

# **The City of Gold and Lead Study Guide**

## **The City of Gold and Lead by Samuel Youd**

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# Plot Summary

The City of Gold and Lead is the third novel in the Tripod series by John Christopher. This novel follows Will Parker and two companions as they make their way to the Games, the sports competition held every year to pick humans who will become slaves in the Tripod cities. Will and his companions hope to enter the city, learn about the Tripods, and return to the White Mountain with the information needed to end the Tripods' control over Earth. The City of Gold and Lead is a science fiction novel filled with adversity and passion that will take the reader along on a story of personal growth, strength, and courage.

Will, Henry, and Beanpole work every day to become champions at their chosen sport in order to be three of the four who will be chosen to go to the Games and be allowed to enter the Tripod city. When the time comes, however, only three are chosen. Will and Beanpole are two of the three, but a boy named Fritz is chosen over Henry. Will is saddened by this choice and knows that if he had not been one of the chosen three that he would not have taken the news half as well as his cousin, Henry.

Will, Fritz, and Beanpole are led down the mountain by a guide to meet a barge captained by an un-Capped sailor and his first mate. When they arrive, the boys are instructed on how they are to behave while on board the barge. Only one boy may remain on deck at all times, while the others will be forced to hide below deck in order to reduce the chances that someone might become suspicious of their intentions. Will and Beanpole elect to remain below decks for the two days they will have to wait to leave the dock.

Will is on deck the day they begin their journey down river. Will is shocked to see a Tripod in the distance because he has not seen one in months. It reminds him of the mission that lies ahead. When the barge stops in a small trading village, the captain goes ashore to conduct business. When he does not return, Will and Beanpole convince the first mate to allow them to search for him. Will finds himself in a bar where he is confronted by angry locals. Instead of walking away, Will fights one of these men and causes him injury. Will is arrested and placed in a pit in the center of town. Beanpole rescues him, but by the time they reach the docks, the barge is gone.

Will and Beanpole begin walking to the Games, but their pace is too slow. Beanpole suggests they build a raft. This increases the speed of their progress, but they cannot control it and therefore cannot stop to find food. When the boys are about to abandon the raft and search for food, they are attacked by a Tripod that breaks their raft into pieces. The boys swim to a nearby island where they discover an un-Capped hermit. This man, Hans, takes them to his home and feeds them a hearty meal. For payment, Hans asks them to clear a field of trees that he has been unable to clear on his own. The boys soon realize Hans plans to keep them hostage there until the field is cleared, so they steal his boat.



The boys arrive at the Games a day before they are due to begin. At the Games, all three boys qualify in their events. However, Beanpole is unable to win and thus secure his place as a slave in the city. Will and Fritz are taken to the Tripod city inside a Tripod. They find the atmosphere in the city hostile, hot and heavy on their fragile bodies. Not only this, but they must breath with an air mask because the air of the city will not support human life. All the winners of the Games go to a selection place where they are chosen by Masters. Will's Master is a kind one, providing him with extra space in his room and allowing him time to rest. Fritz's Master is cruel, often beating him for no reason.

Will and Fritz meet often, comparing notes on what they have learned about the city and the Masters. Fritz is able to explore the city when on errands or when his Master is out, while Will gets most of his information from long conversations with his Master who is fascinated with humans. Will's Master also takes him on tours of the city, showing him many things that both fascinate and frighten him. Will writes all this information in a book his Master has given him to read. Unfortunately, one day his Master finds the book. The Master becomes suspicious and checks Will's Cap, discovering that it is fake. To keep this knowledge from leaving the Master's home, Will hits the Master in a sensitive place between his nose and mouth. The Master dies instantly.

Will goes to Fritz and they decide to make it appear that the Master fell in his pool while intoxicated. Then Will and Fritz go in search of the outflow of the river the Masters use to supply their city with water. It takes them all night, but Fritz and Will eventually find the outflow. Fritz insists on Will leaving, but decides to remain behind to prevent suspicion. Will leaves through the river and finds Beanpole waiting on the other side. The two boys wait many days for Fritz to make his escape, but he never does. The boys leave, taking with them information they hope will help raise a rebellion against the Tripods.



# Chapter 1, Three Are Chosen

## Chapter 1, Three Are Chosen Summary

Will, Henry, and Beanpole live on an Earth that has been conquered by Tripods using Caps that keep humans docile and easy to control. Will, Henry, and Beanpole were to be Capped on their fourteenth birthdays, but they learned of a place where people live un-Capped. They endured great danger to get to this place and now they hope to help raise a rebellion against the Tripods by going to the Games and being accepted into one of the Tripod cities where they could potentially learn all they need to know to defeat their enemy.

Will, Henry, and Beanpole are working hard every day at their chosen sports to qualify to go to the Games. Will and Henry are confident they will be chosen, but Beanpole worries. Beanpole has chosen the high jump, but his opponent often jumps higher and better than him. Will does not want to go to the Games without his two closest friends. Will, Henry, and Beanpole traveled together through Europe six months before in order to join the people on White Mountain. Will learned about them when a vagrant, a Capped person whose mind could not handle the Cap, came to his village and revealed that his Cap was fake. This man told Will there were others like him on White Mountain. Will made the trip with Henry and Beanpole, finding himself forced to kill a Tripod with a metal ball he found among the belongings of the ancient people. Now they have become a part of the un-Capped groups and they want to do all they can to help, which include going to the Games, winning, and being taken into the Tripod city.

The night the four competitors are announced, Will is nervous. Julius speaks of the plan, explaining how the competitors, which have been reduced to three, will be taken to the Games on a barge that is run by two un-Capped men. The boys will compete and will win their events. The boys will then be taken into the city of the Tripods. Even though no one has ever left the city, it is hoped that these boys will be able to gather information and return to the White Mountain. Will is the first chosen for his strength and his experience with the Tripod he killed, but is cautioned to control his impetuous nature. Beanpole is chosen, not because he is expected to win the competition, but because he is intelligent and will be more likely to understand everything he sees. The third boy is to be Fritz, for his strength and ability to succeed. Henry is deeply disappointed not to be chosen, but there is nothing to be done.

## Chapter 1, Three Are Chosen Analysis

The main character is introduced as he and his companions spend time exploring the area around the White Mountains where they came to live in the previous book of the Tripod series. Will Parker is fourteen or fifteen, a young man who grew up in England and should have been Capped like all the other mature adults on Earth. Will left his home before the Tripods came for him, taking with him Henry, his cousin, and a boy



they met in France. The fact that Will left his home and all he knew to escape the Tripods suggests to the reader that he is a boy of courage. The fact that he now wants to be a part of a mission to infiltrate the Tripod city and learn what they need to know to kill the Tripods further tells the reader that Will is strong and determined to free his world of these invaders.

