

**КАЗАНСКИЙ ФЕДЕРАЛЬНЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
ИНСТИТУТ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ
Высшая школа иностранных языков и перевода
Кафедра иностранных языков в сфере международных отношений**

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**KAZUO ISHIGURO
“NEVER LET ME GO”**

READER

**Учебное пособие для внеаудиторного чтения
для студентов I–II курсов Института международных отношений**

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Данное учебное пособие предназначено для внеаудиторного чтения и работы на занятиях со студентами I–II курсов Института международных отношений КФУ. Пособие построено на основе романа «Не отпускай меня» (“Never Let Me Go”, 2005) британского писателя японского происхождения Кадзуо Исигуро. Оно включает в себя биографическое вступление, освещающее жизнь и деятельность Кадзуо Исигуро; интервью писателя, раскрывающее его личные взгляды; 9 глав, каждой из которых соответствует глава книги, и финальные обобщающие задания, включающие в себя вопросы для устного обсуждения и темы эссе.

Данное пособие может быть использовано в качестве учебного пособия для развития и совершенствования навыков чтения, говорения и перевода текста, а также для организации самостоятельной работы студентов. Данное пособие ориентировано на студентов с уровнем владения английским языком B2–C1, а также может представлять интерес для широкого круга изучающих английский язык в качестве материала для индивидуального чтения.

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ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ

Данное учебное пособие для внеаудиторного чтения на английском языке рассчитано на студентов I-II курсов Института международных отношений КФУ, обучающихся по направлению подготовки 58.03.01. – Востоковедение и африканистика.

Пособие построено на основе книги британского писателя японского происхождения Кадзуо Исигуро «Не отпускай меня» (*Never Let Me Go*, 2005). Прочтение книги «Не отпускай меня» на языке оригинала, её осмысление и обсуждение будут способствовать пониманию студентами процессов, происходящих в современном обществе, всё это является актуальным при формировании компетентных специалистов в области востоковедения.

Данное пособие включает в себя биографическое вступление, освещающее жизнь и деятельность Кадзуо Исигуро; интервью писателя, раскрывающее его личные взгляды; 9 глав, каждой из которых соответствует глава книги, и финальные обобщающие задания, включающие в себя вопросы для устного обсуждения и темы эссе.

Книга «Не отпускай меня» на английском языке находится в открытом доступе в сети Интернет: https://booksafe.net/book/ishiguro_kazuo-never_let_me_go-150505.html?ysclid=lcyukjkopf642138178. Однако для удобства работы мы приводим главы книги здесь.

В пособии текст романа адаптирован в учебных целях до уровня Advanced. Каждая глава сопровождается глоссарием и упражнениями, направленными на отработку лексико-грамматического материала, развитие и совершенствование навыков чтения, говорения и перевода, а также на контроль понимания содержания соответствующей главы.

Упражнения разработаны авторами-составителями самостоятельно на аутентичном языковом материале. Преподавателям при работе с пособием нужно иметь в виду, что упражнения включают вопросы на понимание содержания текста, проработку лексического материала, интерпретацию точки зрения автора, задания по переводу

текста с английского на русский язык. Особое внимание уделяется обсуждению поднимаемых в тексте проблем и развитию навыков критического мышления.

При составлении сопровождающих каждую главу глоссариев были использованы онлайн-версии словарей, таких как Oxford Learner`s Dictionaries, Cambridge Dictionary, Collins Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Типологические различия упражнений и глоссариев от главы к главе обусловлены спецификой изучаемого текста. В случае возникновения затруднений при чтении изучаемого произведения авторы данного пособия рекомендуют студентам для перевода интересующих их лексических единиц обращаться к онлайн-словарю «Мультитран»: <https://www.multitran.com>.

При работе на занятии авторы пособия рекомендуют преподавателям обращать внимание как на фактическое понимание студентами прочитанного текста, так и на формирование их способности проанализировать прочитанное, принимая во внимание исторические факты. Финальные обобщающие задания включают в себя вопросы для устного обсуждения и темы эссе. Тематика заданий разработана в соответствии с содержанием произведения и предполагает аналитический подход к его осмыслению.

FOREWORD

Kazuo Ishiguro was born on November 8, 1954 in Nagasaki (Japan). In 1960 the Ishiguro family moved to Guildford (the UK). Ishiguro completed a Bachelor's degree in English and Philosophy at the University of Kent in Canterbury in 1978, and in 1980 he got a Master's degree in Arts at the University of East Anglia.



Kazuo Ishiguro's literary career began in 1981 with the release of the anthology *Introduction 7: Stories by New Writers*. The writer's first novel "*A Pale View of Hills*" was published in 1982, shortly after the publication of this novel, Ishiguro's name was included in the list of the 20 best young British authors of *Granta* magazine, one of the most authoritative publications in the literary world. The next novel, "*An Artist of the Floating World*" (1986), which raises problems related to the attitude of the Japanese to World War II, received the Whitbread Book Award. The novel "*The Remains of the Day*" was published in 1989 and was awarded the Booker Prize.

The Nobel Prize in Literature 2017 was awarded to Kazuo Ishiguro "who, in the novels of great emotional force, has uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world" [5]. Ishiguro's books have been translated into more than 30 languages, including Russian (including "*The Remains of the Day*", "*When We Were Orphans*", "*Never Let Me Go*", "*A Pale View of Hills*", etc.). Currently, the writer is a member of the Royal Society of Literature. In addition to literary awards, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire (1995).

The novel "*Never Let Me Go*" was published in 2005. It was nominated for the Booker Prize and the Arthur C. Clarke Award and included in the list of the 100 best English novels according to *Time* magazine. Despite the

fact that the novel has elements of science fiction, it is not positioned as a science fiction work. The novel takes place in the dystopian Britain of the late twentieth century and tells the story of a young woman Kathy H., who recalls her childhood, youth and thinks about her life. During the narration, the reader learns the life story of Kathy and the story of her close friends Tommy and Ruth. Describing the fate of the characters in the novel "*Never Let Me Go*", not only does Ishiguro raise universal problems, but also expresses deep concern about the consequences of the influence of technology on modern society.

Kazuo Ishiguro, Nobel Prize in Literature 2017

Official Video

I. Study the following words, translate if necessary.

laureate, *n* /'lɔːriət/, /'lɔːriət/ a person who has been given an official honour or prize for something important they have achieved

embed, *v* /ɪm'bed/ (*also imbed*) [*usually passive*] if something such as an attitude or feeling is embedded in a society or system, or in someone's personality, it becomes a permanent and noticeable feature of it

role model, *n* /'rɔːl mɒdl/ a person that people admire and try to copy

self-conscious (about sth), *adj* /,self 'kɒnʃəs/, /,self 'kɑːnʃəs/ nervous or uncomfortable because you are worried about what people think about you or your actions

fellow, *adj* /'feləʊ/ [*only before noun*] used to describe somebody who is the same as you in some way, or in the same situation

petition, *n* /pə'tɪʃn/ a written document signed by a large number of people that asks somebody in a position of authority to do or change something

platform, *n* /'plætfɔːm/ a flat surface raised above the level of the ground or floor, used by public speakers or performers so that the audience can see them

integrity, *n* /ɪn'tegrəti/ 1) the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; 2) (*formal*) the state of being whole and not divided

subtle, *adj* /'sʌtl/ (*comparative subtler* /'sʌtələ/, *superlative subtlest* /'sʌtəlɪst/, **more subtle is also common**) (*often approving*) not very obvious or easy to notice

turn smb/sth down, *ph v* to reject or refuse to consider an offer, a proposal, etc. or the person who makes it

hideously, *adv* /'hɪdiəsli/ in a very ugly or unpleasant way

technique, *n* /tek'ni:k/ a particular way of doing something, especially one in which you have to learn special skills

capture, *v* /'kæptʃə/ to make somebody interested in something

strive, *v* /straɪv/ (*formal*) to try very hard to achieve something

excel in/at sth, *v* /ɪk'sel/ to be very good at doing something

delusion, *n* /dɪ'lu:ʒn/ 1) [*countable*] a false belief or opinion about yourself or your situation; 2) [*uncountable*] the act of believing or making yourself believe something that is not true

recur, *v* /rɪ'kɜ:/ to happen again or a number of times

struggle, *v* /'strʌɡl/ to try very hard to do something when it is difficult or when there are a lot of problems

perspective, *n* /pə'spektɪv/ a particular attitude towards something; a way of thinking about something **SYNONYM viewpoint**

back (smb/sth), *v* to encourage somebody or give them help; to support and agree with somebody/something; to give financial support to somebody/something

apply to smb/sth, *v* /ə'plai/ (*in the progressive tenses*) to affect or be relevant to somebody/something

bury, *v* /'berɪ/ to try to forget an unpleasant experience or try not to feel an unpleasant emotion

move on (to sth), *ph v* to start doing or discussing something new

atrocities, *n* /ə'trɒsəti/ (*pl. atrocities*) a cruel and violent act, especially in a war

suppress, *v* /sə'pres/ to prevent something from being published or made known

tension, *n* /'tenʃn/ a situation in which people do not trust each other, or feel unfriendly towards each other, and that may cause them to attack each other

turmoil, *n* /'tɜ:mɔɪl/ [*uncountable, singular*] a state of great worry in which everything is confused and nothing is certain

period, *n* /'pɪəriəd/ a fixed time during the life of a person or in history

genre, *n* /'ʒɑ:nrə/ (*formal*) a particular type or style of literature, art, film or music that you can recognize because of its special features

desperate, *adj* /'despəreɪt/ feeling or showing that you have little hope and are ready to do anything without worrying about danger to yourself or others

apprenticeship, *noun* /ə'prentɪʃɪp/ a period of time working as an apprentice; a job as an apprentice

apprentice, *n* /ə'prentɪs/ a young person who works for an employer for a fixed period of time in order to learn the particular skills needed in their job

spot, *v* /spɒt/ (not used in the progressive tenses) to see or notice a person or thing, especially suddenly or when it is not easy to do so

outlet for sth, *n* /'aʊtlet/ a way of expressing or making good use of strong feelings, ideas or energy

collaborate, *v* /kə'læbəreɪt/ to work together with somebody in order to produce or achieve something

isolation, *n* /,aɪsə'leɪʃn/ [uncountable] the act of separating somebody/something; the state of being separate

ossify, *verb* /'ɒsɪfaɪ/, /'ɑ:sɪfaɪ/ if habits or ideas ossify, or if something ossifies them, they become fixed and unable to change

oblige, *verb* /ə'blaɪdʒ/ (*formal*) to force somebody to do something, by law, because it is a duty, etc.

look up to smb, *ph v* to admire or respect somebody

crucial, *adj* /'kru:ʃl/ extremely important, because it will affect other things

unfold, *verb* /ʌn'fəʊld/ if a situation or story unfolds, it develops or becomes clear to other people

drift, *v* /drɪft/ to move along smoothly and slowly

canvas, *n* /'kænvəs/ [uncountable] a strong heavy rough material used for making tents, sails, etc. and by artists for painting on

deviate from sth, *v* /'di:vieɪt/ to be different from something; to do something in a different way from what is usual or expected

distort, *v* /dɪ'stɔ:t/ to change the shape, appearance or sound of something so that it is strange or not clear

orthodox, *adj* /'ɔ:θədɒks/ (especially of beliefs or behaviour) generally accepted or approved of; following generally accepted beliefs

conventional, *adj* /kən'venʃənəl/ [*usually before noun*] following what is traditional or the way something has been done for a long time

editor, *n* /'editə(r)/ a person who is in charge of a newspaper, magazine, etc., or part of one, and who decides what should be included

pass away, *ph v* (*also pass on*) to die. People say 'pass away' to avoid saying 'die'.

postgraduate, *n* /,pəʊst'grædʒuət/ (*also informal postgrad*) (*especially British English*) a person who already holds a first degree and who is doing advanced study or research; a graduate student

well-established, *adj* /,wel ɪ'stæblɪʃt/ having a respected position, because of being successful, etc. over a long period

upstart, *n* /'ʌpstɑ:t/ (*disapproving*) a person who has just started in a new position or job but who behaves as if they are more important than other people, in a way that is annoying

station, *n* /'steɪʃn/ (*old-fashioned or formal*) your social position

brutal, *adj* /'bru:tl/ direct and clear about something unpleasant; not thinking of people's feelings

abandon sth, *v* /ə'bændən/ to stop doing something, especially before it is finished; to stop having something

aspiring, *adj* /ə'spaɪərɪŋ/ [*only before noun*] wanting to start the career or activity that is mentioned

worthwhile, *adj* /,wɜ:θ'waɪl/ important, pleasant, interesting, etc.; worth spending time, money or effort on

covet sth, *v* /'kʌvət/ to want something very much, especially something that belongs to somebody else

II. Tell your partner who the people listed below are. Find reliable information on the Internet.

Bob Dylan Charlotte Brontë Dostoevsky Marcel Proust
Kafka Samuel Beckett Harold Pinter

III. Watch or listen to the video

(<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2017/ishiguro/interview/>) to answer the questions:

- What does the Nobel Prize mean to Kazuo Ishiguro?
- How does he feel about being a role model?
- What is the importance of the Nobel Prize?
- Why do the themes of memory, guilt and delusion recur in his work?
- What has most influenced Kazuo Ishiguro's writing style and for whom is he writing for?
- When did he decide to become a writer?
- Which writers does he respect and admire?
- How has Kazuo Ishiguro's wife supported his work?
- What advice does he have for aspiring writers?

IV. Watch or listen to the video again. What does Kazuo Ishiguro say about ...?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - past Nobel prize winners | - Faber and Faber |
| - prizes in general | - being a singer-songwriter |
| - the prizes turned down by him | - the danger for novelists |
| - high standards set by the Nobel | - the first person technique |
| - America, Japan, Europe | - Dostoevsky |
| - having a big choice | - Marcel Proust's impact |
| - Bob Dylan | - deviation from orthodox reality |
| - becoming a writer of fiction | - criticism |

V. What impression have you got of Kazuo Ishiguro both as a writer and a person? Tell your partner about it.

Never Let Me Go

A novel by Kazuo Ishiguro

To Lorna and Naomi

England, late 1990s

Chapter One

I. PRE-READING.

carer, *n* /'keərə(r)/ a person, either a member of the family or somebody who is paid, who takes care of a sick or old person at home

by and large used when you are saying something that is generally, but not completely, true

recovery, *n* /rɪ'kʌvəri/ (*pl.* **recoveries**) the process of becoming well again after an illness or injury

agitated, *adj* /'ædʒɪteɪtɪd/ showing in your behaviour that you are anxious and nervous

comfort, *v* /'kʌmfət/ to make somebody who is worried or unhappy feel better by being kind and showing sympathy to them

credit, *n* /'kredit/ [*uncountable*] praise or approval because you are responsible for something good that has happened

resentful, *adj* /rɪ'zentfl/ feeling bitter or angry about something that you think is unfair

bedsit, *n* /'bedsɪt/ a room that a person rents and uses for both living and sleeping in

pick, *v* /pɪk/ (*rather informal*) to choose somebody/something from a group of people or things

pick, *n* /pɪk/ (*rather informal*) 1) an act of choosing something; 2) a person or thing that is chosen

privileged, *adj* /'prɪvəlɪdʒd/ (*sometimes disapproving*) having special rights or advantages that most people do not have

share, *n* /ʃeə(r)/ the part that somebody has in a particular activity that involves several people

assign, *v* /ə'saɪn/ to provide a person for a particular task or position

nerve, *n* /nɜ:v/ the courage to do something difficult or dangerous

blotch, *n* /blɒtʃ/, /blɑ:tʃ/ a mark, usually not regular in shape, on skin, plants, material, etc.

pavilion, *n* /pə'vɪl.jən/ a building near a sports field, especially one where cricket is played, used by the players and sometimes by people watching the game



guardian, *n* /'gɑ:diən/, /'gɑ:rdiən/ a person who protects something

rounders, *n* /'raʊndəz/ [*uncountable*] a British game played especially in schools by two teams using a bat and ball. Each player tries to hit the ball and then run around the four sides of a square before the other team can return the ball.

every nook and cranny (*informal*) every part of a place; every aspect of a situation

poplar, *n* /'pɒplə(r)/, /'pɑ:plər/ a tall straight tree with soft wood

spot, *v* /spɒt/ (*not used in the progressive tenses*) to see or notice a person or thing, especially suddenly or when it is not easy to do so

tuck sth, *v* /tʌk/ + *adv./prep.* to push, fold or turn the ends or edges of clothes, paper, etc. so that they are held in place or look neat

eaves, *n* /i:vz/ [*plural*] the lower edges of a roof that stick out over the walls

stretch, *n* /stretʃ/ an area of land or water, especially a long one

plead, *v* /pli:d/ to ask somebody for something in a very strong and serious way

jockey with smb for sth, *v* /'dʒɒki/, /'dʒɑ:ki/ to try all possible ways of gaining an advantage over other people

wilt, *v* /wɪlt/ (of a plant) to become weak and begin to bend towards the ground, or (of a person) to become weaker, tired, or less confident

unwind, *v* /ˌʌnˈwaɪnd/ (irr. **unwound** | **unwound**) to stop worrying or thinking about problems and start to relax

glint, *v* /glɪnt/ to produce small bright flashes of light

relish, *v* /ˈrelɪʃ/ to get great pleasure from something; to want very much to do or have something

detached, *adj* /dɪˈtætʃt/ 1) showing a lack of feeling; 2) (*approving*) not influenced by other people or by your own feelings

undisguised, *adj* /ˌʌndɪsˈgaɪzd/ (especially of a feeling) that you do not try to hide from other people; not disguised

excel, *v* /ɪkˈsel/ to be very good at doing something

stab, *n* /stæb/ a sudden sharp pain or unpleasant feeling

tackle smb, *v* /ˈtækəl/ (in football (soccer), hockey, etc.) to try and take the ball from an opponent

deliberately, *adv* /dɪˈlɪbərətli/ done in a way that was planned, not by chance

languorous, *adj* /ˈlæŋgərəs/ (*literary*) pleasantly lazy and without energy

(at) full pelt as fast as possible

half-heartedly, *adv* /ˌhɑːf ˈhɑːtɪdli/, /ˌhæf ˈhɑːrtɪdli/ without enthusiasm or effort

pack, *n* /pæk/ all the people who are behind the leaders in a race, competition, etc.

toss, *v* /tɒs/, /tɔːs/ to throw a coin in the air in order to decide something, especially by guessing which side is facing upwards when it lands

daft, *adj* /dɑːft/, /dæft/ (*comparative dafter*, *superlative daftest*) silly, often in a way that is funny

lace, *n* /leɪs/ a long thin piece of material like string that goes through the holes on a shoe and is used to fasten it

snigger at sth/smb, *v* /ˈsnɪgə(r)/ to laugh in a quiet unpleasant way, especially at something rude or at somebody's problems or mistakes

bellow, *v* /'beləʊ/ to shout in a loud deep voice, especially because you are angry

glare at sth/smb, *v* /gleə(r)/ to look at somebody/something in an angry way

nonsensical, *adj* /,nɒn'sensɪkl/, /,nɑ:n'sensɪkl/ silly; with no meaning

tantrum, *n* /'tæntɹəm/ a sudden short period of angry, unreasonable behaviour, especially in a child

rave, *v* /reɪv/ 1) to talk or write about something in a very enthusiastic way; 2) to shout in a loud and emotional way at somebody because you are angry with them; to talk or shout in a way that is not logical or sensible

fling, *v* /flɪŋ/ (irr. **flung** | **flung**) 1) to throw or push somebody/something with force, especially because you are angry, or in a careless way; 2) to move yourself or part of your body suddenly and with a lot of force

stamp, *v* /stæmp/ to put your foot down heavily and noisily on the ground

fleck, *n* /flek/ a very small piece of something

shin, *n* /ʃɪn/ the front part of the leg below the knee

keep your cool (*informal*) to remain calm in a difficult situation

layabout, *n* /'leɪəbaʊt/ a lazy person who does not do much work

rile, *v* /raɪl/ to annoy somebody or make them angry

flail, *v* /fleɪl/ (especially of arms and legs) to move energetically in an uncontrolled way

gasp, *n* /gɑ:sp/, /gæsp/ a quick deep breath, usually caused by a strong emotion

sternly, *adv* /'stɜ:nli/ in a serious way that often shows that you do not approve of somebody/something; in a way that shows you expect somebody to obey you

speck, *n* /spek/ a very small spot; a small piece of dirt, etc.

grumpily, *adv* /'grʌmpɪli/ (*informal*) in a way that shows you are annoyed or in a bad mood

sheepishly, *adv* /'ʃi:pɪʃli/ in a way that shows that you are embarrassed because you have done something silly or wrong

II. READING AND COMPREHENSION.

My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years. That sounds long enough, I know, but actually they want me to go on for another eight months, until the end of this year. That'll make it almost exactly twelve years. Now I know my being a carer so long isn't necessarily because they think I'm fantastic at what I do. There are some really good carers who've been told to stop after just two or three years. And I can think of one carer at least who went on for all of fourteen years despite being a complete waste of space. So I'm not trying to boast. But then I do know for a fact they've been pleased with my work, and by and large, I have too. My donors have always tended to do much better than expected. Their recovery times have been impressive, and hardly any of them have been classified as "agitated," even before fourth donation. Okay, maybe I am boasting now. But it means a lot to me, being able to do my work well, especially that bit about my donors staying "calm." I've developed a kind of instinct around donors. I know when to hang around and comfort them, when to leave them to themselves; when to listen to everything they have to say, and when just to shrug and tell them to snap out of it.

Anyway, I'm not making any big claims for myself. I know carers, working now, who are just as good and don't get half the credit. If you're one of them, I can understand how you might get resentful—about my bedsit, my car, above all, the way I get to pick and choose who I look after. And I'm a Hailsham student—which is enough by itself sometimes to get people's backs up. Kathy H., they say, she gets to pick and choose, and she always chooses her own kind: people from Hailsham, or one of the other privileged estates. No wonder she has a great record. I've heard it said enough, so I'm sure you've heard it plenty more, and maybe there's something in it. But I'm not the first to be allowed to pick and choose, and I doubt if I'll be the last. And anyway, I've done my share of looking after donors brought up in every kind of place. By the time I finish, remember,

I'll have done twelve years of this, and it's only for the last six they've let me choose.

And why shouldn't they? Carers aren't machines. You try and do your best for every donor, but in the end, it wears you down. You don't have unlimited patience and energy. So when you get a chance to choose, of course, you choose your own kind. That's natural. There's no way I could have gone on for as long as I have if I'd stopped feeling for my donors every step of the way. And anyway, if I'd never started choosing, how would I ever have got close again to Ruth and Tommy after all those years?

But these days, of course, there are fewer and fewer donors left who I remember, and so in practice, I haven't been choosing that much. As I say, the work gets a lot harder when you don't have that deeper link with the donor, and though I'll miss being a carer, it feels just about right to be finishing at last come the end of the year.

Ruth, incidentally, was only the third or fourth donor I got to choose. She already had a carer assigned to her at the time, and I remember it taking a bit of nerve on my part. But in the end I managed it, and the instant I saw her again, at that recovery centre in Dover, all our differences—while they didn't exactly vanish—seemed not nearly as important as all the other things: like the fact that we'd grown up together at Hailsham, the fact that we knew and remembered things no one else did. It's ever since then, I suppose, I started seeking out for my donors people from the past, and whenever I could, people from Hailsham.

There have been times over the years when I've tried to leave Hailsham behind, when I've told myself I shouldn't look back so much. But then there came a point when I just stopped resisting. It had to do with this particular donor I had once, in my third year as a carer; it was his reaction when I mentioned I was from Hailsham. He'd just come through his third donation, it hadn't gone well, and he must have known he wasn't going to make it. He could hardly breathe, but he looked towards me and said: "Hailsham. I bet that was a beautiful place." Then the next morning, when I was making conversation to keep his mind off it all, and I asked where he'd grown up, he mentioned some place in Dorset and his face beneath the

blotches went into a completely new kind of grimace. And I realised then how desperately he didn't want reminded. Instead, he wanted to hear about Hailsham.

So over the next five or six days, I told him whatever he wanted to know, and he'd lie there, all hooked up, a gentle smile breaking through. He'd ask me about the big things and the little things. About our guardians, about how we each had our own collection chests under our beds, the football, the rounders, the little path that took you all round the outside of the main house, round all its nooks and crannies, the duck pond, the food, the view from the Art Room over the fields on a foggy morning. Sometimes he'd make me say things over and over; things I'd told him only the day before, he'd ask about like I'd never told him. "Did you have a sports pavilion?" "Which guardian was your special favourite?" At first I thought this was just the drugs, but then I realised his mind was clear enough. What he wanted was not just to hear about Hailsham, but to remember Hailsham, just like it had been his own childhood. He knew he was close to completing and so that's what he was doing: getting me to describe things to him, so they'd really sink in, so that maybe during those sleepless nights, with the drugs and the pain and the exhaustion, the line would blur between what were my memories and what were his. That was when I first understood, really understood, just how lucky we'd been—Tommy, Ruth, me, all the rest of us.

Driving around the country now, I still see things that will remind me of Hailsham. I might pass the corner of a misty field, or see part of a large house in the distance as I come down the side of a valley, even a particular arrangement of poplar trees up on a hillside, and I'll think: "Maybe that's it! I've found it! This actually is Hailsham!" Then I see it's impossible and I go on driving, my thoughts drifting on elsewhere. In particular, there are those pavilions. I spot them all over the country, standing on the far side of playing fields, little white prefab buildings with a row of windows unnaturally high up, tucked almost under the eaves. I think they built a whole lot like that in the fifties and sixties, which is probably when ours was put up. If I drive past one I keep looking over to it for as long as possible,

and one day I'll crash the car like that, but I keep doing it. Not long ago I was driving through an empty stretch of Worcestershire and saw one beside a cricket ground so like ours at Hailsham I actually turned the car and went back for a second look.

We loved our sports pavilion, maybe because it reminded us of those sweet little cottages people always had in picture books when we were young. I can remember us back in the Juniors, pleading with guardians to hold the next lesson in the pavilion instead of the usual room. Then by the time we were in Senior 2—when we were twelve, going on thirteen—the pavilion had become the place to hide out with your best friends when you wanted to get away from the rest of Hailsham.

The pavilion was big enough to take two separate groups without them bothering each other—in the summer, a third group could hang about out on the veranda. But ideally you and your friends wanted the place just to yourselves, so there was often jockeying and arguing. The guardians were always telling us to be civilised about it, but in practice, you needed to have some strong personalities in your group to stand a chance of getting the pavilion during a break or free period. I wasn't exactly the wilting type myself, but I suppose it was really because of Ruth we got in there as often as we did.

Usually we just spread ourselves around the chairs and benches—there'd be five of us, six if Jenny B. came along—and had a good gossip. There was a kind of conversation that could only happen when you were hidden away in the pavilion; we might discuss something that was worrying us, or we might end up screaming with laughter, or in a furious row. Mostly, it was a way to unwind for a while with your closest friends.

On the particular afternoon I'm now thinking of, we were standing up on stools and benches, crowding around the high windows. That gave us a clear view of the North Playing Field where about a dozen boys from our year and Senior 3 had gathered to play football. There was bright sunshine, but it must have been raining earlier that day because I can remember how the sun was glinting on the muddy surface of the grass.

Someone said we shouldn't be so obvious about watching, but we hardly moved back at all. Then Ruth said: "He doesn't suspect a thing. Look at him. He really doesn't suspect a thing."

When she said this, I looked at her and searched for signs of disapproval about what the boys were going to do to Tommy. But the next second Ruth gave a little laugh and said: "The idiot!"

And I realised that for Ruth and the others, whatever the boys chose to do was pretty remote from us; whether we approved or not didn't come into it. We were gathered around the windows at that moment not because we relished the prospect of seeing Tommy get humiliated yet again, but just because we'd heard about this latest plot and were vaguely curious to watch it unfold. In those days, I don't think what the boys did amongst themselves went much deeper than that. For Ruth, for the others, it was that detached, and the chances are that's how it was for me too.

Or maybe I'm remembering it wrong. Maybe even then, when I saw Tommy rushing about that field, undisguised delight on his face to be accepted back in the fold again, about to play the game at which he so excelled, maybe I did feel a little stab of pain. What I do remember is that I noticed Tommy was wearing the light blue polo shirt he'd got in the Sales the previous month—the one he was so proud of. I remember thinking: "He's really stupid, playing football in that. It'll get ruined, then how's he going to feel?" Out loud, I said, to no one in particular: "Tommy's got his shirt on. His favourite polo shirt."

I don't think anyone heard me, because they were all laughing at Laura—the big clown in our group—mimicking one after the other the expressions that appeared on Tommy's face as he ran, waved, called, tackled. The other boys were all moving around the field in that deliberately languorous way they have when they're warming up, but Tommy, in his excitement, seemed already to be going full pelt. I said, louder this time: "He's going to be so sick if he ruins that shirt." This time Ruth heard me, but she must have thought I'd meant it as some kind of joke, because she laughed half-heartedly, then made some quip of her own.

Then the boys had stopped kicking the ball about, and were standing in a pack in the mud, their chests gently rising and falling as they waited for the team picking to start. The two captains who emerged were from Senior 3, though everyone knew Tommy was a better player than any of that year. They tossed for first pick, then the one who'd won stared at the group.

“Look at him,” someone behind me said. “He’s completely convinced he’s going to be first pick. Just look at him!”

There was something comical about Tommy at that moment, something that made you think, well, yes, if he’s going to be that daft, he deserves what’s coming. The other boys were all pretending to ignore the picking process, pretending they didn’t care where they came in the order. Some were talking quietly to each other, some re-tying their laces, others just staring down at their feet as they trammelled the mud. But Tommy was looking eagerly at the Senior 3 boy, as though his name had already been called.

Laura kept up her performance all through the team-picking, doing all the different expressions that went across Tommy’s face: the bright eager one at the start; the puzzled concern when four picks had gone by and he still hadn’t been chosen; the hurt and panic as it began to dawn on him what was really going on. I didn’t keep glancing round at Laura, though, because I was watching Tommy; I only knew what she was doing because the others kept laughing and egging her on. Then when Tommy was left standing alone, and the boys all began sniggering, I heard Ruth say:

“It’s coming. Hold it. Seven seconds. Seven, six, five...”

She never got there. Tommy burst into thunderous bellowing, and the boys, now laughing openly, started to run off towards the South Playing Field. Tommy took a few strides after them—it was hard to say whether his instinct was to give angry chase or if he was panicked at being left behind. In any case he soon stopped and stood there, glaring after them, his face scarlet. Then he began to scream and shout, a nonsensical jumble of swear words and insults.

We’d all seen plenty of Tommy’s tantrums by then, so we came down off our stools and spread ourselves around the room. We tried to start up a

conversation about something else, but there was Tommy going on and on in the background, and although at first we just rolled our eyes and tried to ignore it, in the end—probably a full ten minutes after we’d first moved away—we were back up at the windows again.

The other boys were now completely out of view, and Tommy was no longer trying to direct his comments in any particular direction. He was just raving, flinging his limbs about, at the sky, at the wind, at the nearest fence post. Laura said he was maybe “rehearsing his Shakespeare.” Someone else pointed out how each time he screamed something he’d raise one foot off the ground, pointing it outwards, “like a dog doing a pee.” Actually, I’d noticed the same foot movement myself, but what had struck me was that each time he stamped the foot back down again, flecks of mud flew up around his shins. I thought again about his precious shirt, but he was too far away for me to see if he’d got much mud on it.

“I suppose it is a bit cruel,” Ruth said, “the way they always work him up like that. But it’s his own fault. If he learnt to keep his cool, they’d leave him alone.”

“They’d still keep on at him,” Hannah said. “Graham K.’s temper’s just as bad, but that only makes them all the more careful with him. The reason they go for Tommy’s because he’s a layabout.”

