

The Wind Through the Keyhole: A Dark Tower Novel Study Guide

**The Wind Through the Keyhole: A Dark Tower Novel
by Stephen King**

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Plot Summary

"The Wind Through the Keyhole" by Stephen King is the eighth book in the Dark Tower series, though it falls between books four and five chronologically. While taking shelter from a storm, Roland tells his three companions a personal story from his youth as well as a story his mother told him when he was a boy. "The Wind Through the Keyhole" is an interesting combination of two stories within the larger context of the Dark Tower series.

In "Starkblast", Roland, Eddie, Susannah and Jake are traveling along the Path of the Beam toward the Dark Tower when an approaching starkblast forces them to take shelter in a meeting hall in the abandoned village of Gook. To entertain his companions, Roland tells two stories, a true story from his youth and a tale that his mother told him as a child. In "The Skin-Man", the story from his youth, Steven Deschain, Roland's father, sends two gunslingers, Roland and Jamie, to rescue the town of Debaria from a skin-man who is ripping people apart. Working with the sheriff to solve the mystery, Roland is appalled by the devastation the creature wreaks, and when he finds a witness to the skin-man, Young Bill Streeter, Roland uses his hypnosis to extract additional information from the boy's mind, finding that the skin-man has a blue ring tattooed around his ankle. While waiting for Jamie and the sheriff to return from the miners' encampment with miners who are able to ride horses since they found fresh manure at the scene of the crime, Roland tells Bill the story of "The Wind Through the Keyhole" to calm his nerves, recalling how his mother told him the story when he was young.

A young boy, Tim lives happily with his parents in the village of Tree at the edge of the Endless Forest until his father, Big Ross, never returns from a venture into the Endless Forest and his partner, Big Kells, tells Tim and Nell that Ross was killed by a dragon. Nell marries Big Kells who becomes very abusive when he drinks, causing Tim to hate his stepfather. When the Covenant Man visits, he gives Tim a key to unlock anything, and Tim uses to unlock Kells' trunk, finding his father's lucky coin inside. Visiting the Covenant Man in a clearing, Tim stumbles upon his father's corpse and heeds the tax collector's suspicions that Kells murdered Ross. During this encounter, Kells beats Nell, blinding her, for opening his trunk before hiding from the townsmen who search for him for Ross's murder.

Finding and using the Covenant Man's wand, Tim sees a vision of receiving a cure from Maerlyn of the Eld for his mother's eyes, so he ventures into the Endless Forest where he faces many dangers. A magical disk given to him by the mudmen leads him to the North Forest Kinnock Dogan where Tim finds a caged tiger. He and the tiger take shelter in the Dogan during a starkblast, and the next day, Tim administers liquid from a brown bottle found in the Dogan to the tyger, causing it to transform into Maerlyn of the Eld who instructs Tim to use the remaining liquid to cure Nell's eyes. He also directs Tim to give Nell the hand ax that belonged to Big Ross as soon as he cures her eyes. Tim flies home on a dibbin, cures his mother's eyes and gives her his father's hand ax. When he attempts to wake Widow Smack, he finds that she is dead, but before he can react, Kells begins choking him until Nell plants Big Ross's ax in the back of Kells' head.



Tim retrieves the gun given to him by Widow Smack which he used during his adventure as Maerlyn foretold that he would become a gunslinger.

Shortly after Roland finishes the story, Sheriff Peavy, Jamie and the other men return with a group of miners who are able to ride horses. Roland parades the miners with blue rings tattooed around their ankles past Bill to identify the skin-man, and when Bill remembers that the murderer's tattoo was different, he identifies Ollie Ang who has a thick white scar running through his tattoo. After killing the skin-man, Roland returns to Serenity to see Everlynne who gives him a letter from his mother, Gabrielle Deschain, explaining that she knew she would die at her son's hand when she returned to Gilead, but she forgives him and asks his forgiveness in turn as he killed her because Gabrielle betrayed her family by becoming the consort of Marten Broadcloak and Roland was tricked by the witch, Rhea of the Coos. Finishing his stories, Roland and his ka-tet ride out the rest of the starkblast before continuing on their journey toward the Dark Tower.



Starkblast

Starkblast Summary

"The Wind Through the Keyhole" by Stephen King is the eighth book in the Dark Tower series, though it falls between books four and five chronologically. While taking shelter from a storm, Roland tells his three companions a personal story from his youth as well as a story his mother told him when he was a boy. "The Wind Through the Keyhole" is an interesting combination of two stories within the larger context of the Dark Tower series.

In the days after leaving the Green Palace, Jake ranges ahead of Roland, Eddie and Susannah, but the men do not worry because Jake has his father's gun and the bumbler, Oy, plus they know he will not stray from the Path of the Beam which leads them toward the Dark Tower. When they breast the hill two hours later, they see Jake and Oy eating with an old man, and as Oy scents the air, Roland nearly knows why, recalling green eyes in the dark. The old man, Bix, welcomes them, offering to share what little he has, as Oy stares at the clouds marking the Path of the Beam. Bix agrees to convey them across the river, and as they tell him about the sad fate of Lud during the journey, Roland recalls a story, "The Wind Through the Keyhole", as he notes a starkblast is approaching. On the other side of the river, Bix directs Roland's ka-tet to a deserted village, urging them to seek shelter during the storm, and though the travelers agree to visit Bix on their return, they all know they will never come this way again. On the way to the village, Roland tells the others about the devastation a starkblast can cause, noting that bumlbers can tell when it is coming. They reach the deserted village of Gook, secure the stone meeting hall and gather wood to heat the building. As the storm nears, Oy will not come inside, so Jake runs out to get him, but he is sure the storm will take him; luckily, Roland pulls Jake and Oy inside and slams the door. During the first few hours of the storm, the group worries that the building will collapse with only Roland remaining calm. When Susannah's dreams wake her, she joins the others by the fire, and Jake asks for a story since none of them can sleep, so Roland agrees to tell a true story from his youth as well as the tale of "The Wind Through the Keyhole", which his mother told him when he was small.

Starkblast Analysis

This novel opens with "Starkblast" which is the frame story that surrounds the two interior stories. This story pertains to the characters who play a large role in the rest of the Dark Tower series, and it shows them traversing the Path of the Beam on the way to the Dark Tower. Though little about these characters are specified in this story, their background is available in the remainder of the series. From this story, we learn that Eddie and Susannah are a married couple who have come to Mid-World from New York in the real world. Jake is also from New York, and he is a young boy who has suffered much tragedy and spends most of his time with his bumbler, Oy. Roland is a gunslinger



from Mid-World, and he is obviously the leader of this ka-tet. As they travel, they realize that a starkblast, a severe storm, is approaching, so they take shelter in an abandoned village, and as a means of entertainment, Roland tells the others two stories, one true story from his youth and one story that his mother told him as a child. This foreshadows the telling of "The Skin-Man" and "The Wind Through the Keyhole" which is soon fulfilled as Roland begins sharing the true story from his past.



The Skin-Man (Part 1), pages 35-53

The Skin-Man (Part 1), pages 35-53 Summary

Not long after Roland's mother dies by his hand, his father, Steven Deschain, summons him and insists that he nurses his old tutor out as a way to punish himself for his mother's death, and Steven insists that Gabrielle's death was not Roland's fault; he was tricked by the witch, Rhea of the Coos. Furthermore, Steven sends Roland and another gunslinger, Jamie DeCurry, to Debaria to complete a job that needs to be done. A skin-man, a shapeshifter, is at work and has killed over twenty people. Steven orders the gunslingers to report to Sheriff Hugh Peavy, one of the few good people in Debaria, but he warns Roland to avoid Serenity, the retreat for women where Gabrielle once stayed, because the women there hate men so. Two days later, Roland and Jamie set out on the train to Debaria. Their conversation about the skin-man terrorizing the people is cut short when the train derails. The gunslingers collect their horses, and the engineer points them toward Debaria, warning them to avoid the women of Serenity and requesting a crew to put the train back on its tracks. As they ride toward town, Jamie returns to the conversation about Steven not believing there is a skin-man, and Roland explains that Vannay believes the tale because twenty-three people were torn to pieces, plus a few witnesses saw the attacks being perpetrated by animals that ran upright like men. The description reminds Roland of a tale his mother told him when he was younger, "The Wind Through the Keyhole". Jamie and Roland near a large haci where a gigantic woman on a throne salutes them in the name of Serenity and the women who abide there. She is glad to learn they have come for the skin-man and, promising she will not eat them as the stories claim, she introduces herself as Everlynn, prioress of Serenity. She calls to a smaller woman, Fortuna, whose face was badly mauled by the creature, and Fortuna tells the men how she and Dolores were attacked as they returned from drawing water. It killed Dolores and caught Fortuna as she turned to run, after which she remembers no more. Everlynn continues that she heard Fortuna scream and ran out with a gun and fired at the creature. After the men eat, they mount up to head to town, but Everlynn tells Roland to see her when his business is done because she has something for him; she knows that he is Gabrielle's son because his mother lives in his face. She orders him not to fail in killing the beast and returning to her.

The Skin-Man (Part 1), pages 35-53 Analysis

The fact that "The Skin-Man" is specified as being Part 1 indicates that there is another part later in the book. This story also serves as a frame for "The Wind Through the Keyhole". Roland begins with being summoned by his father who accuses him of punishing himself for his mother's death. Roland does blame himself, and this plays a large role in his interactions with other characters in this story. Steven sends Roland and Jamie to Debaria to hunt a skin-man that has been tormenting the town. This order foreshadows their ventures in Debaria. He also mentions Serenity, the retreat where



Gabrielle spent some time, foreshadowing Roland's visit to the women of Serenity, despite his father's warning to avoid them. This warning is reiterated by the train's engineer, indicating that Roland and Jamie will face danger should they go to Serenity; however, when they visit Serenity, they meet Everlynne, the prioress, who is quite friendly and helpful. She knows about the rumors of her people's hatred for men, but she quickly insists that the rumors are false as she tends to the gunslingers. She also provides a witness that survived an attack and shares her own experiences with the skin-man, obviously attempting to help Roland and Jamie with their mission. The horror that Jamie and Roland discuss about the twenty-three people who were torn to pieces by the skin-man foreshadows their own experiences while in Debaria. Before the men leave Serenity, Everlynne tells Roland to visit her again before he leaves, and the mention of Gabrielle foreshadows the revelation that what Everlynne has for Roland pertains to his mother.



