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SCIENCE FICTION AND SPECULATIVE FICTION

Margaret Atwood's novels are well known for their forward-thinking, thought-provoking content. Although many would classify her as a science fiction writer, others would not. The reason for the divergent classifications has to do with subtle difference in how people define what belongs to the genre of science fiction.

Atwood uses a great deal of technology in her books. In *Oryx and Crake*, for example, the role of gene modification and transplant science plays a pivotal role in driving the novel's plot. Some individuals see the heavy use of science in *Oryx and Crake* as a clear genre marker of science fiction. However, others have argued that three important distinctions take this novel out of the traditional realm of science fiction into a broader, more encompassing genre called speculation fiction, which is an umbrella term that includes science fiction, fantasy, alternate history¹, horror, dystopian fiction², and other works that imagine a universe that is slightly different from our own.

The first is that Atwood writes about technologies that largely do exist in today's society. Scientists have already been able to combine genomes³ to create stronger, more nutritious plants. What Atwood has done is expand the application of such already existing technological modifications. The narrowest definition of the science fiction genre refers to technologies that do not currently exist. Space travel, for example, is a popular topic among science fiction writers. As a speculative fiction work, *Oryx and Crake* is clearly not set in the real universe, but nevertheless echoes real situations.

The second distinction lies in the role that technology plays in Atwood's novels. Although it is true that her stories largely hinge on the existence of certain types of technological advances, her plots do not revolve chiefly around them. For example, in *Oryx and Crake*, the story is just as much about Jimmy's transformation into Snowman, Crake's disenchantment with humanity, Oryx's profound forgiveness, and the nature of humanity as it is about the technologies in the world that brought them to these experiences. Some consider this type of fiction, which focuses on people rather than technology, to be part of the "soft science fiction" genre, but Atwood herself considers her novels to be primarily speculative fiction.

The third and final distinction is related to the timeline of the novel. With few exceptions, science fiction pieces are frequently futuristic. Speculative fiction, on the other hand, allows for alternate histories and futures to be explored.

Some have argued that the term speculative fiction has also served as a way for authors to escape the pigeonholing tendencies of genre. For some, it allows the possibility of having their work viewed as more serious literature rather than being cast aside as pop fiction.⁴

¹ Alternate history or alternative history, sometimes abbreviated AH, is a genre of fiction consisting of stories that are set in worlds in which one or more historical events unfolds differently from how it did in reality. It can be variously seen as a subgenre of literary fiction, science fiction, and historical fiction.

² Dystopia is defined as a society characterized by a focus on mass poverty, squalor, suffering, or oppression. Most authors of dystopian fiction explore at least one reason why things are that way, often as an analogy for similar issues in the real world.

³ The total amount of genetic information in the chromosomes of an organism, including its genes and DNA sequences.

⁴ Popular fiction refers to the various fiction genres and types that have proved to be popular with wide audiences. This is opposite from literary fiction, which tends to be more academic, invites analyses and has a more narrow market among the scholarly.

STYLE

Point of View

The novel is told from the third-person point of view, but the narrator only knows what is in Jimmy / Snowman's mind. The narrator guides the reader through the action of the story using Jimmy's thoughts as well as the bits of dialogue that Jimmy remembers from conversations with the other characters. Jimmy seems to have a reliable memory. He jumps between topics and time periods, which makes for a piecemeal narrative that keeps the reader wondering what exactly happened in Jimmy's recent history.

After surviving an extremely traumatic set of experiences and living for a long time without any real humans to talk to, Jimmy experiences a great deal of confusion. He is, for instance, plagued by random quotes that pop up in his mind, and usually he cannot remember where he read or heard those words.

Setting

The first setting of the novel is a wildlife refuge near the seashore. This is the place where Jimmy has brought the Crakers so that they can have an endless supply of greens to eat and he can be sustained on fish. The area includes an arboretum, which provides shade for Jimmy during the overwhelming heat of the midday sun. Although this setting is removed from human dwellings, the remnants of civilization wash ashore with the tides to remind Jimmy of the way life used to be.

Much of the flashback action takes place in gated communities. In the OrganInc compound, Jimmy lives in a comfortable home and visits his father's lab building, which includes a room filled with pigoon cages. In the HelthWyzer compound, Jimmy's parents dwell in a posh house, and Jimmy attends a high school with high-tech science labs.

Two contrasting settings are the universities that Jimmy and Crake attend. At the Martha Graham Academy, Jimmy shares a decrepit dorm room with a roommate. The campus includes a rare library of paper books, relics of a distant history. At Crake's school, the Watson-Crick Institute, there are many shiny labs where students invent products with financial backing from prominent corporations. Crake does not have to share his plush suite of rooms with another student.

The final setting for the novel is the RejoovenEsense compound, which includes an overgrown central park and the remains of a typical suburban family dwelling. A rampart that has eight watchtowers built into its perimeter surrounds the entire compound. As Jimmy approaches Crake's Paradise dome, he sees a vestibule that was once kept secure by a state-of-the-art airlock. Paradise has offices and a bio-bubble, which serves as a habitat for the Crakers. Solar panels light the bio-bubble environment.

Language and Meaning

Atwood writes in casual language, including many fragments. This casual use of English helps create a realistic character that thinks in genuine human speech patterns. Atwood tells the story from Jimmy's cache of memories, creating a voice for the character that highlights his sarcasm and love of vocabulary. He frequently reminds himself of words that he once used when he had people to talk to. Sometimes he remembers the words but not the meanings.

One unique and noteworthy feature of Atwood's language is the invented words that serve as names, not only for Oryx and Crake and Snowman, but also for the many companies and

products. Words like RejoovenEsense and pigoon are bastardized language, corrupted for the use of greedy corporations, as well as expressions of man's need to name things and create new language. Jimmy's career runs parallel to this idea of language, since the only use for his literary ability is in advertising.

Structure

The novel comprises fifteen sections, and each section has several subsections. The subsections bear titles that identify important nouns from the passages that follow. The narration jumps between times and settings throughout the fifteen sections, realistically mimicking the way a man's brain would jump about as he tried to sort through a jumble of thoughts in the aftermath of great personal and world crises.

PLOT SUMMARY

Margaret Atwood's novel *Oryx and Crake* takes place in a future world where scientific achievements and particularly genetic experimentation are the focus of society. Mankind's obsession with science ultimately allows the ethically blind idealist Crake to destroy human society.

Oryx and Crake is told through the vantage point of a man named Snowman. Snowman is living in an outdoor setting near a body of water with a group of seemingly alien entities called Crakers. The Crakers ask him many questions and bring him one fish each week. Snowman exhibits a great deal of anger towards a man named Crake. In contrast, he is very fond of, and still hears the ephemeral voice of Oryx.

It is soon learned that Snowman used to be named Jimmy. Through his recounting of his past, the reader learns that he used to live on a compound belonging to a company called OrganInc. His father was a geneticist that worked with pigs used for human organ harvesting with a lab technician named Ramona. These animals, called pigoons, were the source of some tension in the marriage of Jimmy's parents. Jimmy's mother, Sharon takes issue with the level of genetic splicing taking place. Unlike her husband, she sees the animals as more than an amalgamation of proteins. Young Jimmy feels sad for the pigoons because they cannot do anything in their cramped quarters.

