

Among the Imposters Study Guide

Among the Imposters by Margaret Peterson Haddix

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Plot Summary

“Among the Impostors” is a novel by Margaret Peterson Haddix and follows 12-year-old Luke Garner as he starts attending Hendricks School for Boys under the fake name Lee Grant. Because the country’s Population Law states that couples can only have two children, Luke – who is his parents’ third son – is an illegal ‘shadow child.’ If Luke were to be caught he would be executed by the Population Police, and prior to the start of the novel he has lived his entire life in hiding on his parents’ farm. Luke finds it difficult to adjust to life at Hendricks; the teachers ignore him, and a boy Luke calls “jackal boy” bullies him mercilessly every night. Luke discovers that jackal boy, whose real name is Jason, is the leader of a group of other shadow children and he joins the group even though it puts him at risk. When he overhears Jason say on the phone that he is planning to betray some members of his group to the Population Police, Luke realizes that he is the only one who can stop him, although doing so may cost him his life. “Among the Impostors” is the sequel to “Among the Hidden,” the first book in award-winning author Margaret Peterson Haddix’s ‘Shadow Children’ series for older children and young adults.

Twelve-year-old Luke Garner is brought to Hendricks School for Boys by Mr. Talbot, the father of his dead best friend Jen. Luke is his parents’ third child and so is illegal under the country’s Population Law; if he were to be caught, both he and his parents would be executed by the Population Police. After Jen is killed leading a rally to protest the Population Law at the end of the first book in the series it is no longer safe for Luke to remain in hiding on his parents’ farm. Mr. Talbot arranges for Luke to take the name and identity of Lee Grant – a boy who died just before the novel opens – and arranges for him to attend Hendricks, an exclusive boarding school. Mr. Talbot shakes Luke’s hand as he leaves and slips him a note, which Luke hides in his pocket.

Having only ever met six other people – his parents and brothers, Jen, and Mr. Talbot – in his entire life, Luke is overwhelmed by the size of Hendricks, and the hundreds of boys who are always around him. He ducks into one class after another simply to avoid the teachers and monitors who patrol the hallways, and finds that no one will tell him what classes he belongs in, or what he should be doing. He is never alone and so can’t read Mr. Talbot’s note, and the first night in his dorm room one of his roommates (who he thinks of as ‘jackal boy’) bullies him until well after lights-out. For the next week Luke is miserable; he is frightened that he will give away the fact that he is an illegal child and be caught, he goes to classes he doesn’t belong in to just to avoid drawing attention to himself, and he is bullied by jackal boy every night.

One morning Luke sees an open door that leads to the outside. When he is sure no one is looking he slips through it, and runs into the woods a short distance away. Luke looks back towards the school to make sure he hasn’t been followed, and notices that the school building has no windows. He remembers the note from Mr. Talbot and reads it. During the last week he has convinced himself that the note will answer all his questions about how to survive at Hendricks, but Luke finds that it only says: “blend in.” Luke



becomes angry and considers running back to his parents' house, but in the end goes back to the school.

Luke begins to pay attention to everything and everyone at Hendricks so that he can devise a way to get to the woods every day without being caught. He learns how to navigate the school's many hallways and staircases, and after poking his head in every room in the school realizes that there are no windows anywhere. He also notices that many of the students behave strangely. Some sit and rock back and forth for hours, while others sleep all the time; the teachers pay no attention to any of it. Although he can't understand much of what he learns, after a week Luke feels confident enough to start going to the woods for a few hours each day. After he notices a raspberry plant growing in a clearing one day Luke decides to plant a garden, and spends the next few days cultivating it. He returns to the garden one afternoon and finds that it has been destroyed, and believes that other boys from the school are responsible. That night he hides near the door to the outside and when he hears some boys go through it, he follows them.

Luke follows the boys deep into the woods, where they are joined by a group of girls. Luke sees that the leader of the group from Hendricks is Jackal Boy, and as he listens to their conversation he realizes that they are all illegal shadow children, just like him. Luke announces himself to the group and after he is told that his garden was destroyed by accident Jackal Boy – whose real name is Jason – asks Luke to become a part of his group. Luke agrees, and learns that many of the shadow children in Jason's group are hall monitors at school, and that most of them – including a boy named Trey – are afraid of the outdoors. Jason gets Luke a list of the classes he should be attending, and Luke immediately throws himself into his studies. Jason says that since it is only a week until finals he will never catch up, but that Luke needn't worry because Jason can fix his grades for him. Although joining the group has made things easier for him, Luke finds that he does not fully trust Jason, and spends every free hour studying anyway.

The night before final exams Luke is unable to sleep. He hears Jason leave the dorm room a few hours after lights-out and follows him. Luke overhears Jason talking on a phone, saying that no one knows he works for the Population Police. Realizing that Jason is a traitor and planning to betray members of the group, Luke knocks him unconscious and leaves him with the school nurse. Luke then calls Mr. Talbot, who works for the Population Police, but sabotages them whenever he can, and tries to tell him what is happening but Mr. Talbot seems not to understand and hangs up on him. The next morning at breakfast, a Population Police officer comes into the dining hall and announces that he has a warrant for the arrest of illegal third children, but before he can read the names on his list Mr. Talbot arrives with Jason following behind him, in chains. Jason says that he can identify a number of illegal children, but Mr. Talbot convinces the officer that he is lying and Jason is taken away to Population Police headquarters.

That evening Luke is taken to the Headmaster's cottage where he talks with Josiah Hendricks, the founder of the Hendricks and Harlow schools, and Mr. Talbot. Luke learns that the schools have been set up as a first stop for shadow children after they come out of hiding and start living with fake IDs, and have been designed as a place



where they can overcome the emotional disorders that have resulted from their having spent their entire lives in hiding. Once they have dealt with their fears and can fit in with others, they are sent on to the next school. Both Mr. Hendricks and Mr. Talbot believe that Luke is ready to move on, but Luke asks to stay so that he can help those boys like Trey who are afraid of the outdoors overcome their fear by teaching them how to tend a garden. Mr. Hendricks agrees and Luke starts helping other shadow children.



Chapters One – Five

Summary

“Among the Impostors” is a novel for older children and young adults by award-winning author Margaret Peterson Haddix. In the novel, 12-year-old Luke Garner begins attending Hendricks School for Boys under the name Lee Grant. Luke is a third child – or ‘shadow child’ – and is illegal because of the country’s Population Law which states that couples can only have two children, and so is forced to live under a false identity to avoid being caught and executed. After spending his entire life hiding on his family’s farm Luke finds it hard to adjust to the boarding school and feels isolated and alone. He immediately becomes the target of bullying by a boy he thinks of as ‘jackal boy.’ Later, Luke discovers that jackal boy – whose name is really Jason – is the leader of a group of other shadow children at the school. When Jason invites him to join the group Luke accepts, even though he doesn’t fully trust Jason and knows that he is risking capture and death by becoming part of the group. “Among the Impostors” is the second book in the ‘Shadow Children’ series and is preceded by “Among the Hidden.”

Chapter One. Twelve-year-old Luke Garner practices saying his real name late at night, after all of the other boys in his dormitory at Hendricks School for Boys have gone to sleep. The rest of the time Luke goes by the name Lee Grant – the new identity that his dead friend Jen’s father, Mr. Talbot, arranged for him. It feels good to be able to say his old name late at night. The name Luke Garner is all that he has left of his old life with his parents and his brothers, and with Jen.

When Mr. Talbot first brings him to the boarding school Luke is frightened by the size of the place; it is massive compared to his family’s farmhouse, which is the only other place Luke has ever lived. Mr. Talbot leads Luke to the Headmaster’s office where he tells the school secretary that he spoke to the Headmaster the evening before and arranged for ‘Lee Grant’ to start at Hendricks immediately, even though it is the middle of the semester. After filling out some forms, the secretary calls a boy to show Luke to his room, and Mr. Talbot says that he has to leave. He holds his hand out and Luke shakes it uncertainly. After he pulls his hand away, Luke realizes that Mr. Talbot has slipped him a note, which he quickly puts in his pocket.

Chapter Two. Luke wants to read the note immediately because he thinks it will tell him how to survive at Hendricks, but he knows that he must wait until he is alone so that he won’t give himself or Mr. Talbot – who has risked his life by helping Luke, an illegal third child – away. Soon after Mr. Talbot leaves a boy named Rolly Sturgeon enters the Headmaster’s office and the secretary tells him to take Luke to room 156. As soon as they are out of the Headmaster’s office Rolly starts taking enormous steps which Luke, who is carrying a suitcase, cannot keep up with. Rolly then races up a set of steps and disappears. When Luke reaches the top of the landing, Rolly jumps out from behind a post and shoves him. Luke almost falls back down the steps and while he is regaining



his balance, Rolly grabs Luke's bag and takes off down the hallway, screeching with laughter.

Luke chases Rolly and is finally able to tackle him. Suddenly, a man's voice asks what is going on, and Rolly tells the teacher standing there that he was showing the new boy to his room when he attacked him. The man then asks Luke's name and Luke is so frightened that he only remembers to say 'Lee Grant' at the last minute. The man gives both Luke and Rolly four 'demerits' each. After the teacher leaves, Rolly grabs Luke's bag and finally leads him to room 156. Luke thinks that he will be able to be alone and read the note from Mr. Talbot later that night, but is dismayed to see that the room holds eight beds. After putting his suitcase on the only unmade bed, Rolly hits Luke on the shoulder, shouts "Tag. You're it!", and runs off down the hallway. Not knowing what else to do, Luke chases after him.

Chapter Three. Luke is finally able to catch up with Rolly, but is given two more 'demerits' for running in the hallway by another teacher. Rolly ducks through a large door and Luke follows. He finds himself at the back of a huge classroom and can't see Rolly anywhere. The teacher who had just given him demerits is standing in the front of the room, and tells Luke to sit down. Luke has no idea where he should sit, and is frightened by the fact that all the boys around him are staring at him. After a moment he feels himself being jerked backwards into a seat. As the teacher starts the lesson Luke notices that no one is staring at him any longer, but he is scared and cannot pay attention to what the teacher is saying. A bell rings and the other boys race out of the classroom. Luke tries to get to the front of the room to ask the teacher where he is supposed to go, but is swept out of the room by the other boys. Rolly is nowhere to be found and Luke is ordered by an older boy to get to class. Luke asks where his class is, but the older boy has turned away. Not knowing what else to do, Luke follows a group of boys into a classroom and tries to pay attention. It is ten minutes before Luke realizes that the teacher is speaking a language he doesn't understand.

