Katherine Hu

***The Once and Future King***

**Character Development: Guenever**

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| **Chapter/Page #** | **Summary of the Episode** | **Relevance/Analysis** | **Significant Quotation** | **Quotation Page #** |
| 394-397 | After Elaine tricks Lancelot into sleeping with her a second time, a furious Guenever confronts the two of them. Guenever does not believe that Lancelot was tricked and thinks that he loves Elaine. She believes he broke the promise he made to her and behaves jealously. Her behavior drives Lancelot mad. | Guenever often takes on the role of a jealous lover, as seen in this episode. She acts enviously towards Elaine and distrustful towards Lancelot. She also seems uncertain of whether or not Lancelot truly loves her, as she refuses to listen to reason until Lancelot goes mad. | Guenever tells Lancelot not to “speak to [her or] lie to [her]” (White 395). She insists that Elaine and Lancelot are both liars and tells Lancelot to “get out of [her] castle” (White 395). | 395 |
| 470-474 | Guenever sits and thinks in her bathtub contentedly, and her maids think that Lancelot is her lover once more. However, Guenever is thinking of how Lancelot refuses to be her lover because of God and his experiences while looking for the Holy Grail. She knows that Lancelot is doomed to fail God and will be her lover once more eventually. | In this episode, Guenever is portrayed as both someone who does and does not understand Lancelot. On one hand, she realizes that he will not succeed in resisting her forever. On the other hand, she does not seem to fully comprehend why he loves God so much. This episode also shows how other people do not understand Guenever. | Guenever “know[s] that [Lancelot] was to betray his much-loved God for [her] sake” (White 473) and that Lancelot will come back to her. Guenever “was not cut out for religion, as Lancelot was” (White 473), but she loves Lancelot’s love for God, which is doomed to fail. | 473 |
| 478-480 | People dislike Guenever and claim she is a bad hostess. Guenever attempts to please Sir Gawaine by offering fruit to prevent this image of her from continuing, but Sir Pinel poisons the apples. When Sir Patrick dies of the poison, the knights accuse Guenever of treason. | This episode shows Guenever’s role as a scapegoat. Despite the fact that she is queen, the other characters clearly do not respect her and are quick to think the worst of her. Guenever is desperately eager to please the people, but it does not work out and the people are only more vocal about their dislike of her. | Guenever “tr[ies] to placate her critics by being a courteous hostess like La Beale Isoud” (White 479). However, Sir Patrick dies, and Sir Mador de la Porte “voic[es] the thought which was in every mind [and] accuse[s] the Queen of treason” (White 480). | 479-480 |
| 568-570 | Lancelot and Guenever meet secretly while Arthur is out, and Guenever flies into panic when she realizes that they will be caught. The two realize that Lancelot will have to fight his way out and that Guenever will likely be burnt to death. Lancelot tells Guenever to escape, but Guenever insists on staying and facing her death. | This episode shows that Guenever can be strong, perceptive, and brave. Guenever’s abilities of perception were already seen when she knew Lancelot would return to her, but here she quickly realizes what is going to happen. In addition, Guenever understands her love of Lancelot and knows that she will not run while he fights. She demonstrates strength of will and bravery by staying and facing the possibility of death for her love. | Guenever says that “[she] shall take [her] death as meekly as any Christian queen” (White 570) and refuses to run away. | 570 |
| 588-593 | Lancelot and Guenever have a conversation after he rescues her. They discuss the problem they are in and the possible solutions. Guenever suggests that they use the Pope’s help to create a happy ending. | In contrast to her early displays of pettiness and jealousy, Guenever acts with wisdom and caring during this episode. She works to end the chaos and fighting by coming up with a solution to the problem at hand. Thus, Guenever has become much more seasoned and wise now that she has been through so much. | Guenever realizes that peace can be achieved “if [she and Lancelot] appealed for a papal ruling” (White 592). She tells Lancelot that “there will be a happy ending” (White 593). | 592-593 |

