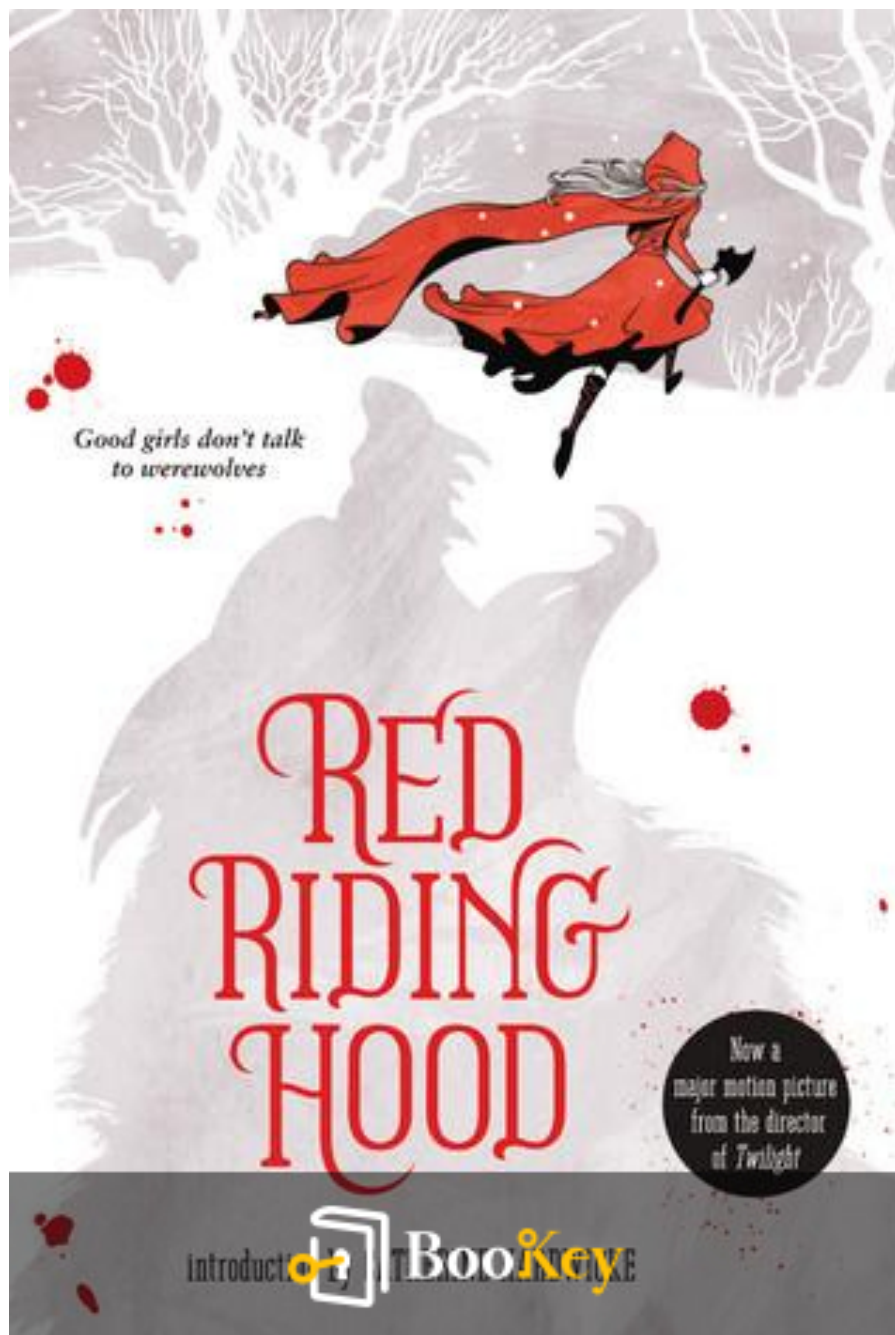


# Red Riding Hood PDF (Limited Copy)

Sarah Blakley-Cartwright



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# **Red Riding Hood Summary**

"A Tale of Mystery Unfolding in a Woodland Shadow."

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## About the book

Step into the shadowy depths of the eerie and enthralling village of Daggerhorn, where ancient secrets and simmering desires lie beneath the humble facade of tightly-knit community life. In "Red Riding Hood," Sarah Blakley-Cartwright takes readers on a bewitching journey through the world of mystery, folklore, and passionate love. As the moonlight dances upon the trees, Valerie, our brave protagonist, finds herself ensnared in a battle between tradition and modernity, fittingly symbolized by the sinister wolf that haunts the village with its bloodcurdling howls. Love, betrayal, and suspense weave together in a compelling narrative that redefines the classic tale we thought we knew. Unveil the startling truths lurking in the shadows, as Valerie courageously fights against unseen forces to protect the fate of her loved ones. This captivating blend of timeless romance and chilling suspense guarantees to lure readers into its gothic embrace, where every twist and turn promises to hold them spellbound until the very last page.

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## About the author

Sarah Blakley-Cartwright is an accomplished author known for her compelling storytelling and vivid imagination. A graduate of Barnard College, her background in arts and literature has greatly influenced her writing, providing her with a rich palette to draw from. She achieved widespread recognition with her debut novel, "Red Riding Hood," a modern twist on the classic fairy tale, which was developed alongside the feature film adaptation directed by Catherine Hardwicke. Beyond the literary world, Sarah has also worked as an editor, bringing her keen eye for detail and narrative to various publications. Her artistic endeavors include acting as Executive Director at the website Figment.com, where she supported a thriving community of creative writers. With a knack for weaving enchanting tales that captivate her readers, Sarah continues to leave a significant mark on the young adult and fantasy fiction genres.

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## Chapter 1 Summary:

In the somber world of Daggornhorn, a young girl named Valerie seeks solace from the oppressive and fearful atmosphere of her village by climbing the tallest tree, a sanctuary where she feels free and invincible. From this vantage point, she can observe the quaint village below, which contrasts sharply with her own isolated existence. Valerie feels different from the villagers, distant even from her joyful friends, with the sole exception of her older sister, Lucie. The sisters share a deep bond, much like interwoven vines in the songs sung by the village elders.

As Valerie descends from her treetop haven, she is called by her mother, Suzette. She gracefully makes her way down past the treehouse lodged high in the branches—an enchanting mystery of architecture never questioned. As the leaves signify the coming of winter, Valerie catches a glimpse of her grandmother, an ethereal figure who floats on the porch, her layered skirts trailing in the autumn air. Grandmother is a striking presence, influencing Valerie with her gentle strength.

Valerie's return to reality is met with the awareness of a village gripped by anxiety. The full moon is here, signaling the dreaded "Wolf night," a time when livestock are offered as sacrifices to the Wolf—a creature that embodies the villagers' greatest fears. Valerie's father, Cesaire, announces that it is their turn to sacrifice Flora, the beloved family goat. Valerie's heart

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is conflicted; the decision of her father ignites both betrayal and empathy.

Despite her sister's caution, Valerie, driven by an adventurous and rebellious spirit, sets out alone into the night forest. Her motivations are a mix of survival, defiance, and an attempt to reclaim some semblance of control. Guided by instinct and desperation, she finds herself face to face with the creature of legend.

The Wolf is an awe-inspiring predator, yet it doesn't immediately attack her. Instead, its gaze upon Valerie is one of recognition, as though it sees something within her that even she does not fully understand. Paralyzed by fear, Valerie submits to the enormity of the Wolf's presence, expecting the worst. Yet her life is inexplicably spared. The Wolf's attention turns back to Flora, resulting in a tragic end for the goat, leaving only the tether as evidence of her existence.

Through these events, Valerie begins to glimpse the complexities of her world—the interplay of fear, sacrifice, and identity. The village's fear of the Wolf mirrors her internal battle with the darkness she senses within herself. As she navigates these realities, Valerie is left with more questions than answers, setting the tone for her journey of self-discovery and the search for courage amidst danger.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Courage in the face of fear

**Critical Interpretation:** In Chapter 1, Valerie encounters the terrifying Wolf, a creature that embodies the greatest fears of her village. Despite the threat, she confronts it with courage and presence of mind, willing to challenge the norms and expectations that demand sacrifice. This key moment reflects the importance of facing one's fears with bravery and tenacity. In life, you too might face daunting challenges or seemingly insurmountable obstacles. However, like Valerie, it's crucial to approach these moments with inner strength and resolve.

Embracing your fears, rather than shrinking from them, can foster personal growth and inspire confidence to venture beyond established limits, allowing you to navigate the complexities of your world with resilience and courage.

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## Chapter 2 Summary:

Valerie sat on the damp morning ground by the road, her legs stretched out, unbothered by passing traffic. Ten years had elapsed since that chilling night when she encountered the malevolent Wolf. Now, indifferent to the sacrificial altar's gruesome remains, Valerie contemplated her past. Growing up, tales of the Wolf—a creature feared in her village of Daggornhorn—haunted her thoughts, silenced by protective yet often unhelpful parental reassurances.

Her sister Lucie, a gentle soul whose poetic nature and ethereal beauty set her apart, approached with a trail of young girls she was teaching to curtsy. Unlike Valerie, Lucie embodied softness and grace. The sisters shared an unspoken bond, a reflection of what Valerie might have been. Together, they marveled at Lucie's innate ability to charm, and Valerie envied her sister's seemingly unblemished life, contrasting her own scars, both visible and unseen.