The setting of this novel relies heavily on the story of the Tripods. The Tripods are giant, metallic-like creatures that roam the Earth on three legs. These Tripods are some sort of aliens that conquered the Earth a generation or more before Will's birth. Will has never known a world without these Tripods. With the Tripods, humans are Capped, given wire caps, that control their thoughts and behaviors. Will instinctively knows that these Caps are to be avoided and the only way humans could defeat them is to not have the Caps in the first place. Will also knows they need to know more about the Tripods, which is why he wants to go on this mission. It is a dangerous mission, injecting tension into the plot and leaving the reader anxious to see Will through it.



# Chapter 2, The Prisoner in the Pit

## Chapter 2, The Prisoner in the Pit Summary

Will, Fritz, and Beanpole make their way down the mountain with a guide. Will attempts to be friendly with Fritz, but all his overtures are met with silence. Will becomes annoyed, but remembers Julius's admonition to control his behavior, so he keeps his annoyance to himself. They reach the docks three days early and their guide leaves them to return to the camps. The three boys, each one fitted with a fake Cap, are introduced to the captain of their barge, the Erlkonig. The captain, Ulf, tells them that only one boy may be allowed on deck at any one time to eliminate suspicion; therefore, two boys must hide below decks. Ulf, and his first mate Moritz, also wear fake Caps and do not want this to become public knowledge. Will and Beanpole elect to remain below deck the first few days aboard, hiding in donkey stalls while the barge is loaded and prepared for the trip. On Will's first day on deck, the day they begin their journey, he is shocked and frightened to see Tripods, a sight he has not seen since his arrival at White Mountain. It reminds Will of his mission in an unpleasant way.

When the barge stops in a small trading village, Ulf goes into town on business. When Ulf does not return within a few hours, Moritz becomes concerned. When Ulf still does not return by early evening, Beanpole convinces him to let the boys go look for him. However, afraid of the boys getting caught, Moritz will only allow Beanpole to go. After Beanpole is gone, however, Will convinces him to allow Will to go as well. Will finds himself in the middle of a farmer's market and he is fascinated by the sights and sounds. Will almost forgets why he is there. When Will sees a bar out of the corner of his eye, he remembers his mission and goes to look for Ulf. Will buys a beer as he looks around, but he does not see Ulf so he begins to leave. One of the men in the bar speaks to him, asking where he is from. When Will tells he was from Tirol, the place Julius and the others told him to say he came from, he discovers that an athlete from Tirol beat out one of their competitors the year before. The men in the bar become aggressive. Instead of walking away, Will allows himself to be pulled into a fight. Will is arrested when one of the men is injured, a man who turns out to be related to the local law man. Will is placed in a pit, a place where villagers will come to throw things at prisoners, and left to wait until the lawman decides what should be done with him. Just before dawn, Beanpole arrives and pulls him from the pit with a rope. Unfortunately, by the time they reach the docks, the Erlkonig is gone.

## Chapter 2, The Prisoner in the Pit Analysis

Will and his friends are fitted with fake Caps and begin their journey. Will is upbeat, but still saddened that Henry is not with them. Will has his first test of self-control, touching on the theme of learning self-control, when he finds Fritz's reaction to his overtures of friendship less than desirable. Will is able to keep his temper, but later, when he is looking for Ulf in a bar, Will is not so successful and ends up in a pit. Will has just



compromised the entire mission by having gotten himself arrested and not controlling his emotions as Julius told him to do.

Will makes it out of the pit, thanks to his good friend Beanpole. Beanpole is clearly a devoted friend and a good person for risking his own freedom to help Will. However, when the two boys arrive at the dock, they discover the barge has gone. Now the boys are in a position where they have to either go back to White Mountain and face the humiliation of their defeat, or make their own way to the Games. The reader is unclear which option they will choose, but due to Will's previous bravery, the reader would assume he would not give up so easily.





## Chapter 3, A Raft on the River

### Chapter 3, A Raft on the River Summary

Will and Beanpole begin walking downriver because they do not want to be in the village when the people discover Will is gone. As they walk, Beanpole tells Will how Ulf returned to the barge a little after dark and was furious to learn Will had gone into town. Ulf refused to search for Will and would not allow anyone else to do it, either. In fact, Ulf said he would be leaving at dawn whether Will was back or not. Beanpole snuck off the barge to help Will. Ulf must have awoke and found Beanpole gone, deciding it best to leave before any trouble could find them. Will and Beanpole walk most of the day, scavenging food where they can. Beanpole has the idea to pretend to be a vagrant and beg food from homes, but this only gets him a dish of dirty water over his head. Finally the two boys settle down for the night in an abandoned cabin.

During the night, Beanpole suggests they make a raft to speed their progress downriver. The next morning, the two boys push down a wall that is already falling and use it to fashion a raft. It takes them most of the morning, but they are finally ready. When they get into the river, the raft is underwater on three corners, leaving only one dry spot. The boys take turns sitting in this spot. Late in the afternoon they become so hungry that they begin arguing about how to control the movement of the raft and land it on shore so they can look for food. Finally they agree they should abandon the raft and swim to shore. They decide to wait until a village comes into view. Unfortunately, before they come to a village, a Tripod crosses their path. At first it appears the Tripod will pass them unnoticed, but then it turns and makes a path straight for them. The Tripod slams a tentacle down on their raft, busting it into pieces and throwing the two boys into the river.

### Chapter 3, A Raft on the River Analysis

As predicted by Will's stubborn personality, Will and Beanpole continue on down the river despite their lack of conveyance. They walk at first, but their progress is so slow that they know they need a raft. Beanpole shows his intelligence by designing and directing the erection of the raft. However, the raft has no means of control, so the boys are at the mercy of the river. This means no way of finding food and the two boys have been without food for two days now. They argue, but their hunger takes their energy and they cannot even argue anymore. This shows the reader the effect of starvation on these two boys and the emotional strain they are under. When the Tripod comes and ruins their raft, the reader becomes aware of the irrational actions of the Tripod and the true danger that lies in wait for these two brave boys.



# Chapter 4, The Hermit of the Island

## Chapter 4, The Hermit of the Island Summary

Will is not a strong swimmer and he begins to tire as he swims against the tide. Beanpole pulls him out of the water, saving his life. As the two boys recover and begin to look around, they realize they are on a small island in the river. They are approached by an un-Capped man. This man is both reluctant and relieved to see the two boys. The man takes them to his home and gives them dry clothes before setting them before a large meal. The boys eat a great deal before asking the man who he is and how he came to be here. The man, Hans, tells them that he has always lived on this island and that his dad died the year he turned fourteen. That year, he remained solely on the island and now only visits a nearby village once or twice a year. The boys realize that his solitary life explains why the man is un-Capped.

