

Book 4: The Candle in the Wind

Chapter 1

1. How does the description of Mordred's race develop his character?

Mordred is an extremely important character in the story of King Arthur's downfall. The description of his race in this chapter defines him as nearly the exact opposite of Arthur. The narrator calls him "the irreconcilable opposite of the Englishman." The narrator describes Mordred's race as bloodthirsty, violent, and hypocritical, and points out the animosity between Mordred's race and Arthur's ancestors. He writes, "They were the race whose barbarous, cunning, valiant defiance had been enslaved, long centuries before, by the foreign people whom Arthur represented." In describing the history of Mordred's people, the narrator helps to characterize Mordred himself, painting him as a self-serving villain consumed with hatred for his father.

2. What is the effect of the narrator's summary (at the end of the chapter) of the feud between Arthur's family and the Orkney faction?

Much of the tragedy of King Arthur's tale can be traced back to the feud between his family and the Orkney faction, specifically Mordred and his mother, Morgause. The reader is already aware of the incestuous relationship between Arthur and Morgause and its consequences because it was recounted in detail at the end of book two; however, reviewing this information reminds the reader of the impending tragedy that will befall Arthur and his civilization. Additionally, reviewing this information helps to set a foreboding tone in this chapter, again emphasizing the impending tragedy.

Chapter 2

1. What loyalties does this chapter reveal? How does this illuminate the conflict within the Orkney faction?

Perhaps surprisingly, this chapter reveals that Gawaine is fiercely loyal to Arthur, Lancelot, and Guenever. When Mordred and Agravaine reveal their plan to confront Arthur with the truth of Lancelot and Guenever's affair, Gawaine is horrified. "I am the head of the clan," he says to Agravaine, "and I forbid ye." The argument turns physical, which is not surprising in the least, given the violent natures of both Gawaine and Agravaine.

Although Gaheris and Gareth do not take explicit sides in the argument, it is clear that their loyalties ultimately lie with Gawaine. Gareth chastises Agravaine for bringing a sword to threaten Gawaine, and Gaheris asks Agravaine to stop his whining about Arthur and Lancelot. Gaheris and Gareth stop the fight by the end of the chapter, with Gareth holding Mordred back and Gaheris catching Gawaine's arm before Gawaine can stab Agravaine.

The schism between the Orkney brothers is interesting. Despite the ancient crimes that Arthur's ancestor perpetrated against the Orkney faction, the majority of the Orkney faction is now loyal to Arthur. Only Agravaine and Mordred are unwilling to forget the past and let go of their resentments.

Chapter 3

1. How is Arthur's character and impact on his country developed in this chapter?

This chapter is important in defining Arthur's reign and the effect he has had on his country since ascending to the throne. This chapter effectively argues that Arthur's importance to history cannot be overstated. "He was the badge of everything that was good in the Middle Ages, and he had made these things himself," the narrator observes. The chapter begins with an overview of England before Arthur's reign, when the country was defined by violence, cruelty and tyranny. The picture that the narrator paints while describing England during Arthur's rule is startlingly different. It is civilized, genuinely religious, and chivalrous.

The narrator even makes a point of dispelling common myths associated with the Middle Ages, so as to make Arthur seem all the more impressive. The narrator argues that Arthur's civilization is "misrepresented in the history books" when it focuses on the slavery of the serfs or the lack of scientific knowledge that is often attributed to this era. Arthur is a larger-than-life figure in this chapter, as he has virtually single-handedly transformed his country into a civilized state.

2. This chapter includes many anachronisms in the writer's narration; it also includes several asides, directed to the reader, comparing Arthur's civilization to the modern age and comparing the reality of Arthur's civilization to the myths the modern reader often associates with it. What effect does this distinctive style create?

This chapter is one of the most distinctive in the entire novel, thanks to the narrator's frequent use of anachronisms and engaging narrative style. The narrator often speaks directly to the reader in this chapter, inviting comparisons between Arthur's world and our own and dispelling myths about Arthur's reign and its effects. This distinctive style creates two important effects.

First, the style in this chapter roots Arthur's story in both history and mythology. The author simultaneously makes historical references that date Arthur's reign and points out inaccurate ideas that the modern man has about the true reality of Arthur's kingdom. In acknowledging the mythos that surrounds King Arthur's story, the narrator acknowledges that Arthur is legendary. In dispelling some of the myths, the narrator implies that the Arthur he is writing about is historical, not merely legendary. This emphasizes Arthur's impact and his importance to the development of civilization.

