

Wizard's First Rule Study Guide

Wizard's First Rule by Terry Goodkind

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Wizard's First Rule Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1-5.....	5
Chapters 6-10.....	8
Chapters 11 -15.....	11
Chapters 16-20.....	13
Chapters 21-25.....	15
Chapters 26 - 30.....	17
Chapters 31-35.....	19
Chapters 36-40.....	22
Chapters 41-45.....	25
Chapters 46- 49.....	28
Characters.....	30
Objects/Places.....	37
Themes.....	41
Style.....	43
Quotes.....	46
Topics for Discussion.....	49



Plot Summary

Wizard's First Rule is the quest story of young Richard Cypher, who must find three magic boxes mentioned in a secret book of his father's. If he does not, the evil lord Darken Rahl will gain power over the living and the underworld, plunging the world into a reign of terror. Along the way Richard must outsmart an evil queen, a tribe of cannibals and a witch woman, as well as several magical beasts. He is aided by Kahlan, a beautiful but mysterious stranger, his wise elderly friend Zedd and his ally Chase, a huge, fierce boundary warden.

After his father's brutal murder, Richard searches for clues to the killer. He happens to meet a beautiful young woman being pursued by three men in the forest. Richard helps Kahlan hide from the men and when they are attacked the two youths kill the four brawny men. Richard takes Kahlan to meet his elderly friend Zedd. Kahlan recognizes Zedd as the great wizard for whom she has been searching. Zedd realizes that Kahlan is a powerful Confessor and he names Richard Seeker of the Truth. They must stop the evil Darken Rahl from gathering all three of the boxes of Orden and opening the one that will give him power over everything living and dead, for good or evil.

The trio visit Richard's friend Chase, who agrees to take them through a pass in the boundary to The Midlands. On the way, Chase and Zedd are injured, so Kahlan and Richard trek through the pass in the boundary alone. In The Midlands, they are accepted into the tribe of the Mud People. A council of seers sends them to Shota the witch woman, who tells Richard that Queen Milena has the final box of Orden, but will not have it long.

Kahlan and Richard, accompanied by wizard Zedd, travel to Queen Milena's castle in Tamarang, encountering a young orphan named Rachel along the way. There, they learn that the wizard Giller has sacrificed his life to save the box from Darken Rahl. After leaving, they encounter Chase with Rachel, and learn that the little girl has the third box of Orden hidden in a loaf of bread. They rush the box to the protection of an army headed by Richard's brother Michael.

Richard is captured by a Mord-Sith and horribly tortured. He tells Darken Rahl that the Book of Counted Shadows, the guide to opening the boxes of Orden, has been destroyed. However, Richard admits that he has memorized the contents of the book. To save Kahlan's life, Richard decides to help the evil Darken Rahl gain dominion over all things, living and dead. At the last minute, Richard leaves out a crucial paragraph of the book, resulting in Rahl's death. Richard becomes Rahl, ruler of all three lands. His love for Kahlan makes him immune to her Confessor powers and they ride a red dragon away to return the boy Siddin to his people and consummate their relationship.

Although Wizard's First Rule is a young adult fantasy novel replete with magic, kingdoms, wizards, dragons and swords, there are other scenes that some readers will find disturbing. These include the brutal murder of a young boy whose body is

cannibalized. One character is a sadistic homosexual pedophile killer forced to eat his own genitals while another is a dominatrix who practices bondage and tortures the hero.



Chapters 1-5

Chapters 1-5 Summary

Wizard's First Rule is the story of the journey of Richard and Kahlan, the Mother Confessor, in their quest to thwart an attempt by the villain Darken Rahl to gain power over the living and the underworld by collecting the three boxes of Orden and opening the right one. They must avoid vicious animals, supernatural Shadow People, spells and a hungry dragon to prevent the abuse of defenseless people. Richard's hidden knowledge of the sacred Book of the Counted Shadows proves to be the final piece of the puzzle needed to save the world.

In Chapter 1, young forest guide Richard Cypher discovers a foul-smelling variegated vine strangling a small tree in Ven Forest in the fall. He has learned most of the herbs and plants in the forest from his lifelong friend, the elderly herbalist and cloud-reader Zedd. However, Richard is certain that he has seen this vine only once before. Three weeks ago, when his father was brutally murdered, his entrails spread around the family cottage, Richard found a tiny piece of the vine in the blue clay jar where his father frequently left messages.

Richard has searched every trail in Hartland Woods to find the vine near the forbidden Boundary where men lose their souls. Now he sees that the vine is choking the trees in this part of the Ven Forest. When he pulls the vine, a pod strikes his hand, leaving a painful, poisonous thorn. His hand immediately starts swelling. Something big and red flashes across the sky. Richard reaches for his knife, only to discover that he has foolishly left it at home.

Looking across the ridge, Richard sees a woman in a white dress on Hawkers Trail below him, near Trunt Lake. From his high vantage point, he can also see four huge men in cloaks stalking her. The woman seems unaware that she is being pursued, walking calmly but purposefully through the forest.

In Chapter 2, Richard dashes to the beautiful young woman. Silently, with gestures, he makes her understand that she is being chased. He leads her to a hidden trail and uses leaves to conceal their tracks. They communicate with sign language so the men chasing her do not hear them. When they can finally stop to catch their breath, Richard learns that the young woman's name is Kahlan Amnell. A cloud in the shape of a snake hovers overhead.

Suddenly two of the huge blond heavily-armed men appear in front of them and two rappel down the cliff behind Richard and Kahlan. They tell Richard to run away because they only want the girl, but he refuses. Kahlan tells Richard to separate the men so only one or two can attack her at once. Above all, she warns him not to touch her while she is fighting them.



One man grabs Kahlan. Richard feels a shock wave like thunder with no sound. Another man attacks Richard, who is still not armed. Richard manages to throw the man off the cliff. The leader attacks Richard while another blast knocks one swordsman into the leader, sending them both off the cliff. Kahlan refuses to explain the shock waves to Richard but is touched when Richard calls her a friend. She tells Richard that the four men were a quad, a team of assassins sent from The Midlands across the Boundary.

In Chapter 3, Richard brings his new friend Kahlan to his brother's house for an elaborate ceremony and party marking Micheal's appointment as First Councilor of all Westland. There they see Chase, a boundary warden who is a close friend of Richard's. The wardens ensure that the fierce beasts and magic stay safely out of Westland.

In Chapter 4, while walking in the woods that night, Kahlan and Richard are bitten by blood-sucking flies. Kahlan stops Richard from swatting the pesky insects. Soon they see a huge shuffling beast, taller than Richard and three times as heavy, catch a rabbit and rip it apart with its bare hands. Kahlan explains that the beast is a long-tailed gar. It uses the flies to locate prey. The short-tailed gar is even larger and more fearsome — and much smarter.

In Chapter 5, Richard is eager to return home to collect a tooth on a leather thong that he usually wears around his neck, a gift from his father. He also wants his knife and backpack. When they arrive, his home has been torn apart in a search for the Book of Counted Shadows, which Richard inherited from his father. Someone is waiting to attack them in the living room. Richard eases the bedroom window open and retrieves his tooth necklace and backpack. He and Kahlan shelter under a wayward pine, building a fire under the natural shelter of protective boughs. Kahlan tells him that the Boundary between D'Hara in the east and The Midlands has been down since spring. Only the boundary now protects Westland from magic. Darken Rahl, ruler of D'Hara, has gained power over the shadow people of the underworld. Even their touch is deadly to humans.

The boundaries were created as the domain of both the living and the dead. No man can cross them and live. They hold magic safely on the other side, away from Westland. A great wizard held the magic in check and put up the boundaries to contain Rahl's legions. Darken Rahl killed the wizard's wife and daughter. The wizard created a ball of wizard's fire and used it to trap Rahl in the boundary. The rulers of all the kingdoms in D'Hara and The Midlands became greedy, using magic and wizards only to benefit themselves. They joined with the six wizards trained by the great wizard to subjugate the people. Disgusted, the great wizard cast a web to make them all forget his name, and retreated to Westland, where there is no magic. Five of the six remaining wizards searched for the great wizard, and were killed. Darken Rahl also searches for the great wizard, to kill him and rule the world. Only the great wizard can appoint someone who can defeat Darken Rahl. Kahlan has been sent by the remaining wizard to find the great wizard and enlist his help against Darken Rahl.

Before they go to sleep, Kahlan opens a tiny blue jar. It contains the night wisp Shar, a magical fairy-like creature who has guided Kahlan across the boundary. A night wisp cannot survive long after such a strain, and Shar is dying. Shar warns Richard that



Darken Rahl will try to kill both Richard and Kahlan soon. She thanks Richard for saving Kahlan's life. In return, she tells Richard that if he only says her name, the other night wisps will help him. While Richard gives Kahlan and Shar time to say their final good-byes, the night wisp calls Kahlan Mother Confessor. She tells Kahlan it is time for her to choose a mate, but not someone for whom she cares. Kahlan makes the shock wave like thunder with no sound again, and Shar dies happy.

Chapters 1-5 Analysis

Richard believes the old adage that trouble has three children, which foreshadows even more trouble to come. His father's murder was the first, and being bitten by the vine is the second. He fears that the man pursuing the woman may be the third. Richard's powerful, greedy older brother Michael has ordered him not to investigate his father's death, but it is Richard's nature to seek answers to questions and to strive for justice - qualities that will be important later in the story. The big red object flitting by overhead ominously foreshadows challenges ahead, perhaps magical monsters. The snake-like cloud and snake-like vine that wriggles and bites symbolize evil and death, in this case supernatural evil in the form of magic.

Richard is surprised to find a beautiful woman in a long white dress striding through the forest. He is even more shocked at Kahlan's amazing powers in fighting off the men who pursue her. She refuses to answer many of his questions, but he is willing to accept that mystery. In fact, it may make her more attractive to him. Still, he intuits that she is someone powerful from far away. Richard thinks Kahlan is lying when she says the quad came across the Boundary, because he knows that is impossible. This foreshadows Richard's own journey across the Boundary.

Michael reveals his evil character in several ways. He drums up support for a war against a nonexistent enemy. He grabs Kahlan's butt, and propositions her simply because she is with his younger brother. He begins to influence the people of Westland against fire, supposedly because their mother died in a fire when Richard was a young child. Michael is driven by greed and a hunger for power, although Richard tries to think the best of his brother. The great wizard's identity is foreshadowed when Richard thinks that he sounds as grouchy as his elderly friend Zedd. The author uses dramatic irony in the conversation between Shar and Kahlan. The reader knows much that Richard does not, that Kahlan is a Confessor with fearful powers, someone who must choose a mate yet destroys that mate.

Richard is looking for a snake-like vine and followed by a cloud shaped like a snake. The snake symbolizes evil in literature, a device that has been used since the biblical snake in the Garden of Eden.



Chapters 6-10

Chapters 6-10 Summary

In Chapter 6, the next day Richard offers Kahlan a juicy red apple. She grabs him by the throat and almost kills him. At the last second, she stops, explaining that in The Midlands, all red fruit is poisonous. Richard has grown feverish. Kahlan says that he needs medical attention. In four hours, he will be unconscious without treatment. Richard is weak but leads Kahlan to his friend Zedd's house. Zedd is horrified to see Kahlan, and asks what Richard is doing with that creature. Zedd quickly recovers his composure and Kahlan cooks spice soup for all of them.

In Chapter 7, Richard passes out from fever. He remembers spending time with his father. Richard's father made him memorize the sacred Book of Counted Shadows before destroying it, to keep it away from Darken Rahl. He gave Richard the tooth of the beast that guarded the book, to wear around his neck. If Richard is ever confronted by the great wizard, the tooth will prove his father's intentions were honorable. As his father has instructed, Richard has told no one that he is the keeper of the book, not even his brother Michael.

