

The Girl With All the Gifts Study Guide

The Girl With All the Gifts by M. R. Carey

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Plot Summary

Four unique individuals try to learn to co-exist after fate puts them together in extreme life-threatening circumstances in the novel “The Girl with All the Gifts” by M.R. Carey. Dr. Caroline Caldwell fights against time to try to find a cure or vaccine for a blood and saliva born fungus that is turning the human population into flesh eating disease carriers. She believes her ability to develop a cure lies in children like ten-year-old Melanie who are infected by the fungus but aren't mentally impaired by it as many victims of the disease have become. As Melanie's story develops, it turns out that Melanie does hold the cure for mankind, just not in the way that Caldwell imagined.

Melanie is among a group of children confiscated by the army for testing of a fungal disease that is wreaking havoc on the human population. In addition to physical testing, the children are also tested for emotional and mental prowess in a classroom setting where the children are given lessons, just like any other children. The difference is that Melanie and others like her must be strapped into high-backed metal wheelchairs in order to keep them from following the prompting of their disease and biting the teachers. Melanie's favorite teacher is Helen Justineau. She treats the children like real children even though others at the army base treat them like test subjects. Sergeant Eddie Parks is cruel and resentful while Caldwell is interested only in being able to dissect the children's brains so she can look at them under her microscope.

Everything changes one day when Caldwell requests that Melanie be sent to the lab for dissection. When Justineau discovers her favorite student is about to be killed, she hurries to the lab to try to intervene. During a standoff between Justineau and Caldwell as Melanie lies on the dissection table, the army base on which they live is attacked by junkers. These junkers, people who did not go to major cities for protection when the disease began but instead chose to take their chances on their own, have herded a large number of infected people, called hungries, to the perimeter of the base to overtake it. Only Melanie, Caldwell, Justineau, Parks and a young naive private named Kieran Gallagher manage to escape.

Although Parks stole a Humvee from the base, the rear axle breaks after only a few miles leaving the group with little food and no protection from the disease carrying hungries that fill the ruined lands between the base and Beacon, the closest city of refuge. These hungries track humans by the smell of their pheromones, movement, sounds and body heat. Parks, who has experience with the hungries, teaches the cohort how to best avoid the hungries. Even though he feels he is in charge of the group of civilians, he, Justineau and Caldwell bump heads often. Their major source of contention is Melanie's role in the group. Park would be happy to let the child go free and no longer worry about her but his wish is disputed by both Justineau and Caldwell. Justineau sees Melanie as a child to whom they have a moral obligation to keep safe. Caldwell, on the other hand, believes Melanie is her property and must be kept with them because of Melanie's value to her research.



As they make their way toward Beacon, Parks develops a new respect for Melanie as she saves their lives multiple times. Because Melanie carries the hungry fungus, she can move around the hungries without them noticing or bothering her. On one occasion she distracts the hungries from her friends so they can get away. At other times she acts as an advance scout for the group, leading them through areas where there is the least dense population of hungries. Gallagher even develops a liking for the girl as the two discover a world in which they'd never gotten to live.

As the novel reaches a climax, Melanie discovers a group of children hungries, like her, living in London. Afraid Caldwell will want to capture them and experiment on them Melanie tells Parks and the others that what she saw was a group of junkers. Fearing for his life, Gallagher takes out on his own and is tricked and killed by the child hungries. Caldwell traps one of these child hungries and uses it to prove there is no cure or vaccine that can be created to annihilate the fungus. Although she'd hoped to present her findings to a more prestigious audience, Caldwell knows she is dying of blood poisoning contracted through cuts on her hands during the attack on the army base. She presents her findings to Melanie. Meanwhile, Parks is bitten by one of the child hungries while trying to protect Justineau. He asks Melanie, once his enemy, to put him out of his misery before the disease completely took over his brain. Before doing so, Melanie has the sergeant help her with the flamethrowers on a tank-like vehicle they had commandeered. She directs him to set fire to a mass of dead, fruiting hungries. Melanie knows this will release spores of the fungus on the world, leaving the only people alive those who have been infected by the fungus.

Of the group that escaped the army base, only Melanie and Justineau survive. Because Justineau has not been infected with the hungry fungus, she must wear a protective suit whenever she goes outside the tank. Her life will not be boring, however, as Melanie has appointed her as the teacher of the group of hungry children who she discovered. This group of children represents the seed from which the Earth will be repopulated.



Chapters 1-4

Summary

In Chapter 1, ten-year-old Melanie lives in a cell. She would prefer to be called Pandora but was assigned her name by Miss Justineau. Melanie's world consists of her cell, a classroom, the corridor and a shower room. There are 38 cells in the corridor which has a large steel door at one end. Melanie noticed this door when it was open one day and the sergeant got angry because she noticed it. Because she listens to conversations around her, Melanie has learned about the base on which she is being kept. She thinks the purpose of the base is to clear out the hungries. These hungries can smell humans and will chase them and eat them. She believes that in the city of Beacon there are people living happily who never see hungries.

The sergeant, his people and one of the teachers come down the corridor each morning. They smell like chemicals. Melanie calls out greetings to these people as they walk by but rarely gets responses. The Sergeant shouts "Transit!" and Melanie knows she is to get up and get dressed. The Sergeant and two people come into her room and strap her into a high backed metal wheelchair. The straps include a neck strap, and hand and foot restraints. She's then wheeled to the classroom where her lessons begin. She remembers one day when she was asking Mr. Whitaker about the details of the population of Birmingham, which he had been teaching. He seemed to be angry when he told her there was nothing out there any more and that the population details were ancient history.

Each weekday the students have classes. On Saturday, they are made to stay in their cells and listen to music. On Sundays, the children are taken in their chairs for chow time. Their right hands are unfastened so they can eat the bowls of grubs they are given. Once they are finished, the doors to the room seal and the children are washed with a chemical spray. Melanie believes the best days of the week are those that Miss Justineau teaches. Justineau reads poems or plays her flute and has taught them about Pandora and her box of evils. Melanie and the other children have learned that Pandora means "the girl with all the gifts." Although she was clever and brave, Pandora had the fault of being curious.

In Chapter 2, the sergeant criticizes Justineau for reading the children a story about Winnie the Pooh. He tells her it is dangerous to think of them as children. He rubs the chemical off his arm and holds it in front of Kenny, one of the students, who begins to drool and snap at the sergeant's arm. Even though the smell of the sergeant was far away from Melanie, she had felt her jaw muscles begin to work by themselves as well. Even though Melanie had already loved her teacher, her affection grew after this incident. When another teacher had the students write a story during class, Melanie wrote hers about saving Justineau from a monster.



In Chapter 3, Justineau talks to the students about death. When she realizes she's upset them, she tries to change the subject. As Melanie thinks about Justineau calling them children, she asks whose children they are. She tells Melanie her mother died when Melanie was very young and that probably her father is dead too. She says it's the same for all the children. Justineau tells them the army pretty much helped themselves to all the children and put them on the army base. Before class is over for the day, Melanie asks Justineau what will happen to the children when they get older. Justineau doesn't answer right away but puts her hand in front of her face as if she's avoiding being hit. Melanie notices at that moment that Justineau always wears red in her outfit. Since Justineau continues not to respond, Melanie believes she has made her teacher sad so she apologizes and says she won't leave. Justineau reaches out and strokes Melanie's hair as the other students watch with their eyes and mouths open. The sergeant speaks up from the back of the room, saying the lesson is over. The sergeant tells Justineau she may lose her job because she just broke every rule. Justineau curses the sergeant, and then walks out of the room.

In Chapter 4, Justineau wonders why she touched Melanie's hair. Her job is to gauge the students' emotional reaction to her and write up reports for Dr. Caldwell but she's gotten caught in her own trap. Even though she knows she shouldn't become emotionally involved in the test subjects, she's afraid it's too late for that.

Analysis

The beginnings of this story have a very strange, science fiction type tone. Even after the first four chapters of this book, the reader is still very in the dark about exactly what is going on in this novel. It appears that a group of about 40 children have been commandeered by the army for use in some sort of testing. The children are even referred to as test subjects. They're treated roughly by most of the adults in charge but are allowed to go to school.

In these opening chapters, the theme of the science versus morality is opened. It is apparent the children are being used in some sort of scientific study, in fact, Justineau indicates that she is required to write up reports about the way the children in her class have the ability to demonstrate a normal affect, a psychological term that refers to the way a person reacts emotionally. The sergeant warns Justineau against getting attached to the children emotionally, a requirement that seems not only inhumane but also impossible. However, it appears that Justineau realizes it is a bad idea to get attached to the children but can't help herself. The question ultimately posed by the book asks if scientific knowledge is supreme or if there should be some standards of morality even in science.

Note the relationships between the three major characters that have been introduced so far. Because Justineau interacts with the test subjects like they are children, which they are as Melanie says she is only 10 years old, the sergeant does not seem to like her. Justineau seems to represent emotion and emotional attachment as the sergeant represents the unbending nature of the law. He angrily reminds Justineau that she



shouldn't get emotionally attached to the children. Unfortunately, he is watching during the class session where Justineau strokes Melanie's hair. He threatens to fire her as she just broke all of the rules. The sergeant seems angry and frustrated. He lashes out at the children and even provokes one to bite his arm. Melanie senses that Justineau is afraid of the sergeant for some reason.

The conflict in the novel seems to come from hungries, creatures who are described by Melanie as ones who will chase humans and eat them. The base has been set up, Melanie believes, to provide protection from these hungries that roam free. Notice that when the sergeant wants to make his point to Justineau about the children not being children, he taunts one of them by wiping the chemicals off his arm that have masked his natural smell. When he holds his arm up to Kenny, the boy drools and snaps at the sergeant's arm. His reaction reminds one of this description of the hungries. Justineau tries to calm Kenny down and seems to think the sergeant is being cruel to Kenny. The sergeant, however, appears to be trying to teach Justineau a lesson about the nature of her pupils.

Notice that despite whatever is wrong with Melanie, she is very intelligent and very perceptive. She learns much through listening and observing. At one point, the sergeant even remarks that Melanie has "way too many eyes on her" (p. 2). Melanie also notices that Justineau always wears something red with her outfit. To Melanie, the color represents blood. She suspects there is something sad about Justineau as if she had something that haunts her and causes her pain. Melanie likes Justineau and even writes a story about saving her teacher from a monster. One can interpret from Melanie's story that the monster from which Melanie hopes to save Justineau from is the sergeant.

Also important in this section of the novel are the references to Pandora. Justineau has told the students the story of Pandora and the box of evils that she unleashes on the world. Remember that Melanie points out the class that the evil unleashed on the world wasn't entirely Pandora's fault as she was set up by Zeus.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think the children are treated so cruelly by the adults who are in charge of them?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the relationships between the three major characters as they have been presented thus far.

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the story written by Melanie about Justineau.



Vocabulary

miser, frags, furtive, transit, receptacle, retention, density, persisted, irrelevant, paranoid, evaporates, caryatid, cabaret, sarcasm, psychologically, enormity, prosperity, trepidation, extrapolating, forlorn, dredged, affect, inevitable



Chapters 5-9

Summary

In Chapter 5, on the days that Dr. Caldwell comes, the children's days are interrupted. Melanie does not like Dr. Caldwell and is not sure why she is there. On this particular day, Dr. Caldwell asks for "one of each" (p. 28) for new tests she is starting. Gender is irrelevant, she says, she wants children from each end of the bell curve. She asks for number sixteen for the low end. When the sergeant asks if she wants Melanie, Dr. Caldwell responds she won't waste her on a routine test and calls her a genius. Dr. Caldwell instead asks for subject twenty-two. Melanie recognizes the students by their numbers as Marcia and Liam. Melanie watches at the grill on her cell door and notices the two students are taken out through the thick steel door. Melanie watches for them to come back but they never do.

In Chapter 6, Justineau is the teacher assigned to the classroom on the first day of spring. She has picked flowers and plants from around the army base and brought them in a big bag for the children to explore. Melanie thinks the most important thing she learned that day was the date — March 21. She promises herself she will keep up with the date as this knowledge gives her a feeling of power.

In Chapter 7, Dr. Caldwell removes the brains of the test subjects from their skulls, a task at which she's very skilled. Even though the subject is dead, its eyes still move and it sighs. She believes the moment of death came when the pathogen, the fungus that is infecting the children, crossed the blood brain barrier. For this reason she sees the children's bodies only as an extension of the fungus for which she is trying to find a cure. She believes she is working with a parasite, not a real person. She wishes she had an automated lathe ultramicrotome, or ATLUM, to cut slices of the brains into sections a single neuron thick. The equipment she has is much less precise. Although she had a chance to study the disease that is affecting humanity in style, she missed out on that chance. Now she is studying alone.

In Chapter 8, Melanie has counted 117 days since Marcia and Liam were taken away. They have still not come back. In the days that have passed since the first day of spring, Melanie notices Justineau has changed. She seems sad. Melanie wonders who made Justineau sad and thinks about what she'd like to do to them. There is only one person she can think of who might be responsible for Justineau's sadness. That man, the sergeant, walks into the classroom just as she is thinking about him and wheels Melanie from the room, quickly and harshly. In her cell, the sergeant comments to Melanie that she has her face screwed up as if she had feelings. Melanie lashes out at him verbally, telling the sergeant that Justineau touched her hair because she loved Melanie. She tells the sergeant that Justineau hates him because he makes her sad. The sergeant balls his hands into fists but doesn't hit Melanie, he instead he puts his face next to hers, and threatens to dismantle her. He stands up and orders the men to leave without unstrapping Melanie from her chair even though they question his command.



In Chapter 9, Dr. Caldwell lectures Justineau about her objectivity. Caldwell explains to her that it is important that they see why the fungus has taken a different course in the children with whom they are working as compared to the overwhelming majority of the population. Dr. Caldwell believes development of a cure or vaccination might be possible from their study of the children. As Justineau thinks that Caldwell was nearly chosen to be part of the group chosen by the government to study the disease, she wonders if Caldwell is still hurt by the fact she wasn't included. Justineau remembers that two mobile labs had been commissioned built from two vehicles intended to transport art exhibitions. The vehicles were fitted up with biology and chemistry labs, external armor, rifles and flamethrowers. After the two vehicles were put into action, the situation with the infection became even worse. No one ever saw the scientific geniuses or their vehicles again.

Justineau points out to Caldwell that Justineau was brought in to do psychological evaluations on the children and determine how well they could engage with her. Justineau had also requested physical testing be stopped on the children and has also requested to be sent home so she didn't have to be part of the experimentation. Neither request was granted. Caldwell reminds Justineau that despite their high functions, the children are hungries. She shows Justineau a fish tank with a thready grey specimen, telling Justineau that is what is in the children's heads. Even though the children seem like normal humans, she reminds Justineau that if they smell the human pheromones, it will be the fungus that will take over control of their bodies. She also reminds Justineau that they are working at the base under the orders of the military, not a civilian group.

At the end of the lecture, Caldwell asks Justineau for a list of the test subjects based on their importance to Justineau's assessments. She claims she wants to take Justineau's needs into consideration, but also wants to "process" half of the test subjects in the next three weeks. As more and more students begin to disappear, Justineau is afraid her students will begin to ask questions that she won't be able to answer.

As Justineau considers how Dr. Caldwell is letting her pick the students who will get killed first, she wonders if that makes her a mass murderer. As she thinks, she walks right into Sergeant Parks without even realizing it. He tells Justineau she can't go near the perimeter of the base as a sentry had noticed some movement there. She suddenly wonders if the sergeant was the one responsible for the lecture she just received from Dr. Caldwell. Although Justineau mentions she believes he told on her, Parks says that he didn't. He says he's trying to help her by sharing his knowledge of the hungries. When Justineau pretends as if she is indifferent to Parks' concern, he tells her that he will keep order in his house a different way. Justineau senses he's talking around something and asks what he's done. He won't tell her specifically. She runs back to the classroom block.

Analysis

Much more information about the plot of the novel can be gleaned from this section of chapters. The children housed in the cells on the base have some sort of mutation from



an fungal infection that has infected and killed a good deal of the population of the United Kingdom. The infection is spread when an infected person bites another. The children are apparently different from other victims of the disease because they are able to think, learn and convey emotion. It appears, however, that the smell of human pheromones activates the instinct to bite, not only so the disease can be spread but also so the fungus can have something on which to feed.

Three of the main characters thus far are of three different experience levels with the fungus and the people infected with it. Dr. Caldwell is a scientist. She is desperate to redeem herself after she was not chosen for the government's group of scientists sent out to try to find a cure or inoculation for the disease. That group was sent out in two rolling, highly armored labs to do their research work, but were never heard from again. Meanwhile, the disease had spread even more. Dr. Caldwell feels she is alone in her search for a cure for the disease. She is also offended because she considers the equipment with which she has to work subpar. As she sees it, the children's role in her research is as test subjects. She removes and dissects their brains to determine how the fungus affects the brain. Dr. Caldwell is solely motivated by her pursuit of scientific knowledge. She represents the lengths to which one can go off the scale of morality in the name of science.

Justineau, on the other hand, is a psychologist who has been brought to the base to determine how well the children function on levels of intelligence and emotion. When Justineau learns that Caldwell's plans for the children is to cut them up, she is upset because she believes this treatment of the children is morally wrong especially since Caldwell does not anesthetize the children when she removes their brains. Caldwell has researched the disease and believes that people who are infected with it do not respond to the anesthesia. She also believes the children are already dead when she begins her work on them even though their eyes still move and their hearts beat. Justineau has written to the leaders in Beacon, a nearby city, requesting that they order the testing on the children to be stopped. Caldwell is angry with Justineau because she believes Justineau has tried to go over her head to interfere with her research, her chance to redeem herself. She pretends to offer Justineau a compromise in which she will spare the students most important to Justineau's research to the last to dissect. She requests a list of students in the order in which Justineau believes they are important to her research. Justineau believes this makes her an accomplice in what she sees as murders.

Sergeant Parks is a soldier who is apparently in charge of the children and the research being done on the army base. Thus far, the only other leader that the sergeant has interacted with has been Justineau. He warns her that she is getting too attached to the test subjects. He, like Caldwell, does not see them as children but as a compilation of their disease. He was apparently one of the soldiers sent out to gather these children and knows first hand how dangerous they are even though they can learn and show emotion. The sergeant is particularly frustrated by Melanie because she is the one with whom Justineau seems most emotionally involved. Notice that it was not when Melanie threatened the sergeant but instead when she insinuated that Justineau hated the



sergeant that he became so angry with her, leaving her locked in her chair even though the men with him questioned his decision.

