

Schooled Study Guide

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Plot Summary

When 13-year-old Capricorn Anderson's grandmother breaks her hip, he has to move out of the hippie commune they live in and into the real world. Initially, he struggles. The children make fun of him and he is generally clueless about life beyond the commune. Slowly however, his affable personality wins people over. By the end of the book he is his school's most popular kid.

Cap Anderson has been arrested by the police for driving without a license. To their surprise Cap has no idea what they have talking about. He tells them he was driving his grandmother to the hospital after she broke her hip falling out of a tree. He lives and is schooled by her on a commune called Garland and neither understands the concept of a license nor knows the emergency number 9-1-1. Eventually, the police let him go to see his grandmother Rain in hospital.

Rain is distraught. She tells the nurses that she cannot go in hospital for two months because she has to look after her grandson Capricorn. He has no one else and she hates the idea of him being contaminated by the real world. The doctors tell her she has no choice and they will have to call the social service to find him a home and a school until she gets better. Luckily for both Cap and Rain the social worker given Cap's case is a lady called Mrs. Donnelly. Brought up on Garland herself, she understands what Cap must be going through and invites him to stay with her at her house.

Cap's first few days at school are a nightmare. The first person he meets is the school bully Zach. From his clothes and lack of social understand, Zach can see Cap is the perfect target for him and his other friends. The school has a tradition of voting the weakest kid in as President so eighth formers like him can make fun of them and manipulate them to do as they please. The last two presidents had to leave school early due to nervous breakdowns. Zach views Cap as perfect president material.

Cap tells Rain that he is not happy at his school. People are violent and have no time for anyone. He wants to go back to Garland. Rain is sympathetic. She tells him that the outside world is an unforgiving place and he should feel sorry for anyone that cannot love like he can. She also expresses guilt. She thinks she should have exposed Cap to the real world sooner.

Cap is voted in as president. Everyone is happy, particularly Hugh Winkleman who knows it would have been him and not Cap who would have been voted in if Zach hadn't noticed Cap so soon. Zach and his friends Daryl, Naomi and Lena are having a great time sending Cap on wild goose chases. One day Cap finds a dead bird in his locker. Upset, he takes it to the garden and buries it in the flowerbed. As he stands over the grave, he is joined by other children including Naomi who secretly wishes that Zach could show as much sensitivity as Cap. Zach looks on from inside the school, in anger.



Cap's homelife is no better. Mrs. Donnelly's daughter Sophie hates him even pouring water over his head when he practices tai-chi on the lawn outside. To Sophie, Cap is an embarrassment. Cap responds in his usual affable manner, but the abuse just continues. Mrs. Donnelly tells him Sophie is partly behaving so badly because of her father and Mrs. Donnelly's ex-husband is always making promises to her he can't keep. Most recently he forgot to show up for their driving lesson. That gives Cap an idea. While Mrs. Donnelly is out, he gives Sophie a driving lesson in Mrs. Donnelly's car.

Meanwhile Cap's popularity at school rises two-fold. One day on the school bus the bus driver Mr. Rodrigo keels over, sending the bus veering towards a dump truck. Cap responds immediately, pulling Mr. Rodrigo off of his chair and steering the bus away from the truck. Despite his arrest at the hospital, the students hail him as a hero and begin helping him out with his duties as president. In particular everyone is keen to help out with the Halloween bash. Even the principle Mr. Kasagi gives him 12 blanks to pay for everything. However, he tells Cap, he must use the checks responsibly. Cap has no idea what he is talking about until he remembers what Rain once said to him: being responsible is helping others. With the checks Cap buys and engraves a bracelet for Sophie, pretending it is from her father and donates money to lots of charities, including \$1000 to Naomi's charities. His generosity makes him even more popular.

The only two people unhappy with Cap's new found celebrity status is Hugh and Zach. Despite hating each other, they decide to get together and plot Cap's downfall. Their first idea is to persuade Cap to dress up in the opposing team's kit during the pep rally and send him out onto the pitch. It works perfectly. As soon as Cap steps onto the field the Claverage players all charge him with Zach's friend Daryl at the front. They only realize he is not a footballer player when his frail crumbles under their weight. Later, Daryl, realizing Zach was responsible, approaches him in the corridor. Zach laughs at him and Daryl unable to compete with him in an argument of words raises his fists to punch him. Unfortunately Cap has stepped between them and his punch lands directly on Cap's nose.

An ambulance arrives for Cap, but it is not to take him to hospital. Rain has arrived at the school to take him back to Garland. Cap has mixed feelings. Though he misses Garland, he was beginning to enjoy his life at Claverage. When they arrive back at commune Cap feels a bit depressed. Compared to the outside world, Garland is very dull.

Meanwhile the students think Cap has died, blaming Zach and Hugh for his death. Both Zach and Hugh think they are ridiculous, but if Zach in particular is going to get back his popular status he needs to take advantage of the situation. With Hugh he decides to arrange a memorial service for Cap in the school car park.

Sophie is doing her driving test when it occurs to her that the bracelet she thought her father sent her was not from him, but from Cap. All the things she said and did to him and all he did was respond in kindness. As soon as she passes her test she drives to Garland, determined to take Cap to the Halloween Bash. Cap has had the same idea



and a few miles from the commune they meet each other. Jumping into Sophie's car, they drive to Claverage High School.

When they arrive at the school, Sophie and Hugh are shocked to see everyone in the car park holding candles and dressed in hippy clothes. Before long they see Zach step onto the stage, asking people to come up to give their tributes to Cap - the best school president Claverage has ever had. One by one and tearfully they all give small speeches until finally Cap comes forward to reveal he is still alive. Everyone goes wild and Daryl steps forward to lift him through the crowd. At the back of the crowd is Rain, observing everything.

A couple of days later Cap is at working on the commune by himself when a white Mercedes pulls up and out steps Rain. Stylishly dressed and with a mobile phone, she tells Cap that she has sold Garland for \$17 million, bought a condo in the city and enlisted Cap at Calverage High School. She insists, however, she has not sold out. They will mostly use the money to help others.



Chapters 1-3

Chapters 1-3 Summary

The police have arrested 13 year-old Capricorn Anderson for driving a vehicle underage. Handcuffed and worried, he answers their questions while watching the ambulance people load his grandmother Rain into the back of an ambulance. He tells them she broke her hip falling out of a plum tree. As they live alone in a hippy commune called Garland, he had no choice, but to drive her to the hospital. Luckily, his grandmother taught him how to drive at the age of eight. The police man takes off his cuffs and allows him to leave with Rain.

At the hospital, Rain screams at the staff that can't keep her at the hospital. She has to look after Cap. Cap is surprised to hear her so angry. Her philosophy has always been that angry people are only ever angry at themselves. He doesn't realize that she is worried for her grandson. His parents died from Malaria when he was a young boy and he has little experience of the world outside the commune. The staff promises they will find someone to look after him.

