

# **Young Warriors: Stories of Strength Study Guide**

**Young Warriors: Stories of Strength by Tamora Pierce**

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# The Gift of Rain Mountain.

## The Gift of Rain Mountain. Summary

Mactun is lying on the hillside daydreaming while his older brother, Baxmal, and friend, Chulchun, spy on the neighboring city. Baxmal is woken up by his brother and told to run and tell the leaders of the city a message. Scaled Jaguar, the neighboring city's leader, is hosting the army of their enemy, Smoke Bat. Mactun isn't much of a warrior, but he knows that if their neighbor is befriending the enemy then his people may be in trouble. Mactun begins to make his way down the mountainside. He dodges vines, mud and other obstacles. Once he makes it out of the jungle he will be free to run as fast as he can. Before he can make it down the mountainside, Mactun is confronted by a wild boar. Mactun escapes the boar and realizes that he could have run into something more dangerous. Something like the enemy. He tries to think like a warrior; if he were Scaled Jaguar he would have people on the lookout so that his plans couldn't be discovered. Mactun decides the best way to avoid enemy lookouts is to go to Rain Mountain, a place he would normally not go. Rain Mountain was a place warriors only went after they were blessed, as there were spirits and witches thought to be in the mountain. Mactun decides if the choice is between the mountain and being killed by the enemy. He'll take a risk on the mountain.

Mactun begins his journey through the jungle of Rain Mountain. As he moves along, he notices that the jungle is the same as the jungle he just passed through, but it is somehow different too. A young man with old eyes appears before Mactun, asking the young man where he is headed. For a moment Mactun worries the young man is one of Scaled Jaguar's soldiers, but reconsiders when he notices the man carries no weapons. The young man asks Mactun to come inside his home and share a drink and a cigar. The man wants to know what is happening in the "world of men." Mactun graciously declines the invitation, saying he must get an important message to his father. A short while later the young man appears again, with the same house behind him, and tries to get Mactun to stop and rest. This time the young man offers Mactun a spear and fine armor if he will stop and talk for a while. Mactun is tempted, but knows his people depend on the message he must deliver. He also knows the mountain is known for its trickery. The third, and last time, the young man stops Mactun he offers him a feathered shield. Mactun is very tempted by the shield. It is just like the one he daydreams of owning, but he can't imagine owning a shield without earning it. He turns down the man's offer and arrives home, delivering his message.

That night, Mactun can't stop thinking about the feathered shield. He heads back to his brother through Rain Mountain. Mactun's mother sent him to his brother with a message to bring more firewood home. The young man, owner of Rain Mountain, again stops Mactun. This time he offers the boy a captain's shield, a general's cape and a scepter which will allow him to replace the current ruler of his city. Mactun almost takes the scepter and then knows he could never be a ruler. The man is impressed and tells Mactun he is brave. He asks Mactun to come drink, smoke and talk with him. In



exchange he will give Mactun peace. There will no longer be warriors killed, or killing, or held captive. Mactun knows that he wants peace more than he wants to be a warrior someday.

Mactun stays with the Lord of Rain Mountain until daylight. He leaves to finish his journey only to find everything he has ever known has been covered by jungle. He is alone. The Lord of Rain Mountain gifted Mactun with peace, but it is only peaceful because everyone else is gone.

## **The Gift of Rain Mountain. Analysis**

The Gift of Rain Mountain is a tale set in Mesoamerica. It is told in the first person through the eyes of Mactun, a young boy. Mactun daydreams of becoming a warrior and having all of the prestige and popularity that comes with being a powerful warrior. But what he wants more than anything is to be at peace. He doesn't want to be killed or to kill another; to be captured or to capture. His brother tells him that Mactun doesn't understand how to be a warrior and Mactun knows this is true. He is tempted by the powerful tools of war the Lord of Rain Mountain offers him, but it is the peace offered by the Lord that tempts Mactun the most. Mactun accepts the Lord's gift, only to discover it is a fool's gift. Mactun receives the peace he wants so desperately, but it comes at the price of losing everyone he has ever known and everything he has ever had.



# The Magestone.

## The Magestone. Summary

Fare, a fifteen-year-old boy, is on the bow of the Osprey. His uncle, Comgall, had taken Fare from the fields of his home and gave him work on the ocean. Fare is holding a silver necklace with a gray stone which his mother gave him before he sailed away and thinking about his father, who owned the necklace before him. The necklace had been his father's good luck charm until he left it with Fare's mother when she gave birth to Fare. His father left to work and never came home again. Fare is holding the necklace when he sees the face of a girl in the water. His uncle tells him it is probably a dead body, but Fare isn't so sure. He makes a gesture to ward off evil spirits.

Neesha is a mermaid who has been following the Osprey. She is attracted to a strong magic aboard the ship and is shocked to see a boy holding Magestone on the deck. The Magestone was a powerful keeper of magic that had been lost when her people fought their enemies, the Creesie. The powerful mage of Neesha's people went missing seven moons ago and their magical powers were lessened when the tone went missing. Neesha thinks for a minute that she should report seeing the stone, but then decides to recover the stone herself.

Fare and the crew set out anchor for the night. Fare is left to guard the boat while his uncle and the other sleep.

Neesha uses her powers to lure Fare to the end of the boat and into the water. She drags him into the deep and notices they are the same age. She tries to take the Magestone off of him, but the stone causes her pain when she touches it. Neesha decides that the stone wants to stay on the boy. She notices that the boy is still alive and decides to use him to help her find the mage who created the stone, a mage named Shashu. It is believed that Shashu is being held prisoner on an island. If the stone wants the boy to wear it, then he must be protected by the stone's magic.

Fare wakes up under the water and thinks he is in a dream. At once he realizes that he isn't dreaming. He is in the water with the girl he had seen in the waves and she is trying to drown him. Fare struggles and tries to get away. The mermaid hits him with her tail and he goes spinning into the deep, dark water. She hits him again and he is knocked unconscious.

Neesha almost felt bad about having to kill the boy to get the stone . . . almost. She is about to deliver a killing blow with her tail when the boy begins to swim to the surface. She grabs him and pushes him through the water, assuming the stone will keep him from drowning. He breaks through to the surface and she watches him, wondering what he will do.



Fare breaks the surface of the water and can barely stay afloat. He grabs on to Neesha for support and asks her what she wants. She tells him she needs his help to find her chief. That he is on an island with pirates and only Fare and the stone can get him back. Fare tries to give her the stone in exchange for his safety, but the stone won't allow him to take it off. Neesha is frustrated and Fare is distrustful. Neesha gathers some dolphins for Fare to ride to the island.

Neesha guides them to the island and decides on a plan of attack. There are only ten Creesie guarding the island. She decides that she can manage an attack, but that Fare will cause a problem as he thrashes around in the water. Fare thinks the mermaid is crazy if she thinks they can attack the mermen guarding the island. He waits by a rock for her return.

Neesha shoots three of the mermen with poison darts and struggles with a fourth before he goes unconscious. The rest of the mermen are sleeping. After knocking the mermen out, Neesha ventures in the cave they were guarding at the entrance of the island.

Fare comes to help Neesha overpower the fourth merman, but she has him unconscious by the time Fare reaches her. The two venture into the cave and Fare can tell something is wrong. The back of his neck crawls and the water becomes dark. He sees a man's face in the water. It is the face of a man who has been tortured. Neesha grabs the man's hand and pulls him forward.

It is the mage. He has been tortured and his flesh is rotting. Neesha is certain that humans are responsible for the torture of the mage. She becomes angry and decides to take it out on the boy, bringing her tail back to kill him. Fare, not knowing the mermaid is angry, offers to help get the mage out of the manacle that is holding him. Neesha is ashamed of her anger.

Fare is sickened by the condition of the mage. He is angered that the pirates would torture the merman the way they had. The head of the pirates is angry when he returns and finds the others asleep. He has taken the mage so that he can control the seas. He is torturing the mage hoping the mage will tell him how to cast magic over the seas. Fare comes out of the cave and pushes the pirate into the water. Shashu takes the pirate under the water for revenge. Fare falls into the water and is hurt. Neesha comes to get him. Neesha has the dolphins take Shashu back to his people. Fare tells her if she taken him to his ship then he will give her the stone and they can say goodbye. Neesha is unsure about helping a human.

They find Fare's ship and he gives her the necklace, asking for a kiss in return. They kiss and Fare is brought back on the ship by the crew. He tells them he kissed a mermaid and it was "cold, fishy and very wet." Neesha thinks the kiss was "hot, musky and very dry."



## The Magestone. Analysis

The story is told in the third person from alternating perspectives. Some parts follow Fare and his thoughts; others follow Neesha and her thoughts. Occasionally the two are followed in the same section.

Neesha sees the magestone and decides she wants to pursue the stone and save the mage by herself. She doesn't like humans, and doesn't worry about killing the boy who wears the stone. A few times she feels a little guilty, but she pushes those feelings aside. Neesha is concerned with herself and the mage, not with the boy from the ship. She only allows him to help save the mage because he has the stone. Neesha learns that not all humans are bad.

Fare is taught that the stone will protect him as it did his mother and father. The stone does protect Fare, although it isn't clear why the stone is so protective toward him. The stone keeps Fare from being killed by Neesha and from drowning in the ocean. Fare is like his name, he is a fair person. Unlike Neesha, Fare doesn't believe the things he has been told about mermaids. He is cautious about Neesha, but doesn't allow his preconceived notions about her to cloud his judgment.



# Eli and The Dybbuk.

## Eli and The Dybbuk. Summary

Eli is thirteen years old and is studying to become a scholar. He enjoys physical games and is a strong boy. His parents also want him to be a scholar, but they are pushing Eli to begin thinking about marriage. Eli has been betrothed to Leah, a neighbor girl. However, Eli isn't ready to be married. Eli is a dreamer and would rather dream of an adventurous life than marry Leah. Eli admits to himself, as he walks home, that he wishes Leah was beautiful. He wants her to be tall and blonde like some soldiers' wives. Instead, Leah is small and dark. Eli, a Jew, wishes she looked less Jewish. He admits that she cooks and sews beautifully, but for a boy who wants to have adventures and be a soldier she is too boring to even think about. Eli humiliated his parents by refusing to marry Leah in front of her family and his. His parents wanted to know why, but he didn't tell them. Eli was planning to leave home in two years to become a soldier. One day he would return home, rich, and everyone would forgive him. He felt bad that he embarrassed Leah, but he wanted to be a soldier. Eli's parents hated soldiers and told stories about the brutal behavior of the Cossacks. But Eli thought the Cossacks he'd met were nice and they would be happy to have them join their ranks.

