

Chrysalids Reading Comprehension Questions

Chapter 1:

1. The city David dreams about contains images with which he is not familiar. Name at least three.
2. What is David's eldest sister's name?
3. From where does David's sister say his dreams may come?
4. How does David feel about the city he sees in his dream?
5. What two words does David use to describe what he and Rosalind have in common?
6. Since this book is set in the future after a nuclear holocaust, what then is "the bank, coming round in a wide curve, and then running straight as an arrow towards the distant hills"? (
7. What happens to Sophie while playing with David?
8. What important information is revealed about Sophie's foot?
9. What is the image of God as decreed by Waknuk society? Quote directly
10. David gives an indication of special abilities in reference to Mrs. Wender. What are these abilities?
11. What secret must David keep?
12. Why are Sophie's toes of such concern?

Chapter 2:

1. How old is David's house?
2. Who built this house?
3. Describe the materials from which this house is built.
4. Explain the words: "My grandfather appeared to have been a man of somewhat tediously unrelieved virtue. It was only later that I pieced together a portrait that was more credible, if not more creditable" (tediously - tiresome, annoying; credible - believable; creditable - good)
5. How did Ellas's wife react to her marriage?
6. What are two of Joseph's occupations?
7. Quote two of the axioms hanging in Joseph's house.
8. What is an Offence?
9. How is the problem of an Offence solved?
10. What are human deviations called?
11. How does Joseph Storm react to deviations?
12. What is the Wild Country?
13. What are the Fringes?
14. What are the Badlands?
15. Give a description of Uncle Axel. Give at least three details.

Chapter 3:

1. Describe David's schooling.

Chrysalids Reading Comprehension Questions

2. What is significant about the steam engine?
3. Who are the Old People?
4. Why does John Wender regard David with suspicion?

Chapter 4:

1. What Information does Uncle Axel discover about David?
2. David becomes aware of something during his conversation with Uncle Axel. What is it?
3. What does David notice about one of the captured Fringe leaders?
4. Choose a quotation from page 34 that describes Joseph's reaction to this man.
5. Why does Angus want the Great Horses?
6. Describe the size of the horses.
7. Where is Waknuk located?
8. What is the author and title of the book that survived Tribulation?
9. What other book survived from the time of the Old People? (
10. What are Ethics?

Chapter 5:

1. Who sees the different footprint on the rock?
2. Why does Sophie hit Alan?
3. What do the Wenders decide to do?
4. How does Mrs. Wender feel about David?
5. What does Mrs. Wender do that is unfamiliar to David?
6. What does Mr. Wender ask David to do?
7. How does the inspector attempt to help David?
8. How does Joseph persuade David to tell where Sophie is?

Chapter 6:

1. Of what does David attempt to convince the other telepaths?
2. What does the inspector bring with him? Why?
3. How are the Wenders found? (
4. What are Uncle Axel's views about running away?
5. According to Uncle Axel, why do people become angry at new Ideas?
6. What do sailors say about sailing to the East?
7. Describe some of the strange things sailors have seen.
8. Describe the area where nothing grows.
9. What probably has caused the damage the sailors have seen there?

Chrysalids Reading Comprehension Questions

10. In real life, what sea are the sailors referring to?
- 11 .What does Uncle Axel say about the "true image"?
12. What does Uncle Axel learn from David?

Chapter 7:

1. Why is no mention made of Petra's birth?
2. What cause is there for concern with regards Petra's inspection?
3. What is the punishment for having three babies who do not pass inspection?
4. Why does Aunt Harriet visit David's mother at this time?
5. How does David's mother respond to Harriet's request?
6. What does Harriet do as a result?

Chapter 8:

- 1 .About what does David begin to worry as he converses with Uncle Axel?
2. Quote the lines that contain Uncle Axel's advice to David.
3. Wyndham is presenting his own views through the lecture Uncle Axel gives to David. What are Wyndham's views here?
- 4 .What does Uncle Axel say makes a man?
5. Who are the other members of David's special group?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of education according to David?

Chapter 9:

- 1.What is the first hint that Petra is not ordinary? Quote the lines from the text.
2. How are Petra's communications different from everyone else's?
3. About what does David dream this time?
4. What does Old Jacob advise doing with any deviation?
5. Why does Old Jacob believe that deviations are increasing in number?

Chapter 10:

1. Give two reasons why Anne's marriage is frightening to the group.
2. How do the members of the group feel about marriage to a norm? Quote a line from the text that supports your claim.
3. Why is Uncle Axel worried about Anne being in love with a norm?
4. How does Uncle Axel suggest they deal with Anne?
- 5 . Why can David and Rosalind not see each other openly?
6. What happens to Alan? What happens to Anne?
7. What fortunate accident regarding Anne's letter prevents the group from being exposed?

