

The Year of the Flood Study Guide

The Year of the Flood by Margaret Atwood

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Plot Summary

The following version of this book was used to create this guide: Atwood, Margaret. *The Year of the Flood*. New York: Doubleday, 2009. EBook.

The novel has two main third person narrators: Toby and Ren. Both women were once God's Gardeners and moved on to dwell in the Exfernal world. The novel opens just after the Waterless Flood has killed most of mankind. Toby is holed up in the AnooYoo Spa-In-The-Park and Ren is trapped in the Sticky Zone at Scales and Tails. Amanda and Ren's stories are told in the present with flashbacks to the past. This tale is broken into sections introduced by speeches from Adam One about various Saint days, which include updates about the state of the God's Gardener cult as the years pass.

The novel opens with a poem about the Biblical fall of man and how nature will one day rise up to create a new Eden. The reader then moves to Toby as she takes stock of the spa after the Flood. Left alone Toby remembers the past. Her parents were middle class. Her mother ran a HealthWyzer chain and her father installed air conditioners. Then they refused to sell to a developer and her mother contracted a mysterious illness. As the money ran out Toby was forced to quit college. Her father killed himself with his illegal rifle after her mother's funeral used the last of the money. Toby buried her father and the gun in the backyard and walked away.

Toby could not get a good job because she had no identity, so she ended up in a plebe working as a Furzooter. After being assaulted a couple times Toby managed to get a position at Secret burgers. The restaurant was managed by Blanco a bully who viewed the girls as sexual toys. After killing his latest one when she tried to flee he turned to Toby. Toby was rescued by the God's Gardeners before Blanco managed to kill her as well but during the rescue managed to make Blanco an enemy for life.

Toby then went the live at the Edencliff rooftop Garden where she reconnected with her friend Rebecca who had sent the Gardeners to rescue her. Though she did not believe in the Gardeners faith, Toby was willing to do any work for them because they saved her life. Pilar, known as Eve six, took Toby under her wing and taught her about bees and mushrooms. She also drew on her aborted college career to start teaching potions and lotions to the kids.

When Pilar contracted stomach cancer and died Toby took over as Eve six. She then learned that the Gardeners were where those hiding from the corps ended up. Many of the founding members were doctors and scientists. The Gardeners continued to help people escape the corps and they gathered intelligence.

Unfortunately, Toby was forced to leave the Gardeners when Blanco attacked them. Though Zeb, an Adam, provoked the attack Toby was still in danger. She is given a new identity and a job managing AnooYoo Spa-In-The-Park. While there she helps out Ren by giving her a job and is shown the MaddAddam site by Zeb. The site allows her to keep track of the Gardeners activities.



Ren came to the Gardeners as a child when her mother Lucerne fled the HealthWyzer compound to be with Zeb. At first, she found their handmade clothing, vegetarian diet, and habit of gleaning strange and the other kids teased her. Then she made friends as Bernice stood up for her and settled in.

Ren met Amanda when she and Bernice had a fight when they were out gleaning Vinegar one day. Amanda was in the mallway with other Tex-Mex girls. Ren invited her home and Amanda ended up joining the Gardeners and living with Ren.

With the arrival of Amanda Ren lost her friendship with Bernice. She ends up telling Bernice the gossip that Bernice's father, Burt, is sleeping with Nuala. The next day Bernice and her mother, Veena, turn Burt into CorpSeCorp for his Gro-op. Years later Ren learns that Burt was molesting Bernice and her actions had little to do with Ren's tale.

At the time, however, Ren is devastated and Amanda tries to cheer her up by arranging for her to smoke weed. This only makes her sick. Soon after this incident, Lucerne and Zeb's relationship breaks down and Lucerne returns to HealthWyzer with Ren. Lucerne claims that she and Ren were kidnapped and paints Zeb as a sex-crazed lunatic. She ensures Ren's compliance by threatening Amanda.

Ren gets sent to high school where she meets and falls in love with Jimmy. Sadly, he does not feel the same way and ends up breaking her heart. After this Ren falls into a deep depression and her grades slip dooming her to Martha Graham. Since that is where Jimmy went Ren has plans of a loving reunion but knows that such a thing is fantasy.

Ren does see Jimmy at Martha Graham but he pretends not to see her. She also runs into Bernice who is now a protester with an extreme green group. This is when Ren learns that Bernice was molested by Burt. After this revelation, she never sees Bernice again and only learns of her death in a safe house raid through news coverage of the event.

Soon after meeting Bernice Ren is forced to drop out of school because her father is killed and her mother remarries. Her stepfather has no interest in a stepdaughter so Lucerne sends Ren away. Ren gets a job working for Toby at AnooYoo Spa. She is happy for a time but after learning that Amanda is now dating Jimmy and running into Lucerne at the Spa she needs to escape. She takes a job working at Scales and Tails as a dancer.

Back in the present, Amanda finds Ren and they manage to figure out the door code to get Ren out of the Sticky Zone. They then reunite with Shackie, Croze, and Oates, boys they knew as kids from the Gardeners. After the reunion, they are forced to flee Scales and Tails as the boys are pursued by Painballers. On their way to AnooYoo Spa for supplies and to look for Toby, Ren and Amanda are captured by the Painballers.

Toby manages to wound one of the Painballers as the group passes the spa, and she rescues Ren. Unfortunately, the Painballers escape with Amanda. Toby patches Ren up



and the women leave the spa in pursuit of the Painballers. They find Oates' body in the woods and then run into Croze acting as a shepherd. This causes them to team up with MaddAddam where they find Shackie, Rebecca, and Zeb.

Zeb refuses to help them search for Amanda, as he sees finding Adam One as a higher priority. He does offer a map and supplies when the women decide to go after Amanda by themselves. Toby and Ren meet the Crakers who show them where the Painballers have gone. They manage to rescue Amanda and meet up with Jimmy. The novel ends as they sit around the fire listening to the Crakers coming.



The Garden

Summary

This poem serves as the prologue for the novel. The poem discusses the revolt of nature. After the Biblical fall, nature has risen up to create a second Eden with the destruction of humanity.

Analysis

Atwood's opening poem has two line stanzas. This sets it apart from the rest of the poems in this novel which all have four line stanzas. This suggests that it has added importance. It comes first and is written in a different format than the other poems.

Throughout the novel, Atwood uses capitalization for emphasis. In this poem she has capitalized: "Garden," "Spoilers," "Water," "Birds," "Trees," "Life," "Gardeners." Capitalizing these words suggests an emphasis on nature, as most of these are nature words. The odd word out is "Spoilers." This references humanity. They are the spoilers of the Garden and had to be thrown out before the Garden could flourish.

Atwood repeats the words "Garden," "Life," and "Gardeners." The Gardeners are the new Noahs. They are those chosen to survive the Flood and replenish the world. They are bringers of life instead of the destroyers that the rest of humanity has become. The poem, therefore, suggests that the novel will be about the triumph of nature over civilization and the final fall of man. It will address the importance of nature as central to life. It may suggest that Eden is a natural world unspoiled by man.

Discussion Question 1

Why might Atwood use a poem as a prologue?

Discussion Question 2

Why is The Garden structured differently than the other poems in this novel?

Discussion Question 3

Does the poem address the main themes of the novel?

Vocabulary

revolt



The Year of the Flood

Summary

Chapter 1:

Toby was once a God's Gardener and now works at AnooYoo Spa-in-the-Park. She is one of the two third person narrators of the novel. The chapter begins in the middle of a "derelict city" (9). Toby observes the vultures roosting on hydro poles from the roof of the spa. She sees that nature is taking over the remnants of civilization. There is evidence of this all around her. There is stagnant water in the spa's pond and Toby has observed it is beginning to become a swamp. Kudzu is overgrowing the once manicured lawn.

Toby remembers the Waterless Flood that destroyed mankind. How people fell in the lawn calling for help while she hid on the roof. Toby is still afraid of catching the plague from survivors. She locks the spa doors at night and scans the surroundings every day from the roof.

Chapter 2 - Ren 0 Year 25 The Year of the Flood:

Ren was a child among the God's Gardeners and is the novel's other third person narrator. She is currently trapped in the Sticky Zone at Scales and Tales. Ren remembers how the Gardeners taught her never to write anything down because writing is dangerous. Instead, you were supposed to rely on memory. However, Ren figures it is now safe to write since everyone is dead. She starts by writing her name on the walls of the Sticky Zone so that she can remember who she is.

Analysis

Chapter 1: Nature is growing over the symbols of civilization such as the manicured lawn and the pond. The order imposed on nature by man has broken down and the natural order is being restored. In the perennial battle of man against the elements, the elements have triumphed. This final loss by humanity suggests the hubris of thinking they can conquer the world and tame nature to suit themselves. Nature acts as a symbol of the Garden of Eden throughout the novel. The Garden of Eden itself symbolized man before original sin when he was at one with nature and himself, it is an unattainable Paradise for mankind to strive for. The tragedy of Eden is that it exists in the past and man is forever moving forward and thus further away from it. Atwood suggests that the only way to attain Eden is for mankind to complete their fall and be destroyed. Then the remnants of mankind will dwell once more in Paradise.

The Waterless Flood, unlike the Biblical Flood, is a plague and it affects only humans. In this way, the animals are free to re-create the world after human civilization is destroyed. Floods are symbolic of death, destruction, rebirth, and a sweeping away of



the old. The Waterless Flood kills most of the human population and leaves the way clear for Glenn's Crakers and the God's Gardeners to rebuild in a world largely given over to nature. It destroys civilization.

Toby's inability to help those affected by the plague shows the type of person who will survive the Waterless Flood. The plague was incredibly contagious and if Toby had tried to help she too would have died. Yet it takes a certain type of person to "fiddle while Rome burns." While Toby was not exactly rejoicing in the death around her, she did stand back and act as an observer. Perhaps great tragedy needs observers else there will be no one to tell its story.

Chapter 2 - Ren - Year 25 The Year of the Flood:

Ren is trapped in the Sticky Zone. The name Sticky Zone suggests a place where things are collected and adhere. It is actually used as a decontamination chamber to isolate anyone who might be ill. Ren's suit had torn and she had been sent into the Sticky Zone until her test results were back. So, ironically it is normally a place where people come down with illnesses, yet being in it saved Ren from the plague. It may yet become a tomb as the door only opens from the outside and the only person with the code is dead. The Sticky Zone showcases the importance of other people, as without other people it has become a death trap.

Ren was taught in the Gardeners not to write anything down because writing can expose you to your enemies. In a world where postings on social media can destroy careers, we should be familiar with this sentiment. Yet Ren has begun writing again, as she figures anyone dangerous is dead. It is important to remember that words have power and that that power can be turned against you. There is nothing worse in an argument than having the other person quote you. Ren finds meaning in words by writing her name on the walls of the Sticky Zone to remind herself who she is. Without other people, humans can lose basic things like identity and language. Writing helps stave off that isolation, as it creates an outlet for the words in our heads.

Discussion Question 1

What are the God's Gardeners?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Toby avoid helping people and is this wise now that the Flood is over?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Ren feel the need to remind herself of her identity?

Vocabulary

derelict



Creation Day

Summary

Creation Day. Year Five Of the Creation and the Naming of the Animals, Spoken by Adam One:

Adam One gives a speech to the God's Gardeners in the Edencliff Rooftop Garden. They are celebrating creation day. Adam One reminds the Gardeners of their link to the animals. He discusses the rhetoric of the God's Gardeners religion. They believe that they still live in the fifth day and that creation is still ongoing. Adam One explains the current state of the world as a result of man's free will and disconnection from nature. Mankind is fallen because he no longer lives with the animals, but instead consumes and enslaves them. Only those who go back to nature can be saved. Religion can be explained using science, but for too many, science has become a religion. Adam One ends the gathering with a song.

When Adam First :

This is a poem presented to the reader as a hymn from the God's Gardeners' Oral Hymnbook. Adam One ends his speech about Creation by having the Gardeners sing "When Adam First." The poem is about restoring man's lost fellowship with the animals.

Chapter 3 - Toby - Podocarp Day, Year 25:

Toby begins the chapter on the roof of the AnooYoo spa building scanning the area for danger. She worries that her isolation is causing hallucinations as she sees a group of naked blue people walk by. She continues to tend the garden which had supplied the spa with organic produce and she now hopes will keep her alive. The garden is flourishing. The Waterless Flood was long enough ago that the vultures no longer drag away human body parts.

Chapter 4 - Toby - Saint Baskir Alouse Day, Year 25:

Toby begins her day with a bath using rainwater that she collected in pails. She remembers the beginning of the Waterless Flood. She hid on the roof of the spa and was careful not to touch anyone while the plague raged. Back in the present, Toby spots pigeons at the pool and worries that they will dig under the fence to get into the garden. She threatens them with her rifle and kills the boar. Toby considers collecting the meat to eat but remembers Adam One telling the Gardeners that "animal protein should be the last resort" (35). Still, Toby feels threatened by the pigeons and vows to target practice and to keep the rifle with her at all times.

Chapter 5:



Toby remembers how she came by the rifle, a banned weapon in her society. Her father had buried it in the backyard when it became an illegal weapon and owning one was punishable by death. She went to pick it up a few days after the first outbreaks. Toby knew by then that this was not just another outbreak, but the Waterless Flood that the Gardeners had always warned of. So Toby went back to her parents' old home at night to dig up the rifle. She traveled through the rioters and around the barricades.

Toby was careful to fake illness so that no one would come near her. She remembered Zeb teaching her, in *Urban Bloodshed Limitation*, not to run but to walk with purpose. She found the rifle and ammo buried in the neighbor's backyard. It took her three days to get back to AnooYoo, but Toby felt that being armed was worth the risk.

Chapter 6:

Toby's rifle is a Rugger 44/99 Deerfield. Her father taught her to shoot with it when she was 12. She remembers the past. Things started falling apart when her father refused to sell their family home to a developer. He lost his job installing air conditioners and Toby's mother contracted a mysterious illness. They were forced to sell the house at a loss to pay medical bills. Toby dropped out of Martha Graham, where she had been studying potions and lotions because there was no more money. After her mother's funeral her father dug up the rifle and shot himself. Toby buried him in the backyard because he had killed himself with an illegal weapon. She then buried the rifle under the neighbor's backyard and walked away. She figured if anyone looked for her CorpSeCorp would start a rumor that she had been picked up by a pimp.

Chapter 7:

Toby worried that CorpSeCorp would seize her for her father's debts. CorpSeCorp is supposed to keep the peace, but really they do not do anything unless someone important is harmed or their bottom line is cut into. There were rumors that women were forced into prostitution to pay off debts. Toby burned her identity and rented a tiny room in the Pleeb Willow Acres, which the locals call Sewage Lagoon.

Unfortunately, she could not get a legitimate job without an ID which she could not afford. Her neighbors were illegals and Toby learned that CorpSeCorps had begun killing illegals rather than spare the expense of deportation. Toby lived over a tanner engaged in the illegal species trade and sold the meat to the new restaurant Rare.

Toby got a job as a furzooter - an advertiser in a fake fur suit. She was attacked twice by fetishists but assured herself that it was not rape because they only touched the suit. Toby sold her hair and eggs for the money; sadly, the second time she went to sell her eggs the process went wrong and she was rendered infertile.

At this point, Toby remembers how she cut off her boyfriend, Stan, when she ran out of money and had to drop out of college. She felt it was better that she ended it because Stan wanted a household with two working professionals. At the end of the chapter, Toby found work at Secret Burgers for a low wage and two burgers a day.



Chapter 8:

The Secret Burgers job allowed Toby to pay her rent. She worried about the manager Blanco who saw the girls as available for sex. Toby was warned about Blanco by her fellow worker Rebecca. Blanco avoided Rebecca because he disliked blacks and because Rebecca had gang ties. Toby had no such protection but she could not afford to quit. Blanco had been “dating” Dora but she tried to run and he killed her. The next day he ordered Toby to his office.

Chapter 9:

Toby retreats into her past because the present, with Blanco’s abuse, is so bad. Blanco demands her total submission. Toby is covered in bruises and has become skin and bones from missing lunch. Her only friend, Rebecca, has disappeared and there are rumors that she has joined some greenie cult.

Toby, in the middle of a normal shift at Secret Burgers, notices a group of God’s Gardeners. They are chanting “No Meat! No Meat!” (71). Adam One stopped outside of Secret Burger to give a speech about the benefits of vegetarianism. Toby talked to Adam One to try and get him to move along before Blanco hurt him. She was too late. Blanco attacked the God’s Gardeners and was hit over the head in the resulting struggle. Toby saw her chance and kicked Blanco when he was down. Unfortunately, he was not unconscious and he vowed revenge, so Toby left with the God’s Gardeners. Toby was welcomed into the God’s Gardeners and the children hugged her.

Chapter 10:

Toby was given no instructions when she joined the God’s Gardeners. She reunited with Rebecca who is now a Gardener. She ended up cleaning the toilets because she had few others skills. Toby worked hard for the God’s Gardeners to thank them for saving her.

Once she had been with the Gardeners a while Toby began teaching the children to make potions, drawing on her aborted college career. She noted that the God’s Gardeners were convinced of the impending doom of mankind. They called this the Waterless Flood. At this point, Toby thought that the God’s Gardeners were crazy and planned to slip away after she had thanked them properly. CorpSeCorps left the Gardeners alone because they were not important enough to destroy and doing so would be bad publicity. Adam One assured Toby that she was guarded from Blanco when he noticed her having nightmares.

Analysis

Creation Day, Year Five Of the Creation and the Naming of the Animals, Spoken by Adam One:



Adam One repeats the word “Creation” suggesting its importance (23). There are also a lot of capitalized words strewn throughout Adam One’s speech. As already mentioned, Atwood uses capitalization throughout the novel to emphasize key points. In Adam One’s speech the words “Creation,” “Creating,” “Creation Day,” “Human Words,” “Creatures,” and “Animals” are capitalized (23). This suggests that words created the animals. The animals were spoken into being by humans and as such humans have a responsibility to care for them. Adam One links “Creating” and “Creatures” using the similarity of the two words to show how close animals are to God.

Adam One discusses how time is relative and God’s days can stretch for eons. In this way, we are still in the fifth day and “creation is ongoing.” (23) Adam One’s speech addresses a central theme of the novel. The importance of nature and the need of those in the present world to reconnect with nature. Adam One explains that God cannot act because Adam (mankind) was created with free will. This means that man has the ability to destroy the world and God is powerless to stop him. Looked at from another angle, it means that man has the responsibility to look after all living creatures because he alone has choices. Adam One supports this view of Creation by re-reading Genesis. He points out that Adam’s first act towards the animals was to name them. “Thus one of loving kindness and kinship” (25). In other words, in the Garden, Adam and the animals were friends. It is only once man fell that he became carnivorous.

When Adam First:

The poem is presented in four line stanzas. Lines b and d rhyme. Atwood has used capitals for emphasis on the words: “Adam,” “Bird,” “Beast,” “Name,” “Creature,” “Creativity,” “God,” “Creation,” “Man,” and “Fellowship” (26). This suggests that she wishes to emphasize the relationship between “Adam” and the animals. Naming is a source of “Fellowship” and “Creativity” (26). The naming of the animals brought “Adam” and the Birds and Beasts together as God’s Creations (26).

Atwood uses iambic pentameter to create a quick and even pace to her poem. It also gives the poem a sing-song quality, which is useful for something meant to be sung. She uses alliteration to press her points home: “face to face,” “first went forth,” and “Bird and Beast” (26). “face to face” suggests meeting the animals as equals (26). “first went forth” emphasizes that this was the first encounter between man and beast (26). “Bird and Beast” are doubly emphasized because it is also capitalized (26). This shows the central importance of animals to the poem and the humanity. “God” and “Fellowship” are both repeated twice in the poem (26). This repetition is used to show that the “Fellowship” of man and animals is the natural order as laid down by “God” (26).

Chapter 3 - Toby - Podocarp Day, Year 25:

Like Ren, Toby is alone and realizes that isolation can cause strange things to happen to the brain. Though the naked blue people are real Toby believes them to be a hallucination because they are such a strange sight, there are so many of them, and they fulfill her yearning for companionship so well. Humans are social creatures and they are meant to live in groups and interact with each other on a regular basis.



Removing that interaction can cause strange things to happen as the brain tries to create social interaction where there is none. A secondary theme of this novel might, therefore, be called Fellowship as much of the novel is spent in the search of other survivors.

Chapter 4 - Toby - Saint Baskir Alouse Day, Year 25:

The theme of isolation continues as we learn that the Waterless Flood passed by touch. It was engineered to take advantage of human nature and passed through society as people tried to comfort each other. As helping hands reached out they were infected and killed for their compassion. Toby, warned in advance that the Waterless Flood would pass by touch, was careful to touch no one and survived. Yet this means she is left with images of people screaming and dying while she watched. As mentioned in earlier chapters there is a place in a disaster for the observer or chronicler and that is the role that Toby has taken.

Chapter 5:

Toby realizes that the Waterless Flood will create a new world when it is finished. She collects her rifle because she is unsure how friendly to humans this new world will be. Humanity has always fought nature and the animals. A world where they are no longer dominant will make them prey of the animals instead of predators. The rifle will help Toby maintain her position as a predator in the new world. She can use it to drive off other predators, the remnants of humanity, if they are unfriendly and to hunt for much-needed protein after her Ararat runs out. The rifle becomes a symbol of safety and protection.

Chapter 6:

Illness pervades The Year of the Flood. Toby's mother has a mysterious and expensive illness that is never diagnosed and slowly kills her. Toby's mother can be read as symbolic of society as a whole. It is slowly and expensively decaying. Illness slows people down, makes them think more of the short term and less of the long term, it causes pain and makes them lash out at those around them. Applying this to society we see a social order that no longer plans for the future. They look only to the pleasures of the now. If the resources are used up to keep the elite in luxury that will be someone else's problem after they are gone. To keep their luxury they lash out at anyone who threatens it. In Atwood's society, this can be seen in the oppression of ideas such as vegetarianism and protecting the rainforest. This picture is eerily familiar. Atwood's novel is set in a possible future not far from our own. Readers may interpret her book as a warning of things to come if our society does not change its ways.

CorpSeCorp started out as private security for the corporations but took over when the police force collapsed from lack of funding. They are clearly corrupt, as in this chapter it is clear that Toby does not expect a real investigation into her disappearance. The use of corrupt private security instead of police lets Atwood show how the world has become controlled by the corporations.



Chapter 7:

It appears that even though her parents are both dead their debts have passed onto their daughter. This is not the way our society is set up, as the estate can be seized for debts but the heirs cannot be held accountable. The society Atwood builds is an extension of ours where capitalism has taken over completely and is no longer diluted by socialism as it is now. This creates a world with no middle class. Instead there are the rich who live in compounds and the poor who subsist in plebs. Dividing society this drastically means that Atwood can take an in-depth look at social disparity.

By living above a tanner Toby becomes indirectly involved in the illegal species trade. Illegal species are species near extinction. The restaurant Rare officially only serves animals that are near to be on this list but really caters to the rich who wants to eat species on the edge of extinction. These activities showcase the selfishness and shortsightedness of the current society. They choose temporary pleasure in the now over preserving other species for the future.

Toby dresses up as a furzooter to advertise products. The fact that she is attacked by fetishists and accepts it shows the break down of order. There is no one to protect her and no one she can turn to to seek justice for the attacks. The best she can do is be thankful the fetishists were interested in the suit not her. Society is already falling apart, as its citizens no longer expect the laws to be enforced.

Toby loses her ability to have children when she sells her eggs and somethings goes wrong. Children are symbols of hope; they represent the future. Without children there is no future and no hope. Toby's loss of her ability to have children is symbolic of the larger decline of society. The society Toby lives in has no future and is handing its children an empty wasteland.

Chapter 8:

Toby lives in a society where the female body is an object to be bought and sold. Part of her job is to be sexually available to her boss. She cannot quit because without a job she would starve as there is no longer any form of social assistance. This is another sign that society is breaking down. Might now makes right. Blanco is stronger than Toby and he holds power over her as her employer. These things mean that he can do what he wants with her. As our own job market worsens we are scarily close to a world where things like this become acceptable.

Chapter 9:

The God's Gardeners are the light in the night that society has become. They save Toby's life. When they welcome her with affection they create a community. Society has become about each individual for themselves. The God's Gardeners fight that by creating a collective. In a world that promotes isolation and corruption they symbolize hope, community, socialism, and freedom.



The God's Gardeners give Toby the strength to fight back against Blanco. With their arrival she is no longer alone with no options. It is much easier to fight battles as a collective than an individual. Though Toby's actions endanger her because of the Gardeners she has a place of safety to flee to. The fight is ended by walking away. This suggests that violence is not the only solution.

Chapter 10:

Toby becomes a teacher. It is said that those who cannot do, teach. This is one of those sayings that is true and untrue at the same time. Teachers are subject matter experts who instead of applying their skills in industry share them with others. The use of Toby as a teacher is more of the God's Gardeners community building. She feels she has no skills because she was forced to drop out of college. The Gardeners show her that the school she did manage to attend was valuable and that those skills can help a new generation. They are building a collective where everyone contributes and skills are shared with the group. This contrasts with society as a hole where knowledge is hoarded and only let out in small pieces to the highest bidder.

The Waterless Flood is introduced to Toby at this time. The Waterless Flood is seen by the God's Gardeners as the inevitable destruction of mankind by their own hubris. Society is already terrified of disease and quarantines the ill routinely. Unlike the original Flood, the Waterless Flood will come from man; they will destroy themselves because of their inability to connect with nature. Society has become a destructive force and eventually that destruction will turn against it.

Discussion Question 1

How do the God's Gardeners intend to restore the balance between nature and science?

Discussion Question 2

Why is the relationship between humans and animals so important to the God's Gardeners?

Discussion Question 3

Why has man fallen according to the God's Gardeners?

