

On a Clear Day Study Guide

On a Clear Day by Walter Dean Myers

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Plot Summary

“On a Clear Day” is a young adult dystopian novel by Walter Dean Myers that takes place in the late summer of 2035. In the Bronx, sixteen year-old Dahlia attends the funeral of her aunt, and believes that there is nothing in life worth living for. The people of the world are divided into classes based on wealth. There are the Favelos (the poor), the Gaters (low-middle class and upper-middle-class), and the elite. At the very top of society are the C-8 companies, who control everything in the world from food production to medicine to the internet. These companies dictate much of everyday life, and they heavily influence the national policies of most countries in the world. As a result, the class system resembles a caste system, and there is little upward mobility.

Dahlia, a brilliant mathematician, is contacted by the American Resistance, a group of young people in their teens and twenties dedicated to finding a way to break the power hold the C-8 have on the world. Michael and Javier, the leaders of the Resistance, entreat Dahlia to join them, and to attend a conference in London being hosted by the Eaton Group, the British equivalent of the Resistance. In addition to meeting with the British resistance and other resistance groups, Dahlia and the Americans also meet with the Sturmers, an American neo-Nazi muscle-for-hire group, and a terrorist warlord named Zayad. Both the Sturmers and the terrorists are self-interested and want to know how the American Resistance will fit into everything.

As time goes on, Dahlia, Michael, Javier, and the other members of the American Resistance uncover different clues and information, which is assembled by Dahlia, who runs mathematically-based projections based on these clues. A plot ultimately emerges in which the C-8 plans to make a 2% profit in the coming year—something that has not happened at all since the world became “equal” under the C-8. Upon investigation, it is learned that one C-8 company, Natural Farming, intends to buy the medical research C-8 company, CTI, thus consolidating power and making more money. Upon further investigation, Dahlia and the others learn that Zayad is being used as a pawn to launch a terrorist attack in Miami, triggering a gang war that will obscure the corporate takeover. Zayad, in return, is to gain 3D printers which will allow him to produce weapons to continue his terrorist operations in Morocco. News of this is spread by the underground, which forces C-8 to cancel the merger.

The American Resistance gathers all of its members, and they organize themselves to prevent the terrorist attack. A battle rages between the Resistance and Zayad’s street gang allies and terrorist thugs. The first wave of the attack is beaten off, and the Sturmers arrive and finish off Zayad and the rest of his terrorist thugs. The mainstream media covers up the particulars of the attack, and Dahlia knows that the victory is only temporary. The C-8 will try for more power again soon. Even though all of the mysteries of the book are not fully revealed, Dahlia knows that will come soon enough.



Chapter 1-5

Summary

Chapter 1 – It is late summer, 2035, in the Bronx, New York. Sixteen year-old Dahlia Grillo and her family bury Aunt Maria, who has died at the young age of thirty-eight, in Van Cortlandt Park, where the dead are disposed of with biocremation. Uncle Ernesto and Dahlia take the death hard. Maria had acted as a mother to Dahlia after Dahlia's own mother had died years before. After the cremation, Dahlia wanders around, aware she may run into Nazi stormtrooper-like-thugs called Sturmers, mercenaries who sell out to the highest bidder. She then decides to head home to Fox Street. She is depressed not only because of the funeral, but because of life in general.

Life in general is dictated by the Central Eight, or C-8 companies, who control everything in the world including food production. World society has been reorganized into classes of people. The Favelos are the poor. The Gaters (divided into High Gaters and Low Gaters) are the next step up, who live in gated communities with armed guards protecting them. Then there are the elite, who have most of the money and power. Schools have been shut down in favor of free education programs on supertables. Dahlia misses school, and hears rumors that the Gaters are allowed private tutors.

Chapter 2 – Dahlia feels as if there is nothing left in life to care about or look forward to. Javier and Michael, two white kids, seek out Dahlia due to an article she wrote on computer projections for "Math Journal." It is explained that the Eton Group is a British-organized conference, determined to challenge the power of the C-8. The C-8 has leaked a report saying there will be two-percent economic growth when it has maintained for years that there has been no economic growth. Javier and Michael want to bring their American team, the Resistance, to the Eton Group. Dahlia denies that she is Dahlia.

Chapter 3 – Though Dahlia has pretended not to be herself, she knows Michael and Javier know who she is. Dahlia goes down to Mrs. Rosario's apartment to cook a meal with her. She tells Dahlia that at some point in life, chances have to be taken. Dahlia reflects on how all previous attempts to oppose the C-8 have failed. She remembers that Michael used to be the singer for a band called Plato's Cave that made it big only to have Michael walk away from it all. She also remembers how well-dressed Javier was despite being in a wheelchair. Dahlia tries to talk herself out of going but in the end decides to go.

Chapter 4 – Dahlia calls Javier and tells him she'll be going after all. She packs what little clothing she has. Mrs. Rosario gives Dahlia a beautiful white shawl before Dahlia leaves.

Chapter 5 – An Asian driver brings Dahlia to a gated house in New Jersey where she is given a room. She is then brought to the conference room. All those assembled



introduce themselves. Michael begins by explaining that the C-8 not only controls the global economy, but its resources as well. Resistance groups are forming all over the world, and the purpose of attending the Eton Group is to see if the American Resistance can work with them--or must work without them. The goal of everything is to learn how C-8 is growing bigger and to predict C-8's next moves and intentions.

In Dahlia's room, she views the video profiles of the other members of the Resistance. There is Michael Gullickson, the former rock star; Javier Gregory, Jewish and a New Jersey native who lost his ability to walk due to a car accident with a drunk driver on Route 287 before graduating from Princeton; Drego Small, a black street kid working to end gang violence who himself has been imprisoned for a number of violent offenses; Tristan Braun, a white, ex-military type; Anja Marlana, a blonde, English-accented girl who is sensitive to the emotions and plights of others and committed to doing social work in the Third World; and Mei-Mei Lum, a competitive Asian chess prodigy who wears three black rings. Finally Dahlia sees her own profile, indicating her skills with mathematics.

Michael later explains that his father used to own a clothing company which relied on child labor. His mother, curious to learn the truth about her husband's work force, visited the company during a protest, where she was ultimately killed. His father committed suicide not long after. Michael's mother inspired him to always want to see the truth, and to be responsible for everything he sees.

Analysis

(The reader should here note that not all of the mysteries and unknowns in this novel are explained. The novel is meant to be the first in a trilogy or series, but given the untimely death of the author, it is unclear if other successive novels may have been previously written, and if so, if these novels will be published.)

"On a Clear Day" is a young adult dystopian novel by Walter Dean Myers that takes place in the late summer of 2035. When the novel begins, Dahlia is a lonely sixteen year-old girl who is largely alone in the world. Most of her family is dead, and she has come to a point where she feels as if nothing truly matters anymore. She feels as if she has no purpose. Here, the theme of Purpose is first introduced in the absence of purpose that Dahlia feels.

Dahlia's lack of a Purpose is not something that she dwells on for long, as the American Resistance group--primarily in the form of Javier and Michael--contacts Dahlia to see if she would be willing to work with them against the C-8. Dahlia ultimately agrees to do this, and it imbues her with a Sense of Purpose about which she becomes truly passionate over the course of the novel.

Likewise, when the novel begins, Dahlia feels as if she has no real friends. Much of the first section of the novel concerns Dahlia in her bedroom not merely out of the



enjoyment of privacy, but out of being alone as well. Here, Friendship--developing over time--becomes a theme. However, Friendship, like the theme of Purpose, also changes.