While Zedd is out, Richard asks Kahlan to promise that she will never harm the old man. She replies that while she likes Zedd, she cannot make that promise. Zedd returns with roots and brews a medicine for Richard. It puts him in a stupor. While Richard is unconscious, the thorn works its way out of his flesh. Zedd tells Kahlan to burn it in the fireplace. While Richard sleeps, Kahlan tells Zedd that all of the other wizards have died trying to help her find the great wizard. She knows Zedd is the great wizard. If he will not help her defeat Darken Rahl, she will force him to do so. She demands that Zedd appoint a Seeker. Zedd replies that Seekers appoint themselves. The great wizard merely recognizes the Seeker. A true Seeker can ask the right questions, questions that will make a king shake in his boots. Kahlan will not ask for Zedd's help because she has promised Richard she will let him ask his old friend first.

In the forest, Zedd encounters a fierce, intelligent short-tailed gar. He uses a force field to stop the beast from killing him. Zedd orders the monster to find the new quad that is tracking Kahlan, kill them and return to D'Hara. If the best does not, Zedd will kill him. The gar agrees. Zedd uses magic to conjure the ghosts of his parents, who convince him to help Kahlan and appoint a Seeker to keep the last box away from Rahl. If that fails, they must keep Rahl from finding the Book of Counted Shadows, which explains in riddles which box to open. The only problem is, Zedd has no idea where the Book of Counted Shadows is.

In Chapter 8, Richard awakens refreshed, two days later. He asks for Zedd's help in their quest and reveals that he knows Zedd is the great wizard. He has always known that the old man had special powers. Zedd is amazed at Richard's powers of deduction. Over Kahlan's objections, he gives Richard the Sword Of Truth, naming him the Seeker



of Truth. Both Zedd and Kahlan kneel, pledging to give their lives if necessary to protect and help the Seeker. Grasping the sword, Richard feels great anger flowing from it.

In Chapter 9, Zedd explains that Darken Rahl has put the magical boxes of Orden in play. Rahl must find all three boxes and open one by the first day of winter, or he will die. If Rahl opens the correct box, he will have power over all the world and underworld, which he will use to enslave all the people. Many people will die, because Rahl and his men enjoy torture and death. The trio's mission is to get the great wizard to help her keep the last box away from Rahl. If that fails, they must keep him from opening the right box.

Richard knows from reading the Book of Counted Shadows that one box will kill the person who opens it. One box will incinerate all living things. The last box holds the power over all things, living and dead, for good and evil. If Darken Rahl opens the second box, they all will be killed. If he opens the third box, something even worse will happen. Darken Rahl will hold power over the entire world, to use for his own evil purposes. To stop this, the trio must find any one box and keep it away from Rahl, because a box can only be opened when one person has all three of them. First, they must find a way across the boundary.

In Chapter 10, Richard learns that the magic of the sword combines with the seeker's intent to crush evil. However, in the wrong hands it can also be used to crush good. One reason Zedd left The Midlands was because the role of Seeker had become a political appointment, no longer made by the great wizard. The sword is not effective against Darken Rahl during the year in which the boxes of Orden are in play. Richard, the Seeker of Truth, must use his most important weapons of his head and heart to find another way to defeat Rahl. A crowd of unruly villagers threaten the trio at Zedd's cabin. The old wizard tricks them and explains to Richard that a trick is often as good as a spell.

Chapters 6-10 Analysis

The magical hidden in everyday people and experiences is revealed in this section. Kahlan, a pretty girl walking in the forest, is actually much more than that. The grumpy old herbalist Zedd is a powerful wizard. To his surprise, Richard, the curious, stubborn, unassuming forest guide discovers that he is even more powerful than either of them. He is the Seeker of the Truth, the ultimate force of justice. However, great power also brings great peril and the trio must face the villain Darken Rahl.

Again, dramatic irony is used to illustrate the fact that Kahlan is not what she seems and that Zedd is actually the great wizard they are seeking. Each of the trio is keeping important secrets from the other two. Zedd clearly knows far more about Kahlan than Richard does, and recognizes her type. She is extremely powerful and can be deadly. Although she likes Richard, that affection may prove fatal for him. When Richard introduces Zedd by his full name of Zeddicus Zu'l Zorander, Kahlan replies that she has never heard that name before. This is a clue for the reader that the old man is actually



the great wizard that Kahlan is seeking. This suspicion is confirmed in Chapter 7 when Zedd uses magic against a gar and to conjure a vision of his parents. Later, while Richard has passed out, Zedd reveals that he recognizes Kahlan as a Confessor, although the meaning of that title is not explained. Zedd warns Kahlan not to use her power against his young friend Richard.

The Sword of Truth symbolizes the great power of truth in the magical world of the book. The person who asks the right questions is more powerful even than the Confessor or the greatest wizard. Yet, the sword has another facet. It also causes great anger in the person who carries it, a thirst for justice that erupts in rage. Zedd warns Richard that he will be marked by the sword and suffer great pain each time he kills someone with it. The sword can only be used to kill people justly. At least, the sword will only kill people that the Seeker truly believes need to be killed — even if the Seeker is mistaken. The Seeker is a law unto himself, and can hold anyone accountable for anything.



Chapters 11 -15

Chapters 11 -15 Summary

In Chapter 11, a few minutes later, two short-tailed gar attack the trio. Richard strikes with the Sword of Truth but is injured in the process. Zedd shoots wizard fire at them. They all take refuge at the home of Richard's friend Chase, the boundary warden. Chase explains that wardens don't keep people out of the boundary. They keep monsters inside the boundary, and limit their food supply. Any living person who enters the boundary will certainly be killed by the underworld shadows who live there. Chase explains that the wardens follow only the Seeker. When he learns Richard has been appointed Seeker, he swears to protect Richard with his life. Chase agrees to lead them through a pass in the boundary, several days away on horseback.

In Chapter 12, the trio travel near the boundary. Chase urges them to go on while he remains behind. They cross a sabotaged bridge by using Zedd's magic to hold it up. Chase returns and admits that he has been killing the fierce boundary wolves and other beasts that track them. Fierce heart hounds pursue them.

In Chapter 13, Kahlan rebuffs Richard's advances, telling him it is not that simple. The snake could continue to follow them, marking Richard's position for Darken Rahl. Richard figures out a way to unhook it by hiding it under rain clouds. Zedd is impressed and says that the young man has real potential as a wizard.

In Chapter 14, the path leads them close to the boundary. It is becoming weaker, allowing them to see the dead in the underworld, in a kind of green glow. Monsters reach out of the boundary and grab Kahlan, Zedd and Chase. Richard attacks them with his sword and saves Kahlan, although Zedd and Chase are injured and unconscious. They tie the two men to their horses and dash away, pursued by a great herd of heart hounds.

In Chapter 15, Kahlan and Richard's horses dash across a bog to Skow Swamp. The water is full of snakes that swim towards them. On impulse, Richard drags the Sword of Truth in the water. The snakes swim away. The next night they take refuge at an inn full of rough men in Southaven. When the men threaten Kahlan, Richard wants to attack them but Kahlan defuses the situation with a joke. The innkeeper Bill, who knows Chase, recognizes Richard as the Seeker because of his sword and helps them. Chase and Zedd are still unconscious. Bill tells them there is no healer in Southaven, but directs them to a nearby bone woman.

Chapters 11 -15 Analysis

When Kahlan touches Richard's hand while they are fighting the gar, he feels the sword's tingle of danger. This signifies the fact that although Richard is falling in love with Kahlan, she is a danger to him and may be evil. The Sword of Truth recognizes the



danger, although Richard does not. All three of Richard's friends separately make him promise that if he must kill them to achieve their goal, or protect himself, he will. Richard is unnerved and does not want to agree, but eventually, reluctantly, he does. This is the ultimate sign of loyalty. Not only are they willing to die fighting for Richard, they are willing to be killed by him if necessary. This also underscores the fact that each of them has very strong powers. Zedd has the power of magic. Richard has the power of truth, the most important of all because it brings justice. Chase's physical powers and knowledge of the boundary are immense while Kahlan has the powers of a Confessor — whatever they may be.

Loyalty is an extremely important value in Wizard's First Rule, almost as important as Truth. It usually takes the form of a character swearing to give up their life if necessary, to defend another character. Zedd, Kahlan and Chase have all sworn to die if necessary to defend Richard, the Seeker of Truth. In this case, loyalty is taken a step further with Zedd and Kahlan making Richard promise that he will kill them if necessary to stop Darken Rahl. Despite all these promises of undying loyalty, none of these things ever happen.

Richard realizes that although his father and other loved ones seem to be reaching for him from the boundary, that is just an illusion. In reality, the monsters from the underworld take various shapes to lure their victims. He also learns that the sword of truth is magical, because the snakes avoid it. Still, Kahlan cautions Richard that the Seeker is not invincible. If he had fought the men at the inn, he would have been killed and Darken Rahl would have conquered the world.



Chapters 16-20

Chapters 16-20 Summary

In Chapter 16, the innkeeper Bill awakens Richard and Kahlan to warn them that two huge blond men have arrived. They are the second quad, sent by Darken Rahl to kill Kahlan. They sneak away, speeding to the cottage of the bone woman, Adie. Kahlan is surprised to learn that Adie knew her mother before Kahlan was born. The old woman gives Kahlan a bone to hide her from the dead. She says that Richard's own tooth necklace does the same thing, but she gives him a glowing night stone to be used only in emergencies. Adie treats Zedd and Chase, but says that it will be five to ten days before they recover enough to travel. Richard and Kahlan cannot wait that long to find the box of Orden. Richard decides they will continue alone. Their friends can follow when they are better.

In Chapter 17, Adie warns them about beasts in the passage, including hart hounds and the gripper. This small animal with strong claws is the reason that Adie has only one foot. Kahlan tells Adie she does not expect to live long enough to have children, because of the madness loose in the land. Richard gives Adie a message for Chase, when he awakes. Chase is to return to tell Michael that the boundary will fall and invaders will come. He must father an army and fight. If Michael fails to do so, Chase is to gather the boundary wardens and defend the people of Westland against Rahl's forces. Adie's house sits at the entrance to the pass through the boundary.

In Chapter 18, Richard and Kahlan must walk the pass through the boundary because it is too narrow in spots for horses. It will take two days and a night, and they cannot rest or sleep in that time. If they do, the shadow people will surely kill them. Mentally Richard reviews the memorized Book of Counted Shadows, trying to find a way to stop Darken Rahl. He knows that only a Confessor can verify that the keeper of the book is genuine. He has heard the term Confessor applied to Kahlan, but doesn't know what it means.

In Chapter 19, Darken Rahl visits his father's crypt in D'Hara. His second in command, Demmin Nass, has brought a young boy named Carl for Rahl. Carl is buried up to his neck in sand. Rahl and Demmin discuss Demmin's recent attack and murder of another young boy, which they tried to blame on a man named Brophy. Demmin also brings a list of demands from Queen Milena, which Rahl accepts unread. In return, she will give him the last box or Orden.

In Chapter 20, Richard and Kahlan walk along the trackless boundary pass. It is so dark that Richard has to use the night stone. Seductive shadow people tempt him to death, but he fights them off with the Sword of Truth. The next morning in D'Hara, the boy Carl awakes. Darken Rahl has sat beside the pit all night. Using lies and trickery, Rahl convinces the boy that his parents are bad people and that only Rahl loves him. Over days in captivity, Rahl manipulates the boy until the child vows to do anything for Rahl, even die for him.



Chapters 16-20 Analysis

Darken Rahl will send as many quads as necessary to kill Kahlan. The assassins are always sent in groups of four, because that is the minimum number necessary to kill a Confessor. There is a friendly rivalry between Bill and Chase, and the innkeeper knows Chase will be chagrined to learn of Bill's role in his rescue. Adie speaks in riddles, but reveals that Kahlan has nothing to fear from Richard's anger. She says that Richard, Zedd and Kahlan each have a secret from the others. Again, using dramatic irony, the reader is aware of Richard's secret knowledge of the book but knows only that Kahlan is more than she seems.

