

The Maze Runner



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF JAMES DASHNER

One of six children, James Dashner was born and raised in a small town in Georgia. As a child, Dashner was an avid reader of sci-fi and fantasy novels and wrote some of his first stories on his parents' old typewriter. After studying accounting at Brigham Young University, Dashner worked briefly in finance before devoting his time to writing fiction. He achieved moderate success with his novels in *The Jimmy Fincher Saga* and *The 13th Reality* series, and Dashner then began work on *The Maze Runner*. His most popular book, *The Maze Runner* stayed on the New York Times Best Sellers list for weeks. As of 2015, he lives in the Rocky Mountains with his family.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Since *The Maze Runner* takes place in a distant, fictional future, the novel does not directly refer to any historical events. Instead, Dashner makes reference to a fictional environmental disaster that threatens to annihilate all life on Earth. As such, Dashner may be responding to recent natural disasters like the 2010 Haiti earthquake and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. The novel also questions the ethics of human experimentation, which recalls the United States' long history of performing secret experiments on people. For example, in the Guatemala Syphilis Experiment, the United States Public Health Services infected people in Guatemala with syphilis in order to test the effectiveness of antibiotics. Possibly having this history in mind, Dashner depicts scientists experimenting on children for the supposed "greater good" of humanity.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

James Dashner lists Orson Scott Card's 1985 sci-fi novel *Ender's Game* as an influence for *The Maze Runner*. Like *Ender's Game*, *The Maze Runner* tells the story of adults raising exceptionally bright children in extremely brutal and dangerous environments in order to prepare them to save humanity from destruction. *The Maze Runner* also belongs to the recent post-apocalyptic trend in young adult fiction. In the dystopian society of *The Hunger Games*, the most popular and successful novel in this trend, teenagers are forced to compete in death matches. Like *The Hunger Games*, *The Maze Runner* follows the conventions of the trend by depicting heroic teenagers struggling with the challenges of adolescence while fighting to save the world from tyrannical adults. *The Maze Runner* is also the first in a series that includes the sequels *The Scorch Trial* and

The Death Cure along with the prequel *The Kill Order*.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *The Maze Runner*
- **When Written:** 2006
- **Where Written:** USA
- **When Published:** 2009
- **Literary Period:** Young Adult Post-Apocalyptic Fiction
- **Genre:** Young Adult, Science Fiction
- **Setting:** The Glade and the Maze
- **Climax:** Thomas and other Gladers fight off the Grievers and find the exit to the Maze
- **Antagonist:** The Grievers and the Creators
- **Point of View:** Close Third-Person

EXTRA CREDIT

Blockbuster: *The Maze Runner* was adapted into a 2014 film of the same name. The popularity of the film has ensured that the book's sequel, *The Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials*, will be made into a movie.

Prequel: For those interested in the events leading up to the story in *The Maze Runner*, Dashner wrote a prequel entitled *The Kill Order*, which tells the story of the sun flares that hit Earth and threatened to wipe out humanity.



PLOT SUMMARY

In the dark of an elevator, a teenaged boy awakes with no memories other than that his name is Thomas. When the elevator comes to a halt, the doors open and Thomas finds himself surrounded by around fifty teenaged boys. Their leader, a boy in his late-teens named Alby, welcomes him to the **Glade**. Surrounded by extremely high stone walls covered in thick ivy, the Glade is a large square piece of land with a few wood and concrete buildings. In each of the surrounding four walls, there is a narrow opening.

Over the course of the next few days, Thomas learns that behind the walls is the **Maze** – a labyrinthine structure full of Grievers. Grievers are violent mechanical creatures that only come out at night. Since the openings to the Maze, what the Gladers call Doors, close at night, the Grievers cannot get into the Glade. During the day, a few of the boys, the Runners, navigate the Maze in order to find an exit. On the same day every month, the elevator brings a new male arrival. But on the

day after Thomas arrives, the elevator returns with a teenaged girl in a coma.

The next day Alby and Minho, a Runner, go into the Maze to investigate a report about a dead Griever. A few minutes before the Doors close, Thomas sees Minho dragging an unconscious Alby towards the Door. With no one else around to help, Thomas enters the Maze right as the Doors close behind him. Inside, Minho tells him that a Griever stung Alby. Thomas and Minho lure a group of Grievers away from Alby and towards the **Cliff** – a place in the Maze where the path ends and overlooks an empty expanse. As the Grievers charge at them, the boys dive out of the way, causing the Grievers to disappear off the Cliff.

It's morning and the Doors are open by the time they are able to return to Alby's location. Newt, Alby's second-in-command, cures Alby by giving him the Grief Serum, which causes him to go through the **Changing**. Newt tells Thomas that the Changing is a painful side effect of the Serum that makes people recall some of their memories.

In the following days, the girl, whose name is Teresa, wakes up and tells Thomas that the Maze is code. The sun also suddenly disappears, which causes the Doors to remain open at night. On the first night the doors stay open, the Grievers come into the Glade and carry off a boy named Gally into the Maze. The Gladers hope that the Grievers will only take one boy per night.

The following day, Thomas uses the maps that the Runners made of the Maze to figure out that the Maze's shifting walls have been spelling out the phrase, "*Float. Catch. Bleed. Death. Stiff. Push.*" To understand the code's meaning, Thomas purposefully gets stung by the Grievers so that he can go through the Changing and recover some of his memories. After the Changing, Thomas remembers that to escape the Maze, they must put the code into a computer that is inside an invisible portal. To get to the portal, they must jump off the Cliff.

After convincing them to follow his plan, Thomas helps lead an armed band of Gladers into the Maze. At the Cliff, a group of Grievers are waiting for them. Thinking that they will only kill one person a night, Alby sacrifices himself to the Grievers. But his sacrifice fails and the Gladers must attack the Grievers as Thomas and Teresa make their way into the portal. Inside, Teresa plugs in the code, which shuts down all the Grievers.

The surviving Gladers meet Thomas and Teresa in the portal. They find a slide that brings them to a giant facility where they meet the creators of the Maze. A woman with the word WICKED stitched into her lab coat and a man in a hood approach the Gladers. The woman congratulates them but says there is still one more test. The man takes off his hood, revealing himself as Gally. Seeming to be mind-controlled, Gally throws a knife at Thomas, but a fellow Glader, Chuck, jumps in front of the knife. As Thomas cradles Chuck's lifeless body, a group of men and women come into the facility and shoot the

woman. The Gladers follow them onto a bus and they all drive into the night.

On the bus, the unnamed leader of this group tells the Gladers that in the world outside the Maze, there has been a devastating ecological disaster that has caused a widespread outbreak of disease. WICKED hoped to raise children in the harsh environment of the Maze so that they would be better prepared to face the challenges of the real world. The leader says WICKED's actions are inhuman and that her group fights to save children from their experiments. They bring the Gladers to a safe-house and give them a place to eat and sleep in peace.

The novel ends with an email by the Chancellor of the Maze Trials, Ava Paige. She writes that the "rescue" was a good finale and that after the group gets a good night's sleep, phase two of the experiment will begin.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Thomas – The novel's protagonist, Thomas is a teenaged boy who enters the **Glade** with no memories other than of his first name. Although Thomas comes to the Glade scared and confused, he shows himself to be brave, resourceful, and strong-willed when he saves the lives of the Gladers Alby and Minho. Thomas also shares a telepathic connection with Teresa, who he may have known before arriving in the Glade. With her help, Thomas struggles to uncover his memories and discover the true nature of his identity. By the novel's end, Thomas realizes that rather than his memories, it is his actions in the present that determine his identity. Thomas also chafes against the strict rules of the Glade, introducing new perspectives and ideas that the Gladers eventually accept since they prove useful for finding an exit to the **Maze**.

Teresa – Arriving the day after Thomas, Teresa is the only girl to have ever come to the **Glade**. Most of the Gladers catcall and insult her because she is a girl, but she challenges their sexist attitudes by proving herself to be a self-confident, bold, and capable young woman. Able to take any of the boys in a fight and not afraid to speak her mind, she becomes a close friend and ally to Thomas. She and Thomas can also communicate telepathically. Although she too has no memories, Teresa suggests that their telepathy may be the result of a close, possibly romantic relationship that they had shared prior to their arrival in the Glade.

Chuck – One of the youngest of the Gladers and Thomas' first friend in the **Glade**. Most of the Gladers find Chuck annoying because of his childish antics and fondness for practical jokes, but Thomas recognizes that Chuck is a loyal and caring friend. They sleep side-by-side every night and Thomas soon feels that Chuck has become like a brother to him. As a result of this affection, Thomas promises Chuck that he will help Chuck find

his family once they've escaped the **Maze**. In the novel's dramatic finale, Chuck sacrifices his own life by jumping in front of the knife that Gally throws at Thomas.

Alby – The leader of the Gladers, Alby is the oldest and most trusted teenager in the **Glade**. Despite Alby's merciless enforcement of the strict laws of the Glade, he is a competent leader capable of inspiring loyalty and bravery in the other Gladers. After going through the **Changing** and learning about the devastations that have struck the outside world, Alby becomes withdrawn and loses his will to lead. Unable to confront the realities waiting for him outside the Glade, Alby sacrifices himself to the Grievors in a desperate attempt to protect his friends.

Newt – Alby's second-in-command, Newt is kinder, smarter, and more level-headed than Alby. While fear of punishment is Alby's preferred method for maintaining order, Newt believes work and labor are the best ways to preserve order in their society. Newt is one of the first of the Gladers to befriend Thomas. He also takes over Alby's role as leader after Alby goes through the **Changing**.

Minho – The Keeper of the Runners, Minho is in charge of leading the other Runners through the **Maze**. Confrontational and somewhat impulsive, Minho leads by intuition rather than thought-out planning, which sometimes gets him into trouble. Minho, however, is always willing to own up to a mistake he's made, which makes him a trustworthy and loyal friend to Thomas.

Gally – Described by Thomas as a bully, Gally is hotheaded and arrogant, constantly threatening the other boys with violence. Despite his flaws, Gally cares deeply about the safety of the Gladers, sacrificing his own life to prevent the Grievors from killing any of the other boys. At the end of the novel, he throws a knife at Thomas because he was under the influence of mind-control.

Ben – A former Runner, Ben goes through the **Changing** on the day Thomas arrives in the **Glade**. In a state of psychological distress, Ben almost kills Thomas because he thinks Thomas does not belong in the Glade. As punishment for attempted murder, Alby banishes Ben to the **Maze**, effectively sentencing him to death, even though Ben deeply repents and apologizes for his actions.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Winston – The Keeper of the slaughterhouse, Winston is the type of boy who takes pleasure in killing animals. Although Thomas doesn't fully trust the Keeper, Winston proves to be a dependable ally when he helps in the fight against the Grievors.

Zart – The Keeper of the farmers, Zart is tight-lipped and physically strong. He is presumably killed by the Grievors during one of the night raids.

Frypan – The head cook in the **Glade**, Frypan is one of the first and most adamant supporters of Thomas after he saves Minho and Alby from the **Maze**.

Ava Paige – Chancellor of the Maze Trials, Ava Paige is the author of the email in the epilogue.

Jeff – One of the Med-Jacks. He and Clint are the closest things to doctors in the **Glade**.

Clint – The other, shorter Med-Jack.

Nick – The last boy to have died before Thomas' arrival in the **Glade**.

Adam – The first boy to be taken by the Grievors.

Dave – Another boy taken by the Grievors.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



MEMORY AND IDENTITY

In *The Maze Runner*, all the characters lose their memories before arriving in the **Glade**. Without these memories, Thomas loses his sense of self. As such, recovering his memories becomes one of his main goals. During his struggle to discover his identity, Thomas questions whether people are the sum total of their memories and past experiences or if we have essential natures that exist regardless of our experiences. For example, early in the novel, Thomas mistakenly believes that the Glade is a prison and that all the Gladers are criminals. Thomas wonders if, were he a criminal before arriving, would that mean that he is an essentially violent or immoral person.

In the end, the novel suggests that none of the boys have truly lost their memories. Instead, their memories, buried deep within their minds, may still be determining their feelings and behaviors. For example, Thomas has a deep almost instinctual feeling that he should trust Teresa even though he doesn't remember her. Later, we learn that they had a very close friendship before their memories were erased. Thus, the novel suggests that personal relationships are so ingrained in our identities that they become part of who we are and cannot be forgotten. Moreover, the novel suggests that people are defined by their actions in the present rather than their past actions. For example, Thomas learns that before arriving in the Glade, he knowingly helped design the **Maze**. As such, some of Gladers distrust Thomas, but the group ultimately accepts him because he proves himself to be a loyal and brave addition to their society.

Unlike Thomas' desire to uncover his memories, some characters wish to further repress their memories of life before the Glade. During the **Changing**, Gladers have flashes of memories from their old life. These memories are so painful that most Gladers who go through the Changing refuse to discuss the memories they've recovered. In the most extreme case, Alby loses his ability to lead after getting some of his memories back. Since Alby was known for his effective leadership, his memories actually cause him to lose the most notable aspect of his identity. In contrast to Alby, Thomas goes through the Changing on purpose in order to get his memories back. Although his memories disturb him, Thomas is only able to save the Gladers by using these memories to find a way out of the Maze. *The Maze Runner* novel illustrates how some people need to repress traumatic memories in order to maintain hope and a sense of self, while others seek to uncover and learn from these memories in order to deal with the problems of the present.



STABILITY AND ORDER VS. CHANGE AND CHAOS

Throughout the novel, a tension exists between the benefits of order for maintaining a self-sustaining society and the necessary changes that must occur for the Gladers to survive the **Maze**. Thrust into this mysterious and dangerous world, the boys use order and rules as a way of preventing panic and despair from taking hold of their lives. With a rigid system of laws, a well-defined leadership hierarchy, and daily work assignments, the boys set up a functioning society despite their young age and extreme circumstances. Thomas quickly learns the value of order when he finds relief from his sense of hopelessness about ever leaving the Maze by committing himself to the daily work routine in the **Glade**.

Although order provides stability, the Glade's systems of laws and punishments verges on being cruel. The Gladers banish Ben for attacking Thomas despite the fact that Ben was in a state of obvious mental distress during the attack. The laws are so rigid that the Gladers don't take into account the circumstances of Ben's attack, banishing him into the Maze, which is effectively a death sentence. When Ben, terrified and crying, pleads for mercy and forgiveness, Thomas sympathizes with the boy and realizes that the cruelty of the punishment is disproportionate to Ben's crime. Most of the Gladers, however, take pleasure in banishing Ben, showing how their desire to uphold order and discipline has become stronger than their sense of empathy or mercy for their fellow Glader.

Thomas, however, initiates necessary changes that disrupt the normal routine and order of things. Although it's against the rules to be in the Maze after dark, Thomas goes inside to save Alby and Minho. Even though he saves them, the other Gladers force him to spend a day in their jail for breaking their rules. Thomas also gets frustrated with the Runners' attitude

towards solving the Maze. Everyday they try the same thing, never changing the routine. Despite their initial resistance to change, Thomas eventually convinces them to forgo the stability of their routine when he helps lead most of the Gladers into the Maze. This break in the normal routine leads to their escape from the Maze. In contrast to those willing to change, the Gladers who stayed behind and stuck with the routine most likely ended up dead.



SACRIFICE

In *The Maze Runner*, many characters risk their lives for the sake of saving those around them in various acts of self-sacrifice. Thomas risks his own life, entering into the **Maze** to save Alby and Minho. In contrast to Thomas's act of bravery, Minho leaves behind the two of them in order to save his own life. Like Thomas, Gally sacrifices himself on the night of the Grievors' first raid so that no one else would be killed. Although Gally may have seemed selfish and arrogant for most of the novel, this sacrifice is an act of redemption that makes up for his past behaviors.

In the end, most of the Gladers are willing to risk their lives in order to protect Thomas and Teresa as they look for an exit to the Maze. Although half of the Gladers die, their sacrifice makes it possible for the rest of them to escape. Thomas, however, wonders if the escape was worth their sacrifice because he thinks it's unfair that half of them died while the other half got to live. Thomas' negative feelings about sacrifice become most pronounced when Chuck sacrifices his life to save Thomas'. At first Thomas feels guilty about Chuck's sacrifice, but Teresa tells him it was Chuck's choice to throw himself in front of the knife. She tells Thomas that now he has a responsibly not to waste Chuck's sacrifice. Thomas agrees and comes to the realization that sacrifice is a tragic but noble act as long as people have the right to *choose* to sacrifice themselves.

In contrast to these self-sacrifices, the author structures the novel around a sacrifice that is not chosen by the people who have to make it. The Creators took teenagers, wiped their memories, and put them in the Maze without their consent. Although the Creators knew that many of the boys would die, they were willing to sacrifice the boys' lives for what they thought was the greater good of humanity—this logic is presented as morally dubious within the novel, as it amounts to using people regardless of hoped-for ends of that use. Thus, sacrifice only appears as a positive act when the person doing the sacrifice has had the opportunity to make that choice for him or herself.



GROWING UP

Like many books in the young adult genre, *The Maze Runner* can be interpreted as an extended

metaphor for the challenges of growing up. In a metaphor for birth, all the kids are brought into the **Glade** with no possessions, memories, or identity. Even the metal box from which they come appears to symbolize the womb. To make the metaphor more obvious, Newt and Chuck both tell Thomas that most Gladers spend their first weeks in the Glade scared, confused, and crying like babies.

Life in the Glade also appears to conform to conventional literary descriptions of childhood. In many literary accounts, childhood is represented as an idyllic period before the hardships of adolescence and adulthood. Although the kids in the Glade have to work, the Glade shares some similarities with representations of a paradisiacal childhood. The Glade is safe, there is an abundance of food, and every day the weather is always beautiful and temperate. In this way, life in the Glade appears like an idyllic childhood.

Unlike the relative peacefulness of the Glade, the author aligns the **Maze** with a period of adolescence. Like the Maze itself, adolescence is marked by confusion, disorientation, and hard decisions. Teenagers navigating adolescence may at times feel just as hopeless and scared as the Runners navigating the Maze. The metaphor of the Maze as adolescence becomes most obvious when Grievors sting kids in the Maze, causing them to go through the **Changing**. In what could be a metaphor for puberty, the Changing makes kids' bodies change in confusing and frightening ways.