Dahlia's induction into the American Resistance also means that she has a social circle now, though it is one created by a shared Sense of Purpose rather than one born of genuine social interaction. Nevertheless, as Dahlia begins to learn about the other members of the Resistance, she does indeed begin to feel at least kindly toward some of them, a clear indication that friendship is not far off.

This initial section of the novel is also important because Purpose and Friendship feed into the theme of Dystopianism. The C-8 companies have promised a utopia-like existence for all the people of the world, and most of the world has fallen under the sway of those companies. What they have received in return is lack of Purpose and lack of community. Rather than bringing people together in equality, the class system in the world has become a caste system.

The companies themselves rule through indirect means without being overtly political. They control the world's resources, and thereby control the world. However, the amount of power these companies have amassed is enough to have spawned a number of resistance groups across the world. They have formed in response to this corporate imperialism, and Corporate Imperialism here becomes an important theme in the novel.

The Dystopianism brought about by Corporate Imperialism can also be seen in other ways as well. The C-8 companies have influenced the domestic policy of various countries directly, such as providing the technology necessary to shut down the education system in the country. Dahlia misses being able to attend a physical school as well as the social interaction aspect of it. However, those who can afford them hire private tutors and thus receive a better, fuller, and more hands-on education. What should be a dream come true for most students in the world--not having to attend school anymore--turns out to be demoralizing, instead. This is all a part of the plan of the C-8 to help take away Purpose, and keep people in their castes.

The reader should also pay careful attention to the name of the band Michael used to sing for, Plato's Cave. This is a direct reference to Epistemology (the philosophy of getting to the truth, and how it can be accurately done). The allegory of Plato's cave involves what appears to be truth, and what is actually true. Only by leaving the illusions in the cave is the truth fully known. Michael is dedicated to finding the truth in the world, and his leaving the band is like the leaving of the cave to set out and find the truth.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Dahlia feel as if she no longer has a reason to live? Do you believe she is correct? Why or why not?



Discussion Question 2

Why does Dahlia decide to join the American Resistance? If you were in Dahlia's place, would you join the Resistance? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

What is the C-8? What is their apparent motive?

Vocabulary

wisp, corrugated, impulsively, intuitive, futility, pretentious



Chapter 6-10

Summary

Chapter 6 – Beginning in 2016, American children have computer chips implanted in their bodies which are used in everything from airport security to police tracking. Patches that block the traceability of the chips are used by many people, including Dahlia, who wears two such patches. Javier explains the meeting isn't illegal, but they will be photographed, followed, and spied on anyway. In London, the Resistance is met by the Eton Group, who bring them to the Chelsea Cloisters Hotel on Sloane Avenue. From there, Dahlia and Anja go shopping. Anja thinks Dahlia has a crush on Michael, but she denies this. Dahlia makes dinner in her room, and invites Michael to join her.

At Dulwich College, the meeting of six groups gets underway. The meeting is designed to prevent C-8 from taking over what remains of the free world. Dahlia learns more about the C-8 Companies. These include Jennings International, a conservative think tank; Natural Farming, a government-subsidized farm group that took over global food production; Cloud Cover, a Chinese satellite and technology company which controls the internet; Crystal Lake, A Euro-Zone company that controls the world's water; Sports Direct, the world's biggest arms and weapons supplier; the Cyto Technology Institute (CTI), a medical research foundation; the Jeremy Fund, an international monetary group that controls global currency; and the Andover Group, which controls the world's energy. Michael then gives a brief talk about how he refuses to let these companies dictate his life. Michael thinks things look promising. Drego disagrees.

Chapter 7 – Jerry “Roderick” Rowland of the Sturmern has come to London to observe the Eton Group conference and invited the American Resistance members to dinner at midnight at the Black Lion. Drago, and the others, agree to go with Michael. Michael doesn't think it is a coincidence that C-8 associated groups, like the Sturmern, have shown up in London. Likewise, the members of the Andover Group are giving their rightful claim on Nigerian oil over to the Nigerian government. No one knows why. At the Black Lion, Roderick reveals that everyone wants a better life, including the Sturmern, who want to get rid of the violent Favelos and want to be among the friends the Resistance makes in London.

Chapter 8 – Anja and Dahlia converse on their own about not knowing the real reason the Sturmern have wanted to be in touch with them. It is clear that everyone is suspicious of each other. Back at the hotel, a diplomatic message arrives from Sayeed Ibn Zayad, and Michael and Javier decide to tell the Eton Group about it. A member of the Eton Group, Victor, explains that Zayad is the Moroccan-equivalent of a Sturmer, but on a wider scale. Victor encourages a meeting with Zayad to see what he wants.

Chapter 9 – Dahlia wants to go home, but realizes something important is unfolding. Drego and Mei-Mei, meanwhile, don't think Michael has the nerve to face Zayad down. Dahlia has heard enough, and gets in Mei-Mei's face, telling her to let the people who



believe in changing things have a chance. This causes Mei-Mei to cry and declare herself Dahlia's forever-enemy as she leaves the room with Drego. Michael thanks Dahlia for defending him, saying that despite being assholes sometimes, Mei-Mei and Drego are good people deep down. He then kisses Dahlia on the cheek. Dahlia realizes she wants to be with Michael and decides to apologize to Mei-Mei.

Chapter 10 – On the way to visit Stonehenge, the American group further discusses Sayad Ibn Zayad. Through the group's conversation, it becomes clear that when Morocco gave up its monarchy, he led a group of rebels to take over the High Atlas Mountains, and in effect runs his own kingdom there, targeting the tourist trade with terrorist attacks. Michael leaves the decision to meet with Zayad up to a group vote. Ultimately, everyone freely votes to meet with him.

Analysis

As the novel continues, so too does the theme of Dystopianism. For example, when it comes to the computer chips that are implanted into human beings which are meant to make things like airport security passage easier, but also allow people to be tracked. As a result, many people have had their chips surgically removed or have purchased patches that block the signal from the chips. It is clear that the voluntary program had widespread support or pressure leading to so many being implanted, which also explains why people still have the freedom to have the chips removed or blocked. How long this freedom will last is uncertain.

The Eton Group meeting in London also touches on the theme of Dystopianism, as the C-8 companies are discussed and profiled. Each of these companies sought a more perfect world in which equality and justice would rule the day--a sort of corporate-enforced socialism--but the opposite has become true. This is apparent among the diversity of the members of the American Resistance, from Javier's wealthy background to Dahlia's status as a Low-Gater. None of the team members has yet transcended their caste.

The discussion and profiling of the C-8 companies demonstrates the theme of Corporate Imperialism. Each of the C-8 companies controls a specific aspect of daily human needs or conveniences, including food, water, medicine, and technology. As such, these companies have the power to dictate the daily decision-making of people around most of the world. The simple everyday freedoms people enjoy are thus stripped away.

The Dystopianism brought about by these companies and their imperial-like power can also be seen in the breakdown of power among the people of various nations. In the United States, the neo-Nazi Sturmers have become something of a twisted vigilante group, selling their muscle to the highest bidder. They are interested enough in the American Resistance to meet with them in London. There is also Zayad, the thug terrorist who prefers to target innocent people and tourists to maintain his power and control. He also seeks out a meeting with the American Resistance. Both of these are



also, in effect, an immoral way to reserve power and freedom among smaller groups against the poorer of the larger group, C-8.