The author uses dramatic irony again in revealing that Queen Milena has the final box of Orden, a fact that is concealed from Richard, Zedd and Kahlan. The fact that Rahl does not read the demands from Queen Milena before agreeing to them indicates that he does not intend to abide by any of them. He is confident that as soon as he gets his hands on the last box of Orden, he will rule the world. Queen Milena and everyone else will be helpless before his violence. Rahl's murder of the boy is brutal, but Demmin is even worse. It is clear that Demmin is a child sexual predator and serial killer. Rahl has helped Demmin hide his many crimes. In return, Demmin supplies children for Rahl's rites, although it pains him to give them up.

In order to gain the power for a single trip into the underworld and back, Rahl must win the unconditional trust of a child, freely given. He manipulates the boy Carl until the child vows that he will do anything Rahl wants, even give his life for Rahl. This relationship is the evil reflection of the promises that Kahlan, Zedd and Chase have made to Richard, to give their lives if necessary to protect the Seeker of Truth. This illustrates that any force, even unconditional love and loyalty, can be used for either good or evil.

The Sword of Truth permits the Seeker to kill justly, but he suffers great emotional pain each time he uses it. This is in contrast to Rahl and Demmin, who prey on innocent children without a qualm, proving that they are truly evil. This property of the Sword of Truth keeps the Seeker from using it casually, but also extracts a great price from Seekers, some of whom have gone mad from using it. Still, a Seeker who could kill another man without feeling any pain would not be worthy of the title.



Chapters 21-25

Chapters 21-25 Summary

In Chapter 21, Richard emerges from the narrows, only to discover that he has lost Kahlan. Using the night stone, he follows her footprints back. He discovers that the final member of the quad is stalking Kahlan. Richard kills him with the Sword of Truth, and suffers great pain for it. Richard finds Kahlan and they go back through the pass in the boundary. Because they are following their own tracks, it is a faster journey, although they are still tired when they emerge into The Midlands. They decide to visit the hostile Mud People. Time is limited and that is their best chance to find someone who knows where the final box is.

In Chapter 22, Zedd awakens in the cottage of Adie the bone woman. He is smitten with her. They share spice soup and spend the night together before Zedd must leave on a mission of his own. In The Midlands, Richard and Kahlan search for the Mud People.

In Chapter 23, the clouds that still follow Richard have brought rain after a long drought. The primitive Mud People believe that Richard is a spirit man or holy man. Kahlan wants Richard to use that power to call a council of seers but Richard refuses to lie, even to save the world. The Mud People call the Seeker Richard With the Temper because the sword makes him so angry. The elders of the Mud People refuse to call a council of seers for Richard. A spiritual leader standing off to the side, the Bird Man, befriends Richard. The Seeker devises a plan to win the tribe's confidence by helping them.

In Chapter 24, Darken Rahl finishes brainwashing the boy. Carl swears his love to Rahl, and promises to do anything for him. Rahl kills the boy by pouring molten lead down his throat. He utters incantations while sending the boy's spirit into the underworld, linking their spirits. He has Demmin wash the boy's body and place it on the altar, cracking the skull. Rahl eats a cooked mush made of the boy's brain, heart and testicles, mixed with magic powders. He calls Carl to him. Carl appears in the form of Shinga, a beast that will carry Rahl to the underworld and back.

In Chapter 25, Kahlan enjoys an idyllic interlude with the family of the Mud People tribesman Savidlin, including his young son Siddin. Yet she tells the Bird Man honestly that she would kill the boy with her bare hands if it would save all the other children in the world from Darken Rahl. Richard spends days showing the Mud People how to make tile roofs because all their thatched roofs leak. He hopes that in return, they will call a council of seekers for him, but the elders still refuse. Richard offers his sword to the elders and suggests that they kill the women and children to save them from being tortured by Darken Rahl. They refuse, but he has scared them. As Richard and Kahlan are packing up to leave, they discover the dangerous magical night stone is missing. The young boy, Siddin, has stolen it.



Chapters 21-25 Analysis

In the conversation between Adie and Zedd, the reader learns that the night stone is dangerous. It is also apparent to the reader that the Mud People are dangerous cannibals when they remark that an enemy was a good man, and lick their lips. Richard is unaware of this important fact, although Kahlan knows from her previous visits to this land. The Mud People are proud and the elders resent what they see as Richard's modern, foreign ways, so they deny him any help. In this case, the Seeker's honesty has not helped him to prevail, even though he is trying to help the Mud People. Richard's position as Seeker of Truth is well-deserved. He will not lie, even when it seems vital to their mission to do so. Instead, he honestly asks the Mud People for their help. He is also able to ask probing questions of others to elicit the truth, even when it is uncomfortable to do so.

Kahlan is especially attached to the young boy Siddin because she believes that she will never have children, especially a son. Being a Confessor makes it impossible to be with a man sexually without destroying him. Therefore, Kahlan, like other Confessors, resists the urge to be intimate with any man she likes or respects. The sexual attraction between Kahlan and Richard is growing stronger, yet she cannot give in without sacrificing their mission to save the world, and destroying Richard.



Chapters 26 - 30

Chapters 26 - 30 Summary

In Chapter 26, Richard and Kahlan frantically rescue Siddin from the spirits of the underworld, called when he plays with the night stone. In the process, Kahlan is attacked by one of the Mud People elders, and must kill him with her magic power. After the death, a new elder must be appointed. The Bird Man appoints Richard's friend Savidlin, who immediately proposes that Richard and Kahlan be initiated into the tribe of Mud People and hold a council of seers. The other elders admit they were wrong and kneel before Richard, offering him their lives. He tries to kill them with the Sword of Truth but it stops an inch before striking the first elder. The elders swear loyalty to the Seeker.

In Chapter 27, there is a great banquet that night to induct Kahlan and Richard into the tribe. Richard eats the meat that is served before he learns that it is dried human flesh. He narrowly avoids having to marry one of the girls of the tribe. The Bird Man gives Richard a magic whistle that calls birds. Later that night, Kahlan and Richard begin kissing. Kahlan is very excited and almost has sex with Richard. That would unleash her full power and destroy him. At the last minute, she regains control and flees from him. Richard still does not understand the power of the Confessor and thinks Kahlan is just reluctant to have sex.

In Chapter 28, the Mud People hold a council of seers for Richard. Kahlan attends as his translator, although women are usually banned. The elders call forth the spirits of their dead ancestors, who question Richard about why he wants to destroy Darken Rahl. He says the biggest reason is because Rahl will kill Kahlan. Satisfied with his answers, the spirits tell Richard that the witch woman Shota can help him find the final box of Orden. To speak with her, they must travel to the fearsome Agaden Reach, an area even Confessors avoid. They emerge from the council only to learn that Darken Rahl and his men have attacked the village, killing many people. Rahl has abducted the boy Siddin as a gift for a friend.

In Chapter 29, Princess Violet, the daughter of Queen Milena, is cruel to her playmate, an orphan named Rachel. When Rachel displeases the princess, she is forced to sleep outside. The kindly wizard Giller comforts Rachel with a magic doll and a fire stick. He hides them in a planter in the garden, and she takes them out the gate of the palace with her at night.

In Chapter 30, Kahlan is surprised that Rahl rides a red dragon, since they are the most intelligent and usually indifferent to human affairs. Traveling to the Agaden Reach, Richard and Kahlan are tricked by Old John, a man who claims he knows Zedd. When Richard realizes that Old John does not leave footprints or break spiderwebs, he knows the truth. Old John is actually a huge, snarling monster from the underworld. Richard fights the monster off but is separated from Kahlan in the process. A nimble, pale,



hairless, disgusting creature named Samuel tries to take the Sword of Truth. Richard puts the creature on a rope and forces Samuel to lead him to the witch woman Shota, who has captured Kahlan. The beautiful auburn-haired Shota holds Kahlan captive, covered with snakes so that if she moves, she will be killed. Kahlan begs Richard to run, leaving her to die so he can save his own life and continue the quest. He refuses.

Rachel's magic talking doll Sara tells her to help the wizard Giller. .

Chapters 26 - 30 Analysis

The author uses dramatic irony to reveal to the reader that the the Mud People are cannibals, eating the flesh of enemies and friends alike. Kahlan knows this, but initially Richard does not and eats the human flesh served at the banquet. Again, the Sword of Truth fails when the killing is not justified. The mighty weapon will allow the Seeker to kill only when he genuinely believes that the victim is guilty and deserves death.

Sex is a major theme in this section. Richard is expected to take one of the girls of the tribe as a wife and impregnate her, as part of his initiation ceremony. He manages to avoid this part of the rite by suggesting that his seed or sperm may be tainted from eating red fruit. Richard does this because he is interested only in having sex with Kahlan. The tribe elders excuse Kahlan from marrying a tribesman because they know that as Confessor, she will destroy any man with whom she has sex — a fact about which Richard is unaware. When Kahlan begins kissing Richard, for a moment she almost loses control and unleashes her full power on him. Frightened, she withdraws.

Siddin is in great danger after being abducted by Darken Rahl. The villain's second-in-command, Demmin, has sexually assaulted and killed many young boys. If Richard and Kahlan do not rescue him quickly, Siddin will suffer the same fate. The fact that Darken Rahl will kidnap the child and subject him to such a terrible fate, as a favor, underscores Rahl's evil nature. On the other hand, the noble nature of the wizard Giller is shown through his kind acts towards the orphan Rachel. This is the first indication that the wizard Giller is not a traitor, but has realized that Queen Milena is evil and is trying to stop both her and Darken Rahl. Still, Giller has an ulterior motive. He is making sure that Rachel can smuggle items out of the palace, and that she has the tools she needs to survive a journey in the wilderness. The reader is aware that the magic talking doll Sara is actually a mouthpiece for the wizard Giller, although Rachel is not.



Chapters 31-35

Chapters 31-35 Summary

In Chapter 31, Shota the witch woman assumes the guise of Richard's mother to trick him. Then she causes an apparition of the wizard Zedd to appear, attacking her. Richard fights the pseudo-wizard to save Shota. In gratitude, she gives Richard one wish. He wishes for Zedd and Kahlan to be set free, instead of wishing for the final box of Orden. The witch woman makes several disturbing yet true prophesies. If Kahlan lives, she will use her power as Confessor against Richard. The Seeker will have to use his sword to fight Zedd's wizard's fire. Queen Milena has the first box of Orden, but not for long.

In Chapter 32, the wizard Giller makes plans to run away, taking Rachel and the box of Orden with him. He creates a fake box of Orden and takes the real one. In the forest, Kahlan is suicidal, believing that she will use her destructive powers as a Confessor against Richard. Richard takes her knife so she cannot kill herself. They part briefly but both are unhappy to be separated.

In Chapter 33, Darken Rahl arrives earlier than expected and demands the box. Giller is barely able to hide a loaf of bread containing the box of Orden in the garden planter before Rahl's men seize him and drag him to the tower. Rahl tortures Giller to force him to reveal the location of the real box. As Rachel narrowly escapes the palace with the loaf of bread and her magical talking doll Sara, the tower room explodes in a burst of wizard fire. Sara falls silent forever, signaling Giller's death.

Richard and Kahlan sneak through the forest, avoiding a huge gang of short-tailed gars playing in the geysers from a hot sulfur spring.

In Chapter 34, Kahlan rejoins Richard, determined not to let Shota make choices for them. She explains to Richard that she is a Confessor, possessed of a power that bewitches anyone who touches her. Once bewitched, they lose all power to resist her and have no free will left. If she asks a question, they must answer. If she tells them to do something, they will gladly obey even if it destroys them. She explains that Confessors are powerful and independent, able to travel wherever they like and explains some of the customs to Richard. Most of the time a Confessor can hold her power in check, but not during sex.

