

# **Among the Brave Study Guide**

**Among the Brave by Margaret Peterson Haddix**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

<a href="#">Among the Brave Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 1 through 3.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 4 through 6.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 7 through 10.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 11 through 14.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 15 through 18.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 19 through 21.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 22 through 25.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 26 through 29.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 30 through 32.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Chapters 33 through 35.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>



# Plot Summary

Trey is the third child of a family. Since families in the story are limited to only two children, third children are illegal and are immediately captured, jailed, or killed by the Population Police, a group organized to enforce the "third child law." Trey lived with his parents until his father's death. He was taught by his father and excels academically. However, when his father died, his mother dropped him off at a school, saying it wasn't safe for them to be together. Trey struggles with abandonment issues and can't decide if he's angrier at his mother, his father, or himself.

As the story opens, Trey is trying to make contact with a man that he and some other children believe will help him, Mr. Talbot. But before Trey can gain entrance into the house, the Population Police arrive and he narrowly escapes capture. Trey's friends escape and he lives in fear over the coming days, hiding out in the house that is now abandoned.

Trey then meets Mark, the older brother of Trey's friend, Lee, who is also an illegal third child. Mark learns that Lee has probably been captured and sets out to rescue his brother, demanding Trey's cooperation. They arrive at the house they believe will lead them to Lee only to discover it's been taken over by the Population Police. Mark attempts to get inside but is captured. Trey asks to join the Population Police as a means of getting into the house. Once he is there, he finds Mark locked in a cage but eventually makes a deal with a soldier to trade Mark's freedom for Trey's efforts to free a friend of the soldier. Trey, still disguised as a Population Police officer, sets out to do so but the road to success is filled with problems. He is attacked twice by mobs of hungry people and arrives at the prison only to discover the prisoner he's helping free as part of his deal with the soldier turns out to be Mr. Talbot. The soldier is a rebel working against the Population Police from inside.

Lee is also released and the boys, along with another soldier who helps them escape, arrive at a secret house where another friend, Mr. Hendrix, has been left alone because the police believe he can't possibly survive. Trey struggles with the idea that he's acted bravely when necessary despite his self-image as a cowardly person. Trey discovers a list of one hundred other third children and determines to volunteer for the Population Police with the hope that he can mount attacks from within. He believes the children themselves are the key to eliminating the Population Police. He's joined by several of the others, including Mark, who promises to join them as soon as he recovers from a broken leg.



# Chapters 1 through 3

## Chapters 1 through 3 Summary

As the story opens, Trey is trying to work up the courage to leave the safety of a car and go to the door of a nearby house. His friends Nina, Joel, and John will remain in the car. Trey tries to get out of going but Nina insists, pointing out that Trey already knows Mr. Talbot. The four children are accompanied by a chauffeur who is driving the car and they hope that Mr. Talbot can help them hide. Nina pushes Trey out and closes the door. Trey has a stack of papers and he clutches them as he prepares to walk toward Mr. Talbot's front door. The chauffeur has parked across the street and the car is virtually hidden. Trey wishes desperately for his friend Lee. Both Lee and Trey are illegal third children. A law in the country makes it illegal for families to have more than two children. The third child of a family is imprisoned or killed by the Population Police, a group established to enforce the law and that is currently in charge of the country. Trey's friend Lee is missing. Lee was with the group earlier but left them to take Smits somewhere and Trey believes Lee was taking Smits home with him.

Just then the door opens and Mr. Talbot is standing there. Trey starts to identify himself but Mr. Talbot cuts him off, saying he won't support the lacrosse team and that Trey is to tell all the other students that this is a "no soliciting" household and they should not come back. Trey tries to interrupt but Mr. Talbot cuts him off again, slamming the door in Trey's face. Trey is wondering what to do when a car comes from a garage hidden under the house. Mr. Talbot is in the back seat and he holds up his hands. Trey sees that he's handcuffed. Trey then realizes that the car he'd arrived is in creeping away. Trey first thinks that they're coming to get him but then realizes they're hiding. Trey follows his instinct and hides behind a flowerpot on the porch.

In chapter two, the Population Police arrive and Trey has no option except to keep hiding. He hears walkie-talkies and gives himself a pep talk, determining that he will be dragged away fighting if he's discovered. Then a young man wearing the Population Police uniform finds him. The young man seems to hesitate and then say, "liber?" Trey doesn't know what the boy means but out of habit he translates the Latin word to English, "free." Trey hates that he didn't immediately begin fighting but the young man miraculously speaks into his walkie-talkie, saying the porch is "all clear."

Trey remains where he is, perplexed at the turn of events, and becomes even more so when he hears all the Population Police officers get into cars and leave the property. Trey has no idea what to do next and wishes someone would come rescue him.

In chapter three, the day passes and it becomes dark. He is hungry and wants to leave his hiding place in search of food but is afraid. He finally scares himself, thinking about the length of time it would take for him to starve to death and what someone would find if they discovered his body. Trey thinks about his friends and believes it's doubtful they'll return for him. He thinks about Mr. Talbot and can't really understand the significance of



Mr. Talbot's arrest, except that it's not likely he'll be returning either. Trey then realizes that Lee might show up at some point and he doesn't want to have to admit that he'd spent days hiding behind a flowerpot. This thought pushes him out of his hiding place.

Trey goes inside the house and discovers the place is completely trashed. Trey inadvertently steps on a small disc, which makes a noise. He freezes but a light shines on him and he soon hears a woman screaming.

## Chapters 1 through 3 Analysis

Trey has a terrible time making himself go toward Mr. Talbot's house but he reminds himself it's because of "conditioning." The reader will later learn that Trey lived with his mother and father, hidden away, and was never outside until his father's death. Trey is an illegal third child and has been forced to remain in hiding all his life to avoid being captured, imprisoned, or even killed by the Population Police. The story's setting is a time and place in which there have been famines that prompted a law making it illegal for families to have more than two children.

The story is a sequel and there are indications as the story opens about the happenings in the previous book. The reader of this story doesn't know all the details but does know that Trey was involved in some situation in which some people were killed. Trey emerged as a hero in the eyes of his friends. It's a situation that he'll struggle with throughout the book. Trey says he isn't brave and seems to hate the fact that his friends believe he is.

Trey, as he's headed into the Talbot's empty house for the first time after the Population Police leave, thinks about his parents. His father had kept him hidden away for his entire life up to his death, apparently in an effort to keep Trey from being arrested or killed. Trey's mother apparently believes this was a mistake and she says that Trey has been "irreparably damaged" by the life he'd led.



# Chapters 4 through 6

## Chapters 4 through 6 Summary

In chapter four, the screaming comes to an abrupt end. The woman says that her flashlight doubles as a gun and asks if Trey is "one of them," referring to the Population Police. Trey is confused and the woman then assumes that he must be a looter. Trey says he's a friend of Mr. Talbot and the woman reveals that she's Mrs. Talbot, George Talbot's wife. Trey says he's been at the Grants' home and the woman seems relieved, saying she's glad they've sent someone to help her. Trey begins to tell her that the Grants are dead but doesn't want to break the news so harshly. He finally tells her he wants to help her but doesn't know what to do. She asks if the Grants had given him any instructions. He then tells her the Grants are dead. Trey doesn't tell her the details of the scene but he remembers all the people dressed in their finery and the chandelier plunging from the ceiling.