Freedom can also briefly be glimpsed in the decision-making process of the American Resistance. While it is clear that Michael is in charge, he routinely seeks out the input, advice, and consent of everyone else in the group, affording them a small measure of freedom that the C-8 denies them. With this democratic process, the Resistance decides to meet Zayad.

It should also be noted here by the reader that Dahlia has now found her Purpose. At the most immediate level, she is creating computer-based mathematical projections in the hopes of predicting C-8's next move. On a more abstract level, she is part of a struggle against Corporate Imperialism and is fighting for a better tomorrow. This imbues her with a Sense of Purpose she could never have dreamt of before.

Discussion Question 1

In what ways are freedoms denied, granted, and secured in this section of the novel?

Discussion Question 2

Which aspects of daily life does the C-8 control? Are there any aspects of daily life that the C-8 does not yet control?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Michael, though clearly being in charge of the Resistance, seek the input of the other members? Why does he bring things up for votes?

Vocabulary

interlaced, drearier, dossier, intimidate, bluff



Chapter 11-15

Summary

Chapter 11 – Anja explains to Dahlia that Mei-Mei is competing with Dahlia and that Mei-Mei only ever feels as good as her last chess win. Anja knows she herself has a big heart but worries about her intelligence. Dahlia reassures Anja that she is indeed intelligent.

Chapter 12 – The Resistance heads to Edgware Road, to the Arabic section of London. Javier cannot attend the meeting for there is no wheelchair access. Zayad is no more than twenty years old, and says he commands around twelve-thousand terrorists. He has great ambitions, and believes the resistance is all talk. The meeting ends soon after, with Michael revealing to the others that it was clear Zayad merely wanted to impress them, and that there was a coldness to him.

Chapter 13 – Dahlia is thrilled to be headed home. The Eton Group vows to continue to work with the Americans. Dahlia learns that Zayad has boasted of his meeting with the Americans online and that he is dismissive of them. This means the meeting must be significant to him somehow, the Resistance members believe. Drego worries that Victor and the British group want an alliance with Zayad. Javier discovers that Menara Airport, which Zayad says he flew out of, also dispatched a flight to London containing members of Natural Farming—which cannot be coincidental. Javier believes Natural Farming booked the flights for Zayad.

At home, Dahlia runs computer models based on everything she has learned at the conference. 2% growth means C-8 is on the move. She also finds the idea of giving up revenue to the Nigerian government and Natural Food's connection with Zayad puzzling. The Sturmers' true purpose is also unknown.

Chapter 14 – Dahlia longs for a simple life, and knows how simple C-8 makes life by dictating the choices of people for them. While texting Anja, Dahlia learns Anja first met Michael at a fair trade conference. Javier then reveals through texts that he has received a message from an old friend working for the lab as a medical technician at CTI. Michael texts Dahlia to let her know she needs to be the one to contact the old friend because Javier is very upset about whatever is going on.

Chapter 15 – Dahlia and Anja fly to Saint Paul, Minnesota, to meet with Ellen Chaikin at the Pig's Eye Café. Ellen arrives. She is in her early twenties and very nervous. She reveals she dated Javier before the accident and that Javier himself was the drunk driver. She forgave him, but he pushed her away because none of their dreams of marriage and family could come true anymore.

Ellen reveals she does blood work, and was a part of the Jack-2 project, which has to do with cell growth regulation and cell repair in the hopes of slowing down the aging



process. Money is not made on processes, but on drugs sold to people. If the aging process could be reduced to pills, CTI would make trillions –or 2% growth in a year. Natural Farming executives, Ellen reveals, are also on the board of CTI, and are playing a bigger and bigger role.

It is also possible that Natural Farming plans to take over CTI, which would also lead to a 2% growth as the number of companies got smaller. C-8 could become C-7. Ellen gives them a memory stick with all the information on it. She then goes to use the bathroom, where she is beaten after denying she knew Dahlia and Anja. They then bring Ellen home, who says she will be okay. They later learn that Ellen has supposedly committed suicide by jumping from her balcony. Anja suspects murder.

Analysis

In this section of the novel, the reader learns more about the C-8 companies and their plans through Ellen, and more of the themes of Dystopianism and Corporate Imperialism. In a broadly philosophical sense, corporate power and its effects can be seen through Dahlia's wishing for a simple life, just to simply live. C-8, superficially, wants to make a simple life possible, but it does so by denying people their freedoms on even the simplest levels. For Dahlia, this is unacceptable in the end.

The C-8 companies, though they are not governments themselves and do not have direct physical power, are nonetheless powerful enough and wealthy enough to act of their own accord. Again, the reader sees the cause, Corporate Imperialism, and the effect, Dystopianism, in its process. Consider the disillusioned Ellen who brings secret information to Dahlia and Anja. Ellen later ends up dead as a result of her efforts to share information, and Anja suspects murder.

The C-8 companies, which have proclaimed that all people are to be equal and that no new wealth or additional revenue is ever created, are implicated in information that is either deliberately released or surreptitiously leaked. The information claims that they will make a 2% profit soon, to the tune of trillions of dollars. The likely cause is a company merger, which would in turn consolidate even more power, and give the companies even greater control in the world.

This power and control goes beyond simple commercialism and the markets. This power and control is also vested in underground operations and behind-the-scenes plays. Consider, for example, how Javier learns that Natural Farming, one of the C-8 companies, flew executives out of a Moroccan airport at the same time Zayad is flown out of the same airport on Natural Farming's dime. Other perplexing questions include why the C-8 companies would likewise be surrendering control of oil revenues to the Nigerian government and why they should be interested in the aging process.

(The reader should again note here that not all of the mysteries and unknowns in this novel are explained. The novel is meant to be the first in a trilogy or series, but given the untimely death of the author, it is unclear if other successive novels may have been



previously written, and if so, if these novels will be published. The truth behind the deal with the Nigerian government, as well as the aging process research are two of those mysteries not explained in this novel.)

As all of this unfolds, the reader also observes the developing Friendships among the members of the Resistance. Anja and Dahlia have become close friends, and it is a relationship that is tremendously beneficial to both of them. Anja reminds Dahlia that she does have a human side of emotion to her, and Dahlia reminds Anja that she is far more intelligent than she believes.

The reader should also note here that with these Friendships the conventions of the caste system, as well as race, seem to be irrelevant. Anja is obviously wealthier than Dahlia, for she has been able to travel to do work in the Third World, while Dahlia has never before been outside New York. At the same time, as poor as Dahlia is, she feels an intimate connection with the obviously-wealthy Michael. Mei-Mei likewise appears to be gravitating toward Drego, an intensely brilliant girl and a street kid.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Ellen get in touch with the American Resistance? What information does she give them? How is this information helpful to the Resistance?

Discussion Question 2

Why does the fact that a powerful company standing to make a 2% profit such a big deal?

Discussion Question 3

Why do Dahlia and Anja get along so well? How does this friendship between them help each of them?

Vocabulary

dramatic, adjoining, degradation, itinerary, gaudy, emphatic, sophisticated, artificial



Chapter 16-20

Summary

Chapter 16 – Javier is devastated by the news of Ellen’s death. Mei-Mei later reports that Zaya is in Miami, Florida with around a hundred men. Tristan explains their own Resistance can count on around 200 people to attend. Drego and Dahlia agree to go to Miami to see what Zayad is up to. Dahlia believes that Zayad is merely a pawn in a larger game. She believes the group is too focused on Zayad and not enough on C-8. She explains that Miami is not Zayad’s area of influence and that he seems to have no clear goal. She adds that there is no way a terrorist will win in America, and that he will face too much kickback. No one is happy with Dahlia’s analysis, but Anja believes her, and goes home with her to the Bronx.