**Thematic Development**

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| **Chapter/Page #** | **Summary of the Thematic Pattern** | **Relevance/Analysis** | **Significant Quotation** | **Quotation Page #** |
| 550-636 | Arthur introduces the thematic pattern of justice when he insists that everyone, from the king to the peasant, get punished for wrongdoing. Justice affects the plot of the novel and causes conflict. Arthur creates the idea of justice for all during his rule, and uses the Round Table to enforce justice, but later Mordred uses this idea against him. | The author introduces the idea that justice means that all are punished for wrong, without exception. He also shows how Arthur’s system of justice, which relied on force, was flawed, because eventually, the people who wield the force will become corrupt. Ultimately, the author also shows how people try to manipulate justice to their own benefit. Mordred and Agravaine use justice as an excuse to get what they want. The author wants the reader to realize that justice is an ideal that human nature often thwarts, as in the cases of Mordred, Agravaine, and the corrupt knights. | Arthur says a real king “ha[s] to be absolutely just… [and] willing to execute his friends” (White 550). He tells Guenever and Lancelot that if they were “guilty of a wrong…[he] should have to cut off both [their] heads” (White 550). | 550 |
| During a confrontation, Mordred and Agravaine tell Arthur that “[they] want justice” (White 559) and plot to use justice against Arthur and Lancelot. Arthur tells them that “nobody succeeds in thwarting justice” (White 559) and warns them that, if they fail, they will be pursued “with all the rigor of the laws which [they] have set in motion” (White 560). | 559-560 |
| Arthur tells Tom of his idea that “force ought to be used, if it were used at all, on behalf of justice” (White 636). He explains that this was the purpose of the Round Table, until “things went wrong [and t]he Table split into factions” (White 636). | 636 |
| 232-634 | Merlin introduces and discusses the thematic pattern of war with Arthur and Kay. Throughout the rest of the novel, Arthur constantly ponders war and conflict and wonders if they are ever justified. He also wonders if it is possible to keep the peace when there are people who are prone to war. | The author wants the reader to realize that there is no good reason for war and that it should be avoided if possible. However, he also realizes that there is little hope for an end to war, as it is part of human nature. The thematic pattern of war is introduced by Merlyn, and for the rest of the book, Arthur realizes that war is difficult to avoid, even though it is wrong and has no good reason. | Merlyn tells Arthur that “wars are a wickedness…[and] are so wicked that they must not be allowed” (White 232). He says “[t]here is no excuse for war” (White 233) and encourage pacifism. | 232-234 |
| Arthur says that the Table is going to ruin since “feud and open manslaughter have started” (White 434). He sends the Table in search of the Holy Grail in order to band the Table together and stop the fighting. | 434-435 |
| Arthur wonders why people fight. He wonders if it is because “people tried to possess things” (White 632), or if it is because of “fear of reliability” (White 633), or if it is because of “resentment for ancestral wrong (White 634). He realizes that all these causes are “a part of it…[but] not the solution” (White 634). | 630-634 |

