

A Planet Called Treason Study Guide

A Planet Called Treason by Orson Scott Card

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Plot Summary

A Planet Called Treason is a classic science fiction novel by Orson Scott Card. It contains many of the elements that Card is famous for in his science fiction writing, including a spectacularly gifted, youthful protagonist on a quest to solve a big problem. This is a story of a heroic journey, which Lanik Mueller, the youthful protagonist, undertakes when he discovers that he is a "radical regenerative." The planet on which this story takes place is called Treason after the accused crimes of several brilliant scientists, researchers and other people who were banished to the planet. Each family has taken a portion of the planet for itself and has developed, on its own, particular genius or gifts related to the original scientist's or other person's original focus or job. Lanik Mueller's ancestor is a geneticist, so his family develops advanced genetics, including the ability to regenerate just about every part of the body short of cutting off the head. Not surprisingly, the Muellers become a warring family as they can never lose battles. However, some of the genetically altered people become radical regeneratives, which means that they spontaneously grow all sorts of appendages and unexpected growths. The Muellers choose to pen these radical regeneratives and harvest the many growths to trade for an important commodity, iron. Usually only the wealthy can be genetically altered to have the protection of regeneration, while the poorer people who are chosen to be radical regeneratives are not treated even as human beings.

The subversives have been placed on this planet, called Treason, by a mother planet, presumably Earth, though never named. The mother planet has the technology for space travel, but they place the banished on Treason which has no iron and no way to get it except through a space-travel device called The Ambassador, which takes items for trade and returns small amounts of iron. If the families can get enough iron, they can build spaceships, escape the planet and go back to the mother planet. However, it has been so many generations since their arrival that none of them has even been on the mother planet, and no one remembers it. They all just want iron so they can escape Treason. The families all live in very separate areas. So, each of them has developed a specialty, such as the Muellers' genetic specialty. They independently trade their items via the Ambassador for iron.

Lanik is due to inherit the throne of his father in the land of Mueller, their family name. When Lanik grows a pair of beautiful breasts on his otherwise tanned and muscled young body, he realizes that he is cursed with being a radical regenerative. The family cannot pen him like an animal with the other radical regeneratives who are harvested, so Lanik knows he must leave the family lands and travel abroad, hopefully to find some help but also to help solve the problem of not having enough iron. Since Lanik cannot rule Mueller, his brother, Dinte, is now in line to take the throne, although most people find Dinte weak and objectionable.

The novel is the story of how Lanik travels throughout the planet Treason, meeting the various peoples with their particular gifts. He learns the various talents of the families across the planet. Some are loving and benign, some are interesting but harmless, and some are very dangerous indeed. In fact, there is one family, the Andersons, that has



enslaved the whole planet, all the families, which have been heretofore unaware of their dilemma because of the devious gift of the Andersons. Lanik learns enough of the various strategies of the other families, as interesting and science fictional as they can be, and uses them to defeat the Andersons. However, in the process he pays a terrible price, which he suffers from for the rest of his long life.

In the front of the book is a map of the lands of Treason, named by the last names of the original banished, so the reader can find out where locations are as Lanik travels along.



Mueller

Mueller Summary

This chapter opens in grand science fiction style with a set of assumptions and vocabulary that set a scene not of this world. The protagonist speaking as "I" says that he has grown many appendages which the doctors have obligingly cut off. However, when he grows breasts and ovaries, he must face the reality of being a "radical regenerative," a person who grows all sorts of unwanted organs and body parts as a rogue result of the genetic engineering experiments conducted by the family. The regenerative powers of the family increase as they inbreed, but occasionally a person becomes a "radical regenerative" and cannot control the growths. Transsexual growth is the sure indicator of a radical regenerative, and unfortunately, Lanik has transsexual growth.

Lanik looks at his breasts and even finds them arousing. He tries to cut off a breast but it is too painful. The chapter refers to slavery, since the Muellers are a warring people who take captives for slaves. The slave summons Lanik to see his brother, Dinte, who teases him about the breasts and suggests that Lanik get a halter, the equivalent of a bra. At the same time, the characters of the mother and her nondescript son are introduced. This is the second wife of Father Mueller, since the first died rather suddenly, at least from Lanik's point of view.

Father tells Lanik he cannot rule and he formally disowns him and declares Dinte, the second son but a young man without many merits, to be heir, including demanding allegiance from Lanik to Dinte. Father knows that Lanik cannot stay, if only to protect Dinte from Lanik's anger. He sends Lanik as an ambassador to the land of Nkumai, a place where black citizens live high in the trees. It is believed that Nkumai has plenty of iron, and Father wants to know how they're getting it, what they are selling to the Ambassador.

Father dismisses Dinte, the mother and her son, and privately gives Lanik "grief," stabbing himself and bleeding, with great pain but always the promise of regeneration. This is a grieving ritual of Mueller that repeats throughout the book. Father tells Lanik he would have sent him to Nkumai anyway as he wants to find out the secrets of their only rival, from his point of view. Lanik makes preparations and leaves, noticing the pens full of radical regeneratives as he does so. These poor souls are kept for the limbs, organs and body parts that are cut off and sent by the Ambassador to the mother planet in exchange for iron. While there, his lover Saranna comes and visits him. She laments his situation, even deeply cutting her wrists, which will heal but cause her illness for a few days, another incident of giving "grief."

Lanik rehearses mentally the situation of their planet, where without iron they cannot make technological advances nor build starships for interplanetary travel. He finally gets to his room and goes to sleep, where there is an attempt on his life by slitting his throat



but he cannot see the intruder. He tries to find the assassin and runs into Saranna, who is coming to find him. She begs him to take her with him, but he cannot. He saddles up his horses, ironically named Hitler and Himmler, and sets off in the night toward a forest called Ku Kuei. It's a dangerous place where no one goes, and where he assumes that no one will come to look for Lanik.

Mueller Analysis

This is classic science fiction in many ways. It is set on a faraway planet where so-called treasonous criminals have been banished to live forever. It is a particularly severe punishment as the planet has no iron, which is needed to make steel for technological advances. The Muellers, the people in whose town the book opens and the hometown of the protagonist, Lanik Mueller, are obsessed with getting iron. They assume that the rest of the planet is, as well. The Muellers are warlike and have conquered several other families, some of whom they have enslaved.

It is classic science fiction as it refers to places and their situations as though everyone would know them. It refers to scientific "realities" such as genetic manipulation and other abilities as perfectly normal. In other ways, it is simply good fiction as it establishes relationships between peoples, such as the slaves and the rich people, the land of Mueller and the other lands, as though anyone would know about it. It establishes the warlike nature of the Mueller's as being the way of the whole world, which later becomes obviously not the case.

It also establishes Lanik, the protagonist, as a likable, intelligent, gifted fellow who has fallen on some very bad luck, and for just a moment, he ponders the equally bad luck of the radical regeneratives whom the family is harvesting for parts. For a fleeting instance, he wonders if that could have been his lot, as well. This foreshadows his later compassion and ability to adapt to new and unlikely environments and peoples in preparation for "saving the world."



Allison

Allison Summary

Since Lanik has had an attack on his life, he must flee quickly. He knows that he is being pursued and must go fast, but the only way he can go is toward the dreaded Ku Kei forest, since no one dares to go there. It is a forest of dread, with a reputation for killing anyone who goes there. All other areas are guarded in this warlike environment. He finally reaches a house, but the old lady of the house will have nothing to do with him, because there have been robbers in the area lately. However, she notices his breasts and even pinches one of them, so she thinks he is a woman in disguise. She offers him bed and board. While he sleeps, soldiers come looking for him, but the old lady hides his things and leaves his tunic open so they can see he is a girl. In discussion with the old lady, Lanik owns that he only can go to the Ku Kei forest, where no one comes out alive. The old lady calls this "ramshit," that it is an odd place but not that dangerous. The old lady is willing to help Lanik, whoever he is, as long as he is running from the king, for whom she has no love.

In discussion, the old lady and Lanik decide he must go to the forest, as there is no other way to go. She gives him an old dress she wore when she was a girl. She reveals her belief about the hopelessness of the situation on Treason, and then someone shoots her through the throat with an arrow. Soldiers have caught up to Lanik, who quickly dispatches them both, since he is a trained royal warrior, a king's son. He must cut off both their heads as otherwise they can regenerate. Lanik gives her grief, which means he pierces himself and bleeds, painful but soon healed, as his father has done when he has left home.

