

To Your Scattered Bodies Go; a Science Fiction Novel Study Guide

**To Your Scattered Bodies Go; a Science Fiction Novel
by Philip José Farmer**

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Plot Summary

To Your Scattered Bodies Go; a Science Fiction Novel is story of a man's search for meaning and answers beyond his death. The story also explores the grim aspects of human nature. Burton is an explorer who dies in the late nineteenth century, only to awaken suddenly and find that his body is being reconstructed. After losing consciousness again, he awakens in a new world, alongside nearly every former inhabitant of earth. Immediately he comes into contact with several fascinating people, including a twentieth century writer named Frigate, an alien responsible for the death of most of humankind named Monat, and a prehistoric human named Kazz. Burton immediately assumes the role of leadership as the people in areas around them rapidly begin to fight with one another. Amongst his group is a woman named Alice, for whom Burton possesses strong feelings; but she rejects him initially as she searches for her husband. Time passes and Burton both learns more about the surrounding area and develops new tools and methods to survive in the area. His curiosity regarding the nature of the resurrection gets the better of him, and he soon makes plans with his group to set forth towards the mouth of the river, where he believes he will find all of the answers he seeks. He and his party travel a very long time and distance up the river, learning a great deal about ancient peoples and the world they are now in. Yet Burton is looking for clues as to who may be in charge of the planet, and why they have brought everyone back to life. One day, they come across a land that is controlled by an ancient Roman king named Tullius, and a Nazi leader named Goring. The two have plans for conquest, and ask Burton and his followers to join them. When Burton refuses, they are enslaved briefly, but rescued by Kazz one night as the land is attacked by several neighboring peoples. A slave revolt ensues and Burton assumes leadership of the people, when Kazz reveals something he has been unable to express before. Kazz tells Burton that everyone has a different symbol on his or her head on this planet, except for three people he has seen, and one of them is a slave to Goring. Suspecting that this man is one of the people responsible for the resurrection, they confront him, but he dies. Afterward, Burton fears discovery by the men, and works his way farther up the river until he is nearly caught. He drowns himself in order to escape capture, and awakens near Goring. The two despise each other, but as time progresses and they both die and become resurrected near each other, they realize they are together for some deeper purpose. Burton continues his struggle towards the mouth of the river despite the fact that he is clearly being hunted, until finally he is caught by the ones he has come to think of as the ethicals. They warn him that he cannot be resurrected indefinitely, but instead must from now on be careful to survive as long as he can. He awakens this time near Frigate, who is thrilled to see him, and resolves to continue his journey towards the mouth of the river.



Chapters 1-3

Chapters 1-3 Summary

To Your Scattered Bodies Go, by Philip Jose Farmer is a story of adventure and exploration in a world where death is not permanent, but violence and slavery are common, as every human is brought back to life for some kind of grand experiment. In Chapter One, Burton dies and suddenly finds himself suspended in space. He sees countless other bodies near him, all suspended in the air. He's come from his deathbed in the city of Trieste, from 1890. He decides to try and escape. He falls, and bodies—none of them awake—begin to fall around him. A canoe-like craft and a face appear, along with two men. One of them points a small metal object at him, and Burton blacks out again.

In Chapter Two, Burton awakens on the shore of a river to see God standing over him. God tells him he's late, and that he must pay up for his time. When Burton asks him why he must do this, the man Burton thought was God turns into darkness, and Burton again loses consciousness.

In Chapter Three, Burton wakes again to find himself on a green hillside with many other human bodies. He also discovers that he is no longer an old, dying man, but instead looks to be about twenty-five. Others around him start to wake up quickly after Burton has regained consciousness. People begin to scream and cry. Burton rises and flees towards a number of trees, worried that a panic is brewing as the behavior of those around him becomes more erratic. As he heads towards relative safety, he sees an inhuman figure approaching him from a group on a hillside.

Chapters 1-3 Analysis

Richard Burton finds himself in an afterlife, of sorts. It is one unlike any previously envisioned by humanity, and he has no idea what has brought them all there, or why. His brief encounter with the being he thinks of as God does suggest that he has some kind of debt to pay, and that the consequences for not doing so will be dire. However, this God does not explain what Burton owes, nor how to go about paying the debt. It is also clear that the rest of humanity is less analytic about the situation than Burton, and that only his time as an explorer has prepared him for the actions people around him will take as they discover their situations. Burton's past life as an explorer may serve him well in this world, since he will be more accustomed to organizing and survival techniques than most people would be.



Chapters 4-6

Chapters 4-6 Summary

In Chapter Four, the creature approaching Burton is an alien named Monat. It speaks to him, and asks him if he knows the reason they have been brought back. The alien tells Burton that he came to earth in 2002. It also asks Burton why the other humans in the area appear to be so frightened, and Burton responds that the people probably think they are in hell. Other humans begin to separate themselves from the crowd. Burton spots what he thinks of as a subhuman, and another man approaches him named Frigate. He blames the alien for his death in 2008, but is not angry with Monat, explaining that the alien had only been protecting his own homeworld. Frigate suggests that they join up in order to protect themselves from the other people. Everyone around them is more or less in a state of agitated panic, and Burton expects that deaths and destruction will start occurring quickly as emotions run out of control. The subhuman identifies himself as something unintelligible, and Burton calls him Kazz as a sort of nickname. They have all been resurrected with small cylinders, and Monat suggests that they examine them at the base of a giant stone mushroom.

In Chapter Five, a woman approaches the group and introduces herself as Mrs. Hargreaves. Frigate recognizes her and knows her first name, Alice. A large group of people has gathered and Burton leads them to the river towards the giant stone mushroom, where they climb up one of the mushroom structures. Frigate accuses Monat of killing mankind again, but Monat insists he was only defending his people. In the past, Monat had made the mistake of announcing that his race had technology that could keep humans alive indefinitely, which had created a worldwide furor on earth to get the technology from the aliens. Monat had killed almost every inhabitant on earth in order to stop them from taking control of their ship and invading his home planet. Burton and the group continue to explore the area. Burton is searching for materials to use in building and construction. He suggests the use of human flesh, which many find offensive, but he reminds the others that they must be extremely practical in this situation, since they have no idea what resources might be available and might need to make use of every possible material in order to survive.