The boys sleep soundly that night and are awakened early the next morning by Hans. They have a large breakfast and then Hans takes them to a field and shows them trees he needs to clear from the field. Hans tells them he cannot remove the trees himself because of arthritis in his shoulders and wants them to do it in exchange for the food he has given them. By lunchtime the boys realize that Hans will not take them to the village until the trees are all gone, a project that could take days. The boys have to be at the Games in just a day or two. The boys decide to steal Hans's boat. Hans sees what they are doing and tries to stop him, but they are able to escape.

## Chapter 4, The Hermit of the Island Analysis

Will is saved by Beanpole a second time. This again shows the reader the kind of person Beanpole is, both intelligent and loyal. Will is lucky to have such a friend as Beanpole and will be doubly lucky if they both go into the Tripod city together. The boys land on an island that is inhabited by an un-Capped hermit. The boys, who have only known un-Capped adults who wanted to fight the Tripods, are a little surprised that this man seems to have no hostility toward the Tripods or any desire to fight them. The man is simply a hermit who wants to be left on his own.

Will and Beanpole are on a time line. They must get to the Games before they begin in order to qualify for their events, win their events, and enter the Tripod city. Unfortunately, Hans wants the boys to stay until they have cleared his field of trees. The boys steal his boat and Will learns a lesson in human compassion when he sees the desperation in Hans's face when he realizes he cannot stop them from leaving with his only means to reach the nearby village. Will is touched and will remember that moment for the rest of his life, suggesting some character growth from this event.



# Chapter 5, The Games, and Chapter 6, The City of Gold and Lead

## Chapter 5, The Games, and Chapter 6, The City of Gold and Lead Summary

In chapter five, Will and Beanpole arrive at the Games the day before they are due to arrive. Fritz and the Erkonig are there as well. Will and Beanpole explore the first day. The next they qualify for their events and move into the competitors' sleeping quarters. All three boys begin their competitions. Will wins his first few matches easily. Fritz appears to struggle in his races, but manages to come in second. Beanpole does well, but is frustrated by easy mistakes, blaming his inability to concentrate. As the Games continue, however, the competition becomes tougher. Fritz continues to come in a distant second and Beanpole struggles with two tough competitors. Will also struggles, nearly losing two matches before finally winning the red belt. Beanpole makes a critical mistake and comes in second. Fritz wins his final race with room to spare. There is a winners feast where Will and his friends are able to celebrate their victories. Beanpole is depressed about his loss, concerned that he did it on purpose for fear of going to the Tripod city. The following day, Will and Fritz say goodbye to Beanpole and get into their groups. The groups are picked up one by one by the six Tripods that have been watching the Games since the first day.

In chapter six, Will is taken inside a room in the base of the Tripod and transported to the Tripod city. The city is covered with a huge, gold dome and a river appears to flow directly into the city at its base. As the Tripod goes inside the walls, a heaviness settles on Will and his companions. The athletes leave the Tripods and are directed into a room where each one is greeted by a human instructor. These humans appear much older than they really are. Will's instructor shows him how to use the air mask he must wear at all times inside the city because the air the aliens breathe is incompatible with human life. All the athletes are then instructed to change into their new clothes, shorts, and to put on their air masks. The door then opens and the athletes are overwhelmed by the intense, moist heat. Some even faint. The athletes are then taken to the Choosing Place where they wait in cubicles for Masters to come look at them. Will is examined by many Masters, and sees Fritz taken by another Master, but he is not chosen until the near the end, leaving him fearful for his life.

## Chapter 5, The Games, and Chapter 6, The City of Gold and Lead Analysis

Will and Beanpole have arrived at the Games, safe and sound and in plenty of time to compete. This part of the mission has come to a successful conclusion, leaving the reader ready for the next phase with high hopes of success. The next part is the most



important part because at least one of the three boys must win their event during the Games or their mission will be a failure and Julius will have to send other boys next year. The competition is tough, but Will and Fritz manage to succeed. This is good on one hand, because at least two boys will enter the Tripod city to find out the information they need to succeed in a fight against the Tripods. However, Beanpole's failure to win leaves Will with only Fritz as a companion on the inside, someone he does not like and is unsure he can rely on. This is a difficult situation for Will.

Will and Fritz travel inside a Tripod, suggesting to the reader that the Tripod is not an alien, but a vehicle of some sort. Will notices that the river flows into the city, suggesting that the aliens are dependent on water for their survival and that the river must flow out as well, giving the reader a foundation on which to figure out how Will and Fritz might eventually escape the city. Inside the city, Will discovers that the atmosphere is difficult for humans and the air completely incompatible with human life. This causes humans to suffer and age quickly, making them unable to survive inside the city for very long, which might suggest why no one has ever come out of the Tripod cities. It also does not bode well for Will and Fritz who have just become slaves to alien Masters.



# Chapter 7, My Master's Cat

## Chapter 7, My Master's Cat Summary

Will is taken to his Master's home in a car shaped like a pyramid that he will have to learn to drive. The buildings are all shaped like pyramids as well. Will's Master lives in one of these pyramid buildings in a home that is about mid-way up the building, suggesting that he is of moderate importance. Once at the house, the Master shows Will around and then directs him to his private room, a room that is filled with oxygen so that Will might relax without his air mask. Will is so exhausted from the atmosphere of the city that he falls instantly to sleep. A short time later, Will begins his duties, which include preparing his Master's food, changing the moss in his Master's bed, and cleaning the house. Will is also expected to drive his Master to work and his other social gatherings.

Masters are not highly social, but they do attend meetings and sporting events. It is at one of these sporting events that Will finally sees Fritz again in the common room that is set aside for the human slaves to sit in comfort. Will and Fritz compare notes and Will learns that despite being mistreated by his Master, Fritz has been able to explore the city and learn a great deal about it. Fritz tells Will about a globe he saw with three cities, including this one, marked on it, and the river where it enters the city, suggesting there is an exit as well. Fritz also tells Will how he learned of the Place of Happy Release, a place where slaves go when they are too sick to continue serving and they are killed, their bodies cremated. Fritz says that slaves go to this place willingly. Will's Master often takes baths during which he likes to have gas balls that appear to intoxicate the Masters. During these times, Will's Master often likes to talk to him. Will's Master is fascinated with humans and often questions Will about things he has read in human books. Fritz encourages Will to learn as much as he can from his Master, but Will is doubtful if he can do this without giving away the fact that he is un-Capped.

