

2010: Odyssey Two Study Guide

2010: Odyssey Two by Arthur C. Clarke

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Plot Summary

"2010: Odyssey Two", is a novel of space and scientific exploration, written by legendary science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke as a sequel to one of his most popular books. Dr. Heywood Floyd is recruited by his government and Russia's government alike in order to accompany space shuttle Leonov's crew to Jupiter to determine what happened to American spacecraft Discovery ten years earlier. Though the journey is long, Floyd and several other Americans are put into hibernation for much of the journey. Leonov is to board the now deserted Discovery and determine what caused the malfunction of the ship's computer, known as Hal. The ship is also supposed to investigate the mysterious monolith similar to the one once found hovering over Tycho crater on the moon.

Floyd is brought out of hibernation early by a sudden and unexpected emergency. As Leonov approaches, still millions of miles from Jupiter, a message from home informs them that a Chinese ship, Tsien, is going to arrive at Jupiter long before Leonov will have a chance to do so. The crew aboard Leonov watches as the Chinese astronauts cleverly land upon the surface of Jupiter's moon Europa, clearly intending to use the ample water supply there as a means of fuel in order to reach the Discovery long before Leonov and claim it as salvage. An international incident is avoided, however, as the Tsien is suddenly destroyed. Floyd and the crew of Leonov investigate, and discover an alien life-form was responsible for its destruction.

Leonov reaches orbit around Jupiter unchallenged by the Tsien, but must still face several difficulties in space. Discovery is found to be in better shape than they had originally counted on, but they cannot determine what happened to the astronauts once on board, and thus learn nothing new about what happened ten years ago. Another American, Dr. Chandra, was responsible for Hal's design, and manages to get the computer up and running, but Floyd distrusts the doctor and fears that Hal might malfunction again, putting everyone's life in jeopardy. During this time, the entire crew has been suffering from the effects of isolation while onboard Leonov, and Floyd's family has begun to deteriorate, and his wife finally decides to leave him. Floyd enters a depression shortly after, as he has been unable to determine what the purpose of the Tycho Monolith is, nor has he been able to determine anything more about what happened to Discovery's crew.

Just as Floyd connects in friendship to another crew member, Walter Curnow, the monolith suddenly opens. The being who was once David Bowman, Discovery's commander, races towards Earth, sparking an international debate. Bowman rapidly returns to Jupiter, and surveys the gas giant and surrounding moons for signs of life and possible intelligence. Disappointed by what Bowman finds, the beings controlling him decide to drastically change the solar system so that more intelligent life might evolve. They begin a process that will turn Jupiter into a second sun.

Wanting to save his former colleagues, Bowman messages Leonov's crew that they have fifteen days to depart from Jupiter. Suddenly, the monolith disappears, and Captain Orlova decides to use Discover's extra fuel supply to jettison them out of

Jupiter's orbit towards Earth. Along the way, Jupiter detonates, sending a way of radiation that nearly destroys the ship and results in Jupiter having become the second Sun in Earth's sky.

Part One

Part One Summary

In chapter one, Dr. Dmitri Moisevitch and Heywood Floyd are inside the astronomy lab at the Thousand-Foot Telescope. Dmitri wants Heywood to explain the Tycho monolith, and the signal it sent to Jupiter years ago. Heywood, or "Woody," on the other hand, is concerned that America's new space shuttle, Discovery II, will be at least a year behind Russia's new shuttle Leonov, that is nearly prepared for launch. Dimitri is concerned about the Russian cosmonauts, because the crew of the original Discovery went missing while in orbit around Jupiter ten years prior, and the same thing might happen to the crew of the Leonov. Dmitri asks after Discovery's data transmissions, and Heywood realizes that his friend is asking for an American astronaut to be sent with the Russian shuttle in order to extract the data from Discovery's computer once Leonov intercepts it.

In chapter two, Dr. Floyd is at his home with his wife, Caroline feeding dolphins that come in from the Pacific Ocean when he gets a call from Victor Millson, who wants to talk to him about two problems. The first is the one Floyd discussed with Dimitri in the previous chapter, namely that the Russians are going to beat the Americans in reaching Discovery. Victor then tells him that a package is coming to him and will arrive within the hour. He asks Floyd to examine the contents of the package and then call him back. An Airforce colonel arrives on schedule with a sealed envelope for Floyd, which contains information about the Russian shuttle and an article drafted to Science Magazine about Discovery's irregular orbit around Jupiter. According to the article, the shuttle will impact with Jupiter's moon Io in just two or three years.

In chapter three, Dr. Chandra, creator of Discovery's computer system, HAL 9000, or Hal, recalls the disaster of Discovery's mission and the death of flight member Poole. He is very concerned about Hal's behavior, and wants to know what went wrong. He asks his own computer, Sal, how to retrieve the information they need to discover what went wrong on the mission. He knows that Hal's data is going to be available shortly, and asks Sal if he can disconnect some of her circuits, and warns the computer it might change her personality somewhat.

In chapter four, Leonov's mission profile is drawn out, listing its objectives, and crew, in a letter addressed to Dr. Floyd. Leonov is to intercept Discovery, gather Hal's data, then send Discovery back into orbit around Earth. It is also supposed to find and study the alien artifact, the monolith near Tycho. Floyd himself, is to personally go on the voyage with the Russian crew. He talks his future mission over with Caroline, leaving out the fact that he'll be in suspended hibernation for most of the two years that he will spend in space.

In chapter five, Floyd and Chandra are at the Cape awaiting the shuttle launch along with Walter Curnow, the man responsible for getting Discovery operational again.



Curnow offers Floyd a drink of champagne, and Floyd gets a negative impression of the astronaut. The shuttle launches and the passengers get a view of earth from space. They are docked with Leonov, where the assistant engineer, Max Brailovsky, introduces himself, and Floyd gets a call on the viewphone from Captain Orlova. She apologizes for the mess in his quarters and explains that they needed every available bit of free space aboard Leonov for storage. Max takes Floyd to meet Vasili Orlov, Captain Orlova's husband and Leonov's chief scientist. They discuss other crew members briefly, then Orlov injects him with a shot that will cause him to hibernate, and Floyd slowly drifts off until he loses consciousness.

Part One Analysis

The introduction to the novel presents a fictionalized version of the year 2010, and it should be noted by the reader that this book was originally published in 1982, almost thirty years prior to this date. Thus, there are technological and political differences between the book's version of the Earth and the actual one. The most notable difference is that in the novel, the Soviet Union still exists, although the level of cooperation between it and the United States is clearly very high. Both the Soviets and the U.S. possess very advanced space exploration programs, with astronauts having traveled at least as far as Jupiter. The main questions posed by the story thus far, are the natures of Hal's malfunction and the alien monolith found in Jupiter's crater of Tycho. Cooperation between the two super-powers also seems to play an important role, as neither nation would be able to successfully complete the new mission to Jupiter without the other, since neither side has all of the information or equipment it would need to survive. However, Floyd seems convinced that this mission, if it is successful, could alter the course of human history by placing it in contact with alien intelligence. Chandra's interests are perhaps the most foreboding, as he seems only concerned with his computer design, Hal, which malfunctioned and killed almost the entire crew of Discovery during the original shuttle's mission, leaving the vessel in an unstable orbit around Jupiter.