Eli is thinking all of these things when he bumps into Leah, knocking her into the dirt. He tries to help her up and is surprised by her behavior. Leah is usually a shy and proper girl, but this Leah is forward. She tries to kiss him and takes down her hair, something forbidden by Jewish law. Eli is shocked even more when Leah unbuttons her blouse. When she laughs, her laugh is not that of an innocent girl. It is the laugh of a worldly woman. Under the laughter Eli can hear Leah's true voice begging for help. Eli realizes that this is not really Leah. He tells her that he knows she is a dybbuk, an evil spirit which has possessed Leah's body. Leah laughs at him and tells him he doesn't know what he is talking about. Eli now knows he is right; Leah would never speak so disrespectfully to him.

The real Leah makes an attempt to fight the dybbuk in her body, but the dybbuk wins control. She rips open her blouse and dares Eli to try and find help. Leah tells Eli that if he brings help she will tell everyone she was used by him and then cast aside. A soldier familiar to Eli rides up the path and Eli runs to him for help. The soldier thinks Eli and Leah were having fun together and that Eli is making up tales now that they have been caught. He asks Leah what she is doing with Eli, whom he considers a baby. Eli can't believe that the soldier he admired so much has called him a baby. Eli wants to save his friend from the dybbuk so he grabs his arm. The soldier flings Eli to the ground and tells him that he is a Jew. He tells Eli that he is a soldier and since Eli is a Jew he should do as he is told or he will thrash Eli. Leah goes to the soldier and bites his leg. The soldier is about to kill her when Eli intervenes. He promises that Leah is crazy and won't bother the soldier again. Eli also thinks that he is no longer so impressed with the soldier.





Eli realizes the dybbuk acts like it knows everything. He forms a plan. He tells Leah that she will give herself away as a dybbuk if she tries to live in his town without a guide. He offers to guide her. The dybbuk explains that there are rules to being a dybbuk and if they are broken the dybbuk will be punished and their name struck from the Book of Life, no one will ever remember they existed. Because the real Leah would never break a promise, the dybbuk can't either. They make a deal. The dybbuk tells Eli he can ask one question and if the dybbuk can't answer it, then she will do anything in her power to see that Eli gets what he wants. They strike the deal and Eli asks a riddle: "What is it that everything has?" The dybbuk answers wrong and Eli asks to have Leah back.

The dybbuk ran screaming away from Eli. A clap of thunder sounded and Leah's body dropped to the ground. The real Leah awoke and Eli held her while she cried. They apologized to each other. He said he didn't want to be a soldier anymore and she said he was brave. As they walked back home they both slowly forgot what had happened. Leah began to think she must have fallen and hit her head. Eli thought he saved her. They arrived at his house and told his family they planned to marry.

Years later Eli and his son, Joachim, were walking. Eli was trying to tell his son that it was better to know something than to do something, because if you do something it is done. But if you know something it is more flexible. To help the boy understand the point Eli asked him a riddle, one which he could barely remember asking before. "What is it that everything has?" Joachim answered that everything has a name, because if something didn't have a name how would men know that it existed. They went home happily.

## **Eli and The Dybbuk. Analysis**

Told in the third person. Eli is a thirteen year old Jewish boy living in Russia. He doesn't have any interest in becoming a scholar, but instead dreams of being a soldier. He also has no intention of marrying the girl his family has picked out for him. He would rather have adventure than a family. And, when he is honest with himself, he wants a girl who doesn't look like she has a Jewish heritage. Eli seems to want to reject certain parts of himself and his heritage. However, it is Eli's heritage which saves him in the end. He remembers a riddle taught to him by his grandmother and the riddle helps him to defeat the dybbuk. Eli marries the girl his parents picked and, in turn, passes his knowledge down to the next generation. Eli also comes to understand that he has taken his heritage for granted. The things he rejected in Leah were the very things he wished to preserve once he realized she was in danger of being taken over by the dybbuk. His experiences with the Cossack soldier allowed him to gain the knowledge his parents had already gained.



# Heartless.

## Heartless. Summary

Ada is in the middle of a battlefield after the battle has ended. She is a camp follower, in charge of taking care of the soldiers. She is in the field stealing from the injured and dead soldiers. When she finds a soldier on the ground she slits their throat, steals their things and moves on to the next body. However, when she reaches Lord Julian Vrueldegost she leaves him alive. He begs for her help, but she is unimpressed. She wipes blood on his throat and tells him to play dead that if another woman finds him they won't be so kind. He begs for her help to get home and promises to double her land. She tells him she has no land. Her village was destroyed. Ada wears a piece of her finger around her neck. Her mother put a spell on Ada so that her heart would shrink to the tip of her finger. Ada can't bring herself to get rid of the finger, it is all that is left of her heart.

Later, Ada is approached by a Manes. A soul trapped in human form that drinks blood. She thinks it must belong to Lord Julian. The Manes calls her a hedge-witch and tells her to hide her necklace. Ada can't cast spells now that her heart has been shrunken and removed. It tells her that if she helps his master the manes will show her a place to hide her shrunken heart necklace. Ada agrees and returns to the field in time to see an old woman robbing the lord. The manes grabs the woman and the woman leaves. Ada takes Julian to her home and hides him in her cellar. The crow-like manes tells her that he has sent a message with the ravens and Julian's people will come for him soon. Julian is in a haze and tells Ada she reminds him of his 12 year old sister. She tells him she is 15. As Julian passes out, Ada thinks it may be better for him to be dead.

Ada returns to the camp from her home and is confronted by a man at arms. He wants Julian. Ada knows she must give the lord up if she is to live; she is glad she doesn't have a heart to bother her when she tells the man where Julian is. The man commands Ada to take her to Julian. Ada thinks about what the man may do to her as he grabs her breast, but because her heart is out of her body she doesn't seem to care. She thinks about how she didn't cry when she buried her mother and thinks that it is better not to feel things. Ada knows it isn't right to not fear death. She takes the bone off from around her neck and swallows it. Instantly she can feel fear again, and pain and loss. It becomes harder for her to lie.

Ada leads the man at arms to Julian and the manes. She lets the manes trap him and she kills the man with his own crossbow. Then she cries. Julian comes out and asks her what he can give her in return for saving him. What does she want? She thinks about wanting her mother to be alive and wanting war to end. Ada laughs and tells her that she doesn't want anything specific, she just "wants."



## Heartless. Analysis

Told in the third person. The story of Ada takes place in a fantasy world which resembles Medieval Europe. Ada's mother has helped her daughter, a hedge-witch, to survive. She took her daughter's heart and shrank it, hardening it forever. Ada now wears her heart around her neck. Not having a heart allows her to deal with the harsh realities of war, life and survival. She can deal with death and with the killing she must do to survive. She doesn't feel remorse, guilt, or sadness. However, Ada comes to realize that she doesn't feel other things either. She has no care for her own life. She doesn't fear anything, even death. Her lack of fear of death keeps her from truly feeling life, enjoying life and really living. As Ada brings the man at arms back to Julian she realizes that she isn't afraid that he will rape, torture and kill her. She understands that lack of fear is wrong. Ada chooses to feel again. By swallowing her petrified heart, she is able to feel all the bad things in life again. And that helps her to appreciate the good things too. When Julian asks her what she wants in return for saving her, Ada is thrilled that she wants anything at all.



# Lioness.

## Lioness. Summary

Amanitari, Tari, is a priestess of the war god, Apedemek. Her mother, the queen and a warrior, chosen Tari's brother, Kinidad, to become a warrior and her daughter to work for a temple Tari's heart still has not recovered from her mother's betrayal and her own disappointment. While her mother and brother fight the Romans, Kush's enemy, Tari is in the desert serving in a temple. She refuses to serve the god of war as a priestess and has the priests show her how to fight and train as a warrior. Tari and her lion, Naga, are summoned home when her brother is killed in battle. Tari and her mother argue when she arrives. Tari wants to join the fighting, but her mother doesn't want to lose another child to battle. She tells Tari that Tari is the only hope for a ruler after she dies.

Tari sees her cousin and childhood friend Netak in the courtyard. He was with her brother when he died and is about to go back to the front. Tari tells him that she and Naga will join him on the front. That it is Apedemek's will. He doesn't agree she should go, but doesn't argue with the princess. Tari disguises herself as a soldier and joins Netak. Tari is horrified at the destruction of her lands by the Romans. She asks the Apedemek to help her fight. She arrives at the front lines and discovers her mother is on her way. The general plans to attack the Romans and push them into the Nile. Tari is nervous about battle, but she is ready and willing to fight. After her first kill she rides into battle fortified. The Kush are pushed back and almost defeated. They gather and the queen tells them they will not negotiate a treaty with the Romans.

That night Tari and Naga sneak out of the encampment to watch the Romans. She discovers the Romans trying to sneak statues of their gods out under cover of darkness. Tari cuts off the head of one god and races off into the desert. The Roman leader follows her and confronts her in the darkness. He is about to kill her when lions come from the wild to fight for her and a sand storm blows in. Tari is saved.

Three days later the Romans retreat, citing a freak sand storm and wild animal attacks as the reason. The Kush and Romans enter into a treaty which protects Kush land. Tari buries the Roman god's head in the sand in front of Apedemek's temple. She marries Netak and they rule together and queen and king.

## Lioness. Analysis

Told in the third person. Tari is a bold and brave princess Kush princess living in Africa during the Roman Empire. She expected to become a warrior like her mother and is greatly disappointed to learn that she will be sent to become a princess for the lion-headed war god, Apedemek. Tari refuses to learn to be a priestess and trains as a warrior instead. She is nervous when she goes to battle, but her training serves her well. She is also well served by her priestess training, the training she so strongly



rejected. Tari believes in the power of her god and laughs that the Roman's have gods who are human looking. Her gods are animal hybrids with the power of animals inside of them. When she calls upon her god to help her in the desert, she is helped by nature. Her real gods. Tari was well served by her mother in her goddess training, without it she would not have been such a strong warrior.