The village hummed with harvest preparations: men brandished rusty scythes, while women tossed bread into baskets from cottage windows. At home, their mother, Suzette, immersed in stew-making, seemed caught in a reverie of marital musings. Balancing her duties with dreams, she grappled with her husband Cesaire's prosaic worldview, contrasting her own yearning for something beyond their village confines.

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As the sisters strategized how to gain their mother's approval for a girls' campout after the harvest festival, Valerie recognized the power in Lucie's persuasive abilities. Suzette, distracted by her own thoughts, unwittingly consented, her daughters' gratitude only registering the magnitude of her decision.

Embarking on their day, Valerie and Lucie joined friends—Roxanne, Prudence, and Rose—each a distinct emblem of youthful aspiration and allure. They set out amidst the lively bustle to the field, eager for the harvest celebrations. Along the way, they were joined by Claude, a misunderstood yet kind-hearted village outcast, whose thoughtful nature was often mistaken for slowness.

The girls' excitement soared at the prospect of meeting boys from nearby villages, a welcome distraction from village life. They passed Henry Lazar, a dashing young blacksmith, recognized for his intricate lock designs. While her friends fumbled in his presence, Valerie remained unaffected, intrigued by her own indifference.

As they neared the harvest grounds, anticipation mingled with a sense of youthful possibility in the air. The prospect of freedom, even for one night, captivated the girls, affirming the importance of such moments in the tightly-knit and often predictable world of Daggornhorn. Valerie, surrounded

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by the vibrancy of her friends and the village's traditions, reflected on the enigmatic ties of sisterhood, community, and the lingering whispers of the Wolf that continued to shape their lives.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Power of persuasion

**Critical Interpretation:** In Chapter 2, the instance where Lucie's persuasive talents convince Suzette to allow a campout teaches you the power and significance of persuasion, not only as a skill but as a transformative tool in navigating the complexities of relationships and achieving your desires. Lucie's gentle, yet effective way of influencing her mother's decision mirrors the importance of communication in overcoming restrictions and unlocking opportunities, reminding you to hone the art of articulating your thoughts clearly and gracefully in your own life's endeavors.

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## Chapter 3 Summary:

In the early morning light, the hay fields glowed with a serene beauty that seemed almost sacred, and Valerie, along with her friends, silently watched as the village men hesitated to begin their day's work. The anticipation was palpable as foreign wagons approached, recalling memories of a recent village wedding and sparking curiosity among the girls about how these newcomers might alter their lives. Despite the men's hard toil, they shared a resigned understanding that the young men's appearances might not fulfill the girls' lofty dreams.

The wagons brought strong, energetic young harvesters from neighboring villages, and the girls, including Valerie and her friends Roxanne, Prudence, Lucie, and Rose, prepared themselves with growing excitement. They exchanged playful banter about pairing off with these newcomers while assessing potential partners based on looks and possessions—a leather bag or a confident smile. Prudence, ever strategic, lamented the village boys' inability to impress compared to these new arrivals, particularly focusing on an eager harvester who had drawn Roxanne's attention though Prudence had spoken to him first.

Valerie, however, stood apart from this excitement. Love and romance were distant concepts for her, and she instinctively felt that none of these boys could connect with her. Her detachment became evident when even more



wagons arrived, but a familiar figure among the young men finally caught her notice: Peter.

Years ago, Peter had been Valerie's childhood companion. The two shared playful adventures until a dramatic day when Peter's father whisked him away during a chaotic scene that branded them as outcasts. That event left a lasting impression on Valerie, and she had assumed Peter lost to her forever. Now, upon recognizing him amidst the harvesters, emotions long since dormant surged anew.

Peter appeared changed, exuding an untamed and enigmatic aura that unnerved and captivated Valerie. His presence evoked memories of their youthful games beneath the Great Pine tree and the dreams they shared of visiting distant towns. Yet now, Peter seemed a different person, distant and absorbed in his labor, as if bearing the scars of a turbulent past.

Valerie wrestled with an urge to approach him, feeling restrained by the watchful eye of the village overseer, the Reeve, and the social boundaries presiding over their interactions. Her contemplation lingered on whether Peter recognized her or was bound by new allegiances or memories that diverged from their shared past.

As the day unfolded in the sun-drenched fields, Valerie remained torn between the desire to reconnect with Peter and the uncertainty of his

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recognition. Peter, too, continued his work, his actions steady and resolute, casting a mysterious shadow over their rekindled yet distant connection. And so, they toiled alongside one another, linked by past familiarity but separated by the passage of time and unspoken questions lingering in the air.

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## Chapter 4:

The chapter revolves around the intertwined lives and emotions of Valerie, Henry, and Peter in the small village of Daggornhorn, during a day of harvesting hay. Valerie is busy with the harvest when Henry Lazar approaches her, offering water and making small talk. Despite a slight conflict, stemming from an awareness of class differences and her assumption about Henry's motives, she maintains a polite demeanor. Henry, born into wealth yet feeling ostracized, tries to connect with Valerie, sensing a shared otherness due to rumors of her past encounter with a mysterious Wolf.

The backdrop shifts to the villagers' midday break, illustrating the communal divide between men and women while Valerie's friends gossip and jest. Valerie's attention, however, is focused on Peter, a significant figure from her past, whose presence rekindles memories and emotions she had set aside. After years away, Peter avoids fully engaging with Valerie and struggles with mixed feelings upon his return to his childhood village, blurred with memories of the past and thoughts of Valerie.

In the afternoon, as the villagers resume work, Valerie and Peter are fortuitously paired together by Reeve, the overseer. Their proximity ignites unspoken emotions and nostalgic connections, though Peter remains distant, avoiding eye contact but not unnoticed by Valerie. As the day winds down



and shadows lengthen, an opportunity arises for Valerie to speak directly to Peter. Their brief exchange is laden with tension and unresolved feelings, acknowledging their shared history despite the time apart.

Eventually, Peter walks away, leaving Valerie with her emotions hanging in the air. The day closes with the community transitioning to a campfire celebration, a typical village tradition, symbolizing the passage of time and life cycles. The chapter, underscored by themes of class, memory, and unspoken pasts, paints a picture of individuals caught between nostalgia and current realities, hinting at deeper mysteries within Daggorhorn.

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## Chapter 5 Summary:

In this chapter, the villagers of Daggornhorn are bustling with activity down by the river, preparing for a harvest celebration. The vivid scents of freshly roasted chicken and cut hay fill the air, stirring a primal energy among the villagers. Amidst the festivities, Valerie reminisces about fond memories with her old friend Peter. The atmosphere is lively, with music playing and villagers enjoying hearty meals. Valerie's father, Cesaire, makes a rare appearance, humorously attributing his appetite to the melody of a flute playing in the background.

Valerie's friend Prudence introduces her to an old rowboat hidden by the river, hinting at adventures to come. As they return from the river, Valerie learns from the Reeve (a local official) and her father that Peter, newly returned to the village, has been offered work in clearing pines. Peter, demonstrating his independence, negotiates for higher pay due to his skill.

The villagers prepare for a traditional camping setup, with the men on one side of the river and the women on the other. Prudence's mother, concerned for their safety due to old tales of the Wolf—a mysterious creature rumored to have attacked villagers years ago—nervously instructs the girls to sleep with their shoes under their pillows to avoid theft. Yet another tale of the village's Wolf lore contributes to the tension, with various versions of who it may have attacked, though no one knows for sure.



Later that evening, the girls huddle in their tent, weaving wreaths and plotting to put Prudence's mother to sleep with Valerie's grandmother's sage tea so they can sneak off into the night. When Prudence's mother finally falls asleep, the conversation turns to more carefree topics, such as romantic entanglements. The girls discuss Henry, a wealthy villager reputedly interested in Valerie, and Peter, whose return has stirred the village's curiosity and old stories about his past.

Prudence shares some stolen oak bark beer, and while the drink loosens the girls' tongues, the topic shifts to speculations about boys and relationships. Valerie reflects on her conflicting feelings, especially with Peter's return, while the other girls tease and engage in gossip about potential romantic interests.

Late in the night, Valerie, emboldened by her resolve to see Peter, spots his signal—a candle flickering from across the river. Encouraged by her sense of adventure and the urgency of the moment, she urges the girls to seize the opportunity to cross the river while Prudence's mother's tea-induced slumber lasts. They agree, ready to embrace whatever the night across the river holds, the excitement of their young lives eclipsing the occasional dangers lurking in their sleepy village.

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## Chapter 6 Summary:

The chapter unfolds with a group of girls, led by Valerie, paddling downstream in a rowboat under the cover of night. Valerie, resourceful and perceptive, guides them toward a flickering candlelight, a signal from Peter. Amidst playful antics from Prudence that rock the boat, they face a mishap when Lucie loses her oar, causing the boat to flood. In a quick-thinking move, they overturn the boat and hide underneath it, giggling and drenched but invisible to any onlookers.

Once back to the shore and somewhat recovered from their soaking adventure, the girls encounter a group of harvesters by the campfires, sans Peter. Despite initial embarrassment over their bedraggled appearance, they share a jovial camaraderie with the harvesters, the boys displaying a gentlemanly restraint. The girls integrate into the makeshift camp, listening to a fiddler's tune while creating crowns of grass and clover.