He enters the forest, which is cold, silent, without animal life, and strange. Everything seems motionless. He travels for long hours but the sun does not seem to move in the sky and night never comes. He just lies down and sleeps when he is tired. Eventually he comes to a lake and follows the old lady's directions to Nkumai, the land he is assigned as ambassador by his father. He must pass through the land of Allison on his way. Two soldiers accost him, thinking him a girl, and mention that Allison has been overtaken by "niggers," so Lanik knows Allison has been conquered by Nkumai. However, Lanik quickly dispatches them as well. He enters an inn where the innkeeper and family reveal that indeed their land has been conquered by the Nikumai. There is poverty in Allison, and the innkeeper and his family go without in order to give Lanik a small portion of food next morning. He pays them with a gold ring, which is common enough in his land but extremely valuable to these people recently conquered.

He purchases clothing with a platinum ring from rough-spoken shopkeepers. From this exchange and from comments that Lanik makes, it is clear that metal is the currency of the planet of Treason, with iron ironically being the most valuable. Coming out of the shop, he sees the conquering Nkumai riding through town all with iron weapons and concludes that somehow these people have found something to trade that is so



valuable that they have all the iron they need, rather a shock to Lanik. Soldiers grab him, strip him, tie him to a post, and threaten to brand him, saying he must "register." Lanik claims he is an ambassador from the land of Bird, an adjacent land.

Lanik decides to claim he is an ambassador from the land of Bird, which is a matriarchal government, so it would be natural for a woman to be an ambassador. When the Nkumai soldiers attempt to brand him, he kicks them in the groin, but they knock him out. Since he can regenerate, he quickly heals from the assault, waking up in a dark, locked room. An old man calling himself a teacher comes in, apologizes, rescues Lanik, and encourages him to go on his way to Nkumai. He leads Lanik to Nkumai, a land of tall trees where people live aloft. It rains hard twice a day so there is no danger of fire. Lanik mentions that he does not touch ground again for weeks.

Allison Analysis

This is the beginning of Lanik's awakening to the larger world around him. Up till now, he has dwelt in a land where his father was ultimate ruler, and when he conquered lands or peoples, it was always thought to be good. However, the old lady that houses Lanik has no love for the king, considering him a despot, cruel and unfair. Lanik can see why she feels that way, and it is a big surprise to him that not everyone feels the same way about his father, his land, his former ways.

This chapter foreshadows the conclusion of the book in a short speech by the old lady. She notes that everyone on the planet fights continually for "a bone," meaning a pittance of iron, but they have no real hope as it's just a token thing. There is no point to the competition and bloodshed for what can never happen. Just after this speech, she is shot through the throat by an arrow, solidifying the strength of her argument.

The dedication this book thanks people who have led the author to read several books, including Tolkein, whose haunted, dangerous forest is almost literally echoed in the Forest of Ku Kei, although the dangers inside are very different. After the forest, Lanik runs into soldiers from Allison, an adjacent land recently conquered by Nkumai. The soldiers call the blacks "niggers" and they sexually assault Lanik, thinking he is a girl, revealing that at least on this planet, at least among many of the people, old prejudices and passions never die.

After Lanik is assaulted and imprisoned, an old man in a robe calling himself a teacher comes and rescues him, a man from Nkumai who believes Lanik's story. He mentions that the assaulting soldiers have been put to death and Lanik thinks it is the least they could do, reflecting both societies' brutal ways.



Nkumai

Nkumai Summary

Lanik enters the strange land of Nkumai under the pretense of being a female ambassador from the land of Bird, which is a matriarchal society. It is easy for him to come in the disguise of a woman as he has grown the beautiful set of breasts. He is wearing the discarded dress of the person who protected him in Allison. The person who is conducting him into Nkumai is called Teacher, and later Lanik learns that everyone in Nkumai has a name based on his or her work, and people know each other by the particular characteristics of that person. This teacher is kind and careful to make sure that Lanik does not suffer too much as they mount ever higher into the trees. It is dizzying and frightening to Lanik who has only ever been on the ground.

Teacher says that there are only three ambassadors in Nkumai as all the others are sent home, revealing their desire to know how Nkumai got all its iron. He leads Lanik to the home of Mbwao Mowa, who is one of the highest officials in the land. Oddly, Mowa does not have a name revealing her work but only this African sounding name. Mbwao has a precedent in choosing an African-sounding name. Evidently, the original settler of Nkumai, a black physicist who is not really an African but who has African pretensions, also has taken an African name, although he is not African at all. Mowa is not that beautiful a woman but she has a beautiful voice. She takes Lanik in, shows him how to sleep, eat, toilet, and otherwise manage life high in the trees.

Lanik looks carefully at the Nkumai society, located as it is high in the trees. At first, Lanik thinks it might be possible to defeat Nkumai by setting fire and burning it to the ground, but soon he realizes that it rains in a deluge twice a day, putting out any possible fires. The Nkumai never have to descend to the ground to get their water because of these daily deluges of rain. They eat birds caught in nets, later a benefit to Lanik as he tries to escape, and fruits. Every morning, everyone stands at the opening of their house and sings. No one has a more beautiful voice than Mowa. She invites many people into her home and Lanik tries to learn from listening to them talk, but it is mostly small talk.

Mowa tells Lanik that the Nkumai have so much iron as they bottle and sell the sweet smells of the swamp which make people happy. In return for telling this, Mowa demands sexual favors. In a strange moment, Mowa's voice becomes deep like a man's, and she even has a day old beard that scratches Lanik. He somehow turns her away from the sexual advances, but the man-turning moment becomes clear later in the book when Mowa is revealed to be a man.

Lanik finally learns the truth about Nkumai but at that moment, guards come and tell him he has been discovered, that he is no ambassador from Bird. True enough, because he kills both of them in true Mueller fashion.



Nkumai Analysis

This chapter is pure science fiction fantasy full of delightful details of a made-up nation called Nkumai high in the trees. Every detail reveals a life that could happen, including how to get food and water and how to urinate and defecate. Lanik quickly overcomes his fear of heights as he learns to navigate among the trees. He is most troubled not by the heights but by the Nkumai's insistence that they are high-minded and pure, but the real experience is that they are as deceptive, greedy and low-minded as any people Lanik has ever met.

Lanik wants to meet the king and everyone pretends there really is a king, but there is not. Actually his hostess, Mowa is the highest official in Nkumai. Mowa is a great deceiver, however, although it is not revealed but only foreshadowed in this chapter, when in a sexual advance she puts on many of the aspects of being a man.

Not for the only time in this book, Lanik learns the truth about things by reading books. He finds himself opportunities to read histories and learn the truth about the Nkumai. Just as he does, he is again at risk as soldiers come to get him. Here he throws off his disguise as a woman and comes across as the true Mueller warrior that he is, killing both instantly and with little effort.



Lanik and Lanik

Lanik and Lanik Summary

This chapter is an extended chase scene, as Lanik must descend from the highest branch of the trees where he has been imprisoned. His hands have been bound by cruel bonds, ropes covered with sharp glass, so that if one is to escape, it means taking off the hands or at least part of the hands. No one knows that Lanik is a regenerative however and so he does get loose, severing the little fingers of the hands rather than the thumbs so he will still be able to climb. Lanik knows that these will regenerate although the pain is terrible. Mowa visits him just before he escapes, and pretends to be compassionate but reveals herself to be cruel. She will not help him. When she leaves, and all the soldiers leave as well, Lanik goes ahead and severs his little fingers, freeing his hands, and begins to escape.

Lanik uses the system of bird nets to descend the tree city, using a knife he takes from one guard he murders to cut the nets so no one can follow him easily. In his fights, he has been wounded, so that some of his intestine actually tangles in the net as he finally falls hard on the ground below. He finds a brook and takes a drink but his intestinal wounds make the drinking make him vomit. He rests, regenerates, and finally can drink again. He follows the brook to a river, where he flings himself and floats till he lands somewhere along the bank. He passes out, rests, and dreams.