Notice the way that the sergeant is portrayed in the opening chapters of the novel. First, he's referred to mostly as "the sergeant," indicating his role is one of control, not of personal relations. The descriptions of him are dominated by his facial scar which is described as extending halfway across his face in a diagonal. Even in his encounter with Justineau where he insinuates he is concerned about her, the scar, which makes his face "asymmetrical and inconceivably ugly" (p. 57) precedes and for this reason overrides the idea that he is also concerned about Justineau. In contrast, Justineau is described as beautiful, kind and welcoming. These differing physical descriptions underline how different the two characters are.

Continue to notice Melanie's intelligence in this section of the novel. Even though nothing is ever said about it, she notices that Marcia and Liam are never brought back when they are taken away by Dr. Caldwell. She wonders where they are and what Dr. Caldwell did with them. The fact that she has noticed her missing classmates even though she hasn't said anything yet confirms Justineau's worst fear. She believes that when Dr. Caldwell speeds up the testing, which she has said she intends to do, the children are going to start asking questions that she will be unable to answer.

Discussion Question 1

Do you think the scientific testing that Dr. Caldwell is doing on the children is morally acceptable? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Compare and contrast the roles of Dr. Caldwell and Justineau in the research of the children. At what point do they butt heads?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the sergeant. How has he been portrayed thus far in the novel?

Vocabulary

unforeseeable, irrelevant, recedes, palindromic, vernal, equinox, clamour, solstice, perimeter, whorls, symmetrical, methodically, virtuosity, occipital, pathogen, deterred, piqued, tropisms, tentative, brusque, untenanted, guillotine, reverie, objectivity, claustrophobic, optimum, hypocrisy, solipsism, commissioned, roving, articulated, berths, refurbishments, exordiums, oblivion, respite, scarcity, optimal, moratorium, cognitively, associatively, animalistic, ontological, dissecting, requisitioned, cashiered, substrate, perverse, hypothesis, inflectionless, nemesis, notorious, lurid, mandibles,



propagates, recoils, analogy, incongruously, conjecture, cohort, reify, sadism,
perforated, facilitator, asymmetrical, inconceivably, solicitude, percolate



Chapters 10-15

Summary

In Chapter 10, as Melanie sits in her chair, unable to move, she thinks about the sergeant's strange behavior toward her. She thinks he might be jealous of Justineau's affection for her, which means she has hit upon one of his weak points. She hears doors opening and footsteps running toward her cell. It is Justineau. She unstraps Melanie from her chair. Melanie jumps up and then freezes as she feels her jaw muscles start working. She warns Justineau to go away. They realize at the same point that when Justineau came in, she didn't spray herself with the chemicals to hide her pheromone smell. Melanie recognizes what she is feeling as hunger. Melanie fights against herself. She pushes Justineau out the door just before the feeling over takes her. It is a long time before the feeling subsides. When Melanie finally collapses, Justineau apologizes to her from the other side of the cell door. Melanie tries to joke, saying she won't bite, but Justineau begins to cry.

In Chapter 11, Justineau realizes three things will stand out that happened during the course of that day. She has realized that Sergeant Parks is right not only about Melanie's instinct but also about Justineau allowing her emotions to get in the way of her rational thinking. She's also realized she has made a commitment to Melanie without even intending to do so when she told the girl she was there for her. Finally, she realizes that she saw a person standing on the wrong side of the fence when she was talking to the sergeant. She knows the man was not a hungry because he was holding aside the branch of a tree. She believes he is a junker and that he poses no threat to the people on the base.

In Chapter 12, although Sergeant Parks hadn't minded his retrieval runs, he is tired of his job on the base. During these runs where he and his fellow soldiers would go out and hunt for anything that had been abandoned that could be used by the army, he'd learned how to walk past the hungries as they stood like statues so that they didn't even notice him. Any sign of movement, however, would wake the monsters and they would all zero in on their prey. If you choose to freeze, or run, you'd die. The only chance a human had against the hungries is to try to fight them off with guns. Along with the hungries, the junkers were also dangerous to the soldiers when they were out on their grab bag missions. It was a junker who gave the sergeant his scar. Despite the danger, the soldiers were able to find a good deal of stuff sitting around in abandoned houses and offices that could be used. The sergeant realizes they are trying to remake the world from these pieces of machinery that are twenty years or more old.

He feels like things went wrong when a soldier noticed a kid who wasn't a full-fledged hungry. Before he knew it, he was being sent to bring back kids like these. Next, an army base was acquisitioned. Then Dr. Caldwell came and the sergeant became a hunter and tracker. Now, he feels like he's running a kindergarten with Dr. Caldwell wanting to know if the children can learn. In reality, the sergeant believes these children



are more dangerous than the real hungries because they have the ability to act like regular people. He admits to himself that Melanie scares him. He controls himself by shutting up and doing what he's told, as a soldier is supposed to.

He understands what Dr. Caldwell is doing. She believes these are the children of junkies who got bitten. While the parents died, the children got stuck halfway. They carry the fungus, but their brains still operate. It is believed they are the best hope for finding a cure for the disease. So far, Parks has been on the base for four years. He was supposed to be rotated out after 18 months. He knows he should be at least a lieutenant in order to be allowed to hold the post he holds. Some days he feels he and his men and women aren't up to the challenge.

He is reading a report taken by Private Gallagher. He gets tired of the jargon Gallagher has written in his report and asks the soldier to explain what happened in plain English. Gallagher tells Parks that he and two other men were trying to weed out some hungries when he ran into three junkies. Gallagher said he shouted at them to run but one of them instead pointed his gun at Gallagher. Gallagher ran into that man, as he led the hungries to the trap. After the hungries were taken care of, they went back to check on the junkies. All three of them had been infected. They killed the three junkies as well. Although Parks can tell that Gallagher feels badly about what has happened, Parks tells Gallagher that he did a good job. After Gallagher leaves, Parks admits to himself he doesn't need the additional problem of junkies roaming that close to the base.

In Chapter 13, it is Friday before Justineau has another day in the classroom. While the students are working on some calculus problems, Melanie notices Justineau is crying as she works. Melanie asks for stories but Justineau says she has to work on her assessments. After thinking for a minute, Justineau tears up the tests and notebooks she's been working on and then gets the book of Greek myths. Before the soldiers take Melanie back to her cell that day, Justineau tells them she needs Melanie for a minute. She shoves the Greek myth book down behind Melanie's back in the chair and tells her to enjoy it. Back in her cell, because the book smells faintly of Miss Justineau, Melanie has a reaction to it, but begins to get used to the smell. She stays up all night reading the book.

In Chapter 14, since Justineau hasn't brought her list of test subjects to Dr. Caldwell decides to go ahead with her own selection of the next child to be used in her research. She decides she needs to start with the child with the least impairment of all. The one she chooses is Melanie.

In Chapter 15, Parks goes alone when he is given orders to bring Melanie from her cell. He tells her that she is going to the lab. She asks to see Justineau but Parks tells her she'll have to ask Dr. Caldwell for permission. She calls him by his first name, begging him to let her see her teacher. In a rush of anger, Parks tells Melanie to never call him by his name again as he grabs her by the throat.



Analysis

Another theme that is important to this novel is that each character has his or her own fault. Just as Pandora's curiosity led her to open the box, the characters in the novel fall prey to their faults. Justineau's fault perhaps is one of being too emotional. Her emotional connection to Melanie causes friction between her and the sergeant, and she and Dr. Caldwell. Dr. Caldwell perhaps uses the affection she knows Justineau has for Melanie when she chooses Melanie as her next test subject after Justineau fails to give her the list of test subjects she had requested.

Also in this section of the novel Melanie believes she has hit upon one of the sergeant's weaknesses. She believes by getting as angry as he did when she suggested that Justineau hated him, she had discovered he was jealous of the affection that Justineau showed to Melanie. In addition to this crack in the sergeant's armor, the author gives the reader his first look at things from the sergeant's point of view in Chapter 12. In the introductory sentence to this chapter the author introduces him not as "the sergeant" as has been the main way of referencing him up to this point, she gives him a name without a title. This name makes Parks appear to be more reachable than the cold, severe sergeant.

In the chapter dedicated to Parks, the reader learns how unhappy the sergeant is in his position. Not only has he been there longer than he expected to be there, he also feels ill equipped to hold the position the army has forced him to assume. Although soldiers put in charge of a base generally had the ranking of at least lieutenant, Parks is just a sergeant. While he understands the purpose of the base and what Dr. Caldwell is trying to do, he feels both overwhelmed and under utilized. Notice that when Parks deals with the soldier who is feeling badly because he caused three junkers to be infected, Parks is as gentle as he can be and tells the soldier that their deaths were not his fault. This peek at a different side of the sergeant gives the reader a fuller understand of his experience with the hungries and his own sense of frustration with his position.

Notice in this section of the novel that the sergeant does introduce another important theme in the novel. That theme is the importance of an education. The sergeant sees the call for the physical testing of the children hungries, but doesn't see the sense in trying to teach them anything. He believes the classroom instruction for the children is time wasted.

As the novel progresses, Dr. Caldwell attempts to put Justineau in charge of giving her what Justineau sees as an execution list for the children. This idea that she is being put in charge of deciding which of her students will die first seems to work upon some feeling of guilt Justineau has for some earlier crime she has committed. In fact, Justineau indicates she has an understanding of what she deserves, a understanding that seems to grow from some evil deed in Justineau's past for which she was never punished as she felt she should have been.

The conflict in the novel continues to be more completely understood as Justineau rescues Melanie from the chair that the sergeant has confined her to, but doesn't use



the chemical spray first. Melanie has a severe reaction to the smell of Justineau's pheromones making Justineau realize that the children have the capability of being just as dangerous as the sergeant said they could be. Notice, however, that because Melanie's brain still functions, she has the ability to fight against the desire for her to feed upon Justineau.

Discussion Question 1

Describe how the sergeant was able to tell the difference between hungries and kids like Melanie.

Discussion Question 2

How does the author make the sergeant seem more like a person in this section of the novel? Use examples from the book to illustrate your answer.

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think that Dr. Caldwell chooses to start with Melanie when she doesn't receive Justineau's list of subjects? Do you think this choice is purely scientific or do you sense some retaliation in her choice?

Vocabulary

agonizingly, sustains, simultaneously, constriction, diverts, wrenching, banal, ricocheted, gangrenous, mettle, infrastructure, besieged, feral, smarminess, rehabilitate, liaison, billet, verified, incandescence, impassive, decapitated, surveillance, inexorable, lethargy, angular, dereliction, sentience, irrevocably, edifice, virulence, incursion, bombast, benign, leered



Chapters 16-21

Summary

In Chapter 16, Melanie's senses are overloaded when Parks takes her up the stairs and outside. They go to another building where they first enter a shower. As she waits in the shower and observes the room around her, she tries to memorize the route they took to get to that building from her cell. After the shower is finished, Parks wheels Melanie into the lab where she sees animals and parts of humans sealed into jars. Dr. Caldwell asks the sergeant to transfer Melanie from her chair to the table. When she's strapped into place, the sergeant leaves and takes Melanie's chair with him. Melanie assumes that means she won't need it any longer. The women undress her using scissors to cut her out of her cotton shift.

In Chapter 17, Justineau knows something is wrong when doesn't see Melanie's face at the grate of her cell window when she goes to the classroom. The soldier who brings in the students doesn't bring Melanie. Justineau sees her cell is empty and then heads up the stairs. The sergeant is talking to three soldiers who look concerned. He tells Justineau they've been discussing a large number of hungries that have been seen near the perimeter. Justineau dismisses the concern as she realizes Melanie has been taken to the lab.

In Chapter 18, Dr. Caldwell washes Melanie, shaves off her hair and then covers her head with a blue gel. Dr. Caldwell asks her to close her eyes but Melanie gets the feeling that if she does, she'll wind up like the specimens in the jars around the room. Suddenly, Melanie hears Justineau's voice and sees her standing in the doorway of the lab holding a fire extinguisher. When Caldwell asks her assistant to call security and have Justineau removed, Justineau smashes the phone with the fire extinguisher. Dr. Caldwell tries to calm Justineau into putting down the fire extinguisher. As she is talking to Justineau, Dr. Caldwell pulls pepper spray out of her pocket and sprays Justineau. Dr. Caldwell sends her assistant after security to remove Justineau and picks up her scalpel again but she is interrupted by an explosion and then the sound of the general evacuation siren. Dr. Caldwell tries to lower the emergency shutters but is too late as hungries burst through the windows.

In Chapter 19, before Parks can even get together a plan, a wave of hungries are racing toward the base. Parks orders the soldiers to shoot at the hungries but there are too many of the beasts. He notices that there are junkers with spears, cattle prods, flamethrowers and bulldozers chasing the hungries toward the base. The creatures are through the perimeter fence almost before Parks knows what has happened.

In Chapter 20, when Justineau is finally able to look around her, she sees a hungry eating the lab assistant. Dr. Caldwell is fighting off the hungries with a piece of glass from the window. Justineau uses the fire extinguisher to fend off the monsters. The operating table is empty with the restraints cut. Justineau wonders where Melanie is.



Caldwell tries to collect her research but drops what she has collected. Justineau grabs her and forces her to leave the lab. Outside the open doors of the building, Justineau sees the soldiers fighting against the junkers. Caldwell motions her into a storage room. Justineau finds a window through which she can get out to find Melanie. Caldwell follows her. As Justineau tries to run for the classroom block, a junker points his gun at her. Suddenly the man is gone when Melanie attacks it, latching onto its throat with her teeth.

In Chapter 21, Melanie is surprised how good her first taste of flesh and blood tastes. She had knocked into the man because he was going to hurt Justineau but had bitten the man before she'd even thought about it. Justineau picks Melanie up and runs with her. Even though she was full, her urge to bite is aroused by Miss Justineau's smell. She fights against herself to keep from biting Miss. Justineau.

Analysis

The conflict in the novel becomes more severe as junkers force their way into the army base using the hungries as weapons. There are a couple of positive things that happen because of the attack. The attack ends a stand off between Justineau and Caldwell because Caldwell was trying to use Melanie's brain for research. It also frees Melanie from the lab table. On the other hand, the attack is bad news because it puts all of the main characters of the novel into direct harm because they no longer have the protection from the hungries that the army base offered.

Significant in these chapters is Melanie's attack on the junker who had his gun raised to shoot Justineau. Her dedication to her teacher is so strong that she would do whatever it took to protect her. Notice that in a way Melanie has fulfilled the story she wrote in class about her desire to save Justineau from a monster. Melanie saved her teacher when she attacked the junker.

Melanie also learns some deep and disturbing information about herself when she attacks the junker. It is her instinct to protect Justineau that made her attack the junker, but it is some other instinct she is following when she bites him. She is overwhelmed by how good the blood and meat tastes. Notice that as Justineau carries her, Melanie physically fights with herself to keep from biting Justineau.

Also of importance in this section of chapter is that regardless of how strongly Justineau felt about the children being treated as children and not monsters, she is disgusted by Melanie when she first pulls the child off the junker. She is aghast at what she has seen first hand that the child is capable of but at the same time knows this is the same child who saved her life.

Even though it pales in comparison to the rest of the action in this section of the novel, Melanie's reaction to her first glimpse of the outside world is interesting. She is overwhelmed by the light and things to see. Even as she tries to take in everything she



is experiencing, Melanie is also clever enough to keep track of the route the sergeant is taking and try to memorize the way back to her cell.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the confrontation between Caldwell and Justineau when Caldwell was about to dissect Melanie. Why was this confrontation significant in the novel?

Discussion Question 2

Parks was unable to even get together a counter attack before his base was invaded by hungries being herded by junkers. Why does Parks think this attack was ingenious?

Discussion Question 3

Consider Melanie's interaction with the sergeant when he came to her cell to take her to the lab. Why do you think it upset him so badly that she called him by his first name?

Vocabulary

spangled, collates, confluence, reverberation, novelty, laconically, surmise, emphatically, inaccessibly, inscrutable, civility, animating, sabotage, oblivious, obliquely, stanchions, viable, hemispheric, divot, flotsam, anodyne, ascend, peristaltic, carillon, valid, forensic, berth, hefts, surreal, subliminally, repletion, satiated, torpid



Chapters 22-27

Summary

In Chapter 22, Justineau runs with Melanie until she reaches the fence. Suddenly, Parks mows down the hungries chasing her with a Humvee. A red-haired soldier works the machine gun on top of the Humvee. Parks orders her to get in. Justineau tells Melanie, who hesitates only a minute, to get in as well. Inside, Caldwell is laying with her hands under her armpits. Parks drives the Humvee through the fence, taking part of it with him.

In Chapter 23, after driving randomly about ten miles Parks pulls the Humvee into a field. It came from the workshop and he's afraid there is trouble with both the engine and rear axle. Gallagher climbs down from the gun pedestal and shouts at Parks when he sees Melanie in the vehicle. Parks raises his gun to shoot her but Justineau moves between them. Parks realizes this is the first time he's seen a hungry in a feeding frenzy not acting on its instincts. Justineau asks him to let Melanie out of the vehicle. He agrees to do so. Melanie runs away from them, upwind. Caldwell insists they bring Melanie with them as she is the only piece of her research she has left. Justineau makes a snide comment about Caldwell's research. Parks leaves the two women arguing and goes to check the rear axle of the Humvee.

In Chapter 24, Melanie fights with the realization she has killed and eaten parts of two people. She wonders what that makes her. She also remembers that as she was trying to cut herself free from the lab table one of the hungries had stood over her. Even though it had seemed to lock eyes with her, Melanie is convinced the hungry didn't even know she was there. Even though she is in emotional turmoil because of what has happened, she is slowly distracted by the sights and smells of nature. The flower smells help her to push the meat hunger away. She sees Justineau watching her and tells her teacher she won't bite.

When Justineau asks Melanie if she is okay Melanie lies and says she is. In reality it has been the worst day of her life, having almost been killed herself and then having seeing Justineau almost killed. She wants to ask Justineau what she is since considering that she just ate parts of two men but doesn't breach the question. Justineau tells Melanie she was very brave in saving her but Melanie counters that Justineau saved her first.