The Skin-Man (Part 2), pages 53-69

The Skin-Man (Part 2), pages 53-69 Summary

The townspeople gather and stare as Roland and Jamie traverse the streets of Debaria, asking if they have come to kill the skin-man and commenting on their obvious youth. When Jamie comments on the number of people, Roland explains that the skin-man does its marauding after dark. At the Sheriff's office, Hugh Peavy is relieved to see the gunslingers, but he was hoping to see Steven Deschain. Asking for a sigil from Steven, Sheriff Peavy explains that he assisted Steven in dispatching the seven members of the Crow Gang some years ago, and when Pa Crow shot Steven, Peavy dug the bullet from his arm, and Steven promised to return it someday. Steven allowed Peavy to take credit for the Crow Gang, and he has been sheriff ever since, but he plans to quit after they get rid of the skin-man. When Roland asks if Peavy has any clue who the skin-man is in human form, Peavy leads them into the jail and draws a map of Debaria on a cell wall in chalk. Marking the area where the killings occurred, he suggests the skin-man is a miner since the murders all took place near the mines. Learning there are around 200 miners left, Jame jokes that they may have time to interview them all before Reaptide, and Roland expects to spend several weeks in Debaria. Peavy informs the men that the skin-man prowls only at night but assures them that the legends regarding the moon are false. Since there are no boarding houses in town, Jamie and Roland spend the night in a cell. The next morning, Roland wakes to a harsh noise and answers the jingle-jang to listen to Canfield of the Jefferson's panicked call about finding around twenty men torn to pieces and dead at the Jefferson Ranch.

The Skin-Man (Part 2), pages 53-69 Analysis

As Roland and Jamie enter Debaria, the townspeople follow them and ask if they have come to kill the skin-man. At the Sheriff's office, Sheriff Peavy is relieved to receive assistance, though he was hoping that Steven would come personally. When Roland gives Peavy a memento from his father, Peavy shares the story of how he became sheriff after helping Steven dispel the Crow Gang which was terrorizing Debaria some years earlier. He also admits that he plans to relinquish his position after they find the skin-man. Though Peavy does not know who the skin-man is, he marks a map to show where the murders have taken place, showing that the attacks all occurred near the mines which indicate that the killer is likely a miner. He also assures them that the skin-man only hunts at night, but it is not affected by the moon. Spending the night in jail since there are no rooms available in town, Roland wakes to a call from Canfield of the Jefferson stating that he has found twenty people killed by the skin-man at the Jefferson Ranch, and this foreshadows Roland's trip to the ranch and his subsequent search for the skin-man.



The Skin-Man (Part 2), pages 70-88

The Skin-Man (Part 2), pages 70-88 Summary

Sheriff Peavy, Engineer Travis, Deputy Kellin Frye and his son, Vikka, join Roland and Jamie as they ride toward the salthills and meet Canfield and two other cowboys at the gate. Canfield explains that he and the others were camping, but hearing screams, they rushed home and found the mutilated bodies. The group starts toward the big house, minding the tracks that may lead them to the creature, and though the tracks belong to a bear, none of them have ever seen such a large bear. They note that the creature began at the bunkhouse where the most food was, but Jefferson must have heard it and come running. It killed him and went to the house for the womenfolk. As they survey the horrendous scene, Jamie determines that they must find this things. He and Roland follow the creature's tracks as it changes to a bull then a cat and finally bare human feet running into a building. Drawing their guns, they enter the abandoned hostelry, and Jamie notes the creature came on horseback as he finds fresh manure; the gunslingers are relieved since only about 20 or 30 miners have access to horses. Hearing moaning, they find an eleven-year-old boy who asks if it is gone and passes out once he is assured of his safety. Roland carries the boy outside and cleans him up, and waking, the boy, Young Bill Streeter, pleads for his father, the cook not to be dead, yet Roland sees the knowledge of his father's death in the boy's eyes as clearly as he recalls the bloody apron. As Roland questions Bill, Bill explains that his father sent him to sleep under the stars to get away from the foreman Elrod Nutter who was drinking. When Bill cries for his da, Peavy tells him that he needs him to be a man, and seeing his own mother's face, Roland has to walk away, though he knows it is cowardly to do so. After Peavy leaves, Roland and Jamie explore the shed, but they do not believe the previous night's events are truly erased from the boy's mind since he asked about the creature and knew his father is dead. Jamie knows that Roland has a way of getting at things buried in people's minds, but Roland does not respond when Jamie asks if he will try with the boy. Roland sends Jamie, Peavy, Fryes and Canfield to the miner's encampment to find who rides horses. He also wants Vikka to tell another boy around his age that Bill witnessed the skin-man so they can parade the suspects past Bill in hopes of identifying him. Meanwhile, Roland will take the boy to town and protect him. Once the expedition leaves for the miners, Roland wakes Bill, sorry for his plans but knowing the stakes are high. He has one more stop to make before they go to town because he wants to show the boy something while they are still alone.

The Skin-Man (Part 2), pages 70-88 Analysis

Fulfilling earlier foreshadowing, Roland proceeds to visit Jefferson Ranch, along with Jamie, Sheriff Peavy, Deputy Frye and his son. They meet Canfield and two other ranch employees at the gate, and the men explain that they heard screams as they were camping and returned to the house to find the remains. Following the tracks in hopes of locating the creature, the group hypothesizes about what happened, and the shear



devastation and horror of it all convinces Roland and Jamie that it is imperative to find and destroy the skin-man, their resolve foreshadowing their successful quest. Though the tracks begin as a bear, it changes several times before turning into human feet, indicating that this creature is the same creature who attacked before. This verification is important since the creature was identified as several different animals during its previous attacks. As Jamie and Roland follow the tracks, they are led into an abandoned hostelry where they find a traumatized boy, Young Bill Streeter. In the hostelry, Jamie also discovers fresh horse manure, indicating that the skin-man came to the ranch on horseback and thus eliminating all of the miners who are unable to ride a horse; this big break foreshadows the discovery of the skin-man's identity. Though Bill claims he cannot remember what happened, his knowledge of his father's death and his fear of the creature convinces Roland and Jamie that the boy's mind has retained more than he knows. Bill's emotional state over his father's death reminds Roland of losing his mother, thus foreshadowing Roland feeling connected to the boy and taking a special interest in him. Jamie's questions about Roland getting at the buried things in Bill's minds foreshadows Roland hypnotizing the boy to learn what he can about the skin-man. After sending the others to the miners to find out who can ride horses, Roland leaves the ranch with Bill, planning to stop and show the boy something before they reach town, and this again foreshadows his plan to learn what Bill has suppressed.



The Skin-Man (Part 2), pages 88-106

The Skin-Man (Part 2), pages 88-106 Summary

Halfway to Debaria, Roland and Bill take shelter in a shepherd's lean-to to eat, and Bill is amazed that Roland is a gunslinger. As Roland shows the boy a trick to make the bullet disappear, the boy starts to sleep, and Roland tells him to recall last night, promising that he is safe. Bill's father sent him to sleep outside to get away from Elrod, and Bill's sleep was interrupted by the sounds of screams and fighting, but when he ran down, he saw blood and a beast ripping Elrod to pieces. Jefferson shot at Bill, saving his life as it caused Bill to hide in the shed. The bear's growls turned into a cat's snarls and then into a human's screams. A man staggered inside the shed, but all Bill saw was the man's ankle and a blue ring tattooed around it; Roland believes they have the skin-man, though he does not know it yet. Telling Bill to leave his memories behind since it is over now, Roland wakes the boy, and they continue on to Debaria. At the Sheriff's office, Roland locks Bill in a cell for safety while he runs an errand, promising that the skin-man will die for his crimes. Asking for a blacksmith, Roland tells the man what he wants, and the man agrees to complete his order today for an exorbitant fee. Returning to Bill, Roland asks about the approaching starkblast and hopes his men return from the mines tonight. He warns Bill that his men will return with miners, but Bill insists that he cannot remember the killer. Roland hopes that Bill will not have to see them as they just need to find the man with a blue ring around his ankle, but when he questions the deputies about the tattoo, they tell him that it is the mark of those who spent time in the prison at Beelie Stockade and nearly half of the miners were imprisoned there. Roland is disappointed that Bill will likely have to look at the miners after all, and when he returns to the cell to find the boy crying because he hates being in jail, Roland assures Bill that he did nothing wrong, and he agrees to tell the story of "The Wind Through the Keyhole". Roland can hear his mother's voice as he begins the tale, and he is pleased to see Bill falling into the story, finding that it is like hypnotising him but in a better way.

The Skin-Man (Part 2), pages 88-106 Analysis

When Roland and Bill take shelter on their way to town, Roland uses a trick with his bullet to hypnotize the boy, fulfilling earlier foreshadowing. Convincing Bill that he is safe, Roland questions him about the previous night, learning what he saw. From this conversation, Roland learns that the skin-man has a blue ring tattooed around his ankle, giving him another clue to the skin-man's identity and foreshadowing the use of this information in determining the skin-man's true identity. With that done, Roland shows his care for the boy by telling Bill to forget what he saw to save him from the trauma recollection of it all. They continue on to Debaria where Roland promises Bill that the creature will die for its crimes, again foreshadowing the successful completion of his mission. Roland orders a special bullet from a blacksmith, foreshadowing the use of this weapon to defeat the skin-man, and the mention of the starkblast seems to be a parallel that replays throughout each story in this book, suggesting that Roland recalls these

stories because of the inclusion of these special storms. When Roland questions the deputies about the tattoo Bill saw, he is disappointed to learn that nearly half of the miners have them as they represent time spent in nearby Beelie Stockade, thus seeming to eliminate this tool as a means of finding the creature. Returning to Bill, Roland agrees to comfort the boy with a story, and so he announces he will share a story his mother told him as a boy, foreshadowing the tale of "The Wind Through the Keyhole" which is promptly fulfilled as Roland begins his tale.



