

Animorphs #4: The Message Study Guide

Animorphs #4: The Message by K. A. Applegate

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Plot Summary

"Animorphs - The Message" by K. A. Applegate is the story of five friends who are Animorphs or humans who can take on the form of any animal that they have DNA mapping for. The story begins with the protagonist, Cassie, who is morphing herself into a squirrel. She wants to be small enough to hide and watch for the predator who has been coming into the barn on her family's farm at night and stealing birds that she and her father have been trying to nurse back to health.

Cassie comes from a family of animal lovers. Her father is the head vet at the Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic and her mother is a vet at the zoo at The Gardens. The guilty party, a fox enters the barn and is spooked with Cassie as a squirrel jumps down from the rafters. The fox chases Cassie but she is saved when Tobias, another member of the Animorphs, swoops down on him and chases him away. Tobias tells Cassie that he was ready to eat her until he realized that she had morphed into the squirrel. Tobias is a human locked in the body of a red-tailed hawk. After morphing into the hawk, he was unable to morph back to his human form. When they are in a morphed state, they communicate telepathically or as they call it through thought-speak.

Cassie and Tobias have both been having dreams about someone in distress calling to them for help from the sea. They tell the other members of their group - Jake, the leader, Marco, and Rachel - about their shared visions. Jake has a news clip showing a man who discovered a piece of scrap metal that washed ashore. Due to the strange writing on the scrap, the kids are almost sure that it was a remnant from a crashed Andalite spaceship. The writing is identical to the writing on the Andalite spaceship that Jake had boarded when he was given the secret to morphing.

The scrap from the ocean coupled with the dreams that Cassie and Tobias are having, cinches it for the friends. They have a big problem however since the evil Yeerks, also alien beings, will be after them and the Andalite they will be trying to rescue. They decide that despite the risk, they must act. They'd all morphed into trout before but they needed to morph into a creature that could withstand the sea water, be big enough not to be prey and be able to swim very fast. There was only one animal that fit the bill - the dolphin. The mission begins in a river that deltas into the ocean. They morph themselves into dolphins and swim down the river into the sea. They are having so much fun in their sleek strong new bodies that they forget about their mission. They lose focus and have to tangle with some hungry tiger sharks. When the sharks attack a large whale nearby, the Animorphs go into action and save the whale. They made a friend forever and one that would repay the favor later.

The Animorphs discover a large domed park underneath the water. Once inside they encounter Ax, the young Andalite who was putting out the distress signal. In the end the Animorphs are able to rescue Ax and save planet earth and all its species but there were many obstacles to that success. They have to fight off the Yeerks, the Controllers - the puppets of the Yeerks - and the much feared leader of the Yeerks, Visser Three. The whale that they rescued from the sharks totes them back to shore on his back. Ax is



able to morph into a human so that he can pass through town without notice. After everyone is back home and safe, Cassie visits the dolphin tank at the zoo. She slips into the water and morphs into a dolphin. Then she plays and romps with the the happy and free spirited animals.



Chapter 1 and 2

Chapter 1 and 2 Summary

In Chapter 1, Cassie is an Animorph. She can't say what her last name is or where she lives. It's a matter of life or death that she maintain her secrecy. If caught, the Yeerks would either kill her or make her a slave by forcing a slug into her brain and turn her into a Controller. There are good things about being an Animorph. The other night, instead of being in bed she was in the barn preparing to turn into a squirrel. Her father is the head vet at the Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic. She helps her father tend to injured birds and animals they keep in the barn. Her mother is a vet at the zoo at The Gardens.

Cassie has learned that as an Animorph, she has to control her animal instincts. Some of the transitions are difficult, like when she turned into a trout. Others are fun such as when she was a horse. On that night in the barn, she is holding Magilla, the squirrel, in her hands telling him that it wouldn't hurt. The first obvious change is in size. Her ears travel up the side of her head to the top. A wave of soft gray fur spreads across her body. Then a big fluffy tail sprouts out of her body. Finally, the squirrel brain kicks in. Suddenly she begins looking out for predators and thinking of nuts. She scampers across the floor and pounces on a chestnut. She sticks the nut in her cheek just when Tobias appears.

In Chapter 2, Tobias, a red-tailed hawk, is flying around in the rafters. The squirrel part of Cassie panics while the human part that is still there is trying to figure out what to do. The squirrel part takes over and runs up the wall and then flies across the barn landing on the wooden beams above the horse stalls. The door opens and a fox comes in. Cassie is sure that it is the predator that has been after the clinic's birds. Tobias swoops down and chases the fox off. The birds are squawking and the wolves in the next room start howling. The horses are upset. Cassie lets go and falls to the floor running out of the barn with the fox right behind her.

Telepathically, she asks Tobias for help, telling him that she had morphed into a squirrel. She is running as fast as she can but the fox is relentless and right behind her. Tobias sends a message back in thought-speech that it is a good thing she identified herself. He was thinking of eating her. The fox chomps down on Cassie's tail but he lets go when Tobias dive-bombs him.

Back in the barn, Tobias asks Cassie what she's doing in the barn at midnight. She begins to morph back into her human form as they talk. She explains that she was trying to catch the culprit that was taking some of the birds. Tobias is beginning to accept that he is destined to remain a red-tail hawk. Cassie's human form is that of an average sized girl who dresses like a tomboy. Jake has a picture of her in her overalls sitting next to his computer.



Tobias hears someone coming. It's Cassie's father. She panics. She still has her squirrel tail! Her father comes in and scolds her for being in the barn in the middle of the night. The tail draws back up into her spine and her father doesn't see it. He tells her to get right to bed. She tells Tobias she's having a lot of dreams about the sea. Tobias is having dreams about the sea, too.

Chapter 1 and 2 Analysis

In Chapter 1, Cassie, the protagonist, leads a secret life. This strange life positions her between animal and human. Because she is part of both, she can see the advantages of each. But her unusual lifestyle, though it has its rewards, is not without danger. There are those who are out to get her and the secrecy she maintains is quite necessary. At this point, the reader can have the assurance that there is quite an unusual adventure ahead of them in this story. The fact that she works with animals and both her parents do as well indicates that a strong and loving support of the animal world has been part of her upbringing which will undoubtedly play into the story.

In Chapter 2, the dual lives of Cassie are brought to the forefront. The sometimes difficult transformation from human to animal is described in great detail. The physicality of changing from a normal sized human to a small squirrel is characterized as quite a rugged transformation due largely to the disparity in size.