In Chapter 25, Parks swears when he sees the rear axle on the Humvee is badly cracked. The sounds from the engine, however, were caused by a missing motor mount. Parks secures the motor with a new bolt before he turns his attention to the situation in which he and the people with him are in. Since he's the only soldier with any experience with the hungries, Parks considers himself in charge of the group. He intends to give them a briefing inside the Humvee but the civilians interfere with his plans. Caldwell wants to go back to the base for her notes while Justineau thinks they should save the children. Parks tells them the best thing for them to do is to head for



Beacon. He tries to convince Justineau the kids will be fine without them and Dr. Caldwell that the junkers wouldn't be interested in her research. He believes they were looking for useful things they could steal, and perhaps payback for three guys that Gallagher got killed. He suggests once they get in radio contact with Beacon, the people from Beacon can go back to the base with firepower and a helicopter to get Caldwell's notes.

When Justineau asks Parks what he plans to do about Melanie, he says he intends to leave her there. Justineau criticizes his ethics. Caldwell suggests Melanie could ride on the roof. The two women begin to argue over the reason for bringing Melanie along but Parks stops the argument by agreeing that the girl can ride on the roof of the Humvee.

In Chapter 26, when Justineau asks Melanie what she wants to do, the girl tells her she wants to stay with Justineau even if it means Caldwell will be in charge of what happens to her. She's happy with the suggestion that she can ride on the roof as it had been scaring her to think of getting back into the Humvee. Melanie tentatively asks Justineau about Melanie's reaction to the men and the meat hunger she is experiencing. Justineau tells Melanie it is in her nature and nothing to be ashamed of. She promises to explain later when they have more time. Despite the seriousness of her situation, Melanie considers the idea that every day from then on will be a day she can spend with Justineau, a promise of hope at the bottom of Pandora's box.

In Chapter 27, Parks stops at a stream where they fill water bottles. Justineau washes out her sweater and dries it on the antenna of the Humvee, giving it to Melanie to wear. They head for a supply cache that had been hidden by the army but find just a hole in the ground. The Humvee only has a first aid kit, a weapons stash, food for a couple of days and three tubes of e-blocker gel. Justineau uses the first aid kit to bandage Caldwell's hands. They settle into their spots on the Humvee and go about five miles before the rear axle breaks. Justineau has a moment where she admires Parks because he doesn't even stop to curse when the Humvee breaks, just doles out supplies to each adult with the understanding that they will be walking from that point.

Parks says that if Melanie will be staying with them, he wants to restrain her in some way. Although Justineau says no to his idea, Melanie agrees with Parks, believing the restraints will help to keep her from hurting anyone. They put handcuffs on Melanie attached to a leash with a muzzle over her mouth. Justineau puts down her foot when they try to put hobbles on the girl as well. She reasons that since they would be running from both hungries and junkers, putting hobbles on the child would be the same as killing her. When Caldwell pipes in with her unwelcome information that Melanie is not really alive to start with Justineau punches her in the face. The men watch, but don't get involved in the fight. Caldwell asks that they back her up when she reports the attack as being unprovoked. Parks nods and insinuates it is time for them to move out.



Analysis

Up to this point in the novel when Melanie, Justineau, Parks, Caldwell and Gallagher escape from the army base, it seemed the main intent of the novel was on developing the characters of Parks, Justineau and Caldwell and what they represent. Parks represents the law of the land in all its strictness and ugliness, Caldwell represents the quest for scientific knowledge regardless of what she has to do to get it and Justineau represents morality and emotional attachment. At this point the characters seem very shallow and rigid. In this section of chapters and those following, the characters will begin to develop and their personalities fill out as they interact with and learn from each other.

The theme of scientific knowledge versus morality continues to be a major point in the novel as Justineau and Caldwell butt heads over the purpose of keeping Melanie with them. Justineau believes they should keep her with them because she became their responsibility when she was captured and brought to the base. Even though Melanie is in no danger from the hungries, Justineau believes it would be irresponsible and morally wrong for them to abandon her. Caldwell, on the other hand, continues to see Melanie only as a test subject. She gets a punch in the face from Justineau, the queen of morality, when she suggests that Melanie's only purpose is to benefit her research.

There are several Biblical references included in the novel but one of the most interesting is found in Chapter 22. Although Justineau had been an advocate for Melanie's rights as a person up to this point, she is faced by the hard evidence that Melanie really is a hungry when she sees the child feasting on one of the junkies. As she holds onto the child, however, Justineau considers Melanie the "anti-Isaac she snatched from the fire to prove to God that he doesn't always get to call the shots" (p. 116). The thought is allegorical with Caldwell being the God to whom Justineau is trying to prove that she doesn't get to call all the shots. Caldwell is compared to God because she seems to feel she has the right to determine who lives and who dies based upon her need for material for her research. Melanie is considered the "anti-Isaac" because she is infected with the hungry fungus. In the Biblical story of Isaac, Isaac was a child whom God had ordered burned as a sacrifice in order to test the faith of Isaac's father. Isaac is saved because God stops the father from sacrificing the boy. In this novel, Justineau takes matters into her own hands, pulling Melanie from the danger she faced with Caldwell.

The development of Parks' character continues in this section of the novel. Even as Justineau faces the hungries, real monsters, she describes herself as having come face to face with a monster when he pulls the Humvee in front of her in an attempt to rescue her. Even as he is acting as her savior, Justineau still sees Parks only as a monster. Notice also in this section how deeply ingrained Parks' habit of being in charge has become in him. He sees himself as being the military leader of the small group that has survived the attack on the base. His plans backfire on him when he tries to give a briefing, which in his opinion is an informational session in which he will inform the people he is with the details of their situation and how they will progress. He expects them to



behave as the soldiers under his command did. Even as he tries to lay down plans, Parks is met by resistance from both Justineau and Caldwell. Both are motivated by their own desires. Still fighting for morality, Justineau wants to go back get the rest of the children. Caldwell, however, wants to go back for her notes and lab samples.

The idea of Pandora and her box is mentioned in this section of the novel. Although her future is unsure, Melanie seems to be content to face whatever evils may be in her future as long as she can be with Justineau. Melanie notes that the close proximity to her favorite person is a glimmer of hope in the bottom of Pandora's box. Notice also in this section of the novel that Melanie refuses to call Justineau by her first name even though Justineau suggests that she can. Melanie's act of sticking with the more formal name for her teacher seems to cement the relationship between them. Melanie has a feeling that she will never be able to get very close to Justineau, either physically or emotionally, her preference to call her by the name she has always used for her teacher indicates that Melanie knows that is as far as their relationship can go.

Discussion Question 1

In Chapter 22, even as Parks is saving Justineau from the hungries his face is described as being one of a monster. How does that description affect the reader's opinion of Parks?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the arguments between Justineau and Caldwell as they fight over Melanie's place in the group. Do you feel sympathy for Parks as he must try to deal with these fighting women? How do you think the situation would be best handled?

Discussion Question 3

Do you think it is necessary for the sergeant to insist that Melanie be restrained for their journey to Beacon? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

arcane, syncopation, metronomic, profoundly, palpable, imminence, interposing, spindly, conundrums, vectors, middling, omen, furtive, caches, provisioned, enclaves, douse, impasse, tersely, moppet, turbulence, astringent, tarmac, chivvying, arsenal, didactic, default, spavined



Chapters 28-31

Summary

In Chapter 28, as they travel, Melanie sees for herself the impact the hungries have made on the world. Parks tries to decide if he wants to take his group through once populated areas, which are dangerous because there are more hungries there, or go around these areas, which open them to other dangers. Meanwhile, Caldwell is going through the stages of grief because she believes her life's work is lost. She blames Justineau for ruining her work. As she starts to sink into depression, Caldwell remembers her samples at the lab weren't worth keeping and that she has most of her notes memorized. She also considers the fact that she has a living test subject still with her, she just has to wait for an opportunity to arise.

Private Gallagher compares the monsters they face with the monsters that his family became whenever they'd drunk too much bootleg whiskey. He thought he'd be okay if he stayed away from drink and drugs, but now realizes there are other monsters in the world that can kill him. He believes he'll get eaten by a hungry before they get to Beacon just because that is the way his life has worked from the beginning. Justineau is thinking about all the children who died without ever growing up. She wishes she could change the series of events that led up to her stroking Melanie's hair. That way she wouldn't feel as if she were bound to the child.

In Chapter 29, Parks has decided to lead his group through Stotfold. Before they reach the town, however, Parks sees a church with a garage he decides might work well as shelter for them. He and Gallagher search it and kill the one hungry they find. Before he can get them all into the shelter of the garage, Justineau becomes angry with Parks when he suggests Melanie stay outside the garage for the night. She asks for the keys to Melanie's handcuffs and tells him they are leaving. Caldwell pipes up with her argument that Melanie is her research property. Justineau starts to go outside with Melanie but Gallagher stops her. Parks taps her on the shoulder with his gun and tells her they'll look for an option. He doesn't want to shoot her as he believes she may be the most useful person in his group. They wind up tying Melanie to a wall with the canteens and a bucket of stones attached to her rope. She'll make noise if she tries to move too far.

In Chapter 30, Melanie has nightmares about biting Justineau. The nightmares wake her up and as she lies awake she remembers her questions to Justineau about going home to Beacon. Now she realizes why the question upset Justineau so badly.

In Chapter 31, the group is woken early by the sound of engines. They collect their things and hide in a field of weeds. They eventually see a bulldozer, Humvee and a Jeep full of celebrating junkers. As soon as they are out of sight Justineau voices her fear that the junkers are looking for them. Parks agrees, believing the junkers have made the attack on the base personal.



Before they start their journey on the open roads, Parks gives them the rules. They are not to talk out loud and if they see any movement they are to clock it with hand signals. He adds that if they do get a hungry after them they are not to run but instead fight it head on by shooting at it or throwing anything useful they may have. About noon they see a car. A dead person is inside. Parks assumes a group of people had been headed somewhere when their car had stopped. At that point they were attacked by hungries he believes. The car has nothing useful to them in it though they wonder at the sack of money the people had with them as if they believed paper money was still worth something.

Analysis

The theme of evils or faults is discussed in this section of the novel. Almost of all Chapter 28 focuses on this theme. The novel is told from the third person point of view with the viewpoint being from one of five characters (Melanie, Justineau, Dr. Caldwell, Parks or Gallagher) during different points in the novel. During this chapter there is a section dedicated to each of these characters as the narrator reveals the thoughts of these characters as they begin their foot journey toward Beacon. At this point in their journey, the thoughts of many of the characters give away their greatest fear.

Melanie is the only character at this point in the novel that seems to be enjoying herself as she gets the chance to observe in person the world that she has heard so much about from her teachers. She thinks about how the humans created a world for themselves that would take care of their needs, but still had to abandon that world when the hungries came along. As she thinks about what she's been taught, she realizes that she avoided the truth of her situation only because she chose not to see it.

Parks, meanwhile, is concerned with keeping the people that he has with him safe. He has much real world experience with the hungries and realizes that even if they stay away from towns and villages as he had originally planned, they will not necessarily stay safe because the hungries will target them using the heat from their bodies at night. Since Parks' major fault, his inability to connect with people on an emotional basis because he values following the rules, has already been discussed a good deal in the novel this section about Parks doesn't focus on his fault as much as it does the tricky situation in which he finds himself.

Caldwell is cycling through the stages of grief because she believes at first that she has lost her life's work. It is important to remember that Caldwell blames Justineau for the loss of her work and intends to make Justineau pay. In this section it becomes clear that Caldwell's fault lies in her belief that the pursuit of scientific knowledge is more important than anything else. She lets it cloud her judgment of other people, in the case of Justineau, and causes her to do foolish things, like insist they return to the base to get her notes. Caldwell is somewhat cheered when she realizes she has much of her notes memorized and that she does still have a test subject with her. As she considers that she just has to find an appropriate time to make her move, it appears that Melanie is still in danger of being dissected by Caldwell.



Gallagher suffers with the most juvenile fears of all of his cohorts. He, like Parks, is feeling the pressure of being in charge of a group of civilians. As his life has not gone favorably in the past, he believes his trip back to Beacon will not end favorably either. In fact, he almost dreads going back home because he has to put up with a family of alcoholics there. He wonders if it would be better for him to go back home or to die on the way to Beacon. His line of thinking foreshadows that his story might not end favorably.

Justineau is thinking about dead children. She wishes she could change the series of events that led up to her making her promise to Melanie that she would take care of her. It appears that Justineau is afraid that she will not be able to keep her promise. Although it hasn't been described yet, there must be some incident in her past that makes her so worried about her position of being responsible for a child.

One of the most important things to notice in Chapter 29 is that even though Melanie seems to realize why Parks treats her as he does, Justineau still takes the treatment as a personal offense to the girl. In fact, Parks seems to be impressed by the steps that Melanie takes to ensure that she won't be a danger to the others. She agreed readily to wear the handcuffs and muzzle even though Justineau thought it inhumane. She even agreed to ride on top of the Humvee. Now, after Justineau fed her, Melanie warned Parks that he hadn't put her muzzle on as tight as it was before. He wonders about her motivations as he tightens the device.

Note also that although Parks thinks that the junkers attack on the base might have been out of retaliation for the junkers that Gallagher killed, he doesn't mention his suspicion to Gallagher. The reason he doesn't say anything goes against the image of him as a monster. He knows Gallagher well enough to realize his nature is sensitive. He's afraid the knowledge that he caused all the destruction at the base will be too much for Gallagher to handle. In this way the "monster" Parks shows that he does have a certain amount of empathy as he keeps the truth from Gallagher.

Discussion Question 1

Do you think Parks is being considerate by not telling Gallagher that it might have been his act of letting the junkers get killed by the hungries that caused the junkers to attack their base? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Compare and contrast Justineau and Melanie's reactions to the rules that Parks puts in place in order to keep the rest of the group safe from Melanie.



Discussion Question 3

Consider Caldwell's decision that she will continue her research on Melanie as soon as the opportunity presents itself. How does this affect the tone of the novel? Do you think Melanie is in more trouble from Caldwell than the others are from the hungries? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

parabola, homing, presuppose, reconnaissance, demanding, treacherous, pith, transgression, cravenly, equivocating, anomalous, predominate, microcosm, comatose, somnolence, assiduously, antics, hecatombs, edict, bivouac, immobility, inert, surplice, perplexed, coterie, coerces, stave, resilient, cavalcade, flamboyant, foraging, opportunistic, ablutions, hinterlands, unsubstantiated, protocols, profuse, vertices, pheromones, gradient, skewed, intact, diorama, partook, nostalgia, categorically



Chapters 32-35

Summary

In Chapter 32, Caldwell has developed a fever that has become worse because she has gotten dehydrated while walking. She turns her mind from her own illness and instead thinks about the things she's learned about the hungries first hand. Based on her new information about how the hungries feed, she thinks she needs to look more closely at the hypothalamus.

When they reach Stevenage, Parks tells his group he and Gallagher will go in first and scope out the city, and then come back for the civilians. Justineau and Caldwell together talk him out of that plan as they make him realize that his plan is actually more dangerous than it would be for all of them to go into the city together. Parks agrees when he sees the two are right and tells them how to move slowly around the hungries without making any noises.

Once inside the city they are looking for a detached house with good lines of view from upstairs windows, hopefully with the doors still attached. When they reach a part of town where there are hungries, Caldwell is fascinated as she is able to examine the creatures as they exist outside the lab. Parks motions them to continue walking carefully. They avoid making eye contact with the hungries, as some believe even seeing a human face can cause them to become aroused.

Near an old-fashioned village green, Parks finally spots the type of house he had in mind. As they skirt the green Caldwell sees a hungry walking toward them. She is pushing a baby carriage. Caldwell is intrigued both by the fact the woman is walking, since hungries generally either stand still or run, and that she is holding onto the baby carriage as if it had importance to her, as hungries generally lose the ability to manipulate objects. Caldwell moves toward the woman even though Parks signals for her to halt. She pulls the blanket back and sees the baby has been dead for a long time but two rats living in the carriage squeal at her forcing the hungry to life. Parks shoots the female hungry, alerting the rest of the pack. Parks orders them to run.

In Chapter 33, Parks and Gallagher try to clear a path through the hungries for the women to follow. They reach the electric gate of the house and have to climb over the fence. Parks covers while the others climb. He runs out of ammo and reloads but the weapon jams. He thinks he's had it but suddenly Melanie is in front of him. The hungries stop as if they've lost Parks' scent. He realizes that the hungries are actually turned off by the smell of another hungry. Melanie has saved his life by masking his smell with her own. Gallagher pulls him through the gate, which they've managed to get part of the way open, and they run for the house and up the stairs. Once they are upstairs, Gallagher destroys the stairs with hand grenades, keeping the hungries from being able to follow them.



Even though they want to rest, feeling that they are finally safe, Parks knows they have to clear the house of hungries. They find several small rooms and determine the house must have been a private hospital. They finally find a day room in which all of them can comfortably stay for the night. He, Caldwell and Justineau check the floor for hungries. Justineau is worried about leaving Melanie alone with Caldwell but Parks assures her it will be all right as they'll only be gone a few minutes.

In Chapter 34, Melanie wants to be alone so she can think about the terrible thing that just happened. Melanie looks around the room the sergeant had found for them to stay in. One of the doors leads to a kitchen. The other leads to a brightly colored room with lots of books. Even as she tries to distract herself by looking at the titles of the books, the thought pops into her mind that she is not a little girl, she is a hungry. She realizes this because the hungries who were trying to bite Park did not hunger for her, it was like she wasn't even there. The obvious proof is the hunger that she felt when she smelled Justineau's smell in her cell. She knows she is a monster.

Dr. Caldwell enters the room where Melanie has taken solace. She tells Melanie she wants only to look at her tongue and tear ducts but Melanie doesn't trust her and slips from her grasp, running from the room. Out in the corridor she finds an alcove she can slide into. If Caldwell comes for her again, Melanie plans to yell for Justineau. As she waits, she hears singing coming from nearby. Wanting to know if it is a ghost, Melanie follows the sound. She walks to a room with an open door where she is momentarily blinded by the red light from the sunset.

In Chapter 35, Dr. Caldwell has also heard the singing. She stands in the doorway of the room where they hungry sits on his hospital bed. Melanie stands in front of him. Caldwell is surprised to hear the man singing and see him looking at pictures in his wallet. Although Dr. Caldwell motions for Melanie to join her at the door, Melanie refuses to move feeling Dr. Caldwell bears her the bigger threat. Caldwell pulls out her gun and aims it at Melanie. Knowing what guns can do, Melanie goes to her. Caldwell points the gun at the hungry. Melanie asks her to leave it alone as it is not hurting her. Parks comes into the room and shoots the creature. Caldwell chastises him for shooting the hungry in the head.