In Chapter 35, Richard and Kahlan walk through the town of Horner's Mill, which has been devastated, supposedly by an army from Richard's homeland, the Westlands. The few surviving women and children have all been brutally raped. As much as they want to help the survivors, they must go on to reach Tamarang and the box before the first day of winter. Rachel is camping under a wayward pine when they find her. She has eaten all her food except a loaf of bread that she refuses to touch. Richard trims Rachel's hair



straight while Kahlan cooks for them. Rachel is afraid to trust them and runs away at night.

Chapters 31-35 Analysis

Shota is pleased when Richard attacks his old mentor Zedd, to save her life. Richard has no choice because only Shota can tell him where to find the final box of Orden. This touches on the issue of Loyalty — whether Richard is willing to sacrifice his friends or even kill them to achieve a greater good. In the end, Richard proves loyal to both Zedd and Kahlan. He refuses to let Kahlan die despite her pleas and stops Zedd without killing him. Both Zedd and Kahlan think that this is a mistake, that Richard should be willing to sacrifice them to save the world. However, Richard's decision underscores the theme that ultimately loyalty to friends and family is the most important thing.

Richard also learns of the horrible price he may have to pay when he realizes that Samuel is the previous Seeker. Samuel has been reduced to little more than a gibbering albino monkey, his sanity destroyed by the mental toll of using the Sword of Truth. It is not clear whether Richard will suffer the same fate. It may be that this is the ultimate end of every Seeker, or that Samuel was never strong enough to be a Seeker. He also begins to understand what being a Confessor truly means. No matter how much Kahlan is attracted to him, she can never have sex with him because it will destroy him. Richard begins to understand some of the customs surrounding Confessors. Once touched by a Confessor, even the worst criminal will bare his soul to her. By law, a condemned man has the right to request a Confessor. Doing so is proof that the man is innocent, since he is volunteering for a different kind of death to prove his innocence. Any children born to a Confessor are always Confessors themselves, although some are more powerful than others. Male Confessors are almost always evil, so their mothers force their fathers to kill the male babies. The men are so bewitched that they gladly perform this service for the Confessor. This means that Kahlan will never have a son and accounts for her affection for Siddin. Kahlan is the last Confessor alive. If she does not have a daughter, there will be no more Confessors.

Hair plays a very important role for women in The Midlands, because it is a symbol of social status and power. Only royalty is permitted to have long hair. Most women are required to keep their hair cut at chin length or shorter, while some wealthy women are permitted to have shoulder-length hair. Princess Violet delights in chopping off Rachel's hair in jagged cuts. When Richard restores Rachel's dignity and self-respect by trimming her hair evenly, it is a touching moment. Kahlan's hair is even longer than the Queen's as befits her status as Mother Confessor. Rachel does not trust any woman with long hair, so she is suspicious of Kahlan. This fear is fed even more when Kahlan makes a chance negative remark about Giller, the wizard formerly charged with protecting Kahlan. Giller is the only adult at the palace who has ever shown love or kindness towards Rachel. Afraid of Kahlan, Rachel runs away, taking the box of Orden hidden in a loaf of bread with her. Richard and Kahlan are unaware that this innocent little girl has the prize they are seeking, and continue on to the castle of Queen Milena in Tamarang.

Still, Richard thinks it is odd that although the girl is starving, she will not eat the loaf of bread or allow anyone else to eat it.



Chapters 36-40

Chapters 36-40 Summary

In Chapter 36, Richard and Kahlan reluctantly press on to Tamarang. Richard catches two rabbits for the stew and Kahlan jokes that they have enough food even for Zedd. At that moment, the old wizard walks into camp. Zedd reveals that he is the keeper of the book, which reveals which box of Orden to open. The book was in Aydindril, the traditional home of wizards and Confessors, which has fallen to Darken Rahl. Zedd assumes that Rahl now has the Book of Counted Shadows. He also reveals that the attack on Horner's Mill was actually by Rahl's men, not troops from the Westlands as rumored. Richard had already been convinced that this was true.

In Chapter 37, Richard reveals that he knows Zedd and Kahlan have been talking about Shota's prophesies. Zedd explains that prophesies don't always come true, or don't come true in the way you might expect. Camped under a wayward pine alone, Rachel feels flies biting her. She runs out from under the pine to be attached by a gar.

In Chapter 38, Richard, Kahlan and Zedd agree to enter Tamarang as a routine inspection of the prison by the Mother Confessor. Zedd warns Richard that Queen Milena will be surrounded by courtiers with magical powers of all kinds. When a huge heart hound attacks Richard, he is saved at the last minute by an enormous wolf. When Kahlan hears this story, she calls Brophy, a wolf who has been following them for some time. Zedd learns that Richard's father gave him a bone necklace, which Richard has now discarded.

In Chapter 39, Kahlan the Mother Confessor and her two escorts visit Tamarang. Ranks of soldiers bow before her and even the Queen and her one-handed artist show deference to the Confessor. Kahlan immediately demands to inspect the dungeons, as is her right. She finds them full of innocent men, all of whom are eager to save their lives by confessing to her. Best of all, she hears a small voice and is delighted to discover Siddin, the young boy of the Mud People. He seems safe. Kahlan warns the Queen that if she ever finds men condemned to die for such minor offenses again, she will take away the kingdom.

Kahlan demands to see Giller, her old wizard. The trio is shown to a tower room where an explosion has occurred. Giller's rotting body hangs upside down from a meat hook. His abdomen is cut open just like the corpse of Richard's father. As the trio leaves the city, they see four horses with a single rider approach.

In Chapter 40, the single rider is Chase. Rachel, holding her loaf of bread, clings to the saddle behind him. Chase saved her from the gar. Chase reports that Michael promptly gathered an army in the mountains of the Midlands to help his brother if needed. Rachel learns that Giller, Zedd, Richard, Chase and Kahlan are all on the same side. When



Richard asks, Rachel admits that the box of Orden is inside her loaf of bread. Happily, they all decide that Rachel will live with Chase and his large family.

Riding across a bridge, Richard is stricken by a keeper spell drawn by the one-handed artist James. It will shrink and shrink until Richard is crushed. Richard tells his friends to take the box to safety, where Michael's troops can guard it. Richard rides to the sacred cave where he uses a magic eraser Zedd has given him to erase the sword from the drawing that contains the spell. At the last minute, attacked by James and the shrinking spell, Richard erases the hand from the picture and draws a stump instead. This transfers the spell to James, who dies on the spot.

Outside, Richard encounters a ring of soldiers led by a beautiful red-haired woman dressed in red leather. He attacks them with the magical Sword of Truth, drops the sword and falls to the ground in agony. He has been captured by a Mord-Sith named Denna. It is impossible for Richard to escape, even though the first day of winter is only one month away.

Chapters 36-40 Analysis

Although truth is so important in Richard's life, he keeps secrets from Zedd and Kahlan. The most important secret is that Richard's father has stolen the Book of Counted Shadows and destroyed it after Richard memorized every page of the book. Richard still does not reveal this secret to his mentor, even though Zedd is despondent about his failure. Zedd seems suspicious when Richard mentions the tooth necklace that his father gave him. It is not clear if the wizard realizes that Richard either has the Book of Counted Shadows or knows where it is. In reality, Richard's mind holds the only copy of that sacred magical book. Despite what Kahlan has revealed about being the Mother Confessor, Richard is amazed at her powerful position.

Darken Rahl is already plotting to take over the Westlands after he opens the box of Orden. He ordered his men to attack Horners Mill and a number of other small towns, but spreads rumors that the attacks were by Westland troops. In this way, Rahl creates a public outcry against Richard's homeland and stirs hatred against the people of the west.

Brophy is an innocent man, a wily trader who donated most of his profits to orphanages. He is shocked and angry to have been falsely convicted of the sexual assault and murder of a young boy. Brophy demanded a Confessor, his right as a convicted man about to be executed. Kahlan unleashed her power on him, making Brophy her devoted slave, unable to ever lie to her. After questioning, Kahlan learns that while Brophy had sometimes violated minor business laws, he is a kind man who has never harmed any child. Having proved his innocence, Brophy is released from prison, but is now permanently enslaved to Kahlan by his own choice. Following the custom, Kahlan has let Brophy choose which type of animal he would like to be. He has chosen a wolf. Kahlan turns Brophy into a huge wolf, a transformation that partially releases him from her spell. He leads a mostly happy life with his mate in the forest, but still has an



intolerable urge to please Kahlan when he is within a few miles of her. Brophy is one of only three men who have ever requested Kahlan's services as a Confessor. All were innocent. This incident underscores the dangers of being under the power of a Confessor. Brophy's accuser is Demmin Nass, Rahl's second-in-command and the actual murderer. Rahl helped frame the innocent man. Coincidentally, the victim was Rachel's brother.

Zedd inspects the tower room and learns much from it. The explosion in the tower was not just wizard fire, it was wizard life's fire, a huge explosion that kills the wizard. He can tell from the sweet taste of the soot that Giller was successful. The smile on the corpse's face reveals that Giller did not disclose the identity of the person he was protecting before his death. The reader knows that Giller has made the ultimate sacrifice to save Rachel and that the box is safe.

The scenes of the Mord-Sith Denna's torture of Richard are some of the most disturbing in the book. When magic is used against a Mord-Sith, she is able to turn that magic against the user, capturing and controlling it. Denna uses the sword's magic to put Richard in agony. The pain can only be avoided when Richard thinks good thoughts about Denna. If he fails to obey Denna's every word, he suffers searing pain. In addition, she physically tortures him with the taser-like Agiel for weeks on end to train Richard to be her pet. The most successful pets are taken as mates and tortured so severely that they live only a few weeks.



Chapters 41-45

Chapters 41-45 Summary

In Chapter 41, Richard is brutally tortured by the Mord-Sith Denna, whom he must call Mistress Denna. She can read his mind and the only way to control the agony is to think pleasant thoughts about her. Any attempt to fight against her, or even move, creates unbearable agony. She also beats him brutally on a daily basis. Richard's anger only brings on more agony. He is weak because he is given just enough food, water and sleep to keep him alive.

After several days, Denna takes Richard to dinner. It is the first time he realizes that while he had been unconscious from pain, he had been taken to Queen Milena's castle. At dinner, Richard is shackled and kept on a leash like a dog. He is forced to sit on the floor behind her chair and to eat gruel from a bowl on the floor like a dog. Richard laps it up because it is the first food he has had in days. One of the men freed from the dungeon by Kahlan is brought in while Richard eats. The man is sentenced to 100 lashes with the whip, and then having his head chopped off.

Denna even allows the cruel Princess Violet to wield the Agiel to torture Richard. Once Denna completely breaks Richard, he will be taken to Darken Rahl for questioning. After Rahl opens the correct box, he will have power over the entire world. Princess Violet promises that Kahlan will be captured. Princess Violet will be allowed to cut her hair. All the queen's guards will be permitted to rape her. After years in the dungeon as the guard's plaything, her head will be chopped off. Richard becomes so enraged at the thought of them torturing Kahlan that he viciously kicks Princess Violet, causing her to bite off her tongue and break her jaw. She falls against the stone floor and is not expected to live.

Denna is amazed when Richard is able to attack Princess Violet. Her power over the magic should have prevented it. After the attack, she puts the Agiel in her lips and kisses Richard, causing agonizing pain for both of them. She has decided to take Richard as her mate. She unfastens his belt buckle, using the Agiel below his waist for the first time.