Vocabulary

materialistic, sterility, consecutive, concurrently, writhing, distinguish, boulevard, barricade, foliage, foreclosed, expose, formality, providential, probation, hierarchy, sanctimoniousness



The Feast of Adam and All Primates

Summary

The Feast of Adam and All Primates Of God's Methodology in Creating Man, Spoken by Adam One:

Adam One gives the news to the Gardeners on the festival day. He tells them that the children have made a "Tree of Creatures" out of found objects to decorate the rooftop (91). It is at this time that Toby is officially promoted to teacher. Pilar cooked Pickled Mushroom Medley for the occasion. Adam One discusses humanities' links to primates. He also explains how mankind's quest for forbidden knowledge has created the flawed world the Gardeners currently live in. Adam One ends his speech by calling for a song.

Oh Let Me Not Be Proud:

The poem is from the God's Gardeners Oral Hymnbook. It calls on its singers to be humble and remember they are but one part of the whole.

Chapter 11 - Ren - Year 25:

Ren remembers that the day of the Waterless Flood started like any other day. Ren worries about Amanda. Amanda is a Bioartist. She spells out words; her current installation is the word "kaputt" done in cow bones and videoed being eaten from a helicopter. When Ren first started working at Scales and Tails she was afraid the God's Gardeners would judge her a slut. Ren worried that Amanda would look down at her, but Amanda understood.

Chapter 12:

Ren remembers her time with the God's Gardeners. Her mother Lucerne and Zeb took Ren to live with the God's Gardeners. The God's Gardeners were obsessed with death. When she first arrived Shackie and Croze teased her unless Bernice was around to make them stop. She attended lessons with the other children at the Wellness Clinic. She had to memorize everything because the children were only given slates that they had to wipe off at the end of every day. The Gardeners regarded writing as dangerous and meat as obscene. They made up chants to aid the memory. The children made up their own chants to bully each other and the adults.

Chapter 13:

Ren lived with Lucerne and Zeb five blocks away from the God's Gardeners building, in an old Cheese Factory that the Gardeners had taken over. The factory was a safe place for squatters since no one knew who the owners were. Ren lived in one big room that Zeb had divided up using curtains, made of duct tape and plastic bags, to create rooms for Ren, Zeb and Lucerne, the toilet, the shower, and a main room. Their dishes were a



mix of gleaned material and thick mugs and plates left over from the God's Gardeners ceramic period. Ren noted that Zeb ignored many God's Gardener rules, for instance he showered daily. During this time, Lucerne had taken to staying in bed all day.

When they first came to the Gardeners, Ren missed the HealthWyzer compound where she was never hungry or uncomfortable and where Lucerne was happy. The God's Gardeners had few toys and they were all handmade. Ren envied the pleebrats their glittery things and wanted "their gawdy freedom" (120). The pleebrats always teased the God's Gardeners. The adults said it was religious persecution but the kids thought it was because of the Gardeners poor fashion choices. The adults told the children that phones were dangerous because they caused illness and to avoid them.

Zeb used to play dominos with Ren, but it made Lucerne jealous when Zeb paid attention to Ren. Looking back at that time, Ren realizes that Lucerne acted out of love. She knows now that love does not always make you happy.

Chapter 14:

In year ten, when Ren was ten years old, she met Amanda. Ren had been out collecting soap ends from hotels and vinegar for wine. The God's gardeners called this Young Bioneers. She and Bernice had a fight and separated. Ren found herself alone at the mallway Apple Corners, otherwise known as Sinkhole. They were always told to avoid the mallway because it was a drug den and teens went there for sex. To the God's Gardeners, drugs were for religious purposes only and sex was for marriage. Ren spotted Amanda with a group of Tex-Mex girls who are dancing to the music from their Sea/H/Ear candies. Amanda sees Ren and waves her over; since Ren was alone she went.

Chapter 15:

Amanda showed Ren her jellyfish bracelet. She told Ren that if jellyfish are not fed they eat each other. Amanda and Ren then went to the abandoned field behind Scales and Tails. This caused Ren to remember one day when she saw a scaly girl running away, and how a bouncer dragged her back. Zeb runs Outdoor Classroom in the yard behind Scales and Tails and the next day they found a naked girl in the field.

Amanda showed Ren an example of what would become her Bioart. She wrote her name in honey on the ground and the ants ate it. Bernice arrived to collect Ren, and the girls invited Amanda to live with the God's Gardeners.

Chapter 16:

Since Lucerne hated the pleebrats, whom she called "thieves and liars," Ren approached Adam One about having Amanda stay with them. Adam One approved of the idea and settled the argument about where Amanda would live by allowing Amanda to choose between living with Bernice or Ren. Bernice lived in the Buenavista Heights Condos, a building controlled by the God's Gardeners, though not owned by them, because ownership was wrong.



Bernice's apartment was musty and the shower was clogged. Her father, Burt, was known for feeling up little girls' armpits. After getting a look at Bernice's situation, Amanda decided to live with Ren.

Chapter 17:

Amanda taught Ren to find Zeb and Lucerne's constant love making funny, instead of shameful. Amanda told Ren about her past and how she ended up as a pleebat. Amanda ran off from a refugee camp in Texas after the death of her parents and burned her ID so that she would not be sent back. Some Tex-Mex kids helped her under the refugee wall. Amanda taught dance and street fighting to the other kids. She used a piece of broken glass with duct tape as a weapon. Amanda was always careful to be pious during festivals as she told Ren you learned more that way.

Analysis

The Feast of Adam and All Primates Of God's Methodology in Creating Man, Spoken by Adam One:

The Feast is used to affirm the link to human's primate ancestors. They also affirm "Divine agency" (92). Adam One believes that scientists have it wrong and that it is impossible to prove a negative. God is the "Nothingness that creates life" (92). The Earth was created as an imposition of God's "Spirit" (92). The fall from Eden was therefore a rise to "a conscience and shamed awareness" of mankind's actions (93).

Our search for forbidden knowledge has created the flawed world we live in and we will reap "the whirlwind" of our failure to listen to God's warning (94). This continued quest for knowledge at the expense of all else is proof that the fall of man is still happening. Mankind has been consumed by greed and has betrayed the sacred trust of the animals. We were given stewardship over the Earth. Our RNA and DNA ties us to the animals and we have betrayed them.

Oh Let Me Not Be Proud:

Like the previous poem, this poem has four line stanzas with b and d rhymes. Capitalization is used for emphasis. There is a repetition of personal pronouns: "me," "we," and "your." This repetition suggests that this poem is about individual and group responsibility. Each person and the group has a responsibility to be humble.

Each stanza is a full sentence. This suggests a completeness of thought. Each idea is an individual and they do not blend together. This reflects individual responsibility. Each person is a unit that together makes up a harmonious group, but only if they each do their job.

Chapter 11 - Ren - Year 25:



Amanda spells out words that are meant to be eaten by scavengers. She is highlighting the cycle of life and the way that everything is eaten in the end even if only by the earth. The word she was working on when the Waterless Flood hit was "kaputt." Kaputt means finished or over. Amanda, even before the Waterless Flood began, was using her art to suggest that society was finished. She highlighted her idea further by using an art form where the words were eaten by scavengers. The words are symbolic of language which represents social order, community, common ground and understanding. She is saying that society is being destroyed and is only good for the scavengers now. A break down of the social order leads to isolation, violence and loss of law and order all of which are seen in the society of the novel.

The other issue in this novel is society's view of sex workers. Though prostitution is now legal and has become a powerful corporation, old ideas about the women who work in that industry linger in the social conscience. Ren has become an object, she is a valued object because she can dance and is good in the trapeze, but she is still a thing to be bought and sold. Society looks down on such women because they believe they have other choices. The fact that so many more women are forced into this industry in the novel is a worrying statement about the health of its society.

Chapter 12:

As already mentioned the God's Gardeners saw writing as dangerous. Writing is a way of preserving words for the future. The fact that the Gardeners write nothing down showcases their belief that there is no future. They also worry that enemies will use their writing against them.

The Gardeners are vegetarians. Though they are obsessed with death and believe that the Waterless Flood will soon destroy the human race they still value life. All life is equal and to be treated with respect, down to the tiniest micro-organisms. Yet they are also practical and are willing to eat meat rather than die. It is only in this time of relative plenty that they have the luxury of vegetarianism. The Gardeners understand that without the mechanisms of civilization vegetables will be much harder to find. This is a practical understanding that many in our own society lack.

Chapter 13:

Ren, Zeb and Lucerne squat in an Old Cheese factory. They are able to squat in the building because no one knows who owns it. So many businesses have gone under that there has not been time to repossess and sell them all. Entire buildings have fallen through the cracks of the new society. This is further evidence that social order is breaking down, as there are no patrols of police to notice squatters nor does there appear to be a central business registry anymore. The government is no longer for everyone but only for those in the compounds.

The gardeners live on the fringes of society. They use what the rest of society has thrown away. The dishes in Ren's new home are gleaned or homemade. There is no consumerism here, and yet they still could not exist with consumers, as the Gardeners



are subsisting on the waste of an overconsuming society. Should that society fail they too will fail, using their current method of living.

The way the Gardeners live is a comment on the extreme amount of waste that consumerism produces. The pleeb they live in is able to support an entire other community, simply on what is thrown away and this is the poorest part of the city. Imagine what would happen if the richest shared their resources. The novel points out that concentrating resources makes no logical sense and only causes suffering.

Chapter 14:

The mallway has an official name of Apple Corners and a local nickname of the Sinkhole. As the pleeb built up and the rich retreated into their compounds those left behind renamed places to better reflect reality. Apple Corners suggests a bright, cheery place you might go for a fun day out. Since the mallway is a known pleeb gang hangout this characterization is unrealistic so the locals begin calling the mallway the Sinkhole. A sinkhole is a hole that open unexpectedly and sucks in everything above it, usually never to be seen again. This suggests that the mallway has become a dangerous place where people go in and do not come out.

The God's Gardeners have the kids collect soap ends and vinegar from hotels. This furthers their goal of living off the grid on the leavings of society. They create soap and wine to sell to the rich who want to pretend to be green because its trendy. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the fact that the Gardeners can survive on the leavings of society suggests that society has become much too wasteful.

Chapter 15:

Amanda's jellyfish bracelet is a symbol of the society she lives in. If fed regular infusions of money people stay relatively happy. If they do not get what they want, they turn on each other until only one is left. However, once there is only one there are no more customers and the last corporation standing will also die. This is the fight that is being played out as the girls struggle to survive while the corps fight each other from their compounds for market share.

Ren's vision of the scaly girl foreshadows her future working for Scales and Tails, and with that image in the back of her mind she goes in knowing she is in for life. Amanda's future is also foreshadowed in this chapter as she shows Ren her view of society by writing a word in honey. At this point, Amanda sees her art as personal; it can appear and disappear by using words that will be eaten. This ability to camouflage keeps her safe in a world where protection now falls on the individual.

Chapter 16:

With the Buenavista, like the Old Cheese factory where Ren lives, the Gardeners continue their habit of staying on the fringes. They do not own the building, though they have taken it over. One of the God's Gardener core beliefs is that ownership is wrong. They are a collective and the idea is that goods and things simply pass through their



hands. This avoids attachment to worldly objects and, they believe, makes them better than those in the External world. A lack of ownership mean you are always borrowing. It means that nothing is permanent and acknowledges that everything will have an end. Ownership has an implicit ideal of immortality, especially ownership of enduring things such as land. Since the God's Gardeners believe that the Waterless Flood will soon sweep everything away they see no point in planning for the long term.

The other side of the coin is the short term. If the Gardeners buy buildings, they need to produce ID and become registered in the system. This would draw unwanted attention from the authorities. It is better to not be known and own nothing than to draw official attention. It is clear from their actions that the Gardeners have something to hide.

Bernice's father Burt is known for feeling up girl's armpits. This casual sexual touching is accepted by the adults because they believe it has gone no further than that. Yet even this is inappropriate and the fact that everyone accepts it so causally shows that society is moving towards objectifying the female form. Sexual objectification of women happens when societies break down and might starts to equal right. Even in the Gardeners who hold themselves to a higher standard this is starting to seep in.

Chapter 17:

Amanda teaches Ren to laugh at Zeb and Lucerne. They are constantly making love and Ren had found their actions humiliating. Amanda normalizes sex for Ren and shows her that it is not shameful. However, Amanda also believes that sex is a commodity. That it is not about your feeling but about what you can get. This attitude is what will eventually allow Ren to work at Scales and Tails. Yet the fact that men now expect sex before helping with basic things such as saving women from rising flood water is troublesome.

Amanda has a "you catch more flies with honey" approach to life. Like many who have suffered trauma she is careful to stay on the good side of her rescuers so that they will keep her. Her piety when the adults are around is more about finding out about her environment and making plans for the future than it is about a belief in the God's Gardeners. Still she shows Ren how putting on a mask and acting correctly will often get you what you want. Ren will use the skills Amanda taught her in her career at Scales and Tails.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Lucerne stay with Zeb?

Discussion Question 2

Why do the God's Gardeners fear writing?



Discussion Question 3

Why are the God's Gardener's obsessed with death?

Vocabulary

stewardship, annihilated, disparage, exceptional, genial, nasturtiums, pariahs, gangrene, hallucinogenic, carbon garboil, macramé



Festival of Arks

Summary

Festival of Arks Of the Two Floods and the Two Covenants, Year 10, Spoken by Adam One:

The kids have laid their arks on the river. Adam One talks about the importance of universal harmony and the Gardeners as Noahs' warning the people of the coming danger. He says that because of the covenant between God and Man after the last Flood that the next one will be manmade. They must be ready for a Waterless Flood that will sweep away most of mankind. The God's Gardeners will become living arks and carry the extinct animals in their memories. Adam One reminds his people that in the coming flood they must remember to avoid the ill.

Adam One quotes Gen 4.2 "Beware of Man, and of his evil heart" (158). After the Flood, God created a Covenant between man and beast which man has broken. Adam One reminds his listeners that "for a Covenant to exist there must be a minimum of two live and responsible parties to it" (154). This means that the animals are equal to man and must be treated as such. They too have "living Souls" (154). He ends his speech with a call for a song.

My Body is My Earthly Ark:

This poem is from the God's Gardeners oral hymnbooks. The poem is about the coming Waterless Flood. It tells of the triumph of nature over civilization and the death of mankind.

Chapter 18 - Toby - St. Crick's Day, Year 25:

Toby watches the liobombs frolic from the roof of the spa. She reflects on how their gene splice was created in an attempt to force the final peace, which many believed was only possible when the lion lay down with the lamb.

She mourns the dead and feels like a dormant ghost of a lost world. Toby has begun taking siestas and is having trouble not falling into a Fallow state. Toby can no longer see a future and contemplates suicide. She eats the last of the honey left from the God's Gardeners in an attempt to remember happier times.

Chapter 19:

Toby continues to remember her time with the God's Gardeners. She was now assimilated into the Gardeners, but she still had nightmares about Blanco. Adam One noticed Toby's distress and told her that Blanco was now in Painball, a nationally broadcast death arena.



Pilar, the God's Gardeners beekeeper, took Toby under her wing and taught Toby all she knew. Pilar told Toby that bees all over the world were dying yet the God's Gardeners bees were thriving. Pilar said this was because you have to talk to bees.

Pilar also taught Toby about mushrooms and she gave Toby the chills by growing poisonous ones as well as edible ones. Pilar was responsible for the Ararat in the Buenavista cellar and ensured that Toby learned how to stock an Ararat. Toby felt tied to her past but learned to let go when she was taught Pilar's view of time. Time, according to Pilar, "is a sea on which you float" (179). After interacting with Pilar, Toby is reborn and given a sense of purpose.

Chapter 20:

Toby noticed that people came and went at the God's Gardeners and that the past was a forbidden topic. Pilar explained this to Toby by telling her that "Only the Now counted" (180). Toby concluded that Adam One ran a relocation program for those who had become "shadow people," people who could no longer use their IDs (180). The God's Gardeners helped those whom the CorpSeCorp drove into hiding. The Corps had bought, killed, or drove into hiding all the doctors. This is because they are distributing pills that make people sick so they can make more money and study new diseases. Toby found Zeb a puzzle since he came and went. The chapter ends when he arrived back with a stomach wound.

Chapter 21:

Pilar and Toby help Zeb down to the Fallows Recovery Hut. Toby learns that Katura was once an internist. Pilar and Katura stitch up Zeb's stomach wound. They then treat it with vinegar and honey and apply maggots to fight infection.

Lucerne appears, but as she is unable to do anything but weep over Zeb, she is sent away. Zeb finds Lucerne annoying and plays chess with Toby as he heals. During that time, he asks Toby to check on Lucerne and treat Lucerne's headaches.

Chapter 22:

Toby started treating Lucerne's headaches and listened to her complaints about Zeb. Lucerne believed that the God's Gardeners mission was impossible. She was upset that Zeb had refused to marry her in the tradition of the God's Gardeners.

She was still legally married, but the God's Gardeners saw marriages as pair bonds. This is not the same as an official wedding and simply requires a statement of intent before the group. A divorce is granted in a similar manner. The God's Gardeners avoided traditional marriages because they felt they were simply another way for the state to track you.

Chapter 23:



Lucerne tells Toby the story of how she met Zeb, at the AnooYoo Spa-In-The-Park. Lucerne was a neglected housewife. Feeling restless one morning at the spa, she went for a walk. She first saw Zeb when he was planting lumiroses. Lucerne recognized Zeb from HealthWyzer, so Zeb kissed her. He then scattered rose petals all over her and they made love. This was the start of their affair.

Zeb needed Lucerne to not talk about his previous ID at HealthWyzer. Toby realized that by recognizing him Lucerne forced Zeb into an affair. Then when he moved on, he either had to take Lucerne with him or kill her. Lucerne is a danger to the God's Gardeners since the corps could trace her to them. Plus, she took Ren which her husband may care more about than being abandoned by his unwanted wife.

On her next visit to Lucerne, Toby ran into a pleebat gang fight. She realized she had inadvertently given them a common enemy and was getting ready to fight them off when Blanco appeared. Toby marched away while the pleebrats were distracted by the bigger threat.

Analysis

Festival of Arks Of the Two Floods and the Two Covenants, Year 10, Spoken by Adam One:

Noah is a symbol of awareness because he was forewarned of God's plan and tried to warn others. The God's Gardeners are the Noahs of their age, as they know that the Waterless Flood is coming and they try to warn society of the dangers. Instead of building an ark like the last Noah, the Gardeners have trained their memories to become living arks. An ark symbolizes safety from a coming storm and while as the preservation of life and knowledge. The species that humanity has destroyed will live on in the memories of the Gardeners. They cannot create a real ark because they are preserving intangible things like knowledge and memory of the animals that have been lost to humanity's greed.

Adam One reiterates the need to avoid touching the ill in the coming Waterless Flood lest they be dragged down as well. This shows that Adam One knows the plague will be spread by touch. As mentioned in earlier chapters the plague takes advantage of humanity's need to find comfort in groups. Only the isolated will survive.

Adam One speaks of a broken Covenant between man and the animals. As he explains, a Covenant is a sacred agreement between two groups. The very existence of a Covenant with the animals tells humans that they have "living souls" and are intelligent creatures worthy of the respect of mankind. It is because of this broken Covenant that the Waterless Flood is coming.

My Body is My Earthly Ark:

The poem has four line stanzas with a b, d rhyme scheme. Capital letters are used for emphasis. The words "Ark," "Flood," "Creatures," "Ararat," and "Destruction" are



capitalized. The Gardeners will use the “Ark” of their bodies, resting in their “Ararat” to rise above the coming “Flood” and avoid the “Destruction” the rest of mankind is destined for. The “Creatures” will also survive, as the “Flood” will not affect them. It is clear from this that the Gardeners see themselves as distinct from the rest of mankind and that as they are forewarned they will survive to create a new world that is at peace with the animals.

There is a repetition of unvoiced sounds such as “Ark.” This suggests a quiet and peaceful transition from the world of man to the world of animals. Mankind will die with a gasp not a scream. Then Nature will take back the world. The poem is about the inevitable triumph of nature over mankind.

Chapter 18 - Toby - St. Crick’s Day, Year 25:

Readers see the triumph of nature over civilization in this chapter. Liobombs run free and frolic where mankind once held sway. Yet, there are clear echoes of man’s influence in this new world. It is not lambs frolicking in the field while lions stalk them but a gene splice hybrid that combines the two creatures. This suggests that even though the Waterless Flood has destroyed civilization and most of the world’s population mankind will still have a place in this new world. It may also suggest that the final peace that the liobomb was created to bring about has arrived and could only occur after the Waterless Flood.

In this new world, Toby feels herself slipping away. She can see no place for a lone woman in a world taken over by nature. As mentioned before, humans are social creatures and need social interaction to thrive. If they become isolated, as Toby is, they risk withering away.

Chapter 19:

Pilar’s bees live in the Edencliff Rooftop Garden and she believes that they thrive because she tells them the news every day. Bees are a collective that work together to produce food and protect the hive. The bees are representative of the God’s Gardeners. Each member has a specific task and has little knowledge of the whole. The Gardeners’ Queen is Adam One. They, too, have drones and workers who gather soap and vinegar and sell produce at the Tree of Life.

Pilar grows mushrooms that are poisonous as well as mushrooms for food. She believes that you should always be prepared. There are dark undercurrents in the Gardeners, as it is never clear what sort of people might need to be poisoned. Yet the existence of poison suggests that the Gardeners are willing to kill to protect their own.

Pilar tells Toby that time “is a sea on which you float” (179). Toby is left with the sense that only the now is important and that the past must be left behind. While the Gardeners acknowledge that society is failing because of its inability to plan for the future they do not see themselves as crusaders who can fix society. It is too late for society and all the Gardeners can do is accept things as they come and stay alive until the Waterless Flood comes.



Chapter 20:

The past shapes an individual. Our past experience gives us the skills and knowledge that we apply to our present. In the Gardeners they refuse to discuss the past and focus solely on the present. Their pasts contain dangerous secrets and have become harmful. It is better, in this case, to deny the past and live only in the present as the future may hold danger and death. Living in the now is generally considered an enlightened way to live, for it suggests that you are fully experiencing life. Since the God's Gardeners feel the end is near, and many are fleeing from their pasts, the now is all they have.

The corps targets doctors. Doctors are the ones we trust to help us when we are ill. They are symbols of knowledge and healing. The corps have corrupted this by unleashing illnesses on the population in a double bid to make more and secure research subjects. The doctors who are not in hiding are now in collusion with the corps and no longer heal the ill but prolong treatment in the name of profit. Those unwilling to toe this new corporate line disappeared, either because they fled or were killed. Society is corrupted at a basic level, as those who should be most trusted have turned against the people.

Chapter 21:

Zeb's stomach wound is treated with homeopathic remedies. Though Katura is a licensed doctor the Gardeners neither has access to nor do they trust modern medicine. With the knowledge that much of it is tainted, they make do with older cures. This shows that society is regressing as it breaks down. Vinegar and Honey will sterilize the area and the maggots will eat the infected tissue. They must watch the maggots carefully and ensure they are removed before they start eating healthy tissue. The use of a healing method where the damaged tissue is eaten is a metaphor for the earth. The damage mankind has done is so vast that it must be destroyed like a cancer before the body or planet can begin to heal.

Lucerne is hysterical over Zeb's wound and has to be sent away. We further learn that she has been having headaches and is unable to do anything. Lucerne becomes a symbol of the general populous. Unable to deal with an injured planet they have retreated in the hopes that complaints and laments will somehow improve things. Lucerne's weeping is as ineffective in helping Zeb as the people's is in saving their society from ruin.

Chapter 22:

Lucerne can, as mentioned in the previous chapter, be read as an everyman figure. She believes that the God's Gardeners mission is impossible. She views them as punishing themselves for no reason. Lucerne thinks that vegetarianism is all well and good but that the Gardeners are never going to save more species from extinction. Since nothing can be changed there is no reason not to enjoy life. Lucerne is missing the main point of the God's Gardeners, which is to provide the hope of change, offer protection from the corps, and warn people of the coming flood. If Lucerne, who lives with the Gardeners,



has missed their message, then she is right their mission may well be impossible. The people do not want to stand up, they just want to keep their heads down, get on with their lives and enjoy what they can. Atwood suggests this is the reason for a lack of change in our own society and that unless we stand up and say something is unacceptable it will happen.

The Gardeners have separated marriage from both church and state. Instead, they have made it a declaration of love between two people. This is very similar to what we now call common law marriages. Marriage should represent a commitment between two people to share their lives and the Gardeners have kept this core ideal of marriage with their ceremony. They also use their form of marriage to re-enforce the importance of community as marriages and divorces are both made by declarations before the group. This is a way of bringing the group closer together.

Chapter 23:

Zeb starts an affair with Lucerne in an attempt to shut her up and inadvertently causes her to fall in love with him. Once her feelings are engaged Zeb is trapped in the affair lest Lucerne tell the authorities about him in a fit of pique. This creates an incredibly unequal relationship, as Zeb, quite naturally, resents Lucerne and Lucerne constantly seeks proof of his love. They become pitted against each other as Lucerne becomes increasingly clingy as she comes to understand how Zeb really sees her and tries to change his mind. This relationship forms the basis of Ren's childhood and likely motivates her relationship with Jimmy in later years.

Lucerne did not run away alone with Zeb but took Ren with her. Her actions may suggest a loving mother, as her husband Frank is clearly neglectful and uninterested in his family. Yet in earlier chapters, Ren complained that her mother was upset when Zeb spent time with her. She was jealous of her lover's time and did not want him to spend it with her daughter creating a father-daughter bond. Lucerne's jealousy suggests that she had less pure motives for taking Ren. It allowed her to lash out at Frank by stealing his daughter, offer Zeb a family as an extra incentive to love her and kept her near a daughter who would offer her love and emotional support.

Discussion Question 1

What is the Covenant with the animals and how does it affect mankind?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Toby contemplate suicide?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Pilar plant poisonous mushrooms and is this attitude justified?