Secondly, this engaging narration creates a familiar, congenial tone. The narrator makes a point to make Arthur's story accessible and relevant. Despite the differences between Arthur's worldview and the modern worldview, the narrator argues that we are not so dissimilar. The narrator asks, rhetorically, "Even if they were foolish enough to believe that the earth was the centre of the universe, do we not ourselves believe that man is the fine flower of creation?" Although living in a distant past, Arthur and his countrymen are not so unlike us, the narrator implies. Arthur's tale is a profoundly human story, rather than a story to which no modern reader can relate, and the distinctive narration makes this possible.

Chapter 4

1. How does this chapter develop book four's theme of the law?

Arthur's new law is extremely important to him. It is a natural progression in his desire to eliminate Might as Right in his civilization. This chapter develops the theme of the importance of the law by demonstrating Arthur's commitment to it. He knows that, as king, he must hold himself accountable to the same laws as the rest of his kingdom. When Lancelot proposes the idea that Arthur should execute Mordred, Arthur disagrees immediately. "When you are a king you can't go executing people as the fancy takes you," he patiently explains. "If I don't stand for law, I won't have law among my people." Arthur is fully committed to his new law, regardless of any inconvenience or outright danger this commitment may cause him.

2. What startling fact does Arthur reveal about his past in this chapter, and how does this revelation further develop his character? His status as a tragic hero?

Arthur reveals, in a confession of sorts to Lancelot and Guenever, that in the days of his youth, before he married Gwen or knighted Lancelot, he committed a terrible sin. In an effort to expunge the effects of his incestuous affair with Morgause, Arthur ordered that all the children born at a certain time were to be put in a ship and floated out to sea, to drown. He made this decision in the hope that it would kill Mordred. Many of the infants died, but Mordred survived. The reader may be shocked to discover that Arthur would commit such a crime, as it is certainly out of character for him. This revelation reveals that Arthur, in spite of all his noble intentions, has committed serious sins during his time as king.

Especially when he was a young king, Arthur was susceptible to fear tactics. Referring to his affair with Morgause, Arthur says, “Everybody told me what a dreadful sin it was, and how nothing but sorrow could come of it . . . They frightened me with horrible prophecies.” Perhaps paradoxically, the reader may find that Arthur’s terrible crime makes him more human and relatable, as even the great King Arthur of legend can make egregious mistakes.

This revelation also is support for an interpretation of Arthur as a tragic hero. His great sin—his incestuous affair with Morgause—seems destined to spell his downfall and his kingdom’s downfall. Despite his efforts to kill the product of that affair, Mordred, in order to avoid fulfilling horrible prophecies, Mordred lives. Arthur seems to recognize that there was no element of chance in Mordred’s survival. He says, “God saved Mordred, and sent him back to shame me afterwards.” Arthur’s destiny seems preordained in spite of all his efforts, reinforcing the tragic elements of his story and his status as a tragic hero.

3. What effect does the foreshadowing in this chapter create?

This chapter heavily foreshadows the fates of both Guenever and Lancelot. In the beginning of the chapter, they speak of what Arthur would have to do if he discovered their affair. He would have to execute them both for treason because of his devotion to his new law. Arthur himself foreshadows this fact later in the chapter. “The only way I can keep clear of force is by justice. Far from being willing to execute his enemies, a real king must be willing to execute his friends.” This foreshadows the decision that Arthur will ultimately have to make about his friends before his story is finished. It creates a rather ominous tone, as the elements line up that will soon force Arthur to make the very decision of which he speaks.

Chapter 5

1. How does Arthur's behavior in this chapter further develop him as a tragic hero?

Arthur's behavior in this chapter reeks of resignation. He recognizes the vendettas that Agravaire and Mordred carry—Mordred against Arthur himself, and Agravaire against Lancelot. Likewise, he recognizes his ultimate helplessness in this matter. The image of Arthur as a resigned, almost defeated man is strong in this chapter. After hearing Mordred's proposal that trial by jury is the only just way to deal with Lancelot and Guenever, the king is crestfallen. The narrator notes: "Arthur put his elbows on his knees and covered his eyes with his fingers. He sat drooping for a moment, collecting the powers of duty and dignity, then spoke from the shade of his hand." There is a strong sense in this chapter that Arthur is resigned to destiny, resigned to the vengeful machinations of his illegitimate son. It is this sense of resignation that further establishes him as a tragic hero. As the events begin to align that will spell the capture of his wife and best friend in treason, Arthur knows there is little he can do that will stop the hand of destiny. Nonetheless, he meets the events with dignity and regality, never succumbing to any temptation to thwart justice.