Mrs. Donnelly is the social worker assigned to Cap's case. As soon as she sees him with his wild hair and tie-dye clothes, she knows he has come from Garland. She herself was brought up there until her parents decided to join the real world. She knows how Cap must feel and insists he moves in with her and her daughter Sophie. Rain, she says, would want him to move in with someone who understands.

Zach Power feels good. At last he is in the top grade at school and as the captain of the football team and the soccer team, officially the school's most happening kid. Outside the school sign, he reaches up and takes off the L from Claverage, hiding it behind the bushes. It now reads C Average High School.

What Zach looks forward to the most is electing the school president. The president is traditionally chosen by people like him and they always choose the geekiest child - someone they can manipulate and make fun of throughout the year. This year it is going to be Hugh Winkleman.

At least that is what he thought until he met Cap Anderson. Asked by the headmaster, Mr. Kasagi to take Cap, the new kid, to his locker, he can hardly believe what he sees standing in front of him: not only does Cap look like a flashback from the sixties, but he can't comprehend the simplest aspects of school life. It is against his principles for example to lock his stuff away in a locker. Cap, he decides, will be the next school president.



Chapters 1-3 Analysis

The first section introduces Capricorn Anderson. He has been brought up by his grandmother in virtual isolation on a hippy commune. So when she breaks her hip, he is thrown head first into the real world of school and order. From the beginning the reader can't help thinking this world will just swallow him up. For example, when the police question him for driving without a license, he doesn't even know what a license is. Nor has he ever heard of the emergency number 9-1-1.

The first person Capricorn meets at Claverage High School is the school bully Zach Powers. The reader fears Capricorn's innocence will destroy him. As Zach mentions in this section, it is the school's tradition to vote in the geekiest students as the school president - someone the popular kids can manipulate and make fun of. The last two presidents at the school have had nervous breakdowns. Zach views Cap as the perfect president.



Chapters 4-6

Chapters 4-6 Summary

While waiting for the bus to take him home, Cap witnesses a fight between two boys. They call each other Butt wipe and Jerk face so when the teacher asks him what happened, he thinks those are their real names. The teacher thinks Cap is talking back and sends him to the headmaster's office. Luckily, he meets Mrs. Donnelly on the way. She has come to take him to the hospital to see his grandmother.

Rain is depressed. She admits to Cap that she should have prepared him better for the outside world, but Cap tells her that the outside world is every bit as bad as she told him. He has only been at the school a day and he has already witnessed violence. People even lock away their belongings to stop others from stealing them. What he says only makes Rain feel worse.

Back at her house, Mrs. Donnelly introduces Cap to her daughter Sophie. Even without talking to him, Sophie decides she hates him calling him Freakazoid and telling her mother she has pretty much ruined her chances with boys. Cap is only vaguely listening to her. She is one of those beautiful women he has only seen on book covers.

During lunch the school nerd, Hugh Winkleman, introduces himself to Cap. Like everyone else is taken aback by Cap's lack of worldly knowledge. Even he could bully this kid. However, without friends himself, he sees Cap as an ally and sits down to talk to him.

Moments later, an announcement comes over the PA from Mr. Kasagi, reminding the students the school presidential elections are taking place next week. At the moment they only have one nominee: Capricorn Anderson. Hugh is shocked, but when he asks Cap about it, Cap is still searching the ceiling to see where the voice came from. He has no idea he has been nominated and deep down Hugh is glad. He knows that if Cap hadn't arrived at the school, he would have been one nominated and as he says, rather him than me.

In love with Zach Powers Naomi Erlanger sees the one way to get noticed by him is through Capricorn Anderson. She helps design posters for the Presidential campaign and when Cap is elected helps Zach to make fun of him - writing fake love letters and organizing fake press conferences. Zach has the combination to Cap's locker so every day they put something disgusting in there - such as a goat's brain from the science lab. It doesn't seem to bother Cap - he just throws it away.

However one day Cap finds, to his horror, a dead bird in there. Wrapping it up gently in a paper towel, he takes it outside and begins to dig a grave for it in the ground with his hands. She doesn't know quite why, but Naomi leaves Zach's side to stand by Cap and



pay her respects to the bird. She regrets it as soon as she sees Zach looking at her disapprovingly.

Chapters 4-6 Analysis

In this section, Cap visits Rain. Her depressive mood and regret of how she raised her grandson, foreshadows the conflict that later develops in her mind regarding the best way to bring him up. Her problem is she has spent so long fighting for what you believes in she has become stubborn to change, losing all connection with reality.

Nevertheless the author does not represent Cap's upbringing as wholly negative. By teaching Cap to love all living things, Rain has instilled in him an unusual patience and sensitivity. By teaching him to stand up for his rights she has made Cap braver and more spontaneous than the other students could ever hope to be.

Despite these admirable qualities Sophie is horrible to him, calling him freakazoid and doing her best to make him feel uncomfortable. Cap never reacts. From his perspective, if someone is angry at him then he must in somehow have wronged them. For the rest of the book, he takes it upon himself to make Sophie happy.

In this section, Cap's attitude wins over Naomi who is one of the students who had earlier bullied him. As Cap stands over the grave of a bird that he has just buried, a tear rolls down his face. Naomi wonders if Zach, her potential boyfriend, could ever display the same sensitivity.



Chapters 7-10

Chapters 7-10 Summary

Part of Mrs. Donnelly's job as Cap's caseworker is to meet with Mr. Kasagi. Mr. Kasagi has both good and bad news. The good news is that Cap is, in terms of education, is as bright as anyone at the school. Mr. Kasagi tells her the problem is that he has never met anyone as clueless about life. In that respect he finds it difficult to understand why the children elected him as school president.

Cap's appointment as school president makes no sense to Mrs. Donnelly either until she arrives home. Sophie tells her they have elected Cap because they always elect the school geek. Anyone that doesn't go along with it runs the risk of being bullied for the rest of the year. Mrs. Donnelly is horrified, but Sophie seems glad Cap is having problems. She hates him with an anger Mrs. Donnelly didn't think her daughter was capable of.

One day when Cap is on their front lawn practicing tai-chi, Sophie pours a waste basket full of water over his head, screaming at him to stop embarrassing her. Cap is distraught, but Mrs. Donnelly tells him not to take her so seriously. She tells him sixteen year old girls don't like anyone. In addition, Sophie's father, her ex-husband, is constantly letting her down. The other day he had promised to take her for a driving lesson, but never showed up.

Cap is struggling with school life. Everything at Garland was so simple - seven acres of land with two buildings, a pickup truck and one other person. Now he has to deal with about a thousand people and he has no idea what is going on. Why for example does he keep finding strange things in his locker? Why does he keep finding pieces of paper in his hair? The only person he can ask is Hugh, but he desperately wishes he could ask Rain - the only person in the world he trusts.

The other problem is his life is Sophie. One day he walked back from the bus in bare feet, his soles picking up all the dirt and stickiness off the sidewalk. Sophie, seeing him hosing off his feet, looks at him distastefully and says "nice". Why would she say nice if she didn't mean it?