Chrysalids Reading Comprehension Questions

Chapter 11:

1. What two forbidden things does Petra do?
2. Why is the strength of Petra's call dangerous to the group?
3. What causes Petra to call for help?
4. How does David greet the stranger?
5. What is the stranger's name?
6. What makes the man suspicious of the group?
7. What does the group decide that they cannot do?
8. How does David determine that Petra can receive thought-shapes?
9. What new information does Petra give the group?
10. Who is Joe Darley? Why is he asking questions?
11. What did Anne do before she died that endangered the group?
12. What did Uncle Axel do as a result? Outline the situation.
13. What other information is provided about banishment to the Fringes?
14. What do David and the group decide to do to Petra if necessary?

Chapter 12:

1. What causes the group's flight?
2. Who is best planned for the escape?
3. What has Rosalind brought with her? How is this symbolically appropriate?
4. Who assists Rosalind in her escape? What are David's thoughts about this news?
5. With whom are Rosalind, David and Petra communicating for information?
6. What do we know about the guns used in Waknuk?
7. What does Rosalind do that she finds to be traumatic?
8. What is happening to Sally and Katherine?
9. About what are the authorities most upset regarding the group?
10. What advantage do the telepaths have over normal people?
11. What does Petra mention for the second time?
12. From where are the thought pictures coming?
13. Why does David know about this land?
14. What technique does Wyndham use to end his chapters?

Chapter 13:

1. What area have the three travellers reached?
2. Who or what is most important right now? Why is this the case?
3. What had happened to Sally and Katherine?
4. David explains to Petra why people hurt other people. Quote the lines.
5. What does Petra tell David about Sealand?

Chrysalids Reading Comprehension Questions

6. What happens to David at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 14:

1. Explain the difference between the external Rosalind and the "real" one.
2. Who has captured the group?
3. Where do the Fringe people think the Devil dwells?
4. After listening to the Fringes man, David observes that all people think they know God's truth. What does the man mean by saying "life is change"?
5. What does the Fringes man mean by "they try to strangle the life out of Life"?
6. Who are the New People?
7. Why do the Sealanders believe they are superior to the Old People?
8. How does the spider-man introduce himself to David?
9. What does the spider-man intend to do with Rosalind?

Chapter 15:

1. Why did David say Sophie's clothes were "almost indecent"?
2. What is the relationship between Gordon and Sophie?
3. Describe Sophie's cave.
4. Who is the last of the original group still communicating with the refugees?
5. What two groups are soon to converge on the Fringes area where David and friends are?
6. What did Sophie mean when she says to David, "This is the Fringes"?
7. How did Sophie free the girls?

Chapter 16.

1. Why did Sophie become angry with Rosalind?
2. Who comforted Sophie?
3. Where is Michael?
4. Where is Rachel?
5. What is a "behind think"?
6. Who - does Petra ask Michael - is pursuing David and Petra?
7. Quote the lines that express David's conflicted feelings about his father.
8. What does the Sealand woman say about the future of Waknuk and others like it?
9. What idea does she express that repeats the ones of the Fringes man in chapter 14?
10. For whom was the spider-man looking? For what reason?
11. How were you to escape the power of the strands coming from the ship?

Note: The Sealanders' arrival and rescue of David and company is an example of a "deus ex rnachina" ending, or literally, "god out of a machine". This theatrical device, often used in Greek tragedy, involved a god appearing to solve the problems of the main characters. The god arrives

Chrysalids Reading Comprehension Questions

from the sky and externally solves the problems of the play. Often the god takes the protagonist into his machine and the two return to the heavens together. The protagonist is then granted immortality.

Chapter 17:

- 1 . How did the Sealand lady get rid of the deadly filaments?
2. Describe the Sealand woman.
- 3 . What "holy" imagery is associated with the Sealand woman?
4. What bad news does the Sealand woman give?
5. How many of the fighters are alive?
6. The Sealand woman speaks about the Fringes people being condemned to a life of "squalor and misery", with "no future for them". The reader then learns that the Sealanders consider themselves to be the current "lords of life". What does she say will eventually happen even to them?
7. What do Michael and Rachel decide to do?
8. Give a few details about the city in Sealand the travellers reach.
9. What is the "buzzing" the travellers hear as they approach the city?
10. Would you describe the ending of this book as hopeful, hopeless or something in between? Explain your answer.
- 11 Explain briefly why John Wyndham chose to title this novel The Chrysalids. See the note below. Note: "The word chrysalid is a biological term which means the state into which the larva of most insects pass before becoming a perfect insect. In this state the larva, wrapped in a hard sheath or case, takes no food and is inactive. In general usage the word can mean a sheltered state or stage of being or growth. Thus, as with all good titles, the reader of The Chrysalids is left to extend this definition so as to apply it in a suitable way to the novel itself " (W.J. Holt, from the 1965 House of Grant edition)