Part Two

Part Two Summary

In chapter six, Floyd wakes himself from hibernation. Dr. Rudenko asks him how he feels. Captain Orlova is also in the room, and Heywood realizes she has grown her hair back since he last saw her. When he mentions this to her, she points out to him that he's growing a beard, although it is just stubble since the hibernation process slows hair growth down considerably. Orlova informs him that they are still a month away from Jupiter, and that he's been woken up early because they suddenly find themselves in a race to get to Discovery, with very little chance of winning.

In chapter seven, Floyd's wife, Caroline, listens and watches a message sent to her from her husband. According to the transmission, he's been woken up early because the Chinese have secretly built a shuttle, Tsien, and sent it ahead of Leonov to beat the Russians and Americans to Jupiter, the monolith, and Discovery. There is some danger that Tsien's aerobraking system will malfunction, and it is very unlikely that Tsien has enough fuel to reach Earth again.

In chapter eight, Floyd watches an image of Jupiter as Tsien approaches the planet's atmosphere. He and several other crew members of Leonov watch as Tsien enters Jupiter's gravitational field and disappears past its dark side. Orlov and Kovalov, the communications engineer spend the next hour studying Tsien's velocity to predict when it will re-emerge. Orlov finally estimates this to be in no sooner than forty-two minutes. He disperses everyone for that time, but Tsien reappears less than a half-hour later. Most of the crew are pleased that the vessel is still intact, but Orlov is shocked that Tsien has already rounded the planet so quickly. He works over the numbers and realizes Tsien's orbit can't bring them near Discovery, but instead will send them out beyond Io. Floyd realizes the Tsien could be in serious trouble, and that the Leonov might not be able to help the Chinese astronauts if a problem arises. He returns to his cabin to try to figure out what the Chinese are up to. Floyd studies the data available on the Tsien until he realizes what the mission and shuttle are about. The Tsien is headed towards another of Jupiter's moons called Europa, where there is water that the ship can use in order to refuel. From there, the Tsien would be able to pass by all of Jupiter's moons and the Discovery, and still have enough fuel to get home comfortably.

In chapter nine, five Chinese astronauts are on the surface of Europa, shown in a picture to Floyd relayed to Leonov from Earth. They have claimed the moon for China, which has sparked an intense international debate back on Earth. Floyd explains that Europa's climate is ideal for a refueling station, and that the Chinese likely plan to use it as a station in order to explore further regions of the solar system. Orlova suggests that the crew of Leonov be prepared to use force in the Chinese attempt to enter Discovery, and many are worried that the Chinese will try to claim the vessel as salvage.



In chapter ten, Floyd is woken up suddenly, and finds himself looking at Europa, which he should still be millions of miles away from. But it is only a dream, and Orlova wakes him up in actuality this time, to tell him that Tsien is in trouble. The Chinese shuttle went off air, and their beacon has also stopped working. Mission Control has told Leonov to swing their dish towards Europa in case Tsien is still sending out emergency transmissions. This will break communications with earth, but the risk is necessary. On the second attempt at doing so, they receive a transmission of human speech, in English, calling for Dr. Floyd.

In chapter eleven, the voice tells Floyd that there is life on Europa, and that Tsien was destroyed by a creature trying to feed from its floodlights. The photoreceptive creature, as Tsien calls it, knocked the ship apart while surfacing from the ice, then surrounded Chang—the person sending the transmission to Floyd and Leonov—to feed off of his thousand-watt lamp nearby. He asks that the creature be named after him, and that the next ship to arrive on Europa bring the bones of Tsien's crew back to China.

Part Two Analysis

The journey of Leonov, having been interrupted by Tsien's unexpected arrival in Europa, finds itself in a situation of unprecedented discovery—namely, new life in the Solar System. Though the plans of the Chinese have almost certainly been severely disrupted as a result of the surprise-attack from the European life-form, the consequences of Tsien's destruction could result in any number of outcomes. On the one hand, Leonov is now much more likely to be the first vessel to reach Discovery and obtain the data needed to determine what happened to the crew of the last mission, and perhaps they will even receive some idea of what the monolith is doing near Tycho and learn more about its purpose and design. On the other hand, the existence of life on Europa could change the nature of Leonov's mission, because there are suddenly far more discoveries that the crew can make. The reader would do well to entertain the likelihood that the monolith is or will be linked to the life on Europa in some way, but should also keep Chang's description of the alien's behavior and appearance. It was not, according to Chang, an intelligent life-form, but instead more like a giant moving plant.



Part Three, Chapters 12-16

Part Three, Chapters 12-16 Summary

In chapter twelve, Leonov hurtles past the first and second moons of Jupiter, which are placed in irregular orbits around Jupiter. The eight crew members meet each morning to discuss minor affairs onboard the ship, and also to make sure morale is kept high since the Russians have been conscious the entire time as opposed to being in hibernation. They are preparing their own aerobraking maneuver that will bring them into Jupiter's atmosphere.

In chapter thirteen, four of Jupiter's moons are extremely unusual, and each very different from each other. Callisto is exactly what scientists expected, but Ganymede is covered in strange ridges. Europa is, of course, covered with water. Many exobiologists had expected life on the moon for decades. Floyd and other scientists are now wondering if there is a connection between life on Europa and the Tycho monolith. On Leonov, the astronauts argue as to whether the creature was intelligent or not. They are getting ready to enter Jupiter's atmosphere, but there are many opportunities for something to go wrong, and many of the crew, including Floyd, are nervous.

In chapter fourteen, Floyd sends a message to Caroline explaining his frustration over being unable to help the rest of the crew as they approach Jupiter. Floyd waits in his cabin, surprised to be joined by Zenia who has kept a great distance from Floyd until now. Zenia is terrified of the aerobraking, but doesn't want the other Russians to know it. Gravity begins to return as the ship begins to shake. A growing roar from the vessel's re-entry begins to deafen Floyd, letting him know they are halfway there. He realizes Zenia has fallen asleep from the exertion of gravity, and falls asleep himself, similarly exhausted.

In chapter fifteen, the Leonov is now in orbit above Jupiter, having used the drag from its atmosphere to slow itself. He joins the others in the observation deck for celebratory drinks. The Leonov ejects its heat shield and they watch it tumble off into space. Then, a voice on the intercom, informs them that they are on their way to the moon of Io.

In chapter sixteen, Floyd sends a message to Dmitri. They've met up with the discovery. Chandra and Curnow have been brought out of hibernation. Discovery is in bad shape, and in fairly close orbit with Io, which has frequent volcanic eruptions that have turned Discovery's hull yellow. He tells Dmitri that Io's surface reminds him of Mordor from Lord of the Rings. The monolith is also nearby, though it remains totally featureless and can't be detected by radar. He also asks Dmitri to cheer up Caroline and his son, Chris, for him.