# Thunderbolt.

## Thunderbolt. Summary

Princess Helen of Sparta has been stolen from her bed and taken away to become the kidnapped bride of Theseus, king of Athens. She is disgusted by the man and his kingdom and tells him so. He slaps her twice as a result of her acerbic tongue, leaving a bruise. Theseus's mother, Lady Aithra, tries to help the 14-year-old princess to speak better of the king. Helen tells Aithra that the only reason her son kidnapped her is because she is beautiful and for that reason he won't hit her again. Aithra tells Helen to watch what she says. Helen decides she needs Aithra as an ally and pretends to be weak and tired. Helen is quite the feminist and feels that Aithra has nothing to do but talk about her son now that he is grown and her usefulness is over.

Helen has been trained as a warrior and spends her introduction to the palace investigating its weaknesses. She realizes that Lady Aithra's weakness is her son. She encourages the lady to talk about her son and to take her to a storeroom where there are keepsakes of her son's childhood. Helen pretends to fall asleep there when Helen is called from the room. Left with a slave girl for a guard, Helen overpowers the girl. She tells the girl that if she helps aid her escape she will have freedom too. The girl puts on Helen's clothes and Helen dresses as a boy. The girl goes out of the room screaming that Helen's brothers have come to take over the palace. Helen pretends to be her brother and runs out of the room. She and the slave girl ride out of the palace and meet with Helen's brothers who have come to save her. The brothers take credit for Helen's escape and her parents back their version of the story. Helen's father tells her that no man would want to marry a princess who behaved the way she claimed she had, even if she was the most beautiful girl in Hellas.

Helen accepts that she is trapped by duty and her beauty, but she will always know that she saved herself and she is responsible for her own freedom and that of the slave girl.

## Thunderbolt. Analysis

Helen's story is told in the first person and her voice is a sarcastic, defiant one. She doesn't care that she is a prisoner and she is proud of her Spartan heritage. She uses her beauty as a weapon and knows that her pretty face can be used in her favor. She understands that Lady Aithra is a product of her culture and she doesn't fault the woman for being weak. However, Helen wants something different in life. She wants to be in control of her own life and she doesn't want to be in the shadow of a man, like Aithra and others. However, after Helen escapes that is precisely where she finds herself. The glory of her deeds is given to her brothers and she is expected to keep her tale to herself. Her behavior is not something to be proud of according to her parents. As much talk as Helen does about how she is in charge of her own life; that seems to be untrue as she is still forced to hide her true nature under the guise of "ladylike" behavior. She is

also forced to hide her sword under her cloak so no one sees it. The author would like the reader to believe that Helen is empowered and free, however, the truth of that seems questionable.



# Devil Wind.

## Devil Wind. Summary

Taravati is the 11-year-old Indian bride of a well-off Indian man. She is now in the service of an English woman, Maude Humbolt, the first one she has ever been around. Taravati is a pretty girl with a father who had enough money to secure her a good marriage to a man twice her age. She is the man's only wife since his family died of cholera years before. Her husband works for the English woman's husband. Taravati's husband is told that she can work for extra money and the husband thanks Maud. He tells the girl that she should thank her too. The girl is surprised to be spoken to by her husband while in front of others. She thanks the English woman using the little English she knows. Maud is pleased when the girl thanks her.

Taravati is now to work as Estella's ayah. Estella is Maud's daughter. She finds that she will assist a Muslim woman called Fatima-ayah who has taken care of Miss Estella since birth. Taravati discovers that 13 year old Estella should have been sent back to England when she turned seven. It is believed that India's air kills English children, but the man of the house is so cheap he wouldn't pay for his daughter to leave. Maud cried and called her husband a baby-killer. The girl wonders if the English man would have sent his child to England if Estella had been a boy. Fatima-ayah thinks that Mr. Humbolt loves nothing but money. Not even himself.

Estella and Taravati become best friends. Taravati was hired to be Estella's companion even though there is a two-year age difference between them. Taravati's husband is kind and doesn't expect her to become his wife other than in name yet. He allows her to learn when Estella is being tutored. The girls sneak out into the city in disguise and meet a witch.

The girls are buying sweets in a merchant square when they hear of a witch. Estella wants to have their fortunes told. Taravati tells her she can guess their fortunes if they get caught. A young man in the bizarre tells the merchants that some day the wind will blow and take the English out along with the merchants. When the girls meet the witch she tells them they should go home, as the wind is about to blow. Taravati is reminded of the young man in the market and she becomes uneasy. The woman tells them to go home and the girls hurry toward their home. On the way they see fire and smell it burning. Warriors are running through the village killing people. A horseman rides by with a white woman's head tied to his saddle. The girls are terrified.

The girls enter the courtyard to find Fatima and Manoj fallen. With his dying breath, Manoj tells her to take Estella and run. Mr. Humbolt comes out of the house with a gun and sword. He looks at the girls like he doesn't know them. Estella and Taravati run into the house. Taravati looks back and watches as Mr. Humbolt slashes Manoj's throat. They find Maud dying. Mr. Humbolt comes into the room and tells them that the sepoy's have revolted and done this. But Taravati looks into Maud's eyes and knows that Mr.





Humbolt has killed everyone. Taravati could tell the moment Maud knew that Tara understood Mr. Humbolt had killed them. Taravati grabs Estella and tells her to run. They watch from the brush as the house burns down and they hear Estella's father calling for her. However, Taravati drags Estella away.

Estella dies of heatstroke as the girls escape the sepoy uprising. Estella tells Taravati that she knows her father killed everyone at the house and she asks Tara to make sure he is named as the killer and doesn't get away with what he has done. Tara kisses her on the forehead and Estella dies. Taravati goes to the witch and offers her life in exchange for justice for the death of her loved ones. The witch agrees.

The witch turns Taravati into Estella, so that is what the English will see when they look at her. She walks a long way to a different English station and tells them she is Estella Humbolt and that she has survived the uprising. They treat her with courtesy and see her as a hero of sorts. She finally hears news of Humbolt and sends a message to him that his daughter is alive and waits for him. Taravati knows that he killed his family so that he could control his wife and daughter's money.

Humbolt is terrified when he sees his daughter and more so when he realizes that his daughter is really Taravati. She tells him she wants revenge for the lives of his daughter and wife and of her husband. She puts her hand over his heart and steals the life out of him. Humbolt falls dead to the ground. Taravati realizes that women have the power to govern life and death and what is in between. She realizes the jadu, witch, didn't give her anything she didn't already possess. Tara just didn't know she had the power. She sheds Estella's clothes and her image and goes to the hut of the witch to become the new witch.

## Devil Wind. Analysis

Taravati tells her story in the first person. She is a young girl who has come to live in an English settlement in India. There is an Indian uprising and the Englishman she works for takes the opportunity to kill his family and blame it on the uprising. He wants to control his wife's money and doesn't love his family. Tara trades her life for the opportunity to get revenge on the man for killing the people she loves. What she comes to realize is that she is a woman and she is strong. The witch helps her to realize she has the power of life and death. After harnessing her own power she realizes that she will not forfeit her life to the witch, she will use her life to become the new witch.



# The Boy Who Cried

## The Boy Who Cried Summary

Young male and female warriors lived in a land called "The Mythical Land To The North And West." The warriors were so skilled that there was peace all over the land. No one caused a problem, except for the dragons. The narrator notes how times have changed. Today you are considered a man if you break through Microsoft's firewall, back then you were a man or woman if you killed a dragon. Dragons surround The Mythical Land To The North And West. A young, gangly boy named Melvin was chosen to go forth and slay a dragon. Melvin had a plan, he planned to slay a dragon and rename himself as Sir Mandrake of the Shining Armor. He wanted to prove to Mary Lu Penworthy that he was a warrior, not just a nerd who couldn't get a date to the prom. Melvin camps in a cave for the night and decides no girl he knows is worth going out and slaying a dragon for. He decides he will return to the Land in the morning and tell the Council of Elders that maybe the rite of passage should be slaying a chipmunk. Melvin gets ready to go home and is blocked by a dragon named Horace. Melvin and the dragon begin to discuss life and girls and what they are supposed to do now that they have seen each other. Horace plans to settle down with a dragon named Nancy Jo Billingsworth and have a few thousand baby dragons. Melvin tells him he doesn't have a girl, he is playing the field. They talk about feeling like outcasts, not having friends and not being able to get dates.

The two agree not to kill each other. Horace suggests killing the horse, but Melvin needs the horse to go home. Melvin tells Horace he is going to save the dragon's life. The next week Spike Armstrong will be coming to hunt the dragon and, according to Melvin, he is everything that Melvin is not. Melvin tells Horace that even though Spike is dumb as a newt all the cheerleaders fight over who gets to sit by him in the cafeteria. Horace decides that he dislikes Spike already! When someone goes to hunt a dragon, Melvin will tell everyone that a dragon is attacking from a different direction. Horace tells Melvin he will do the same when Thunderbolt, a handsome popular dragon, goes to kill a human. The plan works well and the two remain friends, meeting on Saturdays unless it rains.

## The Boy Who Cried Analysis

This story is told by a narrator in third person limited point of view. It is set in a European Medieval-is, fantasy setting where boys and girls are warriors who fight dragons in order to become "men" and "women." It is a rite of passage that is performed weekly. Melvin is an awkward boy who has the same types of problems as most other boys his age. He has acne, he is gangly and he can't get a date. When he heads off into the forest to do what is expected of him to become a man, he is surprised to find a dragon who is in his same circumstances. Horace is a handsome dragon by human standards and he is envious of Melvin's acne. The two are pretty funny together and admit they don't know

why they should be expected to kill each other. Despite their obvious differences, they have so much in common that they become fast friends.



# Student of Ostriches.

## Student of Ostriches. Summary

Kylaia's story begins when she is in her mother's stomach. Her mother saw a flock of ostriches kill a lion and told Kylaia that she kicked for the first time at that very moment. Kylaia learns to run, herd and hunt from her cousin, Ogin. But he teaches her to run with the grace of a gazelle and she wants to run with the power of an ostrich. On Kylaia's 7th birthday she is given a ball by her parents and a herd to watch by her uncle. As she proudly shows off her treasure to her village she is attacked by a pack of boys. They rough her up and steal her ball. Her pride is hurt. Her family demands revenge and Kylaia goes off to tend her herd. She sees a dog get kicked to death by ostriches and thinks if she was an ostrich the boys wouldn't have stolen her ball. Kylaia decides to learn to kick like an ostrich. For two years she practices every day. She kicks and punches and dreams of being able to fight like an ostrich. She practices running and enters into the spring games when she is ten. She doesn't do well in the short races, but she wins the long races with her ostrich sprinting. Her cousin and sisters convince her to race with the boys. They tell her they will bet for her and everyone else will think they are fools. When she wins they will take home a lot of coins. Ogin takes her to the race and she wins money for the family.