Jimmy's father was always critical of Jimmy's lack of skills in the sciences. He felt that Jimmy was ill equipped for success. It is revealed that Snowman recalls these things to pass his time, as there is nothing else to do. The sight of a rakunk reminds him of his pet rakunk Killer. Killer had been a birthday gift from Jimmy's father years ago.

Jimmy's mother, highly dissatisfied with her life in the Compound, runs away. She takes Killer with her. Jimmy misses both his mother and his rakunk but is not sure which one he misses more. Because of his mother's illegal departure, Jimmy is repeatedly questioned by the CorpSeCorps, the government's security and investigative agency.

Jimmy met Crake/Glenn a few months before his mother's departure. As such, the two things are tied together in his mind. Jimmy and Crake begin to spend a lot of time together after school. During this time, they play online games, i.e. Extinctathon, and view many vulgar websites for entertainment purposes. One game in particular, Extinctathon, gives them their nicknames. The game requires vast knowledge of all of the extinct species on Earth. Crake (Glenn) and Jimmy (Thickney) take on nicknames as part of the game. Crake's nickname sticks whereas Jimmy's does not. It is also during these numerous web-surfing hours that they first see Oryx. About eight years old, Oryx was on a child pornography website. Crake prints out her image and gives Jimmy a copy.

After high school, Jimmy and Crake attend different institutions. Jimmy goes to the run-down Martha Graham Academy, a school that concentrates on the much-undervalued arts. He attends this school because his grades in the sciences were too poor to gain him access to any other school. In addition, Jimmy prefers words to numbers. Crake, on the other hand, gains admission to the Watson-Crick Institute thanks to his superior grades. While in college the two drift apart a bit. Jimmy goes to visit Crake during a holiday and marvels at the facilities available at the Watson-Crick Institute.

Once Jimmy graduates from high school, he gets a job at AnooYoo, a company that markets and creates beauty and age-defying products. Jimmy is responsible for their ad campaign. While working at AnooYoo Jimmy has many sexual flings. After several years of working for the company, the CorpSeCorps come to show Jimmy a video and ask him about the whereabouts of his mother. In the video, Jimmy witnesses his mother's execution. Jimmy falls into a depression after watching the video.

Crake saves Jimmy from his deep sadness. Crake offers Jimmy a job at his company. Jimmy is now charged with creating the ad campaign for the BlyssPluss Pill, a medicine that promises to revert aging. Crake shows Jimmy the other part of his project, Paradise. Crake has created a humanoid creature that embodies many of the best qualities of humans and various animals from around the world. In particular, Crake wishes to create an immortal species. He removes many of the "undesirable" human traits from his creation. The Paradise models, or Crakers as they are later called, live in an enclosure inside of the compound. It is here that Jimmy meets Oryx in person for the first time. Oryx and Jimmy eventually develop a sexual relationship even though Oryx is also in a relationship with Crake. The arrangement is odd, but Crake does not seem to know about it.

Oryx's job is to both teach the Crakers about botany and market the BlyssPluss Pill. One day, a worldwide pandemic breaks out. Oryx realizes that it is emerging from every city that she had visited to market the pill. Jimmy locks himself into the Paradise compound with the Crakers. When Crake, who had been out at an unknown place returns, he is unable to get in. When Jimmy lets him in, Crake slits Oryx's throat in front of him. Jimmy then shoots Crake.

The world slowly fades as Jimmy hides out in the Paradise complex. He watches the television stations turn to static. Eventually he realizes that he has to leave the complex because the electricity will run out and he will be trapped inside of the electronically locked doors. He introduces himself to the Crakers as a messenger from Crake and a friend of Oryx. He exits the complex with the Crakers and relocates them to a beach side park.

Once there, he builds a small habitat for himself in a tree. It is here that he begins to deteriorate because he runs out of food and entertainment. He is alone among a group of strange creatures that know nothing of the world before the viral pandemic. He notes that the Crakers exhibit some of the qualities that Crake initially tried to edit out. It is during this time that Snowman, as he has identified himself to the Crakers, begins to narrate his story.

Snowman realizes that he will die if he does not find more sources of food. As such, he decides to return to the compound for supplies. On his way there, he runs into numerous obstacles and hurts his foot. He hides from a group of pigeons in a watchtower room. It is there that he hears voices over the radio and first learns that he is not alone. He arrives at the complex and raids it for whatever supplies and food he can carry. His foot becomes badly infected.

Upon his return to the Craker encampment by the beach, he is told that three other humans recently passed by. Snowman is disturbed by this knowledge because he knows that he has promised both Oryx and Crake to take care of the Crakers. On the other hand, he does not

want to have to harm the humans. The book closes with Snowman's approach toward the three humans. What he ultimately decides is not revealed to the reader.

CHARACTER LIST

Amanda Payne

Amanda Payne, whose real name is Barb Jones, is Jimmy's girlfriend after he graduates from Martha Graham. He lives with her and her three roommates for a few months after graduation while he is searching for a job. He views the world very differently from his artistically-drive partner, but they still have a connection. Jimmy leaves her soon after she brings up the subject of love.

Bernice

Bernice was Jimmy's first college roommate. She mercilessly criticized and harassed him for his lifestyle. After she burned some of his belongings, Jimmy complained to the office and was given a new roommate.

Years later, Jimmy thinks he sees Bernice's body in a picture taken after a violent rally. She was a God's Gardener supporter.

CorpSeCorps

The CorpSeCorps serve as a generalized police force. They guard compounds, schools, and other segregated areas from both disease and unwanted individuals.

The CorpSeCorps are also in charge of investigating those who are anti-government. Because Jimmy's mother ran away, Jimmy was interviewed many times over the years about his mother's whereabouts.

Crake

Crake's real name is Glenn. He acquires the nickname Crake, which is the name of an extinct red-necked Australian bird, while playing an online game called Extinctathon. Crake transfers to HelthWyzer High in the middle of the school year and quickly becomes friends with Jimmy. He is a brilliant student and spends most of his time living in a world of ideas.

After high school, he attends the prestigious Watson-Crick Institute where he becomes a formidable geneticist and turns into a version of a mad scientist when he devises a plan to rid the earth of Homo sapiens and replace this destructive species with a more peaceful and environmentally friendly version. His talents in the field of genetics as well as his unique philosophies ultimately lead to his creation of a group of humanoids later referred to as the Crakers.

Over the course of the novel, Crake turns from boy to brilliant teenager to mad scientist. Crake masterminds a plan to kill all the human beings on Earth and replace them with a new species of man. Crake chooses Jimmy to watch over the Crakers after his death, because he knows Jimmy has compassion and tenderness. Crake's own lack of those characteristics is evidenced by his murder of Oryx, a woman that he claims to love.