Part Three, Chapters 12-16 Analysis

The astronauts have overcome the greatest technical challenge of their entire journey. Their aerobraking maneuver has worked, and they are free to remain safely in orbit near Io. But, as Floyd himself realizes, despite the dangers inherent in re-entering orbit, there were no surprises involved in the procedure. Several of the astronauts remark on how much of the heat shield was still intact. The remainder of the mission deals with unknowns, namely the situation on Discovery and the nature of the Tycho monolith. Floyd is also concerned that his time away from Earth has put a strain on his family, especially Caroline. The reader understands, from Floyd's message to Dmitri, that Caroline wishes to return to the mainland, and he may not voice his concern, but it is easy to infer that he fears she will separate from him soon. He is mostly concerned for his son, Chris.



Part Three Chapters 17-21

Part Three Chapters 17-21 Summary

In chapter seventeen, Walter Curnow puts on his spacesuit to board Discovery. He is responsible for trying to salvage the ship and bring it out of Io's orbit. Max Brailovsky accompanies him, and Curnow admits to being terrified once out in open space. They eject from Leonov in their spacesuits, with Curnow attached to Brailovsky, and manage to reach Discovery, then head towards its control and life-support module. They reach the airlock and Curnow has to manually open the hatch.

In chapter eighteen, Curnow is relieved to be inside Discovery at last. His first order business is to stop the ship's spin. Brailovsky, on the other hand, has grown nervous in the derelict craft. Max tests the air, which is one-hundred-five degrees below zero, by opening his visor. He smells something rotten and immediately shuts his visor in fear and disgust, believing that dead bodies might be on board. Brailovsky wonders if David Bowman managed to return to the ship after all and died in it, even though Curnow is positive the astronaut ejected the bodies of the other dead astronauts and never returned to Discovery.

In chapter nineteen, Leonov's crew watches as Discovery lights up suddenly, meaning Curnow has managed to get the ship's power back up and running. Curnow radios them from Discovery and tells them the ship is in better condition than he'd expected from what he saw on the outside, but stinks badly. All the equipment onboard is still operational. Orlova tells them that the ship will crash in ten days, and Curnow predicts he can have Discovery fully operational inside of a week. He wants to get the internal carousel running to stop the ship's spin. The smell on the ship is identified as spoiled food, and partially resolved by ejected Discovery's internal atmosphere. Ninety percent of the needed fuel for the return to Earth is still intact. Discovery continues to drift toward Io, and is a mere five-hundred kilometers away before Curnow activates the ship's main drive. Eventually Curnow is able to raise the ship. Surgeon-Commander congratulates him, then knocks him out with a drug.

In chapter twenty, Floyd wants Curnow to install a small device between Hal and the main power supply that will allow him to shut the computer down at any time, should it become a threat once again. Floyd wants this kept a secret from Chandra.

In chapter twenty-one, Floyd floats behind Chandra, in Discovery. Hal remains disconnected from the ship's systems, but has been activated. Chandra explains to Floyd that Hal's speech centers have been damaged, and that the computer will quickly relearn how to speak again, but that Chandra should be the only one to communicate with it verbally. When Hal suddenly responds independently, Chandra begins to cry.

Part Three Chapters 17-21 Analysis

Curnow and Chandra, having been brought out of hibernation, now play an important role in the mission, where recovery of the Discovery is concerned. It is important to note that nearly everyone distrusts Chandra, and that this distrust appears to happen on an instinctive level. The computer scientist seems to value the construction of his artificial intelligence, Hal, over actual human life, and this fact clearly disturbs Floyd at the very least, who has gone to the trouble of installing a device that he can use to disable Hal quickly, and does not want Chandra to know about the device, likely for the fear that Chandra would attempt to remove it. Other than the distrust felt towards Chandra by the other astronauts, the crew of Leonov has experienced a good deal of fortune, as the mission appears to be going as smoothly as could be expected, and recovery of Discovery seems well underway.



Part 4, Chapters 22-25

Part 4, Chapters 22-25 Summary

In chapter twenty-two, Floyd sends another message back to his wife on Earth. He tells her the captain has them working and barely allows them time to sleep. Both ships are operational. They are trying to determine if Hal can send Discovery back to Earth, and readying the next stage of their mission, which involves exploring the monolith, which Floyd has taken to calling Big Brother. They've found no new information onboard the ship about what happened to its crew, however. They did manage to find a message from Bowman intended to reach his mother.

In chapter twenty-three, Nikolai Ternovsky is the control and cybernetics expert for Leonov, and he has taken to helping Chandra with Hal. Chandra reports that Hal is ready to transfer orbits to bring them closer to the monolith. Both vessels approach the alien artifact to a distance of one-hundred kilometers, and through their telescopes the crew determines that the object is featureless. They begin their series of tests with passive imaging, such as radar and photographing, but detect nothing at all from the object.

In chapter twenty-four, Discovery has one remaining space pod. It lacks a hatch, but crew plans to use it to examine the monolith without putting anyone at risk. They send the Nina, the name given to the remaining pod, out to examine the monolith's surface, and Vasili has Curnow leave the pod in the center of its largest surface and keeps its radar focused on there. He wants to determine the object's mass, because he is beginning to suspect that nothing is there at all, and he wants to use the Nina to touch its surface.

In chapter twenty-five, the Nina has landed on the monolith without any problems. Vasili has measured its mass at 950,000 tons, which for its volume means that the structure is lighter than air. Discovery and Leonov are now docked together. Chandra continues his work on Hal, alongside Ternovsky. Chandra claims that the computer is ready for use after a week of work on him. Hal does not appear to remember the disaster onboard Discovery. Chandra tells the crew that he has erased Hal's memory of what happened. The next step is to program Hal to escape Jupiter long after the Leonov has departed.

Part 4, Chapters 22-25 Analysis

The mission still progresses exactly as it should. Hal appears to be completely operational once more, but this fact leaves the crew, and the reader, with more questions than answers regarding the nature of Hal's malfunction years prior. Chandra only explains that what occurred depended on the definition of the word "security". According to the only human account they have of Hal's behavior, the computer is responsible for the deaths of Discovery's original crew, and Chandra is almost certainly

hiding something in order to protect his creation. They are no closer to understanding the nature of the monolith, either, in spite of the fact that it appears to be hollow. It continues not to respond to any of the tests the astronauts run on it.



Part 4, Chapters 26-29

Part 4, Chapters 26-29 Summary

In chapter twenty-six, Heywood sends a secret message back to a Victor Millson, the Chairman of the National Council on Astronautics, explaining that Chandra has determined the nature and reason for Hal's malfunction was that he was given information and ordered to conceal it, which went against his basic programming. This essentially drove the computer insane and caused a direct confrontation with Discovery's crew, after Hal determined the only way he could successfully complete his mission was by eliminating the humans onboard. He also informs Millson that Chandra is not entirely cooperative with the rest of the crew.

In chapter twenty-seven, Curnow expresses his dislike of the ship's plumbing, and wishes he could take a warm bath. Rudenko wishes to go horseback riding again. Brailovsky admits that he would go diving if he were off of the ship. Captain Orlova would go to ballet if she were back on Earth. Her husband says he would go diving. Chandra says he would go to Varanasi, Benares, in India. Nikolai would go wind-surfing. Floyd admits to the group that he only wants to be back with his son.