## Chapter 7, My Master's Cat Analysis

Will begins his new life with his Master and feels that the life is difficult, mostly because of the atmosphere and the close proximity to the alien that he despises. Will does not know how good he has it until he learns that Fritz's Master beats him because he likes it. Fritz is in a much worse situation and it makes Will realize how difficult his situation could be, but is not. It also shows the reader the depth of Fritz's character. Fritz was silent and kept to himself the first half of the book, but now he shows that he has as much, if not more, courage than Will. Fritz has learned a great deal about the Tripod city in the short time he has been there, especially compared to the very few things Will has learned. Fritz's health is not good, however, and it is clear that if there is a choice between getting Will out of the city quickly or getting Fritz out, Fritz will win hands down.



# Chapter 8, Pyramid of Beauty

## Chapter 8, Pyramid of Beauty Summary

One day while Will is resting as his Master works, he gets a call to take his Master home early. Will's Master has come down with an illness that is common to the Masters. At home, Will's Master gets into his pool and asks for gas bubbles. The Master uses more gas bubbles than he has used in the past and in a fit of rage, grabs Will to beat him. When Will regains consciousness after this beating, he leaves the room without bowing to his Master. Will realizes what he has done and worries that his actions will alert his Master to the fact that he is not Capped. When Will is called back into the room and his Master remarks on his strange behavior, he is sure he has been caught. However, Will's Master appears to be fascinated with Will and begins asking him questions about his life. Will's Master has decided Will is his friend and asks him what he might want. Will says that he would like to know more about the city. As Will's Master slowly recovers from his illness, he speaks to Will nearly everyday. Once day he even tells Will how the aliens came to conquer Earth by using mind control through the satellites and televisions.

Recalling Will's request, his Master begins taking him on tours of the city. One of these tours takes Will to the globe that Fritz told him about. Another takes him to the Pyramid of Beauty, a place where scenes from Earth's landscape are created in frightening detail, including vegetation and animals. However, it is all dead. As they continue through the museum, Will becomes saddened at the overwhelming sham of it all. Then his Master takes him into a room that he feels is the best part of the museum. This room is filled with girls who were sent to the city as slaves. Will has noticed that there are no female slaves in the city and now he realizes that rather than use these women as slaves, the Masters take the women and kill them, putting them on display like taxidermy animals. Will sees a young woman he once knew and admired, causing him to be filled with rage at all the Masters, his own kind Master included.

## Chapter 8, Pyramid of Beauty Analysis

Will is beaten by his Master much in the same way Fritz suffers nearly every day. Will does not cry out even though Fritz tells him it is expected and he does not bow when he leaves the room. Will is instantly filled with regret, realizing that he once again has failed to show self control as Julius warned him to do. However, Will's Master simply believes Will is different, but he never suspects that the Cap is fake. However, this situation foreshadows the possibility that the Master will eventually learn of the fake Cap and do something about it that will be harmful to Will, Fritz, and their mission.

Will is taken on tours of the city, finally getting to see the things Fritz has told him about. Will attempts to commit to memory everything he sees. Will is also taken to the Pyramid of Beauty in which he sees displays of human landscapes and life that have been

immortalized for the pleasure of the Masters. Will is filled with rage when he sees the women who have also been killed and immortalized, fueling his motivations to complete his mission and fight the Tripods.



# **Chapter 9, I Strike a Desperate Blow, Chapter 10, Under the Golden Wall, and Chapter 11, Two Go Home**

## **Chapter 9, I Strike a Desperate Blow, Chapter 10, Under the Golden Wall, and Chapter 11, Two Go Home Summary**

In chapter nine, several weeks pass, during which Will has begun to keep notes in the margins of a book his Master has allowed him to read. Will hides the book in his room because he believes it is a place where his Master cannot go. One afternoon, Will goes to see Fritz and learns he is in the hospital. The human hospital is simply a room filled with beds where one human slave is allowed to care for the ill. Fritz promises Will that he is better and will go back to his Master soon, if the Master will have him. Will and Fritz talk about finding a way out of the city. Will is concerned Fritz will not last much longer. They believe that the outflow of the river would be the best place, but neither knows where it might be located. A few days later, Will returns home after going on an especially long errand for his Master. When he arrives home, Will learns that his Master has gone into his room and discovered his journal. Will's Master picks him up and begins probing his head to see if his Cap has become dislodged or stopped working. Instead, Will's Master discovers the Cap is fake. Will, desperate to find a way out of the situation, hits his Master in a sensitive place his Master told him about between his top mouth and nose. Will is tossed across the room and his Master collapses.

In chapter ten, Will discovers that his Master is dead. Will goes immediately to Fritz to ask for advice. Fritz suggests they make the death appear like an accident. Will and Fritz move the Master's body into the pool and leave empty gas bubbles around to make it seem as though the Master fell while intoxicated. Fritz then says that Will must leave to protect himself and the mission. Together Fritz and Will begin walking to the far side of the city to find where the river flows out of the city. They walk all night, at one point coming into contact with a Master who causes them a moment of panic but who lets them go on their way. Will and Fritz are exhausted when the sun begins to come up and lie down for a rest. It is then that Fritz hears the river bubbling below them. It takes a little time to find the exact location, but finally they discover a pool that leads out of the city. Fritz seals Will's air mask and insists that he go alone, taking with him the journal notes he made.

In chapter eleven, Will wants Fritz to go too, but Fritz is concerned that if they both go it will cause suspicion. Will agrees and leaves alone. Will swims for a long time, beginning to run out of air and worry he will not find the way out before he suffocates. Finally he reaches the outside, but he cannot remove his air mask to breathe sweet, fresh air. Beanpole pulls Will from the water and cuts the mask from his face. Beanpole has been





waiting by the river, convinced it is the only place someone could escape the city. The two boys wait more than a week for Fritz to make his escape, but he never does. Will and Beanpole begin the long journey back to White Mountain, determined to return with an army.

## **Chapter 9, I Strike a Desperate Blow, Chapter 10, Under the Golden Wall, and Chapter 11, Two Go Home Analysis**

Will begins keeping a journal, making the mistake of believing his Master cannot enter his room because of the air issue. Will forgot that he wears an air mask, therefore it is likely his Master has a similar contraption. Will is caught and must act fast to keep from ruining the entire mission. However, Will did not intend to kill his Master and is shocked to find this is the result of his actions. Now Will knows how to kill the Masters, but he must get out of the city without alerting anyone to what has taken place. Again Fritz comes to the rescue, saving Will from sure disaster and helping him find a way out. Fritz is clearly ailing, having spent a few days in the hospital, but he insists that Will leave because he is strong enough to make it back to the White Mountains with all the information they have gleaned. It is not said, but implied that Fritz has sacrificed himself for the mission and gone to the Place of Happy Release.

Beanpole surprises Will by being outside near the river when he surfaces. Beanpole saves Will's life a third time by cutting the mask off his face and allowing him to breathe. While Will is brave and determined, he has two friends whose intelligence and strength have made his mission a success. Now Will simply has to return to White Mountain and build an army to fight the Masters with the information he has gathered. This ending suggests a fourth book in the Tripod series, one the reader is eager to read now.