Crakers

The Crakers, also known as the Children of Crake, are humanoid creatures who have been

genetically engineered by Crake and the Paradise scientists. They possess what Crake considered the best bits of genetic material from across species. Their skin comes in a wide range of colours, and their eyes are a glowing green. They are quite beautiful in appearance. The Crakers cannot distinguish skin colour, so there is no chance of racism developing among them. Their bodies are immune to disease, and they have been engineered to eat plant material and then create fecal matters that can be predigested. They go into heat at regular intervals, so there is no sexual torment for the Crakers. They are neither hunters nor farmers, so they have no territorial drive. The Crakers do not need to wear clothes or build houses, because they are perfectly adjusted to their habitat. They are programmed to grow from infants to adults rapidly and drop dead at the age of 30.

Jimmy/Snowman has become the Crakers' caretaker. He makes sure that they do not come in contact with anything that might harm or confuse them. Existing entirely inside of the Paradise complex before being released by Jimmy/Snowman, they lack an understanding of the outside world.

Crake's mother

A hospital worker who ends up dying as a result of infection with a "hot bioform." It is later suspected by Jimmy that her own son, Crake, killed her during his efforts to test his experimental microbes.

Glenn

See Crake.

God's Gardeners

A radical group of anti-establishment individuals who disagree with the dominance of the pharmaceutical industry in society. Favouring small farmers and real food, they are frequently seen as protesters at the walls of compounds like HelthWyzer. Bernice, Jimmy's college roommate, was a supporter of the group. It is also believed by Jimmy that his mother participated in the group's efforts.

Jack

Jack is an American living abroad who works in the production of child pornography. He exchanges English lessons for sexual favours with Oryx.

Jimmy

Jimmy, who later renames himself as Snowman, is the main protagonist of the book. The story is relayed completely from his viewpoint, both in his recollections of his past as Jimmy and his current situation as Snowman.

After the fall of humankind, Jimmy is left alone and appears to be the sole survivor of his species. Without society to define him, he renames himself Snowman. His fully adopted name, known only to himself, is Abominable Snowman, a reference to the Yeti, a mythical ape-like creature of the Himalaya. He believes it is apt since he has proven abominable in the face of plague. Later, however, he decides that he might be the other kind of snowman, the kind that is an unconvincing replica of a human being and will melt into nothingness.

Although Jimmy is not a genius, he does possess a knack for language and a love of word usage. After graduating from Martha Graham Academy, Jimmy works as an ad man for self-help products. Later, Crake hires him to lead the ad campaign for BlyssPlus, a Viagra-like

drug.

Jimmy finds it hard to form connections with other human beings. Aside from a pet rakunk, he has one real friend in his whole life, Crake. Yet Crake, who is far more cunning and less emotional than Jimmy, ultimately proves to be a poor friend. Jimmy engages in meaningless sexual relationships with women who are married or otherwise unavailable. After beginning an affair with Oryx, whom Crake and Jimmy have both obsessed over since they first spotted her in an online site in high school, Jimmy feels that he is really in love. Even after her death, he conjures Oryx in his mind and continues their love affair.

Jimmy's inability to relate to others presumably stems from his dysfunctional family background. Jimmy's father does not spend any time with him, even when it is Jimmy's birthday, and his mother abandons Jimmy to engage in subversive anti-compound activities when Jimmy is a young teenager.

Jimmy's father

Jimmy's father, an unnamed character, works for OrganInc and later HelthWyzer as a scientist. He is heavily involved in the pigoon project. Although his wife has many misgivings about his participation in genetic splicing, he has a much more pragmatic approach to his work.

After the disappearance of Jimmy's mother, he is eventually allowed to divorce her. He then marries his laboratory technician, Ramona. They plan to start a new family together.

Jimmy's mother

See Sharon.

MaddAddam

MaddAddam was the screen name of a Grandmaster who ran a game called Extinctathon. Jimmy and Crake were avid players of the game during their teens. Crake continued playing and ultimately becomes a Grandmaster.

Once Crake figured out that MaddAddam was actually comprised of a group of individuals that plotted attacks against the dominating pharmaceutical and genetics companies, he hired them out to use their brainpower for his Paradise Project.

Oryx

Oryx is a mysterious, ethereal character that weaves in and out of the text. When Oryx first appears in the novel, she is a child of about eight years old. Crake and Jimmy spot her on a child pornography site. Oryx wears a garland of flowers and a pink hair ribbon, and in the movie, she licks whipped cream off a grown man. She turns to the camera and smiles contemptuously at whomever will watch this pornography. Crake downloads and prints out the frozen image of that moment.

Oryx, approximately eight years younger than Jimmy, grows up in an impoverished village. After Oryx's father dies, her mother sells her to a well-dressed travelling businessman who frequently comes to the village in search of children. The child-trader forces Oryx to sell flowers to tourists on the streets of an unknown large city, and eventually involves her in a bribery scheme that involves luring men to their hotel rooms. Later, the trader dies, and Oryx is sold to a pornographer.

When Oryx is a teenager, she appears on the news as a foreign girl who has been kept locked in a garage by a San Francisco pharmacist. She claims that he saved her from a life of pornography and locked her up in his garage to keep her safe.

Oryx meets Crake when he orders her for sex from Student Services at Watson-Crick. Later, when he heads the Paradise initiatives, Crake hires Oryx to train the Crakers. In Paradise, she is given a new name, Oryx Beisa, which is the name of a gentle, water-conserving East African herbivore that has gone extinct.

Oryx appears to be used by Crake, unaware herself of his plan to kill all of humanity. In the final moments of her life, she wears pink ribbons, reminiscent of the innocent child she was when Jimmy and Crake first saw her photo online.

After the catastrophe, she continues to haunt Snowman posthumously and the Crakers remember her as a lover of nature.

Ramona

A lab technician and good friend of Jimmy's father at OrganInc. She moves to HelthWyzer with Jimmy's father when he is given a position there under the premise that she is very good at her job. After Jimmy's mother's mysterious departure, Ramona moves in and takes on a motherly role in Jimmy's life.

Sharon

Jimmy's mother. She once worked at OrganInc like her husband, but stopped due to an untreated nervous breakdown. She is depressed and often fights with Jimmy's father. Jimmy vies for his mother's attention, but she spends much of her time sitting in her bathrobe and smoking. Eventually, Sharon runs away from the HelthWyzer compound, abandoning her son and taking his treasured genetically engineered pet rakunk named "Killer." Jimmy is haunted by his mother's absence, and is visited often by CorpSeCorps inspectors attempting to track her whereabouts.

Snowman

See Jimmy.

Susu

The nickname that Uncle En gives Oryx. See Oryx.

Trio of Survivors

At the end of the novel, Jimmy has discovered three other human survivors – a woman and two men.

Uncle En

Uncle En is a trader of young children. He purchases children from desperate families who sell their children to him in exchange for much needed money. He then takes the children to live in large cities and trains them to sell flowers. He trains Oryx to lure men into hotel rooms, but at the last moment, he barges in and "saves" her from the men, taking large bribes to keep them quiet. Later, Uncle En is rumoured to have been murdered, and his body is said to be found floating on one of the city's canals.

Uncle Pete

Uncle Pete is the boss and close friend of Crake's father. After the death of Crake's father, Uncle Pete begins consoling Crake's mother. Eventually, the two move in together. Uncle Pete serves as a surrogate father figure to Crake in the sense that he is the male presence in the household.

Snowman suspects that Uncle Pete met his demise at the hands of one of Crake's experimental bio forms.