Chapter 17 – Anja is warmly welcomed to the apartment building by Mrs. Rosario and all the others. Dahlia tells Anja that she worries something bad will happen in Miami. The girls then have dinner with some of the neighbors, where Dahlia reveals a little about their group. Rafael is enraged to hear that there may be fighting in Miami. Dahlia explains she wants to wake up on a clear day in a world that is full of hope and comfort.

Chapter 18 – The Resistance travels to Miami. Drego wishes to know why, if Natural Farming plans to take over CTI and it can be demonstrated what that would mean, why the plan isn’t simply exposed to the public. Anja explains that people often don’t want to accept or believe the truth because it is harder to do.

Drego and Dahlia then head to the ghetto section of Miami, where they go to a meeting with Pretty Boy who says that Zayad is getting in good with the locals, promising to bring power to the streets. He is already in good with Little Frankie on the West Side. Drego worries about what Zayad is up to. Drego pulls a crack whore off the street to find out who Pretty Boy is dealing for and learns that it is Conrad Butler, who controls much of the illegal activity across the South.

Drego and Dahlia then go to a seedy hotel. There, Drego attempts to track down a man who owes him a favor for Drego not killing him in the past. Information is also sent to Dahlia from Anja about Natural Farming looking into growing hashish in North Africa.

Drego learns from another gang leader that Zayad has been flashing money all over and is interested in buying 3D printers and storing them at the Natural Farming warehouse. The gang leader reveals they discovered this while stealing the chemical that keeps Natural Farming’s seeds dry, for that same chemical also keeps marijuana in good condition. Dahlia realizes these can be used to print weapons and keep Zayad armed for years. He also reveals that Zayad has nobody major backing him. When the leader leaves, Drego explains to Dahlia that the danger of gangs and people like those working for Zayad is that they don’t believe in the future, or look forward to it. Dahlia realizes that major headlines from violence will obscure the Natural Farming takeover.



Chapter 19 – When Drego and Dahlia return to the good hotel where the others are staying, Anja explains she has been spreading rumors online that C-8 is not connected with Zayad to the point where the denial will become so repeated, people will believe the denial is a lie. Dahlia runs some computer models on all the information they have gathered. Most end up with a lot of violence and death, and all of them end up with C-8 winning.

Chapter 20 – Dahlia's models show that Zayad intends to make an attack sometime Wednesday morning. Michael, meanwhile, organizes a meeting, at which some forty other men are present, all of them prepared to fight. They consider the ways that Zayad may attack. Dahlia believes that Zayad will attack on the sides, as he has always done in the past.

Analysis

As it becomes apparent in the novel, through their imperial-like power the C-8 companies have ferreted Zayad and his terrorist thugs into Miami, Florida. Their purpose in Miami is not immediately clear, though it does become evident soon enough. In the Dystopian world that C-8 has created--forcing a mobile class system into a stationary caste system--the lower classes are preyed upon for exploitation. C-8's merging will be major news, but an even larger news story will obscure it. A major gang war instigated by Zayad will do the trick.

This plan demonstrates the unprecedented power C-8 wields and also demonstrates their moral ambiguity by using terrorists to begin a war in which innocent people will be killed. The members of the Resistance understand that people will die no matter what, but they all hope to minimize the number of dead sustained as a result of the plan. Dahlia especially fears that innocent people will be hurt. The C-8 on the other hand have no problem killing anyone--innocent or corrupt--in order to further their own agendas. They are contrasted sharply with the Resistance as a result.

At the same time, the payment Zayad receives goes into 3D printers so that he will be able to print up an arsenal of weapons and never have to come down from his mountain kingdom again. The 3D printers prove to be vital in Zayad's decision to work with the corporations, especially when he refuses to work with the government in control of his own country. Corruption, it is clear, makes for strange partners.

The very people that C-8 has been saying it wants to help all along, the poor, are about to become expendable. Zayad himself is clearly a pawn, though his sense of self-importance makes him believe he is a principal actor. As one of the local gang leaders reveals, Zayad has no major gangs backing him, an ill-omen for Zayad.

The reader should also note that this section of the novel appears to deviate slightly from the overall plot in Drego's pursuit of information about a drug dealer. While this is only loosely associated with the plot, the true meaning behind Drego's pressing for information is not known. The reader should again bear in mind that this novel was



intended to be part of a trilogy or series. Based on the author's untimely death, the reason for Drego's inquiry may never be known.

As the Resistance team discusses what it is that they should do, Anja makes a statement that reinforces something Dahlia said earlier in the novel. The reader will remember that Dahlia wants a simple, free life, as do most other people. And so it is simplest to do as the C-8 advocates, for it just makes life simpler. Anja says that most people go along with things because it is simple and easy and that the truth is not always palatable. Between the human desire for simplicity and peace, freedom--and the truth--is surrendered.

Dahlia's purpose now becomes intensified. She hopes that there will be a brighter, better day in the future, a clear day of hope and comfort. The reader should note that it is from this passage that the title of the novel is drawn. The C-8 companies are the storm that have clouded over most of the Earth, and Dahlia longs for a clear day without them. This part of the novel is also critically important when it comes to Dahlia's sense of self-purpose. At the beginning of the novel, Dahlia was without any Purpose at all. Now, every breath she takes is in pursuit of her dream for a better world. Nowhere is the theme of Purpose more clear than when Dahlia speaks about what she does, and why.

Discussion Question 1

What is Dahlia's purpose by this section of the novel? Do you believe this is a purpose worth fighting for? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Why do Drego and Dahlia go undercover into the ghetto of Miami? What important information do they learn? How do they use it to their advantage?

Discussion Question 3

What is C-8's true purpose about having Zayad in Miami? What do they hope this will ultimately do for them?

Vocabulary

vulnerable, memento, droned, postmortem, dingy



Chapter 21-25

Summary

Chapter 21 – Dahlia and the others watch the news. The Lieutenant-Governor of Florida, Adrian Rogers, addresses rumors about Natural Farming. He says it is a clean American company that has no ties to any terrorist group, that Natural Farming has made a tentative deal with Morocco to turn the nation into a major food exporter, and that other groups are claiming credit for the idea. Michael hopes the public affirmation of a deal, and the public denial of terrorism, has been enough to throw C-8 off its game, and make violence unnecessary. However, the problem now becomes Zayad, who without a C-8 deal acts on his own and goes home and loses face. Zayad decides there will be violence.

Chapter 22 – The battle is waged, and the small-timers that Zayad has hired battle with the men of the Resistance, who stop them from causing violence on a greater scale.

Chapter 23 – Though the lowlife street thugs have been dealt with, Michael, Dahlia, and the others know that Zayad's own trained killers are still somewhere around. Javier attempts to broadcast the failure of the attack, but the signals are jammed. Using a landline, Drego calls the Eton Group to let them know what has happened. Word then spreads about the first attack being repulsed. Michael thinks the Resistance should withdraw, for if Zayad does not have an enemy to fight, he cannot have a victory.

Chapter 24 – Dahlia speaks with Tristan. She worries that they have killed the people they originally intended to protect from C-8's plans. Tristan explains that sometimes people won't listen unless they know their own language is being spoken. He is not happy about having to kill people but can live with it. Suddenly, word comes that the Sturmers have arrived in strength. Zayad's personal group then makes their attack, and Anja and Dahlia are slightly wounded, and treated. The Resistance decides to let the Sturmers handle Zayad's terrorists, which they do.