The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 109-128

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 109-128 Summary

Long ago, Tim lived with his parents, Nell and Big Jack Ross, in the village of Tree, located at the edge of the dangerous Endless Forest where many deadly creatures lived. Big Ross always joked about leaving Tim his hand ax, his lucky coin, his place and his plot, and Tim slept knowing he was loved and had a place in the world. Unfortunately, the good years never last long; when Tim is eleven years old, Big Ross and his partner, Big Kells, travel down the Ironwood Trail into the Endless Forest, and only Kells returns, speaking one word: dragon. Tim loses his dad along with his ax and his lucky coin, and he knows that soon he will lose his plot and place in the world as well. Tim studies with the Widow Smack for half of the day, but when the Widow Smack is sick and sends him home one day, Tim finds his mom crying because she misses Big Ross and because there is little money left and nothing to sell. She fears they will be turned out of their home and does not know what to do. Wishing he could comfort Nell, Tim wishes something will change, but "the worst thing about wishes is that something they come true" (page 115). Nell fears having to move away. Though she knows the Endless Forest is a horrible place, it is the only home she has ever known, and while she has long feared the day that Tim would be big enough to travel the Ironwood Trail, she is sorry that the day will never come as she knows that is what he wants. While Tim is helping Farmer Destry one day, Big Kells visits Nell and proposes, but she asks him to return the next day for an answer. Though her blood has called to Kells since their youth, she is frightened by his anger and violence when he drinks. Ross finally convinced Kells to stop drinking, but Nell has spent her married life being uncomfortable with how Kells looks at her as a woman, instead of as a friend or a friend's wife.

After dinner that night, Nell tells Tim about Kells' offer, and though she believes that Kells cares for her and Tim, Tim thinks that Kells has never paid him any attention unless he was with his parents, and the thought of Kells in his father's house makes him nauseous. Still, Nell worries what will happen to them if she refuses, so the next day when Kells returns, she asks if he will be good to her and her son. When Kells insists that he will be as good as he can to them, Nell says yes and they wed; thus, Tim's story truly begins. Tim is uncomfortable when he notices Kells drinking at the wedding reception, and that night, he hears thuds from his mother's room and Kells telling her that she is not hurt. The next day, Nell insists the bruise on her arm came from the bedpost. Shortly after his wedding, Kells takes Tim with him to the house he sold to Farmer Baldy Anderson to retrieve his trunk which contains all of his possessions. He also informs Tim that it is time for the boy to quit his studies as Kells has secured him a position at the sawmill. Furthermore, Kells does not care what Nells says about it because he is her husband and she will do as she is told. Three days later, Tim goes to



the sawmill with Straw Willem Destry who comments on Kells' drinking, and that night, Tim wakes to Nell's cries yet again as Kells threatens to give her double if she wakes the boy, promising that he will not drink again. Tim hopes it is true, but though he dislikes his mother's new husband, he hopes that ma can learn to love Kells since women have bigger hearts. Tim is disheartened to noticed bruises on both of Nell's arms the next morning.

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 109-128 Analysis

At this point in the novel, Roland proceeds to tell his next story, "The Wind Through the Keyhole", which comprises the majority of this novel. The story opens with a young boy, Tim, who lives happily with his parents at the edge of a dangerous forest. The narrator's commentary that the good years never last long foreshadows a tragic turn of events for Tim, and this foreshadowing is quickly fulfilled when Kells returns from the woods, claiming that Big Ross was killed by a dragon. Tim's mother, Nell, fears losing everything and being forced from the only home she has ever known, both for herself and for her son. Therefore, when Kells proposes, Nell believes this may be the answer to her problem. Still, she asks him to wait for a day because she sees the violence in his eyes that causes her to hesitate. This violence combined with the background information about Kells' drinking habits foreshadows the relationship between Nell and Kells after their marriage. Additionally, Nell's discomfort with how Kells looks at her during her marriage to Big Ross foreshadows the discovery of the lengths Kells would go to in order to acquire something he covets. When Tim learns about Kells' offer, he is obviously opposed to the notion, indicating his excellent intuition and again foreshadowing the negative nature of his mother's relationship with Kells. Nell agrees to marry Kells, but after they are wed, Kells drinks at the reception, foreshadowing the appearance of his violent nature. This foreshadowing is quickly fulfilled when Tim hears his mother fighting with Kells that night and notices a bruise on her arm the next day. Furthermore, Kells soon informs Tim that he must quit his studies and begin working to help support their family, claiming that his decision is law and Nell does not get to have a say in the matter. This attitude combined with his drinking, including the rumors that Tim hears from Straw Destry, indicates that Kells is an unpleasant husband to Nell. Kells beats Nell again that night, and it is obvious that Tim hates his stepfather. These events foreshadow Tim's animosity toward Kells and his future adventures as a result while Kells' violence toward Nell foreshadows more violence in the future between them.



The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 129-149

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 129-149 Summary

As winter nears, Nell's bruises fade and her smile returns, though it is more cautious, and though Tim wonders if life would be better if his stepfather had a tragic accident, he pushes the thought out of his head, knowing his father would be ashamed. He is glad that his mother is no longer bruised and there are no more rumors of Kells drinking, but he knows better when Nell insists he will return to school with Widow Smack next year; Tim sees growing older and working more as his mother's smile pales and loses its sparkle, knowing that Kells is to blame. With reaping gone by, the Barony Covenanter arrives in Tree to collect taxes. At Nell's house, the Covenant Man notes that Ross is dead and comments on how much Kells owes for selling his house, but he insists that Tim bring him the money, and when Tim does, the Covenant Man grabs Tim and orders Kells to hold Nell as he rides to the end of the yard and quietly asks Tim how he likes his new stepfather. When Tim admits that Kells beats Nell, the Covenant Man gives Tim a magical key that will open anything once, causing Tim to think of Kells' trunk and how he touches it each time he passes. The Covenant Man tells Tim that he will camp down the Ironwood Trail for the next two nights in case Tim dares visit him. After the Covenant Man leaves, Kells questions Tim about their conversation, beating Nell and Tim when they object to his treatment, but when Kells leaves, Tim knows he is going to drink. Knowing there is a mystery here, Tim wonders if the magical key might solve it. Nell asks about Tim's conversation with the Covenant Man, noting the tax collector has not aged since she was a girl and always carries the same silver basin roped to the back of his horse. Once Nell is asleep, Tim sneaks and opens the trunk to find clothes and tools, but buried at the bottom is a bag full of mementos, including Big Ross's lucky coin. Tim returns everything except his father's coin, knowing his burglary will soon be discovered and he and his mother will be beaten. Though he is afraid, Tim feels a man's rage for the first time as he realizes that Ross could not have been burned by a dragon since his coin is not even smudged. He has a terrible idea about what really happened to his father and also who to ask, so he leaves a note for Nell not to worry and saddles Bitsy. As Tim traverses the Ironwood Trail in the dark, he considers going back several times, but his resolve hardens each time he touches his father's coin.

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 129-149 Analysis

Though things at Tim's seem to improve as Kells stops abusing Nell, Tim knows that things will worsen and blames Kells, forcing himself to banish his desire to Kells' tragic end to come sooner rather than later for fear of disgracing his father's memory. When



the Covenant Man comes to collect taxes, his attitude toward Kells indicates his dislike for Tim's new stepfather. He grabs Tim and carries him to the edge of the yard where he questions the boy about Kells' relationship with Nell, and his interest in their marriage foreshadows the discovery of what is lurking underneath the surface. Additionally, the Covenant Man gives Tim a magical key to open anything once, and Tim's thoughts of Kells' trunk foreshadows what he will use the key for. The Covenant Man's announcement that he will camp nearby in case Tim chooses to visit him foreshadows Tim's visit to the Covenant Man as well as reiterates the tax collector's interest in affairs at the Ross/Kells household. Once the Covenant Man leaves, Kells seems to know what his conversation was about, questioning and beating Tim and Nell before leaving to drink. After reassuring Nell that Kells' actions are not her fault, Tim sneaks to the trunk and unlocks it. The discovery of his father's lucky coin which is untarnished foreshadows Tim's discovery of the truth behind his father's death. Tim keeps the coin, though he knows that he and his mother will suffer for it, and this foreshadows Kell beating Nell yet again. Still, Tim's fury knows no bounds as he decides he must know what really happened to his father and sets off, foreshadowing his visit to the Covenant Man. While traveling along the Ironwood Trail, Tim ignores his fears, reinforcing his forward movement with the desire to learn his father's true fate.



The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 149-170

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 149-170 Summary

Tim finds the Covenant Man in a clearing belonging to Marchly and Cosington, and after they eat, the Covenant Man sends Tim to collect water from the edge of the clearing, ignoring Tim's objections that the water is stagnant. When the Covenant Man passes his magic wand over the water three times, it clears and shows Tim's cottage where Kells drunkenly accuses Nell of opening his trunk and beats her. Tim tries to leave, but the Covenant Man insists it is already over, showing Nell getting to her feet and Widow Smack helping her. Before he will send Tim away with his blessing, he has Tim dump the water in a certain location, and when he mentions Ross, it reminds Tim that there was no dragon. Tim drops the basin of water when he stumbles upon his father's perfectly preserved corpse. The Covenant Man forces nen, a liquid, down Tim's throat and explains that he did not believe a dragon attacked Ross because there have been no dragons so close to civilization in over a hundred years, so he came here and found Ross's body with his skull riven from the back; he suspects Kells killed Ross impulsively, and he returns Ross's hand ax to Tim who claims he will place it in the back of Ross's skull. Promising to stay on the trail for another night or two, the Covenant Man tells Tim to watch for the green sighe. At home, Tim finds Widow Smack waiting, and she explains she came because she saw Tim rushing past her house. One of Kells' blows struck Nell blind, but Widow Smack suggests her sight may be restored when the swelling in her brain subsides. She offers to stay the night, asking what they will do when Kells returns to finish what he started. Tim tells Widow Smack about his adventure with the Covenant Man, and she comments on the tax collector being untrustworthy. They plan for Tim to sleep on a pallet behind the door in case Kells returns, and tomorrow, Tim will go to Cosington and Marchly to retrieve Ross's body and begin the search for Kells. Widow Smack objects to Tim returning to the Covenant Man, insisting he has caused enough damage by giving the key to the boy, and she knows that he is "pestilence with a heartbeat" (page 169). Some believe he is Maerlyn the Eld in disguised, but Widow Smack knows he is a black magician which is why Tim should avoid him. When Tim asks about sighe, she explains that sighe are fairies, but when she asks if the Covenant Man mentioned them, Tim lies that Straw Willem told him a story, wondering why he lies though he knows the reason deep in his heart.