Then everyone was talking at once, about how Tommy never even tried to be creative, about how he hadn’t even put anything in for the Spring Exchange. I suppose the truth was, by that stage, each of us was secretly wishing a guardian would come from the house and take him away. And although we hadn’t had any part in this latest plan to rile Tommy, we had taken out ringside seats, and we were starting to feel guilty. But there was no sign of a guardian, so we just kept swapping reasons why Tommy deserved everything he got. Then when Ruth looked at her watch and said even though we still had time, we should get back to the main house, nobody argued.

Tommy was still going strong as we came out of the pavilion. The house was over to our left, and since Tommy was standing in the field straight ahead of us, there was no need to go anywhere near him. In any

case, he was facing the other way and didn't seem to register us at all. All the same, as my friends set off along the edge of the field, I started to drift over towards him. I knew this would puzzle the others, but I kept going—even when I heard Ruth's urgent whisper to me to come back.

I suppose Tommy wasn't used to being disturbed during his rages, because his first response when I came up to him was to stare at me for a second, then carry on as before. It was like he was doing Shakespeare and I'd come up onto the stage in the middle of his performance. Even when I said: "Tommy, your nice shirt. You'll get it all messed up," there was no sign of him having heard me.

So I reached forward and put a hand on his arm. Afterwards, the others thought he'd meant to do it, but I was pretty sure it was unintentional. His arms were still flailing about, and he wasn't to know I was about to put out my hand. Anyway, as he threw up his arm, he knocked my hand aside and hit the side of my face. It didn't hurt at all, but I let out a gasp, and so did most of the girls behind me.

That's when at last Tommy seemed to become aware of me, of the others, of himself, of the fact that he was there in that field, behaving the way he had been, and stared at me a bit stupidly.

"Tommy," I said, quite sternly. "There's mud all over your shirt."

"So what?" he mumbled. But even as he said this, he looked down and noticed the brown specks, and only just stopped himself crying out in alarm. Then I saw the surprise register on his face that I should know about his feelings for the polo shirt.

"It's nothing to worry about," I said, before the silence got humiliating for him. "It'll come off. If you can't get it off yourself, just take it to Miss Jody."

He went on examining his shirt, then said grumpily: "It's nothing to do with you anyway."

He seemed to regret immediately this last remark and looked at me sheepishly, as though expecting me to say something comforting back to him. But I'd had enough of him by now, particularly with the girls

watching—and for all I knew, any number of others from the windows of the main house. So I turned away with a shrug and rejoined my friends.

Ruth put an arm around my shoulders as we walked away. “At least you got him to pipe down,” she said. “Are you okay? Mad animal.”

1. Answer the following questions:

- What does Kathy do?
- Who is Ruth?
- What is Hailsham? What does it look like?
- What happened in Kathy’s third year as a carer?
- Who do you think the guardians are?
- What do you believe carers keep in the collection chests under their beds?
- What is the pavilion? Why can Kathy remember it so vividly?
- Who is Tommy? And what happened to him in the field?
- What is Tommy like?
- How do you get the references to Shakespeare in terms of Tommy’s behaviour?

2. Give the summary of this chapter.

III. VOCABULARY WORK.

1. Complete the chart of the word families. Make up 10 sentences with the words you liked the most.

verb	noun	adjective	adverb
	/	agitated/	/
	donor/		-
to boast			
		resentful	
to assign			-

		privileged	
			deliberately
to humiliate			/
-			languorously
to blur			

2. Match the phrasal verbs with their definitions.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. snap out of it/sth snap smb out of it/sth | a) to connect something, usually to a system or to a piece of equipment |
| 2. get/put somebody's back up | b) if it happens to you, you begin to realize sth for the first time |
| 3. hook up (to sth) | c) to stop talking or making unnecessary noise |
| 4. sink in | d) to build something or place something somewhere |
| 5. dawn on smb | e) to make somebody/something weaker or less determined, especially by continuously attacking or putting pressure on them or it over a period of time |
| 6. egg smb on | f) (of words, an event, etc.) to be fully understood or realized |
| 7. work smb/oneself up into sth | g) to make somebody/yourself reach a state of great excitement, anger, etc. |
| 8. pipe down | h) to encourage somebody to do something, especially |

something that they should not do

9. wear smb/sth down

i) to annoy somebody

10. put sth up

j) to make an effort to stop feeling unhappy or depressed; to help somebody to stop feeling unhappy

3. Make the sentences complete. Use the phrasal verbs given above and put them into the correct form.

1. All the stress and extra travel is beginning to ___ him ____.
2. Check that the computer is _____ to the printer.
3. Don't _____ yourself _____ a state about it. It isn't worth it.
4. He hit the other boy again and again as his friends _____ him _____.
5. He paused to allow his words to _____.
6. Suddenly it _____ me that they couldn't possibly have met before.
7. That sort of attitude really _____ my _____ !
8. They're planning to _____ a hotel _____ where the museum used to be.
9. Will you please _____, you two? I'm trying to read!
10. You've been depressed for weeks. I think you should _____ it.

4. Complete the collocations and the prepositional phrases with the words found in the box.

large	guardian	pelt	speck	quips	pick	stab
		nerve	tantrums			

1. A delightful guide was my _____ **angel** for the first week of the tour.
2. **By and** _____, I enjoyed my time at school.
3. Children often **have** temper _____ at the age of two or thereabouts.
4. He ran (**at**) **full** _____ to the bus stop.
5. It is fair when everyone **does their** _____ of the housework.
6. It is your turn to choose. **Take your** _____.
7. She felt a sudden _____ **of pain** in the chest.
8. The senator **made** several _____ during the interview, which got the audience laughing.
9. **It took a lot of** _____ to take the company to court.
10. There isn't a _____ **of dust** anywhere in the house.

5. Find the synonyms of the italicized words in the glossary. Make the substitutions.

1. He *begged* to be allowed to see his mother one more time.
2. It always *angers* me to see so much waste.
3. What *are* you *tittering* at?
4. 'Get over here!' he *yelled*.
5. What he said sounded completely *absurd*.
6. Someone *has hurled* a brick through the window.
7. He smiled *shamefacedly*.
8. I don't *enjoy* the prospect of getting up early tomorrow.
9. Music helps me *relax* after a busy day.
10. He didn't shout, he just *glowered* at me silently.

Chapter Six

I. PRE-READING.

cave in, *ph v* /keɪv ɪn/ to finally do what somebody wants after you have been strongly opposing them

huffy, *adj* /'hʌfi/ (*informal*) in a bad mood, especially because somebody has annoyed or upset you

civil, *adj* /sɪvəl/ polite in a formal way but possibly not friendly

flat, *adj* /flæt/ (*comparative flatter, superlative flattest*) not exciting; not feeling or showing interest or enthusiasm

drift apart, *ph v* to become less friendly or close to somebody

luscious, *adj* /'lʌʃəs/ (of cloth, colours or music) soft and deep or heavy in a way that gives you pleasure to feel, look at or hear

loiter, *v* /'lɔɪtə(r)/ to stand or wait somewhere especially with no obvious reason

quandary, *n* /'kwɒndəri/, /'kwɑːndəri/ [usually singular] the state of not being able to decide what to do in a difficult situation

intervene, *v* /,ɪntə'veɪn/ to become involved in a situation in order to improve or help it

dodgy, *adj* /'dɒdʒi/, /'dɑːdʒi/ (*comparative dodgier, superlative dodgiest*)

not working well; not in good condition

in-joke, *n* /'ɪn dʒəʊk/, /'ɪn dʒəʊk/ a joke that is only understood by a particular group of people

pointer, *n* /'pɔɪntə(r)/ a stick used to point to things on a map or picture on a wall

grasp, *n* /graːsp/, /græsp/ [usually singular] a person's understanding of a subject or of difficult facts

hump, *n* /hʌmp/ a large mass that sticks out above the surface of something, especially the ground

jut, *v* /dʒʌt/ to stick out further than the surrounding surface, objects, etc.; to make something stick out

bypass, *v* /'baɪpɑːs/, /'baɪpæs/ to go around or avoid a place

reminisce about smb/sth, *v* /,remɪ'nɪs/ to think, talk or write about a happy time in your past

hazy, *adj* /'heɪzi/ (*comparative hazier, superlative haziest*) not clear because of a lack of memory, understanding or detail

tile, *v* /taɪl/ to cover a surface with tiles (a flat, usually square, piece of baked clay, carpet or other material that is used in rows for covering walls and floors)

tug, *n* /tʌg/ a sudden, strong emotional feeling

LP, *n* /ˌel 'piː/ a record that plays for about 25 minutes each side and turns 33 times per minute (the abbreviation for 'long-playing record')

swarthy, *adj* /'swɔːði/ especially of a person or their face) having dark skin

tuxedo, *n* /tʌk'si:dəʊ/ (plural **tuxedos**) a black or white jacket and trousers, worn with a bow tie at formal occasions in the evening

weigh sth up, *ph v* /wei/ to think carefully about the advantages or disadvantages of a situation before making a decision

wary of sth/smb, *adj* /'weəri/, /'weri/ (*comparative* **warier**, *superlative* **wariest**) careful when dealing with somebody/something because you think that there may be a danger or problem

unnerve, *v* /ˌʌn'nɜːv/ to make somebody feel nervous or frightened or lose confidence

Walkman™, *n* /'wɔːkmən/ (plural Walkmans /'wɔːkmənz/) a type of personal stereo

hut, *n* /hʌt/ a small, simple building, usually consisting of one room

unsettle, *v* /ʌn'setl/ to make somebody feel upset or worried, especially because a situation has changed

complacent about smb/sth, *adj* /kəm'pleɪsnt/ (*usually disapproving*) too satisfied with yourself or with a situation, so that you do not feel that any change is necessary; showing or feeling complacency

sway, *v* /swei/ to move slowly from side to side; to move something in this way

threshold, *n* /'θreʃhəʊld/ the floor or ground at the bottom of a doorway, considered as the entrance to a building or room

sob, *v* /sɒb/ to cry noisily, taking sudden, sharp breaths

jerk, *v* /dʒɜːk/ to move or to make something move with a sudden short sharp movement

fathom, *v* /'fæðəm/ (usually in negative sentences) to understand or find an explanation for something

hunch, *v* /hʌntʃ/ to lean forward with your shoulders raised or to bend your back and shoulders into a rounded shape

waylay, *v* /wei'leɪ/ (*irr.* **waylaid** | **waylaid**) to stop somebody who is going somewhere, especially in order to talk to them or attack them

confide in smb, *ph v* to tell somebody secrets and personal information because you feel you can trust them

creepy, *adj* /'kri:pi/ (*comparative* **creepier**, *superlative* **creepiest**) (*informal*) causing an unpleasant feeling of fear or slight horror

chill, *n* /tʃɪl/ [singular] a feeling of fear

rummage, *v* /'rʌmɪdʒ/ to move things around carelessly while searching for something

hum, *v* /hʌm/ to sing a tune with your lips closed

longing for sth/smb, *n* /'lɒŋɪŋ/, /'lɔ:ŋɪŋ/ a strong feeling of wanting something/somebody

distraught, *adj* /dɪ'strɔ:t/ extremely upset and anxious so that you cannot think clearly

reconcile smb/oneself to sth, *v* /'rekənsaɪl/ to make somebody/yourself accept an unpleasant situation because it is not possible to change it

sweep, *n* /swi:p/ a long, often curved, piece of road, river, coast, etc.

make up, *ph v* to replace something that has been lost; to compensate for something

ebb (away), *v* /eb/ to become gradually weaker or less

II. READING AND COMPREHENSION.

I think I'd have felt better about what had happened if Ruth had held it against me in some obvious way. But this was one instance when she seemed just to cave in. It was like she was too ashamed of the matter—too crushed by it—even to be angry or to want to get me back. The first few times I saw her after the conversation under the eaves, I was ready for at

least a bit of huffiness, but no, she was completely civil, if a little flat. It occurred to me she was scared I'd expose her—the pencil case, sure enough, vanished from view—and I wanted to tell her she'd nothing to fear from me. The trouble was, because none of this had actually been talked about in the open, I couldn't find a way of bringing it all up with her.

I did my best, meanwhile, to take any opportunity to imply to Ruth she had a special place in Miss Geraldine's heart. There was the time, for example, when a bunch of us were desperate to go out and practise rounders during break, because we'd been challenged by a group from the year above. Our problem was that it was raining, and it looked unlikely we'd be allowed outside. I noticed though that Miss Geraldine was one of the guardians on duty, and so I said:

“If Ruth goes and asks Miss Geraldine, then we'd stand a chance.”

As far as I remember, this suggestion wasn't taken up; maybe hardly anyone heard it, because a lot of us were talking all at once. But the point is, I said it standing right behind Ruth, and I could see she was pleased.

Then another time a few of us were leaving a classroom with Miss Geraldine, and I happened to find myself about to go out the door right after Miss Geraldine herself. What I did was to slow right down so that Ruth, coming behind me, could instead pass through the door beside Miss Geraldine. I did this without any fuss, as though this were the natural and proper thing and what Miss Geraldine would like—just the way I'd have done if, say, I'd accidentally got myself between two best friends. On that occasion, as far as I remember, Ruth looked puzzled and surprised for a split second, then gave me a quick nod and went past.

Little things like these might well have pleased Ruth, but they were still far removed from what had actually happened between us under the eaves that foggy day, and the sense that I'd never be able to sort things just continued to grow. There's a particular memory I have of sitting by myself one evening on one of the benches outside the pavilion, trying over and over to think of some way out, while a heavy mix of remorse and frustration brought me virtually to tears. If things had stayed that way, I'm not sure what would have happened. Maybe it would all have got forgotten

eventually; or maybe Ruth and I would have drifted apart. As it was, right out of the blue, a chance came along for me to put things right.

We were in the middle of one of Mr. Roger's art lessons, except for some reason he'd gone out half way. So we were all just drifting about among the easels, chatting and looking at each other's work. Then at one point a girl called Midge A. came over to where we were and said to Ruth, in a perfectly friendly way:

"Where's your pencil case? It's so luscious."

Ruth tensed and glanced quickly about to see who was present. It was our usual gang with perhaps a couple of outsiders loitering nearby. I hadn't mentioned to a soul anything about the Sales Register business, but I suppose Ruth wasn't to know that. Her voice was softer than usual when she replied to Midge:

"I haven't got it here. I keep it in my collection chest."

"It's so luscious. Where did you get it?"

Midge was quizzing her completely innocently, that was now obvious. But almost all of us who'd been in Room 5 the time Ruth had first brought out the pencil case were here now, looking on, and I saw Ruth hesitate. It was only later, when I replayed it all, that I appreciated how perfectly shaped a chance it was for me. At the time I didn't really think. I just came in before Midge or anyone else had the chance to notice Ruth was in a curious quandary.

"We can't say where it came from."

Ruth, Midge, the rest of them, they all looked at me, maybe a little surprised. But I kept my cool and went on, addressing only Midge.

"There are some very good reasons why we can't tell you where it came from."

Midge shrugged. "So it's a mystery."

"A big mystery," I said, then gave her a smile to show her I wasn't trying to be nasty to her.

The others were nodding to back me up, though Ruth herself had on a vague expression, like she'd suddenly become preoccupied with something else entirely. Midge shrugged again, and as far as I remember that was the

end of it. Either she walked off, or else she started talking about something different.

Now, for much the same reasons I'd not been able to talk openly to Ruth about what I'd done to her over the Sales Register business, she of course wasn't able to thank me for the way I'd intervened with Midge. But it was obvious from her manner towards me, not just over the next few days, but over the weeks that followed, how pleased she was with me. And having recently been in much the same position, it was easy to recognise the signs of her looking around for some opportunity to do something nice, something really special for me. It was a good feeling, and I remember even thinking once or twice how it would be better if she didn't get a chance for ages, just so the good feeling between us could go on and on. As it was, an opportunity did come along for her, about a month after the Midge episode, the time I lost my favourite tape.

I still have a copy of that tape and until recently I'd listen to it occasionally driving out in the open country on a drizzly day. But now the tape machine in my car's got so dodgy, I don't dare play it in that. And there never seems enough time to play it when I'm back in my bedsit. Even so, it's one of my most precious possessions. Maybe come the end of the year, when I'm no longer a carer, I'll be able to listen to it more often.

The album's called *Songs After Dark* and it's by Judy Bridgewater. What I've got today isn't the actual cassette, the one I had back then at Hailsham, the one I lost. It's the one Tommy and I found in Norfolk years afterwards—but that's another story I'll come to later. What I want to talk about is the first tape, the one that disappeared.

I should explain before I go any further this whole thing we had in those days about Norfolk. We kept it going for years and years—it became a sort of in-joke, I suppose—and it all started from one particular lesson we had when we were pretty young.

It was Miss Emily herself who taught us about the different counties of England. She'd pin up a big map over the blackboard, and next to it, set up an easel. And if she was talking about, say, Oxfordshire, she'd place on the easel a large calendar with photos of the county. She had quite a

collection of these picture calendars, and we got through most of the counties this way. She'd tap a spot on the map with her pointer, turn to the easel and reveal another picture. There'd be little villages with streams going through them, white monuments on hillsides, old churches beside fields; if she was telling us about a coastal place, there'd be beaches crowded with people, cliffs with seagulls. I suppose she wanted us to have a grasp of what was out there surrounding us, and it's amazing, even now, after all these miles I've covered as a carer, the extent to which my idea of the various counties is still set by these pictures Miss Emily put up on her easel. I'd be driving through Derbyshire, say, and catch myself looking for a particular village green with a mock-Tudor pub and a war memorial—and realise it's the image Miss Emily showed us the first time I ever heard of Derbyshire.

Anyway, the point is, there was a gap in Miss Emily's calendar collection: none of them had a single picture of Norfolk. We had these same lectures repeated a number of times, and I'd always wonder if this time she'd found a picture of Norfolk, but it was always the same. She'd wave her pointer over the map and say, as a sort of afterthought: "And over here, we've got Norfolk. Very nice there."

Then, that particular time, I remember how she paused and drifted off into thought, maybe because she hadn't planned what should happen next instead of a picture. Eventually she came out of her dream and tapped the map again.

"You see, because it's stuck out here on the east, on this hump jutting into the sea, it's not on the way to anywhere. People going north and south"—she moved the pointer up and down—"they bypass it altogether. For that reason, it's a peaceful corner of England, rather nice. But it's also something of a lost corner."

A lost corner. That's what she called it, and that was what started it. Because at Hailsham, we had our own "Lost Corner" up on the third floor, where the lost property was kept; if you lost or found anything, that's where you went. Someone—I can't remember who it was—claimed after the lesson that what Miss Emily had said was that Norfolk was England's "lost

corner,” where all the lost property found in the country ended up. Somehow this idea caught on and soon had become accepted fact virtually throughout our entire year.

Not long ago, when Tommy and I were reminiscing about all of this, he thought we’d never really believed in the notion, that it was a joke right from the start. But I’m pretty certain he was wrong there. Sure enough, by the time we were twelve or thirteen, the Norfolk thing had become a big joke. But my memory of it—and Ruth remembered it the same way—is that at the beginning, we believed in Norfolk in the most literal way; that just as lorries came to Hailsham with our food and stuff for our Sales, there was some similar operation going on, except on a grander scale, with vehicles moving all over England, delivering anything left behind in fields and trains to this place called Norfolk. The fact that we’d never seen a picture of the place only added to its mystique.

This might all sound daft, but you have to remember that to us, at that stage in our lives, any place beyond Hailsham was like a fantasy land; we had only the haziest notions of the world outside and about what was and wasn’t possible there. Besides, we never bothered to examine our Norfolk theory in any detail. What was important to us, as Ruth said one evening when we were sitting in that tiled room in Dover, looking out at the sunset, was that “when we lost something precious, and we’d looked and looked and still couldn’t find it, then we didn’t have to be completely heartbroken. We still had that last bit of comfort, thinking one day, when we were grown up, and we were free to travel around the country, we could always go and find it again in Norfolk.”

I’m sure Ruth was right about that. Norfolk came to be a real source of comfort for us, probably much more than we admitted at the time, and that was why we were still talking about it—albeit as a sort of joke—when we were much older. And that’s why, years and years later, that day Tommy and I found another copy of that lost tape of mine in a town on the Norfolk coast, we didn’t just think it pretty funny; we both felt deep down some tug, some old wish to believe again in something that was once close to our hearts.

But I wanted to talk about my tape, *Songs After Dark* by Judy Bridgewater. I suppose it was originally an LP—the recording date's 1956—but what I had was the cassette, and the cover picture was what must have been a scaled-down version of the record sleeve. Judy Bridgewater is wearing a purple satin dress, one of those off-the-shoulder ones popular in those days, and you can see her from just above the waist because she's sitting on a bar-stool. I think it's supposed to be South America, because there are palms behind her and swarthy waiters in white tuxedos. You're looking at Judy from exactly where the barman would be when he's serving her drinks. She's looking back in a friendly, not too sexy way, like she might be flirting just a tiny bit, but you're someone she knows from way back. Now the other thing about this cover is that Judy's got her elbows up on the bar and there's a cigarette burning in her hand. And it was because of this cigarette that I got so secretive about the tape, right from the moment I found it at the Sale.

I don't know how it was where you were, but at Hailsham the guardians were really strict about smoking. I'm sure they'd have preferred it if we never found out smoking even existed; but since this wasn't possible, they made sure to give us some sort of lecture each time any reference to cigarettes came along. Even if we were being shown a picture of a famous writer or world leader, and they happened to have a cigarette in their hand, then the whole lesson would grind to a halt. There was even a rumour that some classic books—like the Sherlock Holmes ones—weren't in our library because the main characters smoked too much, and when you came across a page torn out of an illustrated book or magazine, this was because there'd been a picture on it of someone smoking. And then there were the actual lessons where they showed us horrible pictures of what smoking did to the insides of your body. That's why it was such a shock that time Marge K. asked Miss Lucy her question.

We were sitting on the grass after a rounders match and Miss Lucy had been giving us a typical talk on smoking when Marge suddenly asked if Miss Lucy had herself ever had a cigarette. Miss Lucy went quiet for a few seconds. Then she said:

“I’d like to be able to say no. But to be honest, I did smoke for a little while. For about two years, when I was younger.”

You can imagine what a shock this was. Before Miss Lucy’s reply, we’d all been glaring at Marge, really furious she’d asked such a rude question—to us, she might as well have asked if Miss Lucy had ever attacked anyone with an axe. And for days afterwards I remember how we made Marge’s life an utter misery; in fact, that incident I mentioned before, the night we held Marge’s face to the dorm window to make her look at the woods, that was all part of what came afterwards. But at the time, the moment Miss Lucy said what she did, we were too confused to think any more about Marge. I think we all just stared at Miss Lucy in horror, waiting for what she’d say next.

When she did speak, Miss Lucy seemed to be weighing up each word carefully. “It’s not good that I smoked. It wasn’t good for me so I stopped it. But what you must understand is that for you, all of you, it’s much, much worse to smoke than it ever was for me.”

Then she paused and went quiet. Someone said later she’d gone off into a daydream, but I was pretty sure, as was Ruth, that she was thinking hard about what to say next. Finally she said:

“You’ve been told about it. You’re students. You’re... special. So keeping yourselves well, keeping yourselves very healthy inside, that’s much more important for each of you than it is for me.”

She stopped again and looked at us in a strange way. Afterwards, when we discussed it, some of us were sure she was dying for someone to ask: “Why? Why is it so much worse for us?” But no one did. I’ve often thought about that day, and I’m sure now, in the light of what happened later, that we only needed to ask and Miss Lucy would have told us all kinds of things. All it would have taken was just one more question about smoking.

So why had we stayed silent that day? I suppose it was because even at that age—we were nine or ten—we knew just enough to make us wary of that whole territory. It’s hard now to remember just how much we knew by then. We certainly knew—though not in any deep sense—that we were different from our guardians, and also from the normal people outside; we

perhaps even knew that a long way down the line there were donations waiting for us. But we didn't really know what that meant. If we were keen to avoid certain topics, it was probably more because it embarrassed us. We hated the way our guardians, usually so on top of everything, became so awkward whenever we came near this territory. It unnerved us to see them change like that. I think that's why we never asked that one further question, and why we punished Marge K. so cruelly for bringing it all up that day after the rounders match.

Anyway, that's why I was so secretive about my tape. I even turned the cover inside out so you'd only see Judy and her cigarette if you opened up the plastic case. But the reason the tape meant so much to me had nothing to do with the cigarette, or even with the way Judy Bridgewater sang—she's one of those singers from her time, cocktail-bar stuff, not the sort of thing any of us at Hailsham liked. What made the tape so special for me was this one particular song: track number three, "Never Let Me Go."

It's slow and late night and American, and there's a bit that keeps coming round when Judy sings: "Never let me go... Oh baby, baby... Never let me go..." I was eleven then, and hadn't listened to much music, but this one song, it really got to me. I always tried to keep the tape wound to just that spot so I could play the song whenever a chance came by.

I didn't have so many opportunities, mind you, this being a few years before Walkmans started appearing at the Sales. There was a big machine in the billiards room, but I hardly ever played the tape in there because it was always full of people. The Art Room also had a player, but that was usually just as noisy. The only place I could listen properly was in our dorm.

By then we'd gone into the small six-bed dorms over in the separate huts, and in ours we had a portable cassette player up on the shelf above the radiator. So that's where I used to go, in the day when no one else was likely to be about, to play my song over and over.

What was so special about this song? Well, the thing was, I didn't use to listen properly to the words; I just waited for that bit that went: "Baby, baby, never let me go..." And what I'd imagine was a woman who'd been told she couldn't have babies, who'd really, really wanted them all her life.

Then there's a sort of miracle and she has a baby, and she holds this baby very close to her and walks around singing: "Baby, never let me go..." partly because she's so happy, but also because she's so afraid something will happen, that the baby will get ill or be taken away from her. Even at the time, I realised this couldn't be right, that this interpretation didn't fit with the rest of the lyrics. But that wasn't an issue with me. The song was about what I said, and I used to listen to it again and again, on my own, whenever I got the chance.

There was one strange incident around this time I should tell you about here. It really unsettled me, and although I wasn't to find out its real meaning until years later, I think I sensed, even then, some deeper significance to it.

It was a sunny afternoon and I'd gone to our dorm to get something. I remember how bright it was because the curtains in our room hadn't been pulled back properly, and you could see the sun coming in in big shafts and see all the dust in the air. I hadn't meant to play the tape, but since I was there all by myself, an impulse made me get the cassette out of my collection box and put it into the player.

Maybe the volume had been turned right up by whoever had been using it last, I don't know. But it was much louder than I usually had it and that was probably why I didn't hear her before I did. Or maybe I'd just got complacent by then. Anyway, what I was doing was swaying about slowly in time to the song, holding an imaginary baby to my breast. In fact, to make it all the more embarrassing, it was one of those times I'd grabbed a pillow to stand in for the baby, and I was doing this slow dance, my eyes closed, singing along softly each time those lines came around again:

"Oh baby, baby, never let me go..."

The song was almost over when something made me realise I wasn't alone, and I opened my eyes to find myself staring at Madame framed in the doorway.

I froze in shock. Then within a second or two, I began to feel a new kind of alarm, because I could see there was something strange about the situation. The door was almost half open—it was a sort of rule we couldn't close dorm doors completely except for when we were sleeping—but

Madame hadn't nearly come up to the threshold. She was out in the corridor, standing very still, her head angled to one side to give her a view of what I was doing inside. And the odd thing was she was crying. It might even have been one of her sobs that had come through the song to jerk me out of my dream.

When I think about this now, it seems to me, even if she wasn't a guardian, she was the adult, and she should have said or done something, even if it was just to tell me off. Then I'd have known how to behave. But she just went on standing out there, sobbing and sobbing, staring at me through the doorway with that same look in her eyes she always had when she looked at us, like she was seeing something that gave her the creeps. Except this time there was something else, something extra in that look I couldn't fathom.

I didn't know what to do or say, or what to expect next. Perhaps she would come into the room, shout at me, hit me even, I didn't have a clue. As it was, she turned and the next moment I could hear her footsteps leaving the hut. I realised the tape had gone on to the next track, and I turned it off and sat down on the nearest bed. And as I did so, I saw through the window in front of me her figure hurrying off towards the main house. She didn't glance back, but I could tell from the way her back was hunched up she was still sobbing.

When I got back to my friends a few minutes later, I didn't tell them anything about what had happened. Someone noticed I wasn't right and said something, but I just shrugged and kept quiet. I wasn't ashamed exactly: but it was a bit like that earlier time, when we'd all waylaid Madame in the courtyard as she got out of her car. What I wished more than anything was that the thing hadn't happened at all, and I thought that by not mentioning it I'd be doing myself and everyone else a favour.

I did, though, talk to Tommy about it a couple of years later. This was in those days following our conversation by the pond when he'd first confided in me about Miss Lucy; the days during which—as I see it—we started off our whole thing of wondering and asking questions about ourselves that we kept going between us through the years. When I told

Tommy about what had happened with Madame in the dorm, he came up with a fairly simple explanation. By then, of course, we all knew something I hadn't known back then, which was that none of us could have babies. It's just possible I'd somehow picked up the idea when I was younger without fully registering it, and that's why I heard what I did when I listened to that song. But there was no way I'd known properly back then. As I say, by the time Tommy and I were discussing it, we'd all been told clearly enough. None of us, incidentally, was particularly bothered about it; in fact, I remember some people being pleased we could have sex without worrying about all of that—though proper sex was still some way off for most of us at that stage. Anyway, when I told Tommy about what had happened, he said:

“Madame's probably not a bad person, even though she's creepy. So when she saw you dancing like that, holding your baby, she thought it was really tragic, how you couldn't have babies. That's why she started crying.”

“But Tommy,” I pointed out, “how could she have known the song had anything to do with people having babies? How could she have known the pillow I was holding was supposed to be a baby? That was only in my head.”

Tommy thought about this, then said only half jokingly: “Maybe Madame can read minds. She's strange. Maybe she can see right inside you. It wouldn't surprise me.”

This gave us both a little chill, and though we giggled, we didn't say any more about it.

The tape disappeared a couple of months after the incident with Madame. I never linked the two events at the time and I've no reason to link them now. I was in the dorm one night, just before lights-out, and was rummaging through my collection chest to pass the time until the others came back from the bathroom. It's odd but when it first dawned on me the tape wasn't there any more, my main thought was that I mustn't give away how panicked I was. I can remember actually making a point of humming absent-mindedly while I went on searching. I've thought about it a lot and I still don't know how to explain it: these were my closest friends in that room

with me and yet I didn't want them to know how upset I was about my tape going missing.

I suppose it had something to do with it being a secret, just how much it had meant to me. Maybe all of us at Hailsham had little secrets like that—little private nooks created out of thin air where we could go off alone with our fears and longings. But the very fact that we had such needs would have felt wrong to us at the time—like somehow we were letting the side down.

Anyway, once I was quite sure the tape was gone, I asked each of the others in the dorm, very casually, if they'd seen it. I wasn't yet completely distraught because there was just the chance I'd left it in the billiards room; otherwise my hope was that someone had borrowed it and would give it back in the morning.

Well, the tape didn't turn up the next day and I've still no idea what happened to it. The truth is, I suppose, there was far more thieving going on at Hailsham than we—or the guardians—ever wanted to admit. But the reason I'm going into all this now is to explain about Ruth and how she reacted. What you have to remember is that I lost my tape less than a month after that time Midge had quizzed Ruth in the Art Room about her pencil case and I'd come to the rescue. Ever since, as I told you, Ruth had been looking out for something nice to do for me in return, and the tape disappearing gave her a real opportunity. You could even say it wasn't until after my tape vanished that things got back to normal with us—maybe for the first time since that rainy morning I'd mentioned the Sales Register to her under the eaves of the main house.

