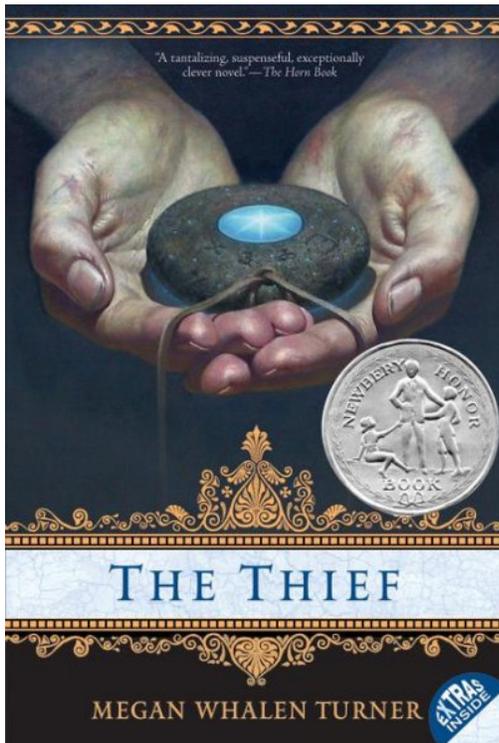


The Thief

by Megan Whalen Turner
A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

About the Book



Gen is a thief who can steal anything—at least, that is the boast he's made in wine shops across Sounis. Now his boasting has landed him in prison, so when the king's magus invites Gen on a quest to steal a legendary religious object, he is hardly in a position to refuse. With little fanfare, Gen, the magus, the magus's two apprentices, and a soldier embark on a journey that takes them out of Sounis, across the mountainous kingdom of Eddis, and into the potentially dangerous territory of Attolia. The three nations are currently in a tenuous peace, but if the quest succeeds, the balance of power will shift. Of course, there's no guarantee that the legendary object even exists. And if it does exist, there's no guarantee that Gen will be able to wrest it from the watchful gods who guard it. Gen, the incorrigible young thief, narrates an unforgettable adventure full of danger, obstacles, and the difficult truth that things are not always what they seem.

The magus is the most powerful advisor to the King of Sounis. He's a scholar, not a wizard, and definitely not a thief. When he needs something stolen, he pulls a young thief from the King's prison to do the job for him. Gen is a thief and proud of it, with this one chance to win his freedom. The magus has plans for his King and his country. Gen has plans of his own.

Permission to use book jacket image and book description granted by HarperCollins Publishers.



<http://library.ohio.gov/ctro>

Book Details

The Thief by Megan Whalen Turner. HarperCollins Publishers, 1996. ISBN 9780060824976. Ages 12 and up. 920 Lexile.
<http://www.harpercollins.com>

The Thief is the first book in Megan Whalen Turner's *The Queen's Thief* series. The series continues with **The Queen of Attolia**, **The King of Attolia**, and **A Conspiracy of Kings**. The series starts with Gen and his adventures across the vivid landscape that Megan Whalen Turner paints. The entire series takes on new characters, new points of view, and plot-twisting surprises. The resulting story is one of adventure, politics, love, and of course, more thievery.

The Thief was honored with the Newbery Honor Award; is an ALA Notable Book; and was named to Best Books for Young Adults by the Young Adult Library Services Association. Published in 1996.

The Queen of Attolia is the second book in the series. Gen gets into more trouble, and we see the more terrible side of Attolia. The three countries are at war, but Gen strives for peace. Published in 2000.

The King of Attolia is the third book in the series. Attolia has a new king, which brings change to the whole landscape as well as all of the characters we've met so far. Published in 2006.

A Conspiracy of Kings is the fourth book in the series. This adventure focuses on Sophos and other characters and their battles with politics, love, and war. Published in 2010.

Author's note on the landscape for **The Thief**:

In 1993, I traveled to Greece for the first time. Greece, for me, was a strange blend of the exotic and the surprisingly familiar. Greece's stories were old long before the brothers Grimm collected their stories, before Robin Hood, King Arthur, before the beginning of the Christian Era. Still, it was new to me and at the same time I felt connected to it by the history I'd learned in college and all those myths I'd learned in Social Studies.

Author's note taken from "The Real World Behind Gen's World", Inside Extras. Permission granted by HarperCollins Publishers.



About the Author

Megan Whalen Turner is the Newbery Honor award winning author of *The Thief* and the subsequent novels *The Queen of Attolia*, *The King of Attolia*, and *A Conspiracy of Kings*.

Turner graduated with honors from the University of Chicago with a B.A. in English Language and Literature. Before beginning a career as a writer, Turner was a bookseller for several years. Her first publication was a collection of short stories called *Instead of Three Wishes*. Her first novel was *The Thief*. She is married to Mark Turner, a professor of cognitive science. She and her family live in Ohio.