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 149-170 Analysis

Fulfilling earlier foreshadowing, Tim meets the Covenant Man in a clearing on Marchly and Cosington's property, and the Covenant Man uses magic to show Kells beating Nell



for opening his trunk and stealing Ross's key. Tim is outraged and wants to return home, but the Covenant Man prevents Tim from leaving, showing that Widow Smack helps Nell. Before allowing the boy to leave, the tax collector sends Tim to dump the water, causing Tim to stumble upon his father's corpse. The Covenant Man proceeds to tell Tim that he was particularly interested when he heard rumors of a dragon attacking Big Ross because they do not live so close to civilization, and he believes that Kells killed Ross using Ross's own hand ax which the Covenant Man then gives to Tim who plans to implant it in his stepfather's head, foreshadowing Kells' death from the tool he used to kill his best friend. The Covenant Man also instructs Tim to watch for the green sighe, foreshadowing the appearance of the fairy. At home, Tim finds that Nell has been blinded by Kells' assault, and they plan for Tim to inform the men in town of his father's death, foreshadowing the discovery of Ross' body and the search for Kells. When Tim shares his ventures with Widow Smack, she disapproves of his association with the Covenant Man, insisting the man is a black magician and a liar. She also mentions Maerlyn of the Eld, foreshadowing the appearance of that particular magician in this story. Tim also learns that sighe are fairies, though he lies about where he heard of them, foreshadowing his intention to return to the Covenant Man despite Widow Smack's warnings.



The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 170-190

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 170-190 Summary

Kells does not return that night, luckily, as Tim falls asleep. He wakes and checks on Nell who is unconcerned with her sight because they will be turned out next year. Widow Smack sends Tim to see the man who promised to gather others and search for Kells. Tim has a strong feeling that they will not find Kells, and he also strongly believes that the Covenant Man is not yet done with him. Returning to Nell, Tim feels like his father has died all over again, and when she sends him to the burial parlor, he is surprised to spend an hour kneeling and staring at his father's face. Walking home, Tim leaves the road to avoid the condolences of a group of approaching women, and he finds the Covenant Man's magic wand and a silver basin. When he fills the basin with water and passes the wand over it, he sees the Covenant Man near the Ross-Kells stake with a green fairy circling his head, and the Covenant Man signals for Tim to make haste. The vision changes to a large house deeper in the Endless Forest than Tim has ever been, and Tim sees himself talking to Maerlyn who gives him a black blindfold which Tim places over Nell's eyes, healing her blindness. Knowing he must move quickly, Tim visits Widow Smack and tells her his plan, ignoring her warnings regarding the incoming starkblast and that the Covenant Man cannot be trusted, and asks her to tell Nell that he will return with a cure. Knowing she cannot dissuade him, Widow Smack gives Tim a lamp, provisions and a gun with bullets which she shows him how to use. After she gives him her blessing, Tim travels along the Ironwood Trail, assuring himself that what the Covenant Man told him was true.

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 170-190 Analysis

The next morning, Tim visits Cosington and Marchly who promise to retrieve Ross's body and search for Kells, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing. Tim's feeling that they will not find Kells and that the Covenant Man is not yet done with him foreshadows these two events which are soon fulfilled. Tim is distraught when he pays tribute to his father's corpse, reinforcing his desire and need to avenge Big Ross. Avoiding women who would offer their sympathy, Tim strays from the road to find the Covenant Man's wand and a silver basin, fulfilling the foreshadowing of his suspicion that the tax collector is not yet done with him. Using the two objects as he had seen the Covenant Man do, Tim summons a vision of the Covenant Man warning him to make haste, standing next to a sign marking the Ross-Kell homestead, and this foreshadows Tim's adventure starting at the post, especially as he also sees a green sighe in the vision. The vision changes to show Tim retrieving and administering a cure from Maerlyn of the Eld to Nell to help

her see, and this also foreshadows pending events. Tim informs Widow Smack of his plan, despite her disapprobation, and she arms him with a gun and provisions before sending him on his way. As Tim begins his adventure, he assures himself that he has not been led astray by the Covenant Man, but the narrator's comment about his age indicates naiveté and foreshadows the lack of truth behind the Covenant Man's words.



The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 190-209

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 190-209 Summary

Near the end of the trail, Tim notices a cold green light but no sign of the Covenant Man. The sighe circles and points to the sign which reads "Traveler, Beware" (page 191). She beckons for Tim to follow her, and he does. She tells Tim that her name is Armaneeta, and Tim is surprisingly unafraid as he follows her deeper into the forest. When he jumps onto a rock and it moves, Tim realizes that he is standing on a dragon's head, and he begs her not to burn him. After the dragon submerges back into the water, Tim notices that Armaneeta is gone, but he has no tears to cry as he believes Widow Smack is right about the Covenant Man telling nothing but lies. As two creatures swim near him, Tim threatens that he is a gunslinger, making noise to frighten them away. So angry that he loses his fear, Tim draws his gun and finds that nothing has ever felt so right in his hands. Noticing mudmen spectators, Tim is shocked that they kneel and applaud, and realizing that they believe he is a gunslinger, he orders them to get him off the island, using their belief to his advantage. They motion for him to stay put and leave, returning with a boat. The Helmsman rescues Tim, and the mudmen gather around the boy when he is brought to shore. Though Tim believes he can find his way home if they direct him to the south side of the swamp, that would mean Nell's blindness will continue, so he asks if the mudmen know of Maerlyn. The Helmsman motions to ask if Maerlyn has a beard and tall hat, but Tim does not understand when he imitates a fierce animal. When Tim asks if Maerlyn is real, the Helmsman shrugs, indicating that he does not know.

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 190-209 Analysis

Near the sign marking the Ross-Kells homestead, Tim comes upon the fairy, Armaneeta, who beckons for him to follow. Tim follows her through the woods, confident that she means to aid him. His encounter with the dragon shows the danger he has wandered into while simultaneously further disproving Kells' claims that Ross was killed by a dragon as this dragon readily retreats back into the water. With Armaneeta disappearing during this encounter, Tim believes that the Covenant Man has led him astray after all, but his fear dissipates into anger as dangerous creatures near him and he is forced to chase them away. Yelling a threat that he is a gunslinger, Tim arms himself, and the feeling that nothing has ever belonged in his hands so foreshadows his future as a gunslinger. The appearance of the mudmen spectators foreshadows their willingness to help Tim, and this is quickly fulfilled as they rescue him from the island. Though Tim wants to go home, he shows courage and loyalty by deciding to press on in

order to help his mother. As he asks the Helmsman about Maerlyn, he does not understand the imitation of a fierce animal, but this foreshadows the shape that Tim will find Maerlyn in.



The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 209-227

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 209-227 Summary

Two tribesmen return with a basket of food and a metal disk from the Old People, and after the Helmsman pushes a button on the disk, he turns in a circle until the red light turns green, pointing north. When Tim mentions that there is water in that direction, the mudmen laugh and the Helmsman points to the boat before helping Tim on board. Because he can read Tim's thoughts, he knows that the boy is not a gunslinger, but that does not matter. Tim cries when the Helmsman and the others indicate that they are all going to die, and as they row the boat, Tim dreams of Nell. The Helmsman wakes Tim when they reach the Fagonard, insisting that Tim keep the metal disk before they leave. Tim walks deeper into the forest as the disk indicates, and once darkness falls, a woman's voice offers Tim light, directing him to the disk which he dropped. Tim continues along the path until he stops to rest, asking the disk to turn the light off and to wake him if something dangerous comes. Tim sleeps as six throcken form a semi-circle around him, but the disk does not wake him as she senses no danger, and the throcken soon leave. As the starkblast moves south faster, Tim wakes, and curious, he pushes the third button on the disk causing it to welcome him to DARIA. When Tim asks for Maerlyn, DARIA directs him to magic, and though he knows it is probably dangerous, he came in search of magic so he continues to follow DARIA's directions. Tim is amazed when he comes upon a group of throcken, and he dubs them wonderful. As he camps that night, Tim recalls what Widow Stark said about the starkblast, and when DARIA gives him the definition of a starkblast, he knows he must finish his business quickly and find shelter, but he wonders where will be safe from the storm. Worrying about the Fagonard and the mudmen, Tim is sure he will be unable to sleep, but he quickly falls asleep and dreams of throcken dancing in the moonlight.

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 209-227 Analysis

The mudmen present Tim with a metal disk from the Old People, indicating the use of magic which is evidenced by the buttons which help to show which direction it is pointing in. The mudmen also offer to assist Tim in heading in the correct direction, carrying him by boat toward the Fagonard. The mudmen know that they are going to die, yet they still help Tim, showing their good nature. Alone, Tim is startled to hear a voice coming from the disk, and he learns its name is DARIA. This again indicates that this disk is magical. DARIA provides Tim with light, watches as he sleeps and leads him in the direction of magic when he tells her that he needs to find Maerlyn. As the winds pick up, Tim recalls Widow Stark's warning about the approaching starkblast, and when

DARIA explains the severity of such a storm to him, Tim realizes that he must find shelter, foreshadowing Tim taking shelter from the starkblast in the near future.



The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 227-246

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 227-246 Summary

Tim thinks of DARIA as his traveling companion during the next three unforgettable days as he sees many oddities. When he finally emerges at the edge of a narrow chasm at the end of the third day, DARIA insists he cross the rock bridge now, and Tim tries not to look down as tentacles close in. Walking through the waterfall and up a staircase, Tim follows the path which enters the woods and sees a tower with a red light as DARIA notes that he has nearly reached his destination but must hurry. She does not answer when Tim, noting the storm clouds, asks if the starkblast is coming, but she does not need to; Tim rushes to the clearing, but he barely glances at the tower when he notices a cage containing an enormous tiger which wears a silver collar with a playing card and a strangely-shaped key. With DARIA urging him to shelter before she shuts down, Tim rushes to the door of the Dogan only to find it locked, and thinking of the keys around the tiger's neck, he returns to the cage, lifts and the bucket next to it and finds a key and a note from the Covenant Man congratulating him on his resourcefulness and explaining that this key unlocks the cage so he can access the keys to the Dogan which are on the tiger's collar. The note also warns Tim that Nell's new husband will be visiting her soon. Tim tries to bargain with the tiger, offering to let it live if it relinquishes the keys on its collar, but when it does not acknowledge him, Tim draws his gun and unlocks the cage. The tiger exits the cage and raises its head to expose the collar which Tim promptly retrieves and uses to unlock the Dogan door. Inside, there are three items: a large white feather, a small brown bottle and a plain cotton napkin. The tiger uses its mouth to open the napkin to sheet size, allowing Tim and the tiger to huddle underneath the sheet for warmth as the full fury of the starkblast reaches them with nightfall. Seeing the destruction caused by the storm, Tim is sure that the Dogan will fall next, but it stands, as it has for over 1000 years. Though the storm worsens, Tim remains safe and warm under the sheet, and he dreams of visiting a dark tower on the other side of Mid-World. By the morning, the wind has lessened, and Tim shares his little remaining food with the tiger before going back to sleep.