When he awakens, he finds that his intestines have regenerated into a boy that is his exact double. He does not want to live in a world with a double but has lost his knife so he brutally severs himself from the boy, leaving him for dead and going on. He gets to the ocean and flings himself in the water, hoping to be rescued by a nearby boat. They do pick him up, but they are slavers. By now, Lanik has regenerated out of control so that he is a man with breasts, arms, legs and other projections, so that the slavers hardly know what they'll sell him for, a man, a woman, or something else they cannot name. Perhaps, they decide, he will sell as a sideshow freak.

Lanik and Lanik Analysis

For adventurous readers who like chase scenes, this is an ultimate experience as Lanik swings, falls and generally evades his pursuers in Nkumai. When he finally gets to the bottom, he rests, but when he wakes, his body has somehow produced a double, through regeneration. Now he is faced with an ethical decision. Should he continue life and have a completely exact clone or double of himself in the same world? He decides he cannot live this way and severs himself, which later becomes a terrific problem. When he immerses himself in the river, this can have religious overtones of baptism, a typical thematic technique in many novels. Later he thinks he is being rescued by a boat but he finds himself in even more difficulties, because his rescuers want to enslave him. He realizes he is in for a long trip.



Monster

Monster Summary

Lanik is imprisoned in a tiny cell in the hold of the ship, not more than two meters wide. He has plenty to drink and eat, although the meat is maggoty and the bread is moldy. His body turns all the energy into making more and more organs and limbs until he is truly frightening.

Lanik listens to the people above-board and learns that they are from the land of Singer, but they are cruel, somehow also kind, and even sentimental. He learns that the captain is an amazing man who can settle all sorts of conflicts and fights. While Lanik is in prison, he figures out all the talents and gifts that the various Families trade for iron in the Ambassador. He hears prisoners being taken above-board and he demands the same treatment. The crewmember says that only those prisoners who are going to be tortured will be taken above but Lanik insists.

When the captain and crew see that Lanik has many arms and legs and other appendages they think he is a devil or some other supernatural being. They beg for mercy but Lanik just demands to be set ashore on the nearest land. In retrospect, he wishes he had chosen a particular land as they set him ashore by the worst desert in the world. He just knows he will die.

Monster Analysis

This is a short transitional chapter to get Lanik off the boat and into the desert where he will meet the Schwartzes. In it, he consolidates his knowledge of the various Families and how they are getting iron. When he finally manipulates the crew to take him above board, they are scared to death at all the new appendages he has grown, being unfamiliar with regeneration. He demands to be set ashore but then has great second thoughts as the first land they come to is flanked by the worst desert in the world. He realizes that he will probably die here.



Schwartz

Schwartz Summary

Lanik walks in the hot desert till he collapses. He awakens to a young voice asking if he wants to die. At first, Lanik considers it but then realizes that the boy has survived in the desert. Evidently, there is a chance that he can, as well. He asks for water and the boy pauses and then moves sand with magic energy and brings up water in the same way. Lanik drinks and passes out. He awakens to a group of men just like the boy, dark skinned and fair-haired. They ask if Lanik wants to be the hideous monster that he is. He says no and they heal him, "from the inside," they say. He can regenerate but he is no longer a radical regenerative.

Lanik wants to be taken to their home but realizes that they do not have actual homes. He thinks he wants to eat but he is cured from hunger and thirst, and realizes that the Schwartzes never need to eat nor drink. He learns the boy's name, Helmut, and realizes that he has taken on the persona of a boy but could be any age. Helmut teaches Lanik that one can manipulate rock, sand and other earth matter. He challenges Lanik to try it himself, that being the only way to learn it. Lanik tries to figure out something that he can ask the earth to give him. Finally, he decides that it would be dramatic to ask the earth to give him a cliff, and Lanik is quite surprised when the earth really does build a cliff right in front of him. Lanik thinks that should be enough, but Helmut teaches him that once you ask the earth for a gift, that afterward you must do something to "honor the gift," giving something back to the earth for its gift. Helmut tells Lanik that he must climb the cliff to "honor the gift." In addition, Helmut tells Lanik that he must leap off the cliff, which is symbolic as well as literal at the same time, in order to master the manipulation of earth matter. Lanik is understandably hesitant to jump off a high cliff. However, he finally gets his courage and leaps right off the edge of the cliff, but instead of dying in the fall, the earth receives him by cushioning the fall and indeed letting Lanik "melt" into the surface of the earth itself until he reaches bedrock. It is magical and mysterious that he can descend into the earth and still be able to breathe. When he finally reaches the rock, he learns from the rock that every death in the world registers in the earth, which cries out in deep pain, a cry Lanik almost cannot bear.

Lanik receives pure brotherly love from Helmut and gives it in return. He wants to stay forever in Schwartz but eventually grows more powerful than even the Schwartzes are, except collectively. He realizes that he must return to his land to help his father. He becomes legendary in the lands such as in the land of Sill where he is known as the Naked Man. He requests clothing. He says his name and is immediately captured and imprisoned, being called the cruelest and vilest of persons. He has not yet figured out that his double, regenerated from intestines from his injury in Nkumai, has become a young man who has killed and destroyed throughout all the lands.

He is taken to his homeland where he is sentenced to death for these very crimes. He figures out that his double came to complete life and did the horrible desecrations and



cruelties that are attributed to him, but no one believes him. He is tortured cruelly by the soldiers in his land.

Schwartz Analysis

In this chapter, Lanik learns the most powerful lessons of his life, not only to be loved and to love purely, but also to move rock and sand and water and earth according to his pleasure and need. He learns that one must never kill with these gifts except in the direst of circumstances, which foreshadows the end of the book. Lanik wants to stay forever with the Schwartzes as they are so kind and loving, but Lanik gets a deep knowing that he must go help his father and his land.

Imagine his surprise when he is blamed for burning crops, killing thousands, and desecrating everything. His father's own soldiers torture him unimaginably. This is not the homecoming he anticipates. It is classic hero-journey plotting, however, like Odysseus, Lanik wants to come home to honor and love but instead is vilified and tortured. Pretty soon he figures out that his double, a boy that he has thought is dead, has actually grown into a young man and has done all the killing and destruction using his own name, Lanik Mueller.



Ensel

Ensel Summary

As Lanik languishes in his cell, his lover Saranna comes to see him. She knows he never could have done the terrible things the double has done. She takes Lanik to his father, whose name is Ensel, and his father also believes him. Lanik learns that Mother, "the turd," rules the land. She is the second wife of Mueller and has always been hated by Lanik. Lanik, Saranna and his father slip into the castle and Lanik causes an earthquake. Lanik slits Dinte's throat but he knows his brother will regenerate. As they escape, they rest and at last, Lanik and Saranna make love. Lanik learns that the Nkumai have taught Lanik's double to hate Mueller and indeed to hate everyone. The double, using Lanik's name, has caused great devastation in all lands.

An old soldier, named Homarnoch, joins them. He has poisoned all the radical regeneratives so there is no value in trade in them. He also takes the library with him, and the knowledge in the books will help Lanik understand how to help save the planet from destruction. They decide to go to the forest of Ku Kei, and Ensel believes Lanik when he says it is not dangerous. An army accompanies them into the forest but nothing bad happens. They reach the lake, bathe, and play.

Ensel Analysis

In this chapter, it becomes apparent that not all is as it seems. Ensel reveals the plotting that his wife and son by her have done, and that they really rule the place. Lanik is tenderly reunited with his lover. Ensel leaves the castle with them. Some soldiers and then, eventually, an army joins them. Fortunately, everyone realizes that Lanik's double has been responsible for all the devastation. Lanik feels sorry for the boy and what he has gone through, another development of his character to be compassionate even for someone who has sinned greatly.

Ensel and about a thousand soldiers eventually join up with Lanik. They all determine they must do the frightening thing, enter the Ku Kei forest, even though they all fear it desperately. They do go in and nothing bad happens, debunking the myth. Importantly, one of the soldiers, Homarnoch, has taken the library of Mueller with them so eventually Lanik can learn the truth about the land.



Ku Kei

Ku Kei Summary

Ensel, Lanik's father, tries to show joy at the comforting environment of the forest, but there is sadness as he has had to flee his kingdom. Lanik keeps listening for the voice of the rock, as he has learned in Schwartz, but he only hears a low, unidentifiable whisper. It is sleepy but also full of anger and hatred, very disturbing. He allows himself to sink into the earth and reach the rock and there the rock sounds the same. When Lanik rises up to the surface, his father is scared to death since he has been gone for an hour, but Lanik says he just learns these things in Schwartz. He reveals that someone has done something to alter time in this place. They keep walking but the sun doesn't go down and finally Lanik gets tired and lies down, although Ensel wants to go on.