In chapter twenty-eight, despite all of their efforts, the crew has made no further discoveries regarding the monolith, and they are growing frustrated. The crew still has weeks to go until they can break orbit and begin the journey back to Earth, and they are becoming bored. A few days ago Chandra set off a fire alarm by lighting in a cigar that he'd smuggled aboard. The rest of the crew found the incident to be hilarious. At one point, Floyd had to confront Curnow about his behavior with Max, especially since Zenia appears to have strong feelings for the engineer. Curnow wonders aloud what kind of accident the girl went through, and Floyd tells him it was due to a bad air crash. Floyd misses his family greatly, and feels as though his part in the mission has failed.

In chapter twenty-nine, Orlov tells Floyd that Sasha's father was a professor of English, and that Sasha is essentially a black sheep in her family. While speaking to Floyd, he sees something outside the ship that Floyd misses because he's facing away from the window. The monolith has opened briefly, revealing clusters of suns within. Something exists the monolith, and Orlov can tell from its direction that it's headed directly towards Earth.

Part 4, Chapters 26-29 Analysis

The relationship between crew members has been explored here, and the isolation and boredom each of them is experiencing has begun to take its toll on each of the astronauts, though they have all designed ways of coping with it. The hardest thing any of them must deal with is being so far from Earth and the people and things they care about. They have very few activities to engage in. Chandra's cigar-lighting comes as the



greatest surprise to the reader, for he is described as a man of few vices and the least likely person so cause such abrupt panic on board the ship. The fact that the monolith has just sent something towards Earth will no doubt become the focal point for the rest of the story, though its exact nature is as of yet unknown.



Part 5, Chapters 30-35

Part 5, Chapters 30-35 Summary

In chapter thirty, the being once known as David Bowman has experienced an incredible transformation brought about by the monolith, and now he races toward Earth. He detects a nuclear weapon in orbit around the planet and rapidly disables it, taking its energy into himself. This action causes mass confusion on Earth. After this, Bowman plunges toward Earth, to the place where he grew up.

In chapter thirty-one, Florida's EPCOT center has become a village for senior citizens, having reached about twenty-thousand in population. Jessi, Dave Bowman's mother, is visited by a robot food trolley and a nurse. Frustrated with the nurse, Jessi swipes her cane, trying to strike her legs, but the nurse turns out only to be a hologram. This is all caught on a video played by a medical technician, who decides to warn the staff in case the seniors begin to take swings at real people.

In chapter thirty-two, Bobby and David Bowman, as children, live near Crystal Spring, which has an impressive depth of one-hundred meters. They plan to bring up a shiny object from the bottom of the lake from its depths. Dave goes under first to test their breathing device, then goes back up to give the nozzle back to his older brother. Bobby, planning to go all the way down with it, is poisoned by carbon monoxide deep underwater and dies.

In chapter thirty-three, Dave Bowman has returned to Crystal Spring where his brother once died. He begins drifting toward the state capital, with no knowledge of what he is looking for. He is partly under control of the force that changed him, and partly able to operate under his own force of will. He goes, undetected, to the home of Betty Fernandez, who is watching news of the recent events. He says hello to her, and she sees him. In his past life as a human, Dave and Betty had been lovers, and before that, Betty had been with Bobby. He asks her if Carlos was his son, or Jose's son, and she tells him that the boy belonged to Dave, but when Dave Bowman leaves, she relates the story to Jose, and admits that she lied to what she thought was a ghost.

In chapter thirty-four, UFO's once sparked intense interest in the mid-twentieth century and become of great significance to many people. The monolith has caused a resurgence in these beliefs, especially with news of a genuine UFO on its way toward Earth. Across the planet, people report sightings of and communication with aliens. Meanwhile, Dave is able to explore the Earth completely undetected. He realizes that he is being used by the things that created him in order to gather samples of human experience across the globe. Some of these experiences, Dave can't even recall after he's observed them. Meanwhile, his mother, Jessie, is still at EPCOT, when a nurse watches a comb raise up in the air by itself and begin sifting through Jessie's hair. Jessie dies peacefully as Dave continues to comb.



In chapter thirty-five, Leonov's crew hears of the events on Earth and watches the debate they've sparked at the UN. Their return to Earth will be difficult, especially because Discovery has barely enough fuel, and they have yet to figure out how to make Hal wait three years before he begins the return journey, even though Chandra claims to have gotten a long way with the computer. However, Chandra also explains that the computer still displays some rather bizarre behavior, which looks like reluctance. Floyd doubts Discovery will be able to safely return to Earth. Chandra wants to stay with Discovery in order to help Hal make the journey home in three years. While Floyd agrees to submit the suggestion to Mission Control, he knows that they would never allow one man to stay by himself for three years in space.

Part 5, Chapters 30-35 Analysis

Bowman's journey to Earth represents a sort cataloguing of human experience, both emotional and historical. The mysterious forces responsible for Bowman's existence as a Godlike creature are also responsible for ape's evolution into man, and very likely for spreading intelligence across the Earth. This fostering of intelligence and knowledge seems like the very reason for the existence of the monolith, and Dave seems to be examining life on Europa in order to compare it with Earth's, and also to gauge the chances that intelligent life will develop on the planet. Bowman's mother has begun to be featured in the book as well, though her mental state appears questionable. This visitation by Bowman doubtless has many political implications for Earth, but the purpose of the monolith is still unknown, and only Betty and Jessie are even aware that Bowman has reappeared on Earth. All the astronauts can do during this time is watch events unfold, and it is important to keep in mind that even though Bowman's journey was initially observed by the crew, they have no idea what left the monolith.



Part V

Part V Summary

In chapter thirty-six, Dave Bowman returns to Jupiter, aware that he is being watched and used, but those responsible have not yet revealed themselves. He travels to Callisto, then to Ganymede. From there he goes to Europa. He sees the wreckage of Tsien, then goes under the ice. Deep under Europa's surface, ice gives way to warm water, and life is present there. He wanders in Europa's ocean and finds many areas where drastic changes have wiped out ecosystems. He examines all sorts of life inside Europa's mass, and understands that this life will all die out some day, because the forces that provide Europa with energy will also die out some day.

In chapter thirty-seven, Caroline has asked Dmitri to tell Heywood that she's leaving him, which Dmitri relays in a message to Leonov. Dmitri also tells Heywood that everyone is trying to figure out what detonated the bomb, and that authorities are trying to convince everyone it was simply a malfunction onboard the satellite. Dave Bowman's mother died just a few days after the object exited the monolith, and thinks there might be a connection between Jessie's death and the monolith. Floyd is hurt about Caroline leaving him, but also feels guilty about being the man responsible for taking Jessie's surviving son away from her.

In chapter thirty eight, Bowman encounters one of the creatures related to the one that destroyed Tsien, then goes to Io, briefly, before moving on to Jupiter itself. He goes into the red spot and examines giant gaseous life-forms there. An entire ecosystem is present. He still finds no hint of intelligence. The forces controlling Bowman lead him deeper inside Jupiter, at the core of which is an Earth-sized diamond.