When Kylaia turns 13 she is allowed to travel a week to Nawolu to the trade fair. Teens are taken to the fair when they are 13 and presented for marriage, but they don't marry until they are 16 or 17. Usually marriages are arranged. However, Kylaia's older sister, Iyaka, returns from the fair betrothed to a young man, Awochu, who fell in love with her and wants her despite her small dowry. Kylaia isn't sure her older sister wants to marry, but her sister claims to be happy because the boy is giving her father 30 cows in order to marry her. Kylaia travels to the fair for her sister's wedding. The girls are dressed up and taken through the fair with their mothers to guard them. Kylaia sees things she has never seen before. But they don't see her sister's fiancé. They see the fiancé with another girl on his arm. Awochu tells them the girl is his bride-to-be and that he won't honor the marriage contract. He believes Iyaka is a witch who put a spell on him. Kylaia's mother is outraged. She tells him that he signed the contract in blood and that he knew what he was doing. She tells him his mother told him not to do it, but he wanted to sleep with Iyaka so he decided to marry her. Iyaka stands up for herself and warns the other girl to pay attention to what type of man she is marrying. She tells Awochu she will let him out of the contract for half the bride price. Awochu refuses and they all go to the village chief to have the dispute settled. Both sides tell their story to the chief, but it is clear that Awochu and his family know the chief and are trying to sway him. There is a great Shang warrior with the chief, his name is Pf. Kylaia thinks he looks strange and out of place and doesn't think he looks like a legendary warrior, just a regular man with white skin.

The chief demands a battle to settle the matter. Awochu says he will fight and Kylaia, against everyone else's judgment, volunteers to fight him. They will fight at dusk. The



Shang warrior helps Kylaia get ready for battle. Her parents are upset and frantic, but Pf tells them she is a smart choice. He asks Kylaia who taught her to fight and she tells him the ostriches. Her father thinks she is crazy and they are all worried. Pf tells Kylaia's family that he is helping them because he could tell very clearly that Awochu was lying. Kylaia uses the skills she honed watching the ostriches to beat Awochu. Pf comes to Kylaia's family and asks if he can bring her to become a Shang warrior. He will pay her bride price, but she won't be his bride. Instead he is paying it for the honor of teaching her to become a Shang warrior. Her family is proud of her for saving their honor and tells her that she has no future for marriage now that she has shown she can beat a man in hand-to-hand combat. Kylaia doesn't care about that, she is excited to begin her future as a Shang warrior.

## **Student of Ostriches. Analysis**

Kylaia tells her story from the first person perspective. The story is told in the past tense as it is a remembrance of her life from pre-birth to 13. It is the story of how she became a Shang warrior, but that isn't known until the end of the story. Kylaia feels that her mother's pregnancy was an omen for her to become a student of the ostriches. She is not a girl who is preoccupied with boys and she isn't a pretty or wealthy girl. Kylaia is an honorable girl who works hard and has pride in herself and her abilities. She describes herself as brown skinned and lives in a tribe, presumably in Africa. Her family is close and they respect Kylaia and her abilities. She is a determined girl who wants to be her personal best so that no one can take advantage of her. Her hard work pays off when Awochu lies about her sister and Kylaia's disabled father must fight the boy. Kylaia is confident enough in her own skills to volunteer herself in her father's place. In doing so, she impresses a legendary warrior and is invited to become a warrior herself.



# Serpent's Rock.

## Serpent's Rock. Summary

Gulpilil stands in the middle of red-rock canyon preparing to die. He isn't sure what to do with his spear, but he knows that he isn't equipped with the right weapons to defend himself.

Four days earlier, Jinabu, Gulpilil's brother-in-law comes running into the village shouting for Marwai, the village elder. Gulpilil thinks that Marwai will help with whatever it is that Jinabu needs, but then decides to find out what is going on because Jinabu is so upset. It is hot and Gulpilil's dark skin and hair are soaking wet. Gulpilil is told to go back to working on spearheads, but he is worried that something is wrong with his sister and wants to hear what is going on. His friend, Idimi, takes Gulpilil to a place where they can overhear what is happening. The place is a hollowed out area in the rock overlooking Marwai's area. Jinabu tells of a shadow that destroyed everything in its wake. He and others hid from the shadow, but he fears it followed him to the village. Jinabu warns the elders that the shadow will come for them all. It doesn't eat the meat they bring home or the dogs, just the people. Jinabu hopes that Marwai will know what the shadow is and what to do about it. Marwai says something to the group and Gulpilil turns to Idimi with his mouth open in shock.

The people of the village light fires and everyone assumes that Marwai will protect them. However, Gulpilil knows the truth. Marwai doesn't know what the shadow is and he can't protect them. Gulpilil thinks about his pregnant sister and how her husband assumes she is dead. Gulpilil thinks that the shadow escaped the earth when the Great Serpent twitched its tail (an earthquake). He knows that one teenage boy can't defend them against the shadow, but he loves his sister enough to try.

He takes a knife, a spear, and two extra spear heads with him as he heads to the red-rock canyon to get his sister. Gulpilil walks into the hot desert with only half of a skin of water. He remembers bringing supplies with him when he made the trek with his father years before. Now he can't bring supplies because his people are preparing to leave their camp. As he walks, Gulpilil thinks he should have collected more information about the creature he was up against. He occupies himself by telling the story of what he is doing in his head.

Gulpilil meets a quick-leaper, a dingo and a bird along the way. He shares his water with the quick-leaper and gets a feather from the bird. When he meets a snake he gives the snake the feather so that it will leave him alone. Gulpilil hears a voice and it is a feathered serpent that has come out of a path in the rock. The serpent tells him a riddle that Gulpilil doesn't understand. When the serpent leaves, the boy follows him.

Gulpilil now stands in the red-rock as he did when the story began. The creature begins to attack him. Gulpilil can't see the creature's form, but its breath smells of old piss and



dead fish. They fight and Gulpilil hears the serpent again. It asks Gulpilil to bring the beast toward him. He does and the serpent attacks, sending the beast into an abyss. The earth shakes and when it stops the serpent, beast and abyss are gone. Gulpilil thanks the god for its protection and goes to his sister's village to see what he can do.

## Serpent's Rock. Analysis

This story is told in third-person and limited perspective. Gulpilil is just a regular boy. He is armed with the spears he has made, but he isn't trained in how to use them like a warrior. However, he loves his sister and his love for her makes him willing to face death to save her. As he travels, he calms himself by creating a story of his journey in his head. His willingness to make peace with the animals he passes is a good thing. It makes the serpent willing to work with him as they defeat the beast. The serpent knows that Gulpilil is willing to be at one with nature. He knows how to appease the animals and isn't a threat. Even after the serpent and beast are gone, Gulpilil doesn't stop to gloat. He thanks the god for protection then moves on with trying to find his sister. He isn't after glory, he is merely willing to do what he must and what needs to be done.



# Hidden Warriors.

## Hidden Warriors. Summary

Heriot, the Magician of Hoad, is in the king's room during a diplomatic meeting with envoys from Dannorad when an assassin runs toward him with a knife. He shouts for the man to freeze and the man does. The man can't move by himself and is taken trembling out of the room. The man says he feels the magician in his head like a worm in an apple. Heriot tells himself that he had no choice by be a worm in the man's head. Lord Glass quietly tells Heriot that he might be a Hidden Warrior. Heriot is uncomfortable. The visiting envoy apologizes for the man who was attempting violence, but expresses his disgust for Heriot getting into people's heads inside the king's diplomatic room. The envoy refers to Heriot as a worm. The king defends Heriot by telling the envoy that Heriot is his magician. He points out that they are all trying to figure out what each other are thinking, Heriot is just better at it than others. Heriot tells the king that he didn't read much in the envoy's thoughts, but he did hear someone thinking there was a rumored plan to assassinate someone close to the king. He told the king's sons and council to be careful. As he leaves the room he wonders if he is really the Hidden Warrior, hero of ancient children's tales who will someday arrive. Heriot closes his eyes and makes a connection with the pulse of the city. He doesn't know how he commanded the man to freeze, but he wants to find out.

Heriot hears people call him a warrior and knows they mean it as a compliment. He doesn't think he is a warrior, but he isn't sure what he is. His friend, Lord Roth, calls to him and asks him how his day has been. Heriot knows Roth was born in Dannorad, but Roth tells him he has lived in Hoad so long he considers himself to be a Hoadian. Heriot tells Roth about the threat to someone close to the king. He tells Roth about the command to freeze that came from him and that he isn't sure how it happened. Roth sees Heriot's "street rat" - Cayley - in the distance. Heriot tells Roth that Cayley wants to be a warrior. They say good-bye and Cayley comes to greet him. Cayley is really a girl. She wants to know if Heriot told Roth she was a girl. He tells her that he hasn't. She asks him if he has ever read Roth's mind and Heriot tells her he doesn't read the minds of his friends. Heriot asks her if she will go with him to the "edge" that evening to test his new skills. Cayley thinks it is dangerous, it is where she was born, but agrees.

They enter the edge and are attacked by five men. Cayley pulls out her sword, but Heriot taps into the energy of the city he felt earlier that day. He is able to set the men on fire with the power of his mind. He tells Cayley he can harness the elements. He believes himself to be the Hidden Warrior of legend. She is upset that he didn't let her use her sword. Heriot tells her to give up on being a warrior and to be what she is. Cayley tells him he couldn't tell she was a girl even though he was a magician. He tells her he doesn't read friends, but Cayley tells him that the truth is he can't read her. She has felt him try to read her mind. Heriot admits that he can't read her even though he has tried. He goes on to tell her that she is only a woman and a stronger man will strike





her down if she tries to become a warrior. She should be what she was born to be, a woman.

They arrive back at their house to find Roth waiting for them. Cayley isn't happy and moves around the edges of the yard doing her warrior dance. Heriot explains to Roth that she fights with imaginary enemies. He tells Roth he want to the edge and won, then someone strikes Heriot from behind, knocking him out.