Finally, at the end of the novel, the Gladers manage to fight their way through the Maze and enter the harsh outside world of adulthood. For example, when the Gladers escape the Maze, they marvel at seeing adults for the first time, which marks this new world as the adult world. But what they don't realize is that by fighting their way through the Maze and entering the outside world, they themselves have become adults. Even Chuck, who has been immature and childlike for the entire novel, gains a new sense of responsibility in the adult world, as shown by his willingness to sacrifice himself for Thomas.



HOPE

Throughout the novel, the Gladers struggle to maintain hope despite the nightmarish and horrific nature of their circumstances. The three main leaders, Alby, Newt, and Minho, each have their own views about the best way for maintaining hope. Alby believes a system of laws and punishments will give the Gladers stability and the hope necessary for their continued search for an escape. In contrast, Newt thinks that work is the only thing that will keep the Gladers hopeful and stop them from panicking. Finally, Minho believes that the Runners' daily routine of navigating the **Maze** gives the rest of the group hope. While all three of the leaders at different times succumb to hope-killing fear (Alby even sacrifices himself in vain after losing all hope),

together their approaches preserve hope in the **Glade** while preventing widespread panic from taking hold.

At the end of the novel, the Creators explain that they put the boys in the Maze in order to test if they would lose hope and stop fighting for survival. The novel ends by suggesting that hope is the most important factor in surviving dire situations.



SEXISM

Gender plays a small but significant role in the novel. For two years, the **Glade** consists of boys only, until Teresa arrives the day after Thomas. Since the boys have never encountered a girl before, Alby senses that there is a risk that some of the boys may rape Teresa, so he has guards protect her. Likewise, when Teresa first arrives, the boys catcall her, treating her like an object rather than a human being. The boys, including Thomas, also direct sexist insults at her, calling her weak and helpless. Teresa, however, proves herself to be braver, stronger, and smarter than most of the boys in the Glade, proving that women are just as capable as men.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



THE MAZE

The Maze is a complex symbol representing both chaos and order. Every night the walls move and shift, making it harder for the Gladers to find an exit. These constant changes along with the apparent impossibility of actually solving the Maze make most of the Gladers see the Maze as a symbol of futility and chaos. Yet, like all labyrinths, the Maze only *appears* chaotic and random. Thomas teaches the Gladers to adopt a new, more all-inclusive perspective when viewing the Maze in order to see the rationality in its construction. As Thomas realizes, instead of shifting randomly, the Maze's wall change in the same way according to a pattern that repeats itself on a monthly basis. While the boys were only trying to solve each section of the Maze individually, Thomas shows them that if they look at the Maze as a whole, then they will see that patterns in the Maze actually spell out a code word. As such, the Maze reveals how things and events that seem chaotic can actually be seen as ordered when looked at from a new perspective.



THE GLADE

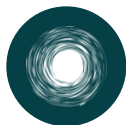
The Maze also represents the trials of adolescence. Like the Maze, adolescence can appear for the teenager to be a chaotic and confusing experience full of wrong

turns and regrettable choices. Although the futility of the Maze makes the boys feel sullen and depressed, Thomas shows them that with a wider perspective they can make it out of the Maze, or adolescence, alive.





THE CLIFF

In contrast to the chaos that the **Maze** appears to represent, the Glade appears to symbolize order, stability, and security. Every boy has a role in the workforce, ensuring the continued production of food as well as the maintenance of shelter in the Glade. As Newt says, this order prevents the boys from succumbing to the fear of living near the Maze. As such, the Glade represents the human ability to construct well functioning societies despite extreme circumstances.



THE CHANGING

At the same, the order and stability inside the Glade may only conceal a dark and systemized savagery. Although the laws in the Glade attempt to prevent violence, they also create cruel and overly violent punishments. Alby, the Gladers' leader, maintains order with fear, often threatening the boys with the death penalty. His use of fear to control the Gladers becomes most overt when Alby has Ben banished. Although Ben attempted to murder Thomas, he did so during a state of mental distress caused by the **Changing**. Even after Ben repents and asks for mercy, Alby stills banishes Ben to the Maze, effectively sentencing him to death. Although Alby feels that such harsh punishments are necessary for ensuring order, the extreme violence of this act and the fact that many of the boys seem to enjoy watching Ben get banished suggest that beneath the Glade's veneer of order and security is actually a somewhat cruel and brutal society.

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 2

Explanation and Analysis


As the novel begins, we're introduced to Thomas. At the same time, in a way, Thomas is being introduced to himself. He's been thrown into a strange place, with no memories of who he is or where he comes from.

The novel uses Thomas--a character without a past, just a present--to pose questions about what makes a person a person. The fact that Thomas has lost his memories might suggest that he's a "blank slate," at the mercy of his environment as he grows up. And yet, as we'll come to see, Thomas *does* remember some things from his old life; he's developed instincts and a personality, both of which have survived the memories that shaped them.

Chapter 3 Quotes

☞ His memory loss was strange. He mostly remembered the workings of the world—but emptied of specifics, faces, names. Like a book completely intact but missing one word in every dozen, making it a miserable and confusing read. He didn't even know his age.

Related Characters: Thomas

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 15

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the novel explores Thomas's memory loss in more detail. Thomas has had his memory wiped, but he remembers *some* basic things about the world. He still knows how to talk, walk, move, think, etc. And yet Thomas has lost all the specifics of *his* life--he'll spend most of the novel filling in the details. On one level, this makes Dashner's job easier--he doesn't have to show Thomas learning language or discovering how to interact with others--and it also suggests that Thomas *does* have a specific past, one that will presumably be revealed at some point.

The passage reminds us that the novel is a coming-of-age story, albeit with a sci-fi twist. Thomas is a young man, but because he has no memories, he can't learn from his experiences grow into a man; without a past, he's locked in the present. Thomas will have to remake himself, reinventing his own personality.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Delacorte Press edition of *The Maze Runner* published in 2009.

Chapter 1 Quotes



☞ And yet he didn't know where he came from, or how he'd gotten inside the dark lift, or who his parents were. He didn't even know his last name. Images of people flashed across his mind, but there was no recognition, their faces replaced with haunted smears of color. He couldn't think of one person he knew, or recall a single conversation.


Related Characters: Thomas

Chapter 6 Quotes

“Out there’s the Maze,” Newt whispered, eyes wide as if in a trance. “Everything we do—our whole life, Greenie—revolves around the **Maze**. Every lovin’ second of every lovin’ day we spend in honor of the Maze, tryin’ to solve somethin’ that’s not shown us it has a bloody solution, ya know? And we want to show ya why it’s not to be messed with. Show ya why them buggin’ walls close shut every night. Show ya why you should never, never find your butt out there.”

Related Characters: Newt (speaker), Thomas

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 38

Explanation and Analysis


In this passage, we learn more about the Maze, the most important symbol in the novel. Thomas is gradually adjusting to his new life: a fellow youth, Newt, explains to him that the Maze is at the center of their lives. The maze is a sinister structure, as Newt is about to show Thomas: it contains the Grievors, dangerous, nocturnal beings that can attack Thomas and his peers.

It's been suggested that the Maze and the Grievors are symbols of the world of adolescence and young adulthood (they're at their most dangerous during the nighttime, not unlike certain teenagers, and they involve a passage beyond the idyllic, simpler world of the Glade). Taken as a symbol of the future, the Maze stands as an intimidating yet inevitable part of Thomas's life: just as he must inevitably grow up, he must inevitably face the mysteries of the Maze.

Chapter 8 Quotes

Newt looked down in the Box one more time, then faced the crowd, gravely. “It’s a girl,” he said. Everyone started talking at once; Thomas only caught pieces here and there. “A girl?” “I got dibs!” “What’s she look like?” “How old is she?”

Related Characters: Newt (speaker), Thomas, Teresa

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 54

Explanation and Analysis



In this passage, we're introduced to Teresa, a girl who's been sent up into the world of the maze. The boys in Thomas's

community are excited by the prospects of having a girl in their group—they've only ever been sent boys as new members. Notice that Newt cries out, "It's a girl," the phrase usually associated with a birth. Newt's outburst emphasizes that emerging from the elevator and into the Glade is itself a kind of birth—a rebirth, allowing the characters to discover their own personalities or possibly create new ones. (Especially since none of them have memories of their past lives.) Notice also that the boys clearly have sexual needs, and seem to think of Teresa in strictly sexual terms. The overall "vibe" of Thomas's community is that of a middle school or high school, full of immature teenagers.

Chapter 9 Quotes

“Think about it. Our memories are wiped. We live inside a place that seems to have no way out, surrounded by bloodthirsty monster-guards. Doesn't that sound like a prison to you?” As he said it out loud, it sounded more and more possible. Nausea trickled into his chest.

Related Characters: Thomas (speaker), Chuck

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 64

Explanation and Analysis



As Thomas spends more time in his new home, he comes up with more theories for why he's there. Thomas has no memories of the past, so his only option is to try to "fill in" the past with theories and educated guesses. Here, Thomas guesses that he's been sent to his new home because he's some kind of criminal—he and his new peers are being punished for their crimes.

It's interesting that Thomas immediately assumes that he's somehow "guilty"—because he's so unsure of his own identity, he assumes he's being punished for something. Thomas lacks a certain confidence in his own abilities and his own goodness. Thomas's struggle to understand his new environment parallels his struggle to grow into an adult—i.e., to find a stable identity for himself.

Chapter 13 Quotes

“This ain't got nothin' to do with no hate or like or love or friends or anything. All we care about is surviving. Drop your sissy side and start using that shuck brain if you got one.”

Related Characters: Alby (speaker), Thomas

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 86

Explanation and Analysis

Alby, the leader of the Gladers, is a tough young man. He understands that life among the Gladers is about living or dying, nothing else. Because of their isolation and the constant danger in their environment, the Gladers needs to be on their guard--they can't give in to their innate sense of sympathy (or so they assume). Alby's job is to keep his followers, including Thomas, healthy and sane--he's stern with them, and some of the rules he enforces seem cruel, but supposedly he only acts this way because he wants them to survive.


Alby's speech suggests that he sees maturity as a somber, no-nonsense affair. Being a mature person means being tough, strong, and never sympathetic--it's all about upholding law and order. These ideas will be challenged throughout the book, however.

It's also worth noting that in this all-male group, anything seen as feminine or "sissy" is considered weak or shameful. Once again the Glade resembles a kind of harsh high school environment.

Chapter 14 Quotes

☝☝ Alby spoke in a loud, almost ceremonious voice, looking at no one and everyone at the same time. "Ben of the Builders, you've been sentenced to Banishment for the attempted murder of Thomas the Newbie. The Keepers have spoken, and their word ain't changing. And you ain't coming back. Ever."

Related Characters: Alby (speaker), Thomas, Ben

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 93

Explanation and Analysis



In this passage, Alby punishes Ben--who's pleading temporary insanity, i.e., the "Changing"--for attempting to kill Thomas. Ben probably doesn't deserve such a harsh punishment--he wasn't in his right mind when he attacked Thomas, and has shown himself to be valuable to the Gladers in other ways, too. Furthermore, he's begged for forgiveness and appealed to the other boys' sympathies. Yet Alby is so insistent on procedure and ceremony that he doles out a harsh punishment to Ben, whether it's just or not. Alby believes that his job is to maintain safety and unity

among his followers--the best way to do so, he thinks, is by harshly punishing anyone who steps out of line. There's a constant sense of danger among the Gladers, but not just because of the Maze--Alby himself is a dangerous person, and the kind of rigid, conformist mentality that allows for cruel punishments like this can easily lead to other atrocities.

Chapter 15 Quotes

☝☝ "Order," Newt continued. "Order. You say that bloody word over and over in your shuck head. Reason we're all sane around here is 'cause we work our butts off and maintain order. Order's the reason we put Ben out--can't very well have loonies runnin' around tryin' to kill people, now can we? Order. Last thing we need is you screwin' that up."

Related Characters: Newt (speaker), Thomas, Ben

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 102

Explanation and Analysis

The Gladers operate on a system of strict order--everyone has to do their part or risk banishment, which is the same as death. Newt is irritated when Thomas--still new to the way things work--complains that he finds his duties menial and boring, and he wants to become a Maze Runner. Newt sees this kind of ambition and individualism as dangerous, so he warns Thomas to devote himself to "order." For Newt, living in the Glade means working hard and accepting one's place.


One reason that Newt isn't sympathetic to Thomas is that he's been among the Gladers for longer than Thomas. When Thomas points out that it may not have been right to banishment Ben, Newt dismisses Thomas's concerns. The Gladers don't really believe in independence or mercy--they believe in work and order, and nothing else.

Chapter 17 Quotes

☝☝ "You don't understand, shuck-face! You don't know anything, and you're just making it worse by trying to have hope! We're dead, you hear me? Dead!"

Related Characters: Minho (speaker), Thomas

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 117

Explanation and Analysis



Thomas, Alby, and Minho have all been trapped in the Maze overnight. Thomas, who's new to the Maze, suggests that they try to escape from the prison of the Maze by climbing vines to safety. Minho, who's more experienced with the Maze than Thomas, rejects Thomas's suggestions as futile. Moreover, Minho gets angry with Thomas for being so optimistic about their chances of survival--his first instinct is to give up altogether.


The scene is an early sign that the Gladers' way of doing things simply doesn't work. Thomas is new to the Gladers, so he doesn't buy into their depressing outlook on life and work. Because he's optimistic, Thomas looks for a way out, trying his hardest to protect himself and his friends. Minho, on the other hand, gives up and (immediately afterwards) runs away.

Chapter 18 Quotes

☝☝ Thomas rocked back on his heels, then ran his arm across his forehead, wiping away the sweat. And at that moment, in the space of only a few seconds, he learned a lot about himself. About the Thomas that was before. He couldn't leave a friend to die.

Related Characters: Thomas

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 119

Explanation and Analysis

Trapped inside the Maze with Alby, Thomas refuses to give up on his peers. While the cowardly, selfish Minho runs away in a vain attempt to save himself, Thomas tries his best to save other people, as well as himself.


It's interesting that the passage describes Thomas as *remembering* his old self--the self that had been wiped away, along with his memories. In times of crisis, Thomas behaves instinctively--in other words, he defaults to his old behaviors. Thomas's memory is stronger than we'd given it credit for; there are certain things about his personality that trauma and amnesia can't erase, and they come out in scenes like this one, when Thomas is surrounded by danger.

Chapter 23 Quotes

☝☝ "Are they changed because they want to go back to their old life, or is it because they're so depressed at realizing their old life was no better than what we have now?"

Related Characters: Thomas (speaker), Alby, Newt

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 149

Explanation and Analysis

Here Thomas sits with Newt and discusses the Changing, the mysterious mental transformation that Alby is now undergoing as he recovers from the Griever's venom. Newt explains that the Changing can be intensely painful for some people--during the Changing, Gladers see flashes of their old lives, and then have to return to their present-day existences outside in the Glade. Newt takes the position that the Changing is depressing because Gladers get to remember the past, but then have to go back to their current lives, which are harder and sadder than their past lives. Thomas, however, suggests that the Changing is so traumatic because it illustrates that the Gladers *never* had a happy life--their pasts are no better than their presents.

The passage corresponds to two views about human development. If the Changing symbolizes puberty and maturity, then Newt is arguing that people are innately good and innocent--and they lose their innocence during puberty. Thomas, however, suggests that there is innate goodness, or an innate *lack* of goodness--childhood is no happier or better than adulthood.

Chapter 26 Quotes

☝☝ "I didn't do anything wrong. All I know is I saw two people struggling to get inside these walls and they couldn't make it. To ignore that because of some stupid rule seemed selfish, cowardly, and...well, stupid. If you want to throw me in jail for trying to save someone's life, then go ahead. Next time I promise I'll point at them and laugh, then go eat some of Frypan's dinner."

Related Characters: Thomas (speaker), Alby, Newt, Frypan

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 166

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Thomas negotiates with his fellow Gladers. Thomas has saved the lives of Minho and Alby while they were in the Maze—but in the process, he's broken the rules, venturing into the Maze. A trial is held for Thomas, to determine whether he should be punished for breaking the rules or praised for helping his peers.

The trial illustrates the basic tension between the Gladers: those who believe in rules and order, and those who believe in right and wrong. Thomas defends himself by saying that protecting Alby and Minho was the "right" thing to do—he doesn't deny that he broke the rules, but he questions whether such rules are really worth following in such a situation. Notice that Thomas *also* says that saving Alby and Minho was the practical thing to do—had he followed the rules, his peers would have died, leaving the entire community weaker.

Chapter 30 Quotes

☝☝ Newt's head appeared at the little glassless window, looking through the bars, a smirk on his face. "Nice reward for breakin' the rules. You saved some lives, Tommy, but ya still need to learn—"

"Yeah, I know. *Order.*"

Related Characters: Newt, Thomas (speaker), Minho, Alby

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 191

Explanation and Analysis

Thomas has been sent to the Glade jail, the Slammer, for disobeying the rules of the community. In the Slammer, Newt lectures Thomas about the importance of obedience to authority. But by this point in the novel, Thomas has already heard Newt's little speech several times—it's getting boring, and Thomas doesn't take it even halfway seriously.

Thomas is beginning to develop his own moral code, distinct from that of the Glade. While others, such as Newt, emphasize obedience to authority, Thomas makes his own rules, and acts for moral reasons—even going out of his way to save Alby and Minho from the Maze. Thomas's self-reliance makes him the most sympathetic and admirable character in the book. Rules and laws are useless when they go against fundamental morality, and so Thomas's disobedience looks like heroism.

Chapter 31 Quotes

☝☝ Alby continued. "I hope the **Changing** doesn't give us real memories—just plants fake ones. Some suspect it—I can only hope. If the world's the way I saw it..." He trailed off, leaving an ominous silence.

Related Characters: Alby (speaker), Thomas

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 197

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Alby tells Thomas that during his (Alby's) Changing he saw images (supposedly his own memories) of the outside world, beyond the Glade. Alby was frightened by such images, and hopes that they're just hallucinations, not real memories. Alby's reaction to the images is interesting, because he seems not to enjoy them in the slightest. If Alby's memories symbolize his old life, then the fact that Alby rejects such images might suggest that he'd prefer to hang onto his life in the Glade. Alby is a kind of Adam figure, trying to stay in the Garden of Eden for as long as possible before he gets knowledge of the outside world. One could say that he's also a quintessential "child" archetype as well, because he's trying to cling to his innocence and ignorance for as long as possible, and is afraid of the "Maze" and outside world of adolescence and adulthood.

Chapter 36 Quotes

☝☝ "I remember remembering," she muttered, sitting down with a heavy sigh; she pulled her legs up to wrap her arms around her knees. "Feelings. Emotions. Like I have all these shelves in my head, labeled for memories and faces, but they're empty. As if everything before this is just on the other side of a white curtain. Including you."