Vocabulary

qualified, fowler, pestilence, liobambs, bloar, gambol, bacterium, lethargy, amanita, painball, vigil, pesticides, internalized, sham, ministering, festering, railing, unsanitary, egotism, flagellants, lumiroses, collision, ambiance, epiglottis



Saint Euell of the Wild Foods

Summary

Saint Euell of the Wild Foods Of the Gifts of Saint Euell ,Year 12, Spoken by Adam One:

Adam One tells the God's Gardeners that Saint Euell week is about "Wild Harvest gifts" which include Fungi and Edible Weeds (218). He reminds them that Saint Euell Gibbons was a self-taught naturalist. The point of harvesting wild food is to avoid eating pesticides. It is also to learn what wild foods are edible.

The Waterless flood is coming, and afterward there will be no more prepared foods. The economy will collapse and the Gardeners have to be prepared to support themselves. They must learn the food shelf in "God's Bounteous Garden" (221). Adam One ends his speech with a call for a song.

Oh Sing We Now the Holy Weeds:

The poem comes from the God's Gardeners Oral Hymnbook and acts as a mnemonic device for the Gardeners to aid in the memory of the names of edible plants. It is a hymn praising God for the creation of the plants that will ensure the survival of the Gardeners after the fall of human civilization.

Chapter 24 - Ren - Year 25:

Ren ate ChickieNobs in the Sticky Zone the night the Waterless Flood struck. She danced and sang in an attempt to alleviate her boredom. As Ren checked the cameras from the Sticky Zone, she noticed that three Painball vets came into the Snakepit. She called Amanda, but got her answering machine. As Ren watched the cameras she thought about how men were willing to tell her anything.

BlyssPluss had been released just after Ren went into the Sticky Zone. She could not wait to get out and try it. The pill promised, "hassle-free sex, total satisfaction" (224). Scales and Tails was finding it delivered as promised and that customers were much easier to handle. Girls could take it on the job and then go without a biofilm which increased their earnings.

Chapter 25:

Ren continues to remember when Amanda lived in with her at the Old Cheese factory. When Ren was 13, Zeb taught a predator-prey relations course. The kids would learn to trap, prepare, and eat wild game. Around that time, Lucerne started cooking and cleaning, but she also fought constantly with Zeb. The morning of the predator-prey course Lucerne made eggs. Zeb and Lucerne ate eggs because they were only potential creatures. Ren liked how Zeb called her and Amanda warrior maidens.



Chapter 26:

Amanda and Ren picked Bernice up before school and walked with her. Amanda told Ren that Nuala and Burt were having a regular affair. Amanda also noted that the Buenavista smelled like a gro-op. Veena roused enough to speak to Bernice as she left for school.

Chapter 27

The girls arrive at the vacant lot for Predator-Prey relations with Zeb. Zeb reminds them that the predator “must attack suddenly and kill quickly” (241). Ren notes that Shackie and Croze obey Zeb because he has lore. Zeb shows the kids how to field dress and cook a rabbit.

After class, the kids go help out at The Tree of Life. As Amanda and Ren have become closer they have drawn away from Bernice. She has become more pious as a result.

Chapter 28

A boy arrived at The Tree of Life looking for Pilar to return a bottle of honey. He was introduced as Glenn, and Amanda and Ren escorted him to Pilar. Amanda identified Glenn as Compound and wondered why he was in the pleeblands.

Chapter 29:

The next day, Veena came out of her Fallow state and sent the girls away when they went to pick up Bernice. Since Pilar was sick the kids had Wild Botanicals with Burt in the abandoned lot. They used their slates to draw the plants they were taught as memory aids.

While Burt was teaching the class about Purslane Veena, Bernice showed up. Veena called him a degenerate fornicator and watched as CorpSeCorp hauled him away for running a gro-op. Amanda later stole a phone to cheer Ren up for their part in Burt's arrest and to remind her not to tell Adam One.

Chapter 30:

Shackie and Croze lifted some of Burt's super weed from the Buenavista to share with Amanda and Ren in the mallway holospinner. Ren got sick and passed out. Amanda traded sex with Shackie and Croze for the weed so that Ren would be happy but since Ren got sick Amanda claimed that the trade was off. Shackie and Croze are mad, but do not push her.

Analysis

Saint Euell of the Wild Foods Of the Gifts of Saint Euell, Year 12, Spoken by Adam One:



Adam One uses the phrase “Wild Harvest gifts” (218) to describe the edible plants that grow in the wilderness. This phrase suggests that wild plants are a gift from God. Those with the knowledge can harvest this gift and reap the bountiful delights of nature. The use of the word “Harvest” (218) is of particular interest because it suggests a time of bounty, abundance, good health, and celebration. The harvest season is traditionally a festival time, as the excess produce that cannot be stored for the coming winter is eaten. Adam One is suggesting that proper knowledge of nature can turn times of hardship and famine such as the shut down of production caused by the Waterless Flood into a time of plenty.

Oh Sing We Now the Holy Weeds:

The poem has four line stanzas, but unlike previous poems it has an a, c rhyme scheme. The use of a different rhyme scheme suggests a wish to highlight the poem. Its format makes it different than the others.

Capitalization is still used for emphasis. The words “Holy Weeds,” “Dandelion,” “Acorn,” and “Milkweed” are capitalized. The use of plant names shows the importance of learning which common plants are edible. Linking these names to the word “Holy” shows how important they are to the Gardeners. In the coming days, the Gardeners believe that their survival will depend on these “Holy Weeds,” so it is unsurprising that they view them as important. These plants are God’s gifts so that the Gardeners will survive in the new world created by the Waterless Flood.

Chapter 24 - Ren - Year 25:

Painball is an evolution of paintball. In this next-gen version of the game, like in the popular Hunger Games, people hunt each other. Painball has replaced jail in the future and you can choose to either die or take your chances in the arena. After the term of your sentence, if you are still alive, you are released. However, there is an acknowledgement of the dehumanising effects of the game as Painball veterans go everywhere with a CorpSeCorp escort. This suggests that CorpSeCorp understands that they are creating killers out of their worst criminals and simply does not care. Ren feels that there are some lines that can never be uncrossed. Once you start seeing other humans as prey, you can never go back.

In Scales and Tails, everything is monitored by cameras. The girls take it as a given that there is always someone watching. This level of security is incredibly invasive considering Scales and Tails is a strip club and brothel. It creates an added level of performance as the girls play to both the client and the camera. It also makes them all voyeurs as they spend much of their downtime watching the cameras. This constant watching and being watched showcase a society that has become blasé about pornography and accepts the invasion of their privacy during their most intimate moment as par for the course. There is no privacy left.

The new drug BlyssPluss promises “hassle-free sex, [with] total satisfaction” (224). Drugs are now needed to create feelings of ecstasy as sex by itself has become so



mainstream and demystified it no longer satisfies. Society is depressed and uninspired to the point where it has to be drugged into oblivion to achieve happiness. BlyssPluss takes advantage of societies deepest desires to destroy it. All humans search for happiness. As society has fallen apart this search has become increasingly desperate and many have turned to drugs. Glenn forces the cracks in his society open to destroy them.

Chapter 25:

Zeb teaches the kids a predator-prey course where they learn how to catch and prepare wild game. The Gardeners believe that society will soon die out as a result of the Waterless Flood and they intend to be prepared. Though they are currently vegetarians, they view vegetarianism as a luxury of civilization. The easiest food to find in the wild is game, and if they intend to survive they will need to hunt. The Gardeners are very practical and constantly teach their kids survival skills, which include eating meat though they do stress that meat eating should be a last resort. Once more the Gardeners accept the collapse of society as a given and move forward from there rather than try to save it. They focus instead on saving individuals from the coming flood.

Lucerne gets out of bed and re-engages with the world in this chapter. She is through passively accepting and has now become an active agent. She is trying to change Zeb into the lover she wants and as it becomes clearer to her that he will never fit her ideal their arguments are getting worse. Lucerne's emergence foreshadows her intention to leave the Gardeners and go back to her own world of the HealthWyzer compound. As the everyman she represents, she has rejected the hand the Gardeners reached out to her and she, like society as a whole, will now drown.

Zeb calls Ren and Amanda warrior maidens. Warrior maidens is a typical way of referencing the Amazons. The Amazons were a legendary band of female warriors who used males for sex, were undefeated in battle and still managed to be feminine. Amazons are symbolic of female power. By calling the girls "warrior maidens" Zeb is imbuing them with power.

Chapter 26:

This chapter foreshadows things to come. Amanda and Ren notice the smell of a groop, Veena is beginning to come out of her Fallow state and Amanda shares the gossip about Burt. All the pieces are laid in this chapter that will come together to cause Burt's death at the hands of CorpSeCorp.

Chapter 27:

Zeb teaches the kids how to hunt and cook a rabbit. He shows them that even in an uncivilized world, humans can be predators if they know what they are doing. The boys look up the Zeb because he possesses "lore." Lore is usually defined as sacred knowledge and is passed down through the generations. With the predator-prey class, Shackie and Croze become Zeb's apprentices and start learning his lore. This shows that the sacred knowledge of our ancestors is still alive and being passed on to a new



generation, even in a technologically advanced society. The Gardeners have gone back to the old ways because they believe that when society falls the technology will also be destroyed.

The meaning of friendship is examined later in the chapter as Amanda and Ren bond and shut Bernice out. As Bernice becomes isolated she turns to religion for solace. Humans need something outside themselves to interact with whether that is a friend or God.

Chapter 28:

The Compound people have become isolated and almost never leave the rarified heights of their Compounds. There are now strict class lines drawn by geography. The fact that Glenn has breached those lines suggests that something is very wrong. This is the first hint to the reader that Pilar is seriously ill.

Chapter 29:

A Fallow state is a deep depression wherein the sufferer is nearly catatonic. The Gardeners believed that such states allowed a person to rest and regenerate their mind. Veena has been in a Fallow state for some time. However, she was still aware of the world around her and knew that Burt was running a gro-op in the Buenavista. She simply did not care until Bernice came to her and told her what else Burt had been getting up to. At this point, Veena believes that Burt has been molesting Bernice and sees turning him over to CorpSeCorp as the perfect revenge. She failed to protect her daughter by noticing what was going on but the second she knew she acted to remove Burt from their lives.

Chapter 30:

Amanda sees sex as currency. She trades sex with Shackie and Croze so they will still weed to cheer Ren up. To Amanda, this is no different than offering money. The importance is that the boys fulfill their end of the deal and Ren becomes happy. Society has objectified women to the point where the boys accept that sex is currency. Sex is no longer about love, or even lust, but about what ensuring that each side benefits equally. For the woman, this must now be in cash or trade not equal pleasure in the act. This allows the sex act to be all about the man's pleasure as he has paid for the privilege.

Discussion Question 1

Why is it so important to the Gardeners to remember the names of the plants?

Discussion Question 2

Why do the Gardeners consider a predator prey class a vital coming of age ritual?



Discussion Question 3

What is the significance of BlyssPluss?

Vocabulary

invariably, agribusiness, tarpaulin, membrane, Skunkweed, ethical, trendies, affluents, sermonizing, sustenance, forage, purslane, translucent, lacework, sequins



Mole Day

Summary

Mole Day, Year 12 Of the Life Underground, Spoken by Adam One:

Adam One talks about the situation with Burt. He reminds his flock that bad rumors destroy lives. He tells everyone that Veena and Bernice have relocated out west following Burt's arrest. Because of CorpSeCorp activity, the Buenavista will have to be abandoned and everything in it considered lost. The Gardeners will now move to the FenderBender Body Shop, as soon as they relocate the rats living there to the Buenavista. The mushroom garden will be regrown in the Wellness Clinic basement until a better place can be found.

Adam One reminds the God's Gardeners that on Mole day they celebrate the usefulness of even the smallest of God's creatures. They must remember that small things are important. Everything has some use and they simply have to think creatively to find that use. They are all a part of the circle of life. Adam One ends his speech with a call for a song.

We Praise the Tiny Perfect Moles:

The poem is from the God's Gardeners oral hymnbook. It underlines the importance of nature to human life.

Chapter 31 - Mole Day Toby, Year 25:

Toby remembers how Adam One told the Gardeners to keep track of the days during the Waterless Flood. Toby has been using an AnooYoo Spa notepad with an eye on it to write down the saint day, gardening notes, and a "to do" list every day.

Toby spotted Jimmy and the Crakers heading to the ocean, but called them a "siren mirage," (283) since she did not believe that that many people still existed. Toby feared if she went looking for them she would be killed for nothing.

Chapter 32:

Toby continues to remember her time with the gardeners. Burt was able to run a gro-op because he was trusted. After Burt was arrested, volunteers took in the displaced families. Adam One was worried about enemies spying on the gardeners and sent Zeb out, disguised as a solarbiker, to gather information.

Adam One invited Toby to become Eve Six in Pilar's place, but Toby said no because she had never really converted to the Gardeners' beliefs. Adam One said that doubts were normal and convinced her to take a vigil on it. Pilar gave Toby the vigil material and told Toby that "the moment is the only time we can be fine in" (294).



Chapter 33:

The gardeners discover that Burt was using his skills as a scientist to grow super weed through gene splicing. Burt was running a CorpSeCorp operation, unfortunately, he was also selling on the side, and that was what Veena told CorpSeCorp. Adam One and Zeb are afraid of what Burt may have told CorpSeCorp if he was that close to them, but are reassured by the corps' lack of actions. Adam One told Zeb that Toby was going to be Eve Six and he congratulated her. Toby went off to work rat removal. She had Shackie and Croze dress as pleebbrats and lay a trail for the rats to follow.

Chapter 34:

The chapter begins as Toby gave an Affective Herb / Mani botanic class. As Toby looked over the class she feared that Amanda was becoming a bad influence on Ren. Nuala appeared to call Toby to Pilar's bedside because Pilar had "chosen her time" (303). Nuala took the class over and Toby heard them start singing the Weeping Willow as she walked away. Toby mused that the White Willow kills the pain.

When she arrived at Pilar's bedside, Toby learned that Pilar had cancer and had taken a Death Angel mushroom rather than face the slow death of stomach cancer. Since this, too, was a painful death, Pilar had prepared Poppy to ease her passing. Pilar left all her things to Toby and asked Toby to take over as Eve Six. Toby agreed and then gave Pilar the poppy. The chapter ends as Toby told Pilar's bees about her death and assumed her responsibilities by bringing the bees the news each day.

Chapter 35:

Toby brought Adam One the news of Pilar's death. He already knew and was preparing to announce her death as an accident lest the other Gardeners consider emulating her suicide. Adam One told the Gardeners that Pilar died as a result of a species error. He believed that lies were necessary for the "greater good" (318). Toby took over as Eve Six and Pilar was composted in Heritage Park in accordance with her wishes.

Toby and Zeb went out disguised as Heritage Parkies in the God's Gardeners truck. Zeb warned Toby to take care, as there had been swarmings of Parkies since they were known to be unarmed. He treated Toby to a Happicuppa to maintain their cover. Zeb and Toby dug Pilar's grave, burying her under an Elderberry while Nuala and Adam One used the Buds and Bloom choir as a distraction. Zeb invited Glenn to Pilar's burial.

Chapter 36:

Now that Toby was an Eve she learned more about the God's Gardeners. Though the Gardeners eschewed technology they kept a laptop where they stored "crucial data" about the corps (327). The Adams and Eves held bi-weekly meetings in a secret room. The God's Gardeners had cells that extended through different pleebbs and even undercover cells within the corps that they called truffles.



Adam One started each meeting with a sermon. This time he talked about the continuing fall of mankind. He said that the more knowledge man gains the farther away from God he falls. The Adams and Eves debated both theological and practical problems. They built up their stance against the corporations. Because they were building an underground resistance, they were particularly worried about what Burt may have told CorpSeCorp as a result of his arrest. The Adams and Eves believed Burt would have tried to trade information for his life and they prepared for a CorpSeCorp raid.

Burt was then found dead in the vacant lot behind Scales and Tails in a staged mob hit. Around the same time, Rebecca became an Eve and took over Nutriment Combining. The Adams and Eves argued about giving Burt a proper burial, but worried that his body was a trap. While they were still debating, Burt was picked up for garboil, so it became a moot point. Adam One reminded the Adams and Eves that they must stand united and not allow bickering to tear them apart. He announced Burt's death to the God's Gardener community and told the Gardeners to watch for unusual acts from the locals or tourists that seemed out of place. As time passed and they were left alone everyone started to relax.

Analysis

Mole Day, Year 12 Of the Life Underground, Spoken by Adam One:

Adam One talks about the danger of rumor. It is said that a lie can run around the world before the truth can get its boots on. As far as the Gardeners know Veena heard an untrue rumor about an affair between Burt and Nuala and then called CorpSeCorp on Burt in revenge for his infidelity. This seems an extreme reaction, as Veena had to know that CorpSeCorp would kill Burt for cheating them. Thus, spreading rumors has led to Burt's death. The author is making the point that people must always be careful of what we say and think about how our words will affect others. The communal living situation of the God's Gardeners compounds this truth as any group of people will be prone to gossip.

With the invasion of CorpSeCorp, many of the Gardeners find themselves homeless and with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Adam One turns this into a lesson on the impermanence of material possessions. Nothing lasts forever so it is best not to form attachments to things that will only be destroyed. Death is always near and must be faced not avoided.

Mole Day celebrates the importance of small creatures from nanobioforms up to moles and toads. Even living creatures so small that they cannot be seen with the naked eye have important roles to play in the world. Without probiotic bacteria, our gut could not function. We must thank these creatures for their vital roles in our lives. Every animal is a part of the circle of life. It is important to remember that without a balanced ecosystem the world would collapse as surely as the human body would collapse without bacteria.



We Praise the Tiny Perfect Moles:

The poem has four line stanzas with a b, d rhyme scheme. It uses capitalization for emphasis. The words “Mole,” “Ant,” “Worm,” “NemaTode,” and “Human” are capitalized. By emphasizing these words, the poem draws a link between humans and animals. It shows the importance of animals for humans’ survival. The poem is in iambic pentameter to aid in creating a musical rhythm. It repeats the words “live” and “like” twice. This suggests that a certain way of life is being shown. Humans need to live in harmony with the animals. Finally, the poem has groupings of nature and life words. This again links life with nature. The only way for humans to survive is if they become in tune with nature.

Chapter 31 - Mole Day - Toby, Year 25:

The notepad Toby uses to keep track of the day has an eye on it. Eyes are considered the windows to the soul. They are the key to sight but they also can deceive the viewer and show them what they expect or want to see instead of what is really there. The fact that Toby is writing a list over an eye suggests that her plans are being watched. Even if she is only watching herself, the eye creates the role of observer.

As just mentioned, eyes can show you what you want to see and that is what Toby fears is happening when she sees Jimmy and the Crakers walking to the ocean. Ironically, Jimmy also feels alone in the world, yet he is observed by Toby. Even in this seemingly empty new world, there is always someone watching. Events require a witness. Toby believes the others a “siren mirage” as she sees them as a lure that will pull her into unnecessary danger.

Chapter 32:

Adam One suspects there is something deeper at work than jealousy over a presumed affair with Naula. But Burt kept his attentions to his daughter so Adam One’s investigation turns up no evidence of sexual abuse among the kids. The Gardeners greatest weakness is those within. As mentioned earlier, they are like bees. Bees will die to defend the hive against an intruder but someone they believe is one of them can rob them blind without them seeing a thing. This is a larger commentary on how we must all be careful that those we give our trust to are truly worthy of it.

Pilar once again discusses time with Toby. Pilar believes that it is important to live in the now. The moment is all that we have when the past exists only in our minds and the future is uncertain at best. Pilar deals with this disconnect by taking each moment as it comes. This is something many strive for, as there is a theory that true happiness lies in the ability to completely accept life as it is.

Chapter 33:

Burt was an expert gene splicer and he had been using his skills to grow super weed. This is the ultimate debasement of science for profit, as there is no use for the weed other than to get high. Burt worked for CorpSeCorp as they owned all the local



operations. Yet he got even greedier and started selling on the side. Burt's willingness to rip off CorpSeCorp suggests he was willing to risk everything, even his life, for money as he had to know that he would be killed as an example if he was caught. This evidence of greed also suggests that he has already sold CorpSeCorp any information he had on the Gardeners. Though no one acts against them yet this is the beginning of the end for the Gardeners, as they are now on the CorpSeCorp radar.

As the chapter ends Shackie and Croze lure the rats away from the FenderBender and towards the Buenavista. Though the Gardeners do not believe in killing animals they are willing to use them to bedevil their enemies as they send the unwanted rats toward CorpSeCorp. Rats are generally seen as carriers of disease and there is a clear link drawn here between the rats and the CorpSeCorp. Both groups are unwanted and potentially deadly. Yet, if aimed correctly, they can destroy your enemies.

Chapter 34:

As Toby leaves her class they start singing the Weeping Willow song. A Weeping Willow is a tree whose branches reach the ground. It is a traditional symbol of sorrow and it is often present in funeral scenes. The White Willow or Willowbark is used to relieve pain and reduce fever. It is the basis of today's aspirin. By linking the two Atwood manages an alliterative way to suggest the coming death of Pilar. Placing the two together also suggests that the death will be painless.

Pilar commits suicide by eating poison mushrooms. Since Death Angel mushrooms can cause severe stomach pains before death Pilar has prepared Poppy so that she can simply go to sleep and never wake up. She chooses suicide only after her diagnosis of stomach cancer is confirmed. Pilar would rather die quickly, painlessly and with dignity at a time of her choosing than suffer a long, painful slide into the abyss of death. Atwood suggests that such illnesses are the only reason for suicide and even has Pilar's cause of death concealed less those with less pressing reason seek to emulate her.

Lastly, the chapter ends with Toby taking over as the beekeeper. Pilar firmly believed that the bees had to be given the news every day of they would fall into decline. There is a running metaphor of the bees as the Gardeners throughout the novel. Without accurate information of the day's event, the Gardeners cannot make decisions about how best to steer their community. Yet like the bees, the news is delivered to the queen and then disseminated from there. Adam One knows everything about what is going on and then he decides how much each of his underlings need to know.

Chapter 35:

Adam one believes that lies are needed for the "greater good" (318). To maintain order and achieve his goals he is willing to lie to his followers. This suggests that Adam One is, in his own way, just as corrupt as the corps. Each side is willing to disseminate misinformation to get their own way. Just because we happen to support Adam One's goals and believe his justifications does not make them any better than the corps. His



willingness to lie shows his ties to the old order and foreshadows his inability to survive in the new world.

Pilar wants to be composted in Heritage Park. Her wishes clearly show her intention to stay out of the official records, as there will be no funeral or burial. The fact that Pilar does not feel it is safe for her friends and family to hold a traditional funeral speaks volumes to the level of surveillance in society. Like weddings, funerals have become a way for CorpSeCorp to monitor and gather information on people. Those who have died in ways that society does not approve of - such as taking their own lives - leave their loved ones in danger of prosecution if they have traditional funerals.

Finally, as Toby and Zeb pretend to be Heritage Park Parkies or maintenance people they must be extra vigilant, as Parkies are often attacked. Parkies are government employees who are known to be unarmed. This makes them a safe target for people looking to vent their anger at a government that no longer looks after them and in many ways has begun to actively harm them. In a situation like this, symbols of the government, such as unprotected employees, come under attack as people try to survive in an increasingly untenable situation.

Chapter 36:

The God's Gardeners have created their own government. They have rejected the government of the rest of society as corrupt and destructive so they have created their own community. The Gardeners are like the ivy growing on old buildings or the moss you often see on larger trees. They have a symbiotic, semi-parasitic relationship with something larger than them. The moss and ivy if not removed will destroy the host. Similarly, the Gardeners feed on a society that is dying and they intend to continue feeding on its corpse.

Like most parasites, they have penetrated deep within the host system. Toby is told they have Truffle cells with the compounds. Truffles are a type of mushroom buried underground but once dug up produce, especially rich meat. They are also prized for their rarity. By calling the secret cells Truffles the God's Gardeners are acknowledging that these cells are hidden and that it is being hidden that gives them value.

As Toby becomes an Eve she learns many of the secrets she sensed that the Gardeners were keeping. The Adams and Eves meet bi-weekly in a secret room. One of the things they store in this room is the group's laptop. Though they publicly disparage technology behind closed doors they admit it is useful. In private the Adams and Eves show a different face from the dreamers they present the world. They are chronicling the abuses of humanity and the animals committed by the corps. They are also helping refugees escape the corps. They have become both underground resistance and silent witness to the atrocities committed by the corps. Yet, they mainly stand as witnesses. They do not act against the corps with their information, they simply store it for posterity. This foreshadows the group's schism, as not all are willing to act as passive observers of humanities last gasps. The fact that all this is done in secrecy draws a parallel



between the Gardeners and the corps. Though the Gardeners may have better intentions than the corps, in the end, they are still hiding information and lying to people.

Finally, Burt's arrest and death are used to showcase the growing tension within the group. Burt becomes garboil, a type of advanced compost, thus becoming part of the cycle of life. His betrayal deeply affected the Gardeners as they believed all in their inner circle shared the same vision. Burt's arrest reveals that the Adams and Eves are not as united as they believed and likely pushed forward the creation of MaddAddam. To go with the continuing metaphor of the Gardeners as bees the hive has been attacked from within and this creates confusion, as they try to understand something that perhaps cannot be understood except to say that many humans are driven by greed and Burt allowed his greed to rule him.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Burt's arrest so unhinge the God's Gardeners?

Discussion Question 2

How is Pilar's suicide framed for her friends and for the community?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Jimmy cross paths with Toby at this point in the novel?