In Chapter Six, Burton examines the stone mushroom more closely and continues exploring the area with his group. Several members of the group have fashioned crude tools out of stone. Frigate accidentally strikes his finger with an axe, and reveals that he had been an amateur anthropologist back on earth. In fact, many people during his time were the same, and some were even neolithic experts, much more skilled at tool use than he. Suddenly, as they work on their various projects and discuss their situation, blue flame shoots out of the stone mushroom structure, and from Burton's vantage point, he can see similar explosions occurring nearby on other mushroom structures. They return to one of the structures and find a corpse with its skin completely burned off. A woman near him says that the flames killed him as he had begun to praise the second chance they had all been given. Kazz pushes the body out into the water, which



causes the water to boil with fish. This alarms people, but Burton doesn't think the fish will be a danger to live creatures, since they only appear to eat dead flesh. Burton likes Kazz because he believes him to be more psychic than regular people due to his prehistoric origin, and also believes the subhuman will have more useful skills than the average person because he is already adapted to living in the stone age. Burton climbs the mushroom structure and finds food in the cylinders. A large man opens a cylinder to eat from it, but a fight breaks out as people swarm the large stone for food. Many people get hurt in the dash for food, but Burton realizes there's more than enough for everyone. Frigate begins to ask Burton many questions about his past. He is familiar with Burton's work in his previous life, but as the two are speaking, another man in their part, Ruach, realizes who Burton is and calls him a Nazi.

Chapters 4-6 Analysis

Burton has assumed the role of leadership in the group quite naturally, which has saved a number of its members from harm already, and he has managed to remain organized and clear-thinking when many others have succumbed to fear and confusion, as evidenced by the numerous outbursts of moblike behavior. It is interesting that his two closest companions so far are Kazz and Frigate, who are on opposite ends of the historical spectrum, and more so that Kazz seems like he will be far more useful in this situation given that he is already familiar with how to live using the technology that they have available. The reader is also introduced to a sympathetic side of Burton's character through the way he treats a young girl whom he manages to rescue from several attackers during the chaos. It is also clear through some of Burton's own statements and Ruach's sudden recognition of him that he is considered a controversial figure historically. Having been the captain of the ship in the nineteenth century, the reader learns that he has acquired strange uses for human bodies, but at this point in the story, the readers know no more about his background than that. It seems very likely that his history will assume greater importance in the chapters to come. The alien, Monat, is also clearly an important character, and it is revealed through these chapters that he is responsible for the death of much of the human race, owing to the technology his own race possessed.



Chapters 7-9

Chapters 7-9 Summary

In Chapter Seven, Burton demands an apology from Ruach, who quickly walks away rather than admit to any wrongdoing. Frigate explains what a Nazi is to Burton, since Burton died decades before they ever existed. He also tells Burton that England lost a great deal of power during the second World War, and Burton is very surprised at this revelation, because during his life England was the most powerful country in the world. Frigate also suggests that he knows something about Alice Hargreaves, one of the women traveling with them. Kazz begins eating from a corpse that they find, which shocks most of Burton's group but only manages to amuse Burton. Alice wants to throw Kazz out of the group for his crude mannerisms, but Burton refuses, still believing that Kazz's knowledge of prehistoric living will be useful. Frigate asks what they will do with the rest of the corpse, and Burton decides to use its skin for a rope. Frigate admits that the action disturbs him, but Burton insists that he needs to get used to this type of thing in order for them all to survive, and that weak-willed people will be unable to succeed wherever they are. A man named Brontich, another member of their group, comes to tell them that they have found another mushroom structure. Many people wait for the cylinders to recharge with food and supplies again there. Burton starts a fire and after a while the mushrooms shoot flames out again, and the cylinders are again loaded with food and other supplies, including tobacco, gum, and lighters for some.

In Chapter Eight, Burton is curious about Alice, because Frigate has mentioned her several times before. She tells him a little bit about her life and her husband. She is from Victorian England, and her husband was a fairly important nobleman, but as she speaks, Burton's hearing suddenly becomes very sensitive and it sounds as if Alice is shouting. He stands up with her and discovers that all of his senses have been heightened greatly. He calls out to Alice, who runs away from him, but he is suddenly deeply in love with her and knows that she is only playing a game with him. He comes back to his senses hours later and realizes that the gum they were chewing from their cylinders contained a powerful drug in it. Alice attacks him, enraged at the effects of the drug. She is upset with him because he promised to protect her, and the effects of the drug made him do just the opposite.

In Chapter Nine, Burton wakes the next morning and starts a fire. He invites Alice to join him, insisting that the drug only allowed her to do what she wanted to do in the first place, but she stays away from him and keeps relatively quiet, though she is no longer furious with him for what happened. Frigate returns with a beautiful woman. He says that many people were affected by the gum the night before, and that several fights broke out near the river. Frigate explains to Burton that he managed to rescue the woman, Longhu, from violence. She agreed to join him afterward, and the two are already becoming close. Monat and Kazz join them and sit next to the fire. Lightning strikes the grailstone, and everyone's grail is refilled again. Burton discusses languages with Frigate because the people in their group speak many different ones, and they



must determine how best to communicate with each other. Ruach returns and finally apologizes to Burton for his outburst the day before. Several of the others who had joined them return. They tell Burton's group that the gum from the cylinders caused chaos everywhere.

Chapters 7-9 Analysis

Something resembling a society is still forming around Burton and Frigate, but many of the newly resurrected people are finding it difficult to adjust to the new, lawless world. Many of the characters are still wrestling with the problems they faced in their pasts, such as Ruach, who is very sensitive about the matter of antisemitism, and Alice, whose victorian attitudes towards Kazz and even Burton are counterproductive in their present world. The drugs inside the cylinder have made the problem worse. It is unclear why the drugs have been included in the cylinders. At this point, no one in the story has any idea why they might have been included, but in several cases it has led to violence and other dramatic changes in behavior, which suggests that whoever has brought these people back to life is running a sort of grand experiment on the whole of humanity. Precisely how the gum fits into the experiment is unclear, but it seems in part at least to shake things up in the groups of people and provide challenges for them that would otherwise not exist.



Chapters 10-12

Chapters 10-12 Summary

In Chapter Ten, Alice returns to the group, clothed in grass she has woven together. Burton finds the dress amusing, but she insists on wearing it. The group begins to explore once again, in order to determine what has been happening in the plains. Burton finds huts made of bamboo have been constructed and decides his group should make some huts of their own. They return to the river and find a pile of grass dresses near a group of humans playing in the water. Burton finds Wilfreda, a woman rumored to have attacked a Sir Robert Smithson, and he invites her to join the group. Ruach tells Burton that he got his leg back from the resurrection, since he had lost it during his previous life, as well as having been made young again. He considers it funny that he survived the second World War in his past life only to have been killed in a car accident in the United States many years later. He also lets Burton know that humanity destroyed the earth's ecosystem in the early twenty-first century.