Heriot awakens to find Cayley fighting Roth and another man. A third man is dead in the grass. Heriot can't believe he thought he was safe at home with Roth. He had been tricked. Cayley kills all three men and Heriot is amazed to see that her warrior dance has prepared her to be a warrior. He realizes she is the true Hidden Warrior. She tells him she felt his power guiding her movements. They are a pair. The warrior and the magician and there is no place that will ever be safe for the two of them. He will be the one they think is the warrior, the person in the public eye. She will be the one in the shadows, the true hidden warrior.

## **Hidden Warriors. Analysis**

This story is told in the third person. The reader has the ability to hear Heriot's thoughts. Heriot is trying to find himself and his place in the world. He is a powerful magician, but his ability to read peoples' minds leads to jealousy and disrespect. People are suspicious of his abilities and they generally show that they have something to hide. The only person he can't read is Cayley, a young girl he saved from the slums which surround the city. The slums are referred to as the "edge." Heriot makes a decision not to read the minds of his friends, and it is this decision that almost defeats him. He constantly tells Cayley to stop trying to be a warrior and just be who she is born to be. Yet he can't seem to do this himself. His uncomfortably with his abilities, and unwillingness to read those closest to him, almost lead to his death. Cayley accepts who she is, even though others won't like it. She is comfortable with herself and that comfort leads to true power which she uses to defeat the enemy.



# Emerging Legacy.

## Emerging Legacy. Summary

Kelyn and her pack mates are sitting in the trees getting ready to hunt. Kelyn looks through the trees and thinks about the harsh terrain of the area and the girl, Sigre, who died. Sigre was a great hunter, but she fell from the trees. Many thought it should have been Kelyn who died because Kelyn is very clumsy. But Kelyn is a great hunter and tracker, like her father was, and if she died people would miss the food her pack brings to the needy. Her pack mates gather around her and prepare to hunt for a nightfox Kelyn is leading them to. She trips and lands awkwardly. Kelyn wishes she could be as nimble as a nightfox. Her pack mates are three boys, Mungo, Gwawl and Iden, and a girl, Frykla.

Kelyn waits at the bottom of the rocks while the others go to get the nightfoxes. She doesn't want to aggravate the injury she received when she tripped. The others come down with the nightfox and they are all excited. They begin to make their way to their favorite campsite, one with a hot spring, when Kelyn stops them. She senses that something is wrong. The others are used to ignoring Kelyn. Most people do because they associate her clumsiness with ignorance. They go past her into the camp site and are attacked. Kelyn falls, saving the attackers from having to take her down themselves. The pack realizes they have been caught by slavers. They are being tied up and the leader tells Kelyn to come by the fire. She picks up her walking stick and tells them she is injured and needs it. It is her secret weapon. The other kids catch on and help her with the ruse. The man tells the kids not to think they can escape. He directs Kelyn to sit. She knows she can escape, but she doesn't because she wants to help her pack mates somehow. As she is being tied up, Kelyn sees that their food is drugged and they will be forced to sleep. She vows that they will escape.

They are walked down the high sloped mountain by the slavers. Kelyn knows that they will be able to escape because the pack mates have hunted this area and know the trail has been blocked by rocks. When the slaves notice this they threaten to rape and kill Frykla unless Kelyn shows them another way down the treacherous mountain. The pack is horrified and immediately say they will help. Kelyn leads the slavers back to where the nightfoxes were caught. There is a rock cat that prowls the area and the slavers don't know about it.

Kelyn tells the slavers that there are choi mushrooms at the top of the area which they could make into a hallucinogenic drug. She gestures to her pack mates to hide in an outcropping of rock. If the slaves disturb the rock cat it will attack from above. One of the men climbed to the top, retrieved the mushrooms and fell to his death. Kelyn and the others could see he was killed by the rock cat, but the leader of the slavers didn't notice. He took the mushrooms and gathered with the others to crush them into a drug. Before leaving, he forces Kelyn and the pack to take a sleeping drug. Kelyn and Gwawl manage to spit it out. The others don't. The men decide to rape and kill Frykla. Kelyn



and Gwawl can wait no longer. Kelyn uses her stick to attack the men. Gwawl does what he can with his tied hands. They are fighting when the rock cat attacks. Gwawl hides under the body of a man he killed and Kelyn hides with the others in a mountain crack. The slavers all die at the paws of the rock cat. Kelyn and Gwawl untie the others and lead them. Kelyn knows they won't remember how she saved them, but she knows she saved them and it changes everything for her. She is her father's daughter after all.

## **Emerging Legacy. Analysis**

Kelyn is a clumsy girl and her lack of grace is mistaken for ignorance in her pack. She and her pack mates are hunters who make sure there is always food for the people of their tribe to eat. Life is precious in the tribe, each person is a part of the whole. Kelyn's father was a great tribe hunter and great things were expected of her. However, because she is so clumsy no one listens to her and she is often taken for granted. Kelyn is a great hunter and tracker. She uses her skills to help them all get out of the situation with the slavers. At first her pack mates don't listen to her plan, they are used to ignoring her advice, but as time goes on they understand she is a great planner. She also begins to see that her mind can be just as useful as being a good hunter.



# An Axe for Men.

## An Axe for Men. Summary

Sais is a Priestess-bride of the Temple in a city called Great Saloe. She remembers how the waters recently turned to salt and overran the fields. The people were forced to move out of the city or die of starvation. The Lady of Saloe orders the city's sacred bulls to be killed in sacrifice to the goddess Tar'atha. Sais knows this isn't according to ritual. The bulls can be sacrificed, but the Twin Kings must dance with them first. Their death is carried out anyway. The people loaded up their belongings and took the image of Sleeping Tar'atha with them as they left through the mud.

The people settle to camp for the night and Sais dreams. She shouldn't be able to dream because she is still a virgin, yet she does. She sees a king full grown with a long red beard. She doesn't know him, but he tells her to call on him when she needs help. Sais thinks about the Lady of Saloe's five sets of twins. It is tradition that if one twin dies the other must also die. The king isn't a twin that she knows of. She wakes up confused.

In her mind, Sais questions why the Great Mother and Lady of Saloe haven't come up with a solution to their problem. They are hot, tired and their supplies are dwindling. Sais is worried about what will happen to the tribe when they run out of food and water. One of the Young Kings is killed by an adder bite and his brother is sacrificed by the Lady of Saloe using the Axe of Sacrifice. Sais knows that ritual demands the new kings be anointed and dance with the bulls. But that doesn't happen and the bulls are dead. She is worried about these changes in their culture. She decides to tell the Lady of Saloe about her dream.

The Lady dismisses the dream as a fantasy and tells her not to repeat it to anyone and to have no more dreams. That night Sais dreams again. The man tells her his mother is the Lady of all Beasts. Again he says to call his name when she is ready to learn what he has to teach her. She wakes, but doesn't know his name.

Sais is in disgrace after the death of the kings. She isn't allowed to attend the monthly feast where cows were sacrificed instead of bulls. All of the Lady's nobles ate and danced and believed she would lead them to safety. But Sais hears that the regular people are not so sure and they aren't happy. They feel that the animals are being wasted on the wealthy and soon there will be nothing to eat. The herdsman who says this, Neshsat, is beaten by the Lady until he apologizes. Sais knows he is right and plans to do something about it.

Sais goes to find Neshat and tells the people she wants him as her first lover. She brings with her a bundle of medicines she stole from the Lady. Neshat is lying face down on a blanket, his back wounded from his beating. She tells Neshat she wants him to have sex with her and tells him there is no longer a Temple. He agrees with her, then sees that she has stolen the Axe of Sacrifice and tells her she will die for it. Touching the



axe is supposed to bring death. Sais tells him that they will all die, then they have sex. Sais realizes that the god in her dream is named Nis. She calls his name and asks for help, sealing a new covenant. They both touch the axe and neither dies.

That night they both dreamed of Nis. He told them how to worship him and asked not to be forgotten by them, promising to lead them to a new land. Sais and Neshat told the herdsman what they learned from Nis. They hid the axe and waited for the Lady's wrath. No one knows what has happened to the axe. The Lady lies and tells them all that Tar'atha has taken it and will bring it to their new settlement. Sais is horrified by the lie.

The herdsman hunt and are rewarded by Nis. They make Neshat a crown so he can give Nis his sacrifice after the hunt. Nis rewards him by giving them more food. The Lady calls Sais to her fire and asks why her Court starves while the huntsmen eat. It is clear she is going to kill Sais. Neshat shows up with the Axe and tells the Lady that her god no longer rules. That the son of her god now rules and the Axe of Sacrifice is now the Axe for men.

## **An Axe for Men. Analysis**

This story is told in the third person. Sais is a priestess in training during times of upheaval. She hasn't been completely made into a priestess-bride yet and, therefore, is able to see some things that the others are not. When her people are forced to leave their lands she notices that the Lady of Saloe, their leader, is not following the traditions of their faith like she should be. Sais realizes her people are suffering because of this. The new god, Nis, chooses Sais to be his new messenger and his new queen. It hurts Sais to see that their cultural ways are not being followed. The corruption of the Lady and her court is also upsetting the common people like Neshat. The Lady is trying to maintain control of her power, but now that there is a new god that the people believe in, it becomes impossible. Sais notices that the Lady is willing to lie about the guidance of the gods. That is the last straw for Sais, when the Lady knowingly lies about their faith Sais knows that it is time for the new god to replace the old one. She and Neshat are able to create a new covenant with Nis and change the Axe of Sacrifice into the Axe for Men because they have the power of the people behind them.



# Acts of Faith.

## Acts of Faith. Summary

Bridget Riley is scrubbing the floors of her Irish convent school when her friend finds her. Maire has gossip about a new girl at school. Maire heard the sisters talking about a girl they are calling Anne Smith. The nuns said the girl would have to be taught the Catholic prayers and that they were not going to tell the headmistress that the girl wasn't Catholic. Bridget can't believe that they would allow a Protestant to take refuge in the convent. She jokes to Maire that Sister Margaret, the headmistress, would rather see Hitler win the war than let a Protestant stay in the convent. The new girl is going to be Bridget and Maire's roommate.