Vocabulary

malicious, inevitable, establishment, extinguishing, antibiotic, hallucination, optimistic, hypocritical, gibbous, stratosphere, splice, analgesic, pliable, lugubrious, contralto, propagation, mattock, doctrine, multidimensional, theological, ironically, maverick, frivolous



April Fish

Summary

April Fish Of the Foolishness Within a Relation, Spoken by Adam One:

The God's Gardeners celebrate April Fish Day. Adam One reminds the Gardeners that the Fish was once the secret symbol of Christ. After all, the first apostles were fishermen. April Fish Day and the spreading of the joy of Christ's Kingdom has evolved over time into April Fool's Day. Adam One tells the Gardeners that "in relation to God we are all fools" (338). He goes on to say that prayer is needed for God to save the sea creatures. He also says that they must grieve the dead zones and hope for restored life. He ends his speech with a call for a song.

Oh Lord You Know Our Foolishness:

The poem is from the God's Gardeners Oral Hymnbook. It explains how important it is to take responsibility for the Earth. The actions of one can make a difference. While they are currently forced to wait one day soon they will need each individual to take up their part within the group to ensure its survival after the Waterless Flood.

Chapter 37 - Ren - Year 25:

Ren begins the chapter still trapped in the Sticky Zone at Scales and Tails. She dreams of Amanda walking through a field of bones. Once she wakes up, she goes back to her memories of the start of the Waterless Flood. Ren began the night by painting her toenails. She then looked around her room and read her horoscope. As Ren watched the club through the cameras, she noticed that a fourth Painballer had arrived. She hoped that with the help of the new drug BlyssPluss that they could handle him.

Chapter 38:

Ren remembers a happier time and she contemplates her past with the Gardeners. In year 14, on April Fish Day, Ren was sad because it was the first time she had celebrated the day without Bernice. Zeb was away and Lucerne had stayed home. Ren thought about the green cake she made with Bernice and was flooded with shame for her actions.

Ren's worries were not helped when she returned home to a fight between Zeb and Lucerne. Lucerne accused Zeb of sleeping with Naula. Shortly after their big fight, Lucerne decided to take Ren and return to HealthWyzer. She had clearly been planning this, as she had gathered escape money. Lucerne told Ren that Amanda could not come. They then walked out of the plebe and caught a solar cab in Big Box. Lucerne claimed that they were abducted.

Chapter 39:



Ren remembers being younger and dreaming of her easy life back at HealthWyzer. Ren's father, Frank, has kept her room the same as when she left. The problem was that her father was dreaming of a reunion with a little girl and she had grown up. Ren's skin was blue from the Gardener clothes she had been wearing.

Lucerne told CorpSeCorp that they were snatched by a cult. She claimed that Zeb wanted her as a sex slave. Lucerne did not know his name or where they were held. Ren was used as a hostage to ensure her compliance. Eventually, she gained the help of other members of the cult, who were appalled at Zeb's actions and was able to escape.

Lucerne threatened Amanda to ensure that Ren continued to lie for her. She hovered over Ren for the first month that they were back to make sure Ren did not spill the beans. When it became clear that Ren would not give her up, Lucerne backed off. Ren then called Amanda from her closet. She learned that Burt was dumped in the vacant lot with freezer burn and parts missing. As the chapter ends, Ren was sent to start school.

Chapter 40:

Ren was freaked out by the way her father looked through people. Ren dreamed of Zeb stepping out of a bear suit. As she settled in, Ren was sent to school at HealthWyzer High. She met Wakulla Price who guided her around the school. Everything was sparkling clean and covered in solarskins. Ren worried about the computers and notebooks issued to the students and the possible harm of all that permanent writing. She continued to lie about the Gardeners to protect them.

Ren quickly realized she had an edge because she had lived in the pleeblands with the God's Gardeners. She thought "how easy it is, treachery" (372) when the other kids begged her for tales of the pleeb. Wakula and Jimmy ended up walking home with her. Ren realized Jimmy was much nicer when not acting. Ren told Jimmy the truth. She also continued to talk to Amanda. She learned that Amanda and Shackie had become a couple and started boosting stuff.

Chapter 41:

Ren and Jimmy started doing their homework together. Jimmy was two years ahead of Ren and he helped her catch up on what she had missed while with the Gardeners. She was introduced to Killer, Jimmy's pet rakunk, and one of the first rakunks ever created. Ren also learned that Jimmy's father was working on pigoons to grow human organs. Ren tried to forget what she could not have and urged Jimmy to do the same when he confessed his crush on Wakula to her.

During this time period, Ren started a diary and claimed to no longer think about the dangers of writing. At the same time, she considered the power over her others could gain by reading her diary. Glenn came to HealthWyzer High and Ren recognized him from his visit with the Gardeners. Jimmy started hanging out with Glenn and Ren was left out. Then Jimmy's mother disappeared with a bunch of critical data and took his pet



rakunk with her to release into the wild. Jimmy was devastated by the dual loss and turned to Ren for comfort. Ren and Jimmy ended up having sex.

Chapter 42:

Ren really liked sex with Jimmy and considered them in love. Around this time, Lucerne found Ren's hidden phone and destroyed it. She told Ren that CorpSeCorp could trace unregulated phones. Ren concluded from this conversation that Lucerne still loved Zeb. Ren understood Lucerne better now that she was in love. Then Ren realized that Jimmy viewed their relationship as friends with benefits and they broke up.

After the break-up, Ren became depressed and suicidal. Yet she somehow found the strength to go on by drawing on her past with the Gardeners. Ren then approached Glenn for sex in an attempt to get back at Jimmy. She ended up talking to Glenn about the God's Gardeners instead.

Ren graduated and went to the Martha Graham Academy because her depression had left her with poor marks. As Ren headed to Martha Graham, a part of her thought that Jimmy would realize he loved her, but the rest realized that they had no chance.

Analysis

April Fish Of the Foolishness Within a Relation, Spoken by Adam One:

The God's Gardeners returns to an older tradition and celebrates April Fish Day instead of the more traditional April Fool's Day. The rooftop garden is decorated with Fish lanterns and everyone eats Fish cakes. The kids are encouraged to mock their elders by attaching a paper fish to their backs. The two main differences between this and April Fool's Day is that it is a full day instead of a half day and that the "prank" is limited to one thing on April Fish Day. In fact, April Fool's Day had to be limited to a half day because people's pranks had become dangerous. April Fish Day is a gentler way to challenge the class structure than more modern ways. Yet, even on a day that is meant to challenge authority the only one willing to mock Adam One is himself. He is the clear and unchallenged leader of the God's Gardeners. The others unwillingness to challenge him - even in fun - creates another link between Adam One and the corps.

The fish was once a secret symbol of Christianity. In times of persecution Christians used a fish to symbolize Christ and identify themselves to other Christians. Adam One suggests that they can learn from this symbol of their ancestors. Like the Gardeners, the early Christians were persecuted for their beliefs and, as the Gardeners will eventually, they triumphed by outliving their enemies. The Old Roman Empire died and a new Christian one rose in its place. This suggests that Adam One sees the Waterless Flood as a way to clear out the corruption of the old empire and leave way for a new empire of Gardeners.

Because of the actions of mankind the sea is now full of dead zones. The ocean is usually viewed as unconquerable, an unlimited source of food and resources. Humans



have finally destroyed that last great resource with pollution and created vast dead zones, areas with nothing, not even useable water. Adam One hopes that if humans stop mining what is left of the ocean's resources these spreading dead zones will be able to recover. Only through destruction can salvation of the Earth now be found.

Oh Lord You Know Our Foolishness:

The poem has four line stanzas with a b and d rhyme scheme, the same as most of the other poems in this novel. Capitals are used for emphasis on the words "You," "Love," "Fools," "Universe," "Your," and "Sky." The emphasis here is personal responsibility. You are being called on to act. It is your love of the universe and sky that will make a difference. Yet we are all still fools. While it is important to take responsibility and not sit idle while the planet is destroyed there is still little one person or even a small group can do. This is not quite true as a small group in the right place at the right time could accomplish more than an army. Perhaps what the poem really means it that this is not yet that time. The Gardeners must wait in readiness for the time to act which will not be until after the Waterless Flood.

The poem repeats personal pronouns with "You" repeating five times, "Your" repeating four times, and "We" repeating twice. This repetition emphasizes a sense of personal responsibility, and lifts doubts by reminding the individual that they have the backing of the group. While it is important to take responsibility for their actions, no one is being asked to act along. The importance of the group is recognized with the alliterative phrase "puncture pomp and puffed up pride." The gardeners are called on to remain humble. They are meant to do what they can but also realize their limitations.

Chapter 37 - Ren, Year 25:

Ren dreams of Amanda walking through a field of bones. Our dreams often express an amalgam of our fears and hopes as we process events. Ren sees Amanda walking which means she is alive - yet, she is walking through a field of bones. The bones symbolize both the death of mankind and Amanda's bioart. Amanda lived surrounded by death even before the Waterless Flood, as she chose a career of feeding words to scavengers. Amanda had already placed herself in the role of witness and chronicler to the decay of man. Ren's dream acknowledges Amanda's place as survivor among the dead and as storyteller of the dead.

In the past Ren continued the role of voyeur that her place in the Sticky Zone trapped her into. With a fourth Painballer in the Snakepit the place is set to explode. Painballers, as mentioned briefly in previous chapters, have little sense of right and wrong. They have been pushed far passed the boundaries of civilization and now exist in a state of barbarism. Blissing them out on drugs is one of the few ways to handle them. The newest drug BlyssPluss is the best for this, as it stimulates the pleasure centers of the brain directly. Yet, because the Painballers have been rewiring their brains this may also make it the most dangerous because they do not need their inhibitions set any lower. Ren's observations prefigure the deaths to come.



Chapter 38:

Ren used to make green cakes with Bernice to celebrate April Fish Day. Green in food is usually a sign of decay. This may suggest that Ren's relationship with Bernice was always rotten and that it simply took the arrival of Amanda to make Ren see that she had options. On the other hand, green is also the color of nature and healthy growth. So perhaps the cake is a symbol of better times with Bernice when their relationship was healthy.

Ren is then forced to leave the Gardeners and Amanda by Lucerne since Zeb and Lucerne have broken up. Ren has adjusted to the God's Gardeners and wants to stay but Lucerne will not allow it. She says it is because Ren has to have adult supervision, however they need to regain their IDs to go back to HealthWyzer. Lucerne cannot do that without Ren because her abduction story only holds water with Ren to back it up. Not taking Amanda also gives Lucerne something to hold over Ren to ensure her co-operation.

Chapter 39:

It is an old Chinese proverb that you must be careful what you wish for. When Ren first arrived at the Gardeners all she wanted was to go home. Now she is home and nothing fits. Her father has turned her room into a shrine to the girl she once was and all Lucerne cares about is resuming her former lifestyle. Neither are truly interested in the teenage Ren. She is left feeling alienated.

When it is safe Ren talks to Amanda. These conversations give both girls a sense of connection with a greater world. Ren is able to maintain her roots to the Gardeners through her talks with Amanda, and Amanda continues her friendship with Ren. While the conversations may require a certain level of performance they play a vital part on Ren's mental health. Ren needs to know that someone cares about her.

The God's Gardeners clothing has dyed her skin blue. Ren's body has changed to match her life with the Gardeners. However, it turns out that much of that can be washed away and Ren is horrified as she watches the blue dye swirl down the drain. It is as though she is washing away her skin and, with it, her previous life. Ren wonders if the past is as easy to get rid of. Can we bathe away our memories?

Lucerne spins a story where the God's Gardeners become a cult and casts herself as Zeb's sex slave though she is careful not to use names. Ren concludes that Lucerne still cares for Zeb or she would have sold him to CorpSeCorp. Lucerne presents the idea that the ends justify the means. Readers have seen Adam One take a similar approach to the truth in earlier chapters when discussing Pilar's death. The truth is negotiable and what is more important is what people believe.

Chapter 40:

Ren's father, Frank, is a top scientist at HealthWyzer. He looks through people. He has spent so much time seeing people as numbers and experiments he can no longer



disconnect that viewpoint when at home. Ren senses this disconnect from her birth father and wishes she had Zeb back. She dreams of Zeb stepping out of a bear suit. This suggests that she sees Zeb as a bear and rescuer. He could come back in disguise and carry her off as he did once before, though she was not his primary focus. Looking back to the running metaphor of the Gardeners as bees, figuring Zeb as a bear could suggest that he will bring destruction to the Gardeners.

Everything is Healthwyzer is always sparkling clean. Ren, used to the grunginess of the Gardeners, finds this unnatural. To her it is evidence of artificial cleaning products and damage to the earth. She finds more to worry her in the lap tops and notebooks of the schools. Permanent writing is anathema to the Gardeners, as they view it as dangerous. The purpose of writing is to share your message with others. The danger of writing is that you cannot control who reads it. For a group such as the Gardeners who are acting against those in power they are right to be suspicious of something that ties them to certain, unpopular or illegal, activities. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, readers see this already in today's world where politicians and teachers can lose their jobs based on personal views they express on social media. Public figures are expected to abide by society's rules or they are removed for someone who will.

Ren has been living in the pleeblands and this makes her a novelty to the compound kids. They are now so cut off from the world that they view anyone from outside as completely alien. The compound kids have no frame of reference for a world outside their compounds. This tempts Ren to make things up about the Gardeners to confirm the other kids' prejudice. However, she has learned from her treachery to Bernice and sticks to the truth as much as possible. Ren does not buy into the idea espoused by her elders that lies are a better form of truth. Instead, the only time she lies is when it will directly protect someone else, as when she backs up Lucerne's kidnapping story to protect the Gardeners from a CorpSeCorp raid. The benefit to this lie is clear cut and there is no moral ambiguity: if Ren tells the truth, the Gardeners will be attacked.

Chapter 41:

Jimmy has a pet rakunk named Killer. A rakunk is a gene splice of racoon and skunk and was created to be a pet. Humans are now engineering animals to do specific things for them. Another example of this is pigoons which Jimmy's father has created to grow human organs. This is a very focused project and suggests a lack of long term thought as there is no testing what other attributes the animals might pick up other than cuteness and an extra set of organs respectively. The name Killer is used ironically by Jimmy as his rakunk is a gentle house pet that no longer has any foraging skills. It is taken literally by his mother when she takes Killer to release into the wild.

Ren tells Jimmy to forget what you cannot have. Since we can only move forward, the past is best forgotten. This is an attitude that Ren learned from the Gardeners, where the past is never discussed and everyone is encouraged to live in the now. Traditionally, male protagonists of genre fiction suffer the loss of their family; with Jimmy, however, this happens when his mother takes off and chooses to take with her not him but his pet rakunk. The rakunk is much better able to survive outside the compound than Jimmy



but he reads this as a rejection that he never really gets over. Jimmy uses this loss as an excuse to push away any other women who might love him even if he is drawn to them. Ren gets trapped by this new behavior when she tries to comfort him. Ren thinks “Oh Jimmy, I thought, I’m putting Light around you” (384). What Ren means by this is that she intends sex to offer comfort and love. Jimmy is unwilling to take more than comfort from her. When Ren realizes this she uses her diary to attack him.

The fact that Ren is now writing a diary suggests that she has rejected the Gardeners. She is willing to commit her private thoughts to writing and risk anyone who finds it reading them. The previous warnings of the danger of writing foreshadow that this is not a good idea and Ren will only end up hurt and may even harm others with her diary.

Chapter 42:

Ren suffers a double loss in this chapter as she learns that Jimmy does not love her and they break up and Lucerne severs her last connection to Amanda in an attempt to protect Zeb. Suffering a loss of connection, Ren spirals into depression. Everyone has an emotional core upon which they build a sense of self. Ren’s is already unstable as she was removed to an alien environment as a child. Being moved again as a teen did not help, and then she suffered the loss of everyone who loved her. It is unsurprising that her reaction is depression.

However, the Gardeners did instill strong values in Ren as a child. In her darkest moments she remembers Adam One saying that love is an “energy wave” and it helps everyone (387). Though she has lost her connection with Amanda Lucerne’s love of Zeb has protected the Gardeners as the phone was disposed of before it could be traced. Ren finds strength in remembering the Gardeners telling her that life is a gift, as well as Amanda’s warning that “love is never a fair trade” (391). Amanda would say that love gives the other person too much power over you and creates an unequal trade. Sex is a form of commerce and Ren has forgotten that and that is why she got hurt.

Ren decides to put this idea to the test and have revenge sex with Glenn on the theory that Jimmy might not want her but he likely does not want anyone else to have her either. When she realizes that far from being jealous Jimmy sees her as an object that he can gift his friend Glenn with she gives up the idea of revenge sex. Women, even girls, are objectified things for trade in this society.

Ren and Glenn discuss the Gardeners rather than have sex. Glenn believes that you have to kill the center of power before anything can change. This foreshadows his creation of the Waterless Flood; he clearly believes that without radical violence society will continue to stagnate.

Discussion Question 1

Why do the Gardeners celebrate April Fish Day instead of April Fool's Day?



Discussion Question 2

Why does Mordis allow the additional Painballer into the club?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Lucerne return to HealthWyzer?

Vocabulary

tolerance, frolicking, Specist, absurdity, materiality, persecuted, humility, transitions, Pisces, misanthrope, contagious, traumatized, spectacular, cyborg, amoeba



The Feast of Serpent Wisdom

Summary

The Feast of Serpent Wisdom, Year 18 Of the Importance of Instinctive Knowing,
Spoken by Adam One:

Zeb is being asked about in the plebe. Adam One reminds the gardeners that “‘I don’t know’ is always the best answer” (399). He talks about God as the Serpent of Wisdom. This teaches the Gardeners to experience wisdom directly and to live in the now.

Adam One says, “No Human can truly know the full mind of God” (402). He reminds the Gardeners not to let “fear dilute certainty” (403). Adam One concludes with the knowledge that animals have “no need for Faith” and a calls for a song.

God Gave Unto the Animals:

This poem is from the God’s Gardeners Oral Hymnbook. It is about the knowledge of God that the animals’ posses. Humans can only have faith but perhaps through emulation of animals they can become closer to the divine and overcome their doubts.

Chapter 43 - Toby, Year 25, The Feast of the Serpent Wisdom:

In folk wisdom, the Old Moon is the pruning week. Toby prunes her nails and considers a makeover, a new her for a new world. She watches as the liobams take down a Mo’Hair. Because cats ambush Toby decides to avoid the garden. She dreams of the past. She sees her childhood home with her father digging in their garden and her mother in the kitchen. Toby realizes that she is dreaming a picture. Toby is increasingly affected by the collage of wrongness and wonders if the end is coming.

Chapter 44 - Year 18, Saint Jacques Cousteau Day:

Toby remembers year 18 as a year of rapture. The God’s Gardeners debated dogma at their Adam and Eve meetings. They worried over details such as that Adam’s teeth may have suggested meat eating and whether the first clothing was animal skins. Adam One explained that belief in God was a result of evolution.

Toby learned that Zeb served as the God’s Gardeners delegate between cells and that he was always annoyingly upbeat when he had bad news. His bad news was that Glenn had gone dark and Zeb was unsure if he was okay. Toby was always the one people told their secrets to. Toby learned that Glenn’s father was killed for telling the world about the HealthWyzer pill scam. Zeb said, “If you’re Corp and you do something they don’t like, you’re dead” (418). Glenn was a brilliant hacker and one-of-a-kind; without his help the Gardeners would have much less information about the corps’ activities.

Chapter 45:



Adam One was more practical behind the scenes than in front of his flock. At the next Adam and Eve meeting, there was a new picture on the wall. Jimmy's mother had arrived with genome codes and sent a message to Jimmy about Killer. The Gardeners offered such people "secure Exfernal placement" (426). In return, the corps fugitives brought information that the Gods Gardeners held on to.

Toby was assigned to manage the new refugee who was given the code name Hammerhead. She brought old information but they were careful to thank her for her effort. Adam One saw the Gardeners as a symbol of hope. Toby gave the Hammerhead poppy to keep her quiet and calm.

Chapter 46:

Toby continued with her chores and extracted honey from the bee hives. Zeb told Toby that Blanco was once more out of Painball. Rebecca took Toby off for a cup of Rescue Tea while she processed this news. Amanda, Shackie, Croze, Oates, and Zeb took the fight to Blanco but he only ended up getting cut.

In preparation, Toby drugged the Hammerhead to get her out of the way. The Gardeners gathered on the roof for the battle. Toby asked the bees for help. The God's Gardeners threw two of the thugs off the roof and Toby set her bees onto Blanco. Zeb said this was not the end as Blanco would not have attacked without permission, even though Zeb provoked him.

Chapter 47:

Zeb believed that Blanco had CorpSeCorp authorization for the attack on the Gardeners. Rebecca argued that it was a personal attack because of Toby. Adam One pointed out that Zeb and the kids had provoked Blanco by attacking him first. The one thing that they all agreed upon was that Toby was no longer safe at the Edenciff Garden and must be sent elsewhere.

Toby was sent to a Truffle niche in the Exfernal World for safety. She packed up her potions and honey, fighting a sense of loss and failure. Toby said goodbye to the bees and then left with Zeb. She was to travel in a Furzoot to provide anonymity until a new identity could be provided. Zeb moved Hammerhead down the line at the same time, marked as Fragile cargo. Toby hung out in a zoot for a few days advertising AnooYoo Spa. With the collapse of the banks and the obsoleting of paper money the old buildings were now good squats for those who wish to remain off the radar.

Toby feared that she would be abandoned by the Gardeners and stuck walking in her zoot forever. However, the Gardeners soon lined up an ID for her. Toby got her hair, skin, voice and fingerprints changed. She was given green contacts with her new ID since changing eye color was still dangerous. After six weeks of seclusion, in a Truffle cell, in Solar Space, the changes took and she was set up with a job. Her new Mo'Hair attracted cats but otherwise, the transition was a success. Toby ends the chapter by contemplating the meaning of beauty in a world where everything is changeable.



Chapter 48:

Toby started her new life as the manager of AnooYoo Spa-In-The-Park. Toby was now called Tobiatha. The ID checks at the spa were lax and it was a bubble of calm in a chaotic world. AnooYoo sold the hope of immortality. Once Toby settled in she started building an Ararat. Since Toby was known as a strict inventory keeper no one else looked closely at the inventory. Toby used her office computer to scan for general news only as she assumed that computer searches were monitored. CorpSeCorp could not yet force people to buy so they still maintained a respectable public image but they now ran the army. There were riots about Happicuppa destroying the rainforest.

The God's Gardeners continued to expand, but their situation was becoming unstable as CorpSeCorp tightened its grip. Muffy was Toby's cell minder and contacted her by coming to the spa for treatments. Muffy brought news and the occasional fugitive, one of whom was the Hammerhead. The Hammerhead had gotten involved with radicals and Toby did not expect her to live much longer.

Lucerne was a regular customer and Toby realized that she was still jealous. She had fantasies of frying Lucerne in the tanning booth. Yet the risk from Lucerne's visits was minimal as Lucerne did not see people like Toby. Zeb visited and told Toby that he now had his own group. Zeb and Toby talked on a pad of paper in case of bugs and he posed as a maintenance man, there to prune the lumiroses. Zeb showed Toby the MaddAddam Extinctathon web portal and she became Inaccessible Rail. Zeb was Spirit Bear. Glenn was also on the site as Red-necked Crake. Toby went to the chat room to watch for messages. She learned that the God's Gardeners were blamed for the bombing of Rarity and forced to go on the run. Muffy went on the run and was later killed with her husband in a car accident.

Analysis

The Feast of Serpent Wisdom, Year 18 Of the Importance of Instinctive Knowing,
Spoken by Adam One:

Adam One presents God in this speech as the Serpent of Wisdom. The Ouroboros or world serpent is a symbol of wisdom. It depicts a snake eating its own tail and is also a symbol of the circle of life and infinity. Everything is born, lives, dies, and is eaten. Adam One believes that the Serpent of Wisdom teaches the Gardeners how to experience wisdom directly and to live in the moment. With an understanding of the cycle of life, life can be lived to the fullest.

Fear can paralyze the heart and mind, creating doubt, uncertainty, and even death. Adam One wants the God's Gardeners to live without fear. As already mentioned, it is important to live in the moment. Humans need Faith because they are further from the divine than the animals. The animals do not need Faith because they have certainty. The Gardeners should strive to overcome their fear and dwell in the certainty of God with the animals.



God Gave Unto the Animals:

The poem has four line stanzas. This poem is marked out from most of the others in that it has no rhyme scheme. The fact that this poem is unlike most of the others in the novel suggests that it has additional importance. Like the other poems, it uses capitals for emphasis. The words “Animals,” “Creatures,” “God,” “Mind,” “Souls,” “Bee,” “Mole,” “Earth,” “Serpent,” “Whole,” and “Brain” are capitalized. Like previous poems, the emphasis here is on the importance of small creatures like bees, moles, and serpents. Creatures that are often overlooked by mankind in their everyday lives have value and are needed for a healthy ecosystem. We also see “Mind” and “Brain” capitalized. This suggests that humans need to think about the creatures. It is not enough to acknowledge their existence, the meaning of that existence must be contemplated.

The poem uses alliteration in the phrases “learn laboriously” and “each enjoys the Earth’s.” Learning about the creations will require work. It is a necessary but laborious process. We are also reminded that all creatures enjoy the Earth. This phrase suggests that all creatures have equal rights to the Earth and man should not have the hubris to put himself above the animals. Finally, many words in the poem are repeated. The more times a word is repeated the more important it is. All creatures belong to the Earth and have souls. The serpent, traditionally a sign of the devil, is refigured as a classical sign of wisdom and used to signify God. No one has the right to oppress other creatures.

Chapter 43 - Toby, Year 25 The Feast of the Serpent Wisdom:

As mentioned in the previous chapter, dreams represent our hopes and fears. Toby dreams of her family home and her family. She realizes she is dreaming of a picture and that she is not in it because she is the frame. Pictures can preserve the past but they are frozen in time. Toby’s family is still saved in her memory but since they no longer exist she cannot interact with them. This continues the themes of isolation and loss and all Toby’s loved ones are gone and she is forced to awaken from her dream into the world where she is alone.