Burton asks Alice why she has stayed with the group if Burton's actions insulted her so deeply the night before. She admits that she has reconsidered the events, but makes it clear that it will not happen again, and she will not go near the gum in the future, though she does wish to stay friends with him in any event. She also tells him that like Frigate, she is familiar with some of his books through her husband's collection, and she dislikes them. Burton believes she is saying this only to discourage his advances any further, and it is clear from her movements and mannerisms that she finds the grass skirt very uncomfortable, but insists that she will be clothed from now on, and it will soon become the new style.

In Chapter Eleven, a group of Bolognese from the middle ages approaches Burton's exploring group and attacks them when they reach the hills. They manage to fight their enemies off, but the area is becoming more and more dangerous. Later, the grails refill, and they eat and start building their huts. Burton leads several of his group to find a source of clean water, and when they return, Monat and Frigate have fought off yet another group who tried to steal their huts from them. Frigate recognized one of the men, who had been a publisher in his previous life and cheated Frigate out of a large sum of money when he was just beginning to be a writer. At first Frigate is thrilled to meet someone he knew in the previous life, but when he remembers the publisher's previous actions, he flies into a rage and attacks the other man.

In Chapter Twelve, Burton tries to determine with whom he will be sharing a hut, but is rejected by both Alice and Wilfreda, the latter of whom takes offense at being his second choice. He goes to Monat's hut and asks him about his homeland, but dozes off from exhaustion as Monat begins to describe his previous life. He is awakened by Monat after he has a nightmare about an execution he witnessed as a young child. Monat insists that the incident must have scarred Burton emotionally or he wouldn't have remembered it in a dream. Burton goes back to Wilfreda's hut and finds her



waiting for him. Many days later, as the group has been exploring and collecting information and building their homes, Frigate explains the territorial instinct to Burton, and that it was derived from biological ancestors Frigate refers to as Blood Apes. They have been constructing a model boat because Burton intends to sail up the river and continue his life's work as an explorer. He has surveyed the area around them to determine its ecology and population density. Savages have begun attacking from across the river in another nearby area, and a man claims to have been killed there and resurrected elsewhere. That same day, the grails do not deliver their midday meal, and instead deliver strips of cloth that can be used as clothes.

Chapters 10-12 Analysis

Burton and the others in his group are trying to re-establish society, as evidenced by Alice's shame at her behavior and creation of the grass clothing. Burton's design of the model boat is further evidence that they are seeking something more than a simple existence on this new planet. Relationships have begun to form, both within the groups and between neighboring collections of people. Violence appears to be on the rise as some of these groups organize, as with the Bolognese attack on Burton's people, but Burton seems committed to protecting those in his group against it. Burton makes the very valid point that most of the people who have been brought back come from more primitive and violent societies. Why Burton would wish to explore the new world is unclear, but the reader can infer since he was an explorer in his previous life, he wishes to be one again. These chapters contrast the instincts of many of these violent peoples with Burton's desire to explore and understand the world around him. It is interesting to notice that clothes appeared in the grails just when people began to construct clothing of their own from the grass as Alice did. Whoever created the world is clearly watching it closely enough to be paying attention to the needs of its people, though why they should include useful items alongside apparently destructive ones like the dreamgum is unclear. It is worth noting that weapons never come out of the cylinders, and that every weapon on the planet is made by hand, which means that people in many areas are working harder at fighting than at anything else.



Chapters 13-15

Chapters 13-15 Summary

In Chapter Thirteen, sixty days have passed and the boat is built. They push it towards the river, and Kazz insists on a sacrifice before they enter the water, because that had been his people's custom when they embarked on a voyage in the water. Kazz gets nervous when Burton refuses, but Burton argues that since they are not on earth anymore, the water god from earth will not get angry at them. Kazz calms down somewhat, though he is still clearly nervous about leaving the human sacrifice out. They set off from the riverbank and travel through the day. They land in the evening, and Alice mistakes a man for one of her children who had been killed in the first World War. Another 415 days go by and the group continues to sail. Burton estimates that they have traveled roughly the circumference of the earth along the river. He and the others have also realized that people are present in patterns, roughly chronological and geographical in order. They also notice that no children are being born anywhere, and realize this must be one of the effects of the resurrection.

During this time, small societies grow slowly but steadily. Many times, they reach the shore to nearly be captured and enslaved by its inhabitants, and they get word that they are approaching a very dangerous group. As they travel along the river, many in the group search for either their own kind or someone they knew in their past lives. Burton still pursues Alice, but she looks for her family. Burton tends to bypass dangerous territories in The Hadji by sailing through those areas during the night in order to avoid being seen.

In Chapter Fourteen, Frigate explains to Burton that he collected all of Burton's books at one point. He also tells Burton that his wife, Isabel, burned many of his manuscripts after his death, which surprises Burton greatly. Meanwhile, many on the boat, named The Hadji, are becoming restless with each other, and Burton resolves to win Alice's affection. Burton likes Frigate but is tired of his constant questions and assumptions about who Burton was in his former life.

The Hadji comes to a fortress built out of logs next to the river. A large group of men row out on a large canoe, and the men on board tell Burton to surrender. The enemies begin firing gunpowder weapons at The Hadji. A man jumps onto Burton's ship, but Burton kills him quickly. Two ships approach, and Burton maneuvers until they crash into one another, but fiery arrows have already hit The Hadji's sails. As Burton's crew puts out the flames, more enemy vessels draw close. The Hadji finally collides with one of them. Knowing they are about to be captured, Burton suggests the women drown themselves since they will be resurrected the next day, but the enemies insist that if they stop fighting they will not be harmed. They continue to fight, and Gwenafra, the young girl Burton has been looking after carefully, is killed, and finally Burton and the rest are overpowered and taken prisoner.