Chapter Four. When the class ends Luke follows the rest of the boys to a large room, and a moment later he realizes that everyone is doing homework. Luke has never done homework because he has never been to school before. Under the country's Population Law Luke is an illegal third child – a 'shadow child' – and before coming to Hendricks he had spent his entire life hiding in his parents' house. Luke has no homework to do but doesn't want to draw attention to himself, and so sits still for two hours until another bell rings. This time Luke follows the other boys to a large dining hall. Luke sits at a table, but is immediately told that the table is for seniors only. He is told to leave the next few tables he sits at for various reasons he does not understand, and finally ends up at an empty table where he eats a tasteless meal. He then follows the other boys to a large hall, where a man gives a speech on how the Population Law saved the country, and how the leaders' wisdom saved everyone from starving. When the man is finished another bell rings, and Luke is told to get to his room because lights-out is in ten minutes.

Luke finds his room and sits on his bed, but an older boy immediately tells him that he must ask permission to sit. The older boy has an oddly shaped face and reminds Luke



of the picture of a jackal he once saw; he immediately thinks of the older boy as 'jackal boy.' Jackal boy makes Luke repeat a number of humiliating phrases like, "I am the lowest of the low. Everyone should spit on me," over and over again while the other six boys in the dormitory room laugh, and continues this for a long time after the lights go out. Finally jackal boy orders Luke to go to bed. Luke slips under the covers and tries to sleep, but can't. He tells himself that he will find time to read the note Mr. Talbot gave him tomorrow and that the note will tell him what to do. He then says his real name, Luke, over and over before finally falling asleep.

Chapter Five. Luke does not get the chance to read the note the next day, or for the next week, because he is never alone. From the time he gets up to the time he goes to bed – even in the bathroom – there are other students, or teachers, or hall monitors around him all the time. Every night, well past lights out, jackal boy bullies him and makes him repeat more humiliating sentences, and hop on one foot or do push-ups. Luke finds it hard to understand why even though he is never alone, but has never felt lonelier in his life.

Analysis

These first chapters serve to introduce the reader to 12-year-old Luke Garner, the main character in the novel. Luke was previously introduced to readers in the first novel in the 'Shadow Children' series, "Among the Hidden", and this novel starts later on the same day as the previous novel ends. In the world these novels are set in, the county's Population Law states that couples can only have two children and Luke – because he is his parents' third child – has been forced to spend his entire life in hiding. If anyone were to find out what Luke was, he would be arrested and executed. In the previous novel Luke became friends with another third child – or 'shadow child' – named Jen Talbot, who tried to change things for shadow children by leading a rally that ended with a march on the president's house. After Jen is killed at the rally by the Population Police Jen's father, Mr. Talbot – who himself works for the Population Police but tries to sabotage them whenever he can – arranges for Luke to take the identity of a wealthy 'Baron' child named Lee Grant who had recently been killed in an accident and escape from his family's home, which is no longer safe for him. Mr. Talbot arranges for Luke – as Lee Grant – to enroll in Hendricks School for Boys, which is where this novel starts.

Hendricks School for Boys is unlike anything Luke could ever have imagined. The building is massive and confusing, and starting his very first day Luke feels out of place and frightened by the strangeness of it all. Having lived his entire life in his parents' small farmhouse Luke finds it impossible to avoid becoming lost in the long hallways, and cannot even begin to understand what the teachers are talking about in the classrooms. Additionally, Luke is confused by the fact that starting on his very first day at Hendricks everyone – other students, hall monitors, and even teachers – assumes that he knows where he should be and what he should be doing, and refuse to help him find anything. He knows that he must avoid drawing attention to himself at all costs, but finds this to be impossible as he continually makes mistakes simply because he doesn't know what he is supposed to be doing. He is even confused by many of the names the



other boys call each other, and him, continually – names like “fonrol” and “lecker” and “exnay.” Luke has no idea what the names mean, but he can tell by the way they are used that they are meant as insults.

Because he is the new boy and is obviously unsure of himself, Luke immediately becomes the target of school bullies. Rolly, the boy who is supposed to show him around on his first day, starts to play tricks on Luke by hiding from him and stealing his suitcase the moment the two of them are alone, and then leaves him alone knowing full well that Luke has no idea where he is supposed to be. On his very first night, when he finally thinks he will be able to get some rest in his room, Luke finds himself being abused by jackal boy who tells him that he is his slave and makes him repeat degrading things about himself over and over. Jackal boy is older and bigger than Luke is, and controls their dorm room. While a part of him wants to resist and stand up to jackal boy the way he had stood up to his older brothers Matthew and Mark in his past, Luke understands that for the time being he must avoid drawing unnecessary attention to himself, and so goes along with the bullying night after night – repeating the degrading phrases, and hopping on one foot or pushing a marble along the floor with his nose.

As the first week goes by, Luke comes to believe that somehow what Mr. Talbot wrote on the piece of paper he slipped him will be the answer to all of his problems, but try as he might Luke cannot find anywhere that he can be alone to read it. It is this inability to be alone that it the hardest thing for Luke to deal with. Prior to coming to Hendricks, Luke had spent the vast majority of his life completely alone in his room in the attic of his parents' farmhouse. The only people he ever saw were his parents and two brothers, and then later Jen Talbot and her father. Having only ever spoken to six other people in his entire life, suddenly being constantly surrounded by other boys is a new and terrifying experience for him, and one that he finds it very difficult to cope with. Having to deal with so many other people while also pretending to be Lee Grant puts Luke under tremendous pressure, and causes him to feel more miserable and alone than he has ever felt before, even though he is constantly surrounded by other people.

Discussion Question 1

What are shadow children? Why are they rendered illegal under the law? Why do shadow children fear the Population Police?

Discussion Question 2

Who is Luke Garner? Why does he attend the Hendricks School for Boys? What are the greatest fears he has entering the school? Why?

Discussion Question 3

Why does "jackal boy" earn his nickname from Luke? Why do the two take such an instant disliking to one another?

Vocabulary

microphone, clammy, jolly, identities, autographed, homesickness, rheumy, contempt, clumsily, incredibly, cruelly, dismissed, galloped, careened, stammered, demerits, blindsided, desolate, haven, fumble, ornate, nonchalantly, frantically, anxious, miraculous, labyrinth, jackal, monitor, despaired, privacy



Chapters Six – Eleven

Summary

Chapter Six. Luke manages to get by. He is careful to avoid lingering in the hallways, sits down immediately when he enters a classroom, and makes certain not to sit at the wrong tables during meals. He is unable to avoid jackal boy at lights-out, but finds he can survive that the bullying sessions since they only happen once a day. One day Luke realizes that, with the exception of jackal boy, he can't tell the other boys in the school apart. During breakfast he hears one boy call another boy "Spence," and tries to memorize what Spence looks like. That day at lunch he watches as Spence takes his seat, but then hears another boy call him "Ted." At dinner, Luke hears someone else call the boy "E.J." Even though Luke is almost positive it is the same boy, he wonders if maybe he has made a mistake. Luke thinks he notices other boys also answering to several different names, but finds that he can never be certain they are really the same boys. Luke also notices that the halls and stairways are always guarded by hall monitors, which makes it impossible for him to sneak up to his dorm room to read the note from Mr. Talbot.

Chapter Seven. One morning Luke sees an open door on his way to class. The door looks like all the other large wooden doors that line the hallways, but this door is on an outside wall. Even though it is barely ajar, Luke can see trees on the other side. Without thinking, Luke races through the door and then stands with his back against the wall of the school, breathing in the fresh air. A moment later he runs across a lawn and into the woods beyond, and doesn't stop running until he trips over a log. He looks back at the school, afraid someone has seen him through a window and is coming after him, but he sees only a solid brick wall with no windows anywhere. Luke realizes that he cannot remember seeing windows in any room at Hendricks. He then remembers the note and unfolds it, excited to finally learn what Mr. Talbot wanted him to know. He unfolds the slip of paper and finds only two words written on it: "blend in."

Chapter Eight. Luke cannot believe that "blend in" is all that is written in the note and screams out in anger and frustration, not caring who hears. He turns the note over again and again looking for something more, and then tears it into tiny pieces. After waiting weeks to be able to read the note that he thinks will answer all his questions, Luke feels foolish and betrayed. He sprawls out next to the log he tripped over, not even feeling strong enough to sit up.

Chapter Nine. Luke awakens several hours later, unable to believe that he'd actually fallen asleep. It is still light out, but he can tell from the sun that it is mid-afternoon. He knows that he has been gone much too long and that someone will surely have noticed that he was missing, but he doesn't want to go back to the school. He thinks about trying to go back to his parents' house, but he has no idea how to get there and knows that he would probably be caught by the Population Police almost immediately. He finds himself thinking that the woods seem friendlier than the people at school and briefly



considers trying to live there, but realizes that he could never survive. He knows that he will have to go back to school, but decides that nothing will keep him from visiting the woods again.

Chapter Ten. Luke puts off returning to school as long as possible and only heads back when it begins to get dark. When he reaches the door, Luke finds that it is no longer ajar and feels himself starting to panic, but the doorknob turns easily and the door opens. After checking to make certain no one is watching, Luke slips back into the building and makes his way down the hallway past the doors to the classrooms. A hall monitor notices him and asks why he isn't in the dining hall, and Luke tells him that he felt sick and then got lost trying to find the bathroom. The hall monitor tells Luke to get back to the dining hall; Luke notices that the hall monitor seems nervous and wonders if it has something to do with the door to the outside. Luke reaches the dining hall just as the doors burst open and the boys all stream out and head towards the large hall in which the evening lecture is held. Luke falls in with the rest of them. No one asks him where he has been all day, and Luke realizes that no one has noticed he was missing. He knows that since he got away with going to the woods once, he will be able to get away with it again.

Chapter Eleven. The next morning Luke wants more than anything else to rush back to the woods as soon as he can, but he decides against trying to go again so soon. Luke realizes that he was lucky to get away with going to the woods the day before and that if he wants to be able to go there again and again without being caught, he will need to be smart about it and start paying attention to everything and everyone around him.

Luke spends the rest of that day actually watching the other boys in his classes instead of just glancing at them and then looking away quickly as he usually does, and notices things that he never noticed before. Some of the boys pay attention to the teachers and take notes, while others sleep openly, and still others sit hunched over with their arms around their knees, rocking slowly back and forth. Luke tries an experiment and looks directly into the eyes of the boys he passes in the hallway between classes. Most of them look away immediately just as he has been doing since he got to Hendricks so as not to be noticed, but two or three keep their eyes locked on his and it takes all of his courage for Luke not to turn away from the boys who stare back at him. The experiment frightens Luke but he knows that there is something important to be learned from it, although he is not completely certain what that something important might be.

