

A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters Study Guide

**A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters by Julian
Barnes**

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



Contents

A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Chapters 1-2.....	3
Chapters 3-4.....	8
Chapters 5-6.....	10
Chapters 7-8.....	13
Chapters 9-10.....	18
Characters.....	20
Objects/Places.....	23
Themes.....	26
Style.....	28
Quotes.....	31
Topics for Discussion.....	32



Chapters 1-2

Chapters 1-2 Summary

Chapter one opens with the preparation of Noah's Ark. The behemoths, along with the hippos, rhinos and elephants are being used for ballast. It makes sense considering their size but no one gave much thought to the smell and to the extensive mucking out that would have to be done. Since there was no one to do the job, it was left to the crew.

The narrator makes it clear that the real Noah's Ark was nothing like the illustrations often seen in children's books. The trip itself was long and dangerous even though some things had been set in place from the beginning. While there were precautions to be taken, such as keeping certain animals apart, there were not as many precautions taken with the humans. The people were chosen to be on the Ark and oftentimes that gave way to conflicting opinions.

The narrator of the story is a stowaway. With nothing to lose or to gain, the stowaway claims that his story is the most accurate. For example, the trip took four years, not 150 days as many believe. Also, the ark was more or less a flotilla rather than just one mighty ship. The Ark was comprised of eight ships: the main Ark, a store ship which was towed behind the main galleon, four smaller ships piloted by each of Noah's four sons, the hospital ship, and finally a ship of mysterious origin. The last ship was the first to be lost, followed by the stores ship. The latter was lost when something chewed through the tow ropes. Shortly after that, the hospital ship disappeared. Ham's wife took great offense at the latter and took some kind of revenge on the animals.

The narrator claims that the worst loss came with the disappearance of Varadi, Noah's youngest and strongest son. Varadi was a cheerful sort and was not favored among his brothers. When Varadi's ship vanished, the brothers blamed the incident on Varadi's poor navigational skills. The brothers also claimed Varadi for spending too much time frolicking with the animals. The narrator insists that the loss was a painful one. Varadi would have given much to the gene pool of the human species. In addition, one-fifth of the world's species vanished along with Varadi and the boat.

The narrator also gives background on Noah, including a heretofore unmentioned standard of living, as people were always told that Noah was poor. The organization of the trip was also faulty in that only select species were taken aboard. If one animal resembled another, then that was good enough for Noah. Many species were simply wiped out.

Other reasons for leaving someone behind included animals without mates, ones that failed the rigorous medical examination, and those that refused to leave their young.



The narrator also states that Noah was not nearly as devout or holy as one is led to believe. Noah is referred to as a drunken rogue but in comparison to others, Noah was a stand up guy.

The myth of two by two is also dispelled. The animals fell into one of two categories - clean and unclean. The clean animals were allowed to come onto the designated trip in lots of seven. The unclean animals traveled in pairs. The narrator also states that the animals were not just chosen; they had to reply to an advertisement and then be chosen from the ranks. The animals did not know the reason for the audition; instead it seemed as if they were being considered for a contest of some sort that included both brains and beauty.

The building of the vessels was also difficult. The craftsmen soon realized that there would be no room for them aboard the boat. Naturally, the craftsmen were not eager to finish the work. The narrator states that there was also a ban on certain animals, referred to those "Not Wanted on Voyage." The narrator was one of the unfortunates and therefore had to stow away.

When the animals learned the truth about the situation, there was bad behavior and jealousy. One species began to talk about another, while some simply refused to participate given such strict guidelines.

The narrator also talks about Noah and the popular misconception of the man and his sons. "You've always been led to believe that Noah was sage, righteous and God-fearing, and I've already described him as a hysterical rogue with a drink problem?" (Chapter 1, page 8)

Apparently, as bad as Noah might have been, the others were even worse. The narrator wonders why God chose to take any humans at all.

The launch of the flotilla was not without problems. There were stowaways everywhere that needed to be contended with, but fortunately the narrator was able to get on board without being detected. In addition, the weather was less than cooperative. Winds blew and torrential rains prevented the launch.

Once the flotilla was underway there was a sense of unease. Animals ate one another which was abhorrent to the humans. Although humans thought themselves above the animals, the opposite was true. At least the animals respected one another and understood the ins and outs of the food chain.

The clean and unclean animals are mentioned again. The animals finally realized what was going on and why the unclean were recruited by twos, the clean animals were recruited by sevens. At first, the animals thought it had to do with the humans' obsession with the number seven. The truth bred resentment and anger.

Animals have great foresight and it did not take long for many of them to realize that they may not last the entire journey. Those that fell sick were discarded and their mates eaten. Unfortunately for the animals, Noah was not well versed on their behavior and



natural states. For example, when the plovers began to turn white, Noah saw it as a sign of sickness and boiled them for supper. The animals explained to Noah what was happening and he may have understood at least some of it. Of course, that did not help the poor Arctic plover.

The animals also began to see a pattern that was attached to the deaths of other animals. Beyond the need for food, it seemed that the humans had something else up their sleeves. The ugly animals were targeted for death. This group included the four legged basilisk, the griffon, sphinx and hippogriff. The only thing they seemed to have in common was that they were cross-breeds.

The narrator does have a few good things to say about Noah, including the fact that Noah was clearly a survivor. In addition to being able to make it through the Great Flood, Noah was obviously devout and was therefore promised certain things. Part of the covenant with God was that Noah and his family would be able to eat any of the animals for the rest of their lives.

The narrator describes Noah, his wife and sons; the sons' wives and their children. All were brown haired and brown eyed, except for Phut, the child of Ham and his wife. Phut was born aboard the ark and mysteriously had red hair and green eyes. It is surmised that Ham's wife had cheated with one of the simians on board. There was a great debate but nothing was ever proven.

The narrator also insists that much of the history of the ark is untrue, yet is presented to make historians and Noah's people look good. The example of the raven and dove is a case in point. It was the raven that found land. Noah just thought it looked better to say that the dove did it.

Once the ark finally landed, it was not easy for the narrator and his six traveling companions to get off the boat. Each animal had to be thoroughly examined. Somehow the narrator made it to land. The narrator states at the end that he cannot understand the big fuss over a man who lost four vessels and about half of the species intended to survive.

In the very last sentence, the narrator finally reveals himself to be a woodworm.

Chapter 2, "The Visitors," details a cultural voyage taking place in present day aboard the Saint Euphemia. Franklin Hughes, lecturer and guest lecturer, is keen on presenting as much historical and cultural information to the ship's passengers as they tour Greece and other locations. Traveling with Hughes is Tricia, his assistant.