Chapter 25 – The mainstream news the next day carries coverage of the fight near Little Haiti, Miami, where the Sturmers are given credit for killing the terrorists, including Zayad. Any link between American druggies and Zayad is denied. Underground news sites reveal the truth, that a bunch of teens stopped a corporate plot. Dahlia has returned home to the Bronx for a little while. She has come to respect everyone in the Resistance, and she hopes that she and Michael fall in love. She knows they have temporarily won a victory. She also knows that, while some of C-8's plot is clear, much of it is not, and C-8 will be back at it again before long. She also thinks the day looks a little clearer.



Analysis

While the C-8 wields tremendous power and influence, they are not all-powerful. Public opinion still matters tremendously--especially in America--and politicians are responsive to public outcries. The government of the state of Florida must respond to accusations of relations between Natural Farming and Zayad, declaring these allegations to be false. What is interesting here is not that the government promises an investigation into the incident, but instead starts from the proposition that these incidents in no way involve the C-8 companies.

However, this public denial is not all that it appears to be. It should strike the reader as strange why a public official should be the one defending a company, rather than the company defending itself. It is obvious that the Lieutenant-Governor of Florida is somehow in the pocket of the C-8, and one can only wonder where the actual Governor of Florida is and why the Lieutenant-Governor is defending a massive corporation.

The incident of near-exposure is disconcerting enough to C-8 to cause Natural Farming to abandon its plans. Zayad, however, needs a victory to spin and save face back in Morocco. He decides to carry on an attack as planned –but his low-level street thugs are repulsed by the American Resistance.

Oddly enough, it is the antagonistic Sturmers, working in cooperation with the American Resistance, who finish the job by eliminating Zayad and his personal terrorist contingent. Corporate Imperialism and Dystopianism makes for strange alliances, but is also proof how disparate groups, many of them principally opposed to one another, may form bonds to defeat an even greater threat or evil. The battle for Miami is certainly an indication of this as the Resistance and the Sturmers team up in order to defeat the terrorists and their gang backers. The Sturmers recognize that the terrorists working for C-8 poses a greater threat not only to themselves, but to their country, than do the American Resistance or the Eton Group.

When the novel ends, the reader is left with a feeling of incompleteness. C-8 has not been defeated, but merely stalled. Dahlia knows this. There are also many mysteries and questions that have yet to be answered (the reader will remember the oil deal with the Nigerian government, the aging process research, and the drug dealing operation by a southern drug kingpin, among others) and may never be answered. Nevertheless, Dahlia is resolved to follow through with her renewed Purpose in life and bring about a clear day.

Discussion Question 1

How does Dahlia's sense of purpose at the end of the novel compare with her sense of purpose at the beginning of the novel? Has she truly changed? Why or why not?



Discussion Question 2

Why is the ending bittersweet for Dahlia? Do you believe she is justified in feeling hopeful, but unhappy that more has to be done? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Choose a mystery or question left unanswered at the end of the novel. Explain what you believe the answer is to this mystery or question and how it may work into the “On a Clear Day” universe.

Vocabulary

tentatively, implement, democratic, countermeasures, hieroglyphic, aloofness



Characters

Dahlia Grillo

Dahlia Grillo is the sixteen year-old Latina narrator and principal protagonist of the novel “On a Clear Day” by Walter Dean Myers. After the death of her mother, Dahlia is raised in the Bronx by her aunt, who dies before the beginning of the novel. Though she is mathematical genius, Dahlia feels as if she has no Purpose in life anymore. Much of this is brought on by being without her mother and her aunt. She is dissatisfied with life, and either wants something more, or wants everything to end. But it is clear that Dahlia is intended for more important things than irrelevance and death.

She is selected by the American Resistance to become a part of the core team determined to challenge the power of the C-8. There, Dahlia becomes quick friends with Anja, develops romantic feelings for Michael, and constantly butts heads with Mei-Mei. Dahlia is considered a core component of the American Resistance, and her work there quickly renews her hope, giving her a sense of Purpose.

Dahlia’s use of mathematics is applied to computer projection models, which seek to anticipate C-8’s next moves. Dahlia successfully uses these projections to determine that C-8 wishes to consolidate its power, as well as to determine when and where Zayad will launch his terrorist attack. By the end of the novel, the merger in C-8 has been stopped, and Dahlia is partially satisfied. She knows there are more mysteries to solve and that C-8 has only been delayed rather than stopped, but she also knows she has a real purpose in life, in that she will bring about the downfall of C-8.

Michael Gullickson

Michael Gullickson is the Caucasian-American leader of the American Resistance determined to overthrow C-8. Michael appears to be in his twenties and is a wealthy orphan. His mother was killed during a protest overseas outside one of Michael’s father’s sweatshops, and his father later committed suicide. Michael became disenchanted with the world as a result, for he dearly valued his mother and knew the sweatshop conditions directly led to the protest that killed his mother.

Michael is the former frontman for the rock band “Plato’s Cave,” which he left to pursue the true state of affairs in the world related to C-8 because he was inspired by his own mother’s desire to always know the truth. Her death galvanized Michael to pursue a greater path in life. Dealing with the truth of the state of the world, and reeling from the death of his mother, Michael tends to be very guarded about himself, but is very warm, gentle, and open toward others. It appears as if he has the acute ability to sense pain in others.

As a result, Michael is a strong but quiet leader who solicits input from his team to make decisions. As the novel unfolds, Michael and Dahlia begin to grow closer. At first they



have a tentative friendship which slowly develops into romantic feelings. However, Michael refuses to act on these romantic feelings because he knows he must keep his mind focused on the objectives of the Resistance.

Anja Marlina

Anja Marlina is a pretty, blonde Caucasian-American who is incredibly kind, sweet, and empathetic. She appears to be in her late teens. She is especially sensitive to suffering and has spent years working to help people in the Third World. Anja becomes fast friends with Dahlia, and the two end up doing everything together, from shopping to gossiping to researching. Anja is self-conscious about her intelligence, but Dahlia reminds her that she is indeed very intelligent. Anja also reminds Dahlia that it is all right to feel.

Javier Gregory

Javier Gregory is a Jewish New Jersey native who is in his early-to-mid-twenties. Incredibly wealthy, he is a graduate of Princeton and hopes to go on to law school. Technology is his forte. During college, Javier drove while drunk, and lost his ability to walk. As a result, he is now confined to a wheelchair. He is Ellen's former boyfriend, and she contacts Javier when she becomes disillusioned working for CTI. When Ellen is murdered, Javier is devastated, for he still loves her.

Tristan Braun

Tristan Braun is a Caucasian-American ex-military type, strong, quiet, and powerful. He is deeply patriotic, intensely loyal, and willing to fight to save the world from evil. When the final battle in Miami comes, Tristan and his network of fellow patriots is quick to take action to defend Miami.

Mei-Mei Lum

Mei-Mei Lum is a competitive Asian-American chess prodigy and perfectionist who speaks Arabic. She appears to be in her teens. Fiercely competitive, Mei-Mei constantly locks horns with Dahlia, seeing her as a rival for power in the group. Mei-Mei later begins what appears to be a romance with Drego.

Drego Small

Drego Small is an African-American street kid who appears to be in his twenties, and who worked to end gang violence. He himself has been imprisoned for a number of violent offenses. Drego is tough and utilitarian, doing whatever must be done for a greater end. His street cred proves to be invaluable as he and Dahlia travel to Miami to



learn about Zayad's intentions there. He ultimately begins something of a relationship with Mei-Mei.