In Chapter 42, Richard is awakened by a bucket of cold water. He is too weak and dazed to remember how to dress himself, and has no idea how many days he has been tortured. Denna is taking him to Darken Rahl's castle, the People's Palace in D'Hara, to finish his training. Queen Milena confronts them as Denna puts Richard in the carriage. She demands custody of the Seeker because he has seriously injured her daughter, Princess Violet. Denna refuses and tells the queen to go back while she still has a castle. The queen lunges at Richard. Denna uses the Agiel, pressing it between the queen's breasts until she falls dead. The queen's guard attacks Denna but Richard kills the guard with his knife, saving Denna's life. Afterward, at Rahl's castle, Denna tortures Richard more extensively for killing Queen Milena, until he is on the edge of madness.



She also allows her sister Mord-Sith, Constance, to brutally torture him. However, Denna also treats Richard with more tenderness than before, when he is not being tortured.

Constance betrays Denna for being too lenient with Richard. Denna is brutally whipped by Darken Rahl. Richard gives her a salve made of herbs to soothe her wounds. She is incredibly grateful for this kindness, and for the first time they make love without the Agiel.

In Chapter 43, the next day, Denna takes Richard to Darken Rahl to be questioned. Afterward, he will become Constance's property. Constance is even more cruel than Denna. Unlike Denna, she no longer has a shred of empathy or tenderness and detests men. Constance promises that once Richard is her pet, she will castrate him. Richard is unable to resist his training, and reveals to Rahl that he has destroyed the Book of Counted Shadows, but only after he memorized every word.

Darken Rahl has already sent two quads to capture Kahlan, Zedd and the remaining box. Rahl has only one week before he must open a box. He claims that he knows which box kills instantly when opened. He gives Richard a choice. If Richard reveals the contents of the book, Rahl will treat Kahlan well. He will allow her to live as a queen in his castle, although he will still require her to bear him a son who is a Confessor. If Richard refuses to divulge the information in the sacred book, Rahl will give Kahlan to Constance for training and Richard will be forced to watch. Rahl will rape Kahlan, forcing her to bear his son, and then allow Constance to torture her until she dies.

Rahl releases Richard, giving him a week of freedom to think about his decision. Richard is still in Denna's power. Rahl says that Richard can end the Mord-Sith's power over him, but only by killing her. Richard has harnessed the power of empathy and forgiveness. The Sword of Truth turns white, as Shota foretold. Denna is waiting for him in their bedroom. She gives Richard her Agiel and allows Richard to kill her, so he can be free. He uses the sword this time with empathy and forgiveness rather than anger.

In Chapter 44, Constance confronts Richard, eager to claim her prize. He uses Denna's Agiel to kill her. Outside, Richard finds Darken Rahl's dragon. As Seeker, Richard has figured out that the only way an intelligent, aloof red dragon would help a human is if someone held her egg hostage. The only animal strong enough to fight off a red dragon is a horde of short-tailed gars. Richard remembers seeing the crowd of gars at the sulfur geyser and realizes that the egg is hidden there. The red dragon will consider helping Richard if he will rescue the egg.

Traveling through the forest, Zedd is pulled into the underworld. He asks Kahlan to touch him with her power, which acts as a lifeline to pull him back into the world of the living. Because Zedd was in the underworld, he is not changed into a slaving idiot devoted to Kahlan.



In Chapter 45, Richard creeps into the cave where the dragon egg is hidden and rescues the egg. The dragon agrees to help Richard for a week, although she makes no secret of the fact that she still intends to eat him when the week is up.

Chapters 41-45 Analysis

Denna allows Richard to keep the Sword of Truth because she controls its magic, making use of the sword extremely painful and its use against her impossible. She flaunts Richard in front of Queen Milena's court, proud to have captured the Seeker as her pet. She enjoys his screams of pain and terror, and tears. Richard now envies the man who has been sentenced to death. Richard learns that Darken Rahl believes Richard has the Book of Counted Shadows, or knows where it is. Richard survives by partitioning a part of himself off from the torture. In that separate room, he seals his self-respect and his love for Kahlan. This frees him to scream, cry and grovel as Mistress Denna requires. Richard is able to keep most of the Book of Counted Shadows secret from Darken Rahl because a partitioned mind cannot be fully broken.

Like other Seekers, Richard has always felt righteous anger when he drew the Sword of Truth. This anger is a natural and useful part of the sword's magic, that allows the Seeker to punish wrongdoers. However, now Richard learns the negative side of that anger. Someone who controls the sword's magic can turn that anger against him, into unimaginable pain. Now, Richard learns the power of empathy and forgiveness. He realizes that Denna is a monster because she has been forced to become one. As he develops empathy for Denna, the pain recedes and Richard is able to access some magic power once again. Richard clearly develops a love for Denna, even as she continues to torture him.

Darken Rahl claims to know which box of Orden kills as soon as it is opened. That leaves only two possible boxes to open. One will instantly destroy everything, and the other will give Rahl infinite power. There is a 50-50 chance that Rahl will destroy the whole world in his quest to be the supreme ruler. Rahl is completely willing to take this risk. Richard also considers that Rahl may be invoking the Wizard's First Rule and tricking him. Rahl might not know which box will kill instantly if opened, but be lying about it.



Chapters 46- 49

Chapters 46- 49 Summary

In Chapter 46, Richard decides that if he cannot keep the last box away from Rahl, he must help the villain because he cannot bear to see Kahlan tortured. He finds Kahlan and Zedd, but because of Rahl's spell, he looks like Darken Rahl to them. They attack him and he leaves quickly. Then he finds Michael, and realizes that his brother is a follower of Rahl.

In Chapter 47, the two quads led by Demmin Nass catch up with Zedd, Kahlan and Chase. Zedd is bound by a powerful spell, Chase with ropes. Nass cannot be harmed by Kahlan's powers, because he is protected by a spell. He breaks Kahlan's arm and gives her to his men to rape. Nass tells Kahlan Richard is dead. She lets out three chilling screams, unleashing the power of Con Dar, the blood rage of a Confessor. This extreme power enables her to use her power on anyone, even without touching them. She quickly dispatches the quads and cuts off Demmin Nass's genitals, forcing him to eat them.

In Chapter 48, Richard is attacked by heart hounds but rescued by the red dragon Scarlet. In spite of the cloud cover, Scarlet has come to help him. She flies him back to the People's Palace where he will deliver the power of Orden to Darken Rahl. Soon after, Zedd, Chase and Kahlan stride into the palace. The guards have been ordered by Darken Rahl to admit them.

In Chapter 49, Zedd sees that Darken Rahl has all three boxes and throws wizard fire at him. Kahlan seizes Darken Rahl, who is wearing the Sword of Truth and unleashes her power on him, just as Zedd realizes that something is wrong. He shouts a warning, but it is too late. Kahlan realizes that the man she has destroyed is Richard, just as the real Darken Rahl walks in the door with Michael and several guards. Richard calls Kahlan mistress, signifying his destruction and subjugation. Devastated, Kahlan shrieks in agony and the power of the Con Dar is extinguished. Rahl's guards gag Kahlan.

Darken Rahl forces Richard to recite the Book of the Counted Shadows to save Kahlan. It takes all night for them to weave the enchantments required to open the boxes. Each box encases one, two or three fingers of shadow in the dawn light. The box with two shadows is the one that will give unlimited power to the person who opens it. Darken Rahl opens it, and is bathed in golden light. He has won and will rule the world. The light gradually turns dark and begins to kill Rahl. Richard has left out one crucial paragraph of the book, tricking Darken Rahl into opening the fatal box.

Richard only pretended to be touched by the power of the Confessor. His love for her protected him from being destroyed, because he already wanted to do whatever she asked. Using the Wizard's First Rule, Richard has tricked Darken Rahl. Richard makes arrangements to restore order to The Midlands, D'Hara and Westland. He and Kahlan



ride off on the red dragon Scarlet to return Siddin to the Mud People and make love in the spirit house there.

Chapters 46- 49 Analysis

Despite his tenderness toward Denna, Richard loves Kahlan so much that he cannot bear to see her tortured. He will even help Darken Rahl rule the world, if necessary to save her. Richard makes this decision even though he knows that Kahlan would want him to do the opposite.

Zedd tells the dying Darken Rahl that Richard is his son, the male heir he always wanted. This is because Darken Rahl had raped Zedd's daughter before setting the fire that killed the wizard's wife. Zedd had fled to Westland with his daughter, who married George Cypher, a widower with a young son named Michael. George had known the entire story, except for the fact that his new father-in-law was a wizard. Now that Darken Rahl is dead, Richard is the new Rahl, or ruler. Zedd loosens the spell that concealed his identity and Richard's so everyone in the land knows of the new ruler, except Richard.

Richard shows compassion and empathy when he orders all the Agiels to be destroyed and the Mord-Siths to be given work helping others until they learn empathy. He forgives his brother Michael's betrayals but orders him executed for crimes against villagers. Richard also orders everyone who has harmed defenseless people to be tried and if found guilty, executed.



Characters

Richard Cypher

Richard is a tall, strong young man with thick black hair whose mother died in a fire when he was young. He works as an unassuming woods guide who leads tourists and dignitaries through the Ven Forest of Westland. He enjoys spending time alone in the forest, and with his friend Zedd, a herbalist and cloud-reader. However, there is one secret that Richard hides even from Zedd. His father George Cypher had stolen a sacred book that was being guarded by a fierce beast, to keep it from falling into the wrong hands. George Cypher and Richard burned the Book of Counted Shadows, but not before Richard spent years memorizing every word. This book includes instructions to opening the three boxes of Orden, a very powerful secret.

Richard is curious and relentless in his pursuit of the truth. When his father is brutally murdered, Richard's older brother Michael tells him to let the authorities handle it. Richard refuses. He is determined to bring his father's killer to justice. The only clue he has is a shred of a snake-like vine that his father left in a blue clay jar as a message for Richard. When he finds the vine, it leads him to Kahlan, and their adventure begins.

Richard doesn't know it, but George Cypher is really his adopted father. The daughter of Zedd the first wizard had been raped by villain Darken Rahl. Richard is their child, so Zedd is actually his grandfather. After the rape, Zedd had taken his daughter to safety in Westland, where magic was forbidden, and she married George Cypher, a widower with a son. Richard's last name, Cypher, suggests cipher, meaning a sum, riddle or puzzle. This is ironic because Richard hates riddles and prefers straight answers. However, he is good at figuring out puzzles. This quality serves him well when he is appointed Seeker of the Truth, one of the most powerful people in all the three lands.

Kahlan Amnell

Kahlan is a beautiful, elegant, strong young woman whom Richard meets in the forest. She has long, lush, shining brown hair, graceful eyebrows and intelligent green eyes. Her clothes are unusual for a hike in the woods — a beautifully simple white dress and handsome but practical boots. Richard helps save her from a quad of four assassins who are chasing her. Richard does not realize that Kahlan is a Confessor, a magical creature with the supernatural power of destroying anyone's free will with a mere touch. What the Mord-Siths accomplish with torture and pain, Kahlan accomplishes with pure love. This has a downside, however. A Confessor can never maintain control of her power during sex. Therefore, having sex with any man she loves or respects destroys him forever. Kahlan is attracted to Richard but not willing to turn him into her emotional slave. Fortunately, she does not have to make that choice.



Kahlan is not just a Confessor, she was by far the most powerful, the Mother Confessor. Any children born to her will also be Confessors. Male Confessors are often evil, so male infants born to Confessors are usually killed at birth by their fathers. Kahlan's strength is so extreme that she intuitively goes into the blood rage, the Con Dor, when she believes that Richard has been killed. Normally, only a Confessor who has been taught the ceremony of the Con Dor by her own mother, as an adult, can access that extreme power.