Analysis

Although Luke learns how to stay out of people's way and avoid drawing any attention to himself during his first few weeks at Hendricks, nothing makes any sense to him. For some reason all of the boys at the school look the same to him, and he finds it impossible to tell them apart even when he tries his best to remember their names and faces. He is even unable to recognize jackal boy when he is outside of their dorm room, even though the older boy's abuse and bullying continues night after night. As soon as Luke thinks he has learned to be able to recognize one boy's name, someone will call



that same boy by a different name and Luke finds himself doubting his own memory and senses. His inability to be able to tell people apart further serves to confuse and frustrate Luke, and adds to his feelings of despair and loneliness. Unable to talk to any of the other boys for fear of giving himself away as being a third child, Luke holds long conversations in his mind with his parents and brothers, Mr. Talbot, and Jen late at night after everyone is asleep, and withdraws further and further into himself.

After he finds the open door to the outside and makes his way to the woods, Luke feels happy and free for the first time since his arrival at Hendricks, but his happiness is short lived. During his weeks of living in fear and loneliness, Luke has convinced himself that the answers to all his questions and problems are contained in the note Mr. Talbot passed to him. When he finds that the note only contains the words “blend in,” Luke feels as though he has been betrayed – almost as though Mr. Talbot had set everything up to be a huge, cruel joke on him. His first thought is to go back to his parents’ house, which is the only place he has ever felt safe, but he soon realizes that is impossible. Even if he could somehow manage to find his way home, Luke would be putting his parents and Mr. Talbot at terrible risk since the Government’s punishment for aiding or hiding a third child is death. Lonely and frightened as he is, Luke knows that he must be brave – like Jen had been – and find a way to survive at Hendricks on his own.

After he returns to school, Luke finds that his desire to be able to go back to the woods again and again causes an immediate change in him. Starting from the moment he comes back into the building, Luke becomes more careful and more observant. When he is asked by the hall monitor why he is not in the dining hall, Luke makes up a believable lie with almost no hesitation – something he would not have been able to do even earlier that day. He also notices that the hall monitor seems nervous, and he finds himself wondering if it has something to do with the door to the outside. The day before he would have hurried off the moment the hall monitor dismissed him without noticing anything, but instinctively Luke understands that from now on he will need to be crafty and careful, and pay attention to all the things he has been ignoring since coming to Hendricks. The next day Luke really pays attention to his classmates for the first time, and notices behaviors that he has never noticed before. He does not understand what these behaviors mean, but he knows that he will need to remember them and investigate further. Most importantly, Luke realizes that it will no longer be enough for him to stay out of people’s way and remain inconspicuous – if he is going to be able to go to the woods whenever he wants to he will need to pay attention to everything, and learn how things at Hendricks actually work.

Discussion Question 1

Why do so few things seem to make sense to Luke at Hendricks? What sorts of things make so little sense to him? Why? What does this say to Luke about Hendricks School?



Discussion Question 2

Why does Luke become determined to head out into the woods routinely? How does this determination to be able to visit the woods change him?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Luke become so determined to figure out the way that everything at Hendricks work? What does he hope to gain from this understanding?

Vocabulary

linger, promptly, bearable, fantasies, bleaker, taunting, multiple, doomed, forged, ceremoniously, scrawl, sprawled, fervently, peered, repented, churn, harboring, filtering, consoled, trembling, crafty, panicked, bitterly, generous, beeline, blatantly, stumbled



Chapters Twelve – Eighteen

Summary

Chapter Twelve. Luke does not return to the woods for an entire week. Instead, he spends his time learning everything he can about Hendricks and his fellow students. Luke manages to peek into every room in the school building and finds that it is not only the wall that he saw from the woods that has no windows – there isn't a single window in the entire building. Luke notices that there are boys who wrap their arms around their knees and rock back and forth in all of his classes, but no one seems to pay any attention to them. He also realizes that most of the other boys look away quickly when Luke stares directly at them; the boys who do not look away immediately worry Luke, and he thinks of them as the 'starers.' All of the hall monitors are 'starers,' and so is Jackal boy. Although Luke continually looks at the ground during the nightly torture sessions, he finds himself wondering what would happen if he stared back at Jackal boy and asked him why he didn't go outside, and if there were other shadow children at Hendricks. Instead, he asks Jen and his parents these questions in his mind late at night.

Chapter Thirteen. Luke finally works out a plan to go to the woods every day after lunch, and come back just before dinner. This will allow him to go to some classes in the morning, and not miss any meals. By now he is certain that none of the other boys or the teachers will realize he is missing. The first day he slips out when the hall monitor near the door is looking the other way. Luke rushes directly to the woods and starts to explore. He comes to a clearing and sees a raspberry plant struggling to grow amid the weeds. Luke starts pulling the weeds around the plant, and as he works he finds himself thinking that this would be the perfect place to have a garden. He thinks he might be able to find wild strawberry plants and transplant them and although he doesn't have any seeds like his father had back on the farm, he is sure he will be able to get some seeds from the meals they serve him at school. Luke decides then and there that he will plant a garden and grow food in the woods.

Chapter Fourteen. After a week, Luke has a nice patch of land cleared for his garden and has planted straight rows of bean sprouts he saved from dinner next to the raspberry plant. Luke found a watch in his suitcase when he'd first unpacked his things, and starts wearing it so that he will be certain to get back to the school right at six o'clock. One day at lunch he is served potatoes which are almost raw and Luke remembers his father telling him that you didn't need seeds to grow potatoes. After the bell rings at the end of lunch, Luke quickly makes his way past several other tables and grabs raw potato pieces whenever he sees them, shoving them into his pockets. That afternoon he plants them next to the bean sprouts, and then walks down to a small creek he'd found a few days before and carries water in his cupped hands back to his garden. As he makes trip after trip and waters his garden, Luke realizes that for the first time in many months he actually feels happy.



Chapter Fifteen. The next day Luke races to his garden eagerly as soon as lunch is over, and finds that it has been destroyed. The raspberry branches are all broken, and the bean sprouts and potatoes have been trampled. At first Luke thinks that some animal is responsible, but he notices that the ground is covered with tracks made by the same kind of shoes that he is wearing. Luke sees that there are tracks from many different size shoes, which mean that lots of people had been in his garden, destroying it. Luke sits down, and begins to cry.

Chapter Sixteen. When he finishes crying, Luke washes his face in the creek and then heads back to school early. He looks at his watch when he reaches the door; it is only 1:30 and he realizes that it will be another half hour before classes let out and he will be able to slip in unnoticed. He leans against the wall next to the door and tries to think of who might have wanted to destroy his garden. He then remembers how the hall monitor had seemed so nervous that first day Luke had come in after finding the door, and realizes that he hadn't been guarding the hallway but had actually been guarding the door itself to make sure it was safe for other boys to sneak out. He realizes other boys must have been going to the woods all along, and they are the ones who found his garden and destroyed it. Luke decides to find out who they are, and make them pay.

Chapter Seventeen. At 2:00 Luke opens the door a crack and peeks inside, but sees that a hall monitor is standing right there. He ducks back outside and a moment later the door shuts. Luke is certain that the monitor noticed it was open and closed it. He considers running back to the woods and waiting until his normal time but instead he grabs the door handle, yanks the door back open, and steps into the hallway. The hall monitor is looking in the other direction, but the door slams closed behind Luke. He quickly joins a group of other boys, but Luke and the hall monitor lock eyes for just a moment. Luke is certain that the hall monitor knows that he was outside, but he doesn't say anything and Luke moves on to a class with the other boys. Luke doesn't understand why the hall monitor let him go, but he knows that he needs to find out.

Chapter Eighteen. That night after dinner, Luke doesn't go to the lecture with the other boys. Instead, he carefully makes his way back towards the door to the outside. The hallways are deserted and when he reaches the final corner before the door, Luke stops and waits. His heart is pounding in his chest and he feels terrified, but he knows that this is the only way he will get the answers he wants. Finally Luke hears what he has been waiting for – boys whispering, a muffled laugh, and the sound of the door opening and then clicking shut. Luke waits five minutes before he quietly follows whoever has just left through the door.

Analysis

During the week between his first and second trip to the woods, Luke learns a great deal about the Hendricks School for Boys and the people in it, but much of what he learns doesn't make sense to him. He finds it impossible to understand why anyone would build a building without any windows – particularly when the land outside where the windows should have been is so beautiful – but as he carefully checks every



classroom and dormitory in the school, he finds that there are, indeed, no windows anywhere. While Luke is checking all the rooms in the school he also learns the layout of the building, and is soon able to get from place to place using different routes without ever getting lost. Along with helping him to stay out of the way of hall monitors and teachers, this also allows him to reach the door to the outside using several different routes, which helps him leave the school unnoticed more easily.

After Luke finds the raspberry plant in the clearing and gets the idea of planting a garden there, he finds that it is all he can concentrate on. Every day he carefully plants bean sprouts he saves from his meals, pulls any weeds that he finds, and shoos away the squirrels and chipmunks that he notices in the trees above his garden. Even when he is in class, or in bed, his garden is all he can think about, and it becomes the main focus of his life. For the first time since Mr. Talbot brought him to Hendricks, Luke has a place that is completely his, where he feels safe and happy. During his hours in the garden he holds long pretend conversations with his father about the straightness of his rows, and how the buds on the raspberry plant are looking. Although it is nothing like having his family back, these conversations make him feel connected to his old life on the farm, and he finds himself feeling that he might actually be able to survive at Hendricks now that he has something that he loves to keep him busy.

When he discovers that his garden has been destroyed and realizes that it had to have been other boys from school who did it, Luke feels as though he has lost everything. He had thought that the woods were completely his – a private little world that no one else knew about – but realizes that he has been kidding himself. When he returns to the school after finding his garden has been destroyed he decides that he will spend as long as it takes to find out which boys are responsible, and make them pay for it. In his anger, Luke allows the door to slam behind him when he comes back into the building and is amazed when the hall monitor doesn't immediately drag him off to the Headmaster's office, but rather locks eyes with him for several seconds and then chooses to ignore him. He notices that, again, the hall monitor seems to be almost as nervous as Luke is, and realizes that he is actually guarding the door to make certain that it is safe for other boys to use, and that he might even be one of the boys who destroyed his garden. As his anger slowly subsides, Luke also realizes that his garden would have had to have been destroyed the night before, sometime after he returned to the school at 6:00. Using what he has learned about the building to take a roundabout way back to the door through hallways that he knows will be empty after dinner, Luke waits in the shadows until he hears other boys leaving the building. Even though he is uncertain of exactly what it is he hopes to accomplish, Luke follows them.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Luke decide to plant a garden? Why does it become so important to him?