Related Characters: Teresa (speaker), Thomas

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 234

Explanation and Analysis

Teresa and Thomas seem to have known each other before they arrived in the Glade—how, exactly, they knew each other isn't remotely clear, though. Teresa has some extremely vague memories of spending time with Thomas—


as she puts it, she can't remember how she knew Thomas, but she can remember *remembering* itself.

The passage is interesting because it suggests how important it is to remember the past when growing in the present. Teresa and Thomas may have had an entire life together--they're trying to rediscover their memories of each other so that they can make sense of their present situations, too. Without memories, Teresa and Thomas are trapped in a permanent state of emptiness, lacking strong identities based on past experiences.

“Congrats, Jeff,” Newt said. “You’re officially the first guy here to get your butt beat by a girl.”

Teresa didn't stop. “Keep talking like that and you'll be next.”

Related Characters: Teresa, Newt (speaker), Jeff

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 238

Explanation and Analysis


In this passage, Teresa proves that she's tougher and stronger than many of the boys in her community. She's snuck to the graveyard, where she meets Newt. Teresa explains that she was able to sneak to the graveyard by attacking Jeff, another Glader. Newt laughs about how Jeff must be weak, but falls silent when Teresa threatens to attack him, too. The message is clear: even if the overall "vibe" of the Glade is masculine, competitive, and immature, women like Teresa are strong and confident enough to stand up for themselves and fight any boys who give them trouble. The novel certainly doesn't delve into many complications of sexism or gender roles, but merely sticks with its assertion that women are as strong and resourceful as men.

Chapter 39 Quotes

“No one ever understood what I saw, what the **Changing** did to me! Don't go back to the real world, Thomas! You don't...want...to remember!”

Related Characters: Gally (speaker), Thomas

Related Themes:    

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 258

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Gally--previously, a bullying, antagonistic character--suddenly reappears to give Thomas some serious advice. Gally runs around, raving like a madman, yelling about how the Grievors will attack one Glader per night until everyone is dead. Gally, who's previously been rude and tough on Thomas, now tells Thomas to reject his memories--he might not like what he finds.

Gally's behavior reminds us that memory, while clearly important to the characters' identities, might not be a solution to their problems. On the contrary, memory can cause as many problems as it solves. Some characters, such as Alby, seem content to live without memories; i.e., to live in a perpetual present, blissfully ignorant of reality. Thomas, on the other hand, seems eager to reclaim his own memories--but Gally's warning suggests that he might want to rethink his goal, particularly since knowledge often brings pain as much as it brings hope.


Chapter 45 Quotes

“They needed more clues about the code. They needed memories.

So he was going to get stung by a Griever. Go through the **Changing**. On purpose.

Related Characters: Thomas

Related Themes:    

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 291

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Thomas endangers his life for a greater good: knowledge. Thomas knows that he needs to solve the mysterious code of the Maze, and he knows that doing so will require him to remember things that happened to him before he arrived in the Glade. The only way to relive his past life is to get stung by the dangerous Grievors.



Thomas is willing to risk his own safety in order to solve the Maze and help the other escape. While other characters regard getting stung as a frightening thing--since it causes the Changing, a series of vivid flashbacks that are either painful or pleasant (and thus painful to wake up from)--Thomas accepts that he must undergo the Changing. Thomas shows that he's becoming a brave, confident young

man, giving up his own ignorant happiness for enlightenment. This is the kind of sacrifice necessary in growing up--experiencing pain and gaining painful knowledge, but maturing and developing in the process.

Chapter 48 Quotes

☝☝ Thomas shook his head. "No, you don't get it. They're weeding us out, seeing if we'll give up, finding the best of us. Throwing variables at us, trying to make us quit. Testing our ability to hope and fight. Sending Teresa here and shutting everything down was only the last part, one more...final analysis. Now it's time for the last test. To escape."

Related Characters: Thomas (speaker), Newt, Teresa

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 301

Explanation and Analysis



Thomas is now clearly beginning to figure out what the Maze is designed to achieve. He doesn't have all the information, but he's guessed that the Maze is specifically designed to challenge the Gladers, separating the strong from the weak.

Throughout the passage, Thomas's tone remains optimistic--he wants to escape from the Maze at all costs. While others, such as Alby, seemed to think that it was better to remain a Glader, ignorant of the past, Thomas is confident that he and his friends' lives will be better once they escape. It's important to note that, as Thomas becomes more aware of his surroundings, he's also become more mature and confident in his own abilities--by exploring his environment, he's grown up.

Chapter 51 Quotes

☝☝ "I'm telling you." Alby sounded like he was begging--near hysterical. "We can't go back to where we came from. I've seen it, remembered awful, awful things. Burned land, a disease--something called the Flare. It was horrible--way worse than we have it here...Better to die than go home."

Related Characters: Alby (speaker), Thomas, Newt

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 312

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, it's revealed that Alby doesn't want Thomas and his friends to go back to the outside world--he wants everyone to remain in the Glade, where life is dangerous and strict, but at least ordered and familiar. Alby has been sabotaging any plans that could potentially lead to an escape--he's absolutely desperate to remain in his current home. Alby explains that he's seen visions of the outside world, in which existence looks cruel and frightening.

In spite of--or perhaps, because of--the fact that he's a leader among the Gladers, Alby is too afraid to leave the Glade forever. For all his pretensions of maturity and control, he's a child--too frightened of the outside world to explore it on his own, and longing to remain in his state of "ignorant bliss."

Chapter 54 Quotes

☝☝ "After two years of being treated like mice, tonight we're making a stand. Tonight we're taking the fight back to the Creators, no matter what we have to go through to get there. Tonight the Griever's better be scared."

Related Characters: Newt (speaker)

Related Themes:     

Page Number: 328

Explanation and Analysis



In this passage, Newt sums up everything the Gladers are going to achieve. For too long, Newt and his friends have been forced to run through the Maze like mice--now, they're going to track down the people who designed the Maze and kidnapped them in the first place.

Notice that it's Newt, not Alby, the group's supposed leader, who's speaking to his friends here. Newt, in spite of his dogmatic reliance on the rules, is brave and optimistic enough to inspire his friends--unlike Alby, his commander, he's not really afraid of the outside world. Newt inspires his peers to stand up for themselves and explore the unknown--in short, to grow up.

Chapter 55 Quotes

☝☝ Minho continued. "Alby didn't wanna go back to his old life. He freaking *sacrificed* himself for us--and they aren't attacking, so maybe it worked. *We'd* be heartless if we wasted it."

Related Characters: Minho (speaker), Alby, Newt, Thomas

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 334

Explanation and Analysis



In this passage, Alby, the leader of the Gladers, has just sacrificed himself to the deadly Grievors in order to protect his friends from danger. Alby has been frightened of leaving the Glade for some time now--yet here, he not only participates in the movement to explore the outside world; he even gives up his own life for the sake of the mission.

Alby's sacrifice, it could be argued, reinforces how opposed he was to leaving the Glade. He's exceptionally brave, and yet he's also deeply frightened of going back to his old life--a life that he's previously described as terrifying and horrible. Alby's act is a kind of noble suicide, designed to free himself from the pain of returning to the past, but also to help those who are determined to do so.

Chapter 60 Quotes

☞☞ "All things happen for a purpose," she said, any sign of malice now gone from her voice. "You must understand this."

Related Characters: Thomas, Chuck

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 360

Explanation and Analysis

Thomas, along with the other Gladers, have escaped the Maze and found the Creators. An unnamed woman confronts them, and then she reveals Gally, who throws a knife at Thomas--but Chuck throws himself in front of Thomas, sacrificing his life. As Thomas grows enraged and then despairing, the unnamed woman tells Thomas that everything happens for a reason.

Thomas isn't sure how to interpret the woman's advice (it's possible that, since his memories have been removed, he doesn't realize how clichéd and banal it is). The woman's

advice suggests that she sees the world through a scientific lens--she thinks that every event has a cause, which can be analyzed and broken down into its constituent parts. (This makes sense if she's a Creator of the Maze, an experiment essentially designed to make everything happen for a reason.) Although Thomas has often thought that the world is a random, unpredictable place, he's gradually come around to the woman's point of view, deciphering the mysteries of the Maze--but then realizing that the Maze itself was made by flawed humans.

Chapter 62 Quotes

☞☞ *He died saving you, Teresa said. He made the choice himself. Just don't ever waste it.*

Related Characters: Teresa (speaker), Thomas, Chuck

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 371

Explanation and Analysis

In this chapter, Thomas tries to make sense of Chuck's sacrifice--a sacrifice that saved Thomas's life at the expense of Chuck's. Thomas doesn't understand why Chuck--someone who hasn't always acted very mature--would have done something so heroic for him, and doesn't know how he should react. Teresa tells Thomas her opinion: Chuck's noble sacrifice is an invitation for Thomas to put his life to a greater purpose.

In a way, Thomas is on to his third life: his first life has been erased from his memory; his second life was spent in the Glade; now, his third life is just beginning, thanks to Chuck. (We might think of this as childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.) Gradually, Thomas is learning to be bolder and more mature in everything he does--here, for instance, he comes to see Chuck's death as a kind of mandate, urging him to be a better person. The universe--and Chuck's death--might seem meaningless, but it's Thomas's job to make his own meaning out of the disaster.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1

A teenage boy awakes in a moving pitch-black elevator. The boy remembers that his name is Thomas but has no memory of how he got into the elevator or who he is. He remembers a vague outline of people and events, but all his memories feel blurred and beyond his grasp.

When the elevator stops, Thomas bangs on the walls, screaming for help. Suddenly, the roof of the elevator opens and a sliver of light momentarily blinds him. Thomas hears the voices of teenagers referring to him as a “klunk” and a “Greenie.”

As Thomas’ eyes adjust to the light, the teenagers lower a rope into the elevator. They help pull Thomas up. Once outside of the elevator, Thomas is flooded with fear and confusion. One of the boys calls him a “shank” and welcomes him to a place called the **Glade**.

In ancient Greek, the word for “truth” is “aletheia,” which translates to “unforgetting.” The Greeks saw truth as an act of remembering. In the same vein, Thomas must uncover his past to find the truth about his identity.



This scene mirrors the moment of birth. Like a newborn, Thomas is brought into his new life with no memories or identity. This is the first indication that the novel is an allegory for growing up.



This scene uses the metaphor of “coming into the light” as a way of symbolically showing Thomas at the beginning of his journey from darkness and ignorance to light and truth.



CHAPTER 2

Confused but curious, Thomas starts to take note of his surrounding. He stands in the middle of a group of fifty teenagers of varying ages and races. Thomas realizes he’s standing in an open expanse several times larger than a football field. The expanse is surrounded by four stone walls hundreds of feet high and covered with thick ivy. The walls form a square around the courtyard. In the middle of each wall is a narrow passageway.

Thomas asks where he is but the boys pay no attention to him, talking to each other about whether he’ll turn out to be a “keeper” or “a slopper.” While they talk, Thomas notices a garden of vegetables, fruit trees, and pens with domesticated sheep and pigs. One of the boys steps forward and introduces himself as Alby. Noticing that all the other boys look at him with reverence, Thomas figures out that Alby must be their leader. Thomas notices that Alby is wearing jeans, a t-shirt, and a digital watch. These clothes surprise Thomas because they seem so normal.

The giant expanse, called The Glade, is beautiful and temperate, an idyllic environment that evokes the Garden of Eden. If exiting the elevator represents birth, then the Glade represents the next stage of life: childhood. But this version of childhood, like any real childhood, is not perfect. The walls around the Glade suggest that the Gladers are either keeping out a dangerous force or someone is keeping them in like prisoners.



The teenagers in the Glade seem to be acting like self-sufficient adults. They have cultivated a sustainable source of food and established a political hierarchy, with Alby as their well respected leader. The systems they have put in place have brought self-sufficiency and order to their society, which otherwise may have descended into chaos.



Thomas asks Alby to tell him where they are. Alby obliges, sitting down in front of him, which causes all the other boys to sit too. He says that Thomas is the first “greenbean” to arrive since a boy named Nick was killed. Another boy, Newt, interrupts Alby, saying that he’s going to scare Thomas even more if he starts by telling him about Nick’s death. Confused and angry, Thomas demands to know who sent him here and why. Alby forcibly pulls Thomas to his feet, yelling that if Thomas were told everything right now, he would die of fear on the spot. Alby says he’ll give him more information tomorrow and marches off, leaving Newt to comfort Thomas. Newt points out that everyone in the **Glade** arrived through the same dark box. Newt says that in time, Thomas will get accustomed to his new life.

Alby’s ability to command respect and obedience becomes more pronounced when the other Gladers follow his lead after he sits down. Newt appears to be his second-in-command, giving him advice on how to deal with Thomas. This scene shows the differences in their leadership styles. Alby becomes aggressive when he thinks Thomas is stepping out of line. Newt, however, is more compassionate, comforting Thomas after all the other boys leave.



Suddenly an ear-piercing scream comes from one of the nearby buildings. Newt goes off to help and tells Thomas to find Chuck in order to find out about his sleeping arrangements. After Newt runs off, Thomas sits on the floor and closes his eyes, wishing this new life were just a terrible dream.

The screams suggest that beneath the idyllic surface of the Glade might lie something sinister. Just as even the most seemingly perfect childhood must have moments of pain and suffering, the Glade’s apparent perfection might have a dark side.



CHAPTER 3

After a few moments, Thomas stands up and notices something flash silver and red and then dart behind a tree. Thomas investigates, but finds nothing. Behind him, he hears a boy say that it’s a “beetle blade” and that it won’t hurt him unless he touches it. The boy, who’s around twelve years old, introduces himself as Chuck. He says he was the the last kid to come from the elevator before Thomas’ arrival. Chuck says that Thomas looks like he is around sixteen years old. There is another scream. Chuck tells Thomas that the screaming boy was stung by a Griever, but that the boy won’t die because he got back to the **Glade** in time to get the “Serum.” Thomas asks for more information about the Grievers. Instead of answering his question, Chuck rolls his eyes at Thomas’ ignorance.

The Glade’s dark side continues to reveal itself: suddenly the seemingly idyllic surroundings are marred by screams, stings, and a mysterious life-saving “Serum” (another word for antidote). The orderliness and tranquility of the Glade seems to mask an undercurrent of danger and disorder. The theme of Growing Up appears in Chuck rolling his eyes at Thomas: he’s treating him like a child just because he doesn’t yet know about the Grievers. Learning about looming threats like the Grievers will enlighten Thomas, but will also make him lose his childhood innocence.



Chuck asks Thomas what his name is, saying that Thomas must at least remember that much. Thomas tells Chuck his name and realizes that all the boys must have had their memories wiped except for the knowledge of their first names. Chuck tells Thomas that although he’s only been the **Glade** for a month and can’t offer that much information, he’ll be his friend. Thomas says he doesn’t need a friend.

Identity consists of more than just one’s memories and past experiences: it’s a continuum that can change as one grows up. Since these boys lack all their memories of life before the Glade, each boy must create his identity and sense of self from scratch.



Annoyed that Chuck cannot give him any information, Thomas goes looking for answers from Newt. Thomas follows the sound of the screams to a large wood-framed building. Inside several boys are gathered around a staircase. One of the older boys starts mocking Thomas, saying he must have “klunked” his pants when he heard Ben scream. Thomas tries to push past the boy and go up the stairs, but the boy says that Alby doesn’t let the “newbies” see someone who’s been stung. The boy then tells Thomas that he saw him during **Changing**.

The older boy, who introduces himself as Gally, says that he’s the “real” leader in the **Glade** and that Thomas should call him Captain Gally. Wanting to embarrass Gally, Thomas does an exaggerated salute, which makes some of the other boys snicker. Gally lets Thomas pass him, hoping that Alby will punish him for breaking the rules.

At the top of the stairs, Thomas opens a door and sees Alby and Newt sitting by Ben who is writhing in pain on a bed. Large green veins crisscross Ben’s body. Sickened at the sight, Thomas thinks that the disturbing image of the boy will be seared into his memory forever. Alby notices Thomas in the doorway and yells at him for coming upstairs, saying that if he sees him again before tomorrow, he’ll throw him off the **Cliff**. Thomas runs out of the building and, once outside, shudders at the thought of the pain that Ben must be going through.

CHAPTER 4

Outside, Thomas notices a concrete building with an iron door that has a steering wheel for a handle. Chuck finds Thomas and hands him a sandwich. After having bad interactions with Alby and Gally, Thomas feels happy that he can rely on Chuck as a friend. When Thomas asks what’s behind the walls, Chuck gets uncomfortable and says he’s never been outside the **Glade**. Thomas asks why everyone is being so secretive and Chuck says that no one really knows the whole story of what’s going on in the Glade.

The insult about “klunking” his pants is intended to make Thomas seem like a baby. Like a newborn, Thomas the newbie can’t even control his bowel movements. The older boy’s use of the Glade slang word “klunk” also makes Thomas feel like an outsider. Language is a key part of identity, and here Thomas seems like a baby in that regard as well: he can’t yet speak the language of the Glade.



Thomas mocks Gally as retaliation for his condescending insult. Thomas’ willingness to stick up for himself shows that he is already starting to grow up. This scene also hints at Alby’s reputation as a strict domineering leader who won’t tolerate the type of mockery or dissent that Thomas has just directed at Gally.



If growing up is the process of honing one’s identity and losing the innocence of childhood, Thomas does both in his first few hours in the Glade. He’s heard about threats of deadly stings, life saving serums, and now he witnesses a boy just like him suffering from some unknown but seemingly life threatening ailment. He also receives his first death threat (from Alby), and feels a rush of a grown-up type of emotion for Ben: empathy. Thomas is growing up fast, experiencing things and creating memories that will form the basis of his new identity.



Thomas realizes that he’s not the only one in the dark about what’s going on in the Glade. Whereas before Gally made Thomas feel like an outsider, Thomas is beginning to see that everyone is a “newbie” in the Glade. Thomas’s experience in the Glade continues to be a metaphor for growing up: just as nobody really knows what’s happening in the Glade, there is no set of rules for life, and everyone must navigate it on their own, defining their identity along the way.