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 227-246 Analysis

Tim and DARIA travel for three more days, and DARIA urges him to hurry forward as they near a rock bridge where large tentacles chase him. On the other side, Tim comes upon a tower which DARIA explains is his destination, but since the starkblast is near, she urges him to hurry before shutting down. Tim's amazement at the sight of the tower is minimized by his astonishment to see a caged tiger. The keys on the creature's collar



foreshadows the necessity for Tim to release the tiger from its cage, and after he realizes that the Dogan is locked, Tim returns to the cage where he finds a key under a bucket, along with a note from the Covenant Man instructing him to use the key to unlock the cage as the keys around the tiger's neck must be used to unlock the Dogan. He also warns Tim that Kells will be visiting Nell again soon, indicating the need for haste. Tim is surprised when the tiger does not attack him after its release, instead choosing to allow him to remove the collar. This foreshadows the tiger's true identity. Inside the Dogan, there are several items, and these oddities foreshadow their usefulness as Tim and the tiger use the dibbin to keep safe and warm as the starkblast rages outside. Tim's dreams of the Dark Tower reconnects this interior story to the outer frame story concerning Roland, Eddie, Susannah and Jake, while the tiger's willingness to share the little bit of food with Tim again foreshadows its true identity.



The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 246-264

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 246-264 Summary

Waking later, Tim questions the tyger about how long it was caged, but it pushes the brown bottle towards Tim and opens its mouth. Hesitating at first for fear of poisoning the creature, Tim drops the liquid into the tyger's mouth, causing its skin to ripple and its head to grow into a conical hat, leaving Maerlyn of the Eld standing before Tim. Tim kneels, but Maerlyn orders him to rise and cap the bottle as he will need the remainder for Nell's eyes. Maerlyn praises Tim's bravery and insists that Tim deserves to be rewarded for freeing him from the shape that he has been trapped in for many years, explaining that the Red King trapped him in the tiger's form and will punish the Covenant Man for sending Tim to Maerlyn. Maerlyn will cure Nell because Tim saved him, but he foretells that he will not be the last that Tim serves and the gun from Widow Smack will only be the first that he wears. Maerlyn instructs Tim to return to Tree, put the drops from the bottle in Nell's eyes and give her Big Ross's hand ax at once. Ordering Tim to sit on the sheet and take the feather in his hand, Maerlyn directs him to think of home, and the dibbin flies back toward the Ironwood Trail, causing Tim to lament as he sees the destruction wrought by the starkblast. Running home, Tim finds Widow Smack asleep, and sneaking into Nell's room, he avoids her questions about where he went until after he applies the drops to her eyes and gives her Big Ross's hand ax. Going to wake Widow Smack, Tim finds her throat has been cut, but his scream is cut off by strong hands wrapped around his throat. Kells has been sitting on his trunk in the main room after having killed Widow Smack for sitting by his warm fire while he was cold in a barn for two nights. His fury increases when he hears Nell's cries of joy to see Tim as she should only cry from pain. Kells has to have Nell; that is why he murdered his best friend, but now the boy who turned him into a hunted man enters the room with a gun so Kells chokes Tim and tosses the gun aside as he withdraws his knife. Kells suddenly releases Tim with a choking sound as his head grows an ax handle, and he turns to face Nell before dropping dead. Putting his hands over his face, Tim blocks out the sight before Nell hugs him and leads him to the porch. Nell wants to go see the constable, but first, Tim insists on retrieving something that Widow Smack gave him. Avoiding the sight of what is left, Tim retrieves the gun and puts it in his belt.

The Wind Through the Keyhole, pages 246-264 Analysis

In the final installment of "The Wind Through the Keyhole", the tiger indicates for Tim to give it the liquid from the brown bottle he found inside the Dogan, and this again foreshadows the tiger's true nature. This is soon fulfilled when the tiger transforms into



Maerlyn. Fulfilling the foreshadowing created during Tim's visions, Maerlyn informs Tim that the liquid will also restore Nell's sight; thus, Tim has fulfilled his mission if he can only get home! Maerlyn also makes several predictions about Tim's future, foreshadowing the fact that Tim will become a gunslinger. His instruction for Tim to give Big Ross's hand ax to Nell as soon as he restores her vision foreshadows the need for Nell to have the ax. Using the dibbin and a feather, Tim flies back toward the village of Tree where he rushes home and restores his mother's sight. He also gives her the ax as instructed by Maerlyn. When he finds Widow Smack dead, he is immediately attacked by Kells whose thoughts reveal his jealousy of Big Ross and Nell. As Kells tries to kill Tim, Nell sneaks up behind him and implants Big Ross's hand ax in the back of his head, fulfilling earlier foreshadowing and creating parallelism and irony as Kells, Nell's second husband, is killed by the same weapon he used to kill her first husband. With Kells dead, Tim insists on retrieving the gun that Widow Smack gave him, again foreshadowing his future as a gunslinger.



The Skin-Man (Part 2)

The Skin-Man (Part 2) Summary

Young Bill Streeter says little as Roland tells his tale, but he asks questions about Tim as soon as Roland finishes the story. Dark has fallen, and Roland suspects that the deputies will not return with the miners until morning, but while telling the story, he had an uncomfortable thought; he would not admit that he could ride a horse if he was the skin-man! Roland thinks that Bill is a good boy, and he hopes that Everlyne of Serenity will take the orphan in. When the riders return with the unhappy miners, Roland has to remind himself that only one of them is the skin-man as he regards them all suspiciously. He thanks them for helping on behalf of Gilead and sends Kellin Frye and Canfield to buy everyone a drink while Arn and Vikka watch the back door. When Roland expresses his fear that the skin-man would not admit to his horseman abilities, Wegg assures him that the men bet on horses every few months, and he is certain that he has rounded up all of the miners who can seat a horse. In the tavern, Roland orders the miners to remove their shoes, finding only ten men with blue rings tattooed around their ankles, so he marches those ten men to the jail. Questioning the oldest miner, Steg Luka, Roland learns that there was a crack in the salt from which a green light shone through, and he has no doubt that it was of the Old People; someone entered the crack, and it changed him, but Steg Luka does not know who entered the crack. After sending Jamie to retrieve the silver bullet he ordered from the blacksmith, Roland lines the men up and walks them past the frightened Bill who pretends that he is Tim. Bill does not recognize the skin-man, but he asks for them to walk past again, showing their tattoos because he insists the skin-man's was different. His eyes widen and he indicates that the man with the broken ring is the skin-man. When Roland asks Wegg to bring Ollie Ang, the man Bill indicated, to him, Roland sees the scar running through his tattoo, but before he can throw the skin-man in a cell, Steg Luka attacks Ollie Ang who turns into a giant snake, rips the old man apart and bites Wegg. Roland shoots into the creature's mouth, and its corpse reverts to Ollie Ang.

Roland and Jamie spend the night in the cell with Bill. Once the boy is asleep, they burn Ollie Ang's body to ashes. The next morning, they round up a crew and put the train back on its tracks, and though they are anxious to get home, they are the guests of honor at the town celebration that night. On the way back to town, they stop at Serenity to ask if Everlyne will take Bill in. Everlyne hugs them and thanks them for their service to the town before agreeing to watch over the orphan. During the feast that night, Everlyne takes Roland to her private quarters, mentioning that Marten Broadcloak visited his mother there and soon after, Gabrielle quit Serenity before she had a duty to perform and much to atone for; yet, she told Everlyne that her son would come someday and left a letter for him. His heart full of love, hate and regret, Roland stares at the letter, considering burning it, but he eventually opens it and reads that his mother returned to Gilead despite her knowledge that she would die at her son's hand. She does so because Ka demands it. Roland traces the last words on the page over and over until the paper crumbles. Regaining control, he returns to the party.



The Skin-Man (Part 2) Analysis

Fulfilling earlier foreshadowing regarding a second part of "The Skin-Man", the novel resumes with the second part of the inner frame story concerning the true tale from Roland's youth. After Roland finishes telling Bill the inner story and his men return with a group of miners who are able to ride horses, Roland questions them about his fear that the skin-man would not confess his ability to ride a horse, but he is assured by Wegg that they have brought all who can ride. Ordering drinks for all of the unhappy miners, Roland rounds up the men who have blue rings tattooed on their ankles to parade before Bill in hopes of finding the skin-man. First, he converses with the oldest miner and learns that someone entered a crack in the salt where a cold green light exuded, and he suspects that this is the skin-man, though he does not know who it was. After acquiring the silver bullet that should kill the skin-man, Roland has the miners marched past Bill who does not recognize any of them, but recalling that the skin-man's tattoo was different, Bill asks to see the men's tattoos, allowing him to recognize the skin-man as Ollie Ang who has a thick scar running through his tattoo. Ollie Ang transforms into a giant snake and attacks several men, but Roland shoots and kills him, fulfilling the foreshadowing concerning his successful mission. To confirm the skin-man's demise, Roland and Jamie burn the creature. The next day, they cannot leave yet because they must attend the town's celebration in their honor. First, Roland asks Everlynnne if she will care for Bill, and she agrees. During the feast, Everlynnne gives Roland a note from his mother which explains that she left Serenity and returned to Gilead because Ka demanded it, despite her knowledge that she would die at her son's hands. Her last words are not revealed, but Roland notes that he traced the words over and over until the paper disintegrated, foreshadowing the revelation of her final words as well as indicating their importance.



