Chapter 9

**Vocabulary:**

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| 1. endearing
 | 1. chafe
 | 1. ruination
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| 1. lip-service
 | 1. scapegoat
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**Questions:**

1. What indications are there in this chapter that David is almost a grown man?

“I had just given up my scythe to *another* man” (83) – David is working in the fields with the other men. He now participates in the work without being told what to do, unlike in previous chapters in which he was always hiding somewhere and trying to avoid work.

1. How is Petra different from the other group members?

“Rosalind put her hands to her face, finger-tips on her temples. She shook her head slightly and looked at me from disturbed eyes. ‘She isn’t’, she said. ‘Something like us, but not one of us. None of us could *command* like that. She’s something much more than we are’”. (84)

Petra is an incredibly strong telepath – so strong that she is almost able to compel others to action without their understanding what they are doing or why.

1. What danger to David and Rosalind did the incident with Petra present?

“One of the men from the field looked at me in a puzzled way: ‘But how did you know?’ he asked. ‘I didn’t hear a thing.’” (84).

Rosalind says that she heard Petra yelling, but of course no one else heard her. This makes people suspicious of David and Rosalind, because the people of Waknuk have been trained to be suspicious of anything that they don’t understand.

1. Why did the group postpone telling Petra of her “special talent”?

“It must have been panic that brought it out…If she isn’t aware of it now, she probably doesn’t even know it happened, so it might easily be an unnecessary danger to tell her about it at all. I don’t think it is fair, or safe, to burden her until it’s necessary…All of us knew that it is not easy to keep on watching each word all the time, even when you’ve had to practice it for years. We decided to postpone telling Petra until either some occasion made it necessary, or until she was old enough to understand more clearly what we were warning her about.” (85)

David is unable to communicate with Petra in the normal way, so Rosalind and the others think that Petra was only able to thought-communicate because she was scared. The group knows how difficult it is to live a double-life, so they decided to wait until Petra is older before they try to explain the situation to her.

1. What did David mean when he said that “[the] stupidest norm was happier,” than he was? Why did he feel this way?

“The stupidest norm was happier; he could feel that he belonged. We did not, and because we did not, we had no positive – we were condemned to negatives, to not revealing ourselves, to not speaking when we would, to not using what we knew, to not being found out – to a life of perpetual deception, concealment, and lying.” (86)

The group has great potential to be the types of better people that Axel refers to in the previous chapter, but they have to keep themselves hidden away. They are not able to live their lives as their true selves.

1. What is different now in David’s repetitive dream?

“only this time when the knife gleamed high in my father’s right hand, the deviation that struggled in his left was not a calf, it was not Sophie, either; it was Petra.” (85)
2. Why does the author introduce Old Jacob’s views at this point in the story? Briefly summarize Jacob’s views.

Jacob is a “venomously puritanical old man” (89) who believes that society has gotten too soft. He thinks that human mutants should be burned instead of being allowed to live in the Fringes. He remembers a time when people were more conservative and punishments were more severe, and he feels that another Tribulation is coming because of everyone’s weakness.

For a real-world allegory, see Pat Robertson, an important Evangelical Christian figure:

Article: <http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/01/13/haiti.pat.robertson/index.html>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5TE99sAbwM>

As David gets older, he becomes more aware of how dangerous it is for him to live in his community. As David matures, so does the reader. This episode is an essential piece of rising action that will bring us to the climax of the book.

1. What warning does Axel give David?

Axel represents the scientific approach. He think the bad seasons happen not because of the people’s behaviour, but because of the wind. “Get a bad winter with gales from the south-west, and up goes the deviation rate – not the next season, but the one after that.” (90). Axel recognizes the trend of higher deviation rates after a lot of wind from the south-west. This makes sense – the wind may be carrying radioactive particles to the soil and water, which is causing the increase in mutations.

Axel warns that if the next year is also bad, as he predicts, then the community will be looking for “scapegoats” (90). Angry people who lack scientific understanding will be looking for someone to blame for the losses of their crops and livestock. Axel is warning David to take extra care, because if they are discovered during a bad time, they cannot expect any mercy.

Chapter 10

**Vocabulary:**

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| 1. inevitable
 | 1. ordained
 | 1. impasse
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| 1. lament
 | 1. evade
 | 1. perpetual
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| 1. emphatically
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**Questions:**

1. Why is the group upset at Anne’s decision to marry? Is their argument a form of discrimination? Explain.

 “Other people feel so dim, so half-perceived, compared with those whom one knows through their thought-shapes; and I don’t suppose ‘normals’, who can never share their thoughts, can understand how we ar so much more a part of one another.” (92-93). The group feels that their way of communicating with each other is superior to the way “norms” can only talk to one another. It is unthinkable to marry someone that they cannot communicate with telepathically, because they would never be as close to them as they are to the other members of the group.

It could be argued that this is a form of discrimination. It is similar to a group of friends who are trying to dissuade their friend from marrying someone who is blind or in a wheelchair.

1. What simile does Michael use to describe marriage to a norm?

“It’d be **like** tying yourself for life to a cripple.” (91)
2. What is the fear that Uncle Axel and David have? What is Uncle Axel’s suggestion?

They’re both afraid that Anne won’t be able to hide her abilities from Alan forever. Eventually, she will be discovered or she will tell him herself.

Axel’s suggestion is to kill Anne in order to protect the rest of the group. David says that they can’t do it because of how close they all are, as a result of the telepathy.

1. What happens to Alan Ervin? Who does Anne suspect?

Alan is shot through the neck with an arrow and dies. Anne suspects the group of killing him. (99)
2. What are the obstacles to David’s and Rosalind’s possible marriage?

“The feud between our families which had first come into the open over the matter of the great-horses had now been established for years...It was perfectly clear that neither side would be anything but dead-set against a union of the families.” (98) David’s and Rosalind’s families hate each other. They think it’s so bad that even if Rosalind were to get pregnant, Angus might just kill David rather than allowing them to marry ‘(99”).
3. How does Rachel save the group from discovery after Alan’s death?

Rachel takes the letter that Anne leaves for the inspector in which she exposes the group and blames them for Alan’s death. She burns it to make sure that no one else will ever read it. (101-102)
4. What feeling is the group left with after Anne’s death? (page 102-103)

“we felt less anxiety than we had at any time for nearly a year…We were grieved for Anne, but the grief was made less sharp by the feeling that we had really lost her some time before” (103).

The group is mourning the death of Anne, but also feels relieved that she didn’t manage to expose any of them.

1. What does Michael realize about the members of the group which could be important to their safety later in the novel?

“One of us has been found not strong enough…” (103)

Anne was the first to become an adult, and she chose to endanger the group for her own benefit. Michael realizes that they may face this problem again as everyone grows.