Hughes is traveling on an Irish passport, a fact that may save him when the ship is invaded with Arab terrorists. Although Hughes notices the men with machine guns, the lecture continues. At irregular intervals, passengers would question the terrorists but receive no response.



Eventually, the terrorists separated the people by nationality and allowed them to go to their quarters and retrieve their passports but nothing more. Hughes tells Tricia to put a ring on her ring finger and Hughes would convince the terrorists that they were married.

Hughes reluctantly becomes the liaison between the terrorists and the passengers. The terrorists say that unless their negotiations are met, two people will be killed each hour. Hughes explains the history of the Middle East to the passengers and how, despite their obvious lack of involvement, each of them is being seen as a Zionist terrorist. As a result, the terrorist group, Black Thunder, will use them to gain the freedom of three of their people.

Hughes manages to protect Tricia, but many of the passengers die. American Forces eventually arrive and take the terrorists into custody.

Chapters 1-2 Analysis

Chapter 1, "Stowaway," seems to be the basis for the entire book. The story of Noah is told through the eyes of a woodworm, a tiny larva belonging to a type of beetle. In the story, the woodworm sneaks aboard the Ark and proceeds to view the happenings as a somewhat disinterested third party. The narrator claims that while they were stowaways, they were not the only ones. However, the woodworms were lucky enough not to get caught. Going aboard was tricky. Leaving the boat after the long voyage was nearly as tricky, except the woodworms managed to make their escape in the horn of a ram.

The woodworm is an intelligent creature that acts like a reporter, dispelling many myths. Most of the myths surround Noah himself. Instead of being portrayed as God's chosen one, the one that would save mankind as well as the beasts, Noah is shown as being an ill-tempered drunken rogue with few navigational skills. The woodworm cannot understand why God would have chosen someone like Noah. Then again, the other people under consideration were much worse. God was forced to choose the lesser of two evils.

The animals were separated into two basic categories - the clean and the unclean. The clean group was allowed to have seven of each species, due in part to the human's obsession with the number seven. Of the unclean species, to which the woodworm belonged, only two of the species were permitted to board. Therefore, the two by two theory of the Ark is incorrect.

All in all, the journey took five and a half years. The woodworm reports cannibalism in the animal kingdom and much worse behavior by the humans. At the end, it is shown that the history is written by the victors, or in this case, Noah. The stories taught to people as children have very little truth to them, but will undoubtedly go on as being seen as the word of God.

In Chapter 2, "The Visitors," the author makes more modern references to Noah and the Ark. The action in this chapter takes place in more recent days although an exact date is not given. The trip is aboard a ship, just like the previous tale. Franklin Hughes is a



modern day Noah and the people are the animals. Separating the people by nationality represents the clean and the unclean, a metaphor not lost on the participants. The terrorists also act as humans, not blaming any one specific person or species but rather lumps everyone together as being at fault. There are ranks between the nations, but the reason for the breakdown seems to be a mystery to everyone but the terrorists.

The explanation given by the terrorists makes perfect sense in their eyes, and in some way, Hughes' mind as well. Hughes does his best to try and protect Tricia, with whom he may be slightly in love.

The two by two is seen again when the terrorists claim that 2 people should die every hour until the demands are met. Help does come at long last in the form of American forces. Like divine intervention, some wonder what took them so long to show up.



Chapters 3-4

Chapters 3-4 Summary

Chapter 3, "The Wars of Religion," begins with a statement from Jurist Bartholome Chassenee (1480-?). Chassenee has taken on the case of the woodworm, et al, for their part in the sailing of Noah's Ark and the incidents that took place on board. There is mention of the first President of the Parlement de Provence.

The testimony included in the chapter is only a partial testimony. It was translated from French, with the verdict translated from Latin. There is no viable explanation for the change in language part way through the court records.

Also included is a petition from the people of Mamirole who object to the presence of rabbits as well as the presence of the woodworms. The rabbits seemed to be easily dealt with but the woodworms, which were responsible for eating the Bishop's wooden leg, were thought to be horrible criminals.

Chassenee argued that the woodworms were not criminals; they were simply doing what woodworms do. Additionally, Chassenee stated that it was unfair to attempt to prosecute some one or thing that was not present at the trial. The law does not support trying some one or thing in absentia. Chassenee also wanted to know if the court truly had the authority to oversee such a case.

Chassenee makes a lengthy monologue. In the end, the woodworms were cast out.

The story ends with a partial judgment that is missing in part because it had been eaten.

Chapter 4, "The Survivor," details the life of Kathy, a young woman who has mental issues. It begins with Kathy being tormented by Eric Dooley, a boy in her class. Dooley has the habit of chewing on Kathy's hair, often restricting the girl to her seat. The story also talks about Chernobyl and other nuclear incidents. The kids talk about Santa's reindeer and comment that the nuclear fallout is how Santa sees to drive at night. Naturally, Rudolf got the worst of it. Kathy does not take this news well and treats it as a horror rather than a joke.

Some people argue that the reindeer killed by the fallout need to be buried. In the end, they were chopped up and fed to mink. That is when Kathy became a vegetarian.

From there, the story jumps around a lot, going from first to third person, with the first person being Kathy.

Kathy is in a relationship with Greg. The couple argues over having their cat, Paul, fixed. Greg is of the mindset, according to Kathy, that women have their place and certainly have no say over neutering an animal.



Greg begins to stay out later and later. Kathy leaves.

In part two, Kathy goes to Doctor's Gully, a small little nothing of a town. Kathy visits the aquarium and decides to go on an adventure. Kathy takes a boat and heads out to the high seas.

The trip is extremely difficult. The cats, Linda and Paul, are fed well, but Kathy is not. After a while, Kathy seems to suffer from delirium. Kathy does get better but needs to find land.

The story switches to Kathy's visits to a therapist of some sort. The therapist asks open ended, confusing questions, most of which completely contradict Kathy's story. It is clear that Kathy has fallen into her own world most likely from the childhood trauma.

Chapters 3-4 Analysis

Chapters 3 and 4 are both convoluted and confusing to read. Chapter 3 details the court trial of Jurist Bartholome Chassenee presenting an argument to the court regarding the animals brought before the judge for punishment. The animals in question are the rabbits and woodworms. The creatures are being charged with what comes naturally and are tied to Noah's Ark. The crimes against the animals are superfluous. The thread of the Ark and the woodworm are obvious ties to the beginning of the world. As the case takes place in the early 16th century, around the time of the Inquisition, it makes sense that such a lawsuit could take place.