Mrs. Talbot says they'd come to realize there was danger. Trey knows the Talbots had three children, two older boys and a third child, Jen, who'd been killed. Mrs. Talbot says they'd made elaborate plans of what to do if the Population Police came. She says she'd hidden, as they'd planned, but was supposed to go to the Grants' home when she came out of hiding. She says she'd have already been gone except she'd seen news of rioting on television and had decided she should wait. Trey knows the Population Police control television but Mrs. Talbot reveals that the wealthy people still have control of some television stations. These are called the Baron Stations.

Trey and Mrs. Talbot go to watch a broadcast. The broadcast is going normally when Mrs. Talbot turns the television on but then the picture changes and there's a man in a "luxurious black jacket" who announces that the former government has been overthrown. According to the man, the former leader has been jailed. Trey immediately jumps to the conclusion that the law making third children illegal has been overridden and that he, along with all other third children, will no longer need to hide. He says as much to Mrs. Talbot who tells him the man is Alodus Krakenaur, head of the Population Police. Mrs. Talbot then begins to cry.

In chapter five, Trey says the situation may not become any worse under Alodus Krakenaur's rule but Mrs. Talbot says Krakenaur is insane. She predicts he'll devote everything to hunting down the third children. Mrs. Talbot then throws the remote through the television screen. Trey says they won't have any way of knowing what's going on and Mrs. Talbot says she doesn't want to know. Trey continues to think about his brief encounter with Mr. Talbot and realizes he was probably warning Trey to stay away and to keep the others away as well. Trey grabs onto the hope that Mr. Talbot, who has outwardly worked for the Population Police but secretly worked to help third children, will be released now that Krakenaur is in control. Mrs. Talbot says Krakenaur has "always hated" Mr. Talbot and that Krakenaur's rise to power is probably why Mr. Talbot was arrested. Mrs. Talbot refuses Trey's idea they might be able to rescue Mr.



Talbot and says she's leaving. It's obvious she doesn't completely trust him. Trey asks to go with her but she refuses.

In chapter six, Trey hides in a kitchen cupboard. He finally manages to muster the courage to rush out, grab a bunch of food from the refrigerator, and return to his hiding place. Trey is initially frantic but forces himself to calm down and consider his situation along with what he needs to do next. Trey decides he should call on another adult friend, Mr. Hendricks. Mr. Hendricks is bound to a wheelchair but Trey realizes he's stable and dependable, more so than some other adults. He decides he'll call Mr. Hendricks but knows he'll have to be careful what he says. He begins to search for a telephone and almost cries when he discovers the phone line has been cut. He decides that he can only wait for Lee to show up.

## Chapters 4 through 6 Analysis

Trey learns that Mrs. Talbot is expecting that Trey has been sent by the Grants and that he's here to help her. At this point, Trey mulls over what he knows about the Grants. They are dead and Trey witnessed their murder. It was that situation that prompted Trey's arrival at the Talbot house. He and the other children were hoping Mr. Talbot could help them. Trey notes at this point that everyone is looking for someone to help them. This will come home to Trey later as he makes a decision to take the offensive approach rather than spending the rest of his life hiding from the Population Police.

The fact that the wealthy people have control of some television stations that broadcast the true situations is an important part of one of the recurring themes of this series of stories. The government seeks to control the people and one way of doing this is to control the information. This is commonly seen in communist governments in which the government oversees the spreading of propaganda with a strict control over anything that might be construed as negative.



# Chapters 7 through 10

## Chapters 7 through 10 Summary

In chapter seven, Trey waits for days and Lee doesn't show up. During this time, Trey is completely cut off from news but knows the situation is probably deteriorating. He thinks about his life with his parents. His mother had spent most of her evenings "glaring resentfully" at Trey while he studied. When Trey's father died of a heart attack, he'd hoped his mother would take an interest in him, perhaps even taking over his education and "loving him like mothers did in books." Instead, his mother had decided to "get rid of him."

On the third day of waiting, the electricity in the neighborhood goes off. That evening, Trey watches out a back window and sees a woman and a little boy at the back door of the only house behind the Talbot's house. Trey thinks he knows the little boy. Trey knows it isn't Lee but believes it's Smits Grant, "the boy Lee had taken to safety." Trey hopes that if Smits is safe at the neighbor's house, Lee is safely there as well.

In chapter eight, Trey eats everything in the refrigerator, knowing it's going to ruin anyway. He then watches to be sure he can identify the boy as Smits. He can't get a look and so he opens a window, hoping he might be able to hear. However, he is still not able to learn what is going on. Trey becomes frustrated and goes outside, hiding near a small barn. When the boy comes by, Trey grabs him and asks if he's Smits. The boy begins to scream, saying his name is Peter Goodard. Trey realizes now the boy really is Smits and that he's trying to hide with a new identity. Trey is hit by another boy, Mark, who has obviously come to the younger boy's aid. But Smits, who is now calling himself Peter, interrupts, saying he recognizes Trey as a friend of Lee's. Smits then says that Lee was picked up by the chauffeur the first day they'd arrived, and that he'd assumed Lee was with Trey.

In chapter nine, Trey becomes very upset and the three boys move inside the barn. Trey learns that Mark is Lee's older brother and that Lee's real name is Luke. Trey says he believes the chauffeur kidnapped Lee but Smits refutes that. He says the chauffeur had talked to Lee and that Lee had said he had to leave immediately. The boys work through the situation, eventually deciding that the chauffeur was a bad guy and had tricked Lee into leaving. Mark says he'd overheard his parents talking and that Lee had gone back to the Grant's house. Trey can't believe Lee would go willingly after the deaths they'd seen there the previous night. Mark then says he and Trey should "go get" Lee. Trey says they can call Mr. Hendricks or the Grants' house but Mark says all the phone lines have been shut down by the Population Police.

In chapter ten, Mark asks Trey if he's ready to leave. Trey searches for a way to avoid or at least delay the trip and says he has to get papers from the Talbot house. Mark goes with Trey. Smits doesn't arrive and Mark says he sent him to bed.





They go inside and Mark lights a lantern. Mark notes the large amount of food and asks if Trey believes it would be stealing to take it. Trey says Mrs. Talbot had said anyone who wants something she left behind would be welcome to it. The boys pack up food in bags and they load them into a dirty pickup in the barn. Trey hides the papers he has in a slit in the seat. Just then another boy pounds on the barn door and then enters. It's obviously Mark's brother, Matthew. Mark invents a cover story about preparing the truck for the regular trip into town to sell their produce but the other boy says their father isn't likely to be going to town. Mark then taunts the boy, saying he's made trips to see his "ugly girlfriend," and Matthew reveals what he knows about soldiers' movements. Mark leaves the barn after telling Trey he'll be back out at dawn for them to leave.