Storm's Over & Afterword

Storm's Over & Afterword Summary

In *Storm's Over*, Eddie recalls the party well, his words breaking the spell of silence. He and Jake thank Roland for the stories as Susannah notes that light has appeared above the boards covering the windows and the wind has dropped considerably. Deciding to sleep until afternoon, they lay down, but Jake thinks of the other side of the keyhole and of Roland's mother reading him stories when he was a boy as Jake's mother never did. The room is much brighter and the wind is calmer when Roland wakes in the early afternoon. Susannah is already awake, and she asks what Roland's mother wrote at the end of her letter. After pausing so long that Susannah does not believe he will answer, Roland admits that his mother's letter ended with "I forgive you everything. Can you forgive me?" (page 306). Susannah asks if Roland could, and he smiles as he answers affirmatively. The group spends one more night at the meeting hall before continuing along the Path of the Beam toward the Dark Tower. The Afterword provides the translation of Gabrielle Deschain's final message to her son in High Speech, noting that the most beautiful words in any language are "I forgive".

Storm's Over & Afterword Analysis

The last portion of this novel, "Storm's Over", returns to the outer frame story. Eddie and Roland are pleased with the stories that Roland told, and as the starkblast begins to dissipate, they all lay down to rest for a while. When Roland wakes later that afternoon, Susannah asks about the end of his mother's letter, and he finally tells her that his mother ended her letter by offering forgiveness and asking for forgiveness in return. Roland smiles as he confirms that he was able to forgive Gabrielle, and the Afterword claims that forgiveness is the most beautiful concept in any language.



Characters

Roland Deschain

Roland Deschain of Gilead is the main character and protagonist of this novel. In "Starkblast", Roland, Eddie, Susannah and Jake are traveling along the Path of the Beam toward the Dark Tower when an approaching starkblast forces them to take shelter in a meeting hall in the abandoned village of Gook. To entertain his companions, Roland tells two stories, a true story from his youth and a tale that his mother told him as a child. In "The Skin-Man", the story from his youth, Steven Deschain, Roland's father, sends two gunslingers, Roland and Jamie, to rescue the town of Debaria from a skin-man who is ripping people apart. Working with the sheriff to solve the mystery, Roland is appalled by the devastation the creature wreaks, and when he finds a witness to the skin-man, Young Bill Streeter, Roland uses his hypnosis to extract additional information from the boy's mind, finding that the skin-man has a blue ring tattooed around his ankle. While waiting for Jamie and the sheriff to return from the miners' encampment with miners who are able to ride horses since they found fresh manure at the scene of the crime, Roland tells Bill the story of "The Wind Through the Keyhole" to calm his nerves, recalling how his mother told him the story when he was young.

Shortly after Roland finishes the story, Sheriff Peavy, Jamie and the other men return with a group of miners who are able to ride horses. Roland parades the miners with blue rings tattooed around their ankles past Bill to identify the skin-man, and when Bill remembers that the murderer's tattoo was different, he identifies Ollie Ang who has a thick white scar running through his tattoo. After killing the skin-man, Roland returns to Serenity to see Everlynne who gives him a letter from his mother, Gabrielle Deschain, explaining that she knew she would die at her son's hand when she returned to Gilead, but she forgives him and asks his forgiveness in turn as he killed her because Gabrielle betrayed her family by becoming the consort of Marten Broadcloak and Roland was tricked by the witch, Rhea of the Coos. Finishing his stories, Roland and his ka-tet ride out the rest of the starkblast before continuing on their journey toward the Dark Tower.

Tim Ross

Tim Ross is the main character and protagonist of "The Wind Through the Keyhole". A young boy, Tim lives happily with his parents in the village of Tree at the edge of the Endless Forest until his father, Big Ross, never returns from a venture into the Endless Forest and his partner, Big Kells, tells Tim and Nell that Ross was killed by a dragon. Nell marries Big Kells who becomes very abusive when he drinks, causing Tim to hate his stepfather. When the Covenant Man visits, he gives Tim a key to unlock anything, and Tim uses to unlock Kells' trunk, finding his father's lucky coin inside. Visiting the Covenant Man in a clearing, Tim stumbles upon his father's corpse and heeds the tax collector's suspicions that Kells murdered Ross. During this encounter, Kells beats Nell,



blinding her, for opening his trunk before hiding from the townsmen who search for him for Ross's murder.

Finding and using the Covenant Man's wand, Tim sees a vision of receiving a cure from Maerlyn of the Eld for his mother's eyes, so he ventures into the Endless Forest where he faces many dangers. A magical disk given to him by the mudmen leads him to the North Forest Kinnock Dogan where Tim finds a caged tyger. He and the tyger take shelter in the Dogan during a starkblast, and the next day, Tim administers liquid from a brown bottle found in the Dogan to the tyger, causing it to transform into Maerlyn of the Eld who instructs Tim to use the remaining liquid to cure Nell's eyes. He also directs Tim to give Nell the hand ax that belonged to Big Ross as soon as he cures her eyes. Tim flies home on a dibbin, cures his mother's eyes and gives her his father's hand ax. When he attempts to wake Widow Smack, he finds that she is dead, but before he can react, Kells begins choking him until Nell plants Big Ross's ax in the back of Kells' head. Tim retrieves the gun given to him by Widow Smack which he used during his adventure as Maerlyn foretold that he would become a gunslinger.

Covenant Man

The Covenant Man is a tax collector who visits the village of Tree after Kells marries Nell because he does not believe the story of a dragon attacking Big Ross. After ascertaining that Tim does not like Kells because he beats Nell, the Covenant Man gives Tim a magic key which will open anything once, telling Tim that he will camp down the road for several days if Tim is brave enough to visit him. When Tim meets him in the clearing on Marchly and Cosington's land, the Covenant Man shows Tim his father's corpse and gives him Big Ross's hand ax. He also leaves his magic wand behind for Tim to find and use to see the vision of Maerlyn giving him a cure for Nell's eyes. Widow Smack does not trust the Covenant Man because he has not aged in many years, so she believes he is a black magician. The Covenant Man also leaves a note for Tim outside the Dogan, along with a key for the tiger's cage, and the note is signed RF. This is interesting to note as Roland and his ka-tet travel along the Path of the Beam toward the land of Thunderclap based on a note left behind by RF.

Big Bern Kells

Big Bern Kells is Big Ross's partner who returns from the Ironwood Trail with a story about Ross being killed by a dragon. Kells marries Nell and begins abusing her, even blinding her after Tim opens his trunk and retrieves Ross's lucky coin. It is determined that Kells murdered Ross, so Kells hides out for several days, returning to Nell's cottage to kill Widow Smack. He chokes Tim, attempting to murder him as well, but Nell stops Kell by hitting him in the back of the head with her deceased husband's hand ax, killing him.



Nell

Nell is Tim's mother who marries Kells after Big Ross dies. She is beaten and even blinded, but she kills Kells when he tries to choke her son.

Big Jack Ross

Big Jack Ross was Tim's father who never returned from the Ironwood Trail. Kells claims that Ross was killed by a dragon, but it is later determined that Kells murdered Ross and left his corpse in a clearing on Cosington and Marchly's land.

Armaneeta

Armaneeta is the green fairy who appears near the Ross-Kells sign and leads Tim deep into the Endless Forest before disappearing while he is stranded on an island in the middle of a swamp.

Maerlyn of the Eld

Maerlyn of the Eld is a magician who has been trapped in the form of a tyger for many years. Tim ventures into the Endless Forest based on a vision of Maerlyn giving him a cure for his mother's blindness, but when he finds a tyger outside of the Dogan, he frees it to take shelter with him inside the building. After Tim administers liquid from a brown bottle to the creature, the tiger transforms into Maerlyn who was trapped in that form for many years by the Red King. Maerlyn orders Tim to put the rest of the drops in Nell's eyes and give her Ross's hand ax before sending Tim back home.

Young Bill Streeter

Young Bill Streeter is the cook's eleven-year-old son in "The Skin-Man" who witnesses the skin-man's attack at the Jefferson ranch. Bill sees a blue ring tattooed around the skin-man's ankle. While Bill is locked in a jail cell for his protection, Roland tells him the story of "The Wind Through the Keyhole". When Roland parades the miners with tattoos past Bill, Bill remembers that the skin-man had a white mark through his tattoo, allowing him to identify Ollie Ang as the creature. Everlynne agrees to take care of the orphaned child.

Ollie Ang

Ollie Ang is one of the miners with a blue ring tattooed around his ankle who can ride a horse. Because of the scar running through his tattoo, Bill is able to identify him as the skin-man who killed over fifty people, and Roland kills him for his crimes.



Everlynn

Everlynn is the prioress of Serenity who tells Roland and Jamie about the skin-man. She also asks Roland to stop by on his way out of town because she has something for him, and after Roland kills the skin-man, he returns to Serenity so that Everlynn can give him a letter from his mother asking for his forgiveness and bestowing hers.

Jamie DeCurry

Jamie Decurry is the young gunslinger who is sent to Debaria with Roland to find the skin-man. He loses his virginity at the party celebrating the death of the creature.

Sheriff Hugh Peavy

Hugh Peavy is the sheriff of Debaria who Steven Deschain tells Roland and Jamie to report to. Peavy became sheriff after helping Steven defeat the Crow Gang, but he plans to retire after the skin-man is found. Peavy helps Roland and Jamie round up the miners who can ride a horse.

Steven Deschain

Steven Deschain is Roland's father and the ruler of Gilead who sends Roland and Jamie on a mission to save Debaria from the skin-man. He knows that Roland blames himself for his mother's death, and he tells his son that it is not his fault.

Gabrielle Deschain

Gabrielle Deschain is Roland's mother and Steven's wife who died at Roland's hand when he was tricked by a witch, Rhea of the Coos. Gabrielle had made Steven into a cuckold by becoming the consort of Marten Broadcloak, the court magis and Steven's chief adviser who abandoned her. She spent time at the retreat in Serenity, and Everlynn recognizes Roland as Gabrielle's son and gives him a letter that his mother left for him. In the letter, Gabrielle admits that Steven begged her to stay at Serenity lest she die at her son's hands, but she must return to Gilead because Ka demands it. Gabrielle ends the letter by forgiving Roland and asking for his forgiveness in return.