Photograph and biographical information courtesy of HarperCollins Publishing and meganwhalenturner.org; used with permission.

Author Resources:

Megan Whalen Turner's official website

<http://meganwhalenturner.org>

Author page on HarperCollins website

http://www.harpercollins.com/authors/15254/Megan_Whalen_Turner/index.aspx

Publishers Weekly Q&A with Megan Whalen Turner

<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/authors/interviews/article/42950-q-a-with-megan-whalen-turner.html>

Publishers Weekly interviewed Turner about *The Queen's Thief* series upon the publication of *A Conspiracy of Kings* in 2010.

The Enchanted Inkpot: Interview with Megan Whalen Turner

<http://enchantedinkpot.livejournal.com/50628.html>

The Enchanted Inkpot is an online community for writers and readers of middle grade and young adult fantasy.

For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:

Contact Megan Whalen Turner via email to discuss visits, book signings, or for interviews:

meganwhalenturner@harpercollins.com

or visit her website to view upcoming appearances: <http://meganwhalenturner.org>

Talk About It!

Topics to share when discussing **The Thief** with young readers.

- Sophos's father believes that the people of Sounis should forget the old gods. Sophos explains, "[My father] says that a country with two sets of gods is like a country with two kings. No one knows which to be loyal to" (p. 78). Do you agree? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having two (or more) systems of belief? What conflicts might arise as a result? Do you think Sophos's father's comparison of religions and monarchs is apt?
- Is there a traitor in this novel? More than one? What motivates a traitor?
- Which story of the old gods did you like the most? Why do you think they were included in the book?
- Several times, Sophos is startled by Gen's comments about his family and background. What surprises him? Why? How does Gen reshape or defy other characters' perceptions of class and hierarchy?
- Did the ending surprise you? What clues were in the book leading up to the revelation of Gen's true identity?
- Gen has a very elaborate plan in mind right from the start of the book. What was his plan? Did it work? Was he foolish or brave for thinking he could manipulate events to his advantage?
- How does the magus's attitude toward Gen change? What evidence do you see of this? How does Gen's attitude toward his companions change? How does this influence his plans?
- Do you agree with Eddis's decision to destroy Hamiathes's Gift? What does she lose by destroying it? What does she gain?
- Why doesn't Gen tell the magus about the gods in the temple? The magus asks Gen if he "won't tell [him] or can't," and Gen replies, "Can't" (p. 231). Why can't Gen tell him?
- Eugenides says he would rather die than be burdened by immortality: "There is something horrible and frightening and, I'd discovered, very, very painful about being trapped in this life when it is time to move on" (p. 273). What are the advantages and drawbacks to being impervious to death? Is this a suitable gift for a god to give a king? If you were offered a chance at immortality, would you take it?

Some discussion questions taken from "*Megan Whalen Turner's The Thief, The Queen of Attolia, The King of Attolia, and A Conspiracy of Kings Discussion Guide*"; used by permission of HarperCollins.



<http://library.ohio.gov/ctro>

Learn and have fun!

Here are some ideas for extending the experience of reading *The Thief*.

- What do you visualize while reading? Draw a map of the countries described in *The Thief*, or draw a picture of what the inner chamber may look like.
- Research ancient and modern Greece, using resources such as World Book Advanced or Oxford Reference, available to students through INFOhio (<http://www.infohio.org/>) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library (<http://www.ohioweblibrary.org/>). Study the land and climate now and in the past. Compare what you find to the scenery in *The Thief*. How are the book's settings inspired by Greece? How else was the author influenced by ancient Greece?
- Research the gods of ancient Greece using library resources as described above, or visit your school or public library to locate books on Greek mythology. Individually or as a group, delve into some of the myths of ancient Greece. Can you identify any similarities between the Greek gods and the gods in *The Thief*? Do the Greek myths have varying stories and plots, like the myths told about the god Eugenides?

Explore More!

Additional ideas and resources to use with *The Thief*.

Discussion Guide to Megan Whalen Turner's *The Queen's Thief* Series

<http://files.harpercollins.com/PDF/ReadingGuides/0688146279.pdf>

A readers' guide to the series, including discussion questions for each book.

The Greeks: Cradle of Civilization

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/thegreeks/htmlver/>

This companion to the PBS series explores ancient Greek history, culture, major figures, politics, art, and warfare. A detailed timeline covers 1200 B.C. to 337 B.C.

Sounis Community on LiveJournal:

<http://sounis.livejournal.com/>

An ongoing, fan-based book discussion group for readers of the series.

About Choose to Read Ohio

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio and the Ohioana Library Association, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: <http://library.ohio.gov/ctro>.

This toolkit created April 2012, revised May 2013.