The night I first noticed the tape had gone, I'd made sure to ask everyone about it, and that of course had included Ruth. Looking back, I can see how she must have realised, then and there, exactly what losing the tape meant to me, and at the same time, how important it was for me there was no fuss. So she'd replied that night with a distracted shrug and gone on with what she was doing. But the next morning, when I was coming back from the bathroom, I could hear her—in a casual voice like it wasn't anything much—asking Hannah if she was sure she hadn't seen my tape.

Then maybe a fortnight later, when I'd long reconciled myself to having truly lost my tape, she came and found me during the lunch break. It was one of the first really good days of spring that year, and I'd been sitting on the grass talking with a couple of the older girls. When Ruth came up and asked if I wanted to go for a little stroll, it was obvious she had something particular on her mind. So I left the older girls and followed her to the edge of the North Playing Field, then up the north hill, until we were standing there by the wooden fence looking down on the sweep of green dotted with clusters of students. There was a strong breeze at the top of the hill, and I remember being surprised by it because I hadn't noticed it down on the grass. We stood there looking over the grounds for a while, then she held out a little bag to me. When I took it, I could tell there was a cassette tape inside and my heart leapt. But Ruth said immediately:

“Kathy, it's not your one. The one you lost. I tried to find it for you, but it's really gone.”

“Yeah,” I said. “Gone to Norfolk.”

We both laughed. Then I took the tape out of the bag with a disappointed air, and I'm not sure the disappointment wasn't still there on my face while I examined it.

I was holding something called *Twenty Classic Dance Tunes*. When I played it later, I discovered it was orchestra stuff for ballroom dancing. Of course, the moment she was giving it to me, I didn't know what sort of music it was, but I did know it wasn't anything like Judy Bridgewater. Then again, almost immediately, I saw how Ruth wasn't to know that—how to Ruth, who didn't know the first thing about music, this tape might easily make up for the one I'd lost. And suddenly I felt the disappointment ebbing away and being replaced by a real happiness. We didn't do things like hug each other much at Hailsham. But I squeezed one of her hands in both mine when I thanked her. She said: “I found it at the last Sale. I just thought it's the sort of thing you'd like.” And I said that, yes, it was exactly the sort of thing.

I still have it now. I don't play it much because the music has nothing to do with anything. It's an object, like a brooch or a ring, and especially now Ruth has gone, it's become one of my most precious possessions.

1. Answer the following questions:

- Who are Miss Geraldine, Miss Emily and Miss Lucy?
- What is meant by “a lost corner” in the chapter?
- What is Norfolk to the main characters?
- Why is smoking strictly prohibited at Hailsham?
- What is one of Kathy’s most precious possessions? Give as much information about the object as possible.
- What does the title of the novel “Never Let Me Go” originate from?
- What was so special for Kathy about track number 3?
- Who do you think the woman on the threshold was? What were the heroes’ suggestions about Madame?
- Where do you believe the tape went?
- Why did the tape presented by Ruth become another Kathy’s most precious belongings?

2. Retell the chapter from Ruth’s perspective.

III. VOCABULARY WORK.

1. Explain the meaning of the following idioms and phrasal verbs in English:

- for a split second
- out of the blue
- stand a chance (of doing something)
- grind to a halt (*irr* **ground** | **ground**)
- give somebody the creeps
- let the side down
- somebody’s heart leaps
- cave in
- make up
- confide in smb

2. Complete the sentences with the above expressions and phrasal verbs.

1. Can I leave early this afternoon and _____ the time tomorrow?
2. He doesn't _____ winning against such an experienced player.
3. Her career _____ when the twins were born.
4. Her _____ with joy.
5. It is important to have someone you can _____ .
6. The decision came _____ .
7. The president is unlikely to _____ to demands for a public inquiry.
8. Their eyes met _____ .
9. This old house _____ .
10. You can always rely on Maggie—she'd never _____ .

3. Fill in the dependent prepositions. Consult the glossary and an English dictionary.

1. We spent a happy evening reminiscing _____ the past.
2. Be wary ___ strangers who offer you a ride.
3. We must not become complacent _____ progress.
4. He could not reconcile himself ___ the prospect of losing her.
5. I was overwhelmed with longing ___ those innocent days of early childhood.
6. We examine the wording ___ detail before deciding on the final text.
7. These complex formulae are _____ the grasp of the average pupil.
8. She stood hesitating _____ the threshold.
9. George was ___ a quandary—should he go or shouldn't he?
10. She gave them all the help she could, and asked for nothing ___ return.

4. Guess the words. Make up your own sentences with them to give the reader all the feels.

1. polite in a formal way but possibly not friendly **c** _____
2. extremely upset and anxious so that you cannot think clearly
d _____
3. not exciting; not feeling or showing interest or enthusiasm **f** _____
4. (*informal*) in a bad mood, especially because somebody has annoyed or upset you **h** _____
5. a sudden, strong emotional feeling **t** _____
6. a feeling of fear **c** _____
7. to make somebody feel upset or worried, especially because a situation has changed **u** _____
8. to become gradually weaker or less **e** _____ (**a** _____)
9. to become less friendly or close to somebody **d** _____ **a** _____
10. to make somebody feel nervous or frightened or lose confidence
u _____

5. Render from Russian into English. Incorporate the words given below in translation. Put them into the correct form.

dodgy jut sway sob jerk
fathom rummage hum loiter hazy

1. Я не могу играть — у меня больное колено.
2. Ряд маленьких окон выступал из крыши.
3. Ветви раскачивались на ветру.
4. Джейн начала неудержимо рыдать.
5. Он рывком отобрал у нее телефон.
6. Элизабет знала, что он сердится на нее, но не могла понять по какой причине.
7. Она рылась в своей сумке в поисках ключей.
8. Какую мелодию ты напеваешь?
9. Подростки слонялись на улице без дела.
10. У меня есть лишь очень смутное представление о том, как работает это устройство.

Chapter Seven

I. PRE-READING.

chunk, *n* /tʃʌŋk/ (*informal*) a fairly large amount of something

glow, *n* /gləʊ/ a feeling of pleasure

turning point (in sth), *n* /'tɜːnɪŋ pɔɪnt/ the time when an important change takes place, usually with the result that a situation improves

back away (from smb/sth), *ph v* to move away backwards from somebody/something that is frightening or unpleasant; to avoid doing something that is unpleasant

clue, *n* /kluː/ a fact or a piece of evidence that helps you discover the answer to a problem

impersonation, *n* /ɪm.pɜːsə'neɪʃn/ an act of pretending to be somebody in order to trick people or to entertain them

electrocute, *v* /ɪ'lektɹəkjuːt/ to injure or kill somebody by passing electricity through their body

mimic, *v* /'mɪmɪk/ (*present participle mimicking* | *past tense and past participle mimicked*) to copy the way somebody speaks, moves, behaves, etc., especially in order to make other people laugh

riotous, *adj* /'raɪətəs/ noisy, exciting and fun

pull oneself together, *ph v* to take control of one's feelings and behave in a calm way

drown somebody/something (out), *v* /draʊn/ (of a sound) to be louder than other sounds so that you cannot hear them

downpour, *n* /'daʊnpɔː(r)/ a heavy fall of rain that often starts suddenly

mill around, *ph v* (especially of a large group of people) to move around an area without seeming to be going anywhere in particular

restlessly, *adv* /'restləsli/ in a way that shows you are unable to stay still or be happy where you are, because you are bored or need a change

put smb off, *ph v* to make somebody dislike somebody/something or not trust them/it

lean, *v* /li:n/ (**leaned** or *UK also leant* | **leaned** or *UK also leant*) to bend or move from a straight position to a sloping position

rail, *n* /reil/ a wooden or metal bar placed around something as a barrier or to provide support

crouch, *v* /kraʊtʃ/ to put your body close to the ground by bending your legs under you

pounce, *v* /paʊns/ to move suddenly forwards in order to attack or catch somebody/something

gutter, *n* /'gʌtə(r)/ a long curved channel made of metal or plastic that is fixed under the edge of a roof to carry away the water when it rains

laugh your head off (*informal*) to laugh very loudly and for a long time

spell sth out, *ph v* to explain something in a simple, clear way

tell smb off (for sth/for doing sth), *ph v (informal)* to speak angrily to somebody for doing something wrong

bewildered, *adj* /bi'wɪldəd/ confused

mutter, *v* /'mʌtə(r)/ to speak or say something in a quiet voice that is difficult to hear, especially because you are annoyed about something

decent, *adj* /'di:snt/ of a good enough standard or quality

set out, *ph v* to start an activity with a particular aim or goal

vital, *adj* /'vaɪtəl/ [*only before noun*] connected with or necessary for staying alive

rove, *v* /rəʊv/ if someone's hands or eyes rove, they touch or look in many different places

outburst, *n* /'aʊtbɜ:st/ a sudden strong expression of an emotion

marbles, *n* /'mɑ:blz/ [plural] (*informal*) a way of referring to somebody's intelligence or mental ability

rowdy, *adj* /'raʊdi/ (*comparative rowdier, superlative rowdiest*) (of people) making a lot of noise or likely to cause trouble

take in, *ph v* to understand or remember something that you hear or read

crafty, *adj* /'kra:fti/, /'kræfti/ (*comparative craftier, superlative craftiest*) (*usually disapproving*) clever at getting what you want, especially by indirect or dishonest methods

smuggle sth/smb, *v* /'smʌgl/ to take, send or bring goods or people secretly and illegally into or out of a country, etc.

contortion, *n* /kən'tɔ:ʃn/ a movement that twists the face or body out of its natural shape; the state of being twisted in this way

thrust, *v* /θrʌst/ (*irr. thrust | thrust*) to push something/somebody suddenly or violently in a particular direction; to move quickly and suddenly in a particular direction

the nuts and bolts (of sth) (*informal*) the basic practical details of a subject or an activity

obscene, *adj* /əb'si:n/ connected with sex in a way that most people find offensive

creep in/into sth, *ph v* to begin to happen or affect something

gash, *n* /gæʃ/ a long deep cut in the surface of something, especially a person's skin

taunt smb, *v* /tɔ:nt/ to try to make somebody angry or upset by saying unkind things about them, laughing at their failures, etc.

bandage, *n* /'dresɪŋ/ a piece of soft material placed over a wound in order to protect it

bond, *v* /bɒnd/ to join two things strongly together; to join strongly to something else

peep, *verb* /pi:p/ to appear slowly and not be completely seen

look up to smb, *ph v* to admire or respect somebody

nonchalantly, *adv* /'nɒnʃələntli/, /,nɑ:nʃə'lə:ntli/ in a calm and relaxed way, showing no sign of worry

murmur, *v* /'mɜ:mə(r)/ to say something in a soft quiet voice that is difficult to hear or understand

rigidly, *adv* /'rɪdʒɪdli/ without bending or moving

cross with smb, *adj* /krɒs/, /krɔ:s/ (*especially British English*) (*comparative crosser, superlative crosser*) annoyed or quite angry

throw smb off balance to make somebody unsteady and in danger of falling

flop, *v* /flɒp/, /flɑ:p/ to fall, move or hang in a heavy way, without control

splint, *n* /splɪnt/ a long piece of wood or metal that is tied to a broken arm or leg to keep it still and in the right position

strap, *v* /stræp/ to fasten somebody/something in place using a strap (a narrow piece of leather, cloth or other material that is used to fasten something, keep something in place, carry something or hold onto something) or straps

perpetrator, *n* /'pɜ:pətretə(r)/ a person who commits a crime or does something that is wrong or evil

slip, *v* /slɪp/ to slide out of position or out of your hand

reassure, *v* /,ri:ə'ʃʊə(r)/ to say or do something that makes somebody less frightened or worried

somebody's heart sinks used to say that somebody suddenly feels sad or depressed about something

landing, *n* /'lændɪŋ/ the area at the top of a set of stairs where you arrive before you go into an upstairs room or move onto another set of stairs

pop, *v* /pɒp/, /pɑ:p/ to move quickly and suddenly, especially from a closed space:

dump, *v* /dʌmp/ (*informal*) to put something/somebody down in a careless or untidy way

shrink from sth, *ph v* /ʃrɪŋk/ (*irr. shrank | shrunk*) to avoid doing something that is unpleasant or difficult

impinge (on/upon sth/smb), *v* /ɪm'pɪndʒ/ (*formal*) to have a clear and definite effect on something/somebody, especially a bad one

sombre, *adj* /'sɒmbə(r)/ sad and serious

fade, *verb* /feɪd/ to disappear gradually

stumble across, *ph v* to discover something by chance, or to meet someone by chance

II. READING AND COMPREHENSION.

I want to move on now to our last years at Hailsham. I'm talking about the period from when we were thirteen to when we left at sixteen. In my memory my life at Hailsham falls into two distinct chunks: this last era, and everything that came before. The earlier years—the ones I've just been telling you about—they tend to blur into each other as a kind of golden time, and when I think about them at all, even the not-so-great things, I can't help feeling a sort of glow. But those last years feel different. They weren't unhappy exactly—I've got plenty of memories I treasure from them—but they were more serious, and in some ways darker. Maybe I've exaggerated it in my mind, but I've got an impression of things changing rapidly around then, like day moving into night.

That talk with Tommy beside the pond: I think of it now as a kind of marker between the two eras. Not that anything significant started to happen immediately afterwards; but for me at least, that conversation was a turning point. I definitely started to look at everything differently. Where before I'd have backed away from awkward stuff, I began instead, more and more, to ask questions, if not out loud, at least within myself.

In particular, that conversation got me looking at Miss Lucy in a new light. I watched her carefully whenever I could, not just from curiosity, but because I now saw her as the most likely source of important clues. And that's how it was, over the next year or two, I came to notice various odd little things she said or did that my friends missed altogether.

There was the time, for example, maybe a few weeks after the talk by the pond, when Miss Lucy was taking us for English. We'd been looking at some poetry, but had somehow drifted onto talking about soldiers in World War Two being kept in prison camps. One of the boys asked if the fences around the camps had been electrified, and then someone else had said how strange it must have been, living in a place like that, where you could commit suicide any time you liked just by touching a fence. This might have been intended as a serious point, but the rest of us thought it pretty funny. We were all laughing and talking at once, and then Laura—typical of her—got up on her seat and did a hysterical impersonation of someone reaching

out and getting electrocuted. For a moment things got riotous, with everyone shouting and mimicking touching electric fences.

I went on watching Miss Lucy through all this and I could see, just for a second, a ghostly expression come over her face as she watched the class in front of her. Then—I kept watching carefully—she pulled herself together, smiled and said: “It’s just as well the fences at Hailsham aren’t electrified. You get terrible accidents sometimes.”

She said this quite softly, and because people were still shouting, she was more or less drowned out. But I heard her clearly enough. “You get terrible accidents sometimes.” What accidents? Where? But no one picked her up on it, and we went back to discussing our poem.

There were other little incidents like that, and before long I came to see Miss Lucy as being not quite like the other guardians. It’s even possible I began to realise, right back then, the nature of her worries and frustrations. But that’s probably going too far; chances are, at the time, I noticed all these things without knowing what on earth to make of them. And if these incidents now seem full of significance and all of a piece, it’s probably because I’m looking at them in the light of what came later—particularly what happened that day at the pavilion while we were sheltering from the downpour.

We were fifteen by then, already into our last year at Hailsham. We’d been in the pavilion getting ready for a game of rounders. The boys were going through a phase of “enjoying” rounders in order to flirt with us, so there were over thirty of us that afternoon. The downpour had started while we were changing, and we found ourselves gathering on the veranda—which was sheltered by the pavilion roof—while we waited for it to stop. But the rain kept going, and when the last of us had emerged, the veranda was pretty crowded, with everyone milling around restlessly. I remember Laura was demonstrating to me an especially disgusting way of blowing your nose for when you really wanted to put off a boy.

Miss Lucy was the only guardian present. She was leaning over the rail at the front, peering into the rain like she was trying to see right across the playing field. I was watching her as carefully as ever in those days, and

even as I was laughing at Laura, I was stealing glances at Miss Lucy's back. I remember wondering if there wasn't something a bit odd about her posture, the way her head was bent down just a little too far so she looked like a crouching animal waiting to pounce. And the way she was leaning forward over the rail meant drops from the overhanging gutter were only just missing her—but she seemed to show no sign of caring. I remember actually convincing myself there was nothing unusual in all this—that she was simply anxious for the rain to stop—and turning my attention back to what Laura was saying. Then a few minutes later, when I'd forgotten all about Miss Lucy and was laughing my head off at something, I suddenly realised things had gone quiet around us, and that Miss Lucy was speaking.

She was standing at the same spot as before, but she'd turned to face us now, so her back was against the rail, and the rainy sky behind her.

“No, no, I'm sorry, I'm going to have to interrupt you,” she was saying, and I could see she was talking to two boys sitting on the benches immediately in front of her. Her voice wasn't exactly strange, but she was speaking very loudly, in the sort of voice she'd use to announce something to the lot of us, and that was why we'd all gone quiet. “No, Peter, I'm going to have to stop you. I can't listen to you any more and keep silent.”

Then she raised her gaze to include the rest of us and took a deep breath. “All right, you can hear this, it's for all of you. It's time someone spelt it out.”

We waited while she kept staring at us. Later, some people said they'd thought she was going to give us a big telling-off; others that she was about to announce a new rule on how we played rounders. But I knew before she said another word it would be something more.

“Boys, you must forgive me for listening. But you were right behind me, so I couldn't help it. Peter, why don't you tell the others what you were saying to Gordon just now?”

Peter J. looked bewildered and I could see him getting ready his injured innocence face. But then Miss Lucy said again, this time much more gently:

“Peter, go on. Please tell the others what you were just saying.”

Peter shrugged. “We were just talking about what it would feel like if we became actors. What sort of life it would be.”

“Yes,” Miss Lucy said, “and you were saying to Gordon you’d have to go to America to stand the best chance.”

Peter J. shrugged again and muttered quietly: “Yes, Miss Lucy.”

But Miss Lucy was now moving her gaze over the lot of us. “I know you don’t mean any harm. But there’s just too much talk like this. I hear it all the time, it’s been allowed to go on, and it’s not right.” I could see more drops coming off the gutter and landing on her shoulder, but she didn’t seem to notice. “If no one else will talk to you,” she continued, “then I will. The problem, as I see it, is that you’ve been told and not told. You’ve been told, but none of you really understand, and I dare say, some people are quite happy to leave it that way. But I’m not. If you’re going to have decent lives, then you’ve got to know and know properly. None of you will go to America, none of you will be film stars. And none of you will be working in supermarkets as I heard some of you planning the other day. Your lives are set out for you. You’ll become adults, then before you’re old, before you’re even middle-aged, you’ll start to donate your vital organs. That’s what each of you was created to do. You’re not like the actors you watch on your videos, you’re not even like me. You were brought into this world for a purpose, and your futures, all of them, have been decided. So you’re not to talk that way any more. You’ll be leaving Hailsham before long, and it’s not so far off, the day you’ll be preparing for your first donations. You need to remember that. If you’re to have decent lives, you have to know who you are and what lies ahead of you, every one of you.”

Then she went silent, but my impression was that she was continuing to say things inside her head, because for some time her gaze kept roving over us, going from face to face just as if she were still speaking to us. We were all pretty relieved when she turned to look out over the playing field again.

“It’s not so bad now,” she said, even though the rain was as steady as ever. “Let’s just go out there. Then maybe the sun will come out too.”

I think that was all she said. When I was discussing it with Ruth a few years ago at the centre in Dover, she claimed Miss Lucy had told us a lot more; that she'd explained how before donations we'd all spend some time first as carers, about the usual sequence of the donations, the recovery centres and so on—but I'm pretty sure she didn't. Okay, she probably intended to when she began talking. But my guess is once she'd set off, once she'd seen the puzzled, uncomfortable faces in front of her, she realised the impossibility of completing what she'd started.

It's hard to say clearly what sort of impact Miss Lucy's outburst at the pavilion made. Word got round fast enough, but the talk mostly focused on Miss Lucy herself rather than on what she'd been trying to tell us. Some students thought she'd lost her marbles for a moment; others that she'd been asked to say what she had by Miss Emily and the other guardians; there were even some who'd actually been there and who thought Miss Lucy had been telling us off for being too rowdy on the veranda. But as I say there was surprisingly little discussion about what she'd said. If it did come up, people tended to say: "Well so what? We already knew all that."

But that had been Miss Lucy's point exactly. We'd been "told and not told," as she'd put it. A few years ago, when Tommy and I were going over it all again, and I reminded him of Miss Lucy's "told and not told" idea, he came up with a theory.

Tommy thought it possible the guardians had, throughout all our years at Hailsham, timed very carefully and deliberately everything they told us, so that we were always just too young to understand properly the latest piece of information. But of course we'd take it in at some level, so that before long all this stuff was there in our heads without us ever having examined it properly.

It's a bit too much like a conspiracy theory for me—I don't think our guardians were that crafty—but there's probably something in it. Certainly, it feels like I always knew about donations in some vague way, even as early as six or seven. And it's curious, when we were older and the guardians were giving us those talks, nothing came as a complete surprise. It was like we'd heard everything somewhere before.

One thing that occurs to me now is that when the guardians first started giving us proper lectures about sex, they tended to run them together with talk about the donations. At that age—again, I’m talking of around thirteen—we were all pretty worried and excited about sex, and naturally would have pushed the other stuff into the background. In other words, it’s possible the guardians managed to smuggle into our heads a lot of the basic facts about our futures.

Now to be fair, it was probably natural to run these two subjects together. If, say, they were telling us how we’d have to be very careful to avoid diseases when we had sex, it would have been odd not to mention how much more important this was for us than for normal people outside. And that, of course, would bring us onto the donations.

Then there was the whole business about our not being able to have babies. Miss Emily used to give a lot of the sex lectures herself, and I remember once, she brought in a life-size skeleton from the biology class to demonstrate how it was done. We watched in complete astonishment as she put the skeleton through various contortions, thrusting her pointer around without the slightest self-consciousness. She was going through all the nuts and bolts of how you did it, what went in where, the different variations, like this was still Geography. Then suddenly, with the skeleton in an obscene heap on the desktop, she turned away and began telling us how we had to be careful who we had sex with. Not just because of the diseases, but because, she said, “sex affects emotions in ways you’d never expect.” We had to be extremely careful about having sex in the outside world, especially with people who weren’t students, because out there sex meant all sorts of things. Out there people were even fighting and killing each other over who had sex with whom. And the reason it meant so much—so much more than, say, dancing or table-tennis—was because the people out there were different from us students: they could have babies from sex. That was why it was so important to them, this question of who did it with whom. And even though, as we knew, it was completely impossible for any of us to have babies, out there, we had to behave like them. We had to respect the rules and treat sex as something pretty special.

Miss Emily's lecture that day was typical of what I'm talking about. We'd be focusing on sex, and then the other stuff would creep in. I suppose that was all part of how we came to be "told and not told."

I think in the end we must have absorbed quite a lot of information, because I remember, around that age, a marked change in the way we approached the whole territory surrounding the donations. Until then, as I've said, we'd done everything to avoid the subject; we'd backed off at the first sign we were entering that ground, and there'd been severe punishment for any idiot—like Marge that time—who got careless. But from when we were thirteen, like I say, things started to change. We still didn't discuss the donations and all that went with them; we still found the whole area awkward enough. But it became something we made jokes about, in much the way we joked about sex. Looking back now, I'd say the rule about not discussing the donations openly was still there, as strong as ever. But now it was okay, almost required, every now and then, to make some jokey allusion to these things that lay in front of us.

A good example is what happened the time Tommy got the gash on his elbow. It must have been just before my talk with him by the pond; a time, I suppose, when Tommy was still coming out of that phase of being teased and taunted.

It wasn't such a bad gash, and though he was sent to Crow Face to have it seen to, he was back almost straight away with a square of dressing plastered to his elbow. No one thought much about it until a couple of days later, when Tommy took off the dressing to reveal something at just that stage between sealing and still being an open wound. You could see bits of skin starting to bond, and soft red bits peeping up from underneath. We were in the middle of lunch, so everyone crowded round to go "urgh!" Then Christopher H., from the year above, said with a dead straight face: "Pity it's on that bit of the elbow. Just about anywhere else, it wouldn't matter."

Tommy looked worried—Christopher being someone he looked up to in those days—and asked what he meant. Christopher went on eating, then said nonchalantly:

“Don’t you know? If it’s right on the elbow like that, it can unzip. All you have to do is bend your arm quickly. Not just that actual bit, the whole elbow, it can all unzip like a bag opening up. Thought you’d know that.”

I could hear Tommy complaining that Crow Face hadn’t warned him of anything of that sort, but Christopher shrugged and said: “She thought you knew, of course. Everyone knows.”

A number of people nearby murmured agreement. “You’ve got to keep your arm dead straight,” someone else said. “Bending it at all’s really dangerous.”

The next day I could see Tommy going about with his arm held out very rigidly and looking worried. Everybody was laughing at him, and I was cross about that, but I had to admit, there was a funny side to it. Then towards the end of the afternoon as we were leaving the Art Room, he came up to me in the corridor and said: “Kath, can I just have a quick word?”

This was maybe a couple of weeks after the time I’d gone up to him in the playing field to remind him about his polo shirt, so it had got about we were special friends of some sort. All the same, his coming up like that asking for a private talk was pretty embarrassing and threw me off balance. Maybe that partly explains why I wasn’t more helpful than I was.

“I’m not too worried or anything,” he began, once he’d got me aside. “But I wanted to play safe, that’s all. We should never take chances with our health. I need someone to help, Kath.” He was, he explained, concerned about what he’d do in his sleep. He might easily bend his elbow in the night. “I have these dreams all the time where I’m fighting loads of Roman soldiers.”

When I quizzed him a bit, it became obvious all kinds of people—people who hadn’t been there that lunch-time—had been coming up to him to repeat Christopher H.’s warning. In fact, it seemed a few had carried the joke further: Tommy had been told of a student who’d gone to sleep with a cut on the elbow just like his and woken up to find his whole upper arm and hand skeletally exposed, the skin flopping about next to him “like one of those long gloves in *My Fair Lady*.”

What Tommy was asking me now was to help tie a splint on the arm to keep it rigid through the night.

“I don’t trust any of the others,” he said, holding up a thick ruler he wanted to use. “They might deliberately do it so it comes undone in the night.”

He was looking at me in complete innocence and I didn’t know what to say. A part of me wanted badly to tell him what was going on, and I suppose I knew that to do anything else would be to betray the trust we’d built up since the moment I’d reminded him about his polo shirt. And for me to strap up his arm in a splint would have meant my becoming one of the main perpetrators of the joke. I still feel ashamed I didn’t tell him then. But you’ve got to remember I was still young, and that I only had a few seconds to decide. And when someone’s asking you to do something in such a pleading way, everything goes against saying no.

I suppose the main thing was that I didn’t want to upset him. Because I could see, for all his anxiety about his elbow, Tommy was touched by all the concern he believed had been shown him. Of course, I knew he’d find out the truth sooner or later, but at that moment I just couldn’t tell him. The best I could do was to ask:

“Did Crow Face tell you you had to do this?”

“No. But imagine how angry she’d be if my elbow slipped out.”

I still feel bad about it, but I promised to strap his arm for him—in Room 14 half an hour before the night bell—and watched him go off grateful and reassured.

As it happened, I didn’t have to go through with it because Tommy found out first. It was around eight in the evening, I was coming down the main staircase, and heard a burst of laughter rising up the stairwell from the ground floor. My heart sank because I knew immediately it was to do with Tommy. I paused on the first-floor landing and looked over the rail just as Tommy came out of the billiards room with thunderous footsteps. I remember thinking: “At least he’s not shouting.” And he didn’t, the whole time he went to the cloakroom, got his things and left the main house. And all that time, laughter kept coming from the open doorway of the billiards

room, and voices yelling things like: “If you lose your temper, your elbow will definitely pop out!”

I thought about following him out into the evening and catching up with him before he got to his dorm hut, but then I remembered how I’d promised to put his arm in a splint for the night, and didn’t move. I just kept saying to myself: “At least he didn’t have a tantrum. At least he kept hold of that temper.”

But I’ve gone off a bit. The reason I was talking about all this was because the idea of things “unzipping” carried over from Tommy’s elbow to become a running joke among us about the donations. The idea was that when the time came, you’d be able just to unzip a bit of yourself, a kidney or something would slide out, and you’d hand it over. It wasn’t something we found so funny in itself; it was more a way of putting each other off our food. You unzipped your liver, say, and dumped it on someone’s plate, that sort of thing. I remember once Gary B., who had this unbelievable appetite, coming back with a third helping of pudding, and virtually the whole table “unzipping” bits of themselves and piling it all over Gary’s bowl, while he went on determinedly stuffing himself.

Tommy never liked it much when the unzipping stuff came up again, but by then the days of his being teased were past and no one connected the joke with him any more. It was just done to get a laugh, to put someone off their dinner—and, I suppose, as some way of acknowledging what was in front of us. And this was my original point. By that time in our lives, we no longer shrank from the subject of donations as we’d have done a year or two earlier; but neither did we think about it very seriously, or discuss it. All that business about “unzipping,” that was typical of the way the whole subject impinged on us when we were thirteen.

So I’d say Miss Lucy had it about right when she said, a couple of years later, that we’d been “told and not told.” And what’s more, now I think about it, I’d say what Miss Lucy said to us that afternoon led to a real shift in our attitudes. It was after that day, jokes about donations faded away, and we started to think properly about things. If anything, the donations went back to being a subject to be avoided, but not in the way it had been when

we were younger. This time round it wasn't awkward or embarrassing any more; just sombre and serious.

"It's funny," Tommy said to me when we were remembering it all again a few years ago. "None of us stopped to think about how she felt, Miss Lucy herself. We never worried if she'd got into trouble, saying what she did to us. We were so selfish back then."

"But you can't blame us," I said. "We'd been taught to think about each other, but never about the guardians. The idea the guardians had differences between them, that never occurred to us."

"But we were old enough," Tommy said. "By that age, it should have occurred to us. But it didn't. We didn't think about poor Miss Lucy at all. Not even after that time, you know, when you saw her."

I knew straight away what he meant. He was talking about the morning early in our last summer at Hailsham, when I'd stumbled across her up in Room 22. Thinking about it now, I'd say Tommy had a point. After that moment it should have been clear, even to us, how troubled Miss Lucy had become. But as he said, we never considered anything from her viewpoint, and it never occurred to us to say or do anything to support her.

1. Answer the following questions:

- What are the two distinct chunks at Hailsham Kathy refers to?
- How did Miss Lucy turn into a source of important clues for the carers?
- What happened at the pavilion when the heroes were sheltering from the downpour?
- What was the carers' reaction to what they had heard from Miss Lucy?
- What is Miss Lucy's "told and not told" idea? And what do Tommy and Kathy think of it?
- What do the students at Hailsham differ in from the people outside it?
- Why did the carers make a joke of Tommy's gash?

- What was the joke itself?
- Did Kathy become a perpetrator of the joke? Why (not)? How did she feel about it?
- What is meant by ‘unzipping’ in the chapter? What helped the carers to come to terms with it?

2. Retell the chapter from one of the guardian’s perspective.

III. VOCABULARY WORK.

1. Complete the phrasal verbs with the correct preposition. Consult the glossary if necessary.

1. creep ___ / ___ something
2. look ___ ___ somebody
3. mill _____
4. pull oneself _____
5. put somebody _____
6. set _____
7. shrink _____ something
8. spell something _____
9. stumble _____
10. take _____

2. Fill in the gaps with the correct form of the phrasal verbs given above.

1. Stop crying and _____ !
2. Fans were _____ outside the hotel.
3. Workmen _____
_____ the mosaic while digging foundations for a new building.
4. Don't be _____ by how it looks—it tastes delicious.
5. You know what I mean—I'm sure I don't need to _____ it _____.
6. They _____ to discover a cure for cancer.
7. As she became more tired, errors began to _____ her work.