Discussion Question 2

Why is Luke so devastated when he discovers his garden has been destroyed? Who does he think is to blame? Why?

Discussion Question 3

As Luke becomes more observant, what sorts of things does he discover, both about the school building itself, and the people within?

Vocabulary

mysteries, multiple, baffled, hypnotized, unleashed, humiliating, apologies, scrawny, cornmeal, measly, edible, candidates, brute, surveyed, emotion, angles, stomped, preposterous, footprints, imprints, torture, horde, marauding, collar, hunching, blizzard, marveled, muffled



Chapters Nineteen – Twenty-Two

Summary

Chapter Nineteen. When Luke gets outside it is full dark, and he sees a light flash in the woods. He runs across the lawn and follows the light, hiding behind one tree after another. Finally, the light stops moving and Luke creeps close enough to see several boys sitting in a semicircle with their backs to him. An instant later another light flashes, and Luke hears a girl's voice ask why an emergency meeting has been called. Luke then hears a familiar voice answer, and he sees jackal boy talking to a tall, thin girl about Luke's age. Jackal boy says that there is something strange about the new boy, and Luke realizes that he is talking about him. He then says that the new boy is registered as Lee Grant, and that he doesn't seem to be autistic, agoraphobic, or suffering from any of the other "usual disorders" but that his records indicate that he has bounced around from school to school. One of the other boys then calls the girl 'Nina,' and the girl tells him never to call her by that name again. For a moment Luke is confused, and then remembers that he also has a name he can't be called by and realizes that everyone in the woods must be a shadow child, just like him.

Jackal boy says that they are concerned because the new kid is getting bolder. 'Trey' had seen Lee Grant come in from the outside that afternoon while on hall monitor duty, and Grant had starred right at him and not dropped his eyes. Trey, who Luke recognizes as the hall monitor from that afternoon, then says that Lee Grant had seemed 'defiant' when he'd seen him come in from outside. When it is clear that jackal boy doesn't understand the word defiant, Luke steps out from behind the tree where he is hiding and says that it means, "Offering a challenge."

Chapter Twenty. Luke steps out from behind the tree before he realizes what he is doing. The eight boys and four girls in the group look at him in astonishment, but no one says anything. To break the silence, Luke accuses them of destroying his garden. When jackal boy says that he doesn't know anything about any garden, Luke says he will show them. He walks towards where his garden had been, and the others follow. When they reach the garden, Luke shows them the broken raspberry branches and ruined rows of beans, but he can tell by their faces that they still don't know what he is talking about. Nina then says that maybe the boys had walked through the clearing accidentally the night before, and one of the other girls says that she wouldn't even know what a garden looked like. Luke realizes that his garden had been destroyed by accident. Jackal boy then starts laughing at Luke for trying to make a garden in the first place and calls him a 'lecker,' which Trey explains means a bumpkin from the country. Soon the others join in laughing at him. Luke suddenly feels very foolish and ashamed. He shouts for the others to leave him alone, and then starts to run back towards school.

Chapter Twenty-One. Luke is tackled almost immediately by jackal boy, who says that if Luke goes back now he will get everybody caught. Luke says that if jackal boy will answer some questions he will wait to go back and won't tell anyone about what he has



seen in the woods, and jackal boy agrees. In answer to Luke's questions, jackal boy says that he is registered at the school as Scott Renault, but with the group his name is Jason. Everyone in his group, and in Nina's group from Harlow School for Girls, has two names because they are all shadow children with fake identities. All of the hall monitors are part of Jason's group, and this allows them to come and go as they please. When Luke asks why Jason has bullied him every night, Jason tells him that it is a procedure he developed to help new shadow children adapt to life at the boarding school. Most shadow children are scared and traumatized when they first arrive, and so one person is assigned to "toughen them up" so that they don't give themselves away. Since many of the children who are sent to Hendricks have developmental or emotional problems such as autism or agoraphobia, Jason developed a test to see who the true shadow children were; he would have one of the hall monitors leave the door to the outside open and make certain that the new kid saw it, and then stare them directly in the eye to see how they reacted. The fact that Luke is there proves Jason was right about him.

Jason then asks some questions of Luke, but Luke is reluctant to answer. Instead, he asks Jason if he'd known Jen, and Jason becomes excited and tells Luke that Jen Talbot is legendary and that he can't believe Luke actually met her in person. Jason then leads Luke back to the group, and tells the others that he knew Jen Talbot. People start asking him questions and he tells them about how he became friends with Jen, and what she hoped the rally would accomplish. When he is finished, Jason asks Luke what his real name is, and everyone falls silent waiting for an answer. Luke is still unsure whether or not he trusts Jason, and after a long pause Luke tells the group that his name is Lee Grant.

Chapter Twenty-Two. When they return to the school later that night Jason sees that Luke cut his face when he tackled him, and takes him to the nurse's office. After the nurse puts a bandage on the wound, they go back to their room and go to bed; there is no bullying session. The next morning at breakfast Jason tells Luke that he can eat at his table with the hall monitors, and Luke asks Jason questions about the school. Jason tells him a man named Hendricks offered his estate to be used to educate 'troubled' children, and built Hendricks for boys and Harlow for girls. The schools were built with no windows because Hendricks believed it would make the agoraphobic children long for what they couldn't see, while also helping to avoid over-stimulating the autistic kids. Hendricks then decided to bring in normal, wealthy 'Baron' kids to act as role models for the others. When Luke asks why all of the adults at Hendricks seem to be so uninterested and distant, Jason says that they only get the dregs when it comes to teachers and staff, and that they simply don't care. He then tells Luke not to worry about grades; he can fix it so Luke gets all A's, and makes the honor roll.

Analysis

Luke's anger about the destruction of his garden is quickly replaced with curiosity and wonder as he listens to the conversation between jackal boy and the girl named Nina from the Harlow School for Girls. It quickly becomes obvious to him that these boys and girls are other shadow children just like him, and when they start to talk about Lee



Grant, he realizes that they already suspect him of being a shadow child as well. When he steps out from behind the tree and announces himself to the group he knows that he is taking an enormous risk, but he also knows that he will need to make contact with these other shadow children at some point, and chooses not to wait. Still, Luke remains cautious and rather than immediately admitting that he is, indeed, a shadow child he asks about his garden instead.

After it becomes obvious that the destruction of the garden was accidental and jackal boy and the others start to laugh at him for trying to make a garden in the first place, Luke is more embarrassed than he has ever been before in his life. He has done his best to remain inconspicuous during his weeks at Hendricks, and having a dozen people laugh at him is more than he can stand. When jackal boy tackles Luke before he can get back to school and put all of them at risk of being caught, Luke realizes that he actually has an advantage. He promises not to tell what he has seen and heard, and in return he gets as much information from jackal boy – who reveals that his name is really Jason – as he can. During that session in the woods, and then again at breakfast the next morning, Luke learns the answers to many of the questions that have been puzzling him for weeks.

Jason tells Luke that during the ‘famine times’ – which was when the Population Law was put into place – there was a debate about what to do with individuals who suffered from mental illnesses, or who were physically or emotionally disabled. Some people believed that they should be allowed to starve to death as was the case with criminals at that time, but others believed that it would be inhumane not to take care of them. Hendricks and Harlow were started to take care of emotionally troubled children. The boys who Luke sees rocking back and forth while holding their knees suffer from autism, while others are afraid of the outdoors or suffer from debilitating shyness, while still others like Rolly Sturgeon suffer from more violent emotional conditions. The fact that so many of the students at Hendricks are troubled allows the shadow children, many of whom have spent their entire lives in hiding like Luke and are therefore uncomfortable around other people, to blend in unnoticed.

Jason has identified a number of other shadow children at Hendricks, and has managed to have them made hall monitors, which allows his group to come and go safely from the outdoors. Jason tells Luke that he can teach him everything he needs to know to survive, and that Luke shouldn’t worry about his grades since he can take care of that for him as well. Given that the teachers and other adults at the school don’t seem to care about the children, Luke understands that for all intents and purposes Jason controls just about everything he needs to. However, even though Jason offers a plausible explanation for why he has been bullying Luke and lets him become part of his group, Luke still refuses to tell Jason his real name when he asks him. Although he is excited at the prospect of having a group of other shadow children as friends and no longer having to be afraid all the time, Luke finds himself unable to trust Jason completely and keeps most of the details about his past to himself.



Discussion Question 1

How does Luke come to discover that there are other Shadow Children? What is his reaction to this knowledge?

Discussion Question 2

What is the truth, Jason claims, about the Hendricks and Harlow schools? What issues do the schools seek to address?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Jason entice Luke to trust him? What does Jason say he can do to assist Luke? Does Luke believe him? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

mystical, orb, erratically, terrified, explanation, semicircle, haunting, squinted, registered, agoraphobic, autism, grieve, pawn, astonished, scraggly, bumpkin, insult, apologetic, smears, pounced, indoctrination, tattling, hooted, glinted, phobic, cagier, smirked



Chapters Twenty-Three – Twenty-Nine

Summary

Chapter Twenty-Three. Luke no longer goes to the woods by himself. Instead, he goes out a few nights a week to meet the girls with Jason and the others. Luke notices that most of the other boys look frightened each time they step through the door and on one trip he asks Trey if he likes going outside, and Trey says no. He spent 13 years hiding in one room and had never set foot outdoors before coming to Hendricks. He tells Luke that he and most of the other boys in the group have only been at the school since the fall, and that Jason only arrived a few weeks before Luke did. They have only been meeting in the woods since April, which Luke realizes was when the rally took place during which Jen was killed.

When they meet the girls everyone jokes around and insults each other, and when Luke asks why they bother having the meetings at all Jason tells him that they are planning ways to resist the Population Law, as a follow-up to Jen Talbot's rally. Later Jason tells Luke that he needs to be patient, that the others aren't as ready as he is to be a 'subversive.' Jason then says that final exams start the next week, but that he will fix Luke's grades for him. Luke tells Jason that he doesn't even know what classes he is supposed to be in, and Jason says he will find out for him.

Chapter Twenty-Four. Jason gives Luke a list of his classes the next morning at breakfast. Even though Jason assures him again that he can change all of Luke's grades, Luke thinks that it is time he starts to learn as much as he can. He goes to every class, and learns something new in each one. Luke tells Jason that maybe he won't need him to change his grades, but Jason teases him and says that Luke will be begging him to help by the end of next week.

