Chapter 7

**Vocabulary:**

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| 1. prowl
 | 1. trivial
 | 1. elude
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| 1. besiege
 | 1. penance
 | 1. afoot
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**Questions:**

1. Why was Petra’s birth not announced immediately?

They are waiting to find out if she will pass inspection.

“No one, indeed, would dream of mentioning the matter openly until the inspector should have called to issue his certificate that it was a human baby in the true image” (66)

1. What earlier incidents in the novel account for the inspector’s intentional delays in approving Mrs. Strorm’s child?

We saw earlier in the novel that Joseph and the inspector sometimes struggle for power (Angus’ great-horses, the inspector’s whip). The inspector is his taking his time because he wants to show Joseph that he has more power.

We also learn that Emily had two children before who did not pass inspection. By making the Strorm’s wait, the inspector raises suspicions that this baby will also not pass inspection. (67)

1. What request did Harriet make of Mrs. Strorm (Emily) and what was Mrs. Strorm’s reaction?

Harriet wants to switch her baby with Petra for a couple of days so that she can pass inspection. We don’t know what’s wrong with Harriet’s baby, but there is an obvious deviation that will not pass inspection. Emily is offended, refuses, and immediately tells Joseph. (71)
2. Examine Joseph Strorm’s “sermon”. (pg 72-73) Look at all the negative words and expressions. To whom are these applied?

“shame or remorse”

“producing a mockery of your Maker”

“criminal conspiracy”

“enemies of God”

“your sin has weakened our defences”

“You have produced a defilement”

“breeding, spread pollution until all around us there would be mutants and abominations”

“Not only have you blasphemed by producing a false image, but in your arrogance you have set yourself against the law, and sinned in intent”

Joseph is using strong language to make Harriet repent and setting her up as an enemy if she does not.

1. What did Aunt Harriet pray for?

“I shall pray God to send charity into this hideous world, and sympathy for the weak, and love for the unhappy and unfortunate. I shall ask Him if it is indeed His will that a child should suffer and its soul be damned for a little blemish of the body…And I shall pray Him, too, that the hearts of the self-righteous may be broken” (73).

Harriet prays for the world to be different, for people to be more tolerant, and for people like Joseph to pay for the hurt he caused other people.

1. Does Mrs. Strorm indicate that she might be capable of compassion?

“Perhaps, she did not realize what she was saying…She began to cry: I had never heard her cry before.” (74)

Though Emily does not show Harriet any compassion, she is upset after she leaves.

1. How many mutant babies has David’s mother actually had, detected and undetected? What is ironic about this?

“The suspense was aggravated by everyone’s knowledge that on the last two similar occasions there had been no certificate forthcoming” (67). Twice before, the inspector has come to see Emily’s new baby and has not issued a certificate. Since Harriet had also had two babies taken away from her, Emily should understand exactly how her sister feels.

Furthermore, David himself is an undetected mutant. If people found out, not only would David be considered a Blasphemy, but Joseph would be allowed to get rid of Emily and find a new wife. This is based on old Biblical laws, in which men could take new wives if their current wives were infertile or were not producing boys.

1. What happens to Aunt Harriet?

“When they broke the news to me next day that my Aunt Harriet’s body had been found in the river, no one mentioned a baby…” (74)

The most likely scenario is that Harriet has drowned herself and her baby, to save them both from the punishment they will face from the community. However, we don’t know what actually happens to the baby.

Chapter 8

**Vocabulary:**

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| 1. heresy
 | 1. abet
 | 1. fruition
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| 1. omnipotent
 | 1. travesty
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**Questions:**

1. Account for David’s increasing fear. What comforting news does Axel give to David?

Harriet’s death is “the most disturbing occurrence” (75) he has ever experienced. It is perhaps more disturbing than Sophie’s situation because Harriet is a member of his family, so he has seen how his parents react to a deviation in the family.

Axel tells David that a boy named Walter was killed accidentally around the time that the telepathic group lost one of their members. David was concerned that one of them was found out and killed, but this news makes it seem that this missing person was an accident.

1. For what reasons does Axel doubt the accepted view of “Tribulation”? According to him, why were the accepted patterns of the Old People not necessarily the best?

Axel is struggling with an idea that many religious people struggle with. “We’ve got to believe that God is sane” (78), but if God was sane, why would he allow so much suffering and instability?

“…what’s the good of trying so hard to keep in their tracks? Where are they and their wonderful world now?” (78). Axel is aware that the Old People must have done something to cause Tribulation. It doesn’t make sense to imitate the Old People’s ways, because they might just cause Tribulation to happen again. Axel thinks they should learn from the Old People’s mistakes rather than trying to recreate their world.

1. In what two ways did “the group” gain confidence?

They all feel relieved to know that the disappearance of one of them could have been an accident.

They also feel better by knowing each other’s names. “Knowing who we were was the second stage in gaining confidence. It somehow increased a comforting feeling of mutual support.” (81). There is a sense of community and support in their group.

1. What are the names of the nine telepaths, including the missing one?

David, Rosalind, Michael, Sally, Katherine, Mark, Anne, Rachel, Walter
2. How is Michael always at the top of his class, and how are the others able to learn from his school classes?

Michael is at the top of his classes because he shares everything he learns with the group, and they help him to work out the new ideas.
3. What in Uncle Axel’s opinion makes a man a man?

“What makes man man is mind; it’s not a thing, it’s a quality, and minds aren’t all the same value” (80).

Rene Descartes – “cogito, ergo sum” (I think, therefore I am)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0A6UKoMcE10>

Axel represents Cartesian philosophy, in which people try to understand that world based what they can observe, rather than on what they believe.

1. Approximately how old is David at the end of this chapter? Provide proof.

David appears to be a pre-teen (10-12) at the beginning of the book. After “six years” pass, David is probably in his teenage (16-18) years.
2. What interesting development arouses our interest at the conclusion of this chapter?

Out of the blue – a new telepath appears - “the day when we discovered that the eight of us had suddenly become nine” (82)