Adrian Rogers

Adrian Rogers is the Lieutenant-Governor of the State of Florida. He goes public to address the issue of allegations of terrorist associations with the C-8 company Natural Farming. Rogers denies these allegations as lies. It is unusual that a public official should be the one defending a company, rather than the company defending itself in this instance. It is also obvious that the Lieutenant-Governor of Florida is somehow in the pocket of the C-8.

Ellen Chaikin

Ellen Chaikin is a pretty, twenty-three-year-old disillusioned medical technician at the labs of CTI. Ellen is working on the process of aging, and has become unhappy with the company. She contacts her ex-boyfriend, Javier, who then sets up a meeting between Ellen, Dahlia, and Anja. It is at this meeting that Ellen reveals Natural Farming appears poised to take over CTI.

C-8

The C-8 are eight companies who control a specific aspect of daily human needs or conveniences, including food, water, medicine, and technology. As such, these companies have the power to dictate the daily decision-making of people around most of the world. The simple everyday freedoms people enjoy are thus stripped away. These companies include Jennings International, a conservative think tank; Natural Farming, a government-subsidized farm group that took over global food production; Cloud Cover, a Chinese satellite and technology company which controls the internet; Crystal Lake, A Euro-Zone company that controls the world's water; Sports Direct, the world's biggest arms and weapons supplier; the Cyto Technology Institute (CTI), a medical research foundation; the Jeremy Fund, an international monetary group that controls global currency; and the Andover Group, which controls the world's energy.



Symbols and Symbolism

Math Journal

Math Journal is a scholarly mathematics magazine that features research, articles, and other associated features relating to mathematics. Dahlia has an article on mathematics-based computer projections published with Math Journal, and this is how she is discovered by the American Resistance.

Computer projections

Computer projections are tabulated by Dahlia to predict likely future events and actions, especially when it comes to C-8 and Zayad. Likely outcomes are given a statistical probability of happening based on past indicators, events, and actions. For example, Dahlia's projections correctly conclude that Natural Farming is looking to take over CTI and that Zayad will attack Miami on a Wednesday morning.

Chemical preservatives

Chemical preservatives are produced by Natural Farming to spray on crops to act as a deterrent to insects and to prolong the life of the food. Gangs steal the preservative to keep their marijuana in sellable condition. It is while stealing this preservative that the gangs discover Zayad is hoarding 3D printers.

3D printers

3D printers are being hoarded and purchased by Zayad and stored in Miami at the Natural Farming warehouse. Zayad intends to use these printers to sustain his mountain kingdom, primarily wanting to use the printers for weapons and ammunition.

Supertablets

Supertablets are an advanced version of the personal tablet. These supertablets are distributed freely to all people in place of public education and schools, for one of their intended purposes is to allow people to learn what they need to learn at their own pace. It also gives the C-8 tremendous influence over what people have access to and what they learn.



Guitars

Guitars are played by Michael while he is in the band “Plato’s Cave.” Michael often reflects fondly on making beautiful music, and seeking truth in the music he played through his guitar. Now, the truth he seeks is of a much higher order, in that he is in pursuit of dismantling C-8 and restoring simple, daily freedoms to people.

Landlines

Landlines are telephones that rely on wires, rather than wireless signals, to operate. They cannot be jammed by conventional wireless means. After the victory in Miami, the C-8 companies jam the wireless internet and wireless signals to prevent word of the battle from leaking out. Drego uses a landline in a nearby store to get the word out, instead.

Money

Money is the primary purpose of the C-8. Their goal is to make money not merely for profit or to expand operations, hire more people, and make a better product, but to wield power and control over the daily lives of people around the world.

Memory stick

A memory stick is a storage device utilized by Ellen to store important information about CTI, such as who is on their board of directors. This memory stick is given by Ellen to Dahlia and Anja. Dahlia uses the information on the memory stick to help run her computer projections.

Video profiles

Video profiles for the members of the American Resistance team are created by Javier and Michael. These profiles allow each of the team members to learn more about the others, including their backgrounds. This is how both Dahlia, and the reader, come to learn about each of the members of the team.

Settings

The Bronx

The Bronx is one of the five boroughs of New York City, and is the poorest, most desolate area of New York. It is where Dahlia lives in an apartment building with many other people, and it is where Dahlia attends her aunt's funeral. The Bronx is diverse, largely black and Hispanic. It is controlled by the Sturmers gang, who often battle with the criminal Favelos gang who terrorize the local residents, though the Sturmers themselves are not any better. Nevertheless, the Bronx is home for Dahlia, and she consistently looks forward to returning home, which she does at the end of the novel.

Morristown, New Jersey

Morristown, New Jersey is a gated and guarded community that is far away from the violence and trauma of the inner city areas. It is in Morristown that the American Resistance is organized, and a guarded, gated safe house is set up. Morristown is where Dahlia is driven to join the Resistance.

London

London is the capital city of England and is home to the British resistance team, the Eton Group. London is also the setting for the organized Eton Group conference, culling together far-flung resistance groups to see what they have in common, and if working together is possible. London is also visited by a group of Sturmers to see what the Americans intend to do and by Zayad the terrorist who wishes to do the same.

Stonehenge

Stonehenge is a prehistoric cultural landmark in England located an hour-and-a-half from London. Stonehenge is visited by the American Resistance team prior to their meeting with Zayad. Stonehenge's true purpose will never be known, and several of the team members content themselves with the idea that everything in the world, including C-8's inner workings, may never truly be known.

Miami

Miami is a major east-coast city in Florida. It has some of the poorest neighborhoods in the country. The area is rife with gang and drug-related crimes. Miami is where Dahlia and Drego go undercover to find out why Zayad has brought one-hundred terrorists to the city. It is where they learn that Zayad plans—and later carries out—an attack meant to take headlines away from the pending Natural Farming acquisition of CTI.



Themes and Motifs

Friendship

Friendship is an important theme in the novel “On a Clear Day” by Walter Dean Myers. In the novel, Friendship proves to be an important and crucial determining factor in the success of the American Resistance and in Dahlia’s own life. When the novel begins, Dahlia not only feels as if her life has no purpose, but she feels as if she has no friends. With her mother and aunt both dead, she feels truly alone. She spends a lot of time alone by herself in her room not only because she is depressed, but because she has no real friends to spend any time with.

Dahlia is soon after contacted by and brought on board with the American Resistance. It is through the American Resistance that Dahlia’s life begins to turn around quickly, including finally making some real friends. Though the level of social activity Dahlia experiences with the Resistance is necessitated by their joint purpose to defeat C-8, the fact that there is a social aspect at all is monumental to Dahlia. Dahlia becomes fast friends with Anja. The two come to do everything together, from gossiping to researching to shopping, and they spend much time together as a result. They learn about, and learn from one another as well, and their support and loyalty for one another is quite clear and telling. Anja, who is very sensitive, kind, and caring, worries that she is not intelligent enough as a balance, and Dahlia reassures her that this is not so. Dahlia, likewise, is encouraged by Anja not to shut out her own emotions, and this helps to prompt Dahlia toward developing romantic feelings for Michael. Dahlia’s own friendship for Michael, which later evolves into romantic inclinations, also sees Dahlia defending Michael from charges of weakness and indecision made by Drego and Mei-Mei. Indeed, Mei-Mei and Dahlia lock horns frequently because Mei-Mei sees Dahlia as a competitive rival. Though Dahlia comes to respect Mei-Mei by the end of the novel, she does not call Mei-Mei a friend. In fact, Mei-Mei says she will be forever Dahlia’s enemy.