Valerie's mind, however, is elsewhere. She discreetly ventures away from the gathering, seeking Peter. The description of the forest, rich in sensory detail, conveys her pensive state. Despite initial doubts about perceived signals from Peter, she discovers an arrow marking on the ground. Her hesitations are hushed when Peter, a tangible yet enigmatic figure from her past, appears on horseback. With a bold move, he helps her up, and together they ride into the woods, stirring memories of childhood thrill and present-day elation.



Eventually, Peter returns the borrowed horse, leaving Valerie to grapple with a sense of budding emotions. Standing alone in the forest, she notices an unusual full, red moon – an ominous omen whispered among the elders as "the blood moon." Alarmed by an unearthly growl, Valerie rushes back to the river, where a chaotic scene unfolds as villagers scramble to safety, fearing the presence of a wolf.

Valerie, reunited with some friends, makes it back to the village, joining others in hastily retreating to protect themselves. Inside the bustling town, voices express confusion and fear over the unexpected blood moon, usually deemed a harbinger of danger.

Back home, under the care of her mother, Suzette, Valerie ponders Lucie's absence and the adventurous night. As a storm rages outside, causing an unsettling ambiance, Valerie contemplates Peter's fate and the eeriness of the evening. Her concerns morph into surreal dreams of flying, echoing the unfathomable blend of danger and wonder she has experienced, leaving her suspended between childhood innocence and the daunting edge of impending realities.

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## Chapter 7 Summary:

In this chapter, the narrative shifts between Valerie's experiences and the contemplative musings of two other characters, Suzette and Claude, within a small, tightly-knit village setting.

Suzette, reminiscing about her youth, reflects on her first encounter with a blood moon when she was just eleven. It was an event entwined with youthful romantic notions, yet tinged with an intrinsic eerie quality. Meanwhile, Valerie, absorbed in her thoughts while kneading dough, contemplates her subtle yet burgeoning affection for Peter—a mysterious figure with a past that sets him apart from her family's approval. He represents an escape and knowledge she yearns for, reflected by his ability to transform ordinary blocks of wood into sacred figures. Despite this, Valerie acknowledges the reality that Peter is bound to the constraints of the harvest season and their divergent social paths.

While engaged in chores, Valerie looks longingly towards outdoor voices and activities that she cannot partake in, especially noting Rose's distinct laugh. Alone with her work, she is left to reflect on a vivid dream from the previous night that lingers sharply in her memory. Upon completing her responsibilities, she heads to fetch water but becomes distracted by thoughts of Peter, visualizing his intense gaze. In her distraction, she awkwardly fumbles with the well's rope but eventually gathers herself, retrieving water



with renewed determination.

Near the clearing where trees are being felled by the Reeve's men, Valerie is drawn to Peter, who stands out perceptibly amongst the laborers, his presence highlighted by his athletic build and the graceful movements of his work. As she surreptitiously observes him, her sense of possessiveness clashes with the societal expectations she feels shackled by when she encounters her father, Cesaire, succumbing to his own troubles with drink—a source of both pride and sorrow for Valerie.

An unexpected turn occurs when Peter gestures for Valerie to join him away from prying eyes. There, he reveals a truth long withheld from her: she has been betrothed to Henry Lazar. The revelation sends Valerie into a spiral of disbelief and confusion, forcing her to confront her deepest desires against the weight of familial duty. She verbally resists the match, declaring her feelings for Peter remain unchanged despite the years apart.

Together, they concoct a spontaneous plan to escape, to flee the numbing constraints of their world for the freedom of unknown horizons. The couple perceives an unguarded wagon as a serendipitous opportunity to execute their flight. With the promise of adventure and their hearts in unison, they prepare to embark on an impulsive journey.

Parallely, Claude, a boy gifted with an observant nature, is engrossed in his

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surroundings. He possesses a peculiar ability to notice the minute details others overlook, immersing himself in crafting and drawing. While engaged with his homemade tarot cards, he stumbles upon a sinister scene—a patch of wheat stained with blood and the remnants of a yellow dress. This morbid discovery foretells tragedy, compelling Claude to rush back to the village with grave urgency.

As the narrative threads converge, Valerie and Peter, poised on the brink of escape, are halted by a foreboding sound: the tolling of church bells. The fourth bell, a harbinger of a wolf attack, chills them, dissolving the illusion of their budding freedom. In those resonating chimes, the couple grasps that their lives are irreversibly altered.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Embrace the courage to pursue your desires

**Critical Interpretation:** In this chapter, Valerie's journey is a poignant reminder of the courage it takes to pursue true desires amidst societal pressures and familial expectations. As Valerie plans to escape with Peter, she embodies bravery and determination, choosing a path that aligns with her heart rather than adhering to imposed duties. This key moment illustrates the importance of being true to oneself and having the courage to follow one's heart, even when faced with daunting challenges or societal norms. The bold decision to seize the chance for a life of authenticity over an arranged future serves as an inspiring lesson, urging you to reflect on your own dreams and the steps needed to realize them, despite external constraints.

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## Chapter 8:

The chapter unfolds with Claude, a young boy marked by a face that tells an older story than his years, standing at the entrance of a tumultuous tavern. Inside, the atmosphere is rowdy and oppressive, with towering candles casting a crimson glow over scarred tables. Claude's mother, Marguerite, is working exhaustively amidst the chaos, deftly weaving through the drunken patrons with trays in hand. As she passes her son, her dismissive remark reflects her impatience and the strained relationship between them. Despite his desire to speak, Claude's voice falters under the judgmental eyes of those around him, who see him as a reflection of something flawed or otherworldly.

The tension peaks when Claude, driven by a desperation to be heard, draws unwanted attention in the tavern. His slip of control and the resulting embarrassment leaves him feeling exposed and alienated. The laughter that ensues is laced with fear—both of him and the unfamiliarity he embodies. In a moment pregnant with tension, he manages to stammer out the word "wolf," pointing to a deeper terror lurking beyond their sheltered village life.

As panic begins to ripple through the crowd, the village bell tolls ominously. Doubts linger among the villagers about the truth of Claude's claim, their disbelief rooted in twenty years of peace with the Wolf. Nonetheless, curiosity and fear drive them forward, and amidst their growing anxiety



emerges Valerie—a focal character whose urgency reflects the impending crash of their serene world.

Valerie races ahead to the center of the wheat fields, overtaking the villagers. Upon arrival, she finds her sister Roxanne and friends Prudence and Rose

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## Chapter 9 Summary:

Chapter 9 unfolds in the small, anguished world of Valerie's family cottage, overwhelmed by grief after the tragic death of Lucie. Villagers cram into the space, offering condolences that feel hollow, while the atmosphere is thick with personal and communal sorrow. Valerie observes this muted chaos, feeling both disconnected and acutely aware of the changes it heralds. Her sister's death seems to cast a shadow on everything, leaving the family members to deal with their grief in isolation, despite being surrounded by well-meaning neighbors.

The narrative touches upon the psychological turmoil within each family member. Valerie perceives her father, Cesaire, as burdened by guilt over failing to protect Lucie, while Suzette, Valerie's mother, is overwhelmed by the complexity of her emotions. The arrival of the Lazar family, including the widower Adrien and his son Henry, introduces a subtle tension, particularly concerning the future marriage plans between Valerie and Henry, which Suzette reveals to her daughter. Valerie's heart is not in it, especially given her unresolved feelings for Peter, a figure from her past.

The chapter illustrates Valerie's internal struggle as she retreats to her shared loft with Lucie, lost in memories and overwhelmed by the permanence of her sister's absence. The villagers' attempts to engage in grief-stricken conversations are overshadowed by anxieties about the impending night and



the presence of the mysterious Wolf, hinted at by the fearful sages who believe a blood moon will rise again. The discussion turns to Lucie's last moments, with suspicion and speculation dividing opinions on what led her away the night she died.

Valerie must navigate her precarious emotional landscape, confronted by Madame Lazar's unsettling insinuations about Lucie's unrequited love for Henry Lazar. The revelations deepen Valerie's guilt, as she wonders what she missed in her sister's life. The chapter ends with tension building between Valerie and her mother over her future with Henry, contrasted with a poignant visit from Peter. Peter, aware of the chasm between his and Valerie's prospects, reluctantly heeds Suzette's sharp directive to stay away for Valerie's sake.

Thus, Chapter 9 encapsulates a profound exploration of grief, loss, and the weight of future expectations that make Valerie's world feel simultaneously familiar and terribly altered. The broader themes of love lost, societal duties, and individual aspirations are delicately interwoven as the characters grapple with emotions that ebb and flow like the tides, leaving them to question the bonds and obligations tied to family, love, and community.

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## Chapter 10 Summary:

Chapter 10 unfolds in a snow-blanketed village where grief and tension hang heavily in the air following a tragic loss. Peter navigates through the hushed town, reflecting on memories and noticing the enduring details of familiar places. As he enters the local tavern, he discovers Father Auguste, the anxious village priest, announcing he's summoned Father Solomon—a legendary werewolf hunter known for eradicating evil with his diverse, fiercely loyal army. Father Solomon's reputation for bravery and cunning precedes him, instilling both hope and apprehension in the villagers.

The Reeve, a stout and commanding figure, questions Father Auguste's authority in summoning outside help, emphasizing the villagers' desire for self-reliance. In the tavern, Cesaire, the father of the deceased girl, voices his desire for personal vengeance, while Adrien, a prominent villager, unites the men with a call to action. Despite differing opinions, the urgency to confront the werewolf threat galvanizes the men, who rally together, determined to reclaim their freedom and safety.