The Animorphs are at one with the animals and are able to communicate telepathically with them. Both Cassie and Tobias, the red-tailed hawk, are having dreams that someone is calling to them from the sea. These dreams may be visions and foreshadow an adventure that may soon be taking place in the sea. If Cassie is to be involved in a mission involving the sea, she probably will have to morph into a sea creature.

There is a hint that Tobias is an Animorph but apparently cannot return from being the red-tailed hawk that he has become.



Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

In Chapter 3, Jake, Cassie, Marco, and Rachel all meet at Rachel's house. They made sure they weren't being followed and that Rachel's mother and sisters weren't home. Tobias even flew over the area to make sure no one was lurking. No one else is having dreams about the sea.

Jake is kind of the unofficial leader of the group. He's a natural leader and cute and smart and Cassie likes him. Marco and Jake have been best friends since they were babies. Marco would like to quit the whole thing and forget about morphing and the Yeerks. Rachel is Cassie's best friend. Rachel and Jake are first cousins. Rachel is fearless. Nothing seems to scare her. She's tall and pretty and blond but she's not a wimp.

Jake shows the group a tape that he has of a news clip. It is of an old man on the beach holding up a piece of scrap metal. The camera zooms in on the metal scrap. The writing on it looks like the Andalite language which they had seen on the night they encountered the Andalite spaceship. Jake had gone inside the ship where he was given the cube that gave the group their morphing powers. Jake thinks that the piece of metal that washed up came from an Andalite spaceship.

In Chapter 4, Cassie fell backwards as if she was falling into the sea. Jake catches her but she hears a voice calling to her. Tobias had also passed out. Rachel is about to call 911 but Cassie convinces her that she is fine. Tobias comes to and starts hopping around. They had both heard a voice calling to them, like a distress call from under the water. Cassie realizes that the voice she hears is not human. It reminds her of the Andalites.

They had first encountered the Andalite ship when it appeared above them when they were walking from the mall. It landed and the Andalite prince came out. He had sustained devastating wounds in a battle in space with the Yeerks. The prince had warned them about the Yeerks - the parasite species that inhabits the brains of other beings. The prince gave them the power to morph. The Yeerks caught up with the prince and murdered him.

Cassie tells the others that if it's an Andalite calling for help, she will answer that call. The others all agree to help.

Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

In Chapter 3, Cassie is not the only human involved in the strange netherworld between human and animal. And it is apparent that all members of this unusual group realize the danger that lurks about them. Jake presents a news clip about the discovery of an



unusual piece of metal that washed up from the sea. Apparently, the spaceship of the aliens who introduced the youngsters to their strange existence may have crashed in the sea. Could that be the source of the dreams that Cassie is having?

In Chapter 4, there is definitely a connection between Cassie's dreams and the incident at sea. She is overcome with the news about the piece of the space ship that washed up from the sea. She realizes that something or someone is in distress and is beckoning to her and Tobias. But the question comes to mind - why are she and Tobias being singled out among her group? Since Tobias is a bird, it doesn't appear that he could be helpful in a mission at sea.



Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 5 and 6 Summary

In Chapter 5, Marco reminds the others that because of the publicity about the metal scrap there will probably be some Controllers at the beach. Cassie feels drawn to the sea as she always does. Marco doesn't think the group should act on the dreams of Cassie and Tobias. Rachel wonders why only Cassie and Tobias are receiving the call for help. Marco thinks that they are being singled out because Tobias is in permanent morph and Cassie is the most talented at morphing. Tobias has scouted about and reports in that some humans have formed a search party and are heading their way. Jake decides that the group should hide from the humans in the sand dunes.

Tobias learns that the search party is part of The Sharing. Chapman and Tom are both in the search party. The Sharing is a front organization for the Yeerks. It's really a way for the Controllers to recruit new voluntary hosts. The Sharing uses a very subtle approach. Recruits are brought on slowly and don't know what's happening to them initially.

Apparently, The Sharing is also looking into the possibility that the Andalite spaceship had crashed at sea. Tobias also heard them talking about having visions. Cassie spots the search party and it's obvious that they're looking for other fragments from the ship. The search party spots Cassie and her friends. They begin running with the search party is in hot pursuit. Cassie recognizes Chapman's voice. He's the assistant principal at school. Someone begins shooting at the fleeing kids. A bullet whizzes right by Cassie's face.

In Chapter 6, even though Cassie had been in direct battle with seven-foot-tall Hork-Bajir warriors and had been shot at by Dracon beams that can disintegrate your body, she'd never been officially shot at before. As they run away, Jake tells Cassie to morph into a fish. But trout are freshwater fish and not salt water. As she runs, Cassie visualizes the trout she had morphed into and the process began. Her feet and legs disappear and soon she is in the water. The search party runs to the edge of the water. Cassie hears them comment that the tracks they followed stopped at the water's edge. Tom wonders if the vision of Visser Three was wrong and that the beings they are tracking aren't Andalites after all. Chapman says that he's not foolish enough to tell Visser Three that he might have been wrong. Cassie and the others have all completed their morphs. But they are in distress, unable to breathe as freshwater trout because of the salt water.

Chapters 5 and 6 Analysis

In Chapter 5, Tobias appears to be somewhat of a tragic figure. He is a boy trapped in the body of a red-tailed eagle. He is afraid to be happy because he fears it may be



taken from him just as his life as a human had been taken from him. Marco is the skeptical one in the group but also appears to be pragmatic. He is putting down the importance of the dreams that Cassie and Tobias are having. He is adamant that the group should not rely on dreams to make their decision. The kids have stumbled onto something that is apparently quite important to the Yeerks who appear ready to murder the kids over it.

In Chapter 6, the kids are facing dangers from all sides. The search party is a part of the evil Yeerks. They are being shot at and are forced to morph into trout. But being in the salt water is dangerous for the trout which are freshwater fish. They will not be able to survive very long. The reader learns that a Yeerk referred to as Viser Three is a feared and dangerous leader of the Yeerks.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

In Chapter 7, over the next few days the group doesn't see much of each other except when they pass each other in the hallways at school. They do have other lives. Rachel is busy with gymnastics and is going to a dinner where her mother, an attorney, is being honored. Jake has to do some make-up work for one of his classes because he hadn't studied. Cassie is tending to a golden eagle who had almost been electrocuted. Tobias is jealous of the attention that Cassie is paying to the eagle.

Jake comes over and tells Cassie that everyone is waiting to see what she decides to do about her dreams. They are relying on her to make a decision about whether they go on a mission or not since she's most in touch with the animals and the best at morphing. Marco is having second thoughts about the mission. Cassie realizes she has to decide if she believes her dreams or not. She admits to Jake that she is afraid of the ocean. Cassie tells Jake she does believe in her dreams and that she strongly feels there is an Andalite out there in trouble and in need of help. They discuss what kind of sea creature they should morph into. Cassie thinks it should be an animal that is fast and not easy prey.