In chapter thirty-nine, Curnow and Orlova discuss Floyd. They are worried about him since Caroline left him. He's making the others unhappy onboard the Leonov. She wants to surprise him with hibernation early if he doesn't snap out of his depression. The commander wants Curnow to talk to him, but Curnow is aware of the fact that Floyd thinks he is a loud-mouthed buffoon, for the most part. Nevertheless, he agrees to try to talk to Floyd. Meanwhile, Floyd himself feels as though he has let his crew members down, because even though he has helped them gather a great deal of knowledge, they still haven't approached any understanding of the monolith. Heywood is hard at work in the pod bay, considering following the same route Bowman once did. Curnow goes to him, and admits that Max was considering an expedition with the Nina, in order to visit the monolith. They joke together briefly, and Floyd realizes they are becoming friends.

In chapter forty, Bowman gathers information from Jupiter's core and receives the first direct message from the forces controlling him. He also realizes that his former colleagues on Leonov are being manipulated, and asks that they never know it. He goes to Hal on Discovery, because the computer will be easier to communicate with in



Dave's present state. He remembers perfectly his last conversation with Hal, and that led to the computer's disablement.

In chapter forty-one, Floyd has begun performing menial jobs on Leonov and Discovery since the importance of his place in the mission is no longer significant. This leaves the other crew members time to do more important things. He spends watch duty reading, composing reports, and conversing with Hal. During one of these instances, Hal delivers a message to Floyd, which says that staying near Jupiter is dangerous, and that the crew of Leonov should leave within fifteen days. He responds back to say that this is impossible, but a response comes in again, insisting on the truth of the original message. The messenger reveals himself as David Bowman as Floyd turns to see a collection of dust take human form. Floyd now believes the message completely, as the head of the figure looks exactly like Bowman once did.

Part V Analysis

Bowman's swift return to the moons of Jupiter do indeed indicate that he and those in control of him are searching for intelligent life in the Solar System. They seem frightened or frustrated that nothing has been found, in terms of intelligent life, either on Europa or Jupiter, though incredible life-forms were discovered there. The forces controlling Bowman seem to be preparing for some kind of massive change in the solar system, particularly one that will place the crew of Leonov in great danger, involving the massive diamond at Jupiter's core. Floyd's depression was thankfully not long-lived, for he has proven himself still to be very useful to the crew and the mission at large, even though he has performed the majority of the duties as given to him from Mission Control. How the crew will manage to escape and return to Earth, beginning in fifteen days or less, seems impossible at present, especially when they would require almost twice that time for a suitable exit window, but it seems possible they could make use of a trip similar to the one used by Tsien to refuel adequately. The novel has once again detached itself from events on Earth, though Dmitri does admit scientists are stunned by the events that have unfolded there.



Part 6, Chapters 42-45

Part 6, Chapters 42-45 Summary

In chapter forty-two, Floyd gives his story to Orlova. She is wary of the idea that Bowman has returned, but Dr. Chandra insists that whatever messaged the ship had to have come from outside of Hal. The crew is trying to determine what happened, and Floyd reminds them that they know Bowman once entered the monolith, and that something recently left it for Earth and disabled a nuclear missile in orbit. The captain insists that they can't leave Jupiter early, regardless of the message, and also that they should delay their departure for another five days in order to improve fuel reserves. Floyd tells Dmitri of their situation in a message, but the crew agrees to keep Bowman's visit a secret from mission control for the time being.

In chapter forty-three, the crew's attitude changes toward Floyd somewhat, but Floyd hears of Betty's encounter with Bowman on Earth and is encouraged. They've worked out the approach to the monolith, but still must wait until conditions are optimal for leaving. Curnow suggests using Discovery's fuel directly to boost them home. They present the idea to Orlova, who agrees it is an interesting idea, but needs positive proof that they are in danger before she will allow them to leave early.

In chapter forty-four, people continue to work on the solution to leaving early as presented by Curnow. Later, on watch duty, Floyd sees that the monolith has completely vanished. He quickly wakes Sasha, who verifies that the monolith has gone. The crew gathers. Orlova takes Bowman's warning much more seriously now, but leaving early still involves huge risks. Meanwhile, Betty Fernandez has revealed the truth about her encounter with Bowman.

In chapter forty-five, Heywood prepares his last message from their position near Jupiter. They are getting ready for the early jump out of Jupiter's orbit. Before they leave, they'll be getting as close to Jupiter as possible in order to use its gravitational pull to slingshot them back towards earth. Discovery will remain in a huge orbit around Jupiter, and they will be unable to bring it back to Earth on this mission. Chandra is worried about Hal's reaction to the new plan. He insists they must be completely honest with Hal about the changes. Floyd suggests they give Hal a chance to comply, and that they disconnect him if the program starts acting strangely.

Part 6, Chapters 42-45 Analysis

The crew's mission has evolved from one of science and exploration to one of survival, a challenge which has faced astronauts before, particularly during the Apollo 13 mission, where astronauts faced a similar situation as this fictional crew faces around Jupiter. The bonds amongst the astronauts have changed in important ways since the earlier stages of the mission. While they may be closer and more familiar with each



other, they are all psychologically drained by the isolation and boredom they've experienced. Floyd's relationship with much of the crew was heavily damaged when he revealed his sighting of Bowman, and while they all agree that leaving early is for the best, no one knows precisely what will happen after the deadline Bowman announced to Floyd.



Part 6, Chapters 46-49

Part 6, Chapters 46-49 Summary

In chapter forty-six, Max circles the two ships during their docking procedure. The two ships are joined with extremely powerful tape. Mission Control asks them to take some pictures of a strange spot that has developed on Jupiter's surface. They reach ignition and begin acceleration toward Jupiter. The maneuver goes well, and the captain orders everyone to rest. In his chamber, Floyd attempts to locate the spot Mission Control told him about. It does in fact look very strange, and Floyd begins to think it is growing, and that it isn't a natural phenomenon at all.

In chapter forty-seven, the two ships continue their journey, and Floyd grows more concerned about Hal's reaction to being left behind. The black spot on Jupiter is, in fact, growing rapidly. They've determined it is made from countless smaller dots. Curnow has Hal's shutoff device in case anything goes wrong with the computer. However, the computer is presently still cooperating, and the black spot once again comes around into view. They discover the spot is actually over one million of the monolith structures like the one that until days ago hovered over Tycho Crater. Hal recommends they abort the countdown to study the phenomenon, even though it is really clear that Hal just wants someone to stay with him. Curnow nearly uses the shutdown device on Hal, because it seems as if the computer has stopped the countdown, but at time zero Hal announces full thrust is on the way.

In chapter forty-eight, Floyd watches as they fly over Jupiter's night side. The fuel gauges on Discovery have been reading low, so they enjoy more of a boost from the other ship than they had originally planned. Sasha detonates the charges that break the tape which kept the two ships attached. Leonov reaches escape velocity, and they are free of the planet.