Chapter Twenty-Five. For the rest of the week, Luke spends every spare moment studying. During one of the trips to the woods Trey asks why he bothers when Jason can fix his grades, and Luke explains that he wants to learn as much as he can, but Trey does not understand. The night before his first test Luke skips going into the woods with the others so he can study, and when Jason returns he teases him about it. Irritated, Luke tells Jason to leave him alone and is surprised when the other boy walks away. That night after lights-out Luke is unable to fall asleep and as he lies awake in his bed he hears someone walking across the room, and then sees the door open and close. Getting up to investigate, Luke sees that Jason's bed is empty.

Chapter Twenty-Six. Luke grabs one of his textbooks so that he can say he just wanted to study some more if he is caught, and heads out after Jason. He checks the bathroom first and finds it empty, and then feels foolish for being so curious. Knowing he won't be able to sleep for a while, he heads to a back stairway and opens his book to study. He hears someone murmuring far below him. Luke makes his way down the steps and then down a second set of steps, following the voice. He sees Jason standing near the



bottom of the steps with his back to him, talking into a portable phone. Jason says something he about him “having four and Nina having two” and then starts reciting a list of names and aliases. Luke thinks that Jason is telling a contact in the underground the real and fake names of the members of his group who are ready to fight the Government. He is disappointed when Lee Grant isn’t mentioned, but then remembers that he never told Jason his real name. Luke suddenly thinks that Jason’s phone might be bugged, and hurries towards him to warn him. Just before Luke reaches him Jason says, “They don’t have any idea I work for the Population Police.”

Chapter Twenty-Seven. Luke grabs the phone out of Jason’s hand and throws it to the ground. Jason turns towards him, and Luke calls Jason an informer and a traitor. Jason starts to move towards him, and Luke hits him on the side of his head with his book as hard as he can. Jason falls backwards and hits his head on the stairs, then rolls the rest of the way down the steps to the landing. When he finally stops rolling, he does not move again.

Chapter Twenty-Eight. Luke cautiously approaches Jason, and sees that he has been knocked unconscious. Although he thinks that Jason deserves to die for being a traitor and informer, Luke knows that he couldn’t bring himself to kill him. As he is trying to decide what to do, the portable phone starts ringing. Afraid that the sound will bring someone to investigate, Luke grabs the phone and starts punching buttons randomly. The phone finally stops ringing, and Luke puts it to his ear and says hello. Immediately a man’s voice starts yelling at Jason for hanging up on the Population Police and Luke whispers that he accidentally dropped the phone. The man angrily says that he will give Jason just one more day to get more names, and then hangs up. Luke is relieved that he is able to fool the man on the phone but also understands that he and his new friends only have one more day of safety, if that.

Chapter Twenty-Nine. Unable to think of any better plan, Luke drags Jason to the nurse’s office. He pounds on the door to wake her up, and then tells her that his friend had a seizure and was thrashing around, then passed out and hit his head. The nurse has Luke help her get Jason to a bed, and then examines him. After asking what both of their names are the nurse types Luke’s account of what happened into her computer, and then tells Luke that he should go back to bed. Luke is afraid that Jason will wake up and tell the nurse everything, but he realizes that there is nothing he can do about that. He leaves the nurse’s office and remembers that he left his book and Jason’s phone back on the stairs. He hurries back to get them and finds that his book is where he’d left it, but can’t see the phone anywhere.

Analysis

As Luke adjusts to having more friends than he has ever had in his life, he finds himself feeling safer and happier than he has felt since losing Jen and leaving his parents’ farm. As he gets to know his new friends, he notices that with the exception of Jason and himself all of the other boys in Jason’s group seem to be very nervous and uncomfortable when they head outside, even though they are calm and confident when



they are inside the school. After Trey tells Luke that he had spent all of his life hiding in one room and had never been outside before coming to Hendricks and meeting Jason, Luke realizes how lucky he has been. Even though he had been forced to hide and had never been able to do the things his brothers had done, Luke had been able to move around relatively freely on his parents' farm for most of his life. When Luke wonders why nothing ever happens at the meetings in the woods where they are supposed to be planning how to fight the Government, Jason explains to him that they won't be able to do anything as long as most of their group shivers with fear every time they step outside. Although Luke feels sorry for the other boys, he is grateful that he doesn't suffer from the fears and phobias they do and proud that Jason thinks he is ready to take on the Government.

Luke decides to concentrate on his studies once he finds himself feeling secure in Jason's group. Though neither Jason nor Trey understand why Luke bothers studying when Jason can fix his grades on the school's computer for him, Luke feels a responsibility to both himself and to Jen to get the most out of his time at Hendricks now that he feels safe. He wants to be ready when the time comes to fight the Government, and he believes that the best way to prepare himself is to learn as much as he can as quickly as he can. Luke is a bright boy and a good student, and once he finally finds out what classes he is supposed to be in and starts attending them he is able to understand more than he thought he would and finds himself learning something new every day. Even though final exams start soon, Luke makes it his goal to learn an entire semester's worth of material in the time he has left and to pass the exams on his own, without Jason having to change his grades. Jason thinks he is crazy and teases him about it, but backs off when Luke tells him to – something he never would have done before Luke became part of his group.

After he overhears Jason say that he works for the Population Police and knocks him out Luke feels hurt, angry, and a kind of murderous hatred he has never felt before. Luke had never allowed himself to trust Jason enough to tell him his real name, but he had been starting to think of Jason as a good friend and as someone who was committed to fighting the Government just like Jen had been. Luke believes that Jason deserves to die for being a traitor and informer and knows that it might actually be easier and safer if Jason were dead, but Luke knows that he could never bring himself to kill anyone. When Luke pretends to be Jason and talks to the man on the portable phone he learns that at most there is only one day left before the Population Police come to Hendricks and arrest the four boys whose names Jason had given them, and he knows that he will be arrested too. After leaving Jason with the nurse Luke knows that he must think of something to save himself and the others, but doesn't know what to do.

Discussion Question 1

What startling truth does Luke come to realize about Jason? What does this mean for Luke?



Discussion Question 2

Who is Trey? What does Luke learn from Trey? How does this reflect or compare with Luke's own experiences?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Luke decide to focus on his studies? Why do Jason, Trey, and the others not understand this? What does this say about Luke's character as a person?

Vocabulary

cowered, executions, gobbled, savoring, wistfully, knights, bookwork, swaggering, trudged, casually, banister, recruit, quivering, alias, indignantly, subversive, dangerous, traitor, paralyzed, shrill, tornado, groveling, ruffled, weird, heroic



Chapters Thirty – Thirty-Four

Summary

Chapter Thirty. Luke searches the steps and the landing several times but the portable phone isn't there. He wonders if Jason has an accomplice who took it while Luke was gone and realizes that he can't trust anyone in Jason's group except the four boys Jason named while talking on the phone. Luke thinks about waking the other boys so that they can hide, but realizes that it will only be a matter of time before they are found no matter where they go. Luke has no idea how to handle the Population Police, and then remembers that Jen's dad has been working against them from the inside for years. Luke decides his only option is to call Mr. Talbot.

Chapter Thirty-One. Luke thinks he may be able to find a telephone and Mr. Talbot's number in the school office, but the door is locked. The door has a glass panel and after hitting it with his book several times, Luke is able break a small part of the panel out. He reaches in, unlocks the door, and enters the office. There is a phone on the secretary's desk, and a file cabinet behind the desk. Luke goes to the file cabinet and finds the file for Lee Grant. When he opens it Luke finds photographs of a boy who looks very much like he does taken when the boy was different ages. He then sees that there is a log entry for every day that Luke has been at Hendricks detailing the results of therapy he has never undergone and tests he's never taken, and he realizes that it is a completely fake file. He flips through the rest of the file and finally finds Mr. Talbot's name and phone number listed under 'Emergency Contact.' Luke picks up the phone on the secretary's desk and dials the number.

Chapter Thirty-Two. A woman answers the phone and hisses that it is 3:00 in the morning, but puts Jen's dad on the line. Knowing that the phone might be bugged and that he will need to talk in a kind of code, Luke identifies himself by telling Mr. Talbot that he told him to 'blend in,' and then says that he needs to come and get him. Mr. Talbot tells him that he should try dealing with the root cause of his problems, and Luke says that the problem he has is like the one he had just before coming to the school, and that he now has four other problems he needs help solving as well. Mr. Talbot suddenly starts to sound as though he is angry, says that he is sure that Luke will be able to deal with his problems himself, and hangs up.

Chapter Thirty-Three. Luke stares at the phone in his hand for a long time. He is sure that either Mr. Talbot didn't understand what Luke had been trying to tell him, or that he did understand but wasn't willing to help him anymore. Luke finally hangs the phone up and replaces his file in the cabinet, then leaves the office. He decides that the only chance he and the others have is to run away. He goes to the door he and the others always use to go outside to try and determine how much time there is until dawn, but finds the door is locked. Luke races around the building and tries every door he knows of, but finds them all locked. Realizing that he and the others are trapped, Luke sits in a



hallway to think and a moment later is found by Mr. Dirk, his history teacher, who gives him two demerits and sends him back to his dorm room.

Chapter Thirty-Four. Luke wakes up in his bed a few hours later, and is angry that he allowed himself to fall asleep. He sees that Jason is not in his bed, and none of the other boys has seen him since lights out. Jason is not at breakfast either, and Luke sits at the table with the rest of the group. He does not know the four boys Jason mentioned during his phone call very well, but at one point he whispers to one of the boys named Patrick that he is in danger. Patrick ignores him, and a moment later the door to the dining hall bursts open and a voice calls out "Population Police!" A large man dressed in a uniform walks to the front of the room announces that he has a warrant for the arrest of 'illegals' guilty of breaking the Population Law. As he is about to read the first name on his list, Mr. Talbot walks into the dining hall and tells the officer to relax. Walking behind him, in handcuffs and chains, is Jason.

Analysis

Luke realizes that he has absolutely no idea how to handle the situation that he finds himself in, and no hope of escaping from the Population Police with the other boys Jason named without help. The only chance he has is to contact Mr. Talbot, and try to get him to save them all. While he is searching his file in the secretary's office for Mr. Talbot's phone number, he sees that someone has been updating the file on a daily basis. All of the entries are fake and detail behavior problems that he doesn't have, therapy sessions and tests he'd never taken, and even an entrance interview that had never happened. With the exception of occasionally handing out meaningless demerits, none of the school officials or teachers had paid any attention to him at all during the weeks he has been at Hendricks. Luke has no idea who has been putting fake information in his file or why, but he doesn't have time to investigate.