8. We must not _____ our responsibilities.
9. Halfway through the chapter I realized I _____ anything ____ .
10. I think that students should _____ their teachers.

3. Find the synonyms of the italicized words in the glossary. Make the substitutions.

1. He did an extremely convincing *impression* of the singer.
2. She saw him coming and *squatted* behind a bush.
3. The teacher *scolded me* for swearing.
4. A *disorderly* crowd had gathered outside the embassy.
5. That was a *cunning* move. They were caught smuggling diamonds into the country.
6. He was leaning *casually* against the wall.
7. The doctor *put his mind at ease* that there was nothing seriously wrong.
8. He never allowed his work to *encroach* on his private life.
9. Paul was in a *melancholy* mood.
10. He turned around, with a *confused* look on his face.

4. Complete the idioms and collocations with the correct word. Consult the glossary if necessary.

1. The promotion marked a **t** _____ point in her career.
2. The trailer gives a few important **c** _____ about the film's plot.
3. Mark did a **d** _____ job as a replacement for Turner.
4. Scans revealed her liver was grossly enlarged and pressing against other **v** _____ organs.
5. Please don't get **c** _____. Let me explain.
6. I was thrown off **b** _____ by the sudden gust of wind.
7. He's losing his **m** _____ (= he's not behaving in a sensible way).
8. She watched him go with a sinking **h** _____.
9. The documentary focuses on the real nuts and **b** _____ of the film-making process.
10. You laughed your **h** _____ off when I fell!

5. Render from Russian into English. Incorporate the words given below in translation. Put them into the correct form.

to flop over to slip gash to pounce on
to taunt about dressing to murmur to peep up through
to electrocute to drown out to thrust into

1. Мальчика ударило током, когда он забрел на железнодорожные пути.
2. Она включила радио погромче, чтобы заглушить шум из соседней комнаты.
3. Он сунул ребенка мне в руки и убежал.
4. Другие дети постоянно дразнили его по поводу его размера.
5. Наложите повязку непосредственно на рану и удерживайте ее на месте.
6. Несколько ранних цветов проглядывали сквозь снег.
7. Он что-то пробормотал во сне.
8. Ее волосы упали ей на глаза.
9. Моя рука соскользнула, когда я нарезала хлеб, и я порезалась. Это была глубокая рана.
10. Кот сидел на дереве, готовый наброситься на уток вниз.

Chapter Twelve

I. PRE-READING.

hiccup (in something), *n* /'hɪkʌp/ (*informal*) a small problem or temporary delay

lark around, *ph v* /lɑ:k/ (*especially British English, old-fashioned, informal*) to enjoy yourself by behaving in a silly way

reckon, *v* /'rekən/ (*especially British English, informal*) to think something or have an opinion about something

fascinated, *adj* /'fæsɪneɪtɪd/ very interested

solemn, *adj* /'sɒləm/, /'sɑ:ləm/ done, said, etc. in a very serious and sincere way

consensus, *n* /kən'sensəs/ an opinion that all members of a group agree with

fizzle out, *ph v* /'fɪzl/ (*informal*) to gradually become less successful and end in a disappointing way

glimpse, *n* /glɪmps/ a sight of somebody/something for a very short time, when you do not see the person or thing completely

vary, *v* /'veəri/, /'veri/ (of a group of similar things) to be different from each other in size, shape, etc.

insight, *n* /'ɪnsaɪt/ an understanding of what something is like

irrelevance, *n* /ɪ'reləvəns/ something that is not important to or connected with a situation

trigger something (off), *v* /'trɪgə(r)/, /'trɪgər/ to make something happen suddenly

batch, *n* /bætʃ/ a number of people or things that are dealt with as a group

newcomer, *n* /'nju:kʌmə(r)/, /'nu:kʌmər/ a person who has only recently arrived in a place or started an activity

crouch, *v* /kraʊtʃ/ to put your body close to the ground by bending your legs under you

jab, *v* /dʒæb/ to push a pointed object into somebody/something, or in the direction of somebody/something, with a sudden strong movement

reservation, *n* /,rezə'veɪʃn/ a feeling of doubt about a plan or an idea

dimension, *n* /daɪ'menʃn/, /dɪ'menʃn/ an aspect, or way of looking at or thinking about something

chortle, *v* /'tʃɔ:tl/, /'tʃɔ:rtl/ to laugh loudly with pleasure

reincarnation, *n* /,ri:ɪnkɑ:'neɪʃn/ the belief that after somebody's death their soul lives again in a new body

decent, *adj* /'di:snt/ (of people or behaviour) honest and fair; treating people with respect

veteran, *n* /'vetərən/ a person who has a lot of experience in a particular area or activity

outburst, *n* /'aʊtbɜːst/, /'aʊtbɜːrst/ a sudden strong expression of an emotion

roundabout, *n* /'raʊndəbaʊt/ a place where two or more roads meet, forming a circle that all traffic must go around in the same direction

nestle, *v* /'nesl/ to sit or lie down in a warm or soft place

drift, *v* /drɪft/ to move along smoothly and slowly in water or air

bitterly, *adv* /'bɪtəli/, /'bɪtərli/ in a way that shows that you feel sad or angry

fuel, *n* /'fjuːəl/ any material that produces heat or power, usually when it is burnt

frosty, *adj* /'frɒsti/, /'frɔːsti/ (of the weather) extremely cold; cold with frost

cowpat, *n* /'kaʊpæt/ a round flat piece of solid waste from a cow

hedge, *n* /hedʒ/ a row of bushes or small trees planted close together, usually along the edge of a field, garden or road

gleaming, *adj* /'gliːmɪŋ/ shining brightly because of being very clean

notion, *n* /'nəʊʃn/ an idea, a belief or an understanding of something

wary, *adj* /'weəri/, /'weri/ careful when dealing with somebody/something because you think that there may be a danger or problem

II. READING AND COMPREHENSION.

I want to talk about the Norfolk trip, and all the things that happened that day, but I'll first have to go back a bit, to give you the background and explain why it was we went.

Our first winter was just about over by then and we were all feeling much more settled. For all our little hiccups, Ruth and I had kept up our habit of rounding off the day in my room, talking over our hot drinks, and it was during one of those sessions, when we were larking around about something, that she suddenly said:

“I suppose you've heard what Chrissie and Rodney have been saying.”

When I said I hadn't, she did a laugh and continued: "They're probably just having me on. Their idea of a joke. Forget I mentioned it."

But I could see she wanted me to drag it out of her, so I kept pressing until in the end she said in a lowered voice:

"You remember last week, when Chrissie and Rodney were away? They'd been up to this town called Cromer, up on the north Norfolk coast."

"What were they doing there?"

"Oh, I think they've got a friend there, someone who used to live here. That's not the point. The point is, they claim they saw this... person. Working there in this open-plan office. And, well, you know. They reckon this person's a possible. For me."

Though most of us had first come across the idea of "possibles" back at Hailsham, we'd sensed we weren't supposed to discuss it, and so we hadn't—though for sure, it had both intrigued and disturbed us. And even at the Cottages, it wasn't a topic you could bring up casually. There was definitely more awkwardness around any talk of possibles than there was around, say, sex. At the same time, you could tell people were fascinated—obsessed, in some cases—and so it kept coming up, usually in solemn arguments, a world away from our ones about, say, James Joyce.

The basic idea behind the possibles theory was simple, and didn't provoke much dispute. It went something like this. Since each of us was copied at some point from a normal person, there must be, for each of us, somewhere out there, a model getting on with his or her life. This meant, at least in theory, you'd be able to find the person you were modelled from. That's why, when you were out there yourself—in the towns, shopping centres, transport cafés—you kept an eye out for "possibles"—the people who might have been the models for you and your friends.

Beyond these basics, though, there wasn't much consensus. For a start, no one could agree what we were looking for when we looked for possibles. Some students thought you should be looking for a person twenty to thirty years older than yourself—the sort of age a normal parent would be. But others claimed this was sentimental. Why would there be a "natural" generation between us and our models? They could have used babies, old

people, what difference would it have made? Others argued back that they'd use for models people at the peak of their health, and that's why they were likely to be “normal parent” age. But around here, we'd all sense we were near territory we didn't want to enter, and the arguments would fizzle out.

Then there were those questions about why we wanted to track down our models at all. One big idea behind finding your model was that when you did, you'd glimpse your future. Now I don't mean anyone really thought that if your model turned out to be, say, a guy working at a railway station, that's what you'd end up doing too. We all realised it wasn't that simple. Nevertheless, we all of us, to varying degrees, believed that when you saw the person you were copied from, you'd get some insight into who you were deep down, and maybe too, you'd see something of what your life held in store.

There were some who thought it stupid to be concerned about possibles at all. Our models were an irrelevance, a technical necessity for bringing us into the world, nothing more than that. It was up to each of us to make of our lives what we could. This was the camp Ruth always claimed to side with, and I probably did too. All the same, whenever we heard reports of a possible—whatever it was for—we couldn't help getting curious.

The way I remember it, sightings of possibles tended to come in batches. Weeks could go by with no one mentioning the subject, then one reported sighting would trigger off a whole spate of others. Most of them were obviously not worth pursuing: someone seen in a car going by, stuff like that. But every now and then, a sighting seemed to have substance to it—like the one Ruth told me about that night.

According to Ruth, Chrissie and Rodney had been busy exploring this seaside town they'd gone to and had split up for a while. When they'd met up again, Rodney was all excited and had told Chrissie how he'd been wandering

the side-streets off the High Street, and had gone past an office with a large glass front. Inside had been a lot of people, some of them at their desks, some walking about and chatting. And that's where he'd spotted Ruth's possible.

“Chrissie came and told me as soon as they got back. She made Rodney describe everything, and he did his best, but it was impossible to tell anything. Now they keep talking about driving me up there, but I don't know. I don't know if I ought to do anything about it.”

I can't remember exactly what I said to her that night, but I was at that point pretty sceptical. In fact, to be honest, my guess was that Chrissie and Rodney had made the whole thing up. I don't really want to suggest Chrissie and Rodney were bad people—that would be unfair. In many ways, I actually liked them. But the fact was, the way they regarded us newcomers, and Ruth in particular, was far from straightforward.

Chrissie was a tall girl who was quite beautiful when she stood up to her full height, but she didn't seem to realise this and spent her time crouching to be the same as the rest of us. That's why she often looked more like the Wicked Witch than a movie star—an impression reinforced by her irritating way of jabbing you with a finger the second before she said something to you. She always wore long skirts rather than jeans, and little glasses pressed too far into her face. She'd been one of the veterans who'd really welcomed us when we'd first arrived in the summer, and I'd at first been really taken by her and looked to her for guidance. But as the weeks had passed, I'd begun to have reservations. There was something odd about the way she was always mentioning the fact that we'd come from Hailsham, like that could explain almost anything to do with us. And she was always asking us questions about Hailsham—about little details, much like my donors do now—and although she tried to make out these were very casual, I could see there was a whole other dimension to her interest. Another thing that got to me was the way she always seemed to want to separate us: taking one of us aside when a few of us were doing something together, or else inviting two of us to join in something while leaving another two stranded—that sort of thing.

You'd hardly ever see Chrissie without her boyfriend, Rodney. He went around with his hair tied back in a ponytail, like a rock musician from the seventies, and talked a lot about things like reincarnation. I actually got to quite like him, but he was pretty much under Chrissie's influence. In any

discussion, you knew he'd back up Chrissie's angle, and if Chrissie ever said anything mildly amusing, he'd be chortling and shaking his head like he couldn't believe how funny it was.

Okay, I'm maybe being a bit hard on these two. When I was remembering them with Tommy not so long ago, he thought they were pretty decent people. But I'm telling you all this now to explain why I was so sceptical about their reported sighting of Ruth's possible. As I say, my first instinct was not to believe it, and to suppose Chrissie was up to something.

The other thing that made me doubtful about all this had to do with the actual description given by Chrissie and Rodney: their picture of a woman working in a nice glass-fronted office. To me, at the time, this seemed just too close a match to what we then knew to be Ruth's "dream future."

I suppose it was mainly us newcomers who talked about "dream futures" that winter, though a number of veterans did too. Some older ones—especially those who'd started their training—would sigh quietly and leave the room when this sort of talk began, but for a long time we didn't even notice this happening. I'm not sure what was going on in our heads during those discussions. We probably knew they couldn't be serious, but then again, I'm sure we didn't regard them as fantasy either. Maybe once Hailsham was behind us, it was possible, just for that half year or so, before all the talk of becoming carers, before the driving lessons, all those other things, it was possible to forget for whole stretches of time who we really were; to forget what the guardians had told us; to forget Miss Lucy's outburst that rainy afternoon at the pavilion, as well as all those theories we'd developed amongst ourselves over the years. It couldn't last, of course, but like I say, just for those few months, we somehow managed to live in this cosy state of suspension in which we could ponder our lives without the usual boundaries. Looking back now, it feels like we spent ages in that steamed-up kitchen after breakfast, or huddled around half-dead fires in the small hours, lost in conversation about our plans for the future.

Mind you, none of us pushed it too far. I don't remember anyone saying they were going to be a movie star or anything like that. The talk was

more likely to be about becoming a postman or working on a farm. Quite a few students wanted to be drivers of one sort or other, and often, when the conversation went this way, some veterans would begin comparing particular scenic routes they'd travelled, favourite roadside cafés, difficult roundabouts, that sort of thing. Today, of course, I'd be able to talk the lot of them under the table on those topics. Back then, though, I used to just listen, not saying a thing, drinking in their talk. Sometimes, if it was late, I'd close my eyes and nestle against the arm of a sofa—or of a boy, if it was during one of those brief phases I was officially “with” someone—and drift in and out of sleep, letting images of the roads move through my head.

Anyway, to get back to my point, when this sort of talk was going on, it was often Ruth who took it further than anybody—especially when there were veterans around. She'd been talking about offices right from the start of the winter, but when it really took on life, when it became her “dream future,” was after that morning she and I walked into the village.

It was during a bitterly cold spell, and our boxy gas heaters had been giving us trouble. We'd spend ages trying to get them to light, clicking away with no result, and we'd had to give up on more and more—and along with them, the rooms they were supposed to heat. Keffer refused to deal with it, claiming it was our responsibility, but in the end, when things were getting really cold, he'd handed us an envelope with money and a note of some igniter fuel we had to buy. So Ruth and I had volunteered to walk to the village to get it, and that's why we were going down the lane that frosty morning. We'd reached a spot where the hedges were high on both sides, and the ground was covered in frozen cowpats, when Ruth suddenly stopped a few steps behind me.

It took me a moment to realise, so that by the time I turned back to her she was breathing over her fingers and looking down, engrossed by something beside her feet. I thought maybe it was some poor creature dead in the frost, but when I came up, I saw it was a colour magazine—not one of “Steve's magazines,” but one of those bright cheerful things that come free with newspapers. It had fallen open at this glossy double page advert, and though the paper had gone soggy and there was mud at one corner, you could

see it well enough. It showed this beautifully modern open-plan office with three or four people who worked in it having some kind of joke with each other. The place looked sparkling and so did the people. Ruth was staring at this picture and, when she noticed me beside her, said: “Now that would be a proper place to work.”

Then she got self-conscious—maybe even cross that I'd caught her like that—and set off again much faster than before.

But a few evenings later, when several of us were sitting around a fire in the farmhouse, Ruth began telling us about the sort of office she'd ideally work in, and I immediately recognised it. She went into all the details—the plants, the gleaming equipment, the chairs with their swivels and castors—and it was so vivid everyone let her talk uninterrupted for ages. I was watching her closely, but it never seemed to occur to her I might make the connection—maybe she'd even forgotten herself where the image had come from. She even talked at one point about how the people in her office would all be “dynamic, go-ahead types,” and I remembered clearly those same words written in big letters across the top of the advert: “Are you the dynamic, go-ahead type?”—something like that. Of course, I didn't say anything. In fact, listening to her, I even started wondering if maybe it was all feasible: if one day we might all of us move into a place like that and carry on our lives together.

Chrissie and Rodney were there that night, of course, hanging onto every word. And then for days afterwards, Chrissie kept trying to get Ruth to talk some more about it. I'd pass them sitting together in the corner of a room and Chrissie would be asking: “Are you sure you wouldn't put each other off, working all together in a place like that?” just to get Ruth going on it again.

The point about Chrissie – and this applied to a lot of the veterans—was that for all her slightly patronising manner towards us when we'd first arrived, she was awestruck about our being from Hailsham. It took me a long time to realise this. Take the business about Ruth's office: Chrissie would never herself have talked about working in any office, never mind one like that. But because Ruth was from Hailsham, somehow the whole

notion came within the realms of the possible. That's how Chrissie saw it, and I suppose Ruth did say a few things every now and then to encourage the idea that, sure enough, in some mysterious way, a separate set of rules applied to us Hailsham students. I never heard Ruth actually lie to veterans; it was more to do with not denying certain things, implying others. There were occasions when I could have brought the whole thing down over her head. But if Ruth was sometimes embarrassed, catching my eye in the middle of some story or other, she seemed confident I wouldn't give her away. And of course, I didn't.

So that was the background to Chrissie and Rodney's claim to have seen Ruth's "possible," and you can maybe see now why I was wary about it. I wasn't keen on Ruth going with them to Norfolk, though I couldn't really say why. And once it became clear she was completely set on going, I told her I'd come too. At first, she didn't seem too delighted, and there was even a hint that she wouldn't let Tommy come with her either. In the end, though, we all went, the five of us: Chrissie, Rodney, Ruth, Tommy and me.

1. Answer the following questions:

- What are "Cottages"? What is this place? Why are they there? Explain your ideas.
- Why did they decide to go to Norfolk? What was the purpose?
- Who are Chrissie and Rodney?
- Why does Rodney care about reincarnation? How does this relate to the main idea of the novel?
- What is a relationship between veterans and newcomers?
- What is a "possible"? How do you understand it? Explain it in your own words.
- Who is Ruth's possible?
- What is Ruth's "dream future"? Why is it so important to her? Why is it only a dream?
- Who are these people? Why were they copied? Explain your ideas.

- Why is it so important for them to find their possibles?

2. Give the summary of this chapter.

III. VOCABULARY WORK.

1. Find the synonyms of the following words in the text:

problem	_____
mess around	_____
bewitched	_____
serious	_____
squat	_____
prod	_____
misgiving	_____
cautious	_____
insignificance	_____
judgement	_____

2. Complete the sentences with the correct form of the following words:

jab consensus reckon trigger off solemn
fizzle out glimpse lark around vary
insight hiccup (in something) irrelevance fascinated

1. That’s why she often looked more like the Wicked Witch than a movie star—an impression reinforced by her irritating way of _____ you with a finger the second before she said something.

2. For all our little _____, Ruth and I had kept up our habit of rounding off the day in my room, talking over our hot drinks, and it was during one of those sessions, when we were _____ about something, that she suddenly said.

3. Our models were an _____, a technical necessity for bringing us into the world, nothing more than that.

4. Weeks could go by with no one mentioning the subject, then one reported sighting would _____ a whole spate of others.

5. Beyond these basics, though, there wasn't much _____.

6. At the same time you could tell people were _____ — obsessed, in some cases — and so it kept coming up, usually in _____ arguments, a world away from our ones about, say, James Joyce.

7. One big idea behind finding your model was that when you did, you'd _____ your future.

8. But around here, we'd all sense we were near territory we didn't want to enter, and the arguments would _____.

9. Nevertheless, we all of us, to _____ degrees, believed that when you saw the person you were copied from, you'd get some _____ into who you were deep down, and maybe too, you'd see something of what your life held in store.

10. They _____ this person's a possible. For me.

3. Explain the meaning of the following collocations in English, make up your own sentences with them:

- every now and then
- to look for guidance
- a whole other dimension
- to be under influence
- first instinct
- cosy state of suspension
- without the usual boundaries
- that sort of thing
- a bitterly cold spell
- to hang onto every word

4. Translate from Russian into English:

1. Наша первая зима в Коттеджах подходила к концу, и мы все к тому времени почувствовали, что более или менее обжились.

2. Главное соображение, на котором основывалась теория «возможных я», было очень простым и особых разногласий не вызывало.

3. Крисси при всем своем высоком росте выглядела очень эффектно, когда стояла выпрямившись, но, кажется, не понимала этого и почти все время сутулилась, чтобы быть как все остальные.

4. Он собирал волосы в хвостик, как рок-музыкант семидесятых годов, и много рассуждал о таких вещах, как реинкарнация.

5. Не помню, чтобы кто-нибудь заявил о своем желании стать кинозвездой или чем-то подобным.

6. Тогда стояли сильные холода, и мы мучились с газовыми обогревателями.

7. Она не упустила ни одной подробности, сказала про растения, про сверкающее оборудование, про вертящиеся кресла на колесиках, - и все это было так живо и ярко, что ее слушали, не перебивая, бог знает сколько времени.

8. Были случаи, когда я могла устроить ей холодный душ; но если Рут и испытывала иногда замешательство, встретившись со мной взглядом посреди своего рассказа о чем-нибудь, она все равно, похоже, была уверена, что я ее не выдам.

9. Насколько помню, той зимой «мечты о будущем» обсуждали главным образом мы, новички, хотя кое-кто из старожилов тоже в этом участвовал.

10. Когда я вспоминаю теперь, мне кажется, что мы множество часов провели, сидя после завтрака в наполненной паром кухне или теснясь далеко за полночь у полупогасшего камина, поглощенные обсуждением планов на будущее.

5. Find the definitions of these words. Use an English dictionary:

- 1. go-ahead _____
- 2. to settle _____
- 3. to drag out _____
- 4. substance _____

- 5. irritating _____
- 6. ponytail _____
- 7. hedge _____
- 8. engrossed _____
- 9. soggy _____
- 10. gleaming _____

Chapter Thirteen

I. PRE-READING.

stroll, *v* /strəʊl/ to walk somewhere in a slow relaxed way

stew, *n* /stju:/, /stu:/ a dish of meat and/or vegetables cooked slowly in liquid in a container that has a lid (= cover)

posture, *n* /'pɒstʃə(r)/, /'pɑ:stʃər/ the position in which you hold your body when standing or sitting

freeze up, *ph v* |fri:z ʌp| to stop moving suddenly because of fear, etc.

glimpse, *n* /glɪmps/ a short experience of something that helps you to understand it

spur, *n* /spɜ:(r)/, /spɜ:r/ a fact or an event that makes you want to do something better or more quickly

ditch, *n* /dɪtʃ/ a long channel dug at the side of a field or road, to hold or take away water

yank, *v* /jæŋk/ to pull something/somebody hard, quickly and suddenly

sulky, *adj* /'sʌlki/ in a bad mood or not speaking because you are angry about something

hilarious, *adj* /hɪ'leəriəs/, /hɪ'lerɪəs/ extremely funny

starve, *v* /stɑ:v/, /stɑ:rv/ to suffer or die because you do not have enough food to eat; to make somebody suffer or die in this way

perched, *adj* /pɜ:tʃt/, /pɜ:rtʃt/ placed in a high and/or dangerous position

chubby, *adj* /'tʃʌbi/, /'tʃʌbi/ slightly fat in a way that people usually find attractive

apron, *n* /'eɪprən/ a piece of clothing worn over the front of the body, from the chest or the waist down, and tied around the waist. Aprons are worn over other clothes to keep them clean, for example when cooking.

tiny, *adj* /'taɪni/ very small in size or amount

gust, *n* /gʌst/ a sudden strong increase in the amount and speed of wind that is blowing

flutter, *v* /'flʌtə(r)/, /'flʌtər/ to move lightly and quickly; to make something move in this way

burst out, *ph v* /bɜːst/, /bɜːrst/ to begin doing something suddenly

cosy, *adj* /'kəʊzi/ (*British English*) warm, comfortable and safe, especially in a small space

eagerly, *adv* /'iːgəli/, /'iːgərli/ in a way that shows great interest and excitement about something that is going to happen or about something that you want to do

surrounding, *adj* /sə'raʊndɪŋ/ that is near or around something

hesitant, *adj* /'hezɪtənt/ slow to speak or act because you feel uncertain, embarrassed or unwilling

obscure, *adj* /əb'skjʊə(r)/, /əb'skjʊr/ not well known

exasperated, *adj* /ɪg'zæspəreɪtɪd/, /ɪg'zɑːspəreɪtɪd/ extremely annoyed, especially if you cannot do anything to improve the situation

shift, *v* /ʃɪft/ to move, or move something, from one position or place to another

naughty, *adj* /'nɔːti/ behaving badly; not willing to obey

whereabouts, *n* /'weərəbaʊts/, /'werəbaʊts/ the place where somebody/something is

pretext, *n* /'priːtekst/ a false reason that you give for doing something, usually something bad, in order to hide the real reason; an excuse

murmur, *v* /'mɜːmə(r)/, /'mɜːrmər/ to say something in a soft quiet voice that is difficult to hear or understand

weariness, *n* /'wɪərɪnəs/, /'wɪrɪnəs/ the feeling of being very tired

circumstance, *n* /'sɜ:kəmstəns/, /'sɜ:kəmstɑ:ns/, /'sɜ:kəmstæns/ the conditions and facts that are connected with and affect a situation, an event or an action

deferral, *n* /dɪ'fɜ:rəl/ the action of delaying something until a later time

donation, *n* /dəʊ'neɪʃn/ the act of allowing doctors to remove blood or a body organ in order to help somebody who needs it

prodding, *n* /'prɒdɪŋ/, /'prɑ:dɪŋ/ the act of encouraging somebody to do something

tentatively, *adv* /'tentətɪvli/ in a way that is not done with confidence

shrug, *v* /ʃrʌg/ to raise your shoulders and then drop them to show that you do not know or care about something

toy with, *ph v* /tɔɪ/ to consider an idea or a plan, but not very seriously and not for a long time

snatch, *v* /snætʃ/ to take something quickly and often rudely or roughly

II. READING AND COMPREHENSION.

Rodney, who had a driver's licence, had made an arrangement to borrow a car for the day from the farm-workers at Metchley a couple of miles down the road. He'd regularly got cars this way in the past, but this particular time, the arrangement broke down the day before we were due to set off. Though things got sorted out fairly easily—Rodney walked over to the farm and got a promise on another car—the interesting thing was the way Ruth responded during those few hours when it looked like the trip might have to be called off.

Until then, she'd been making out the whole thing was a bit of a joke, that if anything she was going along with it to please Chrissie. And she'd talked a lot about how we weren't exploring our freedom nearly enough since leaving Hailsham; how anyway she'd always wanted to go to Norfolk to “find all our lost things.” In other words, she'd gone out of her way to let us know she wasn't very serious about the prospect of finding her “possible.”

That day before we went, I remember Ruth and I had been out for a stroll, and we came into the farmhouse kitchen where Fiona and a few veterans were making a huge stew. And it was Fiona herself, not looking up from what she was doing, who told us how the farm boy had come in earlier with the message. Ruth was standing just in front of me, so I couldn't see her face, but her whole posture froze up. Then without a word, she turned and pushed past me out of the cottage. I got a glimpse of her face then, and that's when I realised how upset she was. Fiona started to say something like: "Oh, I didn't know..." But I said quickly: "That's not what Ruth's upset about. It's about something else, something that happened earlier on." It wasn't very good, but it was the best I could do on the spur of the moment.

In the end, as I said, the vehicle crisis got resolved, and early the next morning, in the pitch dark, the five of us got inside a bashed but perfectly decent Rover car. The way we sat was with Chrissie up front next to Rodney, and the three of us in the back. That was what had felt natural, and we'd got in like that without thinking about it. But after only a few minutes, once Rodney had brought us out of the dark winding lanes onto the proper roads, Ruth, who was in the middle, leaned forward, put her hands on the front seats, and began talking to the two veterans. She did this in a way that meant Tommy and I, on either side of her, couldn't hear anything they were saying, and because she was between us, couldn't talk to or even see each other. Sometimes, on the rare occasions she did lean back, I tried to get something going between the three of us, but Ruth wouldn't pick up on it, and before long, she'd be crouched forwards again, her face stuck between the two front seats.

After about an hour, with day starting to break, we stopped to stretch our legs and let Rodney go for a pee. We'd pulled over beside a big empty field, so we jumped over the ditch and spent a few minutes rubbing our hands together and watching our breaths rise. At one point, I noticed Ruth had drifted away from the rest of us and was gazing across the field at the sunrise. So I went over to her and made the suggestion that, since she only wanted to talk to the veterans, she swap seats with me. That way she could go on talking at least with Chrissie, and Tommy and I could have some sort

of conversation to while away the journey. I'd hardly finished before Ruth said in a whisper:

“Why do you have to be difficult? Now of all times! I don't get it. Why do you want to make trouble?” Then she yanked me round so both our backs were to the others and they wouldn't see if we started to argue. It was the way she did this, rather than her words, that suddenly made me see things her way; I could see that Ruth was making a big effort to present not just herself, but all of us, in the right way to Chrissie and Rodney; and here I was, threatening to undermine her and start an embarrassing scene. I saw all this, and so I touched her on the shoulder and went off back to the others. And when we returned to the car, I made sure the three of us sat exactly as before. But now, as we drove on, Ruth stayed more or less silent, sitting right back in her seat, and even when Chrissie or Rodney shouted things to us from the front, responded only in sulky monosyllables.

Things cheered up considerably, though, once we arrived in our seaside town. We got there around lunch-time and left the Rover in a car park beside a mini-golf course full of fluttering flags. It had turned into a crisp, sunny day, and my memory of it is that for the first hour we all felt so exhilarated to be out and about we didn't give much thought to what had brought us there. At one point Rodney actually let out a few whoops, waving his arms around as he led the way up a road climbing steadily past rows of houses and the occasional shop, and you could sense just from the huge sky, that you were walking towards the sea.

Actually, when we did reach the sea, we found we were standing on a road carved into a cliff edge. It seemed at first there was a sheer drop down to the sands, but once you leant over the rail, you could see zigzagging footpaths leading you down the cliff-face to the seafront.

We were starving by now and went into a little café perched on the cliff just where one of the footpaths began. When we went in, the only people inside were the two chubby women in aprons who worked there. They were smoking cigarettes at one of the tables, but they quickly got up and disappeared into the kitchen, so then we had the place to ourselves.

We took the table right at the back—which meant the one stuck out closest to the cliff edge—and when we sat down it felt like we were virtually suspended over the sea. I didn't have anything to compare it with at the time, but I realise now the café was tiny, with just three or four little tables. They'd left a window open—probably to stop the place filling up with frying smells—so that every now and then a gust would pass through the room making all the signs advertising their good deals flutter about. There was one cardboard notice pinned over the counter that had been done in coloured felt-tips, and at the top of it was the word “look” with a staring eye drawn inside each “o.” I see the same thing so often these days I don't even register it, but back then I hadn't seen it before. So I was looking at it admiringly, then caught Ruth's eye, and realised she too was looking at it amazed, and we both burst out laughing. That was a cosy little moment, when it felt like we'd left behind the bad feeling that had grown between us in the car. As it turned out, though, it was just about the last moment like that between me and Ruth for the rest of that outing.

We hadn't mentioned the “possible” at all since arriving in the town, and I'd assumed when we sat down we'd finally discuss the matter properly. But once we'd started on our sandwiches, Rodney began talking about their old friend, Martin, who'd left the Cottages the year before and was now living somewhere in the town. Chrissie eagerly took up the subject and soon both veterans were coming out with anecdotes about all the hilarious things Martin had got up to. We couldn't follow much of it, but Chrissie and Rodney were really enjoying themselves. They kept exchanging glances and laughing, and although they pretended it was for our benefit, it was clear they were remembering for each other. Thinking about it now, it occurs to me the near-taboo at the Cottages surrounding people who'd left might well have stopped them talking about their friend even to each other, and it was only once we'd come away they'd felt able to indulge themselves in this way.