The monologue and descriptions therein are lengthy and often frivolous. Much of it is unnecessary, although it is disguised in such a way as to show foreshadowing.

The end of the story is quite humorous. The woodworms, obviously unhappy with the outcome of the case, eat the court documents.

Chapter 4, "The Survivor," again ties to Noah's Ark. Kathy is also a survivor of a long and difficult voyage. Paul and Linda, the cats, are the two animals. There are hardships and at times, the reader may think that Kathy will not make it to shore.

The switch between first and third person in "The Survivor" is at times necessary to understand Kathy's frame of mind and obvious decline. At other times, the switch is so frequent that even with the change in pronouns, it is difficult to tell which side of the story is being told and by whom. The author wants the reader to believe that much of what happened to Kathy is delusion, which also proves to completely baffle Kathy. In the end, it somehow seems to be all Kathy's fault and her state is one of escapism.



Chapters 5-6

Chapters 5-6 Summary

Chapter 5, "The Shipwreck," details the sailing of the Medusa and other members of a flotilla. The ships set sail from a port on the Island of Aix on June 17, 1816. There were 365 people on board. In total there were four ships: a corvette, frigate, brig, and a flute.

The voyage was immediately plagued by trouble. A cabin boy fell overboard. The boy was 15 years old and a strong swimmer. However, the crew took a long time in lowering a barge to find the boy. In the end, both the boy and the barge were lost.

The flotilla stopped at Teneriffe for supplies. The locals were thought to be depraved, with the wives of the locals offering their bodies to sailors.

The boats traveled through the tropics. The sea contained many rocks and often prevented some of the ships from following the same routes as their predecessors. An encounter with a large reef caused the loss of the frigate. As a result, a raft was sent out. There were going to be many casualties due to the loss. It seemed to make no difference. The raft sank. Items were cast off before the raft sank completely, saving the vessel from further harm.

The conditions became desperate. In an attempt to relieve themselves from the suffering, a group of men tapped into a wine cask and drank part of the contents. The balance of the wine was thought to be ruined. There was a mutiny. It would not be the first.

Many lives were lost. There were other vessels that tried to sail away from the doomed ships. One officer used a chicken coop to set sail. The craft sank half a cable's length from the Medusa. The mutinies and acts of cannibalism continued until the remaining members of the flotilla were rescued.

Part two discusses at length how one can turn a catastrophe into art. One month after setting sail from Aix, two of the survivors were rescued. The men published an account of the trip a little more than a year later. A painter named Gericault took it upon himself to paint the catastrophe, which is included in the book. The painter was careful to portray the horror of the voyage without detailing the worst of the problems, including the mutinies and cannibalism, although those things were alluded to by Gericault.

Gericault's work was well received and lauded by Louis XIV.

Chapter 6, "The Mountain," begins with Colonel Fergusson awaiting his death. The man is in bed listening to the clock tick away the minutes. Fergusson's daughter, Amanda, sits nearby reading a religious pamphlet.



The Colonel and his daughter did not agree on religion. Amanda saw Gericault's painting as a symbol of God's love, while the Colonel saw it as a tragedy. Amanda tried to persuade the Colonel and vice versa, but neither succeeded.

Amanda became more and more concerned for her father's soul. Eventually, Amanda decided to go to Arghuri, a town the base of Mount Ararat, where there existed proven signs of Noah's landing. The trip would include a trip to a monastery wherein Amanda may gain wisdom and hope for the Colonel. Miss Logan, a family friend, would accompany Amanda.

The author details the trip through many foreign lands. The women did not stay long in any of them. Along the way, they learned more about Ararat, including the fact that no one had ever successfully ascended it, despite rumor to the contrary.

The journey was difficult and long. There were many trials along the way, some of which were dangerous. The trip was full of incidents that in some way fulfilled Miss Fergusson's needs and fears. The women did not manage to ascend Ararat, as Miss Fergusson was injured. The women learned that there had been an attack at Arghuri. The monastery was destroyed, as was the town.

As the women returned home, Miss Logan came to find herself in a dilemma. It was clear that Miss Logan had achieved what she had intended to achieve, even if it was subconscious. Do things happen because they are meant to happen or do we cause them to happen through free will?

Chapters 5-6 Analysis

Chapter 5, "The Shipwreck," mirrors Noah's Ark in the loss of people and animals as well as sailing vessels. The author makes it clear from the beginning that the trip would not be a good one. The death of the cabin boy was a portent. This leaves the reader wondering what will happen next, assuming that the portent shows more horrible of things to come.

The reader wonders why the cast and crew did not turn back after the second and third fiascos. At one point, it seemed pointless to turn around since it was just as far to go back to Aix as it was to continue onward. After the first mutiny, it seemed that reaching land would be the only way the remaining crew and officers would survive.

"The Shipwreck" is a tale that is rivaled by no other in regards to the horror suffered by the survivors. They were stranded without food and water and eventually had to resort to extreme means to survive. The death toll was immense and those that did survive were traumatized for life. Only a portion of the experience was caught in Gericault's painting.

One thing that stands out as being odd is the mention of the Inquisition stepping into object to the moral standing of the monks and the women that offered themselves to the soldiers. It is odd in that the story takes place beginning in 1817.



Part two discusses the way to turn catastrophe into art. Gericault's name is changed to Jerricault, but it is clear that they are one and the same. The painting is lauded widely.

Chapter 6, "The Mountain," details Amanda Fergusson's quest on behalf of her father, the Colonel. The Colonel, who lay dying, is an atheist, much to the horror of his daughter. Despite the lengths Amanda goes to while trying to convert her father, it cannot be done. Amanda becomes obsessed to the point that she is convinced she must go to and climb Ararat to prove that the Ark, and therefore God, exists.

It is strange that Amanda would want to leave her ailing father, even though she had a sign saying the death would be within the year. The battle between purpose and self-will teaches Amanda a valuable lesson, showing that she, not her father, is the one who needed to learn.



Chapters 7-8

Chapters 7-8 Summary

Chapter 7, "Three Simple Stories," begins with a narrative of an 18 year old student who is admittedly: "shuttered, self-conscious, untravelled and sneering; violently educated, socially crass, emotionally blurting." (Chapter 7, page 171)

Since other people the same age behaved in a similar fashion, the narrator did not see his actions as being particularly unusual. In between graduation and university, the student took a job as a pre-school master. The ideal of the job was clearly more wonderful than the actuality, which was spending summer days in a crammer half a mile from the narrator's house, rather than living in an old stone mansion teaching privileged children with doting parents. Instead, the new tutor was in charge of a bookie's son and a solicitor's daughter. The house was present, however, as was the family. The father was a spy, the mother an actress. The grandfather, still hopelessly formal, founded the school. The grandfather, Lawrence Beesley, was now in his eighties and had to be fed by his daughter.