When Sophie arrives home from a disastrous date, Cap is waiting for her on the steps of the house. Dangling the keys in front of her, he tells her mother has gone out and while she has gone he can give Sophie the driving lesson her father never gave her. Sophie agrees. She knows Cap can drive and drive well, and needs some time on the roads before her test.

Despite Sophie's driving mistakes, Cap is endlessly patient with her. At one point she turns into someone's driveway, thinking it is a side street, and then almost straight into



their garage door. Still Cap is patient with her and guiding her back onto the road, she continues the lesson in a much more confident mood.

It is not until she sees her mother walking down the street that she panics again. But again Cap is calm. Noting that she hasn't seen them he drives them back to the house. When Mrs. Donnelly enters they are watching television.

Chapters 7-10 Analysis

The biggest difference between Cap and the other students is that Cap not only accepts difference, but thinks nothing of it. While Sophie and Zach, just by looking at his clothes, presume he is a freak, Cap happily befriends the most popular kid in school - Hugh Winkleman. At the same time, he doesn't consciously seek his friendship. Cap doesn't need friends. While almost all of the other kids are desperate for popularity and relationships, Cap is his own person - secure within himself he needs no one from outside to reassure him. When he is locked in a classroom, for example, he deals with the stress through meditation.

Cap eventually becomes popular because he has no other ambition than to be true to himself.



Chapters 11-14

Chapters 11-14 Summary

Zach is angry that his bullying of Cap is getting no reaction. With the help of Naomi he enticed Cap into a room where the door locks behind you. Yet despite that Cap was in the room for a few hours, bar a few calls for help, he spent most of the time in the lotus position meditating. As Naomi says they were starting to feel they could harass him as much as they wanted, but they could never upset him.

Hugh continues to enjoy Cap's presence. One day on the bus, Hugh is telling Cap to duck Zach's spitballs when suddenly Cap pushes him aside and charges down the bus aisle. Mr. Rodrigo the bus driver has keeled over and the bus is swerving out of control towards a dump truck. With all the calmness in the world Cap steers the bus back on course before asking someone to direct him to the hospital. Naomi comes forward to tell him the way.

The police start to give chase, but Cap refuses to stop until he is at the hospital. Here the police arrest him at gunpoint and take him to the police station.

At a press conference arranged by Zach, Cap fields questions about the upcoming Halloween dance. He has no idea how to organize such an event until someone approaches him about the music. It suddenly occurs to that he can delegate all the jobs to other people.

Sophie's father comes to visit her. He is an impressive person who knows how to talk to people and shows much patience when Cap shares stories with him about Garland - even though Sophie can see he is bored stiff. Before he leaves, he shows Sophie a beautiful bracelet that he has bought her for her birthday. Despite that the present is seven months late, he tells her she can't have it quite yet. He is going to send it to the engraver before he sends it back to her through the post.

Chapters 11-14 Analysis

Other than Cap, all the students are full of self denial and a lack of self knowledge. In this section, Hugh claims he wants nothing more than to be anonymous, but the reader feels this is more out of fear than any genuine need. He thinks if he doesn't slink into the shadows, the other students will bully him. At the same he contradicts himself by constantly putting himself in the spotlight. After all he is the captain of the chess team and he has actively sought the friendship of Cap - a person very much in the public eye. Hugh needs to be popular and it is his denial of what he needs that keeps people away from him.

This section also proves to be a major turning point in the story. When the school driver, Mr. Rodrigo suffers a heart attack at the wheel of the school bus, Cap takes over and



drives the bus to the hospital. The other children are highly impressed, but seemingly not because he saved a life. They rarely mention Mr. Rodrigo's name again. Instead they are impressed with the fact Cap can drive and that even in a state of emergency shows a Zen like calm. At a press conference Zach originally arranged to make fun of Cap, the students genuinely want to know where Cap learned to drive and what the police asked him. Much to Zach's disgust Cap is becoming popular.

While this turning point is part of the main story, Cap's relationship with Sophie is part of a subplot. In this section the reader learns the problems Sophie has with her father -a problem she denies. In this respect one wonders if the anger she directs at Cap and Mrs. Donnelly has more to do with her feeling towards her father than it has to do with them.



Chapters 15-18

Chapters 15-18 Summary

Hugh tries to get to know Cap better. He invites him to his house, but Cap says no. He invites him to the chess club, but Cap tells him he doesn't believe in competition. It is not until he mentions that he likes Cap's clothes, in a lead up to asking him to the mall, that Cap becomes interested. He tells Hugh that he and Rain tie-dye their own clothes at the communes and if he likes he will show him how it is done.

With their hands deep in tie-dye, Miss Agnew enters the classroom. Fortunately she is not angry. She tells Hugh and Cap she hasn't done tie-dying since her college days and would love to dedicate the whole lesson to it with Cap as the teacher. Not long after an announcement goes over the PA that any students interested in tie-dying should join their school president in the art room.

Around 80 kids show up - many of them more interested in Cap than tie-dyeing. They want to know about the Halloween dance, the school bus and tai-chi. As Hugh states every single student is genuinely interested in what Cap has to say.

When Cap arrives home, Sophie is talking excitedly to her mother, obviously upset at something. Cap asks what she is upset about, but Sophie throws a Danson bottle at him and screams for him to get out - it is none of his business. Later Mrs. Donnelly tells Cap she is upset because her father has left town without saying goodbye.

Mr. Kasagi gives Cap 12 signed checks to use to pay for the Halloween bash. He tells Cap he has to be responsible, but Cap has no idea what he is talking about until he remembers something Rain once told him: being responsible is being good to others. When Cap sees a bracelet in a shop window just like the one Sophie's father bought for Sophie, he enters and buys it with one of Mr. Kasagi's checks.

Mr. Donnelly is happy Sophie is in a better mood and knows it is partly to do with her father finally sending her the bracelet. She feels a little suspicious since the engraving, "All You Need is Love," does not sound like something her ex-husband would say.

For Hugh, Cap's newly found popularity is not a good thing. The bullies' attention is back on him. Only the other day, his feet were kicked from under him. He states that Cap's transformation from dweeb to the school's coolest guy has been remarkable. Even people like Naomi, part of Zach's inner circle, worship him, attending his tai-chi classes and trying to impress him with all the new sixties stuff they have recently bought.

The final straw for Hugh is when Naomi approaches Cap for a donation to a charity. Cap happily takes out a school check and makes one out to her for \$1000. Everyone is aghast, crowding around him and high fiving him. Hugh feels insanely jealous and vows never to speak to Cap again.



Chapters 15-18 Analysis

From the story's first major turning point develops the story's first major conflict. After the rise in Cap's popularity, Hugh becomes both jealous and afraid. He is jealous because he has never been popular himself and afraid because he thinks Cap's popularity will put the bullies' spotlight back on him.

This section also shows how potentially corrupting popularity can be since Cap admits to Hugh that it feels really good when people like you. It is perhaps testament to Cap's self-control that he never takes advantage of this situation.