Dystopianism

Dystopianism is an important theme in the novel “On a Clear Day” by Walter Dean Myers. Dystopianism involves a government, organization, association, or company that exercises tremendous or total power and influence in the lives of everyday people, often denying their human and legal rights in the name of the greater good. Those in power will do whatever it takes to retain power and will do whatever is necessary to secure their own ends. On the surface, those with power have the stated goal of helping the people, but in reality, all they do is harm people.

In “On a Clear Day,” the group that wields tremendous power is the C-8, composed of companies who control a specific aspect of daily human needs or conveniences, including food, water, medicine, and technology. As such, these companies have the power to dictate the daily decision-making of people around most of the world. The



simple everyday freedoms people enjoy are thus stripped away. These companies include Jennings International, a conservative think tank; Natural Farming, a government-subsidized farm group that took over global food production; Cloud Cover, a Chinese satellite and technology company which controls the internet; Crystal Lake, a Euro-Zone company that controls the world's water; Sports Direct, the world's biggest arms and weapons supplier; the Cyto Technology Institute (CTI), a medical research foundation; the Jeremy Fund, an international monetary group that controls global currency; and the Andover Group, which controls the world's energy.

These companies originally banded together with the common, stated goals of equality and justice, and making life easier on people, but rather than allowing upward mobility, the policies, products, and influence of these companies have stagnated class mobility, instead creating a near-permanent caste system. The poor stay poor, while the rich become richer. The middle class and wealthy areas (the Low Gaters, the High Gaters, and the elite) are protected by walls and armed guards, while the poor are left to fend for themselves. Indeed, despite promises by the C-8 companies to the contrary, the number of poor have increased rather than declined. Instead of decreasing, misery has increased to a point of hopelessness and purposelessness –as clearly demonstrated by Dahlia early on in the novel, who herself feels hopeless and without purpose.

The C-8 companies, who also have the stated goal of making life easier, push particular products, processes, and ways of doing things, taking the guesswork out of everyday life for Americans, and stripping them of their small, daily freedoms. For example, the public school system has been abolished in favor of learning corporation-chosen lessons on supertablets. These companies are also seeking to gain even more power and wealth as time goes on, as demonstrated by the plans for Natural Farming to take over CTI. The companies are powerful enough to influence and negotiate deals with the governments of other countries, but are not powerful enough to overcome the outcry of the American public for suspected relations to terrorism at the end. As a result, the work that Dahlia and the Resistance do in exposing this link is enough to make the company cut its ties to Zayad. However, the companies are not afraid to play dirty when the need arises. When Ellen leaks information to Dahlia and Anja, she is beaten and later murdered. The murder is made to look like a suicidal jump from her apartment balcony. This also extends to the moral apathy of the C-8 in their desire to entreat with a known terrorist group in order to cover up their planned merger to form the C-7.

Freedom

Freedom is an important theme in the novel “On a Clear Day” by Walter Dean Myers. Freedoms, down to even the most basic, daily decisions, have largely been taken away by the influence of the C-8 companies. Most of the world is now under the spell of the C-8, and precious few places in the world are still totally free. The C-8 companies each control important aspects of everyday life as monopolies in those fields, such as food, water, energy, and technology. As a result, they are able to push particular products, processes, ideas, and so on. Most people are content with this because they want a simple, hassle-free life, and so they are willing to give up the seemingly mundane day-



to-day decision-making for which they have been free to make in the past. But for the members of the American Resistance, this isn't good enough. Those simple Freedoms, even about which products to purchase, are essential in the greater scheme of things. Little Freedoms invariably lead to larger freedoms being taken away.

The C-8 companies have also been tremendously influential in the dissolution of the public school system. Students now receive their education through computer supertablets, and are denied the simple Freedoms of learning in a classroom environment among friends and teachers. Dahlia herself deeply regrets being unable to have the Freedom to attend a physical school. The C-8 companies have been highly influential as well, implanting computer chips into people. These chips contain all of a person's vital information and were originally intended to be used to make airport security passing easier. They have also been used to track people, both legally and illegally, and as a result, a number of companies have produced patches which block the chips from being traced. A number of people have also had them surgically removed. While the blocking or removal of these chips is not illegal, their widespread use is troubling and indicative of the loss of simple Freedoms, like the ability to move around without being tracked.

Other Freedoms have also been denied to people, such as social mobility. In the past, upward mobility was there for anyone who was willing to take a shot at it. With the current economic situation under the C-8, the class system has become a caste system, and there is barely any social mobility at all. If a person is born poor, the chances are that that person will remain poor for life. There is no longer any Freedom for people to follow their dreams or make something of oneself, thanks to the C-8 companies, who now have a stranglehold on power and wealth.

Corporate Imperialism

Corporate Imperialism is an important theme in the novel "On a Clear Day" by Walter Dean Myers. Corporate imperialism is the wielding of immense powers by companies to the point where they heavily influence a country's policies and actions, both foreign and domestic. The C-8 companies control a specific aspect of daily human needs or conveniences, including food, water, medicine, and technology. They have grown immensely wealthy and influential as a result and deal with foreign powers and governments as though they are a governmental power themselves.

In Africa, for example, the C-8 companies deal with the Nigerian government on an equal basis, though the C-8 clearly has the upper hand. While the details of the deal are not fully known, the fact that the C-8 will be returning oil profits to the country speaks volumes about the companies being more wealthy and powerful than the government itself. In Morocco, the C-8 companies act so brashly and without concern that they deal with a terrorist group to achieve their own ends. They entreat Zayad's radical terrorists to attack Miami, cause a gang war, and offer him pay and 3D printers in return. This also speaks to the moral apathy of the C-8, who are willing to do whatever they must to retain their wealth and power. In the United States, the C-8 companies have been able



to influence education policy and limit personal freedoms. The C-8 companies have successfully dismantled the public education system and replaced it with C-8 created education programs presented through supertablets. The C-8 companies have also been able to push the voluntary implanting of chips into human beings by peer pressure and glitzy advertising that promises ease of use, such as going through security at airports.

Purpose

Purpose is an important theme in the novel "On a Clear Day" by Walter Dean Myers. Purpose is essentially the goal, dream, or endgame a human being is intended for, or intends his or herself toward. Purpose is important for Dahlia, the American Resistance, and the C-8.

When the novel begins, Dahlia not only feels lonely, but is without hope and feels as if she has no Purpose in life. She begins to even wonder what the point of living might be. Her world changes when Michael and Javier contact her, and entice her to join the American Resistance against the C-8. Michael and Javier give Dahlia a renewed sense of Purpose as Dahlia becomes a full-fledged member in the fight against C-8. As she later explains to the people gathered at her apartment building, her Purpose is her dream: to wake up on a clear day, full of hope and promise.

The American Resistance, like Dahlia, dedicates itself to the Purpose of dismantling the C-8. Michael, therein, in particular dedicates himself to this task as an ode to discovering the truth, in honor of his mother who was killed trying to determine the truth about his father's company employing children. Michael's desire for truth not only encompasses the desire to see the C-8 done away with, but for the people of the world at large to pursue truth, no matter what the cost. The C-8 companies themselves also have various purposes. Those readily apparent are easy to guess: wealth, power, and influence. But the ultimate endgame--the true grand design--is unknown to anyone. It can be guessed at that these companies are seeking to remake the societies and cultures of the world, for their influence in the domestic policies of various countries. This is certainly the case in the United States, where they have exercised influence in education and personal rights, and in Nigeria, where they have influenced oil policy.