In chapter forty-nine, the crew sees the black spot once more the next morning, having grown much larger. Katerina suggests that the monolith is acting like a virus, devouring Jupiter. They can also see lines of force drawing gases into the structures. They do indeed appear to be devouring the face of Jupiter, and Vasili determines that they will use up all of Jupiter in a matter of days if they continue at their present rate.

Part 6, Chapters 46-49 Analysis

It appears that the Tycho monolith has transformed its purpose yet again, but it has only gone, as far as the crew aboard Leonov is concerned, from a mystery to an even larger mystery. They may be able to learn something more about the structures from Hal, who is still in orbit around Jupiter, and some onboard Leonov seem to think that objects like these might exist all across the universe. Even though they were entirely successful from escaping orbit around Jupiter, the remainder of their journey is still dangerous from

whatever these monoliths may intend to do. After all, we know they are capable of ejecting creatures like the once human Bowman into space at incredible speeds, even if they don't seem to mean any harm.



Part 7, Chapters 50-53

Part 7, Chapters 50-53 Summary

In chapter fifty, Floyd sends a message to Caroline, informing her that he is getting ready to enter hibernation, and that he hopes whatever happens on his return is best for Chris. He also tells her that Jupiter is more or less destroyed from the monolith's self-replication. Chandra is already designing HAL 10,000. He is in the middle of explaining to Floyd that he had disconnected his blackout device on Hal months ago when Sasha suddenly cries out in alarm.

In chapter fifty-one, it is revealed that an alien race has been attempting to breed intelligence all over the galaxy for a very long time now, and that they are the ones responsible for the monoliths. They were also responsible for human intelligence, and have long since transformed themselves into beings of pure energy.

In chapter fifty-two, Dave Bowman returns to Discovery and has Hal send a message towards Earth that begins with "All these worlds." Pure heat slams into Discovery, and Bowman transforms Hal into pure energy as Discovery is totally destroyed. He focuses in and discovers that the planet is actually shrinking. He sounds the alarm. Floyd reaches the observation deck as Jupiter becomes blindingly bright and emits a giant flash. They position Leonov so that the bulk of the ship is between themselves and the radiation on the way. The radiation surges past them doing minimal damage. Floyd announces that Jupiter has just been transformed into a star by some kind of advanced engineers. They search for Discovery and Hal, but find no trace of the other ship's signal.

In chapter fifty-three, the message that Bowman sent to Earth turns out to be "All these worlds are yours—except Europa. Attempt no landings there. Floyd believes that's because the powers that created the sun want life on Europa to evolve on its own. They also realize Hal sent the message to Earth because everyone on Leonov could still have been killed by the radiation blast.

Part 7, Chapters 50-53 Analysis

The purpose of the monolith having replicated itself becomes clear. Jupiter is now a second, much smaller sun, but the odds of intelligent life developing on Europa are now far greater. However, the powers who did this are still far from able to predict the results of their experiment, and they did not even know if the astronauts would survive the explosion on Jupiter. These powers, though advanced and profound, appear to have little concern for individual lives, and perhaps have not judged humankind to be completely worthy of survival. They have, however, given mankind several new worlds that will accommodate life, even if Europa has been deemed off-limits.



Chapter 54-Epilogue

Chapter 54-Epilogue Summary

In chapter fifty-four, Floyd re-enters hibernation, along with Chandra. Katerina expresses envy as the two drift off into sleep. She tells Floyd that Max and Zenia are getting married when they return, and so are she and Walter Curnow.

In chapter fifty-five, the new sun is named Lucifer, or light-bearer. It cuts down the world's need for artificial lighting at night, even if it has seriously jeopardized nocturnal life across the world. The new sun raises many questions, even as mankind adjusts.

In the epilogue, Europeans have traveled to the dark and cold side of their planet, and have developed early astronomy and have begun to develop theories about space. There is a monolith floating above their world as well.

Chapter 54-Epilogue Analysis

The monoliths have rapidly created intelligent life on Europa, and continue to protect it from human, who have nonetheless populated many other surrounding worlds, including the other habitable moons of Jupiter, as perhaps the makers of the monolith had originally intended.



Characters

Floyd

Heywood Floyd was once a scientist and the mission commander responsible for the first Discovery journey to Jupiter. Though he was officially blamed for the disaster that left the shuttle's crew dead or missing, he nonetheless leads a relatively pleasant life on the Pacific Ocean. When it suddenly becomes clear that the U.S. will not be able to reach their ship before the Russians, he is asked to accompany that nation's crew aboard the Leonov, so that they can successfully determine what happened onboard. Heywood leaves behind his wife, Caroline and Son, Chris, and even though he makes every attempt to communicate with them frequently, his marriage deteriorates while he is away. Though he feels as if there is little for him to do onboard Leonov, he does his best to complete small tasks to free up time for other astronauts, and even comes to befriend several of the astronauts, including Walter Curnow, eventually. Bowman comes to him to issue the warning that he and Leonov have fifteen days to leave. It is Floyd that realizes what Bowman has done, and why the monoliths serve to transform Jupiter into a second son, and though he never plans on going into space again, he feels that his decision to undertake the journey was correct, and couldn't have been done by anyone else. Though Floyd clearly loves his wife, it is much harder for him to leave behind his son, Chris, since the boy might not even remember his father by the time Heywood returns.

Chandra

Though Dr. Chandra is originally of Indian descent, he is one of the Americans selected to join Leonov's crew for the journey to Jupiter. Chandra is a computer scientist and responsible for the creation of Discovery's operational computer, HAL 9000. He is very concerned with determining what went wrong with the computer, and as he is completely absorbed in his work, many of the other crew members aboard Leonov find him unpleasant, and most of them distrust him a little. Chandra is withdrawn and secretive, and believes that Hal is every bit as conscious as the humans onboard the ship. Though he is perceived as mild-mannered, he is dreadfully embarrassed at one point for accidentally tripping Leonov's fire alarm system when he lights a cigar that he managed to smuggle onboard. By the end of the novel, most of the crew has respect for Dr. Chandra, especially since Hal does in fact seem to desire the companionship of other humans, owing to Chandra's design of the computer program. He is also intelligent enough to anticipate Floyd's placing of a device that would cut power to Hal instantly if any sort of problem arose with the computer, and let's Floyd know on the way home that he had found the device months ago and disabled it. It can be seen as ironic that Chandra is evasive and noncompliant toward the crew, but insists on complete honesty and compassion when dealing with Hal. Nevertheless, Chandra manages to begin work on a more advanced computer system, HAL 10000, before Leonov even reaches Earth.



Hal

HAL 9000 is an artificially computer originally designed by Dr. Chandra to assist the crew of the original Discovery. In 2000 AD, Discovery undertook a journey to Jupiter, but Hal malfunctioned, killing most of the crew, and the nature of his malfunction remains a mystery until Chandra determines that Hal was given a set of paradoxical orders that caused the computer to develop symptoms similar to human paranoia. Once reactivated by his creator, Hal is compliant and helpful, though does express a desire to remain in human company when Leonov leaves Jupiter's orbit. Though Discovery is destroyed by Jupiter's transformation into a star, Hal is transformed and preserved by David Bowman.