In Chapter 8, after school the next day, Cassie and the others head to The Gardens where her mother is a vet at the zoo there. Cassie has a free pass to the zoo but the others have to pay. Marco never has any money. Ever since his mother died, his father has had a rough time only keeping temporary and part-time jobs.

On the way to the zoo, they pass through the amusement park. Jake looks at the roller coaster which he used to consider the coolest ride until he morphed into a falcon. Talk about some high-speed stunts in the air, he says. Once they reach the zoo, they head for the marine mammal exhibit. They watch the sleek dolphins perform and are amazed at their speed and strength. Eileen, the dolphin trainer, lets the kids feed the dolphins. Cassie is amazed by the smile that always seems to be on their faces and the intelligent look in their eyes. The kids decide that they should morph into dolphins for the mission.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

In Chapter 7, the task of saving an Andalite from a possible wreckage at sea is falling four square on Cassie's shoulders. She is having the dreams and is the most talented at morphing. It will be up to her if the mission is a go or not. She has to look deep inside herself to discover if she believes in her own dreams.

In Chapter 8, Marco is a sympathetic character. His mother died and it seems as though the family has been struggling ever since. Perhaps that explains why Marco is sarcastic

and shields everything with humor. He is hiding the hurt and anger inside. Could Marco be the weak link in the group because of his personal problems?



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

In Chapter 9, the voice in Cassie's dream is growing weak. She calls Jake to see if they are still planning to meet on the beach. They are careful what they say over the phone. Tom, Jake's brother, could listen in. Instead of meeting on the beach, they decide to meet at river where they will have more privacy. Tobias will be watching out overhead. Rachel suggests they wade out into the water and then start morphing.

Cassie is asked to go first. It's always a little tense when morphing into a new animal but she will do her best. Cassie wades out and visualizes a dolphin. The first thing to change is her skin, which transitions from her natural light brown to a pale gray. The skin is tough and rubbery. The others watch as her face bulges out into a long snout. Her arms are disappearing and she can feel a fin growing out of her back. As soon as she releases her legs, she falls into the water.

Cassie is expecting to attain her dolphin brain which will contain the animal's natural survival instincts. Instead, she just begins to feel free and playful. She has the urge to chase fish and eat them and to race across the water. Cassie thought-speeched to the others to start their morphs and swim with her to the ocean.

In Chapter 10, Cassie doesn't like the river. She is anxious to get to the ocean. The four friends swim in a school of four with Tobias flying overhead. Tobias has a small wrist watch strapped to his talon so he can track the time. Their morphs only last two hours. The influx of the salt water when the river turns into the sea is satisfying. They swim on the surface and enjoy both worlds - the beautiful dark blue ocean and the bright blue sky above. Jack leaps out of the water and the others dive down and race to the top to see who can jump higher. In thought-speech, they all agree that their new identity is really "cool!" Tobias reminds them that they had a purpose for being there. They are supposed to be looking for an Andalite spaceship. Cassie starts making clicking noises and realizes that her dolphin radar has been activated. The others all begin to feel that something is out there. It turns out to be sharks.

Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

In Chapter 9, it is revealed that Tom, one of the "bad" guys in the search party, is Jake's brother which complicates the storyline. The image and spirit of a dolphin is a carefree and happy one. As soon as Cassie morphs into a dolphin instead of the expected flight or fright instincts that she gets with most animal morphs, she feels playful and almost childlike. The spirit that she takes on as a dolphin confirms to her that dolphins are the happy animals that they seem to be and the "smile" that is permanently affixed to their faces is real. But her playfulness could endanger the mission which, because of the danger involved, she needs to take very seriously.

In Chapter 10, the kids are all enjoying their new dolphin identities. They feel free and playful. However, they are forgetting their mission. They must remain mindful of the fact that, animal or human, danger always lurks. Tobias warns them not to forget their mission and sharks swimming nearby reminds them of the danger that is ever-present.



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

In Chapter 11, the kids decide to leave the sharks alone. Dolphins don't attack sharks and only fight them off if they are attacked. Besides, there is something else on their radar, something much bigger. It turns out to be a whale which is being attacked by the sharks. Rachel races off first which is no surprise since she is the biggest risk-taker. Tobias reports in. There are four or five sharks attacking a huge whale. Cassie sees a huge tiger shark and rams it in the side with all her speed and strength. She is dazed because the shark's body was like hitting a steel wall. But the shark is wounded and blood is streaming from her gills. Rachel, Marco and Jake attack the other sharks. They are locked in a vicious battle. The shark that Cassie hit swims off with the other sharks right behind it. They are following the stream of blood from it and attack it and leave the whale alone. The kids decide to return to shore when they see that Marco has suffered a terrible wound. His tail is hanging just by threads. There is no way he can make it back.

In Chapter 12, Cassie decides that the only way to save Marco is for him to morph back into a human. The injury was sustained to the dolphin DNA and should not affect the human DNA. But he can't swim, Marco reminds her. The others will keep him from drowning. As soon as he morphs back to human, he can immediately morph back into a dolphin, a new dolphin with no injuries. It is his only chance. Through thought-speech, the humpback whale says he is grateful and that he'll help. When Marco morphs into a human, he surfaces and lets Marco sit on his back. Tobias flutters down by him. They decide to let Marco rest for a while. During that time, the whale fills Cassie in on a lot of information about himself and about the ocean currents and terrain. He had many mates and had lived through eight migrations. He has children all over the world. He also had survived many battles and had made it to both poles. The whale sends Cassie an image of an animal that was part deer, part scorpion and part human.

Marco begins his transformation into a dolphin. Cassie had been right. Marco's new dolphin form is perfect and without any sign of injury. He slips off the whale back into the water. The whale swims off. They hear in the distance his mating song.

Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

In Chapter 11, the kids' carefree attitudes ultimately gets them in trouble - a brutal battle with some hungry tiger sharks. Had they stayed focused on their mission, they could have avoided this danger. By tangling with the sharks, they have new problems: Marco is wounded in the battle and may not survive; and, their lack of focus on their mission has perhaps placed the Anadite that needs saving in more peril.



In Chapter 12, as Cassie comes up with the plan to save the injured Marco-dolphin, she shows her knowledge of animals and science and she shows that she thinks on her feet and is good in a crisis. Their little adventure with the sharks have taught the kids a lesson. They have an important task before them and they need to focus on it. It could mean an Andalite's life and, if they don't give it due attention, he could be a risk for them.