The current world is a collage of wrongness as nature reclaims the Earth. Toby is used to the trappings of civilization and sees their increased destruction as an assault. Since she stands as a symbol for humanity she feels under personal attack by the natural world. She wonders if perhaps she is simply an unneeded remnant of a lost world.

Chapter 44 - Year 18, Saint Jacques Cousteau Day:

Adam One believes that man evolved to believe in God and that this evolution must serve a purpose. God creates penalties for bad behavior. Therefore, God himself is needed as a penalizer. Without the idea of God, there are no consequences for bad behavior. We are responsible only to ourselves and each other. There is no higher authority to tell us what is right and wrong. The result of this loss of belief in the novel’s society has been a rise to power of the rich and an oppression of the poor. In this society might makes right.



Zeb is an upbeat deliverer of bad news. This appears to be his way of softening the blow. Many people try and pad bad news when they are forced to deliver it. Zeb tries to put a cheerful face on it. Since the news is still bad, the result is, as Toby says, annoying.

Glenn is the God's Gardeners hacker and he has now gone dark. This means that they have lost communication with him. It may mean that he is unable to find a safe way to communicate now he is at a college or it may have darker connotations. Since there is no news of his capture going dark may mean that college has caused Glenn to change his ideals. This loss of communication shows the changing relationship between Glenn and the Gardeners.

Toby becomes "a well of silence" as she becomes the God's Gardeners secret keeper (417). The only real way to keep a secret is through silence. The more it is spoken the more likely a secret is to be told to the wrong person or simply to be overheard. Thus, Toby is forced to say nothing. She takes on the role of silent observer as she watches events with the Gardeners progress.

Chapter 45 and 46:

Zeb wants to act and is tired of watching "the lights blink out" (432). Adam One feels that "You can't fight blood without blood" (432) and that the Gardeners should be observers, not activists. Sadly, Zeb leaves Adam One with no choice, as Blanco is now coming and they are forced to defend themselves against plebe thugs. Adam One sees the Gardeners as pacifists and there is no way that peaceful protest will change the current social order.

All the Gardeners can do is observe as society destroys itself and focus on saving individuals from the wreckage. Zeb is unwilling to accept this and believes that if they fight the current regime they can replace it with something else and remove the need for a Waterless Flood. The main problem is that Adam One has given up on this world and is saving his actions for the next one. Zeb still believes the current world can be saved and intends to try. This argument is the start of a schism within the Gardeners and will eventually lead to the formation of MaddAddam.

The Gardeners fight with Blanco and his thugs. Zeb sees this as the beginning of a movement. Adam One sees it as the beginning of the end because bodies attract attention and one of the Gardeners' main tenets is to stay under the radar of the corps. In the end, they are both right, as Zeb goes on to found MaddAddam and CorpSeCorp and will soon move against the Gardeners. Being noticed brings only danger, not political change. The fight reiterates the idea that fighting accomplishes nothing and that the end of mankind is inevitable.

Chapter 47:

After the battle with Blanco in the previous chapter, Toby is forced to leave the Garden. She is devastated by the loss of her friends and community. The God's Gardeners have become her family. This family has been slowly breaking apart ever since Pilar's death.



Burt has been killed. Veena, Bernice, Lucerne, and Ren have all left and now Toby is leaving as tension builds between Zeb and Adam One. It is clear that the community Toby loves will not last much longer under the internal pressures of anger and fear.

When Toby flees Zeb has her wear a Furzoot for anonymity. This way no one will be able to ID her until the Gardeners can arrange a new ID. Toby has come full circle and is back where she was before she met Blanco or the Gardeners. This supports the idea of the novel that time is relative and, therefore, must be taken in moments.

When Toby does get a new ID they change everything. She gets new hair, a different voice, fingerprints, skin tone, and colored contacts. She lives in a world where everything is changeable and there are no stable land marks. Toby wonders how beauty can be only skin deep if you can change your skin. Surely that is a sign that true beauty comes from within. It is not what we look like that matters but how we act.

Chapter 48:

Once she establishes herself at the spa, Toby begins building an Ararat. The original Ararat was the mountain that Noah's Ark landed after the flood. The God's Gardeners view of an Ararat is slightly different as it is the supplies they mean to carry them through the Waterless Flood, not a safe place to reside after the flood has finished.

Toby takes it as a given that her computer is monitored. When Zeb comes to see her they carry out their actual conversation on a pad of notepaper as they expect the office to be bugged. There is an acceptance that someone is listening to every word and reading every keystroke. They live in a totalitarian society where every action is strictly monitored and those that do not conform are punished. This extreme level of surveillance and oppression is scarily easy to extrapolate from our world. Atwood is warning us of what will come if we do not speak out when our freedom is curtailed.

The society Atwood creates is not full of drones towing a preprogrammed company line. The Happicuppa riots are the best example of this. The Happicuppa corporation is destroying the rainforest in the name of a better latte. The fact that protesters are still allowed suggests that society is not yet doomed and still listens to its people. Yet, CorpSeCorp feels secure enough in its power to spraygun protesters which suggests that they have taken over and will not easily be dislodged.

Toby is assigned a handler, Muffy, by the Gardener, as if she were in witness protection. She also helps Muffy hide others from the corps and the Hammerhead passes through the spa. The name Muffy suggests someone fuzzy and ineffective. Atwood once again turns expectations on their head as Muffy runs the God's Gardeners version of witness protection and is in charge of External placement. Muffy uses her appearance to hide in plain sight. Hammerhead was chosen for the other fugitive as a code name and proves well suited for her when she joins an extreme green terrorist cell. She is hard headed and not even a hammer can make her think about the consequences of her actions until it is too late. The Hammerhead would have been of more use to both Jimmy and



the Gardeners had she stayed at HealthWyzer but the Gardeners always accept people as they are, not as they wish them to be.

Zeb tells Toby he has split from the Gardeners and founded MaddAddam. He shows her the Extinctathon website and sets her up with the code name Inaccessible Rail. Zeb's code name is Spirit Bear. The MaddAddam group communicates in a closed chat on the game Extinctathon. Extinctathon is played by naming extinct animals. Only Grandmasters, or gamers who know most of the extinct animal names, have access to the chat rooms. This is a way for Gardeners to communicate, for they memorized lists of extinct animals as part of their chronicling of the decline of society.

Toby calls herself Inaccessible Rail in the game. The word Inaccessible means something out of reach or unavailable. This may suggest that Zeb sees Toby as an impossible ideal that he can never be good enough for.

Zeb himself takes the name Spirit Bear. The Bear references back to Ren's dream of rescue by Zeb. He cannot rescue a single individual like Ren because he has a higher calling. Thus, it is left to Ren to rescue herself. A spirit is a ghost, an invisible force that cannot be contained. This suggests that Zeb will never be caught and that even if he is his ideals will go on. The fact that Zeb returns to the AnooYoo Spa as a maintenance man to tend the lumiroses brings him full circle. Like Toby in an earlier chapter, Zeb has returned to the beginning. Now that both Toby and Zeb have started over there is the suggestion that they have been reborn together and therefore linked. These mutual new beginning may suggest a new closeness between Zeb and Toby.

The chapter end as Toby gets news through the chat room of the destruction of the God's Gardeners. The Edenclyff Rooftop Garden was a second Eden and it has now been destroyed by CorpSeCorp. Though the Gardeners would argue that the point of no return passed long before the beginning of the novel, this is the true turning point. It is clear at this point that society is doomed as they re-create the fall of man in preparation for the second Flood.

Discussion Question 1

Why do the Gardeners see the Serpent as a symbol of Wisdom?

Discussion Question 2

Why does everyone tell their secrets to Toby?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Toby believe that beauty is only skin deep?

Vocabulary

dominant, ferocious, malevolence, annihilation, apprehension, conundrum, plausible, evolutionary, nihilism, proficient, heretical, neocortex, turbulent, sentinels, unfathomable, calamine, proximate, forensic, reprisals, aggression, claustrophobia, expulsion, spurious, superficial, filcher, oxidizing, dysfunctional, eddy, dehydrating, recontouring, chrysalis, intangible, placid, irradiated, cultivated, rudimentary, pilferers, subversive, fanatical, martyr, desiccated, catastrophic, evasive, schism



Pollination Day

Summary

Pollination Day, Year 21 Of the Trees And Of The Fruits In The Seasons, Spoken by Adam One:

Adam One tells his listeners that the garden is destroyed and they were lucky to escape with their lives. The God's Gardeners had become too powerful and because of the splinter group MaddAddam are seen as a threat to the corps. It is now time to blend in with their enemies; they can no longer openly warn others of the coming danger. The Gardeners are currently hiding out as the Fernside Truffle cell on the Street of Dreams.

Adam One talks about the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Fruit is the symbol of a healthy harvest. Its seeds symbolizes new life. Adam One warns his followers that CorpSeCorps is subverting nature by using cyborg bees as spies. He ends with a call to whisper since singing is too dangerous.

The Peach or Plum:

Taken from the God's Gardeners Oral Hymnbook this poem stands out from the others because it is whispered lest it is heard by the wrong ears. The poem explores mankind's impact on nature.

Chapter 49 - Ren - Year 25:

The chapter begins as Ren attempts a Meditation to clear her thoughts and center her mind. She continues her memories of the night the Waterless Flood began. She remembers looking at the news and reading about a minor epidemic. Then a fight broke out in the Snakepit. Savana and Crimson Petal were killed and the CorpSeCorp minders moved in to try and corral the rampaging Painballers. Mordis died to protect Ren as the Painballers tried to beat the door code out of him. Shortly after that, CorpSeCorp swarmed the building, tasered the Painballers, and dragged the three survivors back to Painball. Ren mourned Mordis' death and worried on a more practical level because he was the only one with the code to the door.

Chapter 50:

Still, Ren reminded herself that she was worth money and that SeksMart would send someone who would break the door down. Then, the next day two bad things happened. The minor epidemic exploded and became a plague, and the clean-up crew left Ren in the Sticky Zone. This only appeared to be a bad thing as it likely saved her life, since she would have caught the plague if she had not been in the Sticky Zone.

Ren inventoried her food and discovered that there was enough for six weeks assuming that the power stayed on. Ren tried to call Amanda, but no one answered. She did get



one text from Amanda saying “IM OK” (484). Ren figured that the grid overloaded as everyone panicked and tried to reach their loved ones. Then, as more people died it became easier to get calls through.

The last Ren heard from Amanda, she had stolen a solar car and was on her way to Scales and Tails. Ren told her to stay away from people. The relay towers went down shortly after that and there were no more signals.

Still, Ren refuses to give up hope and believes that “You create your own reality” (484). She clings to a reality where Amanda is alive and will soon be at Scales and Tails.

Chapter 51:

Ren remembers her past as she waits for Amanda to arrive. She left the HealthWyzer compound to attend Martha Graham. At that time in her life, Ren was severely depressed and felt like she had lost all her loved ones. At the academy, she enrolled in Dance Calisthenics and Dramatic Expression. As an arts academy, Martha Graham was falling apart. Buddy the Third was Ren’s roommate. He was a drunken stoner who played on the football team. Ren was careful always to keep her door locked because the football team was known for being rapists.

Ren saw Bernice outside Happicuppa attending a protest. Bernice told her that Veena joined Known Fruits, a group that believed it was a mark of God’s favor to be rich, and now ran five Happicuppa franchises on the west coast. Ren learned that Veena ratted out Burt because he was molesting Bernice and it had little to do with her story about Burt and Nuala. Ren still apologized for her role in the past then she took off before Bernice could control her again. Years later, Ren saw news of Bernice’s death in a raid on a God’s Gardener safe house.

Chapter 52:

After talking to Bernice, Ren felt Jimmy was close because Bernice mentioned that she had had him as a roommate. When they finally did see each other, Jimmy avoided Ren by pretending not to see her. The worst was that Ren still loved him. Ren continued to beat herself up about Jimmy as she learned that she was now his excuse for his lack of commitment.

Lucerne called Ren and told her that Frank was nabbed by a rival Corp. HealthWyzer had refused to pay for his release even though the other corp had a tape of Frank admitting that HealthWyzer had been making people sick. Since HealthWyzer controlled the media, they viewed the threat as minimal and thought that paying the ransom would only encourage more kidnappings.

Lucerne moved to the CryoJeenyus compound to marry Todd and kicked Ren out of the nest, claiming there was no more money for school. Ren’s Dance Calisthenics teacher suggested that Ren approach Scales and Tails. Scales and Tails had gone legitimate and was now a part of SeksMart. Ren met Mordis there and he indicated that he would be happy to employ her. However, Ren ended up going to AnooYoo Spa to apprentice



under Toby instead. Mordis gave Ren his card and told her she had a job with him at Scales and Tails any time.

Chapter 53:

Ren went to work at AnooYoo Spa-in-the-Park in Heritage park. She worked in the laundry room and found AnooYoo comforting. Toby confessed her ID to Ren and told her it was a God's Gardeners "duty to look after one another" (511). Ren then told Toby about her life after the Gardeners though she avoided mentioning Jimmy.

Toby gave Ren the code for the Ararat and told her she would look for Amanda. Ren felt protected. Toby learned that Amanda was a bioartist and lived at the edge of Heritage Park. Toby arranged transportation for Ren to Amanda's house. Toby warned Ren that Amanda tended to go too far and to be careful. Ren visited Amanda as a delivery girl from the spa and the girls were given an hour together.

Amanda told Ren that Toby left the Gardeners because Blanco was after her for some old sex thing. Ren learned that Jimmy was now living with Amanda and then ran into Lucerne at the spa. Ren felt a desperate need to escape from her past. She ended up fleeing to Scales and Tails in a fit of depression.

Chapter 54:

Mordis gave Ren a job at Scales and Tails. Ren became a trapeze dancer. While at Scales and Tails, Ren was only in touch with Amanda by phone as she worried her jealousy over Jimmy would poison their relationship. Then Amanda broke up with Jimmy and continued her work on The Living Word art installations.

Around this time, Glenn started coming to Scales and Tails. He was the top guy at Rejoovu Corp and ran the Paradise Project, working on immortality. He told people he was working on the solution for human beings. Later, Glenn started bringing Oryx and enlisted Scales and Tails as a test venue for BlyssPluss. Ren never told Glenn who she was. At one point, she was assigned Jimmy as a client by Glenn. Ren also entertained top CorpSeCorp men and found them sinister. They were her least favorite clients.

Analysis

Pollination Day, Year 21 Of the Trees And Of The Fruits In The Seasons, Spoken by Adam One:

As mentioned in the last chapter, the loss of the garden recreates the fall of man. The garden had symbolized Eden and with its destruction, the Gardeners are cast into a world of sin, much like Adam and Eve before them. They now intend to assimilate into society to survive until the Waterless Flood. They can no longer warn people of the coming danger. Society could never be saved and now they can save no more individuals as they must focus their energies on self-preservation.



Adam One says that “in success lay the seeds of ruin” (470). The Gardeners had infiltrated all levels of society to spread their message, collect information and offer refugees a safe harbor. In becoming large they become noticeable. In a society where everyone is monitored deviating from the norm attracts strict reprisals. It was only while they stayed off the grid that the Gardeners could be effective. They had to operate in secret and secrets cannot stay secret once they are shared.

The Gardeners have taken refuge on the Street of Dreams. In a society where consumerism is king even dreams are for sale. The name itself suggests an escape from reality into a lane of fantasy. It also suggests a place where people are bought and sold for the pleasure of others. The poor’s happiness is sacrificed for the rich.

Adam One discusses the danger of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. It is the reckless and uninhibited pursuit of knowledge that has brought society to its current state. Unfiltered knowledge has destroyed society. The newest outrage is the creation of cyborg bees to spy for CorpSeCorp. It is now impossible to tell when someone might be listening and they are forced to assume any outdoor conversation is being monitored. This causes Adam One to whisper his latest speech for fear of giving away their location. The Gardeners message has become taboo.

The Peach or Plum:

The poem has four line stanzas, and once more lacks a rhyme scheme. In this case, the lack of a rhyme scheme can be read as a symbol of discord. This poem stands out from most of the others as it is whispered, not sung. This creates an air of secrecy. Caps are used for emphasis which links it with the other poems and the rest of the novel. The words “Plum,” “Birds,” “Bats,” “Pollination,” “Nut,” “Seed,” “Fruit,” “Beast,” “Men,” “Tree,” and “Life” are capitalized. This shows an interest in nature and animals. Plants, animals and wild foods and all mentioned suggesting a natural world where men live at peace within nature.

Alliteration is used in the phrases “Hour by hour,” and “week by week.” Both of these phrases talk about the passing of time. Time is slipping away and with it, the natural world is being lost to man. Repeated words also appear in the poem: “peach,” “birds,” “nut,” “seed,” and “fruit” are all repeated twice. As these are mostly food words this suggests the poem has a strong interest in the foods produced by the natural world. Like the birds, the Gardeners will live on the seeds and fruits that grow wild and so they must remember them. Overall, the poem expresses an interest in the natural lifecycle, fruit, and animals. It explores the human impact on nature and suggests that once civilization is gone those humans that remain can live in peace with the animals.

Chapter 49 - Ren, Year 25:

Ren’s personal losses started before the Waterless Flood took off as the Painballers started a fight in Snakepit, Ren’s friends Savana and Crimson Petal were killed and so was the club’s manager Mordis. The fight personalizes the deaths for Ren and gives her someone to blame in a way that she would not have had had they died of the plague.



Having a clear target for her anger over their deaths lets Ren better grieve for her friend than seeing their deaths as an act of God since she does not yet know how the plague was caused.

Mordis' died in front of the door to the Sticky Zone when he refused to open it for the Painballers. Since the Painballers had already killed the girls in the Snakepit the locked door was the only thing protecting Ren from a similar fate. Mordis sacrificed his life for Ren's life. Mordis acts as a father figure to Ren and he clearly sees himself that way as well when he is willing to die for her. The depths of familial love are highlighted with his actions.

Mordis' death also creates a long-term problem, however, since he, in an attempt to protect the girls, was the only one who knew the door code. Clearly, this protection was needed, yet Mordis may have saved Ren only to doom her to starvation. Still, Mordis was a planner even as he lay dying and, as we will see, gave Ren all she needed to get out of the Sticky Zone. There is a type of clarity that comes as death approaches and the fact that Mordis' last thoughts were of Ren shows how deeply he cared for her.

Chapter 50:

Ren cannot get the attention of the clean up team and is left in the Sticky Zone. Though this ends up saving her life she is left feeling invisible when no one hears her cries for help. Ren is isolated while the Waterless Flood rages around her. As discussed in previous chapters, the Waterless Flood was created to take advantage of the human need for touch and comfort in groups. It is only those who deny their humanity who survive. The Gardeners must be careful not to lose themselves while preserving their bodies.

Ren's isolation is complete with her loss of communication with Amanda. Her world, like ours, has instantaneous communication. Yet, that communication is run by people and once most people are dead the lines of communication disappear and Ren loses contact with Amanda. She says that "You create your own reality" and wills Amanda into being by picturing her alive and on the way (484). Ren's statement reflects the philosophical idea that the world is created by humanities' willpower and that we can influence it by wishing for things. In other words, we are what we think. The fact that we really want rain one day and it does not happen is explained in this philosophy by all the people wishing for a sunny day. Therefore, with fewer people around Ren should have more control over reality.

Chapter 51:

Ren is given a heterosexual male roommate called Buddy the Third by the college. Universities and colleges are already starting to do this as they get more undergrads and space becomes a premium. The dangers of this plan are explored by Atwood as Buddy the Third is a known rapist yet he is given a female roommate. Fortunately for Ren they appear to only share a bathroom and are not literally roommates. Still, the fact that everyone knows Buddy is a rapist and yet nothing has been done to protect Ren



shows that society is completely broken down. There is no justice and laws are no longer enforced. The onus is on Ren to protect herself. This sort of thing takes personal responsibility to the extreme.

Ren majors in Dance Calisthenics and Dramatic Expression. Ren's major shows how the arts have broken down as society puts all its focus on the sciences. Instead of English, History, Philosophy the majors at Martha Graham emphasize practical skills. Ren, for instance, is studying a physical skill.

Ren runs into Bernice and is finally able to apologize for telling her the false rumor about Bert. Ren learns that the real reason Bert was turned into CorpSeCorp was that he was molesting Bernice. As already mentioned, there is no longer any police to turn to in situations like this, so Veena was forced to get creative. Ren remembers Bernice as having "the courage of her convictions" (496). Ren always admired that about Bernice since she never felt that way herself. Ren saw Bernice's anger as a way to struggle out of a shell that she was stuck in.

Chapter 52:

When Ren finally sees Jimmy there is no reunion because he pretends not to see her. Once more Ren is left feeling invisible as those she cares about overlook her. Sadly, love does not go away simply because it is illogical or unwanted. Ren is deeply in love with Jimmy and rationalizes his behavior by blaming herself. She thinks that there must be something wrong with her. This view is reinforced when she learns that Jimmy is now telling his girlfriends he cannot commit because of his bad break up with her. Relationships that end badly can resonate throughout the rest of our lives as we judge all future relationships by our past experience. Yet, Ren tends to take too much personal responsibility. She forgets that it take two to make a relationship and the only one in her relationship with Jimmy was her. Unequal relationships such as Ren's with Jimmy are unhealthy.

Ren's father, Frank, is kidnapped and killed by a rival corporation. This shows the danger in lying as Lucerne had created a story about kidnapping and then her husband was kidnapped. It also showcases the breakdown of social order as HealthWyzer is left to handle the kidnapping negotiations and chooses its bottom line over Frank's life. Money is now more important than people who are seen as expendable drones.

Lucerne, who can again be read as an everyman, epitomizes modern ideal. She disowns Ren because it is the cost effective solution. She also immediately remarries and moves to another compound. Lucerne makes decisions based only on what will benefit her. She does not waste time mourning her dead husband or planning for her daughter's future. One is dead and the other can take care of herself.

Ren goes to work at AnooYoo for Toby. Toby acts as a replacement mother figure after Lucerne disowns Ren. Toby looks out for Ren and gets her a good job somewhere safe. Ren also meets Mordis at this time and sees him as a father figure. With the loss of her



biological family, Ren is creating a new family. Unlike Toby, Mordis has no associations with her past and Ren will soon find the lure of a fresh start too much to resist.

Chapter 53:

The concept of Toby as a mother figure is further developed in this chapter. A good mother nurtures and cares for her child. She stimulates the child's growth while taking care of its needs. Toby provides Ren an opportunity to advance at the spa. Ren is starting out in the laundry but as she learns about the spa operations there will be possibilities for advancement. This suggests that families now resemble companies where they are created not by birth but by choice and are built up based on skills and experience instead of love and kinship. Yet, Toby also finds Amanda for Ren. This suggests that she is worried about Ren's emotional well-being as she tracks down Ren's best friend. Therefore, Toby acts as a mother to Ren in this chapter by looking out for her and by providing her food shelter and emotional support.

Ren and Toby exchange stories about their pasts. They each edit their past for presentation. Ren hides her heart break and Toby hides her past with Blanco. Each woman is trying to protect the other by concealing their emotional scars. They do not trust each other to provide healing for emotions - only for more physical cares. This suggests that they are not a healthy family as they are concealing vital information. Yet they are trying to protect each other which shows that they care about each other.

Ren is forced to hide her visit to Amanda lest CorpSeCorp wonder how the two know each other. Once more Toby acts to protect Ren as she arranges an AnooYoo delivery to Amanda's home with Ren acting as the delivery girl. CorpSeCorp surveillance has forced friendships to go underground lest they harm people. It is no longer safe to openly express caring for other since it can now be used against you.

When Ren finally reunites with Amanda they are unable to see each other for long and are forced to hold their reunion indoors away from prying eyes. While catching up Ren learns that Amanda and Jimmy are a couple. Then when she returns to AnooYoo she runs into Lucerne and is rejected once more. With the rejections of those closest to her heart fresh in her mind, Ren flees to Scales and Tails. If she is going to be forced to hide her feeling she would rather do so away from her loved ones who still accept her, as AnooYoo will be a constant reminder of those loved ones who do not want her.

Chapter 54:

Mordis acts as a father figure to Ren and finds Ren special. Mordis looks after her and ensures that no one hurts her. He takes on the role of protector that Zeb had once held. Since Frank, Ren's birth father is dead, Mordis fills a void in her life. She creates another new family at Scales and Tails with Mordis as the head of the household. He provides structure and discipline.

Ren likes the trapeze because no one can touch her and she can fly free. On the trapeze, she can escape all of her problems. She pretends to be dancing for Jimmy and



that he will fall in love with her. On stage, she feels loved and that gives meaning back into her life.

Glenn becomes a customer at Scales and Tails and is working on the Paradise Project to fix the human problem. None of his investors see this wording as ominous. Fixing the human problem sounds like a euphemism for killing off the human race and replacing them with something better. Since this is what Glenn ends up doing his investors would have done better to listen to his words instead of hearing what they wanted to hear. Glenn is creating a new Eden and it has no place for mankind.

Ren is given Jimmy as a client. This gives her a chance to express her love for him when he does not recognize her because of the biofilm. She is worried about him since he seems to be wasting away into a life of drugs and alcohol abuse. Ren hopes that her caring will somehow reach and help him. The only person who can save someone from that kind of life is themselves. Ren needs to stop trying to take responsibility for others actions, as they are outside of her control.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Mordis choose to die, and are his reasons valid?

Discussion Question 2

After her conversation with Bernice, does Ren view her past differently?

Discussion Question 3

Why is the God's Gardeners garden destroyed?

