

# **Agenda 21 Study Guide**

## **Agenda 21 by Glenn Beck**

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# Plot Summary

Agenda 21, a novel written by Glenn Beck and Harriet Parke, highlights the most extreme results that might occur if the United Nations followed through with the real Agenda 21 document. Preceding Chapter 1, Beck includes a portion of the real Agenda 21 to inform the reader of the gist of its meaning. Then, the novel continues into the tale of Emmeline, a 17 year old girl.

Much of the story is told through flashbacks at the beginning to establish backstory of how the Republic came to power. People are relocated, and the promises the Republic originally produce are to treat everyone equally. The Republic becomes a very power hungry government institution focused solely on reproduction and perfection.

Emmeline can reproduce, which is not typical for most of the women. As soon as she begins her period, she is immediately paired with George, an old friend of the family. Emmeline becomes pregnant; but, as her family is trying to stage a plan for her to escape, Father and George are killed. She has the baby, and Mother falls into a deep depression.

Overall, Emmeline loses her mother, father, and two of the men with whom she is paired. She doesn't know much about the Republic and how they work. She must figure out how this new world works without the guidance of her mother and father.

Mother leaves Emmeline many things hidden in her sleeping mat. Emmeline discovers a Bible, a map, a book, matches, a knife, a coin, recipes, and a picture. This helps shape her own history, and she tries to figure out why her mother leaves these items.

After Emmeline has Elsa, she meets John who is responsible for the babies. She wants to see Elsa constantly, and she collaborates with John on how to make that happen. She meets John's own son, David. David, a night Gatekeeper, visits Emmeline often; and they end up falling in love. Although night Gatekeepers are not supposed to be paired because they aren't home at night, the Authorities pair David and Emmeline. Emmeline is then given the night shift caretaker position at the Children's Village with David's mother, Joan, being her supervisor.

In this position, Emmeline can see Elsa every night. Emmeline meets Lizzie and, eventually, finds out that the Children's Village will be relocated since kids are not thriving. Emmeline decides to do something about it, especially since there are rumors of the people who live in the wild, known as the shadow people, stealing the food from the citizens. Emmeline eventually grabs Elsa and another child, a boy, whom she meets while working. She asks David to leave with her. Although he's hesitant, he agrees. They gather all the things in Mother's mat to take with them and use the matches to create a fire. The diversion allows them to escape the compound through a hole in the fence, which is where the book ends. As they head to freedom, the Republic burns behind them.



# Prologue, Chapters 1 and 2

## Summary

A short excerpt from the real and existing Agenda 21, as proposed by the United Nations, serves as a Prologue to the novel. The intent and purpose of the document is to reallocate resources and control consumption patterns so that global societies can thrive without impact or threat to the environment.

Chapter 1 starts off immediately with Emmeline's mother being taken away. The men who come to the door do not knock before walking in wearing black uniforms. Right away Emmeline knows that they are Enforcers. Emmeline believes that they have come to take Mother away because she had neglected her walking duty for several days. Though Emmeline had walked the boards for both of them (so that they could get food allotments) somehow, the Authorities had known. The boards are similar to treadmills and they generate energy for the collective. Emmeline had noticed that her mother had stopped walking when they had paired Emmeline with Jeremy, a boy that she was assigned to couple with in order to have a child. As the men take Mother away, she tells Emmeline that she is sorry that she didn't have time to teach her more.

It is not permitted to cry out or to show emotion in front of the Enforcers, so Emmeline stands there meekly. As soon as they are out of the door, Emmeline follows Mother to see them take her into a building. Her mother seems to know that she has followed and turns to look out of the bus's windows at Emmeline, silently putting her hand over her heart. Then she is gone. Emmeline goes home and finds herself strangely alone, a situation that her mother had never allowed her to experience until now. Despondent, all she can think of to do is get back on the walking board and finish out her assigned walking duty for the day.

While she walks on the board she discusses how the energy is converted into the energy that supplies the collective's needs, produces the food cubes that they eat, creates the clothing they wear, and handles all of their commercial necessities. It is called the Energy Neutral Policy. The reader learns that the Authorities care about two things: energy and healthy babies. The citizens who were able to be both reproductive and productive were held in higher regard.

In a flashback, Emmeline recalls when Jeremy had been brought to their gray compound dorm. There had been a ceremony and then after everyone had left, he'd taken her behind the privacy curtain and ridiculed her, saying that he had ordered a virgin. Emmeline hadn't thought much of him, either, since he was whiny, gaunt, and pale.

Emmeline continues walking and reflecting on her past. When she was younger, Emmeline's Mother had explained that compounds and the Republic didn't always exist, and that Emmeline's family used to live on a farm. They both laughed at the absurdity of



the thought since the authorities at the Social Update Meetings had reminded everyone that animals were protected and sacred. They were told to memorize and recite the Animal Pledge, which promises that the people of the Earth would protect the Earth and the animals in it, who are granted sacred rights.

Emmeline remembers that once, when they had gone to a Social Update Meeting, there had been a man paraded in front of them by the Enforcers. He was being severely punished for accidentally killing a snake.

Chapter 2 begins with a more detailed description of Emmeline's relationship with Jeremy. He tells her, cruelly, that he knew that her mother was going to be taken. When she asks him how he could know that he smiles and starts to eat his nourishment cube. Then, without another word he goes to bed and falls asleep, leaving Emmeline with more questions than answers.

Left with the silence of the room, and with Jeremy snoring in the corner, Emmeline loses herself in another one of her mother's stories about the 'before times'. She recalls when her mother told her about catching real fish in a stream, and of a time when the farm they lived on was in the middle of the nation, when it wasn't called a Republic. She had said that a new law, called Agenda 21, had been started in the east, and then people were moved into planned communities out west. They were told that the new law was for the good of everyone. Mother had sounded bitter when she had said it. Her mother had also told her about curious appliances called televisions and radios and how all of those had disappeared.

Still lost in her memories Emmeline recalls that she doesn't remember anything about the relocation. She'd been too little at the time. Her first memories were of the gray compound. Her education about colors had come from identifying the colors of the various uniforms that people work for their different duties. Orange uniforms indicated the transport team, green for recycling, gray for gatekeepers, pink and blue for those working in the children's Village, and yellow for those who made the nourishment cubes. White was for chaperons, bright green for managers of nature, black for Enforcers, and if they wore black with gold trim, then that person was the Authority.

She remembers that her father had worked for the Transporters and that they always worked in teams of six. The reader learns that even the rainwater that falls is forbidden to people in the compounds. According to the Agenda 21 the rainwater belonged to the earth and as such was too sacred for human beings to collect or use on their own behalf. The chapter ends with Emmeline describing how she is one of the last children to grow up at home with a parent. Most children are removed from birth and given over to the Children's Village for raising.

## Analysis

The preamble of the actual Agenda 21 is shared at the beginning of the book. Together, the excerpted document and the content of the first chapter reveal necessary



information that explains the new world. A glimpse about how the Republic functions is included, too. While being written from the persona of a young girl who knows very little of what is truly happening around her, the first chapter creates a mysterious curiosity of the true origins of this new world.

The man being punished for accidentally running over a snake foreshadows the lengths that the Republic will go in order to uphold its agenda. This is underscored with the taking of Emmeline's Mother. It is clear in the first chapter that the Republic enforces strange and strict rules and that Emmeline has been a part of it for so long that she doesn't often question anything.

It is significant when Emmeline is paired with Jeremy and she must turn in her widow scarf. It suggests that she has had a pairing before and that the person she was paired with has died. This is also implied when Jeremy sneers at her after the pairing ceremony and says that he'd wanted a virgin.

When Mother tells the Enforcers to take Emmeline's mat instead of her own, foreshadowing is developed about why she chose to do so. Also, the lack of a father figure is obvious, causing even more unanswered questions in the reader's mind. The theme of Family is demonstrated in this chapter as the reader sees how much Emmeline's mother loves her and is willing to sacrifice herself for her daughter. Emmeline's father has either died or is no longer allowed to live with them. Lastly, her selected mate, Jeremy, is anything but family and Emmeline dislikes him, though she puts up with him because she follows the rules.

The similarities created from the descriptions of Emmeline's current life and her young life can be viewed as a metaphor of freedom and confinement. Currently, people are only jailed if they have done something wrong. In Emmeline's world, it seems that everyone is punished and confined whether they are guilty of something or not. This provides a metaphor to some political views of today, where some may believe the government is up to more than they really declare, thus demonstrating the theme of a Distrust of Authority.

Another theme that is prominent in this chapter is that of Loss. The loss of her mother devastates Emmeline, but she is unable to emotionally express that because of the rules and oppression of the new government. She doesn't understand why her mother has been taken. While she does run after her, Emmeline, once seeing that she isn't going to be allowed into the building, simply returns home, numb and at a loss for dealing with life without her mother.

The authors use of the actual parts from the real Agenda 21 document at the very beginning portrays the illusion that the story may have more non-fiction elements than the genre originally implies. What is described as a harmless, fiction story of the most extreme possibilities to Agenda 21, pulls the readers into the terrifying and clueless life of Emmeline with references of how the government – even the real government of today – may be conspiring for something that could take tragic directions if left unchallenged.



In Chapter 2, Emmeline's mental battle increases when Jeremy and she experience some present conversation. He rudely implies he knew Mother would be taken, which creates a curiosity and instant dislike for the boy. The setting of the Living Space is thoroughly described as dim and unpleasant. More background on how life used to be is provided by Emmeline's memories of Mother.

(flashback) Agenda 21 was introduced, and Mother explained how the government first implied it would bring paradise and delete poverty. However, her description of how the compounds started slow and morphed into something completely opposite of what the government implied again foreshadows that it can get worse than it already is.

(present) There's a strong metaphor between Emmeline's developing life and that of the Republic. From the beginning of her story, she starts out happy and slowly gets worse as Mother is taken away and Jeremy treats her poorly. The same goes for the descriptions of the Republic and Agenda 21. They start out with good intentions, as superficial as those may be, and progressively worsen with the continuance of the story.

## Discussion Question 1

Compare and contrast Emmeline's world with the world of today.

## Discussion Question 2

Describe and discuss Jeremy.

## Discussion Question 3

Discuss Agenda 21 and the relocation of people into compounds. What might have instigated this decision?

## Vocabulary

allegiance, enforcer, policy, compound, potent, authority, nation, republic, communities, poverty, patriotic, relocated, citizen, shuffling





# Chapters 3 and 4

## Summary

Chapter 3 starts off with a flashback. Emmeline had found blood in her underwear when she turned fourteen, and she has been afraid to tell her mother. She thought she was dying. Her mother discovered her soiled undergarments and told her that they needed to have a discussion. As they both walked on their walking boards, she explained to Emmeline that the new government had decided that children should be taken from their parents in order to be raised as the children were not growing to their fullest potential in the compounds and that it must be the fault of the parents.

She had told Emmeline that the blood that was happening was normal but that it now meant that she would have to go for reproductive testing in one of the other compounds. It also meant that she might have to move into another compound, away from her parents. This had terrified Emmeline, but her mother would say no more about it.

Chapter 4 is back in the present as Emmeline tries to deal with the horrid smell of the Recycling Center that clings to Jeremy and his clothing. Emmeline realizes she recognizes the odor as coming from the place where her Mother had been taken. Emmeline tries to but can't sleep, and she continues to remember an argument her mother and father had right after she had gotten her first period.

(flashback)

Father informed her she had reproductive-ability testing, which Emmeline knew nothing about since Mother always tried to keep her in the dark. Father and Emmeline began to argue, and she stated she didn't care what the Authority thought. This scared Father, and he begged her to not fight the Authority. Father wanted to tell Emmeline everything, but Mother argued that if they did that then Emmeline would never feel safe again.

The day after she and Father argued, she received a white headscarf that the Gatekeeper left. Emmeline continued to ask Mother questions about the headscarf until Mother finally answered, annoyed. Women were identified by the scarves that they wore. White meant that a girl was of reproductive age, white with black trim, such as her mother wore, indicated that she was paired.

As the flashback continues, Emmeline got on a transport bus to go to her testing, and she finally began to feel more confident about the things she'd learned about the Republic. The bus picked up two more girls from the Children's Village, one of which was quite rude to Emmeline. She insulted Emmeline, teasing her about the things she didn't know, and called her stupid. Emmeline spoke with the kinder girl, Marina, about what it was like to have a mother. Both of the girls pitied her because she was home-raised and not raised in the collective where she could have had friends.



## Analysis

In Chapter 3, Mother is the character mostly developed in this chapter through the flashback, with her abruptness and sharpness apparent. From Emmeline's descriptions, up until the time she received her period, Mother did her best to protect Emmeline. She raised Emmeline at home unlike most other children and she didn't give her daughter much information about the compounds or the Republic. Despite reaching her mid-teen years where children began to form into young adults, Emmeline was still quite childish. However, Mother could not prevent Emmeline from getting her period, and it seemed she was frustrated because she couldn't protect her daughter as well as she used to.

Emmeline sucks her fingers a lot, a habit that continues to portray her as a character who is immature and needs constant comfort. Even more developed in this chapter is the mysterious Republic, who is not only centered around the rights of the Earth and its animals, but also human reproduction. The reader learns that the Authorities are intensely interested in girls who enter their reproductive years.

