her brother, Bowman, serves to be a cautionary check against her. The two work well in concert with one another. When



Bowman falls under the spell of the Morah, it is Kestrel acting without thinking and seeking to latch onto Bowman's true nature that she successfully returns him from the bewitching. She, Bowman, and Mumpo then race back to the city to restore the wind singer's voice and stop the Zars.

Ira Hath

Ira Hath is the mother of Bowman, Kestrel, and Pinpin, and wife of Hanno. She is unfailingly kind and confident in herself and her family, and loves Hanno to no end. She is distantly descended from a great prophetess, and following the abduction of her husband the disappearance of Bowman and Kestrel, returns to her roots. She becomes a prophetess, camping out at the base of the wind singer, and declaring that the people will one day soon be happy. At the end of the novel, she is reunited with her husband and her children.

Hanno Hath

Hanno Hath is the patriarch of the Hath family. He is the husband of Ira, and father of Kestrel, Bowman, and Pinpin. A resident of the Orange District of Aramanth, he is a subdistrict librarian, and has the uncommon ability to read and speak the language of Old Manth. He is devoted to his family, and refuses to scold or harm his children for their acts of rebellion. He deciphers Emperor Creoth's map for Kestrel, and later encourages a mini-rebellion at the Residential Study Center by getting all of his classmates to write about the things they know, rather than responding directly to the tests. He is old friends with Maslo Inch, head Examiner, but this childhood friendship has since vanished with Inch's rise to power. At the end of the novel, Hanno is reunited with his family.

Emperor Creoth the Sixth

Old Emperor Creoth the Sixth is given to to be the ruler of the city of Aramanth, though he reveals he is kept hidden away in a tower. For what reasons and why are a mystery and not revealed. Creoth saves the fleeing Kestrel from the pursuing wardens, and tasks her with the job of restoring the wind singer's voice. Rumor has it that the only reason the wind singer has never been torn down is because Creoth himself has vetoed all attempts to do so. When the singer's voice is restored, Creoth is free from his tower, and is happy to discover the city is alive and noisy.

Maslo Inch

Maslo Inch is the High Examiner of the City of Aramanth. Childhood friends with Hanno, Maslo has since divested himself of the friendship, and spares no effort to humiliate and break the Hath family, a task at which he fails. Maslo is cruel and vindictive, and has



nothing but disdain, disgust, and contempt for those of lower districts, including Hanno. At the end of the novel, it is revealed that Maslo is actually Mumpo's father.

Mumpo

Mumpo is a student in Bowman and Kestrel's class, and is very slow mentally. He is brave and courageous, and has unswerving loyalty toward Bowman and Kestrel, his first two friends. Indeed, Mumpo is in love with Kestrel, and will do anything for her. He saves Kestrel and Bowman from the old children early in the novel, and becomes the third party of their journey to the Hall of the Morah.

Along the way, Mumpo is turned into an old child when he is grabbed by one of the old children, and plunges on ahead into the Hall of Morah without waiting for Bowman and Kestrel. He inadvertently becomes a Zar, but the power of his love for Kestrel, as well as his friendship with Bowman, is enough to bring him back from the Zar ranks. Indeed, upon the return to the city, it is Mumpo who climbs the wind singer to replace the talisman and to restore the tower's voice.

At the end of the novel, Mumpo - who has presumably been put in the Orange District because of the power and wealth of his uncle, for his mother is dead and his father gone - comes to discover that his father is actually Maslo Inch.

Willum

Willum is one of the mud people who inhabit the Underlake region beneath the city of Aramanth. He is jolly and kind, and has an affinity for tixa leaves, which make the user feel dreamy and disconnected. Willum saves Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo from a mud pit, allows them to stay with his family, and then helps guide them to the desert.