Beesley fascinated the new tutor. Many years before, Beesley had been on the maiden voyage of the Titanic. There were no records of Beesley, but that was easily explained. Beesley had managed to escape from the ship in women's clothing just before it went down. Beesley made it to New York and many others drowned.

Beesley was so taken with his tale that he wrote a book about the Titanic. In the book there was no mention of the women's clothing. Later, Beesley was hired to consult on "A Night to Remember," a period piece about the Titanic. Beesley insisted on being on the "ship" once again, but the director refused. Beesley was not about to take no as an answer. Beesley dressed up once again and stood at the rail. Once again, Beesley was taken off the boat before it sank. The narrator ends itself by saying that history always repeats itself, once as a tragedy, and twice as a farce.

In Part 2, the story of Jonah and the whale is recounted. The author asks how such a story could be so blindly accepted by people. Why was Jonah eaten by a whale? What was the purpose? Had Jonah done something wrong? The plausibility of the tale is examined.

Later in the text, the author tells a similar tale about James Bartley, a man who had been lost at sea and eaten by a whale. The whale was killed and the man, while worse for wear, was alive. The author compares the two stories.

In Part 3, the topic of the Jews during the Holocaust is investigated. The year was 1939 and the passengers aboard the Saint Louis were almost all Jews. The people had been forced to buy return tickets to Germany, although none had any intention of returning in



the near future, if ever. Aboard the ship were Gestapo agents, as was normal. The flag flown on the ship was a swastika, again a normal site in those days.

The ship landed first in Cuba. Although many of the ship's passengers had been granted eventual entry into America, the St. Louis was not permitted to dock. Cuba and several other locations claimed that they would be glad to have the Jews in their ports, but the fee for entry was much too steep. The ship sailed from port to port, being tossed around. Eventually, the St. Louis docked in Antwerp after forty days and forty nights. Although the Jews fled Germany, they ended up a mere 300 miles from home.

Chapter 8, "Upstream!" begins with a letter from a man named Charlie to his love, Pippa. The reader can only assume that Pippa is the woman's real name, although she is often referred to as "Pips" or the more informal "Darling." The letter comes from an unnamed jungle.

The entire story takes place through Charlie's letters to Pippa. Charlie is on a film shoot somewhere in the jungle, near the Mucapra in Venezuela. This area, which houses the Orinoco, is on the edge of, or in the Amazon. Charlie is excited for the trip to the jungle. The crew had just come from India and Charlie already feels like a world traveler, although maybe a little worse for wear. Charlie knows that Pippa will not like the fact that he has a beard now, but there has not been a chance to shave as the people in the jungle do not have the same kind of daily conveniences as they do at the London flat. Charlie goes off on a long tangent about Pippa cutting her hair to spite the beard and how he wishes she would not do it. Charlie seems to think that a woman will cut her hair as some kind of punishment for a man's behavior.

Charlie is amused that the people recognize him from his work. The recognition does not come from the single small film Charlie did, but rather the American soap opera that still runs in Caracas. Charlie brushes off the reference to a less prestigious gig.

Charlie's next letter talks about the excitement as the crew travels toward the location. People are a little annoying, but it will pass. Charlie tells Pippa that he carries a photo of her which he kisses every night before he goes to bed.

The next letter covers an entire week. Charlie is working with Matt, another actor who seems to get under Charlie's skin. The jungle, which once seemed like paradise to everyone, is suddenly hot and bothersome. Charlie apologizes for being glum.

Charlie feels better since he has had the opportunity to meet the Indians. The tribe lives near the Mucapra River. Charlie is glad to have had the foresight to train in the gym before the shoot since the terrain is rough and most of the crew is out of shape. Charlie jokes that perhaps everyone thought there would be luxury transportation. Still, Charlie is proud to be a part of such a worthy, but low budget film. Charlie and Matt look forward to doing their own stunts.

Charlie describes meeting the tribe. The people are nude, short and squat, but not fat. The women are pretty but most likely riddled with disease.



The crew seems to think that the Indians are having it on with them because they are warned not to pee in the river. There is supposedly a tiny fish that will swim upstream and bury itself in the penis. The men are horrified. Eventually, they think it is a joke. It is not a joke, however the Indians do manage to pull a prank on Charlie.

The crew begins to shoot. Charlie feels that the experience is great for him and he begins to feel like a new man. The Indians are honest and open and appear to live clean lives. Additionally, everyone can contribute to the film because there are no union rules.

A tragedy strikes the set as one of the Indians drowns.

Charlie begins to think that the best thing to do is to move to another country where he and Pippa can live a clean life and have babies. This is a fascination for a while.

Charlie begins to question the lives of the Indians. The fact that none of the Indians is old is due to the fact that they typically do not live past the age of 35.

One of the stunts goes awry and Matt drowns. Charlie eulogizes the fellow actor by saying that sure he was annoying, but all in all was a good actor and a good man. Charlie is increasingly depressed and begins to wonder why Pippa has not written to him.

The crew finally gets to Caracas. Charlie only wants three things - a bottle of Scotch, a shower, and a long conversation with Pippa. Pippa does not answer the phone.

Charlie finally does connect with Pippa. There is an argument and Pippa puts the phone down and walks away.

The relationship does rapidly downhill from there. There are a few short telegrams that go from pleading to outright hostility. The last is one in which Charlie tells Pippa to take her things and get out of the flat.

Chapters 7-8 Analysis

"Three Simple Stories" carry the same thread of being at sea. In the first, the narrator meets Mr. Beesley, who reportedly escaped from the Titanic during its ill-fated voyage. The narrator is a know-it-all who seems to dislike Beesley at first, or is at least disgusted by the man's age and drool. The story goes that Beesley managed to dress in drag to escape the doomed boat amidst a throng of women. That seems to explain why Beesley's name was not on any of the passenger lists. It would make sense if the passengers' names were only taken after all the survivors had been rescued. Otherwise, it seems quite suspect that Beesley's name should not be present. Yet there is no proof that the man is lying. The narrator also questions the absence of that same story in Beesley's book about the Titanic.