Chapters 19-22

Chapters 19-22 Summary

Zach's friends are all ignoring him in favor of Cap. When he approaches his table at lunch break, the table he has worked since sixth grade to obtain, Cap is sitting in his chair talking to his friends. They are not even acknowledging Zach's presence. He walks away, furiously, only to bump straight into Hugh Winkleman. Staring at his enemy, Zach realizes he has something in common with him - a shared hatred of Cap.

It is the day of the pep rally and Claverage are playing their fierce rivals Rhinestone at a game of football. Cap has no idea what the game is about, but Hugh is happy to fill him in. He tells him as president he has to go out onto the pitch in the Claverage football kit and support the team. He helps Cap into his football gear and directs to the tunnel that exits onto the pitch.

In the tunnel, Cap can hear the crowd fierce and angry. As soon as he steps onto the pitch, he sees the entire Claverage team charging towards him. Looking down at his shirt and realizes he is dressed in the opposing team's uniform.

Daryl sprints towards the Rhinestone player determined to get to him before anyone else. The minute he makes contact however, he knows he has made a mistake. Rather than hitting the firm figure of a footballer, he has crushed the frail figure of a non-player. He tries to warn the others, but it is too late. They all pile on top of him. Cap of course is at the very bottom of the pile.

A little later Daryl hears that Hugh is being blamed for what happened. He knows that is only partly true. He saw Zach and Hugh in deep conversation at lunchtime - Zach would have been the one who put him up to it.

Finding Zack in the corridor, Daryl accuses him of setting up Cap. Zack laughs in his face, telling him that he seemed very willing at the time to tackle whoever he thought was in the Rhinestone kit. Daryl tries to argue back, but knowing he can't beat Zach with words resorts to punching him. Unfortunately he doesn't see Cap come in between. Daryl's punch strikes Cap in the face and knocks him to the ground. Not long after Daryl is watching an ambulance taking Cap away.

Sitting in the back of the ambulance is Rain. She has come to take Cap back to Garland.

Chapters 19-22 Analysis

This section examines Zach's conflict. Due to Cap successes, Zach's own popularity has plummeted to the point that his friends will no longer talk to him. Cap has even taken his place, "his seat," in the school dining room. In many ways this shows the



superficiality of the type of popularity the children look for. Like an item of clothing Zach has gone out of fashion, replaced by someone people once scowled at and whose popularity could be equally short lived. If the students have shown anything, they have shown they are fickle.

Zach's jealousy draws him into a relationship with Hugh - the boy he once bullied mercilessly. This is the first example of Cap's power to show people their true selves. As their friendship develops, the reader will see there is a genuine respect between Zach and Hugh that until now they never felt comfortable to express before. Hugh for example says he admires Zach's innate intelligence.

Of course in an environment far more brutal and unkind than Garland, Cap has been unable to lead people gently to their true selves. They've all had to find out the hard way. In this section, for example, Daryl has to put Cap into hospital before he realizes the mistakes he has made.



Chapters 23-26

Chapters 23-26 Summary

Mr. Kasagi arrives back from his conference flushed with success. It wouldn't be long, he had been told, before he had his own school. On his desk is a pile of letters. The first one is from the bank. He is shocked. The bank tells him a check has bounced and they have charged the student account \$30. The next letter says the same. Capricorn Anderson has donated \$4000 of the school's money to charity.

Mrs. Donnelly arrives at Mr. Kasagi's request. When he tells her what Cap is doing she replies that it is all Mr. Kasagi's fault. He must have known that Cap had no idea how to handle money.

Naomi begins to worry when Cap does not come back to school, stealing his school files in an effort where he is. Unfortunately his file is empty. Eventually she finds out that Cap was living with the Donnelly's and goes to their house. She has no luck. Both Sophie and Mrs. Donnelly tell her they are not at liberty to give her any information.

Zach has gone from the most popular kid in high school to the most unpopular. Six graders look at him in disgust. People write words like jerk on his locker. They all believe Cap is dead and that he is responsible. Zach of course thinks it is all ridiculous. He knows Cap isn't dead, but that doesn't mean he can't take advantage of the situation. With Hugh's help, Zach prints out invitations for a tribute for Cap Anderson: 7 pm in the school car park.

While on her driving test, Sophie realizes that it wasn't her father that sent her the bracelet, but Cap. She feels enormously guilty about how she treated him and knows she must somehow make it up to him.

Chapters 23-26 Analysis

Despite Cap's current popularity there is the potential that it could be very short-lived. Cap is new and exciting yet at the same time no one has really taken the time to get to know him. At the end of the day he is still only a teenager and like everyone else needs time to make mistakes and develop as a person. Though he has been challenged throughout the book, those challenges have always played to his strengths. How would he cope, for example, if Rain died? How would he cope if he was confronted by real violence?

No doubt Cap's time away from the commune has proved a success, but does Cap understand enough about the world for his success to continue? How would the students react if some of Cap's actions had been met by real consequences? Would he still be popular?



In this section, Zach's character proves Cap still has a lot to learn. While Zach looks down and out, he proves he is a natural at working things to his favor, taking advantage of the fact everyone thinks Cap is dead by arranging a memorial service for him with the philosophy; if you can't beat them, join them. His aim of course is to regain his popularity.

In these terms, the advantage Zach has over someone like Cap is that he knows exactly how the system works. People like drama. They like programs such as Trigonometry and Tears and throughout the novel it has been Zach who provided the stage for the drama to take place.

The one thing Cap can provide for people is unconditional love and friendship. During her driving test, Sophie realizes it was not her father that sent her bracelet, but Cap. In fact it has been Cap and her mother and not her father who have given her the support she needed.



Chapter 27-31

Chapter 27-31 Summary

Cap is back at Garland. With Rain's hip she can't do any of the farm work, so Cap is busy picking all the fruit and vegetable. He can't help missing all the people from C Average. Rain tells him he has been contaminated by television and other evils, but Cap is starting to appreciate how the majority live their lives. He asks Rain if he can go to the Halloween Bash, but she says no. Nevertheless when she leaves for some supplies he sneaks off to the gas station. From here he plans to call a taxi, paying for it with his last school check.

As he is walking down the middle of a usually quiet road, a car zooms around the corner. He has to jump into a ditch to avoid it. The driver is Sophie. Making sure he is ok, she tells him she has come to thank him for the bracelet and drive him to the Halloween Bash.

At the school, Cap and Sophie wonder why there are no lights on. When they drive into the car park they see why. There are literally hundreds of people dressed in hippy costumes, holding candles. Sophie and Cap put on Mickey and Minnie masks and join the crowd.

Worried about where Sophie has taken the car, Mrs. Donnelly phones Mr. Kasagi. Mr. Kasagi is as frantic as she is, telling her the children have decided to replace the Halloween Bash with a memorial service for Cap. He tells her he will pick her up and drive her to the school.