## Chapters 7 through 10 Analysis

While the boys are discussing the situation of Lee's disappearance, Smits says the chauffeur had not done anything until after Trey was out of the car because Trey was the hero of the group. Trey can't believe Smits has this opinion and knows that he's really been extremely cowardly except for a single situation. He says that was a "fluke" but realizes the chauffeur may actually have been fooled into believing Trey was a threat.

Smits was a member of the wealthy class of people and Trey's opinion of them is seen when he learns Mark sent Smits back to bed while Trey and Mark went to the Talbot's to retrieve the papers Trey believes are important. Mark says that Smits is "a little kid" as a means of explaining why Smits isn't with them. Trey, however, notes that Mark is "a baron," and that he's "used to other people doing his dirty work for him." However, when Mark says the Talbots "lived like pigs," Trey defends them, pointing out the house had been searched and was probably a "showcase" prior to that.

Trey has lived in fear for his life for a long time and has lived basically on the run. He does not have any personal possessions and doesn't understand the need of some people to hold onto personal possessions. When Trey and Mark go into the Talbot's abandoned house, Mark is longingly looking at the items left behind. As they leave, he says he imagines looters will take everything before he returns. Trey doesn't understand Mark's attitude. He has focused for so long on merely surviving that he can't imagine the desire to have possessions that will make his life easier. Mark's attitude will change over the course of the book as he comes to fully realize the dangers the children face on a daily basis.



# Chapters 11 through 14

## Chapters 11 through 14 Summary

In chapter eleven, Mark wakes Trey and gives him a heavy flannel shirt to wear. Mark prepares to leave and Trey battles fear. Mark insists they push the truck out to the road before starting it so no one hears them leave. Trey continues to whimper and Mark finally says that Trey can stay behind. However, Trey realizes that's not what he wants. Trey steers while Mark pushes the truck out of the barn. Mark takes the wheel and the starts the truck, referring to the truck as "Good old Bessie." Trey asks why Mark didn't tell his parents and Mark says they would worry about him. Trey suggests they'll worry anyway and Mark says they'll just think he's running around, getting into "little trouble." They drive along for awhile before Mark notes they are meeting headlights.

In chapter twelve, Trey screams at Mark to take a side road and hide but Mark points out they would end up in a ditch if they attempted to get off the road. Mark recognizes the truck they're meeting and comes to a stop, greeting the driver who is a man named Hobart. Mark introduces Trey as his cousin "Silas" who was visiting when the situation with the Population Police arise. Hobart urges the boys to be careful. He reveals what information he knows about the surrounding towns. Mark then reveals that he knows Hobart was probably gambling with friends in town and suggests Hobart's wife would be angry to know about it. Hobart laughs and suggests they agree not to tell anyone they've seen each other.

In chapter thirteen, Trey notes that Mark becomes paler as they travel and wonders if Mark is realizing the danger they'll be in. They are headed to the Grants' house in the hope of finding Lee. Trey is almost dozing when Mark leaves the road with the truck, breaking through brush to hide the vehicle from anyone passing by on the road. Trey reveals to Mark that he'd never been outside until the previous December. Mark asks if Trey had never looked out the window and Trey responds that it was "too dangerous."

They remain in the truck for awhile and Trey eventually asks Mark what's wrong. Mark says they are about to be in the city, that he's never been in the city, and asks Trey what he should do to ensure he doesn't stand out. Trey immediately points out Mark's grammar but then chastises himself for it. Trey notes that he'd grown up in the city but knows little about it. They get out of the truck and break limbs to hide the vehicle, then they eat some of the food they've brought along and Trey loads up more in a backpack before they head out.

They set out up the riverbank with Mark in the lead. Trey finds he can make out alright if he stays very near Mark. They find the Grant house and says Smits told him about a loose block in the stone fence surrounding the property. They hear a loud voice issuing commands and stop momentarily. They continue on and discover a crew of men pounding stakes into the ground and stringing wire. Trey urges Mark to hurry to the spot



where they can gain access to the property but Mark says that spot is in the middle of the group of men working on the new fence.

In chapter fourteen, Trey and Mark slip deeper into the woods to consider the situation and the best way to help Lee. Mark suggests they go toward the front of the property to search for another way in. When they reach the front, they find "hundreds of men and boys, lined up and waiting patiently for" something. They are very quiet and the few who are talking are whispering. Mark asks Trey what's happening, believing Trey, who is familiar with the city, will be able to explain. Trey is at a loss. Mark decides he's going to ask. When Trey points out he might be killed just for asking, Mark scouts out the line, looking for someone he believes can be trusted. He finds a boy in a flannel shirt and goes over to him. Mark then returns to Trey with the news that the men and boys are waiting to join the Population Police and that the Grant house is the new headquarters of the Population Police.

## Chapters 11 through 14 Analysis

When Mark and Trey are in the woods near the river hiding the truck, Trey is amazed to note the scenery. He asks Mark if there's "been some kind of contamination." Mark doesn't understand Trey's question and Trey points out the leaves of the trees are turning reds and oranges. Trey has literally never been outside before this and he's not at all comfortable with it. After Mark explains that the leaves are changing because of the fall, Trey remembers he's seen "pictures in books" of the fall foliage but notes that the pictures didn't accurately relate the scenery. Later, when Trey is trying to keep up with Mark as they are hiking through the woods, Trey notes that his father had taught him Latin but that lessons in surviving outside might have been more important.

Mark chastises Trey for his lack of attention to detail. He points out they'd driven for a long time through fall foliage and Trey hadn't noticed it at all until they'd reached the place near the river where they hide the truck. Trey objects, saying he has been paying attention but he admits to himself that he hasn't. This will become an important issue when Trey later returns to find the truck.



# Chapters 15 through 18

## Chapters 15 through 18 Summary

In chapter fifteen, Trey unconsciously clutches his false identity card, the only thing between him and death at the hands of the Population Police. Mark admits that he'd tried to talk the boy out of joining the Population Police and Trey becomes upset and runs away. At the back of the property, Mark discovers all the workers are gone and decides to go through the fence. Mark drops his backpack and starts to climb through the fence. He suddenly begins to spasm and Trey uses a stick to shove him off the fence, only then realizing the fence had been electrified. Four uniformed men arrive and take Mark away. Trey, hiding nearby, is again alone.

In chapter sixteen, Trey doesn't know what to do. He thinks back to a chess game he's played with his father in which he'd used a particular tactic. He compares that to his current situation and realizes the only way to get into the Population Police headquarters is through the front gate with all the other volunteers. He decides he'll do that.

In chapter seventeen, Trey struggles with what to do with the papers he's been carrying around, both those he took from the Grant house and those he'd taken from the Talbot house. Trey makes it to the front of the line and is processed into the force. He is given a uniform and it makes him physically ill to touch it. He is hit for his reaction but manages to get to the bathroom. There, he discovers a grill covering an air duct and he makes his way into the duct. He decides he'll hide there, takes his uniform in behind him so no one will look for him, then pulls the grill closed.