Beesley is thrilled to be a consultant on "A Night to Remember," a film about the Titanic. Beesley insists on inserting himself as an actor aboard the great ship, but is cast off once again. The lesson is that history repeats itself. There is an underlying story of Beesley's last ditch effort to get some kind of recognition for his contributions and perhaps his life, even though those reasons for being recognized may be fabricated.

The author makes a good argument regarding Jonah and the whale. What often seems impossible to believe as a parable, may actually happen in real life.

The second story is of the Jews traveling the world in search of someplace to call their own after escaping Germany, just prior to World War II. The Germans pretend to have some sympathy by letting certain people sail away, yet the restrictions and conditions placed upon the trip ensure that the Jews will not find a place to land. In the end, the plan worked for the Germans. The Jews were forced to return to Antwerp, and along with the rest of the Europeans, were forced to suffer through the Holocaust.

Charlie is an actor nearing middle age. He is eager to shed his bad boy image and be seen as a serious actor. Charlie also seems eager to cast aside a previous habit of cheating on his girlfriends and to promise himself to Pippa, the girl he has been in a five year relationship with prior to leaving London.

The reader can see Charlie's unbridled enthusiasm from the very first. There are slight cracks in the enthusiasm, but are written off to fatigue or weather conditions. Charlie's letters to Pippa range from being very brief to covering an entire week or more, detailing the ways and lives of the Indians and their customs to the conditions in the jungle. As each day goes on, the cracks broaden and deepen so that Charlie is having a difficult time maintaining the new attitude and way of life. Charlie is learning that the grass is not always greener on the other side.

Charlie begins to get annoyed and then angry with Pippa for not writing. The end comes when Pippa learns that an old girlfriend was working on the film in Caracas. Charlie pleads innocent. The relationship turns hostile and ends with Charlie throwing Pippa out of his life, showing that perhaps one cannot teach an old dog new tricks.

"Parenthesis" is what Barnes refers to as the half chapter. It is a chapter unto itself, but is actually an essay and therefore not included in with the history's table of content. "Parenthesis" is a piece of non-fiction narrated by Julian Barnes. The story begins with Barnes sleeping next to a woman he loves. There are often nightmares when Barnes will wake up screaming and terrified until the woman soothes him. They are different in many ways, including the way in which they fall asleep. It is clear that Barnes loves her and is somewhat neurotic in the return of those feelings.

Barnes discusses at length the ability of the poet to express love better than the novelist. The poet seems to have more latitude in that the "I" so often used in a love poem can belong to the poet who wishes to profess his or her love. It could also belong to an unidentified person created by the poet, as the "I" never has to reveal itself. Still,



the poet has better tools and a different framework to work with, which may or may not be true.

Barnes refers to writers Mavis Gallant and Philip Larkin, both of whom speak of love. The writer's concept of love is often suspended in time so that no one knows what happens next. Are we to believe in happily ever after? What is happily ever after?

Barnes spends a great deal of time discussing phonic conspiracy and language. There are many ways to say "I love you" to a person and the author shares that phrase in various languages, including French and German.

Barnes also examines the things that love is supposed to satisfy or perhaps cure. Of course, love cannot cure anything and perhaps it should be seen as a tangent or a side to all of the other things that may involve love, but are surely separate from it.

Barnes also connects love and truth. Those things are also connected to history. No matter what else we can deny, we cannot deny that life can be lived without love.



Chapters 9-10

Chapters 9-10 Summary

Chapter 9, "Project Ararat," details the life of the formerly mentioned Spike "Touchdown" Tiggler. Spike was an average boy from a small North Carolina town. His first view of the Ark was in fact a replica erected by a church as its worship center. Spike was not exactly the town hero, but after his great touchdown, became something of a legend. Spike took Mary-Beth's virginity shortly before leaving town and went into the military. Mary-Beth's mother lamented that it was a shame the bomb had already been dropped before Tiggler could get there.

The touchdown legend came when Tiggler threw a touchdown on the moon. The entire scene was indulgent on Tiggler's part, but the men were off duty, so why not? It wasn't long after that Tiggler first heard the voice telling him to find Noah's Ark. It took a while before Tiggler took the mysterious voice seriously and was convinced that it was not a joke.

Tiggler returned home to celebrations and a reluctant wife. At first Betty did not believe that Spike had been contacted by God. The proof came out in Spike's behavior, however, and their lives were strengthened by faith. It took a while for Tiggler to tell people about his new quest and eventually people stopped thinking he was crazy. Project Ararat was born.

There were committees set up and donations poured in from all over the world. It would be a hard trip, but Tiggler was determined. Project Ararat was deemed a success after the third trip up the mountain when Spike found bones of a man. It was assumed that Spike had found Noah's tomb. Once again, a football was thrown, this time atop Ararat. It was only the beginning.

At the end of the story, Tiggler is back in his town, sitting in the same diner he had been a hundred times before. Only this time, the discussion was about the second round of Project Ararat.

Chapter 10, "The Dream," details a bizarre recurring dream had by the narrator. In the dream, the narrator was awake, or at least thought he was, when there was a knock at the door. The man had been in some kind of state according to the woman that tended to him. The narrator ate ravenously, obsessed with breakfast foods.

The woman, Brigitta, took the narrator shopping. The man was fascinated by the wire cart and was no longer jealous of small children who were allowed to ride in them at the supermarket.

From that moment, everything seemed magical. There was an abundance of money; so much so that the sky was the limit. There were drinks, sex, golf, newspapers and everything else one could desire. There were famous people and there was Brigitta.



The narrator began to realize that there were no limits on what he could have. He met every famous person he had ever wanted to meet and had a finishing score in golf that would rival any professional on the PGA Tour. Then he began to worry. With everything in the world at his fingertips, he worried about never being tired or having ill health.

The narrator learned about Old Heaven and New Heaven and how things had changed and improved.

Perhaps the strangest thing to the man was the transference of what was into what is. In the New Heaven, each person can have absolutely anything one wants; can become anyone and do anything. However, there is a logistical problem. If a person wants to become something else, or someone else, the old person or thing must be given up. One cannot be who one was and still become something or someone else entirely. The mind is not equipped to handle it. The narrator thinks about making that shift. Did it mean that choosing to be someone or something else was the same as choosing death? If so, did it mean that those who had died chose to do so? The answer was not as simple. It is not as if those people chose to die as much as they chose to evolve. Death simply came after that choice was made. Like those people, the narrator also had a choice to make. The choice was to live the life he already had.

At the end, the man wakes up to realize that he has had the same dream. It was a dream of his real life and one that he'd had before.