# Characters

## Will Parker

Will Parker is a young man who grew up in a small village in England after the Tripods conquered the Earth. Will was once good friends with one of his cousins, but his cousin was Capped and stopped being his friend. Will was scheduled to be Capped on his fourteenth birthday, but before that day a stranger came to his village and told him a group of un-Capped people lives in the White Mountains and that he could go there rather than submit to the Tripods. Will decided to leave, taking with him his cousin Henry, whom he disliked at the time, and a boy they met in France named Beanpole.

In a previous novel, Will had arrived in the White Mountains after having some trouble, including being forced to destroy a Tripod with a weapon he found from ancient times in a cave. Now Will and his friends are working hard to qualify for a mission that will allow them to enter a Tripod city and learn things about the Tripods that could help in a rebellion against them. Will is determined to be one of the few allowed to go and is delighted when he is chosen. However, Henry is not chosen, but a boy named Fritz is chosen to go in his place. Will is cautioned to use self-control and prides himself in doing this until he comes to a small trading village where he gets into a fight with a group of locals. Will is imprisoned, causing himself and Beanpole to miss their ride on a barge to the games. Will and Beanpole make it to the Games anyway, with a lesson learned.

Will gets inside the city and is overwhelmed by the atmospheric differences that leave him tired and sore day and night. Will is taken in by a kind Master, but Will hates the Masters so much that he cannot appreciate how kind his Master is until he sees how badly treated Fritz is. Will continues to dislike his Master, however, learning to control his distaste until the day his Master discovers that he has been keeping notes of the things his Master tells him. Will kills his Master and is forced to flee the city.

## Jean-Paul Deliet, or Beanpole

Jean-Paul Deliet, or Beanpole, is a French boy Will and Henry met while traveling from England to the White Mountains somewhere in Germany. Will and Beanpole have become good friends; therefore, Will is thrilled when Beanpole is selected to go on the mission at the Games with him. When Will is arrested and placed in a pit in a small trading village, Beanpole rescues him. However, this rescue leaves the two boys abandoned by the barge that was supposed to take them to the Games. Beanpole and Will begin walking, but soon Beanpole realizes that they will never make it on time if they walk, so he suggests they build a raft.

Beanpole and Will build the raft, but they have no way of controlling it. Soon, hunger makes them decide that they should abandon the raft and swim to shore to find some



food. Before they can do this, a Tripod comes by and breaks their raft into pieces. Beanpole is forced to save Will from the water when he becomes exhausted from swimming against the tide. Later, Beanpole and Will steal a boat from a hermit living on an island where they have washed ashore. The boys make it to the Games, but Beanpole comes in second in the high jump event, causing him to miss his chance to be chosen to go to the Tripod city. Rather than return to the White Mountains, Beanpole scouts out the city and finds the best place for someone to escape and waits there for Will and Fritz. Eventually Beanpole sees Will come out in the river and he rescues him once more. However, Fritz never appears.

## Fritz Eger

Fritz is the third boy chosen to go to the Games in hopes of being admitted to the Tripod city. Fritz is a quiet boy who keeps to himself, making it impossible for Will to befriend him. Fritz is also overconfident, assuring everyone he will go to the Games. Sure enough, Fritz manages to win his competition and is taken to the Tripod city. However, Fritz is chosen by a Master who takes pleasure in beating his slaves.

Fritz spends his time in the Tripod city well, exploring all the places that might give them the information they need to destroy the Masters. However, both the frequent beatings and the atmosphere of the city are taking a toll on Fritz's health and Will worries that he will not survive the few months it will take to gather the necessary information. When Will kills his own Master and is forced to flee, he begs Fritz to come with him. However, Fritz is concerned that the disappearance of two slaves would be too much and cause alarm. Fritz decides to remain for a few days and then to pretend he has gone to the Place of Happy Release. Will and Beanpole wait for Fritz, but he never comes out.

## Henry

Henry is Will's cousin. The two cousins did not get along when they were young, but when Will made the decision to go to the White Mountains and Henry convinced him to take him along, they became friends on the journey. In the White Mountains, both Will and Henry work hard to qualify to go to the Games, but Henry is not chosen. Will fights for his cousin, but it does no good. Will is forced to leave Henry behind, aware of how disappointed his cousin is by these circumstances.

## Julius

Julius is the leader of the un-Capped at White Mountain. It is Julius's job to choose the three that will go to the games. Julius chooses Will, but warns him to exercise self-control. Julius chooses Beanpole and urges him to be careful without his glasses and to use his intelligence to interpret everything he sees in the Tripod city. Julius then chooses Fritz over Henry, urging him to use his physical gifts to endure the struggle ahead and to bring back all information he can. Julius is aware that no one has ever



come back from the Tripod city and encourages all these boys to use caution and to do what they can to come home safely.

## Ulf and Moritz

Ulf and Moritz are the crew of the Erlkonig. Ulf is the captain of the barge. Ulf is an unpleasant man who demands that the boys who are riding his barge to the Games obey his every rule. Ulf is un-Capped, but is frightened of what might happen if anyone learns of this. Ulf insists that two of the boys hide inside the barge at all times, and that one stay up top and help with the chores. The trip goes well at first, despite Ulf's sour mood, until they land in a small trading village. Ulf goes into town to do some business and does not come back right away. The boys become concerned, especially when Moritz, the kind first mate, tells them that Ulf has a habit of drinking. Will and Beanpole go into town separately to find Ulf. Will gets into a fight and is arrested. Ulf refuses to let anyone help Will, even when Moritz argues for Will. Finally Beanpole sneaks off the barge to help Will. Ulf continues the trip down river without the two boys.

## Will's Master

Will's Master is one of the aliens who lives in the Tripod city. Will's Master is kinder than some of the other Masters and has an interest in humans that causes him to seek out Will's friendship. Will's Master often asks him questions about human customs and behaviors, including a request that Will define words such as friendship. Will finds his Master repulsive, especially since the appearance of the aliens is strange and somewhat appalling to humans. When Will's Master attempts to befriend him by talking to him and sometimes caressing him, it takes all of Will's willpower to keep from pushing the alien tentacles away. However, Will uses his Master's friendliness as an advantage, often allowing him to speak of things that might help the un-Capped raise a rebellion against the Masters. Will writes these things in the margin of a book. One day Will's Master finds this book and discovers that Will is un-Capped. Will punches the Master in a sensitive place between his two mouths, killing him instantly.