As preparations for the hunt commence, the village men, eager and emboldened, spill into the snowy night, leaving behind worried families. Valerie, recently bereft of her sister, seeks out Peter, who slips away into a shed to distance himself. Their exchange is fraught with tension as Peter insists he can't act on their mutual feelings, urging Valerie to marry Henry as



her mother wishes. Astonished and hurt, Valerie struggles to understand his resolve.

Meanwhile, Henry approaches Valerie, offering her a handmade copper bracelet—an emblem of his father's craft and his own affection for her. Though Valerie is challenged by her conflicted emotions, Henry's gesture provides a fleeting sense of comfort amid her turmoil. As the men depart, Valerie is torn by her exclusion from the hunt. Her father forbids her from joining, asserting it's not her place, despite her courage and desire to avenge her sister.

That night, after most have returned to their homes, Valerie makes a secret decision. Cloaked in determination, she trails behind the men, fueled by grief and a deep-seated urge to confront the danger threatening her village. Along the way, she witnesses the camaraderie and tense relationships among the men, including the rivalry and subtle truce between Peter and Henry, both unacknowledged yet palpable.

The chapter concludes with Valerie's resolve unwavering, her eyes cast upon the ominous crimson moon, pregnant with warning. She steels herself for the unknown challenges ahead, determined to protect those she loves and confront the darkness closing in on her world.



## Chapter 11 Summary:

In this chapter, the narrative focuses on Grandmother, a revered figure known for her mystical presence and unique lifestyle, and the emotional exchange between her and her family amidst the turmoil caused by a creature known as the Wolf. The story takes place in a village overshadowed by fear and steeped in folklore, following the loss of Lucie, a member of the community and sister to Valerie.

The chapter begins with Grandmother sensing the impending arrival of a group of men from the village, startled by a murder of crows taking flight. These men, who include her son Cesaire, approach Grandmother with a mix of awe and dread, as she has long been the subject of rumors surrounding her supposed connection to witchcraft. She gives Cesaire a pack for his journey and warns him to be cautious, acknowledging the threat posed by the Wolf that has been haunting their village.

Surprisingly, Valerie, Grandmother's granddaughter, arrives instead of one of the men. She shares her grief over her sister's loss and insists on joining the search party, but Grandmother gently discourages her, pointing out her inadequate clothing for the harsh conditions. Valerie is consoled by the warmth and familiarity of Grandmother's tree house, a sanctuary filled with fascinating objects from nature and old family talismans.



As the men venture into the forest to confront the Wolf, Valerie worries about their fate, particularly her father and her love interest, Peter. She reflects on her family's expectations, her lack of agency in her upcoming marriage, and the complexity of her feelings for Peter. Grandmother offers her solace through tea and stories of the past, revealing the village's history with the Wolf and the sacrifices made to appease it, alongside the significance of the church bells that once symbolized safety and alarm.

The narrative provides a glimpse into Valerie's childhood memories with Peter, highlighting their shared rebellion and camaraderie in ringing the bell tower, a moment that now feels tainted by current dangers. As Valerie and Grandmother navigate their grief, they share a quiet understanding of their family's struggles and the weight of their losses, encompassed by fear and uncertainty about the future.

Grandmother attempts to comfort Valerie, urging her to rest. Despite the heavy atmosphere, the elderly woman encourages Valerie to drink her sage brew, acknowledging Lucie's death but offering no solace beyond the ritual of tea. The chapter closes with Valerie's struggle to accept her sister's death, unable to find peace as the threat of the Wolf looms over them all.

Element	Summary
Characters	Grandmother, Valerie, Cesaire, villagers, Peter, Lucie (mentioned)

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Element	Summary
Setting	A village overshadowed by fear, Grandmother's tree house, forest
Plot Summary	<p>The chapter centers on Grandmother's mystical presence and her family's grief over Lucie's recent loss, amidst the threat of the Wolf. The villagers, including her son Cesaire, meet Grandmother with a mix of awe and fear. Valerie confides in Grandmother, reflecting on her family's trials, the search party, and her mixed feelings about Peter.</p> <p>Grandmother consoles Valerie, sharing stories of the village's history and their ongoing struggle with the Wolf.</p> <p>Valerie's childhood memories with Peter are highlighted, emphasizing their camaraderie. Despite the ominous atmosphere, Grandmother offers solace through her ritual of tea, leading Valerie to struggle with Lucie's death.</p>
Key Themes	Grief, family dynamics, folklore, fear, sacrifice, rebellion
Mood	Somber, mystical, fear-tinged, reflective
Objects	Tree house artifacts, pack for Cesaire, tea, family talismans
Symbolism	Church bells (safety and alarm), tea (comfort ritual)

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## Chapter 12:

In this suspenseful chapter, the tension established in the boisterous atmosphere of the tavern transitions into a foreboding silence as a group of villagers, led by the Reeve, Henry, and Peter, venture into the darkness of a mountain cave. The group is composed of men seeking to uncover the mystery or danger lurking within, hinted to be a wolf, yet their courage is tested as they face the unknown.

The initial unity of the group quickly splinters at a fork in the path. Peter, confident but perhaps overzealous, suggests splitting the group further. Henry reluctantly agrees, wishing he had asserted himself before Peter. However, leadership dynamics shift as Adrien assumes command of the remaining group, aligning with those who prefer independent decision-making. Cesaire, torn between confidence and apprehension, ultimately joins the Reeve's faction, leaving Henry and his cohort to navigate the cave independently.

The cave, described as oppressively dark and filled with the fetid scent of decay, becomes an arena of fear and bravado, where Peter arrogantly leads his team, convinced of his superiority. This confidence builds tension within the group, especially between Peter and Henry, who struggle for dominance in both leadership and familial relationship, with the woodcutters observing this rivalry with wary eyes.



As they delve deeper into the mountain, the cave breathes an uneasy wind that forewarns of imminent peril. The group encounters unsettling signs—a wolf's bloody paw print—and soon, chaos erupts. A violent gust of wind throws Henry's group into disarray, and screams of those who encountered

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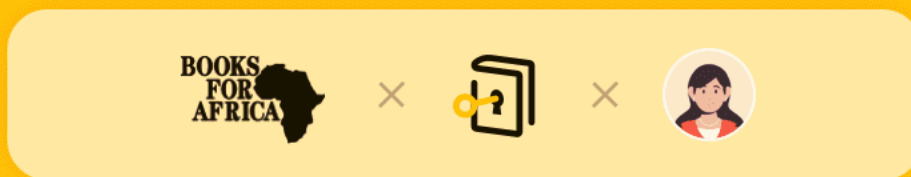




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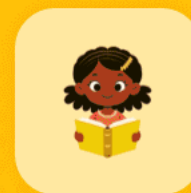
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## Chapter 13 Summary:

In Chapter 13 of an enigmatic tale filled with suspense and gothic elements, Valerie finds herself awakening from a nightmare in her grandmother's cold home, haunted by the recent death of her sister. The unsettling atmosphere is amplified by an open window, suggesting an ominous intrusion. As Valerie comforts herself in her grandmother's presence, she navigates her grief-stricken home life with her mother, Suzette, who is heartbroken and preoccupied due to recent losses.

Valerie's journey through the snowy woods to her family cottage highlights her struggle to acclimate to newfound responsibilities and societal expectations. Her encounter with Suzette, dressed in a bold new red cloak, reveals the symbolic shift in Valerie's identity. Suzette's insistence that Valerie wear the bracelet gifted by Henry, her suitor, designates her as a promised woman, underscoring the societal pressures and internal conflicts within her.

The narrative guides Valerie to the local tavern, a social hub where the villagers convene to celebrate the Reeve's assumed triumph over the mythical Wolf. The Reeve, a notable figure in the community, revels in his perceived victory, though his self-aggrandizing demeanor leaves Valerie contemptuous, knowing deeper truths lie beneath his facade. The villagers' celebration marks a bittersweet occasion, having been freed from the Wolf's



terror at the cost of Adrien Lazar's life. This event triggers Valerie's mixed emotions, torn between relief and the anguish of personal connections.

As the villagers raise their glasses in Adrien's honor, Adrien's son, Henry, is notably absent from the tavern. Valerie locates Henry at his blacksmithing forge, consumed by his grief and self-recrimination for his father's death. Their exchange underscores Valerie's empathy and her realization of the complex emotions she harbors for Henry and Peter, another figure in her tangled emotional web. Though initially driven by empathy, Valerie's concern shifts as she witnesses her mother's mysterious behavior and the reveal of a bracelet identical to her own, sparking curiosity and leading to a startling familial revelation.

The discovery of Suzette's past romance with Adrien Lazar unveils hidden family secrets, abruptly maturing Valerie's understanding of her familial connections and adding depth to her internal struggle. Suzette's affair casts long shadows, insinuating complex inter-family dynamics and exposing truths Valerie had never anticipated.

Just as Valerie begins to process this emotional upheaval, a dark and exquisite carriage arrives unexpectedly, injecting intrigue and signaling the arrival of an unknown yet significant visitor, Father Auguste, hinting at further revelations to come. This unforeseen arrival promises to unveil new dimensions to the plot, intertwining the personal and the mythical in a

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narrative simmering with mystery.