Ensel finally rests but he is in despair, feeling he will never go back to Mueller. Lanik encourages him. Lanik thinks that maybe they should go on to find the Ku Kei, that is, the people that live in the forest. However, Ensel is tired. Lanik does not know how to proceed in this strange place where time is altered, so he decides to "sink" the lake using the earth techniques of the Schwartzes. Sure enough, people arrive right away. They want their lake back but Lanik will not do so till they explain themselves. The Ku Kei are dark skinned, tall and fat—like islanders. They like to laugh and trick, and they negotiate a long time till there is some agreement between them and the Muellers.

Saranna is found with her throat cut and arms severed. There has been a battle and many Muellers have been hurt. Finally the Ku Kei agree to teach Lanik, Saranna, and everyone who wants to learn, their secrets, which are to alter time, slow it down and speed it up, and thus have influence over people around them. During this time, Ensel is full of despair, while Saranna learns to handle her own despair by making love with others in Ku Kei and finally slowing her own time so slow that she becomes a virtual statue. She is lost to Lanik for the moment. Lanik learns that no one in Ku Kei is really happy, though sometimes amused and interested. They are bored, because they have all the time in the world.

Lanik knows he must leave Ku Kei to help right the wrongs in the world. He must leave Saranna behind as she cannot and will not come with him. He sees young girls harassing travelers in the forest as they alter time, but now he knows why. They tease him as he is leaving his lover, but he promises to come back, realizing for the first time that he is faithful to his own true love, Saranna.

Ku Kei Analysis

This is a peculiar chapter because of the unpredictable nature of the Ku Kei people. They seem aggressive and harsh but at the same time, they appreciate a good joke



even on themselves and when Lanik is aggressive to them, they laugh and give in, now willing to teach him their deepest secrets, which are to make time slow down and speed up. This makes it possible to travel fast or to do many things in slow time when no one can see you. The Ku Kei are similar to Pacific islanders in their nature. They're rather fat, lazy and slow, as they have nothing to hurry for. They truly have all the time in the world, because they can slow time down as much as they please.

When Lanik learns to alter time, he learns another important lesson that can help him trick the deceivers, the Andersons, who have taken over the world. He leaves on his own, leaving the soldiers behind and even Ensel, his father, who is now consumed by such despair that he cannot bring himself to do anything on his own. This chapter is rather long but does not reveal a great deal except for the inscrutable nature of the Ku Kei, and of course, their magical gift of altering time.



Jones

Jones Summary

Lanik can travel fast when he is in quick time, which slows down outer time and lets him move fast. Lanik goes to a nearby town in the Family of Jones. There, he talks to a variety of people, trying to learn from whomever he meets. He points out to an innkeeper that his name is Lanik Mueller, which always causes an uproarious reaction because of the harm Lanik's double has done. Lanik sees a carriage with a middle-aged man in it, but an instant later, it is Mbwao Mowa. This foreshadows the deception that Lanik will soon uncover. Lanik leaves his horse with a stabler and escapes in quick time just as Mbwao Mowa comes looking for him. The stabler keeps his secret under pain of death. Lanik points out that in quicktime, he is very lonely as no one can be there with him. He finally finds his way to Britton, a country by the sea.

Jones Analysis

This is a small, short chapter, notable mostly because Lanik happens to see Mbwao Mowa in her true character as a bald, middle-aged man. He finds his way to a place of his heart, the country of Britton.



Britton

Britton Summary

Britton resembles Britain, a sea country with rough rocks, sheep and rivers. People called Humpers tend sheep and live quietly. Lanik dwells there but only after a time interacts with people. It comes about this way. A Humper is herding his sheep into a valley and Lanik gently helps him get the sheep where he wants them to go. The shepherd's name is Glain, and his wife is called Vran. Lanik becomes part of the family, helping with the garden, and helping when Vran goes into labor, since Lanik is a healer from his learnings with the Schwartzes.

People hear of his healing and come from all over Britton for healing for their families and their livestock. Lanik becomes a legend. However, a lord called Barton wants to meet him. Barton lives in comfort while the Brittons live in near destitution. Barton guesses right away who Lanik is. He has met Lanik when Lanik is just a boy.

Barton offers genealogy and history relating to Mueller. He reveals that Dinte, who is the brother of Lanik and who has now taken the throne, does not appear in any of the history books but just pops up later. Lanik realizes he does not remember any boyhood memories of Dinte. Barton has a son the same way. He knows he is his son but has no memories of him. He makes this son lord of many lands. How can these things have happened?

Lanik puts two and two together and realizes that Barton is right. He figures out that Mbwao Mowa is not a woman but a man, as he sees him in quicktime in Jones. Barton's servant, a person called Dul who is actually one of the great illusionists and deceivers from Anderson, attempts to murder Barton as they discuss these things, but Lanik heals him.

Lanik wants to end the domination of Anderson, not just to eliminate the concept of unfair competition but also to end the deception. He wants to go back to the simple peace of Britton but first he must go in quicktime into the capital of the Family of Gill. There he finds himself in great danger.

Britton Analysis

This is a chapter about character. Barton, a lord, discovered the truth about the deception and domination of the wicked Andersons who take on characteristics of others in order to lead and dominate the world. The Andersons appear in families all of a sudden but make the families feel they've been there forever. Thus, they take leadership positions and indeed rule the world.

At first, Lanik has trouble believing Barton, but he reads genealogy and realizes that his brother Dinte never exists before appearing as a young man. Here is yet another



instance of reading books in order to understand difficult circumstances and help solve problems. Doing this reading, and talking with Barton, Lanik realizes he is an only child whose place in the kingdom is usurped by an Anderson. One of Barton's servants is an Anderson and tries to kill Lanik and Barton with poison toddy and then with an iron knife, because they have uncovered the scheme. However, Lanik can heal and saves Barton's life.

Lanik has become such a peacemaker that he wants nothing more than to go back to the simple life of Barton. However, he must overcome his hatred of Dinte and at the same time, overthrow the Andersons somehow and restore order. He travels to a land called Gill and there puts himself in danger as he does not realize the overwhelming nature of the Anderson plot.



Gill

Gill Summary

The servant, Dul, who is one of the illusionists from Anderson, has preceded Lanik to the land of Gill, forewarning the residents that Lanik is coming, and so Lanik is immediately taken captive. The people of Gill think he is the actual person who has killed thousands and destroyed lands and crops, although that person is really Lanik's double, generated from his intestines when he is wounded in escaping from Nkumai. He is tortured, cut, shot with arrows, and almost burned. If a Mueller is burned, he cannot regenerate, but fortunately, the torture stops short of burning Lanik. Since he is not burned, he can still regenerate, so fortunately he escapes with his life. He is buried but he is master of earth so he can surface from his grave. Gill is a brutal place where no one respects life or the dead. Lanik confronts the captain of the guard that is in charge of killing and tells him that under no circumstances shall he kill his new prisoner, who happens to be Barton. The captain has killed Lanik or so he thinks so he is very quick to agree. He thinks that Lanik must be a ghost. Lanik saves Barton from execution and Lanik heals him from injuries suffered in the capture.

Lanik goes into the throne room in quicktime and sees that the old woman sitting on the throne is actually a young man who looks like Barton. Lanik thinks he is going to kill the impostors but cannot figure out how to do so in quicktime. The servant Dul tries to stab Lanik but Lanik stops the attack in quicktime. Several illuders come into the room in disguise but again Lanik goes into quicktime, disarms them, and takes the knives to the young man on the throne, showing he could have been killed.

Lanik goes in to see Barton, who has not yet had enough of his young girl, but Lanik sends her away. Together, Lanik and Barton try to figure out which land, which Family, is the origination of the illuders. They figure out it is Anderson. Lanik knows that he must go to Anderson to see if he can stop their terrible domination of the entire planet. Anderson is rather a long way away and there is a big ocean in between, but Lanik can walk on water in quicktime. He gets to Anderson at the seashore.