Analysis

Another part of Parks' personality that makes him less monster-like is noted in this section of the novel. He has the ability to listen to reason and realize when another person has a plan that is better than his own. He had intended to take Gallagher with him, leaving the civilians at the outskirts of the town, to scope out a place for them to stay the night. Both Justineau and Caldwell convince him this is a bad idea because it would put all of them at an increased risk. Instead of sticking with his plan just because he refuses to listen to anyone else, the sergeant changes his mind when he sees things from Caldwell and Justineau's viewpoints.



Notice also in this section that Melanie is learning some important and disturbing things about herself. Although she had thought the encounter with the hungry in the lab on the army base might have been a fluke, Melanie cannot deny the powerful effect her presence had on the hungries that were poised to bite Sergeant Parks when they were trying to get into Wainwright House. Because she was infected with the hungry fungus it was like the hungries were momentarily turned off by her when she stepped in front of Parks. Even though Melanie doesn't like what her new knowledge is leading her to believe, she tries to come to terms with it.

In the theme of earning trust, Parks is surprised by Melanie's act of stepping in front of him and masking him from the hungries long enough for him to get to safety. Although Parks does not yet trust or respect the girl, this action was the seed that began the growth of those qualities. Meanwhile, Caldwell does nothing to earn respect from Melanie. After what she'd seen in the street, Caldwell is dying to do some more experiments to check an idea that is growing in her mind. When she tries to approach Melanie, just to look closely at her, the girl runs away, as she knows Caldwell sees her only as a research specimen and a person.

Just a few minutes later, Melanie loses even more respect for Caldwell when she seems set on shooting a hungry they find in the house. The man is singing to himself and looking at pictures in his wallet, Melanie thinks he doesn't have to die as he poses no threat to them. Caldwell had threatened to shoot Melanie if she didn't get out of her way so she could shoot the hungry. Before Caldwell was able to shoot the man, however, Parks killed him with a shot to the head.

Also in this section Caldwell's desire for scientific knowledge puts the entire group at risk when she attracts the attention of all the hungries to them by insisting on checking out the woman pushing the baby carriage. She did not follow a direct order given to her by Parks because she wanted more information about the woman and her condition. By doing so, she put not only herself in danger but also the rest of the group in danger. Caldwell is sick, it is indicated she is running a fever probably caused by an infection in her hands, but it doesn't give her an excuse for her behavior. She seems to be so dead set on finding a cure for the fungus that she is willing to kill and risk her own life as well as the lives of others to obtain information.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the way the hungries are portrayed in the novel. Why do you think some of the victims of the fungus, like Melanie and the man at the Wainwright House, have more abilities than others?

Discussion Question 2

Why was Caldwell so angry that Parks had shot the hungry in the head?



Discussion Question 3

What has Melanie learned about herself thus far in the novel? How do you think you might feel if you were in her position?

Vocabulary

extraneous, dehydrated, exacerbating, vocation, non-viable, counterintuitive, robust, vector, ecological, neotenously, asexual, impede, unimpeachable, succinctly, repertoire, unambiguous, precarious, gauntness, nattily, paradoxically, introspection, shambling, belatedly, rudimentary, refute, macabre, baleful, reprimand, terraced, converged, induced, emphatically, anachronistic, intermediate, perambulation, myriad, trajectory, desiccated, desultory, converge, indiscriminate, triangulate, shunts, melamine, deflect, predominate, obliterated, mosaics, pertinent, apogee, docile, alcove, bulwark, taboo, zenith, ruck, apposite, quatrain, consanguinity, autocannibalism, eminently, brusquely, caste



Chapters 36-41

Summary

In Chapter 36, Justineau, Parks and Gallagher search through the canned food in the kitchen of Wainwright House and manage to put together a meal. Caldwell is lost in thought in the day room while Melanie has been chained to a radiator in the children's room. Justineau takes Melanie some meat from their dinner. She also shows Melanie some girl's clothes she has found. Melanie says she likes them but doesn't know how to put them on. Justineau promises to help her.

In Chapter 37, even though Justineau seems to think Melanie is sad about all the hungries that had been killed that day, Melanie realizes they weren't really alive any longer. She does feel a little bad about the man in the hospital, but has also learned how quickly the hungries can turn. Justineau promises not to let anyone hurt her. Melanie wonders how she can be saved from herself.

In Chapter 38, when Justineau returns to the room where the others are eating Gallagher shows her a bottle of brandy that he had found. He doesn't get the smile he'd hoped he would from her but feels better when the sergeant pours Gallagher the first glass. When the others begin to show that they are getting tipsy Gallagher gets uncomfortable and goes to take a final walk around the top floor of the house. The smell is bad, especially at the top of the area where the stairs were. When he shines his flashlight down, the hall is crowded with hungries. Gallagher knows they'll be there until they get a meal or something else sets them off. Next, he goes to check on Melanie. He props open the door with a chair and notices she's been looking at the books. He asks if she wants him to read her one. She says no but then asks him to look on the shelves for a book of Greek mythology. He can't find the one she's requested but suggests a few others. Although she doesn't respond when he asks about another book, Gallagher picks one and tells her he's going to read it. Melanie pretends to not be listening but Gallagher can tell she's tilting her head so she can see the pictures.

In Chapter 39, Parks and Justineau go to the roof of the house to get some air. It is cooler outside but the wind smells like rot. They wonder what is causing the smell and move toward the corner of the building that faces Beacon. Justineau wonders what has happened in Beacon since she left it three years before. They agree that the doctor is a character and then Parks admits that he is glad the mission at the base is over. He lets it slip there had been no communications coming from Beacon, along with other problems. When Justineau questions him he tells her that the last communication he heard from Beacon was five months ago. Changing the subject, Parks asks her what she meant when she called him and Gallagher hard-wired soldier boys. Justineau tells him that hard-wired is a psychological term that indicates a behavior is one that a person has been born with and cannot change. He compliments her trash talk and puts his arm around her shoulder. She is offended. She asks him if he has ever killed a kid.



In Chapter 40, Parks had been feeling mellow up to that point but suddenly realizes the night isn't going where he hoped. He starts to walk off but Justineau tells him she's referring to before the Breakdown. While he tells her he's shot hungries who were children he has never killed a normal child. Justineau admits that she has killed a child. She tells him how she'd run over a child with her car on the way home from a party. Instead of staying with the child or telling anyone what happened, she left the boy in the road and drove away. She thought about turning herself in but never did, when the world ended, she got off clean. Parks doesn't think what Justineau had done was an unforgivable sin and tells her it was an accident. She tells him that she told him about the dead child because her score at life is a minus one. She won't let him take her to a minus two, she tells him before walking off.

In Chapter 41, Caldwell finds some Tupperware storage boxes in the kitchen and takes samples from the dead hungry. She can't do anything with the samples until she has a microscope but is beginning to get a better idea of what she should be looking for.

Analysis

Justineau finally shares with Parks what has been bothering her so badly during this section of the novel. She has been feeling guilty all this time because she accidentally killed a child and has never told anyone. It appears Parks is the first person she has ever confided in. Parks is offended at first by her question because even he had not killed a child before the Breakdown. He thinks Justineau is just rubbing his nose in how bad she thinks he is. Instead, Justineau hopes to drive home her point that she will not allow him to make her feel any more guilty by being responsible for the death of another child. Notice that Justineau seems as haunted by her act of driving away from the boy like a coward and never telling anyone what she'd done as much as she was about the accident that resulted in the boy's death. She feels that she has never paid the price for the crime she committed.

Also significant in this section of the novel is the interaction between Gallagher and Melanie. Even though he is afraid of Melanie, he takes steps toward being a friend. He makes an effort to check on her, an action that indicates he believes she is enough of a human that she's worthy of his concern. He also notices that she seems interested in the books. Even though she pretends to not care about his advances, he knows he's got her attention when he reads to her from one of the books, even though it wasn't the one she asked for first.

Foreshadowed in this section of the novel is the trouble the group will have in leaving the Wainwright House the following morning. When Gallagher goes and checks the house, he notices the first floor beneath the stair landing is filled with hungries. It is the smell that calls them to his attention because he's trying to find from where the stench is coming. He knows the hungries will be there until they either get a meal or their attention is diverted by something else. He doesn't seem to register that this might be a problem he'd need to tell Parks about. Later, when Parks and Justieau are on the roof,



they smell the same smell Gallagher did. This indicates the hungries are not only waiting for them below the stair landing but also around on the grounds of the house.

Discussion Question 1

Why is it significant that Gallagher tries to make friends with Melanie? What effect does his act of reaching out to her have on your opinion of him, if any?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the confession that Justineau makes to Parks. How does this help to explain her behavior and her guilt up to this point in the novel? How does it help to explain her determination not to let any more children get hurt?

Discussion Question 3

What does it mean for the group of people in the Wainwright House that there are hungries surrounding the house and filling the ground level floor? How will this complicate their plans to leave the next morning?

Vocabulary

oxidized, subdued, depicting, carouse, exhortations, painstakingly, elicits, illicit, distorted, totalitarianism, parapet, unfathomable, preserve, ruthlessly, patriarchal, contagion, abashed, retrospectively, rampart, confessional, monologue, absolution, frivolous, consolation, ambient, trivial, momentous, unprecedented



Chapters 42-47

Summary

In Chapter 42, Parks wakes Justineau and the others early to show them the hungries that are packed around the house and on its first floor. They try to come up with some way to get out of the situation they've gotten themselves into. When Justineau goes to check on Melanie, she is surprised when the girl says that she knows how they can get out. When Justineau tells Parks what Melanie has planned, he is afraid he can't trust her even though she tries to convince him that he can. She tells him they don't even have to take the muzzle off her, she will just need her hands. Parks asks if she's afraid of the hungries. Melanie pauses and then says she isn't because they won't hurt her. Parks continues to test Melanie, questioning her to see how much she understands about her situation. She tells him she will come back to them because she wants to and that she is different from the other hungries because she doesn't want to bite anyone. She asks only that she be allowed to wear her new clothes to complete her mission.

In Chapter 43, at the head of the place where the stairs used to be Justineau helps Melanie get into her new clothes. She also gives her a panic alarm, telling her it might work when she gets to the part of her job where she needs to make a big noise. Justineau gives Melanie a hug but Melanie backs away after only a minute, telling Justineau that it isn't safe. Parks lowers her down to the first floor using a rope. The hungries pay no attention to her. She searches through the town until she finds and catches a red fox. Back at the village square, Melanie screams, getting the attention of the hungries. She lets the fox go and the hungries follow it. After all the hungries have cleared out of the house Melanie returns to the place where Parks lowered her down. She tells him her plan worked. He looks at her curiously for a moment and then tells her she did a good job.

In Chapter 44, the group continues through the town seeing no more hungries. Parks is impressed that Melanie has saved him twice, but not ready to relax around her yet. He has decided to stick with his plan and go straight through London despite the troubles they just experienced. Parks is concerned because Dr. Caldwell is moving so slowly, showing her fatigue even early in the morning. They are walking through a burn shadow, a place where incendiaries were dropped trying to clear out hungries. The process was counterproductive as it was mostly healthy people unable to move out quickly enough who were killed while important infrastructure was destroyed. After 20 years, there is still nothing that grows in these areas. They finally reach the edge of the burn, a line where the black turns back into green. A house on the edge bears the marks where an adult and a child were burned to death.

In Chapter 45, Melanie wonders why she couldn't have been born normally into a real family. She thinks of Pandora opening the box of the world and realizing that there is both good and bad inside. She has learned, however, that one has to actually be out in the world to see that there is good and bad.



In Chapter 46, Melanie asks Justineau about the burn shadow. Justineau tells her the story referring to the hungries and the disease that caused them as being evil. Melanie doesn't like the reference to evil and tells Justineau that she isn't evil. Justineau explains to Melanie she is different from the hungries because she can think and they can't. Melanie hadn't considered this difference until this point. Justineau also explains to her that she is important to Dr. Caldwell because the doctor believes she can find something inside Melanie that can help keep people from getting infected with the hungry fungus or can turn them back if they do get infected. As Melanie thinks about what Justineau has told her, she realizes that everyone, not just Pandora, has a flaw that causes them to do stupid things. Parks signals them it is time to get going. While they walk, Melanie considers the world of which she is now a part.

In Chapter 47, Gallagher discovers that he likes Melanie as she has the backbone to even talk back to the sergeant. He compares her to an adult dressed like a kid. Both he and Melanie are speechless as they walk into London and consider the number of people who once lived there and the strength of what it took to kill them all off. They use Melanie as an advance scout to find which streets are free of hungries and safest for them to travel. After the first few times Parks lets her off the leash to scout an area, he doesn't refasten her when she returns. In the mid afternoon they reach a part of town that has few hungries in it. Gallagher and Melanie inspect a two-tiered bus. Melanie shares with him what she knows about the bus. Gallagher has never been particularly interested in the way the world worked before the Breakdown. He decides they've been away from the group long enough and finds himself reaching down to take Melanie's hand to lead her back to the group. She doesn't notice, but he chides himself for his foolishness.

The sergeant, Justineau and Caldwell are looking at a hungry who has fallen dead in a doorway. A white column with bulbous growths is coming out of the hungry's chest. Caldwell tells them it is the fruiting of the hungry pathogen. The pods on the white column are full of seeds. Caldwell wants to take samples but the Sarge orders them not to touch or even go near any of these. Gallagher is disturbed by the sight of these sprouting bodies and is glad when the sun begins to go down so they don't have to look at them any longer.

Analysis

It is in this section of the novel that Melanie really begins to prove her worth to the sergeant. When it appears to the rest of the group that they are stuck in the Wainwright House with no way out Melanie has already come up with a plan. Her plan is well thought out. It will require that she be allowed to leave the group so she can cause a disturbance that will draw the hungries away from the house. Notice the way Parks questions her before he agrees to let her help them. He's still fearful that she is not to be trusted and will try to trick them or run away. Unprompted, Melanie suggests to him safety measures they can take to make sure that she can do her job without putting any of them at risk from her. In part his questions are meant to determine how much she fully understands about what she is and the danger she holds for the rest of the group.



Notice that by completing this mission successfully the sergeant gains respect for Melanie as he even takes the time to tell her that she did a good job. Later, because he has realized that the hungries don't react to her, he lets Melanie act as a scout, going ahead of them to let them know which routes have the least number of hungries. At this point, Sergeant Parks is probably glad he did not abandon Melanie as he had planned to do when they first escaped from the base.

Notice in this section that Melanie also has a conversation with Justineau about her nature. Melanie had asked Justineau about the burn shadow they had encountered and what had caused it. When Justineau referred to the hungries as being "evil" Melanie stopped her and reminded her that she was a hungry. Was she evil as well? Justineau explained to Melanie that she was different from other hungries because she did have the ability to learn, think and had control of her motor functions. Melanie had never thought about herself in this way before that time, she'd thought either she was all good or all bad, not a mix. Again the idea of Pandora is inserted into Melanie's thoughts as she realizes she is learning about herself and her place in the world, and that she's learning that nothing is either all good or all bad. She feels leaving the base was the act of opening the Pandora's box in this case.

Gallagher has gained respect for Melanie in this section of the novel. He admires her ability and willingness to talk back to the sergeant, a quality that he doesn't have. Notice that it is Gallagher, who was born after the Breakdown, and Melanie, who has never seen the world, who are most enthralled by the sights they encounter as they walk. Unlike Gallagher, Melanie is interested in what she sees and wants to learn and understand what the world was like. Gallagher is awed by what he sees but shows little interest in understanding how different the world was before the Breakdown. Melanie's close scrutiny of what she sees around her helps her to understand what a wonderful world humans were able to make for themselves but that this world was destroyed so easily and quickly.

Even as they walk through the desolate world, the evils of the people who once inhabited it are apparent. This is particularly true for the places where incendiaries were used in a badly thought out attempt to get rid of the hungries. Even Parks shows his anger at these areas, which symbolize to him the decision of people who didn't know what else to do so they did things that would make their situations even worse. When Melanie hears the story of the unleashing of the evil incendiaries that killed people and ruined infrastructure she thinks of Pandora's fatal flaw that prompted her to open the box that similarly unleashed evils on the world. Melanie has come to understand that everyone has a flaw. Melanie's seems to be that she is infected with the hungry fungus.

Also significant in this section of the novel are the fruiting hungries that the group begins to encounter. Caldwell believes these sprouting bodies are the mature form of the hungry fungus. Even though she doesn't believe the pods hold any danger to them as long as they haven't broken open, Parks wants to stay on the safe side and stay away from them. Notice also that Parks is concerned about Caldwell's health. He notices that she is walking slower and slower and wonders what might be wrong with her.



Discussion Question 1

Discuss Pandora as she is presented in this section of the novel. In what ways is Melanie like Pandora? In what ways is she different?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the “foolishness” of Gallagher’s attempt to take Melanie’s hand to lead her back to the others after they’d stopped to look at the bus. Do you think his action was foolish or just second nature? What does that action say about his changing relationship with Melanie? Explain your answer.

Discussion Question 3

Talk about the changing relationship between Parks and Melanie. What causes their relationship to change? What does Melanie do to help him understand she doesn’t want to hurt any of them?

Vocabulary

dispersed, quarry, acerbically, entice, contradicts, chieftain, savage, velocity, scrupulous, ponderously, catechism, logistics, eludes, klaxon, proximity, impassable, inscrutable, taut, desolate, fatigue, incendiaries, cauterized, tallow, sublimed, stamina, keen, consensus, queries, penitent, taut, loitering, apocalyptic, cadge, interrogate, bulbous, indents, interlude, blathers, obscene, protuberances



Chapters 48-53

Summary

In Chapter 48, the group spends its third night in the open locked in the jail area of a police station. They all feel claustrophobic in the enclosed area. When they turn off the last of their flashlights the darkness is so heavy that Justineau feels as if God hadn't even bothered to create light.

In Chapter 49, Melanie thinks about her future. She knows there is no group into which she will be accepted once the people she is with reach Beacon. She considers herself as being like Aeneas who will have to go and discover a new Rome.

In Chapter 50, there is a miracle in store for the group, particularly Caldwell, on the fourth day of their journey. It is raining and everyone is in a sour mood. Their food is gone and they are running low on e-blocker gel. Caldwell has been trying to think about what the fruiting hungries means in relation to her research but is distracted by the pain in her hands. Despite the sergeant's orders not to touch the sprouting things, Caldwell found an opportunity to slip one of the sporangia into the pocket of her lab coat. She is so busy in her thought that she doesn't even notice that they've walked up on a huge metal vehicle. Caldwell thinks at first she's hallucinating but then feels with her hand the raised letters of the name "Rosalind Franklin."