Miriam Cohen is sitting on the bed in her new room waiting for her roommates to come in. Miriam looks around the room and sees a crucifix on the wall. She says some words in Hebrew and swears that she will not forget who she is. She recalls her mother telling her that they could only afford for one person to leave, because Miriam spoke English it would be her. Miriam knows that she will not see her family again after the war, even though her mother promises they will be together. As Sister Fiona led Miriam to her new room she told her that Ireland was neutral in the war, but their leader promised to turn any Jews found over to Germany. Sister Fiona warns her to be careful for all their sakes. Sister Fiona tells Miriam that the convent took her in because they serve God, not the government. Bridget and Maire come into the room and meet Miriam. Miriam feels that Bridget will be a bully. Miriam introduces herself as Anne and says she is related to Sister Fiona. Bridget decides "Anne" will be the sister's pet and goes to bed.

Maire prays to the old gods before bed. She, like her mother, is not a Catholic. The sixteen year old longs to see the world someday. Maire falls asleep and has a vision. A woman wrapped in blue tells her to look across a plain. She tells Marie that the girl has the Sight and to look within herself, not without. Just as Marie is about to make sense of the dream she is awakened by Bridget.

Bridget's knuckles are being smacked with a ruler by Sister Margaret. Bridget thinks about how much she hates the woman. After, Maire and "Anne" catch up with her in the hallway. Bridget thinks about how much Anne looks like Sister Fiona, but she knows that they aren't really related. She is touched when Anne shows anger at Sister Margaret's treatment of Bridget. Bridget begins to like Anne and wonders if the girl knows how to leave the convent.

Miriam scrubs the floor furiously as she thinks about the way she has been treated by Sister Margaret. She and Bridget are talking when Deirdre, the class bully, comes in the room to make trouble with Miriam. Deirdre pulls Miriam's hair and Miriam attacks her. Bridget has to pull Miriam off so she doesn't kill Deidre. Miriam can't believe who she has become and how she came to be this way. She was not raised as a fighter, but had to fight off different men, soldiers and attackers as she made her way to the convent.



Bridget threatens Deirdre so she won't tell on Miriam, then she warns Miriam that people like Deirdre and Sister Margaret would think nothing of turning people into the Irish government. Miriam understands that Bridget's words are a warning.

Bridget lays in bed thinking about the killing rage in Miriam's eyes. Maire comes into the room with a book. She tells Bridget that the book can get them out of the convent using magic.

Miriam listens to the other girls talk. Bridget tells Maire she has never been anywhere and couldn't come up with a place for them to go if she tired. Then, Maire is taken over by the Sight. She tells the girls that "Anne" has been to many places and that she will go farther. She says that Anne will travel across water, through smoke and fire. When Maire comes back to herself she can't remember what she said. The girls all think on what happened. They blow out their candle and are checked on by Sisters Fiona and Margaret.

Maire works in the library preparing a spell to take the girls where they want to go. They use the information Deirdre gives them about her American boyfriend to gather details of New York City. Maire knows that the three girls are to make the journey together using magic. There is an explosion and Maire thinks of the smoke and fire from her vision. She grabs the magic book she is reading and runs.

Bridget is in class when the bombings begin. The Axis powers are using the light of the full moon to bomb Ireland. Sister Margaret screams that they are after the Jewish girl. Bridget loses her temper, she won't allow Sister Margaret to expose Miriam to the Nazi authorities. She beats the woman and is stopped by Sister Fiona who kisses her cheek and tells her to run.

Maire and Miriam are in their room packing when Bridget arrives. Maire is again overtaken by the Sight and tells Miriam that her god and Maire's goddess are the same. Then she tells Miriam she knows the girl is a Jew.

Miriam is in shock that Maire knows the names of her mother and grandmother while in the trance. She smells her mother's perfume and finally believes in Maire's magic.

Maire takes the girls hands and tells them they can only take with them what is in their pockets. When she was in the grips of her Sight she saw what happened to Miriam's family. Maire knows this is their only chance to help Miriam escape certain death. She prays to the goddess, Brigid, for help. Maire begins chanting the spell she memorized. The bombs still rage, but seem to miss the convent. Maire envisions Pennsylvania Station in New York and chants harder. In a moment they are transported to the train station. The girls are in awe. Maire thanks the goddess and her mother for their help and guidance.

## **Acts of Faith. Analysis**

This story is told in the first person from three different perspectives. Each time the POV switches there is a break. As the pacing picks up the sections become shorter. Bridget is an Irish Catholic girl who has been sent to live in a convent under the care of nuns. She is a sturdy girl who knows how to take care of herself. Maire is a Pagan girl who has been raised by her mother to believe in the old gods. She is an orphan being raised at the convent. Miriam, Anne, is a Jewish girl on the run from the Nazis. She is at the Convent under the care of Sister Fiona. Miriam is not sure how she came to be in Sister Fiona's care, however, it is clear that she had some horrible experiences as she made her way to the Irish convent. The girls learn about each other as they room together. They learn to accept each other's differences and to keep each other's secrets.





# Swords That Talk.

## Swords That Talk. Summary

Sixteen-year-old Brinn is on his way through a labyrinth to kill a troll and take the trolls treasure. Brinn wants to bring the treasure back to his poor village where he will be seen as a hero. He can't stop thinking about the glory he will receive when he accomplishes his goal. Brinn hopes that killing the troll will convince his people that his is a warrior and they will forget he stole the sword he is using from the village armory. The sword's name is Irontongue and it won't stop talking. Brinn gets upset with the sword and tells him they need the element of surprise, but if Irontongue keeps talking they won't have that. Irontongue tells him that he should have brought a mace if he wanted quiet. Brinn sighs and begins to wonder about the discarded and broken swords and pieces of armor he has seen in the labyrinth when he hears a loud noise.

Brinn finally sees the troll. It is eight feet tall with yellow eyes and warts. Brinn jokes to himself that the troll is definitely a male. Brinn becomes excited. If the stories of the troll are true then the stories of the treasure must be true also. He tells the troll to prepare to lose his head. The troll staggers back and falls to the ground dead. Brinn can't believe it. He goes to kick the troll and see if it is still alive, but he is met with the smell of death. Brinn wonders if the troll was sick because it certainly doesn't look the way he always imagined a troll should look. Brinn and Irontongue enter the cave behind the troll's body and find an enormous treasure. Brinn wonders if the sword will tell people that he didn't really kill the troll, but realizes that talking swords are the ultimate "yes men" and can't betray the person who holds them. Irontongue tells Brinn that the troll's death was anticlimactic and too easy. Brinn thinks it was pretty easy and realizes the troll's death doesn't really help him prove his worth as a warrior.

Out of nowhere, Brinn hears a voice in the cave. It is the voice of a powerful looking warrior. Brinn tells the warrior that the treasure is his. The warrior tells him that the treasure didn't belong to the troll, the troll was only guarding the treasure. He tells Brinn that the boy's true test is only beginning. He tells Brinn that wars have been fought over who owns this treasure. Brinn thinks he will have to fight the warrior. He climbs over rocks to get to the warrior as the man continues to talk. The warrior tells of two great armies that fought years ago. About death and how the troll had grown tired of war. Brinn has no clue what the man is talking about and is focused on how he can defeat the warrior. Brinn lunges for the warrior, but seems to go right through him. The warrior asks Brinn if bringing the treasure to his village will change things. Brinn says yes, but then thinks about the poverty of the other villages. And then thinks there will be skirmishes if he brings the treasure back. He thinks his village doesn't really need all the treasure, no one is really starving. The warrior hears his thoughts. Brinn realizes that if he tells the village he defeated the troll they will come for the treasure and there will be war. If he comes with treasure there will be war, but if he leaves the treasure where the troll hid it there will be no war. However, if he doesn't come with treasure and the troll's



horn he will never be thought of as a warrior. Brinn looks around, but the warrior has disappeared.

Brinn tries his best to bury the treasure and thinks of a story to tell the village. He will tell them that he was defeated by the troll. He hopes that will keep them from looking for the treasure. Iron tongue asks Brinn how he will prove he is a warrior. Brinn tells the sword he thinks he just did. The sword agrees - having the last word, as usual.

## **Swords That Talk. Analysis**

Brinn's story is told in the third person. Brinn wants to become a warrior, but he is really thinking about the glory being a warrior will bring. Not the bravery it takes to be a warrior. When he finally finds the treasure he seeks, he realizes it isn't worth the wars that will start because of it. Brinn really fights with himself over the treasure. Now with the troll or with the ghost warrior who confronts him. Brinn proves he is brave when he turns down the treasure and plots to make himself look defeated so he can save other people's lives.



## Characters

### **Mactun appears in The Gift of Rain Mountain.**

Mactun is a young boy living in South America. He longs to become a warrior and hopes to prove his worth by delivering important messages to and from his village. Mactun takes a short cut through Rain Mountain, even though he knows the mountain is enchanted. He turns down numerous bribes by the Lord of the Mountain, but can't turn down having his ultimate wish granted. Mactun wishes there to be no more war and the Lord grants his wish, leaving Mactun alone in the world.

### **Fare appears in The Magestone.**

Fare is a teenaged boy who sails on a ship with his uncle. Fare wears a good luck charm on his neck given to him by his mother. Fare's father wore the charm and the only time he left it behind is the time he never returned home. Fare is brave and kind. He tries to help the mermaid he meets, even though it is apparent she wishes to kill him. He is a just person who can be trusted.

### **Eli appears in Eli and the Dybbuk.**

Eli is a Jewish teenager who has been promised in marriage by his parents. Eli is going to become a scholar, but longs to be a soldier. His heritage, loyalty and honor are tested when he meets with an evil dybbuk. Eli learns that his dreams are not necessarily realistic and that he cares for his bride-to-be more than he thought.

### **Ada appears in Heartless.**

Ada is an orphaned hedge witch who survives war by robbing dead bodies on the battlefield. Her mother placed a spell on Ada so that she would no longer feel pain, fear or sorrow. However, she can't feel love either. Ada feels nothing in life and learns that being numb to life and emotions is not truly living. She wears a piece of her petrified heart around her neck.

### **Tari appears in Lioness.**

Tari is the teen daughter of an African queen. She is sent to become a priestess while her brother is sent to be a warrior. Tari wants to be a warrior more than anything and trains as one while at her temple. Tari channels the animals of her faith to defeat the Romans who come to destroy her people and her culture.