Gill Analysis

This is a brief interlude in a brutal land called Gill, a place that is also under the thrall of the illuders, who are from Anderson. This place is important as Lanik and Barton finally figure out who the illuders really are and where they come from, which is the land of Anderson. Unfortunately, the illuders know that they are on their trail because of the servant Dul, but Lanik can get around in quicktime. Even the illuders cannot defeat this. Lanik leaves this land in a hurry. It is a nice scriptural touch that Lanik can use quicktime to walk on water. He gets to the land of Anderson quickly.



Anderson

Anderson Summary

Lanik reaches the beach and there is the most beautiful little cottage and a beautiful young girl so attractive that Lanik almost gives up his vows of fidelity to Saranna. However, she makes an attempt on Lanik's life with an iron knife. In quicktime, Lanik learns that she is actually a brutal, filthy old man in a disgustingly dirty cottage. This man tries every illusion to scare Lanik, even an earthquake, but Lanik finally knows these things are not real. He decides that he must destroy the whole land of Anderson in order to save the world. He begins by killing the old man who has attacked him.

However, he has taken a vow not to misuse his powers over earth and rock. He decides that this is for the better good and still causes the earth to swallow up the man on the beach. The brutal pain of the man's death gives him an experience of a scream, so profound he will never heal from it. This foreshadows the many deaths that Lanik and the Schwartzes will later cause, using magic with rock and earth, when they destroy Anderson and all the illuders in order to save Treason from their entrapment.

Anderson Analysis

In this very brief chapter, Lanik realizes there is no defeating such profound illusionists. The Andersons have caused so much death and suffering, but one cannot get past their amazing deceptions. Lanik decides to use the rock against the Andersons by having the earth swallow up the man. This causes the earth such great pain that the scream is unbearable. Lanik will live scarred forever by it.



Treason

Treason Summary

Barton has been killed in Gill while Lanik is gone. Lanik knows he must seek out and destroy any of the illuders throughout the lands and Families. More than that, he realizes that the whole Family land of Anderson must be destroyed, because any survivors can still hold the Planet of Treason captive. He goes to Schwartz for help, but the Schwartzes first disdain him and want to send him away because of his supposed misuse of power. They are ultimate peacemakers and they know that any life that is taken will cause the earth great pain, and that they will feel this pain as well. It is too great a moral sacrifice to use their magical powers to take life. Lanik argues at length with Helmut, who represents all the Schwartzes, who at first adamantly oppose Lanik's plans. Lanik leaves in despair of help. He knows he cannot destroy the whole land of Anderson by himself but he could do it with the support and help of all the Schwartzes. They will not do it and Lanik gives up.

In a few moments, the Schwartzes follow him and tell him he is right, that they will support him. They are willing to change their strong point of view by considering Lanik's plea, and they know that the Andersons will eventually cause much more death and pain than even the destruction of an entire Family land. The Schwartzes lie down together in a circle and send their energy, along the powerful conduit of Lanik, to destroy Anderson. The agony of the earth, the terrible scream of the earth, will scar him forever.

Lanik destroys all the Ambassadors, the machines that send materials to and from the mother world, but these are inanimate so destroying them is not really causing death, so it causes no pain to the land or to Lanik. By destroying the Ambassadors, Lanik also destroys the illusion that the people of Treason must leave the planet to be happy. They have all they need to be happy without wanting to leave to go back to the mother planet. Lanik uses quicktime to travel from land to land, killing every illuder that he sees. Finally, he must go to Mueller and dethrone Dinte. He wonders if he is able to do it.

Treason Analysis

This chapter reveals the most powerful and magical moment in the book, when the Schwartzes overcome their innate refusal to take life in order to help Lanik destroy Andersons and save the world. Lanik is ready to sacrifice his life for this, a messianic symbol. Although he does not die, the agony he experiences in the destruction is almost enough to kill him. Lanik goes through the lands getting rid of the rest of the Andersons. However, he must go home, just as Odysseus does in Homer, to complete the work.



Lanik in Mueller

Lanik in Mueller Summary

Lanik goes home to his Family land, Mueller, in quicktime. He wants to destroy the illuder who is sitting on the throne in the form of his supposed brother, Dinte. Lanik sees that Dinte is no stranger but his double, the clone that forms itself from the intestines of Lanik when he escapes from Nkumai, in the guise of Dinte. Lanik's double reveals how the Nkumai take him in, teach him to hate, and help him destroy so many lands all about. Finally, he goes home and kills the illuder that is Dinte, taking his place, but only after learning the secrets of illusion, himself. He is ruling in Mueller. After learning the truth, Lanik heals his double and tells him he must remain in Mueller to rule. He leaves to go find Saranna in Ku Kei.

Lanik in Mueller Analysis

Again, this is a very short chapter. In it, Lanik sees his double and realizes how he has changed and grown, just as the double has. Lanik does not want to rule in Mueller. He heals his brother, actually himself, a lovely symbol of how people can be healed by their own love and efforts. Lanik leaves his land ostensibly in good hands, being his own in many ways, and seeks his true love, Saranna, in Ku Kei.

Humping

Humping Summary

Lanik gets to Ku Kei and plays tricks back on those who have tricked him with time tricks before. He finds Saranna and slows himself down to the slowtime that she is in, so slow that no movement can be seen by anyone in realtime. They are like sculptures. By the time they work out their commitment and come back to realtime, it is several hundred years later. Watching their love has transformed the Ku Kei to be more introspective and caring. Lanik and Saranna go to Britton, where they build a cottage, engage in healing activities, and live in love, albeit childless for many years. The peacefulness in Britton is enough.

Humping Analysis

This final short chapter is poignant. It gives the image of a several-hundreds'-years sculpture of Lanik and Saranna, crying and rekindling their love. When they emerge into realtime, they have profoundly altered the emotional life of the Ku Kei, who have heretofore been too careless in their relationships. Lanik and Saranna go to Britton to live. It is cold and inhospitable, but it is home for them. They are happy.



Characters

Lanik Mueller

Lanik is the protagonist of the novel. He is 16 when the story begins and, as he travels throughout the planet Treason, especially as he alters time, he grows older. At the end of the novel, he is an old man having lived a full life and having saved the planet by a terrible personal sacrifice. As he travels from place to place, he learns skills and attitudes that he later uses all together to defeat the Andersons, who are masters of deception and have trapped all the Families and their countries into following the Andersons' betrayals. Lanik is the perfect journey hero. He is strong, smart and good at heart, so when he learns powerful secrets, he only wishes to use them for good. He has been born and brought up in a warlike country but he can change that and learn to be a gentle, kind, nurturing kind of person. He is also very funny and reveals a delightful wryness about the way he sees this new world he is traveling in. Lanik's people specialize in genetics and Lanik as well as many other upper class people in Mueller can regenerate but Lanik has been plagued with an unfortunate condition, radical regenerativeness, which means that he keeps growing unwanted limbs and even organs. He must leave his home as he has begun growing breasts and even ovaries. His travels eventually end up saving the world.

Dinte Mueller

Dinte is the second son of the Mueller family. Since Lanik cannot take the throne, having become a radical regenerative, Dinte is set to take it. While Lanik is gone on his journeys, Dinte overthrows the father and takes over the leadership, becoming king. However, there is a mystery surrounding Dinte. No one can remember his birth or childhood. This is because he is actually an Anderson, a disguised person who takes on the characteristics of another person and deceives everyone. Dinte has undergone a few transformations while Lanik is gone. At first, Dinte has the form of an old woman, but Lanik's clone kills her and takes the throne, a radical regenerative himself disguised in the shape of Dinte.

Ensel Mueller

Ensel is Lanik's father. He rules the land of Mueller, and he is grieved to send his eldest son Lanik away, since he has been groomed since babyhood to be the next king. Dinte, the fraudulent son, eventually deposes Ensel Mueller till Lanik comes and saves the day. Ensel is trapped by Dinte and must always deceive others pretending that he is in full agreement with Dinte's manipulations and machinations, even though he very much does not support them. At the end of the book, Ensel shows the grandness of his character by cooperating with Lanik in reclaiming the power of his land, even though there is a strange plot twist as they accomplish that.



Mother

Mother is Mueller's second wife, since the first, Lanik's mother, has died. As seen by her nickname, she is not respected by the family. She has one son whom she hopes can ascend the throne, but there is little hope because of the two elder sons.