If they didn't know it already, they learn that helping another often has its paybacks. They saved the whale from the sharks. He in turn helped save the injured Marco.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

In Chapter 13, Cassie visits Marco. She apologizes for messing up the mission. They discuss whether they should continue with it. Marco reminds her that being an Animorph has been dangerous since the beginning. Marco assures Cassie that it had been his decision to participate. It wasn't her fault that he got hurt. She asks Marco if he's scared. Marco confesses that he is afraid. He's afraid of being hurt or killed. But he's also afraid of getting stuck in a morph like Tobias. He's also afraid of the Yeerks and what will happen if they catch up with them. And he's afraid of "him." Cassie knew that by "him," Marco meant Visser Three. Marco recalls when they witnessed Visser Three killing the Andalite.

Marco tells her about some articles that he saw in the newspaper. A guy is going on a treasure hunt off the coast to look for lost treasure. The other article told of a marine biologist who plans to do some exploration in the same waters. They wonder if these people are really Controllers.

Cassie is stressed by the news. She can't ask everyone to go out there again just based on her dream. But if she really believes that someone is calling to her, she knows they must go find out who it is. After fighting off sharks, maybe the aliens aren't quite a scary.

In Chapter 14, Jake calls a meeting at Rachel's house. He summarizes what they know so far. An Andalite is trapped in the ocean. Cassie believes she can find this Andalite based on some information the whale shared with her. Since they can only stay morphed for two hours, they cannot swim to the location where Cassie thinks the Andalite might be found because it's too far. Rachel suggests that they morph into seagulls first, hop a ride out to sea, morph back to human and then when they get close enough to the target location, they morph into dolphins.

It is a dangerous plan because the Controllers might be out there looking for the Andalite, too. Tobias would not be able to fully participate because there would be no place for him to light down but he agrees that they should undertake the mission. Jake agrees because the longer they wait, the more likely it is that the Yeerks will find the Andalite first.

Cassie and Jake walk home together. She tells him not to ever get hurt. He smiles and tells her he's indestructible. She looks up at the sky and sees Tobias flying by. None of them are indestructible she thinks to herself.

Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

In Chapter 13, Cassie apologizes to Marco for the injury he suffered as a dolphin. But Marco makes her feel better by reminding her that ever since they've been Animorphs



their lives have been at risk - it wasn't just this one mission. He confesses that he's afraid of getting hurt or even killed. He's also scared of the aliens and being stuck in a morph. By his being open and honest, Marco and Cassie become a lot closer. She understands him much better because she realizes that Marco hides his fears behind his humor and sarcasm.

In Chapter 14, the kids decide in favor of the mission. They feel a loyalty to the Andalites because they had gotten their powers from them. And the Andalites are a source of good while the Yeerks are not. They understand that their mission is difficult and dangerous like all their missions. But this one is particularly scary because there are so many ways they could be hurt or killed. They've already had an encounter with man-eating sharks. Marco almost perished. The kids show that they are brave and courageous and all agree that saving the Andalite is worth the risk. When Jake tells Cassie that he's indestructible, they both know that it is not true.



Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

In Chapter 15, after the kids morph into seagulls, they all suddenly acquire a strong attraction for garbage and discarded food. It's in the DNA of seagulls to be scavengers. But the kids are able to control the bird side of their brain and resist the temptation that garbage now holds for them. They fly close to the surface of the water and before long, spot a ship just ahead in the horizon.

The ship is the Newmar which is out of Monrovia. They fly onto the large tanker and morph back into their human forms. Tobias is keeping track of time. It took them an hour and a half to get to the ship. Tobias lights down but will not be able to go on the rest of the mission with them. They had landed in a large abandoned container with metal walls. No one should be able to spot them there. Once they return to their human form, they are freezing because all they have on is their skin tight morphing outfits.

They gauge their distance and figure they are a few miles from the spot where Cassie thinks the wrecked spaceship is. Tobias has to fly back but leaves his watch for the others. Marco morphs first and the others shove him over the side. The others jump in the water still in their human form.

In Chapter 16, when Cassie jumps in, the water is like ice. It is frightening to be in water this deep and cold and this far from shore. Adding to the danger of the situation, the waves are high and the water is choppy. She feels better as soon as she begins to morph into a dolphin. She dives under water and can see that the others are in various stages of morph. They all communicate telepathically and are ready to begin their search for the spacecraft. They swim for a while and surface for air. They spot a helicopter just ahead hovering over the water. They are sure the helicopter belongs to the Controllers which means that the Yeerks are there.

Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

In Chapter 15, being a seagull is a new experience for all four of the Animorphs. But they'd all been birds before and are able to resist the temptation to go scavenging for garbage. They are more focused this time because of their last experience and because they literally don't have much time. If time ran out and they morphed back into humans in the middle of the ocean, the results would be no less than tragic.

In Chapter 16, the good news is that they know they are in the right place because they see the helicopter hovering over a spot in the ocean. The bad news is that the helicopter belongs to the Yeerks and they have beaten them there.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

In Chapter 17, Cassie leads the others on a deep dive. They swim near the bottom of the ocean and race toward the target area. They spot a large transparent dome that's about a half mile in diameter. They can see inside the dome where there is a park with green grass and a small crystal clear lake. The image is similar to what Cassie has seen in her dreams. They see an entry hatch and head for it. Jake is able to open it by ramming it with his beak. They swim into a transition room and then morph into humans. They open the second door and smell the fragrant air. Cassie sees a flash of light and suddenly she is rendered unconscious.

In Chapter 18, Cassie wakes up on the ground next to Jake who is still unconscious. A voice warns Cassie not to move. The being had stunned them to learn who they were. The creature has four hooves and is a pale blue and tan deer or antelope. He has a strong upper body much like the centaur of legend. His face is alien-like with a slit for a nose and two large eyes. He has horns or antlers that have eyes at the end of each horn. He has a powerful tail like a scorpion. The creature appears to be non-threatening. Cassie is sure that the creature is the Andalite they were looking for even though it's holding a Yeeker weapon.

The others come to and see the creature. Marco is afraid that it's Visser Three. The creature becomes enraged and warns Marco not to even mention that name in his presence. Cassie explains that they are answering his call for help. He was sending his message to his cousins. How did she get the message, the creature asks. Cassie explains that they were with the Andalite, Prince Elfangor, when he was murdered. The creature responds that no one could kill Prince Elfangor. He is the greatest of warriors. But someone did kill him. They witnessed it. And the killer was the person that he doesn't want them to mention. He asks if they are on the side of the Yeerks or if they fight them. Jake explains that the Prince died protecting them. His brother, Tom, has been transformed into one of their Controllers. The Andalite asks how they fight the Yeerks. They fight them with the only weapon the Prince gave them - the ability to morph.