Zedd

Richard's elderly friend Zedd is an herbalist and cloud-reader, an irritable but charming old man. He is skinny but has an almost bottomless appetite. Zedd is skilled in healing, and knows the uses of all of the plants in the forest, which he passes on to Richard. Kahlan quickly recognizes that Zedd is Zeddicus Zu'l Zorander, the powerful first wizard. His name itself sounds like a magical incantation. Richard has long suspected that his friend has magical powers. As First Wizard, Zedd becomes angry when his disciples including the wizard Giller begin interfering in politics. They even become members of the courts of kings and queens, instead of remaining impartial. Some also help the nobles abuse innocent peasants. Precious magical relics like the boxes of Orden are given as prizes to prominent citizens. Zedd hides the Book of Counted Shadows where a beast guards it well. His efforts anger Darken Rahl and the villain's father. Darken Rahl rapes Zedd's daughter. Zedd retaliates, shooting wizard fire that scars Darken Rahl's thighs and crotch. In return, Rahl's father sets a fire that kills Zedd's beloved wife. Disgusted with the turn magic is taking, Zedd flees to Westland where magic is forbidden. Powerful spells at the People's Palace of Darken Rahl inhibit Zedd's powers and limit his ability to help Richard.

Chase

The huge boundary warden Dell Brandstone is nicknamed Chase because that is what he does best — chases huge, frightening things through the boundary and kills them. Chase, Richard's best friend, is a huge bear-like man, heavily armed at all times and dressed in chain mail. He accompanies Zedd, Richard and Kahlan on their quest, providing much-needed muscle. Yet, he also has a softer side. He is married and has a half-dozen active, laughing children. It is Chase who finally wins the trust of the orphan Rachel. After defeating Darken Rahl, Chase takes Rachel home to live with his family including his devoted wife Emma.

Darken Rahl

Darken Rahl is the tall, muscular, blond villain bent on using his evil power to subjugate every creature in the three lands, the living as well as the underworld. He orders his men to slaughter the innocent villagers of Horner's Mill and to brutally rape the surviving



women and children. He is scarred on the thighs and genital area from wizard fire wielded by Zedd when Rahl's father kills the wizard's wife.

His first name implies "dark" or blackness, often a symbol for evil. His last name sounds like "rule," making him an "evil ruler." That is what he will become if he uses his considerable magic powers to open the right box of Orden. The name Darken also evokes Darth Vader, the evil ruler who is the father of hero Luke Skywalker in Star Wars. This is a valid comparison since Rahl is also Richard's father, although neither of them knows it for most of the novel. Like Darth Vader, Rahl is a megalomaniac intent only on ruling the world and hurting people. Darken Rahl lives in his lush People's Palace in the land of D'Hara. He rules most of The Midlands and wants to take over Westland as well.

Rahl is a practitioner of the negative subtractive magic, which can be used to destroy things. This is the equivalent of dark magic in Wizard's First Rule and gives him power over the underworld. Despite all of his flaws, Rahl is a very adept, powerful wizard. Only years of practice have given him the skill to carry out the elaborate incantations necessary to open the box of Orden. If he opens the right box, he will have additive as well as subtractive magic and rule the whole world.

Denna the Mord-Sith

Mord-Siths are the most feared beings in the three lands, for good reason. They are able to turn anyone's magic against the victim. They specialize in training victims with horrible torture. A Mord-Sith will mate with their best trainees, inflicting even more pain for the few weeks until the victim dies. They wear red leather that is frequently splashed with the blood of their victims. The Mord-Sith Denna captures Richard and breaks him so that he will answer any question Darken Rahl asks. She takes Richard for her mate.

Mord-Siths are chosen from the most sensitive, empathetic young girls. Like all Mord-Siths, Denna had been trained from the age of 12 to 15 by a Mord-Sith. At 15 she had been mated to the Mord-Sith and finally managed to kill the Mord-Sith at the age of 18. She was then tortured continuously for two years in punishment. Like all Mord-Siths, after Denna was broken, she had to watch her mother being tortured and broken, and then do the same to her father.

Rachel

A very young orphan girl of about eight years, Rachel lives in the castle of Queen Milena where she is the playmate of Princess Violet. Her existence is miserable. She wears raggedy clothes, is seldom fed and has no shoes. Princess Violet hacks Rachel's hair off in jagged pieces and slaps her for pure meanness. At night Rachel sleeps in a locked box in Princess Violet's room if she is lucky. If she has offended the Princess in any way, she is forced to sleep outside in the forest, alone, even in the middle of winter.

Rachel doesn't remember her mother or father. She had lived in an orphanage with her brother, until he was brutally murdered by Demmin Nass. The trader Brophy was tried



for the mother but freed by the Confessor and magically transformed into a huge wolf. Rachel is happier in the orphanage than she had been in the palace.

The wizard Giller takes pity on the little girl. He gives her a fire stick to keep warm when she camps out, and a magical doll named Sara to keep her company. When Giller hides the final box of Orden in a loaf of bread, Rachel is able to sneak it out of the castle when she is banished for the night. Following Giller's instructions, she travels from wayward pine to wayward pine, a little further each day until she finds someone she can trust to keep the box. Eventually, she trusts Chase. When she realizes that Chase, Giller, Richard and Kahlan are all on the same side, she is happy to give up the box.

Giller

Giller is Zedd's second-in-command and most trusted wizard ally until, like the other wizards, he sells out by becoming involved in politics. Giller is assigned the important job of guarding Kahlan, the Mother Confessor but he decides to go to work for the evil Queen Milena instead. Eventually Giller realizes that the Queen is victimizing innocent villagers. He feels great guilt over the abuse of innocent people, including Rachel's poor treatment by Princess Violet.

Giller has a change of heart and realizes that Queen Milena has made a pact with Darken Rahl and plans to give him the box of Orden. Instead, Giller devises a plan to sneak the box out of the palace right under the noses of the guards. He creates a fake box and hides the real one in a loaf of bread. A magic spell prevents people from seeing the box, even if they open the bread. He plans to run away, taking the box and the little orphan Rachel. Before he can do so, Darken Rahl arrives and discovers the fake. He knows that only Giller is capable of this kind of magic. Darken Rahl takes Giller up to the tower to torture him into revealing where the box is. If he does so, the box will be lost and Rachel killed. Giller uses all his life force to create wizard life fire, the only thing more powerful than wizard fire. The resulting explosion kills him and blasts apart the tower room. Giller dies with a smile on his face, aware that he has not betrayed Rachel by giving up the secrets. Zedd can tell by the sweet taste of the soot in the room that the wizard life force had been to save someone else, not just to destroy. Once a traitor, Giller has redeemed himself completely, although it cost him his life.

Queen Milena

Mean Queen Milena is a plump woman with elaborate, curly hair. Because only royalty is allowed to have long hair, she is very proud of it. Milena lives in her castle in Tamarang with her young daughter, the sadistic Princess Violet. Milena is a ruthless, cruel ruler who taxes her subjects until their families are starving to increase her own wealth. If anyone complains, no matter how valid that might be, she sentences him to be whipped and then have his head cut off. Eventually, Queen Milena defies the Mord-Sith Denna and is killed by her.



Princess Violet

Although she is only a young girl, Princess Violet is already a sadist. She is plump and overfed, with thin wispy long hair, the sign of royalty. Princess Violet regularly slaps her companion Rachel, simply to see the look of surprise and hurt in the girl's eyes. She particularly enjoys taunting the defenseless orphan and making her sleep outside for imagined slights. Rachel has a doll when she first comes to live with Violet, but the Princess throws it in the fire in a fit of rage. She chops Rachel's hair in short spikes because the ugly Princess is jealous of Rachel's beauty.

When the Mord-Sith captures Richard, Violet shows a real talent for cruelty, using the Agiel to torture him and forcing him to eat from a bowl on the floor like a dog. Richard is so angry at her that he is able to overcome the Mord-Sith's control and viciously kicks Princess Violet. The blow causes Violet to bite through her own tongue and leaves her unconscious, near death.

Brophy

Brophy is a huge, wily and somewhat unscrupulous trader in magical artifacts and antiquities. However, he has a good side and donates all his profits to orphanages. When a young boy from one of the orphanages is sexually assaulted and murdered by Demmin Nass, he tries to blame the crime on Brophy. The trader is convicted to be executed but demands a Confessor, as is his right. Kahlan touches Brophy with her power, which renders him helpless against her. Answering all her questions honestly, she learns that he may have broken some trade regulations, but he is innocent of murder. In fact, Brophy would never do anything to harm a child. Kahlan has Brophy released from prison, angering Demmin Nass and Darken Rahl.

However, Brophy's life as a man is destroyed. He can do nothing but follow Kahlan around begging her to give him orders. As is the custom, a wizard changes Brophy into an animal of his choice, so that he can resume a somewhat normal, happy life. Brophy chooses to become a wolf. He lives happily in the mountains, taking a mate and raising a litter of cubs. Eventually, however, Kahlan passes nearby on her quest with Richard. Brophy is still somewhat charmed by her, and he secretly follows the pair, protecting them from gars and other menaces. Sadly, Brophy dies trying to defend Kahlan.

Shota the Witch Woman

The seers of the Mud People send Richard and Kahlan to Shota the witch woman, a fearsome fortuneteller. She foretells a number of prophecies that all come true, although not in the way that anyone expects. Shota has the power to assume any form, and she initially appears to Richard as his mother. Then she turns into a beautiful, auburn-haired woman.



The Bird Man

The Bird Man is the shaman of the Mud People tribe. He befriends Richard and Kahlan and helps them become members of the tribe so that they can call a council of seers to find the box of Orden.

Siddin

Siddin is a young boy of the Mud People kidnapped by Darken Rahl as a gift for his friend Demmin Nass. For unknown reasons, Siddin is being kept in the dungeon of Queen Milena's castle where Richard and Kahlan rescue him. Eventually they are able to take him back to his village riding on a red dragon.

Constance the Mord-Sith

Constance the Mord-Sith is even crueler than Denna. She delights in doing permanent damage to her trainees and promises Richard that when he belongs to her, she will castrate him. It is the prospect of Kahlan being constantly tortured by Constance that drives Richard to agree to help Darken Rahl open the boxes of Orden.

James the Artist

James the Artist is a slim, dark man with one hand. He is a talented artist in the court of Queen Milena. He is especially dangerous because a magical spell can only be cast in a language the victim can understand. However, since drawing is universal, James can cast a spell on anyone, no matter what language they speak. He draws a picture that casts a spell on Richard. Richard is barely able to erase the picture and change it to a man with one arm, reversing the spell.

Michael Cypher

Michael is Richard's much-older brother, a short, soft man with a mustache who brags about his courage and wisdom. Michael is greedy and at the beginning of the story, has just been made First Councilor of all of Westland. Although Richard does not know it, Michael has made a pact with the evil villain Darken Rahl. He betrays Richard and gives Darken Rahl the final box of Orden. Eventually, Richard, in his role as Seeker, kills his brother although he is never able to find it in his heart to forgive Michael.

Shar the Night Wisp

Shar is a night wisp, a tiny fairy-like creature who has guided Kahlan across the boundary between The Midlands and Westland. The trip has diminished her strength to the point that Shar cannot survive the trip back, and dies soon after the crossing. Before



she dies, she tells Richard that all he has to do is utter her name, and the night wisps will help him.

Demmin Nass

Demmin Nass is the tall, blond, well-muscled, smooth-chested second-in-command to the villain Darken Rahl. His first name sounds like "demon" while his last name suggests "nasty." He is a nasty demon indeed, a pedophile who abuses young boys and then murders many of them. When he is finally overcome by Kahlan's powers as Confessor, he admits that he has killed 80-100 young boys. It is Demmin who had killed Rachel's brother, and tried to pin the murder on Brophy. Kahlan slices off Demmin's genitals and under her orders he eats them. She extracts all the information she needs from him before he dies.