Mbwao Mowa

Mowa is the tall, not beautiful, but beautifully-voiced black woman who lives in the tops of the trees at Nkumai and holds ultimate poetical power in Nkumai. She is blessed with a beautiful voice and leads the morning song each morning with her gorgeous singing. Although she seems to be very kind and proper, one can see that she is deceiving everyone all the while. When Lanik is captured, she seems to be sad and supportive of him but one knows she is really glad he is captured. The ultimate deception of Mowa is that she is not even a black woman at all but a white bald man from Anderson, one of many Anderson people who have disguised themselves with magic energy to seem to be what they are not. Lanik stays with Mowa for some time in Nkumai.

Lady Lark

Lady Lark is the false name that Lanik takes pretending to be an ambassador from Bird.

Official Who Feeds All the Poor

Official Who Feeds All the Poor is one of the many officials whom Lanik visits in order to see the king of Nkumai. After all these visits, which are pointless, he learns there is no king but only Mbwao Mowa, who is the highest official of the land. It turns out that she is not even Nkumai.

The Captain

The captain of the Singers' boat is an almost mythical character, being able to understand people, quell conflict, and make smart decisions easily. He has a beautiful mellifluous voice and is a peacemaker.

Helmut

Helmut is the man-boy who takes care of Lanik in the desert of Schwartz and teaches him the magic of earth, rock and sand.



Lanik's Double

Lanik's double, severed from Lanik's body, is taken in by the Nkumai, who train him in deep hatred of Muellers and Lanik. He goes around all the lands killing, maiming, burning, raping and torturing all in the name of Lanik, who is not even there. Everyone hates him. Lanik's double learns the secrets of Andersons, kills Dinte, and eventually takes over the leadership of Mueller, which the real Lanik is glad to give him after he heals him of his radical regeneration.

The Turd

The Turd is the disdainful name that Lanik gives to Mother, who ends up ruling the land with Dinte.

Homarnoch

Homarnoch is the old soldier of Mueller who escapes to help Lanik, Saranna and Ensel.

Man-Who-Knows-It-All

Man-Who-Knows-It-All is an ironic name for the teacher in the Ku Kei who teaches Lanik how to alter time, which becomes an important part of the plot later on.

The Shepherd

The Shepherd is the first friend that Lanik makes in Britton.

Barton

Barton is a lord in Britton who hears of Lanik and wants to meet him. He reveals the secrets of Anderson and enlists Lanik's help in defeating the Andersons.

Dul

Dul is Barton's servant, an Anderson illuder who tries to kill Lanik in the land of Gill.

The Girl on the Beach

This girl is Lanik's first experience with Andersons' deception. In reality, she is a filthy old man, although she almost seduces Lanik before he figures it out.



Objects/Places

The Ambassador

The Ambassador is a device that takes items of worth from the residents of Treason, transports them to the mother planet, and returns portions of iron as payment.

Hitler and Himmler

Hitler and Himmler are humorously-named horses that Lanik takes on his journey.

The Forest of Ku Kei

The Forest of Ku Kei is a forbidden place, where legend and common usage say that no one goes. Lanik does go there and learns some fascinating things as he encounters strange time shifts. He is not harmed in the forest. Later, he returns to the forest and meets the Ku Kei people, who are time shifters. He learns their secrets and becomes a time shifter, himself.

Swamp Smells

Swamp Smells are heady, intoxicating smells beneath Nkumai. In a lie, Mbwao Mowa tells Lanik that Nkumai sell the smells in trade for iron.

The King of Nkumai

The King of Nkumai is a conceit in Nkumai as there is no king. It is just an idea to maintain power.

The History Books of Nkumai

In The History Books of Nkumai, Lanik learns that Nkumai sell physics discoveries and not sweet swamp smells in trade for iron.

Allison

Allison is the country that Lanik first enters on his trip out from home. These people have been defeated by the Nkumai whom they call black niggers, revealing typical racial prejudice. They are poor people without particular gifts.



Schwartz

Schwartz is a desert place where Lanik learns that there can be true brotherly love. He also learns to manipulate and magically manage earth, sand, water and more. He is a changed person from the experience.

Ku Kei

Ku Kei is a forest where the residents have learned to alter time. It is a feared place, and most people would never enter, although nearby residents know it is not really that fearsome. Here, the Muellers find one of the ways to help their people.

Singer

Singer is the name of the seafaring family and their fleet of boats, who enslave Lanik but from whom he escapes.

The Library of Mueller

The Library of Mueller is a collection of history that helps Lanik figure out what has happened between his Family and others, such knowledge eventually helping him save the planet.

The Sweet River

The Sweet River is the river in Ku Kei forest.

Britton

Britton is the bare, cold sea country where Lanik finally finds peace and eventually settles down with Saranna after Lanik saves the world from the Andersons.

The Garden

In the Garden in Britton, Lanik makes peace with killing some plants and distressing some stones in order to get food for his friends.

Gill

Gill is a warlike country where Lanik faces execution by those in on the plot of the Andersons.

Anderson

Anderson is the land where the illuders live, those who, by deception, have taken over the world by pretending to be members of royal or leading families.



Themes

Travel Creates Understanding and Tolerance

Until Lanik leaves his home, he is certain that the whole world is just like his own land, which in his case is full of violence, class prejudice, and war. Until people grow up and leave home, or read books, as Lanik later does during his travels, there is no way for anyone to know that there are different kinds of living elsewhere. Lanik learns quickly as he goes on his hero's journey. In the land of Nkumai, he learns that people don't always say what they mean. They can talk high ideologies and ideals but underneath, they can be living in a very different way. Lanik also learns in Nkumai that one can adapt to extraordinary living circumstances, such as climbing and living in trees. In Allison, Lanik learns that prejudice is widespread but so is kindness and goodness of heart. He learns that his own warlike country is not loved in other areas. In Schwartz, Lanik learns the most powerful lessons of his whole travels, lessons that would give him gifts and compassion that will color all the rest of his journeys and indeed his life.

Lanik makes the ultimate sacrifice in his travel. First, he sacrifices what may have been the most beautiful connections in his life when he meets the Schwartzes, learns compassion and pure love, and leaves them. Later he gives up that love when he tries to convince the Schwartzes to help and they refuse. However, his sacrifice comes full circle when they feel the truth of his need and help him.

All through these changes, the good things in Lanik's character, such as fidelity and wholesome commitment to good, stay the same, but they are tempered by terrible experiences, including experiencing the brutal agony of the earth as souls are killed. Lanik is willing to suffer these things for the good, showing the maturity of character developed through his hero's journey.

Supernatural Gifts Can Help Save the World

This is a typical Orson Scott Card novel in that the protagonist, Lanik Mueller, learns many supernatural gifts that eventually help him defeat the worst enemy imaginable and saves the world. In Nkumai, he does not gain supernatural gifts, but he learns the gift of courage in descending from the highest treetops to the earth. However, Lanik possesses a supernatural gift already in that he can regenerate although he can and does experience excruciating pain. He does not die, but can come back to life. In Ku Kei, he learns one of the most fascinating talents, that of shifting time. Doing so can age him but it makes it possible for him to travel quickly throughout land without being seen and without taking much of the real time around him. Changing time also makes it possible for him to evade enemies and save friends from death, because he can stop time and therefore the flying of arrows and other weapons such as attacks by knives. In Schwartz, he learns the most profound talent of all, that of understanding the earth and rock and sand and making them do his bidding. He also learns the great power of



healing, another of Card's ubiquitous themes throughout his books, the ability of people to see and envision what is wrong with a body and go in with energy power to heal others.

With this learning comes the most powerful and awesome power as he must never misuse it nor take life with it. However, the Andersons' power, which Lanik understands but never takes on himself, the power of illusion, of appearing to be something and make your environment be something it is not, is so great that Lanik must utilize all his supernatural gifts to overcome it. This challenge is so great that it causes the earth, the Schwartzes, and Lanik himself the greatest of pain. However, the sacrifice is adequate and the world is safe. The interplay of these supernatural gifts is fascinating. One can imagine these gifts in play in the real world, but Card pushes them past reality into the fascinating realm of almost-real fiction.

Deception, Though Universal, is a Bad Thing

The theme of deception appears throughout this novel. Mueller is a violent country, but the people pretend that they are kind and gentle. The Nkumai are all about deception. They keep insisting that they are peaceful and fair and would never do anything dishonest such as lie or take bribes, but as Lanik progresses through the society, all he encounters is dishonesty, bribery and deception. Lanik learns that people often say one thing but do much another.