In chapter eighteen, Trey continues to go through the air ducts. He sees a light and discovers that Alodus Krakenaur, head of the Population Police, is in the room below him. Trey knows that a sneeze or a cough will give away his position.

## Chapters 15 through 18 Analysis

Mark tells Trey the hundreds of men and boys waiting in line at the Population Police Headquarters are waiting to join the Population Police. Trey asks if those joining are doing so because they hate third children. Mark says that's probably not the case for most of the men and boys, and that they are mostly just hungry. This is what's driving the men and boys to join. The Population Police have implemented a new law. No family is allowed to buy or sell food unless a member of the family has joined the Population Police. This is typical of governments that try to control all facets of life by requiring families to join some particular organization. The government expects cooperation but the bottom line is that people don't whole-heartedly believe in that organization will do only what's necessary to escape punishment.



Mark shows his efforts to save third children when he tells Trey about his conversation with the boy in line to join the Population Police. Mark says he'd told the boy there were other options and that he'd offered the boy food if he would not join. He says he'd even told the boy it was possible to grow his own food. Trey is upset, saying the boy might tell on Mark and Mark admits it was dangerous. This is a sign of Mark's devotion to third children and his opposition to the law.

There is a discussion about the emblem of the Population Police. The emblem is two circles with another shape. Most people believe the two circles stand for the two children a family is allowed to legally have. Some people believe the third is a teardrop, meant to signify the tears of a mother when the third child is killed. Others believe the third shape is a shovel meant to signify the burying of all third children. It could be the different opinions come from the perspective of those looking at the symbol. Those who have lost third children may see it as a teardrop signifying their pain over the loss of those children while those who are intent on destroying third children may see it as a shovel.



# Chapters 19 through 21

## Chapters 19 through 21 Summary

In chapter nineteen, as soon as Trey thinks about the fact that a cough would give his position away he feels the need to cough and has to fight it. He continues to listen. Krakenaur is furious that there's a prisoner in the basement and hundreds of "ragamuffins trampling my front yard," saying that's not something that should occur at Population Police headquarters. He also learns that the prisoner, who Trey assumes to be Mark, is to be "disposed of" in a few hours. Trey manages to work up his courage to crawl over the grill leading into the room where Krakenaur is and does so without being detected. He spends more than an hour trying to find a way into the basement where he hopes to find Mark. He finally does but the hole is straight down. Trey makes his way into that and when he reaches the bottom he breaks through into the basement.

In chapter twenty, Trey manages to hide and hears Mark's voice, suggesting to a guard that the noise of Trey's arrival had been mice or rats. Trey wants to make his way to a pile of boxes nearer Mark and finally works up the courage to do so. Mark sees him and is obviously pleased. A man in uniform is asking Mark why he was trying to sneak into headquarters. Mark says he was hungry, didn't know it was headquarters, and had chased a squirrel through the fence. Mark also says he had an arrow for hunting and suggests the officer go look for it near where Mark was caught. When the officer is gone, Mark thanks Trey for coming back for him. Trey discovers there's a lock on the cage Mark is in and that he can't break it open. Before they can come up with a plan, the officer returns with Mark's backpack full of food and the information that Mark would be "executed at dawn."

When the officer is gone again, Trey tells Mark to scream out the word "liber." Mark begins chanting the word at the top of his voice until he's too hoarse to talk anymore and someone turns the light off.

In chapter twenty-one, Trey berates himself for being so stupid by leaving the backpack in the open and apologizes to Trey for the mistake. Mark tells Trey he should leave but Trey says he'll stay as long as he can. He means he'll stay until Mark is executed but doesn't say it. Mark says being in the cage has given him a greater appreciation for what Lee has gone through his entire life. Mark says his idea to rescue Lee was "stupid" but Trey says they had to try. They are still talking when someone approaches. Mark fears it's someone coming to get him for execution but the person whispers for Mark to be quiet.

## Chapters 19 through 21 Analysis

Trey knows some Latin and that's why he recognized the word "liber" spoken to him by the boy wearing the Population Police uniform on the porch of the Talbot's house. It's



only because Trey has had such a complete academic education that Trey knows the word, but it's his natural intelligence that helps him put it together to realize the word is a code.

Mark asks Trey why he'd returned to the headquarters to get him and Trey says it was because so many people had left him and that Mark was the first who didn't leave on purpose. This prompts a discussion between the boys about parental roles in the lives of third children. Trey says his father had secured a false identification card for him when Trey was a baby but had still kept him inside, never letting him leave the house at all. Trey's mother, however, had given Trey the false identification papers and simply dropped him at the Hendricks School, saying it wouldn't be safe for him to ever see her again. Trey wants to know which of his parents had the right attitude but Mark is mature enough to realize each felt they were doing the right thing in their own ways. Mark's attitude may be at least partly because he has always seen things from the perspective of a family member worried about a sibling but is now seeing things more from Lee's point of view.



# Chapters 22 through 25

## Chapters 22 through 25 Summary

In chapter twenty-two, the person asks why Mark was yelling "liber." Mark says a friend told him to but insists he won't reveal the friend's identity. The man says both Mark and his unnamed source could be a threat. The man eventually turns to leave but Trey is angry. He asks how the man can possibly believe in freedom but walk away and let an innocent boy die. Mark tries several bluffs, saying his friend is very big and then that there are a bunch of friends. Mark tells the man that he has a truck and the man is initially skeptical but then says Mark is of no use to them because he's in a cage. Trey steps out of hiding and says he isn't in a cage.

In chapter twenty-three, Mark, Trey, and the guard work out a trade. Trey worries about his role in the deal because it's going to be up to him to find the truck and bring it back to headquarters. The guard gives Trey a uniform and he puts it on then goes upstairs with the guard with authorization papers to be roaming the streets. Trey knows he'll have to take the shortest route possible to the truck and heads out along the streets. He encounters two young officers and fears he'll be found out. They defer to him because he is wearing the uniform of a higher-ranking officer and he uses that to order them to return to their patrol.

In chapter twenty-four, Trey is suddenly surrounded by a hungry mob. They accuse the Population Police of giving them spoiled food and too little to keep themselves fed. Trey tries to tell them he has nothing to do with the food but they attack him anyway. Trey runs, falls in the river, and gets away from the mob. He knows it's not much of an accomplishment because the people are weak from hunger. Trey soon finds a bridge and continues to worry about whether he can find the truck. Trey believes the truck is now on the opposite side of the river and that he crossed the river without realizing it as he was running from the mob. There are Population Police officers guarding the bridge but Trey can't swim and knows he's going to have to cross the bridge.

In chapter twenty-five, the Population Police call for him to stop but Trey says he's there to "requisition a contraband vehicle." The officers want his authorization papers but Trey tries to bluff his way through. The officers don't fall for it and Trey runs away, breaking loose and jumping from the end of the bridge. He finds the truck and goes back over Mark's instructions. He is able to make the truck go and outruns the guards.