When he calls Mr. Talbot, Luke remembers that the older man had once told him that his phone was bugged, and speaks to him in a rough code that he makes up on the spot. When it appears that Mr. Talbot is not going to help him, Luke decides that the only chance he and the other four boys have is to run away and try to get to a city, although he has no idea how they would survive once they got there. When he finds that all of the doors in the school have been locked from the outside, Luke is afraid that he and the others are doomed. They could try and hide somewhere in the building but it would only be a matter of time before the Population Police found them.

The next morning, Luke can still see no way out, but he needs to do something. During breakfast he tries to warn one of the four boys who Jason identified, but the boy ignores him. Since he doesn't know who else in the group might be a traitor he can't risk telling what he knows to everyone, and so he remains silent. Luke continues to try to think of a way that he and the others can escape all through breakfast but he is too tired, confused, and frightened to think straight. When the Population Police officer enters the dining hall to arrest the boys Jason has betrayed, Luke is certain that it is all over, and that he will be executed with the others. He is shocked when he sees Mr. Talbot come



into the dining hall, and even more amazed when he hears him tell the Population Police officer to relax, that he “found him,” and sees Jason following him in handcuffs and chains. Luke doesn’t know what it means, but since he has no control over the situation all he can do is wait to see what happens.

Discussion Question 1

What does Luke discover while rooting through the offices? How could this affect him? How does it stand to affect the other students?

Discussion Question 2

What does Luke attempt to do in order to deal with Jason initially? Is Luke successful? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

What does Luke attempt to do during breakfast? What is the result of this? Why do you believe this is?

Vocabulary

accomplice, betrayed, dormitory, spider, transcripts, kindergarten, resemblance, horrified, sullen, hostility, baffled, treachery, untroubled, dedication, prohibited, overcome, rational, miserably, falsification, autistic, clutched, agony



Chapters Thirty-Five – Thirty-Eight

Summary

Chapter Thirty-Five. Mr. Talbot tells the Population Police officer that he found Jason hiding in the nurse's office, and that the 'other one' is over at the girl's school. Jason screams that he can show them the real illegal boys, and points out the four boys he named during the phone call. He then points at Luke and says that Lee Grant is an illegal as well, but that he doesn't know his real name. Mr. Talbot laughs and tells the Population Police officer that he has known Lee Grant since he was a baby. Jason cries that even if he made a mistake with Lee Grant he is certain of the others, but Mr. Talbot says that he just made up the other names to save his own skin. The four boys Jason pointed out each stand up and say a name that is different from what Jason called them, and Mr. Talbot asks one of the teachers to get the boys' files from the office. Mr. Dirk, the history teacher, gets the files which confirm the four boys' identities as being what they said they were. Jason insists that the files are fake, but the Population Police officer has heard enough and he and Mr. Talbot take Jason away.

Chapter Thirty-Six. The bell for the first class of the day rings and even though Luke has dozens of questions about what just happened, he heads off to class. He takes his history exam on schedule and even though he sees some of the other members of Jason's group throughout the day, no one talks about what happened. That afternoon Mr. Dirk finds him and tells Luke to come with him. Mr. Dirk leads Luke out the front door of the school, and then along a wide driveway to a small cottage, and then walks away. Luke rings the bell, and a voice tells him to come in. When he walks inside he sees an old man sitting in a wheelchair, and a moment later Mr. Talbot steps out of the shadows. Mr. Talbot waves a long bar all around Luke, and then says that he is not bugged. The old man introduces himself as Josiah Hendricks and asks Luke to sit down. As he sits, Luke notices that both of Mr. Hendricks' legs have been cut off at the knee.

Mr. Hendricks tells Luke that during the Great Famines the Government considered letting the physically and mentally disabled starve, but that he was very wealthy and spent millions in bribes to keep that from happening. In the end the Government left the disabled alone, but passed the Population Law instead. Feeling responsible and guilty, he'd set up the schools. At first he'd only taken children with emotional problems, and then when the first illegal third children were ready to come out of hiding with fake IDs, he took them as well. He hired staff that was too incompetent to notice when files were faked or when names changed, with only a few other people like Mr. Dirk working there who knew the truth. He tells Luke that the school is a place where the phobias most shadow children have as a result of their years spent in hiding won't stand out, and where they can start to adjust to their new lives. Then, when they are ready, they move on. Mr. Talbot then says that he and Mr. Hendricks feel that Luke is ready to move on.

Chapter Thirty-Seven. Mr. Hendricks goes on to say that his schools have never been infiltrated before, and they hadn't been prepared for it. He says that he knew Jason had



formed a group of shadow children and thought it was a positive development until Luke discovered the truth. Luke's call to Mr. Talbot had been enough to allow him to double-cross the Population Police and fake the files of the four boys Jason identified, and they had been able to arrest Jason and Nina – the traitor at the girl's school – instead of six shadow children. The fact that Luke had not panicked after he discovered Jason's plan and tried to stop him is what has convinced Mr. Talbot and Mr. Hendricks that Luke is ready to move on. Mr. Talbot then says that Luke should go and pack his things, and that he will drive him to his new school that very night, but Luke says that he doesn't want to leave Hendricks. He tells them that when he came out of hiding he'd told his parents that he wanted to help other illegal children, but he didn't know how. Now he thinks that he can help the shadow children at Hendricks, and Mr. Talbot asks Luke to tell them more.

Chapter Thirty-Eight. A few days later Luke, Trey, and several other boys are working outside in the new garden Luke has started. Luke was surprised Mr. Hendricks and Mr. Talbot agreed to his plan; Luke had argued that since the Population Law had been passed because of food, it was only right that shadow children should know how to grow it and that he could teach them. While they learn to tend a garden, they will also start overcoming their fear of the outdoors. Luke isn't certain how much longer he will want to remain at Hendricks, but he knows that he has a lot of catching up to do in his studies and while he is catching up, he can help other shadow children.

Analysis

After Jason is arrested and it appears that he and the rest of the group are safe, Luke has dozens of questions but finds that none of the other boys in the group are willing to talk to him about what has happened. He knows that each of the four boys Jason pointed out to the Population Police officer had been given a new name and that their files had been faked during the time Luke had slept, but he has no idea how this could have been accomplished or why none of the other boys at the school had turned the others in. It is only later that evening, after he is brought to Mr. Hendricks' cottage, that Luke finally learns the truth about Hendricks School for Boys and what happened earlier that day.

Mr. Hendricks reveals that rather than there being just a few illegal third children at his schools, he had actually started Hendricks School for Boys and Harlow School for Girls so that when they became old enough to start new lives with fake IDs the shadow children would have some place to go where their strange behavior and fears would not stand out. While there are some emotionally and mentally disabled boys and girls at the schools, most of the students are illegal third children who are trying to adjust to their new lives now that they are out of hiding. The schools are a temporary stop and after they overcome their fears and phobias and learn how to get along with other people, the illegal boys and girls move on to other schools. Before Jason and Nina had been sent to infiltrate the schools by the Population Police none of the shadow children knew that there were others like them at the schools, and most of the teachers and staff are also unaware of their existence. Jason and Nina had been the first Population Police



infiltrators in the history of the schools and had taken Mr. Hendricks completely by surprise. Although he had kept an eye on Jason and knew he was getting other shadow children together, he'd never suspected that he was a traitor. It was only because of Luke's quick thinking in calling Mr. Talbot and figuring out a code that he would understand that the four boys Jason had betrayed, as well as Mr. Hendricks and both of his schools, had been saved.

Based on the events of the previous 24 hours both Mr. Talbot and Mr. Hendricks believe that Luke is ready to move on, but Luke does not agree. He feels that he owes it to Jen – who had given her life trying to help illegal children be free – and to his family to do what he can to help others like himself. Having been raised on a farm he has spent much of his life outdoors, and he knows that he can help boys like Trey who are afraid of being outdoors get over their fears by showing them how wonderful it can be to tend a garden and grow food. He understands that while he will never be Lee Grant, rich Baron boy, he is also no longer just Luke Garner, scared little farm boy, either. During his time at Hendricks, he has become a combination of both.

Discussion Question 1

What does Luke ultimately come to about Jason's arrest, and what happened earlier in the day when the Population Police arrived? How does Luke handle this knowledge?

Discussion Question 2

What is the true purpose of Mr. Hendricks's school? Why does Mr. Hendricks do what he does?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Luke decide to remain at Hendricks School? What does he hope this will accomplish?

Vocabulary

entire, commanding, beseechingly, guffaws, personal, hearth, flannel, disgust, reimburse, ancient, turrets, prisms, khaki, inquisitive, suicide, uniquely, disciplines, infiltrated, indiscretion, confiscated, dizzy, mosquito, impostors, confusion, horizon, agricultural



Characters

Luke Garner (Lee Grant)

Luke Garner is a twelve-year-boy who, prior to the start of the novel, spent his entire life hiding on his parents' farm. Luke is his parents' third son and because of the Government's Population Law, which states that couples can only have two children, is an illegal child who will be executed if he is found. As the novel opens Luke is given a false ID and brought to live at Hendricks School for Boys under the name 'Lee Grant' by Mr. Talbot, the father of Luke's dead friend Jen, after it becomes unsafe for him to remain on the farm. Having never lived anywhere other than the farm or met anyone other than his family, Jen, and Mr. Talbot, Luke is overwhelmed by life at Hendricks. No one is willing to help him find out what classes he should be in, the teachers don't seem interested in him at all, and he immediately finds himself being bullied every night by an older student he thinks of as 'jackal boy.' Although he is lonely and miserable, Luke believes that he owes it to his parents and to his dead friend Jen to survive, and so tries his best to adapt to life at Hendricks while pretending to be someone he is not.

After Luke finds a door that leads outside he begins to pay more attention to the other students at Hendricks, and to the way things at the school work. When the garden that he has been cultivating in the woods just beyond the school is destroyed accidentally, Luke discovers that a group of shadow children led by jackal boy – whose name is really Jason – have been meeting in the woods for a couple of months. Luke joins Jason's group and finds that his life improves immediately. Although Jason is responsible for Luke now having a number of new friends and helps him find out what classes he should be in, Luke finds himself unable to trust Jason completely. He continues to go by the name Lee Grant, and will not tell Jason his real name.