Eddie Dean

Eddie Dean is from New York and is married to Susannah. He is part of Roland's ka-tet which travels along the Path of the Beam, and he listens to Roland's stories as they take shelter from the starkblast in Gook.



Susannah

Susannah is from New York and is married to Eddie. She is part of Roland's ka-tet which travels along the Path of the Beam, and she listens to Roland's stories as they take shelter from the starkblast in Gook.

Jake

From New York, Jake is a young boy with a trouble past who befriends and cares for the bumbler Oy. He is part of Roland's ka-tet which travels along the Path of the Beam, and he listens to Roland's stories as they take shelter from the starkblast in Gook.



Objects/Places

Gook

Gook is the deserted village where Roland, Eddie, Susannah and Jake take shelter in a meeting hall during the starkblast. This is the main setting of the frame story as this is where Roland tells the two stories to his ka-tet.

Path of the Beam

Roland, Eddie, Susannah and Jake are traveling the Path of the Beam toward the Dark Tower when they take shelter in Gook during the starkblast. In "The Wind Through the Keyhole", Tim travels the Path of the Beam on his adventure to retrieve a cure for Nell's blindness.

Mid-World

Mid-World is the main setting of the novel. It is a world parallel to the real world where magic exists, and this is where the entirety of this narrative takes place.

Debaria

Debaria is the town plagued by the skin-man in "The Skin-Man". Steven Deschain sends Roland and Jamie to rid the town of the pestilence.

Gilead

Gilead is the land that Steven Deschain rules as well as Roland's home where he returns after saving Debaria from the skin-man.

Serenity

Serenity is the estate outside of Debaria that serves as a retreat for women. Everlynne is the prioress, and she gives Roland a note from his mother who once spent time at Serenity.

Village of Tree

Tim, from "The Wind Through the Keyhole", lives in the village of Tree which is located near the edge of the dangerous Endless Forest.



Endless Forest

The Endless Forest is a dark, unexplored wilderness full of many dangers where many, including Big Ross supposedly, disappear or are killed.

Ironwood Trail

The Ironwood Trail leads from the village of Tree into the Endless Forest, and this is where Big Ross was supposedly killed by a dragon.

Cosington and Marchly's Land

When Tim finds the Covenant Man on Cosington and Marchly's land, he is shown several visions before being led to Big Ross's body and being told of the Covenant Man's suspicion that Kells killed Tim's father.

Magic Key

The Covenant Man gives Tim a magic key which will open anything once, and Tim uses the key to unlock Kells' trunk where he finds his father's lucky coin.

North Forest Kinnock Dogan

DARIA leads Tim to the North Forest Kinnock Dogan, a building in the middle of a clearing, to seek shelter from the approaching starkblast. Here, Tim releases the caged tiger, using the keys from its collar to enter the Dogan and take shelter under a dibbin.

Dibbin

Tim finds a dibbin in the Dogan, and he unfolds it to use as a sheet to keep the tiger and himself safe and warm from the starkblast. Afterward, he uses the dibbin and a feather to fly home to Tree.

Brown Bottle

Tim finds a brown bottle in the Dogan, and after administering several drops to the tiger, it transforms into Maerlyn the Eld who gives Tim the remainder of the restorative to cure Nell's blindness.

Big Ross's Hand Ax

After the Covenant Man gives Tim his father's hand ax, Tim carries it on his journey into the Endless Forest as he searches for a cure for his mother. Maerlyn instructs him to give the hand ax to Nell as soon as he cures her blindness, and Nell uses the ax to kill Kells as he chokes Tim.



Themes

Magic

Magic plays a large role in "The Wind Through the Keyhole" as the novel is set in Mid-World, a land lying next to the real world with portals between the two worlds, which is filled with untrustworthy magic. Several of the characters in this novel possess magic, and it is filled with magic creatures such as bumlbers, dragons and fairies. The existence of magic is first mentioned when Steven refers to Roland being tricked by the witch, Rhea of the Coos, into killing his mother. The skin-man is also an example of the magic in this novel as he is a regular man who gains the ability to shape-shift after entering a glowing crack which is suspected to have contained magic from the Old People. Because of its unique creation, the skin-man can only be killed by a weapon forced from religious metal, so Roland has to have a special bullet created to kill the creature. Roland also shows that he possesses magic when he hypnotizes Young Bill Streeter to get at the boy's repressed memories of the skin-man.

In "The Wind Through the Keyhole", magic runs rampant. First, there is the story of the dragon killing Big Ross which indicates the existence of these magical creatures. When the Covenant Man visits Nell's cottage, he gives Tim a magical key which unlocks anything once, and after Tim finds his father's lucky coin in Kells' trunk, he visits the Covenant Man in a clearing and is shown a vision of his mother being beaten and blinded by her new husband through the use of a magic wand. Widow Smack insists that the Covenant Man is a black magician, in part because he has not aged in many years. When Tim finds the magic wand and uses it to see a vision of Maerlyn of the Eld, a powerful magician, curing Nell's blindness, he follows the fairy Armaneeta deep into the Endless Forest where he encounters a dragon and is given a speaking metal disk created by the Old People which calls itself DARIA. DARIA leads Tim to the Kinnock where he finds a caged tiger which transforms into Maerlyn after Tim feeds it drops from a brown bottle. Maerlyn instructs Tim to place the remainder of the drops in Nell's eyes before sending him home on a flying dibbin. Maerlyn also prophesies that he will not be the last that Tim helps and that Tim will become a gunslinger.

Betrayal and Treachery

Betrayal and treachery run rampant in the two stories within this novel. In "The Skin-Man", Roland's comments pertaining to the fact that he killed his mother show the ultimate betrayal of matricide; however, Gabrielle forgives her son in the letter she leaves for him at Serenity, and she asks for his forgiveness in return. Treachery is also seen in the fact that Roland was tricked into killing his mother by the witch Rhea of the Coos. The skin-man killing people in Debaria shows treachery and betrayal as his human form is a miner that lives alongside these people, yet he turns on them and rips them apart when he is affected by magic from the Old People that allows him to change



his shape. Steg Luka attacks Ollie Ang for this betrayal when the skin-man's identity is revealed.

The betrayals in "The Wind Through the Keyhole" are many, beginning with Kell's lie that Big Ross was murdered by a dragon. The reality is that Kells murdered his best friend because he coveted Ross's wife, Nell. Kells marries Nell after his friend's death, but he has a bad habit of getting drunk and beating her. When Tim learns the truth of his father's death, he betrays his stepfather by telling the townsmen the truth, and he ventures into the Endless Forest to find Maerlyn and seek a cure for Nell's blindness. Tim feels that he has been betrayed by the Covenant Man when Armaneeta abandons him after he encounters a dragon, but the mudmen give him a magical disk, DARIA, who leads him to the Dogan where he finds Maerlyn who grants Tim a cure for Nell. Maerlyn has been trapped in the form of a tiger for many years by the Red King who will punish the Covenant Man for leading Tim here to rescue the magician. Kells kills Widow Smack for her comfort while he has been hiding in a barn, but when he tries to kill Tim, Nell comes to her son's rescue and kills her second husband with her deceased husband's hand ax.

Starkblasts

Starkblasts play a large role in this novel as one appears in each story and helps to drive the action forward. In "Starkblast", Roland and his ka-tet seek shelter from the pending storm, and as they hide in an abandoned meeting hall in the town of Gook, Roland tells the two inner stories to his companions as a means of distraction from the dangers raging outside. Though a starkblast does not actually occur in "The Skin-Man", the raging winds cause Roland to suspect that a storm is approaching, and he hopes his men will return with the miners suspected of being the skin-man before the storm hits. Jamie and Bill both express their fear and dislike of the raging winds.

In "The Wind Through the Keyhole", Widow Stark warns Tim that a starkblast is approaching before he enters the Endless Forest in search of a cure for Nell's blindness. The mudmen who rescue Tim from the island also warn him of the imminent storm, and DARIA urges him forward as the storm begins. Knowing he must take shelter, Tim releases the tyger from its cage because keys to the Dogan are located on its collar. Tim and the tiger take shelter in the Dogan during the starkblast, using a dibbin for warmth. Tim is amazed that the Dogan remains standing despite the damage the starkblast does to its surroundings. After the starkblast, Tim flies home on the dibbin, and he is distraught to see the havoc wrought by the storm throughout the Fagonard and to the mudmen who have been killed during the storm. Similarly, Roland and his ka-tet are pleasantly stunned that the meeting hall in Gook where they take shelter does not collapse during the starkblast, though the other buildings in the abandoned town do.

Style

Point of View

"The Wind Through the Keyhole" is written using two different points of view. The frame story, "Starkblast" and "Storm's Over", is written using a third-person narrator, as is "The Wind Through the Keyhole". "The Skin-Man", however, is written from a first-person perspective. These points of view are limited but reliable, while the outer frame story is very limited as it focuses primarily on events, "The Skin-Man" shares Roland's thoughts and emotions as he is the narrator. Roland is able to convey some of the characters' thoughts and emotions as he tells the story of "The Wind Through the Keyhole", but this is mostly limited to those of the protagonist, Tim Ross. These points of view are important as they indicate how closely the narrator is affiliated with each of these stories.

The distribution of exposition and dialogue is fairly equal throughout this novel. The exposition is imperative for describing the environment of Mid-World as well as the events that transpire, while the dialogue serves to develop the characters, their thoughts, feelings and relationships with other characters. The viewpoint in the outer frame story and the inner frame story, "The Skin-Man", are both told through Roland's eyes; however, "The Wind Through the Keyhole" focuses exclusively on events as Tim experiences them.

Setting

This novel is set in Mid-World, an imaginary world parallel to the real world which can be accessed through portals. The majority of the characters are native to Mid-World, and some even have magic, but some of the characters have come to Mid-World from the real world. The important distinctions between characters comes from whether they possess magic or not, but Roland's job as a gunslinger is important as this is what leads him to Debaria in "The Skin-Man".