Whenever they laughed, I laughed too just to be polite. Tommy seemed to be understanding things even less than me and was letting out hesitant little half-laughs that lagged some way behind. Ruth, though, was laughing and laughing, and kept nodding to everything being said about

Martin just like she too was remembering them. Then once, when Chrissie made a really obscure reference—she'd said something like: “Oh, yes, the time he put out his jeans!”—Ruth gave a big laugh and signalled in our direction, as though to say to Chrissie: “Go on, explain it to them so they can enjoy it too.” I let this all go, but when Chrissie and Rodney started discussing whether we should go round to Martin's flat, I finally said, maybe a bit coldly:

“What exactly is he doing here? Why's he got a flat?”

There was a silence, then I heard Ruth let out an exasperated sigh. Chrissie leaned over the table towards me and said quietly, like she was explaining to a child: “He's being a carer. What else do you think he'd be doing here? He's a proper carer now.”

There was a bit of shifting, and I said: “That's what I mean. We can't just go and visit him.”

Chrissie sighed. “Okay. We're not supposed to visit carers. Absolutely strictly speaking. Certainly not encouraged.”

Rodney chuckled and added: “Definitely not encouraged. Naughty naughty to go and visit him.”

“Very naughty,” Chrissie said and made a tutting noise.

Then Ruth joined in, saying: “Kathy hates to be naughty. So we'd better not go and visit him.”

Tommy was looking at Ruth, clearly puzzled about whose side she'd taken, and I wasn't sure either. It occurred to me she didn't want the expedition side-tracked and was reluctantly siding with me, so I smiled at her, but she didn't return my look. Then Tommy asked suddenly:

“Whereabouts was it you saw Ruth's possible, Rodney?”

“Oh...” Rodney didn't seem nearly so interested in the possible now we were in the town, and I could see anxiety cross Ruth's face. Finally Rodney said: “It was a turning off the High Street, somewhere up the other end. Of course, it might be her day off.” Then when no one said anything, he added: “They do have days off, you know. They're not always at their work.”

For a moment, as he said this, the fear passed through me that we'd misjudged things badly; that for all we knew, veterans often used talk of possibles just as a pretext to go on trips, and didn't really expect to take it any further. Ruth might well have been thinking along the same lines, because she was now looking definitely worried, but in the end she did a little laugh, like Rodney had made a joke.

Then Chrissie said in a new voice: "You know, Ruth, we might be coming here in a few years' time to visit you. Working in a nice office. I don't see how anyone could stop us visiting you then."

"That's right," Ruth said quickly. "You can all come and see me."

"I suppose," Rodney said, "there aren't any rules about visiting people if they're working in an office." He laughed suddenly. "We don't know. It hasn't really happened with us before."

"It'll be all right," Ruth said. "They let you do it. You can all come and visit me. Except Tommy, that is."

Tommy looked shocked. "Why can't I come?" "Because you'll already be with me, stupid," Ruth said. "I'm keeping you." We all laughed, Tommy again a little behind the rest of us.

"I heard about this girl up in Wales," Chrissie said. "She was Hailsham, maybe a few years before you lot. Apparently she's working in this clothes shop right now. A really smart one."

There were murmurs of approval and for a while we all looked dreamily out at the clouds.

"That's Hailsham for you," Rodney said eventually, and shook his head as though in amazement.

"And then there was that other person"—Chrissie had turned to Ruth—"that boy you were telling us about the other day. The one a couple of years above you who's a park keeper now."

Ruth was nodding thoughtfully. It occurred to me that I should shoot Tommy a warning glance, but by the time I'd turned to him, he'd already started to speak.

"Who was that?" he asked in a bewildered voice.

“You know who it is, Tommy,” I said quickly. It was too risky to kick him, or even to make my voice wink-wink: Chrissie would have picked it up in a flash. So I said it dead straight, with a bit of weariness, like we were all fed up with Tommy forgetting all the time. But this just meant Tommy still didn't twig.

“Someone we knew?”

“Tommy, let's not go through this again,” I said. “You'll have to have your brains tested.”

At last the penny seemed to drop, and Tommy shut up.

Chrissie said: “I know how lucky I am, getting to be at the Cottages. But you Hailsham lot, you're really lucky. You know...” She lowered her voice and leaned forward again. “There's something I've been wanting to talk to you lot about. It's just that back there, at the Cottages, it's impossible. Everyone always listening in.”

She looked around the table, then fixed her gaze on Ruth. Rodney suddenly tensed and he too leaned forward. And something told me we were coming to what was, for Chrissie and Rodney, the central purpose of this whole expedition.

“When Rodney and I, we were up in Wales,” she said. “The same time we heard about this girl in the clothes shop. We heard something else, something about Hailsham students. What they were saying was that some Hailsham students in the past, in special circumstances, had managed to get a deferral. That this was something you could do if you were a Hailsham student. You could ask for your donations to be put back by three, even four years. It wasn't easy, but just sometimes they'd let you do it. So long as you could convince them. So long as you qualified.”

Chrissie paused and looked at each of us, maybe for dramatic effect, maybe to check us for signs of recognition. Tommy and I probably had puzzled looks, but Ruth had on one of her faces where you couldn't tell what was going on.

“What they said,” Chrissie continued, “was that if you were a boy and a girl, and you were in love with each other, really, properly in love, and if you could show it, then the people who run Hailsham, they sorted it out for

you. They sorted it out so you could have a few years together before you began your donations.”

There was now a strange atmosphere around the table, a kind of tingle going round.

“When we were in Wales,” Chrissie went on, “the students at the White Mansion. They'd heard of this Hailsham couple, the guy had only a few weeks left before he became a carer. And they went to see someone and got everything put back three years. They were allowed to go on living there together, up at the White Mansion, three years straight, didn't have to go on with their training or anything. Three years just to themselves, because they could prove they were properly in love.”

It was at this point I noticed Ruth nodding with a lot of authority. Chrissie and Rodney noticed too and for a few seconds they watched her like they were hypnotised. And I had a kind of vision of Chrissie and Rodney, back at the Cottages, in the months leading up to this moment, probing and prodding this subject between them. I could see them bringing it up, at first very tentatively, shrugging, putting it to one side, bringing it up again, never able quite to leave it alone. I could see them toying with the idea of talking to us about it, see them refining how they'd do it, what exactly they'd say. I looked again at Chrissie and Rodney in front of me, gazing at Ruth, and tried to read their faces. Chrissie looked both afraid and hopeful. Rodney looked on edge, like he didn't trust himself not to blurt out something he wasn't supposed to.

This wasn't the first time I'd come across the rumour about deferrals. Over the past several weeks, I'd caught more and more snatches of it at the Cottages. It was always veterans talking among themselves, and when any of us showed up, they'd look awkward and go quiet. But I'd heard enough to get the gist of it; and I knew it had specifically to do with us Hailsham students. Even so, it was only that day, in that seafront café, that it really came home to me how important this whole notion had become for some veterans.

“I suppose,” Chrissie went on, her voice wobbling slightly, “you lot would know about it. The rules, all that sort of thing.”

She and Rodney looked at each of us in turn, then their gazes settled back on Ruth.

Ruth sighed and said: “Well, they told us a few things, obviously. But”—she gave a shrug—“it's not something we know much about. We never talked about it really. Anyway, we should get going soon.”

“Who is it you go to?” Rodney suddenly asked. “Who did they say you had to go to if you wanted, you know, to apply?”

Ruth shrugged again. “Well, I told you. It wasn't something we talked about much.” Almost instinctively she looked to me and Tommy for support, which was probably a mistake, because Tommy said:

“To be honest, I don't know what you're all talking about. What rules are these?”

Ruth stared daggers at him, and I said quickly: “You know, Tommy. All that talk that used to go round at Hailsham.”

Tommy shook his head. “I don't remember it,” he said flatly. And this time I could see—and Ruth could too—that he wasn't being slow. “I don't remember anything like that at Hailsham.”

Ruth turned away from him. “What you've got to realise,” she said to Chrissie, “is that even though Tommy was at Hailsham, he isn't like a real Hailsham student. He was left out of everything and people were always laughing at him. So there's no point in asking him about anything like this. Now, I want to go and find this person Rodney saw.”

A look had appeared in Tommy's eyes that made me catch my breath. It was one I hadn't seen for a long time and that belonged to the Tommy who'd had to be barricaded inside a classroom while he kicked over desks. Then the look faded, he turned to the sky outside and let out a heavy breath.

The veterans hadn't noticed anything because Ruth, at the same moment, had risen to her feet and was fiddling with her coat. Then there was a bit of confusion as the rest of us all moved back our chairs from the little table all at once. I'd been put in charge of the spending money, so I went up to pay. The others filed out behind me, and while I was waiting for the change, I watched them through one of the big misty windows, shuffling about in the sunshine, not talking, looking down at the sea.

1. Answer the following questions:

- Why is Norfolk a special place? Where is it?
- How did they get to Norfolk?
- Why are they going to Norfolk?
- Who is Martin? Why can't they visit him? Why does he have his own flat?
- Who is a carer? What do you think they do for a living?
- What are special circumstances for Hailsham students? What is a rumour?
- What other stories did Chrissie and Rodney tell?
- What is a deferral? Why is it important for the purpose of the story?
- How can someone get a deferral?
- What is your attitude towards the main characters (Kathy, Tommy, Ruth)?

2. Discuss the author's opinion on getting a deferral in the context of organ donation described in this chapter. Is it relevant to current medical situation?

III. VOCABULARY WORK.

1. Match the words with their synonyms. Consult a dictionary if you need:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. hilarious | a. ramble |
| 2. cosy | b. unknown |
| 3. obscure | c. snug |
| 4. exasperated | d. ploy |
| 5. pretext | e. infuriate |
| 6. tentatively | f. grab |
| 7. toy with | g. flirt with |
| 8. snatch | h. hesitantly |

9. flutter

i. hover

10. stroll

j. funny

2. Translate the following sentences into Russian:

1. The veterans hadn't noticed anything because Ruth, at the same moment, had risen to her feet and was fiddling with her coat.

2. A look had appeared in Tommy's eyes that made me catch my breath.

3. Almost instinctively she looked to me and Tommy for support, which was probably a mistake.

4. She and Rodney looked at each of us in turn, then their gazes settled back on Ruth.

5. This wasn't the first time I'd come across the rumour about deferrals.

6. Rodney looked on edge, like he didn't trust himself not to blurt out something he wasn't supposed to.

7. I could see them bringing it up, at first very tentatively, shrugging, putting it to one side, bringing it up again, never able quite to leave it alone.

8. But I'd heard enough to get the gist of it; and I knew it had specifically to do with us Hailsham students.

9. There was now a strange atmosphere around the table, a kind of tingle going round.

10. It occurred to me that I should shoot Tommy a warning glance, but by the time I'd turned to him, he'd already started to speak.

3. Explain the meaning of the following collocations in English, make up your own sentences with them:

- a few whoops
- to stare daggers
- to barricade yourself in/inside (something)
- wobbling voice
- to catch breath

- faded look
- big misty windows
- wink-wink
- to get the gist
- near-taboo
- a tutting noise

4. Complete the text with one word in each space. The first letters are given:

1. That day before we went, I remember Ruth and I had been out for a **s**_____, and we came into the farmhouse kitchen where Fiona and a few veterans were making a huge **s**_____.

2. Ruth was standing just in front of me, so I couldn't see her face, but her whole **p**_____ froze up.

3. I got a **g**_____ of her face then, and that's when I realised how upset she was.

4. We'd pulled over beside a big empty field, so we jumped over the **d**_____ and spent a few minutes rubbing our hands together and watching our breaths rise.

5. Then she **y**_____ me round so both our backs were to the others and they wouldn't see if we started to argue.

6. Even when Chrissie or Rodney shouted things to us from the front, she responded only in **s**_____ monosyllables.

7. We were **s**_____ by now and went into a little café perched on the cliff just where one of the footpaths began.

8. When we went in, the only people inside were the two **c**_____ women in aprons who worked there.

9. The café was **t**_____, with just three or four little tables.

10. So that every now and then a **g**_____ would pass through the room making all the signs advertising their good deals flutter about.

5. Find the definitions of these idioms, make up your own sentences with them. Use an English dictionary:

- be starving (for something)
- on the spur of the moment
- (tied to) somebody's apron strings
- the patter of tiny feet
- the bubble bursts shift your ground
- (the) shifting sands (of something)
- in/under the circumstances
- pomp and circumstance
- snatch victory from the jaws of defeat
- until the last moment that you would lose

Chapter Fourteen

I. PRE-READING.

batch, *n* /bætʃ/ a number of people or things that are dealt with as a group

handy, *adj* /'hændi/ easy to use or to do

nod, *v* /nɒd/, /nɑ:d/ if you nod, nod your head or your head nods, you move your head up and down to show agreement, understanding, etc.

mocking, *adj* /'mɒkɪŋ/, /'mɑ:kɪŋ/ (of behaviour, an expression, etc.) showing that you think somebody/something is silly

pushchair, *n* /'pʊʃtʃeə(r)/, /'pʊʃtʃer/ a small folding seat on wheels in which a small child sits and is pushed along

furious, *adj* /'fjʊəriəs/, /'fjɜ:riəs/ very angry

aisle, *n* /aɪl/ a passage between rows of seats in a church, theatre, train, etc., or between rows of shelves in a supermarket

rack, *n* /ræk/ a piece of equipment, usually made of metal or wooden bars, that is used for holding things or for hanging things on

rummage, *v* /'rʌmɪdʒ/ to move things around carelessly while searching for something

jigsaw, *n* /'dʒɪɡsɔː/ a picture printed on cardboard (= very thick, stiff card) or wood, that has been cut up into a lot of small pieces of different shapes that you have to fit together again

rumour, *n* /'ru:mə(r)/ a piece of information, or a story, that people talk about, but that may not be true

swoop, *v* /swu:p/ to fly quickly and suddenly downwards, especially in order to attack somebody/something

swivel, /'swɪvl/ a device used to connect two parts of an object together, allowing one part to turn around without moving the other

tremor, *n* /'tremə(r)/ a slight shaking movement in a part of your body caused, for example, by cold or fear

hint, *n* /hɪnt/ something that you say or do in an indirect way in order to show somebody what you are thinking

spell, *v* /spel/ to have something, usually something bad, as a result; to mean something, usually something bad

bracing, *adj* /'breɪsɪŋ/ (especially of weather) making you feel full of energy because it is cold

indicated, *v* /'ɪndɪkeɪt/ to show that something is true or exists

crumble, *v* /'krʌmbl/ to break or break something into very small pieces

vivid, *adj* /'vɪvɪd/ (of memories, a description, etc.) producing very clear pictures in your mind

muck about/around, *ph v* (*British English, informal*) to behave in a silly way, especially when you should be working or doing something else

buckle, *v* /'bʌkl/ to fasten something or be fastened with a buckle

dodge, *v* /dɒdʒ/, /dɑ:dʒ/ to move quickly and suddenly to one side in order to avoid somebody/something

loiter, *v* /'lɔɪtə(r)/ to stand or wait somewhere especially with no obvious reason

preoccupied, *adj* /pri'ɒkjupaɪd/ thinking and/or worrying continuously about something so that you do not pay attention to other things

sheer, *adj* /ʃɪə(r)/, /ʃɪr/ complete and not mixed with anything else

rot, *v* /rɒt/, /rɑ:t/ to decay, or make something decay, naturally and gradually

hushed, *adj* /hʌʃt/ (of voices) speaking very quietly

tangibly, *adv* /'tændʒəbli/ in a way that can be clearly seen or understood

shuffle, *v* /'ʃʌfl/ to walk slowly without lifting your feet completely off the ground

zigzag, *v* /'zɪgzæg/ to move forward by making sharp sudden turns first to the left and then to the right

starkly, *adv* /'stɑ:kli/ in a way that is unpleasant, real and impossible to avoid; completely

junkie, *n* /'dʒʌŋki/ (*informal*) a drug addict (= a person who is unable to stop taking dangerous drugs)

gutter, *n* /'gʌtə(r)/, /'gʌtər/ the bad social conditions or low moral standards sometimes connected with the lowest level of society

hitchhike, *v* /'hɪtʃhaɪk/ to travel by asking for free rides in other people's cars, by standing at the side of the road and trying to get passing cars to stop

II. READING AND COMPREHENSION.

When I got outside, it was obvious the excitement from when we'd first arrived had evaporated completely. We walked in silence, Rodney leading the way, through little backstreets hardly penetrated by the sun, the pavements so narrow we often had to shuffle along in single file. It was a relief to come out onto the High Street where the noise made our rotten mood less obvious. As we crossed at a pelican to the sunnier side, I could see Rodney and Chrissie conferring about something and I wondered how much of the bad atmosphere had to do with their believing we were holding back on some big Hailsham secret, and how much was just to do with Ruth's having a go at Tommy.

Then once we'd crossed the High Street, Chrissie announced she and Rodney wanted to go shopping for birthday cards. Ruth was stunned by this, but Chrissie just went on:

“We like buying them in big batches. It's always cheaper in the long run. And you've always got one handy when it's someone's birthday.” She pointed to the entrance of a Woolworth's shop. “You can get pretty good cards in there really cheap.”

Rodney was nodding, and I thought there was something a little bit mocking around the edges of his smile. “Of course,” he said, “you end up with a lot of cards the same, but you can put your own illustrations on them. You know, personalise them.”

Both veterans were now standing in the middle of the pavement, letting people with pushchairs move round them, waiting for us to put up a challenge. I could tell Ruth was furious, but without Rodney's co-operation there wasn't much that could be done anyway.

So we went into the Woolworth's, and immediately I felt much more cheerful. Even now, I like places like that: a large store with lots of aisles displaying bright plastic toys, greeting cards, loads of cosmetics, maybe even a photo booth. Today, if I'm in a town and find myself with some time to kill, I'll stroll into somewhere just like that, where you can hang around and enjoy yourself, not buying a thing, and the assistants don't mind at all.

Anyway, we went in and before long we'd wandered apart to look at different aisles. Rodney had stayed near the entrance beside a big rack of cards, and further inside, I spotted Tommy under a big pop-group poster, rummaging through the music cassettes. After about ten minutes, when I was somewhere near the back of the store, I thought I heard Ruth's voice and wandered towards it. I'd already turned into the aisle—one with fluffy animals and big boxed jigsaws—before I realised Ruth and Chrissie were standing together at the end of it, having some sort of tête-à-tête. I wasn't sure what to do: I didn't want to interrupt, but it was time we were leaving and I didn't want to turn and walk off again. So I just stopped where I was, pretended to examine a jigsaw and waited for them to notice me.

That was when I realised they were back on the subject of this rumour. Chrissie was saying, in a lowered voice, something like:

“But all that time you were there, I'm amazed you didn't think more about how you'd do it. About who you'd go to, all of that.”

“You don't understand,” Ruth was saying. “If you were from Hailsham, then you'd see. It's never been such a big deal for us. I suppose we've always known if we ever wanted to look into it, all we'd have to do is get word back to Hailsham...”

Ruth saw me and broke off. When I lowered the jigsaw and turned to them, they were both looking at me angrily. At the same time, it was like I'd caught them doing something they shouldn't, and they moved apart self-consciously.

“It's time we were off,” I said, pretending to have heard nothing. But Ruth wasn't fooled. As they came past, she gave me a really dirty look.

So by the time we set off again, following Rodney in search of the office where he'd seen Ruth's possible the month before, the atmosphere between us was worse than ever. Things weren't helped either by Rodney repeatedly taking us down the wrong streets. At least four times, he led us confidently down a turning off the High Street, only for the shops and offices to run out, and we'd have to turn and come back. Before long, Rodney was looking defensive and on the verge of giving up. But then we found it.

Again, we'd turned and were heading back towards the High Street, when Rodney had stopped suddenly. Then he'd indicated silently an office on the other side of the street.

There it was, sure enough. It wasn't exactly like the magazine advert we'd found on the ground that day, but then it wasn't so far off either. There was a big glass front at street-level, so anyone going by could see right into it: a large open-plan room with maybe a dozen desks arranged in irregular L-patterns. There were the potted palms, the shiny machines and swooping desk lamps. People were moving about between desks, or leaning on a partition, chatting and sharing jokes, while others had pulled their swivel chairs close to each other and were enjoying a coffee and sandwich.

“Look,” Tommy said. “It's their lunch break, but they don't go out. Don't blame them either.”

We kept on staring, and it looked like a smart, cosy, self-contained world. I glanced at Ruth and noticed her eyes moving anxiously around the faces behind the glass.

“Okay, Rod,” Chrissie said. “So which one's the possible?”

She said this almost sarcastically, like she was sure the whole thing would turn out to be a big mistake on his part. But Rodney said quietly, with a tremor of excitement:

“There. Over in that corner. In the blue outfit. Her, talking now to the big red woman.”

It wasn't obvious, but the longer we kept looking, the more it seemed he had something. The woman was around fifty, and had kept her figure pretty well. Her hair was darker than Ruth's—though it could have been dyed—and she had it tied back in a simple pony-tail the way Ruth usually did. She was laughing at something her friend in the red outfit was saying, and her face, especially when she was finishing her laugh with a shake of her head, had more than a hint of Ruth about it.

We all kept on watching her, not saying a word. Then we became aware that in another part of the office, a couple of the other women had noticed us. One raised a hand and gave us an uncertain wave. This broke the spell and we took to our heels in giggly panic.

We stopped again further down the street, talking excitedly all at once. Except for Ruth, that is, who remained silent in the middle of it. It was hard to read her face at that moment: she certainly wasn't disappointed, but then she wasn't elated either. She had on a half-smile, the sort a mother might have in an ordinary family, weighing things up while the children jumped and screamed around her asking her to say, yes, they could do whatever. So there we were, all coming out with our views, and I was glad I could say honestly, along with the others, that the woman we'd seen was by no means out of the question. The truth was, we were all relieved: without quite realising it, we'd

been bracing ourselves for a let-down. But now we could go back to the Cottages, Ruth could take encouragement from what she'd seen, and the rest of us could back her up. And the office life the woman appeared to be leading was about as close as you could hope to the one Ruth had often described for herself. Regardless of what had been going on between us that day, deep down, none of us wanted Ruth to return home despondent, and at that moment we thought we were safe. And so we would have been, I'm pretty sure, had we put an end to the matter at that point.

But then Ruth said: "Let's sit over there, over on that wall. Just for a few minutes. Once they've forgotten about us, we can go and have another look."

We agreed to this, but as we walked towards the low wall around the small car park Ruth had indicated, Chrissie said, perhaps a little too eagerly:

"But even if we don't get to see her again, we're all agreed she's a possible. And it's a lovely office. It really is."

"Let's just wait a few minutes," Ruth said. "Then we'll go back."

I didn't sit on the wall myself because it was damp and crumbling, and because I thought someone might appear any minute and shout at us for sitting there. But Ruth did sit on it, knees on either side like she was astride a horse. And today I have these vivid images of the ten, fifteen minutes we waited there. No one's talking about the possible any more. We're pretending instead that we're just killing a bit of time, maybe at a scenic spot during a carefree day-trip. Rodney's doing a little dance to demonstrate what a good feeling there is. He gets up on the wall, balances along it then deliberately falls off. Tommy's making jokes about some passers-by, and though they're not very funny, we're all laughing. Just Ruth, in the middle, astride the wall, remains silent. She keeps the smile on her face, but hardly moves. There's a breeze messing up her hair, and the bright winter sun's making her crinkle up her eyes, so you're not sure if she's smiling at our antics, or just grimacing in the light. These are the pictures I've kept of those moments we waited by that car park. I suppose we were waiting for Ruth to decide when it was time to go back for a second look. Well, she never got to make that decision because of what happened next.

Tommy, who had been mucking about on the wall with Rodney, suddenly jumped down and went still. Then he said: “That's her. That's the same one.”

We all stopped what we were doing and watched the figure coming from the direction of the office. She was now wearing a cream-coloured overcoat, and struggling to fasten her briefcase as she walked. The buckle was giving her trouble, so she kept slowing down and starting again. We went on watching her in a kind of trance as she went past on the other side. Then as she was turning into the High Street, Ruth leapt up and said: “Let's see where she goes.”

We came out of our trance and were off after her. In fact, Chrissie had to remind us to slow down or someone would think we were a gang of muggers going after the woman. We followed along the High Street at a reasonable distance, giggling, dodging past people, separating and coming together again. It must have been around two o'clock by then, and the pavement was busy with shoppers. At times we nearly lost sight of her, but we kept up, loitering in front of window displays when she went into a shop, squeezing past pushchairs and old people when she came out again.

Then the woman turned off the High Street into the little lanes near the seafront. Chrissie was worried she'd notice us away from the crowds, but Ruth just kept going, and we followed behind her.

Eventually we came into a narrow side-street that had the occasional shop, but was mainly just ordinary houses. We had to walk again in single file, and once when a van came the other way, we had to press ourselves into the houses to let it pass. Before long there was only the woman and us in the entire street, and if she'd glanced back, there was no way she wouldn't have noticed us. But she just kept walking, a dozen or so steps ahead, then went in through a door—into “The Portway Studios.”

I've been back to the Portway Studios a number of times since then. It changed owners a few years ago and now sells all kinds of arty things: pots, plates, clay animals. Back then, it was two big white rooms just with paintings—beautifully displayed with plenty of spaces between them. The wooden sign hanging over the door is still the same one though. Anyway,

we decided to go in after Rodney pointed out how suspicious we looked in that quiet little street. Inside the shop, we could at least pretend we were looking at the pictures.

We came in to find the woman we'd been following talking to a much older woman with silver hair, who seemed to be in charge of the place. They were sitting on either side of a small desk near the door, and apart from them, the gallery was empty. Neither woman paid much attention as we filed past, spread out and tried to look fascinated by the pictures.

Actually, preoccupied though I was with Ruth's possible, I did begin to enjoy the paintings and the sheer peacefulness of the place. It felt like we'd come a hundred miles from the High Street. The walls and ceilings were peppermint, and here and there, you'd see a bit of fishing net, or a rotted piece from a boat stuck up high near the cornicing. The paintings too—mostly oils in deep blues and greens—had sea themes. Maybe it was the tiredness suddenly catching up with us—after all, we'd been travelling since before dawn—but I wasn't the only one who went off into a bit of a dream in there. We'd all wandered into different corners, and were staring at one picture after another, only occasionally making the odd hushed remark like: “Come and look at this!” All the time, we could hear Ruth's possible and the silver-haired lady talking on and on. They weren't especially loud, but in that place, their voices seemed to fill the entire space. They were discussing some man they both knew, how he didn't have a clue with his children. And as we kept listening to them, stealing the odd glance in their direction, bit by bit, something started to change. It did for me, and I could tell it was happening for the others. If we'd left it at seeing the woman through the glass of her office, even if we'd followed her through the town then lost her, we could still have gone back to the Cottages excited and triumphant. But now, in that gallery, the woman was too close, much closer than we'd ever really wanted. And the more we heard her and looked at her, the less she seemed like Ruth. It was a feeling that grew among us almost tangibly, and I could tell that Ruth, absorbed in a picture on the other side of the room, was feeling it as much as anyone. That was probably why we went on

shuffling around that gallery for so long; we were delaying the moment when we'd have to confer.

Then suddenly the woman had left, and we all kept standing about, avoiding each other's eyes. But none of us had thought to follow the woman, and as the seconds kept ticking on, it became like we were agreeing, without speaking, about how we now saw the situation.

Eventually the silver-haired lady came out from behind her desk and said to Tommy, who was the nearest to her: "That's a particularly lovely work. That one's a favourite of mine."

Tommy turned to her and let out a laugh. Then as I was hurrying over to help him out, the lady asked: "Are you art students?"

"Not exactly," I said before Tommy could respond. "We're just, well, keen."

The silver-haired lady beamed, then started to tell us how the artist whose work we were looking at was related to her, and all about the artist's career thus far. This had the effect, at least, of breaking the trance-like state we'd been in, and we gathered round her to listen, the way we might have done at Hailsham when a guardian started to speak. This really got the silver-haired lady going, and we kept nodding and exclaiming while she talked about where the paintings had been done, the times of day the artist liked to work, how some had been done without sketches. Then there came a kind of natural end to her lecture, and we all gave a sigh, thanked her and went out.

The street outside being so narrow, we couldn't talk properly for a while longer, and I think we were all grateful for that. As we walked away from the gallery in single file, I could see Rodney, up at the front, theatrically stretching out his arms, like he was exhilarated the way he'd been when we'd first arrived in the town. But it wasn't convincing, and once we came out onto a wider street, we all shuffled to a halt.

We were once again near a cliff edge. And like before, if you peered over the rail, you could see the paths zigzagging down to the seafront, except this time you could see the promenade at the bottom with rows of boarded-up stalls.

We spent a few moments just looking out, letting the wind hit us. Rodney was still trying to be cheerful, like he'd decided not to let any of this business spoil a good outing. He was pointing out to Chrissie something in the sea, way off on the horizon. But Chrissie turned away from him and said:

“Well, I think we're agreed, aren't we? That isn't Ruth.” She gave a small laugh and laid a hand on Ruth's shoulder. “I'm sorry. We're all sorry. But we can't blame Rodney really. It wasn't that wild a try. You've got to admit, when we saw her through those windows, it did look...” She trailed off, then touched Ruth on the shoulder again.

Ruth said nothing, but gave a little shrug, almost as if to shrug off the touch. She was squinting into the distance, at the sky rather than the water. I could tell she was upset, but someone who didn't know her well might well have supposed she was being thoughtful.

“Sorry, Ruth,” Rodney said, and he too gave Ruth a pat on the shoulder. But he had a smile on his face like he didn't expect for one moment to be blamed for anything. It was the way someone apologised when they'd tried to do you a favour, but it hadn't worked out.

Watching Chrissie and Rodney at that moment, I remember thinking, yes, they were okay. They were kind in their way and were trying to cheer Ruth up. At the same time, though, I remember feeling—even though they were the ones doing the talking, and Tommy and I were silent—a sort of resentment towards them on Ruth's behalf. Because however sympathetic they were, I could see that deep down they were relieved. They were relieved things had turned out the way they had; that they were in a position to comfort Ruth, instead of being left behind in the wake of a dizzying boost to her hopes. They were relieved they wouldn't have to face, more starkly than ever, the notion which fascinated and nagged and scared them: this notion of theirs that there were all kinds of possibilities open to us Hailsham students that weren't open to them. I remember thinking then how different they actually were, Chrissie and Rodney, from the three of us.

Then Tommy said: “I don't see what difference it makes. It was just a bit of fun we were having.”

“A bit of fun for you maybe, Tommy,” Ruth said coldly, still gazing straight ahead of her. “You wouldn't think so if it was your possible we'd been looking for.”

“I think I would,” Tommy said. “I don't see how it matters. Even if you found your possible, the actual model they got you from. Even then, I don't see what difference it makes to anything.”

“Thank you for your profound contribution, Tommy,” said Ruth.

“But I think Tommy's right,” I said. “It's daft to assume you'll have the same sort of life as your model. I agree with Tommy. It's just a bit of fun. We shouldn't get so serious about it.”

I too reached out and touched Ruth on the shoulder. I wanted her to feel the contrast to when Chrissie and Rodney had touched her, and I deliberately chose exactly the same spot. I expected some response, some signal that she accepted understanding from me and Tommy in a way she didn't from the veterans. But she gave me nothing, not even the shrug she'd given Chrissie.

Somewhere behind me I could hear Rodney pacing about, making noises to suggest he was getting chilly in the strong wind. “How about going to visit Martin now?” he said. “His flat's just over there, behind those houses.”

Ruth suddenly sighed and turned to us. “To be honest,” she said, “I knew all along it was stupid.”

“Yeah,” said Tommy, eagerly. “Just a bit of fun.”

Ruth gave him an irritated look. “Tommy, please shut up with all this 'bit of fun' stuff. No one's listening.” Then turning to Chrissie and Rodney she went on: “I didn't want to say when you first told me about this. But look, it was never on. They don't ever, ever, use people like that woman. Think about it. Why would she want to? We all know it, so why don't we all face it. We're not modelled from that sort...”