## Chapters 22 through 25 Analysis

When the guards at the bridge don't pursue Trey, he becomes curious and can't make himself leave without waiting to see what's happened. The guards are standing near the bridge and aren't chasing Trey at all. Trey watches as one of them pulls off his shirt, lays it on the ground, and fires his gun into it several times. The guard then tosses the shirt



into the river. They can't figure out what's going on and will later figure out that the guards were smuggling. Those guards will be caught and killed.



# Chapters 26 through 29

## Chapters 26 through 29 Summary

In chapter twenty-six, Trey returns to the Population Police headquarters quickly. He is granted entry with no problem. The officer Trey and Mark made the deal with is waiting and Trey presents papers, forged by one of the officers, to have Mark moved to another facility, a prison called Nezeree. The officer Trey and Mark made the deal with tells the second officer he isn't willing to call to verify anything though the move is somewhat strange and the second isn't willing to make the call either. Trey and the officer load Mark's cage into the back of the pickup. Trey is given additional forged papers to pick up one of the officer's friends at Nezeree and some of Trey's friends, including Nina and Lee, from another prison. As Trey is about to drive away, he whispers the word "liber" and the guard responds with "free," then says "God free us all."

In chapter twenty-seven, Mark asks Trey for some tools that are hidden under the seat. He wants to try to get the lock off his cage. He continues to work at it but eventually gives up and focuses on giving Trey driving directions. Mark also hands Trey an apple, saying the guard had inexplicably given him his backpack. Trey continues to have trouble driving and is afraid to go very fast. He worries they won't reach the prison in time but is afraid to drive faster on the curvy road. Suddenly he hears Mark screaming at him to speed up. Mark says they are "under attack" and Trey, in his rush to get going faster, lets his foot slip off the clutch pedal and the truck's engine dies. Suddenly, a mob is on them, screaming for food. They begin rocking the truck and then Trey feels the truck turning over.

In chapter twenty-eight, Trey gets through the broken windshield. Mark's cage is thrown clear of the truck and Trey soon realizes Mark is injured. Trey learns that Mark's leg is severely broken and that the bone is apparently sticking out. Mark tells Trey to go on in an effort to get Lee but Trey comes up with a plan. Trey rushes to the overturned truck and shouts that there's food under the truck. The mob begins to rock the truck and it's soon back on its wheels. Then Trey rushes down the road, yelling that there's a truck loaded with bread nearby. The mob mindlessly follows and Trey rushes back to Mark. Trey gets Mark loaded into the truck seat. Mark warns the truck may not start but it does. This time, Trey pushes the truck and is soon going faster than he'd ever driven before.

In chapter twenty-nine, Trey decides they'll first go to pick up the Population Police officer's friend, as they'd been instructed. When they get to the gates, the guard says he hopes Mark is not a new prisoner. Trey assures him he's only picking up a second prisoner. The guard warns Trey that the warden is "a stickler for appearances," noting Trey's rumpled and torn uniform, the result of his misadventures with the mobs.

Trey arrives at the warden's office and, keeping the guard's words in mind, immediately apologizes for his appearance. He says he's carrying a prisoner who tried to escape.



Trey says he recaptured the prisoner and broke his name in the process. The warden commends Trey for his action. Trey hands over his forged orders and the warden notes that it's unusual that Trey's picking up prisoners from both Nezeree and Slahood, the prison where Lee and Nina are being held. Trey says he's "only following orders" and snaps to attention. The warden says he's impressed with Trey's attitude and asks if he'd be willing to transfer. Trey says that he feels an obligation to his current station. The warden says that he plans to have Trey's prisoner executed immediately as punishment for attacking a Population Police officer.

## Chapters 26 through 29 Analysis

It's important for the reader to remember Trey has been held in his house without ever seeing anything of the outside world until less than a year earlier. This is why he was amazed by the changing of the fall leaves. Trey had apparently been taught a great deal by his father who had also apparently tried to make Trey aware of the workings of the world. However, now that Trey is out in the city and on his own, he's struggling with the situation. He notes the mobs, the people smuggling food, and other instances of disorder and wonders if this is how the world is supposed to be. He can't decide if his father was telling the truth and the world has simply changed that much or if his father was telling an ideal situation.

The guard from the Population Police headquarters seems familiar to Trey but he can't figure out why. It's not until later that Trey will discover the man is the father of the boy who had first whispered the word "liber" to Trey on the porch of the Talbot's house.



# Chapters 30 through 32

## Chapters 30 through 32 Summary

In chapter thirty, Trey tells the warden at another prison, Churko, has "personal reasons" for overseeing the death of the prisoner in the truck, Mark. The warden says he understands and announces he'll have the prisoner seen by the prison doctor to ensure the prisoner "lives long enough" to be tortured. The warden then calls for an officer named Nedley to drive the prisoner to the infirmary and to fill the truck up with gas and arranges for the other prisoners to be delivered in order to save Trey time. Trey is worried about Mark in the hands of the Population Police officer named Nedley but knows there's nothing he can do about it. He accepts the warden's offer of a shower and clean uniform. After the shower, Trey discovers a television and watches part of a news cast. He sees photos of the man he'd seen take off his shirt and shoot it full of holes. The news cast indicates the man has been killed as a smuggler.

Krakenaur then announces the capture of a father and son who were traitors from inside the Population Police. Trey watches as photos of Jonathan Sabine - the young man who had helped keep Trey safe on the porch of the Talbot's house - and his father are shown on the television. Jonathan's father, Jonas, is the man who'd helped get Mark and Trey out of the headquarters and signed the papers authorizing Trey to take the prisoners. Krakenaur says anyone who encounters papers signed by either Jonas or Jonathan Sabine should ignore them. Trey then hears a phone ringing and knows it's going to be orders from headquarters advising the prison warden of the events.

In chapter thirty-one, Trey rushes to the warden's desk and, with no other tools at hand, bites the telephone wire in two. The warden comes in at that moment and Trey covers his situation, saying he'd been trying to kill a cockroach. Just then a fax begins to arrive and Trey offers to get it for the warden. The warden says it might be sensitive material and Trey promises not to look at it. Trey seems so eager to please that the warden allows him to get the fax. Just then the warden announces that the prisoners from Slohood have arrived and Trey rushes to the window then out the door. The warden yells for Trey to return his fax but Trey continues rushing toward the waiting truck just as Mark's truck returns with a man Trey doesn't recognize in the back. Trey realizes this must be the man Jonas Sabine had risked his life to save.

The new prisoners are loaded onto Mark's truck and Nedley pushes Trey into the bed of the truck as well, apparently as if he were making the prisoners get settled. Then Nedley yells out that his hand is caught in a chain and the truck begins moving quickly. Nedley yells out, saying he's being kidnapped and yelling that he's going to get Mark. Trey gets through the window in the back glass of the truck and Mark needs his help to mash the gas pedal because his leg is in a cast. Mark says Nedley helped them and that it was all a ruse to get them out of the prison compound.