In the car park, Zach climbs onto the platform he has arranged for the ceremonial and faces the crowd. Hundreds of people have turned up. Cap he says into the microphone was Claverage school's greatest ever president and today he would like to invite people to the stage to pay tribute to him. The students are not shy. One after the other they share their thoughts. Naomi says she feels guilty about how she treated him at the beginning. Another tells the crowd that Cap's positive influence helped him to stop picking on his brother. When it is Hugh's turn he knows he must make a strong, but quick impressive. At the back of the car park he can see Mr. Kasagi approaching, fast. Grabbing the microphone, he falls to his knees in tears and screams "he was too young to die." Next to him a boy takes off his Mickey Mouse Mask. It is Capricorn Anderson. Everyone falls silent.

On stage Cap says he want to say goodbye to everyone. And he means everyone - going through all their names one by one. The students stand in disbelief. As Zach states: how can he compete with someone who can remember the names of 1000 children? When Cap is finished, Daryl lifts him through the crowd and to his grandmother Rain, standing at the back of the car park. She is with Mrs. Donnelly who



is shouting at her about the school checks and how her hippy beliefs are stunting Cap's growth as a person. Finally Rain leaves with Cap, angry and frustrated.

A few days later, Cap is surprised to see a Mercedes pulling up outside Garland. He is even more surprised when a stylish looking Rain steps out from behind the wheel. She tells cap she has sold Garland for \$17,000,000 and they are moving into a Condo. They are not giving up the hippy principles, but she says Cap needs to learn more about real life.

Chapter 27-31 Analysis

The memorial service the children hold for Cap feels both self conscious and pretentious - two things Cap is against. It takes Cap's own speech give the service meaning and depth. What this shows however, is that children need the space to experiment and make mistakes before they can finally discover who they really are.

Luckily by the end of the book, Rain comes to the same conclusion. She realizes she is holding Cap back and sells Garland for \$17,000,000, buying a condo in the city and sending him back to Claverage High School.



Characters

Capricorn Anderson

Brought up in a commune by his grandmother, 13-year-old Capricorn Anderson's life changes when his grandmother breaks her leg. For the first time in his life, he has to attend a public school, live in a normal house and mix with kids his age.

The difference from him and the other kids is extreme. He wears tie-dyed clothes and has never cuts his hair. When the headmaster Mr. Kasigi first introduces him to the school bully Zach Powers, Zach thinks someone from the heavens has sent him a gift. Cap doesn't know what he should put in his locker. He thinks when one student calls another butt-face, it is his real name. In terms of real life he is clueless and someone Zach and the other kids can manipulate. Immediately Cap bypasses all the other so called nerds in the school to be crowned as school president.

Zach isn't the only person who bullies Cap. Sophie Donnelly the daughter of Mrs. Donnelly and who he shares a house with, has no patience for his lack of social mores. She calls him Freakazoid and at one point during an argument with her mother, forces Cap out of the room by throwing an object at him. Even when Cap shows kindness towards her she berates him.

Yet while Cap's understanding of society is underdeveloped his patience, kindness and sensitivity towards others is innate. Despite the cruelty directed towards him, he never lashes back. He is no coward either. When the bus driver Mr. Rodrigo suffers a heart attack at the wheel of the school bus he drives him to the hospital.

It slowly dawns on the school children there is something special about him. They stop making fun of him and start participating in his tai chi classes. When Cap holds a tie-dyeing session, virtually the whole school turns up. Cap through just being himself is changing the school children's perspective on life.

Naomi and Lena, who once joined Zach in bullying him, now view Cap like a Guru. Particularly Naomi. When she hears Cap may not come back to school she is devastated, saying she may as well have been told they were demolishing the school. To her Cap has opened a kind, sensitive side to her that though always part of her, she had previously been unable to reach.

The only two people that dislike Cap are Zach and Hugh. Even then, despite their cruel efforts to hurt him, Cap's attitude gives them a new niche. At the end of the story, they have organized a memorial service that though aimed only to give them popularity, still lacks the nasty edge of their previous plans.

On a personal level, the real world hardly seems to change Cap at all. He is always himself, which the author presents as the secret behind his eventual popularity.



Zach Power

Zach Power's life at Claverage High school revolves around maintaining his image and popularity. In this respect the beginning of the year couldn't have started better.

The tradition at the school is for the all the so called happening kids to pick the nerdiest and most easily manipulated kid as the school president, ensuring they can do what they want for the whole of their final year. The arrival of Cap is a godsend for them. He is completely clueless - the perfect school president.

Zach's downfall is his bullying tactics. He doesn't just ensure the school votes Cap as President and then move on, but goes out of his way to make Cap's life a misery. Or at least attempt to make Cap's life a misery. In Cap he finds his match. Cap is so blissfully unaware of the dynamics of school life. Rather than respond to Zack's bullying, he hardly even notices him.

For someone who craves attention as much as Zack this is disastrous and his attempts to prove his worth become increasingly nasty and desperate. At one point, he even arranges it so the entire football team tackles Cap, thinking he is a member of the opposition. Such tactics only contribute to him realizing his worst nightmare - being unpopular.

Suddenly the school is ignoring him and focusing on Cap. His only friend is the kid he once bullied - Hugh Winkleman.

However, despite his negative qualities, the author never represents Zach as your stereotypical stupid bully. He is, as Daryl and Hugh admit, very bright and despite a cold edge to his personality has the ability to recreate himself. Perhaps not with the genuine touch of someone like Cap, but nevertheless it is ability that proves priceless.

By the end of the story, he decides the only way he regain his popularity is by joining what he calls the hippy bandwagon.

Sophie Donnelly

When her mother takes Capricorn Anderson into their home, 16-year-old Sophie Donnelly is horrified. Sensitive to her image, she sees Capricorn and his strange ways as an embarrassment. People she tells her mother are asking her whether this "freakozoid" is her brother.

Yet behind her anger is genuine hurt. Her father, who her mother has divorced, and she worships, promises her the world but never delivers. For example, he promises to help her pass her driving test, yet never shows up to give her a lesson.

She takes her anger out at both Cap and her mother. She berates Cap for being different, calling him Freakozoid, even when he is kind to her. She blames her mother



for everything negative in her life - divorcing her father and ruining her social life by taking Cap into their home.

It seems only through repetition that she realizes the most important things in her life. Cap consistently returns her nastiness with kindness, attempting to show her how to drive and engraving the bracelet her father promised to engrave. Despite the blame she heaps on her, her mother is always loyal and understanding.

Slowly such loyalty makes her realize that her father is not the perfect figure she had painted him as in her mind. While he is still her father, he has serious flaws she could probably never change.

This revelation allows her to open her heart to Cap and her mother. In turn helping her to move on with her life.

Naomi Erlanger

At the beginning of the novel, Naomi thinks she is in love with Zack Powers and will seemingly do anything he says. When Zack suggests they elect Cap as the school President, she agrees wholeheartedly. When he tells her to write love letters to Cap in someone else's name, she jumps at the chance. Slowly however she realizes it is nothing more than a shallow crush.

The real Naomi is not an insensitive bully, but surprisingly compassionate. It just takes the patience and kindness of someone like Cap to draw her out. As she observes all the horrible things her potential boyfriend does to Cap, she can't help but admire how Cap accepts or even doesn't even notice that they are bullying her. She sees it as refreshing and in the end life changing.