Thomas goes to explore but Chuck says he shouldn't because the big openings in the walls, which Chuck calls the Doors, will close soon. Thomas doesn't believe that the walls can move so Chuck tells Thomas to go see for himself, saying that the Runners will be back soon anyway. They go to the East Door where Chuck explains that the doors close every night. Chuck also says that the walls inside the **Maze** shift around during the night. Thomas realizes that Chuck must have revealed something that he wasn't supposed to by referring to the Maze. When Thomas asks about the Maze, Chuck says he won't answer any more questions and heads back into the center of the **Glade**.

Thomas stares into the Door and notices the pathway keeps going straight but that there are also many other pathways diverting off the path to the left and right, just like in a labyrinth. As he stares, a boy suddenly turns a corner onto the main pathway and runs straight out of the door and past Thomas. Thomas then sees one boy entering the **Glade** from each of the three other Doors. All four boys meet at the concrete building with the steering wheel door and go inside.

Chuck reappears at Thomas' side and tells him he should get some sleep. At that moment the walls begin to close. There is a loud grinding sound and the earth shakes, which makes Thomas panic, but Chuck just laughs at his surprise and naiveté. After the walls seal up the Doors, Chuck tells Thomas that they should go to bed. Knowing he has no other choice, Thomas follows Chuck to the sleeping quarters.

CHAPTER 5

Before going to bed, Chuck plays a practical joke. He and Thomas hide below the bathroom window of a building called the Homestead. Chuck waits until a boy walks nearby the window before jumping up and scaring the boy inside. The boy inside starts to curse and Thomas realizes that Chuck must have scared Gally. Chuck runs off, but Gally comes outside and sees Thomas trying to get away. When Gally calls Thomas' name, Thomas turns around and apologizes. Gally says that if ever pulls something like that again, he will hurt him and Chuck. As Thomas goes to find Chuck, he feels a strong sense of hate for Gally.

Thomas cannot fathom that the walls, which look so stable and immobile, can move. Thomas will quickly learn not to trust the appearance of stability so readily. As he will learn, even the most orderly and stable aspects of life in the Glade (and life in general) can move and change at any moment.



All the Runners arrive in the Glade at almost exactly the same second. This shows how organized and controlled the Glade appears on the surface.



As the walls move and change position, Thomas' sense of stability and of his own identity are also in flux. Once again he is treated like a newbie, this time due to Chuck's laughter at his innocent sense of panic.



Though Chuck had just mocked Thomas for his childish naiveté, now it seems clear that Chuck himself is just an immature kid. Thomas continues to learn about himself: not just an immature "newbie," he's becoming an adult, capable of feeling grown-up type emotions like guilt (as shown in his apology to Gally) and hate.



Most boys sleep in the Homestead but since it's too full, Chuck and Thomas take sleeping bags and sleep outside in a garden. As Thomas starts drifting into sleep, he has a sudden realization that the **Glade** and the **Maze** feel familiar. Although he doesn't know why this feeling came over him, he feels a strong urge to explore the Maze, just like the four boys he saw coming out of the Doors were doing. He tells Chuck he wants to be a Runner, but Chuck tells him he has no idea what Thomas is talking about.

In another moment of realization, Thomas tells Chuck that he's been to the **Glade** before. Surprised, Chuck sits up in his sleeping bag. Thomas doesn't want to lose the sense of epiphany by talking more about what he feels, so he turns over and falls asleep.

CHAPTER 6

The next morning, Newt wakes Thomas up before dawn. Newt says he's supposed to show Thomas something before everyone else wakes up. They go to one of the stone walls and Newt pushes some ivy away to reveal a window. For a moment nothing happens, but then a magnificent glimmering light shoots through the window. Newt tells Thomas he needs to show him what's inside the **Maze**.

When Thomas looks into the window he sees a creature, part-machine and part-animal, with sharp metal appendages sticking out from its body. The creature lurches at the window and Thomas screams but the window doesn't break. Newt says these things are called Grievers and that they take over the **Maze** at night. Since the doors shut at sunset, the Grievers can't get into the **Glade**. Newt says that Thomas, like all the other boys, needs to help find a way out of the Maze.

A few hours later, Thomas is eating breakfast with the rest of the boys. He thinks about why and how such a maze can even exist, and how they can be expected to find a way out. As he thinks through these problems, Alby taps his shoulder and tells him that he will give him a tour now.

Thomas continues to uncover and refine his identity. He feels an instinctual awareness emanating from within that tells him what he should do with his life in the Glade. One of the hallmarks of growing up is acquiring the capacity for introspection. By feeling and trusting his instincts, Thomas has an epiphany about his identity.



Thomas' introspective revelations continue. Here he shows how concerned he is about their fragility, however. Even talking about his newfound sense of identity makes him wary.



Like when the light blinded Thomas as he came out of the elevator, the light here signifies that Thomas will once again experience a feeling of enlightenment or rebirth. Just as he was beginning to feel comfortable with his newfound identity, he might be starting over from scratch.



The Maze is in part a symbol for the complexities of adolescence. The Grievers, in their threatening appearance and nocturnal schedule, may represent the dark side and pitfalls of adolescent life: excessive drinking, drug use, unprotected sex, and so on.



Thomas' encounter with the Griever makes him pensive, showing that he is struggling to uncover the mysteries of the Maze. Allegorically, this scene represents Thomas' struggling to understand what it means to be a teenager.



CHAPTER 7

Alby takes Thomas to the Box, which is what they call the metal doors in the ground that open up to the elevator that brought Thomas to the **Glade**. Its doors are now closed, but Alby says that every month a new boy arrives, and supplies arrive this way every week. Alby says they don't know who sends the boys or the supplies. He also says that the **Glade** is set up in four sections. Gardens is for growing crops, Blood House is for raising and slaughtering animals, Homestead is for sleeping, and Deadheads is the graveyard. Alby explains that for the next two weeks, Thomas will work in each section under the supervision of a Keeper, the leader of the section, until he figures out which job suits him best.

Alby brings Thomas to the South Door. Alby says that he's been living in the **Glade** for two years. Everyone who had lived in the Glade before him has died. For two years, they've been running through the **Maze** and making maps, but they still haven't figured out how to escape. Thomas steps closer to the Door to get a better look inside the Maze, but Alby stops him, saying that no one but Runners are allowed inside the Maze. If anyone else goes inside, they'll be killed by the Grievors or thrown off the **Cliff** by the Gladers as punishment for breaking the rule. Thomas feels a deep almost instinctual awareness telling him that he is meant to be a Runner.

Thomas sees another beetle blade and asks Alby what they are. Alby says that they think they're spies for the Creators of the **Maze**. Before Alby can explain anything else, a loud alarm sounds. Alby seems confused and explains that the alarm means another boy is coming up through the Box. Before Alby runs off to the Homestead, he says two boys have never arrived within the same month.

CHAPTER 8

All the boys assemble nervously outside the Box. Chuck explains to Thomas that the boys got used to the routine of new arrivals coming on a monthly basis, so this change seems scary to them. Chuck also explains that before he arrived in the **Glade**, some boys made long ropes from the ivy on the walls, pried open the Box doors, and sent a boy down the hole. When he was already deep in the hole, something swooshed by and cut the boy in half. Chuck says they keep the bones of the boy in the graveyard so that future Gladers will know not to try that again.

Here the orderliness of the Glade, with its four-part structure and clearly defined boundaries, contradicts strongly with the looming threat of bloodthirsty monsters like the Grievors lying just beyond the walls. Even the strictest sense of order can give way to chaos and even death at any moment.



Thomas' sense of self continues to strengthen. He's learning, however, that he may be doomed unless he can figure out a new way to escape the Maze. While routine in the Glade provides a sense of security, the Runners' unwillingness to try new approaches to solving the Maze may be preventing them from finding an exit and saving their lives.



The Glade's sense of stability crumbles when the alarm sounds. This change is the first of many changes that will soon follow.



The boys' nervousness shows how dependent they've become on the sense of order in the Glade. Any breach like this unexpected alarm causes panic, as if they've suddenly become awakened to the reality of their lives inside the giant Maze. The Gladers decision to keep the dead boy's bones is a reminder that deviating from the routine can be fatal.



When the elevator arrives and the doors open, Newt looks inside and announces, “It’s a girl.” All the boys start to hoot and call dibs on her, but Newt cuts them off, saying that she looks like she may be dead. Newt and Alby use vines to lower themselves into the Box and bring the girl’s body out. Thomas notices that she is around sixteen years old, has dark hair and pale skin. He thinks she is beautiful but feels strange thinking that about a dead girl. After the boys get a look at her, they all leave to go back to work.

Thomas is about to go with them when Newt and Alby ask him to stay and look at the girl to see if she looks familiar. Thomas responds that he has never seen her before. The girl suddenly sits straight up. In a hollow and haunted voice, she says, “Everything is going to change.” She then gives a note to Newt, which he reads aloud, “She’s the last one. Ever.” The chapter ends with the girl falling unconscious.

CHAPTER 9

Newt calls for the Med-Jacks, the **Glade’s** version of doctors, to examine the girl. They determine that she may be in a coma. One of the Gladers calls out, sarcastically asking why the Med-Jacks get to touch her first. Fearing for her safety, Alby says that if any of the boys touches her, he’ll be banished. As they take her away, Thomas feels sympathy for her and feels connected to her in some unknown way. Alby calls a Gathering, which Chuck explains is something that only occurs when something truly significant happens.

Thomas and Chuck go to raid the kitchen for some food. As they eat, Thomas asks Chuck what’s inside the concrete building. Chuck says that’s where they keep the maps. Chuck explains that the Runners come together after each day and pool their information to add to their maps of the **Maze**. Realizing he may never escape the **Glade**, Thomas wonders aloud if they are all murderers put into the Glade as punishment for their crimes.

After Thomas and Chuck finish eating, Thomas goes exploring and discovers a beetle blade, which reminds him of a small metallic lizard. He inspects it and sees the word “WICKED” spelled out on its back. The beetle blade shoots off into a wooded forest area and Thomas follows it to investigate.

The phrase, “It’s a girl” is commonly associated with birth. Newt’s use of the phrase reaffirms that coming out of the Box is a metaphor for the moment of birth. By catcalling and calling dibs on the girl, the boys treat her like an object for their amusement and pleasure. They’re acting like stereotypical immature teenage boys, despite their atypical circumstances.



The girl’s arrival brings a sense of hope and renewal to the Glade. The old routine has only led to suffering and imprisonment, but the girl’s remark that “Everything is going to change” might signal a new approach to escaping the Maze.



The continuation of several themes: Thomas’ exploration of his feelings and instincts, the boys’ immature objectifying treatment of the girl, and Alby’s domineering demand for order within the Glade at any price—even banishment.



Like most adolescents, Thomas has a difficult time defining his identity. Previously he had felt a sense of innate purpose—to become a Runner—but now, having lost hope, he thinks he might just be a criminal.



The word WICKED on the backs of the beetle blade suggests that something evil might lie beneath the appearance of order and stability at the Glade. It could also reflect Thomas’ exploration of his own identity as a “wicked” murderer.



CHAPTER 10

Thomas walks deeper into the forest but loses track of the beetle blade. When he hears a twig break behind him, he heads toward the noise and finds himself inside the graveyard. There are dozens of graves, each marked by a clumsily made cross. Thomas wonders how all these boys died. Thomas walks toward a structure covered in grimy glass. He peers inside and sees half a skeleton. Next to the structure is a plaque warning future Gladers not to try climbing down the Box.

Thomas hears another snap behind him, but before he can do anything a pale, haunted looking boy bursts through the trees and tackles him. The boy bites deep into Thomas' neck. Thomas is able to push him off and the boy trips, hitting his head on a rock. When the boy is lying before him, Thomas realizes his crazed attacker is Ben, the sick boy who was screaming.

The plaque and the skeleton both serve as warnings to the Gladers: deviating from the path means certain death. Thomas' wondering about how all these boys died foreshadows his own fate, perhaps. How will he escape the Maze without joining their ranks?



Ben has been transformed by the Grievors. Once again, the novel represents change or deviation from the norm (in this case Ben's transformation) as something dangerous and abominable.



CHAPTER 11

Ben gets up and takes out a knife from his pocket. Before Ben can strike, Alby appears in the graveyard with a bow and arrow pointed at Ben and tells him he'll kill him if he tries anything with the knife. Ben shouts back that Thomas is the one they should kill because he's not one of the Gladers. In a fit of screaming and gurgled words, Ben flings himself at Thomas and Alby shoots Ben in the cheek, killing him. Before Thomas can ask any questions, Alby disappears back into the forest.

Thomas spends the rest of the day in a blur of fear and anxiety about living in the **Glade**. The next morning, Thomas wakes up feeling depressed for having been a part of Ben's death. But as he starts his training with the Keeper of the Blood House, he starts to feel better. The head of the Blood House, Winston, shows him around and makes him shovel animal feces (also known as "klunk"). When he sees how much pleasure Winston derives from slaughtering animals, Thomas thinks that Winston must have been sent to the Glade for being a serial killer. Before his lunch break, Thomas watches in disgust as Winston slaughters a pig. Thomas decides he will never be able to work in the Blood House or eat pork again.

As Thomas leaves for lunch, he notices a Runner coming out of the East Door earlier than normally expected. Thomas walks over to him in order to ask him what it's like being a Runner. Before he reaches him, the Runner collapses to the ground.

In the Glade under Alby's leadership, breaking the rules can be fatal: rather than warning Ben or incapacitating him with a non-lethal shot, Alby shoots to kill. Alby's casual response to Ben's killing shows how justified he feels in sacrificing lives to enforce the rules.



Thomas' views on human nature and identity are becoming clearer. Because all of the boys in the Glade have no pre-Glade memories, their past experiences cannot overtly determine their behaviors. Thus, Thomas thinks that Winston is an inherently cruel person rather than a person whose experiences in life have made him cruel. Over time, the novel will complicate this view of identity as innate and unaltered by experience.



In another change in the routine, a Runner comes home early. Once again, this change seems to signify something bad: the Runner may have been stung.



CHAPTER 12

Thomas fears the Runner may have been stung, so he calls out for help and Alby comes running to meet them. When they reach the Runner, they find that he is conscious but extremely exhausted and barely able to speak. Alby says the Runner's name is Minho. Minho asks Alby for some water and Alby goes off to get him some.

Thomas asks Minho if he found anything out in the **Maze**. Minho says that although that's normally the worst question to ask a Runner, today is different. When Thomas asks what he found, Minho says he'll have to wait till Alby gets back before he says anything else. When Alby returns and gives Minho permission to speak in front of Thomas, Minho says that he found a dead Griever in the Maze.

CHAPTER 13

Alby seems surprised to learn that Minho had found a dead Griever in the **Maze**. They agree to haul the Griever back to the **Glade** tomorrow. Alby then turns to Thomas and asks again if he's holding any information back. Thomas reiterates that he is not withholding any information and asks why Alby is so suspicious of him and hates him so much. Alby says it's not about hate or love or friendship, but just about survival. Alby makes Thomas promise that he'll come to him if he remembers anything. Alby then turns and goes back toward the Glade.

Thomas goes into the graveyard area to find a quiet place to think. He is interrupted by Chuck, who tells him that Ben didn't die from the arrow wound and that the Keepers have gathered and decided to banish Ben for attacking Thomas. When Thomas asks what banishment means, Chuck just smiles and runs off.

At dusk before the walls close, Alby assembles everyone at the East Door. A couple of Gladers drag a crying Ben to the Door and Newt brings out a giant pole with a collar at one end. Seeing the punishment begin to unfold, Thomas feels a sense of guilt for his role in Ben's banishment.

The Runners' lives revolve around sacrifice. Everyday, they enter the Maze knowing that they might not come out. Even Alby, who never takes orders from anyone, carries out Minho's request, showing his respect for Minho's willingness to sacrifice himself for the good of the Glade.



Minho's discovery represents another change in the routine. But, for the first time, this change brings good news: Grievers can die. And if they can die, then the Gladers might be able to learn how to kill them.



The value Alby places on survival explains how he so casually killed Ben despite helping him get through the Changing the day before. Alby will help the boys through their hardships not out of kindness or friendship, but out of a need to keep as many boys healthy and alive as possible. But, if they break the rules or cause disorder, he has no problem punishing or even killing them.



Chuck's smile reveals a darker side to his personality: he's looking forward to Ben's banishment. His excitement comes from the widespread belief in the Glade that discipline maintains order. Chuck has so embraced the value of discipline that he perversely takes pleasure out of knowing that Alby will punish Ben.



Thomas' guilt shows that he recognizes the injustice of banishing a teenaged boy. For Thomas, this cruel kind of discipline does not seem worth the price of maintaining order.



CHAPTER 14

Alby wraps the collar around Ben's neck. Ben pleads that he only tried to kill Thomas because the **Changing** made him crazy. Alby pays no attention and, in a ceremonial and authoritative voice, decrees that Ben will be banished. The ten Keepers of the **Glade** all grab hold of the pole at the opposite end of the collar.

Crying and pleading for help, Ben looks around the crowd hoping to inspire someone to intervene. Thomas' guilt makes him hide behind a larger boy so Ben won't see him. As the Door begins to close, the Keepers use the pole to thrust Ben inside the **Maze**. In the last moment before the door closes, Thomas sees Ben screaming and crying. Thomas says that Ben's fear and desperation has made him look barely human. The door closes and Thomas feels hot tears running down his face.

If this were true justice, then Alby would give Ben a lighter punishment because he was temporarily insane while he committed the crime. But for Alby, the public display of authority and discipline to preserve order is more important than actual justice.



Since Ben's banishment is not actually justice, it appears more like a ritual sacrifice. All the Keepers must participate and all the Gladers must watch. The Gladers sacrifice Ben under the false pretenses of justice because they want to feel like they are preserving order and authority, which makes them feel safe despite living near the Maze.



CHAPTER 15

Thomas goes to sleep with the images of Ben's haunted face on his mind. The next morning, Newt wakes Thomas up and tells him he'll be spending the day working with the farmers. As he gets up, Thomas notices Minh picking up Ben's collar by the East Door. Newt says that every time they banish someone, the Grievors leave the banished person's collar at the threshold of the **Maze**.

Newt tells Thomas that he was a Runner until a few months ago, when he hurt his leg running away from a Griever. Newt says that to be a Runner, you need to be fast, smart, and a good decision maker. Sensing that he'd likely have Newt's support, Thomas reveals his desire to be a Runner. Newt says that Thomas will first need to prove himself as a valuable member of the **Glade** before he will be recommended as a Runner. When Thomas says he'll go crazy if he does menial labor like farming, Newt says that the Glade operates on a system of work and order, and that the system won't change for him.