Chapters 9-10 Analysis

"Project Ararat" is about a man who was at once self-involved. Tiggler was a typical boy that wanted the small town girl, got that, and moved on to fulfill a dream of being a pilot. The stint in the Navy led to a trip to the moon, where Tiggler threw the football that would make him famous. That moment of frivolity would prove to change Tiggler's life.

Tiggler's experience on the moon is a reference to being called to God. Tiggler was literally called to God when asked to go to Mount Ararat and find Noah's Ark. As with many converts, Tiggler was eager to share his find, yet was often met with cynicism. Even Betty, Tiggler's wife, doubted her husband, wondering if Tiggler was beginning to lose his mind. Tiggler prevailed. As the story goes on, the reader can see Tiggler visibly transform into a religious man, although there remains just a touch of self.

In "The Dream," Barnes investigates the final aspect to life and perhaps the history of the world. The dream deals with death and the evolution into the spirit world beyond. Even though one's wildest dreams can be had at the blink of an eye, it does not come without cost or without choice.



Characters

God appears in All

The God referred to throughout "The History of the World in 10½ Chapters," by Julian Barnes, appears to be the Christian ideal of God although other faiths and cultures are mentioned. In the Christian view, God is the Father of all, the Creator of the Universe, and the Supreme Deity. God is also the father of Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior to His followers.

God may be seen in many ways, through miracles, such as the appearance of the butterfly when a crew is desperately lost at sea, the rainbow as a covenant to Noah, the actions of the raven and the dove. It was God that spoke to Noah about the Great Flood and instructed him to build the Ark. The woodworm had differing tales than Noah, but along the line all seemed to agree that God had some part in the ark building as well as getting every one and thing that was left safely to shore.

God's wrath may also be seen in regards to the Great Flood or the Great Deluge that completely flooded the earth, except for a select number of animals and the family of Noah. It can also be seen in the violent weather and bad luck that befalls certain people.

God is referred to in every story whether it is directly, indirectly, or through the use of metaphor. In many of the stories it is clear that God is being referenced directly. This is seen mainly in the discussions of religion, such as in "The Wars of Religion." It is also made clear in the tales directly involving Noah's Ark - "The Stowaway", "The Mountain" and "Project Ararat."

Noah appears in The Stowaway, The Mountain

Noah was the one chosen by God to save the animals and humans from the Great Flood. Noah was said to be sage, holy, and basically beyond reproach, therefore being the perfect choice to carry out the grand mission.

Noah was instructed to build an ark and take aboard his family and two of every type of animal so that the planet could be re-inhabited without the wickedness of those left behind.

The author sees a different side of Noah, and certainly one less flattering than the one in the Bible and other texts.

The author claims that Noah was a self-righteous man with a bad temper. He was a drunken rogue that did not always work for the common good. Noah was a jealous man that did not like to be questioned, let alone confronted. Noah did not take into consideration the feelings and habitats of the animals. Instead, Noah chose to congratulate himself on his accomplishments, particularly after the ark landed at



Arghuri. The man made up several titles to commend himself on a job well done as well as being one of those chosen by God.

Noah's character is brought into question by the narrator who obviously was not fond of the man.

"Noah - what point is there in not telling you the truth? - was bad-tempered, smelly, unreliable, envious, and cowardly." (Chapter 1, page16)

The narrator goes on to compare Noah to a gorilla. However, the gorilla was obviously superior to Noah in brains, grace, and strength. The narrator believes that the gorilla would have been a much better choice to take on the mission.

After the landing of the ark, Noah chose to live his last 350 years as a hedonist; drinking, passing out, and reliving his glory days on the ark.

Woodworm appears in Stowaway, The Wars of Religion

This character appears in "Stowaway" and acts as the narrator of the text.

Black Thunder appears in The Visitors

This Middle Eastern terrorist group is responsible for the deaths and mayhem in "The Visitors."

Franklin Hughes appears in The Visitors

This character is the guest lecturer about the Aphrodite Cultural Tours and the reluctant spokesperson for the terrorist group.

Bartholome Chassenee appears in The Wars of Religion

This character is the jurist in "The Wars of Religion." The man is the representative fighting on behalf of the animals in a court of law.

Amanda Fergusson appears in The Mountain

This character is the Colonel's daughter in "The Mountain." Amanda goes on a pilgrimage, during which she hopes to save her father's soul.



Miss Logan appears in The Mountain

This character is the traveling companion to Amanda Fergusson in "The Mountain." Miss Logan is also in love with the Colonel.

Kathy appears in The Survivor

This is the main character in "The Survivor." Kathy is supposedly suffering from mental delusions.

Monsieur Gericault appears in The Shipwreck, The Survivor

This character is responsible for capturing the shipwreck of the Medusa on canvas. Gericault is also referred to in other stories, however the spelling of his name is changed to Jerricault.



Objects/Places

Noah's Ark appears in *The Stowaway*, *The Mountain*, *Project Ararat*

This is the main setting in "The Stowaway" and is referenced in several other chapters. Noah's Ark is a Biblical vessel, thought to have been the way to transport God's chosen from the wicked world into a new and fresh existence. Some people believe the Ark is a historical artifact, while others think it solely religious. Some do not believe it exists at all. In "The Stowaway" the narrator also insists that much of the history of the ark is untrue, yet is presented to make historians and Noah's people look good.

Chapter one of "The Stowaway" opens with the preparation of Noah's Ark. The behemoths, along with the hippos, rhinos and elephants are being used for ballast. It makes sense considering their size, but no one gave much thought to the smell and to the extensive mucking out that would have to be done. Since there was no one to do the job, it was left to the crew.

The narrator makes it clear that the real Noah's Ark was nothing like the illustrations often seen in children's books. The trip itself was long and dangerous, even though some things had been set in place from the beginning. While there were precautions to be taken, such as keeping certain animals apart, there were not as many precautions taken with the humans.

The building of the Ark was not nearly as quick as is often depicted. The craftsmen used to build the Ark were lackadaisical once they realized that there would not be any room for them on the Ark. The woodworm also makes fun of the choice of wood. Noah was told to use gopher wood. According to the woodworm, not only was it a stupid choice, it was not nearly as easy to come by as other, better suited types of wood.

In actuality, it took 5½ years for the Ark to make the trip. To some, this showed bad navigational skills. To others, it showed that Noah had the utmost faith in the Lord.

Sea appears in All

The sea is the setting used in all of the stories, at least in part. When one refers to the sea, it often means an ocean or other large body of water which may be another type of body of water.