Towards the end of the novel she becomes one of Cap's most dedicated followers, taking tai-chi lesson and participating in his art classes. When she hears Cap may not be coming back to school, she is crushed, stating they may as well have told her they were going to demolish the school.

For Naomi, Cap has been the only person who has been able to make her see her real self.

Hugh Winkleman

Hugh is one of the few people genuinely delighted at Cap's arrival at Claverage. For years he had looked down upon by the cool crowd as the year's main geek. Cap's arrival takes away the spotlight from him, giving him what he craves - anonymity. If wasn't for Cap's arrival Hugh would have been thrown into the limelight as the school's president.



Nevertheless it is hard to feel sympathy for his character, especially in comparison to Cap. Unlike Cap, one feels he brings a lot of the torment on himself. His sections, for example, always have a condescending tone and rarely does he sound genuine. Even his friendship with Cap, seen as his best friend by the people in the school, feels forced. He has no one else to talk to.

It is little surprise that Zach turns him so easily against Cap. Together they plot to dress Cap up in the rival team's football kit and put him on the field of play. It works and all the Claverage players charge him - hard and fast - leaving Cap on a crumpled heap on the floor.

Despite that Zach has bullied Hugh throughout his school life, one now feels that a friendship could blossom between them. They both share a keen intelligence. At one stage Hugh states that he admires Zach's cleverness. And they both share a cold persona and, even when there is a possibility they could have been responsible for seriously injuring Cap, show little remorse for their actions.

There is also the hint that Hugh secretly craves Zach's popularity. During Cap's memorial service, which he and Zach arrange, he takes the stage to give a speech about Cap. As he states in his section, his aim is to win friends and not to produce a speech in honor of a friend.

Mrs. Donnelly

Mrs. Donnelly is a social worker who as a young child was once a member of the Garland commune. Her parents and her left the commune when she was twelve and like Cap she was thrust into Claverage School. Like Cap she struggled. As she tells Mr. Kasagi she had no idea of the outside world at the time and struggled with ideas that she was always told were evil. For example, she claims she never touched a cent of money until she left the commune - to her money was the root of all evil.

In this regard, she is the one character able to understand Cap and as soon as she hears about his predicament welcomes him into her house. In fact the reader gets the feeling that Cap is not only someone who reminds her of her childhood, but is someone who can help her get over it. She defends him to almost everyone she meets, particularly her daughter Sophie. At one point, she even states she protecting Cap from her daughter. When Cap becomes popular at school there is probably no one happier.

Through her relationship with Rain and her choice of jobs, the reader gets the impression Garland does not bring back happy memories for her. Or at least she feels it stunted her growth. As Cap observes - she acts strange when Rain calls her by her hippy name - Floramundi.

The most obvious way her time at the commune affected her decisions in life was through her choice of a husband. Mr. Donnelly is an unreliable man whose selfish ways and salesman persona seems as far away from hippy life as one can get. Not surprising then she found him attractive and even less surprising that she divorced him.



Rain

Cap's grandmother, Rain has had a fascinating life. Living in San Francisco in the fifties and sixties, perhaps the city's most exciting time, she rejected capitalist society to become a leading figure of the hippy movement. First she participated in war demonstrations and then she founded the hippy commune Garland. It was here she really made her mark, becoming the commune's teacher and as Mrs. Donnelly's states, for a hippy, a very fierce teacher, blindly following the hippy doctrine. It was perhaps partly because of her inflexibility that people began leaving Garland until, after the death of Cap's parents; it was only herself and Cap left.

Still convinced that she was right and the rest of society was wrong, she home schools Cap at the commune, shielding him from any outside influences. As the reader observes, Cap has no idea of the most basic aspects of society.

The novel partly examines Rain's slow realization that she has been wrong to bring up Cap in this way. It begins when she breaks her leg. Consigned to a hospital bed, she has no choice, but to send Cap to a public school. Initially she is horrified by the results - Cap is bullied and feels miserable. Her views are vindicated. But as she spends more time on her own, thinking, she realizes that Cap's problem is that she has not prepared him to deal with people in the outside world. To them he is almost like an alien.

For someone as proud as Rain it is hard for her to accept she has been wrong, but in the end she proves she is woman of real substance. Out of the hospital, she sells Garland and buys a condo and a Mercedes and enrolls Cap at Claverage School. She claims that she will continue preaching and living by her value, however the reader is left to ponder how she will cope after so many years living on a commune.

Darryl Pennyfield

Darryl is not only one of Zach's most loyal friends, but he worships him. In his eyes, Zach is not only highly intelligent, but the one person who makes school tolerable. In comparison, he sees himself as little more than a muscle man - Cap even remembers his name by comparing his physique to a barrel which of course rhymes with his first name.

While he doesn't regard himself as a good student, he uses his power to become one of the school's best defensive players on the football, happily playing the role of bruiser. When Zach tells the team to charge one of the Rhinestone players (the school's main rivals), he automatically does it without thinking and, determined to get their first, charges in front of the pack and plows into the player with all his weight. Unfortunately that player is Cap, unknowingly persuaded onto the field dressed as Rhinestone player by Zach and Hugh.

When he finds out what Zach did, he is furious and he realizes he has spent his school life worshipping someone who has done nothing but used him. One afternoon he



confronts Zach in the hallway. Unable to compete with Zach's wisecracks and confidence, he resorts to punching him not realizing that Cap has wriggled in between them to stop them fighting. For the second time he floors Cap. This time accidentally. In that moment, he becomes Cap's latest convert.

Lena

Lena is the only one of the main school kids who does not tell a chapter from her point of view. Most of what the reader knows about her is told to the reader through Naomi. Despite that Naomi sees her main rival for Zack's attentions, she looks upon her as a good friend and a good person. Unlike many other people in the novel, she attracts and persuades people through her personality and goodlooks and not through bullying. By the end of the novel, like Naomi, she has become one of Cap's most loyal followers.

Mr. Kasigi

Mr Kasigi is the school's headmaster. Though seemingly a kind man, he turns a blind eye to his students' policy of choosing the most easy to manipulate person as the school President. This particular year they choice Cap. Despite warnings from Mrs. Donnelly about how much worldly knowledge Cap has, he hands Cap a series of unsigned checks without fully explaining how the checking system works. He is horrified when he finds out Cap has donated money not only to charities, but to students. Only Mrs. Donnelly's intervention stops him from accusing Cap of Fraud.

Mr. Rodrigo

Mr Rodrigo is the driver of the school bus. One day he has a heart attack while driving the children to school and Cap has to take over, taking him immediately to the hospital.

Mr. Donnelly

The author portrays Mr. Donnelly as man who means well, but fails live up to either his daughter Sophie's expectations or his own promises to her. In the story he promises to help Sophie pass her driving test, but fails to show up for their lesson. He promises to engrave the bracelet he buys for his daughter, but forgets all about it. All along Sophie worships him, seeing him as the person who understands life. In reality, however, he is a flawed and selfish man. Only at the end of the story does Sophie realize how flawed and selfish he is, which, though hurtful, allows her to appreciate the life she has with her mother.