## Fritz's Master

Fritz's Master is one of the unkind Masters. Fritz's Master often beats Fritz for no reason except that it brings him pleasure to hurt a human. There are divisions among the Masters regarding humans. Some find the humans interesting, while others see them as a necessary nuisance. There are still others who believe the humans should not be used as slaves because it causes the Master to appear weak in some way. Fritz's Master is friends with one of these latter, despite the fact that the Masters are not social creatures and they do not seek out companionship. Fritz's Master will often leave Fritz at home when he meets with this friend, giving Fritz the time he needs to explore the city and learn more about the Masters. Eventually, however, Fritz's Master beats him so



frequently that he begins to suffer in his health and Will comes to the conclusion that the Master will kill Fritz.

## Hans

Hans is an un-Capped adult who lives on an island in the middle of the river. Will believes the man is un-Capped because he lives alone and does not make waves with the locals. Will and Beanpole meet this man when their raft is destroyed by a passing Tripod and they are forced to swim for shore. Hans comes to the shore and takes them home with him, unhappy to be disturbed, but happy to have someone to help him clear some trees from a field he would like to plant. Hans feeds the boys and gives them a warm place to sleep. When the boys realize that Hans plans to force them to stay until his field is cleared, they steal his boat. Will is shocked and saddened by the fear and desperation he sees on Hans's face as they row away in his boat.

## Tripods

The Tripods are large three-legged beings that move around the Earth, snatching up trouble makers and children who have reached the age to be Capped. Will and the others believe that these Tripods are the aliens that have come to conquer their world. However, when Will and Fritz are taken to the Tripod city to become slaves, they realize that the Tripods are simply vehicles in which two to four of the aliens ride inside. The aliens cannot breathe the air that humans breathe, therefore they need the Tripods to provide the air they need to breathe while they are outside their cities.



# Objects/Places

## Caps

When each human reaches the age of maturity, usually fourteen, they are taken by the Tripods to be capped. These caps control the human's thoughts and emotions, making them easier for the Masters to control, keeping rebellions non-existent.

## Books

The Masters have collected a library of books from the humans who existed when they conquered the Earth. Will's Master allows him to take some of these books to read. Will's Master has also read these books and finds human behavior curious, leading him to ask Will many questions about human behavior.

## Gas Bubbles

The Masters use gas bubbles of some sort to become intoxicated. When Will's Master has too many of these gas bubbles, he beats Will. Later, when Will kills his Master, he and Fritz make it appear that the Master had too many gas bubbles and fell into his water pool.

## Air Masks

While living in the Masters' city, all humans must wear an air mask because the air the Masters breathe would kill them.

## Common Rooms or Commune Rooms

In every building where human slaves are expected to visit there are common rooms that are filled with oxygen so that the humans might rest and relax while waiting for their Masters to call them.

## Will's Room

Will has a room in his Master's home where the air is oxygen allowing him to relax without his air mask. Will's room is different from other slaves' rooms in that the Master has arranged for a platform to be erected in the room to provide more space for Will.



## **Pyramids**

All the buildings in the Master's city are built in the shape of a pyramid. The cars are also shaped like pyramids.

## **Pyramid of Beauty**

Will's Master takes him to the Pyramid of Beauty, a place that is similar to a museum that shows scenes of human life, including dioramas of Earth landscapes. Included in this pyramid is a room where all the beautiful girls sent to the city have been killed and preserved to be viewed and admired for their beauty.

## **Place of Happy Release**

When a human slave becomes too sick to continue to be of service, they will go to the Place of Happy Release where they stand upon a floor that causes their immediate death and then takes their bodies to an oven to be cremated.

## **The Games**

The Games is an organized sporting event, similar to the Olympics, that takes place every year in order to select strong, athletic humans to act as slaves to the Masters. Three are chosen from the un-Capped so that they might infiltrate the Tripod city and escape to report on what they have learned.

## **Erlkonig**

The Erlkonig is the barge on which the boys are to travel to the Games. However, Will is arrested for a bar fight and this causes him and Beanpole to miss the Erlkonig when it moves on from a trading post where the fight took place.

## **Boat**

Will and Beanpole steal a boat from Hans in order to make it to the Games before they begin.

## **River**

The Masters require a humid atmosphere and frequent dips in heated pools. To provide this water, the Masters have a river that runs into the city and then runs out again at the other end. Will and Fritz search for the outflow of this river in order to escape. Will makes the escape safely, but Fritz does not.



## **Ancient Cities**

Many cities still remain from the time before the Tripods came, but they are uninhabited. Will finds these cities fascinating because they speak of a power that is inconsistent with the conquering of the Tripods.

## **City of Gold and Lead**

The City of Gold and Lead is the city where the Masters live. The city is covered with a gold bubble to encompass an atmosphere that is much heavier than the atmosphere of Earth. The air is also altered, made of gases that would kill a human who tried to breathe it.

## **White Mountains**

Will lives in the White Mountains with a group of un-Capped men and women who want to build a rebellion against the Tripods. It is for this reason that Will, Beanpole, and Fritz are sent to the Games with the hope that they will be able to enter the Tripod city and come back with valuable information that can be used in a rebellion.





# Themes

## Learning Self-Control

Will is a strong-willed, determined young man who believes himself to be one of a few who might be capable of getting into the Tripod city. Will is determined to be the hero, to bring back information that will help the un-Capped rise against the Tripods. However, Will tends to be impetuous, arguing when it might be better to listen and taking charge when it might be better for him to remain a follower. Due to this, the council at White Mountain almost does not send him to the Games, but decide to anyway because his virtues outweigh this one fault. They caution Will, however, to learn to control his willfulness.

Will begins his journey by attempting to befriend the one stranger on the trip, Fritz. Will finds Fritz difficult to speak to and impossible to befriend, but prides himself in his attempts to keep his annoyance to himself. However, Will is unable to control this more impetuous side of his character when he goes into a small village to look for the captain of his barge and ends up getting into a verbal altercation with a group of the villagers. Rather than walk away, Will gets into a physical fight with these people, ending the fight by injuring a relative of the local law man. Due to his lack of self-control, Will is placed in a pit where he will be abused by the locals in the morning. Luck is on Will's side when Beanpole is able to rescue him, but Will's lack of self-control has caused him and Beanpole to lose their ride on the barge.

Will and Beanpole manage to make it to the games and Will is chosen as one of the slaves who will be taken into the Tripod city. Will's assignment has just begun. Will must act as though he is one of the Capped, acting as though he respects the Masters and is willing to do anything for them, no matter how demeaning. Will manages to act the role most of the time, but when he is beaten he refuses to cry out, causing his Master to believe he is unusual. Will continues to do things that go against the idea that he is Capped and therefore subservient to the Masters, eventually leading to a situation in which his Master discovers that Will's cap is fake. Will has learned some self-control, but not enough, because he reacts to the situation by killing his Master. This places Will in a position where he must disappear immediately or face the possibility of all the Masters learning of the un-Capped hiding in White Mountain. In doing this, Will must sacrifice Fritz, his partner in this scheme, a sacrifice that will teach Will the power of self-control and self-sacrifice.