Gook is the deserted village where Roland, Eddie, Susannah and Jake take shelter in a meeting hall during the starkblast. This is the main setting of the frame story as this is where Roland tells the two stories to his ka-tet. Roland, Eddie, Susannah and Jake are traveling the Path of the Beam toward the Dark Tower when they take shelter in Gook during the starkblast. In "The Wind Through the Keyhole", Tim travels the Path of the Beam on his adventure to retrieve a cure for Nell's blindness. Mid-World is the main setting of the novel. It is a world parallel to the real world where magic exists, and this is where the entirety of this narrative takes place. Debaria is the town plagued by the skin-man in "The Skin-Man". Steven Deschain sends Roland and Jamie to rid the town of the pestilence. Gilead is the land that Steven Deschain rules as well as Roland's home where he returns after saving Debaria from the skin-man. Serenity is the estate outside of Debaria that serves as a retreat for women. Everlynn is the prioress, and she gives



Roland a note from his mother who once spent time at Serenity. Tim, from "The Wind Through the Keyhole", lives in the village of Tree which is located near the edge of the dangerous Endless Forest. The Endless Forest is a dark, unexplored wilderness full of many dangers where many, including Big Ross supposedly, disappear or are killed. The Ironwood Trail leads from the village of Tree into the Endless Forest, and this is where Big Ross was supposedly killed by a dragon. When Tim finds the Covenant Man on Cosington and Marchly's land, he is shown several visions before being led to Big Ross's body and being told of the Covenant Man's suspicion that Kells killed Tim's father. DARIA leads Tim to the North Forest Kinnock Dogan, a building in the middle of a clearing, to seek shelter from the approaching starkblast. Here, Tim releases the caged tyger, using the keys from its collar to enter the Dogan and take shelter under a dibbin.

Language and Meaning

The language used in this novel is fairly casual and informal, but the sentences are constructed quite properly and are easily understood. The simplicity of the language is useful and effective for clarifying the magical concepts present in Mid-World. This aids comprehension by explaining unfamiliar concepts and terms to the reader.

The language utilized in "The Wind Through the Keyhole" characterizes the creatures and beliefs of Mid-World as well as the specific characters who play a role in the narrative. The distribution of exposition and dialogue is fairly equal throughout this novel. The exposition is imperative for describing the environment of Mid-World as well as the events that transpire, while the dialogue serves to develop the characters, their thoughts, feelings and relationships with other characters. The verbiage chosen aids the writing style by simplifying and expanding upon unfamiliar concepts of magic. Overall, the language used in this novel makes the concepts addressed much easier to understand.

Structure

This novel is comprised of six chapters and 309 pages. It contains an outer frame story, an inner frame story and an interior tale. The outer frame story consists of "Starkblast" and "Storm's Over", 29 and 4 pages in length, respectively. "The Skin-Man" is broken into two parts, one comprised of 55 pages while the second consists of 34 pages. The interior story, "The Wind Through the Keyhole", is 162 pages long. The novel ends with a one-page Afterword. The chapters are long and detailed. The book takes place during two days as that is the time period in which the outer frame story takes place, but Roland tells his two stories during the first night. Each of the stories told encompass a longer period of time.

"The Wind Through the Keyhole" by Stephen King is the eighth book in the Dark Tower series, though it falls between books four and five chronologically. While taking shelter from a storm, Roland tells his three companions a personal story from his youth as well

as a story his mother told him when he was a boy. "The Wind Through the Keyhole" is an interesting combination of two stories within the larger context of the Dark Tower series. The novel's pace is fairly quick, and it is easy to understand. The outer frame story is linear, though "The Skin-Man" is a sort of flashback to Roland's youth. Overall, the novel is easy to understand and very entertaining.



Quotes

"He has plenty of stuff to think about. He's been through a lot. Not every kid comes back from the dead. And it's like Roland says- if someone tries to face him down, it's the someone who's apt to be sorry." Eddie, Starkblast, page 5

"But done is done, Roland, as thee also knows. And thee doesn't nurse him out of love. Thee knows that, too... If 'twas only respect, I think you'd visit him, and read to him- for you read well, your mother always said so, and about that she spoke true- but you'd not clean his shit and change his bed. You are scourging yourself for the death of your mother, which was not your fault." Steven Deschain, The Skin-Man (Part 1), page 37

"They may still be a year or more from having to shave but once a week, but they're gunslingers, Fortie. If they can't set this cursed town right, then no one can. Besides, it will do you good. Horror's a worm that needs to be coughed out before it breeds. Now tell them." Everlynne, The Skin-Man (Part 1), pages 50-51

"Everlynne. That one'd spit in the devil's face. And if he took her down to Nis, she'd be running the place in a month." Sheriff Peavy, The Skin-Man (Part 1), page 61

"The Jefferson Ranch, ye great grotting idiot! You need to get the sheriff out here, and jin-jin. Everyone's dead. Jefferson, his fambly, the cookie, all the proddies. Blood from one end t'other... Maybe fifteen. Maybe twenty. Who can tell? They're all in pieces. Whatever it was did for em left the two dogs, Rosie and Mozie. They was in there. We had to shoot em. They was lapping up the blood and eating the brains." Canfield, The Skin-Man (Part 1), page 69

"Roland. We have to find this thing. We have to." Jamie, The Skin-Man (Part 1), page 75

"You'll tell the salties who know about horses that there was a witness to the murders at the ranch. You'll say you can't tell them who it was- naturally- but that he saw the skin-man in his human form... Now here's where Vikka comes in. He'll get separated from you and the others a bit and whisper to someone- another kid, one his own age, would be best- that the survivor was the cook's boy. Bill Streeter by name." Roland, The Skin-Man (Part 1), page 86

"Come to the sound of my voice. As you come, you'll leave everything that happened last night behind, because it's over. Come, Bill. Come now." Roland, The Skin-Man (Part 1), page 95

"Those were good years, but as we know- from stories and from life- the good years never last long." The Wind Through the Keyhole, page 110

"No, lad, I've spoke a place for 'ee at the sawmill. You ain't too sma' to stack boards. Ye'll start after harvest's done, and before first snow... She don't get aye, no, or maybe



in the matter. I'm her husband, and that makes me the one to decide." Kells, *The Wind Through the Keyhole*, page 127

"That grown Tim Ross might want no more than to fall into bed after meat and bread. He would begin to smoke a pipe and perhaps get a taste for graf or beer. He would watch his mother's smile grow pale; he would watch her eyes lose their sparkle. And for these things he would have Bern Kells to think." *The Wind Through the Keyhole*, pages 130-131

"Come and see me if you care to. And if you dare to, of course. But come at night, for this jilly's son likes to sleep in the day when he gets the chance. Or stay here if you're timid. It's naught to me." *Covenant Man, The Wind Through the Keyhole*, page 137

"The world is foul, young Tim, but we build up a resistance, don't we? We breathe its air, eat its food, do its doings. Yes. Yes, we do. Never mind. Hunker." *Covenant Man, The Wind Through the Keyhole*, page 152

"Now dig out they ears and listen. I began to hear stories in Tavares, forty wheels east of here, of a woodsman who'd been cooked by a dragon. It was on everyone's lips. A bitch dragon as big as a house, they said. I knew it was bullshit. I believe there might still be a tyger somewhere in the forest- but a dragon? Never. There hasn't been one this close to civilization for years ten times ten, and never one as a big as a house. My curiosity was aroused. Not because Big Ross is a taxpayer- or was- although that's what I'd've told the toothless multitude, were any member of it trig enough- and brave enough- to ask. No, it was curiosity for its own sake, because wanting to know secrets has always been my besetting vice. Someday 'twill be the death of me, I have no doubt." *Covenant Man, The Wind Through the Keyhole*, page 160

"He's fascinated you. And why? For gain? Nay, not him. He saw a bright light in the darkness of this forgotten backwater, that's all, and nothing will do for him but to put it out... Something to do with your mother, I wot. He knows what levers move folk; aye, none better. He has magic keys to unlock their hearts. I know I can't stop thee with words, for one eye is enough to read your face. And I know I can't restrain thee with force, and so do you." *Widow Smack, The Wind Through the Keyhole*, page 185

"Welcome to DARIA, a guidance service of North Central Positronics. You are on the Beam of the Cat, sometimes known as the Beam of the Lion or of the Tyger. You are also on the Way of the Bird, known variously as the Way of the Eagle, the Way of the Hawk, and the Way of the Vulturine. All things serve the Beam!" *Daria, The Wind Through the Keyhole*, page 221

"Greetings, Brave and Resourceful Boy! Welcome to the North Forest Kinnock, which was once known as the Gateway of Out-World. Here I have left you a troublesome Tyger. He is VERY hungry! But as you may have guessed, the Key to SHELTER hangs about his Neck. As you may have also guessed, this Key opens the Cage. Use it if you dare! With all regards to your Mother (whose New Husband will visit her SOON), I



remain your Faithful Servant! RF/MB" Covenant Man's note to Tim, *The Wind Through the Keyhole*, pages 237-238

"Time is a keyhole. Yes, I think so. We sometimes bend and peer through it. And the wind we feel on our cheeks when we do- the wind that blows through the keyhole- is the breath of all the living universe." Tim's thoughts, *The Wind Through the Keyhole*, page 245

"For they mother's eyes... True as the Turtle that holds up the world. You've come a goodly way, you've shown great bravery- and not a little foolishness, but we'll pass that, since they often go together, especially in the young- and you've freed me from a shape I've been caught in for many and many-a. For that you must be rewarded. Now cap the bottle and get on your feet." Maerlyn the Eld, *The Wind Through the Keyhole*, page 250

"I guessed that their lives as miners were little more than slavery, and I was thankful ka had pointed me along a different path... although, when I look back on it, I wonder how much difference there might be between the slavery of the mine and the slavery of the gun. Perhaps one: I've always had the sky to look at, and for that I tell Gan, the Man Jesus, and all the other gods that may be, thankya." Roland, *The Skin-Man (Part 2)*, pages 273-274

"The mark. I seen the mark. It's the man with the broken ring." Young Bill Streeter, *The Skin-Man (Part 2)*, page 287

"I forgive you everything. Can you forgive me?" Gabrielle Deschain's letter to Roland, *Storm's Over*, page 306

Topics for Discussion

Who is Roland, and why does he tell the two stories in this book?

Compare and contrast "The Skin-Man" and "The Wind Through the Keyhole".

Why does Roland go to Serenity, and what does he find there?

How does Roland identify the skin-man?

Why does Tim Stoutheart enter the Endless Forest?

What is a starkblast, and what is its role throughout this novel?

Who do you feel shows the most courage throughout this novel, and why?

What role does magic play throughout "The Wind Through the Keyhole"?