## **Helen.appears in Thunderbolt.**

Helen is a princess of Sparta who has been kidnapped and taken to Greece as a war bride. Helen doesn't want to be in Greece and she refuses to be humbled by her captor. She doesn't believe that women are unable to fend for themselves. Helen devises a plan to escape her captors. She escapes Greece and is able to return to her home.

## **Taravati.appears in Devil Wind.**

Taravati is the Indian child bride of a man working for a British family living in India. She and her best friend escape being murdered and meet a witch. Taravati trades her life to the witch for an opportunity to enact revenge on the person who killed the people she loves. Taravati takes on a different identity and kills the man who killed her husband and friends.

## **Melvin.appears in The Boy Who Cried**

Melvin is a teenage boy who undertakes his village's rite of passage in order to impress a girl. He goes off to fight and kill a dragon. Melvin meets a dragon who becomes his friend. The two talk about girls, acne and bravery. Melvin doesn't kill the dragon he meets and makes sure that no one else can kill the dragon either.

## **Kylaia.appears in Student of Ostriches.**

Kylaia is a teenage girl who learns to fight by watching ostriches in the desert. When her sister's fiancée lies about their relationship, Kylaia fights the man and wins, restoring her family's honor. Kylaia impresses a legendary warrior who asks her to come and train with him and his fellow warriors.

## **Gulpilil.appears in Serpent's Rock.**

Gulpilil is a teenage boy who makes arrows and spearheads for his village. He is not trained as a warrior, but he is a brave boy who knows he must risk his life to save his sister. Gulpilil lives in the Australian Outback. He travels to Serpent's Rock to destroy a beast that has killed everyone in his sister's village. Gulpilil works with the animals he meets along the way and earns the trust of the Great Serpent. He wins against the beast and goes to find his sister.

## **Heriot.appears in Hidden Warriors.**

Heriot is a great wizard who can read the minds of others. He thinks he may be the Hidden Warrior talked about in legends, but isn't sure. Heriot has a difficult time accepting his gift. He uses his mind reading abilities to help his king uncover his



enemies, however, Heriot does not use his ability to uncover his own enemies. Heriot discovers that the girl he has been helping is a true warrior and they become a team.

### **Kelyn.appears in Emerging Legacy.**

Kelyn is a clumsy teenage girl whose father is a great warrior and hunter. Kelyn is known for being able to find food for her village, but she isn't taken very seriously. Kelyn comes up with a plan to save herself and her friends from slavers who would harm them. She proves that she is smart and capable, even if she is clumsy.

### **Sais.appears in An Axe for Men.**

Sais is a priestess in her village. When her people must leave their homeland in search of food, Sais notices the queen is no longer being true to their gods and their faith. Sais steals the Axe of Sacrifice and forges her own faith in order to help her people. She exposes the queen's corruption and provides for the people of the region.

### **Bridget/Maire/Miriam. appears in Acts of Faith.**

Bridget, Maire and Miriam are three girls of different faiths who end up in the same Irish convent during World War II. The girls each hide secrets regarding their pasts and their true faiths. They work together to perform a magical spell that transports them to the United States. Their escape saves the life of Miriam, a Jewish girl hiding from the Nazis.

### **Brinn.appears in Swords That Talk.**

Brinn is a teenage boy who is eager to prove himself as a warrior. He goes in search of a troll who is believed to be hiding treasure. Brinn hopes to kill the troll and bring the treasure to his people. Brinn discovers that treasure will create more problems than it solves, so he hides the treasure and returns home knowing he sacrificed his dream for the good of his people.



## Objects/Places

### **Rain Mountain.appears in The Gift of Rain Mountain.**

Rain Mountain is an enchanted mountain in South America. The mountain is watched over by the Lord of the Mountain who uses his powers to tempt men. The mountain provides a shortcut for the young warrior, Mactun.

### **Magestone.appears in The Magestone.**

The Magestone is a stone that holds magical properties for the mermaids. Fare wears the stone around his neck as a good luck charm. Neesha wishes to recover the stone for her people and to use it to save their mage.

### **Dybbuk.appears in Eli and the Dybbuk.**

The Dybbuk is an evil spirit who has taken over the body of Eli's bride-to-be, Leah. The Dybbuk has no body and wishes to use Leah's so that it may continue experiencing life.

### **Manes.appears in Heartless.**

The manes is a spirit and guardian of Julian, the man Ada finds fallen on the battlefield. The manes is magical. It has the head of a raven and the body of a young boy. It takes great magic to call a manes. The manes helps to protect Ada and Julian.

### **Apedemek.appears in Lioness.**

Apedemek is the Lion god of Kush. Tari is one of Apedemek's priestesses. Apedemek lends his power to Tari as she defeats the Roman soldier in the desert.

### **Sparta.appears in Thunderbolt.**

Sparta is where Helen is from. It is a great, ancient city where men and women are trained to be warriors from birth. The city is austere and is the enemy of the city of Athens in Greece. Sparta produces great warriors.

### **The Witch's Fire.appears in Devil Wind.**

The Witch's Fire is what Taravati is exposed to when she turns to the jada for help. Taravati lights the fire with with the force of her will. Over the fire, she promises to exchange her life for a chance at revenge. The fire allows her to become Estella.



## **Horace.appears in The Boy Who Cried**

Horace is the dragon Melvin meets in the forest. Horace is a funny dragon who engages in witty conversation with the boy. Horace questions why Melvin would want to kill him. He and the boy become friends.

## **Ostriches.appears in Student of Ostriches.**

Ostriches are the powerful, wild creatures Kylaia watches as she herds her animals. The ostriches kick and use their long legs, powerful kicks and quick reflexes to win against their enemies. Kylaia copies their movements as she trains herself to become a warrior.

## **Great Serpent.appears in Serpent's Rock.**

The Great Serpent is a serpent god who helps Gulpilil defeat the monster that is killing the people in the Outback. The people believe that the serpent twitched its tail, causing an earthquake which released the monster. The Great Serpent helps Gulpilil by pushing the monster back down into the earth.

## **Cayley's Warrior Dance.appears in Hidden Warriors.**

Cayley is Heriot's ward and friend who practices her combat skills by performing a twirling warrior dance. Her dance is done alone. The warrior dance looks as if Cayley is just playing, dancing alone. But the dance trains Cayley for combat and helps her save Heriot's life. The skills she hones from the dance convince Heriot that she is also a Hidden Warrior.

## **The Rock Cat.appears in Emerging Legacy.**

The Rock Cat helps to save the hunters in Emerging Legacy. Kelyn and the other hunters left fresh meat out for the Rock Cat to eat. When they are taken captive, Kelyn leads their captors to the home of the Rock Cat. The cat pounces on the slavers, killing them and helping the young hunters escape.

## **Axe of Sacrifice.appears in An Axe for Men.**

The Axe of Sacrifice is a symbol of Sais's faith. It is a ceremonial axe used to kill the sole survivor of a pair of royal twins. It is believed that anyone who touches the axe will die. Sais and her lover use the axe as a symbol of the new faith they create. They rename the axe as the Axe for Men.



## **Sister Margaret's Ruler.appears in Acts of Faith.**

Sister Margaret is a cruel nun who runs the Irish orphanage where Miriam, Maire and Bridget live. The ruler is used to punish the girls when they misbehave. Sister Margaret is brutal when she uses the ruler. Bridget uses the ruler to punish Sister Margaret when the woman threatens to expose Miriam to the Nazi authorities. Use of the ruler by the nun causes Miriam to become enraged.

## **Iron tongue.appears in Swords That Talk.**

Iron tongue is the talking sword Brinn takes with him on his mission to defeat the troll. Iron tongue is a sarcastic sword that is loyal to whomever holds him. The sword's memory resets with each new owner.





# Themes

## **Being a warrior isn't always about fighting and war.**

Almost all of the stories in the book center around the idea that a warrior is more than just brawn. A warrior also has brains. Anyone can use a sword or their fists in a fight, but a true warrior knows how to assess their situation and use the tools at their disposal.

In the Magestone, Fare and Neesha use their combined skills to save the mermaid mage. They are able to outwit pirates and change the ways in which they view each other. Fare is able to push aside his fear to help Neesha; Neesha is able to put aside her prejudice and accept Fare's help.

In Eli and The Dybbuk, Eli uses his intelligence to trick the Dybbuk into releasing its hold on Leah.

In Thunderbolt, Helen believes that she has the right to lead her own life and not be a prisoner. She devises a plan to trick her captors and escape.

In Devil Wind, Taravati is willing to sacrifice her life to the jada in order to obtain the revenge she seeks. She knows exactly how she wants to seek revenge and sets into motion a plan to destroy her enemy.

In The Boy Who Cried "Dragon!", Melvin and Horace discuss why they are trying to kill each other. They realize there is no good reason to do each other harm and create a plan to protect each other in the future.

In Acts of Faith, Bridget, Maire and Miriam understand that to be safe they must stand together. They pool their knowledge and resources to protect each other and to better their circumstances.

In Swords That Talk, Brinn comes to realize that fame and fortune are not always a good thing for society. He realizes that too much money is the cause of wars. In the end he decides to forgo his dream of fame and bury the treasure he finds so that it will not create destruction.

## **Change is a part of being human.**

Many of the warriors in the book grow as people during their story. Through a series of discoveries about themselves and their environments, they grow into young adults.

In Heartless, Ada comes to realize that if she denies her emotions she isn't really living. By sealing off her heart she is unable to feel love, fear, relief or hate. Ada comes to understand that those emotions are a normal part of the human experience and refuses to deny them any longer.



In *The Gift of Rain Mountain*, Mactun asks the Lord of the Mountain to grant him the one thing he truly desires. . . a world without war. However, the result of his wish is that he finds himself alone in the world. The only human being left. Mactun's lesson is that war, and the changes brought by it, is a part of the human experience.

In *An Axe for Men*, Sais and her consort help their people enter into a covenant with a new god. The old faith is not longer working for the people. Sais and her lover risk their lives to steal the symbol of the old faith and convert it into a symbol of the new faith.

## **Humans can learn how to survive from nature and the world ar**

Many of the stories in the book revolve around the idea that man can learn much from nature and the physical world around them. Many of the warriors in the book pattern their skills after that of familiar animals.

In *Lioness*, Tari is a priestess of the god Apedemek. When Tari is chased into the night by the Roman Petronius she is assisted by a pack of lions, representatives of her god and his earth.