In chapter thirty-two, Trey learns their extra passenger is Mr. Talbot. Trey also learns that the chauffeur was protecting the children to the best of his ability. Nina explains they'd pulled away in order to better hide the car when the Population Police arrived at the Talbot house. When they'd seen the guard discover Trey hiding on the porch, they'd assumed he was captured and killed. Nina says they'd gone back to the Grant's house, assuming they'd be safe there, but were arrested as soon as they drove through the gates.

Trey's next concern is Nedley. He asks Lee if he believes Nedley can be trusted. Lee seems to be of the opinion they have no choice but to trust him. Trey notes that all those who had been in prison seemed shrunken and weak. Mr. Talbot has been beaten so severely that he's barely recognizable and Mark has a broken leg. With no other option, Trey settles in for the ride, letting Nedley drive. Trey gives directions and they soon arrive at Hendricks School.

## Chapters 30 through 32 Analysis

When Trey realizes that he won't be needing to return to the Population Police headquarters, he's faced with a new dilemma. He knows if he is able to get them safely out of the prison compound, he'll have an extra person with him. Not only will he have Mark, Lee, Nina and several other of his own friends, he'll have the prisoner the Population Police officer at headquarters demanded Trey pick up. Trey says he could leave that prisoner on the side of the road and let him figure out how to deal with the mobs. Trey is immediately ashamed. He notes that's the kind of attitude a true member of the Population Police would have.

Trey comes to understand there were several adults working against the Population Police, including Mr. Talbot and the chauffeur. He asks why the chauffeur hadn't revealed his position after they'd seen the murders at the Grant house but the man says he didn't think Trey and the others would have believed him. Trey admits that this was probably true and says everything was so confused during those hours that they probably wouldn't have believed the chauffeur's story.



# Chapters 33 through 35

## Chapters 33 through 35 Summary

In chapter thirty-three, the group arrives at Hendricks School. Mrs. Talbot, who is a doctor, takes over caring for everyone who is injured. Trey, who hasn't slept in a long time, goes to bed. He finds he is unable to sleep and Mrs. Talbot brings him something to help him rest. When he does go to sleep, he does so without dreams. When Trey wakes, he discovers Mark is telling about their adventures. Mark reveals that he'd begun trying to get Nedley to help them as soon as Nedley got in the truck at the prison. It was Mark who came up with the idea to make it seem he was kidnapping everyone and it was Mark who punctured tires on the Population Police trucks to keep them from coming after the group as they escaped. Trey also learns that Jonas was murdered as an example to others who might try to fight the Population Police.

In chapter thirty-four, Trey and his friends are treated well and take advantage of it for several weeks. Trey discovers the Population Police had taken all the students from Mr. Hendricks' School but left Mr. Hendricks, who is wheelchair-bound, behind. Trey realizes they'd expected him to die on his own but they hadn't counted on his determination and the garden that produces enough to support him and his guests.

Mr. Talbot recovers enough to get out of bed. He remembers Trey's arrival at his home just before his arrest. He asks why Trey had gone there and Trey says he and the other children had been looking for someone to take care of them. Trey also reveals the papers he's carried around with him since the deaths at the Grant house. One of them is actually a coded message containing the identities of one hundred third children, a paper that could have been devastating if it had fallen into the hands of the Population Police. Mrs. Talbot suggests they burn the lists in the fireplace and they prepare to do that. Mrs. Talbot says that with the burning of these papers, no one will know who these children are. Trey objects, saying their true identities will never be lost. He says that his name is Trahern Cromwell Torrence and that he will always be Trahern, regardless of what name he uses. Trey then tells the adults they've "been wonderful helpers" but that it's time for the third children to take a stand on their own. Mr. Hendricks and Mrs. Talbot say the battle has already been lost. Trey understands they plan to hide and he understands. However, he says he is no longer willing to hide. He points to the problems in the Population Police such as deserters, smugglers, and traitors as proof the Population Police are vulnerable. Trey says he managed to join the Population Police once with a false identity and that he intends to do so again. When Trey asks if anyone else is in, Nedley immediately steps up, as does Lee, Nina, and the chauffeur. Mark then says he'll go home to recover but will be ready to join up as soon as he's healed. Trey says it isn't Mark's fight but Mark points out the families will never forget their children, even when those children are living with false identities. Mark says he's allowed his younger brother to leave without him twice but that he won't do it again.



In chapter thirty-five, Trey and Lee are waiting to enter Population Police headquarters. Nedley, Nina, and the chauffeur are already inside. Trey looks at an officer, lounging against a tree. Trey wants to tell the officer that he's relaxed now because he doesn't know what's about to happen.

## Chapters 33 through 35 Analysis

When the group arrives at Hendricks School, Mr. Hendricks shouts for Mrs. Talbot. She arrives and is shocked to see her husband's condition but then says that she should have listened to Trey when he offered to help her.

The papers that Trey has carried around with him since the night of the Grants' deaths are important to Trey because they represent order and normalcy. Trey has an academic background and an analytical mind. He depends greatly on order and in the time of serious stress in his life, he finds solace in his ability to carry out this task of putting papers in the hands of an adult that he believes will make sense of them.



# Characters

## Trey

Trey is a third child who is on the run from the Population Police. His real name, revealed at the end of the book, is Trahern Cromwell Torrance. Trey lived a cloistered life as a youngster and he makes note of the fact that he'd never really been outside until his time with Mark. Trey considers himself incapable but is actually a very capable and daring young man when the situation calls for it. Trey is smart with regard to academics, having been taught by his father. In times of stress or danger, Trey tends to take comfort from these academics. For example, when Trey and some of the other children are in front of Mr. Talbot's house, Trey thinks about the base word for "chauffer" and other facts about the word. Trey was kept hidden away inside until his father's death. His father's death dramatically hurt him and he struggles to deal with the anger he feels, though he can't decide whether he is most angry at his mother, his father, himself or all three. Trey is proud of himself for an unnamed action that occurred prior to the beginning of this book, but that act is not revealed nor is it important. What is important is that Trey is proud of himself for it. This is the beginning of Trey's emerging self-confidence that is a vital part of his maturity. By the opening pages of this book, Trey has realized it's much easier to be brave when he was faced with a situation and the need to react. He compares that to the fear he feels as he's going to Mr. Talbot's front porch and knows that he has too much time to think about the situation and to analyze all the things that could go wrong. It's noteworthy that Trey's name is the word used by card players and others for "three."

## Mark

The older brother of Lee, he is the second child of the family. Mark learns that Lee may be imprisoned and becomes determined to sneak in to rescue his younger brother. Mark is something of a daredevil and comes up with the plan to rescue Lee, dragging Trey along with him. When the last place Lee was seen turns out to be a Population Police headquarters, Mark decides to break in. He's seriously injured and captured in the process. Though Mark is the outgoing person of the pair, he admits that he would have been too afraid to go to the lengths Trey goes to in his efforts to save him. Mark is seriously injured when their truck is attacked by a mob and turned over. Despite his pain, he puts himself in more danger by asking for help from a Population Police officer. Mark is in agony when he punctures tires of the police trucks and then drives the truck away from the prison, but endures it in his effort to save the group. Mark puts a new perspective on the pain that families endure because of the third child law. Mark, as a second child, says that the families ache for their children that are in hiding or missing because of the law. His perspective is one that Trey and the other third children haven't really considered. When the group of children, led by Trey, come up with a plan for attacking the Population Police from inside, Mark pledges to join them.