In Chapter 51, Caldwell has been raised to believe that people don't get second chances. She's surprised when she sees Rosie in front of her and considers this to be her second chance. Caldwell stops Parks from forcing the door open. She tells him it's a mobile lab and that by forcing open the door he could be putting at risk any experimentation going on inside. Parks shares with her that he has his doubts about being able to get into the machine by force at any rate as it is heavily armored. Caldwell remembers a crank used for emergency access from the outside. When Caldwell finds the crank and fits it into place Justineau asks her how she knows so much about the vehicle. Caldwell tells her she was part of the group affiliated with the project. She can't bring herself to reveal that she was 27th on the list when 26 scientists were needed.

As soon as Parks has the door open, Caldwell tries to go inside but he stops her, telling her that he needs to make sure there is no one there first. She waits and hopes the labs and equipment is undamaged. Parks returns and tells them there is only one body there, the driver, who appears to have shot himself. Once she's inside, Caldwell sees that the lab has everything she could hope for including an ATLUM.

In Chapter 52, Justineau and Melanie aren't as thrilled about the vehicle as Parks and Caldwell are. As Caldwell looks over the lab equipment, Parks begins poking at the generator. He tells Justineau he might be able to get it working again. Justineau goes to tell Melanie they might be staying there a while but the girl is standing behind her. She



asks to talk to Parks in private. Justineau joins Gallagher where he's taking stock of supplies. He's found a compact disc system and plenty of CD's, but no food.

In Chapter 53, Parks calls a crew meeting. Justineau notices that Melanie isn't there. She questions this but Parks tells Justineau Melanie had to go outside for a while and didn't want Justineau to know why. He tells them he hopes he can fix the generator in the vehicle because it will provide them a safe way back to Beacon. Parks allows those with him to vote on whether they should stay with the vehicle or go. Justineau is the only one who votes against staying with the vehicle.

Justineau offers to go with Gallagher on scavenger duty. Before she leaves she asks to be told where Melanie went. Parks tells her that he's gained respect for Melanie over the past several days and that he wouldn't willingly cut her loose but that their e-blocker isn't working any longer. In order to try to keep her feeding reflex at bay, Melanie wanted to go out and gore herself. Justineau tries to pick a fight with him but he stops it by criticizing himself, an ability Justineau didn't realize Parks possessed.

Analysis

The group makes an important find in this section of chapters. Earlier in the novel, in Chapter 9, two armored tanks to be used for researching a cure of the disease were introduced. Caldwell had been among the group of scientists considered for a position on one of these moving laboratories. She has lived with the feeling of failure because on the list of 26 scientists chosen to man the labs, she was number 27. Even though the labs were sent out but never found again and no significant research or findings were even made because of them Caldwell has spent her life feeling slighted and insignificant. However, the group Caldwell is now a member of happens to walk up on one of these tanks where it was abandoned. Caldwell believes at first that she is hallucinating.

Caldwell recognizes the irony of her situation. She feels she has been given a chance to redeem herself. In a way the entrance of Rosie into the novel does give Caldwell a chance to redeem herself because she knows a good deal about the tank and how it works. She's able to get them inside the vehicle, which they wouldn't have been able to do if she hadn't been with them. For the others, Rosie is a mixed blessing. She provides a place that is protected from the hungries. There is a possibility that she can even give them a ride to Beacon. However, because the vehicle is a rolling laboratory, it contains all of the things that Caldwell needs to complete her dissection of Melanie.

In Chapter 49 as Melanie considers her future, she also foreshadows her fate as she considers that she must be like Aeneas, who had to run from civilization and create his own new world after the fall of Troy. Because Melanie is different from anyone she's met before — she's a hungry but also has the ability to think — she realizes there is no place that she will be accepted.



Also notice in this section of chapters that Parks finally admits to Justineau that he's had to reconsider his opinion of Melanie. He no longer sees her just as a disease carrier, but recognizes her intelligence as well. Even so, Parks reminds Justineau that Melanie is still a hungry and still has the instinct to eat flesh.

Significant also in this section of the novel is the offense that Justineau feels when Melanie goes to Parks about her feelings of hunger instead of to her. Even though Parks has developed a higher respect for Melanie, Justineau is still suspicious of his intentions when it comes to the girl. They both realize they are facing a problem because they have no more e-blocker which masks the odor of the pheromones, but neither quite knows what should be done about that situation yet.

Discussion Question 1

Chapter 48 ends with the sentence: "It's like God never bothered" (p. 254). What is the significance of this quote? How does it relate to the immediate situation in which the group finds itself in as well as the situation of population as a whole?

Discussion Question 2

What is the significance of the group just coming upon the mobile lab sent out 20 years before when no one else had been able to find it? Why is it like a dream come true for Caldwell?

Discussion Question 3

How does Parks show in this section of the novel that he has gained respect for Melanie? Why does it offend Justineau that Melanie would voice her concern about the hunger she is experiencing to Parks and not to her?

Vocabulary

irrevocable, desultory, stupefying, indefatigable, scenarios, sporangia, integument, hyperpolarisation, correlates, entropy, demure, vehemence, dourly, sieving, tersely, omission, consoled, piquancy, keen, breached, amok, centrifuges, verdict, punctilious, amends, embrasures, medieval, aft, rapt, armatures, fathomless, stereophonic, eclectic, ferocious, precariously, remiss, solicitude, salvage, forage, justify, gorge, snide, insinuation, mollified



Chapters 54-58

Summary

In Chapter 54, Gallagher is nervous alone with Justineau. He's also thinking again about the soundness of his decision to go back to Beacon. The search for food is slow and nerve wracking. To make matters worse, it is raining. They finally find a locked up garage next to a looted corner store. There are only carbonated beverages and snack foods in the garage, but some it is still good so they load up and head back to Rosie.

In Chapter 55, in the lab Caldwell makes slides from the tissue samples she took from the hungry at Wainwright House. She can't use the microscope yet so she instead puts the sporangium she collected into a sealed manipulator tank. Using a scalpel she manages to break open the sporangium revealing grey spores. As she manipulates the spores, she realizes that Parks is standing behind her. She tells him the spores won't open easily and will require an environmental trigger to open. The sergeant thinks she's been infected with the hungry virus because of the way she's acting. She tells him he's too stupid to have a career in science. She takes the bandage off her left hand and shows him the red streaks that run up her arm. She is suffering with blood poisoning. Although she took a massive dose of antibiotics when they first entered Rosie, she doubts it will have any affect. Realizing the cure to the problem isn't as easy as he thought it would be Parks questions Caldwell about the spores. She tells him they will be dangerous only if they open. If the spores are released, people who breathe them in will be infected. She estimates what is left of humanity will be gone a month after the spores open.

In Chapter 56, Justineau begins to worry as soon as they get back to Rosie and sees that Melanie has not returned. She recognizes something is bothering Parks but that it is different from her concerns. He's worried because they are out of e-blocker gel. Not only do they risk attracting hungries, he also worries what the increased smell will do to Melanie. He knows they'll have to think of some other way to restrain her. Justineau chides Parks because she thinks he's thinking there is some easy way to get rid of Melanie. She tells him he took responsibility for the child when he brought her in from the outside. She pulls out the flare gun and shows it to him. He tries to stop her, even going so far as to point his handgun at her. After she opens the door, he drops the hand that is holding the gun. Justineau sets off the flare. It lights up the sky with a red light. Parks flatly tells Justineau she needs to get back into Rosie as Melanie won't be the only one who's seen the flare.

In Chapter 57, Melanie is cheered by the flare even though she wasn't lost. She found a feral cat to eat but was more concerned about something else she'd seen earlier that day. After she'd eaten, she walked around until she found a building with the sign "arts depot" with noises coming from inside. She walks out onto what appears to be a balcony and hears the laughter of children. She believes it sounds like there were lots and lots of people playing a game. Her eyes adjusted to the dark and Melanie was



finally able to see what was happening. She watches for a long while before she leaves the building. Outside, she realizes she is crying.

In Chapter 58, Justineau sits up the night waiting for Melanie. Gallagher sleeps while Parks works on the generator and Caldwell looks at slides with a battery-powered microscope. It is dawn before Justineau finally sees Melanie headed back to Rosie. Although she fights against it, Parks makes her wait until he has talked to Melanie and gotten her presentable before he will let Justineau see her. Justineau lashes out at Caldwell when she goes through the lab away from where Parks is getting Melanie back inside. She tells Caldwell she doesn't get to see or talk to Melanie but Parks interrupts her and corrects her. He says that Melanie wants to talk to all of them and that they need to listen. As they gather, Melanie tells them they aren't alone.

Analysis

Notice that Gallagher is still concerned about the sanity of the idea of going back to Beacon. Even as he and Justineau search for food for them to eat that night, a more pressing issue that a reunion with his alcoholic family, Gallagher is preoccupied with the fear of going back to his family. Justineau, meanwhile, worries about Melanie. She still hasn't returned from her hunting expedition when she and Gallagher return to Rosie with the snack foods they had found. Knowing that he can't stop her, Parks lets Justineau send up a flare to indicate to Melanie where they are. Notice, however, since the group has entered the area of London that has a good many dead hungries, they have seen very few live ones. Even though Parks indicates they will suffer the consequences of Justineau's flare, there is no immediate influx of hungries to the area.

Meanwhile, while she was out on her own, Melanie has seen something that has disturbed her quite a bit. As in the past, she's used the schooling that Justineau and the others gave her to recognize the unusual things she's been seeing around her. Inside the arts depot, once her eyes adjust to the light, she realizes she's standing inside a theater. A few clues are given as to what she might be seeing. She hears the laughter of children, sounding as if they are playing a game. The laughter reminds her of her friends in the classroom so this could account for the sadness Melanie felt when she left the theater.

Also significant in this section is Parks' confrontation with Caldwell. It is the first time they have been alone since the journey started. It is no secret that Parks does not like Caldwell. He's been noticing her odd behavior and her slowness as they have been traveling. It appears that he believes she has been infected with the fungus and has just not told anyone. Notice that he has his gun trained on her as he first approaches her as if he fears she might try to attack him. Caldwell quickly dissipates his worry when she shows him the red streaks on her arms. She has blood poisoning caused by the cuts on her hands.

Notice the contempt with which Caldwell treats Parks when she tells him about the sporangium and the threat it holds. Realizing that he isn't scientifically minded, Caldwell



attempts to make him feel dumb by using terms he can't understand. Instead of trying to play well with the group with which she finds herself, Caldwell prefers to make them feel insignificant because they don't have the same level of scientific intelligence that she has.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Parks think that Caldwell might have been infected with the fungus? What does it appear he planned to do if she was affected?

Discussion Question 2

What do you think it is that Melanie saw in the theater of the arts depot that upset her so badly?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the conversation between Caldwell and Parks about the sporangium. How do these spores pose a danger to humans? Are they an immediate danger?

Vocabulary

metaphorical, ransacked, bayonet, euphoria, impede, efficacy, sequestered, fractal, conceivable, vagaries, topography, sepsis, unitary, stagnation, pandemic, innocuous, robust, contrite, taciturn, insinuatingly, nonchalance, ascends, abattoir, deigned, irrelevant, balustrade, gradations, perilously, impasse



Chapters 59-60

Summary

In Chapter 59, Melanie tells the group she saw junkers practice fighting each other in an abandoned theater. She thinks they may have been the same ones that were at the base. Gallagher is terrified. He believes they should run but Parks tells the group he's close to getting the generator fixed. He believes they should wait as they'd have more safety in Rosie than on foot. Caldwell notes that what Melanie described as unusual behavior from the junkers.

After Parks tells them they are to hunker down in Rosie until further notice he asks Melanie how she is doing. She says she can smell all of them since they have run out of e-blocker. She thinks they need to find some way to restrain her as a precaution. Caldwell notes there is a specimen cage in the lab. Justineau doesn't like the idea of Melanie being locked in a cage but Melanie insists. Caldwell and Justineau begin fighting but Parks puts an end to it when he tells Justineau he needs her in the engine room. Parks warns Caldwell to stay away from Melanie or else she'll have to answer to him.

In the engine room Parks closes the door. He tells Justineau he wants her to find out what it was that Melanie saw. He knows it was something that scared her but doesn't think it was junkers. He points out all of the discrepancies he noticed in Melanie's story. Justineau also notice the way Melanie kept looking at Caldwell during her tale, as if she were just talking to her. When Justineau questions why Parks didn't call Melanie on her lie Parks said he felt it was something she was too scared to talk about. Parks surprises Justineau by talking about Melanie like a human being and Justineau rewards him with a kiss on the cheek.

In the lab, Justineau orders Caldwell outside. When she asks Melanie about the junkers she is surprised how easily Melanie admits to her that there were no junkers. What she'd seen were 15 children of every age chasing rats in the theater. They were hungries, like Melanie was. She didn't want Dr. Caldwell, Parks or Gallagher to know about them because she was afraid they'd want to capture them and hold them as prisoners so they could experiment on them. Justineau promises not to let these children be used for experimentation. As she's thinking how to best handle the situation, she feels a vibration then a rumble that quickly dies out. In the engine room, Parks grins at her telling her that he got it. He explains he cut the engine because he didn't want anyone to hear until they were ready to leave. Justineau, who has been joined by Caldwell, suggests they roll out. Suddenly Parks realizes Gallagher is not with them.

In Chapter 60, Gallagher is running afraid of what is both ahead of and behind him. He believes if he can reach the river, he can find an island where he'll be safe. As he walks he notices shadows moving and gets the feeling he's being followed. Gallagher suddenly realizes he left quite a few things behind that he'd intended to bring with him.



His biggest concern is that he doesn't have any food and very little water. He tries to go back to the garage where he and Justineau got the food the day before but gets lost trying to navigate. He's more and more sure that he isn't alone as he's hearing skittering sounds when he's walking that stop when he stops.

Hoping to lose them Gallagher takes off across the street into a burned out building that turns out to be a mini mart of some sort. There is still food on the shelves. He tries out one of the packets and finds it is edible. He stuffs as many as he can into the pockets of his clothes. He gets distracted by porno magazines and doesn't look up until he hears the floorboards creak. A tiny girl is holding out a headless rat to him. He tries to talk to her, knowing she is one of Melanie's kind of hungries. He believes what she is giving him is a peace offering. When he reaches out for the rat, however, the girl pulls it back. He stands still a moment believing he has misunderstood her.

As he waits, he feels sudden pain in both legs as small figures run away from him. Suddenly a kid with a painted face swings at Gallagher with a baseball bat. Gallagher tries to stand but can't. He feels his wounds and realizes the hamstrings in both legs have been cut. Gallagher pulls out his gun and threatens to shoot the kids but they don't seem concerned. He tries to shoot the boy who seems to be in charge but can't because his clip is empty. He remembers the grenade knowing he can at least make his death quick but he can't pull the pin because he can't make the kids understand what the grenade would do to them. When he finally lets go of the baseball bat, the only thing that had been keeping them at bay, they settle in on him.

Analysis

In this section of the novel Melanie tells the group as a whole that she saw junkers practicing fighting skills in the arts depot. Later, when she is alone with Justineau she tells her that it was actually a group of child hungries, just like her, who she saw. Melanie doesn't make a very good liar as the sergeant and Caldwell both saw through her story right away. Melanie isn't lying to Parks or Justineau as much as she is to Caldwell. As she watched the children playing together and gathering their meal, she recognized that they were a family. They had learned to care for each other and interact in a way that is beyond Caldwell's understanding. Because Caldwell doesn't understand the importance of friendship and family, only the pursuit of scientific knowledge, Melanie knows she'd want to capture these children and use them for her research. Melanie intends to stop that if she has any say in the matter at all.

Melanie's announcement, however, has an unintended impact on Gallagher. He's always had the idea that his life would end by a hungry taking his life. That though seems to become a self-fulfilling prophecy as Gallagher is killed by the children hungries. Even though Parks, Caldwell and Justineau all saw through Melanie's story that there were junkers in the area, Gallagher chose to believe her. In the end, his childlike innocence and naivety are what gets him killed. He has gotten used to Melanie and her determination not to hurt anyone. In fact, the two have forged a friendship as they've explored the world together. Now, he expects the same kind of reaction from the



children who follow him into the mini mart. Significant in Gallagher's death is that he allows himself to be killed without fighting back. Even though he has a grenade, he can't bring himself to pull the pin because he can't make the children realize that what he's holding in his hand will hurt them. Gallagher is far too kind hearted to have ever been a soldier.

After Parks and Melanie have decided that Melanie should be confined in the specimen cage in order to make her feel more secure about their safety since they are out of e-blockers, Caldwell and Justineau come to heads on the main theme of the book which asks if scientific knowledge or compassion/morality is more important. Caldwell is offended because Justineau wants her to leave the lab for a minute so she can talk to Melanie. Caldwell is typically self-important and claims that a few minutes out of the lab might affect the survival of the human population.

Notice also in this section that although Justineau has gained respect for Parks, she still considers him bloodthirsty and cruel. Despite her belief that Parks is cruel, notice she believes she is even crueler than he. Although she's doing so in a joking manner, she makes the decision to herself that they shouldn't get together as they might breed. Her insinuation is that their children would be cruel and bloodthirsty as well.

Discussion Question 1

How did Gallagher foresee his own death? Do you think he subconsciously thought dying in London was better than going home to his family? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Why is it significant that Melanie has found a group of children like her? What does this mean for her possible future?

Discussion Question 3

When Justineau wants to talk to Melanie in private, she orders Caldwell out of lab. Caldwell poses a question to Justineau: "Which will do the most good in the end? Your compassion, or my commitment to my work?" (p. 315). Discuss the answer to this question. What is more important? Compassion or scientific discoveries? Maybe a combination of both?