***The Color of Water***

**Character Development: Ruth**

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| **Chapter/Page #** | **Summary of the Episode** | **Relevance/Analysis** | **Significant Quotation** | **Quotation Page #** |
| 17-19 | Ruth’s grandfather dies, but Ruth is confused about the nature of death. No one in her family talks about death, and she does not ask for fear of her father. This causes her to grow afraid of death, despite not knowing what it even is. | This shows that Ruth’s family is already broken. It shows that Ruth does not have positive interactions with her father, and that he terrifies her. It also shows that Ruth’s family does not communicate with one another very well, thus causing a childhood fear for Ruth. | Ruth “[does]n’t know what death [is]” (McBride 18) because her family never speaks of it. She does not dare to ask Tateh about it, and thus grows up with a fear of death. | 18 |
| 80 | Ruth goes to school and discovers that her classmates hate her for being a Jew. She starts calling herself Ruth instead of her given name, Rachel, to fit in more. However, the others still hate her and tease her. | This episode shows that Ruth’s position is society is very low and that many hate her. It shows that her interactions with other characters tend to be negative in result. This episode reveals that Ruth would like to fit in and be liked, but is unable to. | Ruth’s classmates call her “a dirty Jew” (McBride 80), driving her to adopt the name Ruth “because it didn’t sound so Jewish” (McBride 80). However, her new name doesn’t stop the teasing. | 80 |
| 112-114 | Ruth falls in love with Peter, an African American who is kind to her and does not judge her. However, she soon becomes pregnant with his child. This terrifies her because she knows he will be killed if anyone finds out. | This episode shows how starved for love Ruth truly is and how much she is willing to risk for a taste of it, as well as how naïve she can be. It also shows that other characters tend to judge Ruth when they interact. The episode also demonstrates that Ruth is terrified of her father, the Klan, and other people in town. | Ruth realizes that she is “pregnant and c[a]n’t tell a soul” (McBride 112). She is terrified, but thinks that “[Peter] ha[s] all the answers” (McBride 113). When she realizes he is as terrified as she is, she becomes convinced that they will both be killed. | 112-113 |
| 154-158 | Ruth decides that she will run away to New York. She is unsure of how her mother will survive without her, but is still determined to leave. Ruth joins the graduation ceremony to be with Frances one last time before leaving for good. | This episode shows that Ruth’s heartbreak and abortion have made her personality stronger and more determined. She is now more independent and sure in herself than before. This is also the first episode where Ruth truly dares to defy her father to his face, showing that she is no longer as scared of him as she was before. | Ruth “ma[kes] up [her] mind…that [she will] leave Suffolk for good” (McBride 154). Though she does not wish to leave her mother, sister, and Frances, she “start[s] to have opinions of [her] own” (McBride 154) and plans to go to New York, as there is no life for her in Suffolk and she wishes to avoid a loveless arranged marriage. | 154 |
| 233-237 | Ruth converts to Christianity and marries Dennis, who is James’ father and an African American. The clerks at city hall are reluctant to give them a marriage license, but they get married anyway. The two tell each other to be strong, because many will resist their marriage. | This episode shows how Ruth has grown from the unsure girl who was starved for love and hoped for others to like her. Now, Ruth is stronger in the face of judgement and cruelty. Ruth is also more sure of what she wants and more determined to see it through. | Ruth decides she “want[s] to be in [Dennis’] kind of family” (McBride 236), so the two meet at city hall. The people at the hall are “very nasty and no one want[s] to write up their paperwork” (McBride 236), but they still manage to get married. They agree to be strong even if others try to break them up. | 236 |

**Thematic Development**

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| **Chapter/Page #** | **Summary of the Thematic Pattern** | **Relevance/Analysis** | **Significant Quotation** | **Quotation Page #** |
| 12-222 | Throughout *The Color of Water*, Ruth and James struggle with the thematic pattern of identity. James struggles with his racial identity, wishing his family were fully black so that they would truly fit in. Ruth also struggles with racial identity, as she does not fit in with any race. They both also struggle with personal identity as they try to make their way in the world and figure out who they are. | The author tries to convey that a sense of identity is highly important and that various factors, such as race, career, love, or family, can play a part in shaping one’s sense of identity. He also tries to show that race often impacts one’s sense of identity more than it should. The author wants to show that identity is a real struggle and that people can spend most of their lives trying to figure it out. | James is confused by how his mother doesn’t look like “Rodney’s mother, or Pete’s mother[, or himself]” (McBride 12). He is unsure of her race. | 12 |
| James is surprised by his mother’s “ease among black people” (McBride 31). He observes her ability to ignore insults from both races. | 31-32 |
| James realizes that “[his] family has a history [in synagogues]” (McBride 221) and that part of him is Jewish, even if he never knew that growing up. | 221-222 |
| 199-277 | *The Color of Water* explores the thematic pattern of family and how it affects people. James often depends and defines himself by his family, following his siblings in supporting Black Pride, and he also learns more about his family throughout the book. Ruth, on the other hand, breaks free from her broken biological family and creates a family of her own. | The ideas this book introduces about family can vary and sometimes contradict. Family is sometimes painted as a loving, benevolent group, but other times, family heightens people’s insecurities and makes their problems worse through coldness, pride, or other vices. Both characters have problems with their family, but both also wish to support and help their family. | Tateh has an affair and “want[s] to divorce [Mameh] so he could marry his fat girlfriend” (McBride 199). Despite the divorce, their broken family “still live[s] together, and [they are] all miserable” (McBride 200). | 199-200 |
| Ruth leaves and Tateh tells her to “[n]ever come home again” (McBride 215). When Ruth tries to visit her mother, she is told that she is “out of the family” (McBride 216) and that she should stay out of it. | 215-216 |
| Ruth “has created her own nation, a rainbow coalition” (McBride 277) that visits each year during the holidays. Ruth has created her own diverse family that is still close. | 276-277 |