Thomas continues to feel guilt, showing that he senses the unjustness of the punishment. To a larger extent, Ben's unjust banishment reveals the violent, ritualistic sacrifices that form the basis of the Glade's outward appearance of order and tranquility. The Glade may seem like Garden of Eden on the surface but underneath is a society that maintains order through violence and sacrifice.



In another example of the differences in their leadership styles, Newt's belief that daily work assignments keep order contrasts with Alby's trust in law and discipline for preserving order. Newt's claim that the Glade won't change for Thomas ironically foreshadows that Thomas will completely change life in the Glade.



CHAPTER 16

Thomas spends the morning hours pulling weeds and doing farm work alongside the Keeper of the farmers, Zart. Zart explains the other positions in the **Glade**. He says that Sloppers do all the cleaning work and that the Baggers take care of the dead but also work as police. As lunchtime nears, Thomas feels an even stronger urge to be a Runner to avoid farm work, which he despises. His desire to be a Runner is mixed with strong emotions about the girl who arrived in the Box, but he doesn't yet know why.

At lunch, Newt is distraught and tells Thomas that the girl is still in coma. Newt says that the girl is saying "weird stuff" in her unconscious state. Newt listens but says that what's concerning him more is Minho and Alby's whereabouts: they went into the **Maze** to investigate the Griever and should have been back hours ago. When Thomas suggests sending a search party into the Maze to look for them, Newt looks horrified and says that's not allowed because more people may get lost. Thomas notices, however, that Newt's terror was less about a fear of losing other Gladers and more about his own fear of the Maze.

By dinner time, all the Runners have returned except Alby and Minho. Afraid that they're dead, the Gladers eat dinner solemnly. As they eat, Newt runs frantically from Door to Door, hoping that Alby and Minho will return before the Doors close. Thomas goes to see Newt at one of the Doors a few minutes before they all close. Newt says that Minho and Alby must be dead since they haven't come back yet. Losing all hope, Newt walks back toward the Homestead.

As the Door begins to close, Thomas sees Minho inside the **Maze** with Alby, stung by a Griever, being helped along. Thomas calls for Newt's help, but realizes Newt won't be able to get to the Door in time to save them. Feeling he must help, Thomas slips into the Maze and the Door closes behind him.

CHAPTER 17

Inside the **Maze**, everything is dark and Thomas feels terrified, but he manages to find his way to Minho and Alby. Minho tells Thomas that he was stupid, not brave, to enter the Maze because now they're all going to die. Thomas asks about the Griever and Minho says that when they found it, Alby touched it and it came back alive. Instead of attacking them, it ran away, but trampled Alby in the process, stinging him with its needles and rendering him unconscious.

As we will soon learn, Thomas connects his desire to be a Runner with his feelings for the girl due to an unconscious memory on the verge of resurfacing. Though he doesn't realize it yet, Thomas' memories govern his desires and emotions.



Newt's unwillingness to send in a search party shows that he would rather risk the lives of his friends than break the rule forbidding non-Runners from entering the Maze. Though Alby has been the Glade's biggest supporter of the rules, in an ironic twist Newt's refusal to break them might lead to Alby's death.



Newt's fear connects the theme of Stability and Order vs. Change and Chaos with the theme of Hope. Newt's fear of the Maze makes him rely on the established rules to give him a sense of security. If Newt had more hope and less fear, then he would risk breaking the rules and send a search party to look for Minho and Alby. Without hope and relying too much on the rules, Newt fails to save his friends.



In an act of brave self-sacrifice, Thomas enters the Maze to save the others. Thomas acts like a true adult, knowing that he must sometimes break the rules in order to do the right thing.



Minho's fear illustrates how life in the Glade has so ingrained in him the rule against going into the Maze at night that he believes breaking that rule will unavoidably lead to his death. This fear causes him to lose all hope for survival.



Thomas suggests they climb the vines in order to protect themselves from the Griever, but Minho responds by saying that they've tried that in the past and it didn't work. Minho yells at Thomas, saying his sense of hope is just making everything worse. They then hear a whirring and clicking sound in the distance. Minho stands up and says the only way they will survive is if they split up and run as fast as they can. At that, Minho runs into the **Maze**, leaving Alby and Thomas alone and defenseless against the approaching Griever.

As Minho's reaction shows, hope can be painful in dire situations. It's easier for Minho to handle the situation emotionally by accepting that he's going to die rather than hoping that he may live. But without hope, Minho loses all courage and sense of responsibility, betraying Alby and Thomas by running away.



CHAPTER 18

Thomas feels angry at Minho for running away at the first sign of trouble. Although Minho said they already tried climbing the vines, Thomas devises a plan to tie vines around Alby and hoist him up the wall. After much strenuous effort, Thomas is able to climb up the wall and lift Alby thirty feet into the air with vines attached to each of his limbs.

Thomas' actions recall the story of the boy who climbed down the Box. After the boy died, the Gladers lost any hope that climbing up the vines didn't work in the past, Thomas' hopefulness gives him the courage to try climbing them himself.



As Thomas hangs on the wall and rests, a beetle blade comes out of a small hole on the wall right beside him. Thomas examines the creature and once again sees the word "WICKED" printed on its body. As the beetle scurries off, Thomas sees a Griever round the corner and walk toward them.

The beetle blade is like a bad omen, telling Thomas that he is "wicked" for climbing the vines. The omen foreshadows that Thomas' plan for survival will not turn out the way he hoped.



CHAPTER 19

As the Griever approaches, Thomas notices that it is covered in a slimy skin and has needles and other sharp metal appendages like claws and hooks sticking out of it. The Griever moves by retracting its metal appendages and then rolling. Feeling fear of the creature, Thomas has a vague memory of being a child afraid of the shadows on the walls of his room and running into his parents' room for safety.

Thomas' recovery of a memory reveals that his memories, rather than erased, lay deep within him. The fact that he has these repressed memories suggests that his identity may not actually be a blank slate. Instead, if his memories are still present, then they might be shaping his personality in unknown ways.



The Griever comes to the spot on the wall right beneath Thomas and then stops moving. Thomas hopes that it has stopped for good, but then it comes back to life and starts climbing the wall.

The beetle blade's omen comes true. But, unlike Minho, Thomas won't give up hope at the first sign of trouble.



CHAPTER 20

The Griever uses spikes to climb the wall and shines a blinding red light straight at Thomas. Knowing he can't stay where he is, Thomas moves sideways across the wall by using his body weight to swing and catch nearby vines. The Griever follows Thomas instead of going for Alby, which makes Thomas feel glad that he can draw the creature away from the unconscious and vulnerable Alby.

Thomas' sense of responsibility, a hallmark of maturity, shows that he is becoming an adult.



Thomas accidentally swings into a wall and loses his grip. As he tumbles down the wall, he manages to catch a vine halfway before hitting the floor. Thomas pushes off the wall and swings backwards, hitting the Griever's slimy body. As he swings off, he feels the creature's claw make a gash in his back.

Thomas' steadfast determination and sense of hope give him the courage to attack the Griever head on. Unlike the timid Gladers who stick to the rules, Thomas, with hope on his side, tries a new method for survival: fighting off the Griever.



Thomas lets go of the vines, lands safely on the ground, and starts running in order to escape the Griever and lure it further away from Alby. Keeping track of the turns he makes so he can find his way back, he rounds one corner and sees three Griever rolling towards him.

Like the trials of adolescence, the Maze is testing Thomas' ability to remain calm, mature, and hopeful despite the pressures and setbacks.



CHAPTER 21

Thomas turns around and sees the first Griever still pursuing him. Thinking he has a better chance at getting past just one Griever, Thomas charges at the first Griever. The Griever runs at him too but before they collide, Thomas dives sideways and gets past the creature. As he continues to run, Minho grabs him from around a corner and tells him that Thomas's sideways dive gave him an idea for beating the Griever.

Thomas' tenacious sense of hope inspires Minho to help him. This is the first of many examples where hope spreads from one person to another in the Glade.



Thomas follows Minho to the **Cliff**, where the **Maze** appears to end abruptly. The path looks over a seemingly infinite expanse of black sky. Since the path leading to the Cliff is narrow, the Griever approach in single file. Minho tells Thomas to dive out of the way as soon as the Griever charge.

The Cliff presents the closest thing to an "exit" from the Maze that the Gladers have found: suicide. In the metaphor of the Maze as adolescence, the Cliff represents the hopelessness that drives teenagers to suicide when they feel they have no other escape.



The first Griever charges and they dive out of the way. Without enough time to stop, the Griever falls off the edge, seeming to disappear into thin air. They successfully repeat this tactic with the second and third Griever, but the last one is able to stop just before falling off the edge. Minho and Thomas give each other a knowing look and they charge at the Griever together, kicking it in its center so that it too disappears off the **Cliff**.

Hope gives Minho the courage to change his longstanding method for surviving the Maze: running. Though running kept him alive in the past, this method fails to protect him or his friends in the Maze at night. Once he realizes that change is necessary for survival, Minho shows his willingness to adapt by taking the Griever head on.



CHAPTER 22

Unable to cope with almost dying, Thomas sits beside Minho and cries for half an hour. When he calms down, Thomas tells Minho they have to find Alby. Minho says that Alby must be dead already because they didn't inject him with the Serum before sunset. Thomas asks if they ever tried giving a stung Glader the Serum after sunset. Minho realizes they've never tried because stung Gladers have either managed to get back into the **Glade** before the Doors closed or they weren't able to get back in time and presumably died within the **Maze**. Minho says they have always just assumed that the Serum wouldn't work after sunset. Gaining new hope, they head to the spot where they left Alby.

On their way to Alby, Minho says the Serum is short for the Grief Serum. He says that the Creators send them the Serum through the Box. When Minho and Thomas arrive at the spot, the Door is already open and they see Newt. Too exhausted to help get Alby down, Thomas shows Newt where Alby is hanging and then he and Minho head into the **Glade** to rest.

As they walk to the Homestead, all the Gladers gawk at them with awe. Thomas goes to sleep but is woken up by Chuck a few hours later, who tells him that Alby has survived but is now going through the **Changing**.

CHAPTER 23

Hearing the sounds of Alby's screams, Thomas is no longer able to sleep. To find some quiet, he goes to the graveyard and feels the crippling reality that he is surrounded by a **Maze** that contains real-life monsters. Thomas feels an intense desire to get revenge on the Creators and the people who put him in the **Glade**.

Chuck and Newt find Thomas in the graveyard. Newt tells him that Alby will be alright soon. When Thomas asks about what happens during the **Changing**, Newt says that all they know is that the Gladers who go through it get glimpses of their erased memories. Newt says that people go a little insane and become unlikable after the Changing because it's like having your life back and then having it taken away all over again. Thomas responds that maybe they go crazy because they realize their old lives were no better than their current ones.

Minho's lack of hope in the effectiveness of the Serum reveals his deep-seated belief that any change in routine is futile. But once Thomas shows him the flaws in his assumptions about the futility of change, Minho gains a renewed sense of hope. After having these experiences in the Maze and seeing firsthand the value in Thomas' new methods and fresh perspectives, Minho may finally learn the importance of change.



By staying hopeful and trying new methods, Thomas saves Alby's life. Now Thomas may be able to convince Alby and the other Gladers that change, rather than something just frightening, is in fact valuable.



To everyone's surprise, Thomas survives the Maze, perhaps inspiring hope in the Gladers just as he did in Minho. With this hope, the Gladers may finally be willing to change their flawed approach to solving the Maze.



This setting in the graveyard heightens the reader's sense of Thomas' hopelessness. The graves suggest that at some level Thomas also wishes to join their ranks (later in the novel Minho will accuse him of having a death wish). If he remains hopeless, then the only "escape" to the Maze that he'll find will be over the Cliff.



As its name implies, the Changing is a metaphor for puberty. Since most of the Gladers were children before arriving in the Glade, Newt's interpretation of the Changing suggests that the boys realize that they can never return to the innocent happiness of childhood. In terms of the metaphor, Thomas responds that puberty makes them realize that their childhood was never that perfect in the first place.



Before Newt leaves, he says that all the Keepers will meet tomorrow to discuss if they should reprimand Thomas for breaking the rules by going into the **Maze** or honor him for saving the lives of Minho and Alby.

The Gladers value their system of order so much that they'll still hold a trial to determine if Thomas deserves punishment even though he risked his life to save Minho and Alby. This strict adherence to the law seems absurd since Thomas only broke the law because it was preventing him from saving lives.



CHAPTER 24

At the Gathering of the Keepers, Thomas sits in a large room in the Homestead before the eleven Keepers. Thomas notices that one of the keepers is Gally, who he knows is going to vote against him. Minho is also there as Keeper of the Runners. There is one chair empty for the absent Alby. Newt leads the meeting, saying that half the Gladers think Thomas is a rule-breaker and the other half think he's a hero. Gally interrupts, accusing Thomas of breaking one of their most important rules: not going into the **Maze**. Before he can say anything else, Newt yells at Gally to wait until it's his turn to talk.

Half of the Gladers support what Thomas represents: a necessary change in the routine that will help them find an escape from the Maze. The other half see Thomas as a danger to their way of life: his new ideas and changes may lead to a breakdown in order.



Each Keeper says his opinion, most of them agreeing that Thomas should be praised but also be minimally punished for breaking their number one rule. When it's Gally's turn to speak, he says that Thomas is a spy for the Creators because no newbie could ever be brave enough to go into the **Maze** and smart enough to save Minho and Alby, two of the most accomplished Gladers. Gally says Thomas only saved the two of them as a trick to win the Gladers over. After he gives his speech, Newt asks Minho to give his opinion. In a concise statement, Minho nonchalantly nominates Thomas to replace him as Keeper of the Runners.

Gally's accusation casts legitimate doubts on Thomas's reliability as our protagonist. Since Thomas doesn't have access to his memories, he may be involuntarily spying for the Creators or carrying out their will in some unknown way. But since this novel constantly upholds hope as a positive attribute, Gally's lack of hope in Thomas makes his accusation less convincing.



CHAPTER 25

The Keepers argue loudly about Minho's suggestion until Newt calms everyone and asks Minho to better explain his proposal. Minho says that out of all the Keepers, he's the only one who has been inside the **Maze** except for Newt. Gally interrupts, saying that he's been in the Maze, but Minho yells at him, saying that he's only been in the Maze once and that was when he was breaking the same rule that Thomas broke.

Gally only wants to enforce the rules when they benefit him. He complains that Thomas broke the rules even though he broke the same rule in the past. Gally also ignores the rules of the Gathering by interrupting people as they speak. This hypocrisy discredits Gally's argument.



Minho continues, saying that inside the **Maze**, he got scared and ran off but Thomas stayed calm and risked his own life to protect Alby. Gally interrupts again, diminishing Thomas' accomplishments by saying he was lucky. Minho yells at Gally, telling him he is a coward who has never been a Runner so he has no right to express his opinion about what courage and strength it took Thomas to survive the Maze.

Minho's argument for the importance of experience supports the idea that experiences, rather than one's innate nature, form the basis of identity.



Embarrassed by Minhó's insults, Gally threatens to break Minhó's neck. Minhó pushes Gally to the ground and says that if he ever threatens him again, then he'll break his arms and legs before breaking his neck. As Gally storms out of the room, he says things are going to change and that if he must, then he will kill Thomas in order to stop him from carrying out the Creators' secret plans.

Gally echoes the girl's warning that everything will change. Gally, however, wants things to change back to the status-quo before Thomas' arrival. While the changes Thomas introduced by going into Maze were examples of progress, Gally wants changes that take the Glade a step backwards: a strict and violent enforcement of the rules.



CHAPTER 26

After Gally leaves, Thomas feels fear that Gally wants him dead. Minhó says they should throw Gally in the Slammer, the **Glade's** jail, for threatening Thomas. To Minhó's surprise, Winston says that maybe Gally has a point about being worried about Thomas. Tired of being talked about like he's not there, Thomas finally speaks up. Thomas says that he only broke the rule because not doing so would have meant that he would have had to turn his back on two people who needed his help.

In the same way that Thomas' hope was contagious in the Maze, fear spreads from Gally to Winston. In the Glade, fear of disorder keeps the Gladers from changing their flawed attempts at escaping the Maze. To change their views, Thomas argues that since rules are fallible, people must be willing to break or change them in order to protect the lives of others. If Thomas can convince them of the importance of change, then perhaps he can get them to alter how they approach solving the Maze.



Newt proposes that they throw Thomas in the Slammer for one day and then let him start training for being a Keeper. If he proves himself, they'll make him the Keeper of the Runners in a month. The Keepers vote and Newt's proposal passes. Chuck runs into the hall after everyone's left except Minhó and Thomas. Chuck tells Thomas that Alby is asking for him.

Newt's decision to throw Thomas in jail is purely symbolic. Not wanting to neglect the strict system of laws and punishments, Newt feels he must do something to show the Gladers that, no matter what, breaking the rules will get you punished.



CHAPTER 27

Thomas enters Alby's room. Alby, who still looks sick, tells the Med-Jacks to leave the two of them alone so that they can talk privately. When they are alone, Alby says that during the **Changing** he saw Thomas and the girl working with the Creators in the place where they come from. Alby says that he remembers an event called the Flare and that the world outside the **Glade** is horrible and apocalyptic. Alby says that he now understands that the Creators must have made them forget so that they could live peaceful lives within the Glade.

Since the Changing is a metaphor for puberty, Alby suggests that becoming a teenager means losing the innocence of childhood by becoming aware of the harsh realities of adult life. Alby's wish to stay in the Glade is a metaphorical wish to remain a child forever so that he won't have to face the challenges of the adult world.



Alby starts to say something else, but then begins to viciously choke himself. Thomas calls for Newt and together they try to restrain Alby. Alby comes close to killing himself, but he suddenly calms and stops choking himself. Alby says he doesn't know what just happened and that it felt like someone was controlling his body. As Thomas and Newt leave the room to let Alby sleep, Alby tells Thomas to be careful with girl and that Newt should protect the maps.

Alby's loss of control continues the metaphor for puberty. Here, an invisible force takes control over Alby's body. Similarly, in adolescence, for some teenagers hormonal changes can be strong enough to make them feel and do things outside of their control.



CHAPTER 28

Newt and Thomas get leftovers from lunch and discuss the situation regarding Alby. Newt says that no one has ever tried to tell them what they remembered from the **Changing**. Newt suggests that something must be preventing them from talking about their memories and that must be why Alby started choking himself. Thomas wonders to himself if it were possible that **Maze** somehow asserts a kind of mind control on them.

