

MiNRS

Discussion Questions & Responding to Quotes / Passages

Chapter 1 - Calculations

**The Great Mission is Everyone's Mission.
You are what makes it great.
Melming Mining is a green company.
Remember to always compost your water
Put people ahead of profit
Safety first.
Perses is our home.
We are all caretakers.**

The messages were all over the place, on posters in our classroom, the walls of our core-scraper, and the tunnels of the mines. (p. 4)

What information does the poster reveal about his life? Why did Christopher swell with pride every time he saw the poster?

Chapter 3 – The Great Mission

“A series of images passed across the screen as the man described the wonders technology had brought to the world – solar energy, medical miracles, superfast computer. Then dramatic music signaled a change in the story.

“For centuries miner had uncovered the minerals and nutrients that kept the whole system of civilization working smoothly. But resources are finite. Silicon, platinum, gold, silver, and titanium had been depleted.

Crops failed.

Technology failed.

Earth was running out of the building blocks for life.” (p.31)

What is the significance of this passage to our lives?

Chapter 5 – Battle

“I don't have time to explain it all. Humans are complex. We've always told you we were convinced of the worthiness of this mission. We came to Perses to do great things. . . . But power, money . . . Those do funny things to people.” (p. 60)

What does Christopher's father mean? How does this statement relate back to life in North America?

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Chapter Seven – Aftershock

There was a poster on the wall of the infirmary that showed a smiling miner in a hardhat, along with the slogan WE ARE WHAT MAKES MELMING MINING GREAT. WE ALL WORK TOGETHER (p. 75)

Why do you think the author includes this detail in his novel? What might the significance be?

“all of us are alone now. We are all we have. And if we want to make it, if want to live we have to . . . to . . . We need to kick ourselves in own freaking butts.” (p.78) How are the children reacting to their sudden loss? Why do you think their reactions are so different? DO you think it is right for Christopher to force the kids to face their loss so soon?

Chapter 8 – Food Fight

“Food is like gold for us.” (p. 92) Explain the significance of this statement.

At the end of the chapter, Christopher hear a ‘sound that send a chill down my back.’ What was the sound he heard and why would he have this reaction?

Chapter 11 – Crumbs

“Why had I wasted a precious source of light to read a book? That didn’t make me a good leader. It made me an idiot.” (p114)

Do you think Christopher is a good leader? Give specific examples to support your answer. What qualities do you think make a good leader?

Chapter 12 – Speaking

“A digger is a one person drilling machine. It can cut through rock like knife through butter.” (p.122) What is the significance of Christopher finding a digger?

Chapter 13 – Sleepwalking

“You want to be a leader? Give those kids something to fight for.” (p.137)

Why does Elena say this to Christopher? Do you agree with her? Why or Why not?

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Chapter 14 – Drive Shaft

“If you’re smaller and unarmed, you can’t fight back on equal terms. Instead you take what you can.” (p 149)

How does Christopher come up with this idea? What plan do they come up with? Do you think it will work? Why or Why not? Do you think Elena’s plan is better?

Chapter 16 – Reality

“The children’s eyes were closed. They were dirty. They looked sick. More than a few looked like they might be on the verge of starvation or dehydration.” P.174

What is your reaction to this scene? What is Christopher’s reaction? What does this scene remind you of? What connections can you make?

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Chapter 17 – Ground

Consider the following passages from Chapter 17. Why is Christopher so shocked that grinders are kids and not machines? How are these quotes and example of money and power being more important than safety? Why would somebody sell his or her child to do such dangerous work? Why do you think people exploit kids?

“The word shot through my brain like an electric shock. A grinder was person. No, not a person, a child. I thought – I’d always been led to believe – that a grinder was just another piece of mining equipment. A machine. But a grinder wasn’t a machine.” (p.177)

“Children have been used in mines for centuries, so they went back to what worked.” (p 178)

“Small hands and small bodies. Also small price tags. My parents barely got a month’s rent when they sold me to Melming.” (p178)

“I closed my eyes and shook my head. I’d seen transport ships arriving, but my parents had always said they were bringing new supplies. Was that what Fatima was to Melming, to my parents – a supply? (p. 179)

“They hadn’t even invited the grinders to they party. They had just left them in a cage.” (p.180)

“As I drove on, the depths of this new horror began to sink in.

My father knew about this.

My mother knew about this.

Hans Melming knew about this.

This was our Great Mission

The other kids had called my dad and mom heroes.

They had saved so many children. But had they, really?”

(p.181)

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Chapter 18 – Illumination

“Well, they need our help. They are part of our family now.” (p.189) Why does Christopher consider the grinders part of their family? Why is it important to him that they are included?

“Did Jimmi and Pavel and the others have a point? Should we have left the grinders to fend for themselves? We were low on supplies. How would we survive with so many more people to feed?” (190) Why do you think Christopher is second-guessing himself?

“I don’t hate. Hate does no good.” (p.195) Do you think Fatima has a right to feel hate if she chose too? Do you think what she says is true?

Chapter 19 – Mapped

“Elena said I was in charge, but she had gotten what she wanted. I wondered: Who was the real leader?” – (p. 209)

Who do you think is the real leader at this point? What leadership qualities do they both possess? Why do you think Christopher feels like Elena is the real leader?

Chapter 20 – Community

“So maybe we aren’t a family, but we’re getting close,” I said. “Sometimes you just have to dig a mile in another person’s shoes and all that.” (p.217) What does Christopher mean when he says this? Why is it significant?

Chapter 27 – Surfacing

“My hand faltered. A few second before, I’d been looking at a spy, a traitor, a murderer. Now I saw myself. A kid. A kid whose father had been taken away from him, and then offered back. What would I have done? Would I have cooperated?” (p.276)

Christopher realizes that Jimmi made a choice that was logical for a kid, or any person to make. Do you think Jimmi made the right choice? What would you have done if you were Jimmi? What do you think Christopher would have done if he were in the same situation?

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Chapter 28 – Hard Truths

“Fighting, even just fighting to survive, was taking a toll on all of us.”(p.288)
Explain why Christopher says this.

Chapter 31 – Beacon

*“I’m not sure I’m ready to even think about the future yet,” she said.
“I think about it sometimes. You need to have hope. Hope that things can get better.” (p.307)*

Why is hope so important to all the children?

“Adults don’t always listen to what kids have to say.” (p.308)
What do you think? Is she right? Give example from the text and from your own experiences.

Chapter 32 – End Game

Alek made the ultimate sacrifice for his friends. Why?

Chapter 33 – Awakening

‘So many questions were left unanswered. Who were the Landers? Who were they working for? Where had they hidden before the Blackout?’ – (p.328)

Creative Writing Task – predict the answers to these questions!

Cliffhanger!! – What do you think will happen next??