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## Chapter 14 Summary:

The chapter opens with the tense arrival of a black carriage in the snowy village of Daggornhorn, led by a group of fierce soldiers and a masked bowman on a white horse. Among the group's imposing equipment is a large, menacing iron elephant, which puzzles the curious villagers. Valerie, the focal character, stands in the square as the caravan halts, noticing her friends Roxanne and Prudence, but feeling estranged due to her recent engagement.

The village is abuzz with anticipation, having gathered to witness the newcomer's entrance. Many hope the arrival will interrupt the town's cycle of disappointment. The atmosphere is charged, with eyes cast towards the black crosses on the carriage windows. Peter, who seems a figure of past affection for Valerie, avoids her gaze. Overwhelmed by the sorrow of love's past traumas, Valerie considers retreating into solitary life, much like her grandmother in the woods.

A soldier formally introduces Father Solomon, a regal figure described as impressive as royalty. He has two young daughters, strikingly grief-stricken, who seem to hold the crowd's fascination momentarily before the audience redirects their attention to Solomon. As the girls depart safely in the carriage, Solomon, clad in gleaming armor, commands the crowd's attention.



Father Solomon addresses the villagers about the threat of a Wolf—an ominous creature responsible for recent tragedies, including Valerie's sister's death. Valerie engages with Solomon, seeking answers to why the Wolf had chosen now to attack and why her sister was targeted. Solomon offers her indirect insights, suggesting she consult with his scribe, who holds records of their hunts and the creatures they've encountered.

Solomon conveys a chilling tale of his own encounter with a werewolf, revealing that his own wife, Pénélope, had been the beast he hunted. This connection is dramatized with the presentation of Pénélope's preserved hand, disrupting the villagers' belief that they had previously slain the beast. Solomon warns that the real Wolf might still be hidden among them, perpetuating fear and suspicion within the village.

Solomon's story emphasizes the unique danger during the blood moon, a time when new werewolves can be created through bites. The Reeve, a local authority figure, insists the threat is over, but Solomon challenges this belief, leading to tension and a call to vigilance.

In the closing scenes, Valerie consults the scribe, who presents her with a tome of eerie, illustrated creatures. Faced with these images, Valerie reflects on the haunting nature of the Wolf, mourning her sister Lucie's loss and grapples with the dark reality overshadowing her village.

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This chapter thus builds on a mysterious and ominous atmosphere, introducing Father Solomon as a key character and deepening the mythology of the Wolf threat in Daggornhorn, setting the stage for tensions and revelations to unfold.

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## Chapter 15 Summary:

In Chapter 15, Valerie grapples with the impending loss of her sister, Lucie, as she and her family prepare to send Lucie's body down the river in a ritual farewell. Late in the afternoon, Valerie, her mother Suzette, and her father Cesaire carry the raft with Lucie's body to the riverbank. The ground is soft beneath their feet, bearing traces of others who have come before them. They join the remaining members of the Lazar family, who are also mourning a loss—Adrien, Madame Lazar's son, lies on a separate raft. Madame Lazar stands stoically with her grandson Henry, who silently seeks Valerie's forgiveness for past conflicts.

Cesaire prepares torches for the ceremonial send-off, and Henry takes a torch to Adrien's raft, setting it aflame and pushing it into the river. The water, nearly motionless, would eventually quench the fire, but not before its purpose is fulfilled. In an intimate moment, Valerie sees Madame Lazar's humanity as she stands grieving, tears brimming in her eyes, revealing a softer side that Valerie seldom notices.

Claude, a friend burdened by the realization of evil after witnessing Lucie's death, arrives to pay his respects. Valerie welcomes his presence, finding some solace in his support. As Adrien's raft drifts away, Cesaire prepares to release Lucie's raft, granting Valerie a final moment to say goodbye to her sister.



Suzette, overwhelmed with sorrow, approaches the raft. Valerie reflects on the cruelty of parents outliving their children, feeling the raw injustice of it. With a nod, Cesaire ignites Lucie's raft, and it begins its journey. Valerie, supported by Henry, lets her tears flow, mourning deeply as she watches Lucie become one with the river.

As they leave the riverbank, Madame Lazar disappears into her grief, and Valerie, caught between her parents, walks along the river's edge, pondering the resilience of life as small plants emerge through the snow. In the distance, she hears Claude calling her back, as Suzette questions the unfairness of her survival.

The family returns to a village now fortified with barricades, heavily guarded by Father Solomon's soldiers. The heightened security reflects an ongoing battle against the elusive Wolf, a dangerous entity terrorizing their community. Imposing and unnerving, the barricades signal to Valerie not just physical entrapment but an internal struggle with the limits of her world.

In a chilling moment, as they navigate the darkened path home, a wolf with a human face leaps from the bushes, embodying the fear and surreal terror looming over their lives. The encounter underscores the thin line between humanity and the monstrous, leaving Valerie and her family facing the haunting uncertainty that the Wolf brings to their doorstep.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Resilience amidst grief and loss

**Critical Interpretation:** In Chapter 15, you're with Valerie as she faces the heartbreaking duty of saying goodbye to her sister, Lucie. As you stand by the riverbank, you can't help but feel the weight of sorrow hanging in the air. Yet, amidst this profound grief, you find something remarkable happening. Instead of succumbing entirely to despair, you witness the resilience of life pushing through—symbolized by small plants emerging through the snow. This imagery speaks directly to your soul, reminding you that even in the toughest, coldest moments, life finds a way to endure and find light. When pain envelops you, this chapter encourages you to draw strength from Valerie's experience, as she tackles loss and heartbreak, discovering hope in the perseverance of life. Just like her, you can continue forward, embracing the courage to let go and allow new beginnings to take root, even when surrounded by darkness.

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## Chapter 16:

In Chapter 16 of the story, the tense atmosphere of celebration in Valerie's village is thick with an underlying tension that mirrors the turmoil within her. The villagers gather in the square for a festival celebrating the supposed defeat of the Wolf, an ever-present menace that has haunted their lives. Under the eerie glow of a blood moon, the celebration spirals into chaotic revelry, with a towering effigy of the Wolf burning at one end, casting ominous shadows over the scene.

Valerie, the protagonist, meanders through this chaotic scene, feeling isolated among her community. The celebration seems forced, a desperate attempt to drown out fear and grief with music, dancing, and alcohol. The villagers dance with manic energy, trying to recapture a sense of normalcy despite the recent tragedies. Valerie struggles with her emotions as she navigates the merriment, questioning whether the Wolf is truly gone, an anxiety that lingers despite the Reeve's assurances of safety.

The intricate social dynamics of the village are laid bare, with characters engaging in reckless behavior. Amid the festivity, there's a sense of lawlessness as night falls, with villagers embodying a primal savagery fueled by drink and desperation. Valerie's friend Prudence reassures her, yet Valerie's unease persists.



Valerie's father, Cesaire, adds to her distress, succumbing to the revelry in a drunken stupor, compelling Valerie to guide him away from the celebration. Her struggles are compounded by the recent loss of her sister, Lucie, whose presence she yearns for to help manage the night's chaos.

Simultaneously, interpersonal conflicts arise, as Valerie grapples with her complicated feelings for Peter, a figure from her past, and Henry, her betrothed by circumstance. The tension escalates when Henry, drunk and mourning his own losses, confronts Peter violently. This confrontation underscores the intricate web of relationships and emotional strains between the characters.

In a poignant moment, Valerie seeks solace with Peter, their connection igniting despite their complicated history. Their passion unfolds amid the backdrop of chaos, charged with raw emotion and yearning. Yet, even in these moments of closeness, the specter of being watched lingers—a symbolic reminder of the secrets and societal pressures enveloping them.

The chapter concludes with a poignant twist as Henry witnesses Valerie and Peter's intimate exchange, leaving him stricken with shame and regret. This moment encapsulates the overarching themes of love, betrayal, and the search for identity in a world fraught with danger and expectation. The chapter captures the essence of human vulnerability and the relentless pursuit of connection, set against a backdrop of uncertainty and haunting