Chapter 6

1. How does this chapter further develop Gareth's character?

Gareth has been largely absent from the action of the novel since his introduction in book two. Although he has not been a major character, his actions and words in this chapter make clear the deep affection he feels for Lancelot. Gareth exclaims to Lancelot, "I owe everything to you," making perfectly clear where his loyalties lie. As a brother in the Orkney faction, Gareth necessarily has a strong sense of duty to his family, but he neglects this duty in favor of warning Lancelot instead. This chapter reveals Gareth's true loyalty to Lancelot (and, by extension, King Arthur) and the essential goodness of his character.

2. What does Lancelot's response to Gareth's warning reveal about his character?

Lancelot's response is flippant and arrogant (and perhaps downright infuriating to the reader, who suspects the trouble ahead for Lancelot and Guenever). Even when Gareth reveals the depth of the plan to catch Lancelot in Guenever's bed, Lancelot simply refuses to believe it. He is secure in the knowledge that he has been indirectly accused of infidelity before and has always managed to evade consequences. Again and again Gareth tries to persuade Lancelot not to go to the queen, and again and again Lancelot assures Gareth that nothing will happen. Lancelot is more arrogant and love-struck in this chapter than the reader has ever seen him. He is so focused on visiting Gwen that he is unable to acknowledge the validity of Gareth's panic. Indeed, he reveals himself to be so carelessly arrogant that he leaves his room without his sword.

Chapter 7

1. How and where does the tone change in this chapter?

The tone of this chapter changes rapidly after Guenever recounts the story of how Lamorak was murdered. All at once, she seems to realize just how bloodthirsty, vengeful, and murderous Lancelot's enemy is. "Lance," she says, "do you realize that the two other people he hated are dead?" She leaps from her chair and tries to push Lancelot from the room before they are discovered; at virtually that same moment, the door handle begins moving, due to the knights on the other side of the door determined to catch Lancelot in treason. This dramatic shift in tone separates the playful beginning of the chapter—during which Lancelot and Jenny banter merrily, in the comfortable, familiar manner of long-time lovers—and the part of the chapter in which Lancelot murders another knight and prepares to fight the rest.

2. How are the events of this chapter a turning point for Lancelot and Guenever? For the story of Arthur?

With the events of this chapter, Lancelot and Guenever's affair has finally fully come to light. There is no defense for Lancelot's presence in the queen's room, and fourteen knights have witnessed his presence there. The long-kept secret is now entirely out in the open, and no one, not even King Arthur, can deny the truth of the affair after this night's events. The life that Lancelot and Guenever have lived for so long now must come to an end. It is a turning point for them because it is now impossible for them to pretend to be loyal to the king. Likewise, this event is a turning point for Arthur because it forces him into a position in which he must execute both his best friend and his wife, if he is to follow the laws which he so values. It represents the beginning of the downfall of Arthur's kingdom.

Chapter 8

1. How does Arthur demonstrate both his commitment to justice and his love for his wife in this chapter?

Arthur is deeply conflicted in this chapter. He has been forced to order the execution of his beloved wife. Additionally, he knows Lancelot so well that he is sure Lancelot will attempt to rescue Guenever. Arthur knows that it is his duty as king to prevent Lancelot from doing so, but he also desperately hopes that Guenever will be saved.

The king demonstrates his commitment to justice and to the new law by the very action of ordering Gwen's execution. Further, he demonstrates his commitment to this by setting a group of knights to guard against Lancelot's impending rescue attempt. He even swells the ranks of the guards by sending Gaheris and Gareth to support them shortly before the planned execution.

However, Arthur's love for his wife (and his best friend) ultimately wins out. Although he has made reasonable efforts to prevent Guenever from being rescued, when Lancelot appears he cannot hide his elation. "My Lancelot!" the king cries. "I knew he would!"