Vocabulary

proximity, pragmatically, anomalous, muses, retrospective, pragmatic, rejoinder, impede, existential, culling, feral, surreal, exorcism, vintage, terse, vertigo, projectile, anonymous, desiccated, trove, unmitigated, emaciated, impasse, hamstring, incongruously, louche, effervescing, incredulously



Chapters 61-64

Summary

In Chapter 61, Parks, Justineau and Melanie set out to search for Gallagher. Caldwell claimed she was too weak to walk. Melanie gets his scent right away. When they reach the mini mart Melanie tells Parks he should get out his gun as she senses there are Hungries in the area. When they find Gallagher, it is much too late. Parks feels guilty because he let the boy die alone. Melanie says they should bury him but Parks angrily asks what the point would be. She replies that they need to honor Gallagher's memory. Melanie reasons that if they can't bury him, they should burn him. Even as Justineau tries to explain to Melanie why they can't do that Parks decides they should do that. He gets a box of disposable lighters that he empties over Kieran's body. As he lights a match, Melanie is also talking to the body but they can't hear what she is saying. They have almost reached Rosie when Melanie jerks up her head having heard a noise. Parks realizes it is Rosie's engines. As the vehicle rushes toward them Parks steps into the road to signal Caldwell to stop but she does not. She continues to accelerate as she drives away.

In Chapter 62, as soon as the others had left, Caldwell locked Rosie from the inside and started up the generator to power the lab. She notices in the samples that she's taken from the Hungry in the Wainwright house that the brain had begun to grow new neurons to replace those destroyed by the fungus. She wishes she had her samples from the lab and realizes she needs samples from test subject one but she doubts her research would be approved by anyone in the group.

Putting together her plan, Caldwell puts together the airlock from the inside intending to poison her companions with gas when they return to Rosie. She's hoping Melanie will enter first and that she can get the outside door closed before anyone else is hurt. She opens the baffles on the windows so she can watch for the rest of her group to return. As she dozes and drifts in and out of consciousness, Caldwell sees the face of a small child looking at her through the window. As she watches, she sees that there are a whole pack of these children roaming around Rosie.

Caldwell makes her decision without even realizing she has done so. She opens the outer door all the way and the airlock door partway. A boy throws himself at her and Caldwell closes the inner airlock door on his torso. She starts to laugh when she realizes the Hungry's head is not damaged but a stone shoots in through the door and hits her in the face. Caldwell hits the controls to close the door. At the last minute, the boy is able to wedge the baseball bat into the opening. More and more hands of Hungries start trying to open the door and Caldwell is shocked when she sees it start to open. She runs for the cockpit and puts Rosie into motion. She pushes the vehicle as fast as it will go feeling only vibrations when it impacts something. She sees some figures in the road, she thinks one of them might have looked like Parks, but flies by them too fast to really recognize them. She remembers the cameras that are installed



on Rosie and checks out the progress the hungries have made. Now there are only two left hanging onto Rosie. She deliberately scrapes against the side of a building, causing one of the hungries to lose its grip. She wants to stop and examine the boy she did catch but is afraid the painted boy might catch up to her. She finally drives far enough she feels comfortable slowing down. When she sees a gray mass in front of her she believes she might be going blind. She stops Rosie and rubs her eyes. When she looks again, she sees a forty-foot high grey wall. It is formed by the fungus *Ophiocordyceps*.

In Chapter 63, Melanie finds she is unable to be furious like Justineau because she is still sad that Gallagher was killed. She's happy about Caldwell driving away until she realizes it means that Justineau will have no place to take cover. It is Melanie who encourages them to go after Caldwell. She runs ahead, showing them the way. Before she leaves, she hugs Justineau and tells her that she won't let anything happen to her.

In Chapter 64, Caldwell exits Rosie through the cockpit door. After she's studied the wall made by the fungus, she gets back into Rosie and goes back to the lab. She secures the hungry caught in the door and cuts off its head. She puts the head on a work surface then returns to the airlock to throw the remainder of the child's body out of the vehicle. She has no guilt or sorrow for what she has done.

Analysis

Parks gets angry in this section of the novel. Instead of his general stance of being angry just for the heck of it, Parks is angry because the squad of one man that he had under his command had been killed. Then, when Parks realizes that Melanie has learned all of things that she has under his watch, things he now considers useless like the act of burying a fallen soldier in order to show respect, he gets even angrier. Even though he once considered the school lessons the children at the base were made to attend a nuisance, he now sees how much potential damage those lessons did to the children. Through her lessons, Melanie believed there was a world of which she would be a part some day. She believed the things she'd learned in her schooling had merit and worth in her life. Instead of choosing to disillusion the girl and tell her the practice of burying a fallen soldier was bullshit, he decided the best course of action would be to respect her wishes. Even though they can't bury what's left of Gallaher, he set fire to his remains. Notice that Parks is actually angry enough about what has been done to Melanie that he considers it to be a war crime.

Meanwhile, Caldwell has discovered the other hungry children despite Melanie's best attempts to keep them hidden from her. She gets herself in a pickle, however, as she tries to trap one of these children in Rosie's airlock and discovers that they are much stronger than what she imagined. Although the doors of the vehicle work on hydraulics, the children are able to pull it open. She drives off in Rosie believing that is the only way to save herself from the mess she has made. As she drives she literally hits a wall. This wall is made of the sprouting bodies of dead hungries.



Notice that even though Melanie is happy that Caldwell is on the run, she is smart enough that she realizes quickly that no Rosie means Parks and Justineau have no place to take cover. Because these child hungries she has found are able to think and work together, they pose a new and more severe threat for Parks and the others.

Adding to the theme of science versus morality, notice that Caldwell shows no remorse for what she has done. She needed a specimen of a second-generation hungry to study, she took it. She killed a child and doesn't even consider that what she did was wrong. She's also taken off with the only secure shelter available to her and the rest of the group and doesn't feel bad about that either.

Discussion Question 1

Consider Parks' anger at the things the hungry children were taught that he now considers useless. Do you think he overstates the damage done when he considers this education equivalent with a war crime? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

If you were Parks, would you have trusted Caldwell enough to leave her alone with Rosie? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Do you think Melanie, Parks and Justineau did right by burning Gallagher's remains? Why or why not? Why does Parks argue at first there is no point?

Vocabulary

furtive, depictions, chasm, unserviceable, consent, cagoule, pyre, behemoth, punctiliously, turret, profligate, perseveres, subliminal, increments, avidly, enthralled, immured, stratagem, sentient, cohort, juggernaut, perturbed, necrotic, dysfunctional, concedes, creosote, cumbersome, nostalgia, coalesce, sentience, rivulets



Chapters 65-68

Summary

In Chapter 65, Melanie points to Parks and Justineau, showing where Rosie has stopped in front of a wall of what looks like dirty snow. They inspect Rosie and see the body of the male hungry lying outside the door. Caldwell is watching them from inside Rosie. She puts up a note in the window saying that she has to work and she is afraid they might stop her. She doesn't seem to care when Justineau motions to her that they might die. Parks tries the emergency access but has no luck getting in that way. Justineau asks Park what they should do. He tells her he plans to scout out someplace for them to stay the night. Before he goes to look for a place Parks asks Melanie if she is sleepy. When she says she isn't, he asks her to see if there was a way around the grey mass.

In Chapter 66 Melanie is glad for a project because she's unhappy about everything that has happened that day. She believes it is her fault that Gallagher got killed because of the story she told about the junkies. She is angry with Caldwell for leaving Justineau with no place safe to sleep and even angrier with her for killing the young hungry for her tests. She thinks how the child hungries had learned how to be a family even though they had no one to teach them formal lessons. They had killed Gallagher, she thought, but knew they didn't know any better. Melanie believes that Caldwell should have known that killing was wrong.

She follows the wall for a long time to the east, finding no way around it. She also follows it a long way to the west. Finally, Melanie tries to go through the grey mass but only gets so far until she gets to an area so thickly infested with trunks she can't walk through. She's also come across the body of a hungry, still walking, but starting to sprout.

In Chapter 67, Caldwell continues to work even though her fever has reached 103 degrees. She is awed at the thin slices made by the microtome. What she finds is bleak and absolute but Caldwell feels better because she has realized the truth. She is distracted when she hears noises coming from inside Rosie. She believes she hears voices on the radio and sees a flashlight outside the windows. She tries to get an answer on the radio but is not successful. She puts on one of the biohazard suits before opening the door. She sees the light still moving near the end of Rosie. She walks toward the light and with a sinking feeling discovers someone has tied the flashlight onto a metal rail. Believing she has been tricked, Caldwell rushes back to get inside Rosie before someone can attack her or take over the vehicle.

Once she is inside with the doors locked Caldwell begins to calm down. She walks to the lab and is surprised to see Melanie sitting there in her chair, reading her notes. Caldwell realizes it was Melanie who tricked her so she could get inside. Melanie tells her that she wants the truth about why she is the way she is. Caldwell fights with



herself, wanting to tell someone what she has discovered, but not wanting it to be Melanie. She finally gives in and explains to Melanie that her brain structures and the brain structures of the other children like her are different. Caldwell explains Melanie was probably born to a mother who was already infected. While the fungus totally took control of a first generation hungry's brain, the second-generation hungries, like Melanie, live in a symbiotic relationship with the fungus. As Caldwell feels her blood poisoning is entering its final stage, Melanie continues to listen as she talks. Caldwell is grateful, as she believes Melanie had been sent to take the knowledge she'd learned to Beacon for her.

In Chapter 68, Parks and Justineau were having a bad night where they'd hidden out in a third story loft. They hear hungries below them, but those creatures can't climb up to where they are. As they sit together, Justineau tells Parks she hasn't been fair to him. She holds Parks' hand, and then kisses him on the lips. He turns off the flashlight.

Analysis

In this section of the novel Melanie weighs the actions of the children hungries against those of Caldwell adding to the theme of morality versus scientific knowledge. Caldwell has done about everything she can do to prove to Melanie that she doesn't care about people. Even though she should know her actions were wrong, Caldwell killed one of the hungry children she had discovered living in the arts depot. Melanie finds the murder particularly sad because those children were kinder to one another and acted more as a family unit than some civilized people did.

Notice also that Melanie blames herself for Gallagher's death. She realizes that he ran away because she scared him with the story she told about the junkers. It was, however, in her attempt to keep Caldwell from killing the children that Melanie told that story. While Melanie is upset that Gallagher got killed, she doesn't find fault with the hungry children for killing him. She sees them as operating on a different level of morality as they don't know it is ill mannered to kill and eat another person.

Another mark against Caldwell's popularity is her act of locking the rest of the group outside Rosie. She does so because she is afraid Parks and Justineau will try to interfere with her research. She seems unconcerned that by being left outside with no cover, Justineau and Parks face almost certain death.

Because of Caldwell's insistence through the novel that Melanie had worth only as a test subject, it is poetic justice that Melanie is the one who manages to trick Caldwell into opening Rosie's door, and then acts as the one who hears the results of her experimentation. The child outsmarts Caldwell, the learned scientist, and seems to understand the scientific terms that Caldwell uses to describe her findings almost as well as Caldwell does.

Also in this section Parks and Justineau finally have the sexual encounter for which Parks had been hoping. It comes after Justineau admits to Parks that she hasn't treated



him fairly through their journey. He has impressed her and earned her respect as he has managed to keep them alive, with the exception of Gallagher, despite the dangers they have faced. She has come to realize they would not have had the success they did without his expertise. Parks has also impressed her with his willingness to accept Melanie as a person once he learned more about her unique personality.

Discussion Question 1

What is your opinion of Caldwell at this point in the novel? Do you feel any sympathy toward her at all?

Discussion Question 2

Consider Melanie's opinion that the hungry children could not be held responsible for Gallagher's death because they didn't know any better. Do you agree with her? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

How have Parks and Justineau's opinions of one another changed during the course of the novel? Discuss why they have begun to feel differently about each other.

Vocabulary

boggle, atavistic, proliferation, recoils, apparition, violation, filaments, literal, ethereal, null, innocuous, protracted, aural, irresolute, hectoring, pertinent, substrate, embargoed, copulating, assiduously, laconically, fraternizing, equivocal, pristine



Chapters 69-72

Summary

In Chapter 69, Justineau and Parks begin to hear the noises below them take on an organized sound. The child hungries have found them. Knowing they have to get away, Parks and Justineau escape through the skylight. They walk along the roof of the building but the hungries follow them. Parks begins shooting at them. Justineau makes him stop when she sees the children are running away. Parks knows the children are just regrouping. They begin hitting Justineau and Parks with stones from a slingshot about the time Melanie calls for Parks on the radio. He tells her they have been found by the hungry kids. Melanie tells him she is coming for them. As they are climbing over a garden wall Justineau is hit hard enough with a projectile to knock her off the wall and bring blood. Parks picks up Justineau and runs with her as the hungries continue to shoot things at him. He gets tackled and then smacked on the shoulder. The boy bites Parks' arm. A girl tries to bite Justineau but Parks grabs Justineau's gun and begins shooting blindly. The children scatter because of the sound of the gun as well as a new ear splitting sound.

In Chapter 70, Melanie is wearing the helmet from an environmental suit, has painted her body blue and is pressing the panic alarm that Justineau gave her. She's additionally shooting the flare gun at the children. The boy who appears to be the leader swings at Melanie with the baseball bat, knocking off her helmet. Although she doesn't want to, she shoots the boy in the face with the flare gun. She finishes him off with the bat. The other children run away.

In Chapter 71, Parks carries Justineau back to Rosie with Melanie leading the way. When they reach Rosie, Melanie knows Parks is tired but tells him they have something left to do. She has him direct her how to work the flamethrowers. Because she isn't tall enough, he has to shoot for her. They aim at the wall of fungus.

After he's finished, he tells Melanie she has to let him out of Rosie because he isn't safe anymore. They pass Justineau who has regained consciousness but doesn't seem to notice them. Melanie tells her that she will come back for her and take care for her. They go outside and Melanie helps the sergeant sit down. She tells him that he saved Justineau. As they sit there he asks if she could shoot him since he can't shoot with his left arm. He doesn't want to be a hungry. He realizes they've set fire to the fungus and that the spores are what is filling the air. Parks is overwhelmed with what they have done but Melanie tells him that it was the only way to allow the world to start over again. Suddenly Parks tells Melanie that a woman named Marie was blonde. He suggests that their child might have looked like Melanie. When Melanie sees the hunger reflex kicking in in Parks, she shoots him.

In Chapter 72, Justineau realizes she's back inside Rosie. Caldwell is dead on the floor. There is no sign of Melanie or Parks. Outside the windows it looks like grey snow is



falling. She starts to cry when she realizes it is the spores. Melanie enters through the airlock. She covers herself in fungal disinfectant. Justineau realizes what her life will be like from that point forward. Melanie hugs Justineau and then tells her to get dressed and meet the children. Melanie glares at the children warning them to stay still as Justineau came out in her environmental suit. Justineau greets her new class and begins her lesson.

Analysis

Knowing there is no cure or inoculation for the fungus that causes the hungry disease, Melanie opens Pandora's box when she and the sergeant set fire to the huge mass of fungus plants situated in front of Rosie. The decision is one that Melanie apparently did not arrive at without thinking through the circumstances carefully. She has seen what the people who have been left living on the Earth are doing to one another. The people who live in places of refuge are at war with the junkers and the hungries. The new population of child hungries, like Melanie, lie somewhere in the middle of those who are uninfected and the hungries. Without getting rid of the groups that want to harm these children, Melanie knows that they will never have a chance to survive. She also believes they are the best hope to repopulate and once again get control of the modern world.

Ironic in this section is that the child whom Sergeant Parks had once feared would infect him with the hungry fungus and kill him is now the one whom he asks to kill him so that he doesn't have to live his life as a hungry. Parks also admits to Melanie that Marie was blonde, like Melanie. He suggests that if they'd had a child, that child could have looked like Melanie. It is this new knowledge of Parks having a significant other who was blonde that helps the reader understand his dislike of Melanie at the beginning of the novel much better. Melanie must have reminded him of Marie the whole time he was working with her.

Also poetic justice is Justineau's imprisonment in Rosie. The guilt she felt because she had killed a child and never taken responsibility for its death had eaten at her the entire course of the novel. Because she will not be able to go outside Rosie unless she is wearing an environmental protection suit, Justineau will effectively spend the rest of her life in jail. Although she will be jailed in a sense, Justineau will also have the job of teaching the new inhabitants of the Earth everything they must know in order to run the world.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the significance of the reader learning that the Sergeant had a significant other named Maria who was blonde, like Melanie.



Discussion Question 2

Discuss the significance of Justineau having to live out her life imprisoned in Rosie and an environmental suit. Do you think her punishment suits her crime?

Discussion Question 3

Consider Melanie's decision to set fire to the huge forest of fungus plants. The fire will cause the pods to release their spores, infecting the remaining population of the Earth with the fungus. Do you think she made the best decision based on the circumstances? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

piebald, resonant, eclectic, tactics, ululation, polarised, grimacing, rime, increments, resigns, contrite



Characters

Melanie

Melanie is one of the main characters of the novel. She is a 10-year-old girl who has been infected by a fungus. Instead of the fungus taking over her brain, as it has in other people who have been infected, Melanie is very intelligent and high functioning. Like the other hungries, however, when Melanie smells the pheromones of another human or blood, the fungus takes over and causes an almost irresistible desire for her to want to bite and feed on people and animals. It is through the transfer of saliva into the bloodstream that the fungus is spread. Because Melanie is one of several children who seem to have some sort of partial immunity to the fungus, she has been brought to a refurbished army base on which a scientist is trying to find a cure or vaccine for the fungus. During her time in captivity on the base Melanie makes friends with a psychologist brought in to teach the children and determine how well they interact mentally and emotionally as compared to normal children. The whole purpose of Melanie being on the base is so that the scientist can dissect her and study her brain in hopes of finding a cure.

Melanie is on the table about to be dissected when hungries are forced to overrun the base by a band of junkies. Melanie is one of the few who escapes from the base after the attack. As she travels with the small group of survivors, she gains the respect of Sergeant Parks, the man in charge of the base who once hated her because of the danger she represented. She is brave enough to save him and the rest of the group from hungries on more than one occasion. Because she is infected with the disease, Melanie is able to move among the hungries with no fear of being bit or injured. She can also mask the odor of the other uninfected people her for short periods of time.

During her time learning from Justineau, Melanie was particularly interested in the story of Pandora and the box of evils she unleashed on the world. In the end of the novel Melanie gets to be like Pandora as she realizes she must cause the rest of humanity to be infected by the virus in order for the entire world to be saved. Melanie learns from Dr. Caldwell, the scientist, that there is no cure or inoculation for the fungus. She realizes the only way to save humanity is to set fire to the spores they had found growing from dead hungries. These spores would open releasing the fungus so that it could be contracted through the air. Melanie knows the only way for the world's population to begin again is to kill off the remaining uninfected people who she knows will only keep killing each other and the second generation hungries, the ones whom she believes hold the only hope for the world to be repopulated.