In Chapter Fifteen, Burton and the others are taken ashore and given over to Goring and Tullius. Goring is a former Nazi and high officer from Germany during the second World War, and Tullius is an ancient Roman monarch about whom historians know next to nothing. The two leaders, especially Goring, want Burton to join them. They demand that Burton kill several slaves who attempted to escape. Burton refuses, but, to his surprise, Kazz agrees to it. When Tullius talks of taking Alice, Burton grabs a club from a slave and attacks them. Suddenly, the slaves revolt. Burton is knocked out and awakens in a prison with Frigate. An Englishman named Robert Spruce tells them that Goring and Tullius are planning on taking over surrounding areas. They discuss the possibility of a slave revolt, but spend many days imprisoned as slaves, building walls for Goring and Tullius.

Chapters 13-15 Analysis

It is a measured comment on humanity at large that Burton and his crew are captured by slaveholders just over a year after they set out along the river, confirming Burton's belief that most of the people who have been brought back will be dangerous and hostile, since that is how they learned to be in their former lives. Tullius and Goring are strange allies. They have little in common with each other aside from a desire for power, and Goring goes so far as to incite antisemitism in order to gain slaves for the work he plans to do. It seems likely that this conflict will be the focus of the remainder of the book, and that the question of who or what brought everything back will go unanswered, at least while Burton struggles against humanity's desire to enslave and attack itself. Burton's desire to possess Alice has also become important, because she is now being held captive by the same people who have enslaved him. Goring serves as a lens through which we may view Burton's character, since Goring does not have the reputation for being a strong anti-Semite, but both he and Burton are historical figures around which accusations of antisemitism may be made validly, and whereas Burton is an explorer and adventurer, Goring sees himself as a conqueror and a ruler, which in this world may allow him to become even more powerful than the Nazis were on earth.



Chapters 16-18

Chapters 16-18 Summary

In Chapter Sixteen, Burton and Frigate are taken to Goring's palace. Goring expresses distaste for Hitler's attitude towards the Jews, but admits that it is a very useful tool for controlling people. Frigate tells Goring how he thinks they have been brought back, and also that he believes they are not actually the original people, but instead just exact copies, unless there really is a soul separate from the body in the first place which can be put into a new body. This idea disturbs both Burton and Goring. Goring again asks them to join him and Tullius, but they refuse once more, to Goring's great disappointment. They are returned to the other prisoners and decide to keep watch overnight. In the morning, they move to attack, but see that Kazz has already begun as the subhuman kills several guards unexpectedly. Kazz lowers weapons and a ladder to the prisoners. They begin their attack in full, learning that a nearby settlement has struck at Tullius and Goring that same day. Tullius and Goring are having difficulty getting along themselves also. Burton is told that Wilfreda is dead, but finds Goring and rescues Alice. Goring is killed by both of them, his forces scatter, and all of the slaves escape by the end of the morning.

In Chapter Seventeen, Burton and the others quickly form a government in the land that was once controlled by Tullius and Goring. Alice stays with him, and the two are now together. Kazz approaches him one morning and explains something that he was not able to explain before because of his poor English. He says that each of them, except for three people whom he has seen, has a mark on their heads that only he can see. Burton assumes this must be because the mark is lower on the spectrum, and that Kazz's eyesight can detect the light that the mark reflects. One of the people without a mark is Robert Spruce, the man who spoke to Burton in the prison. Kazz mentions this to Spruce, and Spruce disappears quickly afterwards. Burton organizes a search for the man, believing that he may have some of the answers for which Burton and the others are looking. They catch Spruce several hours later, and bring him back to their base for questioning. Burton threatens to torture Spruce when he refuses to give up any information, but his group is able to determine that they have been put on this planet by descendants of humanity, who survived Monat's attack on earth. They also determine that Spruce very likely played a role in constructing the planet they are now on. Spruce continues to refuse to help them until they threaten him with torture again and he dies suddenly. They dissect him, and Dr. Steinberg finds a small black ball in Spruce's brain that he thinks Spruce used to kill himself.

In Chapter Eighteen, Burton is exploring the area because he has heard rumors of copper nearby. He and his crew return near the ruins of Goring's old castle and Burton knows that something is wrong. None of the guards are at their posts to challenge his reappearance. He runs to his hut to wake Alice, but though she is clearly still healthy, he is totally unable to wake her up. He immediately suspects that Spruce is responsible, and that the ones who created this planet are looking for him. Suddenly, Alice awakens.



Kazz goes to find Monat as they prepare their escape, but Burton stops him because he wants to keep a low profile and the alien will be too identifiable. Kazz and Ruach decide to stay behind.

Chapters 16-18 Analysis

The narrative has shifted somewhat after the successful slave revolt led by Burton. By now, claims of Burton's antisemitism have more or less been laid to rest, and many of the characters realize there are far more important matters at hand than a simple misunderstanding of Burton's works. He has proven himself to be a staunch supporter of freedom and democracy, but Kazz's revelation of the marks on everyone's foreheads intrigues Burton and the others because it is the first hint of the power that put them all here. Burton has always sought answers, and even though he has demonstrated civility beyond most of the others in the novel, his threats of torture clearly affect Spruce negatively, and it strikes the reader as an unnecessary antagonism, even if he is not serious about the torture. Burton seems desperate to uncover the truth about his current location, and this seems to be causing trouble for him in the long run. The fact that the Mysterious Stranger, as Burton now thinks of him, has come back for him after his death, suggests that Burton was right at least to some degree about the threat the other man represents to Burton and the others.



Chapters 19-21

Chapters 19-21 Summary

In Chapter Nineteen, Burton has been traveling with Alice, Frigate, and a few others for some time. Against all odds, he encounters Goring yet again. Goring has been in a State called Severia for three days, and has been suffering from terrible nightmares about his past crimes and chewing a lot of dreamgum from a supply that he bartered from another world.

In Chapter Twenty, Goring tells Burton that he obtained his supply of gum from upriver, but had to flee that area because the others felt he was too lazy and began to resent his lack of contributions to their society. They had also been disturbed by the noises he made during his severe nightmares. He had once been a morphine addict on earth, and Burton explains that there is a connection between the two addictions. After Goring describes his nightmares, Burton realizes each has been having similar ones about the other. Burton explains to Goring that Spruce is actually one of the people who resurrected everyone, and that he might be searching for him. Goring says that a man named Robert Agneau actually came to Goring earlier that day asking questions about Burton and trying to determine his location. Burton leaves the hut, but immediately discovers that Richard Spruce has been spying on him outside nearby. Burton chases him but quickly loses him, and decides to return to Agneau's hut briefly before he flees the people he believes are coming for him.