Raka

Raka is the king and ruler of the Ombaraka people. He is very fierce, and very short, and believes at first that Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo are Chaka spies. But when the three of them save the Baraka fleet from destruction, Raka realizes he has been mistaken. After Bowman reads his emotions -Raka feels unaccomplished and unloved by his father, who resented Raka's short stature- Raka brings the three children to the edge of the desert so that they can follow the Great Way.

The Morah

The source of all evil in the regions around her hall, the Morah is an old woman who sleeps and is awoken by Bowman. She is truly evil, and commands the Zar army, which seeks to destroy Aramanth.



Objects/Places

Aramanth

Originally a small salt-mining camp, Aramanth grew wealthy, prosperous, and powerful. It is a city of megalithic proportions, designed in concentric circles. The closer in the circle one lives, the wealthier and more powerful one is, without the outermost circles being for the poorest and least privileged. Aramanth is ruled by a Board of Examiners who rate citizens based on their ability to perform in tests. The city is presumably ruled by Emperor Creoth the Sixth, who doesn't seem to have too much power, except to continually veto all attempts to tear down the wind singer tower at the heart of the city.

Community Hall

The Community Hall is where citizens are given regular examinations during the course of the year. It is at the Orange District Community Hall that baby Pinpin utterly fails her first test.

The Underlake

The Underlake is a subterranean region beneath Aramanth, into which the citizens deposit their filth and waste. The Underlake is populated by people who cover themselves with mud, and live off and in the trash from the world above. It is where Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo originally flee the city, and later through where they return.

Ombaraka

A massive city situated upon a massive wooden land-sailing ship, Ombaraka is home of the Baraka people, ruled by King Raka. Ombaraka has been in perpetual war against the Chaka people, and Ombaraka is where Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo are taken after being captured.

Residential Study Center

The Residential Study Center is where perpetually failing citizens of Aramanth are sent to study and learn in the vain attempt to pass the annual High Examination. It is where Hanno Hath is sent, and where he devises a rebellion against the Examinations.



The Hall of the Morah

Located at the end of the Great Way, the Hall of the Morah is where the Morah rests and the dark army of Zars is stationed.

Corvette

A small land-sailing ship, a corvette is what Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo use to sail across the desert, and later to engage and defeat the Chaka fleet.

Giant Statues

Giant statues of robed men are positioned on either side of the Great Way, and serve as a physical landmark for the Great Way's position.

The Wind Singer

Constructed by nomadic strangers, the wind singer is a giant music tower which, when it catches the wind, emits beautiful musical notes which create harmony and happiness and destroy evil. The wind singer stands at the heart of the city of Aramant, and all proposals to destroy it are vetoed by Emperor Creoth the Sixth. The voice of the wind singer is restored by Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo, who journey to recover the talisman to make the tower sing.

The Map

The map given to Kestrel by Emperor Creoth shows the way to the Hall of Morah, down the Great Way. Written in Old Manth, the map is deciphered by Hanno, and serves as the guide for the quest of Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo.

Themes

Family

Family is a major and dominant theme in the novel "The Wind Singer" by William Nicholson. It is present in every aspect and every adventure in the book, from the beginning to the end. In Nicholson's novel, family means strength, love, companionship, and loyalty - all of which are on clear display by the Haths.

The Hath family is a close-knit group. Ira and Hanno Hath protect and raise their children well, who in turn respect and admire their parents. Indeed, the Hath family is a rare and beautiful thing. Rather than scold their children for their unhappy disobedience, Hanno and Ira rally around their children and help accept the burden of punishment. This means reeducation and reallocation, yet neither Hanno nor Ira bemoan their children for the misfortune they have received. Family decisions are made together, and are always made for the benefit of the family, rather than at the expense of particular members.

The Hath children - specifically the twins, Kestrel and Bowman - also demonstrate an incredible strength of family. They are devoted to one another, and make a pact, consistently honored, that they will do everything together, from facing danger to never abandoning the other. When they confront the fires of the Hall of Morah, both siblings enter simultaneously. Indeed, it is the familial love between the siblings that Kestrel seizes upon to save her brother from the clutches of the Morah.