Newt tells Thomas that they need to find out who he was before coming to the **Glade**. He tells Thomas to open his mind and be honest about what he sees and feels. Thomas tells him that he feels as if he has been to the Glade before. Newt tells him that's odd since most kids arrive in the Glade and are too scared and shocked to do anything for a week. Thomas also says that he had an instinctual knowledge telling him he needed to be a Runner. Newt encourages him to keep trying to remember and then tells him they're going to see the girl because seeing her may jog his memory.

When they get to her room, a Med-Jack named Clint says she's been unconscious this whole time, but has been rambling about how everything will change and has been repeating Thomas' name. As Thomas stares at her, he feels like she looks familiar and then hears a girl's voice say the name "Teresa" in his head. After telling Newt what he heard, Newt says that Thomas must have unlocked her name from his memory.

Thomas hears the same voice say his own name. Thomas jumps up and says that she's talking to him. He hears her say that they are the last ones and that she won't remember anything by the time she wakes up. Teresa says that they can pass the Trials and that they sent her as a trigger. Terrified about hearing her in his head, Thomas runs out of the room to escape the voice. Without realizing it, he runs into the **Maze** in attempt to get further away from her. As he runs, Teresa says in his head, "It was you and me, Tom. We did this to them."

CHAPTER 29

In state of confusion and distress, Thomas unintentionally ran for an hour inside the **Maze**. Realizing he must get back to the **Glade** before sunset, Thomas finds it surprisingly easy to retrace his steps. Thomas finds his way out of the Maze and immediately goes to sleep, not wanting to talk to anyone.

Even if the Maze does not directly control their minds, the Gladers' fear of the Maze governs how they feel and act. For example, Newt's fear of the Maze prevented him from sending a search party to look for Alby and Minh.



Thomas thinks an innate nature, rather than his repressed memories, make him want to be a Runner. Newt, however, recognizes that Thomas' feelings most likely come from his unconscious memories of past experiences. Since the capacity for introspection is a sign of adulthood, Thomas' continued examination of his inner feelings shows that he is becoming more of an adult.



Teresa associates change with Thomas, cementing our perception of Thomas' role in the Glade as the bringer of change.



In the beginning of the novel, Thomas' guilty conscience made him think that the Glade was a prison for juvenile murders. But now it seems like Thomas' guilt comes from a repressed memory of his role as a Creator.



In earlier chapters, Thomas' talent for retracing his steps would have reaffirmed his innate drive to be a Runner. After Teresa's revelation, however, his ability to navigate the Maze suggests that he has an unconscious familiarity with its layout and design because of his role in its creation. Not actually destined to be a Runner, Thomas felt drawn to the Maze because of his memories.



Chuck wakes Thomas the next morning. Chuck tells him that Gally has disappeared. Some of the Gladers think he went into the **Maze**, but Chuck thinks he's too smart to make such a bad decision. Chuck says that Gally's friends are probably just hiding him somewhere. Thomas says that he wishes he could just have a day to relax. Chuck responds that he's going to get his wish in the Slammer.

Since Thomas doesn't realize that he'll be alone in jail all day, his wish for a day to himself is an example of dramatic irony (which is when the significance of a character's words are unknown to the character who speaks them). This irony recalls the moment when he wished for revenge against the Creators, not realizing that he was one himself.



CHAPTER 30

In a concrete building north of the Homestead, Newt lets Thomas into the jail cell. There is only one rickety wooden chair and nothing to do. After a few hours of intense boredom, Chuck arrives with Thomas' lunch. He says no one has found Gally yet but that Alby is up and around.

Thomas is the type of person who needs change. For Thomas, the unchanging repetitiveness of staying in a room all day with nothing to do is almost as painful as a night in the Maze.



Chuck tells Thomas that when he first arrived, he cried every night out of fear and desire to go home. Chuck asks Thomas if he think he has good parents, ones who miss him now that he is gone. This makes Thomas angry at the Creators for putting them in the **Glade** and depriving Chuck of a normal life. Thomas assures Chuck that he has parents who care about him. Thomas promises Chuck that he will get him home.

Thomas still doesn't accept that he is one of the Creators, so he directs his anger outwards at the other Creators rather than at himself. Thomas also tries to give Chuck hope, a necessity for survival, by promising that he will get him back to his parents.



CHAPTER 31

As Thomas hears the Doors begin to close, Alby arrives at the Slammer and lets him out. Alby tells Thomas that during the **Changing**, he saw Thomas helping the Creators, but that the images he saw could just be fake memories implanted by the Creators in order to make them suspicious of Thomas. Alby hopes this is true, saying that if the images he saw of the world outside the **Glade** were real, then he would rather stay in the Glade than go home.

Alby's wish to stay in the Glade represents his desire to remain a child rather than enter the adult world outside the Maze. In an attempt to salvage his lost childhood innocence, Alby tries to convince himself that the images he saw of the adult world were merely illusions.



Since he was in jail, Thomas missed dinner so he eats leftovers that the cook, a boy named Frypan, had prepared especially for him in gratitude for saving the lives of Minho and Alby. Minho joins Thomas as he eats and tells him what he should expect for Runner training tomorrow. Minho also tells him a fable about a woman trapped in a labyrinth who found the exit by sliding her right hand against the wall, turning right at every turn. Minho says that by the laws of physics and geometry, she was able to find the exit. But in the **Maze**, Minho says, all the paths just lead back to the Glade. After dinner, Thomas gets into his sleeping bag and wonders what the Runners have been missing.

Unlike the woman in the fable, the Gladers' use of logic and reason to solve the Maze has been a total failure. These failures have led them to see the Maze as a symbol of chaos. If the Maze, a source of fear and anxiety, represents chaos for the boys, then it becomes clear why they want the Glade to run on a system of law and order: they want their home to be as different from the Maze as possible.



CHAPTER 32

The next morning, Minho wakes Thomas before dawn and shows him inside a locked room in the Homestead where he gives him running shoes, a wristwatch, and other running gear. Minho says that over time they've gotten all this running gear by placing notes with requests for stuff in the Box. The next time the Box arrives, the Creators would include some of the supplies they had requested.

Minho shows Thomas a secret trapdoor in the room which leads to another room where they keep weapons like knives, swords, and spears. Minho says that they keep these weapons hidden so that people like Gally cannot get to them. At first, the weapons make Thomas excited, but then he realizes that they only need weapons because they may one day need to fight off the Grievors. This thought replaces his excitement with fear. Thomas takes a couple of knives and then follows Minho to the Map Room, which is the concrete building with the steering wheel door.

In the Map Room, Minho draws Thomas a map of the **Maze**. First he draws a large square that fills up the entire page. Within that square, he draws three rows each consisting of three squares of the same size, nine squares in all. He labels the middle square "The **Glade**." Starting from the upper left hand corner and moving clockwise, he labels the rest of the squares one through eight. Minho says that there are Doors just like the ones that at the entrance to the Maze that lead into Sections One, Three, Five and Seven. Although the location of the Doors does not change, the pathways leading up to them do.

Minho explains that they have eight Runners, one for each Section. Although they have never found an exit out of any of the Sections, Minho says that they have learned that the walls repeat the same pattern of shifting every month. Minho also admits that the **Maze** is incredibly discouraging, but agrees with Thomas when Thomas says that they can't give up until they find an exit. Minho tells Thomas that he'll now take him through his first run through the Maze.

Since the Creators supply the Gladers with this gear, they must not be totally evil. This scene should make the reader consider why the Creators would put a bunch of teens in a Maze and then give them the resources to get out. Perhaps they are studying something about human nature: will teenagers put in dire situations form a functioning society capable of finding an escape to the Maze or will they merely descend into chaos?



Here, the weapons undermine the appearance of the tranquility in the Glade. Since the weapons are physically beneath the Glade, they symbolically evoke all the violence (like the ritual sacrifice of Ben) that lies below the Glade's surface. These weapons suggest that, at any moment, the Glade could erupt in extreme violence.



With all of its twists, turns, and dead-ends, the Maze appears absolutely chaotic to the Runners. But a map of the Maze reveals certain unchanging constants like the position of the doors and the number of sections. The Maze, therefore, has an order and logic not immediately apparent. In contrast, the weapons below the Homestead reveal that the Glade is more violent and chaotic than it appears on the surface.



Again, the Maze appears more ordered than it seemed. The walls don't shift randomly, but instead follow a very specific pattern that repeats itself on a monthly basis. As a result of this new information, the Glade and the Maze don't seem that different after all: they both consist of violent chaos and structured order.



CHAPTER 33

Thomas follows Minho through the **Maze**, keeping up but slowly getting more and more tired as he runs. They start in section Eight and find the Door that leads into Section One. As they run, Minho shows Thomas how to cut ivy without stopping and drop it behind them in order to leave a trail. At lunchtime, they rest and Minho explains how Alby nudged the dead Griever with his foot. This caused the creature to come alive, but instead of attacking them, it tried to flee, running over Alby in the process.

They run some more and then rest again. Thomas sees a beetle blade and asks what they're for and why they have the word WICKED on them. Minho says the Gladers have always assumed that the beetle blades spy for the Creators but they don't know what the word means.

As they talk, Thomas notices a glimmer of silver against a wall. Thomas goes to investigate and Minho shrugs, already seeming to know what he'll find. When Thomas approaches the walls and pushes the ivy out of the way, he sees a metal plaque with the words, "WORLD IN CATASTROPHE: KILLZONE EXPERIMENT DEPARTMENT." Minho says these plaques are all over the **Maze**. They continue to run, but finding nothing new, they turn back an hour later.

At the end of the day, Thomas feels physically depleted. Becoming Runner has lost its appeal and he feels exhausted with this new life already. Right before he falls asleep, he hears Teresa's voice in his head, saying "Tom, I just triggered the Ending."

CHAPTER 34

The next morning Thomas awakes to shouting and confusion in the **Glade**. Although his watch says it's morning, the sky is totally grey and there is no sun. He meets up with the other boys at the Box. Thomas realizes that since sun cannot just disappear, the sun along with the whole sky must have been an artificial illusion. Chuck comes next to Thomas and says the sky looks like a grey ceiling. The memory of Teresa's warning from the last night creeps into his head and he worries that the sun's disappearance may be the beginning of the end.

Minho's insistence on training shows the importance of experience. Though Thomas felt an innate drive to be a Runner, he must first acquire the knowledge and experience before he can become a true Runner.



Minho's lack of knowledge about the beetle blades shows that even one of the Glade's leaders doesn't know everything about their world. They may try to keep this lack of knowledge hidden from the other Gladers because it may weaken the appearance of their authority.



Since the Maze is an experiment, all the control that Alby, Newt, and Minho seem to have over life in the Glade is actually an illusion. In reality, they have no real control because they're just lab rats in the Creators' experiment.



Thomas' disenchantment with being a Runner reveals that he never actually had an instinctual drive to be a Runner. He simply mistook his repressed memories of the Maze as an innate calling to run through it.



Once again, the appearance of order in the Glade begins to disintegrate. In Greek mythology, the sun is a symbol of order and reason. Thomas, however, realizes that their sun was merely an illusion. This suggests that the order in Glade was also an illusion. The sun's disappearance foreshadows that the Glade's illusion of order will also soon disappear and give way to chaos.



Minho appears and tells Thomas to get ready for the run. Thomas asks why they're still going and Minho says that it's even more important now, since without the sun none of their plants or animals will be able to survive in the **Glade** for long. Thomas considers telling Minho what he heard in his head the previous night, but decides not to for fear that the Gladers will think that he and Teresa are working for the Creators.

Minho and Thomas run into the **Maze** and, in Section Eight, they come across a Griever. It runs off, but Minho and Thomas follow in order to see where the Grievers go during the day. The Griever runs to the **Cliff** and jumps, but instead of falling, it just disappears into thin air.

CHAPTER 35

Minho tells Thomas that Grievers must be leaving the **Maze** by jumping through some sort of portal beyond the **Cliff**. To test Minho's theory, they throw rocks off the Cliff. They all fall normally, but then Minho throws one and it disappears. They try throwing another in the same spot and it works again. When Thomas suggests that they jump into the portal, Minho responds that he must have a death wish. Before returning to the **Glade** with their new discovery, Minho decides they should explore the Maze some more. Minho hopes that the changes in the sky have somehow prompted an exit in the Maze.

After failing to find anything else, they return to the **Glade** to tell Newt and Alby about the portal, which Thomas christens the Griever Hole. But first Minho takes Thomas to the Map Room and has him draw a map of their section. Minho says that after each run, the Runners draw maps of their sections. By looking for patterns in the way the maps change from day to day, Minho says that they hope that can find some clue to the location of an exit.

After drawing the map, Minho and Thomas run into Newt and Alby outside the Map Room. Newt informs them that supplies have stopped coming through the Box. As Minho tells them about the Griever Hole, Chuck comes running to them to tell them that the girl is awake. Thomas then hears Teresa in his head saying that she needs to tell him things before her memories fade. The chapter ends with her saying that the **Maze** is a code.

Minho tries to preserve a sense of stability despite the drastic changes in the environment. Leading the other Runners in their daily run through the Maze, Minho hopes to maintain order by adhering to their routine.



Minho and Thomas' understanding of the Cliff begins to shift when they see the Griever disappear. Earlier the Cliff represented punishment and death, but the Griever's disappearance implies that the Cliff may represent something more: perhaps a real exit?



The Cliff continues to shift its symbolic meaning. While the Cliff had represented the hopelessness that would drive a Glader to suicide, now the Cliff may actually hold the secret to their escape. Like so many symbols in this novel, the Cliff starts off representing one thing (hopelessness) and ends up representing its opposite (the hope of an escape).



Minho's commitment to the Runner's routine once again shows that he believes routine provides stability and security in the face of all the horrors outside the Glade. He won't even end the run early to tell Alby and Newt about their discovery.



Like the Cliff, the Maze shifts its symbolic meaning. No longer representing total chaos, the Maze is a rational code that the Gladers can learn to decipher.



CHAPTER 36

Not wanting to confront Teresa, Thomas runs into the graveyard to find seclusion. When he settles in there, he hears Teresa's voice. She says that forgetting him was the worst part of the memory loss. At first he thinks he is hearing her voice in his head again, but then he turns and sees her. Standing near stone wall, Teresa is dressed in jeans and a t-shirt.

Teresa asks if he remembers her and he says that although he can't explain it, she seems familiar. She responds that she remembers remembering, but the memories, although all there, are blurred. Thomas says that he likes when she calls him "Tom," that it reminds him of home. He then asks how she has been communicating with him through their thoughts. She telepathically says that she doesn't know but it feels right and normal. She also shows him her arm on which she had scrawled a note, which reads, "WICKED is good." She says she was able to write this down before her memories totally faded, but that she can no longer remember what it means.

Newt, Alby, and a Med-Jack named Jeff come into the graveyard. Newt asks how Teresa got to the graveyard and she responds that Jeff must not have mentioned how she kicked him in the groin and escaped through the window. When Newt mocks Jeff for being beaten up by a girl, Teresa threatens Newt that if he keeps talking that way, he'll be next.

Alby demands to know from Thomas why Teresa came to him. Thomas says that they must have known each other before arriving in the **Glade**, but that they can't remember anything else. Alby gets angry at Teresa, asking what she did to cause the changes in the Glade. She says that she triggered the end but doesn't know why or what that means. Yelling at her and Thomas for being so casual, Alby tells them that it's past sunset and the Doors never shut.

CHAPTER 37

Despite Thomas' protestation, Alby has Teresa brought to jail for triggering the changes. Thomas tries to defend her but Alby says that he's lucky he's not thrown in the Slammer with her. As Alby calls for two guards to take her away, she telepathically thinks to Thomas that he should come see her. He tries to respond with telepathy but she doesn't respond.

Thomas has just gone through some major shifts in perception. The Maze, no longer representing chaos, is actually a code and the Cliff, no longer a symbol for death, may be their only hope for an exit. Now, in another perceptual shift, Thomas mistakes hearing Teresa in real life for hearing her in his thoughts.



Thomas still feels a connection to Teresa despite his memory loss, showing that personal relationships leave an imprint on our identities that never truly disappears. And, in another example of shifting meaning, Teresa tells him that "WICKED is good." The phrase is an oxymoron, since "wickedness" is by definition bad. But as we keep seeing, in the Glade (and in life) our perceptions can shift at any moment: what seems like chaos is order and what seems like wickedness is good.



Teresa's action subvert the boys' sexist beliefs about women: she overpowers Jeff in a fight and sticks up for herself when Newt mocks him for losing to girl. Teresa quickly proves herself to be an equal match to the boys.



In another instance of sexism, Alby directs his question about Teresa to Thomas as if she wasn't even there. Sexism is so prevalent in their society that Alby completely ignores Teresa, showing that he lacks respect for her.



Here again, Alby's sexism reveals itself when he blames Teresa for triggering something she had no control over. Alby's accusation is comparable to when sexist men blame women for being raped because the way they dress or act "triggers" men's sexual desire.



All over the **Glade** people are trying to seal the Doors in order to prevent the Grievers from getting inside. Thomas thinks that everyone is working hard so that they can keep from panicking. Thomas goes to see Newt and convinces him that Teresa is innocent. Newt says that if they can survive the night, then he'll consider having Teresa freed from the jail. Before leaving, Thomas suggests that maybe he and Teresa were sent to the Glade to help find an exit.

Thomas' realization that work keeps people from panicking shows that he has internalized Newt's philosophy about the value of work for maintaining order.



Thomas visits Teresa in the jail. She tells him that she's afraid of the Grievers. Thomas says that she's never heard that the Gladers called them that before. He says that she must remember more than she realizes or else overheard people talking about the Grievers while she was still in a coma. Thomas soothes her worries by promising to get her out of the jail tomorrow. He then heads back to help the rest of the Gladers defend his new home in the **Glade**.

If Teresa can recall the name of the Grievers, then perhaps Thomas can also recover his memories to help find an exit to the Maze. By uncovering his memories, Thomas can come one step closer to learning the truth about himself and his world.



CHAPTER 38

Inside the Homestead, Minho, Newt, Alby, and Thomas discuss what they need to do to defend themselves and escape the **Maze**. Minho says he and the Runners are going to need to spend the night in the Maze, but Alby says that's too risky. Newt agrees with Minho, saying it's the only way. They convince Alby, but Alby loses faith in his ability to think clearly. Alby tells Newt and Minho they have to make the decisions from now on. Alby says he will go to the Map Room to look for patterns but they tell him not to because the Grievers may already be out there. Despite their objections, he heads out.