2. The reader does not see Lancelot rescuing Guenever from her execution; rather, this action is narrated through Arthur and Gawaine's exclamations as they watch from a window. What effect does this point of view create?

This interesting perspective is effective for a number of reasons. As the narrator does not directly narrate Lancelot's actions, some of the events of the rescue are left ambiguous, and the reader is divorced from the bloodshed of the battle. At the end of the chapter, the reader learns that Lancelot has killed twenty knights during his rescue. However, given the elation and excitement between Gawaine and Arthur as they watch Lancelot's rescue, this number seems extremely high. Thus, narrating Lancelot's rescue through the excited eyes of Arthur and Gawaine makes the battle seem more glorious and less bloody than it actually was. Additionally, it emphasizes the heroic nature of Lancelot's actions, as both Gawaine and Arthur praise him, and de-emphasizes the violence he perpetrates on the other knights.

3. How are the deaths of Gareth and Gaheris important to the plot development?

The reported deaths of Gareth and Gaheris strike an ominous, grieving note at the end of this otherwise triumphant chapter. The news of his brothers' deaths makes Gawaine weep like a child. The reader knows of Gawaine's propensity for violence, and the reader also knows of Gawaine's extreme devotion to his family. The deaths of Gareth and Gaheris at Lancelot's hands serve to assure the reader that Lancelot will not be allowed to flee peacefully. Rather, Gawaine must seek vengeance for these deaths; his inner nature demands it.

Chapter 9

1. Guenever says, "Civilization seems to have become insane." How does this statement illustrate the demise of Arthur's kingdom?

Guenever's statement perfectly illustrates the problems plaguing Arthur's civilization. The knights of the Round Table are divided against each other, with some loyal to Arthur and some loyal to Lancelot. King Arthur is forced to lay siege to his best friend's castle, Gawaine is desperate for vengeance against Lancelot, and Mordred continues to lay cunning plans and plots. In effect, the glorious unity of Arthur's kingdom has been destroyed. Guenever's statement reflects this, and it also indicates her knowledge that the problem does not lie only with her and Lancelot. Even if both she and Lancelot surrendered and were killed, the bloodshed would not stop. Old rivalries and animosities have been reawakened, and they threaten to destroy Arthur's civilization forever. "There are a hundred extra feuds on foot, for those we killed in the market-place and on the stairs, and for things through half a century of Arthur's past," Lancelot observes. "Soon I will not be able to hold them, even as it is." Guenever's statement, like Lancelot's, reflects the seeming inevitability of the kingdom's downfall.

Chapter 10

1. What effect does Mordred have on Gawaine in the beginning of this chapter? How does Mordred's prodding affect Lancelot's sentence?

Gawaine is clearly conflicted in the beginning of the chapter, contemplating Lancelot's motives and intentions in killing Gareth. He seems inclined to believe that perhaps Lancelot did kill Gareth by mistake, saying "There seems to be nae reason why he should have killed him." Mordred, however, knows exactly how to manipulate Gawaine. After a short conversation, Mordred has convinced Gawaine of Lancelot's absolute treachery; he has even convinced Gawaine that Lancelot killed Gareth out of jealousy, which the reader knows is a ridiculous idea. Mordred stirs Gawaine to anger, and Gawaine exclaims, "God's curse on them! I willna have this peace. I willna forgive them ... It is my brother that was butchered, none of theirs, and, God Almighty, I will have the vengeance!" Gawaine's anger is very important in this chapter. Gawaine speaks for the throne when Lancelot and Guenever appear, rather than the king himself. Because his anger and vengeful nature is roused, Gawaine refuses to grant Lancelot pardon. Thus, Mordred's careful manipulation of Gawaine guarantees that Lancelot will not be forgiven by Arthur's government.

2. How is Arthur characterized in this chapter?

King Arthur is a broken man in this chapter. From the moment he enters to the end of the chapter, he is weak and nearly silent. Although he wears majestic clothes, he is "almost literally supported" on his way to the throne, and he sinks down when he reaches it. He allows Gawaine to speak for him, making decisions that should be better left to the king. Even when Lancelot appeals directly to Arthur, Gawaine answers for him. When Mordred prompts Arthur to speak, Arthur's body language reeks of tragic sadness. The narrator notes, "He shook his head like a baited bear. He moved it with the heavy movement of a bear, but would not look from the floor." When Arthur allows Gawaine to pronounce judgment upon Lancelot, it is clear that Arthur has become powerless in his sadness.