In Chapter 4, more information is offered to the reader via Emmeline's memories of her father. The reader sees that it is required that girls who reach sexual maturity have to be tested. It is clear that this upsets both parents that their child has to be treated like this, but they are also too frightened not to comply. The conversation that she overhears between her parents is a clear indicator that not following the rules can result in dire consequences, and that they have purposely kept their daughter in the dark about certain practices by the Republic so that she would have a sense of security where she lived. This, of course, indicates that there is less safety or security than Emmeline knows. The theme of Distrust of the Government is prevalent in the discussion between Emmeline's parents.

Also of note is that the compound seems to be developed into sections, the ones growing up in the Children's Village are perceived as superior to those who grew up at home with their parents. The clear lines reflect in the citizen's duties, too, with the Authorities, Enforcers, and Gatekeepers holding power over the others. Despite the government's original intentions to create a so-called paradise, there is apparent segregation. This segregation acts as a parallel to real life, where racism, sexism and other types of segregation are still apparent despite the government's best intentions to declare everyone equal.

Protection continues to be a huge theme in this chapter, with both Mother and Father trying to keep Emmeline as safe from the outside world as possible. They seem to think something worse may be on the horizon, with the two often arguing over what is best for their daughter.

Headscarves are more thoroughly explained in this chapter, again providing a type of segregation. Up to this point, three different types have been explained – one for those able to bear children, one for those who are paired, and one for those who are widowed. At this point, we know Emmeline has donned both a black and white headscarf, and are curious how she got from the white to the black at such a young age. The symbols of



the headscarves clearly indicate that the Republic is big on identification of people and their purpose, which is all geared toward reproduction. This additional information about headscarves assists in foreshadowing Emmeline's progression from the white to the black, from innocence to a loss of innocence.

## Discussion Question 1

Given what is known about the new order, why might reproduction be of ultimate importance to the Authorities?

## Discussion Question 2

How do the girls make Emmeline feel when they realize that she's been raised at home?

## Discussion Question 3

What makes it apparent that Emmeline's parents fear the Authorities?

## Vocabulary

reproduction, birthrate, metronome, enhancement, proclaim, rhythm, whiny, vivid, sanitizing solution, ability, rumble, notation, chattered, waxy



# Chapters 5 and 6

## Summary

Chapter 5 still shares the past as Emmeline recalls that the intake officer at the reproductive testing center spoke with the chaperon about how strange it was that Emmeline didn't have a folder. They described Father's job and declared Mother antagonistic. The officer wrote with a pencil and paper, which was prohibited years ago by the Authority.

The conflict of not many girls being fertile anymore came up, along with the mention of special medicine being used in the Children's Village to promote fertility. Emmeline underwent her tests. Emmeline panicked once they referred to her as ripe and reproductive, and the chapter ends with her feeling confused and refusing to show allegiance to the Republic by make the circle sign as a pledge of commitment. She does this because she refused to think that she was anything like the intake officer and chaperon.

In Chapter 6, Emmeline returned home and waited outside as she overheard Mother and Father talking. They argued and Mother cursed the Republic, which frightened Father. At one point Father told Mother to stop using the 'God' word as it was forbidden. Emmeline learned that they were so upset because she had been paired already with a man named George who was over 30 and already married, though they had taken his wife off many months ago because she was ill and not productive.

Her parents were told that George would be paired with Emmeline in two days. Emmeline did not know a thing about how pairing worked, and Father chastised Mother for not teaching her when she should have. Mother told Father that she simply couldn't explain all of this information to Emmeline and he must do it.

Emmeline recalls that she had noticed a ladybug on the wall, caught it, then watched it fly away. She shoved a finger into her mouth and noted that it tasted bitter.

## Analysis

In Chapter 5, Mother is described as having antagonistic tendencies and Emmeline is reproductive when most other girls are not. This creates conflict. The Enforcers might have taken the Mother away from Emmeline because of the antagonism.

The reproductive-ability test is quite invasive, physically and mentally, for Emmeline. Although this test is only problematic for her, it is a metaphor for how invasive and harmful the Republic is to the citizens. The two parallel each other, and just as Emmeline is not comfortable with how the reproductive-ability test is conducted and the results she receives from it, it is possible that the citizens will start to feel the same way about the Republic and their tendencies.



The theme of Over Protection is demonstrated in this chapter as the reader learns that in her desire to protect her daughter, Mother had actually done her daughter a disservice because she is ill prepared for what is about to happen with George. In fact, she was ill prepared when her period came and wasn't told what it was or why it was happening. This is all an attempt by Mother to keep things the way that they were prior to the new Agenda, and that she is desperately clinging to a past way of life that is simply gone.

In an earlier chapter, Mother tells Emmeline that the birthrate is quickly declining. It is not much thought of then, but when Emmeline is declared as ripe and reproductive, a description that is not common anymore, a question develops around why women are not fertile in this new republic. It is clear that although Emmeline is sheltered, much more than other children, she is quickly learning for herself the powers of the Republic and all the questions and doubts people have for them.

Her refusal to make the circle sign, although she is not punished for it, shows her opposition to the Republic and her dislike for their workers. The theme of Distrust of the Government is demonstrated in this simple refusal to salute. The Republic must have high hopes for her since she is one of the few fertile women left, and her opposition at the end of the chapter points toward the possibility of her refusing to aid in their hopes. A similarity rises between Emmeline and her mother, Emmeline is already beginning to show some opposition to the Republic. With Mother being antagonistic, it is easy to see from whom Emmeline gets that trait.

In Chapter 6, the secrets that Mother and Father keep from Emmeline parallel with the secrets the government keeps from the communities. Father and Mother argue, and Father seems to be very rule-abiding whereas Mother continues to curse the Republic, her antagonistic side beginning to truly show itself. With the conversation centered around George and the Republic taking his wife away and the knowledge of Mother being taken in the first chapter, it seems to be that something mysterious is happening to those who are no longer productive or are uncooperative.

With the description of George as being one of them, there are sides that are starting to form. There are hardworking folks who remember how the nation used to be and the Republic driven folks who are desperate to make the rules and laws of the current day work. The weight of all the things Emmeline doesn't know starts to settle, leaving a mysterious cliffhanger at the end of the chapter about how Father will proceed to tell Emmeline about pairing and how the world is now going to change in a period of two days.

A ladybug is on the wall of her living quarters and she recalls letting it crawl onto her finger. Ladybugs are often symbols of freedom and love. When the bug flies away and she tastes the bitter taste on her finger, the author is suggesting that things are changing for her, and not for the better.

When Emmeline sticks her fingers in her mouth, which is an infantile habit that she has retained, it is not salty but bitter. This is a metaphor for the changes that are taking



place, that they are not known, comforting or common, but rather bitter. This is also symbolic of the bitterness of knowledge that she has gained from not only overhearing her parents, but the events at the Reproductive Center.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Discuss Mother's overprotection of Emmeline.

## **Discussion Question 2**

What is apparent in the conversations and arguments between Mother and Father?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Discuss the symbolism of the ladybug.

## **Vocabulary**

intake, ripe, specialist, regulations, consequences, fertile, antagonistic, chronic, futility, allocation, criteria, forbidden



# Chapters 7 and 8

## Summary

Chapter 7 is a flashback. Father and Emmeline went for a walk and he spoke briefly about her tests. He continued to ask her what she and Mother talked about when they were together. Father picked some grass while they spoke, saying how he missed the smell of growing things. The reader is told that Emmeline's mother used to be a history teacher and that George, the man Emmeline will be paired with, used to be her student.

Father had decided that he needed to educate Emmeline about Agenda 21. He asked her what she already knew and she told him that she knew what it was, but not why it was done. Father told her that at first it was a matter of no one liking or trusting the people in charge, so the people elected those that told them what they seemed to like. When those people came into office they made changes, lots of little changes that no one really worried about. Then the laws became stricter and more difficult to comply with. Her mother was told that she couldn't teach history anymore. He sadly told her that while he wasn't really aware of what the ulterior motives were of the government, Mother was.

Father then gave Emmeline a leaf to hold and smell while he explained how the world today came about. She was pleased and asked if she could keep it. He told her yes and continued. The people in power realized that the people were making bad decisions so they removed all elections and remained in power. Money became worthless and churches were converted to other uses. People were relocated into planned communities and were assigned work to do.

She recalls that this was the only time she saw her father cry. He had cried and then taken the leaf from her, squashing it and letting it fall to the ground. He told her that by protecting her from the ugliness of it all that they had placed her in danger. They would try to make that right for her, now. He told her that the longer they were forced to live in the planned communities the more bitter and withdrawn her mother had become. He ended the discussion by telling Emmeline that there were rumors that the government didn't relocate everyone, that there are pockets of people who are living free beyond the fences.

Chapter 8 continues the flashback as Mother gave Emmeline a brief description of George and how she liked him when he was in her class. She described pairing, which is a little frightening and confusing to Emmeline. Emmeline recalls when she was told about George. Mother told her about him and how he worked on the Transport Team with Father, that they had known one another in the past when they lived on a neighboring farm. Mother also taught her about sex and what would be expected of her. Emmeline didn't have any questions afterward and had shoved her fingers back into her mouth, which her mother promptly removed for her.



She and George are paired but as it turned out they ended up with the living space next to Emmie's Mother and Father, so she and her mother could continue to talk while they walked on their boards. Though they were paired, George didn't touch her sexually for nearly a year after they were paired. He still missed his wife and she was okay with the arrangement. George taught her more about the outside world, about trains, and the work that he and her father did on the Transport Team. They were made to haul large bus boxes back and forth, like mules or horses.

He shared with her his memories of her mother back when she had been a teacher. Emmeline didn't know that her mother had also been a brilliant poet. When Emmeline asked him more about her he had gone silent, making her believe that he was keeping something from him in regards to her mother. Later in the year, when she was 15 and George was 31 they had sex for the first time. Emmeline doesn't think much of it other than that it was her duty. She did not become pregnant for another year.

Once again, it was her mother who told her what she needed to know. One morning as they were walking on their treadmills (boards) she told her mother that she'd missed her period. Her mother told her that it meant that she was going to have a baby. The information had made her mother so upset that she'd stopped walking early. Emmeline had continued to walk because there were rules.

## Analysis

In Chapter 7, Father finally begins to take shape as this chapter solely focuses on him and Emmeline. He is always described as rule-abiding, and Emmeline is surprised when he rips up some grass, then plucks off a leaf from the tree. It is apparent that he misses the past as well, mentioning the farm once again. The farm has come up multiple times now, and it will possibly be a place that is visited further on in the book.

With the plucking of the grass and the leaves and Father's gentleness and allowance of Emmeline to experience and question the past, a type of alliance is formed between the two characters. Up until Chapter 7, it is always Mother who is against the Republic. Yet, in this personal talk between Father and daughter, it seems like whole family questions the government.

The description of Mother's fresh cooking represents freedom, joy, and happiness, the main components of how things used to be. Although the family feels as if their freedom is stripped from them currently, when Father mentions the tales of the people who may have slipped from the Republic's grasp and don't live in compounds, a strong sense of freedom is again established.

The theme of Family is strong in this chapter, as well as the themes of Over Protection and Distrust of the Government. The reader learns that the government slowly and incrementally stripped citizens of their rights and power to govern themselves. People like Emmeline's mother knew what was coming and tried to fight against it, but in the end, was taken with the rest of them to the camps. The theme of Distrust of the





Government is apparent in not only the retelling of the past, but in the reaction of Emmeline's mother to the new world order when it emerged. However, Father acknowledges to Emmie that by keeping her innocent as long as possible that they have placed her in danger.

The symbolism of the leaf is intrinsic to the overall mood and tone of this chapter. When Father gives the leaf to Em she is delighted with the gift, symbolically eagerly receiving what her Father is offering, which in this case was knowledge about how and why the Agenda 21 went into effect. However, through the midpoint of the retelling he takes the leaf and lets it flutter to the ground, as if to underscore the fall of the way of life. Later, when he grinds it under his heel it is as if he is saying goodbye to the old way of life and of freedom in general.

Chapter 8 is a flashback from Emmeline's memory. She tells more about the mother and the Republic through the scenes that unfold. The fact that George is so much older than she is tells the reader much about the new Republic and its disregard for individual freedoms or rights. Though George is kind and friendly, what comes from a discussion of his character is that he and Father are made to work as horses pulling carts and buses around town. He serves the purpose of also educating Emmeline on things that she was formerly unaware of, such as trains, and farms, and how life used to be before the planned communities. The theme of Loss is strong in this chapter as George also remembers what life was like before Agenda 21.

The fact that her mother used to be a brilliant teacher and poet indicates that she was a critical thinker and felt things deeply. George's answer to Emmeline when she tells him that she never heard any of her poetry indicates that the lack of freedom silenced her voice and that for all purposes she felt like a bird in a cage. Her mother's reaction at the pregnancy reinforces the idea that Mother hates her life and the life that her daughter is being forced to live. Emmeline (or Em as she is sometimes called), still innocent in many ways, can't understand why her mother should be so upset, or why George is still so sad all of the time.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Compare Mother to Father after they were forced to move.

## **Discussion Question 2**

How has living with George been a good thing for Emmeline?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Why is Mother incredibly upset when she learns that Emmeline is pregnant?

## Vocabulary

reorientation, solemn, policies, vigilant, vowed, elections, officials, creaked, mesh, paring, boundaries, uniform, trimmed



# Chapters 9 and 10

## Summary

In Chapter 9, the flashback continues and shows that George cared for Emmeline as the baby grew. Emmeline asked Mother what it was like to have a baby, and again, Mother was hesitant to respond. She did answer though, and told Em about her own birth. Mother told her that when she was born all of the hurt was forgotten and that she was the most beautiful baby that she'd ever seen in the world. She began to cry and stopped talking. Emmeline asked her why she was crying. Mother told her that all she will know is the pain and that the joy of seeing the baby and being with the baby will never be hers to have.