Vocabulary

faddists, angiosperms, insecticides, pandemic, pulverized, Kudzu



Saint Dian, Martyr

Summary

Saint Dian, Martyr Year 24 Of Persecution, Spoken by Adam One:

The number of God's Gardeners have dwindled in the recent years as the Gardeners have been persecuted for their beliefs. They take a moment to remember the fallen, including Bernice. Adam One talks about the oppression of the God's Gardeners by the Exfernal world. He reminds the Gardener that Saint Dian loved all God's creatures and that they should strive to do the same. Adam One believes that humans are addicted to bloodshed. Still, there is hope since the Waterless Flood is coming. The God's Gardeners are currently hidden in a dim cellar and speak only in whispers. Then intend to leave at dawn for new and separate hiding places. They whisper one last poem before they head out.

Today We Praise our Saint Dian:

This poem is from the God's Gardeners Oral Hymnbook. Like the one directly preceding it the poem is whispered. It contains a message that all life is sacred and must be protected.

Chapter 55 - Ren, Year 25

Ren repeats the names of her loved ones as a way to keep them alive. Ren worries because she is running out of food. She remembers Mordis' last words to her were "Your name" (540). Ren also thinks about Glenn and how Glenn was always thinking about human's relationship with God. The chapter ends as Ren discovers she has five days of food left. She also thinks she hears footsteps.

Chapter 56:

Amanda arrives at Scales and Tails. She turns the music off and removes Mordis' body from in front of the door. Amanda and Ren work out the door code as the clue was in Mordis' last words. Ren's name backwards opens the door. Amanda and Ren swap their survival stories.

Chapter 57 - Toby, Saint Karen Silkward, Year 25:

Toby finds a bee in the spa. Toby asks the spirits for help. Sadly, the visit is a bad one and the pigeons destroy her garden, which had food she needed for survival. She will now have to forage for proteins and lipids. Toby considers creating a rooftop garden as a replacement, but discards the idea as impractical.

Chapter 58 - Ren, Year 25



Amanda tells Ren that the worst part of her journey was the thunderstorms. The highway she was on when she lost contact with Ren was a “vulture sculpture” (551). She was forced to ditch the solarcar after the road became impassable because of all the abandoned vehicles and bodies. She stayed on the fringes and was careful to touch no one. Amanda tells Ren that she slept in trees and on top of garages.

Amanda and Ren proceed to celebrate their survival. They sleep in a client room because it is the cleanest and has no bodies. They plan to stay at Scales and Tails until their food is gone or the solar power cuts out. They talk about their past with the Gardeners and watch movies. They crack open the tinned cans of food that were kept as rewards and for high rollers.

Chapter 59 - Toby, Saint Anil Agarwal, Year 25:

Toby is approaching a famine situation. She prepares to go hunting for animal protein. Toby first goes up on the roof to check the area and then gathers supplies. As Toby walks out of the spa, she sees the evidence of human bodies in handbags and shoes. She contemplates the soporific quality of nature and the dangers of letting down your guard. Toby tries not to look like prey as she forages. She harvests maggots from the boar’s corpse for food. She notices that the pigs have mourned the dead boar with offerings of ferns and flowers.

Chapter 60 - Ren, Year 25:

Amanda and Ren do each other’s nails to make themselves feel better. They try on biofilm bodysuits, living cells that bond with your skin including a face unit, and start dancing. Amanda dresses as a flamingo and Ren a peagret. Then three guys come in and it leads to a tense moment until the men are revealed to be Shackie, Croze, and Oates.

Amanda makes mimosas and faux fish, and the boys tell their story. CorpSeCorp nabbed them for bioform resistance. The boys were in Painball when the flood hit and they were able to walk out afterwards since the guards were gone. They came to Scales and Tails because of its reputation. Amanda and Ren worry about the other Painball team that the boys tell them is following the boys. The door lock is broken. Later, this worry turns out to be justified as they are forced to flee Scales and Tails when the Painballers destroy it.

Chapter 61:

Ren figures that the Painballers came to Scales and Tails for her since they are the ones who killed Mordis. As they flee, Shackie aims them towards the forest because it is safer. As they walk through the city, there is evidence of mass looting and death. They raid a supermarket for food and find Zizzy Fruits, Secret Burgers, soybeans, and Joltbars, as well as lighters. They end up heading down the road to the Old Wellness Clinic, where they set a fire to cook the Secret Burgers and soybeans. They all feel that the God’s Gardeners are with them in spirit.



Ren is still in her peagret outfit and wants real clothing. They find the Wellness Clinic Ararat, but it has been used. This gives them hope for other survivors, maybe Zeb. Ren suggests that they head to the AnooYoo spa and look for the Ararat there, as well as the garden. She also secretly hopes that Toby will be there, though she does not share this thought with the others.

They think they are being careful. They enter the wood through Heritage Park, walking toward the spa's western gate. Then Amanda and Ren are captured by the Painballers. Ren does not like to think about what happens next, though it is worse for Amanda.

Analysis

Saint Dian, Martyr Year 24 Of Persecution, Spoken by Adam One:

Adam One says, "Exfernal powers kill both in word and deed" (534). By this, he means that society in the form of CorpSeCorp is destroying the Gardeners. They are doing this literally by hunting down and killing members of the Gardeners. But they are also attacking the ideals that the Gardeners stand for. The Gardeners have lost members as people flee out of fear or out of disillusionment. The heart of their movement is under attack.

Still, Saint Dain was able to foster "loving care for all creatures" (534) and they should follow her example. Adam One believes that they must not become hateful toward their enemies. They are a peaceful sect and will fight back by disappearing into the world until the time is right. All they have to do is hold out for a little longer as "history will soon be swept away by the Waterless Flood" (535). The Waterless Flood will destroy the enemies of the Gardeners and they will rise up into a new world. A flood is a symbol of rebirth and the Gardeners intend to be reborn into the world at peace with nature.

Until that happens they must remain in hiding. The novel repeats this theme of staying hidden and the importance of things that are overlooked. The Gardeners were powerful earlier in the novel because they went unnoticed by those in power. It was only once MaddAddam splintered off and they came to the attention of CorpSeCorp that they were persecuted. Now with this speech, Adam One is again calling on his followers to hide. Only the hidden have power in a society where all are watched.

Today We Praise our Saint Dian:

The poem has four line stanzas and a b, d rhyme scheme that returns it to the scheme of earlier poems. The rhyme scheme links the poem to poems sung by the Gardeners in happier times and suggests that such times may come again in the future, after the Waterless Flood.

The poem is whispered not sung which sets it apart from most of the other poems. Whispering suggests secrecy, worries about being overheard, and unseen danger. The poem contains topic forbidden by the dominant culture and is thus taboo. The Gardener could be punished for speaking it because it marks them as radicals.



Capitals are used for emphasis: “Saint Dian,” “Life,” “Faith,” “Species,” “Gorilla,” “Love,” “Friend,” “Murderers,” “Dian,” “Earth,” “Gorillas,” and “Spirit.” These words create a relationship between man, symbolized by Dian, and gorillas, who stand for the animals. Therefore, the poem is calling for mankind to be friends with the animals who share a common spirit. The poem also condemns all who would kill animals.

Alliteration appears in the phrases: “blood for bounteous” and “Gorillas gathered.” The first phrase suggests that sacrifice is needed to achieve the poem’s vision of friendship with the animals. Only after blood is spilled will nature reveal its bounty. In the second phrase “Gorillas” can be read as standing for all animals. This phrase suggests that after the Waterless Flood the animals will gather.

The poem has repeated words and phrases. “She,” “her,” “protect life,” “all are one,” and “Species” are all repeated. These repetitions suggest the importance of becoming one with the animals. To do this all life must be protected by mankind. The poem is, therefore, about the importance of life and the need to respect the animals.

Chapter 55 - Ren, Year 25:

In this chapter, Ren is using words to shape reality. The names of her loved ones become a type of spell. Someone’s name is their identity. It is what they present to the world and what they answer to in public. By calling the names of her loved ones Ren is invoking them in an attempt to make them live.

Mordis also appears to have seen the power of names, as the last thing he says to Ren is “Your name” (540). Since Mordis knows he is dying, his words must have meaning. Dying declarations have always been given special weight as those who know death is near often thought out their last words.

Glenn’s idea is that immortality is a consequence of grammar. Since you cannot talk about your own death without using the word “I” you insert the possibility of life after death into any discussion of the subject. Grammar has made the concept of mortality almost impossible to contemplate. Glenn also says that God is the “I don’t know” in the past. If history is what happened in recorded time, then there must have been something to explain what happened before that. Science and religion both attempt to fill in the gaps that history leaves. Glenn suggests that God is a brain mutation and that, like a love of music, he is built in because God provides us with answers to unanswerable questions.

Chapter 56:

With the arrival of Amanda, the dead start to come back to life. Though on the one hand, we accept that Amanda was always alive, on the other hand, until she appeared at Scales and Tails she was much like Schrodinger’s cat. She existed inside the box and until it was opened the reader and Ren did not know if she was alive or dead. Perhaps Ren did shape reality with her summoning ritual in the previous chapter.

Chapter 57 - Toby - Saint Karen Silkward, Year 25:



Toby remembers the phrase Pilar taught her that “a bee in the house means a visitor” (546). You can control the type of visit by how the bee is treated. If the bee dies the visit will be terrible, if the bee is damaged it will be a bad visit, if the bee is unharmed the visit will be good. In spite of Toby’s best efforts, the bee is hurt and the visit is bad. Atwood examines the way our actions affect the universe around us.

Toby’s thought about a rooftop garden suggest an attempt to recreate the Edenclyff rooftop garden of the Gardeners. Yet once you have lost paradise you can never go back. With only one person and no irrigation a rooftop garden at AnooYoo is impossible. Practical needs must trump spiritual dreams.

Chapter 58 - Ren, Year 25:

Amanda views the highways as a “vulture sculpture” (551). The roads are full of the dead and the scavengers are feasting. Civilization has fallen and its bones are being picked clean. Amanda sees the dead as an impediment rather than as individuals to be mourned. She only looks out for her own and these people are strangers. Amanda has no problem avoiding their pleas and staying on the fringes as she travels to Scales and Tales. This is a pragmatic view towards death as all Amanda could do is catch the plague from those victims and she can save Ren’s life if she gets to Scales and Tails. Amanda, unlike Adam One or Zeb, chooses the one over the many. To her, it is better to save one loved one than try and save several strangers by passing a warning about how the plague is spread. The first is possible the second is likely to lead to her death and Ren’s.

The girls break into the tinned cans that were kept as rewards and for high rollers. The workers at Scales and Tails were rewarded with luxury food items for performing special tasks. This treats them like favored pets who if they are good are given special treats. Such things objectify the women of Scales and Tails and show how far society had fallen that they felt such behavior was acceptable.

Chapter 59 - Toby - Saint Anil Agarwal, Year 25:

Nature can lure you into a state of peaceful contemplation of its beauty. Those who have never been in the wilderness are especially susceptible to this quality of nature. Toby knows this is dangerous and fights against it. Nature is full of predators and there is no time to stand around contemplating its beauty. Those who do so end up dead. Nature can then be read as showing us the dangers of letting down our guard.

Toby harvests maggots for food. Maggots are a source of protein and once you have some you can easily breed more. The easiest type of protein to forage for are bugs, worms, and maggots. Toby focuses on the need for protein and tries to forget what she is eating. It is better to eat maggots and survive than refuse and starve.

The pigeons have mourned the dead boar and left offerings at the body. This suggests that they have a higher level of intelligence than the average pig. They have been gene spliced with humans to serve as organ donors. Their creators do not appear to have thought ahead and realized what they were creating. The pigeons appear to be



developing a rudimentary culture. They symbolize the dangers of thinking only of the present, of using genetic engineering without oversight or forethought.

Chapter 60 - Ren, Year 25:

Amanda and Ren are both affected by the isolation of this new world. It is causing depression and this is why they dress up in the biofilm bodysuits. They want to feel alive. The world feels empty and this simultaneously creates a feeling of safety and loneliness. They are safe because they are no longer being watched and judged by security forces all the times. They can act as they please yet there is no one left to interact with. As previously mentioned humans are social animals and needed to talk to each other to be healthy. Isolation can breed depression and even insanity.

The music the girls dance to attracts the boys. They too are seeking human interaction in an empty world. Both groups crave not just someone to talk to but romantic relationships. That is why the boys headed to Scales and Tails. They wanted sex to reaffirm that they survived.

The boys took part in Bioform resistance, which means that they created species to attack the governing order. The Gardeners had promoted peace with the animals and stopping the growing number of extinctions. MaddAddam created new animals. The order of being leaves creation in the hands of God and sees man creating as a sign that he has overstepped his bounds. In a way, MaddAddam's actions can be read as the cause of the Waterless Flood. They also more literally caused it as the scientists of MaddAddam were forced to help Glenn create the plague.

Chapter 61:

The kids flee the Painballers. When faced with a superior enemy it is best to flee. As they run through the city Ren notes evidence of looting. Ren wonders how anyone thought a new TV would save them from the plague. The looting suggests that society was rooted in materialism. The acquiring of more objects was the most important thing to many of the dead and they spent their last moments gathering more objects to comfort them. Society had imbued material possession with great worth and perhaps it was so much that people really did believe that the objects could save them.

The kids are surrounded by echoes of the past as they set up camp in the Old Wellness Clinic. The spirit of the Gardeners is still in the building. Memory is a powerful thing and it is often tied to places or things. Each of the kids had spent a lot of their childhood in the Wellness Center because it served as the Gardeners school. Camping there creates a feeling of safety as they remember better times. The Wellness Center also provides hope for other survivors as the kids find an empty Ararat. Another Gardener has been here before them and after the Waterless Flood. They can become part of a larger group - they just have to find them.

Ren is still in the peagret outfit and this is dangerous as it dehumanizes her. It is a lot easier to assault a bird than a woman. While the biofilms provided protection from disease they also created anonymity and erased the identity of the wearer. Ren's



premonition proves all too real when she and Amanda are captured by the Painballers. Yet the regular clothing Amanda is wearing does not serve to protect her so clearly the Painballers have passed the point of seeing women as people. They are only objects to be used and discarded.

Discussion Question 1

Why are the Gardeners in hiding?

Discussion Question 2

Do you agree or disagree with Glenn's explanation for God?

Discussion Question 3

Why do the girls fear the other Painball team?

Vocabulary

infiltrated, vindictive, transgenics, hypocritical, derision, hallucinogen, soporific, dilute, adrenalin, scrounging



Predator Day

Summary

Predator Day, Year 25 Of God as the Alpha Predator, Spoken by Adam One:

Adam One talks about the past and how the kids used to decorate the Edencliff rooftop garden with predator images. The Gardeners must now celebrate the festival “in the inner Garden of our Minds” (587). The Waterless Flood has come. The Gardeners are in the basement of the Buenavista Condo Complex, but must move on as their Ararat has run out. However, they will first take a moment to celebrate “God the Tiger” (588). God is figured as a defender, and as a wild Being. Predators are blessed. Adam One reminds everyone that it is better to be a predator than to be prey. He then ends his speech by calling for a song.

The Water-Shrew that Rends its Prey:

The poem is from the God’s Gardeners Oral Hymnbook. It follows the scheme of early poems, recited when the Gardeners were at Edencliff. The poem is about predators and how predation is part of the cycle of life.

Chapter 62 - Toby - Saint Nganeko Minkinnick Manukau, Year 25:

The day starts with a red sunrise, a prelude to the coming storm. Toby feels that she is losing her language. Still, she struggles on. She eats land shrimp (maggots) and tries not to think about what they really are. As she is surveying the land from the roof, she sees two men exit the woods with a female bird creature on a rope. Toby sees this as evidence that evil will always survive and shoots at the men, wounding one and driving them off. She figures they will be back with a plan.

Chapter 63 - Toby - Saint Wen Bo Day, Year 25:

Toby sees no men and no bird woman today. She wonders if she was temporarily insane, then she hears someone calling her name. Ren is hurt and asks Toby for help. Toby goes to drive her off, but recognizes Ren.

Chapter 64:

Toby hauls Ren into the Spa. She treats Ren’s wounds and removes the bird suit. Ren has head and leg wounds and her crotch is torn up. She also has a high fever. Toby considers the Death Angels since food is scarce and Ren might not make it anyway. Yet, Ren is a precious gift and trusts Toby. Toby realizes she is too tired to think when she almost starts a fire with a candle and puts off any decisions until tomorrow.

Chapter 65 - Toby - Saint Mahatma Gandhi Day, Year 25:



In the morning Ren's fever is down and her pulse is steady. Toby does the laundry. She remembers Adam One's words about love and knows that she must help Ren. Ren gives Toby hope that more of the God's Gardeners survived the Waterless Flood. Toby puts maggots on Ren's leg wound to stave off and treat the infection. She feels reborn and is now glad that Ren has come.

Chapter 66 - Toby, Year 25:

With the maggots, it takes three days to get Ren's leg wound clean. By the second morning, Ren's fever is gone and she is able to eat more. Ren tells Toby her story. Toby agrees to go back for Amanda. She thinks that they will have to move anyway, as they will need more food. Toby and Ren transition to carnivores as that is the easiest food to find. Toby finds packsacks in the basement and privileges tools in her packing. Toby and Ren cut their hair before they leave so that they cannot be grabbed by it. The hair is left on the roof for the birds.

Chapter 67 - Toby - Saint Chico Mendes Martyr, Year 25:

The women leave the spa just before dawn. They are dressed in pink exercise suits with pink canvas sports shoes and pink hats. Toby thinks it is a pity they are so pink. The situation is grave, but Toby is excited to leave the nest. She remembers Zeb telling her that nature is dangerous. Toby knows that the Painballers have sprayguns, but her rifle has a longer range. Toby plans to spend the night in the Eastern gatehouse and then work towards the sea.

Ren still believes that they will find Amanda, Toby will shoot the Painballers, and the boys will appear. She thinks Toby can fix everything, as her illness has made her more childlike. Toby and Ren find a recently killed dog and try to pick up the pace. Unfortunately, Ren cannot. They rest under a tree and Toby wraps up Ren's blister. Toby decides to cut through the meadow. Though more open, it is also a shorter route and Ren is already limping.

Analysis

Predator Day, Year 25 Of God as the Alpha Predator, Spoken by Adam One:

Though the Waterless Flood has come there is still no Eden for mankind. The Gardeners Eden was the Edencliff garden. They are now forced to make do with memories of the garden that Adam One tells them to create in their minds. Perhaps Adam One is suggesting that Eden is not a place but a state of being; if we create the vision of the garden in our minds we can mentally enter Paradise.

Predator Day celebrate "God the Tiger" (558). The tiger is a predator that hunts through stealth. Tigers sneak up on their prey and leap onto their backs to break their necks for the final kill. To envision God this way is to suggest that God is in charge and will leap out and grab you when you least expect it. Adam One calls on his followers to emulate



this example. To move through this new world as predators. Adam One is telling his followers how to protect themselves now that humans can be prey.

The Water-Shrew that Rends its Prey:

The poem has four line stanzas with a b, d rhyme scheme which links it back to the poems sung when the Gardeners were at the Edencliff garden. Caps are used for emphasis: “Water-Shrew,” “Prey,” “Nature’s,” “Leopard,” “Puss,” “Animals,” “Creatures,” “Famine,” “Meat,” “Vows, and “Life” are all capitalized (592). These words link animals to nature and suggest that all creatures are meat in time of need. Life can be given to predators for their survival. It is better, therefore, to be the predator and survive.

Alliteration is also used in the phrase “Nature’s need” (592). This emphasis on nature suggests its central importance to the poem. Eating is a natural part of life and cannot be stopped. We must embrace the cycle of life and take part in it. The poems repeated words showcase its meaning further as “hunt,” “Prey,” and “Famine” are all repeated twice. Prey must be hunted to prevent famine. The poem is about the acceptance of the natural order and about finding a place within that order for the Gardeners.

Chapter 62 - Toby - Saint Nganeko Minkinnick Manukau, Year 25:

Toby has been isolated from the rest of humanity since the Waterless Flood swept over the world. She is worried that she is losing her language. Toby is completely alone. As mentioned repeatedly humans only thrive in groups. With no one to talk to Toby is losing the trappings of civilization and turning in on herself. She needs interaction with other people soon or she risks losing her identity. People’s identities are built not just internally but also on how others see them, what they choose to present to different parts of society, and the interactions they have with those around them. Everyone is shaped by others and needs that input to move forward and grow as an individual.

When Toby sees Ren and the Painballers she cannot ID Ren because Ren is still wearing the biofilm. Since Ren looks like a bird creature Toby is unsure if this is another vision (she still believes Jimmy and the Crakers to be a hallucination). Still when she sees that Ren is a captive she acts to drive the men away. However, Toby has drawn inward enough that she does not go see what happened to the bird woman. Isolation can make you stop caring about others as you draw inward to protect yourself.

Chapter 63 - Toby - Saint Wen Bo Day, Year 25:

As mentioned in a previous chapter Ren’s biofilm dehumanizes her. It makes her a thing instead of a person. When she approaches Toby, Toby is unsure who she is, even though Ren no longer wears the head of the suit. Clothing is an important part of how people perceive us.

Chapter 64:

Toby considers euthanizing Ren because she is very sick and Toby has little food. Having been isolated so long Toby has retreated into survival mode and sees Ren as a



possible threat to her survival. However, Toby is smart enough to realize her thinking is not clear. The candle almost starting a fire is a sign. It shows Toby she is overtired and possibly irrational. She knows that she cannot make serious decisions in this state and prepares for bed. It is a good idea to think about any serious decision but certainly one that affects another's life cannot be made lightly. This scene echoes Pilar's death but Atwood shows us the differences as Ren is no incurable and therefore should not be put out of her pain through permanent means.

Chapter 65 - Toby - Saint Mahatma Gandhi Day, Year 25:

The next morning Ren is better and the world is a brighter place. Life and not death is the answer for Ren. With Ren's arrival, Toby is no longer alone and has returned to society. There is a continuation of the theme of rising from the dead as Ren was dead to Toby but is now here at the spa with her. This is easier to see than with Amanda's rebirth as Ren was wounded and near death but is now on the mend. The Painballers and her illness have brought her to Toby where she will be treated and find a new life.

Toby treats Ren's leg wound with maggots. This reflects back to an earlier chapter where Pilar treated Zeb's wound with maggots. The treatment invokes the Gardeners and brings the women closer to those they have lost. It also invokes Zeb and foreshadows his rebirth.

Chapter 66 - Toby - Year 25:

Toby takes back her role as a mother figure for Ren. Ren sees her as a savior and thinks that she can fix all the problems. Toby will save Amanda and they will find the boys. Toby takes care of Ren and prepares to head out as they need to move somewhere with more food, but thinks the odds of saving anyone are slim. She protects Ren by keeping this to herself.

Toby and Ren leave their cut hair for the birds. They become part of nature by contributing to the bird's nests. Cutting their hair symbolizes a transition to warriors as shorter hair creates less of a target. To hark back to Adam One's Predator Day Speech, the women are transitioning from prey to predator.

Chapter 67 - Toby - Saint Chico Mendes Martyr, Year 25:

The women are dressed all in pink because the spa only had pink clothing. Pink symbolizes girlhood, happiness, unconditional love, compassion, and nurturing. The pink represents the AnooYoo spa that Toby refers to as a nest. It has been a place of safety in an uncertain world and they are now forced to leave. This echoes a child growing up and leaving home for the first time; they face unknown pitfalls and are not quite sure if they are ready but they leave anyway so that they can face life's challenges as an adult. Leaving AnooYoo can, therefore, be read as a coming of age for Ren. She sheds her childhood innocence and faces life head-on to save Amanda.

The women find a dead dog on their journey to the gatehouse. Dogs are symbols of love, understanding, affection, and family. To find one dead suggests the imminent loss



of someone dear. The fact that the dog was murdered suggests that a similar fate waits for one of the woman's loved ones. It also tells the women that their enemies are close.

The women break cover and take a short cut across the meadow. Meadows are typically places of serenity where nature is tamed by humanity. This meadow has been growing wild since the Waterless Flood and represents nature taking over from civilization. It also shows how beauty can be dangerous - the women are exposed in the meadow and must not let its serenity fool them into feeling safe.

Discussion Question 1

If the Gardeners believe predators are to be emulated, why have they been practicing vegetarianism?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Toby attack the Painballers?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Toby consider killing Ren and is her decision justified?

Vocabulary

minuscule, meditate, apprehension, theoretical, annihilation, tremendous, scimitar, hysterically, dehydrated, archeologists, photophobic, sinuous



Saint Rachel and All Birds

Summary

Saint Rachel and All Birds, Year 25 Of the Gifts of Saint Rachel; and of the Freedom of the Spirit, Spoken by Adam One:

The Gardeners rejoice in the new world they find. They have been privileged to witness the rebirth of the world. Three new people have joined their group: Melinda, Darren, and Quill. Each escaped the Waterless Flood because they were isolated.

The Gardeners are now in a Happicuppa franchise. Adam One remembers the Happicuppa protests and says that Happicuppa was the biggest threat to birds in our time. In earlier times it had been DDT, which Rachel Carson campaigned to ban. Adam One believes that with the Waterless Flood the rainforest can now recover. He ends his speech with a call for a song.

When God Shall His Bright Wings Unfold:

From the God's Gardeners Oral Hymnbook. This poem harks back to the early poems when the Gardeners were on the Edencliff Rooftop Garden. The poem explains that killing a bird is sacrilege.

Chapter 68 - Ren - Saint Chico Mendes Martyr, Year 25:

Toby and Ren walk through the meadow and a flock of Mo'Hairs appear. Toby keeps them moving. They then must cut through the trees for shade and cover. The air of the forest is thick. They find a waterhole dug out beside the stream and because this is a Gardeners trick they are hopeful of meeting friendly faces. Toby says that someone has come this way before them, but not today. Then they find Oates' body strung up with his throat cut. Toby pulls Ren away as they need to get to the gatehouse; they have no time to stop and bury Oates.