Chapter 11

1. How does this chapter further develop the theme of the law?

Guenever's conversation with her waiting woman, Agnes, illuminates Arthur's motives in his behavior toward Lancelot and Gawaine. Guenever explains that Arthur is engaging in battle against Lancelot and allowing Gawaine to lead him because of his devotion to his law and to justice. "The King likes Lancelot so much that he is forced to be unfair to him—for fear of being unfair to other people," Guenever explains to Agnes. This statement emphasizes Arthur's commitment to justice and to upholding the law, even when this commitment forces him to engage in battle against his best friend.

Further, Arthur's act of appointing Mordred as Lord Protector also contributes to the theme of the law. Arthur surely knows that Mordred is his enemy, yet he leaves him in charge of the country while he is fighting in France. Agnes asks, "First he goes to fight with his best friend because Sir Gawaine tells him to, and then he leaves his bitterest enemy to be Lord Protector. Why does he choose to act so blind?" Guenever's response to this question is illuminating. She says, "Mordred has never broken any laws." This response suggests the amount of faith that Arthur invests in his new law. Even knowing that Mordred has nefarious intentions, Arthur cannot act against him because then he would be acting as a tyrant, rather than as an enforcer of just laws. In this way, Arthur is handicapped by his own devotion to his law. Mordred is not interested in Arthur's justice. "I have never asked to be treated with justice," he sneers to Guenever, outlining his treacherous plan to announce Arthur's death and take Guenever as his own wife.

2. How has Mordred's relationship with his mother affected him?

Mordred is a treacherous, twisted character, intent on bringing down Arthur's kingdom. However, much of his nature is attributed to the cruel machinations of his equally twisted mother, Morgause. The narrator argues in this chapter that Mordred's madness is merely the result of his mother's nature and the way she raised him. The narrator explains that Mordred is "robbed of himself—his soul stolen, overlaid, wizened, while the mother-character lives in triumph, superfluously and with stifling love endowed on him, seemingly innocent of ill-intention." In effect, Mordred is merely a puppet of his long-dead mother. He has lost his sanity and seems to live only to cause pain and ruin to Arthur and his kingdom. Guenever is correct when she says of Morgause, "I expect she ate Mordred ... like a spider."

Chapter 12

1. How has Arthur's behavior changed in this chapter compared to his behavior in chapter 10? How has Gawaine's?

In this chapter, Arthur is once again the good and kindly king that the reader has come to recognize and expect. The silent powerlessness that he demonstrated in chapter 10 is gone. Instead, he is gentle and kind to the injured Gawaine, and devotes time to arguing that Lancelot must have killed Gareth by mistake. Gawaine, also, is more sympathetic and reasonable. He recognizes that it is unlikely that Lancelot bears any grudge against the Orkney clan—something that Mordred convinced him of in chapter ten. After all, Lancelot spared Gawaine's life in battle, an action that seems irreconcilable with Mordred's insistence that Lancelot hates the Orkney faction.

Students should note that both Arthur and Gawaine's behaviors have changed because of the absence of Mordred's corrupting influence. While the two men are in France, far away from Mordred's plotting, they both become more like their former selves. At the end of this chapter, Gawaine finally fully recognizes Mordred for the evil character that he is.

Chapter 13

1. The reader learns of Gawaine's death through a letter, rather than through direct narration of the battle itself. What effect does this technique create?

The pacing of the narrative in book four has been extremely fast. Often, months have passed between chapters, and the setting jumps from country to country quickly. Several times in this book, events have been summarized in the form of a letter or by a messenger rather than through direct narration. Gawaine's death (as well as his forgiveness of Lancelot and his request for Lancelot to stand against Mordred) is revealed through the technique of a letter. This technique allows the narrative to continue at a very fast pace, focused directly on the action that most matters: Arthur's attempt to win back his kingdom from Mordred and Lancelot's plan to assist him. The events of this book are careening quickly toward the conclusion of Arthur's tale, and the letter technique effectively allows the narrative to continue at such a pace.

