Chapter 17

**Vocabulary:**

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| 1. interminable
 | 1. bravado
 | 1. cardinal
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| 1. reprovingly
 | 1. disquisition
 | 1. variant
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| 1. misgave
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**Questions:**

1. How does the Sealand woman free the Chrysalids from their cobwebs?

She has a spray that dissolves the cobwebs.
2. The cobweb material kills the Waknuk people who touch it, but the Chrysalid group is set free. What is the symbolism here?

The people of Waknuk are unwilling to consider or change their beliefs. If they struggle against the cobwebs instead of staying calm, they are killed. In the same way, struggling against new ideas, information, and ways of thinking and knowing is the end of the people of Waknuk.

On the other hand, the Chrysalid group members stay calm and are freed from the cobwebs. They are given the chance to survive and become part of the evolution of humankind. They are reborn into powerful creatures with new abilities, like caterpillars that have emerged from their chrysalids and become butterflies. As the Sealand woman says, “life is change”.

1. Explain how the meeting between Petra and the Sealand woman is an indication of the special quality of life in Sealand?

Petra and the Sealand woman are able to communicate in a complex way that is beyond the understanding of David and Rosalind. It may be that life in Sealand is beyond the current abilities of David and the others.

1. Describe the Sealand woman’s appearance.

“Her eyes were large, with irises more brown than green, and fringed with long, deep-gold lashes. Her nose was straight, but her nostrils curved with perfection of a sculpture. Her mouth was, perhaps, a little wide; the chin beneath it was rounded, but not soft. Her hair was just a little darker than Rosalind’s and, astonishingly for a woman, it was short. Cut off nearly level with her jaw…the lightness of her face…like new cream, and with cheeks that might have been dusted with pink petals…so untouched, so unflawed…she was a woman – thirty, perhaps…with a serenity of confidence.” (192)

The Sealand woman is very pale, which shows that she does not work outside the way the Waknukians do. She is modern, confident, and mature.

1. After the Sealand woman explains that she has decided that “…it was worth while…” to come, and mentions the costs of sending the ship, what can the reader extrapolate (guess) about the real reasons for the rescue? Was it altruism, or gain? (Look up the word “altruism”.) Explain your viewpoint.

The Sealand woman does not appear to have come to save Petra and the other members of the group simply because she wanted to save them. Instead, she thinks that Petra will be a useful tool for her.

“She has still a great deal to learn, but we will give her the best teachers, and then, one day, she will be teaching them.” (193)

1. What is the sad news that the Sealand woman has for Michael? What is it that makes going back to Waknuk tolerable for Michael now?

She says that they do not have enough fuel to go back for Rachel. Michael and Rachel are in love, and since neither one of them has been detected yet, they might be able to survive in Waknuk for a while until Michael can find a way to get to Sealand.

“Knowing makes all the difference. Knowing that we’re not just pointless freaks – a few bewildered deviations hoping to save their skins. It’s the difference between just trying to keep alive, and having something to live for.” (198-199) – going back to Waknuk is tolerable for Michael now because he knows that the Chrysalids are not just mutants, but part of a bigger population. He knows that there is a place for him, and so he doesn’t feel so alone anymore.

1. How does the Sealand woman justify what happens to all the Fringes and normal people as she landed? What do you think of her opinion? What observation does she make about the fate of her own race in the distant future? Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

“It is not pleasant to kill any creature…just as we have to keep ourselves alive in these ways, so, too, we have to preserve our species against other species that wish to destroy it.” (195) – the Sealand woman believes that it was all right to kill the Waknukians and the Fringes people because they wanted to “destroy” the human species. This is the same feeling that Joseph Strorm and the people of Waknuk felt about the deviants. They all feel that they can do terrible things in order to save themselves.

“Sometime there will come a day when we ourselves shall have to give place to a new thing…The essential quality of life is living; the essential quality of living is change; change is evolution: and we are part of it.” (196) – according the Sealand woman’s point of view, life is always evolving and species are always being replaced by more advanced species. One day, her species of human telepaths will be replaced by something else.

1. At the end of the story, David recognizes the great city in Sealand as the city of his dream. Why does the novel begin and end with that vision?

David’s dream is foreshadowing of what is to come. We can also guess that this city is where David has written the whole story from. By showing the city at the beginning and ending of the novel, we see how there has been a wider world of hope and connection for the Chrysalids all along. It changes how we think of the novel as a whole.

1. What is so special about New Zealand? How is Rosalind’s personality affected? What does the population’s reaction to Petra confirm about Petra’s importance?

New Zealand is a place where the Chrysalids can finally be themselves and be surrounded by a community of people like them. For the first, Rosalind feels that she can let her guard down and be herself.

As they approach the city, they can sense that everyone in the city is communicating beneath them. We can assume that they are excited about Petra, who could mean many things to them, including a way to advance their civilization.

1. Why is the simile (page 200) of Rosalind’s smile appropriate?

“It was like a flower opening” (200). Flowers open their petals so that they can catch sunlight. For the first time, Rosalind can open herself up to life, growth, and change.