Helen Justineau

Helen Justineau is the psychologist brought into the army base to work with the strange children who have been found apparently born to a mother who had been affected with



the fungus. Of the three adults who were at the base, Justineau represents emotion. She views the test subjects as children even though they are carriers of the fungus. Justineau becomes particularly attached to Melanie. When she learns that Melanie has been taken to the lab to be dissected by Caldwell, Justineau goes to the lab armed with a fire extinguisher to keep Caldwell from hurting Melanie. Justineau had earlier requested that the leaders at Beacon make Caldwell stop doing physical testing on children. Caldwell already resented Justineau because she felt Justineau was interfering with her work. When the hungries break into the base during Justineau and Caldwell's standoff over Melanie, Caldwell is forced to leave the base without her research notes or specimens. She blames Justineau for the loss of her work.

Justineau is one of the people who manage to escape the hungries who were forced to invade the base. During the journey Justineau acts as an advocate for Melanie as she insists that the girl be treated like a person and not so much like a prisoner or test subject. Also during the trip, Justineau confides in Parks that she accidentally ran over a child with her car and never told anyone about the death. It is because of this child's death and her unresolved guilt that Justineau has dedicated herself so strongly to saving Melanie.

At the end of the novel Justineau is the only uninfected person left alive. After Melanie set fire to the sporangium the air was filled with fungus spores. The only way that Justineau could go outside was to wear an environmental suit. Even though she never was punished for the crime of killing the child, Justineau must live the rest of her life in a jail of sorts in order to keep from being infected. She is also appointed by Melanie to be the teacher of the children who will repopulate the world.

Caroline Caldwell

Caroline Caldwell is the scientist assigned to study the second-generation hungries in hopes of finding a cure or vaccine for the disease. She is determined to redeem her reputation as a scientist by finding this cure. She was offended when the government included her in a group of elite scientists to train to initially try to find a cure for the disease. Dr. Caldwell, however, missed the cutoff of those chosen by just one slot. In the group of the three adults from the base, Dr. Caldwell represents science. She sees the second-generation hungries as test subjects, not as living beings. Her ability to do anything necessary to the children in order to find a cure shows her lack of emotion of empathy. She is the antithesis of Justineau.

While fighting off the hungries when they overtake the lab, Caldwell badly cuts her hands with glass from a broken window. Even though Justineau treats the wounds, Caldwell contracts sepsis or blood poisoning. Later, the group happens to find one of the moving labs commissioned by the government. Caldwell thinks that all of her dreams have come true. She finally has the equipment she needs to properly study her test subjects. Caldwell, however, has to fight against the time she has alive and the people with whom she is traveling to do her work. At one point she commanders the lab leaving the others to fend for themselves against the hungries. Melanie tricks Caldwell



into letting her into the lab. While she's there, Caldwell tells Melanie what she has learned about the disease and that there is no cure or inoculation available for it. Caldwell dies from her blood poisoning just after she is able to tell Melanie her findings.

Sergeant Eddie Parks

Sergeant Eddie Parks is the commander in charge of the base on which Caldwell is working to find a cure for the fungus even though he technically doesn't have the ranking needed to be in charge of the base. Of the three adults Parks represents legality. He believes in following orders and obeying the law.

In the beginning chapters of the novel, Parks is described as a monster who is abusive to Melanie and hateful to Justineau. As the novel progresses, the sergeant's personality becomes more palatable. He gains respect for Melanie, showing that he can change his mind about people, and at several times during the trip takes advice from the others in his group and puts it into play when he realizes their opinions are better than his.

At the end of the novel the reader feels pity for the sergeant as he is bit by a hungry in his attempt to save Justineau from the creatures. The sergeant's right arm is damaged badly and he is not able to use it to shoot himself so he asks Melanie to shoot him and not let him live as a hungry. Before his brain completely shuts down, the sergeant admits to Melanie that Marie, apparently a significant woman in his life, perhaps his wife, was a blonde. He says that if they'd had children, they might have been like Melanie.

Private Kieran Gallagher

Private Kieran Gallagher is the one soldier that Parks manages to save from the base when the hungries attacked. Gallagher is the one who ran into the junkies when he and some other soldiers were trying to trap some hungries. The hungries killed the junkies. The sergeant suspects the act of the junkies running the hungries into the base might have been retaliation for Gallagher getting the junkies killed.

Gallagher is young and green. He has known nothing of life before the fungus. He joined the army to get away from his family because they had the habit of getting drunk and unruly. Because he remembers the way his family members would act when they began drinking, Gallagher did not trust himself to drink. Gallagher fears what will happen to him when he and the others reach Beacon. He does not want to have to go back to his family.

It is Gallagher's fear, and his naivety, that ultimately get him killed. Gallagher and the others had just learned from Melanie there was a large group of junkies in the area. Instead of staying with the group, Gallagher took off on his own believing he could make it back to Beacon without the others. He finds a convenience store where he stocks up on prepackaged foods. A group of second-generation hungries follows Gallagher into the store. A girl tricks him into walking into a trap. The children kill him.



The Hungries

The hungries is a term used to refer to the group of people affected by a fungus that basically turns them into man-eating zombies. These creatures react to sounds, the smells of blood or human pheromones, and changes in temperature. They could run superhumanly fast in order to catch their prey. When the hungries bit their prey, they spread the disease. At one point in the novel the junkers use the hungries as a weapon by running these creatures into the army base upon which Dr. Caldwell was trying to find a cure or inoculation for the disease.

The Painted Face Boy and His Fierce Tribe

It is these children who become the only hope to repopulate the world after Parks and Melanie set fire to the spores found growing on the remains of dead hungries. Melanie discovered these children living in an arts depot in London. They were second-generation hungries like Melanie who were affected with the disease but still had their mental and emotional abilities. At the end of the novel, Melanie sets Miss Justineau up as the teacher for this new generation of people.

The Junkers

The junkers were people who refused to take cover when the call came from Beacon. These people chose instead to take their chances living outside protected areas.

Jean Selkirk

Jean Selkirk is Dr. Caldwell's clumsy and somewhat unwilling lab assistant. She is killed by hungries when they overtake the base.

Marcia and Liam

Marcia and Liam are the two students that Dr. Caldwell requests be brought to her lab for testing. Melanie watches for them to return but they never do. She later realizes they were dissected by Dr. Caldwell.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Grey Steel Door

The grey steel door on one end of the corridor on which Melanie's cell is located represents the limit of Melanie's world as she knows it. Everything outside that door is unknown. Melanie is taken out of the corridor through that door when she is transported to Dr. Caldwell's lab.

Melanie's Chair

Melanie and the other children were transported to class and the showers using these high-backed metal wheelchairs. The students were taught to sit in the chairs before the sergeant or his people entered their cells so that they could be safely strapped in so they couldn't injure anyone. The chair is a symbol of Melanie's mobility. She knows that when the sergeant leaves Dr. Caldwell's lab and takes her chair with him that it is not intended for her to leave the operating table alive.

Sergeant Parks' Scar

Sergeant Parks' scar makes his face appear asymmetrical and ugly. He got it during a fight with a junker when he was working as a grab bagger. The scar is an outward symbol of the ugliness that both Melanie and Justineau believe lie in the sergeant's personality. After they each got to know the man better, however, they realize his personality was not as deformed and ugly as they once believed it was.

Tales the Muses Told: Greek Myths, by Roger Lancelyn Green

Because Melanie enjoys the stories in this book so much Justineau manages to hide it in the girl's wheelchair, allowing her to read the book while she's in her cell. Melanie is excited to get the book because she's never had a book of her own before. It is also a symbol of Justineau's affection for Melanie and her desire to give the girl a better life than what she is experiencing as one of Dr. Caldwell's test subjects.

Rosalind "Rosie" Franklin

Rosalind "Rosie" Franklin is the name of one of the armored vehicles commissioned by the government to be a rolling lab in the search for a cure or inoculation for the fungus causing people to turn into hungries. To Caldwell Rosie represents a scientific breakthrough as it provides her with access to state of the art equipment with which to continue her research.



A Grey Wall

When Caldwell commandeers Rosie she both figuratively and literally runs into a wall created by the fungus. She has fought against this fungus for years in her attempt to find a cure but it blocks her attempt, as she finally must admit there is no cure or inoculation that can be developed for the fungus.

Metaxa Three-Star Brandy

Gallagher finds this brandy in Wainwright House and shows it to Justineau hoping that he will gain favor with her. Although he drinks a little of the brandy, Gallagher associates alcohol with his family members who were either drunk and fighting or comatose. To Gallagher, the brandy represents a danger. He tries to stay away from it as much as possible.

A Personal Alarm

Justineau gives Melanie this personal alarm when Melanie is about to leave the group to try to lure the hungries away from Wainwright House. The alarm makes a loud noise that Justineau believes will attract the hungries. Melanie later uses this personal alarm to attract the second-generation kids who are attacking Parks and Justineau. Because it was given to her by Justineau, the alarm is a symbol of Justineau and her concern for the child.

E-Blocker

The E-blocker gel represents one of the few safety measures that Park and his group have against the hungries. This gel blocks the smell of human pheromones, one of the three main triggers that attract the creatures to their prey.

Sporangium

Caldwell dissects one of these sporangium which contain spores of the fungus. These sporangium grow out of the bodies of dead hungries. Caldwell believes that once there is an event that causes the spores to open, humanity will be wiped out in a matter of weeks as these spores will infect people through their respiratory tracts. Although they are harmless as long as they pods are not broken open, the sporangium represent the end of humanity.



Settings

Melanie's Cell

Melanie's cell is the only world she knows before Parks takes her outside to go to Dr. Caldwell's lab. It is only in her cell that she is allowed to wander free without having to be restrained in her chair.

The Classroom

Melanie and the other students are taken to the classroom each weekday where they are taught lessons. It is in this classroom that Melanie meets Justineau and the two forge a friendship.

The Hotel Echo Lab

Dr. Caldwell's laboratory on the Hotel Echo base is where the children are taken when they are to be dissected for Caldwell's research. It is in this lab that Caldwell and Justineau have two of several standoffs about their differing opinions of the children involved in the research project. Justineau, Caldwell and Melanie are in this lab when the hungries overtake the base.

A Church

It is in the garage next to this church that Parks and the others take refuge the first night after the junkers had taken over the army base. They are awoken when the junkers, driving a Humvee and Jeep from the base, go by looking for them.

Wainwright House

The group of survivors from the base spends its second night on the road in the Wainwright House. Inside this house, which had been some sort of private hospital, they find a hungry who is singing and looking through family pictures. Caldwell is fascinated by him and later goes back to his body to take samples she hopes she will be able to examine later.

Police Station on Whetstone High Road

Although they have no line of sight out of this bunker of jail cells, Parks and the other spend their third night on the road locked in this underground jail inside the police station.



Arts Depot

It is inside an abandoned arts depot in London that Melanie discovers the band of hungry children like herself. They are chasing rats in the theater of the building. Because she doesn't want these children to become subjects for Caldwell's research, Melanie instead tells the others that she saw junkers practicing fighting moves in the depot.

A Mini Market

Gallagher stops in a mini market in which he finds food to take with him on his journey. It is when he is distracted by the pornography magazines that he allows the tribe of hungry children to sneak up on him and kill him by surprise. Melanie, Parks and Justineau later find Gallagher's remains in this mini mart and burn them to show their respect.

London

A good deal of the action of the novel takes place in the city of London. It is in this city that the group discovers the sprouting hungries and also finds Rosie. Gallaher is killed in a mini mart in London as he tries to escape the junkers he believes are after them. It is also in this city that Melanie discovers a tribe of children who are like her. They are infected with the hungry virus, but still able to think. It is also in London that Melanie sets up her school for the child hungries after she sets fire to the mass of fungus sporangium effectively wiping out the uninfected population. It is from this small group of children that the world will be repopulated. Justineau, who is the only one who has survived with the exception of Melanie, is the teacher for this group of students.

Themes and Motifs

Science Versus Morality

A major theme addressed by the book is that of scientific research versus morality. Caldwell seeks to find a cure or inoculation for the fungus that causes people to turn into hungries. In order to do so, she must dissect the brains of those infected with the fungus. Justineau, on the other hand, fights to keep Caldwell from killing the children she teaches. As the two are in close proximity after they escape from the base, they continue to butt heads over Melanie's purpose. As the characters struggle, they ask the question: What is more important, morality or knowledge?

At the end of the novel, the reader is left to his own conclusion about the dilemma. One should take into consideration that it was only after Caldwell told her that there was no hope for a cure or inoculation for the fungus that Melanie decided to set fire to the fungal forest, spreading the pods so the remaining people would be infected through their respiratory tracts. Although she was putting an end to the fighting, Melanie's actions could have been seen as immoral because she is exposing so many people to a fungal infection that will end their lives. Melanie realizes, however, that in the long run, her decision was best.

Just as Melanie had realized life wasn't as simple as she had once thought with things being all good or all bad, the reader comes to the decision that life has to be made of an equal balance of morality and the desire for scientific knowledge. Caldwell's desire for a cure despite what she has to do to get it illustrates what the world would be like if everyone were to put all their focus into science. Justineau's mess of emotions and guilt illustrates how people would act if they were to put their energies in just doing what was morally right. In the end, Melanie's decision is both morally wrong and morally right. She kills some but allows others to live without fear. She does so using the scientific knowledge and reasoning that the young hungries who can think and learn are those who are best equipped to survive. Alone, neither Justineau nor Caldwell could have arrived at this decision. It took one willing to combine both aspects to get the job done.

Evils

The idea that there are evils in the world is learned by Melanie through her study of the story of Pandora. Even though Pandora's name meant "the girl with all the gifts," Pandora had the fault of curiosity that caused her to open the box of evils. As Melanie studies the people and the world around her, she realizes that things are not all good or all bad but instead a mixture of both. She also comes to the conclusion that everyone has some fault in their personality that causes them to do foolish or evil things.

It is when Melanie realizes that she is a hungry that she comes to the conclusion that everyone has faults. She doesn't like it when Justineau refers to the hungries as being



evil and wonders if all those infected with the fungus are really all evil. Justineau explains to Melanie that she is not like all hungries because she has the ability to think. Melanie accepts this explanation with the idea that being a hungry is her one fault.

In her contemplation of those around her, Melanie believes that Justineau is perhaps the only one who is faultless. Justineau, however, believes that her fault is the most serious of all. She is hiding the knowledge that she once accidentally ran over a child, killing him. Because of the Breakdown, she was never charged with or punished for the crime. It has been this guilt that has caused Justineau to be an advocate for the rights of the children on the army base. Although Justineau felt she was doing what was right, the other leaders on the base saw her actions as foolish because she was befriending children who could potentially harm her.

Earning Respect

An idea that is significant in this novel is that one can earn the respect of another person just by the way one treats that person. Two characters who earned the respect of others in the novel are Melanie and Parks. Dr. Caldwell, despite her high level of intelligence, managed to lose the respect of those with whom she traveled.

At the beginning of the novel, Parks makes it no secret that he has no use for Melanie or those like her. He regularly warns Justineau what people like Melanie are capable of and that it is dangerous to become emotionally attached to them. When Parks discovers that Melanie is among those who have escaped from the army base he would be happy to shoot her there and not worry about her any longer. Caldwell and Justineau both argue against this and Melanie winds up traveling with the group.

At the end of the novel, Parks opinion of Melanie is completely different from his opinion at the beginning. When Melanie steps in front of him at Wainwright House blocking him from the hungries so he can get to safety, he is surprised by her actions. The next morning she offers to lure the hungries away from the house so Parks and the others can escape. Parks questions Melanie to see how much of her situation she actually understands. He is surprised how clearly she understands that she is a hungry and that she has the ability to infect those she is with if she gives in to her instincts.

When Melanie successfully completes her mission and returns from distracting the hungries from Wainwright House, Parks actually tells her that she did a good job. He's still not ready to trust her yet, but his respect is growing. Later, he begins using Melanie as an advance scout to determine which routes will be the safest for them to travel. He later tells Justineau that he's glad he didn't abandon Melanie as he had wanted to because she had been very helpful to them.

After Parks became infected with the hungry virus, he trusted Melanie to shoot him when the time came. His right arm had been badly damaged in a scuffle and he wasn't able to shoot left handed. Melanie understood his wish not to live out the rest of his life as a hungry and promised to kill him when the time came. It was as the two were sitting



together during Parks' last moments of lucidity that he gave Melanie the highest compliment. He mentioned to her that Maria, apparently his significant other, had been blonde. Parks seems to be trying to tell Melanie that if they'd had a child, she could have looked like Melanie. There is also some suggestion that Melanie is the kind of child, intelligent and self sufficient, that he would have imagined himself fathering.

During their travels, Melanie also earns the respect of Gallagher. He relates to Melanie because they are both seeing the remains of the pre-Breakdown world for the first time. Because of their shared awe of what they are seeing to two forge a friendship. Gallagher learns to respect Melanie because she is tough and talks back to the sergeant even though she is tiny. Gallagher may wish that some of Melanie's toughness might rub off on him.

Another character in the novel that manages to earn the respect of a person who formerly did not like him is Parks. During their interactions at the base Justineau had seen Parks as a cruel, rigid authoritarian. Of course, the reader later learns that Justineau didn't like Parks because he represented the same cruelty she believed she had in her own personality. As the two interact with one another after they escape from the base, Justineau realizes there are things even in the legalistic Parks that she admires. She admires the way he considers the opinions of other people, even if they contradict his own, and she admires his ability to be critical of himself. Perhaps the most significant change that Parks makes that affects Justineau's respect for him is his realization that Melanie is a person.

The Power of Education

Although it is a minor theme, the idea that education can be a very powerful tool in a receptive mind is significant in the novel. Education, in fact, can be so powerful that when Sergeant Parks realizes how seriously Melanie took her education he became angry with the teachers. He considered the skewed information she was taught and the impact that it had on her as being equivalent to a war crime.

Even though she didn't realize it at the time, the education Melanie received was not intended to help her understand the world or teach her how to live in the world. It was never intended for her to grow up or become part of the world outside the army base on which she was held captive. Because she was highly intelligent, Melanie took her education very seriously.