Chapter 69 - Toby - Saint Chico Mendes Martyr, Year 25:

Toby feels bludgeoned by Oates' brutal death. Yet, she has no time to stop and mourn. There is a storm coming and they have to get to shelter as Toby thinks it might be a twister. The women reach the gatehouse. There appears to still be a guard there, he is probably dead, but Toby is taking no chances and blocks the door to that room. The storm hits as Ren and Toby enter the gatehouse.

They find Mo'Hair legs outside the gatehouse suggesting that the Painballers have passed this way. Not one to waste food, Toby field dresses the legs. Ren then stands guard while Toby enters the blocked room to search for firewood. She finds the Painballer that she shot, who turns out to be Blanco, abandoned there with a festering



leg wound. Blanco asks for water, but Toby is afraid he is shamming, even though she smells rot from his leg.

Toby gets a Zizzy Froot and drugs it with poppy and Death Angel. When she goes back Blanco is trying to set up an ambush with a knife. Toby waits for the drugs to take effect and then searches the room for firewood. She makes Mo'Hair leg soup. Ren and Toby sleep on the roof with their supplies. Toby tells Ren that Blanco will never wake up.

Chapter 70 - Toby - Saint Rachel and All the Birds, Year 25:

Toby wakes before dawn, everything looks fresh and once more she feels reborn. The light hits Ren and she wakes up yelling, "I'm late" (649). The women laugh as they realize the ridiculousness of such statements. Toby scouts for threats with her rifle. Before they leave, she checks that Blanco is dead and they drag him out back for an open air burial. Toby thinks of him as an offering to the pigs, a life for a life. She closes the gate and ties it shut to slow down pursuit. They come out into Heritage Park near Pilar's grave. As the chapter ends, the women run into Croze with a flock of Mo'Hair.

Chapter 71 - Ren - Saint Rachel and all Birds, Year 25:

The women learn what happened to Croze and Shackie. The boys had been leading the line when their group was ambushed. When they came back to see what had happened, they found Oates. Croze leads Toby and Ren to MaddAddam, the scientists who were forced to help Crake and Rejoovu. Croze starts to reunite people now that the Waterless flood is over. MaddAddam has a cookhouse, toilets and is working on setting up solar. Ren is overwhelmed by all the dead who have come back to life.

Chapter 72 - Toby - Saint Rachel and All Birds:

Ren and Croze wander off. Toby thinks of the advantages of young love. Rebecca appears and Toby learns that Zeb is alive. The pigeons have been bothering MaddAddam as well. Toby and Rebecca catch up. Rebecca, Zeb, and Katuru holed up in the Wellness Clinic. Rebecca got an answer on the radio that said "I'm here, I'm here" and is hopeful it means that Adam One and the Gardeners survived as well. As the chapter ends, the group fends off a dog attack and field dresses the meat.

Chapter 73 - Ren - Saint Rachel and All Birds, Year 25:

Ren goes for a nap in Croze's bed. When she wakes up, he has joined her. She tells him she is not yet ready for sex. Croze is full of plans to rebuild, remove the pigeons, and go to the ocean. He reveals that Crake and BlyssPluss were the sources of the Waterless Flood. Ren asks about the Crakers, whom she is told are living down on the shore.

Zeb has told MaddAddam to avoid contact with them as well as the crazy guy who appears to be connected to them. Zeb and the others return from their looting expedition. They tell the others that CryoJeenyus was locked up and there were no survivors. From this, Ren figures that Lucerne is dead. The expedition discovered



evidence that Adam One and his group had been at the Buenavista, but they are not there now. Zeb intends to continue the search for Adam One and the God's Gardeners.

Rebecca says that they have seen the Painballers. They approached MaddAddam and offered Amanda as a trade for fresh power packs for their guns. MaddAddam could not go through with the deal, so the Painballers left with Amanda. Ren worries they will soon kill Amanda and wants to go after her before she is disposed of by the Painballers. Zeb sees Adam One as a higher priority, but agrees to give supplies to Toby and Ren. Zeb leaves Toby with a map, and supplies including hammocks, and they set out. As they walk through the forest they hear strange singing and conclude it must be the Crakers.

Analysis

Saint Rachel and All Birds, Year 25 Of the Gifts of Saint Rachel; and of the Freedom of the Spirit, Spoken by Adam One:

Like Miranda in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* the God's Gardeners have been reborn into a "Brave New World" and rejoice in it. With the Flood receding, or so they believe, the Gardeners emerge and explore the world. They emulate Miranda in that they embrace the people they find in this new world. Yet they forget that the plague takes advantage of those who reach out the hand of friendship to strangers. The Gardeners believe that with the old regime gone they can now start building their Paradise from which they will rule. Such hubris has no place in the new order and will bring swift punishment.

Adam One believes that when birds die it is a sign that life is dying. He is looking back to the idea of the canary in the mineshaft. Though it has become a general sign of danger, it originated because miners used to take canaries into the mineshaft with them. The canary was much smaller than a man and so if there was any poisonous gas it would die before man would be effected, thus giving the miners time to flee. Therefore, birds dying have become a sign of danger that, left unheeded, will bring death to mankind.

When God Shall His Bright Wings Unfold:

The poem has four line stanzas and a b, d rhyme scheme. The poem uses caps for emphasis: "His," "Heaven's," "Dove," "Bird," "Swans," "Cockatoo," "Owl," "Waterfowl," "Vulture," "Holy Bird" "Death," and "Life" are all capitalized (631). These words suggest that the birds are holy instruments of God. They have the power of life and death and must be treated with respect. The pronoun "He" is repeated seven times and "His" is repeated three. The use of the capital here suggests a reference to the divine. The birds belong to God. The repetition makes it clear how important the birds are to God. The poem suggests that killing a bird is an attack on God.

Chapter 68 - Ren - Saint Chico Mendes Martyr, Year 25:



The thick air of the forest is used to add a sense of foreboding to the scene. The women find hints of the passage of friends when they find a waterhole. This builds a sense of hope that they will soon join a larger community. Then they find Oates' body. The fact that they do not bury him shows that they are still in survival mode. The women are in hostile territory and cannot yet stop and mourn. Emotional wellbeing has to be put aside in favor of physical wellbeing.

Chapter 69 - Toby - Saint Chico Mendes Martyr, Year 25:

The characters in the novel are often subjected to extreme weather. The women are unable to stop and bury Oates because a twister is on the way and they must seek shelter. Twisters are symbols of destruction, death, and extreme change. This storm is brought in by the death of Oates and heralds Blanco's death.

The women, as already mentioned, exist in survival mode, they are constantly expecting danger. This leads to a state of hyper-alertness as their adrenaline rushes through them. This state is what causes Toby to notice Blanco in the gatehouse and to take precautions even though he appears dead. It is always better to be sure rather than risk being harmed.

Toby kills Blanco. He tormented her in the past and more recently he attacked Ren. Toby thinks that "Mad dogs bite" (645). Even though Blanco seems to be incapacitated and is dying he is still dangerous. Still, she admits to herself that killing him is an act of vengeance, not mercy.

Though Toby knows she should be thinking of Blanco as a fellow creature who is suffering or at least as a predator that needs to be put down all she can see is her old enemy. Toby finally has Blanco at her mercy and she takes her chance. This harkens back to when she joined the Gardeners. Toby was unable to stop herself from kicking Blanco when he was down. She now has a much better weapon. This moment was foreshadowed when Pilar told Toby that poisonous mushrooms are needed, as you never know when you might want to poison someone.

Chapter 70 - Toby - Saint Rachel and All the birds, Year 25:

Toby starts the chapter feeling reborn. She is now free. She has spent a large part of her life hiding from Blanco. That threat is now lifted and she feels that if she was able to defeat her old enemy she can do anything. The Waterless Flood was an unsatisfying way to kill Blanco as it brought no closure. This way she knows she is strong enough to face her fears and conquer her enemy.

Ren wakes by shouting "I'm late" (649). This shows that, unlike Toby, she is still caught by the past. Civilization runs on a timetable that it forces its members to adhere to. There are no more clocks or schedules. This symbolizes a loss of time. Time is a construct that humans created to more easily interact with large groups. Without large groups, it is unnecessary and can even be an impediment as seen here where it creates unneeded anxiety within Ren.



Chapter 71 - Ren - Saint Rachel and all Birds: Year 25:

There is a repetition of the idea of the dead coming back to life. It makes you contemplate the meaning of death. Is death when the body dies or is it when people hear about your death or perhaps there is a type of death that exists when you are believed to be dead. If belief shapes reality then in some way if the majority of those living believe you are dead, then you are dead whether you continue a physical existence or not. A good example of this is the practice of shunning. Being shunned by your community creates a type of death even though you are still alive.

When Ren meets MaddAddam she says that they have to “rebuild the human race” (660). She recognizes them as a viable community. Now that there are enough survivors of the Flood in one place to build a community surely the goal will be to recreate civilization. Yet most of the survivors were persecuted by society. Why would they want to recreate something that attacked them? They are a small enough community that they should be able to live in an anarchy. There are also the Crakers to consider.

Chapter 72 - Toby - Saint Rachel and All Birds:

Toby sees Ren and Croze as a couple. To her, everything is simple when you are young. She finds Ren’s statement about rebuilding the human race naïve. Instead, what they need to focus on is survival. This worry is emphasized when she learns that the group has been attacked by pigeons. She then helps defend against a dog attack. The advantage to such attacks is that they provide meat. However, the power in the sprayguns will not last forever and Toby is the only one with a rifle. There is still a lot that needs to be done if MaddAddam is going to survive in this new world.

The answer on the radio provides hope that they are not alone. Zeb has been devoting much of his time to searching for Adam One and the Gardeners. With Amanda in known danger, this privileging of the search for the Gardeners seems odd. Zeb still believes in serving the many over the one. This type of thinking is doomed to failure.

Ren is back to linking sex with love. After her experience with the Painballers, she wants there to be some meaning behind her sexual encounters. Ren is tired of being seen as an object and wants to be valued as a person. So instead of having sex she listens to Croze’s plans for the future. Croze sees the new world as a place of opportunity. The only impediments are the pigeons and those can be easily dealt with by sprayguns. Then man will once more be the dominant species and can do as he wishes with the world. This seems to negate the point of the Waterless Flood which was to remove man before his deprecations completely destroyed the world. Croze sees his plans as different from the destructive ones of the dead and yet he has the same lack of respect for life. This suggests that his plans will not come to fruition.

Zeb is also stuck in the past as he privileges the possibility of the many over the surety of the one. Given the same choice that Amanda was faced with in an earlier chapter Zeb chooses to reach out to the many instead of racing to the one friend who he knows



needs his help. All that MaddAddam knows about the condition of the Gardeners is that they have safely found and used one of the Ararats. They know that the Painballers were trying to use Amanda as a trade object and were rejected since they did the rejecting. So they have failed to help her twice by leaving her in danger. This leaves Toby and Ren to act on their own as the others clearly consider other priorities more pressing even though they know not acting will likely lead to Amanda's death. There is a curious lack of regard for individual life among MaddAddam. They seem instead to value the collective as a whole and see its parts as disposable. Considering how few people are left they truly need an attitude adjustment if they are to survive.

As Toby and Ren travel in search of Amanda, they hear strange singing. They believe that the noise is caused by the Crakers. Singing is used to express emotions and the Crakers use it to heal. The Craker ability to literally heal through music is an expansion upon the way the music is said to heal the soul. Music can be used to adjust your mood and lower blood pressure. Perhaps healing wounds is a logical next step.

Discussion Question 1

Why do the Gardeners welcome Melinda, Darren and Quill?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Toby kill Blanco?

Discussion Question 3

Why do MaddAddam refuse to go after Amanda?

Vocabulary

ethereal, contravention, indigenous, endorse, exquisite, pilloried, bludgeoned, elaborate, trundle, luminous, arboretum



Saint Terry and All Wayfarers

Summary

Saint Terry and all Wayfarers, Year 25 Of the Wandering State, Spoken by Adam One:

The God's Gardeners have arrived at the Edencliff Rooftop Garden to rest and renew themselves. Adam One reminds them that the day is dedicated to Saint Terry Fox, who outran death to live in memory. Explorers can become martyrs for their communities. Oates' namesakes sacrificed himself for his people. The Gardeners have lost Darren and Quill. Philo has entered a fallow state on the rooftop of a parking garage and Melissa was eaten by wild dogs. Adam One ends his speech with the hope that these losses will be the group's last and he calls for a song.

The Longest Mile:

The poem is taken from the God's Gardeners Oral Hymnbook. It calls on the happy times that the Gardeners once experienced in the Edencliff Rooftop Garden. The poem expresses the weariness of a long journey and the hope that the end is near.

Chapter 74 -Ren - Saint Terry and All WayFarers, Year 25:

Toby tells Ren that they are on a dangerous path. They start a meditation wherein Ren focuses on Amanda. Toby and Ren approach the Crakers, who say that Ren smells blue. They say blue should not be wasted and want to mate with Ren. Toby convinces them that Ren only seems blue.

The Crakers are worried about Snowman, who has hurt his foot and needs more purring. Instead of waiting for healing, he has gone after the Painballers and refused to let them follow. Toby and Ren ask for directions and follow Snowman. Ren is afraid that they cannot get Amanda back. Toby finds tracks of Amanda and the Painballers, and of Snowman. The women take off their packsacks so that their arms will be free in the coming battle.

Chapter 75 - Toby - Saint Terry and All WayFarers, Year 25:

Toby takes a moment to pray since this new world hardly epitomizes survival of the fittest. She wonders if maybe the Crakers are meant to replace humans. Toby considers Ren's situation if they lose and hopes Ren dies quickly. She sneaks through the forest with her rifle out. She notices how beautiful the world is seen through an adrenalin high. Toby calls on the predators to help her.

Chapter 76 - Ren - Saint Terry and All WayFarers, Year 25:

Ren hears voices and knows they are getting close. The Painballers are cooking meat. Amanda is off to the side with a rope around her neck connected to the leg of a dark



bearded guy. She is skin and bones. The Painballers sprayguns are on the ground and the women can see that they have little power left. The Painballers are discussing the Crakers. They think that they are savages, possibly cannibals and they want to trade Amanda for a Craker woman.

Snowman arrives on the scene and Ren discovers he is Jimmy. Jimmy brandishes a spraygun and the women worry he will shoot indiscriminately as he appears unstable. Toby steps out before the Painballers get to their sprayguns, but they have Amanda as a hostage. Toby tells Ren to get Jimmy's gun. Amanda whacks both Painballers over the head with a rock then runs, crying, to Ren. They tie up the Painballers. Jimmy has a fever and is hallucinating.

Analysis

Saint Terry and all Wayfarers, Year 25 Of the Wandering State, Spoken by Adam One:

The Gardeners have returned to Eden. The Waterless Flood cleansed their expellers from the Earth and made it safe to return to their man-made Paradise on the Edencliff rooftop. Yet this journey has cost them dearly. All three of their new members are dead. Two of something that may be the plague and the third was eaten by wild dogs. Adam One spins this as the sacrifice of the one for the whole. These few have died so that the group can survive. The Gardeners are, as mentioned in previous chapters, like a beehive, each drone is ready to die to protect the hive and the queen. Yet now that the outside threats have changed so drastically with the death of most of mankind should not the God's Gardeners evolve as well?

Martyr's may live on in memory but if all are dead who is left to remember them? That type of immortality relies on an oral history and a communal memory to exist. The Gardeners are entering a world where the end of such things is coming. The Gardeners can be read as the remnants of civilization and nature is turning on them as it begins its ascent. This is seen in the wild dog attack. Dogs are no longer the friends of man but have become its enemies.

The Longest Mile:

The poem has four line stanzas with a b, d rhyme scheme. This brings it in line with most of the other poems in the novel and is a reminder of happier times when the Edencliff garden was a Paradise. Caps are used for emphasis: "Hope's," "Road," "Despair," "Faith," "Destruction," "Enemies," "Life," "Message" "Torch," "Traveller," "Altar," "Nature's," "Goal," and "Pilgrim's Soul" are all capitalized (686). These words suggest that there is a light at the end of the tunnel; that though the Gardeners have despaired, there is still hope as their enemies have been destroyed and nature has taken her rightful place.

Surely, the Gardeners will soon find their own place in this new world. Alliteration appears in the phrases "we weaken" and "race on, race on" (686). The first suggests that the deaths of some of their members, as well as the long journey, have taken a toll



on the Gardeners. The second suggests that, in spite of their wishes, their journey is not yet over. They must still travel further if they wish to survive in this world. Overall, the poem talks of the weariness of travel and the hope that the end of the journey is near.

Chapter 74 - Ren - Saint Terry and All WayFarers, Year 25:

Toby and Ren meditate before they pursue the Painballers. Ren remembers Adam One telling her "It is not only the body that travels...it is also the soul" (688). This links back to the repeated idea that thought creates reality. Ren believes that she can send her soul out to find and comfort Amanda during her meditation. She will then awaken with a sense of how Amanda is and where she is.

When Toby and Ren meet the Crakers, yjru want to mate with Ren because they claim she smells blue. The Crakers appear to be like cats and go into heat instead of like "regular" humans and able to mate all the time. A mating season may have been created to separate the biological act of reproduction from the emotional feelings of love and lust. Since Ren does not look like the Crakers Toby is able to convince them that she only appears blue.

It is odd to associate a color with the impulse to mate. The color blue is typically associated with calmness, serenity and in darker shades with depression and sadness. None of those emotions typically invoke thoughts of having sex. Perhaps the idea is to link a feeling of calm consideration to the sex act.

The Crakers seem to think that Crake is a god. Crake was Glenn's MaddAddam code name. He also adopted it when speaking with the Crakers who are named after him. Names are important and Crake's interaction with the Crakers mirrors that of Adam's with the animals. This suggests that the Crakers are to take over the Earth because they have been created to be at one with the animals whereas humans can only attempt to meld with the animals.

Chapter 75 - Toby - Saint Terry and All WayFarers, Year 25:

After meeting the Crakers Toby cannot help but wonder if they are meant to replace humanity. They are perfectly engineered to survive in this new world. They are able to drive off predators and self-heal. The Crakers seem like a prettier and cleaner version of humanity. They are the solution to the human problem that Glenn created. Toby thinks he may have succeeded.

Toby prepares to attack the Painballers. It is interesting to note that the Painballers are never given any names. They are just given physical descriptions. Not naming someone is the best way to create an "other." The Painballers have become the unknown "other" through their lack of identity.

Toby believes it would be "Much worse for [Ren] if she doesn't die immediately" (700). Morality has "lower notes" that both the Painballers and Toby have hit (700). There are worse things than death. The women have to win this battle or they will be getting first-hand experience of some of those things. The Painballers are the enemy because of



their actions as much as anything else. They represent the evil will present in the world. Through their survival, Atwood shows us that nothing can wipe out the bad things unless we stand up and fight against them.

Chapter 76 - Ren - Saint Terry and All WayFarers, Year 25:

The Painballers have taken Lucerne's place as everyman figures, though they also represent humanity's dark side as everyman figures that dissect their interaction with the Crakers. They decide that the Crakers must be a group of native cannibals. It is unclear what evidence they have for this conclusion, other than the Crakers' clear otherness. To the Painballers, different means savage and since they ultimately represent humanity at its basest they assume that Crakers are cannibals because they would be if placed in the same position. While all anyone can do is process experiences through the lens of their own views the Painballers are an extreme of this. This is shown when they are willing to trade Amanda to the Crakers even believing that the Crakers would eat her.

Jimmy appears and attacks the Painballers. Ren and Toby leap into the battle to ensure that Amanda is rescued unharmed. The action is very fast, but appears very slow. Since both women are riding adrenalin highs they are seeing the world at a different pace and time seems fluid. Amanda is not so abused that she is not willing to strike out at her attackers and the battle ends when she knocks the Painballers out. Allowing Amanda to finish things lets her take back some control over her life. She becomes an agent again instead of an object of exchange.

Discussion Question 1

Why do the Gardeners not intend to re-establish themselves on the Edencliff rooftop garden?

Discussion Question 2

Why do Toby and Ren interact with the Crakers?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Amanda hit the Painballers with a rock?

Vocabulary

cache



Saint Julian and All Souls

Summary

Saint Julian and all Souls, Year 25 Of the Fragility of the Universe, Spoken by Adam One:

There are now few left on the Edencliff Rooftop Garden. This is because the Gardeners have the plague. Adam One reminds those still alive that the souls of all creatures live forever. With their deaths, they witness the end of a species. The Waterless Flood is a plague that only affects humans. The Earth was unharmed, but humanity was demolished. It is not the Gardeners fate to be a part of the new world. He ends with a prayer for All Souls and asks for forgiveness in death.

The Earth Forgives:

From the God's Gardeners Oral Hymnbook. This final poem serves as both prayer and epitaph to the Gardeners. It is about how time heals all wounds and the Earth will eventually offer forgiveness for their sins.

Chapter 77 - Ren - Saint Julian and all Souls, Year 25:

Amanda, Ren, Jimmy and Toby all sit around a camp fire. They find comfort there from their earlier fear. Ren retrieves the women's packs and Toby makes soup. Ren worries about Jimmy, his foot is infected, and he is taking to someone who is not there. Toby urges everyone to remember the dead and then let go of the past. Jimmy hears music moving closer, and as the novel ends the Crakers appear.

Analysis

Saint Julian and all Souls, Year 25 Of the Fragility of the Universe, Spoken by Adam One:

The God's Gardeners are dying. Their humanitarian efforts to aid others have ended up costing them their lives as the new members turned out to be plague carriers. This is a lesson in thinking through the consequences of our actions before we act. While Adam One's impulse was always to welcome everyone it had got him into trouble before with Burt. Instead of learning from that mistake Adam One has once more let danger into the garden and this time, the consequences are deadly.

The Gardeners believe that they are the last of the human race and that with their death the human race will breathe its last. The Waterless Flood was clearly meant to destroy all of humanity so that the animals could create a new kingdom. The Gardeners are working with only some of the information and being uninformed can be dangerous. There was plenty of BlyssPluss left lying around after the Waterless Flood. Since the



Gardeners did not know it was the cause of the plague they would not know to avoid it. Older members would have avoided pills on general principle but given their current dire straights clearly someone did not agree. It is important to make an informed decision based on all the information. Lacking vital intelligence has cost the Gardeners everything.

The Earth Forgives:

The poem has four line stanzas, and a b and d rhyme scheme. This structure invokes the majority of the poems in the novel and reminds the Gardeners of the good times. Caps are used for emphasis: “Earth,” “Trees,” “Fish,” “Deer,” “Wolf,” “Creatures,” “Vengefulness,” and “Justice” are all capitalized (719). This suggests that the animals have found justice. The wolf hunts the deer and the balance of nature is restored. Yet, nature is also vengeful and does not forget a slight. It is that vengeance that is killing the Gardeners. With the knowledge of their death, the Gardeners join the cycle of life.

Alliteration appears in the phrase “little lives” (719). This suggests that in the grand scheme of things the lives of the Gardeners have little importance. Their lives are important only to them. Overall, the poem asserts that nature is now dominant over the Earth and there is no place in this new world for man.

Chapter 77 - Ren - Saint Julian and all Souls, Year 25:

As the novel ends the main characters gather around a campfire. A campfire is a symbol of warmth, fellowship, and hospitality. Fire is the beacon that holds back the ever-present darkness. This symbol of fellowship is reinforced as they all share a meal. With the appearance of Jimmy, the last of the survivors has become part of the group. MaddAddam is now on the cusp of becoming a cohesive community. This future is foreshadowed by the camp fire and the fellowship it represents. The Waterless Flood is over and there is now a whole new world out there.

Discussion Question 1

Why do the Gardeners seem to know so little about the Waterless Flood?

Discussion Question 2

Could the death of the Gardeners have been prevented?

Discussion Question 3

How would it change the world of the MaddAddam trilogy if humanity really did die out?

Vocabulary

fragility, dissolution, persecuted, extinguished



Characters

Toby

Toby, short for Tobiatha, is one of the two narrators of the novel.

Prior to current time in the novel, Toby was a God's Gardener, known as Eve Six and in charge of potions and lotions. The previous Eve Six, Pilar, taught Toby a great deal and became her mentor.

In the current time of the novel, Toby works at AnooYoo Spa-in-the-Park. She came to the spa after she was forced to flee the Edencliff rooftop garden because of an attack by her ex, Blanco. The Gardener bought her a new identity which including changing everything about her appearance except her eye color. They then set her up with the spa job as a safe place to hide in plain sight.

After the Waterless Flood Toby becomes isolated at AnooYoo until she saves Ren from the Painballers. Once she saves Ren, the women unite to find resources and rescue Amanda from the Painballers. They are able to find other survivors and even meet a new race when they confront the Crakers. Toby acts as a mother for Ren and leads her through these trials.

Ren

Ren is the second narrator of The Year of the Flood. She was a child among the God's Gardeners. She arrived among the Gardeners when her mother, Lucerne, ran off from the HealthWyzer compound with Zeb, an Adam. She stayed with the Gardeners throughout the formative years of her childhood. It was only when Lucerne had a falling out with Zeb when Ren was 14 that they returned to HealthWyzer. This made Ren a child of two worlds.

Since she spent most of her childhood with the Gardeners their values are deeply ingrained in her psyche. Yet ,she spent her high school years in a compound and that introduced her to the wonders of consumerism. She also learned the sorrow of a broken heart as Jimmy rejected her love.

In current time within the novel, Ren is incredibly fragile from the instability of her childhood. She feels rejected by her birth father, Frank, and her surrogate father, Zeb. Neither Frank nor Zeb fought for her. Then Frank dies, and Lucerne throws Ren away to create a new family.

This will eventually lead Ren to Scales and Tails. She first tries working with Toby at AnooYoo spa-in-the-park but finds the interactions with lost loved ones too much to bear. Her best friend Amanda is now dating Jimmy and Lucerne comes to the spa. Ren



flees to Scales and Tail where she is currently a trapeze dancer. Scales and Tails is a strip club on the Street of Dreams.