At the end of the novel, the strength of family cannot even escape the foulness of someone like Maslo Inch, who upon reunion with his son Mumpo, asks Mumpo's forgiveness.

Rebellion

Rebellion is a major and dominant theme in the novel "The Wind Singer" by William Nicholson, and appears primarily in two places, at the hands of three characters. Rebellion becomes a source of unity against the oppressive city of Aramant and its rulers.

In the first instance, rebellion is committed by Kestrel, who climbs the wind singer to voice her displeasure with the city over the entire arena. She stops the work day for many government and political officials, not to mention for regular citizens. This single act of rebellion not only disturbs the day for half the city, but is something that will be repeated again and again as the days pass. Indeed, her fleeing of the city is itself also an act of rebellion.

In the second instance, rebellion is committed by Hanno Hath while he is at the Residential Study Center. Rather than simply taking the High Examination, he is able to



enlist every single one of his classmates to write about the things they know, rather than about the things the Examiners think they should know, on the tests. This causes severe consternation and incredulity in the ranks of the Examiners.

The third instance of rebellion appears with the character of Ira Hath, Hanno's wife. Ira, the descendent of a prophetess, decides to become a prophetess herself. Refusing to wear the plain gray clothes of the Grey District, Ira instead dons striped robes and encamps at the foot of the wind singer. There, she preaches to innumerable people, telling them happiness will one day come.

Each instance of rebellion therefore serves to undermine the careful and meticulous pattern of order concocted and overseen by the Examiners and the wealthy. Indeed, the restoration of the voice to the wind singer brings out the good and kindly Emperor Creoth, who wants a city full of happiness and noise.

Adventure

Adventure is a major and dominant theme in the novel "The Wind Singer" by William Nicholson. It appears on every page of the novel, ultimately reaching a great crescendo of action and consequence. Adventure can consist of a break with the norm, a journey, or an embarkation and the struggle to overcome some sort of challenge. It can also include meeting new people and seeing new places -all of which occur in the novel.

The very first forms of adventure in the novel occur with Kestrel's disobedience in class, and later her ascent of the wind singer. It is a break from the norm, something she has never done before. It is a small adventure, but it is an adventure nonetheless. The ascent of the wind singer itself proves to be a major adventure, with half the city being disturbed by Kestrel's acts.

The greatest adventure of all proves to be the journey to restore the voice of the wind singer. Alongside that overarching adventure, there are several smaller adventures that Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo have. Among them are the land-sailer battle between the cities of Omchaka and Ombaraka, and the encounter with the wolves and eagles that fight the first battle against the Zars. Indeed, meeting the mud people, the Baraka, and the Chakas, and learning about their ways and their culture and society prove to be matters of adventure for the three journeying children.

Style

Point of View

William Nicholson tells his novel "The Wind Singer" from the third-person omniscient. This is done for several reasons. Principally, the vast scope of characters, places, and events, require a third-person omniscient narrator to conduct the plot. This allows effortless transitions between characters and different places, as well as simultaneous events occurring in polar places. Secondly, there are events and conversations between people that a limited-omniscient, first-person narrator would not be privy to, but are nevertheless crucial to the reader for the direction of the plot (such as Maslo Inch's plotting to break the spirit of the Hath family). Thirdly, in order to engage the reader and keep the plot moving along with the fast pace of the adventure itself, Nicholson uses third person to avoid the oftentimes distracting nature and slowness that can be consistent with first-person narration, where much emphasis is spent on thought and consideration, rather than action.

Setting

Because William Nicholson's novel "The Wind Singer" is a work of fantasy and fiction to such a degree that an entire world must be invented, setting the novel in a recognizable place or period would have been distracting and unrealistic. Nicholson instead creates a world around Aramant, one of rocky shores and oceans, and dry and inhospitable deserts, to the north of which lie thick forests, hills, and gray mountains. The setting is therefore perfect for fantasy and adventure, and for Nicholson to bend the laws of reality in the world he has created, for they are his laws and his world.