Chapter 10 continues the flashback. George and Emmeline talked about how she wouldn't ever get to see the baby. He expected that she already knew that before Mother explained it, and she became upset with him. She told him not to speak to her unless he tells her how the Republic got this power. He told her that he didn't exactly know, only that they had done it so slowly that no one had thought it was important.

Emmeline skipped the Social Update Meeting because she was sleeping. When she woke, she overheard George, Mother, and Father talking. When she interrupted them, they explained that they may be able to keep the baby if they can hide her under empty grain bags and let her escape with George. Later that night Emmeline has a nightmare where the baby in her belly is giving the Republic salute.

## Analysis

The constant questions about why the Republic will take Emmeline's baby and what will happen once they do so is increasingly present. This establishes more clues about what the Republic is truly up to.

The easement between George and Emmeline is comforting, as George can provide her with some missing links about the past that her parents can't. Emmeline wanted a friend, and George has filled that space for her.

The theme of Family as well as the theme of Loss are present in this short chapter in the discussions between Mother and Emmeline. Mother is aware that her daughter will never know the joy of motherhood, though she will be required to go through the agony of childbirth. The memory of Emmeline's birth is too much for Mother and she stops talking for the rest of the day. Mother has underscored the theme of Family and illustrated that, in essence, the Republic doesn't care about the integrity or necessity of the family unit in the raising of a child, or in forming lasting bonds with others.

In Chapter 10, the dream at the end of the chapter instills a strange, almost fearful aspect to the story. The baby making the Republic sign symbolizes that the Republic, or



the thought of the Republic has pervaded even her dreams and that deep down, she fears that they will claim her child for their own, leaving her out of the equation.

When she overhears George and her parents talking she demands to be let into the loop. They still treat her as a child, even though she is getting ready to be a parent, herself. She demands that they fill her in and stop treating her like a baby any longer. They tell her that they are making plans to get her and the baby away from the camps with George. Emmeline is terrified that they won't have anywhere to sleep or anything to eat. Mother discounts all of that saying that at least they will be together. This difference of opinion shows the vast differences between the two characters in that to Mother, Family is everything. However, to Emmeline, who is essentially a product of the camps, having resources such as food and lodging is the overall concern.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Describe the relationship between George and Emmeline?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Compare the reactions of Mother and Father to the plan to leave the camps.

## **Discussion Question 3**

What is Emmeline's reaction to the plan to leave the camps?

## **Vocabulary**

anchor, sympathetic, mercy, quality, strained, awkward, darting, absence, mournful, pillars, permissions, stations

# Chapters 11 and 12

## Summary

In Chapter 11, as the flashback continues, it shows that the next day Mother and Emmeline walked their boards and didn't speak about the plans from the previous night. Dusk arrived, and the Gatekeeper brought their food and water. However, he only left one each for Mother and Emmeline. There was no food left for George or Father. They would later learn why. Just as it turned dark Emmeline observed the Gatekeeper speaking with Mother, who then cried out and donned a black headscarf. Overhead, Emmeline recalled, there were birds flying. Several flew overhead in a row.

The Gatekeeper approached Emmeline, handed her a black headscarf, and said there was an accident and that George and Father both died. Emmeline didn't believe him, but before either of them could put up any fight they were relocated to the Recycle Compound. Emmeline was immediately assigned another partner, Jeremy, who would be relocated to be with Emmeline in a few days. Her mother is allowed to live with her until a 'disposition' could be filed. Emmeline is not told what that means.

Chapter 12 still chronicles events that have happened in the past. Emmeline became lonely, as Father and George were presumed dead and Mother was depressed. The putrid smell of the living spaces in the recycling center makes her nauseous. Mother would not move or walk her board, and Emmeline has to accomplish both boards so that the Republic wouldn't be suspicious or cut their food rations.

Emmeline went into labor, and Mother was not allowed to accompany her with the Transport Team. Emmeline had her baby and demanded to see it, but of course she was not allowed. When she began to be frantic about seeing the child an older man leaned down in her ear and gently told her that this wasn't going to help anything. He continued to assure her that things would be fine. Later, as he escorted her out, he told her that he knew her father. He confirmed her suspicions when he said that whatever happened to them was wrong, and the Authorities lied. John told Emmeline he saw the baby and that it was a girl. Emmeline was still very weak, and John must transport her into the compound. Mother took care of her, and they held each other tightly before falling asleep.

## Analysis

Emmeline, who has always been described as clueless, does not believe the Gatekeepers when they say George is dead. They refuse to let her see the bodies, claiming it to be protocol, which seems to point toward them hiding something. The black headscarves, the material for widows, symbolize death and depression. Mother acts on this, sobbing throughout the night and becoming unstable. Emmeline says that her mother wore hers 'like a shroud'. Emmeline is shocked, but still believes that



George and Father aren't dead. In many ways this still indicates that she is naive and innocent, childlike in her refusal to accept reality. The theme of Loss is profound in this chapter as two characters in Emmeline's life are gone.

The symbolism of the birds flying overhead is introduced in this chapter. At George and Father's deaths several birds fly overhead and Em takes notice of them. Symbolizing freedom, these birds have the ability to go wherever they like, much as the spirits of her father and husband have been freed from their bodies.

Jeremy is briefly introduced for the first time since before Emmeline recalled the events leading up to him, which leads to Mother being taken away soon. The merest mention at the end of the chapter indicates that they have already planned to dispose of Mother after the move to the Recycling Center.

In Chapter 12. Emmeline begins to mature in some aspects, demanding to be let in on plans, to be kept in the loop instead of being protected all of the time. Entering into an adult relationship with George also matures her in some aspects and she learns more about how things were before the Republic, and why things have unfolded as they have. After she has her baby her character develops more because she is given a stark reminder of how inhumane the current government is. The theme of Distrust of the Government is plain in her frantic tirade about not being allowed to see her child.

The theme of Family is also demonstrated. Emmeline and Mother are the only family members left, besides the new baby, whom she learns is a girl. John and Mother are friendly, and although it can get him in a lot of trouble, John goes out of his way to tell Emmeline the little he knows about the baby. He also tries to comfort her about how the Authorities are wrong about George and Father, which leads to foreshadowing of them making another appearance later in the novel.

The end of this chapter almost brings the reader up to the present time, and suggests that Emmeline is about to lose her mother as well. Loss, as a theme, is prominent in this section as she loses George, Father, Mother, and the baby all in a short period of time. Emmeline's family is taken from her, so she must find the loyalty families develop in her own friends, like this stranger named John. She also must learn to rely on herself now that the ones who always try to keep her safe are all gone.

## Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Family as it is demonstrated in Chapter 12.

## Discussion Question 2

How has the theme of Loss appeared in both chapters? Justify your answer with textual evidence.



## Discussion Question 3

What might have really happened to George and Father? Use textual evidence for support.

## Vocabulary

clerk, lingered, disposition, severe, distraught, womb, ridiculous, putrid, jagged, consuming, dismissed, clanging, amnesiac, whirled, generous, vital, functional, swirling, lurched, briskly



# Chapters 13 and 14

## Summary

Chapter 13 resumes in the present time. With everyone in her family now gone, Emmeline only has Jeremy to keep her company. Jeremy is younger than Emmeline and hateful. She refuses to pair with him, one reason being that she just had the baby a few days ago. The other reason is that she simply dislikes him.

Emmeline has trouble sleeping, and she spends a lot of time on her Mother's mat. She watches the night Gatekeeper bring the breakfast around the compound, and he speaks with her when he reaches her living area. He sees her through the window slit when it is sunrise, and they talk briefly before he continues to make his rounds. Emmeline watches him walk away and finds herself feeling oddly toward him.

In Chapter 14, Emmeline accidentally rips Mother's mat on the ground, and when she goes to fix it she finds a piece of paper inside it. The Republic took books, paper, and pencils away a long time ago. So, it is curious that her mother would still have some of those forbidden items. Emmeline remembers when the authorities came to take the paper and books away and that her mother had said that they couldn't take what was written from their minds. She also recalls hearing her mother declare that not everything could be monitored, and free will was one of those things.

Back in the present, Emmeline wants to search the paper and see what it is, but is fearful as Jeremy will wake soon. She decides to wait. Again, she has a short conversation with the kind Gatekeeper. He offers to bring her an egg the following day, which is a huge deal since nourishment cubes are the only food for citizens.

Once Jeremy leaves, Emmeline first walks her board, then aims to discover what is in Mother's mat. She pulls out a picture, and figures out the girl and woman are her and Mother in the picture. She feels more items in the mat, but decides to wait until later to open it further because she needs to get back to her walking board. In some ways she now feels as if her mother is still with her.

## Analysis

A dislike arises for Jeremy, especially since he is a foil for George. George is kind, gentle, sweet, and caring whereas Jeremy is bitter, snobby, and childish. The absence for George magnifies with Jeremy's anger and annoyances.

Emmeline falls into a type of depression and she can't sleep much, which is how she meets the night Gatekeeper. Up to this point, the Gatekeepers are rude and unforgiving. However, the night Gatekeeper is introduced in a setting of the rising sun, basked in new light, which gives him the appearance that maybe he is kinder than the others. He





greeted Emmeline in the morning, and speaks brief, kind words to her before disappearing to continue his rounds. He is also closer to her own age.

The theme of Distrust of the Government is demonstrated in Emmeline's refusal to pair with Jeremy. She knows what they expect of her as far as Jeremy is concerned, but she is simply not willing to be with him regardless of the rules. This shows her mother's tendencies, and Emmeline begins to change into the type of woman her mother was, possibly due to the fact that she is a mother too, now.

In Chapter 14, even though Mother is not present, she and Mother seem to continue to grow their relationship as Emmeline finds the things Mother hid in her mat. The reason behind Mother pointing at Emmeline's mat when the Gatekeepers took her away is now obvious, as her own mat was a hiding place for many illegal things.

Emmeline is not entirely rebellious yet, as she still walks her board and does what is monitored. But her growing friendship with the night Gatekeeper and her findings of the objects in the mat point to her easily slipping from the Republic's grasp. This and her refusal to pair with Jeremy show that she is definitely changing and evolving as a character.

The picture Emmeline finds serves as a symbol of hope sent from her mother. Emmeline is sad and lonely without her family, demonstrating the theme of Loss, but she continues to discover the things her mother leaves behind. She draws strength from her thoughts about Family which points to that theme, and suggests that great strength lies in her feelings for her family. Whereas she doesn't know much about the Republic at the beginning of the story, the picture points to how life used to be and Emmeline begins to have urges to return to that, or at least realize why Agenda 21 was activated in the first place, and why it must end.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Compare George to Jeremy.

## **Discussion Question 2**

Why did Mother keep the picture of her and Emmeline?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Discuss Emmeline's character development since her mother was taken away.



## Vocabulary

creaked, screeched, streaks, alert, grief, dusk, absence, wrinkles, monitor, blotches, deposit, pry, suspicious, musty, dim



# Chapters 15 and 16

## Summary

In Chapter 15, Emmeline dreams of the picture, and finally she sleeps peacefully. When she awakes, as promised by the Gatekeeper, there are eggs in her food tray. Jeremy complains that in the Children's Village he didn't have to go to work in order to get food. He whines that he wants to go back, then he goes to work.

After Emmeline walks her energy board, the day Gatekeeper stops and asks her about early morning awakenings, which is not usual. Generally the Gatekeepers kept to themselves. She says she slept fine, and wonders if the night Gatekeeper told him of her sleeping issues. John shows up and tells her more information about her baby. He says her name is Elsa, and that she is healthy. John leaves quickly, as his presence there is forbidden, and Emmeline remembers that a Social Update Meeting is scheduled for later that night. She is left wondering how John had gotten into their sector at all since there are numerous fences separating the various sections in the community.

In Chapter 16, Emmeline has to convince Jeremy to come with her to the meeting. Jeremy's constant denial and unwillingness to cooperate make Emmeline nervous. He still continues to whine about how much easier life was in the Children's Compound. Whereas she knows what the Republic is capable of, it seems he is unaware that he can't just refuse to do what is required. He complains about a stomach ache; but, she makes him get up and go with her anyway.

The Social Update Meeting takes place, informing the citizens that the birthrate is not up to par with their enemies' rates. The speaker also mentions that energy production must increase. Thus, each citizen will be required to wear bands on their legs that will capture the energy from their movements throughout the day. At the end of the meeting, early morning awakenings are discussed. The Authorities discuss that not sleeping is a sign of depression, and depression is not productive. Thus, citizens are to remain on their sleep mats until the usual wake up time. The crowd that is gathered is not happy at all.

## Analysis

In Chapter 15, the plot takes a stronger hold now. Finding out about baby Elsa is important, dangerous, and necessary. As John mentions at the end of the chapter, it is clear that family is important and worth risking oneself for, which demonstrates the theme of Family.

The day Gatekeeper knowing about her early morning awakenings makes her and the reader question whether the night Gatekeeper is truly trustworthy. The early morning awakening issue and the approaching meeting may have something in common with each other, as Emmeline states at the very end of the chapter that they are the only two bad things happening that day.



John seems to be a character that will be seen more and more throughout the story, as he is Emmeline's main connection to her baby. Jeremy continues to indicate that he is quite young and has just left the protective and less restrictive Children's Village, yet Emmeline is still patient with him. After giving birth, she does the typical characteristics of a mother – family driven, dedicated, patient, and kind. The true character behind Emmeline is emerging fast, and some of her characteristics may come in handy later during the novel.