Objects/Places

The Yellow Bus

The yellow bus takes Cap and the other children to school. One time Cap has to take over the driving when Mr. Rodriguez, the bus driver, has a heart attack. Cap drives the bus to the hospital where he is immediately arrested.

Tye-dye clothes

Tye-dye is a method of dying your clothes in a variety of colors. Cap wears tye-dye clothes and holds a tye-dyeing lesson, which allows everyone to take the afternoon off.

Peace Sign

The peace sign is the hippy sign of peace - a type of arrow inside a circle. Rain wears a peace sign on her forehead.

The Mercedes

At the end of the story, Rain arrives at Garland in a white Mercedes she has brought with the money she received for selling her property.

Claverage Highschool

This is the school the children in the story attend. Students like Zach Powers like to take away the A from the sign so it reads C Average - the students' nickname for the school.

The Hospital

Rain is in hospital for a couple of months to recover from her broken ankle.

The Donnelly`s Home

When Rain is consigned to hospital, Zach moves in to the Donnelly's house with Sophie and Mrs. Donnelly. Unlike Garland, the house has all the mod-cons, including a television.



The Bracelet

Sophie's unreliable father buys her a pretty bracelet with rhinestones, but though he shows it to her, he says it is not quite ready. He wants to get the bracelet engraved and then send it back to her in the post. Knowing, it will never happen, Cap finds a similar bracelet and engraves it with All You Need is Love, pretending it is from Sophie's father.

The Memorial

When Zach realizes the only way to get back his popularity is to jump on the happy bandwagon, he holds a memorial for Cap in the school carpark. Everyone dresses in hippy contumes to pay their last respects to Cap. It ends, however, with Cap arriving to give his own speech.

The School Checks

Mr. Kasagi gives Cap checks to help pay for the school Halloween dance. Cap, however, has no idea how to deal with money and starts to give the checks away to charities and students.

Garland

Garland was a once vibrant hippy commune that is now only home to Rain and Cap. Rain homeschools Cap here and shields him from the outside world, but when she breaks her leg she has no choice, but to send Cap to a normal school. Slowly Cap becomes part of life there. When he arrives back at Garland, he sees how the lonely life is and how it looks bland and old in comparison to other houses.



Themes

Popularity

Popularity and the meaning of popularity is the novel's main theme. At the beginning of the novel Zach is the school's most popular kid and Hugh and Cap are the school's least popular kids. Yet Zach has reached his lofty position through bullying other people and surrounding himself with people like Daryl and Naomi who are willing to hang on his every word. In short his popularity does not have a solid foundation and his so called friends need no excuse to drop him and move onto the next person. In this case that person is Cap,

In comparison, Cap's popularity has a far more solid foundation, reaching his position through genuine heroic action such as saving Mr. Rodrigo's life and standing up to Zach. From this perspective it seems like Cap's popularity has the potential to last long time.

At the same time the author represents popularity as something that is always superficial. Zach and Cap both become popular because they make life interesting. Even if he has cruel intentions, Zach is always thinking up dramatic Schemes while Cap, no matter the situation, will always react to situations differently to anyone else. After a while, however, one feels that the students will grow tired of Cap as they grow tired of Zach. How would the students, for example, react if Cap's actions, such as donating the school's money to charity, had real consequences? One feels the majority would leave Cap in the lurch and move onto someone else.

The author is not deriding popularity. He just making the point that in the short time you have it, you should use to do something positive. While Cap may not maintain the level of popularity that he is enjoying at the end of the book, he has at least used it to make a difference.

Accepting Difference

When Cap first arrives at Claverage High School, the other students view him as some kind of alien since he dresses differently, he talks differently, and thinks differently. As far they are concerned he is a freak. Even Sophie, the girl he lives with, calls him a Freakazoid, constantly berating him for his strange ways.

There can be no doubt that Cap's upbringing was far different than the other kids'. Unlike them he has known only a handful of people, spending most of his time in his grandmother's company. She has taught him hippy values such as you must treat all living things with the same respect and love you want them to show you. Any anger you feel is not anger you feel at them, but frustration at your own shortcomings.



To the students at Claverage this may as well be a different language. In comparison they have brought up in a competitive environment where being the best and being popular is all important. Where the word loser is the world's biggest insult of them all. Unlike Cap they have not learned to show patience for anyone different to themselves.

In this respect Cap is able to teach them alot. While initially they see Cap's patience and understanding as a weakness to exploit, they slowly grow to appreciate his acceptance of them. It is his acceptance of their difference that makes them want to accept him.

Of course, they find it difficult to accept and will probably never find out who Cap really is, but that they try shows at least that they are willing to acknowledge difference in other people.

Finding Oneself.

As young teenagers, the students at Claverage are all still searching for who they are and where they fit in. Before Cap arrives however, they all seem scared of trying to be themselves. Their one goal is to get through school without being bullied.

In comparison, Cap has been brought up to always be true to himself and because of this, fears no one. He knows as long as he stays true to his spirit, showing kindness and love to others, people will respond to him in kind.

That does not mean Cap has nothing to learn about life. The whole story is about him learning about a world beyond his hippy values. However, unlike the students he is far more open to new things and letting the new things in his life develop himself as a person. With this approach to life nothing can come as a real shock to him and nothing can affect him negatively. Rain's values have given him such a foundation he can take or leave anything he learns.

In comparison, the other students have to learn about themselves the hard way. For example Zach has to lose all of his friends before he can start questioning himself. Daryl has to almost kill Cap before he can question his relationship with Zach.

In the world outside the commune, the author shows that getting to know yourself is not an easy task. At the same his portrayal of Cap suggests there is the potential for it to be as easy or as hard as the person wants to make it. It is society and its oppressive rules that have made self-discovery a long, hard road.



Style

Point of View

Throughout the novel the author switches the first-person point of view between Capricorn Anderson, Zach Powers, Hugh Winkleman, Mr. Kasagi, Mrs. Donnelly, Daryl and Sophie. Cap, however, is the main character and all of the monologues revolve what he is doing, has done or has said.

Nevertheless, Cap's first person point of view makes up the majority of the narrative. Surprisingly the author does not show any subtle difference in how he talks in comparison to the other characters, or even how he thinks. Though they talk about different things, the monologues seem to flow into one another. This works in two different ways. First it highlights the hippy ideal they are all the same and all worth of the same analysis. Second, in terms of age, race and sex it shows little prejudice. Judging from his name, Mr. Kasagi, for example, maybe Asian as his name suggests, but none of the characters ever refer to his ethnicity.

On the surface it is a surprise the author never represents Rain in any of his first-person narratives. However, he doesn't need to. Cap is the extension of her thoughts and his actions, showing her she does not have to be afraid of the real world.

Setting

There are two main settings in the novel, Claverage Highschool and Mrs. Donnelly's House. The author uses the Claverage High School setting to highlight how scary it must feel for someone like Cap. Unlike Garland, the commune he lives in, it has over 1000 people and each with a different idea about how life should be lived. Yet despite these different ideas, they are held back from being themselves by a set of rules that to someone like Cap makes no sense. From his perspective, the rules only serve to create a tension that often explodes into violence.