Feeling much safer and happier now that he has some friends, Luke throws himself into his studies and finds that he enjoys his classes, and learns quickly. The night before final exams Luke discovers that Jason is actually an informer for the Population Police, and is planning on betraying several members of his group to the Government. Luke knocks Jason out and then manages to call Mr. Talbot, who is able to arrest Jason and stop him from carrying out his plan. Having saved the other boys and the school, Mr. Talbot and Mr. Hendricks – the Headmaster – tell Luke that he is ready to move on, but Luke asks to stay instead so that he can help some of the other shadow children who are afraid of the outside adjust by teaching them how to tend a garden. Luke is no longer the scared farm boy he was when he first came to Hendricks, and wants to do something that will help others adapt to their new lives.

Jason (Jackal Boy, Scott Renault)

Jason is a student at Hendricks School for Boys, and lives in the dormitory room Luke is assigned to. Starting Luke's very first night at Hendricks Jason (who Luke thinks of as



'jackal boy' for the first half of the book) bullies Luke every night after lights out, making him repeat demeaning phrases, or perform embarrassing acts like pushing a marble along the floor with his nose. Jason is older and bigger than Luke, and Luke goes along with the bullying rather than draw attention to himself by resisting. When Luke follows a group of boys out to the woods one night after his garden is destroyed, Luke learns that Jason is the leader of a small group of illegal third children just like himself. After Jason explains that he only bullied Luke as a way to toughen him up because he had suspected that he was another shadow child all along, Luke joins Jason's group. Jason immediately helps Luke find out what classes he is supposed to be taking, and offers to fix Luke's grades for him.

Although his life immediately improves after joining the group, Luke finds that he cannot bring himself to trust Jason completely and refuses to tell him his real name. Luke eventually discovers that Jason is an infiltrator working for the Population Police, and plans to betray at least four boys in his group who have told him their real names. Luke knocks Jason out and then makes a phone call to Mr. Talbot who is able to fake the files of the four boys, arrest Jason instead of them, and lead him away in chains to Population Police Headquarters for questioning.

Mr. Talbot (George)

Mr. Talbot was the father of Jen Talbot, the young girl who Luke formed a friendship with before she was killed at a rally prior to the start of the book. Even though he works for the Population Police, Mr. Talbot sabotages them whenever he can and is part of an underground organization that helps shadow children obtain fake IDs and live normal lives. It is Mr. Talbot who provides Luke with the fake identity of Lee Grant – a boy who was killed in an accident shortly before the story opens – when it is no longer safe for him to stay with his parents, and who arranges for Luke to attend Hendricks School for Boys. When Luke discovers that Jason is a traitor and intends to betray four other shadow children, Mr. Talbot is able to double-cross the Population Police, fake the documents of the boys who are at risk, and arrest Jason instead.

Mr. Hendricks (Josiah)

Mr. Hendricks is the founder and Headmaster of Hendricks School for Boys and Harlow School for Girls. He is an old man who has lost both of his legs and is confined to a wheelchair. Mr. Hendricks founded his two schools shortly after the Population Law was passed so that illegal children would have some place to go where the fears and phobias that resulted from spending their entire lives in hiding would not be noticed when they were ready to start living in the open under fake names. Mr. Hendricks is a kind and compassionate man who explains many things to Luke shortly after Jason is arrested and taken away. At the end of the novel he allows Luke to stay at the school so that he can help other shadow children who are afraid of the outdoors overcome their fear.



Trey

Trey is a member of Jason's group, and is the hall monitor who is positioned in the hallway near the door to the outside. After discovering that his garden has been destroyed, Luke looks directly into Trey's eyes defiantly after allowing the door to the outside to slam behind him. Trey is a shy boy who spent his entire life hiding in one room before coming to Hendricks, and suffers from an intense fear of the outdoors. Trey is one of the boys that Luke teaches how to tend a garden at the end of the book to help him overcome his fear.

Nina

Nina is the leader of a group of shadow children at Harlow School for Girls, and she and the other girls in her group meet the boys in Jason's group several times a week in the woods, supposedly to plan ways to resist the Population Law. After Jason is arrested, Mr. Talbot tells Luke that Nina was also planning on betraying the girls in her group, and was arrested right after Jason was taken away.

Mr. Dirk

Mr. Dirk is Luke's history teacher at Hendricks. He is one of the few staff members who know about the illegal boys at the school, and he helps Mr. Hendricks keep them safe. It is Mr. Dirk who returns to the dining hall with the fake records of the four boys Jason tries to betray, and he is also the one who takes Luke to Mr. Hendricks' cottage the evening after Jason is arrested.

Patrick Kerrigan (Tyrone Janson, Robert Jones)

Patrick is one of the four boys Jason intends to betray. Luke tries to warn him just before the Population Police arrive, but Patrick ignores him. Patrick is the first of the four boys to stand up and say that his name is different from what Jason has called him, which is the first step in convincing the Population Police officer that Jason is lying.

School Nurse (unnamed)

The school nurse is an older woman who bandages the cut on Luke's face after Jason tackles him in the woods. Luke wakes her after he knocks Jason out with his textbook, and leaves him in her office. Luke does not think that the school nurse is very bright.

Population Police Officer (Stan)

A Population Police officer comes to Hendricks during breakfast with a warrant for the arrest of the boys Jason named in his phone call the night before. Mr. Talbot is able to



convince the officer, who he calls Stan, that Jason has made the names up to save himself. In the end, the Population Police officer arrests Jason instead.

Rolly Sturgeon

Rolly Sturgeon is one of the emotionally disturbed boys at Hendricks, and has violent tendencies. He is the first boy Luke meets at Hendricks, and as he is taking him to his dorm room Rolly runs off with Luke's suitcase, and later tries to push him down the steps.

Jen Talbot

Although she is killed just prior to the start of this story – at the end of the first novel in the series – Luke talks to Jen in his mind throughout the course of the novel. Jen was Luke's only friend, and was killed by the Population Police when she led a rally to try and get equal rights for shadow children. Jen is Luke's hero, and he draws much of his strength from her memory.



Symbols and Symbolism

Note

Mr. Talbot slips Luke a note just before he leaves him at Hendricks. Luke believes that the note will tell him everything he needs to know to survive at Hendricks, but when he is finally able to read it he finds that it only says: “blend in.”

Suitcase

When Luke arrives at Hendricks he has a suitcase. It is so heavy that he is unable to keep up with Rolly Sturgeon when the other boy is leading him to his room.

Demerits

Teachers give Luke and the other boys at Hendricks demerits, but they are meaningless.

Marbles

As part of the bullying sessions, jackal boy has Luke push marbles along the floor with his nose.

Door to the Outside

One day Luke finds an open door to the outside. Luke uses this door to get to the woods just beyond the school. Jason’s group also uses the same door to get to the woods.

Raspberry Plant

Luke sees a raspberry plant growing in a clearing in the woods. As he is pulling weeds out from around it, Luke gets the idea to plant a garden.

Watch

Luke uses a wrist watch to make sure he gets back to school on time when he goes to the woods.



Portable Phone

Luke catches Jason talking to the Population Police on a portable phone.

School Book

Luke knocks Jason out with a school book.

Wheelchair

The Headmaster, Mr. Hendricks, uses a wheelchair because he has lost his legs.

Dorm Room

Luke shares a dorm room with seven other boys. Luke is bullied by jackal boy in the dorm room.

Nurse's Office

Luke drags Jason to the nurse's office after knocking him out.

School Office

Luke calls Mr. Talbot from the school office after finding the phone number in his file.

Woods/Garden

Luke finds that he can get to the woods that border the school through an open door, and plants a garden there. Later, Luke and the other boys in Jason's group meet the girls from Harlow in the woods.

Mr. Hendricks' Cottage

After Jason is arrested Luke is taken to Mr. Hendricks' cottage by Mr. Dirk. He meets with Mr. Hendricks and Mr. Talbot, and a great many things are explained to him.

Harlow School for Girls

Harlow is a nearby school that Mr. Hendricks has set up for girls. Nina and the girls in her group that she intends to betray are students at Harlow.

Hendricks School for Boys

Hendricks School for Boys is a private boarding school set up by Josiah Hendricks to help shadow children begin the transition from hiding to living in the open with fake identities. Hendricks is housed in a massive building which has no windows and feels more like a prison than a school to Luke.



Settings

The novel is set in the not too distant future in a country that the reader is led to believe is the United States, although this is never actually confirmed in the narrative. In this future society, the Government has passed a Population Law which makes it illegal for any couple to have more than two children; the penalty for breaking the Population Law is death for the parents, and for the illegal child. Luke Garner, the main character in the novel, is an illegal third child and just prior to the opening of the story leaves his parents' farm in order to avoid being discovered and arrested by the Population Police.

Luke is brought to Hendricks School for Boys, a private boarding school for wealthy children, where he lives under the name Lee Grant. With the exception of one scene that takes place in the Headmaster's cottage, all of the action in the novel takes place in the school building or in the woods on the school grounds. The building which houses Hendricks is far larger than any place Luke has ever seen, and at first appears to him to be a confusing assortment of long hallways, staircases that seem to go nowhere, and massive halls and classrooms. During the course of the novel Luke discovers that there are no windows anywhere in the school building, and that the doors leading to the grounds can be locked from the outside. The woods that Luke discovers bordering the school are quiet and peaceful, and for most of the novel the woods are the only place where Luke is able to relax. These locations are very important to the plot as they allow the author to place Luke in two completely different settings – one that is oppressive and frightening, and the other which is comforting and peaceful – and contrast the feelings that each bring out in Luke and, later, several of the other boys Luke becomes friends with.



Themes and Motifs

Changing Perceptions

Luke's perceptions of his surroundings, and of the other boys at Hendricks, and how these perceptions are altered as his circumstances change, form a key theme in the novel. When he is first brought to Hendricks Luke is overwhelmed by the size of the building, and by the sheer number of other students he encounters. Having only met six other people before in his entire life, Luke finds it impossible at first to tell one boy from another and is so miserable that he doesn't really try. After he finds the door that leads to the outside, however, Luke understands that if he is going to be able to sneak back to the woods on a daily basis, he is going to have to pay closer attention to everything around him. Luke starts to actively explore his physical surroundings and pay close attention to the other boys at school. He learns how to navigate the hallways and get from place to place without being noticed, and realizes that many of the other students are exhibiting odd behaviors that he hadn't noticed before, like wrapping their arms around their knees and rocking back and forth continually. As Luke becomes more aware of his surroundings and the people in it, his self-confidence grows and his quality of life improves.