Adam One

Adam One is the founder of the God's Gardeners. His first person speeches introduce each section of the novel. He was once a top scientist at a Corporation but was disgusted by the hypocrisy of the corporations. He decided that instead of continuing with the corporations he would use science to discover the true meaning of religion and God. This led him to create the God's Gardeners.

The God's Gardeners is not completely esoteric. Adam One believes that civilization as a whole is doomed and will soon be swept away by the Waterless Flood. However, he believes that by spreading the message of society's corruption individuals can be saved. He sees the God's Gardeners as a beacon of hope in a hopeless world.

He practices what he preaches. Adam One led the Blooms and Buds choir and saved Toby's life when he rescued her from Secret Burgers. He runs a type of underground railroad that hides those who defect from the corporations. He also collects information on the ills the corporations are perpetrating against society. Unfortunately, as there are no longer any police and the media is controlled by the corporations all Adam One and the Gardeners can do is record information and save individuals.

Rebecca

Rebecca is a friend of Toby's. Toby meets her when they work together at Secret Burgers. Rebecca eventually becomes a God's Gardener and orchestrates Toby's rescue from Blanco. Later, Rebecca becomes an Eve and becomes disillusioned with the God's Gardeners. Wanting to challenge society, she joins MaddAddam. She and Toby reunite after the Waterless Flood.

Dora

Dora was Blanco's girl when Toby first went to work at Secret Burgers. She tried to run from Blanco's abuse and was found the next day in the alley, cut to pieces.

Pilar

Pilar was Eve Six of the God's Gardeners. She tended the bees and mushrooms. She became Toby's mentor. Sadly, she contracted stomach cancer and chose to eat Death Angel Mushrooms and Poppy rather than face a slow death. Toby and Zeb buried her in Heritage Park.



Savanna

Savanna is a pale girl who works at Scales and Tails. She is killed when the Painballers rampage through the place shortly before the start of the Waterless Flood.

Amanda

Amanda is Ren's best friend. They were both with the God's Gardeners as children. She was originally a refugee from Texas. Amanda is the closest thing Ren has to family.

Amanda is a Bioartist; she spells words. Her current installation is the word "kaputt" done in cow bones and videoed being eaten from a helicopter.

Amanda saves Ren's life when she travels across the country to open the door to the Sticky Zone. The girls are like sisters and have kept in touch as often as possible through life's twists and turns. Now that the Waterless Flood has struck they feel like it is them against the world.

Shackie

Shackie is an older boy who was a God's Gardener. He used to tease the Ren and Bernice about dying in the Waterless Flood. The oldest of three boys he was tall and skinny with a spider tattoo. When he grew up he joined MaddAddam.

Shackie survives the Waterless Flood because he and his brothers are in Painball on charges on bio-resistance.

Croze

Croze is Shackie's brother. He was also with the God's Gardeners. The middle of three boys, he was stumpy and missing a side tooth. When he grew up he joined MaddAddam.

He survives the Waterless Flood because he and his brothers are in Painball on charges on bio-resistance.

Oates

Oates is Shackie and Croze's little brother; he was always tagging after them. The boys had lost their father on a trip the father took with Zeb. Their mother then abandoned them. When he grew up he joined MaddAddam.



Oates survived the Waterless Flood because he and his brothers are in Painball on charges on bio-resistance. Unfortunately, Oates' luck does not continue, as he is killed by the other Painball team.

Bernice

Bernice was a God's Gardener girl. She was always mean to the others, but she stopped Shackie and Croze from teasing Ren when Ren first arrived. She was older than Ren.

Until Amanda arrived Ren and Bernice were good friends. After the arrival of Amanda there was no room for Bernice and she turned to religion for comfort. Bernice left the Gardeners after her mother Veena discovered that Bernice's father, Bert, was molesting her. Veena then turned Burt over to CorpSeCorp for cheating them at their gro-op operation and they moved out west.

Bernice eventually joins an extreme green movement and is killed in a CorpSeCorp raid.

Zeb

Zeb is the founder of the splinter sect MaddAddam. The name came from the children who all called him Mad Adam. He was the link between the God's Gardeners cells, but he eventually disagreed with Adam One who believed in flying under the radar and a stance of passive observation.

Zeb believes that society can be saved only if the corporations are overthrown. He feels that a grassroots revolution is possible and that if Adam One isn't willing to lead it - he would.

Lucerne

Lucerne is Ren's mother. She ran away from her husband and the HealthWyzer compound to be with Zeb, and she brought Ren with her. In spite of this romantic start to a new life, she was depressed by the Gardeners and often stayed in bed all day. Lucerne eventually returns to HealthWyzer, once more taking Ren with her.

Veena

Veena is Bernice's mother. While with the Gardeners, she spends much of her time in a fallow state or severally depressed. She never washes and sits on the couch all day staring at nothing. However, when Bernice needs her she come through, removing Burt from their lives and taking them out west. She ends up running a chain of HealthWyzer stores.

Burt

Burt is called “the knob” by the kids. He is Veena’s husband and Bernice’s father. He was an Adam with the God’s Gardeners, and was known for groping little girls’ armpits. While he stopped there with other kids, he molested Bernice. Veena turns him in for his pot farm after learning he molested their daughter. He is later killed by CorpSeCorp for ripping them off.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Garden of Eden

The Garden of Eden itself symbolized man before original sin when he was at one with nature and himself; it is an unattainable Paradise for mankind to strive for. The tragedy of Eden is that it exists in the past and man is forever moving forward and thus further away from it. Atwood suggests that the only way to attain Eden is for mankind to complete their fall and be destroyed. Then the remnants of mankind will dwell once more in Paradise.

The Waterless Flood

Floods are symbolic of death, destruction, rebirth, and a sweeping away of the old. The Waterless Flood kills most of the human population and leaves the way clear for Glenn's Crakers and the God's Gardeners to rebuild in a world largely given over to nature. It destroys civilization.

Toby's Rifle

The rifle becomes a symbol of safety, and protection. Toby makes a quest-like journey to find her rifle while the Waterless Flood still rages. The fact that she risks death suggests that the rifle is important. It is later used to scare off the Painballers and rescue Ren. Toby also uses it to kill the boar that will end up providing her food when she would otherwise have starved. The rifle comes to be a symbol of survival.

Campfire

A campfire is a symbol of warmth, fellowship, and hospitality. Fire is the beacon that holds back the ever present darkness. This symbol of fellowship is reinforced as the main characters all share a meal. Every one has found each other and the threat of the Painballers has been vanquished. Toby, Ren, Amanda and Jimmy take this moment to celebrate their continued survival in an increasingly hostile world.

Children

Children are symbols of hope; they represent the future. Without children, there is no future and no hope. Toby's loss of her ability to have children is symbolic of the larger decline of society. The society Toby lives in has no future and is handing its children an empty wasteland.



The God's Gardeners take special care to educate their children, as the world after the Waterless Flood will belong to them. They teach survival skills, lore, and memory exercises and as well as natural healing methods. Unlike the modern society that Toby's experience exemplifies, the God's Gardeners are planning for the future and teaching their children accordingly.

Noah

Noah is a symbol of awareness because he was forewarned of God's plan and tried to warn others. The God's Gardeners are the Noahs of their age as they know that the Waterless Flood is coming and they try to warn society of the dangers. They attempt to save individuals like the previous Noah saved a pair of each animal. The God's Gardeners intend to preserve the knowledge of the previous society but hope to be better caregivers of that knowledge than its current keepers. Instead of building an ark like the last Noah, the Gardeners have trained their memories to become living arks.

Ark

An ark symbolizes safety from a coming storm and while as the preservation of life and knowledge. The God's Gardeners intend to become living arks, caring all they need to survive within themselves. Since they expect a plague to hit sometime in the near future this is a sensible solution as they must be in a state of constant readiness. Becoming a self-contained ark gives them their best chance at survival. The Gardeners again use knowledge to plan for the future.

Doctors

Doctors are the ones we trust to help us when we are ill. They are symbols of knowledge and healing. The corps have corrupted this by unleashing illnesses on the population in a double bid to make more and secure research subjects. The doctors who are not in hiding are now in collusion with the corps and no longer heal the ill but prolong treatment in the name of profit. Those unwilling to participate in this way must flee for their lives. Society is corrupted at a basic level as those who should be most trusted have turned against the people.

The dead dog outside AnooYoo.

Dogs are symbols of love, understanding, affection, and family. To find one dead suggests the imminent loss of someone dear. The fact that the dog was murdered suggests that a similar fate waits for one of either Toby or Ren's loved ones. It also tells the women that their enemies are close. Atwood uses this symbol to foreshadow Oates' death.

Twisters

Twisters are symbols of destruction, death, and extreme change. This particular storm is brought in by the death of Oates and heralds Blanco's death. It can even be read as a large comment on the death of the human race as the God's Gardeners will soon meet their fate.

Settings

AnooYoo Spa-in-the-Park

AnooYoo Spa-in-the-Park is located in Heritage Park. Women go there for facials, body wraps and minor cosmetic procedures. The Spa sells the hope of immortality. The spa is where Zeb and Lucerne first met. Lucerne was there for a treatment and Zeb was planting lumiroses. When Lucerne recognized Zeb from HealthWyser he kissed her to distract her and accidentally started an affair he could not extract himself from. This led to Lucerne and Ren joining the Gardeners as Zeb sought to buy her silence.

Later, the spa becomes managed by Toby when she needs a place to hide from Blanco. Since Lucerne has returned to HealthWyser at this point she again frequents the spa but has little interest in the staff. When Ren is disowned by Lucerne Toby hires her. Ren works there briefly until she flees her loved ones for Scales and Tails. Toby builds an Ararat at AnooYoo and shelters there from the Waterless Flood.

Toby again takes Ren in when, after the Waterless Flood Ren is captured by Painballers and Toby rescues her. Toby uses the spa's facilities to heal Ren. After Ren is healed the women leave the spa,, which has come to symbolize safety, in search of Amanda and food.

The spa becomes an almost maternal site as it shelters Toby from harm from the outside world both before and after the Waterless Flood. It is decorated solely in pink creating feelings of love and compassion. The Spa reminds Toby that not all is lost and that there is still caring in the world.

The Sticky Zone

The Sticky Zone is an isolation chamber located in Scales and Tails. It is used to check for viruses; it is a clean room. Being in the Sticky Zone saves Ren's life, but she becomes trapped there after the Waterless Flood. The door only opens from the outside and Mordis, the only one with the combination, is dead.

The Sticky Zone is a strange combination of life and death as it twice saved Ren's life but may end up killing her. First, when the Painballers went on their rampage through Scales and Tails they were unable to get through the locked door of the Sticky Zone to Ren. Mordis died rather than give them the combination. Second, after the clean up team missed her, the Sticky Zone protected Ren from the Waterless Flood. Yet, it is a sealed room with a limited amount of food. If Ren cannot find another survivor to open the door, she will starve to death.

Therefore, the Sticky Zone represents life turned to death. It was helpful only in the short term and must now be abandoned lest it become a tomb. Still, it instills a type of



inertia, since having called for help, there is little Ren can do except pray Amanda is still alive and will arrive in time.

Edencliff Rooftop Garden

The Edencliff Rooftop Garden is the home base of the God's Gardeners. They have created a garden in the middle of a pleeb. It provides them with honey, herbs, fruit and vegetables. The garden comes to symbolize Eden. when the Gardeners are driven out after they are outlawed it is a re-creation of the fall of man. Nothing will ever be as good as their ideal days in the garden despite the fact that their belief system states that the Waterless Flood that ends civilization will be the true ideal times. It is after the Waterless Flood that the Gardeners believe they will come into their own. The times of persecution will be over and they will be free. The fall of man will also be at an end. They are even free to return to the EdenCliff Rooftop Garden after the Waterless Flood.

Yet they return only to die. They learn that there is no going back. That paradise has no place for the Gardeners and that all their preparation was not enough. The Gardeners Garden is both Eden and a mass grave as it reveals the perils as chasing what has been lost.

HealthWyzer Compounce

The HealthWyzer Compound is where Ren grew up. Her real father, Frank, works there. Ren meets Jimmy at HealthWyzer and Glenn transferred into the compound to finish high school. Zeb also has unexplained ties to the compound.

HealthWyzer becomes a symbol for all the corps. We learn that HealthWyzer has created pills that slowly kill people and seeded their vitamins with them. This makes the company billions as they try to cure the mysterious illness. They also get the people as test subjects. This is how Toby's mother was killed.

HealthWyzer is also the source of the pigoons. Pigoons are a gene splice of pig and human to create organ donors. They were released during the Waterless Flood and are incredibly dangerous because of their added intelligence. HealthWyzer, like all corps, was more interested in the bottom line than anything else. They allowed Frank to be killed rather than pay his ransom, lest his kidnappers be encouraged into trying again.

Buenavista Heights Condos

Buenavista Heights Condos was where Bernice lived. The Gardeners grew mushrooms in the basement. Bernice's father was running a pot farm on the empty floors of the complex. The place was a six-floor walk-up controlled by the God's Gardeners. It contained a mushroom garden in the basement. Bernice's apartment had a clogged shower, cracked tiles and a permanent musty smell from the mushrooms.

The God's Gardeners used the Ararat there during the Waterless Flood.



Themes and Motifs

Reconnecting with Nature

The Year of the Flood explores the importance of nature and the need of those in the present world to reconnect with nature. The novel is about the triumph of nature over civilization and the final fall of man. Nature is central to life. Eden is a natural world unspoiled by man.

Nature is growing over the symbols of civilization such as the manicured lawn and the pond at the AnooYoo Spa. The order imposed on nature by man has broken down and the natural order is being restored. In the perennial battle of man against the elements, the elements have triumphed. This final loss by humanity suggests the hubris of thinking they can conquer the world and tame nature to suit themselves.

Adam One explains the current state of the world as a result of man's free will and disconnection from nature. Mankind is fallen because he no longer lives with the animals, but instead consumes and enslaves them. Only those who go back to nature can be saved. The skills of living in and working with nature that God's Gardeners teach their followers works to help them survive for many years, as they teach how to live in nature and use her resources in a renewable way for everything from nourishment to health care. This only fails the Gardeners when at least one of them succumbs to human desires over what they had been taught, and the plague finds its way into the Gardeners' group as a result, killing them off.

Atwood's clear message throughout the novel is that nature is the most powerful thing on the planet, and although man may think he is in charge or at the top of the food chain in current day, he will not outlast nature. Atwood seems to suggest that mankind's only hope for longterm survival is to find a way to live more peacefully and respectfully with nature.

Fellowship

The Year of the Flood looks at the importance of friends to humanity. Much of the novel is spent in the search for other survivors. It is only as the novel ends that the main characters gather around a campfire. A campfire can be read as, among other things, a symbol of fellowship. This idea is reinforced then they all share a meal. With the appearance of Jimmy, the last of the survivors has become a part of the group. MaddAddam is now on the cusp of becoming a cohesive community. This future is foreshadowed by the campfire, and the fellowship it represents. The Waterless Flood is over and there is now a whole new world out there.

The Fellowship theme is also explored in man's relationship with the animals. In the Garden, Adam and the animals were friends. It was only once man fell that he became carnivorous. Adam One suggests that society will not be healthy until we go back to this



pre-fall utopia and once more see the animals as friends, not prey. Mankind must be friends with the animals, who share a common spirit.

Humans need something outside themselves to interact with whether that is a friend or God. It is only in groups that humans thrive and that is why this novel follows the survivors of the Waterless Flood as they pull together.

Isolation

Isolation is Fellowship's dark mirror, and Atwood demonstrates throughout the novel how scary isolation is to humankind, as it causes negative outcomes ranging from loneliness and sorrow to eventual insanity and death.

Just as humans thrive in groups they wither when forced into isolation. The plague is designed to take advantage of this, as the Waterless Flood passed by touch. It is engineered to take advantage of human nature and passed through society as people tried to comfort each other. As helping hands reached out they were infected and killed for their compassion. This forces people to choose isolation if they want to continue living.

When readers are introduced to Toby, she is alone at AnooYoo Spa. All Toby's loved ones are gone and she is forced to awake each day from her dreams into a world where she is alone. She becomes suicidal and worries she is becoming delusional as the length of her isolation continues. Ren is also alone but she has the hope of Amanda joining her to cling to. Toby has nothing and sees the days stretch out in front of her in an endless march of isolation and considers her Death Angel mushrooms a viable alternative to such a future. She may well have taken such a route had Ren not re-entered her life. The relief from isolation is likely all that saved the two women, as they bonded together to find a way to live in the new world. Finding and saving Amanda added to their confidence and feelings of belonging to a group again, rising their spirits and giving them the will to live, survive, and thrive.

Rebirth/Rising from the Dead

While there is no people literally coming back from the death, for many characters it feels that way when they find a loved one after a prolonged period of not seeing them; this is because the world has become such a hostile place that few survive or return after disappearing. Atwood uses this theme to show how dire the situation in the world has become in her novel, and it is a warning to readers that our own society could suffer a similar fate if we do not heed her warnings to create a better, kinder, and more even relationship with nature.

One of the first characters to "return from the dead" is Amanda, when she appears at Scales and Tails to save Ren. Ren had held out some hope that Amanda was still alive and coming for her, but she had no proof of this and a large part of her must have assumed that Amanda, like most of humanity at this point, was dead. Seeing Amanda



before her must have been a joyful yet quite surreal experience - like seeing someone you care about return from the dead.

Toby had also assumed Ren was dead after they did not see one another for a prolonged period of time. Despite the fact that Toby had once acted as Ren's mother figure for awhile, Toby had to let go of those feelings and assume Ren was dead in order to move forward and concentrate on keeping herself alive in the new world.

Ren's return gives Toby hope that more of the God's Gardeners survived the Waterless Flood. Toby puts maggots on Ren's leg wound to stave off and treat the infection. Helping Ren recover from her injuries makes Toby feel reborn, and she is glad Ren has come back to her.

Toby's feelings are described as feeling reborn once again after killing her former abuser Blanco. She is now free from fear that he will find her again. She has spent a large part of her life hiding from Blanco, but killing him lifts that from her shoulders and she feels free to focus on other things. It also instilled confidence, as she believes that if she is able to defeat her old enemy she can do anything.

Finally, the Gardeners feel they have been reborn into a new world after the Waterless Flood. The group feels the time they have been waiting for has come, where the Waterless Flood has killed their enemies and it is not time for the Gardeners to rise up and take charge of their new world. This rebirth, however, does not end up working out for them, as they have not been reborn from their humanity, and it is at least one of their member's decision to imbibe in human pleasure that introduces the plague to their group and ends up killing most of them off.

Place of Women

Atwood uses her novel, *The Year of the Flood*, to comment on how the devaluation of women to mere objects to be traded or used, is a sure sign of a degenerated and dangerous society.

The first example of this is Toby. After society started falling apart, Toby had to obtain whatever work she could get in order to feed herself. She ended up working at a burger place for a man named Blanco primarily because it allotted her two burgers a day. However, in order to keep her job, it was understood that Toby (along with all other women working there) had to be sexually available to her boss, Blanco. When Blanco's supposed "girlfriend" tried to run away from him due to his extreme abuse, she was found the next day in a nearby ally, cut to pieces - a clear message to other women working for Blanco.

Ren also becomes viewed as an object in the story when she goes to work at Scales and Tales, a type of strip club. Ren is not only devalued by the men who come to watch her perform on the trapeze, but the rest of society looks down on her as well because they believe she must have other choices for work. The fact that so many more women are forced into this industry in the novel is a worrying statement about the health of its



society. Even before going to work at Scales and Tails, Ren is treated as an object when Jimmy, a boy she is in love with, tries to "loan" her to his friend Glenn for sex.

Another example of how devalued women and girls are in Atwood's world is how accepted Bernice's father's, Burt, behavior is. Although he is feeling up girl's armpits, certainly an inappropriate way for a grown man to touching young girls, those in society who are aware of his behavior think little of it, because they reason he has not taken his touching any further. This turns out to be a devastating wrong assumption, as Burt is actually sexually molesting his daughter Bernice.

Many women in Atwood's world have given into the social attitudes toward women and have begun seeing themselves as objects as well. Amanda uses sex as currency. She trades sex with Shackie and Croze so they will sell weed to cheer Ren up. To Amanda, this is no different than offering money. The importance is that the boys fulfill their end of the deal and Ren becomes happy. Society has objectified women to the point where the boys accept that sex is currency. Sex is no longer about love or even lust but about ensuring that each side benefits equally. For the woman, this must now be in cash or trade not equal pleasure in the act. This allows the sex act to be all about the man's pleasure as he has paid for the privilege.

Atwood's message - warning - is clear: the objectifying and devaluing of women is a clear sign of a degenerating society.



Styles

Point of View

The novel contains two third person narrators: Toby and Ren. They each tell their own story in the present about their actions following the Waterless Flood. The reader learns the narrators' histories through flashbacks. Each narrator is a former God's Gardener. Toby was Eve Six and Ren was a child among the Gardeners.

The novel is divided into sections introduced by a first person speech from the head of the God's Gardeners, Adam One. Adam One's speeches are in chronological order and start at year five and progress to year 25, the year of the Waterless Flood. The speeches are in celebration of various festivals and cover the history of the God's Gardeners. Each speech is followed by a song from the God's Gardeners Oral Hymnbook. These songs take the form of short poems usually a page to a page and a half long that address the main theme of the preceding speech.

Language and Meaning

Atwood used capitalization for emphasis throughout her novel. She is creating a new world set in the near future. One of the main way, she does this is through the creation of a different lexicon for her characters. She introduces words such as rakunk, pigoon, and solarcar to explain to the technology of the future. The words may be alien but they are often explained using context or even introduced for their first usage is they are completely new such as pigoon which is explained as a "pig balloon" used for growing human organs the first time it is used by Jimmy whose father created the creatures.

Atwood also uses a lot of scientific language. This also aids in her world building. The corps that have taken over in the near future represent not only the final victory of capitalism but also the victory of the sciences over the arts. This is reflected in her language for this novel which is universally science oriented and when it does touch on the arts such as at Martha Graham College it is only to show us how far they have fallen. Martha Graham is falling down and offers courses such as Potions and Lotions (Toby's major) and Dance Calisthenics (Ren's major), neither of which would be offered at a serious arts college today. Ren, for instance, plans to teach Yoga during the lunch break at a corp when she graduates.

Structure

The novel itself is broken into sections framed by Adam One's speeches. Each section represents a God's Gardener festival day. They serve to fix a sense of time to the events of the Waterless Flood. After each introductory speech, there is a song from the God's Gardeners Oral Hymnbook. This is presented in the novel as a short poem. It

also serves to remind us that the Gardeners themselves did not write anything down but used a strictly oral traditional. Thus the use of speeches to pass news.

After the poems are chapters narrated by either Toby or Ren. After each chapter heading the narrator, year and if Toby is speaking Saint days are noted. This style of switching speakers ensures that the reader is never lost, even during extended flashbacks. The Saint days are noted for Ren's chapter because we are told early on that she has lost track of the days. Once she meets up with Toby and is told the day the Saint day is once more noted beside her chapters to show that she now knows what day it is.

This meticulous timekeeping sets *The Year of the Flood* apart from *Oryx and Crake* where the narrator Jimmy was completely lost and as we see when we encounter him at the end of *The Year of the Flood* completely unprepared. Ren and Toby were both prepared for the Waterless Flood and had both had rudimentary survival training. The added structure in this second novel reflects that.



Quotes

Only the Spirit lives forever, and the Spirit isn't a thing."
-- Adam One (chapter 2)

Importance: Adam One explains that there is no such thing as immortality of the body. Nothing lasts forever.

What breaks in daybreak? Is it the night? Is it the sun, cracked in two by the horizon like an egg, spill out the light?"
-- Toby (chapter 3)

Importance: Toby considers the idea that the sun might break for each new dawn. What is the importance of the words we choose and why are so many of them violent. Does life only come at the cost of destruction?

"If you are clutched or even touched, you to will drown."
-- Adam One (chapter 5)

Importance: The plague is spread by touch. It takes advantage of the human need for fellowship and comfort when injured.

How can anyone reason that the failure to measure the Immeasurable proves its non-existence?"
-- Adam One (The Feast of Adam and All Primates)

Importance: Adam's speech is saying that it is impossible to prove a negative and scientists would do well to remember that. God cannot be measured but that does not mean he does not exist.

We craved knowledge of good and evil, and we obtained that knowledge, and now we are reaping the whirlwind."
-- Adam One (The Feast of Adam and All Primates)

Importance: Adam's speech is saying that not all knowledge is good and it is the relentless pursuit of knowledge at all costs that will destroy mankind.

"You trade what you have. You don't always have choices."
-- Amanda (chapter 11)

Importance: Amanda believes that you use everything you have to survive. What you want to do does not always come into it.

She desperately needs to believe such pure joy is still possible."
-- Toby (chapter 18)



Importance: Toby sees the time of the Edencliff rooftop garden as a time of joy. She holds on to the good of that time as a sign that joy is possible.

It was good to let boys of that age believe that they were doing the jobs of men, so long as they didn't get carried away."

-- Toby (chapter 33)

Importance: Toby gave the task of sending the rats to the Buenavista to Shackie, Croze and Oates because they needed the sense of responsibility.

Final self journeying is a moral option only for the experienced, and, I have to say, only for the terminally ill."

-- Adam One (chapter 35)

Importance: Adam One believes that suicide is only an option for the terminally ill.

The sands of time are quicksands."

-- Adam One (chapter 36)

Importance: Time can cause people to forget any and everything as the everyday business of life is gotten on with.

We are all in one and others hands."

-- Adam One (chapter 40)

Importance: Adam is saying that, in the end, we must all trust each other and all look after each other.

Maybe sadness was a kind of hunger."

-- Toby (chapter 47)

Importance: Toby expresses her belief that sadness can create a void just like hunger and it too can be fed and allowed to either grow or be sated.