Adie the Bone Woman

When Chase and Zedd are injured, the kindly innkeeper Bill directs Richard and Kahlan to the cottage of a healer, Adie the bone woman. She is a frail-looking elderly woman with only one foot, who has a large collection of bones in her tiny cottage, many of them from creatures of the underworld. Adie casts a spell on Zedd and Chase to help them heal, and takes care of them while Richard and Kahlan continue on their quest. When Zedd recovers, he restores Adie's foot with magic and the two develop a romance.



Objects/Places

The Three Boxes of Orden

The three boxes of Orden are magical. Once a player puts the boxes in play, he or she has one year to open one box. A box can only be opened when all three are present. If the player fails to open a box within a year, the player dies. Each box has a different result when opened, and there is no way to tell in advance which box is being opened. One box kills the player. The second box destroys every creature, living and dead. The third box gives the player unlimited power over all things, living and dead, for good or evil. The villain Darken Rahl hopes to open the last box and become the evil ruler of all three lands and the underworld. Richard and Kahlan undertake a quest to keep him from collecting all three boxes. When that fails, they must prevent him from opening the right box.

The Sword of Truth

Zedd names Richard the Seeker of Truth and gives him the Sword of Truth. The sword is silver, with an intricately intertwined handle of silver and gold wire. The grip of the sword is engraved with the word "truth." When Richard grasps the sword, he can feel the word etched into his hand. The sword has magic that gives the Seeker even more power to question people. The magic prevents the sword from being used to kill anybody unless the Seeker believes they deserve to die.

The People's Palace

Darken Rahl's huge, elaborate castle in D'Hara is called the People's Palace. It is a complex where people are required to go to chapel twice per day and worship Rahl. In the innermost court of the palace, Rahl conducts his darkest rituals including killing a child and the incantations that will permit him to open the final box of Orden. The design of the castle is a magic spell itself, which prevents Zedd or any other wizard from using their powers inside it.

The Night Stone

Adie the bone woman gives Richard the night stone to use at the darkest point when he and Kahlan cross the boundary. The night stone glows with light. However, it also attracts the Shadow People of the underworld, whose very touch is deadly to a human — a fact that Adie neglects to mention. The boy Siddin is endangered when he steals the night stone and plays with it, unaware that he is calling the Shadow People to his village of Mud People.



Westland

Richard lives in the country of Westland, the western-most area of the three lands. Westland was formed when the great wizard Zedd created a boundary between it and The Midlands. Westland is free of magic because there was no magic there when the boundary was put up, and no one can cross the boundary. The residents of Westland settled there because they fear magic and wanted to live in a land free of it. Westland is peaceful, and is ruled by a First Councilor.

The Midlands

The central portion of the three lands is The Midlands, a loose confederation of kingdoms. Each kingdom is ruled by a king or queen, one of whom is Queen Milena of Tamarang. The Midlands is separated from Westland only by the boundary. Magic is very common in The Midlands and Queen Milena has several wizards or magicians in her court. Most of the kingdoms in The Midlands have signed peace treaties with Darken Rahl, unaware that for him, this is the first step in conquering a land.

D'Hara

D'Hara is the eastern area of the three lands. It was once a collection of kingdoms like The Midlands, but has been completely taken over by Darken Rahl and his father before him. Rahl is now the supreme ruler of D'Hara and is worshiped there like a god. Rahl's castle, the People's Palace, is in central D'Hara.

Horner's Mill

A small town in The Midlands, Horner's Mill has been completely devastated by soldiers who killed all the men and raped all the women and children. Darken Rahl sent his army to do this, but blames it on an imaginary army from Westland. This is part of Darken Rahl's evil plot to take over Westland.

Tamarang

Queen Milena's kingdom in The Midlands is called Tamarang.

Southaven

Southaven is a small town in the southern portion of Westland where Richard and Kahlan take refuge after being chased by heart hounds.



The Ven Forest

Richard is a woods guide familiar with every corner of the Ven Forest in Westland. It is while exploring the forest after his father's death that he sees Kahlan being pursued by assassins.

Hawker's Trail near Trunt Lake

Trunt Lake is a lake just south of Hartland in the Ven Forest in Westland. Richard first sees Kahlan on Hawker's Trail near Trunt Lake.

Aydindril

Aydindril is a secret cave in the mountains where the great wizard Zedd has placed many magical artifacts for safekeeping, including the Book of Counted Shadows.

Hartland

Hartland is Richard's hometown, the largest city in Westland.

The Boundary

The boundary is controlled by creatures of the underworld, including huge heart hounds and Shadow People. Any man who enters the boundary will immediately be killed. Boundary wardens patrol the forest near the boundary. Their job is not to keep people out of the boundary. It is to keep the underworld contained within the boundary. They do try to limit the number of people who cross into the boundary, simply to minimize the food supply for the creatures of the underworld.

King's Port

Since there is no way for a human to cross the boundary, Richard reasons that there must be a pass through it. That pass is King's Port, in the south of Westland.

The Book of Counted Shadows

The Book of Counted Shadows is a sacred text that describes how to open the three boxes of Orden, and most importantly, which box to open. The great wizard Zedd hid it at Aydindril, guarded by a huge beast who was the keeper of the book. Richard's father, George Cypher, killed the beast and stole the book to keep it away from Darken Rahl's father. This made George Cypher the keeper of the book. To protect the book even more, George had his adopted son Richard memorize the book, line by line, over a

number of years. When Richard could recite the book perfectly, they burned it. This makes Richard the keeper of the book, even though what he keeps is the knowledge, not the physical book itself.



Themes

Truth

The overwhelming power of truth to bring about justice is a primary theme of Wizard's First Rule. Richard's appointment as Seeker of the Truth elevates him from a humble woods guide to a position even more powerful than Zedd the First Wizard or Kahlan, the Mother Confessor. The Seeker has the ultimate power to question anyone, and even makes kings quake in their boots. If he finds need to, he can kill anyone with the magical Sword of Truth. The sword's magic prevents it from being used on anyone the Seeker does not believe to be truly guilty and deserving of death. The fierce boundary wardens serve only the Seeker and do not answer to any king.

Richard is ideally suited to be Seeker because he is intelligent and able to read people well. He easily discerns when someone is lying to him, and can uncover the truth based on slivers of information. Most importantly, he has the knack for asking probing questions that drill to the heart of the issue and is not afraid to take action based upon his discoveries. As Seeker, he also has the power to realize when a question is not being answered truthfully. In the moral world of this novel, Truth is the most highly prized quality and is inherently good.

Yet, this belief system assumes that there is only one universal, immutable truth about every issue. In fact, there can be layers of truth, and different truths for different people. If asked whether chocolate or vanilla tastes better, some people will say chocolate and others will say vanilla. All of them answered truthfully. They simply have different taste buds and different perceptions. In Wizard's First Rule, people like Darken Rule and Queen Milena are acting in a way that is truly evil. They intend to hurt others, so knowing the truth reveals them as villains. In real life, motives are usually more mixed. Running red lights and chopping down trees are bad, and a person who does that may deserve to be punished. The Sword of Truth would certainly permit them to be punished. Yet, someone may run a red light to speed a bleeding child to the hospital, or chop down a tree to plant a garden to feed the hungry. Those are not evil deeds. The real world is not as simple as the world of Wizard's First Rule, where there is only one truth at a time.

Secrets

Despite Richard's devotion to the truth in his role as Seeker, almost every major character in the novel keeps secrets from the others. Zedd conceals the fact that he is not just a wizard, but the first wizard, the greatest magician in the three lands. He also hides what he knows of Richard's true parentage. Richard is the son of Zedd's daughter, sired when she was raped by Darken Rahl. This makes Richard Darken Rahl's heir, and Zedd's grandson. Even at the end of the novel, Zedd has not yet revealed this to Richard.



Kahlan conceals the fact that she is the Mother Confessor, a magical being whose raw power, unleashed, can destroy the will of any man or woman with a single touch. As the Confessor, Kahlan can obtain any information and bring down any ruler. However, anyone who feels her power loses themselves. He or she is completely incapable of self-directed action, and can do only as Kahlan orders. This effect is so extreme that villain and child predator Demmin Nass eats his own genitals when Kahlan orders him to do so. Because of this extreme power, Confessors are feared and loved but never treated as equals. Kahlan is so grateful to have a friend in the humble woods guide Richard that she delays telling him of her supernatural powers much too long. A strong sexual attraction grows between the two. Kahlan, like other Confessors, can never act on such an attraction because the loss of control during sex would destroy their lover. Because she hides this fact from Richard, the relationship deepens and eventually they are able to overcome the obstacle.

Richard's secret is perhaps the most important, since it affects the future of the whole world. Beginning when he had been just a child, George Cypher, Richard's adopted father, required that he memorize word for word the sacred Book of Counted Secrets. The book contains the only instructions to the incantations necessary to open the three boxes of Orden, and to determine which box will grant total dominion over the living and the underworld, for good or evil. Only after being brutally tortured by the Mord-Sith does Richard reveal this secret to Darken Rahl.

Anger vs. Love, Compassion, Understanding and Forgiveness

A central theme of Wizard's First Rule is the importance of anger, but the greater importance of love, compassion and understanding. Anger is an intense and useful emotion in the novel. When Richard uses the Sword of Truth, he finds that it incites a powerful, righteous anger in the Seeker holding it. That white-hot anger enables the Seeker to uncover the truth, and to intimidate even the wealthiest king or most powerful wizard into answering questions truthfully. Richard does not see anger as a negative emotion. It is the power that enables him to right injustice and punish those who do evil.

Yet, eventually Richard learns that compassion and understanding can be even more useful than anger. Captured by a sadistic Mord-Sith, Richard's anger is turned against him. Every time he feels angry, it causes him incredible physical agony. Eventually he learns to focus on other things so that this anger no longer controls him. Richard conquers his emotions so well that he is able to feel compassion for the Mord-Sith Denna, who after all is merely a product of her training and life experiences. This compassion eventually turns the Sword of Truth white, and allows Richard to forgive the worst offenders before he kills them. Only this power of forgiveness permits Richard to escape the fate of Samuel, the previous Seeker who was turned into a gibbering, pale, sub-human creature by the aftereffects of using the sword.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of Wizard's First Rule is third person omniscient, which gives the story a fairy-tale like quality often found in fantasy novels. This point of view allows the reader access to many character's inner thoughts, including Richard, Kahlan, Zedd, Rachel, the wizard Giller, Demmin Nass and Darken Rahl. Point of view shifts are deftly interspersed with passages in third person objective point of view, so the reader never feels disoriented by abrupt shifts in point of view.

This point of view also permits the reader to know many facts that are concealed from some or most characters. Only the reader knows that Rachel's enchanted doll Sara is a projection of the wizard Giller and speaks with his voice. The reader is privy to the Mord-Sith's tortures of Richard and Darken Rahl's murder of a child, although other characters know nothing about them. The reader is also aware of less ominous secrets, particularly the fact that Richard has memorized The Book of Counted Shadows and destroyed it.

The first 18 chapters focus closely on Richard's adventures with Kahlan and Zedd. Starting with chapter 19, there are scene shifts between Darken Rahl in D'Hara, Queen Milena's castle in Tamarang, and Richard's group of travelers. Many of these later chapters switch scenes between the different locations to create a multi-layered quest saga.

Setting

The setting of Wizard's First Rule is an imaginary world comprised of three countries or lands: Westland, The Midlands and D'Hara. Each is separated by mountains and a boundary controlled by the underworld, to prevent humans from traveling between lands. The lands resemble the middle ages in some respects. Arrows and swords are common weapons, and there are no guns or explosives. The only explosions are magical, caused by wizard fire. Horses, not cars, are used for transportation.