After finding other shadow children meeting in the woods and joining Jason's group, Luke has access to more information about his surroundings, and much of what he has noticed on his own starts to make sense to him. Luke realizes that the hall monitors in Jason's group – who seemed to be so confident and in command when they patrolled the hallways – are in fact terrified by the outdoors; Trey, for example, can hardly bring himself to open his eyes when walking across the lawn, and only begins to relax a little when he reaches the cover of the trees in the woods. Luke comes to realize that while at first he had thought that he was the only boy at Hendricks who was afraid all the time and terrified by his soundings, in truth all of the boys at Hendricks are damaged in some way, and just like Luke they are coping with their new lives as best they can.

Loneliness/Isolation

During his first few weeks at Hendricks, Luke feels more alone and more isolated than he has ever felt before in his life, even though he is surrounded by literally hundreds of other boys. Having had almost no experience interacting with people outside of his family and understanding all too well that if anyone finds out that he is not really Lee Grant it will mean his death, Luke withdraws into himself almost completely at first. He does not know if there is anyone else at the school that he can trust or if any of the other students are illegal third children, and has no idea how he can go about finding out. During those first few weeks the only direct interaction Luke has with other people is when a teacher or hall monitor tells him to get to class – or gives him demerits for doing something wrong – and jackal boy's nightly bullying session.



The main reason that Luke is willing to join Jason's group – and forgive the older boy for the nightly bullying sessions – is because belonging to the group will mean that he is no longer alone and isolated all the time. Even though he knows that he is putting himself at great risk by joining the group, and has the presence of mind not to reveal everything about himself and his past to Jason, Luke immediately feels a sense of belonging and finds himself happy in the company of his new friends. Such belonging also ensures a degree of security. As becomes obvious during Luke's talk with Mr. Hendricks and Mr. Talbot near the end of the novel, most of the illegal third children suffer from intense feelings of loneliness and isolation while at the school, and the reader understands that since being planted there by the Population Police Jason has exploited these feelings whenever he could to get others to join his group so that he could eventually betray them.

Responsibility

Even though Luke is miserable when he first starts attending Hendricks School for Boys and often thinks it would be easier to simply give up and run away, he feels a responsibility not only to himself but to his parents, Mr. Talbot, and his dead friend Jen to find a way to survive. He realizes that if he were to let his guard down and be caught it would mean not only his death but also the death of his parents and Mr. Talbot, and so he does what he can to remain inconspicuous and survive. Even when Luke starts risking going to the woods every day he makes certain that he plans his moves carefully so that he won't be caught. After he joins Jason's group Luke throws himself into his studies because he feels a responsibility to carry on his friend Jen's work to help other shadow children, and he realizes that the first step to being able to do this is to learn as much as he can as quickly as he can.

Along with being a very responsible boy, Luke is also extremely loyal. After he learns that Jason intends to betray four members of his group and that Luke himself will also probably be turned in to the Population Police, Luke immediately starts trying to think of a way for all of them to get away. Even though he doesn't know the boys Jason is planning to betray very well and has only been a member of Jason's group for a short time, Luke feels a responsibility to help the other boys get away even though he knows he would have a better chance of escaping on his own. Later, after Jason is arrested and Luke is told that he is ready to move on to the next school, Luke asks to stay so that he can help some of his fellow students. Luke has learned that many of the boys at Hendricks are afraid of the outdoors and, being lucky enough to have been raised on a farm and not having that fear, he feels that it is his responsibility to try and help those students overcome their fear and adjust to their new lives.



Styles

Point of View

The novel is written in the third person. The point of view is that of the novel's main character Luke Garner, a 12-year-old illegal third child – also known as a “shadow child” – who, prior to the start of the book, has spent his entire life hiding from the Government's Population Police on his parents' farm. Luke is present and is the central character in every scene in the novel and all of the action and information in the story is presented to the reader as it is experienced and understood by him. The author also makes certain that the reader is constantly aware of what Luke is thinking and how he is feeling; this is particularly effective when the author presents Luke's feelings of loneliness and fear throughout the course of the novel.

In the first half of the novel the story is told using mostly descriptive narrative with only a few lines of dialogue here and there – much of which takes place in Luke's mind between himself and his dead friend Jen, or his absent parents. In the second half of the novel, the story is told using a mix of descriptive prose and dialogue as Luke starts communicating regularly with other characters. The intimate point of view used in the novel works very well since understanding the wide range of emotions Luke goes through and the courage it takes for him to overcome his fears and his feelings of isolation and despair are crucial to the plot. It also allows the reader to sympathize with Luke, and care very deeply about what happens to him.

Language and Meaning

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Structure

The novel is divided into 38 numbered chapters; the shortest of these chapters is just over one page in length, while the longest chapter is just over ten pages. The chapters are untitled, and with the exception of Chapter One no subchapters are used. The novel is 172 pages long. The story opens in late April, and takes place over the course of about two months. The author keeps the reader aware of how much time has passed at irregular intervals throughout the story. In some cases a single short paragraph will show the passage of as much as a week, while at other times several chapters will be used to cover a single scene or the events that occur over the course of just a couple of hours.

The novel contains one main plot which follows 12-year-old Luke Garner – an illegal third child – as he tries to adjust to his new life hiding under an assumed name at Hendricks School for Boys, joins a group of other illegal ‘shadow children’ at the school, and uncovers a plot by the leader of the group to betray them all to the Population Police. The novel is the second book in the ‘Shadow Children’ series by the same author, and is preceded by “Among the Hidden.” While the novel can be enjoyed as a standalone work, readers will have an easier time understanding the world in which the story is set, as well as the reasons why Luke ends up at Hendricks in the first place, if they read the previous book first. The novel is followed by the third book in the series, “Among the Betrayed.”



Quotes

Sometimes he whispered his real name in the dark, in the middle of the night. (chapter 1 paragraph Page 1)

Importance: Luke has a secret identity as a shadow child, and in order to save his life and his freedom, he has obscured it, having taken on an assumed name. He attends the Hendricks school, and in the dark of night, he whispers his own name to remind himself of his true identity. This also allows the reader to understand that not everything is as it appears.

No alarms bells went off, no Population Police swooped in to carry him away. His feeling of hope surged, even more than the fear. (chapter 4 paragraph Page 28)

Importance: Not available.

The problem was, Luke couldn't always stop himself from wanting more. (chapter 6 paragraph Page 32)

Importance: Luke, in his struggle to survive, is beset with the very human conundrum of wanting to survive, but wanting more -more in the way of knowledge, and more in the way of freedom. Yet both the pursuit of knowledge and of greater freedom put Luke in greater danger.

He glanced around again, this time regretfully. The trees looked friendlier than any of the boys or teachers at school. (chapter 9 paragraph Page 37)

Importance: While visiting the woods, Luke comes to the sad realization that the darkened trees at night, as well as the unknown within the woods, seem to be friendlier than the students or teachers at the school. This demonstrates the severe isolation that Luke feels.

Luke stood up and planted his feet firmly on the ground. 'I have the woods,' he said aloud. 'I'll have the garden. This is mine. (chapter 13 paragraph Page 63)

Importance: Here, Luke resolves that he shall have some measure of control over his own life, and over something else. He resolves that he will have something that is entirely his own: a garden. His garden will become something which he can, to some extent, control; and something he can care for and make his own, all within the context of having the freedom to do it.

Lots of people had been in Luke's garden. Lots of people had been there destroying it. (chapter 15 paragraph Page 70)

Importance: In chapter fifteen, Luke is horrified to discover that his garden -the extent



of his freedom and efforts -has been completely destroyed, presumably by Jason and many other boys at the school. It both angers and saddens Luke.

Luke listened harder, as if it would help him make sense of their words. Who would be proud of being an 'exnay'? If he'd learned anything at Hendricks it was that 'exnay' was one of the worst insults you could hurl at anybody. (chapter 19 paragraph Page 82)

Importance: Not available.

He didn't know what possessed him to make that threat. Maybe it was just habit – after twelve years of being the youngest brother, he knew the power of tattling. (chapter 21 paragraph Page 93)

Importance: Luke realizes that his one source of power, now, is knowledge: He knows about the secret, nighttime meetings of Jason, the other boys, and the girls, and will reveal these meetings to the school officials and others if Jason does not give Luke information.

Luke wanted to object to the word 'lecker'. Just because someone came from the country, that didn't make him dumb. Did it? (chapter 22 paragraph Page 106)

Importance: Not available.

Luke felt sorry for the other boy. How many of his other new friends had basically lived their entire lives in a box? (chapter 23 paragraph Page 109)

Importance: While Luke is certainly trapped within the confines of the population control system and the school, he realizes that others have had it far worse than he has, having always lived either under close guard or secrecy; yet, in Luke's case, he has spent his early years on a farm, enjoying some small measures of freedom that most other shadow children are denied.

Jason still had his back to Luke. He was saying indignantly into the phone: 'Of course I'll get the others to tell me their real names. They're just cagey. They do trust me. They don't have any idea I work for the Population Police. (chapter 26 paragraph Page 122)

Importance: It is in chapter 26 that Luke's suspicions of Jason are confirmed: He is working for the Population Police, and is working to betray the shadow children at Hendricks. Suddenly, the danger is all too clear for Luke, who realizes he is now the only thing standing between Jason and survival.

Luke was proud of himself. He couldn't be any clearer than that, not using a potentially bugged phone. Surely Mr. Talbot would understand. (chapter 32 paragraph Page 140)

Importance: At long last, as Luke begins to think for himself, and begins to approach things at Hendricks cautiously, he gains self-confidence in his ability to handle difficult



situations and various obstacles -such as bugged phones. It reinforces his self-worth, and inspires him to continue on.

It was hard having a dead hero as a best friend. (chapter 33 paragraph Page 143)

Importance: Not available.

It didn't seem right that Luke had just had one of the most terrifying days of his life, and his own family would never know. (chapter 36 paragraph Page 155)

Importance: In difficult times, family usually proves to be a bulwark against such difficulties, and a place for comfort, acceptance, and emotional and even physical support. Unfortunately, as a shadow child, Luke does not have this option. He must rely primarily on himself.

This was a level of evil Luke could never have imagined before, back on the farm. (chapter 37 paragraph Page 167)

Importance: Luke, fully aware of the infiltration the Population Police, and the lengths to which they will go, astounds him. He had not previously understood that such a kind of evil could exist.

It wasn't Luke, it wasn't Lee – it was, somehow, both identities at once. Just like Luke himself. (chapter 38 paragraph Page 172)

Importance: At the end of the novel, Luke comes to understand that his real identity is neither wholly Luke or Lee, that he is both of them at once, and that both identities form his true identity, each working to help, support, and enhance the other, especially in his new mission to help other shadow children.