CHAPTER ABSTRACTS, COMPREHENSION, AND SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

SECTION 1 (pages 3-13)

Mango (pp. 3-5)

- Snowman wakes up in a tree and gets ready to start his day.
- Snowman's watch is broken, though he says it doesn't matter because there is no official time anymore.



1. What can the reader assume about civilization and humanity in Chapter 1?

Flotsam (pp. 6-10)

- A group of children bring Snowman items that they have found on the beach so that he can identify them.
- Snowman reflects on Crake's rules for naming.
- The children are curious about Snowman's stubble.
- Snowman shoos the children away.



2. How has Margaret Atwood set up a futuristic, post-apocalypse world in this chapter?
3. Why is "Snowman" an appropriate pseudonym for the main character?
4. What role does Snowman play for these children?

Voice (pp. 11-13)

- Gazing at his worn, bug-bitten body, Snowman becomes hyper-aware of the profound changes that have taken place.
- He begs Oryx to speak to him, but she does not. Instead, the voice of the unknown woman returns - complementing him on his body.
- Snowman hallucinates voices of past girlfriends descending upon him.
- Painfully aware of his isolation and loneliness, Snowman begins to panic and screams at the ocean.



1. Why can't Snowman tell what time it is?
2. Why doesn't it matter that Snowman does not know what time it is?
3. Where has Snowman been sleeping?
4. What kind of hat does Snowman wear?
5. What fruit is hidden near Snowman's tree?
6. What objects do the children bring Snowman?
7. What does Snowman say his stubble is when the children ask about it?

8. What does Snowman pretend his watch is?
9. Who does Snowman pretend to ask for the children?
10. What does Snowman end up telling the children about the items they bring him from the ocean?
11. What did Crake rule concerning names in Chapter 1?
12. What does Snowman wrap himself in to start the day?

SECTION 2 (pages 17-38)

Bonfire (pp. 17-24)

- Snowman, who was once called Jimmy, begins to tell the story of his past.
- Jimmy's earliest memory is of a bonfire of animals burning due to a virus that was killing them.
- Jimmy's father and a man standing next to them discuss who caused the fire and how they could have broken past the tight security that was in place.
- Jimmy's mother tries to explain to Jimmy what a disease is.



1. What kind of boy was Jimmy?
2. How is Jimmy's view of animals different from his father's?
3. What can the reader assume about Jimmy's parents' relationship?
4. Why does Jimmy's mother chastise his father, "How many times do I have to tell you? [...] He's too young." (p. 22)?

OrganInc Farms (pp. 25-32)

- Jimmy's father, a genographer at OrganInc Farms, is one of the most important contributors to the creation of the pigoon project.
- Jimmy gets to visit the pigoons, whom he considers his friends.
- Jimmy lives in a grand company-supplied home in an OrganInc compound.
- Jimmy's family never visits the cities, which are known as "the pleebands".



5. What are pigoons?
6. What is the pigoon project about?
7. What can the reader infer about the pleeblands since they are labelled "unsafe"?
8. What are the compounds compared to?

Lunch (pp. 33-38)

- Jimmy's mother had also worked for OrganInc Farms at one point in her life.
- Snowman's problematic relationship with his mother is touched upon in this chapter.



9. What did Jimmy's mother's job consist in?
10. Describe Jimmy's mother's state of mind!



1. What does Jimmy's father do?
2. What project is Jimmy's dad a key worker in?
3. What type of meat is frequently served at OrganInc's cafeteria?
4. What is Ramona's job?
5. As a child, who does Jimmy believe his only friends are?
6. Why doesn't Jimmy's family ever visit the pleeblands?
7. What is Jimmy's mother's first name?
8. What did Jimmy's mother do before she quit her job?
9. Which word best describes Jimmy's mother's personality?
10. Who is Dolores?

SECTION 3 (pages 41-51)

Nooners (pp. 41-48)

- Snowman dislikes the glare and humidity of noon, so he retreats into the forest.
- Oryx is introduced as one of the key people of the story.
- Snowman begins to worry that he will forget things from the past.



1. What characters does Snowman think of as he is reminiscing about his past?
2. Aware of the slow degradation of his mind, Snowman tries to come up with ways of preserving whatever he has left. – What are some of his options to occupy his time? Why does he discard them?
3. How does Atwood manage to create suspense in this chapter?
4. In spite of all the adversity, the extreme loneliness, and physical discomfort Snowman faces, what glimmer of hope is there ?

Downpour (pp. 49-51)

- Snowman makes a beeline for his storm refuge.
- A book in his mind encourages him to concentrate on the “immediate realities and [...] tasks at hand.” (p. 51)
- At the end of this chapter, Snowman has the strange feeling that someone is watching him from behind the foliage.



1. Why does Snowman retreat to the forest in the middle of the day?
2. When Snowman is in the forest, what does he worry about?
3. What game does Snowman believe will help his mind?
4. Why does Snowman decide not to keep written records?
5. What happens to the afternoon weather in Snowman's location?
6. Where does Snowman find shelter during the bad weather?
7. What does Snowman drink water out of?
8. What does Snowman wish he was drinking rather than water when he is in the forest?
9. After thinking about beverages, what does Snowman regret?
10. What is the author's purpose in the first three sections of the novel?

SECTION 4 (pages 55-106)

Rakunk (pp. 55-66)

- Jimmy gets a pet rakunk from his father.
- Soon after Jimmy's tenth birthday, his father changes jobs.
- Jimmy's father announces a major breakthrough at work.



1. What is a rakunk?
2. How does Jimmy's mother feel about their move to the HelthWyzer compound?
3. What does Jimmy's father refer to when he says, "We've done it" (p. 63)? - How does Jimmy's mother feel about the news?

Hammer (pp. 67-78)

- When his parents fight in the evenings, Jimmy is comforted by his only real friend, Killer.
- One day Jimmy comes home from school to find that his mother has left the compound and gone into hiding.
- After some time passes, Ramona moves in, and Jimmy's father makes no attempt to hide their sexual relationship from Jimmy.
- Jimmy starts getting postcards from his mother from places like England and Argentina.



4. Explain the title of this chapter!
5. How does Jimmy feel for months after his mother has left?
6. Why is Jimmy's father scared after his wife has left him?

Crake (pp. 79-86)

- Jimmy meets Crake, at the time still known as Glenn, a few months before the disappearance of his mother.
- Snowman recalls how Crake "generated awe" (p. 86) from both his peers and the teachers at the school. People sensed his capacity to do something, but were unsure of what.



7. How is life in the pleeblands different from that of the Compounds?

Brainfrizz (pp. 87-100)

- Crake becomes Jimmy's lab partner in Nanotech Biochem class.
- When Jimmy and Crake do not play computer games, they surf the Internet looking at disturbing and sexual websites.



8. What are the names of the computer games Jimmy and Crake play?
9. What pseudonyms do Jimmy and Crake choose to play Extinctathon? – Why are these names appropriate?
10. Name some of their favourite websites, and say what they are about.
11. Where do Jimmy and Crake get the skunkweed from that they smoke while watching executions and porn?