Styles

Point of View

Walter Dean Myers writes his novel “On a Clear Day” in the first-person limited-omniscient narrative mode from the point of view of main character and principal protagonist, Dahlia. The first-person aspect allows the reader to see and experience things the way that Dahlia sees and experiences them firsthand and thus gives the reader a detailed and intimate glimpse into Dahlia’s thoughts and feelings, which are not readily available to others in the Resistance. The limited-omniscient aspect of the novel’s narration adds a sense of realism and believability to the novel, for no human being knows everything that is going on in the world at once. The reader learns about things only as the characters in the novel learn about them. The limited-omniscient aspect also adds a feeling of drama, urgency, and mystery, as Dahlia and the Resistance members are often in the dark as to the true intentions and plans of the C-8.

Language and Meaning

Walter Dean Myers writes his novel “On a Clear Day” in language that is simple and straightforward. This is done for a few different reasons. The simple and straightforward language reflects the fact that the narrator is a non-college-educated girl who is only sixteen. The language each of the characters uses is reflective of their backgrounds. For example, Drego, a street kid, is heavy on slang, whereas Michael, both philosophical and musically talented, often speaks with a deep and poetic authority on subjects such as truth. As such, the language employed lends a sense of realism and believability to the characters as well. Likewise, simple and straightforward language is reflective of the target audience of the novel: young adults and new adults in the mid-2010s.

Structure

Walter Dean Myers divides his novel “On a Clear Day” into twenty-five consecutive, linear, numbered, and untitled chapters, from 1 through 25. This simple and straightforward structure allows the reader to focus on the plot of the story, which itself is far-reaching, full of information, and takes place in different places around the world and in the United States. The reader should again remember that this novel is clearly intended to be the first in a trilogy or series, but given the untimely death of the author, it is unclear if other successive novels may have been previously written, and if so, if these novels will ever be published.



Quotes

It was getting harder to tell when people were going to die... They had forgotten their songs.

-- Dahlia (Chapter 1 paragraph 5)

Importance: Here, Dahlia describes the condition that she, and so many others, are faced with. They no longer have a Purpose, a reason for living, a song to sing and live by. Dahlia's utter lack of Purpose is such a daunting thing that it often exacts a physical toll on people, and it is exacting depression on Dahlia. It provides evidence for the theme of purpose, and becomes a core concept in Dahlia's evolution as a character as she seeks to find her Purpose in life.

They see that doing nothing when you see evil means that eventually you become a part of that evil.

-- Michael (Chapter 2 paragraph 47)

Importance: Here, Michael explains the importance of people joining the fight against C-8. This includes not just Resistance members or the poor, but everyone. Silence is consent. Silence is voting. Silence adds to evil, and allows evil to march on, unopposed. As such, those who are silent become a part of the evil by their unwillingness to challenge it. As a result, the C-8 companies reap tremendous power, which is noted in the theme of corporate imperialism: companies doing almost anything they want.

Everybody is afraid of letting life get away from them.

-- Michael (Chapter 6 paragraph 101)

Importance: Michael attempts to explain why only the young seem to favor change. As people get old, they get afraid of letting life pass them by, and so they want to stop and hold on to what they have, rather than looking forward to what may come next. The C-8 companies have behaved in a similar fashion, grabbing for anything they can hold onto. For the C-8, however, holding onto power is more than mere survival, but is a testament to their greed and corporate imperialist tendencies to absorb greater influence and control in the daily lives of people.

The easiest thing in the world is to make too much of them. You can go crazy digging up explanations of stuff you don't understand.

-- Dahlia (Chapter 10 paragraph 39)

Importance: There are questions and mysteries in the world which will never be fully answered, such as the mystery of Stonehenge. Dahlia elucidates this as such while she and the team are visiting Stonehenge. Her message becomes important by the end of the novel, as major plot points, mysteries, and questions are left unresolved. This also means that Dahlia will have to accept some things on faith and feeling rather than merely by reason and logic -something which Dahlia must learn over time, and something which Anja helps her to see.



What I wanted was a simple life. Eat. Sleep. Work. Look for hope. In a C-8 world it was even simpler.

-- Dahlia (Chapter 14 paragraph 1)

Importance: Here, Dahlia explains something with far-reaching consequences. She longs for a simple life, like most people. But unlike most people, Dahlia isn't about to surrender her freedoms for that simple life that C-8 hands them. She opposes the corporate imperialism of the C-8, and has been imbued with a sense of Purpose in bringing about their downfall.

We need to rethink this thing as if we're playing with hard-nosed and damned intelligent professionals, not some brown-skinned cowboy out of North Africa!

-- Dahlia (Chapter 16 paragraph 48)

Importance: Here, Dahlia worries that too much of the focus is on Zayad's terrorist thugs, rather than the C-8 companies themselves. Dahlia believes that there is much more at stake than what Zayad is playing for, and as the truth bears out, Dahlia is right. It is important the team does not shift its entire focus to Zayad, as C-8 is up to much more than merely stirring up trouble in the Miami ghettos. Here, Dahlia's quick thinking and mathematically-precise mind is invaluable to the team, for Dahlia's predictions end up saving the day in Miami.

At this last meeting, after coming back from Saint Paul, I felt as if I was in the middle of the ocean in a storm. There's lightning all around and big waves, and you don't know what to do next.

-- Dahlia (Chapter 17 paragraph 18)

Importance: Following the murder of Ellen and the meeting in Minnesota, Dahlia suddenly feels as if she is lost in a storm. That major companies would resort to murder and consorting with terrorist organizations is terrifying to Dahlia, for they are things which she never would have envisioned in her wildest dreams. This demonstrates the desperation of the American Resistance to succeed and demonstrates just how important it is that they do succeed.

I want to wake up on a clear day and see a world full of hope and comfort.

-- Dahlia (Chapter 17 paragraph 125)

Importance: Here, Dahlia clearly and succinctly lays out not only her dream, but her Purpose in life. This has come to define who she is, and what she aspires to do and see. Unlike the beginning of the novel, Dahlia now has a Purpose, and it is unlike anything she has ever known before, driving her on to succeed. This quote also forms the title of the novel, "On a Clear Day," in which Dahlia serves as the principal speaker. Dahlia's desire for a clear day is reflective of the simple dreams of all Americans to want clear days and simple lives. It is a call not only to look forward to better days, but to help make those better days possible.



Because people don't want to believe it's bad for them... That's the main reason we don't fight back. It's simpler just to close our eyes and hope for the best. We always slook for the easy way out.

-- Anja (Chapter 18 paragraph 10)

Importance: Here, Anja very intelligently explains why more people don't stand up, and prefer just to go along with things as they are. People want to live a simple life, and ignore the truth, especially if it is unpalatable or terrible or makes things difficult rather than easy. As a result, companies like the C-8 are able to absorb and expand their power. Here, the reader can see how corporate bodies are able to gain quasi-imperial powers. This happens through intentional ignorance or willing submission on the part of people, who would rather not go against the grain.

I wondered if I would ever come up with one true answer that would tie everything together. Could be, but right now I didn't have it.

-- Dahlia (Chapter 25 paragraph 8)

Importance: At the end of the novel, Dahlia reflects on the fact that there are still questions and mysteries which have to be answered. She wishes she could know the answer to everything right then, but knows those answers will be forthcoming and perhaps never coming at all, like Stonehenge. The reader should also remember that the novel is meant to be the first in a trilogy or series, but given the untimely death of the author, it is unclear if any more books in the series are pending.