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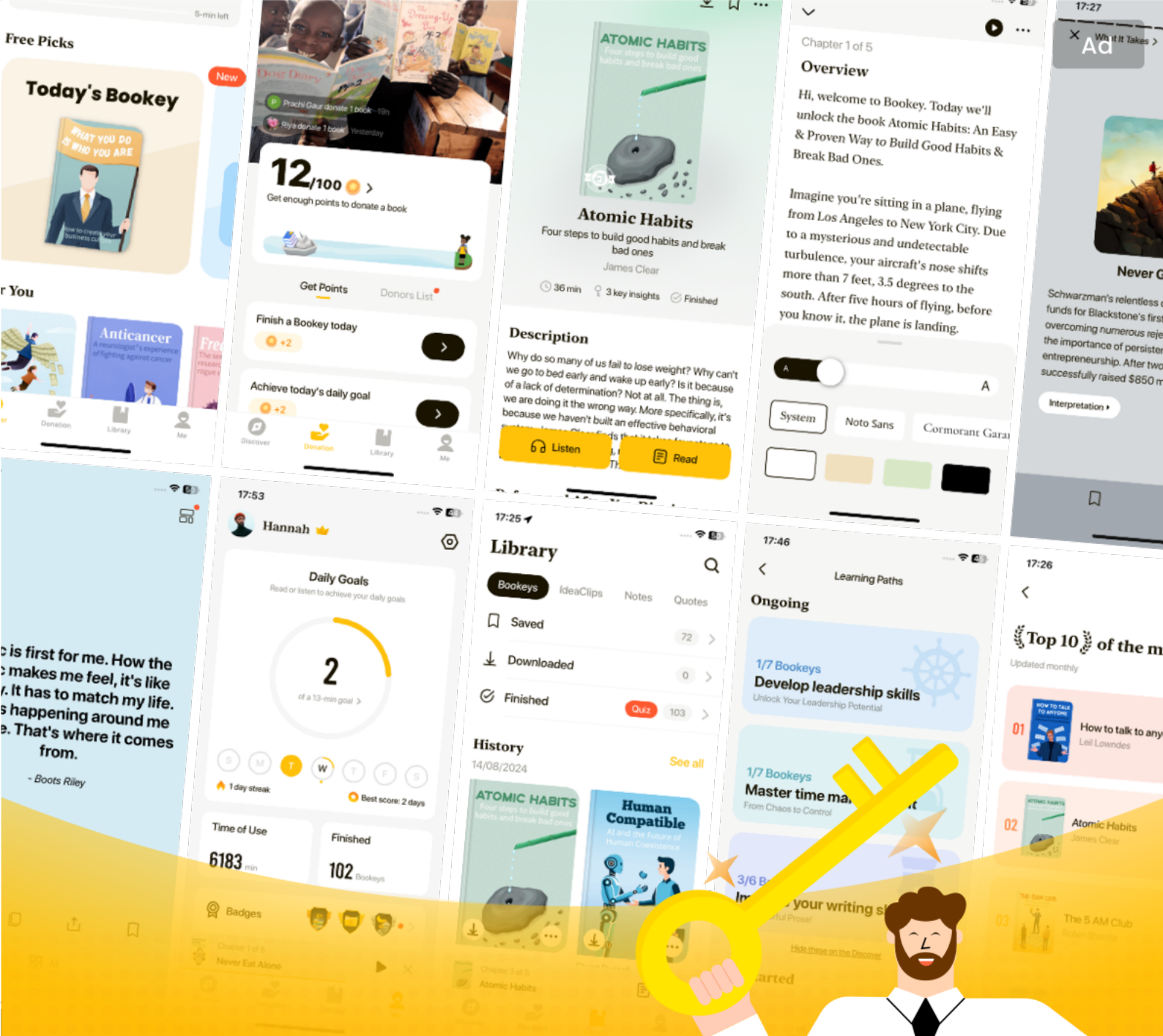
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## Chapter 17 Summary:

In this chapter, Valerie experiences a surreal and vivid evening amidst a celebration, followed by chaos brought on by a sudden appearance of the Wolf—a mythical and feared creature that has haunted her since childhood. Stepping out from the revelry, Valerie blends into the festivities, feeling a strange empowerment. She is momentarily lost in the frenetic energy of the celebration, set against a backdrop of roaring fires and lively music. Amidst the chaos, she dons a pair of goat horns in a spontaneous act of recklessness.

The celebratory atmosphere takes a foreboding turn when Valerie spots familiar, piercing eyes that trigger childhood memories of dread. The Wolf appears in a sudden, dreadful rush, causing mayhem in the town square, confronting villagers with its terrifying presence. The Reeve, a local authority figure, is swiftly killed by the Wolf, which catalyzes a wave of panic. People scatter chaotically; amidst the chaos, a man named Claude drops his deck of playing cards, believing their scattering to symbolize the collapse of order.

Valerie, though afraid, stands apart from the terrified villagers. Her focus is broken when soldiers, part of Father Solomon's men, reveal their hidden presence. They arm themselves, prepared for the battle they anticipated. Solomon, a self-righteous and authoritative figure who had tried to warn the town, feels a grim vindication as he commands his men to attack,



confidently claiming that the Wolf cannot cross into holy ground.

The description shifts to a vivid account of the battle between the soldiers and the Wolf. Despite their efforts to fight, the soldiers are overpowered, the creature's strength overwhelming them. The scene is amplified by the presence of a scribe who, amidst the chaos, draws the unfolding mayhem until he, too, falls victim to the Wolf.

Finally, Father Solomon rides into the fray, brandishing his sword and invoking divine power. However, his confidence falters as the Wolf's roar spooks his horse, throwing him into the bonfire. Yet, rising from the flames, Solomon embodies rage and a thirst for vengeance. The scene concludes with a masked Bowman intervening, shooting silver-tipped arrows at the Wolf, forcing it to retreat into the night, while Solomon, scarred but driven by revenge, emerges from the ashes.

The chapter deftly weaves together themes of fear, fate, and the tension between the supernatural and human resilience, setting the stage for further confrontations between the villagers and the enigmatic Wolf.

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## Chapter 18 Summary:

In this tense chapter, Valerie and Roxanne navigate a terrifying night in the town of Daggornhorn, which is under the threat of a menacing Wolf. Amidst the chaos and destruction, they are searching desperately for Roxanne's brother, Claude, and Valerie's secret love interest, Peter. The town is already rife with scandal, prompting Valerie to keep her thoughts about Peter to herself. This mystery deepens as Valerie begins to question whether the chaos started when Peter arrived.

As they move through the town, Valerie is haunted by memories of her sister, Lucie, who was loved by Valerie despite her mischievous tendencies. While comforting Roxanne, who is paralyzed with fear, the sense of being hunted by the monstrous Wolf is palpable. The Wolf is depicted as immense and terrifying, exuding an air of both physical and psychological menace. Valerie and Roxanne find themselves cornered, with no place to escape, when the Wolf confronts them.

In a surprising twist, the Wolf speaks to Valerie, claiming an eerie connection with her, and reveals it knows her name and a hidden part of her soul. The Wolf's voice is a chilling combination of human and animal sounds, resonating deeply with Valerie. Its conversation with her revolves around freedom and the desire to escape the confines of Daggornhorn, challenging Valerie's perceptions of her own nature.



Father Solomon, a stern figure committed to hunting the Wolf, appears alongside a masked bowman, momentarily distracting the creature.

However, the Wolf makes a chilling promise to return before a fateful blood moon wanes, hinting at a further confrontation. After the Wolf retreats, Solomon exudes a mix of religious fervor and authority, suggesting only faith and action can offer salvation.

Valerie and Roxanne find themselves ushered into the churchyard for safety. The emotional aftermath reveals a stark comparison between the friends—Roxanne, visibly shaken, confronts Valerie about her interaction with the Wolf. Valerie realizes that Roxanne hadn't heard the Wolf's words, amplifying the dread of being singled out. This secret now poses a new threat for Valerie in their superstitious community.

Strikingly, Valerie is troubled by the realization that the Wolf's human eyes seemed familiar, hinting at a greater mystery yet to be uncovered. As Roxanne suffers a nosebleed, a small irony given the night's bloodshed, Valerie is left to contemplate the Wolf's foreboding influence. This chapter masterfully addresses themes of fear, identity, and the unsettling thin line between humanity and monstrosity, all within the shadow of a wolf's predatory presence.

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## Chapter 19 Summary:

Valerie awoke at dawn, feeling the sharp cold of the new day. Disturbed by her dreams of Peter, she was reminded of the brutal events that had recently unfolded in her village, Daggornhorn. As she stretched on the hard church pew, she noticed the village shrouded in a dense fog, giving it a ghostly appearance. The Captain had opened the churchyard gates, allowing her to witness the somber task of cleaning up the massacre that had taken place. The once lively square was now filled with the sound of shovels against the frozen ground.

Henry, a man from her past, walked by without noticing her, possibly ashamed of his actions at the festival. Valerie refrained from calling out to him, remembering the subsequent events and Peter's touch. Suddenly, the sound of hooves caught her attention as Father Solomon arrived on horseback, his presence dark and imposing. Solomon's silver-plated, dagger-like fingernails gleamed ominously as he approached the traumatized villagers, who awaited his judgment.

Father Auguste apologized to Solomon, acknowledging their error in doubting him. The villagers silently agreed to place their trust in Solomon, whose reputation as a werewolf hunter preceded him. Solomon, with an authoritative tone, expressed his resolve not just to kill the beast responsible for the recent violence but to make it suffer, indicating its lineage and



strength were unlike any he had encountered before.

Solomon's attention turned to the Reeve's fallen body and he callously remarked on the futility of the man's celebration. The villagers, disillusioned with the Reeve, found solace in Solomon's ruthless decisiveness, especially when he swiftly executed the Captain's brother, who had been bitten and thus, cursed. Solomon's actions were a grim reminder of the seriousness of the situation, further emphasized by his declaration of a village-wide hunt for the werewolf in its human form.

As Solomon addressed the crowd, detailing the traits to look for in the werewolf and promising that no secrets would remain hidden, Valerie sensed the villagers' conformity to this new, charismatic authority. Feeling uneasy with the blind obedience displayed by her neighbors, she quietly left, driven by an empty stomach and a desire to escape the oppressive atmosphere.

At home, Valerie found her father and grandmother, but her focus was on her injured mother, Suzette, who bore the wolf's scars. Cesaire, her father, displayed tenderness as he tended to Suzette, leaving Valerie to ponder the nature of their love and marriage. Memories of happier times with her mother and sister, Lucie, flooded back, tinged with the fear of losing Lucie's image as time passed.