Additionally, the letter—written in Gawaine's own handwriting—allows for one last, telling characterization of Gawaine. Although Gawaine has always been quick to anger and violent by nature, his handwriting is so beautiful that it is innocently childlike. The narrator calls forth the image of a boy "sitting with his feet hooked round the legs of a stool and his tongue out, writing carefully." This image affirms Gawaine's essential good nature, despite his flaws.

2. What does Lancelot's decision to go to Arthur's aid reveal about his character?

Even though Lancelot has been under siege by Arthur and his armies for several months, and even though he has been called a traitor and has been expelled from England, Lancelot is still loyal to King Arthur and his ideals. As soon as help is requested, Lancelot wastes absolutely no time flying to Arthur's aid, revealing him to be a noble, good character in spite of his affair with Guenever and his many failings. Lancelot holds absolutely no ill feelings toward Arthur. Indeed, Lancelot seems to recognize that Arthur has been the victim of circumstance as much as Lancelot himself has been. Additionally, it is clear that Lancelot still loves Guenever and desires to rescue her.

Chapter 14

1. How does this final chapter further develop the theme of might and right?

Arthur spends the majority of this chapter in careful rumination, looking over the lessons of his life and contemplating the nature of humanity itself. He spends several pages contemplating warfare and the idea of Force Majeur, the idea that might makes right. In looking over his life, Arthur summarizes his own evolving ideas about might and right, entertaining ideas of Communism and religion. This chapter further develops the theme of might and right by adding some ambiguity to Arthur's noble ideas. Despite the work of his entire lifetime, it seems to him that extinguishing force is an impossible ideal. "Justice had been his last attempt—to do nothing which was not just. But it had ended in failure. To do at all had proved too difficult," the narrator explains. There is no simple answer for the king to the question of how to destroy might in the world. Nonetheless, King Arthur has been an innovator in attempting to establish justice and eliminate force; this will be his legacy.

2. How does this conclusion firmly establish Arthur as a tragic hero?

It is easy to see the tragedy in King Arthur's story. Students should remember back to the conclusion of book two, which described how Arthur's unknowing sin with Morgause led to the birth of Mordred, and thus the downfall of his kingdom. Ever since the beginning of book four, when Mordred began his deceitful scheming, it has seemed inevitable that Arthur's kingdom will end in ruin. This inevitability, brought about by Arthur's own sins, is a hallmark of tragedy. Arthur himself, despite his flaws, is nonetheless an extremely heroic character. Even in this final chapter, as he faces death, he behaves with nobility, bravery, and even hope. Although he has assured his own destruction, he knows that his ideals have merit and sends Tom of Warwick to spread these ideals.

3. How does the appearance of Tom of Warwick illuminate the meaning of this book's title: "The Candle in the Wind?"

King Arthur appoints the young page, Tom of Warwick, to keep his ideals alive, even after Camelot falls and Arthur is dead. Arthur describes his ideals as "a sort of candle." He says, "I have carried it for many years with a hand to shield it from the wind. It has flickered often. I am giving you the candle now—you won't let it out?" This metaphor of the candle is a perfect metaphor for Arthur's revolutionary ideas and influence. It is delicate and susceptible to destruction, but nonetheless resilient, like a small flame. Arthur passes on the burden and responsibility of spreading his ideals to the young page, whom he calls "the light-bringer." Despite the wind—that is to say, the forces that oppose justice and fairness—Arthur is confident that the young page can protect and spread his legacy.

Arthur himself has been a candle in the wind during his reign. Although he has faced many challenges and been opposed often by outside forces, his commitment to doing what is right has been paramount. Now that he has passed on his flame—his legacy, his ideals, his ethics, his goals—to another, he can face death with a peaceful heart.

4. How does the last line of this chapter affect its tone?

The majority of this chapter is morosely contemplative in tone, as Arthur worries over his failures and wonders if his ideals could ever be achievable. Arthur is consumed with exhaustion and sorrow, and the tone of the chapter reflects this. However, the tone shifts when the young page enters, becoming more hopeful, even cautiously optimistic. The last line of the novel—"THE BEGINNING"—emphasizes this hopeful tone. Although this is the end of Arthur's tale (because his death and the fall of his kingdom is imminent), this line indicates that it is merely the beginning of his legacy. Despite the tragedy of Arthur's death, it will prove to be merely the beginning of the good that his legacy will impart to the world. The last line thus ends the chapter and the novel on an optimistic, almost triumphant note.