In Ku Kei, everything is such a deception that people throughout the planet Treason believe that it is a dangerous place, a place of no return, the mythical deep, dark, dangerous forest. However, beneath the deception is a simple albeit supernatural gift, which is that the Ku Kei have learned to alter time. They can make time go so slowly that the sun never seems to set, or they can make time go so fast that they can age and make their deaths come faster. This deception has worked for them for eons, until Lanik comes and steals the water in their lake, using Schwartz technology. The Ku Kei reveal the truth behind their deception, and it all makes sense.

The Schwartzes do not deceive, yet their gift is the most unbelievable of them all. The Brittons do not deceive as well. These peoples are most beloved of Lanik.

The Andersons are the worst deceivers. They have descended from a magician who develops such powers that the Andersons can make a whole house, a whole town, or even a whole country appear to be something it is not. It even smells and sounds real. The Andersons can disappear. They can seem to be someone else, and that is how they have taken over the entire planet, by inserting themselves into the highest levels of societies and taking over their leaderships. However, their deception is unveiled as Lanik can speed up time and see what is really happening. In his interaction with the girl on the beach, who is really a filthy old man who tries to kill Lanik, he knows that there is no overcoming these people with regular means. He must destroy them.



By destroying the Andersons, Lanik symbolically destroys the concept of deception in the land of Treason. There is one major deception that Lanik destroys, which is the belief that the people need iron to leave the planet. The people realize, with the destruction of the Ambassadors, that they can live peacefully and happily on the planet without ever wanting to leave.



Style

Point of View

This book is written almost solely from the point of view of the protagonist, Lanik Mueller, who at the opening of the book is a sixteen-year-old boy plagued with a serious problem. He is born into a family that is warlike and mostly patriarchal, a family that has descended from a genetic scientist and has developed genetics to such a degree that people can be reprogrammed to regenerate limbs and even organs, a plus if you are always fighting and going to war. These regeneratives can experience pain and do suffer when wounded or sick, but they remain alive and whole after a short time. However, occasionally, the regeneration reprogramming goes astray and a person becomes a radical regenerative. This means that the person grows all sorts of limbs, appendages, other-sex parts and organs, so they are not fit for public appearance. They are usually stabled worse than animals, with their limbs periodically harvested for off-world trade to get iron, a commodity ostensibly not part of the planet Treason.

Lanik has unfortunately and accidentally become a radical regenerative. He is slated to become the next king, the heir of the throne, but he cannot remain in public with this handicap so his father sends him away to figure out how another neighboring warlike Family the Nkumai is getting so much iron. Lanik has remained isolated as most children are in his family's lands, and this is his first adventure into the world. He has grown a pair of breasts as part of his regeneration so he goes as a woman.

Lanik is smart, funny and good-hearted, and these characteristics remain with him as he goes on a classic hero journey. They grow and are enhanced by his experiences. The book spans his entire lifetime, although time is altered, in typical science fiction style, as the book progresses so he ages unnaturally by the end of the book. Each time Lanik visits a country, he learns from the people. The most profound learning comes from his extended visit to the Schwartzes, a family that has learned to master earth and stone, water and sand, as well as to heal themselves and others to the point that they no longer feel heat and cold and no longer need to eat and drink. These powerful characteristics come with the benefit of being compassionate in a world that is violent. However they live in the "bitterest desert in the world," so no one comes to visit them, except Lanik, the wandering hero of the book.

Lanik learns supernatural skills as he goes along and grows in understanding and compassion. He overcomes his childhood teachings that make him a bully and supercilious, so when he visits Barton on the edges of Britton, he humbles himself and overcomes his natural inclination to act superior. When Lanik finally reaches his great challenge, which is to use the incredible powers he has gained and indeed to ask the Schwartzes to help him by using theirs, his character has grown enough that he can see beyond the obvious and suffer at great cost, even at the potential of losing his life, in order to save others. In this sense, he has grown past being a human into the point of view of being a messiah.



The book also reveals others' points of view through the conversations, such as Ensel, the father who is losing his kingdom to the imposters, and Helmut, the delightful Schwartz who can be any age and who becomes Lanik's teachers. However, the point of view remains consistent through Lanik's eyes.

Setting

The setting in this book is pure science fiction. For some unspecified reason, a group of people from a home planet, ostensibly Earth in the future where space travel is possible, is exiled for some kind of Treason. They are all packed into a space ship and taken to a planet which the home world cruelly calls Treason, and which the residents of the planet have retained. This is symbolic of the general attitude of the people almost over the whole planet. Part of the terms of their exile is that they are put on a planet that has no iron, which is almost universal on Earth and most other places, so they cannot refine metal to make space ships to return to the mother planet, Earth. Everyone on the planet seems to share the angst of this exile, even many generations after their exile. Indeed, so many generations are affected that the present generation does not even remember anything about Earth.

On Treason, each original exile travels to some portion of the planet and takes the land for his or her own, evidently with a mate or some others as they have all developed into societies, virtually independent of each other. Each exile comes with a particular talent or lifework. Over the generations, they refine, develop and extend this talent so that it is almost magical. For example, Lanik's family, the Muellers, originate from a geneticist. Their Family develops this trait so much they can now regenerate. The Nkumai came to Treason with the original settler as a physicist, and the Nkumai sell advanced physics concept to Earth, something that is so valuable that they seem to have as much iron as they could want, something that Lanik is very jealous of. The Bird Family originated from a female socialite, so they are a matriarchal society without much in the way of science or similar gifts. The Andersons, the people that have taken over the planet by deceit, originate from a magician.

Treason is a varied planet, just as Earth is. It has violent deserts, beautiful forests, rivers, lakes, oceans, and farmlands. Some of the areas seem very similar and are named similarly to Earth areas. For example, a cold, rocky, seacoast land is named Britton, and the residents build homes similar to earth British homes and live in a Spartan, spare lifestyle that speaks very much to Lanik. Although the planet is named Treason, the setup reminds the reader of early Australia where traitors and criminals are exiled in early times of Earth to make their own independent societies in a large geographical area.

Of course, this setting is very much in the future, so that there are inventions that do not exist in present Earth. For example, there is space travel, and all the residents of Treason are very much aware of it even though they cannot accomplish it. In addition, there is some kind of instantaneous transmission from Treason to Earth in the form of the Ambassador, a machine that can take and transmit materials instantaneously.



Interestingly, this theme is an echo of a similar development in Orson Scott Card's novel, "Speaker for the Dead," where scientists develop instantaneous communication and transmission over the endless expanses of space.

On Treason, magical abilities are the norm. The Ku Kei, descended from Pacific Islands, can alter time, a talent that Lanik learns and can use to help heal the world. The Schwartzes are healers and magical managers of earth and stone and water. The Muellers can genetically heal and regenerate. The Andersons can create huge, long-term, magical illusions, and so on. Unfortunately, travel is rather rare on this planet so Lanik is one of the few to merge these talents in order to work for the common good.

Language and Meaning

This book is delightful science fiction in its language. The first chapter sets out with vocabulary and assumptions that set the reader up for a magical otherly world quite different from our own, although originating from Earth in many of its assumptions and meanings.

One of the first peculiarities of language is the idea of Families. The residents of Treason descend from ancestors who are exiled to the planet and each exile has taken some land for himself or herself and developed a whole society. These lands are called Families. Each Family has its own characteristics, and there are poor ones and lordly rich ones, evidently stemming from the original gifts and status of the original exiles. The particular setting of Mueller, Lanik Mueller's Family, has its own vocabulary, including the "pens," which is where the radical regeneratives who supply body parts to be sent off-world are kept. Another example is the Ambassador, an ironic name for some mechanical device that sends items off-world to Earth and brings back iron, which is of great value.

Indeed, the status of iron is a peculiarity in this world. Iron is one of the most common elements in most places, but it is scarce in Treason. However, later in the book, the reader learns that there is really iron in the world but it is disguised and hidden so that the residents will think that they are indeed permanently exiled. This should cause them to remain in subservience to Earth and provide Earth with important things that it needs in exchange for pitifully small transmissions of iron through the Ambassador.