## Lee

Trey's friend and Mark's younger brother, Lee's name is really Luke but he is living under a false identity because he is an illegal third child. For the purpose of clarity, he is referred to as Lee throughout this guide. Lee is captured by the Population Police and held in prison until Mark and Trey mount a rescue. He joins Trey's plan to attack the Population Police from inside their ranks.

## Nedley

This is a young man who is working as Population Police officer when Trey and Mark arrive at Nezerree Prison. Nedley is called on by the warden to take Mark to the prison infirmary and helps Mark hatch the plan to escape from the prison. Nedley is the one who takes over driving after their escape and he plans to go back and join the Population Police under a different name in order to keep fighting against them.

## Nina

This is one of the children who is in the car driven by a chauffeur when Trey goes to Mr. Talbot's front door. Nina later tells Trey they'd waited for him until they saw a Population Police officer discover Trey's hiding place and had then assumed Trey had been killed, prompting them to leave.

## Mr. Talbot

This is one of the children who is in the car driven by a chauffeur when Trey goes to Mr. Talbot's front door. Nina later tells Trey they'd waited for him until they saw a Population Police officer discover Trey's hiding place and had then assumed Trey had been killed, prompting them to leave.

## Smits

This is a young boy who is hiding at Lee's house when Trey discovers him. Smits is apparently much younger than Trey and is sent to bed when Trey and Mark come up with the plan to try to rescue Lee.

## Mr. Hendricks

The head of a school that had been used as a place for illegal third children to hide, Mr. Hendricks is bound to a wheelchair. He reveals near the end of the book that officials had arrived to take all the children away and had left Mr. Hendricks behind, expecting that he would die of his own accord because he is without food and handicapped.



However, Mr. Hendricks has a garden that will easily provide food for him and for the new arrivals.

## **Alodus Krakenaur**

Head of the Population Police, he takes over the country around the time of Trey's arrival at the Talbot house. He is, in Mrs. Talbot's words, insane, and she predicts things will get worse under his rule.

## **Nezeree Prison warden**

A man who is a stickler for details and military style, Trey plays the role to perfection which makes the warden trust him more than he might normally trust a new recruit. The warden believes Trey is a promising young recruit and that he'd be a good addition to the prison crew. He asks Trey if he'd like to transfer to the prison. He is caught off guard when Trey and the others escape.



## **Objects/Places**

### **Population Police**

This is an entity charged with eliminating the third children of each family, based on a law that makes more than two children illegal.

### **Baron Channels**

These are television stations controlled by the wealthy people. These news casts provide accurate information that would be prohibited by the government.

### **The Kitchen Cabinet**

This is where Trey hides after Mrs. Talbot leaves him alone in her house.

### **Bessie**

This is the name Mark calls his truck.

### **The Grants' house**

This is the new Population Police headquarters where Mark is taken prisoner.

### **Nezeer Prison**

This is where Trey picks up Mr. Talbot and Nedley helps them escape.

### **Slohood Prison**

This is where Lee, Nina, and several other of Trey's friends are being held.

### **The Hendricks School**

This is where Lee, Nina, and several other of Trey's friends are being held.

## **The Bridge**

This is where Trey watches as a Population Police officer removes his shirt and shoots into it several times, making it look as if he'd been killed.

## **Liber**

This is the Latin word for free and the code word used by those battling the Population Police.



# Themes

## Corruption of Government

The government has become completely corrupt under the rule of one leader and will probably become more so under the rule of the Population Police Commander, Alodus Krakenaur. At the heart of the matter is the law that families can have only two children, making all "third children" are illegal and subject to death. These children and their families are apparently persecuted and even killed. The Population Police has been formed to enforce this law. The Population Police then sets out to recruit new members by creating a new law - families must have one member listed as a Population Police officer or they cannot legally buy and sell food. This serves a dual purpose. Not only are hundreds of men and boys rushing to join the Population Police, the government is forcing families to serve a law that many believe is wrong. Despite their opposition to the government and the law against third children, many families are willing to have a family member join so the family can eat. Another example of the corrupt government is seen in the television stations. The government controls all television broadcasts with the exception of the "Baron channels" which are owned and viewed only by the wealthy. The mainstream television news casts are controlled by the government. The news being shown includes information about traitors and others who are "against" the government, always with harsh punishments in an effort to deter others who might fight against the government.

## Coming of Age

Trey matures dramatically over the course of the story, especially with regard to understanding the true meaning of bravery. As the story opens, Trey is headed toward the front door of a man who is an ally of the third children with the hope he will care for and protect them. The trip from the car to the door seems to take forever and Trey spends a great deal of time hating the fact that he feels like a coward because he's afraid. Trey is hoping to find his friend Lee because he believes Lee is the brave one of the group. As the story progresses, Trey comes to realize that bravery is more complicated than he'd thought and that he is not the coward he'd believed himself to be. Mark notes the change in Trey when Trey puts himself in danger in an effort to rescue Mark from Population Police headquarters. Trey says it's because Mark had not willingly left Trey behind so he was unwilling to leave Mark behind. This brings up an important aspect of Trey's emerging maturity with regard to his parents. Trey has serious abandonment issues and hates his parents because of their treatment of him when he was a child. Trey says he can't decide whether his father was right to keep him hidden away in an effort to keep him safe, or if his mother was right in her decision to separate from him. He eventually determines that both had been right to some degree and that perhaps they had each grieved for Trey's situation. Trey also comes to realize and he relates to the others at the end of the story, that the only people who can effectively fight the Population Police are the third children who are being directly threatened.



## Bravery and Determination

Bravery becomes an issue for Trey early in the book because others think of him as brave and he doesn't see himself in that light. As the group arrives at the Talbot house, Trey is sent inside. He says that he'd done one brave deed and that everyone is now expecting bravery from him. Trey's idea of bravery isn't practical but he's basing it on very limited experiences. Trey is actually a very brave boy but it takes him a long time to fully understand the meaning of bravery. When Mark is arrested by the Population Police and held in the Population Police headquarters, Trey does what's necessary in order to gain access to the headquarters and then risks everything to find Mark. Mark tells Trey that he isn't sure he could have taken the risks Trey took. The lines between bravery and determination become blurred as Trey goes to great lengths to get Mark's truck back to the Population Police headquarters and then to rescue the truck from a hungry mob. At one point, the truck is turned over and Trey bravely pushes back into the mob then manipulates them into pushing the truck back onto its wheels. The final look at this theme comes as the book ends. Trey says only those who are most directly affected by the laws against third children will be the most effective in the fight against the Population Police. Trey plans to join the Population Police in an effort to fight them from the inside and calls for volunteers. He gets several volunteers, including Nedley, Lee, Nina, and Mark.