In Chapter Twenty-one, Burton attacks Agneau in his hut, knocking him unconscious. Goring suddenly appears and attacks Burton with a spear but Burton kills him yet again. Agneau regains consciousness and escapes to a canoe on the river, where Burton meets up with him and hits him with a javelin, knocking him into the water. Burton examines a piece of cloth he took from Agneau earlier in the fighting, and discovers a photograph of himself that was taken on earth many centuries ago. The photograph has been altered in ways to help identify Burton to the people searching for him. He sees two craft in the sky, briefly, and plunges into the water as one of the craft dives after him in pursuit and drowns to avoid being taken captive.

Chapters 19-21 Analysis

Burton's attempt to escape those to whom he refers as the Ethicals has proven seemingly disastrous, since the consequences of confronting Spruce and Agneau seem to be constant pursuit and danger. Burton has no idea of what specifically endangers him. He seems, instead, to be experiencing many of the same irrational fears much of humanity displayed earlier in the novel. His fear of the Ethicals is strangely placed, since he has no obvious reason to be afraid of them, and the situation is all the more complicated because he is trying to capture one of them at the same time as they are trying to apprehend him. Goring's reappearance indicates something unusual going on,



since the river is so large and heavily populated that encountering anyone previously known has very small odds, even with the amount of time that has passed since they last saw one another. There also seems to be an important plot point developing with the dreams and nightmares primarily faced by Goring but also experienced by Burton, much of which seem to do with their prior lives and present situation, but the exact nature of which is still unknown.



Chapters 22-24

Chapters 22-24 Summary

In Chapter Twenty-two, Burton awakens, alive again, surrounded by fighting giants. He narrowly escapes as one turns to attack him, but his foot is badly smashed in the process. He realizes that these giants are very likely prehistoric humans that anthropologists never discovered on earth. He is grabbed by one of them, tossed into the air, and caught again. From this high up in the air, Burton can see a large section of the surrounding area, and he realizes that he can see the very last grailstone, which he believes means that he is very close to the start of the river. The giant collapses and Burton goes down with him, discovering a seriously injured Herman Goring on the ground.

In Chapter Twenty-three, Burton is resurrected yet again next to Goring, since both have been killed in the fight with the giants. Goring agrees not to betray Burton to the Ethicals, realizing that despite how much the two loathe each other, it is always better to be with someone you know as opposed to strangers, and since they keep being brought back together, they clearly must work together anyhow. Burton disguises himself as an Egyptian and remains with Goring as the two learn the customs and languages of the area. His current plan is to find the Ethical's tower at the start of the river and sneak into it, and to commit suicide whenever he is in danger of being caught. He befriends a hutmate by the name of John Collop, who has become very religious in this life and tells Burton that several people have been resurrected without life in their bodies. The two discuss religion a great deal, and Burton considers converting to his teachings, but refuses when Collop says he must never again harm another living thing, even in defense. Goring, however, converts after another series of nightmares begins. Burton believes he is becoming sick from the dreamgum habit once again.

In chapter twenty-four, Burton comes to like Collop very much and believes him to be one of the world's few genuinely good people. However, he still desires to find and enter what he thinks of as the Dark Tower of the Ethicals. He is awakened one night by loud noises, and leaves his hut to discover Goring fighting with his woman. Burton goes to them but is struck on the head by something. It turns out to be Goring with a club, but Goring suddenly runs toward the river. During the fight he sees a white figure but cannot determine what it is, other than some kind of humanoid figure. Burton follows him and stops him before he can enter the water. Goring confesses that he has stopped using the gum, but attacked his woman because she was getting ready to leave him. He also insists that the nightmares have gotten worse despite the fact that he's no longer intoxicated. Burton sits down, and suddenly loses consciousness. He awakens in a hut next to a man pointing something shiny and metallic at him.



Chapters 22-24 Analysis

The question of why they have been brought back to life again comes to the forefront, and this time Collop, a man of deep religious convictions, sheds some light on their new reality through his teachings. He is almost compelling enough to convince Burton to join his religion, but his practice of nonviolence is too impractical for Burton to condone, since most of the world is still full of violent peoples. In this particular section of the river, it seems as though a fairly decent society has evolved, much in contrast to the constant warfare and slavery Burton experienced along the rest of the river during his journey on The Hadji. Goring, however, proves unable to cope with the guilt he suffers from actions in his previous life and even though he attempts to find salvation in Collop's new religion, fails by attacking the woman with whom he lives, which is an action Burton cannot comprehend. His use of the dreamgum suggests that he has fallen into an addiction, much in the same way he had been addicted to morphine in his prior life. It may also be the case that many like Goring are suffering from a similar mental illness, and indeed Goring warns Burton not to use the dreamgum any longer, because the effects of its use may be cumulative.



Chapters 25-27

Chapters 25-27 Summary

In Chapter Twenty-five, the man tells Burton that he has a fractured skull, and that he should be dead from his injuries. He also reveals to Burton that he is an Ethical, but working against their experiment because he believes what they are doing to their ancestors is wrong. Burton and the other thirty-six or thirty-seven billion people have indeed been brought back as part of a large experiment, that they will all be disposed of when the experiment comes to an end. The Ethical tells him that the others are on their way, and gives him a capsule that will kill him and destroy his brain cells so that the Ethicals cannot discover what their traitor has told him.

In Chapter Twenty-six, Burton awakens next to Goring yet again, and is quickly grabbed by a number of small dark-skinned men. They drive a grail into his head, and once again Burton dies to awaken in a different place.

In Chapter twenty-seven, Burton is resurrected next to Goring. Goring is still mentally ill, and is not experiencing the brief relief from symptoms that he once did from his deaths. Goring dies quickly, and is scalped by the Sumerian inhabitants who have learned the practice from their Native American neighbors in this world. When he sees Goring without his scalp, he realizes that he saw the man when he woke up in the pre-resurrection chamber, only failed to recognize him because Goring has had hair every time he's been resurrected. In the next several months, Burton realizes the Mysterious Stranger, whom he calls the Ethical who spoke to him briefly, must want Burton to get to the Dark Tower in order to kill for him. He escapes the Ethical's detection of him for the next seven years, dying 777 times.

Chapters 25-27 Analysis

Burton's purpose has become clear, but his connection to Goring and means of achieving his goals are not. Since he must evade capture by the Ethicals, his only choice is to kill himself whenever he is suspicious that they are nearby. Perhaps he hopes that they will lose interest in him and he will be free to travel to the planet's north pole unpursued by his enemies. The largest section of time in the entire novel passes in Chapter Twenty-seven with almost no mention of where Burton has been or what he has learned in that time. However, the reader is safe to assume that he never reconnects with Frigate, Alice, Kazz, Monat, or Ruach during his journeys.