“Ruth,” I cut in firmly. “Ruth, don't.”

But she just carried on: “We all know it. We're modelled from trash. Junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps. Convicts, maybe, just so long as they aren't psychos. That's what we come from. We all know it, so why don't we

say it? A woman like that? Come on. Yeah, right, Tommy. A bit of fun. Let's have a bit of fun pretending. That other woman in there, her friend, the old one in the gallery. Art students, that's what she thought we were. Do you think she'd have talked to us like that if she'd known what we really were? What do you think she'd have said if we'd asked her? 'Excuse me, but do you think your friend was ever a clone model?' She'd have thrown us out. We know it, so we might as well just say it. If you want to look for possibles, if you want to do it properly, then you look in the gutter. You look in rubbish bins. Look down the toilet, that's where you'll find where we all came from.”

“Ruth” – Rodney's voice was steady and had a warning in it – “let's forget about it and go and see Martin. He's off this afternoon. You'll like him, he's a real laugh.”

Chrissie put an arm around Ruth. “Come on, Ruth. Let's do what Rodney says.”

Ruth got to her feet and Rodney started to walk. “Well, you lot can go,” I said quietly. “I'm not going.”

Ruth turned and looked at me carefully. “Well, what do you know? Who's the upset one now?”

“I'm not upset. But sometimes you speak garbage, Ruth.”

“Oh, look who's upset now. Poor Kathy. She never likes straight talking.”

“It's nothing to do with that. I don't want to visit a carer. We're not supposed to and I don't even know this guy.”

Ruth shrugged and exchanged glances with Chrissie. “Well,” she said, “there's no reason we've got to go round together the whole time. If little Miss here doesn't want to join us, she doesn't have to. Let her go off by herself.” Then she leaned over to Chrissie and said in a stage whisper: “That's always the best way when Kathy's in a mood. Leave her alone and she'll walk it off.”

“Be back at the car by four o'clock,” Rodney said to me. “Otherwise you'll have to hitch-hike.” Then he did a laugh. “Come on, Kathy, don't get in a sulk. Come with us.”

“No. You go on. I don't feel like it.”

Rodney shrugged and started to move off again. Ruth and Chrissie followed, but Tommy didn't move. Only when Ruth stared at him did he say:

“I'll stay with Kath. If we're splitting, then I'll stay with Kath.”

Ruth glared at him in fury, then turned and strode off. Chrissie and Rodney looked at Tommy awkwardly, then they too began walking again.

1. Answer the following questions:

- Who is Ruth's "possible"? Did they find her? Describe this person.
- How did Ruth feel while they were standing under the windows?
- What were they doing while they were waiting for that woman? What was the atmosphere like?
- Why did they follow that woman?
- What happened in *The Portway studios*?
- Who did the silver-haired lady take them for?
- What did Kathy say to the silver-haired lady? How do you think she felt at that moment?
- How did Ruth react at the end? What did she say? Why? Quote it.
- Where do you think Ruth will find herself in 10 years? What is her possible future?
- Why didn't Kathy go with the others? Why do you think Tommy stayed with her?

2. Retell the chapter from Ruth's / Tommy's / Rodney's perspective.

III. VOCABULARY WORK.

1. Match the words with their antonyms. Consult a dictionary if you need:

- | | |
|------------|--------------------|
| 1. batch | a. bold |
| 2. rummage | b. straightforward |
| 3. jigsaw | c. bland |
| 4. tremor | d. evidence |
| 5. hint | e. growth |
| 6. rot | f. information |
| 7. zigzag | g. arrange |
| 8. rumour | h. stillness |
| 9. vivid | i. attach |
| 10. hushed | j. individual |

2. Translate from Russian into English:

1. Потом, когда мы перешли на главную улицу, Крисси объявила, что они с Родни хотят зайти купить открыток для дней рождений.

2. Оба старожилы теперь стояли посреди тротуара, заставляя мам с прогулочными колясками себя объезжать и ожидая наших возражений.

3. Мне и сегодня это нравится: большой магазин, множество рядов с полками, где выставлены открытки, масса косметики, здесь же, может быть, и фотокиоск.

4. Если я сейчас приезжаю в город и у меня есть капелька свободного времени, я иду в какое-нибудь подобное место, где можно просто слоняться в свое удовольствие, ничего не покупая, и тебе и слова не скажут.

5. Когда я опустила коробку и повернулась к ним, обе смотрели на меня с неприязнью.

6. Когда они проходили мимо, Рут взглянула на меня свирепей некуда.

7. Сотрудники переходили от стола к столу, стояли, опершись на перегородки, разговаривали, шутили; некоторые, близко сдвинув кресла на колесиках, попивали кофе и ели сэндвичи.

8. Она смеялась над какими-то высказываниями своей приятельницы в красном, и в ее лице, особенно когда она,

отсмеявшись, встряхивала головой, был не просто намек на сходство с Рут, но, пожалуй, и нечто большее.

9. Стены и потолок были чуть желтоватого оттенка, там и тут высоко были развешаны куски рыболовных сетей и изъеденные временем части лодок.

10. Между тем седая дама и «возможное я» все время разговаривали, не особенно громко, но нам было слышно, потому что в этом салоне голоса словно бы наполняли все помещение.

3. Guess which words from the text are meant by these definitions:

1. _____ covered in very soft fur or feathers
2. _____ protecting somebody/something against attack
3. _____ in a worried or nervous way
4. _____ laughing a lot in a silly, nervous way
5. _____ slightly wet, often in a way that is unpleasant
6. _____ a person who is going past somebody/something by chance, especially when something unexpected happens
7. _____ a covered vehicle with no side windows in its back half, usually smaller than a lorry, used for carrying goods or people
8. _____ a feeling that somebody has done something wrong, illegal or dishonest, even though you have no proof
9. _____ the state of being quiet and calm; the state of not being worried or disturbed in any way
10. _____ very successful in a way that causes great pleasure

4. Find the synonyms for the following words in the text:

1. useful _____
2. sidewalk _____

- | | |
|-----------------|-------|
| 3. contemptuous | _____ |
| 4. angry | _____ |
| 5. dive | _____ |
| 6. quiver | _____ |
| 7. graphic | _____ |
| 8. mess around | _____ |
| 9. hang around | _____ |
| 10. utter | _____ |

5. Explain the meaning of the following collocations in English, make up your own sentences with them:

- pat on the shoulder
- gang of muggers
- rotten mood
- to stroll into somewhere
- to have some sort of tête-à-tête
- giggly panic
- since before the dawn
- to talk properly
- a dizzying boost
- a clone model

Chapter Twenty-One

I. PRE-READING.

thump, *v* /θʌmp/ to beat strongly

woozy, *adj* /'wu:zi/ (*informal*) feeling unsteady, confused and unable to think clearly

carsick, *adj* /'kɑ:.sik/ feeling that you want to vomit because of the movement of a car

pavement, *n* /'peɪvmənt/ (*British English*) a flat part at the side of a road for people to walk on

deserted, *adj* /dɪ'zɜ:tɪd/ (of a place) with no people in it

pedestrian precinct, *n* /pə'destriən 'pri:sɪŋkt/ (*British English*) a part of a town, especially a shopping area, that vehicles are not allowed to enter

thud, *v* /θʌd/ **thud (something) + adv./prep.** to fall or hit something with a low, heavy sound

hut, *n* /hʌt/ a small, simply built house or shelter

gateway, *n* /'geɪtweɪ/ an opening in a wall or fence that can be closed by a gate

deliberately, *adv* /dɪ'libərətli/ done in a way that was planned, not by chance

hesitation, *n* /,hezɪ'teɪʃn/ the act of being slow to speak or act because you feel uncertain or nervous

spun, *v* /spʌn/ Past Simple of **spin**

spin (somebody) round/around, *v* /spɪn/ to turn round quickly once; to make somebody do this

waylaid, *v* /weɪ'leɪd/ Past Simple of **waylay**

waylay somebody, *v* /weɪ'leɪ/ to stop somebody who is going somewhere, especially in order to talk to them or attack them

revulsion, *n* /rɪ'vʌlʃn/ (*formal*) a strong feeling of horror

squint, *v* /skwɪnt/ to look at something with your eyes partly shut in order to keep out bright light or to see better

peer, *v* /pɪə(r)/ (+ *adv./prep.*) to look closely or carefully at something, especially when you cannot see it clearly

banister, *n* /'bænɪstə(r)/ (*also bannister*) (*British English also banisters* [plural]) the posts and rail that you can hold for support when going up or down stairs

seal off, *phr v* /si:l/ if one object or area is sealed off from another, there is a physical barrier between them, so that nothing can pass between them

woven, *v* /'wəʊvən/ Past participle of **weave**

weave, *v* /wi:v/ to make cloth, a carpet, a basket, etc. by crossing threads or narrow pieces of material across, over and under each other by hand or on a machine called a loom

shade, *n* /ʃeɪd/ a thing that you use to prevent light from coming through or to make it less bright

murky, *adj* /'mɜ:ki/ (of a liquid) not clear; dark or dirty with mud or another substance

tuck, *v* /tʌk/ tuck something + *adv./prep.* to put something into a small space, especially to hide it or keep it safe or comfortable

burst into something, *phr v* /bɜ:st/ to start producing something suddenly and with great force

blurt something out, *phr v* /blɜ:t/ to say something suddenly and without thinking, usually because you are excited or nervous

daft, *adj* /dɑ:ft/, /dæft/ (*informal*) silly, often in a way that is funny

muddled, *adj* /'mʌdlɪ/ (*especially British English*) confused

deferral, *n* /dɪ'fɜ:rəl/ (*also deferment*) [uncountable, countable] (*formal*) the action of delaying something until a later time

bank on somebody/something, *phr v* /bæŋk/ to rely on somebody/something

devastated, *adj* /'devəsteɪtɪd/ extremely upset and shocked

scrutiny, *n* /'skru:təni/ (*formal*) careful and complete examination

vague, *adj* /veɪg/ (comparative **vaguer**, superlative **vaguest**) not clear in a person's mind

stride, *v* /straɪd/ + *adv./prep.* to walk with long steps in a particular direction

contorted, *adj* /kən'tɔ:tɪd/ twisted so that the natural or normal shape is lost

II. READING AND COMPREHENSION.

From days before we went, I'd had in my mind this picture of me and Tommy standing in front of that door, working up the nerve to press the bell,

then having to wait there with hearts thumping. The way it turned out, though, we got lucky and were spared that particular ordeal.

We deserved a bit of luck by then, because the day hadn't been going at all well. The car had played up on the journey out and we were an hour late for Tommy's tests. Then a mix-up at the clinic had meant Tommy having to re-do three of the tests. This had left him feeling pretty woozy, so when we finally set off for Littlehampton towards the end of the afternoon, he began to feel carsick and we had to keep stopping to let him walk it off.

We finally arrived just before six o'clock. We parked the car behind the bingo hall, took out from the boot the sports bag containing Tommy's notebooks, then set off towards the town centre. It had been a fine day and though the shops were all closing, a lot of people were hanging about outside the pubs, talking and drinking. Tommy began to feel better the more we walked, until eventually he remembered how he'd had to miss lunch because of the tests, and declared he'd have to eat before facing what was in front of us. So we were searching for some place to buy a takeaway sandwich, when he suddenly grabbed my arm, so hard I thought he was having some sort of attack. But then he said quietly into my ear:

“That's her, Kath. Look. Going past the hairdressers.”

And sure enough there she was, moving along the opposite pavement, dressed in her neat grey suit, just like the ones she'd always worn.

We set off after Madame at a reasonable distance, first through the pedestrian precinct, then along the near-deserted High Street. I think we were both reminded of that day we'd followed Ruth's possible through another town. But this time things proved far simpler, because pretty soon she'd led us onto that long seafront street.

Because the road was completely straight, and because the setting sun was falling on it all the way down to the end, we found we could let Madame get quite a way ahead—till she wasn't much more than a dot—and there'd still be no danger of losing her. In fact, we never even stopped hearing the echo of her heels, and the rhythmic thudding of Tommy's bag against his leg seemed to be a kind of answer.

We went on like that for a long time, past the rows of identical houses. Then the houses on the opposite pavement ran out, areas of flat lawn appeared in their place, and you could see, beyond the lawns, the tops of the beach huts lining the seafront. The water itself wasn't visible, but you could tell it was there, just from the big sky and the seagull noises.

But the houses on our side continued without a change, and after a while I said to Tommy:

“It's not long now. See that bench over there? That's the one I sit on. The house is just over from it.”

Until I said this, Tommy had been pretty calm. But now something seemed to get into him, and he began to walk much faster, like he wanted to catch up with her. But now there was no one between Madame and us, and as Tommy kept closing the gap, I had to grab his arm to slow him down. I was all the time afraid she'd turn and look at us, but she didn't, and then she was going in through her little gateway. She paused at her door to find her keys in her handbag, and then there we were, standing by her gate, watching her. She still didn't turn, and I had an idea that she'd been aware of us all along and was deliberately ignoring us. I thought too that Tommy was about to shout something to her, and that it would be the wrong thing. That was why I called from the gate, so quickly and without hesitation.

It was only a polite “Excuse me!” but she spun round like I'd thrown something at her. And as her gaze fell on us, a chill passed through me, much like the one I'd felt years ago that time we'd waylaid her outside the main house. Her eyes were as cold, and her face maybe even more severe than I remembered. I don't know if she recognised us at that point; but without doubt, she saw and decided in a second *what we were*, because you could see her stiffen—as if a pair of large spiders was set to crawl towards her.

Then something changed in her expression. It didn't become warmer exactly. But that revulsion got put away somewhere, and she studied us carefully, squinting in the setting sun.

“Madame,” I said, leaning over the gate. “We don’t want to shock you or anything. But we were at Hailsham. I’m Kathy H., maybe you remember. And this is Tommy D. We haven’t come to give you any trouble.”

She came a few steps back towards us. “From Hailsham,” she said, and a small smile actually went across her face. “Well, this is a surprise. If you aren’t here to give me trouble, then why are you here?”

Suddenly Tommy said: “We have to talk with you. I’ve brought some things”—he raised his bag— “some things you might want for your gallery. We’ve got to talk with you.”

Madame went on standing there, hardly moving in the low sun, her head tilted as though listening for some sound from the seafront. Then she smiled again, though the smile didn’t seem to be for us, but just herself.

“Very well then. Come inside. Then we’ll see what it is you wish to talk about.”

As we went in, I noticed the front door had coloured glass panels, and once Tommy closed it behind us, everything got pretty dark. We were in a hallway so narrow you felt you’d be able to touch the walls on either side just by stretching out your elbows. Madame had stopped in front of us, and was standing still, her back to us, again like she was listening. Peering past her, I saw that the hallway, narrow as it was, divided further: to the left was a staircase going upstairs; to the right, an even narrower passage leading deeper into the house.

Following Madame’s example, I listened too, but there was only silence in the house. Then, maybe from somewhere upstairs, there was a faint thump. That small noise seemed to signify something to her, because she now turned to us and pointing into the darkness of the passage, said:

“Go in there and wait for me. I’ll be down shortly.”

She began to climb the stairs, then seeing our hesitation, leaned over the banister and pointed again into the dark.

“In there,” she said, then vanished upstairs.

Tommy and I wandered forward and found ourselves in what must have been the front room of the house. It was like a servant of some sort had got the place ready for the night-time, then left: the curtains were closed and

there were dim table lamps switched on. I could smell the old furniture, which was probably Victorian. The fireplace had been sealed off with a board, and where the fire would have been, there was a picture, woven like a tapestry, of a strange owl-like bird staring out at you. Tommy touched my arm and pointed to a framed picture hanging in a corner over a little round table.

“It’s Hailsham,” he whispered.

We went up to it, but then I wasn’t so sure. I could see it was a pretty nice watercolour, but the table lamp beneath it had a crooked shade covered with cobweb traces, and instead of lighting up the picture, it just put a shine over the murky glass, so you could hardly make it out at all.

“It’s the bit round the back of the duck pond,” Tommy said.

“What do you mean?” I whispered back. “There’s no pond. It’s just a bit of countryside.”

“No, the pond’s behind you.” Tommy seemed surprisingly irritated. “You must be able to remember. If you’re round the back with the pond behind you, and you’re looking over towards the North Playing Field...”

We went silent again because we could hear voices somewhere in the house. It sounded like a man’s voice, maybe coming from upstairs. Then we heard what was definitely Madame’s voice coming down the stairs, saying: “Yes, you’re quite right. Quite right.”

We waited for Madame to come in, but her footsteps went past the door and to the back of the house. It flashed through my mind she was going to prepare tea and scones and bring it all in on a trolley, but then I decided that was rubbish, that she’d just as likely forgotten about us, and now she’d suddenly remember, come in and tell us to leave. Then a gruff male voice called something from upstairs, so muffled it might have been two floors up. Madame’s footsteps came back into the hallway, then she called up: “I’ve told you what to do. Just do as I explained.”

Tommy and I waited several more minutes. Then the wall at the back of the room began to move. I saw almost immediately it wasn’t really a wall, but a pair of sliding doors which you could use to section off the front half of what was otherwise one long room. Madame had rolled back the doors

just part of the way, and she was now standing there staring at us. I tried to see past her, but it was just darkness. I thought maybe she was waiting for us to explain why we were there, but in the end, she said:

“You told me you were Kathy H. and Tommy D. Am I correct? And you were at Hailsham how long ago?”

I told her, but there was no way of telling if she remembered us or not. She just went on standing there at the threshold, as though hesitating to come in. But now Tommy spoke again:

“We don’t want to keep you long. But there’s something we have to talk to you about.”

“So you say. Well then. You’d better make yourselves comfortable.”

She reached out and put her hands on the backs of two matching armchairs just in front of her. There was something odd about her manner, like she hadn’t really invited us to sit down. I felt that if we did as she was suggesting and sat on those chairs, she’d just go on standing behind us, not even taking her hands away from the backs. But when we made a move towards her, she too came forwards, and—perhaps I imagined it—tucked her shoulders in tightly as she passed between us. When we turned to sit down, she was over by the windows, in front of the heavy velvet curtains, holding us in a glare, like we were in a class and she was a teacher. At least, that’s the way it looked to me at that moment. Tommy, afterwards, said he thought she was about to burst into song, and that those curtains behind her would open, and instead of the street and the flat grassy expanse leading to the seafront, there’d be this big stage set, like the ones we’d had at Hailsham, with even a chorus line to back her up. It was funny, when he said that afterwards, and I could see her again then, hands clasped, elbows out, sure enough like she was getting ready to sing. But I doubt if Tommy was really thinking anything like that at the time. I remember noticing how tense he’d got, and worrying he’d blurt out something completely daft. That was why, when she asked us, not unkindly, what it was we wanted, I stepped in quickly.

It probably came out pretty muddled at first, but after a while, as I became more confident she’d hear me out, I calmed down and got a lot

clearer. I'd been turning over in my mind for weeks and weeks just what I'd say to her. I'd gone over it during those long car journeys, and while sitting at quiet tables in service-station cafés. It had seemed so difficult then, and I'd eventually resorted to a plan: I'd memorised word for word a few key lines, then drawn a mental map of how I'd go from one point to the next. But now she was there in front of me, most of what I'd prepared seemed either unnecessary or completely wrong. The strange thing was—and Tommy agreed when we discussed it afterwards—although at Hailsham she'd been like this hostile stranger from the outside, now that we were facing her again, even though she hadn't said or done anything to suggest any warmth towards us, Madame now appeared to me like an intimate, someone much closer to us than anyone new we'd met over the recent years. That's why suddenly all the things I'd been preparing in my head just went, and I spoke to her honestly and simply, almost as I might have done years ago to a guardian. I told her what we'd heard, the rumours about Hailsham students and deferrals; how we realised the rumours might not be accurate, and that we weren't banking on anything.

“And even if it *is* true,” I said, “we know you must get tired of it, all these couples coming to you, claiming to be in love. Tommy and me, we never would have come and bothered you if we weren't really sure.”

“Sure?” It was the first time she'd spoken for ages and we both jolted back a bit in surprise. “You say you're *sure*? Sure, that you're in love? How can you know it? You think love is so simple? So, you are in love. Deeply in love. Is that what you're saying to me?”

Her voice sounded almost sarcastic, but then I saw, with a kind of shock, little tears in her eyes as she looked from one to the other of us.

“You believe this? That you're deeply in love? And therefore, you've come to me for this... this deferral? Why? Why did you come to me?”

If she'd asked this in a certain way, like the whole idea was completely crazy, then I'm sure I'd have felt pretty devastated. But she hadn't quite said it like that. She'd asked it almost like it was a test question she knew the answer to; as if, even, she'd taken other couples through an identical routine

many times before. That was what kept me hopeful. But Tommy must have got anxious, because he suddenly burst in:

“We came to see you because of your gallery. We think we know what your gallery’s for.”

“My gallery?” She leaned back on the window ledge, causing the curtains to sway behind her, and took a slow breath. “My gallery. You must mean my collection. All those paintings, poems, all those things of yours I gathered over the years. It was hard work for me, but I believed in it, we all did in those days. So you think you know what it was for, why we did it. Well, that would be most interesting to hear. Because I have to say, it’s a question I ask myself all the time.” She suddenly switched her gaze from Tommy to me. “Do I go too far?” she asked.

I didn’t know what to say, so just replied: “No, no.”

“I go too far,” she said. “I’m sorry. I often go too far on this subject. Forget what I just said. Young man, you were going to tell me about my gallery. Please, let me hear.”

“It’s so you could tell,” Tommy said. “So you’d have something to go on. Otherwise, how would you know when students came to you and said they were in love?”

Madame’s gaze had drifted over to me again, but I had the feeling she was staring at something on my arm. I actually looked down to see if there was birdshit or something on my sleeve. Then I heard her say:

“And this is why you think I gathered all those things of yours. My *gallery*, as all of you always called it. I laughed when I first heard that’s what you were calling it. But in time, I too came to think of it as that. My gallery. Now why, young man, explain it to me. Why would my gallery help in telling which of you were really in love?”

“Because it would help show you what we were like,” Tommy said. “Because...”

“Because of course”— Madame cut in suddenly — “your art will reveal your inner selves! That’s it, isn’t it? Because your art will display your *souls!*” Then suddenly she turned to me again and said: “I go too far?”

She'd said this before, and I again had the impression she was staring at a spot on my sleeve. But by this point a faint suspicion I'd had ever since the first time she'd asked "I go too far?" had started to grow. I looked at Madame carefully, but she seemed to sense my scrutiny and she turned back to Tommy.

"All right," she said. "Let us continue. What was it you were telling me?"

"The trouble is," Tommy said, "I was a bit mixed up in those days."

"You were saying something about your art. How art bares the soul of the artist."

"Well, what I'm trying to say," Tommy persisted, "is that I was so mixed up in those days, I didn't really do any art. I didn't do anything. I know now I should have done, but I was mixed up. So you haven't got anything of mine in your gallery. I know that's my fault, and I know it's probably way too late, but I've brought some things with me now." He raised his bag, then began to unzip it. "Some of it was done recently, but some of it's from quite a long time ago. You should have Kath's stuff already. She got plenty into the Gallery. Didn't you, Kath?"

For a moment they were both looking at me. Then Madame said, barely audibly:

"Poor creatures. What did we do to you? With all our schemes and plans?" She let that hang, and I thought I could see tears in her eyes again. Then she turned to me and asked: "Do we continue with this talk? You wish to go on?"

It was when she said this that the vague idea I'd had before became something more substantial. "Do I go too far?" And now: "Do we continue?" I realised, with a little chill, that these questions had never been for me, or for Tommy, but for someone else—someone listening behind us in the darkened half of the room.

I turned round quite slowly and looked into the darkness. I couldn't see anything, but I heard a sound, a mechanical one, surprisingly far away—the house seemed to go much further back into the dark than I'd guessed.

Then I could make out a shape moving towards us, and a woman's voice said: "Yes, Marie-Claude. Let us carry on."

I was still looking into the darkness when I heard Madame let out a kind of snort, and she came striding past us and on into the dark. Then there were more mechanical sounds, and Madame emerged pushing a figure in a wheelchair. She passed between us again, and for a moment longer, because Madame's back was blocking the view, I couldn't see the person in the wheelchair. But then Madame steered it around to face us and said:

"You speak to them. It's you they've come to speak to."

"I suppose it is."

The figure in the wheelchair was frail and contorted, and it was the voice more than anything that helped me recognize her.

"Miss Emily," Tommy said, quite softly.

"You speak to them," Madame said, as though washing her hands of everything. But she remained standing behind the wheelchair, her eyes blazing towards us.

1. Answer the following questions:

- Why didn't Tommy get his test results on time?
- Who was walking along the "opposite pavement"? What was she wearing?
- How long did Tommy and Kathy follow Madame?
- What was Madame's reaction when she was suddenly called?
- Describe the hall Kathy and Tommy walked along when they entered Madame's house. Why do you think it was silent in the house?
- What was depicted on the watercolour picture hanging in the corner over the round table?
- What was odd about Madame's manner? How did she behave while talking to Kathy and Tommy?
- Why was Kathy always speaking to Madame first?

- How did Kathy prepare for that conversation with Madame? Why did she put so much effort in it?
- How do Kathy and Tommy treat the rumours about Hailsham?
- Who did Madame address her questions to whether she had gone too far?

2. Give the summary of this chapter.

III. VOCABULARY WORK.

1. Find the synonyms of the following words in the text:

totally	_____
embankment	_____
purposely	_____
look-alike	_____
twist	_____
doubt	_____
disappear	_____
muted	_____
firmly	_____
ruined	_____

2. What meaning of the following phrasal verbs is realized in the text? Find out all their meanings in the dictionary and make up sentences with them:

work up	get into
turn out	make out
set off	back up
hang about	turn over
run out	go over

3. Find an object to the following verbs from the text. Describe the context in which these phrases appear:

deserve	_____
re-do	_____
park	_____
face	_____
follow	_____
prepare	_____
grab	_____
notice	_____
smell	_____
seal off	_____

4. Insert the necessary word from the Pre-reading section in the right form:

1. The street she was walking along was _____. There was no one around her nearby.
2. Madame was near to _____ singing, as Tommy thought.
3. Kathy's thoughts were _____ at first, but she calmed down when she realized Madame's hear her out.
4. Kathy had no _____ of calling Madame loud from the gate.
5. Kathy had an idea Madame was aware of them following her but she was _____ ignoring them.
6. _____ about Hailsham are not worth of banking on them.
7. Tommy was always going to _____ something completely daft, as Kathy thought about him.
8. Kathy saw the whole hallway of Madame's house when she _____ past her.
9. Tommy always feels _____ while driving, that's why he always needs to stop and walk it off.
10. Kathy and Tommy could hardly see the picture in the corner because the shine of the lamp was weak and reflected on the _____ glass.

5. Translate from Russian into English:

1. Нам справедливо полагалось немного удачи, потому что этот день до сих пор складывался не очень-то удачно.

2. Я заметила, что входная дверь у нее была с цветными стеклами, и когда Томми закрыл ее за нами, в коридоре, где мы оказались, стало довольно темно.

3. Хотя в Хейлшеме Мадам была для нас враждебной личностью, вторгавшейся извне, теперь она внушала доверие, представлялась человеком куда более близким, чем все новые знакомые, появившиеся у нас за последние годы. Вот почему все, что я вызубрила, разом вылетело у меня из головы.

4. Моя галерея. Вы имеете ввиду мою коллекцию. Все эти картины, стихи, все ваши произведения, которые я собирала год за годом. Итак, вы думаете, что знаете, зачем она была нужна, зачем мы этим занимались.

5. Я пополняла мою *галерею*, как вы все ее называли. Я очень сильно смеялась, когда узнала, что мою коллекцию обозначили этим словом.

6. Разумеется, потому, что они раскрывают вашу внутреннюю суть! Вы ведь это имели ввиду? Потому что они показывают, какие у вас *души*!

7. Но к тому моменту легкое подозрение, возникшее у меня, когда она впервые спросила: «Я зашла слишком далеко?», начало усиливаться.

8. В то время у меня в голова был такой хаос, я никаким творчеством не занимался. Я теперь понимаю, что я должен был, но тогда в голове была полная неразбериха.

9. Именно после этих слов смутная мысль, которая у меня была, превратилась в нечто более определенное.

10. Фигура в кресле была сгорбленная и немощная, и узнала я ее, прежде всего, по голосу.

Chapter Twenty-Two

I. PRE-READING.

disillusioned, *adj* /,dɪsɪ'lu:ʒnd/ disillusioned (by/with somebody/something) disappointed because the person you admired or the idea you believed to be good and true now seems without value

merit, *v* /'merɪt/ (*formal*) merit (doing) something to deserve praise, attention, etc.

turn out, *ph v* /tɜ:n/ (used with an adverb or adjective, or in questions with *how*) to happen in a particular way; to develop or end in a particular way

contraption, *n* /kən'træpʃn/ a machine or piece of equipment that looks strange or complicated and possibly does not work well

cabinet, *n* /'kæbɪnət/ a piece of furniture with doors, drawers and/or shelves, that is used for storing or showing things

hurl, *v* /hɜ:l/ hurl something/somebody + *adv./prep.* to throw something/somebody violently in a particular direction

sulk, *n* /sʌlk/ (*British English also the sulks* [plural]) a period of not speaking and being unpleasant because you are angry about something

estate, *n* /ɪ'steɪt/ a large area of land, usually in the country, that is owned by one person or family

stamp out, *ph v* /stæmp/ to get rid of something that is bad, unpleasant or dangerous, especially by using force or a lot of effort

imply, *v* /ɪm'plaɪ/ to suggest that something is true or that you feel or think something, without saying so directly

beacon, *n* /'bi:kən/ a light that is placed somewhere to guide vehicles and warn them of danger

wishful, *adj* /'wɪʃfʊl/, (*British English*) having wishes or characterized by wishing

intently, *adv* /ɪn'tentli/ with strong interest and attention

see to something, *ph v* /si:/ to deal with something

steadfast, *adj* /'stedfɑ:st/ (*literary, approving*) not changing in your attitudes or aims

take somebody aback, *ph v* /teɪk/ [usually passive] to shock or surprise somebody very much

set out, *ph v* /set/ to begin a job, task, etc. with a particular aim or goal

deplorable, *adj* /dɪ'plɔ:rəbl/ (*formal*) very bad and unacceptable, often in a way that shocks people

dejected, *adj* /dɪ'dʒektɪd/ unhappy and disappointed

secure, *v* /sɪ'kjʊə(r)/, /sɪ'kjʊr/ to obtain or achieve something, especially when this means using a lot of effort

vocal, *adj* /'vəʊkl/ telling people your opinions or protesting about something loudly and with confidence

cultivated, *adj* /'kʌltɪveɪtɪd/ (of people) having a high level of education and showing good manners

shadowy, *adj* /'ʃædəʊi/ [usually before noun] that not much is known about

test tube, *n* /'test tju:b/ a small glass tube, closed at one end, that is used in scientific experiments

reminisce, *v* /,remɪ'nɪs/ reminisce (about something/somebody) to think, talk or write about a happy time in your past

assembly, *n* /ə'sembli/ (plural **assemblies**) the meeting together of a group of people for a particular purpose; a group of people who meet together for a particular purpose

lose touch (with somebody/something), *idiom* to no longer have any contact with somebody/something

bemusement, *n* /bɪ'mju:zmənt / the feeling that you have when you are puzzled or confused by something.

take stock (of something), *idiom* to stop and think carefully about the way in which a particular situation is developing in order to decide what to do next

reverse, *v* /rɪ'vɜ:s/ reverse something to change something completely so that it is the opposite of what it was before

motor neurone disease, *n* /,məʊtə 'njʊərəʊn dɪzi:z/ (*abbreviation MND*) a disease in which the nerves and muscles become gradually weaker until the person dies

square the circle, *idiom* to do something that is considered to be impossible

convince, *v* /kən'vɪns/ to make somebody/yourself believe that something is true

demonstrably, *adv* /dɪ'mɒnstrəbli/, /'demənstərəbli/, /dɪ'mɑ:nstrəbli/ (*formal*) in a way that can be shown or proved

recoil, *v* /rɪ'kɔɪl/ to react to an idea or a situation with strong dislike or fear

culpable, *adj* /'kʌlpəbl/ (*formal*) responsible and deserving blame for having done something wrong

avert, *v* /ə'veɜ:t/ (*formal*) avert something to prevent something bad or dangerous from happening

the tide turned, *idiom* used to say that there is a change in somebody's luck or in how successful they are being

shattered, *adj* /'ʃætəd/ very shocked and upset

dormitory, *n* /'dɔ:mətɪri/ a room for several people to sleep in, especially in a school or other institution

II. READING AND COMPREHENSION.

“Marie-Claude is correct,” Miss Emily said. “I’m the one to whom you should be speaking. Marie-Claude worked hard for our project. And the way it all ended has left her feeling somewhat disillusioned. As for myself, whatever the disappointments, I don’t feel so badly about it. I think what we achieved merits some respect. Look at the two of you. You’ve turned out well. I’m sure you have much you could tell me to make me proud. What did you say your names were? No, no, wait. I think I shall remember. You’re the boy with the bad temper. A bad temper, but a big heart. Tommy. Am I right? And you, of course, are Kathy H. You’ve done well as a carer. We’ve

heard a lot about you. I remember, you see. I dare say I can remember you all.”

