

= Sir Thursday =

Sir Thursday is a young adult fantasy novel written by Australian author Garth Nix . It is the fourth book in The Keys to the Kingdom series , and was released in March 2006 . Sir Thursday continues from the preceding book , following the adventures of Arthur Penhaligon as he attempts to retrieve the Fourth key of the Kingdom , and claim mastership of The Great Maze . As with the other books in the series , the theme of ' seven ' is prevalent , along with the themes of sin and virtue . The book received generally favourable critical response , but was criticised for a slow pace , among other issues .

= = Synopsis = =

The book begins with Arthur Penhaligon and Leaf attempting to return to Earth after their adventures in the Border Sea . While Leaf is able to pass through the front door and return to Earth , the presence of a Nithling duplicate of Arthur prevents him from doing so , and he is forced to remain in the Lower House .

Dame Primus then informs him that Mister Monday and Grim Tuesday have been assassinated . Moments later , he is drafted into the Glorious Army of the Architect ? wherein everyone living in the House must serve for 100 years ? which is based in the chessboard @-@ like demesne called the Great Maze . The leader of the army is the Fourth Trustee of the Will , Sir Thursday , a Denizen afflicted with the deadly sin of wrath . The army is currently involved in a campaign against the Piper , who is trying to claim the Fourth Key .

Within the army , Arthur is soon mistaken for a Piper 's child and has his memory wiped , along with his friend Fred Initials Numbers Gold ? a real Piper 's child . One month later and during the first battle against the Piper 's New Nithling army , Arthur begins to recall his identity . The entirety of it is recovered later in the book when an officer mentions his name and title .

On Earth , Arthur 's double , known as the Skinless Boy , has thrown a hospital near Arthur 's home into panic by infecting staff and patients with a fungoid , extraterrestrial life @-@ form which allows him to read and eventually control their thoughts and actions . This fungus , nicknamed Grayspot , is mistaken for a biological weapon , and the hospital put under quarantine . Leaf infiltrates the hospital , seeking to obtain and destroy the magical object used to create the Skinless Boy : a pocket torn from one of Arthur 's shirts . She succeeds , but is infected by Grayspot in the process . She then leaves the hospital , only to find that the House has appeared above it and cannot be reached from the ground . With the help of a retired pharmacist named Sylvie , Leaf makes her way to Arthur 's house where she uses a special telephone to contact Arthur 's friends and get help , just as the fungus gains full control of her body .

Suzy Turquoise Blue arrives and takes the pocket to the House . There , she finds Arthur and Fred , and joins them in a raid led by Sir Thursday to find and destroy the New Nithlings ' weapon , which is preventing the mechanical floor of the Great Maze from shifting . Arthur destroys the weapon by throwing the pocket into it , simultaneously destroying the Skinless Boy . As Arthur escapes from the Piper with Sir Thursday , he distracts Thursday enough for the fourth part of the Will , a snake embodying the virtue of justice , to break free , whereupon it makes Arthur the Bearer of the Fourth Key ? a sword or baton depending on whether or not the wielder is in combat ? and Commander of the Glorious Army of the Architect . With help from Dame Primus and others from the lower demesnes , Arthur defeats the New Nithling army .

On Earth , Leaf wakes up in a hospital a week after the Skinless Boy was defeated . She soon learns from a nurse that the Grayspot has disappeared and that Lady Friday , another Trustee , has become a doctor on Earth .

= = Characters = =

= = = Major characters = = =

Arthur Penhaligon ? The protagonist of the book , Arthur is a human asthmatic , who was chosen by the Will of the Architect to become the Rightful Heir to the house . He owns the First , Second , and Third Keys , but is not in possession of them throughout most of the book . Arthur shows a strong sense of right and wrong , as well as a reliance on friends and allies to achieve his goal : the rightful mastery of the entire House .

Dame Primus ? The embodiment of the Will , who consists in Sir Thursday of the First , Second , and Third parts of the Will . She is portrayed as caring little for others , becoming easily annoyed if they seem to be slowing the process of restoring the House .

Sir Thursday ? Sir Thursday is the fourth Trustee of the Will , and is afflicted with the sin of Wrath . He is a military Denizen , and believes in order and control . The Will breaks free from him when Arthur makes him sufficiently angry .

Leaf ? Leaf is one of Arthur 's few human friends . She supports him in Sir Thursday by retrieving the pocket that supports the existence of the Skinless Boy .

Suzy Turquoise Blue ? Suzy Turquoise Blue is a Piper 's Child , and another friend of Arthur . She also aids him in his adventures , and joins Arthur in the army in order to pass him the pocket .

= = = Minor characters = = =

Part Four of the Will ? The Fourth Part of the Will , embodying the virtue of justice , takes the form of a snake . It is released by Arthur near the end of the book when he makes Sir Thursday angry .

Fred Initials Numbers Gold ? A Piper 's Child drafted into the army the day before Arthur , Fred provides him with information and support until the end of the book , where he is missing , having been captured by the Piper .

The Piper ? The Piper , one of the children of the Architect and the Old One , claims to be the Rightful Heir , and lays siege to the Citadel in the Great Maze to wrest the key from Sir Thursday .

= = Themes = =

As with the previous books in the series , the themes of seven , sin and virtue are prevalent throughout Sir Thursday providing the personality characteristics for many of the main characters .

In Sir Thursday , readers are also introduced to the power issues that Arthur begins to struggle with ? his natural compassion and desire for fairness and kindness , against the characteristics displayed by other senior denizens and Dame Primus , and the influence of the key . In addition , the idea of Arthur losing his mortality and becoming an immortal Denizen of the House , represented by the silver / gold crocodile ring that was introduced in Drowned Wednesday , is further explored , with Arthur often choosing to refrain from using the key ? and the power it represents ? to ensure he remains human .

The book also loosely explores the dangers of anger , and actions taken in anger . It is only Sir Thursday 's loss of control and subsequent murder of two Piper 's Children that allows Arthur to gain control of the Fourth Key , assisted by Thursday 's Dawn , Noon and Dusk .

= = Critical reception = =

The book received generally favourable reviews . It is ranked 4 stars by Amazon users , and The Times stated " Nix 's imagination is matched only by his prose style . "

In particular , the book was praised for its originality , intricacy , action and characters . VOYA says that the book " .. is well written , action packed , imaginative , and full of quirky memorable characters ... " , and Children 's Literature agrees that " It is a readable choice ... " The School Library Journal also extensively praised the book , saying " Reluctant or ' hard to fit ' readers will find this series enjoyable , as Nix is able to create vivid pictures in the minds of his readers . Fans of the fantasy genre will appreciate these books for their strong continuity , believable characters , and edge @-@ of @-@ your @-@ seat @-@ action . This offering complements the series ? well @-@

established structure . "

The book did , however , receive consistent criticism . The most common complaint was on the speed of the plot ? the School Library Journal summarises all the comments , saying that " the events move a little slower than in previous installments ... " ? and the difficulty in entering the series without reading all the previous books first : VOYA simply says " readers attempting to enter the series through this volume are likely to be quickly lost . " Children 's Literature also criticised the repetition of previous content , saying there is " .. entirely too much front matter [ which ] sags with the necessity of replaying earlier story lines . "