Chapters 28-30

Chapters 28-30 Summary

In Chapter Twenty-eight, Burton has determined roughly the shape and course of the river throughout his travels. He awakens once again, this time near the Arctic Circle. He finds Collop there. Collop is excited to see him, and tells him that Goring is there, but Burton plans to travel up the rest of the river. Collop is disappointed that Burton is not taking more interest in his spiritual development. Burton waits outside near the river but sees something flash into existence nearby, and so runs away to hide from the Ethicals.

In Chapter Twenty-nine, Burton finds himself in a room with a dozen Ethicals. They found him through their agents and his high death count, but they cannot explain to him why he awakened in the pre-resurrection chamber. They also warn him that people can only be resurrected a certain amount of times before the process fails and the body is brought back without the soul. The Ethicals also tell him that he will have no memory of the meeting with them when he awakens again, and he suddenly blacks out and loses consciousness.

In Chapter Thirty, Burton awakens again, next to Frigate this time. The two are very glad to see each other, but Burton realizes that his memories of meeting the Ethicals remain completely intact, unlike what they promised him would happen. He tells Frigate that he again plans to sail upriver.

Chapters 28-30 Analysis

Burton's brief reunion with Collop reminds the reader that some of the resurrected are working towards a stable and peaceful society that never existed on earth, and that many view the second chance they've been given as a means of getting things right spiritually. Burton's Mysterious Stranger has encouraged him to continue his quest towards the mouth of the river. His encounter with the Ethicals suggests that they are not as sinister as the Stranger had told him, but ultimately, he decides to continue his journey just the same.



Characters

Burton

Burton was an explorer during the nineteenth century who traveled extensively in the Middle East. He died in 1890, next to his wife Isabella, and woke up in the pre-resurrection chamber, and to all knowledge, was the only person out of over thirty billion to do so. Burton possesses intelligence and knowledge that many along the river do not, and he makes extensive use of his wide range of abilities to provide stability and safety wherever he goes. He also chooses his friends carefully, for their character or knowledge, and these friends aid him further. He possesses a strong dislike of slavery and those who would harm innocent people, and feels that those who control the river planet now are responsible for great wrongdoings against humanity. He sets about finding them and confronting them. Along the way, he becomes an enemy of Goring, who alongside his ally Tullius, has plans for war and domination over vast portions of the planet. As time progresses, Goring begins to suffer from guilt over his actions on Earth and the two become something like friends. Burton's closest friends are Kazz the subhuman, Alice, Ruach, Monat, an alien who is responsible for killing most of the population of earth in the earliest twentieth century, and most of all, Frigate, who deeply admires the man and his accomplishments. He later becomes a friend of Collop, who implores Burton to find spiritual enlightenment, but Burton insists on continuing his journey towards the mouth of the river where he believes he may discover all the answers he seeks about the world they now inhabit.

Frigate

Frigate was a writer in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century who worships Burton as a hero and follows him until Burton dies one night by drowning himself in the river. Frigate is intelligent, inquisitive, and does his best to assist Burton whenever he can. He and Burton are separated a long time after Burton's first death, but they are reunited at the end of the novel as Burton resumes his journey up the river.

Kazz

Kazz is a subhuman whom Burton quickly befriends because his simple nature and knowledge of living in the Neolithic era are highly useful in the new world. Kazz is also able to see a slightly different spectrum of light than normal humans, which allows him to identify agents of the Ethicals. He is also responsible for saving Burton from slavery while posing as a member of Goring's followers.



Monat

Monat is an extraterrestrial responsible for the death of much of humanity in the early twenty-first century, but he did so only to defend his own people. He is taller than humans, with longer limbs, and as a result Burton is forced to abandon him when he realizes that the Ethicals will begin chasing after him.

Ruach

Ruach is a Jewish immigrant to America who lived through the second World War. Though he originally accuses Burton of antisemitism, he quickly apologizes for the insult and joins Burton's group. He possesses an intense hatred of Goring, since the two come from opposing sides of the war.

Alice

Alice is a beautiful woman from Victorian England who begins the story looking for her family. She decides to enter into a relationship with Burton after he saves her and she realizes that the new world has given everyone a second chance at life.

Goring

Goring was a chief officer for Hitler during the second World War. In the new world, he joins forces with Tullius and takes over a large portion of the river, but is killed by Burton during a slave revolt. Afterwards, he and Burton are often resurrected together, and Goring suffers from intense guilt over the crimes he committed on earth.

Tullius

Tullius is a Roman king from ancient times who joins with Goring in order to conquer surrounding lands in the new world. He is defeated during the slave revolt that kills Goring the first time.

Spruce

Spruce is a slave of Goring who turns out to be an Ethical in disguise. After his discovery, he kills himself, then returns to pursue Burton along with many other Ethicals.



Wilfreda

Wilfreda is a woman of low birth from roughly the same place and time as Alice, who stays with Burton briefly. She is killed before the slave revolt in Goring and Tullius' territory.

Collop

Collop is a devout believer and founder of his own church who preaches peace and spiritual development. Burton becomes good friends with him, but rejects his teachings because Collop insists on nonviolence. Goring does join his faith, but suffers from nightmares that lead him to attack the woman with whom he lives.

The Mysterious Stranger

The Mysterious Stranger is an Ethical who works to aid Burton in his search for answers. Though he insists that the Ethicals are running a terrible experiment on Burton and all of mankind, he meets with Burton only briefly for fear that he will be discovered by those he has betrayed.



Objects/Places

Earth

Though Earth is only briefly mentioned in the first chapter of the novel, many of the characters speak of their time and actions on the planet.

The River

The river on the new world that humanity inhabits is theorized to snake across its entire surface.

Cylinders/Grails

These small metallic devices are used to produce food and supplies for the resurrected by placing them in the larger grailstones. They also produce tobacco and other drugs.

Grailstones

These large stone structures release huge amounts of energy three times a day to produce food and supplies in the grails of the people on the new planet. They are situated along both sides of the entire riverbank.

Human Skin

Burton remarks that human skin is useful for leather and making ropes in the new world.

Spears

Spears are the most common form of weapon in the new world, since they are the easiest weapons to make.