Dave

David Bowman was the commander of the original Discovery, who narrowly escaped Hal's attempts to kill the crew. Dave once managed to deactivate Hal and enter the monolith, and reemerges as an extraordinary being who gathers information about life on Earth, Jupiter's moon Europa, and Jupiter itself. He warns the crew of Leonov that they must flee Jupiter quickly, and recreates Hal as a being like himself once the original Discovery is destroyed.

Max

Maxim Brailovsky is Leonov's Engineer, and quickly makes friends with most of the crew. He is also responsible in large part for helping restore Discovery.

Orlova

Tatiana Orlova is Leonov's ship captain. She is capable and intelligent, and though she originally resists Floyd's suggestion that they leave Jupiter's orbit ahead of schedule, changes her mind immediately when the monolith disappears.

Orlov

Vasili Orlov is Leonov's main engineer and husband of Orlova.

Curnow

Walter Curnow is another American onboard Leonov primarily responsible for getting Discovery up and running again. Though Floyd dislikes the man at first, the two come to share a friendship near the end of the novel. He is somewhat loud and boisterous, but the Russians seem to enjoy his company.



Dmitri

Dr. Dmitri Moisevitch is Floyd's former counterpart in the Russian space program, and the man responsible for asking Floyd to accompany Leonov to Jupiter. The two scientists enjoy a strong friendship, and Floyd sends many of his messages to Dmitri on his journey.

Caroline

Caroline is Floyd's second wife, and the mother of his son Chris. She disapproves of the mission to Jupiter, and eventually separates from her husband while he is in space.

Chris

Chris is Floyd and Caroline's son. Floyd misses him very much while in space, and fears that Chris won't know who he is upon his return.

Chang

Chang is a Chinese astronaut who manages to survive the alien life-form's attack on Tsien. He sends a message to Floyd explaining what has happened to Tsien and her crew.

Betty

Betty Fernandez was once in a relationship with David Bowman, but chose to marry another man, Jose. Dave visits her in his new form and asks him if Carlos is his son, and she lies and says that he is.

Jessie

Jessie Bowman is David's mother. She is suffering from Alzheimer's and dies while Dave combs her hair in his new form.



Objects/Places

Monolith

The Monolith was once the name given to the black featureless object found floating above Jupiter's crater of Tycho. Its purpose is unknown, but it possess a number of incredible powers. Floyd refers to the structure as "Big Brother."

Discovery

Discovery is the original ship sent to Jupiter by the United States. It is abandoned and in an irregular orbit around Jupiter until Leonov intercepts it.

Leonov

Leonov is the Russian space shuttle launched to explore Jupiter.

Tsien

Tsien is the name of the Chinese vessel sent to Jupiter. It is destroyed by an alien life-form on Europa.

Jupiter

Jupiter is the largest planet in the solar system, and has many moons, including Europa and Io.

Io

Io is one of Jupiter's moons. Its surface experiences lots of volcanic activity.

Europa

Europa is one of Jupiter's moons. There is a great deal of ice and water on the planet.

Crystal Spring

Crystal Spring is the location of the place where David Bowman once lost his older brother in a tragic accident.

EPCOT

EPCOT is a center for senior citizens suffering from senility and Alzheimer's. David Bowman's mother Jessie is a resident there.

Floyd Residence

Floyd has a large house on an island in the Pacific that is often visited by dolphins.



Themes

Exploration

The author of "2010: Odyssey II" is widely known for his contributions to science fiction that primarily explore the idea of extraterrestrial intelligence and space exploration. The entire novel, in a sense, continues the author's tradition of paying homage to what he viewed to be an extraordinary field of scientific work. In this sense, each of the characters onboard Leonov is an astronaut first, and human being second. The crew aboard Leonov is even horrified when Tsien's crew dies after the alien attack, citing a strong bond between all space-explorers, and indeed the crew seems to cheer Tsien on even though that ship's mission is directly preventing their own, and Captain Orlova's suggestion of the use of force against them is not taken seriously. Each of the astronauts has been selected for his or her own expertise and abilities in order to ensure success of the mission, which is to travel to Jupiter in order to find out what happened to Discovery and determine the nature of the monolith. Even Tsien manages to land on the moon called Europa, and begins plans to build a fueling station on that moon in order to allow exploration to further regions in the solar system. Exploration is central to the novel as a whole, as the world created by the author has developed far more ambitious and capable space-exploration technologies.

Intelligence

The astronauts clearly take pride in their work, and the main reason that they are sent to Jupiter is to uncover the nature of the monolith, which appears to be the creation of some other form of intelligent life. This is a correct assumption, and the explorers may have been surprised to learn that, in essence, intelligent life is the very purpose of the monolith, which was created by beings who are attempting to create intelligent life all throughout the galaxy. For this reason alone do they cause the monoliths to transform Jupiter into a second sun, giving Europa the heat it needs in order to develop intelligent life. These creators see intelligent life as the only purpose in the galaxy, which is why they wish to foster and create it, and all of their experiments and manipulations are geared towards accomplishing this goal. The epilogue gives the reader an interesting survey of life on Europa twenty-thousand years after the creation of Lucifer, as the intelligent species on that moon develop astronomy and wonder about the strange lights that appear to travel back and forth between other celestial bodies. They wonder quite clearly why those lights do not visit them, and the author has very cleverly already presented the reader with the answer: humans have been forbidden to do so. This belief that intelligence is in essence the purpose of the universe is clearly the point made by the author in the novel.



Politics

Earth does not make many appearances in the novel, as it takes place almost completely onboard the ship Leonov. However, the politics of Earth underscores, and in some cases undermines, the efforts of the astronauts at every possible turn. Numerous events are kept hidden from the general public, and the disaster involving the original discovery came about because Mission Control made the decision to hide critical information from Discovery's crew while making sure Hal was informed. This constant deception and posturing is still felt by the astronauts in the cold confines of space. As they watch Tsien race towards their own objective, the United Nations and countries involved engage in a heated debate about everyone's rights to what resides in space, particularly the moon Europa and the spaceship Discovery. These political conflicts are mostly scoffed at by the crew of Leonov, which is composed of both American and Russian astronauts. Floyd himself appears very disdainful of the idea that space is a place for anything less than total cooperation, as he personally lost his position at the U.S. space program as a result of Discovery's disaster many years ago, which was not directly his fault. The chaotic and often divisive decisions that come from the political structures in the novel often lead to difficulties and represent a branch of intelligence that obstructs the truth rather than reveals it.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of the novel is third person, focusing primarily on Dr. Heywood Floyd as he journeys toward Jupiter, but often switching characters to share the thoughts of other astronauts or people on earth as unfolding events make necessary. Most important amongst these transitions include first and foremost the journey of David Bowman, who becomes an important viewpoint nearer to the close of the novel, and Dr. Chandra, who is extremely guarded and often misunderstood by the other characters. As the novel's setting spans a vast distance, this is entirely necessary in order to inform the reader of the events that are occurring at the same times throughout the solar system. The chapters generally take place in chronological order, but the reader is to be aware that over these great distances, light can take long periods of time to travel. Thus, transmissions sent from Floyd to Earth are not received immediately, and vice-versa. This does not complicate the general flow of the novel however, and in the rare instances where things take place at roughly the same time, the author is skilled enough to provide enough cues to the reader that this is the case. This type of narrative works well for a book that covers such a large space, and is necessary since the objectives of the race that originally constructed the monoliths is made known at the end of the book.