HottTotts (pp. 101-106)

- One afternoon, as Jimmy and Crake watch porn online, they see Oryx for the first time.
- Crake prints the picture of Oryx for Jimmy. Snowman recalls having saved it over the years.



12. What does the site HottTotts specialize in?
13. What does the reader find out about Oryx? – How does Jimmy feel after he has seen Oryx for the first time?



1. What is the name of Jimmy's pet rakunk?
2. What is the name of the biotech company that hires Jimmy's father?
3. What role does Jimmy play in class?
4. Who's Alex?
5. What are the names of Jimmy's hand puppets?
6. What happens to Jimmy's former pet?
7. Who tells Jimmy, "You mustn't blame yourself, son. It's not your fault she left." (p. 74)?
8. What name does Jimmy's mother use when she signs postcards?
9. Who is described as "intellectually honourable"?
10. Who was Glenn named after?
11. Who is Wakulla Price?
14. How old is Oryx when Jimmy and Crake first see her?

SECTION 5 (pages 109-128)

Toast (pp. 109-113)

- Snowman, feeling better now that the weather has cooled off, sees a rabbit and wishes he could catch it for food.
- Snowman is reminded that he cannot use metaphors⁵ with the Crakers because they do not understand them.

⁵ an expression that describes a person or object by referring to something that is considered to have similar characteristics to that person or object (e.g. *All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players* is the phrase that begins a famous soliloquy from William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, spoken by the melancholy Jaques.)



1. Why can't Snowman catch and kill the rabbit?
2. How does Snowman attempt to shoo the children away, and why does he initially fail?
3. What role does Snowman play for the children? – How does he feel about his predicament?

Fish (pp. 114-121)

- The Crakers bring Snowman fish and ask him to tell them stories about Crake.
- Snowman tells the Crakers about Crake's Great Rearrangement.



4. What do the women look like? – Why does Snowman feel no lust for them?
5. What is Snowman referring to when he says, "Idiot [...] I should have made it three a day." (p. 116)?
6. What story does Snowman tell the Crakers about chaos, the Great Rearrangement and the Great Emptiness?
7. What role has Crake unwittingly taken in the Crakers' world? – In how far is this ironic? – How does Snowman feel when telling the Crakers stories about Crake?

Bottle (pp. 122-128)

- Unable to sleep, Snowman decides to no longer hoard his last bit of alcohol, and greedily drinks the Scotch he's been storing in his cache.
- A pack of wolvogs approaches Snowman's tree. He yells at them and throws a bottle at them in defence.



1. What is missing from the bodies of the Craker women?
2. What colour are the eyes of the Children of Crake?
3. What do the Crakers smell like?
4. Why are they scented?
5. Who are they named after?
6. What do the new humans ask Snowman about when they bring him fish?
7. What are wolvogs?
8. Who sought Snowman's companionship and protection for a while?
9. Who does Snowman try to conjure before he goes to bed at night in his tree?

SECTION 6 (pages 131-169)

Oryx (pp. 131-141)

- Snowman's recollection of Oryx's childhood offers him a way to pass the time.
- Jimmy and Crake discuss poverty.



1. What do we learn about Oryx's childhood?
2. How does Jimmy's view of what happened to Oryx differ from Oryx's and Crake's?
3. Given their diverging viewpoints, how can the three protagonists be characterized?

Birdcall (pp. 142-147)

- The children are taken for a long journey on a muddy road, across a river and through a forest.
- In the forest, Oryx is comforted by familiar birdcalls that remind her of her village.

Roses (pp. 148-156)

- Oryx and her brother are taught how to sell roses to the tourists outside expensive hotels and shops.
- One day, on orders from Uncle En, Oryx lets a strange man take her up to his hotel room.



4. How is Uncle En watching the children? – What does this remind you of?
5. What happens to Oryx's brother?
6. What game does Uncle En make Oryx play? – How does she feel about this?

Pixieland Jazz (pp. 157-169)

- After Uncle En's disappearance, Oryx is sold to a porn movie maker.
- Jimmy asks Oryx if the men raped her. Not wanting to talk about "ugly things" (p. 168), she avoids the question.



7. How does Oryx feel about Uncle's En's death? – Explain!
8. What has Oryx learned about life during this time?
9. How did the girls spend their free time?
10. Who's Jack?
11. What does Oryx mean by the "good trade" (p. 166)?



1. Where does Jimmy believe that Oryx once lived?
2. Who is Oryx sold to?
3. What is the name of the person who buys Oryx?
4. How many other children beside Oryx are sold to the man?
5. What does Uncle En tell the soldiers who the children are?
6. Where is Oryx imprisoned after she is bought?
7. How many children are there when Oryx arrives?
8. How are Oryx's actions monitored by her owner?
9. Why don't the children selling flowers have to worry about the police?

10. What is Oryx renamed by her owner?
11. What is the name of the cameraman?
12. What does the cameraman teach Oryx?
13. What does the cameraman call the building where the movies are made?

SECTION 7 (pages 173-199)

Sveltana (pp. 173-181)

- Finally facing the ugly truth, i.e. starvation, Snowman plans to revisit the RejoovenEsense Compound in search of food.
- Since the Children of Crake are his responsibility, Snowman sets off to their camp to tell them he is leaving, so as not to alarm them with his absence.



1. What is Snowman's reticence about returning to the RejoovenEsense Compound indicative of?

Purring (pp. 182-191)

- Snowman sees the Crakers performing their morning ritual of urinating on their territory to protect its inhabitants by keeping wild animals (e.g. wolvogs, rakunks, bobkittens and pigoons) out.
- Three women and one man are purring over an injured boy.
- The rapid rate of growth that Crake endowed his creations with still unnerves Snowman.



2. Why has Crake given the men the task of urinating round their territory twice a day?
3. What is the purring about?
4. Who will the Crakers pray to in the hope that the animals will not bite them anymore?
5. What had Crake not anticipated? How does Snowman feel about this?
6. What can you say about the growth rate of the kids?
7. Why is Snowman crying as he leaves the village of the Crakers?

Blue (pp. 192-199)

- Snowman witnesses a group of Crakers mating.
- Snowman recalls an argument he had with Crake about art and its role in courtship.



8. Describe the reproductive system Crake has designed! – What benefits are there to this means of procreation?
9. How does Crake insult Jimmy?
10. How do the Crakers bore Snowman?



1. What is “Sveltana”?
2. Where does Snowman hope to find sprayguns?
3. What is the name of the path to the Crakers’ encampment?
4. How did the Craker boy get injured?
5. What is the name of semi-digested herbage that gets expelled through the anus and re-swallowed several times a week?
6. What is Snowman’s purpose for going on the journey?
7. How long does Snowman expect to be gone on his journey to the compound?
8. What are the bobkittens meant to control?
9. How often are female Crakers fertile?

SECTION 8 (pages 203-256)

SoYummie (pp. 203-208)

- Jimmy and Crake graduate from high school and go to different colleges.
- Jimmy’s father, finally divorced from his wife in absentia, has married Ramona.



1. What references to climate change are there on page 203?
2. What colleges do Jimmy and Crake go to?
3. How does Crake feel about his mother’s recent death?