Cap comes to the conclusion, however, that if he brings these people together, then he could create a peaceful co-existence such as at Garland, but on a larger, grander scale. The memorial at the end of the novel proves he has achieved just that.

In comparison, the Donnelly's house is a safe haven for Cap. Like Garland there is only a few people he has to get to know, using that space to find out more about society. It is at the Donnelly's house that he watches television and learns about the complexity of family relations. The relationship that he develops with Sophie feels like one between a brother and sister.



Language and Meaning

As a young adult's book, the language is very accessible. Despite the multiple points of view, the characters generally speak as one, using the same vocabulary and tone of voice. The younger characters occasionally use words such as freakazoid and happening and Sophie in particular has her own vernacular, but it is a language that a general audience can not only understand but reinforces the idea that they are still trying to find out who they are.

The most intriguing aspect of the author's writing is that he rarely describes anything or anybody in any detail other than Cap. For example the author tells the reader that Sophie is beautiful or that Daryl is muscular, but never tells the reader the color of their eyes or hair, or what clothes they like to wear. Equally, the author describes the dull colors of Garland, but never describes really the school in any detail.

This has the effect of highlighting his idea that Cap and Rain are fully secure within their identity. They are who they are. In comparison Sophie, Zach, and the others are not secure with who they are and therefore it is difficult for the author to define their characters with simple descriptions.

Structure

The novel is divided into 31 chapters. Each chapter is told from the first-person point of view from the point of view a variety of characters. Despite this approach the novel has a relatively straightforward plot. The author introduces the novel's main characters conflict in the first few lines - namely that Cap, brought up in virtual isolation, has been thrust into the unforgiving world of school and rules. Immediately the reader realizes that the plot will be dedicated to Cap learning about his surroundings.

He is confronted with many problems on the way, including the school bully, learning to deal with money and rising to the position of school President. However, the real turning point comes when he saves the school children by taking control of the school bus when Mr. Rodrigo suffers a heart attack at the wheel, making him the most popular kid in the school.

After that the author uses the structure to question the very concept popularity. He suddenly introduces more points of view and the point of view of already used characters such as Zach and Hugh become longer as they become more obsessed with winning back their popularity. Even Mr. Kasagi worries that Cap's use of the school checks will lose him the respect of his peers.

It shows that that they are all obsessed with their image and this obsession could eventually destroy them. It is only when Rain allows Cap to return to the school that one feels things will turn out ok.



Quotes

"I was thirteen the first time I saw a police officer up close. He was arresting for driving without a license was. I wasn't too clear on what being arrested meant either" (Chapter One, p. 1).

"Rain always said that anger upsets the balance inside a person. So when you yell at somebody, you're attacking yourself more than whoever it is you're yelling at" (Chapter One, p. 2).

"Not that I was nobody last year. I was still probably the most happening seventh grader in the place, But really isn't your school until you're a senior" (Chapter Three, p. 14).

"Hugh Winkleman you're a lucky man. With the arrival of this new kid, all the losers in school were bumped down one space. Never before had anyone screamed for the job of eighth grade president like Capicorn Anderson" (Chapter Three, pg. 17).

"True Information isn't the same as experience. You know what television is, but you've never watched it. You know what pizza is, but you've never tasted any. You know about friendships, but you've never had a friend" (Chapter Four, p. 21).

"He wasn't nerdy in a typical way. He wasn't a computer geek or captain of the chess club (that was me). He couldn't Klingon; in fact he had never even heard of Star Trek. But one peek at the guy and you knew, dweebwise, there was a new sheriff in town" (Chapter Five, p. 28).

"Duh - eighth grade president isn't an honor, mother. It's like being elected village idiot. Every year they pick the biggest wing nut in the building" (Chapter Seven, p. 45).

"There was something inside him that nobody understood, something mysterious and strong. Not muscle strong or fighting strong - a kind of strength that gave him the self control to meditate instead of falling apart" (Chapter Ten, p. 66).

"I liked Cap. Really, I did. But I'd be less than honest if I didn't admit that the best thing about him was the fact that he took the heat off me. I was allowed to live because the pack was in full cry after him" (Chapter 11, p. 71).

"Cap shoved me out of the way and hit the floor running. He leaped over Mr, Rodrigo's still form and landed in the driver's seat, stomping on the accelerator, With s roar of the big motor, the bus lurched through the interaction, missing a dump truck by inches" (Chapter 11, p. 72).

"My ex-husband is not a terrible person, but he doesn't see things through. He rolls into town, gets everybody's hopes up, and then he's gone until the next time, when he does it all over again" (Chapter 16, p. 100).



"When Cap Anderson becomes the most popular, happening kid at C Average Middle School, that's the end of the world. Especially when you consider that the guy he replaced was me" (Chapter 19, p. 120).

"Whoever told you that the whole world performs according to your instructions? That's what started this whold mess - you trying to make poor Cap dance to your tune!" (Chapter 19, p. 125).

"About thirty pounds of hair spilled out onto the turf. Eleven hundred screaming, cheering kids went suddenly silent at the sight of the eighth grade president stretched out, dazed, on the grass" (Chapter 135, p. 135).

"It looked smaller than I remembered it, and more - used. The colors and textures seemed very bland compared to the warm and bright bricks and stuccos of the houses around C Average" (Chapter 22, p. 149).

"I lived on Garland Farm until I was twelve. When my family moved, I had never handled money. Not even a penny. Money was the key to everything that gone wrong with the world, and the leaders of the community kept any kind of financial dealings completely hidden from us kids" (Chapter 23, p. 154).

"I'd declared war on the kid...And he'd responded by doing the most wonderful thing anyone had ever done for me" (Chapter 26, p. 176).

"Look around - ponchos, tie-dyes, peace signs. Cap - they are in costume. They're dressed as you" (Chapter 28, p. 185).

"We're rich. But don't worry. We're not turning our backs on what Garland represents. With this money, we can accomplish more than we could by living there for a thousand years. You the rght idea with the Student Fund Activity checks. I see a charitable foundation - the Garland Foundation, maybe. The Sixties maybe over, but the spirit is stornger than ever" (Chapter 31, p. 207).



Topics for Discussion

What can the children from Claverage school learn from Cap? What can Cap learn from the children in Claverage school?

What do you think of Rain's decision to keep Cap at Garland for the first 13 years of his life? How could her decision affect Cap in the future?

Pick one of the children in the novel? What kind of person do you think they will become in the future? What job would suit their personality?

How will living in a condo and going to a normal school change the lives of both Rain and Cap? What problems do you they face in adapting to their new life style?

What are the accuracies and inaccuracies of Korman's representation of highschool in America?

Why do you think the author chose to tell the story from a variety of view points? Pick a character. How would the story change if was told from that character's point of view?

Choose one character other than Cap and Rain. How has Cap and hippy ideologies changed their life and the way they view life?