In Chapter 16, Emmeline grows worried about who is reporting her early morning awakenings. Also, the fact that there are multiple citizens who are waking early signifies that multiple citizens are not happy. There is also the concept of increased energy production and birthrates. Enemies are mentioned, where they have not been mentioned before, which brings up the concern that there may be other global planned communities such as the one that she lives in.

Emmeline is desperate to talk to John and his wife, and this shows her regressing back into her childish personality. She feels this way because John has the same protective 'feel' to him as her own father. They are surrounded by Authority figures, and the Social Update Meeting is obviously not the easiest place to pry for information. Emmeline searches for John and his wife afterwards though, but the couple disappears before she can talk to them. This signifies Emmeline still has a lot to learn in the secret keeping world of the Republic. The symbolism of the bus that the Authorities get into is clear, control of the planet. The symbol is that of a globe on a black field, which seems to represent a world view and the notion that human life is expendable.

## Discussion Question 1

Discuss Jeremy's character.

## Discussion Question 2

Why might John and his wife be helping Emmeline?

## Discussion Question 3

Discuss the theme of Family as it appears in Chapter 15.

## Vocabulary

sidebars, trembling, slit, rancid, nuzzling, glossy, escorted, stage, wisdom, dedication, preservation



# Chapters 17 and 18

## Summary

In Chapter 17, Emmeline has trouble sleeping, and meets with the night Gatekeeper when he deposits her breakfast. He tells her that she reminds him of his sister. They speak briefly, and Emmeline discovers that she knew the Gatekeeper and his family back when she lived on the farm, though she was too young to really remember. Jeremy leaves for work quickly, struggling with the increased energy output for his bike. Emmeline also notices that the energy board is harder to work.

Emmeline finally searches again through the mat, and in addition to the picture she finds Mother's recipes. She must quickly hide them as Enforcers come into her home asking for Jeremy, as he did not show up at work. Later that night, Jeremy is found trying to climb back into the Children's Village. They state that Jeremy will not return, but there is no other male to be paired with currently. Emmeline is to live alone until a male is found. Emmeline is not sorry.

In Chapter 18, Emmeline pulls out the picture and recipes and discovers the third item from Mother's mat. It is a map of the United States. Kansas is circled, and Emmeline assumes that is where they used to live.

John shows up again, giving her information that Elsa is growing and that the night Gatekeeper will provide her with anything she needs. John verifies that she used to live in Kansas. He wants to see the map to determine where they are located now, and Emmeline says she will give him the map if he can take her to Elsa. He says he will try, and he leaves. As soon as he is gone, the night Gatekeeper shows up. She finally learns his name. It is David, and he says he already knows hers. He touches her on the shoulder, and then leaves.

## Analysis

### Chapter 17

As Emmeline fully realizes she will live alone, the novel starts to take a turn. It is not normally allowed for a living space to only be occupied by one person, and Emmeline seems to be the exception. Despite this providing her with ample time to explore Mother's mat, it will also draw attention to her.

Jeremy's childish escape attempt is not a shock, although it does prove that the Republic is forcing reproductive kids to become adults too early. This highlights their obsession and need for reproduction, with Emmeline still not knowing why they try to create so many babies.



Her relationship with the night Gatekeeper continues to develop, their connection with the farm causing curiosity. She reminds him of his sister, and he is a link to her past that she can use as a friend and for information. They both assist each other, and have a tentative friendship. He seems to do no harm as he gives her extra food and conversation. Although he is a Gatekeeper who has more power than other duties, he is kind and doesn't force her to do anything. This would seem to indicate that not everyone is on the Republic bandwagon and that there are most likely more people like her mother, who do not agree with the Republic.

Yet, since he is not the one reporting her early morning awakenings, it is confusing as to how the Republic knows about that. If they are observing them while they are in their homes, then Em's discovery of her mother's mat may place her in jeopardy.

## Chapter 18

Alliances are quite clearly forming. Emmeline sharing her secret map with John and requesting he bring her Elsa is a strong bond, and they form a quick bond of trust. David is to be trusted, as John's opinion seems to be correct. Yet the day Gatekeeper still poses a threat.

John says that family and staying alive are both extremely important. As Emmeline is hiding contraband in her mother's mat and Elsa is the only member left of her family, both family and staying alive seem unlikely to her. John's desperation to figure out where they are located points to the possibility of them escaping. It also gives them some knowledge about the Republic that they did not have before.

The theme of Family is explored in this chapter with the suggestion that a sense of family is not necessarily confined to blood relations. John and Emmeline trust each other, and provide each other with sacred information. David provides her with friendship and confidence. Both are important to Emmeline, as she is now alone and must rely on those she can trust.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Jeremy attempt to return to the Children's Village?

## Discussion Question 2

Discuss the items that were found in Mother's mat. Why would she keep those?

## Discussion Question 3

Why would a map be considered contraband to the republic?

## Vocabulary

explore, treasures, infraction, productive, evaluated, permission, striding, determined, linger, tremors, bolted, impatience, specifics, wise, stunt, mature, stable



# Chapters 19 and 20

## Summary

Chapter 19 starts off with a terrible storm, which eventually transforms into a beautiful day. When David takes over for the night, Emmeline searches through Mother's mat for more treasures. She finds an old book she likes, called "The Little Prince."

Em notices that now that she's been retrieving the treasures from her mother's mat that it has become misshapen and lumpy. Over the years of her mother sleeping on it, it had molded into a comfortable shape that worked. Now, since she has been moving things around, the mat is uncomfortable. Emmeline notices how handsome David is, and he checks on her later that night. They plan for him to stop by again later that night, and they both state that they will pretend it is a date, like in the old days. Emmeline is glad that David isn't paired, and then she discovers that David is John's son. He is called away soon after leaving her with more questions that she would like to have asked him.

In Chapter 20, David leaves flowers for Emmeline with her breakfast, and the day Gatekeeper lingers around her living space. She remembers to tell David about it. She carries on with her energy board, doing what the Republic can monitor. Later that day, John visits again with a guess that they are currently in Pennsylvania, Ohio, or West Virginia. John tells her that the Authorities are considering assigning her to the Children's Village since she lives alone and has no partner. John gives her tips on what to do if the Authorities offer her a position at the Children's Village. He leaves, and David arrives later. They share an egg together as the chapter ends.

## Analysis

In Chapter 19, Emmeline realizes that she is developing feelings for David. She seems to be teetering down a path of forbidden things, as she continues to discover more secret items in Mother's mat, is conspiring to see her daughter Elsa, invited a Gatekeeper into her home, and has feelings for someone whom she is not paired with.

More questions arise as Emmeline finds out she used to be neighbors with David, and he seems to remember her. She doesn't remember him, though. David leaves to check on another woman who has nightmares, which continues to establish him as gentle and caring. Those are two characteristics Emmeline liked about George, and David seems to have taken his place at the forefront of Emmeline's mind.

In Chapter 20, when John tells Emmeline that she must act miserable about the Children's Village, it exposes more information about the Republic. They want all the citizens to be unhappy, which is not how a typical government works. Also, with John's job as a transporter, he overhears a lot about what the Authority figures discuss. He is quickly becoming a key player in the story, as he is Emmeline's main source of information.





When David arrives later that night, Emmeline asks what will happen if the flowers are discovered. The result must be bad, as David refuses to speak about it. This signifies that David knows more about the Republic than he is willing to divulge. Like his father and many of the others that surround her, Em finds that their attempts to protect her from the horrible truth to be irritating. The theme of Over Protection hasn't surfaced in a while, but toward the end of this chapter it returns to remind readers that Em acts so naive that people around her want to protect her from bad news, reality, or herself.

## **Discussion Question 1**

What is it about Emmeline that makes people want to protect her?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Why is David taking so many risks for Emmeline?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What are Emmeline's feelings toward David?

## **Vocabulary**

paces, regretted, relief, forbidden, ritual, propped, plump, morsels, savoring, humble, averted, qualified, assigned.



# Chapters 21 and 22

## Summary

In Chapter 21, as John had predicted, the Authorities show up at Emmeline's living space. They say it is not productive for one person to live in a space. She is one of the few females who is reproductive, and it is necessary to pair her with someone. They mention a night Gatekeeper who is reproductive who can pair with her during the day. She is required to work the Children's Village during the night shift so both she and the Gatekeeper will be home at the same time. David arrives that night, and although he doesn't give her much information about the other night Gatekeepers, he does kiss her.

Emmeline goes to the Children's Village the next day, and meets with Joan, John's wife. She briefly explains that she has been appointed as a supervisor since a lot of the babies are failing to grow. She mentions that Emmeline will be able to take care of Elsa while she works.

In Chapter 22, Joan continues to educate Emmeline on the different duties of working at the Children's Village. Joan mentions the other night caretaker, Lizzie, and insinuates that Emmeline can't trust her. Joan briefly describes her daughter, the girl that David finds Emmeline similar to. She also confirms that David has been chosen to be Emmeline's pairing partner.

Joan welcomes Emmeline to the family, and then they continue the tour. Joan describes that the Authorities are considering putting a small amount of work for the children's toy energy boards. They reach the nursery, and Emmeline finally sees Elsa but isn't allowed to pick her up.

## Analysis

It is still unclear as to whether Emmeline will pair with David or another night Gatekeeper, at first. And although she is still allowed to live in her same living space, there will be a public pairing ceremony. This, again, brings even more attention to Emmeline. She seems to be emerging as the citizen who is treated specially by the Authorities because of her unique situation of living alone, and this may not settle well with the other citizens who want to be treated the way she is. Now that she knows John, Joan, and David, the four of them may be able to conspire more frequently about what to do about the Republic and how to escape.

David continues to be kind to her, but it is apparent that Emmeline is holding herself back when it comes to him. This may be a result of her losing George and most of her family, not getting along well with Jeremy, or the fact that she is not sure she will even be paired with David. Emmeline gets her hopes up often, which is a character flaw. She is starting to learn to be more cautious, but she still is walking a thin line.



In Chapter 22, the theme of Family takes the forefront. With Joan convincing the Authorities to pair Emmeline with David over one of the Children's Village boys, it is clear she is dabbling in political matters to attempt to bring Emmeline into her family. Among the other forbidden things that have been mentioned, the Republic will not be thrilled once they realize what Joan is doing.

The other night Gatekeeper seems to be unworthy of Emmeline's trust even though they have not met yet. I believe this may be tough for Emmeline, as she has never had a friend and may try to communicate with her co-worker. This can get her in big trouble, especially if she divulges any information that needs to be kept secret.

More information is offered as to how the Republic came to be in charge over the children. The Authorities brainwashed many women with promises that their children would be better raised under consistent authority figures. Although most people believed them, Joan and Emmeline's mother and families did not.

Emmeline's characterization continues to evolve with the rush of love she feels for Elsa. She also mentions how her daughter looks like George, which is the first mention of George in a couple of chapters. With David about to enter her life, as well as Elsa, it is possible it will overwhelm Emmeline and she will not be sure how to react to all of these new additions, causing her to make a mistake. The reader is reminded that she is only 16.

## Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Family as it is explored in Chapters 21-22

## Discussion Question 2

What are the very real consequences should Emmeline's alliance with John and Joan be discovered?

## Discussion Question 3

What does Joan's ability to manipulate the system tell imply about the system at Compound 18?

## Vocabulary

expectations, fading, twisted, concerns, requisition, wheeze, scrawny, whine, philosophies, discordant, disjointed, farce, bassinets



# Chapters 23 and 24

## Summary

In Chapter 23, the day Gatekeeper acts coolly toward Emmeline when she returns. He knew Jeremy, which is how he knew about her awakenings and about how Mother didn't walk her board. He makes it clear that he hates her just as much as Jeremy ever did. John delivers her energy bike and shows her how to work it.

Authority figures show up to discuss her pairing ritual and her new job. They almost find a problem with her sleeping mat and offer her a new one, but the problem is avoided. Emmeline asks many questions, and they get angry with her. Once they leave, she practices riding her bike, and sees the woman who sleepwalks around the community. She tells Emmeline that she just wants to go home.

In Chapter 24, Emmeline is restless and can't sleep. She goes to her door to watch for David to come on duty. However, the night Gatekeeper is not David. Emmeline starts to worry, as she has not heard from David and she doesn't know why he may be missing. The new Gatekeeper stops outside Emmeline's door. He begins taunting her about David before he leaves, and Emmeline fears the worst. She decides she is not a child anymore and wishes she had confronted the Gatekeeper about where David was. She continues to feel powerless.

## Analysis

Foreshadowing occurs in Chapter 23 with the sleeping mat issue. Also, Jeremy's conversation with the Gatekeeper about Emmeline and her mother also points toward alliances on the Republic's side, which can be extremely dangerous for Emmeline since she will soon be working around people at the Children's Village who might watch her closely and report on her. Additionally, there is the suggested sexual threat from the day Gatekeeper who more than once mentions her sleeping mat.

The theme of Distrust of the Government is prevalent in this chapter as the reader sees Emmeline acting almost as her mother must have in the early years. She continues to press for answers until the Gatekeepers tell her that they are under no obligation to indulge her questions.

Although Emmeline is developing into an adult, her two main flaws remain knowing when to keep to herself and asking too many questions. Her questions stem from how her mother refused to tell her much about the present, but they are still dangerous when directed towards the Authority. They may start to feel suspicious about why she desires to know so much, and begin to investigate about her life. This can lead them to find many things she doesn't want them to, which could be harmful to everybody involved, including Joan, John, and David.