The sea is the greatest enigma on earth. It is a paradox in that it can be gentle and beautiful or violent and ugly. Its creatures are too vast to be counted. The perfect example of this can be seen in "The Shipwreck." The crew of the Medusa first encounters a school of porpoises and later experiences the great strength of a deadly



shark. The sea is the giver of life to thousands of species of creatures, yet it cannot or will not support mankind.

Although some of the sailors throughout the stories are seasoned navigators, others are not. In the case of Noah, the time at sea was not several months but 5½ years, according to the woodworm. Others tossed themselves into the sea either on purpose or through some unfortunate accident. It is clear that the sea was not always accommodating to those not native to its waters.

Arghuri appears in Stowaway, The Mountain, Project Ararat

This location is where the people from Noah's Ark settled after the end of the Great Flood. It is also a town visited by many on the way to Mount Ararat.

Island of Aix appears in Shipwreck, The Mountain

This location is the port in France where the sailors of the Medusa, et al, set sail in 1817.

Medusa appears in Shipwreck

This is the ship sailed from Aix. The ship, part of a four ship flotilla, ended up in a shipwreck immortalized by Gericault.

Greece appears in The Visitors

This is the final destination of the Aphrodite Cultural Tour led by guest lecturer, Franklin Hughes.

Greece appears in The Visitors

This is the final destination of the Aphrodite Cultural Tours headed by lecturer, Franklin Hughes.

Ararat appears in The Stowaway, The Mountain, Project Ararat

This is the mountain on which Noah's Ark supposedly settled. For thousands of years people have made pilgrimages to the site.



Cape Hatteras appears in Project Ararat

This is one of the ports visited by the Ferry in "Project Ararat."

Dublin appears in The Mountain

This location is the home to Amanda and Colonel Fergusson.



Themes

The sea

One of the main themes used throughout "A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters," by Julian Barnes, is the sea. The sea is a main part in "The Stowaway" as the story takes place almost entirely aboard Noah's Ark during the 5½ years it was at sea.

The sea is the setting used in all of the stories, at least in part. When one refers to the sea, it often means an ocean or other large body of water which may be another type of body of water.

The sea is the greatest enigma on earth. It is a paradox in that it can be gentle and beautiful or violent and ugly. Its creatures are too vast to be counted. The perfect example of this can be seen in "The Shipwreck." The crew of the Medusa first encounters a school of porpoises and later experiences the great strength of a deadly shark. The sea is the giver of life to thousands of species of creatures, yet it cannot or will not support mankind.

Although some of the sailors throughout the stories are seasoned navigators, others are not. In the case of Noah, the time at sea was not several months, but 5 ½ years, according to the woodworm. Others tossed themselves into the sea either on purpose or through some unfortunate accident. It is clear that the sea was not always accommodating to those not native to its waters.

Noah's Ark

Another theme prevalent throughout the book is Noah's Ark. Some people believe the Ark is a historical artifact while others think it solely religious. Some do not believe it exists at all. In "The Stowaway" the narrator also insists that much of the history of the ark is untrue, yet is presented to make historians and Noah's people look good.

Although the topic of each story changes, there is a constant thread tying all of the stories to the Ark.

Chapter one of "The Stowaway" opens with the preparation of Noah's Ark. The behemoths, along with the hippos, rhinos and elephants are being used for ballast. It makes sense considering their size, but no one gave much thought to the smell and to the extensive mucking out that would have to be done. Since there was no one to do the job, it was left to the crew.

The narrator makes it clear that the real Noah's Ark was nothing like the illustrations often seen in children's books. The trip itself was long and dangerous, even though some things had been set in place from the beginning. While there were precautions to



be taken, such as keeping certain animals apart, there were not as many precautions taken with the humans.

The building of the Ark was not nearly as quick as is often depicted. The craftsmen used to build the Ark were lackadaisical once they realized that there would not be any room for them on the Ark. The woodworm also makes fun of the choice of wood. Noah was told to use gopher wood. According to the woodworm, not only was it a stupid choice, it was not nearly as easy to come by as other, better suited types of wood.

In actuality, it took 5½ years for the Ark to make the trip. To some this showed bad navigational skills. To others, it showed that Noah had the utmost faith in the Lord.

Individuality

Individuality is another theme throughout the book. Each character, whether it's a person or a beast, shows its own individual character. "The Stowaway" is a good example of individuality. The woodworm is clearly an individual. This is established long before the reader knows the narrator is not human. The animals are separated into two groups, the clean and the unclean, yet they still maintain individuality through their personalities. Some feel superior to others, and the others are indignant at being treated lesser than those in the higher group.

The same scenario applies to the hostages in "The Visitors." The terrorists set themselves above the people on the ship as well as world governments. Hughes places himself above many of the passengers. When the passengers are separated into groups according to nationality, one makes the comment that they are being singled out as clean or unclean.

In "The Survivor" Kathy is separated from the "normal" world as she supposedly struggles with mental issues. In "The Mountain" there is a clear separation between the faithful and the faithless. Amanda, the faithful, is determined to prove to her father the Colonel that her way is the right way, that the faithless shall suffer eternal damnation unless he sees the light. In the end it is Amanda that learns the much needed lesson, not the Colonel.

Throughout the book, Spike "Touchdown" Tiggler is given a nod as a special individual character whether or not the man believes his own press.

Although individuality of the characters is important, it does come to light in each case that those supposedly superior are not necessarily ranked the highest in the eyes of God or his fellow man.



Style

Point of View

The point of view used in "The History of the World in 10½ Chapters," by Julian Barnes, changes from first person to third person omniscient, depending on the topic. The first person is more personal and subjective and is used mainly when Barnes is describing his own feelings and experiences. A good example of the first person can be seen in "The Stowaway" and "The Survivor."

The use of first person is particularly entertaining in "The Stowaway" as the narrator is a woodworm that managed to sneak aboard Noah's Ark. The woodworm is an objective speaker and is eager to set the record straight regarding the famous voyage.

The parts written in third person omniscient tend to be those of observation of the weather, behaviors of others, or inanimate objects. Good examples of these problems include, "The Wars of Religion" and "The Mountain." In the chapters that use third person omniscient, the writer has the ability to relay to the reader the complete picture, rather than the single vision or impressions as viewed by one person.

There are sections that combine first and third person points of view. The switch between first and third person in "The Survivor" is at times necessary to understand Kathy's frame of mind and obvious decline. At other times, the switch is so frequent that even with the change in pronouns, it is difficult to tell which side of the story is being told and by whom.