Cassie explains that they came there to rescue him because the Yeerks are searching for him, too. A piece of the ship had washed ashore so they know he's there. The Andalite is young and the only one to have survived the crash. The dome had been part of the space ship but had separated in a great conflict that took place in orbit over Earth. His name is Aximili-Esgarrouth-Isthill. Jake calls him Ax and Ax calls Jake, Prince Jake and bows to him.



Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

In Chapter 17, the dome they discover has breathable air. Going inside the structure will expand the time of the overall mission. When they enter the dome as humans again, they fall unconscious. Was it something in the air that made them pass out? Or, did someone or something knock them out?

In Chapter 18, the kids are able to beat the Yeerks to the Andalite because they had morphed into dolphins and were able to dive down deep and get to the dome first. The identity of the abandoned Andalite is finally revealed. His description fits the vision that the whale had. Cassie is immediately certain that the creature is an Andalite due in part to his gentle nature. Although they were hoping that the Andalite that was calling for help would be a great warrior, they learn that the Andalite is not only completely alone but is young like they are. Since the Andalite, nicknamed Ax, calls Jake, Prince Jake, it seems that it will be up to Jake to lead Ax and the others to safety. How that will be accomplished is not apparent. Danger lurks because the Controllers who are searching for them may soon discover the dome.



Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

In Chapter 19, Ax showed the kids around the dome. Jake recognizes that the dome is a part of another world and being there is like being on another planet. Ax warns that the Yeerks would make his planet and Earth as barren as their own if they get the chance. Ax explains that once a planet is under their control, the Yeerks change it to suit their needs and only allow enough plants and animals to remain to keep the host bodies fed. They eliminate all the species except those that they plan to eat. Yeerks are killers of worlds - murderers of all life. They leave only desolation and misery in their wake.

Most species have succumbed to them. Only the Andalites can defeat them. But the Andalite warriors will not return to earth for a year or two. That leaves it up to the Animorphs and Ax to defeat them.

In Chapter 20, Ax says he will morph into the sea creature's identity that he has acquired while abandoned at the bottom of the ocean. Suddenly, they see the hull of a ship that is anchored right above them. A loud pinging sound tells them that the ship's Sonar has locked in on them. They hurry to the transition room and begin morphing. When morphing is almost complete, the dome is hit by a blast. They open the chamber door and swim out - four dolphins and Ax who is now a shark!

They swim to the surface and looking back see that the explosion caused two big holes in the dome. Water is seeping into the structure like a waterfall. The Hork-Bajir warriors can't swim. But Taxxons have also come to earth which, according to Ax, presents another problem. When they go to the surface, they see that the Blade ship of Visser Three is hovering there. It had released Taxxons into the water and they are coming directly toward them. Taxxons are ten-foot long centipedes with sharp needle-like legs.

Cassie had witnessed Visser Three devour the Prince and the Taxxons eat discarded pieces of him. She had also seen a Taxxon eat one of its own when ordered to do so. As a shark, Ax guesses that he is best equipped to fight off the Taxxons.

Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

In Chapter 19, the full scope of the task that lies before them is realized when Ax tells them that the Yeerks plan to take over the planet and destroy all species except those that they plan to eat. They will leave the planet barren and removed of everything else. Since the Andalites are the only species who can defeat the Yeerks and the Andalite warriors will not return for a year or two, it is up to Jake and the gang to defeat this evil force and save planet earth. Their mission has been elevated from saving one Andalite in distress to saving the earth and all its species.



In Chapter 20, Ax will be a big help after all. As a shark he will be able to ward off the attack of the ten-foot long centipedes known as Taxxons that have been released to attack them. Although they escaped from the dome in just the nick of time, how are they going to be able to get back to shore? They have just a limited amount of time and they have to swim quite a distance to get there.



Chapters 21 and 22

Chapters 21 and 22 Summary

In Chapter 21, Cassie has to force her dolphin self to attack the Taxxons because the centipede is not a natural enemy of the dolphin. She speeds through the water and rams the side of one of the worms. It bursts like a watermelon. As it turns out, the Taxxons are no match for the dolphins and the shark and are defeated. It is time for the kids and Ax to get out of there. Cassie races to the surface and spots two ships. But the Blade ship is hovering above the ocean just a short distance away. They decide to head for a small channel island a short distance away, unmorph and rest and then morph again to return to the mainland.

They hear a loud noise behind them. Something large is surfacing. A huge, dark red hump that is covered with hundreds of fish tails breaches the surface. Ax recognizes it as a mardrut, a Yeerk creature that moves through the water by shooting water through its chambers. But Ax says that this is no ordinary mardrut - it is Visser Three in morph.

In Chapter 22, as the kids swim away from the creature that Visser Three had become, they become tired and exhausted. Unfortunately, Visser Three does not tire and relentlessly chases them. He speaks to them through thought-speech. He tells them that he is coming for them. He will decide whether to make them Controllers or simply just eat them. Everyone is frightened, even Ax. Time is running out and the mardrut is gaining on them.

Cassie feels a deep hatred in her heart for Visser Three. But she is determined not to die with hate in her heart. She lets her mind drift to happier times with her father and mother and grandmother and with the animals she cared for. She thinks of the whale she had befriended. She hears the whale's song. He must be near! She uses thought-speech to send him a distress signal. Everyone is too exhausted to swim any longer. They decide to turn and fight Visser Three even though they have no hope of defeating him.

Chapters 21 and 22 Analysis

In Chapter 21, although the Animorphs and Ax defeat the Taxxons handily, a new menace is heading their way. It is the most feared of all the Yeerks - Visser Three is swimming toward them morphed as a Yeerk sea creature known as a mardrut. How will they defeat this villainous monster? Will they have to morph into something else to do so? Could the whale that they befriended sense their need for help? As they battle Visser Three they have to be mindful that their time is running out. They can't afford to morph back into humans in the middle of the ocean.

In Chapter 22, Cassie, feeling defeated, thinks of happier times. She also summons up the image of the helpful whale that she befriended. She hears his song so he can't be



far away. She sends a distress signal to him but he doesn't reply. She is ready to fight to the end. She knows it will be her last battle. But surely the whale heard her plea for help and is on his way. The Animorphs and Ax can only hope so because they face impossible odds.