“What good does it do you or them?” Madame asked, then strode away from the wheelchair, past the two of us and into the darkness, for all I know to occupy the space Miss Emily had been in before.

“Miss Emily,” I said, “it’s very nice to see you again.”

“How kind of you to say so. I recognised you, but you may well not have recognised me. In fact, Kathy H., once not so long ago, I passed you sitting on that bench out there, and you certainly didn’t recognise me then. You glanced at George, the big Nigerian man pushing me. Oh yes, you had quite a good look at him, and he at you. I didn’t say a word, and you didn’t know it was me. But tonight, in context, as it were, we know each other. You both look rather shocked at the sight of me. I’ve not been well recently, but I’m hoping this contraption isn’t a permanent fixture. Unfortunately, my dears, I won’t be able to entertain you for as long as I’d like just now, because in a short while some men are coming to take away my bedside cabinet. It’s a quite wonderful object. George has put protective padding around it, but I’ve insisted I’ll accompany it myself all the same. You never know with these men. They handle it roughly, hurl it around their vehicle, then their employer claims it was like that from the start. It happened to us before, so this time, I’ve insisted on going along with it. It’s a beautiful object, I had it with me at Hailsham, so I’m determined to get a fair price. So when they come, I’m afraid that’s when I shall have to leave you. But I can see, my dears, you’ve come on a mission close to your hearts. I must say, it does cheer me to see you. And it cheers Marie-Claude too, even though you’d never know it to look at her. Isn’t that so, darling? Oh, she pretends it’s not so, but it is. She’s touched that you’ve come to find us. Oh, she’s in a sulk, ignore her, students, ignore her. Now, I’ll try and answer your questions the best I can. I’ve heard this rumour countless times. When we still had Hailsham, we’d get two or three couples each year, trying to get in to talk to us. One even wrote to us. I suppose it’s not so hard to find a large estate like that if you mean to break the rules. So you see, it’s been there, this rumour, from long before your time.”

She stopped, so I said: “What we want to know now, Miss Emily, is if the rumour’s true or not.”

She went on gazing at us for a moment, then took a deep breath. “Within Hailsham itself, whenever this talk started up, I made sure to stamp it out good and proper. But as for what students said after they’d left us, what could I do? In the end, I came to believe—and Marie-Claude believes this too, don’t you, darling?—I came to believe that this rumour, it’s not just a single rumour. What I mean is, I think it’s one that gets created from scratch over and over. You go to the source, stamp it out, you’ll not stop it starting again elsewhere. I came to this conclusion and ceased to worry about it. Marie-Claude never did worry about it. Her view was: ‘If they’re so foolish, let them believe it.’ Oh yes, don’t show me that sour face of yours. That’s been your view of it from the beginning. After many years of it, I came not exactly to the same viewpoint. But I began to think, well, perhaps I shouldn’t worry. It’s not my doing, after all. And for the few couples who get disappointed, the rest will never put it to the test anyway. It’s something for them to dream about, a little fantasy. What harm is there? But for the two of you, I can see this doesn’t apply. You are serious. You’ve thought carefully. You’ve hoped carefully. For students like you, I do feel regret. It gives me no pleasure at all to disappoint you. But there it is.”

I didn’t want to look at Tommy. I felt surprisingly calm, and even though Miss Emily’s words should have crushed us, there was an aspect to them that implied something further, something being held back, that suggested we hadn’t yet got to the bottom of things. There was even the possibility she wasn’t telling the truth. So I asked:

“Is it the case, then, that deferrals don’t exist? There’s nothing you can do?”

She shook her head slowly from side to side. “There’s no truth in the rumour. I’m sorry. I truly am.”

Suddenly Tommy asked: “Was it true once though? Before Hailsham closed?”

Miss Emily went on shaking her head. “It was never true. Even before the Morningdale scandal, even back when Hailsham was considered a

shining beacon, an example of how we might move to a more humane and better way of doing things, even then, it wasn't true. It's best to be clear about this. A wishful rumour. That's all it ever was. Oh dear, is that the men come for the cabinet?"

The doorbell had gone, and footsteps came down the stairs to answer it. There were men's voices out in the narrow hall, and Madame came out of the darkness behind us, crossed the room and went out. Miss Emily leaned forward in the wheelchair, listening intently. Then she said:

"It's not them. It's that awful man from the decorating company again. Marie-Claude will see to it. So, my dears, we have a few minutes more. Was there something else you wished to talk to me about? This is all strictly against regulations, of course, and Marie-Claude should never have asked you in. And naturally, I should have turned you out the second I knew you were here. But Marie-Claude doesn't care much for their regulations these days, and I must say, neither do I. So if you wish to stay a little longer, you're very-+ welcome."

"If the rumour was never true," Tommy said, "then why did you take all our art stuff away? Didn't the Gallery exist either?"

"The Gallery? Well, that rumour *did* have some truth to it. There *was* a gallery. And after a fashion, there still is. These days it's here, in this house. I had to prune it down, which I regret. But there wasn't room for all of it in here. But why did we take your work away? That's what you're asking, isn't it?"

"Not just that," I said quietly. "Why did we do all of that work in the first place? Why train us, encourage us, make us produce all of that? If we're just going to give donations anyway, then die, why all those lessons? Why all those books and discussions?"

"Why Hailsham at all?" Madame had said this from the hallway. She came past us again and back into the darkened section of the room. "It's a good question for you to ask."

Miss Emily's gaze followed her, and for a moment, remained fixed behind us. I felt like turning to see what looks were being exchanged, but it

was almost like we were back at Hailsham, and we had to keep facing the front with complete attention. Then Miss Emily said:

“Yes, why Hailsham at all? Marie-Claude likes to ask that a lot these days. But not so long ago, before the Morningdale scandal, she wouldn’t have dreamt of asking a question like that. It wouldn’t have entered her head. You know that’s right, don’t look at me like that! There was only one person in those days who would ask a question like that, and that was me. Long before Morningdale, right from the very beginning, I asked that. And that made it easy for the rest of them, Marie-Claude, all the rest of them, they could all carry on without a care. All you students too. I did all the worrying and questioning for the lot of you. And as long as I was steadfast, then no doubts ever crossed your minds, any of you. But you asked your questions, dear boy. Let’s answer the simplest one, and perhaps it will answer all the rest. Why did we take your artwork? Why did we do that? You said an interesting thing earlier, Tommy. When you were discussing this with Marie-Claude. You said it was because your art would reveal what you were like. What you were like inside. That’s what you said, wasn’t it? Well, you weren’t far wrong about that. We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your souls. Or to put it more finely, we did it to *prove you had souls at all.*”

She paused, and Tommy and I exchanged glances for the first time in ages. Then I asked:

“Why did you have to prove a thing like that, Miss Emily? Did someone think we didn’t have souls?”

A thin smile appeared on her face. “It’s touching, Kathy, to see you so taken aback. It demonstrates, in a way, that we did our job well. As you say, why would anyone doubt you had a soul? But I have to tell you, my dear, it wasn’t something commonly held when we first set out all those years ago. And though we’ve come a long way since then, it’s still not a notion universally held, even today. You Hailsham students, even after you’ve been out in the world like this, you still don’t know the half of it. All around the country, at this very moment, there are students being reared in

deplorable conditions, conditions you Hailsham students could hardly imagine. And now we're no more, things will only get worse."

She paused again, and for a moment she seemed to be inspecting us carefully through narrowed eyes. Finally, she went on:

"Whatever else, we at least saw to it that all of you in our care, you grew up in wonderful surroundings. And we saw to it too, after you left us, you were kept away from the worst of those horrors. We were able to do that much for you at least. But this dream of yours, this dream of being able to *defer*. Such a thing would always have been beyond us to grant, even at the height of our influence. I'm sorry, I can see what I'm saying won't be welcome to you. But you mustn't be dejected. I hope you can appreciate how much we *were* able to secure for you. Look at you both now! You've had good lives, you're educated and cultured. I'm sorry we couldn't secure more for you than we did, but you must realise how much worse things once were. When Marie-Claude and I started out, there were no places like Hailsham in existence. We were the first, along with Glenmorgan House. Then a few years later came the Saunders Trust. Together, we became a small but very vocal movement, and we challenged the entire way the donations programme was being run. Most importantly, we demonstrated to the world that if students were reared in humane, cultivated environments, it was possible for them to grow to be as sensitive and intelligent as any ordinary human being. Before that, all clones—or *students*, as we preferred to call you—existed only to supply medical science. In the early days, after the war, that's largely all you were to most people. Shadowy objects in test tubes. Wouldn't you agree, Marie-Claude? She's being very quiet. Usually you can't get her to shut up on this subject. Your presence, my dears, appears to have tied her tongue. Very well. So to answer your question, Tommy. That was why we collected your art. We selected the best of it and put on special exhibitions. In the late seventies, at the height of our influence, we were organising large events all around the country. There'd be cabinet ministers, bishops, all sorts of famous people coming to attend. There were speeches, large funds pledged. 'There, look!' we could say. 'Look at this art! How dare you claim these children are anything less than fully human?'

Oh yes, there was a lot of support for our movement back then, the tide was with us.”

For the next few minutes, Miss Emily went on reminiscing about different events from those days, mentioning a lot of people whose names meant nothing to us. In fact, for a moment, it was almost like we were listening to her again at one of her morning assemblies as she drifted off on tangents none of us could follow. She seemed to enjoy herself, though, and a gentle smile settled around her eyes. Then suddenly she came out of it and said in a new tone:

“But we never quite lost touch with reality, did we, Marie-Claude? Not like our colleagues at the Saunders Trust. Even during the best of times, we always knew what a difficult battle we were engaged in. And sure enough, the Morningdale business came along, then one or two other things, and before we knew it all our hard work had come undone.”

“But what I don’t understand,” I said, “is why people would want students treated so badly in the first place.”

“From your perspective today, Kathy, your bemusement is perfectly reasonable. But you must try and see it historically. After the war, in the early fifties, when the great breakthroughs in science followed one after the other so rapidly, there wasn’t time to take stock, to ask the sensible questions. Suddenly there were all these new possibilities laid before us, all these ways to cure so many previously incurable conditions. This was what the world noticed the most, wanted the most. And for a long time, people preferred to believe these organs appeared from nowhere, or at most that they grew in a kind of vacuum. Yes, there *were* arguments. But by the time people became concerned about... about *students*, by the time they came to consider just how you were reared, whether you should have been brought into existence at all, well by then it was too late. There was no way to reverse the process. How can you ask a world that has come to regard cancer as curable, how can you ask such a world to put away that cure, to go back to the dark days? There was no going back. However uncomfortable people were about your existence, their overwhelming concern was that their own children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, did not die from cancer,

motor neurone disease, heart disease. So for a long time you were kept in the shadows, and people did their best not to think about you. And if they did, they tried to convince themselves you weren't really like us. That you were less than human, so it didn't matter. And that was how things stood until our little movement came along. But do you see what we were up against? We were virtually attempting to square the circle. Here was the world, requiring students to donate. While that remained the case, there would always be a barrier against seeing you as properly human. Well, we fought that battle for many years, and what we won for you, at least, were many improvements, though of course, you were only a select few. But then came the Morningdale scandal, then other things, and before we knew it, the climate had quite changed. No one wanted to be seen supporting us any more, and our little movement, Hailsham, Glenmorgan, the Saunders Trust, we were all of us swept away."

"What was this Morningdale scandal you keep mentioning, Miss Emily?" I asked. "You'll have to tell us, because we don't know about it."

"Well, I suppose there's no reason why you should. It was never such a large matter in the wider world. It concerned a scientist called James Morningdale, quite talented in his way. He carried on his work in a remote part of Scotland, where I suppose he thought he'd attract less attention. What he wanted was to offer people the possibility of having children with enhanced characteristics. Superior intelligence, superior athleticism, that sort of thing. Of course, there'd been others with similar ambitions, but this Morningdale fellow, he'd taken his research much further than anyone before him, far beyond legal boundaries. Well, he was discovered, they put an end to his work and that seemed to be that. Except, of course, it wasn't, not for us. As I say, it never became an enormous matter. But it did create a certain atmosphere, you see. It reminded people, reminded them of a fear they'd always had. It's one thing to create students, such as yourselves, for the donation programme. But a generation of created children who'd take their place in society? Children demonstrably *superior* to the rest of us? Oh no. That frightened people. They recoiled from that."

“But Miss Emily,” I said, “what did any of that have to do with us? Why did Hailsham have to close because of something like that?”

“We didn’t see an obvious connection either, Kathy. Not at first. And I often think now, we were culpable not to do so. Had we been more alert, less absorbed with ourselves, if we’d worked very hard at that stage when the news about Morningdale first broke, we might have been able to avert it. Oh, Marie-Claude disagrees. She thinks it would have happened no matter what we did, and she might have a point. After all, it wasn’t just Morningdale. There were other things at that time. That awful television series, for instance. All these things contributed, contributed to the turning of the tide. But I suppose when it comes down to it, the central flaw was this. Our little movement, we were always too fragile, always too dependent on the whims of our supporters. So long as the climate was in our favour, so long as a corporation or a politician could see a benefit in supporting us, then we were able to keep afloat. But it had always been a struggle, and after Morningdale, after the climate changed, we had no chance. The world didn’t want to be reminded how the donation programme really worked. They didn’t want to think about you students, or about the conditions you were brought up in. In other words, my dears, they wanted you back in the shadows. Back in the shadows where you’d been before the likes of Marie-Claude and myself ever came along. And all those influential people who’d once been so keen to help us, well of course, they all vanished. We lost our sponsors, one after the other, in a matter of just over a year. We kept going for as long as we could, we went on for two years more than Glenmorgan. But in the end, as you know, we were obliged to close, and today there’s hardly a trace left of the work we did. You won’t find anything like Hailsham anywhere in the country now. All you’ll find, as ever, are those vast government ‘homes,’ and even if they’re somewhat better than they once were, let me tell you, my dears, you’d not sleep for days if you saw what still goes on in some of those places. And as for Marie-Claude and me, here we are, we’ve retreated to this house, and upstairs we have a mountain of your work. That’s what we have to remind us of what we did. And a mountain of debt too, though that’s not nearly so welcome. And the

memories, I suppose, of all of you. And the knowledge that we've given you better lives than you would have had otherwise."

"Don't try and ask them to thank you," Madame's voice said from behind us. "Why should they be grateful? They came here looking for something much more. What we gave them, all the years, all the fighting we did on their behalf, what do they know of that? They think it's God-given. Until they came here, they knew nothing of it. All they feel now is disappointment, because we haven't given them everything possible."

Nobody spoke for a while. Then there was a noise outside and the doorbell rang again. Madame came out of the darkness and went out into the hall.

"This time it *must* be the men," Miss Emily said. "I shall have to get ready. But you can stay a little longer. The men have to bring the thing down two flights of stairs. Marie-Claude will see they don't damage it."

Tommy and I couldn't quite believe that was the end of it. We neither of us stood up, and anyway, there was no sign of anyone helping Miss Emily out of her wheelchair. I wondered for a moment if she was going to try and get up by herself, but she remained still, leaning forward as before, listening intently. Then Tommy said:

"So there's definitely nothing. No deferral, nothing like that."

"Tommy," I murmured, and glared at him. But Miss Emily said gently:

"No, Tommy. There's nothing like that. Your life must now run the course that's been set for it."

"So, what you're saying, Miss," Tommy said, "is that everything we did, all the lessons, everything. It was all about what you just told us? There was nothing more to it than that?"

"I can see," Miss Emily said, "that it might look as though you were simply pawns in a game. It can certainly be looked at like that. But think of it. You were lucky pawns. There was a certain climate and now it's gone. You have to accept that sometimes that's how things happen in this world. People's opinions, their feelings, they go one way, then the other. It just so happens you grew up at a certain point in this process."

“It might be just some trend that came and went,” I said. “But for us, it’s our life.”

“Yes, that’s true. But think of it. You were better off than many who came before you. And who knows what those who come after you will have to face. I’m sorry, students, but I must leave you now. George! George!”

There had been a lot of noise out in the hallway, and perhaps this had stopped George from hearing, because there was no response. Tommy asked suddenly:

“Is that why Miss Lucy left?”

For a while I thought Miss Emily, whose attention was on what was going on in the hallway, hadn’t heard him. She leaned back in her wheelchair and began moving it gradually towards the door. There were so many little coffee tables and chairs there didn’t seem a way through. I was about to get up and clear a path, when she stopped suddenly.

“Lucy Wainright,” she said. “Ah yes. We had a little trouble with her.” She paused, then adjusted her wheelchair back to face Tommy. “Yes, we had a little trouble with her. A disagreement. But to answer your question, Tommy. The disagreement with Lucy Wainright wasn’t to do with what I’ve just been telling you. Not directly, anyway. No, that was more, shall we say, an internal matter.”

I thought she was going to leave it at that, so I asked: “Miss Emily, if it’s all right, we’d like to know about it, about what happened with Miss Lucy.”

Miss Emily raised her eyebrows. “Lucy Wainright? She was important to you? Forgive me, dear students, I’m forgetting again. Lucy wasn’t with us for long, so for us she’s just a peripheral figure in our memory of Hailsham. And not an altogether happy one. But I appreciate, if you were there during just those years...” She laughed to herself and seemed to be remembering something. In the hall, Madame was telling the men off really loudly, but Miss Emily now seemed to have lost interest. She was going through her memories with a look of concentration. Finally she said: “She was a nice enough girl, Lucy Wainright. But after she’d been with us for a while, she began to have these ideas. She thought you students had to be

made more aware. More aware of what lay ahead of you, who you were, what you were for. She believed you should be given as full a picture as possible. That to do anything less would be somehow to cheat you. We considered her view and concluded she was mistaken.”

“Why?” Tommy asked. “Why did you think that?”

“Why? She meant well, I’m sure of that. I can see you were fond of her. She had the makings of an excellent guardian. But what she was wanting to do, it was too theoretical. We had run Hailsham for many years, we had a sense of what could work, what was best for the students in the long run, beyond Hailsham. Lucy Wainright was idealistic, nothing wrong with that. But she had no grasp of practicalities. You see, we were able to give you something, something which even now no one will ever take from you, and we were able to do that principally by sheltering you. Hailsham would not have been Hailsham if we hadn’t. Very well, sometimes that meant we kept things from you, lied to you. Yes, in many ways we fooled you. I suppose you could even call it that. But we sheltered you during those years, and we gave you your childhoods. Lucy was well-meaning enough. But if she’d had her way, your happiness at Hailsham would have been shattered. Look at you both now! I’m so proud to see you both. You built your lives on what we gave you. You wouldn’t be who you are today if we’d not protected you. You wouldn’t have become absorbed in your lessons, you wouldn’t have lost yourselves in your art and your writing. Why should you have done, knowing what lay in store for each of you? You would have told us it was all pointless, and how could we have argued with you? So she had to go.”

We could hear Madame now shouting at the men. She hadn’t lost her temper exactly, but her voice was frighteningly stern, and the men’s voices, which until this point had been arguing with her, fell silent.

“Perhaps it’s just as well I’ve remained in here with you,” Miss Emily said. “Marie-Claude does this sort of thing so much more efficiently.”

I don’t know what made me say it. Maybe it was because I knew the visit would have to finish pretty soon; maybe I was getting curious to know

how exactly Miss Emily and Madame felt about each other. Anyway, I said to her, lowering my voice and nodding towards the doorway:

“Madame never liked us. She’s always been afraid of us. In the way people are afraid of spiders and things.”

I waited to see if Miss Emily would get angry, no longer caring much if she did. Sure enough, she turned to me sharply, as if I’d thrown a ball of paper at her, and her eyes flashed in a way that reminded me of her Hailsham days. But her voice was even and soft when she replied:

“Marie-Claude has given everything for you. She has worked and worked and worked. Make no mistake about it, my child, Marie-Claude is on your side and will always be on your side. Is she afraid of you? We’re all afraid of you. I myself had to fight back my dread of you all almost every day I was at Hailsham. There were times I’d look down at you all from my study window and I’d feel such revulsion...” She stopped, then something in her eyes flashed again. “But I was determined not to let such feelings stop me doing what was right. I fought those feelings and I won. Now, if you’d be so good as to help me out of here, George should be waiting with my crutches.”

With us at each elbow, she walked carefully into the hall, where a large man in a nursing uniform started with alarm and quickly produced a pair of crutches.

The front door was open to the street and I was surprised to see there was still daylight left. Madame’s voice was coming from outside, talking more calmly now to the men. It felt like time for Tommy and me to slip away, but the George man was helping Miss Emily with her coat, while she stood steadily between her crutches; there was no way we could get past, so we just waited. I suppose, too, we were waiting to say goodbye to Miss Emily; maybe, after everything else, we wanted to thank her, I’m not sure. But she was now preoccupied with her cabinet. She began to make some urgent point to the men outside, then left with George, not looking back at us.

Tommy and I stayed in the hall for a while longer, not sure what to do. When we did eventually wander outside, I noticed the lamps had come on

all the way down the long street, even though the sky wasn't yet dark. A white van was starting up its engine. Right behind was a big old Volvo with Miss Emily in the passenger seat. Madame was crouching by the window, nodding to something Miss Emily was saying, while George closed up the boot and moved round to the driver's door. Then the white van moved off, and Miss Emily's car followed.

Madame watched the departing vehicles for a long time. Then she turned as though to go back into the house, and seeing us there on the pavement, stopped abruptly, almost shrinking back.

"We're going now," I said. "Thank you for talking to us. Please say goodbye to Miss Emily for us."

I could see her studying me in the fading light. Then she said:

"Kathy H. I remember you. Yes, I remember." She fell silent, but went on looking at me.

"I think I know what you're thinking about," I said, in the end. "I think I can guess."

"Very well." Her voice was dreamy and her gaze had slightly lost focus. "Very well. You are a mind-reader. Tell me."

"There was a time you saw me once, one afternoon, in the dormitories. There was no one else around, and I was playing this tape, this music. I was sort of dancing with my eyes closed and you saw me."

"That's very good. A mind-reader. You should be on the stage. I only recognised you just now. But yes, I remember that occasion. I still think about it from time to time."

"That's funny. So do I."

"I see."

We could have ended the conversation there. We could have said goodbye and left. But she stepped closer to us, looking into my face all the time.

"You were much younger then," she said. "But yes, it's you."

"You don't have to answer this if you don't want to," I said. "But it's always puzzled me. May I ask you?"

"You read my mind. But I cannot read yours."

“Well, you were... upset that day. You were watching me, and when I realised, and I opened my eyes, you were watching me and I think you were crying. In fact, I know you were. You were watching me and crying. Why was that?”

Madame’s expression didn’t change and she kept staring into my face. “I was weeping,” she said eventually, very quietly, as though afraid the neighbours were listening, “because when I came in, I heard your music. I thought some foolish student had left the music on. But when I came into your dormitory, I saw you, by yourself, a little girl, dancing. As you say, eyes closed, far away, a look of yearning. You were dancing so very sympathetically. And the music, the song. There was something in the words. It was full of sadness.”

“The song,” I said, “it was called ‘Never Let Me Go.’ ” Then I sang a couple of lines quietly under my breath for her. “*Never let me go. Oh, baby, baby. Never let me go...*”

She nodded as though in agreement. “Yes, it was that song. I’ve heard it once or twice since then. On the radio, on the television. And it’s taken me back to that little girl, dancing by herself.”

“You say you’re not a mind-reader,” I said. “But maybe you were that day. Maybe that’s why you started to cry when you saw me. Because whatever the song was really about, in my head, when I was dancing, I had my own version. You see, I imagined it was about this woman who’d been told she couldn’t have babies. But then she’d had one, and she was so pleased, and she was holding it ever so tightly to her breast, really afraid something might separate them, and she’s going baby, baby, never let me go. That’s not what the song’s about at all, but that’s what I had in my head that time. Maybe you read my mind, and that’s why you found it so sad. I didn’t think it was so sad at the time, but now, when I think back, it does feel a bit sad.”

I’d spoken to Madame, but I could sense Tommy shifting next to me, and was aware of the texture of his clothes, of everything about him. Then Madame said:

“That’s most interesting. But I was no more a mind-reader then than today. I was weeping for an altogether different reason. When I watched you dancing that day, I saw something else. I saw a new world coming rapidly. More scientific, efficient, yes. More cures for the old sicknesses. Very good. But a harsh, cruel world. And I saw a little girl, her eyes tightly closed, holding to her breast the old kind world, one that she knew in her heart could not remain, and she was holding it and pleading, never to let her go. That is what I saw. It wasn’t really you, what you were doing, I know that. But I saw you and it broke my heart. And I’ve never forgotten.”

Then she came forward until she was only a step or two from us. “Your stories this evening, they touched me too.” She looked now to Tommy, then back at me. “Poor creatures. I wish I could help you. But now you’re by yourselves.”

She reached out her hand, all the while staring into my face, and placed it on my cheek. I could feel a trembling go all through her body, but she kept her hand where it was, and I could see again tears appearing in her eyes.

“You poor creatures,” she repeated, almost in a whisper. Then she turned and went back into her house.

We hardly discussed our meeting with Miss Emily and Madame on the journey back. Or if we did, we talked only about the less important things, like how much we thought they’d aged, or the stuff in their house.

I kept us on the most obscure back roads I knew, where only our headlights disturbed the darkness. We’d occasionally encounter other headlights, and then I’d get the feeling they belonged to other carers, driving home alone, or maybe like me, with a donor beside them. I realised, of course, that other people used these roads; but that night, it seemed to me these dark byways of the country existed just for the likes of us, while the big glittering motorways with their huge signs and super cafes were for everyone else. I don’t know if Tommy was thinking something similar. Maybe he was, because at one point, he remarked:

“Kath, you really know some weird roads.”

He did a little laugh as he said this, but then he seemed to fall deep into thought. Then as we were going down a particularly dark lane in the back of nowhere, he said suddenly:

“I think Miss Lucy was right. Not Miss Emily.”

I can't remember if I said anything to that. If I did, it certainly wasn't anything very profound. But that was the moment I first noticed it, something in his voice, or maybe his manner, that set off distant alarm bells. I remember taking my eyes off the twisting road to glance at him, but he was just sitting there quietly, gazing straight ahead into the night.

A few minutes later, he said suddenly: “Kath, can we stop? I'm sorry, I need to get out a minute.”

Thinking he was feeling sick again, I pulled up almost immediately, hard against a hedge. The spot was completely unlit, and even with the car lights on, I was nervous another vehicle might come round the curve and run into us. That's why, when Tommy got out and disappeared into the blackness, I didn't go with him. Also, there'd been something purposeful about the way he'd got out that suggested even if he was feeling ill, he'd prefer to cope with it on his own. Anyway, that's why I was still in the car, wondering whether to move it a little further up the hill, when I heard the first scream.

At first I didn't even think it was him, but some maniac who'd been lurking in the bushes. I was already out of the car when the second and third screams came, and by then I knew it was Tommy, though that hardly lessened my urgency. In fact, for a moment, I was probably close to panic, not having a clue where he was. I couldn't really see anything, and when I tried to go towards the screams, I was stopped by an impenetrable thicket. Then I found an opening, and stepping through a ditch, came up to a fence. I managed to climb over it and I landed in soft mud.

I could now see my surroundings much better. I was in a field that sloped down steeply not far in front of me, and I could see the lights of some village way below in the valley. The wind here was really powerful, and a gust pulled at me so hard, I had to reach for the fence post. The moon wasn't quite full, but it was bright enough, and I could make out in the mid-distance,

near where the field began to fall away, Tommy's figure, raging, shouting, flinging his fists and kicking out.

I tried to run to him, but the mud sucked my feet down. The mud was impeding him too, because one time, when he kicked out, he slipped and fell out of view into the blackness. But his jumbled swear-words continued uninterrupted, and I was able to reach him just as he was getting to his feet again. I caught a glimpse of his face in the moonlight, caked in mud and distorted with fury, then I reached for his flailing arms and held on tight. He tried to shake me off, but I kept holding on, until he stopped shouting and I felt the fight go out of him. Then I realised he too had his arms around me. And so we stood together like that, at the top of that field, for what seemed like ages, not saying anything, just holding each other, while the wind kept blowing and blowing at us, tugging our clothes, and for a moment, it seemed like we were holding onto each other because that was the only way to stop us being swept away into the night.

When at last we pulled apart, he muttered: "I'm really sorry, Kath." Then he gave a shaky laugh and added: "Good job there weren't cows in the field. They'd have got a fright."

I could see he was doing his best to reassure me it was all okay now, but his chest was still heaving and his legs shaking. We walked together back towards the car, trying not to slip.

"You stink of cow poo," I said, finally.

"Oh God, Kath. How do I explain this? We'll have to sneak in round the back."

"You'll still have to sign in."

"Oh God," he said, and laughed again.

I found some rags in the car and we got the worst of the muck off. But I'd taken out of the boot, just while I was searching for the rags, the sports bag containing his animal pictures, and when we set off again, I noticed Tommy brought it inside with him.

We travelled some way, not saying much, the bag on his lap. I was waiting for him to say something about the pictures; it even occurred to me he was working up to another rage, when he'd throw all the pictures out of

the window. But he held the bag protectively with both hands and kept staring at the dark road unfolding before us. After a long period of silence, he said:

“I’m sorry about just now, Kath. I really am. I’m a real idiot.” Then he added: “What are you thinking, Kath?”

“I was thinking,” I said, “about back then, at Hailsham, when you used to go bonkers like that, and we couldn’t understand it. We couldn’t understand how you could ever get like that. And I was just having this idea, just a thought really. I was thinking maybe the reason you used to get like that was because at some level you always *knew*.”

Tommy thought about this, then shook his head. “Don’t think so, Kath. No, it was always just me. Me being an idiot. That’s all it ever was.” Then after a moment, he did a small laugh and said: “But that’s a funny idea. Maybe I did know, somewhere deep down. Something the rest of you didn’t.”

1. Answer the following questions:

- How does Emily describe Tommy and Kathy?
- Is that conversation in Emily’s house allowable? Why?
- How does Marie-Claude treat regulations?
- What were Tommy and Kathy doing at Hailsham?
- What was the main question Tommy and Kathy wanted to be answered?
- Why did Emily call Tommy a “dear boy”? What is her attitude towards this couple?
- Why was Tommy’s art taken to the gallery?
- What was the first purpose of clones’ existence?
- What was people’s attitude towards clones and their organs?
- What was the Morningdale scandal?
- Why did they have to close Hailsham?
- What happened to Ms. Lucy Wainright? What were her ideas about students’ life?