## Adversity

An alien race has come to Earth and somehow managed to enslave all of humankind, despite their obvious strength. Will has grown up in the world after this conquest; therefore, he does not know how it took place. Will marvels at the Ancient Cities, unsure how people who could build and live in such awesome cities could have allowed



themselves to be conquered by an alien race such as the Tripods. When Will goes to live in the Tripod city as a slave, he learns the truth from his Master. The aliens came to Earth searching for a planet they could colonize. The aliens watched Earth for many years, taking samples and studying the people until they felt they could use Earth for their purposes. The aliens then began taking over the people by controlling their minds through message sent to televisions through satellites. The aliens then came to the Earth and placed caps on the humans until they had enough under their control to use them to fight against those who did not watch television. In time, the aliens were able to subdue all humans and take control of the Earth.

Will has lived in a world of the Capped all his life. The Capped do the aliens' bidding, never questioning their orders, even when it comes to doing such things as burning books from the time before the aliens. Will was to be Capped when he turned fourteen, but a man came to his village and told him of a place where many un-Capped live. Will made the trip to this place with his cousin Henry and a boy, Beanpole, they picked up in France. In the White Mountains where the un-Capped live, Will becomes a part of a plan to send three boys to the Games, a sporting event whose winners go to live in the Tripod city as slaves. The idea is for those boys to go into the Tripod city, learn information about the Tripods, and return to the White Mountains. The un-Capped want to mount a rebellion against the Tripods in order to free the Earth of her conquerors.

Will learns the information needed to help kill the Masters, but he also learns that the Masters plan to set up machines that will alter the atmosphere of Earth, killing all humans. Will has only four years to get back to White Mountain and help mount a successful rebellion to stop the annihilation of humans. Will manages to escape the city, but the book ends as he begins his journey back to the White Mountains. The adversity of this novel is to continue in its sequel, continuing the series until either the Tripods are forced from Earth or the un-Capped are defeated, making adversity a major theme not only of this novel, but of all the novels in the series.

## Friendship

Will is good friends with Beanpole, a young French boy he traveled with in the first book of this series. Will hopes that Beanpole will be able to come with him to the Games, but he is frightened that Beanpole is not strong enough in his event to pass the test the council has set for them. Will has no doubt that his cousin, Henry, will be among the four chosen to go to the Games. However, on the night the four are chosen, Will is not only surprised to discover that only three will go, but that Henry will not be one of them. Will and Beanpole are both chosen, but the third position goes to Fritz, a sullen young man whom Will does not know well.

On the trip to the Games, Will attempts to befriend Fritz but finds him quiet and uncooperative. Will tries to hide his impatience with this young man, but has decided a friendship does not matter. Will is almost positive that only he and Beanpole will be going to the Tripod city. Therefore, Will is shocked when it is not Beanpole who will go to



the Tripod city with him, but Fritz. Will is grateful not to be going alone, but he fervently wishes his good friend would be there to help him through this most difficult situation.

Will seeks out Fritz in the first weeks they are inside the city. Will is humbled by the circumstances under which Fritz is forced to live. Fritz's Master is cruel, often beating him for no reason except that he can. Despite this, Fritz is able to explore the city and learn many things about the Masters. Will feels as though he has done nothing compared to what Fritz has done. As time goes on, Fritz begins to show strain from the abuse he suffers and the atmosphere of the city, causing Will to come to the realization that Fritz most likely will not survive the year. Will has developed a grudging respect for Fritz and wants to help Fritz leave the city. However, when Will is caught by his Master with his fake cap, he is forced to kill his own Master. This leaves the two boys in a situation in which Will must leave immediately or risk the Masters learning about their fake caps. Fritz refuses to leave, afraid that if he leaves at the same time it might cause the Masters to become suspicious. Fritz sacrifices himself for Will and the mission. Will learns a great deal from his friendship with Fritz, helping him to grow up a little in the process.

# Style

## Point of View

The point of view of this novel is first person. The narrator is the main character, Will Parker. Will is a young man who lives on an Earth that has been conquered by an alien race known to them only as the Tripods because of the creatures that roam the Earth, policing the humans. Due to the intimacy of the first person point of view, the reader is given access to Will's every thought and feeling, allowing the reader to listen in to his internal dialogue and see the emotional struggles he endures through the course of the novel.

The first person point of view is one of the most intimate and most limiting points of view a writer might utilize. The first person allows the reader to follow along in the events of a plot through the eyes of one character, moving from place to place and even to event as the main character does. This allows the reader a unique connection to the main character that makes it seem almost as though reader and character are one, that what happens to the main character also happens to the reader. However, by using such a narrow narration, the writer cannot show the reader the thoughts and feelings of other characters, nor can the writer show events that happen outside the knowledge of the main character.

In this novel, the main character is a teenage boy living in a world that has forced him to grow up faster than he might have in a less adverse society. This colors the way the boy sees the world and the events taking place around him, giving the reader only this colored view of the world with the limited knowledge of this boy. For this novel, this point of view works well because the author stays true to his character and his viewpoint, giving the reader a well rounded story while encouraging a strong connection with the main character.

## Setting

The novel is set in a world, most likely sometime in the 1970s, in which aliens have conquered the humans. The cities that once were thriving metropolises in the 1960s are now deserted, many of them fallen to ruin. New villages have sprung up, designed in such a way as to provide protection from the Tripods that roam the countryside, forcing obedience from the human citizens. There are three large cities entombed in golden bubbles where the alien race lives and each year several Games are held throughout the world whose winners are taken to the cities to be slaves to the aliens. The people who remain living free on the Earth are Capped, given metal caps that are fused to their scalps and which control their thoughts and behaviors, especially where they relate to the Tripods.



The setting of a science fiction novel is very important because they are usually settings that do not exist in reality and include human behaviors or customs that are not common in reality. The setting of this novel is basically the same Earth that the novel's readers know, with the exception of the alien race that has conquered the humans. These aliens appear to large machines that walk on three legs and roam the Earth, looking for humans who have disobeyed or acted in unacceptable ways. All humans are subservient to these Tripods, except for those who have escaped the capping process. These humans have gathered in the White Mountains and the main character, Will Parker, is one of these. The plot follows Will as he attempts to learn more about these Tripods; therefore, the plot would not be possible without the setting. The setting works well with this novel, is well described, and realistic enough to make this novel an enjoyable read.

## Language and Meaning

This novel was originally intended for young adult readers, therefore the language is simple English. The novel is written in English even though the characters speak many different languages, including English, French, and German. None of the foreign words are written in the novel, but the use of these foreign languages is mentioned and suggested to have been translated into English for congruity throughout the novel. The only foreign words that exist are words Will tells to Fritz in describing a conversation he has had with his Master in which the Master used words from his native language. These words are gibberish and Will presents them as such; therefore, there is nothing for the reader to attempt to comprehend.