As Valerie helped care for her mother, doubts crept into her mind—was her

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mother, Suzette, the werewolf? While tending to her, Valerie was overwhelmed by the strangeness of caring for someone she suspected could be linked to the chaos that had befallen their village. However, at her grandmother's gentle urging, she set aside her fears and suspicions to comfort her mother, seeking solace in the familiar act of nurturing.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Overcoming Fear and Suspicion

**Critical Interpretation:** In this chapter, you witness Valerie grappling with an intense internal conflict as she navigates fear and suspicion in a village shrouded by terror. Even suspecting her own mother to potentially be the very source of the havoc, she finds within herself a profound strength to overcome these paralyzing emotions. Instead of succumbing to distrust and letting uncertainty drive a wedge between them, Valerie chooses to push aside her fears, displaying an unwavering commitment to care for her injured mother.

Think about how this action reflects a broader lesson in our lives. Often, we find ourselves caught in scenarios dense with doubt and mistrust, yet by channeling compassion over cynicism, we can forge resilient connections and maintain our humanity even amidst chaos. Valerie's choice serves as a powerful reminder to trust our instincts to love and support, even when faced with fear-inducing circumstances.

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## Chapter 20:

In this intense and gripping chapter, we find Valerie in the midst of a turbulent and oppressive atmosphere. The chapter opens with heavy pounding on her door, heralding the arrival of inquisitors intent on tearing apart their lives and exposing their secrets. Valerie fearfully anticipates a visit from an authority figure, but instead is confronted by Peter, a figure from her past whose intense and burning eyes suggest danger.

Peter pleads with Valerie to flee, claiming they are all in danger. Valerie is torn by memories and doubts, recalling the passionate yet frightening moments she and Peter shared. The paranoia and chaos in the village escalate with the recent murder of Valerie's sister, the wolf's ominous presence, and the suspicion that Peter might be involved.

Valerie's internal conflict deepens as she observes her wounded mother, Suzette, being tended to by her Grandmother. Noticing the old woman's long nails and recalling the wolf's attack, Valerie harbors suspicions against her own grandmother. Yet, a dialogue between them reveals that the wolf wants Valerie alive, implicating Valerie in a web of fear and guilt.

As she exits the cottage, Valerie encounters her estranged friend Roxanne and her mother, Marguerite, who remain silent and withdrawn, ignoring Valerie's concern for Claude, a young boy known for his strangeness.



Valerie's sense of isolation intensifies when even a dog, a symbol of innocence and trust, recoils from her.

Henry, Valerie's fiancé, approaches with heart-wrenching news, breaking off their engagement. He has witnessed Valerie with Peter, which shatters his

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## Chapter 21 Summary:

In a tense and chilling chapter, Claude, a young and misunderstood boy, finds himself at the mercy of Father Solomon and his soldiers in a war-torn village setting. They are convinced he is the Wolf—a sinister figure terrorizing the community. The scene unfolds in a dilapidated barn, where Claude is dragged and huddled, terrified by the looming threat of a grotesque metal elephant, a medieval torture device. Despite Claude's panicked chanting, which reveals his innocence, Solomon commands the soldiers to imprison him in the device, showing no empathy or doubt about Claude's guilt. Solomon's resolve is clear as he reminisces about killing his wife for the sake of his children, suggesting that extreme actions are sometimes necessary for what he believes is the greater good. However, his logic raises questions about morality and justice.

Father Auguste, a village priest, stands by, horrified by the situation but too powerless to intervene. Meanwhile, in a dramatic turn of events at a local tavern, Claude's sister Roxanne bravely approaches Solomon, seeking to negotiate her brother's release. Her attempt begins with a modest offering of silver coins. When Solomon dismissively rejects this, Roxanne, in desperation, offers herself, unveiling a personal and painful sacrifice. Her courage and desperation are palpable as she fights to save her brother, even resorting to offering a bigger prize: the name of a witch.

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Roxanne's final offer piques Solomon's interest. In a world where witch hunts and fear of the supernatural are rampant, the promise of uncovering a witch's identity is invaluable. Thus, the chapter highlights themes of desperation, sacrifice, and moral ambiguity amidst a backdrop of superstition and religious fervor. It raises questions about the lengths people go to for family and the ethical compromises made under the guise of righteousness.

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## Chapter 22 Summary:

In Chapter 22, a tense atmosphere unfolds in the village besieged by fear and superstition. Valerie's father, exhausted and vigilant, accidentally drifts into sleep while watching over a delirious Suzette, his presence measured by the axe that seems too large for his weary frame. Valerie takes over the watch, pondering about the village children and their fading memory of Lucie, whose kindness once shone like a beacon.

The village is gripped by suspicion, exacerbated by a vigilante group uncovering trivial oddities in their neighbors, mistaking them for sinister signs. The uneasy quiet is shattered when soldiers burst into Valerie's home, forcefully taking her to a makeshift courtroom in a tavern, where an accusatory trial is hastily convened.

Roxanne, Valerie's friend, reluctantly betrays her, describing Valerie's abilities in a way that suggests witchcraft. The townspeople are aghast at this revelation, and Valerie, captured in the spotlight of their morbid curiosity, chooses a path of honesty—or defiance—by not denying her connection with the Wolf. She tells the court of the Wolf's proposal for peace: it will leave the village unscathed if Valerie departs with it.

Father Solomon, a commanding figure orchestrating this chaotic drama, tries to manipulate the villagers into believing that Valerie is the key to saving



themselves from the Wolf's wrath. Yet, Henry, filled with principles and a quiet dignity, speaks against sacrificing Valerie, earning the scornful attention of the crowd and the resignation that comes from standing alone.

As the villagers leave the trial, transforming their disgust and fear into gossip and whisper campaigns, Valerie is left to face an uncertain fate, a pawn in Solomon's larger plan to trap the Wolf. Even as fear dominates, loyalties are questioned, and intentions scrutinized, a sliver of hope emerges in the form of Peter and Henry, who set aside their differences to rescue Valerie. Though they hold mutual suspicion, the shared goal of saving the woman they each care for drives them to cooperate, uneasy yet resolved. Their clandestine alliance hints at cracks forming in the villagers' hysteria, suggesting that unity, even one born from reluctant necessity, may offer a path forward amidst the shadows threatening to engulf their world.

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## Chapter 23 Summary:

In Chapter 23, Roxanne is depicted as burdened by deep worry and despair due to the mysterious disappearance of her brother, Claude. Her emotions are a snapshot of the broader climate of fear and suspicion encompassing the town of Daggornhorn. To understand this chapter, it is essential to grasp the strained social conditions of the community—a village grappling with poverty and scarcity, rife with jealousy and unkindness, but not one overrun with overt evil until recent transgressions indicated otherwise.

Roxanne approaches the Captain, a figure of authority, hoping for reassurance. Her brother's release, as promised by Father Solomon, is her only solace. The Captain's ambiguous reply and distracted demeanor foreshadow darker truths yet to come. He leads Roxanne to a grim discovery in the tavern's courtyard, heightening her anxiety. A wheelbarrow draped in a blanket reveals a hand—the hand of her brother, Claude.

The chapter crescendos as the blanket is removed, exposing Claude's lifeless body. His injuries suggest a brutal end, a manifestation of the malevolence now seeping into their lives. Roxanne is crushed by the revelation, collapsing in despair, forced to confront her village's descent into chaos.

The narrative underscores the shift from an imperfect yet tolerable existence to one overshadowed by evil—the invisible, insidious darkness that Roxanne



and her villagers must reckon with as their story unfolds.

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## Chapter 24:

Two days ago, Valerie couldn't have imagined herself in her current predicament. Everyone she once cherished had either betrayed her or been alienated by her actions. Her sister, Lucie, had died, and Valerie anticipated that she would share the same fate that night in a prison cell, damp and dark as if it were a grave. Accustomed to housing animals, the cell was fitted with iron bars more suited for a jail. Sparse candles provided minimal light, their flickering shadows enhancing her isolation. Her only defender, Henry, whom she had spurned for someone else, had failed to voice his support. Peter, the man she loved, had not stayed to defend her either.

Valerie imagined Henry finding love with someone else, like Rose or Prudence, while she believed Peter would remain devoted to her memory, preserving it untainted. A pang of regret swept over her for not leaving with Peter when she had the chance. Amidst her despair, her grandmother's face appeared, offering a shred of comfort. When her grandmother asked if she needed anything, Valerie thought of the elk-horn knife hidden in her boot, but she couldn't show it with the guard's watchful eyes upon her. Her red cloak, taken by Solomon, left her feeling exposed and vulnerable.

Valerie hoped her grandmother had a plan, having withheld her voice during the trial. But the older woman, like others, was paralyzed by fear of Solomon, not the Wolf. Her grandmother speculated on the Wolf's unusual



public attack during the festival, theorizing its intent was personal, especially towards Valerie and her sister. Valerie proposed that Lucie, driven by love for Henry and feeling hopeless upon learning of Valerie's engagement, might have offered herself to the Wolf. Yet, this explanation felt hollow and implausible. Her grandmother, with a developing theory of

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## Chapter 25 Summary:

In this chapter, a tense confrontation unfolds in the cluttered blacksmith shop between Henry, the blacksmith, and Valerie's grandmother. The wind sweeps Grandmother in, but Henry remains focused on his task, his back turned to her. Despite the shop being closed, Grandmother praises Henry for defending her granddaughter, Valerie, earlier that day. However, Henry is still hurt by his broken engagement with Valerie, who loves someone else.