Happicuppa (pp. 209-216)

- Following graduation, Jimmy and Crake spend some time at Uncle Pete’s place in the Moosonee HealthWyzer Gated Vacation Community.
- Crake confides in Jimmy that his father didn’t just die; he jumped off an overpass in the pleeblands.



4. What is the Happicuppa controversy about? – Can you think of similar demonstrations in our contemporary world?

Applied Rhetoric (pp. 217-225)

- At Martha-Graham Academy, Jimmy studies Problematics, as it is best suited for individuals who like words.
- Jimmy begins dating many women at the Academy.



5. “Live performance had suffered the sabotage panics of the early twenty-first century” (p. 219). Can you think of a live TV show in 2015 that was cancelled because of a bomb threat?
6. What is Martha-Graham Academy like?
7. What scheme does Jimmy repeatedly use to seduce women?
8. How is Oryx unlike the women that Jimmy meets in college?

Asperger’s⁶ U. (pp. 226-233)

- Jimmy and Crake keep in touch through college via email and online chess games.
- In correspondence with Crake, Jimmy brags about his sexual conquests because that is the “one field of endeavour in which he had the edge over Crake.” (p. 226)
- After a year apart, Jimmy visits Crake at Watson-Crick for Thanksgiving.



9. What do the CorpSeCorps men at Watson-Crick question Jimmy about?

Wolvogs (pp. 234-242)

- Crake takes Jimmy on a tour of the various departments at Watson-Crick and shows off the students’ inventions and creations.



10. Name some of the inventions / creations Jimmy sees at Watson-Crick!
11. What is on Jimmy’s mind after he has seen these creations?

Hypothetical (pp. 243-250)

- One night, Crake tells Jimmy that he believes HelthWyzer creates diseases in order to sell more medicine.



12. What services do Student Services arrange for the students?
13. What is the hypothetical scenario Crake walks Jimmy through?
14. What does Crake believe about his father’s death?

Extinctathon (pp. 251-256)

- The final evening of Jimmy’s visit, Crake asks Jimmy if he would like to play Extintathon, the game that has given Crake his nickname.
- During his visit, Jimmy is awakened by Crake’s nocturnal screams.

⁶ Asperger’s syndrome: a type of autism in which someone does not develop normal social abilities, and is often very interested in one particular subject [After Hans *Asperger* (1906-1980), Austrian pediatrician.]



15. What does Crake show Jimmy in the hidden playroom?
16. What does Jimmy warn Crake against?
17. How come Snowman now knows what Crake's nightmares were about?



1. In what month does Jimmy graduate from high school?
2. What school is comparable to the Watson-Crick Institution?
3. Who does Jimmy recognize during a news report?
4. What is the focus of Jimmy's school?
5. What is the nickname of the course Jimmy is majoring in?
6. Who is Bernice?
7. How does Bernice protest animal abuse?
8. Why does Bernice burn Jimmy's jockey shorts?
9. What is the nickname of the Watson-Crick Institution? – Why?
10. What is the title of Jimmy's outstanding senior dissertation?
11. What is Crake studying?
12. What name does Crake use to introduce Jimmy to his classmates?
13. Who do the women at Watson-Crick remind Jimmy of? – Why?
14. What is discouraged at Crake's school? – Why?
15. Who is MaddAdam?
16. What does Crake use as his gateway to Extinctathon?

SECTION 9 (pages 259-280)

Hike (pp. 259-265)

- Snowman exits what used to be a semi-residential area and enters the pleeblands.
- After Snowman has reached RejoovenEsense, he sees a trail of abandoned objects, evidence of hope lost.



1. Describe the pleeblands!
2. What possibility does Snowman ponder?

RejoovenEsense (pp. 266-274)

- Snowman enters a house through a broken window.
- As Snowman respectfully ransacks the house for food and supplies, he has flashbacks of Oryx.



3. What does Snowman find in the house?
4. What does he feel when he looks at himself in the mirror? – Why?
5. What weird feeling does Snowman have about the home he visits on the compound?

Twister (pp. 275-280)

- Snowman enters a security building to escape a tornado and sees more dead guards with no guns before the lights go out.
- Snowman snacks on cashews, drinks some bourbon, and, just before setting his head on the desk, he sees Oryx floating toward him.



6. Why are guns missing from the dead guards?
7. How has Snowman's relationship with pigeons changed dramatically over time?
8. How can the threat of the pigeons be read as a criticism regarding the genetic modification of animals?
9. How does the novelist continue to build suspense in this chapter?



1. Who believes that all it takes is the destruction of one generation of humans to permanently eradicate civilization?
2. What birds are flying overhead when Snowman enters the compound's residence area?
3. What is a snat?
4. What is at the entrance to RejoovenEsense?
5. What is Snowman's overall destination?
6. How many dead bodies are inside the home on the compound that Snowman enters when he first arrives?
7. What does Snowman take to wear from the home on the compound?
8. What animals does Snowman try to scare away at the RejoovenEsense compound?
9. What type of building does Snowman enter when he sees a twister approaching?
10. What does Snowman see in this building?
11. What does Snowman fear when the lights go out inside the building?

SECTION 10 (pages 283-307)

Vulturizing (pp. 283-290)

- Jimmy graduates from Martha Graham with a degree in Problematics.
- He gets a summer job at the Martha Graham library, but is soon fired.



1. Why is Jimmy fired?
2. How do Amanda's roommates view human society?
3. What project does Amanda work on?
4. Describe Jimmy's relationship with Amanda!

AnooYoo (pp. 291-295)

- Jimmy moves into an apartment at the AnooYoo Compound.
- Although unfulfilled by his work, Jimmy begins climbing the corporate ladder.
- He involves himself in a string of sexual relationships with married women.

Garage (pp. 296-300)

- Crake heads a cutting edge research project at the powerful RejoovenEsense Compound.
- Jimmy sees Oryx on a news report after she was found locked away in a garage by a prosperous San Francisco pharmacist.



5. What does Oryx testify? What is striking about her testimony?

Gripless (pp. 301-307)

- Throughout the years, the CorpSeCorps question Jimmy about his mother four times a year.
- He begins having nightmares about young slender women who wear floral garlands and ribbons. Finally he sinks into a depression so deep that not even alcohol and sex can comfort him.



6. What do the CorpSeCorps agents show Jimmy in his fifth year at AnooYoo?



1. Who is Amanda Payne?
2. What does Jimmy do at AnooYoo?
3. What has Uncle Pete died of?
4. What is the man who locked Oryx up ordered to do for her?
5. What does Oryx want to study?
6. What does Jimmy lose interest in after learning about his mother's fate?

SECTION 11 (pages 311-329)

Pigoons (pp. 311-315)

- Snowman wakes up from a nightmare in which he was five years old.
- He plans to head toward the central mall in search of food.



1. What is Snowman's predicament at the end of this chapter?
2. What important point does the change in mental capacity provided to the pigoons demonstrate about human nature in the novel?

Radio (pp. 316-322)

- Snowman opens an interior door and finds a steep flight of stairs leading to the watchtower.
- He finds a windup radio in one of the kitchenette's cupboards.



3. What does Snowman find in the watchtower?
4. What does he hear once he's cranked the radio up and searched the stations? – How does he feel? Why?