In Chapter 24, all of the secrets she is keeping finally begin to catch up with Emmeline. She begins to worry herself sick about David while she thinks about all the horrible things that can happen to him. She realizes she loves him, which shocks her.

Obedience to Authority to avoid being noticed is a demonstrated theme in this chapter. Emmeline is already at the top of the Authority's minds with all the special events that must be done for her, which is not good for all the secrets she is keeping. The danger of her working with John, Joan, and David against the government presents itself strongly, and people are beginning to be placed in harms' way.

The Gatekeeper seems to know what happened to David, as he taunts Emmeline, as if he knows she can hear him. This causes her sleep to be restless, and she constantly wonders how she got herself into this mess.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Describe some of Emmeline's flaws and how they might be used against her.

## **Discussion Question 2**

Jeremy told the Authorities about Emmeline's mother and Emmeline's sleeping patterns. What else might he have told them?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What are some of the things that make Emmeline feel powerless?

## **Vocabulary**

rotten, matted, tangled, relevant, unseemly, barracks, frigid, clenched, conscience, gait, artificial



# Chapters 25 and 26

## Summary

In Chapter 25, Emmeline refuses to eat her nourishment cube because she doesn't feel good. Eating the cube is required by the Republic. She walks her board and finds another mystery object in Mother's mat, a flat, circular, golden object with an Indian on one side. The Social Update Meeting is to take place that night. When Emmeline goes to eat her breakfast cube, she realizes that the woman who has nightmares has stolen it from her to give to her children. Even when the Gatekeeper returns the cube to Emmeline, she doesn't eat it because she believes it is dirty. The woman is taken away.

Emmeline remembers that Social Update Meetings involve armies once a year. As Emmeline goes to the meeting, the man who is the woman's husband is beaten by the Gatekeepers. As she tries to fight her way to the front, she hears John tell her there has been a change of plans but he is gone before she can ask him what is going on. Emmeline gets extremely worried, and having not had much to eat all day long, passes out.

In Chapter 26, Emmeline regains consciousness as the meeting is beginning. There is a normal meeting of updates, ending with a rumor of conflict south of the Republic. The meeting ends without any pairing between Emmeline and David. She remains in the rain as the rest of the attendees go home. She searches for someone she can trust, finds no one, and returns home.

John shows up at her window later, reassuring her that David is okay and that she will see him tomorrow. Despite the soothing information that David is okay and she will be seeing him soon, Emmeline wonders why she can't see him tonight and where he has been. The storm continues as John leaves.

## Analysis

The curiosity of where people are taken when they are taken away is strong in Chapter 25. As the woman is being led away by the Gatekeepers, she asks if they are taking her to her daughter, Lizzie. Another character is mentioned earlier in the story named Lizzie, the girl who is co-working with Emmeline. It is possible they could be the same person, divulging the fact that when people are taken away it is possible they are just relocated to a different part of the compound.

The mention of the army again sparks curiosity. The citizens seem to have no idea who the Republic is fighting and why. The two sides are obvious now, the Republic and the slow to rebel citizens. They are both keeping secrets from each other. It seems to be a competition of who can keep secrets the longest, and what will happen when one side loses composure.



Emmeline is obviously quite conflicted, as she ends up passing out once she hears John telling her there had been a change of plans. She is not handling the situation as an adult might, and it is clear she is overcome with anxiety and fatigue.

In Chapter 26, the storm at the meeting is a sign that things won't go as Emmeline wants them to. It also foreshadows a possibility of a continuance of bad events. The mention of war, alongside the storm, also foreshadows bad happenings. The war, if real, could bleed into the compounds and possibly cause an uproar.

With Emmeline remaining alone after the meeting, it is clear she relies too much on the trust and help of others to help her through hard times. As the tenseness of rumors of war and what the Republic is up to increases, she may have to learn to rely on herself.

## Discussion Question 1

Discuss the significance of the storm and what the author's purpose is in using the weather.

## Discussion Question 2

What might Emmeline being alone at the meeting symbolize or foreshadow?

## Discussion Question 3

What indicates that the Republic is not adequately taking care of its citizens?

## Vocabulary

poisonous, melted, flushed, shame, pledges, roaring, rumble, jagged, elevated, platform, unison



# Chapters 27 and 28

## Summary

In Chapter 27, Emmeline wakes and believes that things might be better. She continues to reassure herself that John had said that all was well and that there had been a change of plans. The map had gotten wet, but had dried during the night. She returns the map to the mat and she finds another object. It is the New Testament, which Emmeline does not recognize as she has never gone to church. Another object is discovered, a knife. Emmeline is quite shocked, as weapons are banned.

She assesses all she's found thus far and wonders what significance they may have. Once she decides there is no connection between the items, she looks for more items and finds matches as well. She steps outside after she walks her board, and sees new people moving into the space previously occupied by the crazy woman and her husband. She goes to greet them, but they are very standoffish. She returns to her home and receives two nourishment cubes. Before she can tell the Gatekeeper that he has made a mistake, two Authority figures and David walk towards her.

In Chapter 28, when the Authority figures arrive, Emmeline forces herself not to look up at them and David because she is afraid she is going to smile and give everything away. Looking happy is not tolerated. While she is looking down at her shoes she notices a ladybug flipped over on its back. To her surprise, the pairing ceremony occurs, and David places his mat and uniform in the living space.

They stand together, silent, not really sure what to do next. She offers him his nourishment cube, which he rejects and says they will eat later. He kisses her and they spend the entire evening together. Later, they eat the cubes.

## Analysis

Emmeline, despite feeling powerless recently, has taken on a leadership role in the community. She is now acting like leader, introducing herself to the new members of the community and sometimes refusing to do things the Republic demands, such as arriving on time, eating her nourishment cubes, and keeping to herself.

The new discoveries of what is in Mother's mat looks at why Mother had saved those items for Emmeline. Matches, a knife, a book, recipes, the Bible, and a map are all things that can be used to survive in the wild. It seems Mother had bigger plans for Emmeline, and those plans remain unknown.

Distrust of the Government as a theme is strong in this chapter, especially in her exchange with the new members that moved into the crazy woman's home. Emmeline seems to be taking after her mother as she shapes herself into an adult who looks after herself.





Chapter 28 serves as a type of relief from all of the previous chapters. Nothing bad happens, and Emmeline and David are finally together. He treats her like nobody else ever has, and she truly revels in it, and in him. She and David actually have feelings for one another, which is uncommon for those who are paired. They must not let the Republic find out about this, or it can have serious consequences. The silent offering of the nourishment cube almost stands as a silent agreement between the two. They can finally relax and be together for the night without hiding it from anyone, which has never happened with either of them.

## **Discussion Question 1**

How is Emmeline acting as a leader in the communities?

## **Discussion Question 2**

How is David different than the other two men who were paired with Emmeline?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Discuss the theme of Distrust of the Government as it pertains to Emmeline.

## **Vocabulary**

hissed, affairs, tally, risky, peg, lethal, bubble, recoiled, withdrawn, vines, beautiful, twined, methodically, clattered, motionless



# Chapters 29, 30, and 31

## Summary

In Chapter 29, David calls Emmeline his wife, which is uncommon. Usually, those who are paired do not refer to each other as husband or wife. Later, when they are alone, they talk about words that their parents used to use. They realize that there are many words that their parents have used which they have no relation to, no connection, or conception of. Emmeline starts to get a headache when they begin talking about laws and policies, and she goes to walk her board.

David confronts her, asking her why she is walking her board when she has to ride her energy bicycle to work later that night. She explains that the Authorities are requiring her to do both. David refuses and says that since she is his wife, he will walk the board for her.

In Chapter 30, David says that Emmeline's mother used to be his Sunday School teacher, and he tells Emmeline a little about the philosophies and religion of God and Sunday School. He tells her that Father used to sing, and that when they owned the farm David thought Emmeline was a nuisance. They also discuss what it is like to work all night, as later that day is Emmeline's first night in the nursery.

They talk about Randall, the mean night Gatekeeper who bullies Emmeline. John stops by to tell Emmeline to inform Joan of how her shift goes. David shows her how to get to the Children's Village, and she leaves.

In Chapter 31, Emmeline bikes to the Children's Village, injuring her foot in the process. Randall stops her by the Children's Village, giving her trouble but letting her in. Emmeline overhears two workers talking about her. They mention her trying to hold Elsa and Joan not stopping her.

The two workers drop the subject of Emmeline and mention that a baby was born. Emmeline figures out the baby probably belongs to the woman who lives close to her. Its ankle is turned, and it isn't considered perfect. So, the workers say it goes to the Re-Cy center. Emmeline must get to work, so she interrupts.

## Analysis

In Chapter 29, David is protective and kind, like George. However, Emmeline seems to be attracted to him in a way that she wasn't attracted to George. This might be attributed to their closeness in age. When David walks the board, he takes over for Emmeline. Although family is not mentioned, they seem to have formed a unit.

According to David, they are married, which is better than just being paired. They have found a confidante in each other and have formed a little family all on their own. As they



talk about both of their parents, it is clear that there are three separate families involved: David's parents, Emmeline's parents, and David and Emmeline.

The bond between the two strengthens the trust Emmeline has for John and Joan just because they are David's parents. It seems to be that those kids who are raised at home, i.e. Emmeline and David, have a better grip on reality compared to those who are raised in the Children's Village, such as Jeremy.

Although Jeremy has not been mentioned lately, with David's entrance into Emmeline's life, it is apparent that David is taking precedence over George's memory. This makes him the foil for Jeremy. Since David is also a tad older than Emmeline, but not as old as their parents, he may be able to provide her the guidance and encouragement she needs to fully mature into a responsible adult.

Chapter 30 ends with Emmeline sharing through narration that things are about to get really bad. She has been looking forward to working at the Children's Village. Until now there has been only good news. However, John's request that she speak with Joan about her first shift points to something else happening that might not go as Emmeline plans.

The large discussion of God and symbols is not just a coincidence. God holds a conversational aspect in the story up to this point, but discussion of religion continues to increase. It seems the Republic is quite power hungry, and they use power symbols like flags, clipboards, and central Authority. The other, small group of people who oppose the Republic actively – John, Joan, David, Emmeline, and her parents seem to have symbols, too, however. The main powerhouse behind this symbol seems to be God with the churches, Sunday school, and history lessons backing it up.

In Chapter 31, Emmeline injuring her foot is no coincidence, as it points toward how the night pans out. She notices that Randall has imperfect legs, and that conflicts with the baby that the workers discuss. That baby has a turned foot and gets placed in the Recycle Center. Restrictions are getting worse. If the Republic only needs babies who can reproduce, there is no reason to get rid of them if they are imperfect in other ways.

It seems that the Republic is working toward a perfect group of citizens, all of them healthy and able to reproduce. This parallels the real-life event of Nazi Germany. The Republic is power hungry and only wants perfect citizens.

The workers' conversation about the baby's fate is terrifying. If the Republic is complaining of low birthrates, they shouldn't deposit babies just because they don't have perfect proportions. More is being exposed about the Republic and their intentions.

## Discussion Question 1

How are David and Emmeline different than those in the Children's Village?



## Discussion Question 2

How might being a Gatekeeper cause someone to become corrupt?

## Discussion Question 3

What makes it evident that David and Emmeline are truly in love with one another?

## Vocabulary

lovely, floating, scuffling, inward, dip, earthy, ultimate, identify, destination, quality, twirling, scalp, steer, jealous



# Chapters 32, 33 and 34

## Summary

In Chapter 32, on her first night of work, Emmeline finds herself already staring off badly. When she first arrives the two workers ask Emmeline if she has brought her torch, which she hasn't. They chastise her immediately. Emmeline follows one of the other workers, Lizzie, around because Emmeline has no light to do anything on her own.

Lizzie snaps at Emmeline frequently, making it clear that she only follows her own rules, not Joan's. Lizzie says they must restock, even though Joan says that is only done during the day. They slowly progress through the nursery until there is only one crib left, and Emmeline has not seen Elsa yet. She worries that Elsa may have been taken.

In Chapter 33, Emmeline sees Elsa in the last crib and is relieved. Lizzie says Elsa is stubborn and that she doesn't like her. Emmeline gets frustrated, but she keeps calm because she can't give herself away. Lizzie gets an egg from someone named Randall when she goes on break, but Randall doesn't bring Emmeline one.

One of the babies starts to cry, and Lizzie refuses to check on it. Lizzie falls asleep, and Emmeline goes to check on the babies in the dark. She helps the baby boy who is crying, and then she moves on to Elsa. Lizzie discovers that Emmeline left, finds her in the nursery, and tells her that she broke the rules.

In Chapter 34, Lizzie continues her aggressive behavior toward Emmeline. Lizzie yells at Emmeline and says that all her friends will say she does a great job comforting and taking care of the babies. Randall stops by to make sure everything is okay. Lizzie says it is Emmeline who has been falling asleep, not her. Randall writes it down to report it later. They return to the supply cupboard, and Lizzie begins to tell Emmeline the history of the Republic.

The ultimate Authority, Fabian, is finally mentioned. Lizzie begins to talk about Emmeline's mother, aunt, and grandma. Emmeline never knew them, and she wonders how Lizzie does. Lizzie says that Emmeline's aunt and grandma were shot in front of everyone and that the only reason her mother stayed alive was so she could raise Emmeline.

## Analysis

Even though Joan is the supervisor in charge of the Children's Village, it is clear that Lizzie thinks she has all the power. A clear line between home-raised kids and kids raised at the Village is defined. It seems that home-raised kids like Emmeline and David are more likely to oppose and reject the views of the Republic, whereas Village-raised kids like Lizzie rejoice in the Republic and worship them.