Their conversation takes a sharp turn as Grandmother hints at suspicions of a murderous Wolf in their midst, indirectly accusing Henry. Henry's frustration grows, particularly with the mention of Lucie, a woman once believed to be infatuated with him. Grandmother's insinuations push Henry to an epiphany, shifting his perspective entirely.

In a dramatic reversal, Henry accuses Grandmother of being the Wolf, a creature responsible for brutal killings. He recalls the distinct musk of the Wolf from the night his father died, a scent he now claims to detect on Grandmother. As he steps closer, his accusation and proximity make Grandmother uneasy, feeling faint from the heat of the forge and the weight of the accusation.

Henry's relentless questioning forces Grandmother to realize her own unsettling scent and potential link to recent events, including the murder of

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Valerie's granddaughter. With no solid defense, only a vague memory of reading in isolation, Grandmother grows desperate to verify her own innocence. She retreats from the shop, her suspicions reflected back at her, and hurries home to uncover the truth about herself and her possible connection to the Wolf.

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## Chapter 26 Summary:

In this intense and pivotal chapter, a clandestine plan unfolds under the cover of night in a village tormented by fear and suspicion. Three men, including Peter and Cesaire, execute an intricate scheme to douse the area with lamp oil, aiming to destabilize the oppressive forces that have taken control. However, the plan goes awry when Cesaire attracts attention and is eventually captured by Captain Solomon's soldiers. This capture sets off a cascade of events that exemplify the village's uneasy atmosphere and tensions.

Valerie, already in the clutches of Father Solomon, becomes another casualty of the village's hysteria. Solomon seeks to publicly shame Valerie, whom he accuses of witchcraft, by forcing a terrifying iron wolf mask onto her head. This cruel artifact is not only heavy and degrading but also emblematic of the superstitions that grip the community. Valerie's heart breaks as she confronts the public humiliation in front of villagers, some of whom she once considered allies, like Madame Lazar and Rose, who now turn against her.

The tragic gravity of Valerie's situation becomes evident when Cesaire, her father, offers her a last moment of reassurance, echoing lessons of strength he taught her and her late sister, Lucie. Yet, amidst this darkness, Valerie experiences the turmoil of human relationships when her mother, Suzette,



emerges, frantic and broken, demanding her daughter's release with a mother's fierce desperation.

As night falls and the blood moon looms, Valerie is chained to a post, left to endure the harsh judgment of the village. A moment of surprise arrives in the form of Prudence, who reveals herself to be embittered and hostile, recounting past grievances and advising Valerie of her imminent doom, reinforcing the isolation Valerie feels.

The chapter captures the terror and loneliness that Valerie endures, heightened by the knowledge that the werewolf, referred to ominously as "the Wolf," is anticipated to come for her. In this moment of vulnerability, the narrative delves into themes of betrayal, loss, and the crushing weight of communal hysteria. As Valerie awaits her fate, her resolve remains strong despite the relentless adversity, showcasing her resilience and determination in the face of overwhelming odds. Her tale underscores a broader commentary on fear, prejudice, and the courage to face one's destiny head-on.

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## Chapter 27 Summary:

In Chapter 27, the narrative centers around a tense and chaotic scene involving several characters and their intertwined motives. Father Solomon is positioned atop a granary tower, tactically overseeing a perilous situation. Below, his men are poised with silver-tipped arrows, ready for a confrontation with an unseen threat, which Solomon likens to hunting a tiger. The bait in this deadly game is Valerie, a young woman chained to an altar. Solomon's calculated demeanor is disrupted as flames suddenly engulf the square, a sabotage orchestrated by Peter, a young villager conspiring with Valerie.

Amidst the chaos, Valerie is approached by Henry, another villager who claims to be rescuing her. His intensity unsettles Valerie, and as he works to release her using crude keys he fashioned earlier, she recalls ominous suggestions made by her grandmother and a mysterious note she saw with Lucie. During this turmoil, Peter assists by attacking a soldier but is quickly overpowered and captured, revealing the stakes of their rebellion.

The scene shifts as Solomon orders an evacuation upon realizing the granary itself is ablaze. It becomes clear that time is running out. Despite the mounting danger, Father Auguste, a figure of moral opposition, attempts to prevent further violence, pleading with the Bowman not to shoot Henry. However, in the ensuing chaos, Solomon kills Father Auguste, symbolizing



the ruthless dictates of survival over compassion.

The chapter concludes with Peter in captivity, Solomon having lost his hostage as Valerie escapes with Henry. Solomon's directive to "lock [Peter] in the elephant" reflects his intent to exact revenge and quell the rebellion started by these villagers. Within this action-packed chapter, themes of sacrifice, betrayal, and the fight for freedom against oppression are vividly depicted, setting the stage for further confrontations.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Courage in the Face of Fear

**Critical Interpretation:** In Chapter 27, the chaos and impending danger illustrate a powerful narrative of courage—exemplified by Valerie's unwavering resolve and the villagers' acts of defiance, including Peter's courageous sabotage. This chapter reminds us that bravery is not the absence of fear but the resistance against it, often at a great personal cost. As Valerie takes action despite her perilous situation, we learn that facing overwhelming odds with courage can inspire change and drive us beyond our perceived limitations. In our lives, this message urges us to confront our fears head-on, embracing the inner strength to stand firm even when it seems easiest to succumb to intimidation or adversity.

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## Chapter 28:

In this intense chapter, Valerie finds herself on the run, falsely accused of being a witch. Her once tranquil village, Daggornhorn, has descended into chaos, with soldiers searching for her and a treacherous werewolf haunting their streets. This dark tale unravels in the shadow of the blood moon, a celestial signifier of impending doom in folklore.

Valerie escapes with Henry Lazar, whose intentions are conflicted due to his past relationship with her and his possible identity as a werewolf. Initially, they hope to find refuge with Peter, a friend whose relationship with Valerie is strained yet crucial to her survival. However, their plan falls apart when their meeting with Peter doesn't go as expected, leaving Valerie and Henry stranded in a dead-end alley amidst dye vats.

Tensions rise when Valerie questions Henry's loyalty, suspecting him of treachery. In a moment of desperation, she contemplates striking him with her knife, driven by fear and survival instincts. Yet, the appearance of a distant inhuman growl stops her, signaling the presence of something more sinister.

Soldiers close in, and Henry tries to shield Valerie by hiding her among blue flower petals. A heavy atmosphere envelops them, teetering on the brink of violence. As they flee, Solomon, a zealous priest and their formidable

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pursuer, arrives with soldiers. Henry is wounded protecting Valerie, who, in turn, attempts to drag him toward the sanctuary of a church where supernatural creatures such as the Wolf cannot tread on holy ground.

As they near safety, Solomon blocks their path, asserting his authority. He yanks an arrow from Henry's shoulder, intensifying the pain and bleeding. The moment plays out dramatically under the watchful eyes of the town's people.

In the midst of chaos, the elusive Wolf reappears and the villagers, initially paralyzed by fear, watch as the real threat shifts. Solomon, driven by obsession, attempts a final assault on the Wolf but falls victim to its deadly power.

Despite the ensuing havoc, the villagers begin to rally around Valerie, who is at a crossroads, battling an internal conflict about whether to surrender to the Wolf. Their support is a symbolic gesture of unity; together, they face the menace that has terrorized them.

As dawn approaches, the Wolf retreats, leaving Valerie, Henry, and the townspeople to grapple with what remains. In a poignant moment of reckoning, Solomon confronts Valerie, but his fate takes a fatal turn. Bitten by the Wolf, he succumbs to the curse of becoming what he despises most.

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The chapter ends with Valerie searching for clarity in the aftermath of violence and betrayal, haunted by the absence of Peter. Solomon meets an inevitable end at the hands of his Captain, bringing a grim sense of justice that leaves the villagers to ponder over their collective ordeal.

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## Chapter 29 Summary:

In this captivating chapter of Valerie's tale, she awakens from a nightmare that blurs the line between dream and reality. Her grandmother appears monstrous and predatory, evoking memories of Red Riding Hood's infamous wolf. Startled awake in her own bed, Valerie finds only her friend Roxanne beside her, but the unsettling presence of her mother Suzette, with her unnatural demeanor, casts a shadow over the room. Everything seems distorted, as though Valerie is still trapped in a dream.

Determined to reach her grandmother's house, Valerie hastily dismisses her mother's odd behavior and rejects her offer of porridge, intent on starting her journey. Throughout the stormy village, the snow refuses to yield any trace of her path, reinforcing her sense of isolation. As she ventures outside, she encounters Henry, who is preparing to hunt the fearsome Wolf—a threat that looms over the village. Valerie is reminded of Henry's loyalty and strength, contrasting with her own tumultuous feelings for Peter.

Despite the danger, Valerie continues her trek through the forbidding wilderness towards the Black Raven Woods. The landscape is eerily quiet, each sound and sensation accentuated by the cold. As she pushes onward, she feels a presence trailing her, heightening her anxiety. When she turns to confront her pursuer, she realizes it is Peter, his appearance battered yet beautiful amidst the snow.



Peter insists that she is not safe with him, hinting at a secret he harbors. But Valerie's love for Peter overpowers all doubts. In a crescendo of emotions, she embraces Peter, choosing to remain with him no matter his nature, whether man or beast.

The chapter ends with an ambiguous sense of finality, leaving readers to question if this is truly the end of Valerie's story or if there are more revelations yet to come.

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