Chapters 23, 24 and 25

Chapters 23, 24 and 25 Summary

In Chapter 23, Visser Three is tired from all the swimming and tells the Animorphs that he's decided to eat them. Just then a large shape emerges from the depths and then another. In all, five whales surround the mardrut. They begin attacking Visser Three and although his mardrut form is imposing, it is no match for the whales. They ram him and lash him with their tails. Visser Three screams in pain and retreats. The whales chase him for a while then let him go. Cassie is beginning to believe that the whales did not respond to her message; rather, they responded to the sea who wanted to rid itself of this horrible presence.

The Animorphs and Ax morph back into their natural forms and hop on the whale's back who takes them back to shore. Cassie and Jake talk about the mission. They had used the dolphins but, in the end, they had used them to save their own species as well as most of the other species on earth. There should be no guilt or shame about that.

In Chapter 24, once the whale drops them off on the beach, the Animorphs morph back into their dolphin forms and swim back down to the river bank where the mission began. They change back into their jeans and sweats which they had hidden behind the bushes. Tobias flutters down and meets Ax. The others explain that Tobias was a human but is trapped in his morph.

They discuss how they will get Ax to Cassie's farm where he can be safely hidden in the fields. Ax has a solution. He will morph into a human. The Animorphs had never seen a creature morph into a human before. It was quite a sight. There are some extra human clothes that he can wear. His human form seems to be a combination of all the Animorphs. They can see him struggling to understand his new identity - they had been there many times before.

In Chapter 25, a few days after they return, Cassie confirms that Ax is safely hidden in the fields. She morphs into a seagull and flies to The Gardens. She had decided to fly in because it was after hours and the gates were closed. Once she lands, she morphs back into her human form. She goes to the dolphin tank, slips in the water and becomes one of them. They don't reject her. They want her to play with them. She happily complies with their wishes.

Chapters 23, 24 and 25 Analysis

In Chapter 23, the whales come to the rescue just when Visser Three has announced he's decided to eat the Animorphs. Cassie feels that her whale friend and the others didn't answer her plea for help. Rather, it was a distress signal from the sea itself. The awful beast known as the mardrut did not belong among her sea creatures and she wanted him out. But the whale took the exhausted Animorphs and Ax back to shore.



Cassie had made a true friend in the whale once again confirming that helping him out when the sharks were attacking was one of the best moves the Animorphs had ever made.

In Chapter 24, turn about is fair play. Ax morphs into a human. Since he chose to morph into a human that had a trace of all the Animorphs, it showed that he had respect and admiration for all his earthly friends. Will Ax remain on earth and become a member of Team Animorphs?

In Chapter 25, Cassie feels at one with the dolphins - their playfulness, their strength and happy spirit all suit her to a tee.



Characters

Cassie

Cassie is the young protagonist of "Animorphs: The Message" by K. A. Applegate. She is a member of a small, secret society known as the Animorphs. The Animorphs are five youngsters who are able to morph into animals that they have DNA mapping for.

Cassie is considered the Animorph who has the closest relationship with animals. Perhaps it's because she loves and appreciates them so much. The others in the group also feel that Cassie is the most skilled at morphing - which is also because she has a deep sense of the animals. Cassie inherited her love and respect for animals from her parents. Her father is the lead vet at a animal rescue center and her mother is a vet at the local zoo.

Cassie is having dreams that someone who has been lost at sea is sending her a message to be rescued. She is not sure if her dreams are credible enough to risk the safety of the team. But when a remnant from a wrecked spacecraft washes to shore, the Animorphs are sure that the scrap is from the spaceship of aliens who had befriended them. Cassie is now sure that the mission must go forward and she must lead the way.

Cassie befriends a whale during their mission. Later, the whale repays the favor in spades. He helps fight off an alien monster and brings Cassie and her friends back to shore. Cassie has a strong need to return to her identity as a dolphin and slips off to the zoo and morphs into a dolphin so that she can once again swim with the animals that she so loves and admires.

Jake

Jake is a member of the Animorphs and is the unofficial leader of the team. He is the calm voice among others that range from sarcastic and skeptical to emotional and over-reactive. He is the perfect leader. Jake lets everyone else speak their mind while he takes it all in. After everyone has had their say, he summarizes what is actually known versus what is mere speculation. He has a way to leave himself out of the mix and present the facts, risks and consequences of a mission that they are considering. Jake is the team member who provides solid evidence that an alien spaceship has probably crashed in the sea and that a good alien, known as an Andalite, is sending out a distress signal.

Cassie, who is the protagonist and narrator of the story, tells the reader that she thinks Jake is cute and "likes him" likes him. Cassie doesn't let her crush on Jake get in the way of their relationship as team members. Although Jake is usually all business, the fact that he keeps a little picture of Cassie by his computer might be a sign that he returns the feelings she has for him.



Jake impressed the alien Ax who had been sending distress messages from under the sea. In fact, he was so taken with Jake that he dubbed him Prince Jake. But Jake is a humble young man and he asked that Ax just call him Jake.

Rachel

Rachel is a tall, pretty blond who is a member of the Animorphs. She is the biggest risk-taker of the group and knows no fear.

Marco

Marco is a member of the Animorphs. He always has a sarcastic or humorous remark which sometimes annoys the others. But his mother died a year before and he and his father are struggling. He hides his hurt and anger behind his humor.

Tobias

Tobias is the red-tailed hawk that is a member of the Animorphs. He is really a human who got "stuck" in his morph and can't return to his human form.

Yeerks

The Yeerks are the evil aliens who have attacked earth. They plan to take over earth and destroy most of its species.

Visser Three

Visser Three is the evil leader of the Yeerks. He is feared by everyone, even his own kind.

Ax

Ax, whose full name is Aximili-Esgarrouth-Isthill, is a young Andalite who is trapped at the bottom of the ocean after his spaceship crashes.

Prince Elfangor

Prince Elfangor was the leader of the Andalites. He was killed by Visser Three during a violent confrontation between the Yeerks and the Andalites.

The Mardrut

Visser Three morphed into a mardrut which is a huge, ugly sea creature. In that form, Visser was hunting down the Animorphs who he planned to eat.



Objects/Places

The Barn

Cassie and her parents live on a farm. Cassie and her father use their large barn to tend to sick and injured animals and birds that they discover on the grounds.

The Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic

Cassie's father runs the Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic where he is the head vet.

The Gardens

Cassie's mother, who is also a vet, works at a large zoo at The Gardens which is a local amusement park.

The Blade

The Blade is the alien spaceship that the evil leader of the Yeerks, Visser Three, is transported in.