When she first began experiencing the outside world, Melanie was able to incorporate what she learned in the classroom with what she was seeing. She took an active interest in what she saw and how the world had turned out the way it had. Notice that Melanie and Gallagher shared a similar curiosity about the world but that Gallagher's interest seemed to stop there. He didn't really seem to think there was a possibility that the world might return to what it had been before the Breakdown. Melanie still seems to think this might be a possibility.



Even though Caldwell believed she was superior to those with her because of her high level of intelligence and scientific knowledge, Caldwell realizes when she is about to die that the only receptive mind to which she can report her findings is Melanie's. Caldwell at first tries to talk down to the child, but Melanie is able to understand Caldwell's research and findings almost with no explanation. Had Melanie not had the class room lesson at the base, she would not have been able to understand and grasp the concepts that Caldwell shared with her.

It is when Melanie remembers her lessons about honoring dead soldiers by having a burial that Sergeant Parks becomes angry. In the face of the destruction around him he believes the customs of the past are purposeless. He suddenly realizes how wrong it was to fill the receptive minds of the children with knowledge about a world that no longer exists. In his anger he believes what the teachers had done to these children was the equivalent of a war crime. What he does not realize at that time is that Melanie will be the one to organize a new beginning of the world. She will use the things she learned at his base to teach a new generation.

Pandora

During her class time with the children, Justineau would often read to them from a book of Greek mythology. It was the story of Pandora and her box of evils that Melanie related to most closely. In the end, Melanie becomes an allegorical Pandora, releasing the evils of the hungry fungus on the world.

Melanie had often wished she'd been given the name Pandora instead of Melanie. She thinks it would have fit her better. The name Pandora means "the girl with all the gifts." It is from the meaning of Pandora that the novel takes its name. Melanie draws several conclusions by combining her new experience of the read world with the story of Pandora. She first learns that everyone has at least one fault. Second, she learns that everything is not entirely evil or entirely good.

In the story of Pandora, her fault was her curiosity. It was this curiosity that prompted her to open the box and unleash all of the evils in it into the world. As Melanie travels with Justineau, Parks, Gallagher and Caldwell, she comes to the realization that everyone has at least one fault that causes them to do stupid things. In Melanie's case, she is infected with the hungry fungus.

As Melanie discovers the world for the first time she realizes that everything around her has both good and bad qualities. As she takes in the wonderful and amazing sights, she realizes what good things humans are capable of making. When she sees the things they did to their creations in an attempt to get rid of the hungries, she also realizes the destruction of which they are capable.

It is with this in mind that Melanie opens her own Pandora's box of sorts. She has heard Caldwell's research findings and knows that there is no cure or inoculation for the fungus that causes people to become hungries. She has also learned that unless



someone puts a stop to it, what remains of humanity will just continue fighting until the species kills itself. Melanie decides the best action to take is to set fire to the forest of fungus "trees" and pods in front of Rosie. Any remaining junkies and uninfected people will become infected by breathing in the spores. Since hungries don't respond to and feed upon one another, the fighting will stop between the uninfected and the hungries. This will give the children born to those infected with the fungus, those who are hungries but have the ability to think, the chance to grow up and repopulate the world.

Styles

Point of View

This novel is told from the point of view of an omniscient third person narrator. At different points in the novel, the point of view focuses on one of five different major characters. These characters include Melanie, Parks, Justineau, Caldwell and Gallagher. The outside point of view works well for the novel as it doesn't allow the reader to get too close to any one of the characters. Each of the characters is developed independently with little interaction until all five of them are thrown together when the army base is overtaken by hungries. One of the main aspects of the novel are the changes, or lack of changes, made in each character in respect to the others as they get to know each other better. If the story had been told in a first person point of view from one, or even a combination of all the characters it might have been too easy for the reader to get attached to one or more characters. With the third person point of view, the reader stays distanced enough from the characters that he is able to admire or resent the changes they make in respect to each other.

Language and Meaning

Because this is a novel that deals with science there is a good deal of scientific jargon used in the text. Because Caldwell deals with people who are not well versed in science, she has to break down her discoveries, or lack thereof, into laymen's terms for those who are with her. In this way, she also shares her discoveries in laymen's terms with the reader.

Also significant in this novel is the use of British terms with which an American reader might not be familiar. A torch, for instance, is a flashlight. Parks speaks of the boots and bonnets of cars. The boot is the European term for the trunk of a car while the bonnet is the hood.

There are also terms used only in the context of the novel. The Breakdown, for instance, refers to the point in time where there was a major increase in the number of cases of people infected with the hungry fungus. It signifies the end of life on Earth as we know it now with many people going to take cover in cities of refuge where it was believed they could escape the fungus. According to inferences in the text, this Breakdown occurred more than 20 years before the beginning of the novel. Hungries are people who have been infected with the fungus while junkers are people who chose to remain out of the cities of refuge to take their chances against those who had been infected.



Structure

This 403-page novel is divided into 72 chapters. Some chapters are as long as 16 pages while other are as short as 2 pages. Approximately the first 24 chapters focus mainly on one particular character in the novel as they have not yet been forced together. It is in Chapter 25 when the group loses use of the Humvee and realizes they must start walking that the chapters begin to incorporate focus on several different characters in the same chapter.

The plot of the novel is fairly simple. Those who have escaped from the army base try to survive in the open until they can reach the city of Beacon. Of course, they never reach this city but they do come to a point at which Melanie makes a decision to release fungus spores on the earth so that a new generation of humans can survive. The novel is complex in the themes that it addresses as well as the interpersonal relationships it discusses. While they are trying to survive the hungries the group members do things that earn or lose the respect of others in the group. A major theme addressed is the idea of morality and its conflict with science. It is more important to be kind or to pursue scientific knowledge regardless of the cost?

The story is told in a linear fashion. It begins with Melanie's experiences in the cell and classrooms of the army base and ends with Justineau beginning her first class with the group of children who promise to be the new population of the world. There is more exposition than dialogue in the novel.



Quotes

Melanie sometimes says, 'I won't bite.' She says it as a joke, but Sergeant's people never laugh. Sergeant did once, the first time she said it, but it was a nasty laugh. And then he said, 'Like we'd ever give you the chance, sugar plum.'"

-- Melanie and Sergeant (Chapter 1 paragraph 22)

Importance: This quote is significant because it illustrates how little Melanie understands about what is wrong with her at this point in the novel, but how well she hits the nail on the head concerning what scares the sergeant and his people the most.

You don't want to get attached to them,' he says. 'You know what they're here for.'"

-- Sergeant (Chapter 2 paragraph 21)

Importance: Parks chides Justineau because he believes she is developing relationships with the children who are on the base for research purposes, and are dangerous.

And even though the smell was very faint where Melanie was, it made her head swim and her jaw muscles start to work by themselves."

-- Narrator (Chapter 2 paragraph 24)

Importance: This quote describes Melanie's reaction the first time that she smelled unmasked human pheromones after the sergeant wiped the masking chemicals off his skin.

But he feels like they lost their way somewhere. When they found the first of the weird kids, and some grunt who'd obviously never heard about curiosity and the cat called in a fucking observation report."

-- Narrator (Chapter 12 paragraph 15)

Importance: Sergeant feels like things went wrong when they first began babysitting the children infected with the hungry fungus as a research project at the base.

Because Caldwell wants to know if these spooky little monsters can learn. She wants to see inside their heads. Not just the hardware – she's got her operating table for that side of things – but the squishy stuff too. Like, what are they thinking?"

-- Narrator (Chapter 12 paragraph 29)

Importance: The sergeant considers how Caldwell is not happy just dissecting the children and discovering what makes them tick as far as their anatomical structures but also wants to know if they are capable of learning and what makes them different from the other hungries.

And suddenly, like seeing the other side of an optical illusion, she knows what that something will be. They're going to cut her up and put pieces of her in jars like these



pieces of other people all around her.
-- Narrator (Chapter 18 paragraph 13)

Importance: Although she'd wondered since Marcia and Liam were taken away what had happened to them, Melanie realizes that they were dissected by Caldwell in the name of science, the same thing that is about to happen to her.

But right then, something happens that makes her stop. Two things, really. The first is an explosion, loud enough to make the windows rattle in their frames. The second is an ear-splitting scream, like a hundred people shrieking all at the same time."
-- Narrator (Chapter 18 paragraph 51)

Importance: Caldwell pauses in her dissection of Melanie when she hears an explosion and siren. It is alerting them there is danger on the base. It also signals the end of Caldwell's work on Melanie.

Unless they were looking for payback for the guys that Gallagher got killed, but he's not going to say that right now."
-- Narrator (Chapter 25 paragraph 27)

Importance: Although the sergeant believes that the junkers might have pushed the hungries into the base in retaliation for Gallagher accidentally getting the three junkers killed, he doesn't say anything to Gallagher because he is afraid it will make the boy feel guilty about the destruction of the base.

He'd like to put a bullet in Melanie's head and leave her by the roadside. But given that the civilians have joined forces against him, given that both Caldwell and Justineau, for their different reasons, want Melanie to stay on as a member of their party, this is his grudging compromise.
-- Narrator (Chapter 27 paragraph 45)

Importance: Although Parks does not make any bones about not wanting Melanie with them during their trip, he knows it would be too difficult to try to fight against both Caldwell and Justineau, and agrees to let her stay.

The hungries' known triggers are endocrine sweat from an unmasked human body, rapid movement and loud noises. But there's a fourth, which mostly comes into play when the temperature drops at night. They can zero in on you by your body heat, somehow."
-- Narrator (Chapter 28 paragraph 10)

Importance: Because the sergeant has worked around the hungries as a grab bagger, he is familiar with the things that draw to hungries' attention to humans.

Justineau ruined her work, and her work is now gone. Justineau will pay, when they get back to Beacon, with the trashing of her career and with a court-martial that will probably see her shot."



-- Narrator (Chapter 28 paragraph 18)

Importance: Even though it was technically the junkers and the hungries that destroyed Caldwell's work and forced her to leave without her notes and samples, Caldwell decides to take her anger out on Justineau, blaming her for the loss and swearing to get revenge.

This is what's going to happen. Somewhere between here and Beacon, a hungry will take a bite out of him. Because that's the way his life is set up to work."

-- Narrator (Chapter 28 paragraph 33)

Importance: Gallagher sets up for himself a self-fulfilling prophecy. He's believes he's had bad luck throughout his life and will continue to do so.

The kid masked him. Her chemicals blocked his, just for a second or two, so the hungries lost the pheromone trail that ended with their teeth in his throat."

-- Narrator (Chapter 33 paragraph 23)

Importance: Although he's not ready to completely trust Melanie yet, Parks gives her credit for saving his life when she steps in front of him to mask his scent.

The monsters are named for the feeling that filled her when she smelled Miss Justineau in the cell, or the junker men outside the block. The hungries smell you, and then they chase you until they eat you. They can't stop themselves. / Melanie knows exactly how that feels. Which means she's a monster."

-- Narrator (Chapter 34 paragraph 15)

Importance: Melanie is deeply disturbed when she first realizes that she is a hungry. She believes this classifies her as a monster, not the little girl she had believed she was.

Last message from Beacon was about five months back,' Parks admits. 'Normal signaling wavelengths have been empty ever since.'"

-- Sergeant Parks (Chapter 39 paragraph 18)

Importance: Parks tells Justineau that he has not heard from anyone at Beacon for five months. Even though he and the others are hoping to find civilization in Beacon, this confession on Parks' part lets Justineau it is uncertain if there are even people alive in Beacon any longer.

So that's twice now that the hungry kid has saved their bacon. If she makes the hat-trick, maybe Parks will even start to relax a little around her. Hasn't happened yet though."

-- Narrator (Chapter 44 paragraph 3)

Importance: Even though Parks had wanted to kill Melanie when he first discovered that she had escaped from the base with them he begins to gain a bit of respect for her



after she had saved his life twice. Despite her willingness to help the sergeant and the others, he still is wary of her intentions.

All the incendiaries could do was to move them on a few miles in one direction or another, and in some cases to destroy infrastructure that might have saved a lot of lives.
-- Narrator (Chapter 44 paragraph 11)

Importance: Although it had been hoped that the use of incendiaries could stop or slow the spread of the fungus, the fires actually backfired as they destroyed infrastructure that could have been used to help save lives.

And then like Pandora, opening the great big box of the world and not being afraid, not even caring whether what's inside is good or bad. Because it's both. Everything is always both. But you have to open it to find that out."
-- Narrator (Chapter 45 paragraph 2)

Importance: As Melanie explores the world around her, she begins to realize there are no boxes, like Pandora's, that contain only evils. She has come to the realization that these boxes contain a mix of evil and good, but that one must have the courage to step up and open the box in order to find out.

It's not just Pandora who had that inescapable flaw. It seems like everyone has been built in a way that sometimes makes them do wrong and stupid things."
-- Narrator (Chapter 46 paragraph 21)

Importance: Melanie makes the discovery that everyone, regardless of how strong they portray themselves as being, has a built in weakness.

I estimate that what's left of Humanity 1.0 will close up shop within a month of one of these pods opening."
-- Caldwell (Chapter 55 paragraph 34)

Importance: When Dr. Caldwell has an opportunity to examine the spores that form from the bodies of dead hungries, she estimates that everyone left on Earth will be dead about a month after those spores begin to open.

But you dropped a net over her and brought her home. And now she's yours. You interfered. You took on a debt."
-- Justineau (Chapter 56 paragraph 29)

Importance: Justineau tells the sergeant that when he went out and trapped Melanie and brought her back to the base, he took on a debt and is now responsible for taking care of her.

Obviously. She's talking about changing, in front of her teacher and her friend. Ceasing to be herself. That prospect scares her a lot."
-- Narrator (Chapter 59 paragraph 123)



Importance: Although Justineau doesn't seem to understand why Melanie is so afraid of being close to Justineau, Melanie thinks to herself that what scares her most about being near Justineau is the possibility that she could change in front of her.

But they weren't junkers. They were children of every age from maybe four or five to about fifteen. And what they were doing was chasing rats."

-- Narrator (Chapter 59 paragraph 135)

Importance: Even though Melanie told the group as a whole that she had seen a group of junkers in the art depot, she later admits to Justineau that it was actually a group of children, second-generation hungries like her, that she saw in the art depot. She lied to the group because she felt Parks would want to move on if he felt there was an organized groups of hungries nearby. She hoped this would keep Dr. Caldwell from learning about the children so she would not have the opportunity to kill them and use them for research.

All he can think of is that he had a command of one and he let the boy die alone. That's the sort of sin you go to hell for."

-- Narrator (Chapter 61 paragraph 25)

Importance: Even though the sergeant had been portrayed as some sort of monster in the earlier parts of the novel, he shows he is different from cold-hearted Dr. Caldwell because he shows remorse that Gallagher had died on his watch.

If the road to knowledge was paved with dead children – which at some times and in some places it has been – she'd still walk it and absolve herself afterwards."

-- Narrator (Chapter 64 paragraph 15)

Importance: As Dr. Caldwell tries to trap some of the second-generation children to use as test subjects she does not consider that there is anything wrong with her actions. She believes knowledge is more important than anything, even morality.

Dr. Caldwell has to be made to stop doing these things. Someone has to teach her a lesson."

-- Narrator (Chapter 66 paragraph 2)

Importance: After Dr. Caldwell commandeers Rosie, putting the others at risk of being attacked by hungries, Melanie believes someone needs to teach Dr. Caldwell that she and her research are not the more important than people. Melanie takes it on herself to teach Caldwell this lesson.

The other part is desperate to share. Caldwell longs for an auditorium of geniuses, sages both living and dead. She gets a child who's neither, or both. But the world is winding down, and you take what you're given."

-- Narrator (Chapter 67 paragraph 60)



Importance: Even though she has always seen Melanie as just a test subject and not a real person, Melanie is the only person who is available for Dr. Caldwell to share the findings of her research.

The fungus utterly wrecks the brain of a first-generation hungry.
-- Caldwell (Chapter 67 paragraph 78)

Importance: When sharing with Melanie the results of her research Caldwell tells her that the first-generation hungries are completely disabled because the fungus feeds on the brain and shuts down its function.

But it doesn't feed on the brain. It gets its nourishment only when the host eats. It's become a true symbiote rather than a parasite."
-- Caldwell (Chapter 67 paragraph 79)

Importance: Caldwell explains to Melanie how the fungus works in the second-generation hungries. Instead of the fungus destroying the brains of these people, the person and the fungus have a relationship where neither completely handicaps the other, a symbiotic relationship.

Still. You got us this far, against all the odds, and for most of the way I've treated you like the enemy. I'm sorry about that."
-- Justineau (Chapter 68 paragraph 16)

Importance: Although Justineau had bucked the sergeant's authority from the beginning of their time off the base, Justineau finally admits to Parks that she realizes it was because he took charge of the situation and made them follow his orders that they had been able to survive.

Don't worry, Sergeant. I'll do it. I won't leave you until it's done."
-- Melanie (Chapter 71 paragraph 51)

Importance: Even though Melanie had once fanaticized about being able to hurt the sergeant because she imagined it was he who made Justineau sad, at the end of the novel she promises to kill the sergeant out of respect for him. He has been infected by the fungus as he tried to save Justineau from being infected. Parks does not want to live as he has seen the other hungries. He asks Melanie to kill him because his right arm was injured and he can't shoot with his left hand. Melanie promises to stay with him until he is dead.

But only if you let them grow up,' she finishes. 'If you keep shooting them and cutting them into pieces and throwing them into pits, nobody will be left to make a new world. Your people and the junker people will keep killing each other, and you'll both kill the hungries wherever you find them, and in the end the world will be empty.'"
-- Melanie (Chapter 71 paragraph 61)

Importance: Melanie explains to Sergeant Parks why they had to set fire to the trunks



and grey matter growing out of the bodies of dead hungries. She knows the only way for the second-generation hungries to have a chance to populate the world is to kill off both the junkers and those living in protection.

Marie. She was... blonde. Like you. So if we'd had a kid..."
-- Sergeant Parks (Chapter 71 paragraph 66)

Importance: As he is losing brain function because he has been infected by the fungus Sergeant Parks tells Melanie that Marie, presumably a special woman at some point in his life, was a blonde. He wonders if their child would have looked like Melanie.

Gives her love without hesitation or limit, whether it's earned or not – and at the same time pronounces sentence on her."
-- Narrator (Chapter 72 paragraph 14)

Importance: Justineau realizes that although she never confessed to the crime, she will be serving the rest of her life in a sort of jail as she will have to live inside Rosie in order to survive. If she goes outside without the environmental suit, she will breathe in the fungus spores and be infected with the hungry fungus.