Rampart (pp. 323-329)

- Snowman tends to a cut on his foot from stepping on his broken bourbon bottle.
- He escapes the watchtower.



5. What does Snowman dream about that night?
6. How does he manage to escape?



1. What is the scraping noise coming from the corner of the room?
2. What forces Snowman to retreat into the gatehouse?
3. What keeps the animals from attacking Snowman when he is inside the watchtower on the compound?
4. What language does the first man speak on the radio that Snowman finds?
5. What does Snowman shout into the radio?
6. What does Snowman forget when he leaves the tower?
7. Where is Snowman heading?
8. What odd thing does Snowman see from the third watchtower in the far distance?

SECTION 12 (pages 333-385)

Pleebcrawl (pp. 333-341)

- Snowman continues his journey across the rampart, suffering in the hot sun.
- He flashes back to memories of him and Crake going to bars in the pleeblands.



1. Although Jimmy is excited to finally be in the pleeblands, he isn't prepared for what he sees. What does he see, and why is he so overwhelmed and surprised?
2. What does Crake mean when he says, "So this is where our stuff turns to gold" (p. 339)?

BlyssPluss (pp. 342-349)

- At the RejoovenEsense Compound, Crake informs Jimmy that his unit, called Paradise, is working on immortality.
- Crake clarifies what the BlyssPluss initiative consists in.



3. What surprising news do Jimmy's superiors at AnooYoo have for him on the Monday following his weekend with Crake?
4. Explain: "Crake [...] had long tentacles" (p. 343)!
5. What scourges will the BlyssPluss Pill eradicate?
6. How will it "confer large-scale benefits" (p. 437) on the entirety of society, and even on the whole planet?

MaddAddam (pp. 350-353)

- Crake takes Jimmy to the Paradise dome – a highly guarded complex.



7. What names do the researchers in the Paradise office complex have?
8. Who are all these people working for Crake?
9. What happened to the few researchers who were "not team players" (p. 353)?

Paradice (pp. 354-360)

- Through a one-way mirror in Crake's office, Crake shows Jimmy his life work.
- The project is to remain top secret and the scientists are not allowed to leave Paradise.
- That evening Jimmy is moved into a suite inside the Paradise dome.



10. What does Crake's life work consist in?
11. How are the Crakers superior to ordinary human beings?
12. Explain how Crake wants to achieve immortality!
13. How are the BlyssPluss Pill and the Paradise Project inextricably linked?

Crake in love (pp. 361-372)

- A few days later, Jimmy sees Oryx in the bio-bubble with the Crakers.
- Oryx has a sexual relationship with Crake and Jimmy.
- Jimmy, driven to find out about Oryx's past, questions her about the "so-called maid scandal" (p. 371).



14. What is Oryx's role in Crake's project?
15. Where did Crake encounter Oryx?
16. What had Crake not managed to edit out in the Crakers?
17. Describe the unusual relationship between Oryx, Crake and Jimmy!
18. What does Oryx's new job consist in?
19. Why is Jimmy not satisfied with Oryx's answers concerning the details of her past?

Takeout (pp. 373-378)

- Crake tells Jimmy that he is putting him in charge of the Crakers in the event that anything should happen to him.
- Oryx tells Jimmy that she will never leave Crake.



20. In hindsight, what signs had Jimmy missed?

Airlock (pp. 379-385)

- An epidemic of fatal infection is sweeping the world.
- Crake kills Oryx by slitting her throat, and then Jimmy shoots Crake and kills him.



21. Describe the course of the disease!
22. Why is Oryx crying when she calls Jimmy?
23. Jimmy assumes a role of leadership that he has never had before. What is his primary goal, and what does he therefore do?
24. Why are Jimmy and Crake immune to the virus?
25. What does Crake mean when he tells Jimmy, "I'm counting on you" (p. 385)?
26. Why does Jimmy feel responsible for the Crakers?



1. How did Crake find out about Jimmy's mother's execution?
2. What does Crake give Jimmy before they go to the pleeblands?
3. What is it Jimmy must have accepted though he cannot remember having said yes?
4. What does Jimmy see from his room at the RejoovenEsense VIP guest hotel?

5. What is a secret effect of the prophylactic pill?
6. What is the real purpose of the prophylactic pill?
7. Who will not like the creation of the BlyssPluss Pill? Why not?
8. How are Crake and Jimmy inextricably linked in the success of the prophylactic pill?
9. Why is the Paradise dome sealed with an airlock?
10. What name does Crake suggest for Jimmy when Jimmy comes to work for him?
11. What is Crake's view of immortality?
12. When will the MaddAddam crew be allowed to leave the Paradise Complex?
13. How has pseudospeciation been eliminated?
14. What does Oryx teach the Crakers about?
15. Why is Oryx off limits for Jimmy?
16. What does Snowman mean by "If only" on p. 373?
17. Why does Crake want Jimmy to look after the Paradise Project should anything happen to him?
18. What does Oryx make Jimmy promise?
19. Why will Oryx never leave Crake?
20. Where did the epidemic appear first?
21. Why can Crake not enter the inner part of Paradise when he returns at dawn?

SECTION 13 (pages 389-412)

Bubble (pp. 389-392)

- Snowman arrives at the 8th watchtower where he sees the remains of Oryx and Crake.
- He injects his foot with antibiotics.
- Having collapsed on the bed of his old suite, he dreams of Alex the parrot.



1. What does Snowman feel when he sees the remains of Oryx and Crake?
2. Snowman begins to exhibit signs of slowly losing his grip on reality due to pain, exhaustion, and lack of adequate nutrition. – How does this manifest itself?
3. How is the importance of social existence highlighted in this chapter?

Scribble (pp. 393-405)

- For several weeks after the breakout of the massive pandemic Jimmy watches news reports of sickness and chaos in the cities.
- He makes a point of checking in on the Crakers several times each day.
- In his old office Snowman finds a note he once wrote explaining the events that had taken place.



4. Describe the chaos there was in the first two weeks following the outbreak of the virus
5. What were some of the measures taken to contain the virus?
6. What questions concerning Crake did Jimmy ask himself in the midst of the mayhem?
7. What kept Jimmy from committing suicide?
8. Why did Jimmy have to remove the Crakers from their dome?
9. What powerful message does Snowman's crumpling up the note Jimmy once wrote convey?

Remnant (pp. 406-412)

- There is a flashback to Snowman taking the Crakers to an arboretum near the seashore.
- Along the route to the seashore, Snowman has to shoot a few remaining infected people and navigate through piles of abandoned objects and rubble.



10. Why did Jimmy introduce himself to the Crakers as “Snowman”?
11. Why weren’t the Crakers alarmed when they came across the dead bodies of Oryx and Crake?
12. What mythology did Snowman invent for the Crakers? – What is ironic about it?
13. What did Snowman tell the Crakers about the dead bodies they saw on their way to the seashore?