Each Family not only has its particular gifts but its particular character elements. These are evocative of characters in certain areas in the original Earth. The Ku Kei are built physically just like the Pacific islanders on many of the islands on Earth. They are tall and solidly built, prone to fat when not working hard physically, and of course, these people do not have to work hard physically as they can alter time and get what they need easily. These people are prone to laughter and jokes but they are also volatile and easy to anger. They like to play tricks on visitors, which gives the Forest of Ku Kei the dreadful reputation of being a terrible place. The Nkumai resemble tall, warlike residents of Africa, and the original exile takes an African name, although he is really a regular resident of westernized culture on Earth. In Britton, the residents resemble early Britons



on Earth, working hard, living simply, herding sheep, and appreciating deep and abiding relationships.

Part of the charm of this book as science fiction is the transmutation of these Earth-like characteristics and assumptions into an advanced, futuristic society, combining familiar language and cultural aspects with the unique developments of culture and language on a faraway planet. It is also the absolute acceptance of what could be considered magical elements, such as many familiar Orson Scott Cards themes. One of these is the alteration of time, a beloved theme in many science fiction works. Another Card favorite is the ability of certain characters to intuitively send their minds into the bodies of others, seeing and visualizing what is going wrong with injury and disease, and magically and intuitively healing these maladies. This material appears frequently in Card, such as in the Alvin Maker series later in Card's career. Another theme is using singing to heal and alter others, which the Nkumai do every morning in their morning song, as everyone sings to each other to greet the new dawn. Yet another is the magical and supernatural management of the earth elements, including soil, sand, water and stone, again developed in later Card novels. Still another is instantaneous transmission of materials and messages between planets. All of these elements are particularly designed and revealed in the context of Treason, and finally in the character of Lanik, the elements are combined to work for the salvation of the planet from one Family that has misused its gifts and entrapped the entire complex of Families.

Structure

This novel is based on the classic structure of a hero's journey. The protagonist, Lanik, sixteen years old at the outset of the novel, is exiled from his home for problems that he does not even cause. He sets abroad at his father's request, but in a situation that makes it impossible for Lanik to remain at home, his physical problem of becoming a radical regenerative, no longer fit to be heir of the throne.

At the outset, Lanik possesses a positive and noble character. He is a young protagonist, typical of Orson Scott Card novels that often feature child or teen heroes. As he travels from place to place, his skills as a fighter and nobleman constantly emerge, but he also develops his inherent character traits of being kind, compassionate, strong and willing to sacrifice himself for the good of others and indeed the good of the world. He moves from place to place. At first, he is assigned by his father to visit and be an ambassador to the Nkumai, who improbably live high in the tops of trees in an impossible large forest. He moves through lesser lands where people are usually poor and often talk in the poor grammar and syntax of backwater England, evidently descended from such people. These folk have often been conquered by the Nkumai and the folk often speak in very bitter, racist terms about the Nkumai, using the "nigger" word, reminiscent of such attitudes on Earth.

The richer or lordlier Families have developed economically and socially and are free from domination, except in a strange plot twist, unbeknownst to them as the Andersons have used trickery and sorcery to disguise themselves as members of the real society.



They insert themselves into lordly or ruling families and thereby have eventually ended up ruling the entire planet, always living in disguise. For regular people it is impossible to detect this ruse, because the deception can include invisibility, absolute change of any personal characteristic, sounds, smells, and even changing room and land characteristics. In this way, families have an older son instantly appear into their lives but the deception makes them think that the son has been there always. It takes some strong convincing by Barton, a lord in the land of Britton, to reveal this dastardly plot to Lanik, the hero on his journey. Lanik realizes that his usurping brother Dinte is not his brother at all. Lanik knows he is an only child and has no childhood or youthful memories of this brother. This is a turning point in the plot as Lanik then sets out, with some anger that he eventually tempers along the way, to right the wrongs over the whole planet.

Each time that Lanik visits a Family, particularly the ones in power, he learns something and grows as a character, but he also accumulates traits, attitudes and powers that eventually help him conquer the wicked Andersons. When he finally visits the Andersons, he realizes that they are unredeemable. None of them seems to be working for a higher good but all are living in shame and destitution, thievery and lies, and they are so powerful that no one can defeat them nor reason with them, because they can alter everything and trick everyone. Only by going into quicktime can a person even see what the deceptions are, but since the Ku Kei are the only ones that know time alteration, at least till Lanik appears on the scene and learns it, nothing can be done as the Ku Kei never leave their forest home.

Lanik loves the Schwartzes so much, having learned compassion and pure love in their society, that he does not want to leave them. He also loves Britton wholeheartedly, having found peace and contentment in a rather brutal, spare environment. He gives up these dear loves in order to help the planet and eventually ends up living in Britton at the end of the book. He must offer the ultimate sacrifices, the love and respect of the Schwartzes and even his own life on the line, in order to save the planet, thus making himself into a messianic figure.

Finally, when all is resolved, Lanik returns home, but unlike many hero journeys, he does not remain at home. He does return home to get rid of the Andersons, but in a strange plot twist, he finds that his cloned double has defeated Dinte and rules in his stead. As a true large-hearted hero, Lanik heals his double and leaves him to rule in his stead. For himself, he follows his heart back to his true love. Lanik has learned that he loves Saranna so much that he will never cheat on her. He is a faithful hero in love as well as war. He finds Saranna and negotiates with her, healing her pain with all the love of his heart. Together they travel in quicktime to Britton, the area of the world that Lanik has learned to love the most. Together they live there, healing the people with their enhanced powers but not having children of their own, in peace and love as a couple.

Lanik is the hero of this journey. He is transformed by his travels, as heroes are, but he uses his enhanced gifts to serve others, just as Odysseus does in the classic hero journey of the Odyssey.



Quotes

"It's not just breasts,' said Homarnoch, the Family surgeon. 'Sorry, Lanik. It's ovaries. For life.'" Page 13.

"Then I put the arrow that had struck my shoulder into her hand, to give her power in the next world, though I doubted privately that there was such a thing." Page 34.

"I gave her grief, letting the blood drip from my hand onto her face." Page 34.

"Behind it was the bitterest desert in the world." Page 115.

"My God,' said the captain, "what are those bastards doing to prisoners these days?" page 104.

"Singer had a thriving business. In human flesh." Page 104.

"A strange people, at once cruel and kind, strong and weak, and so quick to change from one extreme to the other that I could not predict what they would do." Page 107.

"From the inside,' the man answered, beaming. 'We only work from the inside. Do you want to continue your walk now?'" Page 121.

"I can't show you, Lanik-e. You must do it yourself." Page 125.

"When you walk in it without fear, the forest of Ku Kei is beautiful enough." Page 195.

"And I fleetingly wondered if I was yet old enough to truly love her." Page 194.

"Under everything, I still hear the scream of the earth, but it no longer taints the things I see and do." Page 298.

"A sharp tongue, even when speaking to a lord, and a man who refuses to come when bidden until the planting's done." Page 216.

"Not the voice of the rock, but rather a low, soft, almost unthinkable whisper, and I couldn't understand." Page 169.

"Lanik, I've changed my mind. I want to be young forever. Take me with you." Page 296.

"All death was the same, and the rocks grained horribly as if to say, 'We trusted you, we gave you power, we obeyed you, and you used us to kill!'" Page 275.

"We are savages. We take our energy from the same source as the plants." Page 130.

"Lanik, I believe the sand will hold you." Page 132.



Topics for Discussion

Card has created a stellar science fiction world. Explain how the residents of Treason came to be there. Explain how the important Families developed their gifts.

Lanik has learned many strange and wonderful skills. Describe them. How do they help Lanik save the world?

Describe the Andersons' method of ruling the world. How does Lanik defeat them?

Orson Scott Card frequently uses the themes of healing in his work. How does he develop these themes in *A Planet Called Treason*?

Describe how Lanik's character changes as he undergoes his hero's journey. Describe how his double changes, as well.

Lanik learns faithfulness to his true love. How does this happen in the book? How does this love relationship eventually turn out? Do you believe in lifelong true love?

There is a constant treatment of deception and lying in the book. What deceptions create important turning points in the plot? What do you learn about deception as a generality, reading this book?

Lanik breaks the one important rule of managing earth and stone, that you never take life with it. Did he do right or wrong? Explain your position.