The setting of the story is immersed in the dark. Emmeline can't see unless she keeps very close to Lizzie. Emmeline represents the blind citizens, and Lizzie represents the Republic, the only ones with light. The vocabulary used is also dark and unhappy, signifying the bad things in this chapter. It is quite possible that the bad that is about to happen will originate from the Children's Village. Since things are not going as planned in the Children's Village, that might point toward it being the origin of all bad things from the Republic.

In Chapter 33, working in the nursery is not going as Emmeline originally planned. Lizzie refuses to follow any of the rules, which conflicts with the Republic's decision to hire on Joan as a supervisor. Emmeline gets bullied, and Elsa serves as her symbol of hope. The only thing keeping Emmeline focused and excited is the possible chance to see her daughter.

However, although Joan tells her to hold the babies if they are crying, Lizzie is firmly against it. On the first night, Emmeline breaks Lizzie's rules and comforts the boy who is crying and then moves on to hold Elsa. Lizzie catches her.

In Chapter 34, the reason behind Mother's constant anxiety and being against the Republic finally makes itself clear. After seeing her family shot, she refuses to join the ranks of the Republic; but, she must do what is necessary so that she doesn't get killed, leaving Emmeline behind. Her antagonistic tendencies have a stronger reason now, other than just disliking the Republic.

Emmeline is angry that her father and David never told her about what happened with her mother's family, and that made her question them. It is clear she was being protected more so than anyone else, but that protection has now led to dangerous situations. The theme of Over Protection is demonstrated in this chapter. The danger that it presents when someone has been too sheltered from the realities of life are explored. The chapter ends with Emmeline finally saying she understands what it feels like to be trapped, which is how Mother felt as well.

## **Discussion Question 1**

How is Elsa a symbol of hope for Emmeline?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What is Lizzie's reason for wanting to get Emmeline in trouble on her first night at work?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Discuss the theme of Over Protection.

## Vocabulary

swollen, crooked, regulations, reciting, rattling, flakes, clung, layout, stocking, unremarkable, murky, haze, ill-prepared, rough, tube



# Chapters 35 and 36

## Summary

Dawn arrives, and Lizzie goes around waking the older children. The girls are less enthusiastic to wake, and Emmeline is surprised at how frail they all look. The workers move to take care of the babies, and Emmeline gets to put a new diaper on Elsa.

Lizzie accuses her of getting a special deal because she is partnered with David. Emmeline denies it, because Lizzie threatens Elsa, hinting that she will miss a feeding or not be taken care of correctly if Emmeline is getting a special deal. She allows Emmeline to hold Elsa, and as she does, Lizzie makes it clear to Emmeline that she should say Lizzie did not fall asleep. Emmeline agrees to lie for Lizzie as long as she gets to take care of Elsa.

In Chapter 36, Lizzie rushes Emmeline to stop her crying and to leave Elsa so they can get off their shift. Lizzie forces Emmeline to go home without talking to Joan. She walks past Joan's office and doesn't stop. Emmeline feels Lizzie has more power than Joan, and that scares her.

Emmeline becomes very upset on the ride home, and feels betrayed because nobody had ever told her about the earlier executions of her aunt and grandmother. She gets home and takes her anger out on David. He says he didn't know she wasn't aware about her family being killed, and he refuses to answer her when she asks if it could happen again.

## Analysis

The two contrasts of night and day show despair and hope accordingly. In the previous chapters, in the middle of the night, Lizzie is rude, threatening, and mean. She accuses Emmeline of sleeping, and Emmeline can't say anything because she relies on Lizzie for light. Yet once dawn hits, Lizzie seems a bit better. She makes a deal with Emmeline, and although she is still threatening and rude, she doesn't seem as scary as the night before.

Emmeline wants to speak with Joan soon, and it is not sure whether she will report Lizzie or not. She wants to continue to take care of Elsa, but if she doesn't report Lizzie, things could get a lot worse. It is not established if Lizzie is threatening her with empty threats or not, but Emmeline does not want to risk it to find out. The phrase her father always tells her resurfaces, which is to not fight the system.

In Chapter 36, with the knowledge of the shootings and David's refusal to answer her further questions it is clear that the murders could happen again. Emmeline's emotions are running high, which is dangerous. It is possible she will begin to act out soon, and since most of her time will now be spent with Lizzie, she may lash out at her.





Emmeline is experiencing some maternal feelings towards Elsa, and she snaps at Lizzie. Lizzie, with more power than Joan, rubs it in Emmeline's face. Emmeline may get to the point where her control breaks, and she says something that can be used against her.

Her anger in throwing the energy bike shows that she wants to lash out against the Republic. She has already copped an attitude against Lizzie and Randall, and although they haven't done anything about it yet, if Emmeline continues they just might. This is directly demonstrative of the theme of Distrust of the Government. She has realized enough truths about her family and their move to the community that she is now as much a rebel as they ever were.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why are the children failing to thrive in the institutions?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What does Emmeline realize about the well intentioned protection that everyone has given her?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Why won't David answer Emmeline when she asks about the murders and if they could happen again?

## **Vocabulary**

despised, dormitory, mousy, puzzled, ritual, pungent, calloused, mistake, injustice, cautious, gagged, scorching, rage



# Chapters 37 and 38

## Summary

In Chapter 37, Emmeline and David are still arguing. Emmeline asks what good it does for her to not know anything. She then proceeds to throw her nourishment cube because she is so angry. Emmeline is still very upset, and David sits next to her to comfort her. She's tired, and he convinces her to drink some water.

She confesses that it is Lizzie who has been telling her about her family, and David apologizes, saying that he hates that she had to hear it from Lizzie. David says maybe secrets were her parents' way of protecting her. David promises to tell her everything as soon as she has rested. She sleeps on the mat, remembering all the things Mother hid for her and how she hasn't told David yet.

In Chapter 38, Emmeline can't sleep well because of all the memories haunting her. When she wakes, David has flowers that his dad left for them on the windowsill. They talk about Elsa, and then if they have kids how they won't be allowed see them.

Emmeline learns more about how her mother led protests and how David and his parents worked on the farm. David tells her of the hole in the fence and how his father escapes through it to go just into the forest. He says that the Gatekeepers can't see the hole, and that his dad never goes farther than to just pick flowers.

## Analysis

In Chapter 37, Emmeline begins to embrace her mother's rebellious spirit. Emmeline throws the nourishment cube and tosses her bike to the ground. She doesn't care who sees her doing these things. She says that if they want to shoot her then go ahead. It seems like something her mother would do. David says she must think of Elsa and of him. It's as though he is talking down to her. This is what Emmeline's father had always done with Mother.

Although David promises to tell Emmeline about everything once she gets some sleep, it seems that Emmeline still doesn't plan on telling him about the hidden items in Mother's mat. Perhaps, Emmeline plans to keep these secrets, even though David says he will tell her all of his.

In Chapter 38, there are a lot of symbols mentioned, one being the flowers that David finds for Emmeline and the other being David's father finding the hole in the fence. Both of these symbols represent freedom and family.

The flowers remind Emmeline of Elsa, and how she's delicate and dependent, yet beautiful. Elsa always reminds Emmeline of freedom because when most mothers can't see their babies, Emmeline can see, hold, and take care of Elsa.



David's father being able to get through the fence also represents freedom. This shows that the family, if needed, can escape from the Republic and go to a better place. By sharing this with Emmeline, David is expressing his deep trust in her.

## **Discussion Question 1**

How has Emmeline become more like her mother?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What was David's reaction to Emmeline's temper tantrum?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What does the hole in the fence represent?

## **Vocabulary**

wafted, cleansing, tasteless, struck, forest, effort, inefficient, degrees, spite, pruning, baling



# Chapters 39 and 40

## Summary

In Chapter 39, a Social Update Meeting is called, and Emmeline and David walk to the meeting. They see David's parents, and the announcements begin. After the announcements, the Authorities announce that armies have been stealing food from the Republic and that nourishment cubes will be smaller. No eggs will be given to night shift workers.

Most of the Citizens seem foolish in their complete adoration of the Republic, and Emmeline notices this through their body language. The last announcement is that birthrates have fallen. The Authorities declare that if citizens cannot produce viable babies, they will be re-paired with someone else with no exceptions.

In Chapter 40, David makes good his promise to tell Emmeline everything that has been withheld from her. David explains the three different kinds of people who were around when the Republic was formed: the believers, the protesters, and the quiet watchers. He tells her that the last group just hung back, and slowly slipped away into the shadows. Most of them never were relocated because they had simply hidden. They are called the Shadow People now. David suggests that it is not an army that the Authority fears; it is the Shadow People who have grown in larger numbers. He says that the Authority wants them to be afraid, and that he is more afraid of the Authority than of the shadow people. Emmeline talks about how she thinks she knows who Lizzie's mother was and that she believes it was the woman who sleepwalked in her old sector.

David says maybe she should mention Lizzie's mother to her, since it is interesting that Emmeline knows something that Lizzie does not. He tells her to not trust Randall, and they go their separate ways to work.

## Analysis

On the way to the Social Update Meeting, Emmeline sees the couple that lives next door who produced the baby that wasn't viable. She sees how dejected they look, which draws her closer to David. This proves that their relationship is strong and real, unlike most other pairs.

Joan touches her heart when she sees Emmeline, a sign her mother had always done. This touches Emmeline, and it is a symbol of the new family she has developed. Emmeline begins to pay close attention to all the citizens to try and see if they dislike the Republic as much as she does. Unfortunately, after the announcements, most of them seem to completely adore the Authorities.



The re-pairing of people if they don't reproduce scares Emmeline and David, as they don't want to have a baby that is taken from them. They must decide to try for a baby or not be together at all.

In Chapter 40, the reader finally receives some more of the puzzle pieces regarding the development and implementation of Agenda 21. The novel, now near the end, is finally coming together regarding the backstory of how the Republic was formed. David says he fears the Authority, which he knows, more than he fears the shadow people, whom he doesn't know. He says that the Authority wants the citizens to be afraid. This allows the Authority to continue to hold power. As long as the citizens are afraid, the Authority is in control.

It is possible that the Authority are the ones who are afraid. They may be trying to instigate fear into the citizens so they can continue to hold power. If the citizens realize there is better life out there, they may join the shadow people. They are scrambling to keep control. With the reduction in rations it is also likely that the Republic is running low on resources.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why do most of the citizens seem to believe what the Authorities tell them?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Who are the Shadow People? Why do they post a threat?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What dilemma are Emmeline and David facing as of the last Social Update decree about reproduction?

## **Vocabulary**

soles, envious, worship, dispatched, exceptions, dreaded, straddled, linger, lurking, fortress



# Chapters 41 and 42

## Summary

Chapter 41 begins with Emmeline starting her shift with Lizzie. Joan tells Barb, the night shift supervisor, that she needs to see Emmeline in the morning. Emmeline figures out how important it is to Lizzie to be good at something, and she decides to try and manipulate her.

Emmeline tells Lizzie that Joan says Lizzie is the best with the babies. Lizzie warms up to her a little bit. She tells Emmeline that she can hold Elsa, with her torch, if she can go talk to Randall and not be questioned. Emmeline agrees.

In Chapter 42, Emmeline goes to hang out with Elsa. She helps a little boy who needs to find the washing area, and he obviously likes her. She worries about Elsa in the future with no caretaker breaking any rules for her like she does with the boy. Lizzie returns, clearly aggravated for some reason. Lizzie accidentally hits Elsa in the head with her torch, and Elsa starts to cry.

Lizzie tells Emmeline about how she worries for Randall because of his foot. Emmeline then tells her about knowing Lizzie's mother. The chapter ends with Emmeline telling Lizzie that they took her mother away.

## Analysis

Emmeline is learning quickly. You give, you receive. She gives Lizzie what she wants, which is to be recognized for hard work and being good at something, and Lizzie rewards her with a trip to go see Elsa. They have a secret bond of sorts. Emmeline knows Lizzie has a special relationship with Randall, and Lizzie knows Emmeline wants to be with Elsa.

They give each other what they want, and this can point toward a future alliance between the two. Lizzie can also provide Emmeline with information that nobody else can. She knows how the Children Village works since she grows up there, and nobody else is around the babies and the workers as much as she is.

In Chapter 42, when the little boy who Emmeline breaks the rules for is obviously quite scared of the Children's Village, it shows that dark things can happen in bright places. It helps make Emmeline realize that nobody can hide anywhere, because even the safest place, like the Children's Village, is sick and twisted.

Emmeline is fiercely protective of Elsa, even when Lizzie hurts her on accident. She's truly matured into being more adult like, like her mother, and wants the best for her child. The Children's Village is obviously not the greatest or safest spot for Elsa, or any of the children for that matter.



Her friendship continues to strengthen with Lizzie, as she is able to provide Lizzie with information about her mother. The chapter ends with Emmeline telling Lizzie that they took her mother away, and this may point to an even stronger bond between the two girls.

## **Discussion Question 1**

How does Emmeline manipulate Lizzie?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What does Emmeline realize as a result of her brief encounter with the little boy in the washing area?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What makes Emmeline feel that she and Lizzie could be friends?

## **Vocabulary**

supplies, rocker, creak, merely, mounds, nickname, pronounce, limp, spy, expand, investments



# Chapters 43 and 44

## Summary

In Chapter 43, Emmeline's shift is ending. As requested, she goes to Joan's office. Joan realizes Lizzie is lurking around outside the office, trying to overhear anything. Joan pretends to scold Emmeline and praise Lizzie until Lizzie goes off with Randall. Emmeline confronts Joan about not doing anything to prevent her aunt and grandmother from dying.