The Andalite Spaceship

A piece of scrap metal washes up on the beach and brings the attention of the news media. The Animorphs recognize the strange writing on the remnant as the language of the aliens known as the Andalites.

The Dolphin Tank

The Animorphs decide to morph into dolphins and visit the dolphin tank at The Gardens in preparation for their mission. The animal trainer allows them to feed the dolphins and interact with them.

The River

The Animorphs first morph into dolphins in a secluded spot on a river that runs into the ocean.



The Ocean

A good alien, an Andalite, is trapped underneath the ocean when his spaceship crashes. The alien sends out a distress signal that is received by Cassie and Tobias.

The Dome Home

Part of the alien spaceship that crashes in the ocean is a large dome-like structure that contains green fields and even a lake. The alien lives in the dome under the sea until he is rescued.

The Farm Fields

Once Ax, the Andalite who was trapped under the ocean, is rescued by the Animorphs, he is taken to Cassie's farm where he is allowed to safely graze in the fields.



Themes

Friendship

One of the strongest themes that runs through the story entitled, "The Animorphs: The Message" is one of friendship. The five members of the Animorph team are all good and loyal friends. Since the team often has to taken on very risky missions, it is essential that the members can trust and rely upon each other. Just as in the military, a weak link can bring down a whole unit. There are differences among the youngsters but they have learned to accept, understand and cope with those differences.

Marco always has a sarcastic or humorous remark for every occasion. Sometimes it is off-putting to the others but they are generally tolerant of his remarks and understand where they come from. Marco's mother died the year before and his father has been struggling ever since. He and his father live in a small apartment and don't have much money. His father has been so distraught over the death of his wife that he has a hard time keeping a job. Marco strikes out with his humor and sarcasm as a way of disguising his hurt and anger and worry.

Cassie, the protagonist in the story, does not limit her friendship to just people which makes sense since she is an animal nearly half the time. When Cassie has morphed into a dolphin on a rescue mission, she spots a whale that is being attacked by a pack of tiger sharks. Although she disdains violence, Cassie does not hesitate to ram one of the sharks which ends up driving the rest of the sharks away. Her actions led to the beginning of a solid friendship with the whale who shared with her information about his life and about the sea. When Cassie and the others are in real danger, the whale comes to their rescue. He chases away an alien sea creature that is about to attack them and returns the Animorphs to land toting them on his large back. He was a friend returning a favor to another friend.

There are five members of the Animorphs. When Tobias morphed into a red-tailed hawk, he was unable to morph back into a human. He is "stuck" in his morph for the time-being. The other members of the team treat Tobias with as much respect as they do everyone else. They never leave him out of their plans and consider his opinion as important as that of anyone else. They treat him with the respect he deserves because he is a good friend.

Responsibility

The kids who form the Animorph team are brave risk-takers who are dedicated to their mission despite the danger and odds for success. They were gifted with the secret to morphing from a benevolent alien force. After receiving this gift, they understood it to be not only a gift but a huge responsibility. Because the youngsters could accomplish things that no one else on earth could, they accepted the huge duty attached to that gift.



The gift of morphing matured them in ways that passing years and aging could not do. With their skills, they recognized that they would be called upon to do things, right wrongs, undertake risky rescue missions and other adventures that adults wouldn't even want to take on. For example, Cassie, is having a frequent dream in which someone or something is calling to her from the sea. She does not want to risk the lives of the Animorph team if her dreams are just that. Yet, she cannot ignore the visions she is having. Finally, more evidence convinces the team that they must respond to the distress call and attempt a rescue mission to save the individual who is pleading for help.

Another example of going above and beyond is when the youngsters morph into dolphins. They enjoy the speed and strength they acquire by morphing into dolphins but then duty calls when a whale who is being attacked by a pack of tiger sharks needs help. It is not Cassie's natural tendency to fight and the dolphin does not normally attack a shark unless it is being attacked. So Cassie realizes that in order to save the defenseless whale she would have to go into action. She had to overcome her own distaste for violence and the reluctance of the dolphin part of her brain not to attack, dig deep and ram the shark with as much speed and power as she could muster.

The kids who were part of the Animorph team were typical kids. Had this huge responsibility not been bestowed upon them as it was, they would not have sought it out. But the gifted and the great are often those to whom life gives the most responsibility.

Animal Advocacy

There is a strong theme of animal advocacy in "Animorphs: The Message." The story begins with the protagonist morphing into a squirrel so that she can catch the predator who comes in at night and steals the injured and sick birds that she and her father are tending to and bringing back to health. It is obvious throughout the entire story that Cassie loves animals. She not only loves them, she loves to be them. She has a profound respect for animals and their rights to live free and maintain their dignity. Since her father and mother are both vets, it is apparent that she was raised to respect and love animals.

Cassie is portrayed as the Animorph who is most in touch with the animals. The others consider her the best at "morphing" into animals which is probably attributed to her strong feelings for them which allows her to make a strong emotional connection with them. Cassie and the others love racing through the water and breaching the surface with high acrobatic jumps while they are dolphins. She had always noticed that dolphins seemed to have a permanent smile on their faces. Being one, she finally understands why - the animals are free and happy.

Cassie loves animals so much that when she has to defend herself against tiger sharks, she finds it difficult to ram the shark because it's just not in her to fight another animal. The youngsters are able to chase away a pack of sharks that are attacking a large



whale. The whale becomes their friend and he has a special connection with Cassie. He shares information about his life and the sea with her which helps the Animorphs in their rescue mission. Cassie lauds the intelligence of whales. Although they can't do algebra and geometry, they have so many skills and such advanced intelligence that it's beyond human understanding. At the end of the story, Cassie visits the dolphin pool at the local zoo where she slips into the pool and where she becomes one with the dolphins for one more swim.



Style

Point of View

"Animorphs - The Message" by K. A. Applegate, is a work of fiction and is written in the first-person narrative from the perspective of the protagonist, Cassie. She tells the story of the adventures of a secret club she belongs to along with four other youngsters. She is considered to have the closest connection with the animals and tells of her love and admiration for the animals that she sometimes becomes. Cassie has a deep understanding of the animals and their natural instincts and is always careful to honor and respect their individuality. The character Cassie describes in detail the physical transformation that takes place when morphing from human to animal and back.

This book is one in a series of adventure books about the Animorphs. The author is apparently an advocate of animal rights since the animals are always presented in the most positive light. The series is a popular one and has sold millions of copies worldwide. K. A. Applegate is also the author of other bestselling works including the "Remnants" series and the "Everworld" series among others. With the author's vast experience in writing books and series that are targeted for tween and teen audiences and apparently has a substantial knowledge of animals, she is the perfect writer to pen the tale of the Animorphs.