Magic is common in The Midlands and D'Hara, but the Westlands was specifically designed to exclude any magic. Use of magic or magical creatures is strictly forbidden in the Westlands. Despite this law, magic does exist in the most western land. The bone woman Adie practices magic and gives Richard a magical night stone. The great wizard Zedd uses magic even while still in Westland and Kahlan uses her magical powers to protect herself from a quad of assassins.

The boundary is part of the underworld, populated by the dead and fearsome creatures. A human cannot survive even the slightest touch by the Shadow People living there. Boundary wardens patrol the forest to keep the creatures of the underworld inside the boundary, and discourage humans from being killed. A dangerous hidden pass through



the boundary allows Richard and Kahlan to cross to The Midlands. There they learn that the boundary between The Midlands and D'Hara has been destroyed by Darken Rahl.

Language and Meaning

Author Terry Goodkind draws on a tradition of slightly archaic language in fantasy novels to bring the world of the novel alive. Men are fellows, a ruler is a councilor, capes are cloaks and borders are boundaries. Archaic weapons contribute to this feeling, because Richard is comfortable with leather tunics worn like armor, chain mail and the parts of a sword. A mace is used as a weapon at one point. The search party doesn't travel across a bridge, they traverse its span.

Yet, the prose is clear and straight-forward, easily understood by most readers. It never gets in the way of telling the story. Most readers will clearly understand the events of the story without re-reading any portions. Occasional descriptions are brief, either short passages or portions of a sentence. They include a wealth of visual detail, yet do not bore the reader or interfere with the story. Following convention, the prose becomes simpler and easier to follow during fights and action scenes, to avoid frustrating the reader. Relatively more elaborate passages and descriptions are used at the few momentary pauses between action.

Names carry special significance. The author often imbues names of creatures or characters with special meaning, as when he names Darken Rahl, a name that evokes images of a "dark ruler" or "evil king." In another example, the sadistic Denna is named a Mord-Sith. Mord evokes the word mortal, meaning death or deadly. In the Star Wars universe, a sith is an evil creature. The word also echoes the hiss of a snake, another symbol for evil. The Mord-Sith is truly a creature that brings the most "evil death" through torture.

Structure

The novel is 573 pages long, divided into 49 chapters. Each chapter averages about 11 pages. The initial chapters are the shortest, with some just a few pages long. Later chapters are longer, partly to accommodate scene shifts from one location to another. Each chapter ends with a teaser or cliffhanger that encourages the reader to continue reading. The chapters are simply numbered and do not have any titles. The narrative is well-paced, with constant dilemmas and obstacles facing the characters.

The book is not divided into any sections, although it easily could have been. This tactic gives the reader a feeling that the story is one long rush, a headlong quest into the dangerous unknown. Sections with names such as The Mud People, Tamarang, and others would have given the reader a sense of making progress on this journey, which is the opposite of the author's intention. Instead, the lack of divisions makes the events one long search, where nothing is accomplished until the last chapter. The final climax of the novel occurs in chapter 49 where Richard agrees to cooperate with Darken Rahl but tricks the villain, causing his death. The denouement quickly follows, with Richard

recognized as the new ruler who gives orders to put all right within the kingdom before he rides off on a red dragon with his lady love.

Each chapter head contains a large drawing of the Sword of Truth. Within the chapter, major scene breaks are separated by smaller copies of the same drawing. For example, when the scene shifts from Richard and Kahlan in The Midlands to Daken Rahl in D'Hara, there is a small sword to separate the parts.



Quotes

"The sounds of the forest fell dead still. Richard looked up, flinching as a dark shadow swept over the ground, leaping across limbs and leaves. There was a rushing, whistling sound in the air overhead. The size of the shadow was frightening. Birds burst from cover in the trees, giving alarm calls as they scattered in all directions. Richard peered up, searching through the gaps in the canopy of green and gold, trying to see the shadow's source. For an instant, he saw something big. Big, and red." Chapter 1, pg. 15

"He remembered what people always said, 'Trouble sires three children,' and knew immediately that he didn't want to meet the third child." Chapter 1, pg. 15

"What you did," she said, struggling to get the words out, 'was enough to make a difference. It was enough to save us. No matter how little you think it was, it was enough. If you hadn't helped me..." Chapter 3, pg. 33

"At first everything was fine, but then the council of the Midlands started taking actions the great wizard said were corrupt. Something to do with the magic. He found out that the council had reneged on agreements about how the power of magic was to be controlled. He told them that their greed and the things they were doing would lead to worse horrors than those put down in the wars." Chapter 5, pg. 54

"Richard felt Kahlan's questioning eyes on him, but he continued to fix his gaze on Zedd. 'You are the great wizard.'" Chapter 8, pg. 83

"A Seeker is a person who answers to no one but himself; he is a law unto himself. The Sword of Truth is his to wield as he wishes, and within the limits of his own strength, he can hold anyone to answer for anything.' Zedd held up a hand to forestall Richard's objections and questions. 'I realize this is vague. The problem with explaining it is that it is like all power. As I told you before, it's how the person uses power that makes it what it is. This is the core of why it is so important to find the right person, a person who will use the power wisely.'" Chapter 9, pg. 89

"Zedd sat up tall on his horse, held his arms out straight to his sides, palms up, tilted his head back, breathed deeply, and closed his eyes. Reluctantly, cautiously, the other two crossed the bridge. On the other side they turned their horses and continued to look back. The wizard's horse began walking across unprompted while Zedd continued to hold his arms out, his head tilted back and his eyes closed." Chapter 12 , pg. 123

"Darken Rahl will kill anyone to win. Those who fight on his side will do the same. You may have to do the same. Like it or not, the aggressor makes the rules. You must play by them, or you will surely die by them." Chapter 13, pg. 131

"I am sworn to protect the life of the Seeker with my own. I would do anything required to protect you.' She gave him a meaningful look, lifting an eyebrow." Chapter 15, pg. 157



"Even if she wasn't saying it, Richard knew she didn't think he would live either. She was trying not to frighten him, but she thought he would die in the effort, too. That is why she hadn't wanted Zedd to give him the Sword of Truth, to make him Seeker." Chapter 17, pg. 177

"Darken Rahl, as had his father before him, considered women merely vessels for the man's seed, the dirt it grew in, unworthy of higher recognition. Darken Rahl, as his father before him, would have no wife. His own mother had been nothing more than the first to sprout his father's wondrous seed, and then she had been discarded, as was only fitting." Chapter 19, pg. 187

"Heat of rage from the magic surged through him as the sword came free, sweeping in an arc at the shadows. The ones caught by the blade flared into nothingness, the smoke of their form spinning, as if caught in a vortex of wind, before coming apart with a howl. More came at him." Chapter 20, pg. 199

"I cannot honestly say at this moment what I will do if the elders say no. It is not my wish to harm your people, but to save them from the pain I have seen. I have seen what Darken Rahl does to people. I know what he will do. If I knew I could somehow stop Rahl by killing Savidlin's precious little boy, I would do it without hesitation, with my bare hands if need be, because as much as the doing of it would wound my heart, I know I would be saving all the other precious little children." Chapter 25, pg. 250

"Richard with the Temper,' his voice was even, and strong, for not only the elders but also the crowd that had gathered around the platform, were listening, 'since you are from a different land, and your seed could be poisonous to this young woman...' he lifted one eyebrow, leaning the slightest bit forward, '... my niece,' he looked to her, then back to Richard, 'we beg that you not hold us to this tradition; that you not take her as your wife.'" Chapter 27 , pg. 275

"Richard saw a tear run down her cheek as she turned without looking at him and began walking up the road. She stopped in midstride and stood a moment; her beautiful auburn hair lay upon her shoulders and partway down the back of the wispy dress." Chapter 32, pg. 331

"Princess Violet says I'm to go yell at the cooks for her, and then I'm to go to the washwomen and tell them that she found a gravy stain on one of her dresses, and that she would never get gravy on one of her dresses, and that they must have done it, and if she ever finds they do that again, she'll have their heads chopped off. I don't want to say that to them, they're nice." Chapter 32, pg. 332

"Wizard's First Rule: people are stupid.' Richard and Kahlan frowned even more. 'People are stupid; given proper motivation, almost anyone will believe almost anything. Because people are stupid, they will believe a lie because they want to believe it's true, or because they are afraid it might be true.'" Chapter 36, pg. 397



"Zedd nodded. 'He uses the Wizard's First Rule to do most of the work for him. That is what makes our job so hard. He gets people on his side because people don't care about the truth.'" Chapter 36, pg. 398

"Giller's naked body swung slightly as it hung, upside down, from the end of the rope, a mat hook driven through the bone of his ankle." Chapter 39, pg. 436

"He regarded her with a glower. 'You're too ugly to be left to wander about. A gar would eat you sure.' That made her laugh. 'I have other children, they're all ugly too. You'll fit right in.'" Chapter 40, pg. 443

"To teach you the meaning of pain. To teach you that your life is no longer yours, that it is mine, and I can do anything I want with it. Anything. I can hurt you in any way I want, for as long as I want, and no one is going to help you but me. I'm going to teach you that every moment you have without pain is a moment only I can grant you. You're going to learn to do as I say without question, without hesitation, no matter what it is. You are going to learn to beg for anything you get." Chapter 41, pg. 457

"In the darkness, she led him from the carriage. He watched her feet as she walked, keeping the proper slack in the chain attached to her belt. Even though he kept his eyes on her, he still noticed the place they were entering. It was immense, dwarfing the castle at Tamarang." Chapter 42, pg. 475

"He spoke before he thought. 'The year they chose you, Mistress Constance, must have been a year of desperate need; otherwise, one of such limited intelligence would never have been selected to be Mord-Sith.'" Chapter 43, pg. 492

"He was mate to a madwoman, he thought sadly." Chapter 43, pg. 493

"If nothing else, he would be dead now from being the mate of a Mord-Sith. He could not have survived until now." Chapter 47, pg. 546

"Zedd rubbed his chin in thought, looking up at the windows, 'Well, only once before that I know of.' His eyes rested on the two of them. 'But you can tell no one, just as I wasn't able to tell you. No matter how much pain it may cause, no matter the consequences, you can never tell. If even one knows, it could be passed on, destroying forever the chance for others.'" Chapter 49, pg. 567



Topics for Discussion

What is the Sword of Truth and why is it given to Richard?

Why does the villain Darken Raahl want the three boxes of Orden?

If opened, one box of Orden kills the player, and one destroys the world. What does the third box do?

Richard has a secret that he keeps from Zedd and Kahlan. It is about something he memorized. What is the secret?

The Seeker of Truth has the power to question anyone, and punish them with death if they are guilty. Is such a power a good thing or a bad thing to have?

Why do Richard and Kahlan want to become members of the Mud People Tribe?

Richard is given many magical items that he does not use, like the tooth of a magical beast worn around his neck and a magical bird whistle. Do you think he might use them in future books?

Darken Raahl raped Zedd's daughter. Zedd shot wizard fire at Raahl, burning his thighs and crotch. Was this justified? Why or why not?

Who is your favorite character in the novel: Richard, Kahlan, Chase, Rachel, Griffer, Zedd, Adie, Shota, Queen Milena, Darken Raahl, Rachel or Denna the Mord-Sith?

There are two kinds of magic power in the novel, additive and subtractive. Additive allows you to make something, or make it grow by adding to it. Subtractive power allows you to destroy things. Which would you rather have and why?

If you had magical powers, how would you use them?

The Confessor has the power to make anyone tell them the truth about anything. If you were a Confessor, who would you interview? What questions would you ask?

Richard saves the egg of Scarlet, the red dragon. She returns to help him, and show him her baby. Why does she agree to fly him and Kahlan back to the Mud People's village?

Why does Richard find it easier to forgive the Mord-Sith Denna, who has tortured him, rather than his brother Michael, who has betrayed him to the Mord-Sith?

Do you think the people of Westland made the right decision when they decided to keep magic out? Why or why not?