1. Why does Snowman head towards Paradise’s emergency storeroom?
2. Why does Snowman apologize to the banana slug he’s stepped on?
3. How long did Jimmy remain holed up in Paradise?
4. What woke Jimmy up the day after he’d shot Crake?
5. What is the name of the virus?
6. How did Jimmy manage to skip three days of horror in the second week after the outbreak of the pandemic?
7. Who might have served as trial runs for Crake’s experimental virus?
8. When did Jimmy first show themselves to the Crakers?
9. Who addressed Snowman first?
10. Why was the park near the seashore the best location for Snowman and the Crakers?
11. How many people did Snowman shoot on their way to the seashore?
12. What did Snowman tell the Crakers to call the shore?

SECTION 14 (pages 415-426)

Idol (pp. 415-422)

- On his way back to the arboretum, Snowman prepares what he will tell the Crakers.
- When Snowman arrives at the Crakers’ settlement, he discovers that they have made an effigy of him.



1. Describe what Snowman hears and sees as he approaches the Crakers’ settlement!
2. What proof is there in this chapter that Crake’s experiment has failed?
3. What symbolism does Snowman notice behind the children dismantling the effigy made in his honour?

Sermon (pp. 423-426)

- The Crakers tell Snowman that a group of his kind came by their encampment.
- Before Snowman goes in search of the group of humans, he decides to give the Crakers some practical advice.



4. Why did the two men look angry?
5. What words of wisdom does Snowman want to impart to the Crakers?
– Why doesn't he? What will he ultimately tell them?
6. What dilemma of conscience is Snowman faced with if there really are more humans alive?



1. As the sun rises, what does Snowman spot in the sky?
2. What does Snowman shoot on his way to the rampart?
3. What will Snowman tell the Crakers regarding why he couldn't see Crake?
4. How many fish does Snowman plan to tell the Crakers that he needs to eat per week?
5. What sound does Snowman hear as he approaches the village?
6. What did the Crakers build while Snowman was away?
7. What are the Crakers doing around the structure they have built?
8. Why do the Crakers believe that Crake lives in the sky?
9. How does Snowman explain Crake's invisibility to the Crakers?
10. What Craker tells Snowman that other humans came by their encampment?
11. How many humans did the Crakers see?
12. What do the Crakers say that the woman smelled like?
13. What do the group of unknown humans run toward when the Crakers expose themselves?
14. What is one of the unknown human men carrying when the Crakers see them?
15. Why are the Crakers purring around Snowman?

SECTION 15 (pages 429-433)

Footprint (pp. 429-433)

- The next day Snowman goes to the beach in search of the other survivors.
- When Snowman sees the humans, he wonders how he should approach them.
- The novel ends on a cliffhanger.



1. What dilemma is Snowman faced with?
2. What different ways are there for Snowman to approach the other starving humans?
3. What does the cliffhanger consist in?
4. Do you think that Snowman will approach the people on the beach? – Why (not)?



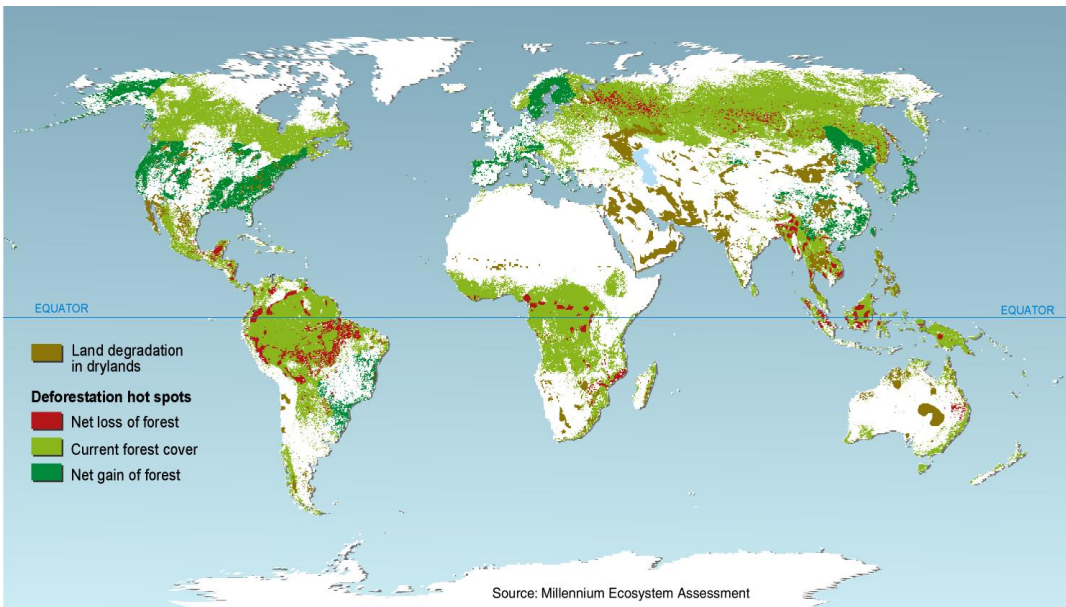
1. What visual clue proves other survivors' existence?
2. What smell signals Snowman that there are people nearby?
3. When Snowman finally sees the other humans, what are they doing?
4. What is Snowman left wondering when he sees the people?
5. What weapon do the humans have with them?
6. What hour does Snowman say it is when he is considering whether or not to approach the group of humans?
7. What is the total number of humans that Snowman sees when he considers approaching them on the beach?

APPENDICES

Look at the pictures below, describe them, and point out their relevance to *Oryx and Crake*!







WRITING AN EXAMINATION PAPER

Take the following to heart

- *Carefully study each of the questions set on a particular text.* Make sure you understand what they are asking for, so that you select the one you know most about.
- *Answer the question!* – Obvious, isn't it? However, bitter experience shows that many students fail because they do not actually answer the question that has been set.
- *Answer each point of question!* – Again, obvious, but so many students spend all their time answering just part of a question and ignoring the rest. This prevents you gaining marks for the parts left out.

The question

- Read and understand every word of it. If it asks you to compare (the similarities) and / or contrast (the differences) between characters or events, then that is what you must do.
- Underline all the key words and phrases that mention characters, events and themes, and all instructions as to what to do, e.g. *compare, contrast, outline, comment, write about, show how / what / where.*
- Now write a short list of the things you have to do, one item under the other. A typical question will only have between two and five items at most for you to cope with.

Planning your answer

- Look at each of the points you have identified from the question. Think about what you are going to say about each. Much of it will be pretty obvious, but if you think of any good ideas, jot them down before you forget them.
- Decide in what order you are going to deal with the question's major points. Number them in sequence.
- So far you have done some concentrated, thoughtful reading and written down maybe fifteen to twenty words. You know roughly what you are going to say in response to the question and in what order – if you do not, you have time to give serious thought to trying one of the other questions.

Putting pen to paper

The first sentences are important. Try to summarize your response to the question so that the examiner has some idea of how you are going to approach it. Jump straight into the essay; do not nibble at its extremities for a page and a half. High marks will be gained by the candidate who can show he or she has a mind engaged with the text. Your personal response is rewarded – provided you are answering the question!

As you write your essay, *constantly refer back to the question and your list of points* and make sure you are actually responding to them.

How long should the answers be?

There is no "correct" length. What you must do is answer the question set, fully and sensitively, in the time allowed. Allocate time to each question according to the percentage of marks awarded for it.

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