Joan tells Emmeline about all the ways a citizen can be different. She says that people can be different because they don't meet specific standards as set forth by the Authority. Then they can be different by needing more than other citizens...giving less or needing more. Those are both punishable, she says. The third way is for citizens to report on each other to the authority. The reporting citizen will be rewarded for reporting anyone who is subversive to the Authority. Joan also explains that the workers are organized against her. Emmeline says the babies need love and Joan says she can't mandate that because the workers won't listen to her. She says if the babies don't get better, the Children's Village will be relocated.

In Chapter 44, the day Gatekeeper is not as helpful as before, and he is on edge about something. He mentions how eggs are no longer provided for any night workers. David is waiting for Emmeline by the time she gets home. It is obvious that the cubes have already gotten smaller, and he says they need to talk.

David explains that something bad is going on and he is not exactly sure what it is. He says everyone is tense and that even though the Authority is promising good things, the facts show otherwise. Emmeline tells him what his mother said about relocating the Children's Village, and David becomes even more worried.

## Analysis

Even though Emmeline and Lizzie have a deal, it is clear Lizzie still doesn't trust Emmeline since she is trying to overhear what is going on between Joan and Emmeline. Emmeline and Joan work together to persuade Lizzie to leave. Although Emmeline doesn't spend much time with Joan, it is clear they are a team. They are both united against the Republic in their secret way, and that is why they work so well together. Emmeline doesn't have that with Lizzie yet, because Lizzie still praises the Republic.

Emmeline's bond with Elsa continues to grow as she is able to take care of her more. The theme of Family arises in this chapter as Emmeline confronts Joan about her aunt and grandmother's deaths and how they did nothing to stand against it. Joan apologizes and tells her that they were wrong and should have done something.





In Chapter 44, the power of the Authority is slipping. They say everything will be fine if citizens continue to create energy and eat less, but as David points out, rumors don't point toward the truth. The facts do. If the citizens pay attention to the facts, they will get more and more restless about the Authority.

When Emmeline hesitates to tell David about the possibility of the Children's Village relocating, she is demonstrating the theme of Over Protection. Then she realizes that she is doing what has been done to her in the past and that withholding information to protect someone just makes them vulnerable and possibly in danger. So, she tells him what his mother told her. He is as upset as she is.

## **Discussion Question 1**

How are the workers rebelling quietly against Joan?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What would make the Gatekeepers all tense?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What does Emmeline learn about over protecting in Chapter 44?

## **Vocabulary**

thriving, credits, ethic, eloquently, successful, desktop, eternity, tang, hunched, timbre, faraway, fidgety



# Chapters 45 and 46

## Summary

David feels something on Mother's mat, but he can't ask about it because the Gatekeeper is getting closer to the morning inspection of the living space. It is clear that when he reaches their space that he wants to talk to David. Once he leaves David tells Emmeline that he heard that another train line was ripped up. Emmeline decides to show him the map and try and figure out what is going on.

They figure out that if the train lines are ripped up, the citizens will get no food, not less food. Yet they are getting less food, and Emmeline figures it out. She says that somehow there is less food, as if the farm communities are failing just like the Children's Village. The Authority has lied to everybody.

In Chapter 46, Emmeline shows David everything that is in the mat. He explains what Thanksgiving is like, and tells her that the gold circle is a coin, which the Authority confiscated. When he comes to the Bible, he says they must do everything they can to protect it.

David says that people save what they think they will lose. He says he saved salt when it was rumored to be taken away. He says he hides it in his sleeping mat. However, he tells Emmeline that he is very happy that her mother saved what she did.

## Analysis

David and Emmeline continue their train of thought in this chapter. If the farm commune is failing along with the Children's Village, it is possible that all other communities that produce things are failing, too. Since the communities are not connected and there is no way to communicate between the communities, there is no way to figure out if the Authority lied.

However, Emmeline has the map. And she knows what John said about them being near the east coast. By using what she remembers and her own ideas, she figures out that the Authority is lying.

In Chapter 46, when David says people save what they are going to lose, that can be one of the reasons Mother saves all those things. However, since she is one of the leaders of the protests, she may have saved those things so Emmeline can continue her protests. This demonstrates the theme of Distrusting the Government. As it seems to be unfolding, more and more people are quietly, and some not so quietly, rebelling against the draconian methods of the planned living communities.



The New Testament is obviously quite important, and David seems to know why. If he will do everything in his power to protect the Bible, then religion may hold a greater power than it originally seems.

With the discovery of these things and David's knowledge of them, the items will possibly be used soon. Also, since David hides things as well, it is quite possible that others are hiding things from the Republic, too.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why would the Authority lie to the citizens?

## **Discussion Question 2**

How does Emmeline come to the conclusion that other planned communities were failing?

## **Discussion Question 3**

How does David's knowledge of the items in her mother's mat change their significance for Emmeline?

## **Vocabulary**

logical, blurring, border, arcs, birdsong, ridge, outlaw, exchanged, pudding, incredible



# Chapters 47 and 48

## Summary

Emmeline is running late for work, and once she arrives there is no Gatekeeper. Lizzie is drinking with the daytime caretaker. Lizzie is mad, as Randall has been taken away, and she blames Emmeline for it.

Lizzie clarifies that the children will not be in the Children's Village anymore starting tomorrow. Lizzie says she stole the alcohol, and as she continues to drink Emmeline hurries around. She tries to gather supplies, but has no light, and drops them. She starts to cry, fearing she will lose Elsa.

In Chapter 48, Emmeline sees that Lizzie has passed out, and she takes her torch. She checks on all the other children, and feeds and changes the babies. After she speaks briefly with the boy from the other night, she decides to take Elsa to David.

She escapes, which is easy since there is no Gatekeeper, and finds David working. She tells him that they have to leave. They argue briefly, and Emmeline tells him that she will leave without him if she has to. She gets everything from Mother's mat, and she starts to leave. David follows.

## Analysis

The bond between Lizzie and Emmeline obviously means nothing, as Lizzie easily blames Emmeline for turning in Randall. Whereas Emmeline worries about protecting all the children and taking care of them, including Elsa, Lizzie could care less

In many respects, Lizzie represents the Authority and their lack of caring for the actual health of the citizens, and Emmeline represents the few caring workers that try their hardest to make sure everything goes smoothly. Rumors seem to represent truth, and the structure of the Republic seems to be crumbling. The theme of Family surfaces in this chapter when Emmeline makes up her mind to grab Elsa and run.

By telling David she will leave without him, it is clear that Emmeline has truly matured to be almost a replica of her mother. Her refusal to stay in the Republic is rebellious like her mom. Yet, she acts with more clarity, and has developed into being a smart combination of her mother's belief in freedom and her father's careful actions.

The theme of Family is continued as David realizes that they are his family and that he will do what he can to protect them. He agrees to leave with her.



## **Discussion Question 1**

How does Lizzie act as a metaphor for the Authority?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Discuss the theme of Family as it is demonstrated in Chapter 48.

## **Discussion Question 3**

Compare Emmeline's character at the end of the book to the Emmeline at the beginning of the novel.

## **Vocabulary**

volume, wander, snorting, bloodshot, tracked, immobile, raspy, eavesdropping, thud, sliver



# Chapter 49

## Summary

In Chapter 49, Emmeline and David run across the compound and cross through the Social Update center. She and David decide to set the stage on fire to create a diversion. They return to the Children's Village to get the torch and the other little boy that Emmeline had been taking care of. They quickly get to the hole in the fence. Elsa begins to cry and Emmeline places her finger in her daughter's mouth to calm her.

Everybody moves through the hole but David, and Emmeline is scared he won't follow. She turns to leave, ready to fulfill her promise of leaving with or without David, but David follows. Emmeline worries that the fire will spread to the Children's Village, but David reassures her that it will go to the Authority supply building instead. They disappear into the unknown as the compound goes up in flames.

## Analysis

The final chapter in the book gives hope that the protagonists will make it okay and that they might find the shadow people. However, that point is left unresolved. David and Emmeline have again created their own family with Elsa and the small, unnamed boy. They escape through the hole and into the woods, and toward freedom, leaving all of the planned living ideas behind in ruins.

Placing her finger in her daughter's mouth shows that she has come full circle. At the beginning of the story she was constantly sticking her fingers into her mouth like a toddler would. Now, she has matured and embraced adulthood. By placing her fingers into her daughter's mouth the author is letting the reader know that she understands the reality that she lives in and isn't afraid.

Although they are trespassing into the unknown full of dangers, the story almost leaves off on a cheerful note, as it seems safer outside the Authority's grasp. The larger commentary, of course, is directed toward a thoughtless and power hungry government, so enamored of itself and its philosophies that it remains out of touch with reality and common human nature. The theme of Distrust of the Government is left as a last theme for the reader to digest as the characters presumably go on to lead better lives outside of the government's interference.

## Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Distrust of the Government.



## Discussion Question 2

What is the author's purpose in writing this story?

## Discussion Question 3

What are some possibilities for what will happen to Emmeline, David, and the children after they leave the compound?

## Vocabulary

chaos, damp, slope, tricks, crawl, traumatic, antithesis, crackling, diversion, merging



# Characters

## Emmeline

Emmeline takes center stage throughout the novel as the story's young protagonist. She is quite childish at the beginning, the result of being sheltered by her parents her entire life. At the start of the story, she is quick to trust and love, as she doesn't know anything different from life inside the Republic.

However, Emmeline grows emotionally as she progresses through the novel and loses two pairs, her mother, and her father. She learns to value family and learns what trust really means. As she loses her two main sources of information early on in the story, she must learn to figure things out for herself.

Emmeline transforms into a younger version of her mother once she realizes what the Republic is really up to. She has strong urges to protect her family, and she does this in the ways her mother would have, by escaping.

## Mother

Since Mother is really only told about through flashbacks and dialogue, she is a difficult character to understand. At the beginning, she comes off as slightly crazy and very pessimistic. Later on, members of the Republic describe her as having antagonistic tendencies. The reader realizes this early on with her cursing the Republic and her unwillingness to cooperate, but Emmeline doesn't truly understand her mother until she discovers how her aunt and grandmother died.

Mother is misunderstood as someone who doesn't like change until toward the end of the story, once Emmeline discovers all the items she hid for her. Once that happens, Emmeline and the reader truly understand why Mother's actions. Overall, she is very influential on Emmeline and provides a great deal of support, comfort, and protection.

## Father

Although protection is still at his forefront, Father gives Emmeline advice that is opposite to that given by Mother. He always tells Emmeline to do exactly as the Republic says and to not fight them. He is much lesser known than Mother, yet their opposite ways of parenting combine to create Emmeline, who is careful like Father yet rebellious like Mother.





## John

John, although not seen as much as some of the other characters, plays a vital role. He is Emmeline's first trusting friend after she loses her parents, and he is the one that helps her understand that family runs deeper than blood. He takes risks, but only those necessary.

## David

David comes in to play about halfway through the story. From the beginning of his appearance, he shows kindness and an interest in Emmeline. She begins to have feelings for him, as he does for her. He becomes her new family, and she learns to rely on him and trust him.

There is a different relationship between the two than what they have with their parents. They are closer in age, and they can rely on each other in terms of trust and learning about the past.

David is a Gatekeeper; yet, unlike most others, he is trustworthy. By being a Gatekeeper, he knows a bit more about the rumors and who to avoid. By sharing this information with Emmeline, and her telling him whenever something goes wrong, they make a good team.

## Jeremy

Jeremy isn't around very long, as he is incredibly snobby and childish. His reaction to Emmeline and how life is outside the Children's Village is pathetic, and he is quickly removed from the story.

## George

George, although not interested in Emmeline like David, treats her with kindness. He is a good first pair to her because he can show her the ways of life and protect her as the mother of his child. He and Emmeline have a gentle, more friend-like relationship and he is the first person she gets close to who isn't a blood relative.

## Joan

Joan reminds Emmeline of her own mother, and she likes Joan because she is David's mother. Joan is uncertain about how she will help the Children's Village. Although her failure will be a huge problem, she still tries her hardest to make the babies happy and healthy. She protects Emmeline while at work, and provides another source of information to John, David, and Emmeline.



## Lizzie

Lizzie resembles a female Jeremy at the start. She is snobby and wants to do things her way just because she's been there the longest and thinks she deserves it. She is lazy, and is quick to tattle and lie to save herself. She and Emmeline don't get along and never become friends, but she is easily manipulated by Emmeline. Lizzie just wants to be good at something, as growing up in the Children's Village makes her feel not special since she is always treated the same as the other children. It seems she may be jealous of Emmeline, just because Emmeline is raised with her biological family and knows that type of love whereas Lizzie does not.

## Randall

Randall, being related to Lizzie, is also snobby and rude. However, most of this stems from his imperfection, and he worries about how the Republic might react if he needs a special shoe. Randall is not very well-known other than being a bully and only being friends with his sister, and from what Joan says, he doesn't trust anyone.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## Lizzie and Emmeline

These two signify more than just themselves. They are opposites of each other, but their positions and their personalities signify something more. Lizzie represents the Authorities and the Republic, poor at making things right and unwilling to help the citizens and provide love. Emmeline represents the way things used to be, as she is caring and wants to help those who need it, even if they require special treatment.

## Weather

Weather is used a lot in the story to foreshadow and set the mood. Whether that be sun or rain, both symbolize what can happen. Whenever there is a storm, bad things normally follow and vice versa with sunshine.