Setting

The main setting in "The Stowaway," and referenced in several other chapters, is Noah's Ark. The Ark is often the basis for metaphor in other sections. Noah's Ark is a Biblical vessel thought to have been the way to transport God's chosen from the wicked world into a new and fresh existence. Some people believe the Ark is a historical artifact while others think it solely religious. Some do not believe it exists at all. In "The Stowaway" the narrator also insists that much of the history of the ark is untrue, yet is presented to make historians and Noah's people look good.

Chapter one of "The Stowaway" opens with the preparation of Noah's Ark. The behemoths, along with the hippos, rhinos and elephants are being used for ballast. It makes sense considering their size, but no one gave much thought to the smell and to the extensive mucking out that would have to be done. Since there was no one to do the job, it was left to the crew.

The narrator makes it clear that the real Noah's Ark was nothing like the illustrations often seen in children's books. The trip itself was long and dangerous, even though some things had been set in place from the beginning. While there were precautions to



be taken, such as keeping certain animals apart, there were not as many precautions taken with the humans.

The building of the Ark was not nearly as quick as is often depicted. The craftsman used to build the Ark were lackadaisical once they realized that there would not be any room for them on the Ark. The woodworm also makes fun of the choice of wood. Noah was told to use gopher wood. According to the woodworm, not only was it a stupid choice, it was not nearly as easy to come by as other, better suited types of wood.

In actuality, it took 5½ years for the Ark to make the trip. To some this showed bad navigational skills. To others, it showed that Noah had the utmost faith in the Lord.

Language and Meaning

The language and meaning used throughout "The History of the World in 10½ Chapters," by Julian Barnes, is relatively straightforward. Although the time periods are vastly different in many ways, the language used throughout is rather generalized. This helps the reader to clearly understand the text without the struggle of deciphering archaic or overly technical language. It also helps to maintain a common and constant thread throughout the book even though there is a range of several thousand years between all of the stories.

In "The Wars of Religion," the testimony included in the chapter is only a partial testimony. It was translated from French, with the verdict translated from Latin. There is no viable explanation for the change in language part way through the court records. There are also several legal terms and other similar vernacular included which often makes the reading dry.

Overall, Barnes makes the stories fairly easy to read although the literary aspect often serves to confuse readers and to send them off into another direction, often missing vital stories or segues essential to the plot.

Structure

"A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters," by Julian Barnes, is a work of fiction. It is comprised of 297 pages broken down into 10 chapters. The shortest chapter is 24 pages in length; the longest chapter is 34 pages in length. The average number of pages per chapter is 28.

There is a one illustration in the book. The illustration is a reproduction the painting the shipwreck of the Medusa by Gericault.

The first chapter, "The Stowaway," begins with the preparation of Noah's Ark. The tale is told in the first person, through the eyes of a stowaway woodworm.

Throughout the book there is always some thread, no matter how tenuous, to Noah's Ark, whether it is a story about a boat, suffering, stormy seas or animals taken aboard two by two.

The author splits the book between first person and third person omniscient. "The Stowaway", "Three Simple Stories", "Upstream!", "Parathensis", "Project Ararat" and "The Dream" are all written in the first person.

"The Visitors", "The Wars of Religion", "Shipwreck" and "The Mountain" use third person omniscient.

"The Survivor" combines first and third person points of view. The switch between first and third person in "The Survivor" is at times necessary to understand Kathy's frame of mind and obvious decline. At other times, the switch is so frequent that even with the change in pronouns, it is difficult to tell which side of the story is being told and by whom.



Quotes

"God's wrath with his own creation was news to us; we just caught up in it willy-nilly."
(Chapter 1, page 6)

"You've always been led to believe that Noah was sage, righteous and God-fearing, and I've already described him as a hysterical rogue with a drink problem?" (Chapter 1, page 8)

"As far as Noah and his family were concerned, we were just a floating cafeteria."
(Chapter 1, page 14)

"She didn't believe that Father Christmas squeezed down the chimney and left presents at the end of your bed, but she did believe that reindeer flew." (Chapter 4, page 83)

"She thought that landing on the island would make the nightmares stop." (Chapter 4, page 99)

"By misfortune, they had struck the reef at high tide; and the seas growing violent, attempts to free the ship failed." (Chapter 5, page 116)

"Here he was on his deathbed, preparing for oblivion, and she sits over there reading Parson Noah's latest pamphlet." (Chapter 6, page 143)

"Miss Fergusson had maintained, when they first stood before the haloed mountain, that there were two explanations of everything, that each required the exercise of faith, and that we had been given free will in order that we might choose between them." (Chapter 6, page 168)

"It's not much of a story, is it? As in most of the Old Testament, there's a crippling lack of free will around - or even the illusion of free will." (Chapter 7, page 176)

"If we look at the history of the world, it seems surprising that love is included." (Chapter 9, page 234)

"Spike Tiggler's home town was strong for the Democrats and even stronger for the Baptists." (Chapter 9, page 251)

"It was a good morning's work. It might have been the best morning's work there ever was." (Chapter 10, page 286)

Topics for Discussion

How do you feel about the narrator's point of view regarding the tale of Noah's Ark? Is it blasphemy or does it make sense to you? Explain. Which is your favorite part? Why would one choose to believe the narrator over the religious texts?

What is your opinion on the rule about the clean and unclean animals? Does it sound fair? What types of animals do you think were left behind? Why? Why did some of the slow animals make it and some did not? Explain.

How do you feel about the use of the woodworm as a narrator? Do you think the woodworm was telling the truth or making up tales to make himself sound more important? Which is the most incredible story? Which do you think are true?

In "The Survivor" Kathy has a great deal of trouble with emotions and nightmares. The mental health professionals try to make Kathy believe that her problems are largely self-inflicted. What is the explanation? How does Kathy react? Do you believe Kathy or the therapist? Explain.

"The Mountain" brings about a good topic for argument. Do you think things are destined to be a certain way or does self-will override all of that? If one fights against it to exert self-will, is it a wise or futile effort? Explain.

All of the stories have tied to Noah's Ark in some way. Do you believe that Noah's Ark existed and/or exists? Explain. Has there been any proof of the existence of the Ark? Do you see the Ark as being a historical or religious symbol? Explain.

The crew aboard the Medusa suffered greatly while out to sea. At one point they ran out of food and drink and were forced to take extreme measures to stay alive. Discuss the extreme measures. What would you do in the same situation? Do you think you could ever resort to cannibalism?