Language and Meaning

William Nicholson tells his novel "The Wind Singer" in language that is simple and straightforward, but with a gentle poetic touch to it. This is important and instrumental for two primary reasons.

First, Nicholson's audience is one of young adults, so a grand vocabulary and superfluously poetic prose would not be welcome or useful. By using language that is consistent with an educated young reader, Nicholson makes his novel that much more engaging.

At the same time, Nicholson's novel is not without a soft, poetic touch. His use of gentle language, especially when it comes to love and kindness between characters, proves to give the novel's writing an elegance, which at the same time reinforces the fantasy setting of the novel. One expects fantasy people to speak differently, but not altogether unlike people from the real world.

Structure

William Nicholson structures his novel "The Wind Singer" in twenty-four consecutive chapters, with the inclusion of a prologue. Nicholson does this for at least two reasons.

First, the book is geared toward young adults. Rather than confusing his audience with unnecessarily complicated structure which could detract from the plot of the story, Nicholson chooses consecutive chapters to help keep the reader grounded in a fantasy world.

Secondly, the pace of the novel is swift and engaging. In order to progress events and keep the plot moving, Nicholson uses consecutive chapters so as not to interfere with, or interrupt the steady pace of action with unique or unusual structuring.



Quotes

She had gone so far now, she had broken so many rules and said such wicked things, that she knew she would suffer the most severe punishment; and since what was done could not be undone, she was free to be as bad as she wanted to be."

-Chapter 3, p. 35

"The song of the wind singer will set you free."

-Chapter 7, p. 77

"We'll look after each other," said Kestrel. "You're the one who feels, and I'm the one who does."

-Chapter 11, p. 128

Keep them safe, he said, as if there was someone or something out there to whom he could appeal. They're so young. Watch over them.

-Chapter 13, p. 160

Nothing excited people in Amaranth more than seeing fellow citizens humiliated in public.

-Chapter 17, p. 230

"That's where we have to go," said Kestrel, looking at the mountain. "Into the fire."

-Chapter 18, p. 265

So hand in hand they walked down the last of the Great Way towards the flames.

-Chapter 19, p. 282

As she spoke the words, he knew they were true. What was there to fear? So long as he looked into the million eyes, he was part of the greatest power in existence. no more fear now. Let others fear.

-Chapter 20, p. 290

We face the ancient enemy at last. What else can we do but die?

-Chapter 21, p. 304

"Look after him, Mumpo," said Hanno Hath in his quiet voice, his arms still tight round his children. "Fathers need all the help their children can give them."

-Chapter 24, p. 358

Topics for Discussion

The thought, "We face the ancient enemy at last. What else can we do but die?" from the old leader of the gray wolves in Chapter 21 (page 304) underscores the hopelessness of fighting the Zars. Why is this quote and the attack of the wolves and black eagles important? What does it demonstrate to Kestrel, Bowman, and Mumpo?

Discuss the theme of family in William Nicholson's novel, "The Wind Singer". What is family like in the novel? What is the Hath family like? How do the members of the Hath clan demonstrate the theme of family, and how does it affect the course of the novel? Provide specific examples.

Discuss the friendship that exists between the characters of Bowman, Kestrel, and Mumpo. What is this friendship like? Why is it important? How do each of the characters help and encourage the others?

Discuss the theme of adventure in William Nicholson's novel, "The Wind Singer". What are some of the adventures in the novel? List three. Why are they adventures? What experiences do Kestrel, Bowman, and Mumpo gain from these adventures?

Discuss the theme of rebellion in the novel "The Wind Singer" by William Nicholson. Where does rebellion occur, and at whose hands? How is this rebellion greeted by citizens and Examiners? What are their responses? Are the rebellions effective? Why or why not? Provide evidence to support your claim.