# Style

## Point of View

The story is presented in the third person from the limited perspective of Trey. This method is likely used by the author as a means of creating suspense. For example, Trey remains behind when Mark is taken to the prison infirmary to have his broken leg set. Trey can only wonder what Mark is doing and whether he is even alive the entire time he's gone. The reader is also left to wonder about Mark's fate. When Mark returns and Trey meets the truck outside the warden's office, he's completely surprised by the actions of Mark and Nedley when Mark takes off with Nedley in the truck. It's later that Trey learns this was carefully planned by Mark and Nedley while they were gone to the infirmary. Trey fully expects to be chased by the Population Police from the prison but Mark reveals he'd caused flats on all the police vehicles so there was virtually no danger of being followed. The reader gains important knowledge through Trey's observations, thoughts, and conversations. For example, the reader learns about Trey's childhood as Trey thinks about those years and as he tells Mark about his life as a young boy. The story is one installment of a series. As such, there are actions that occurred prior to this book that shaped the action and characters. The reader learns about some of these through the thoughts of Trey and his conversations. The perspective seems reasonable for the story, subject, and presentation.

## Setting

The story is set in a fictional time and place. Neither the place nor the time setting is important because of the fictional events that have affected the people and places. There is a terrible lack of food which is apparently the reason Population Police and the law against third children were established. In many books, the reader can use available technology to determine the time setting. In this case, there are phones, cars, faxes, and televisions, but there seems to be little other technology that would typically be used by the characters of this book if the book were set in modern times. For example, there is no mention of cell phones or computers. The technology is not a significant clue because the country probably changed dramatically over the course of the events. There may have been technology advances that became unavailable for some reason during the uprising that occurred because of the government changes, the unfair laws, and the food shortage. The dialogue seems to indicate the speakers are American and live in modern times. There are several specific settings in the story. These include the Population Police headquarters, Mr. Talbot's house, Mr. Hendricks School, the Nezeree Prison, and the barn at Mark's house. All are described only in moderate detail but all the descriptions seem reasonable.



## Language and Meaning

The author depends heavily on suspense throughout the book and this becomes an important part of the language and meaning. The story is in a reader-friendly format and the action flows quickly. The reader with an average vocabulary will likely find only a few unfamiliar words. The book is aimed at younger readers and the characters, dialogue, and words are acceptable for the story and the audience. For example, the reader knows the third child of any family is in danger of being killed. This is revealed but the reader never actually sees any of this carried out. It is evident there is violence occurring all around but the reader directly sees only a tip of this. The photos of several people who have been killed are shown on television, for example, but the reader doesn't actually get details of the deaths. The book is part of a series but can be understood as a stand-alone book. There are some characters mentioned that are more important in other books of the series but the readers who do not know these characters will not be lost with the action of this story. The reader who expects a resolution to the situation will be disappointed. As the story comes to an end there is another of the author's suspenseful teases. Trey, Nedley, Nina, Lee, and Mark make plans to join the Population Police in an effort to fight from the inside.

## Structure

The book is divided into thirty-five chapters of varying length. The chapters flow generally in chronological order, though the reader learns some details of events prior to the opening scene through flashbacks, memories, and conversations. For example, Trey was educated by his father, led a completely secluded childhood, and was dropped at the Hendricks School by his mother. These actions all happened prior to the events of the story but the reader learns about them through various means. Trey recalls some of these details and it's obvious he misses his father. Trey tells Mark about his father's decision to keep him secluded and his mother's decision to leave him. The book is one of a series but can be read and understood as a stand-alone book. The reader who has not read the prior book will not know all the details of the events at the Grants' house which led to Trey and Nina arriving at the Talbot house. The reader who expects the book to have a conclusion will be disappointed. The book ends with Trey, Nina, Lee, and some others deciding how to further attack the Population Police. In the first two chapters, Trey arrives at the Talbot house, sees Mr. Talbot's arrest, and finds himself abandoned by his friends. By chapter eight, Trey has found one of his friends, a boy named Smits, and Mark, the older brother of another of his friends. Trey and Mark come up with a plan to rescue Lee. In chapter fifteen, Trey and Mark arrive at the new Population Police headquarters and Mark is captured. By chapter twenty-seven, the boys are on their way to rescue their friends at two Population Police prisons and in chapter thirty-two, they arrive at the Hendricks School where they recover and make plans for their next step.





## Quotes

"With part of his mind, Trey knew he was being foolish - a total baby, a chicken, a fear-addled idiot" (Chapter 1).

"You've got to get some food. But his stomach, which had become more than accustomed to hunger over the years, just said, Hey, don't pin this on me. I can wait" (Chapter 3).

"Protecting you? He wanted to say. I was more terrified than anyone" (Chapter 9).

"And over in Farlee, they've got soldiers patrolling the streets, telling people to turn out their lights, or turn on their lights, or cook them supper, or dance walking upside down on their hands - whatever the soldiers want, the soldiers get, or else the pull the trigger. And sometimes, they pull the trigger just for fun, no matter what people do,' Hobart said" (Chapter 12).

"An elephant, he thought, could not have been any louder or clumsier. Hey Dad? Trey thought. Why was it more important to learn Latin than this?" (Chapter 13).

"He was mere yards away from the headquarters of the Population Police, the people who had wanted to kill Trey ever since he was born. He had every right to tremble" (Chapter 15).

"Trey had always prided himself on his brilliance and been ashamed of his cowardice. But now that he'd actually shown a little more courage, his idiocy had condemned his friend to death" (Chapter 20).

"How can you use liber as a password if you don't really believe in freedom?' Trey shouted" (Chapter 22).

"How could this man care so much about spit-polished shoes and so little about a human life?" (Chapter 29).

"The chauffeur was an adult, but Trey realized that he'd been every bit as stunned as Trey was to see the Population Police officials swarming over the Talbots' property. He'd felt every bit as helpless." (Chapter 32).

"And then Trey understood that everyone was gone, that the Population Police had left Mr. Hendricks behind to die" (Chapter 34).

"The Population Police are not invincible. They have mobs attacking them" (Chapter 34).



## Topics for Discussion

Describe Trey. Why do his friends believe he's brave? What does Trey think about the suggestion that he's brave? Is he brave? Support your answers with examples from the book.

Who is Mark? How are Mark and Trey similar? How are they different? Describe the conversation Mark and Trey have in the basement of the Population Police headquarters.

What is the role of the Population Police? How has the organization become corrupt? How does the organization encourage people to join? Trey believes people are joining the Population Police because they hate third children. What is Mark's response? Do you believe he's right? Why?

What is the most important theme of this book? Give at least three examples of that theme. List at least one example of this theme from some other book.

Describe Trey's actions at the Nezeer Prison. Describe Mark's actions at the prison. How do the actions of the two come together to allow them to escape?

Who is Nina? Lee? Mr. Talbot? Mr. Hendricks? Smits? The chauffeur? Mrs. Talbot? How is each connected to Trey? What is the role of each in the book?

Describe how the book ends. What does Trey mean when he says the third children will never forget who they really are? What is Mark's reaction to Trey's speech? What does Trey plan to do? Do you think he can succeed? Why or why not?