Boats

Many people on the new world, including Burton, fashion boats either to fish or to travel.

Ethicals

Ethicals are a race of people who control the new planet. They are descended from those who survived Monat's attack on Earth, and possess incredible technology.



Huts

People begin building huts very quickly out of bamboo once they are resurrected.

Bamboo

Bamboo is common on the new planet, and used as a building material for many different tools and weapons.

Symbols

Kazz can see symbols on every real person's head, and those without the symbols are agents of the Ethicals. When Kazz reveals what he can see to one of the agents, Burton suspects this changes quickly, so that the Ethicals can better blend into humanity.

Cigars/Cigarettes

The grails commonly produce tobacco products that people either use or barter.

Dreamgum

The dreamgum is a chewing gum produced in the grails containing a powerful drug that causes the chewer to hallucinate. It creates chaos along the river the first night it is discovered.



Themes

Cruelty in Human Nature

Burton quickly realizes that peaceful people will be in danger throughout the new planet, since most of human history suffers from intense violence, slavery, warfare, and destruction. The novel explores this violence as cultures spanning across earth's geography and timeline are mixed together and placed next to one another in somewhat random fashion. Through the first third of the novel, Burton and his group constantly fight off enemies who wish to either enslave them or destroy their belongings. The most extreme example of this violence and cruelty comes from Goring and Tullius, who have captured a large number of slaves whom they intend to use in order to build an army. Frigate discusses the natural inclination of humanity toward acts of violence, and assumes that man is violent because his ancestors were. Burton is well accustomed to the violence in which humans can engage against one another. While he may not engage in this type of cruelty himself, he is never surprised by it and meets it with resistance wherever he finds it. He suspects that the Ethicals are themselves guilty of a great cruelty against humanity, and devotes his new life to discovering what they are up to in order to stop them. Though a large portion of humanity is indeed violent and destructive, Burton feels that most of humanity is worth giving a proper second chance. The Ethicals have not done so by bringing everyone back to run whatever experiment it is that they are currently running. The idea that humanity is naturally cruel is a common theme in science fiction of this time.

Exploration

Burton was an explorer on earth, and decides to continue his profession on the new planet. Exploration is portrayed in the novel as a positive human characteristic, and this is very typical of the science fiction in the era in which the novel was written. Burton is chosen as the hero of the novel because he is an explorer, and exploration satisfies the creative and constructive drives of humankind within the novel. It is no coincidence that Burton, a fervent explorer, also champions rationality and democracy wherever he goes. According to the novel, exploration is about knowledge and responsibility. As Burton continues to travel through the world, he learns more about it and the way in which people have been situated inside of it, and it is these discoveries which allow him insight into the creators of the planet. It is equally interesting that in all of his time exploring the planet, Burton encounters no other explorers of the outside world. He does, however, meet Collop, who is another explorer of sorts. Unlike Burton's desire to understand the world around him, Collop insists on understanding one's actions on Earth as a means of bettering oneself in the new world. Burton identifies and even encourages this type of thinking, but cannot bring himself to go along with Collop's religious teachings because they remove his right to defend himself, an ability he will sorely need if he is to confront the Ethicals.



Change

One of the most important themes in the novel is about the ways that the characters change throughout it. Alice changes her mind and accepts Burton after she realizes that the world they are in can be about second chances. Burton himself is originally harassed because people believe him to be an anti-Semite, but he personally insists that whatever he may have been in his past life, his new one has no place for such attitudes. Goring undergoes a very important change in the novel. He begins as a would-be conqueror, defeated by Burton and suffering from hopelessness and despair. Though these feelings cause him to be mentally unstable for some time, he nevertheless finds new hope in Collop's church and, by Collop's account, becomes a peaceful and thoughtful man by the end of the novel. Collop's entire religion is founded on the reality that everyone has been given a second chance in this new world. Perhaps a large part of Burton's trouble with the world at large is that in creating the world the way that they have, the Ethicals have taken away many individuals' ability to change. Violence still continues, even with less reason than there was on earth. In this sense, the Ethicals have prevented humankind from undergoing a change from a violent race into a peaceful one, and it is very likely this fact that underlies Burton's disdain and distrust of them.



Style

Point of View

The point of view is third person, with the narrative focused on the adventures, discussions, and thoughts of Burton. Burton is a somewhat unreliable narrator, because he thinks that he was never very good as a ship captain. He also believes himself to be somewhat psychic, and Kazz as well, but the reader never encounters evidence of this, indeed experiencing much to the contrary. He is unaware that Ethicals walk amongst them, and is many times surprised by the actions or statements of other characters, such as when Kazz kills the slaves in order to join Goring's soldiers. Burton is intelligent and capable as an explorer, but also lacks evidence that the Ethicals are involved in something sinister. Despite this, he continues his quest against them with sheer determination.

The novel unfolds in roughly chronological order, but large gaps in time with rapid summations of events do occur. Both in the middle and near the end of the novel, years go by with scarcely any mention of what transpired in them. Much of the story is told through dialogue as Burton argues about the philosophical or practical aspects of the world in which they have all found themselves. Action sequences are common, though most are over quickly.

Setting

The majority of the story takes place on the new planet inhabited by the resurrected humanity. The planet is covered by a river millions of miles long that snakes and wraps around it in such a way that it begins very close to where it ends. On the shores of either side of the river are grasslands, and grailstones are placed at regular intervals along the length of the river. As one goes farther from the river, the terrain eventually turns into hills, and then mountains with a climate too difficult to pass over. The land along the river itself has a generally uniform climate, which is warm and mild.

Settlements cover the entire length of the river, with people having been resurrected in roughly chronological and geographical order, but there is an element of randomness to the grouping which allows a large portion of any settlement to be from all samples of humanity. Many of the societies are peaceful, but some are less peaceful than others, and engage in warfare and slavery with their neighbors. News tends to travel in both directions by river from its origin, but people are resurrected at random locations when they die, so knowledge of events very far away sometimes become common knowledge. Societies eventually form along the rivers, reflecting the cultures of which they are composed.



Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is relaxed and simple, a few exceptions being from characters who have poor English, such as Kazz, who can only express themselves with difficulty. Sentences are constructed in a manner with which any modern reader will be highly familiar, and there are very few surprises in syntax or even grammar. It isn't entirely certain that Burton would talk or speak in this manner, since he died in 1890, but the novel does not suffer greatly as a result; in fact, the flow would probably be hindered if he did express himself in such a manner. After all, many of the characters come from different places and speak different languages, so it works well in the novel that Burton's thoughts and speech patterns are assumed to be normal.