Setting

This book takes place mainly onboard the Russian spaceship Leonov, which is tightly cramped, but excellently constructed, considering the ship is supposed to transport roughly a dozen people to Jupiter. Leonov's interior is sparse, providing very little room for any sort of recreational activity. Whatever space the ship has is taken up with equipment the crew is to use on its mission, and as a result, they begin to suffer from boredom and isolation while onboard, though the Americans on the ship are put into hibernation for the majority of the time toward Jupiter and away from it. Discovery is similar in construction to Leonov, but larger, and possessing a large spinning wheel that simulates gravity for its crew. It can be operated completely by the computer program HAL 9000, though the computer originally malfunctioned. The planet Jupiter encompasses a large portion of both ship's horizons once Leonov comes to orbit it. The view is spectacular, and the crew can also see much of Io's surface, which looks violent and highly volcanic.

The Earth featured in this novel is similar to real Earth, save that EPCOT center is an actual city of some 20,000 people, most of whom are senior citizens who require intensive care to remain in good health.



Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is straightforward. Though there are some technical and scientific terms thrown around here and there, it is dealt with through clear and concise language for the most part, the strongest example of this being the use of Jupiter's gravitational field in order to accelerate spaceships. Most of the crew aboard Leonov is Russian, but the novel is delivered in plain English, for the most part, and in cases where Russian is used, explanations are always offered to assist the reader in comprehension. It is mentioned that Floyd occasionally finds himself explaining things to American crewmates in Russian, but again, this disparity in languages never disrupts the narrative in the least. Given the fact that the novel takes place roughly in the fictional present, the language makes perfect sense and fits well within the context of the novel, and while it could be argued that more technical language might be used onboard a spaceship during complicated maneuvers, enough crew members are present who are not actually astronauts, that it makes sense for Captain Orlova or Vasili Orlov to quickly explain to these members what is about to happen in plain terms. The use of one single language throughout a space-exploration novel even though other languages are present and in use is a standard practice, so readers familiar with other similar works will be very comfortable with the language used herein.

Structure

The novel is divided into seven parts, each with a separate heading explaining the contents of the section. The sections are further divided into chapters, generally no more than twenty pages, and each beginning with a phrase explaining what the chapter will be about. These headings go a long way towards assisting the reader in anticipating the contents of these sections and chapters. The chapters themselves tend to be very short, dealing with one concept or situation.

The plot of the novel is simple. Leonov is sent to Jupiter to determine what happened to Discovery and to find out more about the monolith. While they are partially successful, Leonov's exploits near Jupiter produce results far greater than anyone in the ship or on Earth could have ever predicted. There do exist a few subplots, mainly the deterioration of Floyd's marriage, and Leonov's brief race with Tsien to capture Discovery first.

The pace of the novel is rapid despite the fact that the author does an excellent job describing Jupiter and its moons in many places throughout the novel. These descriptions are always vibrant, and usually included briefly during chapters where such a description would be warranted. As a result, they do not disrupt the fast-paced nature of Leonov's exploration in space.



Quotes

"The great saucer set among the mountains was already half full of shadow, as the tropical sun dropped swiftly to rest, but the triangular raft of the antenna complex suspended high above its center still blazed with light." Chap. 1, p. 3

"Duty! Yes, that was the key word, and what multitudes it contained. He had a duty to himself, to his family, to the University, to his past job (even though he had left it under a cloud), to his country—and to the human race." Chap. 4, p. 25

"Tsien had closed down all voice, video, and data circuits two hours before, as the long-range antennas were withdrawn into the protective shadow of the heat shield. Only the omnidirectional beacon was still transmitting, accurately pinpointing the Chinese ship's position as it plunged toward that ocean of continent-sized clouds." Chap. 8 p. 46

"The signal faded again. A stunned silence followed that no one attempted to interrupt. While he was waiting, Floyd searched his memory furiously. He could not recognize the voice—it might have been that of any Western-Educated Chinese." Chap. 11 p. 64

"He began to look for the Great Red Spot, then quickly checked himself at such a foolish thought. All the enormous cloudscape he could see below would be only a few percent of the Red Spot's immensity; one might as well expect to recognize the shape of the United States from a small airplane flying low above Kansas." Chap. 15, p. 90

"He was still not sure if he had handled Curnow properly. Though he did not suppose that he would ever really like the big engineer, or enjoy the sound of his slightly too-loud voice, Floyd's attitude toward him had changed from mere tolerance to respectful admiration." Chap. 28, p. 139

"In some subtle way, he was being used as a probe, sampling every aspect of human affairs. The control was so tenuous that he was barely conscious of it; he was rather like a hunting dog on a leash, allowed to make excursions of his own, yet nevertheless compelled to obey the overriding wishes of his master." Chap. 34, p. 168

"Even while pain gripped his heart like a vise, what he felt for David Bowman was not envy, but pity." Chap. 37, p. 185

"The sphere of consciousness in which he was embedded enclosed the whole of Jupiter's diamond core. He was dimly aware, at the limits of his new comprehension, that every aspect of the environment around him was being probed and analyzed." Chap 40, p. 197

"He felt certain—and the knowledge filled him with helpless despair—that if they did not leave before that mysterious deadline, they would not leave at all." Chap. 42, p. 214

"Yet on further reflection, after the initial amazement had worn off, it was hard to see how a spreading black stain on the surface of Jupiter could represent any kind of



danger. It was extraordinary—inexplicable—but not as important as the critical events now only seven hours in the future." Chap. 47, p. 241

"The human race would adapt, as it had done to so many changes in the past. A generation would soon be born that had never known a world without Lucifer; but that brightest of all stars would be an eternal question to every thinking man and woman." Chap. 55, p. 284



Topics for Discussion

Is "duty" Floyd's real reason for going on Leonov's mission to Jupiter? How useful was he onboard the ship?

What about Walter Curnow causes Floyd to dislike the engineer? What eventually causes them to become friends?

Why does the crew of the Leonov seem to distrust Chandra? Do certain crew members trust him more or less than others? Why or why not?

Is Hal really conscious? Explain your reason for why this is or isn't the case, keeping in mind arguments from characters in the novel.

Why does Dave return to Earth and visit Crystal Spring? Is this a place of his choosing or the forces that control him? What about the Spring is so significant to Dave, and how might that relate to his mission on Discovery?

Who onboard Leonov get married by the end of the novel? What is significant about these revelations? Consider Floyd's conversation with Walter about the way he interacts with Max.

Why do the ultra-advanced beings see fit to turn Jupiter into a star, destroying all life on the planet? What is their rationale for doing so and do you agree with it. Why or why not?