Minho has to choose between sticking to the old routine or making changes to their approach to solving the Maze. He chooses change, perhaps because Thomas' hopefulness has finally rubbed off on him, giving him the hope he needs to try something new. In contrast, Alby is too set in his ways, unwilling to risk changing the routine that has provided them stability thus far.



Although afraid, Thomas eventually falls asleep. In the middle of the night, Thomas awakes to the mechanical sounds of the Grievers surrounding the Homestead. Thomas thinks three or four of them are out there but as soon they seem to get really close, the sounds dies away. Then a door opens, and Gally barges into the Homestead.

As the Grievers invade the Glade, they bring with them the havoc and chaos of the Maze. The Glade's outward appearance of stability and safety has totally collapsed. Now the Glade is just as dangerous and chaotic as the Maze.



CHAPTER 39

Raving like a madman, Gally says the Grievers will kill one person per night until everyone is dead. He screams that the Griever's operate on a Variable that makes them only kill once a night. He turns to Thomas and tells him not to try and remember where they came from.

Gally's claim that the Grievers run on a Variable reveals that the Grievers are not actually the epitome of chaos. Once again, what seems like chaos actually contains its own form of order.



Gally then starts clawing at the walls, taking down the wood planks they used to barricade the windows. As he takes down one of the planks, a Griever comes through the window. At first the Griever goes for Newt, but then Gally sacrifices himself by charging into it. The Griever takes hold of Gally and drags him into the **Maze** with the other Grievers following behind. Watching the Grievers, Thomas sees Minho follow them into the Maze.

Gally was the novel's only human antagonist, but he redeems himself through an act of heroic self-sacrifice. Minho also proves that he has the capacity for change, charging into the Maze without regard for the rules that would have previously prevented him from entering it at night.



CHAPTER 40

Thomas runs to the Door that Minho went through but Newt calls out to him before he goes inside. As Newt tells him not to go inside, Minho runs out of the **Maze**, telling them he just wanted to confirm that the Grievers had gone through the Hole. Newt then tells them that someone set fire to all the maps in the Map Room. Minho and Newt go to investigate while Thomas goes to check on Teresa.

Here's another instance of Minho's newfound sense of courage and defiance. Perhaps inspired by Thomas' willingness to break the rules when necessary, Minho no longer mindlessly obeys the rules if he feels that he must break them in order to find an escape.



In the jail, Teresa tells Thomas that she's been sleeping this whole time. They discuss what she meant by saying that the **Maze** is a code. Thomas wonders if it's possible that the Maze is spelling something out and the boys never realized since they always looked at each Section independently rather than looking at all eight Sections together. Teresa says that may be true, but Thomas' excitement at possibly finding a key to understanding the Maze vanishes as he realizes that all the maps have been burned.

Another example of change's value: Thomas realizes that the Gladers have not altered how they study the maps despite never finding any clues. In contrast to this reluctance to change, Thomas' fresh perspective may yield new information about how to escape the Maze.



CHAPTER 41

Thomas runs to the Map Room to see what he can salvage. When he arrives, he finds a group of boys huddling around Minho who is cradling an injured Alby. Minho says that whoever set fire to the maps must have also beaten up Alby. After making sure that Alby is alright, Thomas tells Minho and Newt they need to come with him to the Slammer because he and Teresa may know how to solve the **Maze**.

Burning the maps could represent the destruction of old, flawed ways of looking at the Maze, but Thomas knows he must have a new perspective to have any hope of finding an exit. This is the first indication that a compromise between traditional routine and change is necessary for survival.



At the Slammer, Thomas pleads for Teresa's release, convincing them that she had no control over triggering the end. Desperate and in need of whatever help they can get, Minho and Newt agree to let her out. Once she's out, Thomas says that she remembers that the **Maze** is a code. Minho asks what kind of code and Thomas responds that he'll be able to figure it out by studying the maps. Since they're all burned, Thomas says that the Runners need to recreate as many maps as they can from memory so that he can figure out the code.

Once again, Thomas' hope remains firm despite not having the maps. As we saw with Minho in the Maze, without hope, people will give up and turn on each other. If that happens now, then the Gladers are doomed.



Minho glances knowingly at Newt. Minho tells them that before the fire, they moved the maps from the Map Room because of Alby's warning to protect the maps, and hid them in the weapons room. They all head over to check them out.

In the weapons room, the maps gain new significance. They become the best "weapon" for solving the maze.



CHAPTER 42

In the weapons room, Thomas feels the answer to the problem of the maps inside of him. A sudden flash of knowledge tells Thomas what to do. Without telling them why, he says he needs wax paper from the kitchen, scissors, and black markers or pencils.

Since Thomas had a role in the Maze's creation, these epiphanies are not examples of his innate knowledge but instead of moments when he uncovers his memories.



When Newt and Minho come back with the materials, Thomas orders everyone to trace the last ten days of each section of the **Maze** onto the wax paper. After tracing for a while, Newt says they should test out Thomas' theory before they continue. Thomas lays a single tracing from each day and section on top of each other so that he has an eight page stack. Now, when Thomas looks at the stack, the lines crisscross to reveal a dark image at the center of the page: the letter *F*.

With a more all-inclusive perspective, Thomas is able to decode the shifts in the Maze. No longer a random, meaningless structure, the Maze becomes a code that he can decipher. Since the Maze represents adolescence, Thomas' new perspective shows that teenagers can better navigate the challenges of adolescence by looking at the "big picture" rather than getting stuck on any single aspect of their lives.



CHAPTER 43

Thomas, Newt, Minho, and Teresa trace more days and stack them together in the way Thomas showed them. After some time, they trace out the message: "FLOAT. CATCH." Before they can continue tracing the maps, Minho says he needs to get back to exploring the **Maze**. Thomas says that's a waste of time, but Minho responds that all the changes in the **Glade** may have prompted an exit to open in the Maze. Newt agrees with Minho and tells Thomas he'll find some trustworthy Gladers to help finish the tracing. At Newt and Minho's request, Thomas goes running with Minho.

Though his recent experiences have made him more willing to change his approach to solving the Maze, Minho's cannot bring himself to abandon the order and stability that his role in the Glade provided him. As of yet, it's unclear if Minho's decision to stick with the routine will be another example of relying too much on old flawed methods and practices.



Minho tells Thomas to follow him through the **Maze** like the last time. Before they enter the Maze, Chuck meets up with them and wishes Thomas luck. As he leaves, Thomas tells Chuck to remember the promise he made to get Chuck home to his parents. With tears of gratitude and affection in his eyes, Chuck gives Thomas a thumbs up. Minho and Thomas run into the Maze.

Thomas's relationship to Chuck reveals how much Thomas has matured in just a few days. When Thomas first arrived in the Glade, Chuck mocked his childish naiveté. But now, Chuck has become like a younger brother to Thomas, looking to him for hope and reassurance.



CHAPTER 44

As Thomas and Minho run through the **Maze**, they notice the walls hadn't changed at all the previous night. Teresa's voice comes into Thomas' head, saying that they've been making progress with the code. Thomas tries to respond by visualizing the words "Can you hear me" in his head. She responds that she can but that his voice is faint. He asks how they can telepathically communicate and she responds that maybe they're lovers. Surprised by her bluntness, Thomas trips over himself. Teresa also suggests that the Creators may have done something to their brains to give them this ability.

As they talk, Thomas tells her he's getting a headache from the mental strain. Teresa says she gets them too when they telepathically communicate for longer than a few minutes. He asks her to explain what she wrote on her arm, but she says the telepathy hurts too much and stops trying to communicate.

After Thomas and Minho run through the entire Section, they explore the **Maze** more closely, feeling the walls and climbing the ivy to look for hidden spots. Around midnight, a group of Grievers run right past them. Minho says they should go back because he doesn't think they're going to find anything else. Minho says that he wouldn't be surprised if Gally was right and they find that another Glader was taken. Feeling defeated, Minho says that maybe the Grievers will take them all by the end of the month.

CHAPTER 45

When they return, it's early morning and Newt says that the Grievers took a boy named Adam who Thomas never met. Minho is discouraged and runs off to the Homestead. Thomas initiates a conversation with Teresa and she says that they've gotten all the code words and that he should come down to the weapons room as soon as he can.

When Thomas arrives Teresa shows him the message: FLOAT. CATCH. BLEED. DEATH. STIFF. PUSH. After PUSH, the **Maze** gives them no new letters for a week before resetting at FLOAT. At first Thomas has no idea what the words mean, but then he realizes what he needs to do to find the answer. He feels like it's a terrible idea but he knows it's the only option he has if he wants to get the Gladers out of the **Maze** alive. Instead of telling Teresa his plan, he says he needs rest.

The Maze and the Glade have swapped symbolic meanings. With the nightly Griever raids, now the Glade is a place of change and chaos while the Maze, which remains the same every night, is a place of stability and uniformity. Teresa also challenges Thomas' sexist expectations. Rather than acting "modest and demure" as Thomas seems to expect from a young woman, Teresa is frank about their past relationship.



If Thomas and Teresa could telepathically communicate all the time, then they could begin to lose their individual sense of self. These limitations on their powers ensure that their identities remain distinct.



Minho's loss of hope confirms that he has put too much faith in the old ways. Once these ways fail, he gives up hope instead of looking for alternative ways to adapt and survive.



Once again, Mingo gives up hope instead of persevering. In contrast, Thomas's hopefulness provides a model for how to act in a crisis: stay positive and move on to the next task.



Again the Maze's movements appear to have some underlying meaning. Even though the message seems random and morbid, Thomas does not give up hope. Unlike Minho, Thomas' hope gives him the confidence to tackle any challenge that comes his way.



As he leaves, Thomas resolutely decides that in order to find the answer to the **Maze**, he needs more memories. To get his memories back, Thomas decides to get stung by the Grievers in order to go through the **Changing**.

Thomas' sense of responsibility to his friends makes him risk his life. Here, Thomas exhibits the grown-up qualities of responsibility and selflessness.



CHAPTER 46

Without telling anyone his plan to get stung by the Grievers, Thomas goes to the Homestead with everyone after dinner and waits for the attack. In the middle of the night, the Grievers come, break into the house, and take a boy named Dave. As they run off, Thomas follows them despite Teresa and Newt's protestation. When Thomas attacks the Griever holding Dave, the rest of the pack start stinging him with their needles. He knows they've stung him when he feels a searing pain. He's able to fight his way out of the pack of Grievers and then collapses to the ground.

Thomas continues to show his maturity by putting his life at risk to help save the other Gladers. Thomas' hopefulness also gives him the courage to attack a pack of Grievers head on.



Chuck, Teresa and Newt find Thomas lying in the grass, barely conscious. They carry him back into the house where they inject him with the Grief Serum. Before he passes out, he whispers that he got stung on purpose.

Thomas will now go through the ultimate test of his maturity: the Changing. If Thomas can get through the Changing without losing his hope (unlike most of the other boys), then he will have symbolically survived the challenges of puberty and adolescence.



CHAPTER 47

Thomas enters a dream state where he finds himself in complete blackness devoid of time or physical sensation. After experiencing this void for an unknowable amount of time, he feels a wind pick up and swirl around him, ripping at his clothes. A tower of mist moves towards him and he gets absorbed by it. At that moment, all his memories come flooding back along with an immense amount of pain.

Since nothing exists in the Changing except the self, the Changing represents moments of intense introspection in which people discover their true selves. For most Gladers, introspection makes them sullen and hopeless. But, if Thomas wants to grow up and save the Glade, he must learn how to be introspective, uncover the truth of his identity, and not give up hope.



CHAPTER 48

Thomas hears a voice calling his name and realizes it is Chuck. When he wakes, Chuck tells him that he's been out for three days and that Zart, the Keeper of the farmers, along with two other boys were taken by the Grievers. Thomas tells Chuck to get Newt so that they can call a Gathering. Then he contacts Teresa in his head and tells her that he remembers more now. Thomas says they've done bad things but he has a plan to escape the **Maze**. With regret, Thomas says that some people may die in the process.

Thomas' experiences during the Changing do not crush his hopeful spirit. Undeterred by the memories that return to him, he immediately makes plans for escape. In terms of the allegorical meaning of the Changing, Thomas comes out of puberty more mature, proactive, and self-assured.



When Newt arrives, Thomas tells him that the **Maze** is actually a test designed to see if the Gladers will continue to fight and hold onto hope despite the seemingly impossible odds against them. Thomas says that the Grievers' nightly raids are the last and most dire stage in the test. Thomas tells Newt to call a Gathering so that Thomas can explain his plan for escaping the Maze.

Thomas' interpretation of the Maze reveals the importance of the theme of Hope. Though all of the Glade's leaders have at one time or another lost hope, Thomas and Teresa overcome fear and never give up. Hope gives them the strength to survive.



CHAPTER 49

At the Gathering, Thomas explains that during the **Changing** he saw flashes of his lost memories. He says that the **Maze** was a trial that was never meant to be solved and that whoever survives will go on to do something important. Thomas says the Creators stole every one of the Gladers when they were children and named them after scientists (Thomas for Thomas Edison, Alby for Albert Einstein, Newt for Sir Isaac Newton, etc.).

Unlike in the previous Gathering where Thomas stayed silent, Thomas now leads the meeting, showing how the Changing, which represents puberty, has made him grow into a confident and mature leader.



Thomas says the Creators wanted to test if the kids would keep trying to solve the **Maze** despite the Variables, which are the events and things that prevent or discourage them. Thomas confesses that he knows how to solve the code because he was with the Creators when they put the code into the Maze.

Thomas' former role as a Creator doesn't deter him from helping the others. He could have resigned himself to his identity as a Creator and refused to help the Gladers, but instead he tries to redeem his past actions by helping the Gladers in the present.



CHAPTER 50

Thomas admits that he and Teresa helped design the **Maze**. He says he doesn't know why the Creators picked them to help but it may have something to do with them being telepathic. This revelation about their telepathy makes everyone go silent. Before anyone can interrupt, Thomas tells them that they forced him to help construct the Maze.

In the Glade, where real-life monsters live inside a giant Maze, the existence of telepathy doesn't seem so farfetched. It's just another example of how distorted any sense of normalcy can become in the Glade.



Newt tells the group that the Creators are their enemy, not Thomas and Teresa. Minho agrees and encourages Thomas to tell the Keepers his plan for escape. Thomas says that inside the Griever Hole is a computer and that plugging the code into the computer will disarm the Grievers and open an exit. Thomas says that the Grievers will come at them with all they've got if they try getting into the Hole, but that it's their only shot at survival.

Newt and Minho's support of Thomas reveals that it doesn't matter what he did before coming to the Glade because he has proven himself to be an invaluable ally. Their support illustrates that one's actions in the present matter more than who one was in the past.



CHAPTER 51

With bloodshot eyes, Alby quickly stands up, knocking his chair over behind him. He accuses Thomas of working for the Creators and says that his plan will get them all killed. Thomas asks Alby if he's forgotten that he was the one who saved him when Minho got scared and ran off in the **Maze**. Alby responds that maybe Thomas was just trying to get the Gladers to trust him. Newt cuts in, saying that Thomas risked his life getting sung by the Grievors just so that he could recover his memories and help protect all of them.

Realizing his mistrust is unwarranted, Alby admits his real reason for opposing the plan: he doesn't want to go back to the horrible world he had visions of during the **Changing**. Alby confesses that he was the one who burned all the maps, fearing that Thomas would figure a way out of the **Maze**. Alby explains that he had visions of a disease called the Flare and that he saw the world scorched by fire. Alby says that it would be better to die in the **Glade** than to return home.

Minho tells the group that he'd rather fight and take his chances with the Creators than die in the **Glade**. Thomas says that no matter what the Keepers decide, he, Minho, and Teresa will fight their way to the Griever Hole and punch in the code. Thomas then says that the only way to get into the Hole is by sacrificing someone to the Grievors so that they stop attacking for the night. When Winston sarcastically asks who he thinks they should sacrifice, Thomas nominates himself.

CHAPTER 52

While the Keepers erupt into loud argument, Newt has a chance to talk one-on-one with Thomas. Newt tells him to leave the meeting room so that the rest of the Keepers can discuss the plan without his presence interfering with their decision. Newt adds that he won't allow Thomas to sacrifice himself and that all the Gladers will fight their way to the Hole together.

Thomas tells Newt that he wants to sacrifice himself because it's the only way to redeem himself for building the **Maze**. Newt says that it's not his fault because he was just a kid forced by the adults to do something wrong. Before Thomas leaves, Newt promises that he'll try to convince the group to attack the Griever Hole tonight before the Grievors kill anyone else.

The Changing made Thomas mature into a confident leader, but it made Alby become unstable. Since Alby's accusation echoes Gally's claim that Thomas was a spy, Alby appears to have become the "new" Gally. With Gally gone, Alby takes his place as the most violent and unstable Glader. Once the epitome of control and order, Alby now seems crazy, unable to control himself.



Alby's decision to burn the maps reveals that he has a greater fear of change than of dying. With no hope for the possibility of making a better life, Alby has lost all will to live, which reinforces the idea that hope is a necessary factor for survival.



Thomas' plan requires the Gladers to trust in change and hope. Instead of hiding in the Glade, they must all confront their fears by going into the Maze, battling the Grievors, and jumping off the Cliff. Thomas shows once again that, like a mature grown-up leader, he is willing to sacrifice himself for the Gladers.



Newt's rejection of Thomas' proposal to sacrifice himself is the first indication that self-sacrifice may not always be the right decision. Self-sacrifice should only be a last resort and, as Newt implies, since all the Gladers will fight there might not be a need for his sacrifice anyway.



Thomas's desire to sacrifice himself mirrors Gally's act of redemption. But, unlike Gally, Thomas has done nothing that requires redemption because he had no choice but to help the Creators. Thomas's hopefulness also spreads to Newt, who wholeheartedly believes in his plan.



Thomas telepathically communicates with Teresa and tells her to meet him at the Box. When they meet, he tells her the plan to attack the Hole. After he confesses that he's scared, she tells him that it's only human to feel afraid. After that, they hold hands in silence, enjoying the peace before the big fight.

Teresa's reassurances illustrate that fear is natural and okay as long as it doesn't overpower hope. In Alby's case, fear takes him over, making him prefer death over returning to home.



CHAPTER 53

After the Gathering ends, Newt meets up with Thomas and Teresa at the Box. Newt tells them that all the Keepers agreed to Thomas' plan. Although the Keepers will go, Newt doesn't know how many of the Gladers will follow them. Newt says that he'll get Alby to fight with the Keepers by convincing him that they have a chance at starting a new life together outside the **Glade**. Thomas says that they all need to stock up with weapons and food before the attack.