There is a great deal of dialogue in the book. A few of the characters' dialogue is represented with heavy accents or strange speech patterns, but in these cases the meanings of what they are trying to say is always more or less made clear. The characters that speak English fluently, however, have very few distinguishing traits. Even Monat, then alien, and eventually Kazz, all seem to pose questions and challenges to Burton's plans in more or less the same manner. The characters are not distinguished by the way they speak, but instead in what they speak to Burton about.

Structure

The novel is divided into thirty chapters, the shortest of which is less than two pages, the longest of which is over ten. It is also important to note that this novel originally existed in serial form, so that the author's intent is slightly different from what the reader will generally encounter inside a novel. A novel typically has a powerful overarching plot that is distinguished early in the beginning. However, since this novel was originally released in installments, the characters tend to become sidetracked far more often than in a standard modern novel. With this kept in mind, the original structure of the plot serves the novel well, especially since the setting appears to have been the driving force of the story in general.

The novel possesses one major plot, Burton's search and discovery of the Dark Tower and the plans of the Ethicals. The novel never concludes this search, but instead it continues in the next of the series. Several smaller subplots occur throughout, such as Burton's pursuit of Alice and Goring's capture of Burton and his friends, but these subplots are generally resolved quickly, and mainly serve as a means of holding the reader's interest until the next installment of the novel. As a self-enclosed work, the story does not function very well, because Burton is well away from discovering the nature and plans of the Ethicals before the end.



Quotes

"He tried to sit up and felt, numbly, a panic. There was nothing to sit up upon because he was hanging in nothingness."

Chap. 1, p. 7

"Burton felt less unreal. The being—the Tau Cetan!—talked so pragmatically, so sensibly, that he provided an anchor to which Burton could tie his senses before they drifted away again."

Chap. 4, p. 22

"They walked across the mile-broad plain and into the hills. On the way, several others joined their group. One was a little girl, about seven years old, with dark blue eyes and a beautiful face. She looked pathetically at Burton, who asked her in twelve languages if any of her parents or relatives were nearby. She replied in a language none of them knew."

Chap. 5, p. 31

"He did not feel so minute and unworthy now. The stars were inanimate matter, and he was alive. No star could ever know the delicious taste of an expensive cigar."

Chap. 8, p. 53

"They started down the hills, pushing through the grass and carrying their grails, chert weapons, bamboo spears, and buckets. They had not gone far before they encountered a number of people. Apparently, many plains dwellers had decided to move out. Not only that, some had also found chert and had made tools and weapons."

Chap. 10, p. 71

"This was the second time that Burton had heard the name Hitler. He intended to find out all about him, but at the moment everybody would have to put off talking to finish the roofs on the huts."

Chap. 11, p. 86

"Burton glanced at the American but did not stop his speech. Frigate was quoting lines from Burton's poem, *The Kadishah of Haji Abdu Al-Yazdi*. It was not the first time that he had quoted from Burton's prose or poetry."

Chap. 13, p. 98

"This had been the second stage of their curious relationship. Frigate became closer but, at the same time, more of an annoyance. The American had always been restrained in his comments on Burton's attitudes, undoubtedly because he did not want to anger him."

Chap. 14, p. 111

"At dusk, Burton, Frigate, Ruach, de Greystroke, and Monat were taken from the stockade and marched down to a grailrock. There were about two hundred slaves there,



guarded by about seventy Goringites."
Chap. 15, p. 128

"The days that follow were busy ones. A rough census indicated that at least half of the twenty thousand inhabitants of Goring's little kingdom had been killed, severely wounded, abducted by the Onondonga, or had fled. The Roman Tullius Hostilius had apparently escaped."
Chap. 17, p. 143

"Events were fuzzy and encapsulated. A lightning streak of himself in the unmeasurable chamber of floating bodies; another flash of the nameless Custodians finding him and putting him back to sleep; then a jerky synopsis of the dream he had had just before the true Resurrection on the banks of The River."
Chap. 19, p. 156

"Goring giggled, stepped up to Burton and tried to put his arms around Burton's neck. Burton pushed him back so hard that he staggered up against the table and only kept from falling by clutching its edges."
Chap. 20, p. 163

"On the way back to the hills, he looked behind him. The dim white figure of Goring was slowly sinking into the black-and-silver waters of The River. Burton saluted, since he was not one to resist the dramatic gesture. Afterward, he forgot Goring."
Chap. 24, p. 193

"The first blow drove the side of the grail against his head, made him half-unconscious, sent a vast ringing through him and sparks of light before his eyes, and knocked him to his knees. He never felt the second blow, and so awoke once more in another place—"
Chap. 26, p. 200

"Collop said that he would keep silent, although he was disappointed that Burton would not be able to see Goring again and judge for himself what faith and love could do for even the seemingly hopeless and depraved."
Chap. 28, p. 210



Topics for Discussion

Burton and Goring are the two characters in the novel that have been based on actual historical figures. Discuss why the author may have made these choices and the progression of their relationship throughout the novel. Are they friends by the end, or is their relationship more complicated? What leads Goring to the guilt and suffering he caused on Earth? Was it just the dreamgum, or was it something deeper in his personality?

Burton has many conversations about the nature of human cruelty with other characters in the novel. Discuss Burton's own opinion of the subject. Is he correct in his assumptions about human nature? If so, what about Collop's point of view? Is Collop right that Burton could do with more spiritual development, or is Burton right to distrust the Ethicals and their experiment?

Why does Burton threaten to torture Spruce if he does not come clean with the truth? Is that a wise decision? A character flaw? What are the others' reaction to his threats? Is there a better alternative to threatening Spruce?

Many of the characters in the novel come from different times and locations. Discuss the locations in which Burton finds himself the most comfortable (i.e. the ones in which he spends the most time). Is there anything similar about them that might attract Burton to these locations, since he spends a great deal of time traveling about the world?

Is Burton's appraisal of the Ethicals a reliable one? What is the main reason that Burton seems to distrust them as much as he does?

Many of the societies that evolve in the book develop forms of slavery. Is this a realistic portrayal of human behavior if resources such as food are not scarce, and no disease exists that could threaten anyone's livelihood?

Why does Burton seem to like Collop so much? Goring clearly likes the man as well. What drives both of these characters to Collop as an individual? What does he discuss with them?