In *Student of Ostriches*, Kylaia envisions a time when she can stand up to those who bully her. She watches how the ostriches fight and decides she will teach herself to fight in the same way. Her studying pays off when Kylaia defeats a man in combat who has an advantage over her in training and weight.

In *Serpent's Rock*, Gulpilil shows his respect for the creatures he meets in the Outback. Because of this when he reaches the cave where the monster hides, the Great Serpent knows Gulpilil is the right person to help defeat the monster.

In *Hidden Warriors*, Cayley learns to fight by training herself using a "warrior dance." Her movements make it look like she is pretending to dance, but she is really training to fight. She tumbles and twirls her way into becoming a skilled warrior. Heriot pulls from the energy of the city when he uses his magic. As his powers grow, he is more and more able to become one with the world around him.

In *Emerging Legacy*, Kelyn uses her knowledge of the land and of the rock cat to save herself and her hunting partners. She knows where the roads are dangerous, which animals will attack and what medicinal properties the plants in the area have.



# Style

## Point of View

The point of view is different for each story in the book.

The Gift of Rain Mountain is told in the first person by Mactun, the main character.

The Magestone is told in the third-person and omniscient. The reader is able to hear the thoughts of the two main characters as the point of view changes from that of Fare to that of Neesha.

Eli and The Dybbuk is told in the third-person and limited. The reader is able to hear the thoughts of Eli, the main character.

Heartless is told in the third-person and limited. The reader is able to hear the thoughts of Ada, the main character.

Lioness is told in the third person and limited. The reader is able to hear the thoughts of Amantari, "Tari", the main character.-

Thunderbolt is told in the first person by Helen, the main character.

Devil Wind is told in the first person by Taravati, the main character.

The Boy Who Cried "Dragon!" is told in the third-person and limited. The reader is able to hear the thoughts of Melvin, the main character.

Student of Ostriches is told in the first person by Kylaia, the main character.

Serpent's Rock is told in the third person limited. The reader is able to hear the thoughts of Gulpilil, the main character.

Hidden Warriors is told in the third person limited. The reader is able to hear the thoughts of Heriot, the main character.

Emerging Legacy is told in the third person limited. The reader is able to hear the thoughts of Kelyn, the main character.

An Axe For Men is told in the third person limited. The reader is able to hear the thoughts of Sais, the main character.

Acts of Faith is told in the third person omniscient. The reader is able to hear the thoughts of the three main characters: Bridget, Maire and Miriam.

Swords That Talk is told in the third person limited. The reader is able to hear the thoughts of Brinn, the main character.



## Setting

The setting is different for each story in the book.

The Gift of Rain Mountain is set in Mesoamerica.

The Magestone is set at sea sometime before the modern era.

Eli and The Dybbuk is set in Russia sometime before the modern era.

Heartless is set in a fantasy land similar to Medieval Europe.

Lioness is set in Kush, a kingdom in Africa, during the Roman occupation.

Thunderbolt is set in Athens, Greece, during ancient times.

Devil Wind is set in India during the British Imperialist period.

The Boy Who Cried "Dragon!" is set in a fantasy land similar to Medieval Europe.

Student of Ostriches takes place before the modern era, presumably in Africa.

Serpent's Rock takes place in the Aboriginal culture of Australia.

Hidden Warriors is set in a fantasy land similar to Medieval Europe.

Emerging Legacy is set in a primitive, mountainous area.

An Axe For Men is set in an imaginary land during a drought.

Acts of Faith is set in an Irish convent school during World War II.

Swords That Talk is set in a fantasy land similar to Medieval Europe.

## Language and Meaning

The language in each story helps to build the setting. As the stories are short, each word must contribute to building the characters and the setting. The stories use words which match the setting in which they are used and the culture they are meant to represent. For example, Devil Wind uses Hindi words to lend authenticity to the setting and story. Eli and The Dybbuk uses Hebrew words to paint a picture of Eli and Leah's world. Often, the dialogue helps to create the personalities of the characters which only have a short time to be introduced and arced. An example of this can be found in The Boy Who Cried "Dragon!" Melvin and Horace have a number of amusing discussions which reveal their innocence and kindness. Swords That Talk also provides an example of how dialogue is used to build characters.



## Structure

Young Warriors: Stories of Strength is composed of 15 short stories, an Introduction, and an Afterword. Below is the book's table of contents:

Introduction by Tamora Pierce.

Chapter 1: The Gift of Rain Mountain.

Chapter 2: The Magestone.

Chapter 3: Eli and The Dybbuk.

Chapter 4: Heartless.

Chapter 5: Lioness.

Chapter 6: Thunderbolt.

Chapter 7: Devil Wind.

Chapter 8: The Boy Who Cried "Dragon!"

Chapter 9: Student of Ostriches.

Chapter 10: Serpent's Rock.

Chapter 11: Hidden Warriors.

Chapter 12: Emerging Legacy.

Chapter 13: An Axe For Men.

Chapter 14: Acts of Faith.

Chapter 15: Swords That Talk.

Afterword by Josepha Sherman.



## Quotes

"Perhaps a part of thinking like a warrior was knowing one's limits" (The Gift of Rain Mountain, p. 18).

"In some ways it went against the grain; humans were the enemy, every bit as much as the Creesi" (The Magestone, p. 39).

"Much to Eli's dismay, his parent went by the chronological seasons, not the seasons of the heart" (Eli and The Dybbuk, p. 45).

"The part of her that would have been pleased by his pleading and fear was long one, and with it the part that might have pitied him" (Heartless, p. 67).

"Would all her dreams of duty and glory prove as dry as sand blown over long-dead bones" (Lioness, p. 85).

"My life would be my own, not merely the mirror of some man's great deeds" (Thunderbolt, p. 107).

"The English wished to see a miracle, so when I walked into the colonel's bungalow and proclaimed myself Estella Humbolt, that is who I became in English eyes" (Devil Wind, p. 140).

"He's the captain of every sports team, he's the most handsome boy in the Land, and even though he has the brains of a newt all the cheerleaders fight to sit near him in the cafeteria" (The Boy Who Cried "Dragon!" p. 155).

"Thanks to my height and strength, my boy-less family had meat for the pot and coins for my sisters' dowries" (Student of Ostriches, p. 167).

"Snakes were older brothers, short of temper and long on venom" (Serpent's Rock, p. 197).

"Everyone who lives here is a sort of warrior fighting doom" (Hidden Warriors, p. 214).

"She might be clumsy, she might regularly deal herself bruises and stumbles, she might never truly be her father's daughter, but Kelyn had no shortage of ideas" (Emerging Legacy, p. 236).

"'There...is...no...Temple,' Sais said" (An Axe for Men, p. 261).

"The world taught you then" (Acts of Faith, p. 280).

"Wealth makes one a king, not a warrior" (Swords That Talk, p. 304).



## Topics for Discussion

Explain the gift that the Lord of Rain Mountain gives to Mactun. Is it a good gift? A bad one? What do you think the moral of this story is?

- 1) What preconceived notions does Fare have about mermaids?
- 2) What preconceived notions does Neesha have about humans?
- 3) Does Fare's opinion of mermaids change by the end of the story? Why or why not?
- 4) Does Neesha's opinion of humans change by the end of the story? Why or why not?

Eli dreams of being a soldier, but he knows his parents will be upset by his dream. Why does Eli's encounter with Yevgeny change how he feels about being a soldier for Russia? What do the soldier's comments tell the reader about how Jews are viewed in Russia during this time?

- 1) Why did Ada's mother petrify her daughter's heart?
- 2) How does Ada break the spell?
- 3) What does Ada realize is missing from her life due to her lack of heart?
- 4) How are emotions a part of the human experience?

Tari does not wish to be the priestess her mother would like her to become, she wishes to be a warrior like her brother. How has Tari's priestess training allowed her to become a warrior? Would she have had the skills needed to defeat the Romans if she had not been a priestess in training at the temple? Explain your answer using examples from the story.

Why does Helen look down on Lady Aithra? In what ways is Lady Aithra a product of her culture? In what ways is Helen a product of her culture? Is Helen really as powerful as she would have the reader believe? Why do you think the way you do?

Explain why Mr. Humbolt killed his wife and servants. What did he hope to gain? Who did he blame their deaths on? What happened the day he committed the murders that allowed him to finally enact his plan?

Melvin and Horace find that, despite their obvious differences, they have much in common.

- 1) Why is Melvin looking for a dragon? How does he feel about this?
- 2) Why is Horace in the forest? Does he feel threatened by Melvin?



3) What do the two find they have in common?

4) What statement is the author trying to make in this story? Why do you feel the way you do?

Why is Kylaia so sure she can defeat Awochu in hand-to-hand combat? How has she prepared herself to become a fighter? In the beginning of the story, Kylaia tells of how she was not able to defend herself against bullies in her village. How does her, and her family's, encounter with Awochu parallel her earlier encounter with the village bullies? What enables Kylaia to have the confidence she needs to stand up for her family?

What drives Gulpilil to battle the monster? Is he driven by love? Fame? Fortune? How are his motivations different than other characters in the book? How are they the same?

There are many Hidden Warriors in this story.

1) How is Cayley a hidden warrior?

2) How is Heriot a hidden warrior?

3) How is Lord Roth a hidden warrior?

4) How is Heriot's anonymous attacker, at his home, a hidden warrior?

Kelyn is a good hunter and is able to provide meat for the sick and aging in her village, but she is not someone the villagers respect. Why is Kelyn not respected by her village and pack mates? What about Kelyn is considered to be a weakness? Why might her weakness be mistaken for ignorance? How does Kelyn prove to her pack mates that she is useful and worth listening to?

After Neshat is beaten, he tells Sais that there is no temple. What does Neshat mean by this? Is the temple a literal place? Why or why not? What does the Lady of Saloe represent to her people? Why have the people become unhappy with her rule?

Why does Sister Fiona agree to hide Miriam in the convent? What did she say that leads you to believe the way you do? Why is Ireland a relatively safe place for Miriam to hide during the war? How does Bridget know that "Anne" is not who she says she is? How does Maire know that "Anne" is not who she says she is?

Why does the warrior try to dissuade Brinn from taking the treasure back to his village? What does he tell Brinn about the wars that took place over the treasure? Why does Brinn decide to bury the treasure and make up a story about the troll? Do you think this is the first time a would-be treasure hunter has changed his mind about taking the treasure? Why or why not?