Hope is the only thing that Newt can offer Alby, the only thing that will give him the will to fight. Without it, Alby's fear of the outside world consumes him, causing his mind and abilities to waste away.



Newt agrees that they need to arm the Gladers but says that he and not Thomas will be the one to lead the Gladers because more boys will trust Newt's leadership. Newt says that in the end, it doesn't matter if the Gladers try to get to the Hole or not because one boy will be killed tonight no matter what. Not wanting to discourage Newt, Thomas doesn't express his fear that the Grievors may continue their attack even after killing one of the Gladers.

Thomas keeps his fears to himself because, as he saw with Alby, a lack of hope destroys one's ability to think and lead. Newt also has too much faith in the predictability of the Grievors' attacks. He hasn't yet learned that everything in the Glade (and in life) can change at any moment.



Newt gathers the boys and, to Thomas' surprise, most of the Gladers decide to go. Thomas thinks most of them have decided to fight because each one of them is secretly hoping that they won't be the one killed by the Grievors. Before the fight, Teresa and Thomas go into the graveyard to speak privately. Once there, they decide that if they fail to enter the code, then Newt and Alby will be the back up pair to enter the Hole and punch in the code.

The Gladers complicate the Hope theme. Their hope gives them a will to fight, but it seems like a perverse form of hope. Instead of hoping for the survival of their group, they actually hope that someone will die in their place. Like when they sacrificed Ben to give themselves a sense of security, they hope someone will die so that they can protect themselves.



Teresa asks Thomas what he thinks the phrase she wrote on her arm, "WICKED is good," is supposed to mean. Thomas has the sudden realization that "WICKED" is an acronym for the words he saw on the sign within the Maze: "World In Catastrophe: Killzone Experiment Department." Although Thomas figures out the acronym, he says he has no idea why she would write that WICKED was a good thing. Before leaving, Thomas and Teresa agree that they have nothing to lose by trying to fight.

Thomas' realization about the acronym doesn't get him any closer to understanding the meaning of the phrase "WICKED is good." Only when he gets his memories back will he begin to understand the truth.



CHAPTER 54

During the last meal before they all enter the **Maze**, Thomas and Chuck talk about the plan. Chuck says he's not scared because only one person will die. Without saying anything, Thomas feels bad that so many people are hoping that someone else will die in their place. Thomas tells him that if they all fight, maybe they can all make it home. Thomas then says that Chuck should not forget Thomas's promise to get him home. Chuck says that as long as he gets out of the Maze he'll be happy.

As everyone finishes dinner, Newt and Alby announce that it's time to enter the **Maze**. Thomas notices Alby vacantly staring at the ground and decides that since Alby is unstable, he'll need to keep an eye on him inside the Maze. Newt calls everyone to attention and gives a pep talk. He says that up to now they've been treated like mice, but tonight they'll take the fight to the Creators. He says that although in the past they were the ones scared of the Maze, tonight the Grievors better be scared. When the Gladers start cheering and yelling, Newt raises his weapon and dashes into the Maze with the rest of the Gladers charging right behind him.

As the Gladers run toward the **Maze**, Thomas notices Chuck and Teresa running beside him with spears in their hands. Thomas feels an overwhelming sense of fear for their lives. This fear makes it hard for him to run, but his determination to escape and protect his friends gives him the courage to fight his way to the Hole.

CHAPTER 55

The Gladers run through the **Maze** for an hour without seeing or hearing any Grievors. As they near their target, Thomas feels fear for his friends rather than courage. When they arrive at the corner that leads onto the passageway to the **Cliff**, they hear the sound of Grievors. Minho tells everyone to stop running and scouts ahead, when he comes back he says there are over a dozen Grievors in front of the Hole just waiting for them. Thomas says that the beetle blades must have let the Creators know that they were planning this attack.

Thomas tries to correct Chuck's perverse form of hope. Thomas spends the entire novel trying to give hope to his fellow Gladers, but once they actually get the idea, they pervert it into something ugly and cruel: a hope that someone else will die. The Gladers are stuck in a kind of sacrificial mindset where they think it's ok to sacrifice one person so that the others can live.



Newt's comparison of the Gladers to mice is apt since the the Creators have no concern for their safety—they treat them like lab rats in a maze. Willing to sacrifice the Gladers' lives for their test, the Creators perform the wrong kind of sacrifice: taking risks with other people's lives without their consent. Newt's speech also inspires hope in the Gladers, giving them the strength and courage to charge into the Maze.



Like always, Thomas' hope and determination beat out his fear. Learning responsibility is a sure sign of growing up, so Thomas seems like an adult in that regard as well: he's become like a protective and responsible older brother to Chuck.



The approaching showdown between the Grievors and the Gladers marks the climax of the novel. Will the Gladers succumb to fear and run away, sacrifice one of their own in order to save themselves, or will they stay hopeful and fight?



Thomas sees more Grievers coming from the opposite direction, blocking off their escape. The group huddles together and Alby, in act of brave desperation, throws himself at the Grievers guarding the Hole. They swarm over him and tear his body apart. When Newt tries to save him, Thomas tells him there is nothing he can do for Alby now. Minho says that Alby didn't want to go back to the real world so he sacrificed himself, hoping that the Grievers would stop their attack once they've killed one of them.

Realizing that Minho is right, Newt tells the Gladers that their main priority is to protect Thomas and Teresa so that they can make it to the Hole. As Newt is speaking, the Grievers near the Hole start moving closer to the group. Alby's sacrifice has failed to stop the Grievers from continuing their attack. Thomas' fears are realized: the Grievers will kill more than one Glader tonight.

CHAPTER 56

Minho leads the charge into the Grievers near the Hole and then more Keepers followed by the Gladers try to clear a path for Thomas and Teresa. Chuck tries to help the Gladers but Thomas pulls him close. Not wanting Chuck to risk his life for him, Thomas says that he and Teresa will need him in the Hole in case there are more Grievers waiting for them.

As they run towards the Hole, there is battle all around them. The sound of the Gladers screaming and being killed by the Grievers surrounds them. Thomas knows he can't stop to help, that he has to keep running to the Hole. He and Teresa both get slashed by the Grievers and Chuck almost gets taken by one of them. After these close-calls, they make it the edge of the **Cliff**.

Teresa jumps in and then Thomas helps Chuck make the jump. As he helps Chuck into the Hole, Thomas feels a love for Chuck as if he were his brother. As the battle rages behind him, Thomas follows them through the Hole.

Alby becomes like a mirror image of Gally. Like Gally, Alby loses hope and sacrifices himself for the good of the Gladers. Alby's sacrifice shows that not all self-sacrifices are acts of bravery. Alby only sacrificed himself because he was too afraid of the real world to try to escape.



Alby's fear and hopelessness make him needlessly sacrifice himself, revealing once again that self-sacrifice isn't always the right decision. Alby's failure to stop the Grievers suggests that self-sacrifice isn't valuable or even particularly admirable when done out of rash hopelessness. If he had more hope, then he could have held on and risked his life in the more productive way of fighting the Grievers in the coming battle.



Thomas lets the other Gladers sacrifice themselves in the fight, but doesn't let Chuck, a boy he loves like a brother, risk his life. This reveals a double standard: Thomas is ok if other people die in the fight as long as the people he loves stay alive.



The Gladers' will to fight must result from a newfound sense hope. Before they hoped that someone would die and the fighting would end, but with that hope squashed, they continue to fight, showing that they now have the kind of hope that Thomas believes in: the hope that if they all fight, they can all survive.



Jumping off the Cliff is the ultimate symbol of hope. All three of them must take an actual "leap of faith," hoping that they'll survive.



CHAPTER 57

Thomas finds himself in dank, cold ten foot high cylinder. They walk down a short tunnel where they find at its end a computer. As Teresa types in the code, a Griever jumps through the Hole. Thomas uses his spear to cut off one its spikes. The Griever emits a loud shriek and Thomas gains a new confidence knowing that the Grievers can be hurt. Taking advantage of its injury, Thomas jumps on the creature and plunges his spear deep into its body. Yellow fluid seeps out of the puncture wound and the Griever stops moving for good.

Teresa says the computer won't let her enter the last word, "PUSH." Before Thomas can come help, two more Grievers come through the Hole. Chuck then points to a button under the computer and says maybe she should push that. The Grievers grab Thomas and Chuck right as she pushes the button. The creatures shut down and everything goes silent except for the sound of a door sliding open.

CHAPTER 58

The shut down Grievers suck their instruments into their skin and turn off their lights. Thomas and Teresa cheer Chuck for finding the button. Minho then jumps into the Hole, followed by Newt, and some of the other Keepers and Gladers. Minho says that eighteen of them survived but that the other half of the group died in the fight. Thomas wonders if they can call it a victory with so much death.

The survivors see that the code opened a door, which leads them to a long steep slide. Thomas is the last of the Gladers to go down the slide. As he slides down, he feel like the slide goes on forever, as if he falling into the belly of a giant monster. Smelling a horrible odor of oil and rot, he feels like he may throw up. But before he can, the slide ends and he lands on the floor among the other Gladers.

They find themselves in a giant chamber, bigger than twenty Homesteads. Against one wall is a glass panel where groups of thin people in white stand watching them. For a moment Thomas thinks they are ghost, but then realizes that they are the Creators.

The cylinder mirrors the inside of the Box that brought Thomas to the Glade. The novel juxtaposes these settings to show how much Thomas has matured since his arrival. Thomas came to the Glade like a newborn scared and confused, but he is leaving as a confident leader capable of killing a Griever.



Since Chuck hasn't had much of an active role in the novel, this scene shows that he too is starting to grow up. No longer just a kid who needs protection, Chuck proves himself to be calm and alert in a crisis. He, too, is becoming an adult.



Thomas' uncertainty about the value of sacrifice reveals the limitations of what good self-sacrifice offers. If half of them die, then was the sacrifice really worth the victory?



Traditionally, novels depict escape or coming into new knowledge as an elevation, but since everyone who's gone through the Changing has said that the real world is worse than the Glade, their descent symbolically shows that they are travelling into the even darker, harsher adult world.



Thomas' claim that the Creators seem like ghosts is a more apt metaphor than he realizes. Like ghosts, the Creators were the unseen forces affecting the boys' lives.



CHAPTER 59

The Gladers stare silently at the Creators until Minho threatens to break their faces. There's a loud rumbling sound and a man and a woman come towards the Gladers. The woman wears a lab coat with the word "WICKED" stitched on her lapel and the man wears a hood that obscures his face. She congratulates them on completing the **Maze**, saying that she is surprised with how few of them died or gave up.

She then tells the man to take off his hood. It's Gally with tears streaming down his face. Minho angrily demands an explanation for what is going on and she says that she expects more maturity from someone who completed the **Maze** Trial. She then says there is one more Variable. Like Alby in bed after the **Changing**, Gally struggles to speak, saying that he can't control himself. He then takes a knife from his back pocket and throws it at Thomas.

In a flash, Chuck saves Thomas' life by diving in front of the knife. As Thomas cradles Chuck in his arms, he wishes that Gally had attacked anyone but Chuck. Before dying, Chuck's last words are "Find my mom. Tell her..." Thomas feels a dark and terrible rage swell inside of him as Chuck dies. He rushes at Gally and beats him to the sound of Gally's crunching bones until Newt and Minho pull him off. Thomas goes back to Chuck's lifeless body and weeps long and loud for the first friend he made in the **Glade**.

CHAPTER 60

Thomas realizes that Chuck was a personal symbol for the possibility of returning to a normal life. Now that Chuck has died, Thomas feels that the life that lies ahead of him will be full of misery and sorrow. After the woman says that's all things happen for a purpose, there is shouting and commotion from the doorway. People with guns and grimy clothes come inside. One person from this new group tackles the woman and shoots her in the head.

To the Gladers confusion and fear, these new people tell the Gladers to follow them because their life depends on it. The Gladers follow them outside of the building. Unlike in the **Glade** where everyday had the same weather, it is raining heavily outside. These people tell the Gladers to board a large beaten-up bus that is waiting for them.

For the first time in the novel, an adult appears, signifying that the Gladers have symbolically entered the adult world. No longer children in the Glade or teenagers in the Maze, they have arrived in the outside world, becoming adults themselves.



The woman reinforces the idea that the Gladers have become adults by saying that she expects Minho to be more mature for someone who passed the Maze Trials. Many cultures have rituals or tests that initiate children into adulthood and, in the novel, the Maze Trial is that test. (It's kind of like a nightmarish version of a Bar-Mitzvah.)



So far Chuck has been the most childish character in the novel, but this scene shows how much he's grown up. No longer needing protection from Thomas, he sacrifices his own life to save his friend. While fear and hopelessness caused Alby to sacrifice himself, a pure desire to protect Thomas motivates Chuck's sacrifice. The novel will ultimately use his sacrifice as a model for the right kind of self-sacrifice.



In line with the theme of order and change, the Gladers' lives change rapidly, but the woman's claim that all things happen for a purpose gives us reason to believe that, once again, what appears like chaos is not as random as it seems. Additionally, Chuck's death causes Thomas to give up all hope. Will he be able to make sense of Chuck's death and get his hope back before the novel ends?



The outside world appears chaotic and unpredictable. Both the Gladers and the reader don't know who these people are or what they want. For the time being, chaos and rapid change appear to take over.



As Thomas waits to get on the bus, a hideous and horribly smelling woman tackles him to the floor and says, “Gonna save us from the Flare” and “Don’t believe a word they tell you.” The new people pull the woman off of Thomas and shuffle him onto the bus, which then takes off into the night

Thomas must start his journey anew in the outside world. He has no information about what’s going on and cannot trust anyone. As soon as Thomas mastered one stage of his life (the Maze as adolescence) he becomes a beginner in the next stage (the real world of adults). But perhaps the experiences he gained, the memories he formed, and the identity he honed will help him survive now as an adult.



CHAPTER 61

A woman who Thomas thinks is this new group’s leader explains the realities of the world outside the **Glade**. She says that natural sun flares began to get worse until one day a flare scorched large portions of the earth and killed millions. After this environmental disaster, a disease called the Flare began to infect people so that they lost all sense of humanity and became like animals governed only by instinct. She says that only the rich have access to a cure.

Like the teenagers who lost their memories inside the Glade, people infected with the Flare lose all sense of self. However, unlike the Gladers, they also their humanity. The Gladers’ ability to retain their human nature despite losing their identities might help them deal with the problems of the real world.



She tells Thomas that the Gladers were only a fraction of the thousands of children who were orphaned after the sun flare. WICKED tested the orphans to find the best and brightest of them who they hoped could be raised in the harsh conditions of the **Maze** so that they would develop an undefeatable sense of hope despite seemingly impossible odds. WICKED hoped that by raising the Gladers in this way, they could engineer a generation of adults able to find an end to the disasters caused by the sun flares.

The woman’s explanation lends further support to the idea that hope is the most valuable quality for surviving dire circumstances. She implies that in the outside world, people have lost their hope, which has prevented them from finding a cure for the Flare. As we have seen in the Glade, when people lose hope, their chances for survival diminish.



She explains that the main part of her group lives across a place called the Scorch, which is just a dead zone filled with people sick with the disease. Until they find a cure, her group fights WICKED in order to prevent them from using children in their experiments. She says that they fight WICKED to keep the human race from losing all sense of their humanity.

Remember how the boys sacrificed Ben so they could feel safe? Well, WICKED commits the same injustice on a much larger scale by sacrificing the lives of children for the slim chance that they can stop the disasters.



The bus arrives at a multicolored building that has a clean and kind staff of people working there. The staff feeds the Gladers pizza and provides warm beds. Thomas eats well and feels as if he could sleep for months.

At the safe-house, the Gladers get back some of the order and security they first had in the Glade. But since the outside world is in shambles, it seems unlikely that this stability will last very long.



CHAPTER 62

In the sleeping quarters, Thomas rests on the bottom bed of a bunk bed. Minho is on the top bed and Newt has the bed next to theirs. Minho asks what he thinks happened to the Gladers who stayed behind and Thomas says that they probably didn't make it. Although the other Newt and Minho keeping talking, exhaustion overcomes Thomas.

Before falling to sleep, Thomas talks to Teresa in his head. She tells him she's sorry about Chuck. He begins to explain the promise he made to him, but she cuts him off, saying that Chuck chose to sacrifice himself. She tells him that instead of pitying himself, he should accept that now he a responsibility not to waste Chuck's sacrifice. After agreeing with her, Thomas says that he wishes he could remember her and their life before the **Maze**. She says she feels the same way. They say goodnight and Thomas rolls over, feeling a slight sense of happiness before falling asleep.

EPILOGUE

This chapter is formatted as an email written on the date "232.1.27" by Chancellor Ava Paige. The email has the the subject line, "Thoughts on Maze Trials, Group A." She writes that she is surprised about how many of the boys survived the **Maze**. She also writes that the "rescue" and the boy's murder were a good "finale."

She then writes that the boys will soon recall their memories and eventually understand that WICKED is good. She says that they'll come to understand that all WICKED did to them was for the sake of humanity. She writes that the boys will be allowed a full night's rest before stage two begins. The email ends with her writing that Group B's trial results were just as good but that she needs more time to process the data.

If Thomas is right, then the fact that all the Gladers are dead illustrates the absolute necessity of hope and change. The boys who stayed lost their lives because they were too afraid and reliant on the rules of the Glade to risk their lives trying a new approach for escape.



Chuck's sacrifice becomes a model for the right kind of sacrifice. As Teresa suggests, sacrifice is noble and praiseworthy as long as it is made of one's own free will. The Gladers who died in the fight against the Grievors made the same ethical choice, risking their own lives in order to escape the Glade. In contrast, WICKED unjustly risks the lives of the Gladers by putting them through the Maze Trial without their consent.



This email reveals that the rescue and Chuck's death were not as random as they seemed. Like the nightly changes in the layout of the Maze, those events, although appearing chaotic, were in fact not random at all. Once again, the novel suggests that what may seem like chaos can sometimes have an underlying order.



Ending on a cliffhanger, the novel encourages us to read the sequel to learn more before judging the ethics of WICKED's decision to sacrifice the lives of children for "the greater good." Just as the meaning of the novel's symbols often changed, the meaning of sacrifice may also change in the sequel. Sometimes it may be necessary to sacrifice the few for the sake of many. Perhaps, in the end, WICKED will turn out to be good...





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