## Recycle Center

The Re-Cy center is mentioned a lot, and that is not just because Emmeline lives there. It is used to symbolize the image that the Authorities are using Agenda 21 to recreate and recycle humans and their work. Recycling plays a big part in the story, such as when the citizens must walk on their energy boards to recycle their energy into energy for the compound. It is as if the Authorities are deleting the old life, and recycling everything, history, humans, and laws, into something completely new.

## White Headscarf

White is often a color used to describe innocence. Emmeline wears this at the beginning when she is single but able to be paired. While Emmeline wears this, she is ignorant to a lot of the ways the Republic works.

## Black Headscarf

Emmeline dons this headscarf once she becomes a widow after George dies. This, the opposite of the white headscarf, signifies a turning point for her. After George and after she gives birth, Emmeline is almost a completely different person than when she wore the white headscarf.



## Fire

The fire at the end of the book destroys the physical aspects of the Authorities. Since it attacks their stage and their supply building, the fire symbolizes the downfall of the Authorities' power and the loss of their control as Emmeline and her family escape their hold.

## The Forest

The compound Emmeline lives in is bordered by a forest. The forest symbolizes freedom, as it is where John knows he can get to and not many others. The forest is forbidden to the citizens.

## The Compounds

Although the Republic places people in compounds so everyone works equally and gets the same treatment, the compounds symbolize jail and lack of freedom. The citizens can't escape, and they must abide by all laws which the Republic establishes. This is similar to a jail.

## Perfection Standards

Although reproduction is dwindling, the Republic is strictly focused on producing perfect babies. Even babies who have the slightest imperfections are rejected, and this symbolizes real world happenings, like Nazi Germany. It seems the Republic wants a perfect group of citizens.

## Flowers

The flowers David gets for Emmeline signify hope and love. Flowers are not allowed to be kept by citizens, but David risks himself to get them for Emmeline. They always remind Emmeline of Elsa, who reminds her of hope.

## Eggs

When Emmeline first meets David, he begins sneaking hard boiled eggs to her for breakfast. These are banned and forbidden. Yet, he finds them and gives them to her. Eggs not only represent rebellion but also the beginning of a new love, a new life, and the birth of a new movement toward freedom.



## Leaves

When Emmeline's father is talking with her about her impending pairing, he hands her a leaf from a tree. To interfere with nature at all is forbidden, but he takes a leaf down for her to hold. That she is so delighted by the leaf indicates the severe repressive lifestyle they endure. The leaf he hands his daughter represents the old way of life, where plucking a leaf from a tree was nothing, a simple pleasure. When Father grinds it under his heel he is signifying that those times are over and gone.

## Birds

Birds are mentioned several times throughout the novel. First, there is the reference to Mother as being a caged bird, imprisoned by the Republic away from her beloved farm. Then, when George and Father are killed, Em sees birds flying overhead. Both instances indicate that birds signify freedom.

## Picture in the Mat

Em finds many items inside of her mother's sleeping mat. One of those is a picture of her as a baby being held by her mother. This represents a precious way of life that the mother had hoped to return to some day.

## Authorities' Bus Box

The Bus Box that the Authorities ride in is different from the others in that it is solid black and has a large planet in the middle of it. This signifies a desire for domination and oppression.

## Hole in the Fence

John has found a way through the fence where the Gatekeepers can't see. This is the route that Emmeline and David use when they leave the compound in the middle of the night. The hole represents not only freedom, but the unraveling of a carefully constructed matrix of control by the government via Agenda 21.



# Settings

## Farm

Though the reader and Emmeline are never on the farm, frequent references are made to it. The farm was located in Kansas and it was where Emmeline was born, where Father and Mother lived, and where David and his family lived nearby (as did George). The farm begins to serve as a reminder of what they had and what they lost when the Republic was allowed to take over.

## Compound 18

This is the planned living community that Emmeline and her family are moved to when she was a toddler. This is the first place that she actually remembers as she was too young to remember the farm where she was born.

## George's Living Space

When Em and George are paired, she moves in with him. The house is next door to her parent's space; so, Em is happy and content.

## Recycling Living Space

When Em is paired with Jeremy she must move into a space close to where he works at the Recycling Center. The putrid smell coming from there turns Em's stomach.

## Children's Village

This is the section of the Compound that houses infants and children. They are raised there for the Republic. Any children that are not perfect are recycled, Em learns. Additionally, this is where Joan, David's mother works and, eventually, where Emmeline works.



# Themes and Motifs

## Family

Family plays such a big role in *Agenda 21*. Emmeline starts off being very close with her mother and father. They are really all she knows, as she doesn't grow up in the Children's Village. Emmeline doesn't have friends, and Mother is her closest friend.

However, Emmeline loses her family and her pair, George, very early on in the story. This leaves Emmeline feeling stranded as she loses everyone she ever knew and is left with Jeremy, who does not remind her of family at all. However, eventually she gets close to John, who leads her to David. She then meets Joan.

This family becomes her new family, and Emmeline falls in love with David, works with John to get to Elsa, and gets a job with Joan. Like a real family, each person supports her and provides her with the different things she needs to survive.

Yet despite all the support she gets from David and his family, her remaining family dwindles to Elsa. Although she will risk herself for David, John, and Joan, she will do absolutely anything for Elsa. All of this shows the theme of family running deeper than blood, and that family is to be relied on once times get hard.

## The Problem of Over Protection

Mother and Father do not tell Emmeline much about how things are. Mother always tells Emmeline about how things were in the past. In the beginning, this doesn't harm Emmeline. It helps her cherish the little bit of happiness that remains.

However, once Mother is taken and Father is supposedly killed, Emmeline is left to her own devices. She acts younger than she really is, just because she never has any responsibilities growing up. Many other citizens make fun of her for her lack of knowledge, and her lack of knowledge can possibly get her in trouble.

She is not sure what is and what isn't allowed, and she gets much of that information from John and David. She learns more about her family from them than what her mother tells her, and the reader learns with her. Throughout the story, the reader is about as clueless as Emmeline, and Emmeline's constant questions are also questions that the reader wants to know.

However, John and David can't provide her with all information, and some things she needs to figure out for herself. She learns how to pay attention and manipulate people, such as Lizzie. Although Emmeline is clueless and more information at the start would have been extremely helpful, the vigilance she learns from her parents help her and she somehow never gets in big trouble with her lack of knowledge.



## Distrust of Government

Many citizens absolutely adore the Republic. They agree with their rules from the start. However, the citizens who are hardworking and don't get rewarded for that dislike the Authority. Most of them keep these feelings to themselves, but those start to surface.

Many people begin to distrust the Authority when they are allowed to use energy, books, and all the things they ban when the citizens are not. Emmeline often wonders why they are so special if everyone is supposed to be equal. In the society that they live in, the Authority draws lots of attention to themselves by holding themselves above the citizens.

Once Emmeline discovers that the baby with the turned foot is discharged so easily even though birthrates are plummeting, she fully loses trust for the Authority. Emmeline finds it hard to trust anyway, since nobody ever tells her anything, but she is willing to give almost anybody a chance. At the beginning, she doesn't mind the Authority because they are all she knows. Yet people often act as those who influence them, and Mother's distrust rubs off on Emmeline.

Many people in real life distrust authority figures as well, and that is played off in the story. Many people trust the Authority since they explain they try to make things better. Once things begin to resemble jail and there is no free will, that trust plummets.

## Loss

Loss is a theme and the way of life in the story. Everybody eventually loses someone important to them, but Emmeline happens to lose a lot. What she loses does not mean just the people in her life, either.

Losing her parents is a huge loss for Emmeline, but it also teaches her how to rely on herself and trust others that she is not related to. Mostly, the loss of her parents –albeit painful – is helpful to Emmeline since she needs to learn to help herself.

Emmeline doesn't remember her old life, but in the explanations from her family and David, it is as if she loses it all over again. After experiencing how life is currently and learning how amazing it can be, Emmeline wants to return to her old life. By discovering all the items hid for her by her mother, Emmeline wishes to go back and feels as if she lost her old life even though she doesn't remember it.

Physical things are not the only things lost in Agenda 21. Emmeline loses her family and her home, but she also loses her innocence. Emmeline is kind and gentle and innocent, ignorant to everything that happens until she begins to see the true cruelty of the Authority. Although losing her trust in the world is a bad experience, it needs to happen as Emmeline comes of age and must take care of herself.





## Obedience to Authority

Obedience is a major theme in this story. Mother always tells Emmeline to do what is monitored. Father always tells her not to fight them. It seems that everyone must obey, and nobody is sure what happens to those who don't.

Obedience to Authority and its importance shows its face right away as Mother is taken away. She doesn't work her board and is depressed, which makes her unproductive. The Authority takes her away for refusing to follow their rules, and it is not clear where she is taken.

Emmeline always does what the Authority can monitor, but she begins to disobey in other things. She doesn't report the citizen who steals her cube, she hides things in her mat, and she begins to think of what life might be like in the future if she isn't trapped by Authority.

The Authority tries to keep their hold on the citizens by punishing them severely if they disobey. Mother is taken away for not being productive, Lizzie's mom is taken for stealing, a man is beat for accidentally running over a snake. By punishing people so severely, citizens don't want to disobey in fear of being hurt. However, the Authority can't hold that kind of power for long, and they eventually start to lose it at the end of the story.

# Styles

## Point of View

The story is written in first person, from the point of Emmeline. She is young, so the vocabulary is relatively simple and the story line is easy to follow. The reader feels left out of the loop sometimes, due to Emmeline's ignorance. Since Emmeline begins as an ignorant 14 year old and ends as a 17 year old who knows much more about life and the Republic, the point of view almost makes it feel as if the reader is growing with Emmeline.

## Language and Meaning

The vocabulary is quite simple, as Emmeline is fourteen years-old through part of the novel and seventeen through the other part. Although the concepts may be hard to understand based on all the political influences and government involvement, the vocabulary simplifies the story a bit so that it can be understood by younger readers. Also, the vocabulary fits Emmeline's personality, since she is not the most educated citizen. Her unfamiliarity with much of the before-time words is strange, but the descriptions from other characters help clear up any confusion.

## Structure

The novel jumps back and forth between flashbacks and present tense. This, albeit slightly confusing, helps provide the necessary backstory of the Republic and everything about how the government is run. This is necessary because although Emmeline is the narrator, she does not know much about the Republic. Much of the information is told through dialogue, which makes it easier to understand.

The book has 49 chapters, an average length of 10-15 pages, with some of them being the exception with only a few pages.



## Quotes

No buts. Elsa is all that is left of my family. As you said, family is important.”  
-- Emmeline (Chapter 18)

**Importance:** This was said by Emmeline as she was told that she would not be able to see her child ever again after she gave birth to her. Emmeline agrees with them but vows that she will find a way to get back to Elsa.

But you can't take what is in my head.  
-- Mother (Chapter 14)

**Importance:** This was Mother's response when the authorities came and confiscated all of the books and writing materials from their living space.

“Some things you have to do. The things that are monitored. So get on your board. Start walking.”  
-- Mother (Chapter 14)

**Importance:** This was the advice that Mother gave to Em so that she would survive. She is implying that there are many things that are not monitored. In order to keep those things secret, one must do the things that are monitored so as to keep suspicion away.

“My name is my name. I don't need to give it to you. It's one of the few things I have left.”  
-- John (Chapter 12)

**Importance:** This establishes John as someone that is much like Em's mother.

“Don't talk to me. Don't. Unless you can tell me how they got this power.”  
-- Emmeline (Chapter 10)

**Importance:** Em tells this to George when he tries to make her comfortable right before the birth of their child. She is tired of everyone protecting her from the truth. She wants to know, and she's demanding answers.

“Okay, little teapot. Pour it out.”  
-- George (Chapter 10)

**Importance:** This is George's way of getting Emmeline to share what is on her mind. It references a child's song, "I'm a Little Teapot." In this new Republic, poetry, songs, or any other sort of entertainment is forbidden.

“All you will have is the pain. You will never see your baby. You will never have the joy.”  
-- Mother (Chapter 9)



**Importance:** Mother says this when she learns that Em is pregnant. She understands that her daughter will never be allowed to enjoy motherhood, just the pain of childbirth.

“God damn it. God damn it to hell and back.  
-- Mother (Chapter 6)

**Importance:** This shows that Mother, even after having been in captivity for thirteen years or so, is not complacent with the Republic.

“Whatever you do, Emmeline, whatever you do, don’t fight them. Do you hear me? Don’t ever fight them.”  
-- Father (Chapter 4)

**Importance:** This was said by Father when he was getting ready to take Emmeline to the Reproductive Testing Center. He wanted to make sure that she didn't fight the authorities because he knew that they would not tolerate it.

“Sometimes a person just needs to talk. Know what I mean?  
-- Lizzie (Chapter 42)

**Importance:** Lizzie tells Emmeline on the first night of work that she needs to go and speak with Randall on her breaks. Later, the story reveals that Randall is her brother and that she is checking in with him because he is crippled. She is worried that he will be taken because he isn't physically perfect.

“We trusted – John and me, a lot of others – the way things were. We couldn’t imagine anyone being able to change that.”  
-- Joan (chapter 43)

**Importance:** When Emmeline confronts Joan for standing by while her aunt and grandmother are executed, this is what Joan says. She says that it all happened so fast that they didn't have a chance to consider what it all meant.

“Maybe we can pretend we’re going out on a date.”  
-- David (Chapter 19)

**Importance:** David says this to Emmeline after he agrees to come back in the evening to see her. He says that they can pretend like they are on a date like in the old times.