Setting

"Animorphs - The Message" is set in an unidentified coastal community near the beach and ocean. Cassie, the protagonist, lives with her mother and father on a farm that has a large barn and spacious fields for grazing. The Animorphs often meet in Rachel's house. Marco who lost his mother the year before lives in a small apartment with his father. Cassie and her father care for sick and injured birds and animals in the large barn on their farm. Her father is a vet and runs the Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic. Her mother is a vet at the zoo located in an amusement park called The Gardens. Also located at The Gardens is an aquatic park which features a dolphin pool which the youngsters visit.

The Animorphs take on mission to rescue an abandoned alien, known as an Andalite, whose spaceship has crashed in the ocean. The kids morph into seagulls and hitch a ride on a tanker that takes them part of the way to the space wreckage. They then morph into dolphins to swim the rest of the way to the distressed spacecraft.

The Animorphs dive to the bottom of the ocean and find a huge dome-like structure. On closer inspection, they see that there are green fields, fresh air and even a lake inside the dome. The stranded alien had been living in the dome since the crash. It was a part of the spaceship that broke off upon impact.



After rescuing the alien, a whale gives them a ride on his back and drops them off at the beach. Cassie takes the alien to her farm where he can graze in the pastures without being spotted.

Language and Meaning

In reading "Animorphs - The Message," one has to be prepared for some unusual words that describe aliens and elements of alien worlds. The Andalites are good aliens who are great warriors and fight against the evil Yeerks, the bad aliens. The leader of the good aliens was Prince Elfangor but he was defeated and killed by the Yeerks. The leader of the evil force is Visser Three who everyone, good and bad alien alike, seem to be afraid of. The young Andalite who is stranded in the ocean has a tongue-twister name, Aximili-Esgarrouth-Isthill, who the kids nickname Ax for obvious reasons. The Traxxons are horrible 10-foot long centipedes with hundreds of knife-like legs that are unleashed by the Yeerks. The Controllers are humans who are under the mind control of the Yeerks. The mardrut is a huge alien sea creature that chases the kids in the water.

An unusual aspect of the communications used in this story is what is referred to as thought-speech. This method of communication is used between the members of the Animorphs team when the members have morphed into animals. For example, the Animorphs all morph themselves into dolphins during their mission to save an alien Andalite who was abandoned at sea. While they are swimming along, they can communicate with each other telepathically or, using their term, by thought-speech.

This method of communication is used at the very beginning of the story as well as throughout the entire work. In the first chapter, Cassie has morphed into a squirrel and Tobias, who is an Animorph who is "stuck" in his morph as a red-tailed hawk, communicate with each other in the following manner: "Tobias came to rest on a crossbeam and looked down at me with his fierce hawk's gaze. 'Cassie? Why are you out here at midnight turning into a squirrel?' Cassie answers, 'Well, we've had some birds taken in the last couple of days....So I decided to morph and wait to see when he showed up.

Structure

"Animorphs - The Message" by K. A. Applegate is the story of five friends who are the Animorphs, humans who can take on the form of animals. The book is divided into twenty-five small and medium-sized chapters. The story is fundamentally told in chronological order. There are a few references to past events, especially as it relates to how the five youngsters became involved in the world of Animorphs.

The premise is established in the first few chapters of the story. An Andalite is beckoning to the protagonist, Cassie, asking her for help. The messages come to her in dreams and she unsure how much credence she can give to them. The next stage of the story involves the acceptance by the other Animorphs that Cassie is truly receiving a



distress signal that they cannot ignore. The Andalites are aliens who had visited before and gifted the youngsters with the ability to morph. Andalites are good and strong warriors who fight against the evil of another alien force, the Yeerks.

The last part of the book covers the actual mission itself in which the Animorphs use their powers of morphing to rescue the Andalite and to save earth and all its species from the invading Yeerks.

The book is one of a series and is followed by a preview of the next episode which is called, "The Predator."



Quotes

"They'll force a Yeerk slug into our brains, where it will take control of us, making us slaves - tools of the Yeerk invasion of Earth" (Chapter 1, p. 1).

"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the results of a hundred battles" (Chapter 3, p. 15).

"There is nothing as big as the ocean. It's like this entirely different planet, full of strange plants and fantastic animals. Valleys and mountains and caves and broad, flat plains, all hidden from our sight" (Chapter 5, p. 28).

"Cassie, you know we all trust your instincts. You're the best at understanding animals. You're the best morpher. You know everyone in the group respects you" (Chapter 7, p. 42).

"I had to learn when I started helping my dad with the animals—sometimes death just happens, and all you can do is get over it the best you can" (Chapter 8, p. 47).

"Morphing isn't usually very pretty. In fact, it's the kind of thing that, if you didn't know it was going to be all right, would freak you out. I mean, I've watched while Rachel does her elephant morph, and I can tell you, it is the creepiest, scariest, most disgusting thing you'll ever see" (Chapter 9, p. 59).

"It's this whole thing we're doing, this whole Animorph thing. I mean, it's been dangerous right from the start" (Chapter 13, p. 81).

"The talking bird wants to know if getting information on the location of an alien from a whale, that you've just saved from sharks, by turning into dolphins... You're suggesting that weird" (Chapter 14, p. 87).

"What do you know of Andalites? My people are not known to humans. You do not travel the stars. You know only your own planet" (Chapter 18, p. 111).

"Andalites are halfway between looking cute and looking scary. You can get past the weird stalk eyes and the fact that they don't have mouths (at least not that you can see), but that scorpion-like tail is far from cut" (Chapter 19, p. 117).

"I had fought the Yeerks to preserve human freedom. Now I fought to help the entire world. Still, fighting doesn't come naturally to me" (Chapter 21, p. 129).

"I felt the terrible hatred surge in me again. But I didn't want to end my life that way. I would not die with hate in my heart. That would be one victory I could deny Visser Three" (Chapter 22, p. 137).



Topics for Discussion

Describe the process that the Animorphs used to morph into a dolphin and into a squirrel.

Describe the Taxxons? Why were they dangerous? How were they defeated?

What plan did the Yeerks have for Planet Earth?

What is the true identity of Tobias? What potential problem does he represent to the other kids?

Who is Prince Elfangor? Why was Ax astonished that he was defeated in battle?

Why does everyone fear Visser Three? What other identity did he take on?

How did the Yeerks take over the minds of other creatures and make them into Controllers?