2. Prove the necessity of making up clones' artwork galleries. What is the sense of such exhibitions? Was it effective to change people's minds?

III. VOCABULARY WORK.

1. Match the attributives with the nouns:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. shining | a. notion |
| 2. wonderful | b. funds |
| 3. deplorable | c. questions |
| 4. medical | d. way |
| 5. wishful | e. surroundings |
| 6. pledged | f. smile |
| 7. commonly held | g. rumour |
| 8. sensible | h. conditions |
| 9. entire | i. science |
| 10. thin | j. beacon |

2. Find the definitions of the following words in the dictionary, make up your own sentences:

disappointment
padding
to gaze
to suggest
regulations
to reveal
narrowed
surroundings
impede
guardian

3. Translate the following phrases and collocations, make up your own sentences with them:

- to feel badly about something
- to turn out well
- to be determined to
- from long before someone's time
- to cease to worry
- to get to the bottom of things
- to enter someone's head
- no doubts ever crossed one's mind(s)
- to beyond somebody
- the height of somebody's influence
- to drift off on a tangent
- to square the circle
- to know somewhere deep down

4. Translate the following sentences into Russian:

1. We were able to do that much for you at least. But this dream of yours, this dream of being able to defer.

2. Such a thing would always have been beyond us to grant, even at the height of our influence.

3. You've had good lives; you're educated and cultured. I'm sorry we couldn't secure more for you than we did, but you must realise how much worse things once were.

4. When Marie-Claude and I started out, there were no places like Hailsham in existence. We were the first, along with Glenmorgan House. Then a few years later came the Saunders Trust. Together, we became a small but very vocal movement, and we challenged the entire way the donations programme was being run.

5. Most importantly, we demonstrated to the world that if students were reared in humane, cultivated environments, it was possible for them to grow to be as sensitive and intelligent as any ordinary human being.

6. Before that, all clones—or *students*, as we preferred to call you—existed only to supply medical science. In the early days, after the war, that’s largely all you were to most people. Shadowy objects in test tubes.

7. That was why we collected your art. We selected the best of it and put on special exhibitions. In the late seventies, at the height of our influence, we were organizing large events all around the country.

8. There’d be cabinet ministers, bishops, all sorts of famous people coming to attend. There were speeches, large funds pledged.

9. Oh yes, there was a lot of support for our movement back then, the tide was with us.”

5. Reread and memorize the paragraph describing the reasons of closing Hailsham. Fill in the gaps with the necessary nouns without looking back at the text. You may use their synonyms if needed:

1. It was possible to avert the scandal if Hailsham authorities had worked very hard at the stage when the _____ about Morningdale appeared.

2. Except Morningdale, there were other factors which contributed to the Hailsham closure, for instance, that awful _____.

3. The combination of these factors led to the turning of the _____.

4. The work of the Hailsham movement was always fragile as it depended on the whims of _____.

5. As long as corporations and politicians saw a _____ in supporting the movement, Hailsham could keep afloat.

6. The work of the movement was very hard, it was always a _____, and when after Morningdale the social climate changed, they had no chance to survive.

7. The world wanted you, students, back in the _____ where you’d been before the likes of Marie-Claude and Emily ever came along.

8. Hailsham lost its _____, one after another, in a matter of just over a year.

9. There was nothing like Hailsham in the country, only so-called government ‘ _____ ’, where the awful things took place.

10. After closure, Hailsham authorities remained with a mountain of students’ work and a mountain of _____.

6. Translate the following phrases. Consider how they are related to the idea or the plot of the chapter (book):

a peripheral figure

to be-aware of

to be fond of somebody

to shelter somebody

to keep thing from somebody

poor creatures

to dance sympathetically

never let me go

cruel world

could not remain

to know somewhere deep down

Chapter Twenty-Three

I. PRE-READING.

cagey about something, *adj* /'keɪdʒi/ (*informal*) not wanting to give somebody information

cluster, *v* /'klʌstə(r)/ to come together in a small group or groups

recall, *v* /rɪ'kɔ:l/ (*formal*) to remember something

crouched, *adj* /kraʊtʃt/ in a position with your body close to the ground and your legs bent under you

resentment, *n* /rɪ'zentmənt/ [uncountable, singular] resentment (towards/against somebody) a feeling of anger or unhappiness about something that you think is unfair

tug, *n* /tʌg/ a sudden, hard pull

savour, *v* /'seɪvə(r)/ savour something to enjoy a feeling or an experience completely

resentful, *adj* /rɪ'zentfl/ feeling bitter or angry about something that you think is unfair

prickle, *n* /'prɪkl/ a slight stinging feeling on the skin

affectionately, *adv* /ə'fekʃənətli/ in a way that shows caring feelings and love for somebody

niggle, *n* /'nɪgl/ (*British English*) a small criticism or complaint

rile, *v* /raɪl/ rile somebody | it riles somebody that... to annoy somebody or make them angry

pointlessly, *adv* /'pɔɪntləsli/ in a way that has no purpose or is not worth doing

shrink, *v* /ʃrɪŋk/ + *adv./prep.* to move back or away from something because you are frightened or shocked

confide, *v* /kən'faɪd/ to tell somebody secrets and personal information that you do not want other people to know

congregate, *v* /'kɒŋgrɪgeɪt/ to come together in a group

wasteland, *n* /'weɪstlənd/ an area of land that cannot be used or that is no longer used for building or growing things on

chunk, *n* /tʃʌŋk/ (*informal*) a fairly large amount of something

thistle, *n* /'θɪsl/ a wild plant with leaves with sharp points and purple, yellow or white flowers made up of a mass of narrow petals pointing upwards

wire-mesh, *adj* /waɪə meʃ/ made from, or consisting of, a network of fine wires

bramble, *n* /'bræmbl/ (*especially British English*) a wild bush with thorns on which blackberries grow

nettle, *n* /'netl/ a wild plant with leaves that have pointed edges, are covered in fine hairs and sting (= cause you pain) if you touch them

thicket, *n* /'θɪkɪt/ a group of bushes or small trees growing closely together

stalk, *v* /stɔ:k/ + *adv./prep.* to walk in an angry or proud way

shrug, *v* /ʃrʌg/ to raise your shoulders and then drop them to show that you do not know or care about something

current, *n* /'kʌrənt/, /'kɜ:rənt/ the movement of water in the sea or a river; the movement of air in a particular direction

blow up (at somebody), *phr v* /bləʊ/ (*informal*) to get angry with somebody

slip, *v* /slɪp/ + **adv./prep.** to go somewhere quickly and quietly, especially without being noticed

while something away, *phr v* /waɪl/ (*informal*) to spend time in a pleasant lazy way

doodle, *v* /'du:dl/ to draw lines, shapes, etc., especially when you are bored or thinking about something else

crisp, *adj* /krɪsp/ (comparative **crisper**, superlative **crispest**) (*approving*) (of the air or the weather) pleasantly dry and cold

reluctant, *adj* /rɪ'lʌktənt/ hesitating before doing something because you do not want to do it or because you are not sure that it is the right thing to do

vengeful, *adj* /'vendʒfl/ (*formal*) showing a desire to punish somebody who has harmed you

lay-by, *n* /'lei baɪ/ (plural **lay-bys**) (*British English*) an area at the side of a road where vehicles may stop for a short time

to be on the lookout (for somebody/something), *idiom (informal)* to watch carefully for somebody/something in order to avoid danger, etc. or in order to find something you want

II. READING AND COMPREHENSION.

Nothing seemed to change much in the week or so after that trip. I didn't expect it to stay that way though, and sure enough, by the start of October, I started noticing little differences. For one thing, though Tommy carried on with his animal pictures, he became cagey about doing them in my presence. We weren't quite back to how it was when I'd first become his carer and all the Cottages stuff was still hanging over us. But it was like

he'd thought about it and come to a decision: that he'd continue with the animals as the mood took him, but if I came in, he'd stop and put them away. I wasn't that hurt by this. In fact, in many ways, it was a relief: those animals staring us in the face when we were together would have only made things more awkward.

But there were other changes I found less easy. I don't mean we weren't still having some good times up in his room. We were even having sex every now and then. But what I couldn't help noticing was how, more and more, Tommy tended to identify himself with the other donors at the centre. If, for instance, the two of us were reminiscing about old Hailsham people, he'd sooner or later move the conversation round to one of his current donor friends who'd maybe said or done something similar to what we were recalling. There was one time in particular, when I drove into the Kingsfield after a long journey and stepped out of the car. The Square was looking a bit like that time I'd come to the centre with Ruth the day we'd gone to see the boat. It was an overcast autumn afternoon, and there was no one about except for a group of donors clustered under the overhanging roof of the recreation building. I saw Tommy was with them—he was standing with a shoulder against a post—and was listening to a donor who was sitting crouched on the entrance steps. I came towards them a little way, then stopped and waited, there in the open, under the grey sky. But Tommy, though he'd seen me, went on listening to his friend, and eventually he and all the others burst out laughing. Even then, he carried on listening and smiling. He claimed afterwards he'd signalled to me to come over, but if he had, it hadn't been at all obvious. All I registered was him smiling vaguely in my direction, then going back to what his friend was saying. Okay, he was in the middle of something, and after a minute or so, he did come away, and the two of us went up to his room. But it was quite different to the way things would have happened before. And it wasn't just that he'd kept me waiting out in the Square. I wouldn't have minded that so much. It was more that I sensed for the first time that day something close to resentment on his part at having to come away with me, and once we were up in his room, the atmosphere between us wasn't so great.

To be fair, a lot of it might have been down to me as much as him. Because as I'd stood there watching them all talking and laughing, I'd felt an unexpected little tug; because there was something about the way these donors had arranged themselves in a rough semi-circle, something about their poses, almost studiedly relaxed, whether standing or sitting, as though to announce to the world how much each one of them was savouring the company, that reminded me of the way our little gang used to sit around our pavilion together. That comparison, as I say, tugged something inside me, and so maybe, once we were up in his room, it was as much me feeling resentful as the other way round.

I'd feel a similar little prickle of resentment each time he told me I didn't understand something or other because I wasn't yet a donor. But apart from one particular time, which I'll come to in a moment, a little prickle was all it was. Usually he'd say these things to me half-jokingly, almost affectionately. And even when there was something more to it, like the time he told me to stop taking his dirty washing to the laundry because he could do it himself, it hardly amounted to a row. That time, I'd asked him:

“What difference does it make, which one of us takes the towels down? I'm going out that way anyway.”

To which he'd shaken his head and said: “Look, Kath, I'll sort out my own things. If you were a donor, you'd see.”

Okay, it did niggle, but it was something I could forget easily enough. But as I say, there was this one time he brought it up, about my not being a donor, that really riled me.

It happened about a week after the notice came for his fourth donation. We'd been expecting it and had already talked it through a lot. In fact, we'd had some of our most intimate conversations since the Littlehampton trip discussing the fourth donation. I've known donors to react in all sorts of ways to their fourth donation. Some want to talk about it all the time, endlessly and pointlessly. Others will only joke about it, while others refuse to discuss it at all. And then there's this odd tendency among donors to treat a fourth donation as something worthy of congratulations. A donor “on a fourth,” even one who's been pretty unpopular up till then, is treated with

special respect. Even the doctors and nurses play up to this: a donor on a fourth will go in for a check and be greeted by whitecoats smiling and shaking their hand. Well, Tommy and I, we talked about all of this, sometimes jokingly, other times seriously and carefully. We discussed all the different ways people tried to handle it, and which ways made the best sense. Once, lying side by side on the bed with the dark coming on, he said:

“You know why it is, Kath, why everyone worries so much about the fourth? It’s because they’re not sure they’ll really complete. If you knew for certain you’d complete, it would be easier. But they never tell us for sure.”

I’d been wondering for a while if this would come up, and I’d been thinking about how I’d respond. But when it did, I couldn’t find much to say. So I just said: “It’s just a lot of rubbish, Tommy. Just talk, wild talk. It’s not even worth thinking about.”

But Tommy would have known I had nothing to back up my words. He’d have known, too, he was raising questions to which even the doctors had no certain answers. You’ll have heard the same talk. How maybe, after the fourth donation, even if you’ve technically completed, you’re still conscious in some sort of way; how then you find there are more donations, plenty of them, on the other side of that line; how there are no more recovery centres, no carers, no friends; how there’s nothing to do except watch your remaining donations until they switch you off. It’s horror movie stuff, and most of the time people don’t want to think about it. Not the whitecoats, not the carers—and usually not the donors. But now and again, a donor will bring it up, as Tommy did that evening, and I wish now we’d talked about it. As it was, after I dismissed it as rubbish, we both shrank back from the whole territory. At least, though, I knew it was on Tommy’s mind after that, and I was glad he’d at least confided in me that far. What I’m saying is that all in all I was under the impression we were dealing with the fourth donation pretty well together, and that’s why I was so knocked off balance by what he came out with that day we walked around the field.

The Kingsfield doesn’t have much in the way of grounds. The Square’s the obvious congregating point and the few bits behind the buildings look more like wasteland. The largest chunk, which the donors

call “the field,” is a rectangle of overgrown weeds and thistles held in by wire-mesh fences. There’s always been talk of turning it into a proper lawn for the donors, but they haven’t done it yet, even now. It might not be so peaceful even if they did get round to it, because of the big road nearby. All the same, when donors get restless and need to walk it off, that’s where they tend to go, scraping through all the nettles and brambles. The particular morning I’m talking about, it was really foggy, and I knew the field would be soaking, but Tommy had been insistent we go there for a walk. Not surprisingly, we were the only ones there—which probably suited Tommy fine. After crashing about the thickets for a few minutes, he stopped next to the fence and stared at the blank fog on the other side. Then he said:

“Kath, I don’t want you to take this the wrong way. But I’ve been thinking it over a lot. Kath, I think I ought to get a different carer.”

In the few seconds after he said this, I realised I wasn’t surprised by it at all; that in some funny way I’d been waiting for it. But I was angry all the same and didn’t say anything.

“It’s not just because the fourth donation’s coming up,” he went on. “It’s not just about that. It’s because of stuff like what happened last week. When I had all that kidney trouble. There’s going to be much more stuff like that coming.”

“That’s why I came and found you,” I said. “That’s exactly why I came to help you. For what’s starting now. And it’s what Ruth wanted too.”

“Ruth wanted that other thing for us,” Tommy said. “She wouldn’t necessarily have wanted you to be my carer through this last bit.”

“Tommy,” I said, and I suppose by now I was furious, but I kept my voice quiet and under control, “I’m the one to help you. That’s why I came and found you again.”

“Ruth wanted the other thing for us,” Tommy repeated. “All this is something else. Kath, I don’t want to be that way in front of you.”

He was looking down at the ground, a palm pressed against the wire-mesh fence, and for a moment he looked like he was listening intently to the sound of the traffic somewhere beyond the fog. And that was when he said it, shaking his head slightly:

“Ruth would have understood. She was a donor, so she would have understood. I’m not saying she’d necessarily have wanted the same thing for herself. If she’d been able to, maybe she’d have wanted you as her carer right to the end. But she’d have understood, about me wanting to do it differently. Kath, sometimes you just don’t see it. You don’t see it because you’re not a donor.”

It was when he came out with this that I turned and walked off. As I said, I’d been almost prepared for the bit about not wanting me anymore as his carer. But what had really stung, coming after all those other little things, like when he’d kept me standing in the Square, was what he’d said then, the way he’d divided me off yet again, not just from all the other donors, but from him and Ruth.

This never turned into a huge fight though. When I stalked off, there wasn’t much else I could do other than go back up to his room, and then he came up himself several minutes later. I’d cooled down by then and so had he, and we were able to have a better conversation about it. It was a bit stiff, but we made peace, and even got into some of the practicalities of changing carers. Then, as we were sitting in the dull light, side by side on the edge of his bed, he said to me:

“I don’t want us to fight again, Kath. But I’ve been wanting to ask you this a lot. I mean, don’t you get tired of being a carer? All the rest of us, we became donors ages ago. You’ve been doing it for years. Don’t you sometimes wish, Kath, they’d hurry up and send you your notice?”

I shrugged. “I don’t mind. Anyway, it’s important there are good carers. And I’m a good carer.”

“But is it really that important? Okay, it’s really nice to have a good carer. But in the end, is it really so important? The donors will all donate, just the same, and then they’ll complete.”

“Of course it’s important. A good carer makes a big difference to what a donor’s life’s actually like.”

“But all this rushing about you do. All this getting exhausted and being by yourself. I’ve been watching you. It’s wearing you out. You must do, Kath, you must sometimes wish they’d tell you can stop. I don’t know why

you don't have a word with them, ask them why it's been so long." Then when I kept quiet, he said: "I'm just saying, that's all. Let's not fight again."

I put my head on his shoulder and said: "Yeah, well. Maybe it won't be for much longer anyway. But for now, I have to keep going. Even if you don't want me around, there are others who do."

"I suppose you're right, Kath. You *are* a really good carer. You'd be the perfect one for me too if you weren't you." He did a laugh and put his arm round me, though we kept sitting side by side. Then he said: "I keep thinking about this river somewhere, with the water moving really fast. And these two people in the water, trying to hold onto each other, holding on as hard as they can, but in the end it's just too much. The current's too strong. They've got to let go, drift apart. That's how I think it is with us. It's a shame, Kath, because we've loved each other all our lives. But in the end, we can't stay together forever."

When he said this, I remembered the way I'd held onto him that night in the wind-swept field on the way back from Little-Hampton. I don't know if he was thinking about that too, or if he was still thinking about his rivers and strong currents. In any case, we went on sitting like that on the side of the bed for a long time, lost in our thoughts. Then in the end I said to him:

"I'm sorry I blew up at you earlier. I'll talk to them. I'll try and see to it you get someone really good."

"It's a shame, Kath," he said again. And I don't think we talked any more about it that morning.

I remember the few weeks that came after that—the last few weeks before the new carer took over—as being surprisingly tranquil. Maybe Tommy and I were making a special effort to be nice to each other, but the time seemed to slip by in an almost carefree way. You might think there would have been an air of unreality about us being like that, but it didn't seem strange at the time. I was quite busy with a couple of my other donors in North Wales and that kept me from the Kingsfield more than I'd have wanted, but I still managed to come in three or four times a week. The weather grew colder, but stayed dry and often sunny, and we whiled away the hours in his room, sometimes having sex, more often just talking, or with

Tommy listening to me read. Once or twice, Tommy even brought out his notebook and doodled away for new animal ideas while I read from the bed.

Then I came in one day and it was the last time. I arrived just after one o'clock on a crisp December afternoon. I went up to his room, half expecting some change—I don't know what. Maybe I thought he'd have put up decorations in his room or something. But of course, everything was as normal, and all in all, that was a relief. Tommy didn't look any different either, but when we started talking, it was hard to pretend this was just another visit. Then again, we'd talked over so much in the previous weeks, it wasn't as though we had anything in particular we *had* to get through. And I think we were reluctant to start any new conversation we'd regret not being able to finish properly. That's why there was a kind of emptiness to our talk that day.

Just once, though, after I'd been wandering aimlessly around his room for a while, I did ask him:

“Tommy, are you glad Ruth completed before finding out everything we did in the end?”

He was lying on the bed, and went on staring at the ceiling for a while before saying: “Funny, because I was thinking about the same thing the other day. What you've got to remember about Ruth, when it came to things like that, she was always different to us. You and me, right from the start, even when we were little, we were always trying to find things out. Remember, Kath, all those secret talks we used to have? But Ruth wasn't like that. She always wanted to believe in things. That was Ruth. So yeah, in a way, I think it's best the way it happened.” Then he added: “Of course, what we found out, Miss Emily, all of that, it doesn't change anything about Ruth. She wanted the best for us at the end. She really wanted the best for us.”

I didn't want to get into a big discussion about Ruth at that stage, so I just agreed with him. But now I've had more time to think about it, I'm not so sure how I feel. A part of me keeps wishing we'd somehow been able to share everything we discovered with Ruth. Okay, maybe it would have made her feel bad; made her see whatever damage she'd once done to us couldn't

be repaired as easily as she'd hoped. And maybe, if I'm honest, that's a small part of my wishing she knew it all before she completed. But in the end, I think it's about something else, something much more than my feeling vengeful and mean-spirited. Because as Tommy said, she wanted the best for us at the end, and though she said that day in the car I'd never forgive her, she was wrong about that. I've got no anger left for her now. When I say I wish she'd found out the whole score, it's more because I feel sad at the idea of her finishing up different from me and Tommy. The way it is, it's like there's a line with us on one side and Ruth on the other, and when all's said and done, I feel sad about that, and I think she would too if she could see it.

Tommy and I, we didn't do any big farewell number that day. When it was time, he came down the stairs with me, which he didn't usually do, and we walked across the Square together to the car. Because of the time of year, the sun was already setting behind the buildings. There were a few shadowy figures, as usual, under the overhanging roof, but the Square itself was empty. Tommy was silent all the way to the car. Then he did a little laugh and said:

“You know, Kath, when I used to play football back at Hailsham. I had this secret thing I did. When I scored a goal, I'd turn round like this”—he raised both arms up in triumph— “and I'd run back to my mates. I never went mad or anything, just ran back with my arms up, like this.” He paused for a moment, his arms still in the air. Then he lowered them and smiled. “In my head, Kath, when I was running back, I always imagined I was splashing through water. Nothing deep, just up to the ankles at the most. That's what I used to imagine, every time. Splash, splash, splash.” He put his arms up again. “It felt really good. You've just scored, you turn, and then, splash, splash, splash.” He looked at me and did another little laugh. “All this time, I never told a single soul.”

I laughed too and said: “You crazy kid, Tommy.”

After that, we kissed—just a small kiss—then I got into the car. Tommy kept standing there while I turned the thing round. Then as I pulled away, he smiled and waved. I watched him in my rear-view, and he was

standing there almost till the last moment. Right at the end, I saw him raise his hand again vaguely and turn away towards the overhanging roof. Then the Square had gone from the mirror.

I was talking to one of my donors a few days ago who was complaining about how memories, even your most precious ones, fade surprisingly quickly. But I don't go along with that. The memories I value most; I don't see them ever fading. I lost Ruth, then I lost Tommy, but I won't lose my memories of them.

I suppose I lost Hailsham too. You still hear stories about some ex-Hailsham student trying to find it, or rather the place where it used to be. And the odd rumour will go round sometimes about what Hailsham's become these days—a hotel, a school, a ruin. Myself, for all the driving I do, I've never tried to find it. I'm not really interested in seeing it, whatever way it is now.

Mind you, though I say I never go looking for Hailsham, what I find is that sometimes, when I'm driving around, I suddenly think I've spotted some bit of it. I see a sports pavilion in the distance and I'm sure it's ours. Or a row of poplars on the horizon next to a big woolly oak, and I'm convinced for a second I'm coming up to the South Playing Field from the other side. Once, on a grey morning, on a long stretch of road in Gloucestershire, I passed a broken-down car in a lay-by, and I was sure the girl standing in front of it, gazing emptily out towards the on-coming vehicles, was Susanna C., who'd been a couple of years above us and one of the Sales monitors. These moments hit me when I'm least expecting it, when I'm driving with something else entirely in my mind. So maybe at some level, I *am* on the lookout for Hailsham.

But as I say, I don't go searching for it, and anyway, by the end of the year, I won't be driving around like this anymore. So the chances are I won't ever come across it now, and on reflection, I'm glad that's the way it'll be. It's like with my memories of Tommy and of Ruth. Once I'm able to have a quieter life, in whichever centre they send me to, I'll have Hailsham with me, safely in my head, and that'll be something no one can take away.

The only indulgent thing I did, just once, was a couple of weeks after I heard Tommy had completed, when I drove up to Norfolk, even though I had no real need to. I wasn't after anything in particular and I didn't go up as far as the coast. Maybe I just felt like looking at all those flat fields of nothing and the huge grey skies. At one stage I found myself on a road I'd never been on, and for about half an hour I didn't know where I was and didn't care. I went past field after flat, featureless field, with virtually no change except when occasionally a flock of birds, hearing my engine, flew up out of the furrows. Then at last I spotted a few trees in the distance, not far from the roadside, so I drove up to them, stopped and got out.

I found I was standing before acres of ploughed earth. There was a fence keeping me from stepping into the field, with two lines of barbed wire, and I could see how this fence and the cluster of three or four trees above me were the only things breaking the wind for miles. All along the fence, especially along the lower line of wire, all sorts of rubbish had caught and tangled. It was like the debris you get on a sea-shore: the wind must have carried some of it for miles and miles before finally coming up against these trees and these two lines of wire. Up in the branches of the trees, too, I could see, flapping about, torn plastic sheeting and bits of old carrier bags. That was the only time, as I stood there, looking at that strange rubbish, feeling the wind coming across those empty fields, that I started to imagine just a little fantasy thing, because this was Norfolk after all, and it was only a couple of weeks since I'd lost him. I was thinking about the rubbish, the flapping plastic in the branches, the shore-line of odd stuff caught along the fencing, and I half-closed my eyes and imagined this was the spot where everything I'd ever lost since my childhood had washed up, and I was now standing here in front of it, and if I waited long enough, a tiny figure would appear on the horizon across the field, and gradually get larger until I'd see it was Tommy, and he'd wave, maybe even call. The fantasy never got beyond that—I didn't let it—and though the tears rolled down my face, I wasn't sobbing or out of control. I just waited a bit, then turned back to the car, to drive off to wherever it was I was supposed to be.

1. Answer the following questions:

- What changes occurred in the relationship between Kathy and Tommy? What was the reason?
- Why did Kathy feel resentful when she and Tommy went up to his room?
- What point in the relationship with Tommy riled Kathy much more than others?
- What is peculiar about the donors “on a fourth”?
- Where do donors walk their concerns off?
- Why is it good to have a good carer, according to Kathy?
- What does the river Tommy was thinking about symbolize?
- Did Kathy forgive Ruth?
- What did Tommy do when he scored a goal in football at Hailsham?
- How did Kathy feel about the fact that Tommy was near to complete?
- What has Hailsham turned into nowadays?

2. Give the summary of the chapter. Put the accent on Kathy’s and Tommy’s feelings about the events and conversations.

III. VOCABULARY WORK.

1. Match the verbs with the adverbs. Make up as many phrases as possible and explain their meanings. Compare your ideas with the ones from the text. Think of your own sentences using these phrases:

- | | |
|-----------|------------------|
| 1. smile | a. half-jokingly |
| 2. do | b. intently |
| 3. finish | c. aimlessly |
| 4. talk | d. differently |
| 5. listen | e. vaguely |
| 6. fade | f. quickly |

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| 7. deal | g. properly |
| 8. wander | h. endlessly |
| 9. say | i. well |

2. Find the synonyms of the following words in the text:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| - continue | - forceful |
| - deliberately | - transport |
| - enjoy | - lightly |
| - a doctor | - hurt |
| - evident | - tired |
| - harmonious | - serene |

3. Translate the following phrases. Make up your sentences connected with your own experience:

to come to a decision

to treat something as worthy of congratulations

to go in for a check

to back up one's words

there's always been talk of

to walk something off

to suit somebody fine

to have a word with somebody

to make a special effort

not to tell a single soul

to be on the lookout for

to change nothing about anything

4. Replace the underlined sentence parts with the synonyms or synonymous phrases (sentences):

1. In fact, in many ways, it was a relief: those animals staring us in the face when we were together would have only made things more awkward.

2. It was an overcast autumn afternoon, and there was no one about except for a group of donors clustered under the overhanging roof of the recreation building.

3. If, for instance, the two of us were reminiscing about old Hailsham people, he'd sooner or later move the conversation round to one of his current donor friends.

4. And then there's this odd tendency among donors to treat a fourth donation as something worthy of congratulations.

5. How there are no more recovery centres, no carers, no friends; how there's nothing to do except watch your remaining donations until they switch you off.

6. All the same, when donors get restless and need to walk it off, that's where they tend to go, scraping through all the nettles and brambles.

7. When he said this, I remembered the way I'd held onto him that night in the wind-swept field on the way back from Littlehampton.

8. Tommy didn't look any different either, but when we started talking, it was hard to pretend this was just another visit.

9. And I think we were reluctant to start any new conversation we'd regret not being able to finish properly.

10. I'm not really interested in seeing it, whatever way it is now.

5. Translate from Russian into English:

1. Меня отделял от нее забор из двух ниток колючей проволоки, и я видела, что этот забор и три-четыре дерева надо мной – единственные препятствия для ветра на мили вокруг.

2. Впрочем, хотя на поиски Хейлшема я ни разу не отправлялась, иногда в пути мне кажется, что я вижу какую-то его часть.

3. Когда у меня настанет более тихая жинь в том центре, куда меня пошлют, Хейлшем будет там со мной, надежно спрятанный у меня в голове, и отнять его у меня никто не сможет.

4. Воспоминания, которые я ценю больше всего, остаются такими же яркими, какими были.

5. Хотя Рут заявила в тот день, что я никогда ее не прощу, она ошиблась. Злости у меня на нее сейчас уже нет.

6. Да, наверно, она огорчилась бы – ведь получается, что вред, который она нам нанесла, нельзя было исправить так легко, как она надеялась.

7. Томми тоже выглядел, как обычно, но, когда мы начали беседовать, трудно было делать вид, что это просто очередное посещение.

8. Дальнейшие несколько недель до того, как новый помощник приступит к работе, были, помнится, на удивление безмятежными.

9. Кому-то, наверно, наше тогдашнее состояние покажется немного нереальным, но мы в те дни ничего странного в нем не видели.

10. Я почти готова была к тому, что он захочет отказаться от моей помощи. Но от чего мне стало действительно больно – это от последних его слов, которыми он отделил меня еще раз, но теперь уже не от себя и других доноров вообще, а от себя и Рут.

QUESTIONS AND TASKS FOR THE FINAL DISCUSSION

1. Find the equivalent to the following British English words in North American English:

carer	_____
in-joke	_____
lace	_____
dinner suit	_____
pavement	_____
pushchair	_____
lark around	_____
reckon	_____
roundabout	_____
a fortnight	_____
cowpat	_____
cosy	_____
rumour	_____
dustbin	_____
petrol	_____
boot	_____
lorry	_____
pedestrian precinct	_____
hallway	_____
dormitory	_____
centre	_____
bramble	_____
savour	_____
watercolour	_____
recognise	_____

2. Answer the following questions:

1. Why is the book called *Never Let Me Go*?
2. What's the main idea of the book?

3. What are the main problems of the novel?
4. Why is the novel narrated in the first person?
5. Where does the action take place?
6. Analyze the main characters. What do you think of Kathy, Tommy and Ruth? Do you like / dislike them?
7. Who is the protagonist / antagonist?
8. What is the love line in the novel? Do you think Tommy ever loved Kathy?
9. Talk about the timeline. When does the action take place? Why?
10. How does the novel end? Why?

3. Give a short summary of the events of the book from the point of view of:

- Tommy
- Ruth
- Madame
- Miss Emily
- Chrissie and Rodney

4. Write an essay on any of the following topics. It should be of approximately 700 words:

1. The image of unreliable narrator in the novel *Never Let Me Go*.
2. Existential problems in the novel.
3. Dystopian elements in the novel.
4. Analyze the novel *Never Let Me Go*.
5. Problems of bioethics in the novel.
6. Elements of Japanese culture in the novel *Never Let Me Go*.
7. The problem of organ transplantation.
8. Moral side of cloning.
9. My attitude to animal / human cloning.
10. Imagine that you're creating a short film based on this novel. Think of the main idea, setting, plot and a protagonist.

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KAZUO ISHIGURO
“NEVER LET ME GO”

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