The language of this novel is simple. The book was originally intended for young readers, so the language tends to be simplistic enough for these readers to understand. However, the language is not so simplistic that the older reader feels spoken down to or otherwise offended. There are little to no foreign phrases in the book and therefore no need of explanation for words a reasonably educated reader might not understand. There is little slang in the novel as well, reflecting a society in which young children are not allowed to develop into adulthood unsupervised or un-Capped. The language of the novel is well chosen and works well with the setting as well as with the characters who populate the novel.

## Structure

The novel is divided into eleven chapters. Each chapter has a title that describes a place, person, or event that takes place within the action of the chapter. Each chapter contains exposition and dialogue, as well as internal dialogue that describe the thought processes of the main character, Will Parker. The novel takes place in linear time line, beginning before Will and his friends are sent on their mission to infiltrate the Tripod city and ending when Will makes his escape from the Tripod city.



The novel has only one main plot. The novel begins as Will and his friends work to qualify for a mission to go to the Games and be admitted into the Tripod city in order to do recon and escape, returning to the White Mountains in order to report their findings in use in a rebellion against the Tripods. Will successfully makes it to the Games after a few mishaps and qualifies to go into the Tripod city. Will collects information on his own and through his friend, Fritz. Will is nearly caught by his Master and forced to kill the alien, causing a need to get him out of the city immediately. Will escapes with the help of Fritz, but Fritz refuses to go with him in the fear that the Masters will figure out they were un-Capped and begin looking for others who are un-Capped. This plot comes to a satisfying end at the conclusion of the novel although room is left to suggest a sequel to the novel.



## Quotes

"They had been a strange and marvelous people. I had seen the ruins of one of the great-cities in which they lived...with broad avenues that ran for miles, crumbling buildings still soaring up against the sky, huge shops into which all the houses of my native village could have been packed, with room left over. They had moved in ease and splendor about the earth, splendor beyond measuring, almost beyond understanding. And despite this, the Tripods had conquered and enslaved them." Chap. 1, p. 2

"And at the head of all the groups there was one man, whose hands held all the threads, whose decisions were unquestioned. This was Julius." Chap. 1, p. 9

"We had seen no sign of Tripods during our journey from the White Mountains through the valleys to the river. During this day on deck, I saw two. Both were distant, striding along the western skyline, three or four miles away at least. But the sight of them gave me a shiver of fear, which took some subduing. For quite long periods it was possible to forget the exact nature of the mission on which we had embarked. Being reminded of it was a nasty jolt." Chap. 2, Pit, p. 23

"To the west there was a Tripod, giant-striding through the fields. I felt a kind of satisfaction at the sight. Ridiculously puny by comparison though we were, it was something that we were still in the fight." Chap. 3, p. 45

"At first I was incredulous, thinking of the trouble we who had fled to the White Mountains had taken to avoid being Capped, while this man had just stayed where he was, not worrying. Surely there could not be flaws like this in the Tripods' mastery of the earth? But the more I thought about it, the less surprising it seemed. He was one man, living like a hermit. The domination of the Tripods depended on the serfdom of men as such, and to that end it was enough that Capping should be accepted as a natural and inevitable thing where a handful of men, two or three even, were gathered together. One man did not matter, as long as he stayed quiet and caused no trouble." Chap. 4, p. 57

"I looked at the faces of my companions, all happy and exalted at the thought of serving the Tripods, and did my best to put the same expression on my own. My legs trembled. I made an effort and controlled them, but moments later they were trembling again." Chap. 5, p. 78

"It was the heat that struck me first. I had thought it was hot enough inside the Tripod and in the outer rooms of the City, but that was mild in comparison with the furnace blast that I now encountered. And yet not a furnace blast, because the air was damp as well as hot." Chap. 6, p. 89



"I was my Master's cat." Chap. 7, p. 114

"I looked at her close-cropped curls. They covered, but did not quite conceal, the one thing she did wear on her head: the Cap that had brought her, gladly, to this monstrous resting place." Chap. 8, p. 138

"It would be useless to fight against him. Even fully fit, with normal weight, a man was no match for the strength of the Masters." Chap. 9, p. 157

"It doesn't matter what you like, or I like. One of us might get away to take the news of what we have learned back to Julius and the others. It is safer if it is you." Chap. 10, p. 177

"We were going home, but only to arm ourselves and others. We would come back." Chap. 11, p. 185





## Topics for Discussion

Where are the White Mountains? Who lives there? Why? Why do they live in tunnels and caves? What is the tunnel that Will and his friends explore in the opening pages of the novel? Why is Will surprised to find a hotel at the top and not a king's palace? What do Will's impressions of these tunnels and this hotel tell the reader about the world in which Will lives?

What are Tripods? Why is Will afraid of them? Why does Will describe the destruction of a Tripod in an earlier novel? What bearing does that have on Will as the novel progresses? Who else mentions this destruction later in the novel? Why?

What are caps? What do caps have to do with the Tripods? Why does Will not have a cap? Why is a fake cap molded to Will's head before he leaves the White Mountains? What purpose does this cap serve for Will at this point? What danger does the fake cap pose for Will if someone should find out about it? Does someone find out about it? What does Will do to that person?

Who is Fritz? Why does Will initially dislike Fritz? Who would Will have rather seen go on this mission with him? Why? Would this other person have done a better job than Fritz? What sport does Fritz participate in to be chosen to go to the Tripod city? How does Fritz do in the city? Who is Fritz's Master? How does Fritz's Master treat him? Why? What information does Fritz gather about the city? Why does this information make Will feel as though he has done nothing to help in the mission? Why does Fritz not go with Will when he leaves?

Who is Beanpole? How do he and Will know one another? Why does Beanpole help Will escape the pit when he was told not to? What consequence do these boys suffer as a result of Will's rescue? What do the boys do next? Whose idea is it? How do they get to the Games? What sport does Beanpole participate in? Why does Beanpole think he did not win? What does Beanpole do after the Games? How does Beanpole save Will at the end of the novel?

What is the Tripod city? Why is it referred to as the City of Gold and Lead? What is the atmosphere of the city like? What affect does it have on humans? Why? What information does Will hope to learn about this city? Why? How many cities like this one do the Masters have on Earth? What is the purpose of these cities?

What do the Masters plan to do to the Earth's atmosphere? Why? What will happen to the humans? How long does Will have before this takes place? What does Will want to do to help save humanity? What does the Master want to do with some of the humans? Is this merciful? Why does Will feel this is cruel? Do you believe it is cruel or merciful?